A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

The beginning of 2021 brought hope that the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), along with the rest of the world, might return to some semblance of normalcy after enduring a shut-down and closure of most of our facilities in 2020. Like most institutions during this time, MNHS has felt the many and varied effects of the pandemic.

We were able to re-open the History Center with two new, strong exhibits, while construction progressed quickly at Historic Fort Snelling. By summer we were able to welcome visitors back to most of our historic sites including Split Rock Lighthouse, which was even featured with its beacon glowing on ABC’s Good Morning America in October.

We rose to the challenge of our closure by concluding a multi-year strategic planning process, further defining our mission and vision while outlining a number of strategic imperatives. Throughout the planning process, we listened to myriad voices. Some said, “You are going too far.” Others said, “You aren’t going far enough.”

Minnesota native and UCLA Distinguished Research Professor of History Lynn Hunt wrote, “History involves a set of tensions, between the local and the global, between our own history and someone else’s, between academic and popular forms, and even between past and future. The tensions cannot be overcome; they can only be navigated.” An increasingly important part of our role is to manage that inherent tension and to equip others to do the same.

Our approach to exploring and teaching history is embedded in our mission statement, which calls on us to create powerful engagement with history, cultivate curiosity and foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society. The mission encompasses all Minnesotans with the first part of our statement reading, “We serve all the people of Minnesota.”

The strategic plan is centered on four imperatives to remain the strong, bold and impactful organization that we have been for 172 years: re-envisioning space; expanding authority and expertise; transforming access; and, creating a sustainable future. Some of the exciting momentum behind these imperatives is detailed in this report.

Notably, in November the American Alliance of Museums reaccredited MNHS. This recognition from such a venerable organization is the gold standard for museum excellence. With great appreciation, we thank the staff, governing board, interns, and volunteers who have helped us remain a model institution.

The work we do would not be possible without the generous support of the people of Minnesota. Our gratitude goes to those new and long-standing members and donors who support us both in spirit and with financial contributions. We are thankful for our visitors, legislators, history enthusiasts, and most importantly, all the people of Minnesota.

David Hakensen, president
Kent Whitworth, director and CEO

PORTIONS OF THE LOWER SIOUX HISTORIC SITE RETURNED TO THE LOWER SIOUX INDIAN COMMUNITY

In February of 2021, MNHS transferred 115 acres—approximately one half—of the Lower Sioux historic site to the Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC). MNHS and LSIC believe the tribe’s ownership of the land will benefit the public through a richer and more complete telling of the important history connected to the place.

In 2017, the Minnesota Legislature approved the land transfer, which is adjacent to the LSIC’s tribal lands along the Minnesota River. MNHS continues to own and manage the historic warehouse, interpretive trails, archaeological sites and the visitor center as it has done in partnership with LSIC since 2009.

"From my heart I say Pidámayaye do," said Lower Sioux Indian Community President Robert L. Larsen. “It’s not the end but a very good continuation of our partnership!”

PRESERVING HISTORY AND EXPANDING ACCESS IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY

Digitization project preserves history just in time for Fergus Falls’ 150th Anniversary

As MNHS partners with communities and organizations to acknowledge, elevate and share lesser-known histories, it is simultaneously preserving historical documents. In Otter Tail County, recent efforts to digitize such documents will guarantee current and future generations access to a better understanding of Otter Tail County history.

Author R.C. Drews was embarking on a major research project to compile information and write a book detailing the founding of Fergus Falls in celebration of the city’s 150th year. MNHS had scores of paper records for Fergus Falls’ founding father, George B. Wright, in its St. Paul archives.

When the pandemic began, in-person access to these documents was restricted. “Time was limited and, sadly, it may have been easier to abandon this project even with Fergus Falls’ 150th birthday just around the corner,” said Jordan Rasmusson, Otter Tail County Historical Society board member and State Representative of District 8A.

A collaborative effort to digitize necessary files from MNHS archives allowed vital research to be completed on time. The book Founding Fergus Falls was finished and is on track to be published in 2022. Making these important records available digitally has dramatically improved accessibility for researchers of Otter Tail County history and beyond.

"History helps us understand what came before and how we arrived at this historical moment. It helps us understand each other, whether your family has been in Minnesota for generations, or you are a first generation immigrant. History helps us see that the individual pasts we have traversed over the years come together to create the collective past that we all share.”

