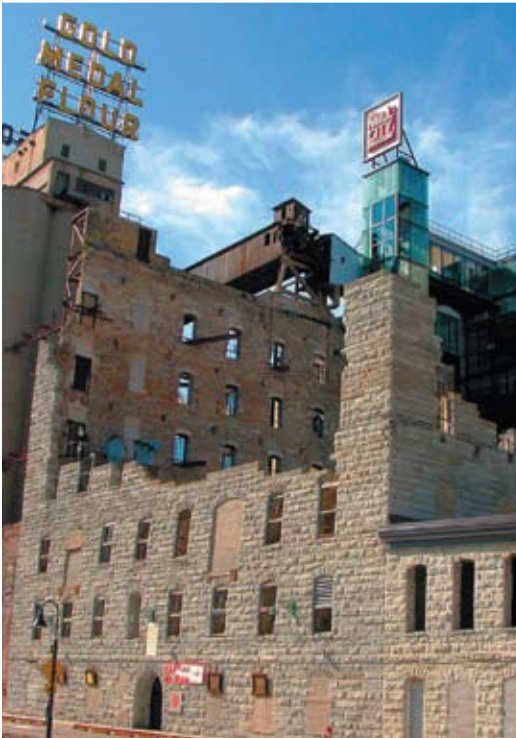


Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2008



This year, the Minnesota Historical Society has embarked on an introspective review of our work, programs and partnerships across the entire institution. The timing of this important effort could not be better. As the Society celebrates its 159th year and the state its 150th year, we find ourselves in difficult economic times, making planning even more essential. The process we have begun will ultimately lead the Society in a direction to capitalize on our strengths and make progress where we face challenges. The Society's basic mission as outlined in its charter from 1849, its strong financial structure, and its highly professional staff and leadership are our foundation in weathering these troublesome times, and weather it, we will.

It is human nature to be comforted by the familiar and predictable, and we are disquieted by abrupt, jarring change. The whirl in the financial markets of the past few months surely qualifies as abrupt and jarring. The Minnesota Historical Society, as the custodian of the stories of change in the past, provides us with the link that can help us understand these events as they unfold around us, keep them in perspective and help us to grasp their long-term implications. History surely does matter.

Edward Stringer, President, Minnesota Historical Society

As Minnesota's sesquicentennial year comes to a close, we find ourselves in sobering times with our national economy deeply stressed. We know that these conditions are affecting Minnesotans and that they will inevitably have an impact on the Minnesota Historical Society. At such a moment, it is important to remember that the Society has weathered many previous storms since its founding almost 160 years ago. In turbulent times, our organization can offer Minnesotans the perspective of history to shed light on present events and help shape a vision for the future of our state and its people.


Through its Minnesota's Greatest Generation project, the Society is creating an enduring legacy for present and future generations. The success of this multi-year initiative has more than achieved the goals we set in August 2005. We look forward to the opening of a major new exhibition at the History Center in May 2009 that will provide a unique perspective on our state's Greatest Generation.

In the following pages, you will read about additional ways in which the Society is connecting Minnesota's history with the contemporary world. An exciting example is the development of new programs at Historic Fort Snelling to tell a much broader story of this place that stands at the crossroads of Minnesota's history. Visitors will learn about the Indian peoples who long inhabited this land, African Americans who worked and lived at the fort as slaves, and the generations of soldiers who mustered through Fort Snelling on their way to active duty from the time of the Civil War through World War II. These are stories that carry great meaning for today's Minnesotans.

Plans are also underway to tell a broader story at the Oliver H. Kelley Farm. With new programming now under development, the Society will bring the story of agriculture up to the present, as visitors learn not only about farm life more than a century ago, but about how food production and nutrition have changed over time – from organic farming to genetic engineering.

As Minnesotans participated in the national election this year, students across the state took part in History Day, Minnesota's fastest growing social studies enrichment program, co-sponsored by the Society and the University of Minnesota. We are proud of all the 6th through 12th grade historians who explored this year's theme, "Conflict and Compromise in History." Among them is Sade Ogundiran, a junior at Minneapolis South High School, who took first place at the national level for her project entitled "Fannie Lou Hamer, the Voice that Inspired Freedom Summer." Through her research, Sade learned about Hamer's role in changing the Democratic Party rules to seat integrated delegations after the 1964 convention. Projects such as Sade's help students better understand how today's political process has evolved.

