

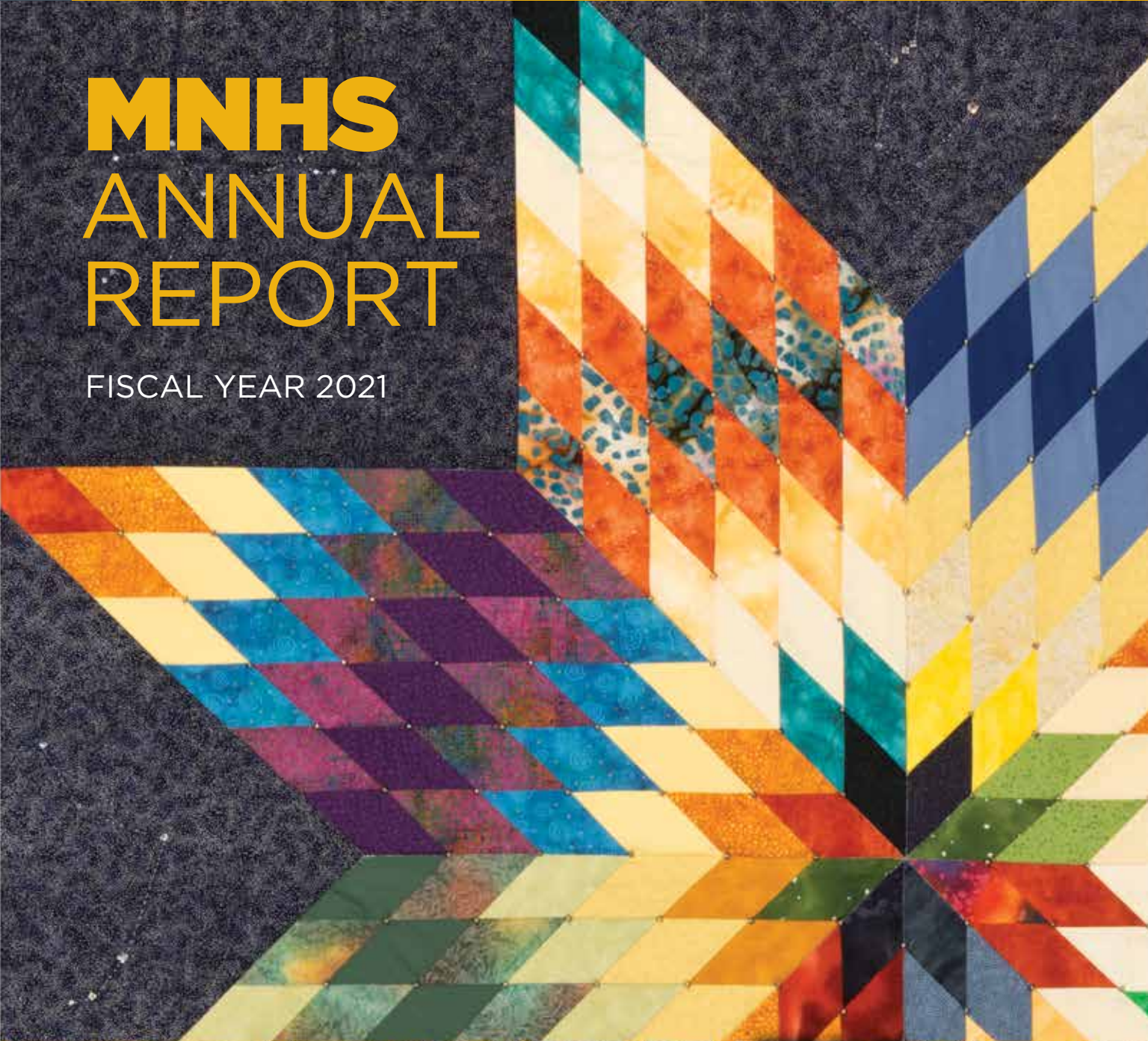


MINNESOTA  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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# MNHS ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021