—Judge Peter M. Reyes, Jr., executive council member, Minnesota Historical Society
EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN AND SINCLAIR LEWIS: 100 YEARS OF MAIN STREET EXHIBITS OPEN AS VISITORS RETURN TO THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER

While the Minnesota History Center welcomed back visitors in January, two new exhibits were thoughtfully being prepared behind gallery doors.

On March 6, the Extraordinary Women exhibit opened to the public, featuring stories of 22 women who fought for equal rights, including women’s right to vote, through political activism, education, and social justice work. Illustrations, multimedia pieces and MNHS collection objects brought these women’s stories to life.

Then on April 10, during the centennial year of Sinclair Lewis’s seminal novel Main Street, the Minnesota History Center opened the exhibit, Sinclair Lewis: 100 Years of Main Street. Lewis is arguably one of the most famous authors to come out of Minnesota. His novels and short stories sold millions, many were made into Hollywood films. He was the first American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1930. The exhibit featured more than 300 items from the MNHS collections, the Sinclair Lewis Foundation, and other collection lenders.

CONFEDERATE SHIRT AND 1906 CAVALRY UNIFORM EXPAND MILITARY STORIES AT HISTORIC FORT SNELLING

On the second day of the Battle of Nashville, Dec. 16, 1864, Henry L. Mills, a sergeant in the 7th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry was shot in the leg. In an effort to stanch the bleeding Mills grabbed a shirt from a fallen Confederate soldier. This shirt remains stained from Mills’ blood.

Mills mustered out at Fort Snelling, returning to St. Paul where he recovered and lived to age 92. While MNHS has many Civil War items in the collections, any item that survived the battlefield such as this shirt, is rare.

In 2021, the staff at Historic Fort Snelling also received a donation of a U.S. Cavalry uniform worn by Grover Cleveland Cooper in 1906 when he was stationed at Fort Snelling. Though born in Virginia, Cooper spent many years at Fort Snelling where he was a member of the Bareback Squadron which performed horse-riding showmanship.

The 1864 and 1906 military textiles will be on display in the Historic Fort Snelling’s new Plank Museum & Visitor Center in the coming years. They represent some of the expanded stories being shared at the site including stories of the military beyond 1820 and of the Dakota, African Americans, Japanese Americans, women and more.
FY21 HIGHLIGHTS

**BY THE NUMBERS**

187,904 Visitors
14,225 Member households
2.8 million Engagements with MNHS social media
2.5 million People visited our website, MNHS.org, 3.6 million times
Nearly 900 Volunteers and interns contributed more than 19,000 hours
132,000 Print and ebooks sold, which exceeded last year’s sales by 15% and exceeded projections by nearly 24%
406,235 Unique users viewed 822,984 pages on MNopedia
1,504 Pages now available on the Digital Newspaper Hub
4.2 million Items added to the collections
420,218 pages added this fiscal year
$4.9 million Provided by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

**COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHTS**

Bradstreet tables and Handicraft Guild lamp (and Winfred Porter photograph) which further document renowned interior designer John Bradstreet and his contemporaries at the Handicraft Guild, an organization founded, led, and staffed primarily by women, that was central to the Arts and Crafts movement active in Minneapolis (1904 to 1918).

Confederate soldier’s shirt used as a tourniquet by Henry L. Mills of the 7th Minnesota volunteer regiment. This rare item survived the battlefield and complements MNHS’s extensive Civil War holdings.

An eight foot tall mosaic sculpture by Rochester based artist, Judy Onofrio. (Photo on page 19.)

**HISTORY CENTER EXHIBITS**

**EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN**

**SINCLAIR LEWIS**

100 Years of Main Street

**MNHS PRESS HIGHLIGHTS**

Secrets of the Loon by Laura Purdie Salas and Chuck Dayton was selected as a winner of the 2021 Riverby Award from the John Burroughs Association.

MNHS Press and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe launched a major collaboration to publish Ojibwe stories collected from tribal elders and published in the Ojibwe language as part of the band’s language-revitalization initiative called the Aanjibimaadizing Project (“Changing Lives”.

Hosted 18 live virtual events on Facebook.

Published a collection of writings by BIPOC authors reflecting on the death of George Floyd and its impact on Minnesota, released on the anniversary of Floyd’s death.

**NATIONAL HISTORY DAY MEDALISTS**

Sasha Allen, Eden Prairie High School, Eden Prairie
Sam Kellar-Long, Helena Squires Mosher, and Mae Wrigley, Open World Learning Community, St. Paul
Nico Allen, Central Middle School, Eden Prairie

Left: Mill City Museum, Minneapolis.
As a nonprofit organization, we serve the people of Minnesota. Our annual budget of $50.5 million comes from three sources that work together to bring the public vibrant, crucial programs, and services: private funding, earned revenue, and public funding, including significant funding from the State of Minnesota.