To carry out its mission of public service, the Society depends on a remarkable level of support. We are deeply grateful to all of those who make our work possible – Minnesota's Governor and State Legislators, our generous donors, the state's more than 400 county and local historical organizations who work with us, nearly 20,000 dedicated Society members, and our outstanding staff and volunteers. Thanks to the extraordinary commitment Minnesotans have made to preserve and learn from their history, the Society's work is thriving. In the days ahead, we will continue to bring our citizens history that connects past and present, that is current, germane and relevant to the times in which we live and the challenges we face. Please join us in this important endeavor.


Nina Archabal, Director

2008 HIGHLIGHTS

SOCIETY SALUTES SESQUICENTENNIAL WITH 'MN150'

The Society saluted Minnesota's 150 years of statehood with the October opening of "MN150," a History Center exhibit that looks at the people, places and things that have shaped our state. More than 2,700 individuals nominated not only preeminent Minnesotans, such as Hubert H. Humphrey and Walter Mondale, but little known success stories, such as Bradford Parkinson, a Minneapolis native responsible for the now ubiquitous Global Positioning System (GPS). Innovative new technology allowed us to involve the general public in developing the content of the exhibit more than was ever possible before. A popular feature of the exhibit is an interactive quiz in which visitors of all ages can test their knowledge of the state. Video feedback stations let visitors communicate their ideas instantly. And a state-of-the-art wiki, a collaborative web site, allowed users in the exhibit and around the world to edit and add content.

HILL FAMILY PAPERS COME TO SOCIETY THROUGH GENEROUS GRANTS

In March, the Society received the Hill Family Papers, a gift from the James J. Hill Reference Library. The 1,200 cubic feet of records, which include the personal papers of Hill, his son Louis, and Louis' wife, Maud van Cortlandt Taylor Hill, joined the Society's existing Hill collection. These include the vast corporate records of Hill's Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railways and the personal papers of Hill's artist grandson, Jerome Hill. A generous gift from three Hill family-related philanthropies – the Northwest Area Foundation, the Grotto Foundation and the Jerome Foundation – will enable the Society to catalogue the collection and develop a web site to provide access and promote usage far beyond the Society's headquarters in St. Paul.

MUSEUM VISITORS, SCHOOLCHILDREN, RESEARCHERS AND WEB USERS AROUND THE WORLD BENEFIT FROM THE SOCIETY'S SERVICES

The Society's unprecedented influence continued to grow, both at home and far beyond Minnesota's borders. More than 250,000 young people discovered history at the History Center, Mill City Museum and historic sites across the state. Nearly one million people visited our 26 museums and historic sites over the year, including 30,000 in-person researchers at the Society's library at the History Center. Our web site's reach continued to grow receiving 9.5 million visits, with many thousands of genealogy researchers drawn to the birth and death certificates pages. Through the generosity of a Bush Foundation grant, the Society launched the first phase of the Great Rivers Network, which enables visitors to simultaneously search multiple online databases. Ultimately, the search capability will include historical societies in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota.

**HISTORIC SITES CELEBRATE
“SESQUI-SENSATIONAL” SUMMER**

The summer sites season got off to a rousing start with sesquicentennial events at the Society’s historic sites across the state. Children and families were invited to take a pledge and become “sesqui-scouts,” which earned them a badge and discounts on visits to all 26 historic sites and museums. Events included the introduction of horse-drawn trolley rides at the Oliver H. Kelley Farm, a week-long Statehood Celebration at the State Capitol, special July 4th events at several sites and a WPA program complementing a new exhibit at the Charles Lindbergh Historic Site, among many others. Support for sesquicentennial events was made possible through a gift from the Richard and Shirley DeLeo Fund for Historic Sites.