**THIS  
IS WHO  
WE ARE**



## 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



**Left:** 1959 George Morrison abstraction, gouache on paper. Gift of Cynthia Whiteford and David Nelson.

“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

## 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.



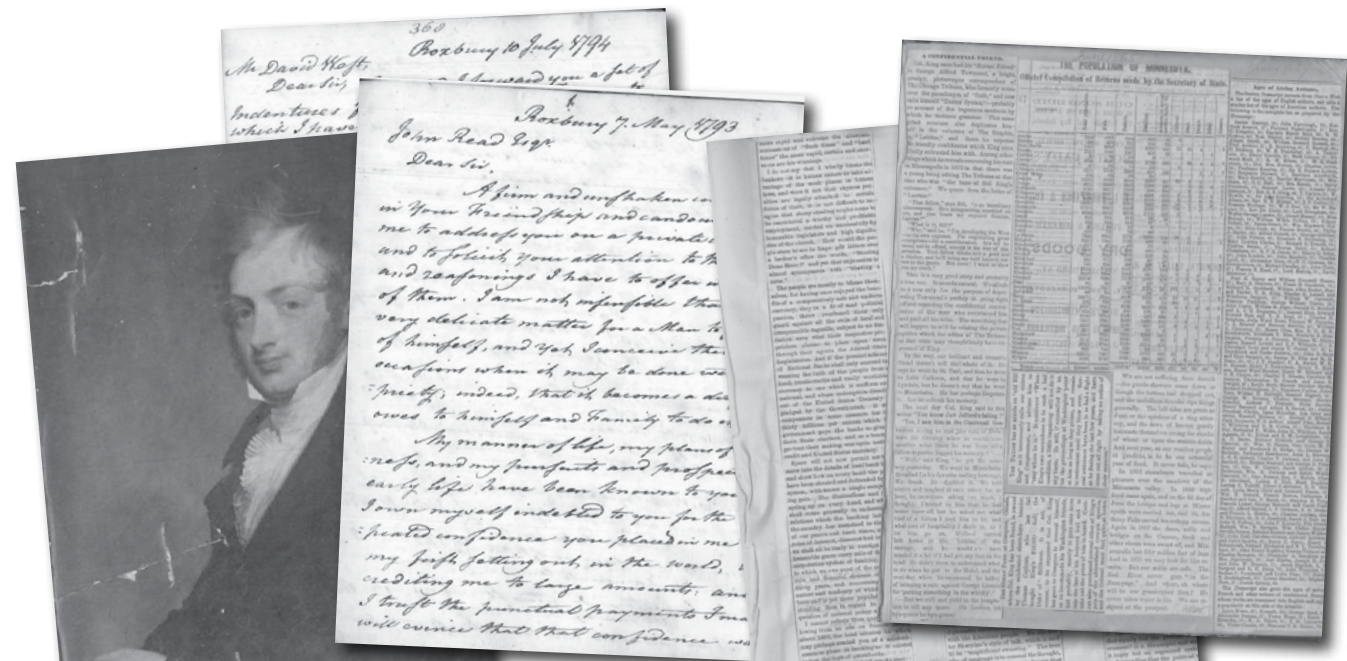
## PORTIONS OF THE LOWER SIOUX HISTORIC SITE RETURNED TO THE LOWER SIOUX INDIAN COMMUNITY

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.

The Lower Sioux Agency is a place of great historic significance. It is located on both historical and contemporary Dakota homeland along the Minnesota River Valley known as Cansa’yapi (“where they marked the trees red”) and is a site of key events related to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

“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!”





## 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

*MNHS acquires Confederate shirt used to bind the wound of a Minnesota soldier*

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** Items added to the collections
- 4.2 million** Pages now available on the Digital Newspaper Hub **420,218 pages added this fiscal year**
- 5** Minnesota students earned medals at the National History Day competition
- \$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.)

Papers of journalist, playwright, and co-founder of the History Theatre **Lance S. Belville.**

Papers of former representative and presidential candidate **Michele Bachmann.**

Left: Mill City Museum, Minneapolis.