Public funds, including funding from the state’s general fund, provide a foundation of support and enable us to leverage non-public funds to create a nationally recognized history program. Typically, two-thirds of our operating funds come from the State of Minnesota. We deliver functions designated by law, such as preserving historic landmarks and resources, managing critical records and collections, and operating cultural destinations important to tourism. State support also includes capital funding to preserve historic buildings and construct new ones, as well as Legacy Amendment (Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund) support for new, statewide history programs, including grants for local history organizations.

The Minnesota Historical Society also receives support from donors, foundations, corporations, and members. Their gifts support everything from general operations and school field trips to important acquisitions, conservation work, and community outreach. Endowment funds give MNHS strength for today and tomorrow. Finally, earned revenue from admission fees, rental events, museum stores, publication sales, and many other activities also provides a base of funding while keeping history accessible and at family-friendly prices.

During fiscal year 2021, COVID-19 forced the closure of MNHS historic sites and museums through the first three quarters, which resulted in a $3 million reduction in earned revenue. To address this, MNHS furloughed roughly half of its staff, used reserves, and relied on state operating appropriations and non-state restricted funds to support reduced operations. MNHS also received one-time federal funding under the Employee Retention Credit related to the Covid pandemic.

### Financial Summary

#### Sources of Support and Revenue
- Private contributions: 7%
- Federal grants: 2%
- State operating appropriation: 27%
- State legacy appropriation: 21%
- State capital appropriation: 4%
- Earned income: 8%
- Investment return: 31%

#### Expenses by Program Area
- Library and collections: 19%
- Historic sites and museums: 27%
- Edu., outreach & content dev.: 20%
- Heritage preservation: 15%
- Management and general: 16%
- Development and membership: 3%

#### Condensed Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
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<th>With Donor Restrictions</th>
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<td>Accounts payable and accrued liabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total liabilities and net assets</td>
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#### Statement of Activities

**Year Ended June 30, 2021**

**SUPPORT:***
- Private contributions: $2,912 1,075 $1,837 $5,817
- Federal grants: 1,585
- County and other grants: 62
- State operating appropriation: 23,197
- State legacy appropriation: 17,583
- State capital appropriation: 3,100
- Total support: 27,694 20,483 1,137 1,830 51,144

**REVENUE:**
- Admission fees: 1,160
- Museum store sales: 1,245
- Publication sales: 1,746
- Program fees: 96
- Contract service fees: 1,344
- Library sales and fees: 212
- Investment return: 262
- Endowment payout: 1,096
- Change in value of split-interest agreements: 22
- Rental, parking, food services: 78
- Other sales, fees, and memberships: 465
- Total revenue: 7,904 1,931 7,850 15,850 43,535

**Total support & revenue:** 35,398 7,850 16,843 $33,351

**Net assets released from program restrictions:** 53,130 17,732 1913 (8,202)

**Total support, revenue, and net assets released from program restrictions:** 55,100 1,913 1,913 3,640 6,185 17,696 84,495

**EXPENSES:**
- Program services:
  - Library and collections: 9,217
  - Historic sites and museums: 11,055
  - Education, outreach, and content development: 9,471
  - Heritage preservation: 7,380
  - Total program services: 27,923 2,012

- Supporting services:
  - Management and general: 8,015
  - Development and membership: 1,589
  - Total supporting services: 9,605 105

- Total expenses: 47,325 2,157 49,442

**Net increase (decrease) in net assets:** 5,805 204 (131) 3,640 6,185 17,696 33,053

**Net assets at beginning of year:** 12,048 10,326 17,48 34,480 32,468 70,733 254,573

**Net assets at end of year:** 17,953 90,502 9,079 39,130 39,563 $94,429 $289,626

These statements are condensed from MNHS’s audited financial statements available at www.mnhs.org/reports.
HELP HISTORY CAMPAIGN
The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the donors who provided gifts to the Help History Campaign in June 2020 and fiscal year 2021. Help History was created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to raise critical funds to allow MNHS to safely reopen our sites to the public and update our technology infrastructure.