**LEGISLATURE APPROVES \$4.6 MILLION
FOR HISTORIC FORT SNELLING,
\$300,000 FOR OLIVER H. KELLEY FARM**

The Minnesota State Legislature continued its long-time support for protecting Minnesota’s preeminent historic site, Historic Fort Snelling. While the Society’s request to the Legislature for \$24.8 million for a new visitor center at the site was not funded, the 2008 Legislature and Governor did include the approval of \$4.6 million for the historic fort to be used for stabilizing buildings and expanding the program in important ways, developing classrooms for school groups and handicapped-accessible restrooms. The Society is in the process of completing a comprehensive plan for the fort that will include strategies to improve the visitor experience and expand the interpretive program.

The Society also launched a revitalization project for the Oliver H. Kelley Farm expanding the story, time period and interpretive methods at the site. Along with a visit to see the 19th-century farmstead, crops, livestock and farming methods, the site’s visitors – including 12,000 schoolchildren per year – will have an opportunity to learn the importance of agriculture, food and the environment in the 21st century. During the 2008 session, the Legislature appropriated \$300,000 to the Society to begin the process of engaging the Kelley Farm’s visitors in what are among the most important and relevant issues of our time and to design structures and facilities that will accomplish that goal.

2008 HIGHLIGHTS

CHANGING EXHIBITS HIGHLIGHT DIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA'S COMMUNITIES, OUTREACH MAKES THEM AVAILABLE TO ALL AT THE HISTORY CENTER

The innovative exhibit “Right on Lake Street,” developed in collaboration with Macalester College and In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, whisked visitors into the colorful mix of people and cultures that is the essence of Lake Street. “We Couldn’t Live at Home” looked at generations of young people who found protection in one building, which began as the Sheltering Home for Jewish Children nearly a century ago and is now home to Avenues for Homeless Youth on Minneapolis’ North Side. And “Suburban World: The Norling Photos” took a quirky look at 1950s-era Bloomington through a treasure trove of photographs long believed lost but rediscovered in the basement of the Bloomington Historical Society in 2002 by Brad Zellar, whose book was the inspiration for the exhibit.

The East Side Neighborhood Access Initiative, which added the American Indian Magnet School to the seven St. Paul public schools it already serves, is in its second year of bringing underserved audiences to the History Center. This year, the Rondo Neighborhood Access Initiative brought students from Wellstone Elementary School. The full program will be launched next year.

MINNESOTA'S GREATEST GENERATION PROJECT CONTINUES SUCCESS

The Minnesota’s Greatest Generation project entered the final year of a multi-year initiative to preserve and tell the stories of those who came of age in the Great Depression, experienced World War II on the home front and abroad, and went on to build our modern nation. By the end of the year, the Society had posted 786 stories of the Great Depression, World War II and the post-war years on the Share Your Story section of the web site along with more than 630 artifacts from the Society’s collections, including photos, artwork, objects, documents, film and audio clips, and maps. The Minnesota’s Greatest Generation Film Festival enjoyed its second successful year attracting more than 60 entries with awards going to those judged best in five categories. The award-winning films were shown on the Comcast cable network and Twin Cities Public Television during the seven-part Ken Burns’ documentary “The War” and at libraries throughout the state. The Society’s conservation program conducted 22 Preserving Your Family History workshops around the state. And work continued on the upcoming exhibit, “Minnesota’s Greatest Generation: The Depression, The War, The Boom,” scheduled to open Memorial Day Weekend of 2009.

MHS PRESS PUBLISHES A RECORD 30 BOOKS

MHS Press enjoyed another banner year releasing an all-time record 30 titles. Brad Zellar's "Suburban World: The Norling Photos" inspired an exhibit, while Kate Robert's "Minnesota 150," the companion book to another exhibit, "MN150" was one of the year's best-selling titles. Two books, "We Are at Home: Pictures of the Ojibwe People," by Bruce White, and "Creating Minnesota: A History from the Inside Out," by Annette Atkins, won Awards of Merit from the Association for State and Local History. Master storyteller Kevin Kling's "The Dog Says How" was launched at a gala event at St. Paul's Fitzgerald Theater, and Greg Gaut and Marsha Neff's Minnesota History journal article "Save the Lady: The Struggle for the Winona County Courthouse" won the biennial David Stanley Gebhard Award given by the Minnesota chapter of the Society for Architectural Historians.