## 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

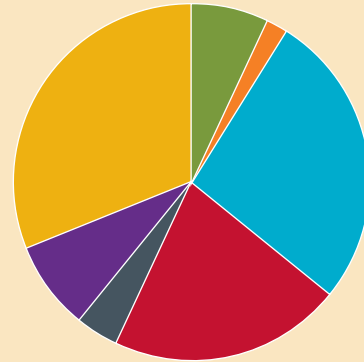
# 2021 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

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.

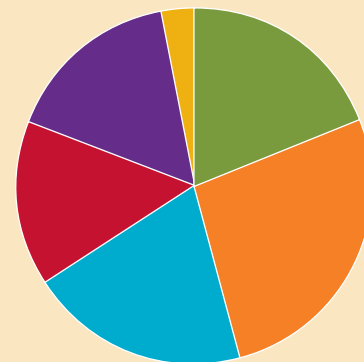
The Minnesota Historical Society also receives support from donors, foundations, corporations, and members. Their gifts support everything from general operations and school field trips to important acquisitions, conservation work, and community outreach. Endowment funds give MNHS strength for today 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 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.



## 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

As of June 30, 2021

(000's) omitted

	Without Donor Restrictions			With Donor Restrictions			Total
	Operating	Plant fund	Board-designated endowment	State appropriations	Other	Perpetually Restricted	
Cash and investments	\$ 17,305		9,079	(5,251)	32,054	93,869	\$ 147,056
Receivables	4,263			31,104	1,143	821	37,331
Museum shop inventories	885						885
Property and equipment net		90,392		16,916	7,069		114,377
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 22,453</b>	<b>90,392</b>	<b>9,079</b>	<b>42,769</b>	<b>40,266</b>	<b>94,690</b>	<b>\$ 299,649</b>
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 4,500			4,649	613	261	\$ 10,023
Net assets	17,953	90,392	9,079	38,120	39,653	94,429	289,626
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$ 22,453</b>	<b>90,392</b>	<b>9,079</b>	<b>42,769</b>	<b>40,266</b>	<b>94,690</b>	<b>\$ 299,649</b>

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Year ended June 30, 2021

(000's) omitted

<b>SUPPORT:</b>						
Private contributions	\$ 2,912			1,075	1,830	\$ 5,817
Federal grants	1,585					1,585
County and other grants				62		62
State operating appropriation	23,197					23,197
State legacy appropriation				17,383		17,383
State capital appropriation				3,100		3,100
<b>Total support</b>	<b>27,694</b>			<b>20,483</b>	<b>1,137</b>	<b>51,144</b>
<b>REVENUE:</b>						
Admission fees	1,160					1,160
Museum store sales	1,245					1,245
Publication sales	1,746					1,746
Program fees	96					96
Contract service fees	1,344					1,344
Library sales and fees	212					212
Investment return	262		2,246	6,098	18,374	26,980
Endowment payout	1,096		(315)	1,749	(2,530)	
Change in value of split-interest agreements					22	22
Rental, parking, food services	78					78
Other sales, fees, and memberships	465			3		468
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>7,704</b>		<b>1,931</b>	<b>7,850</b>	<b>15,866</b>	<b>33,351</b>
<b>Total support &amp; revenue</b>	<b>35,398</b>		<b>1,931</b>	<b>20,483</b>	<b>8,987</b>	<b>84,495</b>
Net assets released from program restrictions	17,732	1,913		(16,843)	(2,802)	
<b>Total support, revenue, and net assets released from program restrictions</b>	<b>53,130</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>3,640</b>	<b>6,185</b>	<b>84,495</b>
<b>EXPENSES:</b>						
<b>Program services:</b>						
Library and collections	9,257	297				9,554
Historic sites and museums	11,815	1,242				13,057
Education, outreach, and content development	9,471	468				9,939
Heritage preservation	7,380	5				7,385
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>37,923</b>	<b>2,012</b>				<b>39,935</b>
<b>Supporting services:</b>						
Management and general	8,013	104				8,117
Development and membership	1,389	1				1,390
<b>Total supporting services</b>	<b>9,402</b>	<b>105</b>				<b>9,507</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>47,325</b>	<b>2,117</b>				<b>49,442</b>
Net increase (decrease) in net assets	5,805	(204)	1,931	3,640	6,185	17,696
Net assets at beginning of year	12,148	90,596	7,148	34,480	33,468	76,733
<b>Net assets at end of year</b>	<b>\$ 17,953</b>	<b>90,392</b>	<b>9,079</b>	<b>38,120</b>	<b>39,653</b>	<b>\$ 289,626</b>