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The Thomas and Julienne Youngren Foundation*

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Anonymous
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Karen Columbus Bolton
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Will and Claudia Kaul

THE PATRICK COLEMAN CHAIR: CURATOR OF MAPS, RARE BOOKS, AND PRINT CULTURE
Funds raised to establish The Patrick Coleman Chair: Curator of Maps, Rare Books, and Print Culture will be used to support a senior-level curatorial position focused on the acquisition and preservation of books and printed materials. The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the following donors and the volunteer fundraising committee, led by co-chairs Chris Coleman and Phyllis Goff, for their generous support of this new endowed position and tribute to the career and contributions of longtime librarian Patrick Coleman, who retired in August 2021 following a four-decade tenure at MNHS. The listing below includes contributions received through December 15, 2021.

Anonymous
Joseph Amato
Gary and Katrinina Andersen
Nina Archabal*
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Colin Dunn
Harriet and Bruce Bart
Julia Baugniet and Carter Clausdapp
David Dunn and Susan Foote
David Edminster
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Roger Hale and Nor Hall
Patricia M. Hampl
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Kathy and William Haug
Samuel Heins and Stacey Mills Heins
Mary R. Han
Mary Abbe Hintz
Carl and Heidi Horsch
Jean Housh
Ariane Koenig
Karen Columbus Bolton
John Kaul* and Gloria Gurnlie
Will and Claudia Kaul
MNHS thanks Dr. C. Peter Magrath and Rev. Susan Thon for investing in the preservation of the printed page and contributing to The Patrick Coleman Chair: Curator of Maps, Rare Books, and Print Culture. This endowed position will honor and continue the work of longtime Acquisitions Librarian Patrick Coleman, who retired in August 2021 following a four decade career at MNHS.

“Right: Detail of ‘and the feather drifted silently to earth, as though it meant something,’ gouache on paper painting by Dan Bruggeman, c. 2020. MNHS collections.”

* Coleman Chair Campaign committee member
** Deceased
NORTH STAR CIRCLE
The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the following donors in our North Star Circle for their leadership support from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The commitment and generosity of our North Star Circle members sustains our work to serve all of 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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MNHS recently lost a devoted supporter and longtime friend with the passing of Nina Rothchild. Nina and her husband Ken have been members since 1963, and were founding members of the North Star Circle in 1999. Ken served on the MNHS Executive Council from 1963-2001, including as president from 1986-1992, and they have generously supported many MNHS initiatives, such as the revitalization of the Oliver Kelley Farm, the construction of the Minnesota History Center, programs that focus on Business and Women’s History in Minnesota, professional development for MNHS employees, and acquiring the Mike Lynch Archive for our collections.

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A grant from the Raymond & Florence Berglund Foundation allowed MNHS to purchase 13 all-terrain wheelchairs for our historic sites. Now, people needing wheelchair assistance can enjoy the full visitor experience at our sites. The wheelchairs have already received glowing reviews including a warm thank you from the father of this young girl pictured here who visited Historic Forestville last summer. Sadly, trustee Kenneth Berglund, son of the late Ray and Florence Berglund, recently passed away. He and his wife Doris had been longtime members of MNHS and had previously donated a number of historic photos from their family’s lumber business to MNHS collections.

Matt Nupen and his family visit Historic Forestville and utilize one of the all-terrain wheelchairs.

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In Spring 2022, MNHS will celebrate the grand reopening of Historic Fort Snelling. MNHS is grateful for strong corporate support for this major revitalization project:

“Ecolab is proud to support the revitalization of one of Minnesota’s most important historic sites, improving riverfront access and expanding the stories at Fort Snelling will benefit Minnesotans for generations to come.”
—Kris Taylor, Vice President of Global Community Relations, Ecolab

“The revitalization of Historic Fort Snelling is an important step forward in Minnesota History. This project will help Minnesotans to understand the powerful, diverse and complex histories of our state. Securian is proud to collaborate in this work.”
—Nicole Hansen, Executive Director, Securian Financial Foundation

Right: Historic Fort Snelling at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.
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Left: Extraordinary Women exhibit at the Minnesota History Center.
They were North Star Circle Members to MNHS for more than 20 years. In addition to Sandy being a member of our Honorary Council, Sandy and Bob were members of Minnesota’s greatest generation. In honor of Sandy and Bob’s tremendous contribution, the Klas family has allowed us to name a beautiful new scenic overlook in their memory at Historic Fort Snelling.

We are grateful for the special commitment of these visionaries, whose generosity has included support of the Minnesota Legacy Society by including MNHS as a beneficiary of a will or other planned gift. We are grateful for the special commitment of these visionaries, whose generosity has included support of the Minnesota Legacy Society by including MNHS as a beneficiary of a will or other planned gift.

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