TRAVELING EXHIBITS BRING THE WORLD TO THE HISTORY CENTER'S DOOR

The Society hosted several exciting exhibits developed by other organizations and museums around the country. Among the highlights was a showing of an original broadsheet of the Declaration of Independence, printed the evening of July 4, 1776, which was on view at the History Center during Statehood Week in May. More than 20,000 schoolchildren were among thousands of visitors who came to see this important piece of our national history. "Enemy Within: Terror in America, 1776-Today," from the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., looked at the history of domestic terrorism and espionage over more than 200 years. Finally, the Society confirmed arrangements to bring "Vatican Splendors: From Saint Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museums and the Swiss Guard," the largest traveling exhibition ever shown at the History Center.

SOCIETY NAMES 14 PROPERTIES TO NATIONAL REGISTER, AWARDS \$1,748,714 IN GRANTS

A total of 14 properties were newly listed on the National Register during the fiscal year: Detroit Lakes City Park, Detroit Lakes; Kasson Public School, Kasson; Eitel Hospital, Minneapolis; First National Bank-Soo Line Building, Minneapolis; Pence Automobile Company Building, Minneapolis; Benjamin Noble (Shipwreck), Knife River vicinity, Lake County; United States Post Office, Fairmont; Commerce Building, St. Paul; Riverside Hangar, St. Paul; Listening Point, Morse Township, Saint Louis County; Northern Pacific Railway Depot, Staples; Moritz Bergstein Shoddy Mill and Warehouse, Oak Park Heights; Log Cabin, Oak Park Heights; and Stillwater Overlook, Oak Park Heights.

The Society's Historic Preservation Department awarded a total of \$1,748,714 from five state and federal sources. Awards included 74 State Grants-in-Aid, 11 State Capitol Grants-in-Aid, 28 Federal Certified Local Government (CLG) Grants, four Minnesota Transportation Network Grants and nine Historic Preservation Flood Relief Grants. This is the largest annual total on record for funds awarded in a given year.

Fiscal Year 2008 Financial Highlights

The Society received \$26.2 million in operating support from the State of Minnesota in fiscal year 2008, approximately 53.8% of its total support and revenue for the year. This represents an increase of \$3.2 million over fiscal year 2007 and is due mainly to one-time appropriations for various initiatives.

In addition, the Society received \$9.2 million in capital bonding appropriations, or 18.9% of its total support and revenue for the year. The Legislature provides capital appropriations generally every other year resulting in a significant increase in fiscal year 2008 support. This bonding support is for Historic Sites Asset Preservation (\$4.0 million), Historic Fort Snelling Revitalization (\$3.0 million), County & Local Preservation (\$1.6 million), Oliver Kelley Farm Historic Site (\$0.3 million), and Heritage Trails at Fort Ridgely (\$0.3 million).

Contributions from members, friends, corporations and foundations totaled \$5.6 million, down \$3.0 million from fiscal year 2007. This decrease is a result of successful fundraising during fiscal year 2007 in support of Minnesota's Greatest Generation project and "MN150," as well as the proceeds from the sale of the Ffoillott sapphire.

Total non-investment operating revenues increased an average of 1.5% over the previous fiscal year, with increases in admissions, memberships, and various fees and service areas. Decreases in Museum Stores sales and publication sales tended to reflect the downturn in the economy. The "MN150" exhibit was a driving force in admissions, memberships and auxiliary services during the fiscal year.

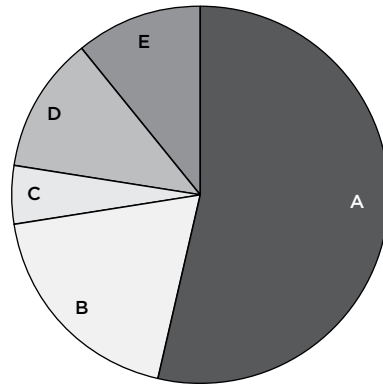
Fiscal year 2008 was the third full-year of the Society charging for admission at the History Center, which resulted in approximately \$314,000 in admission fees, down \$24,000 from fiscal year 2007, and \$108,000 of membership revenue, up \$5,000.