These statements are condensed from MNHS's audited financial statements available at [www.mnhs.org/reports](http://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.

### \$100,000+

Anonymous  
George and Diane Power  
The Thomas and Julianne Youngren Foundation

### \$25,000-\$99,999

Anonymous  
The Gale Family Foundation  
Nora McNeely Hurley, Michael Hurley and The Manitou Fund

### \$10,000-\$24,999

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Jane Rae Wilkens  
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Warren and Margaret Zaccaro

## 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 acquisitions 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	Karen and Leslie Desnick
Joseph Amato	Pamela Desnick
Gary and Katherine Andersen	The Driscoll Foundation
Nina Archabal*	Colin Dunn
Thomas J. Arneson	George Dunn and Donna Harris
Harriet and Bruce Bart	David Durenberger and Susan Foote
Julie Bagnat and Carter Clapsadle	David Edminster
Ford* and Amy Bell	Vicki and Si Ford
Dan Berg and Welcome Jerde	Bob & Phyllis Goff* Fund of The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Margit and Tom Berg	Luca Gunther and Kit Wilson
Paul Berning	Fred Hagstrom and Sandra Spadaccini
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Suzanne Blue	David* and Kim Hakensen
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Cherbec Advancement Foundation	Mary R. Henry
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Deirdre Coleman	Ardes Johnson
Emmett* and Carrie Coleman*	Carol A. Johnson
Patrick Coleman* and Sally Johnson*	James E. Johnson and Lucy R. Jones
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Terrance and Laura Cullen	Will and Claudia Kaul
Mark and Jean Davis	

Kurt Kelsey and Mary Lynch  
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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 members ^^ 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.

## DIRECTOR'S CIRCLE

**\$50,000+**

Tom and Julianne Youngren<sup>^</sup>

## GUARANTOR

**\$25,000 - \$49,999**

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 Biloine "Billie" Young

### TRIBUTES

Patrick Coleman  
 Matt Eidem, Jeff Johns, Anders Mayland, and Hayes Scriven  
 Beth Finlayson, Retirement  
 Phyllis Goff  
 Jim Johnson, 80th Birthday  
 Tom Kurihara, 85th birthday  
 Col. Edwin "Bud" Nakasone  
 Doug Raney  
 Kate Roberts  
 Dan Schmechel, Board service  
 Ted Stamos, MNHS Volunteer  
 Ben Thompson



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.



## ENDOWMENT & SPECIAL PROJECT DONORS

The following donors made commitments in support of endowments and special initiatives in fiscal year 2021.

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Betty and Whitney^^ MacMillan

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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.

^^ Deceased

# CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their generous support of our programs in fiscal year 2021.

## \$500,000+

WEM Foundation

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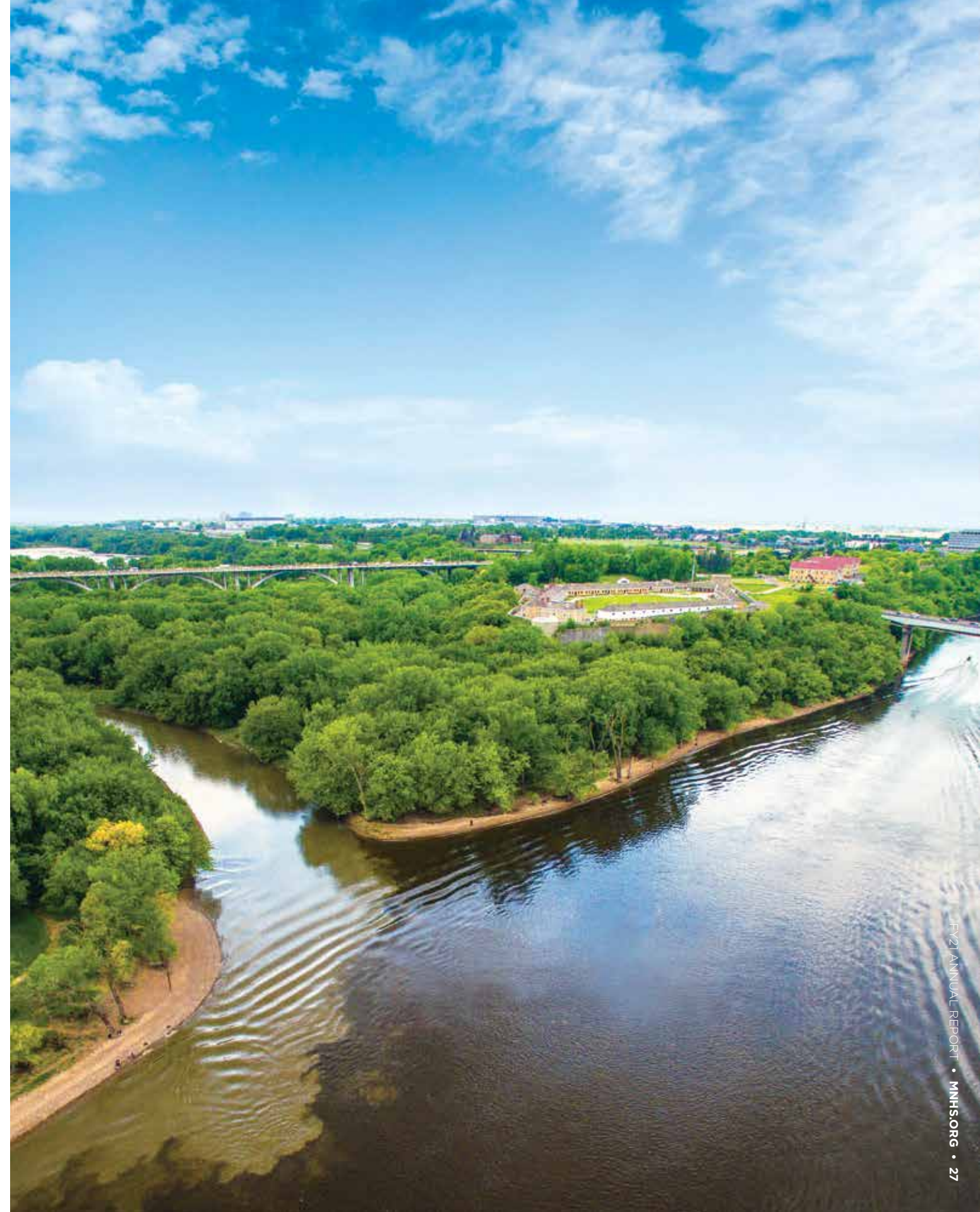
*In Spring 2022, MNHS will celebrate the grand reopening of Historic Fort Snelling. MNHS is grateful for strong corporate support for this major revitalization project:*

*“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.

^^ Deceased

# MINNESOTA LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

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

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*Alexandra "Sandy" and Robert Klas created a bequest to the Minnesota Historical Society in their estate. 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 and helped create our popular exhibit of the same name, which has now been on display at the History Center for more than ten years. Following the death of Bob in 2019 and Sandy in 2021, MNHS received their generous gift to support the revitalization of Historic Fort Snelling and create an unrestricted endowment. 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.*

MNHS makes every effort to provide an accurate listing of donors between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. If we have made an error, please contact us at 651-259-3115.