Investment losses for fiscal year 2008 of \$4.6 million, were due primarily to unrealized losses in market value at the close of the fiscal year, June 30. During the first half of the fiscal year the Society experienced realized gains of approximately \$4.6 million. The change in unrealized gain and losses on investments between fiscal years 2008 and 2007 was a loss of \$9.2 million. Investment return on the endowment funds for fiscal year 2008 was a negative 13.7%.

Total expenses for fiscal year 2008 were \$47.0 million, up \$2.3 million from the prior year and related primarily to salary and benefit increases (\$1.3 million) and expenditures for one-time initiatives funded by the State, some of which were not yet completed by the close of the fiscal year.

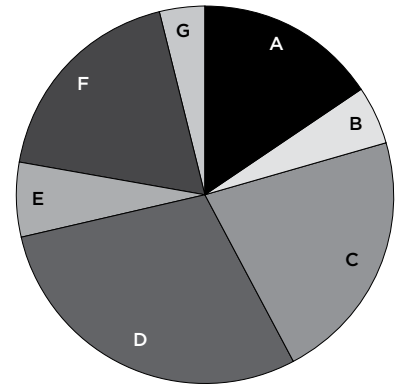
Salaries and benefits increased 5.7% in fiscal year 2008 and comprised 49.6% (\$23.3 million) of the Society's total expenses for the year, compared to 49.3% (\$22.0 million) for fiscal year 2007.

More than 2,000 volunteers contributed 41,500 hours at the Society's museums and historic sites across the state.



Sources of Support and Revenue:

- A State Operating Appropriations . . . 53.8%
- B State Capital Bond Appropriation . . 18.9%
- C Federal, State & County Grants 4.9%
- D Support from Individuals, Corporations and Foundations 11.6%
- E Earned Income 10.8%



Percentage of Expenses by Program Area:

- A Library Collections and Archival Services 15.6%
- B Publications 5.0%
- C History Center Museum 21.8%
- D Historic Sites 29.3%
- E Outreach and Preservation 6.3%
- F Management and General 18.4%
- G Development 3.7%

Condensed Balance Sheet Year ended June 30, 2008

(000's) omitted with summarized information as of June 30, 2007

	Unrestricted			Temporarily Restricted		Permanently Restricted	Total	
	Undesignated unrestricted funds	Plant fund	Board designated endowment	State appropriation	Other	Endowment	2008	2007
Cash and investments	\$ 3,111		\$ 13,377	\$ 3,502	\$ 10,827	\$ 18,724	\$ 49,541	\$ 53,616
Receivables	2,067			14,293	3,072	1,327	20,759	12,687
Museum shop inventories	980						980	959
Property and equipment net		\$ 88,075					88,075	89,546
Total assets	\$ 6,158	\$ 88,075	\$ 13,377	\$ 17,795	\$ 13,899	\$ 20,051	\$ 159,355	\$ 156,808
Payables and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,704		\$ 97	\$ 2,982	\$ 967	\$ 382	\$ 6,132	\$ 5,284
Net assets:								
Unrestricted	4,454	\$ 88,075	13,280				105,809	110,947
Temporarily restricted				14,813	12,932		27,745	19,305
Permanently restricted						19,669	19,669	21,272
Total net assets	4,454	88,075	13,280	14,813	12,932	19,669	153,223	151,524
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 6,158	\$ 88,075	\$ 13,377	\$ 17,795	\$ 13,899	\$ 20,051	\$ 159,355	\$ 156,808

These statements are excerpts from the Society's audited financial statements which are available upon request.

Statement of Activities Year ended June 30, 2008

(000's) omitted with summarized information as of June 30, 2007

	Unrestricted			Temporarily Restricted		Permanently Restricted	Total	
	Undesignated unrestricted funds	Plant fund	Board designated endowment	State appropriation	Other	Endowment	2008	2007
SUPPORT AND REVENUE								
Support:								
Private contributions	\$ 1,179				\$ 3,766	\$ 689	\$ 5,634	\$ 8,599
Federal grants					2,403		2,403	549
County and other grants							-	511
State operating appropriation				\$ 26,216			26,216	22,904
State capital appropriation	-	-	-	9,192	-	-	9,192	-
Total support	\$ 1,179	-	-	\$ 35,408	\$ 6,169	\$ 689	\$ 43,445	\$ 32,563
Revenue:								
Admissions fees	\$ 2,146						\$ 2,146	\$ 2,111
Museum store sales	1,882						1,882	1,952
Membership	984						984	950
Publication sales	1,602						1,602	1,717
Program fees	625						625	648
Contract service fees	891						891	764
Digital product fees	412						412	427
Investment return	1,289		(3,817)		167	(2,292)	(4,653)	6,623
Auxiliary services	1,047						1,047	866
Other sales and fees	342	-	-	-	-	-	342	356
Total revenue	\$ 11,220	-	\$ (3,817)	-	\$ 167	\$ (2,292)	\$ 5,278	\$ 16,414
Total support and revenue	\$ 12,399	-	\$ (3,817)	\$ 35,408	\$ 6,336	\$ (1,603)	\$ 48,723	\$ 48,977
Net assets released from program restrictions	33,304	-	-	(27,976)	(5,328)	-	-	-
Total support, revenue and net assets released from program restrictions	\$ 45,703	-	\$ (3,817)	\$ 7,432	\$ 1,008	\$ (1,603)	\$ 48,723	\$ 48,977
EXPENSES:								
Program services:								
Library collections & archival services	\$ 7,126	\$ 193					\$ 7,319	\$ 7,184
Publications	2,341	8					2,349	2,168
History Center Museum	9,773	481					10,254	9,524
Historic sites	12,996	771					13,767	14,295
Outreach and preservation	2,953	5					2,958	2,489
Total program services	\$ 35,189	\$ 1,458	-	-	-	-	\$ 36,647	\$ 35,660
Supporting services:								
Management and general	8,637	12	-	-	-	-	8,649	7,495
Development	1,727	1	-	-	-	-	1,728	1,532
Total supporting services	\$ 10,364	\$ 13	-	-	-	-	\$ 10,377	\$ 9,027
Total expenses	\$ 45,553	\$ 1,471	-	-	-	-	\$ 47,024	\$ 44,687
Increase (decrease) in net assets before reclassifications and transfers	150	(1,471)	(3,817)	7,432	1,008	(1,603)	1,699	4,290
Transfers to board designated endowment (1,200)			1,200					
Total reclassifications and transfers	\$ (1,200)	-	\$ 1,200	-	-	-	-	-
Changes in net assets:								
Unrestricted	(1,050)	(1,471)	(2,617)	-	-	-	(5,138)	2,390
Temporarily restricted	-	-	-	7,432	1,008	-	8,440	(1,058)
Permanently restricted	-	-	-	-	-	(1,603)	(1,603)	2,958
Net changes in net assets	(1,050)	(1,471)	(2,617)	7,432	1,008	(1,603)	1,699	4,290
Net assets at beginning of year	5,504	89,546	15,897	7,381	11,924	21,272	151,524	147,234
Net assets at end of year	\$ 4,454	\$ 88,075	\$ 13,280	\$ 14,813	\$ 12,932	\$ 19,669	\$ 153,223	\$ 151,524

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the people of Minnesota who, through appropriations made by the Legislature and approved by the Governor, have supported the Society in its mission. The special support of our members and friends named in the following lists is critical to maintaining excellence in our programs and services. The Society is grateful to all those who have given their financial support, and we use this opportunity to give special recognition and thanks to those who have contributed \$250 or more.



NORTH STAR CIRCLE

The North Star Circle provides the foundation of our private support, donating nearly a million dollars this year.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the leadership support of the following North Star Circle members. These friends have contributed \$1,000 or more for annual membership during our 2008 fiscal year running from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2008.

Thank you to the Katherine B. Andersen Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation for their additional financial support of all new and increased North Star Circle Memberships.

Guarantor: \$25,000-49,999

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