^^ Deceased

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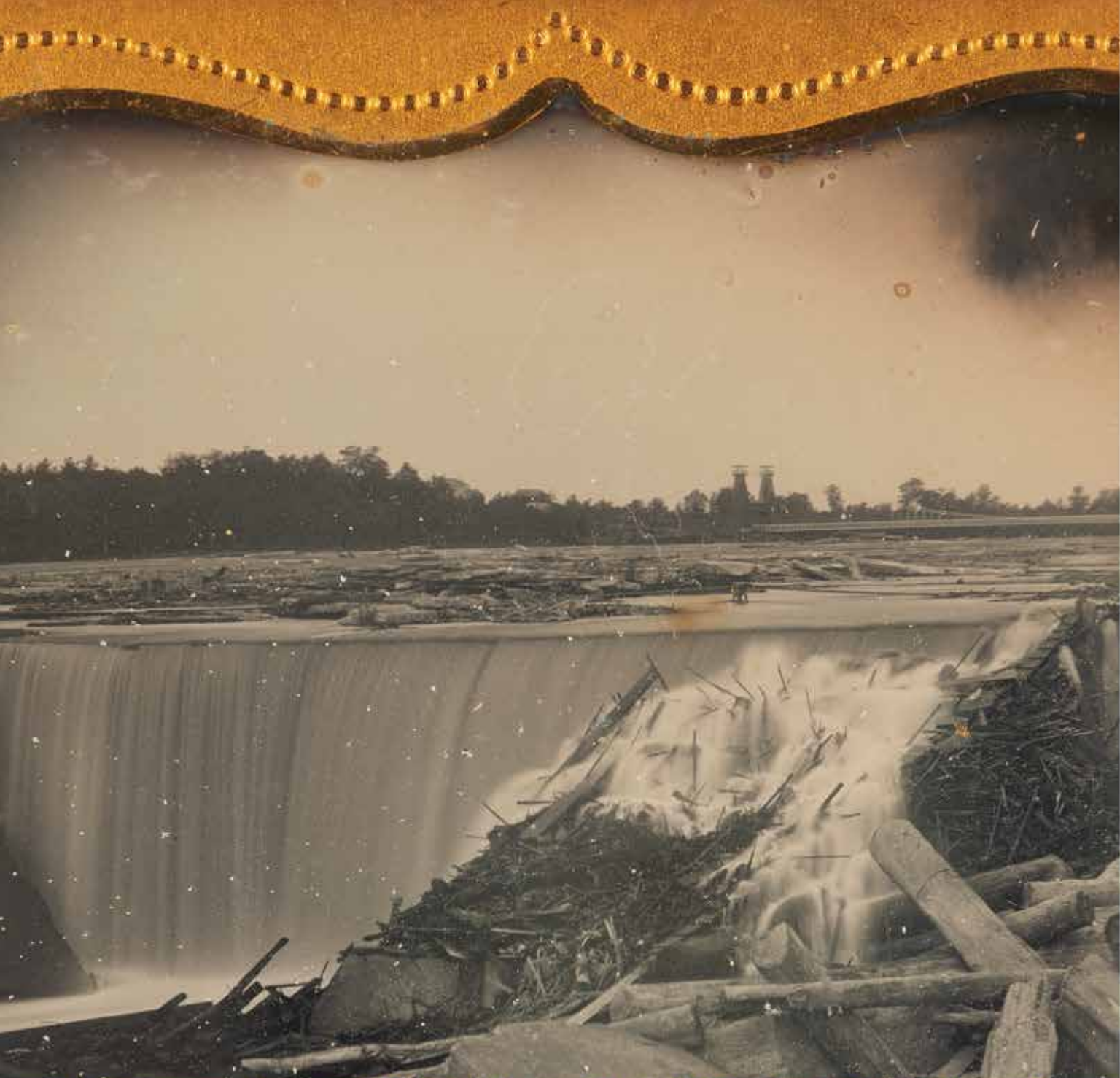
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Back cover: Daguerreotype of St. Anthony Falls from 1855 photograph by Alexander Hesler.

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