

ANNUAL REPORT

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2015-2016

Dear Members,

This has been an exceptional year for your Ramsey County Historical Society, thank you for your ongoing and generous support.

I am thrilled to announce that we recently received a one-million dollar gift from the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Foundation to endow the preservation and access of our various collections. We also just completed a comprehensive cataloging of our complete artifact collection under the direction of Curator/Archivist Mollie Spillman and the RCHS collections committee chaired by Susan McNeely.

Our editorial board, led by John Lindley with a committee chaired by Anne Cowie, continues to produce an excellent quarterly magazine. Our recent book, *Custom House* by Jim Stolpestad, has made an important contribution to our city's history and won two awards, including a national Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History. A new book on Fort Snelling by author Stephen Osman is in the works right now and will be published in 2017.

Gibbs Farm, led by Terry Swanson with a committee chaired by Tim Glines, continues to expand the reach of youth and adult education programming. Major expansion of the educational program is under

Your Gifts Have Made Possible...

- Creating *Investigate MN!*, a six-week, museum-based summer school program designed to help address the achievement gap in Minnesota
- Expanding educational programs and partnerships for more than 22,000 students
- Cataloging and photographing our entire collection of 13,814 artifacts
- Collecting and preserving the oral histories of Bhutanese refugees and of health care workers during the HIV/AIDS crisis.
- In partnership with three other organizations, hired an archaeologist to re-introduce academic archaeology in four counties and successfully test a new shared-staffing model.



Over 7,000 students from 84 schools have visited Gibbs Farm during the first half of 2016.

consideration to compliment the new Ford Bell Museum under construction across the street.

Led by Chad Roberts, our president, and a finance committee chaired by Ken Johnson, our finances have continuously improved over the last few years. Today RCHS has a solid foundation with a sustainable future. We recently changed our fiscal year to begin July 1st and run through June 30th to more efficiently manage our finances. This resulted in a “stub” year from January through June this year.

During the year Judy Kishel, Robert W. Mairs, Roxanne Sands, and Janine Joseph have honored us by joining our board of directors. Welcome!

As we continue to present, preserve, and publish the past we look forward to a growing and exciting future.

James Miller, Chair of the Board

A Gift for Preservation & Access

The Mary Livingston Griggs and Mary Griggs Burke Foundation recently awarded RCHS a one million dollar endowment gift for the purpose of preserving and providing access to RCHS archival and artifact collections. This generous gift has resulted in the renaming of our research facility as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RECOGNIZING OUR DONORS: SUPPORT BY INDIVIDUALS

*Loyalty Circle** members have supported RCHS for more than 10 years. Designated with an asterisk (*) on the lists. *The Ethel Stewart Heritage Society* recognizes donors who have provided for RCHS in their wills with a planned gift, or with cumulative contributions of \$10,000 or more. Members of the Ethel Stewart Heritage Society are acknowledged in **BOLD** type.

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The RCHS Research Center has assisted 548 researchers from all over the U.S. in the first half of 2016, January 1-June 30.

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Campers at Gibbs Farm play a traditional game of marbles during Pioneer Kid day camp.

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RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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EVER FORWARD!

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future

Investigate MN!

Now in its second year, *Investigate MN!* is a museum-based summer school program that addresses summer learning losses by introducing young people to the enriching resources available at local museums and libraries. Students combine classroom learning and visits to the Gibbs Farm, Minnesota Historical Society, Ford Bell Museum of Natural History, the Science Museum of Minnesota and other sites. Summer learning loss can leave students up to three months behind their peers every fall and is a leading cause of Minnesota's achievement gap. *Investigate MN!* reduced this learning loss by 51% in its first year while also dramatically improving reading and writing skills.

African Americans in Minnesota during the Civil War Film Project

In close partnership with Twin Cities Public Television and with support from Minnesota's Legacy Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund, your historical society is creating a 30 minute program for broadcast statewide that explores the stories of African Americans in the State during the Civil War. Four, eight-minute films are also being produced for use by educators in classrooms. These programs will all be available beginning in the summer of 2017.

Legends & Landmarks Phase One (Research)

Our history in Ramsey County is as diverse as the many cultures that make up its citizenry. Telling our stories well and accurately requires greater inclusion of the stories of communities frequently overlooked including women, non-European immigrants, and the Dakota. By compiling extensive research files on 100 individuals and 20 locations in the county that illustrate the story of Minnesota, we are setting the stage to create exhibits, publications, and programs that reflect the true depth and breadth of the history of our community. This effort is designed to address the 6th grade social studies standards and will include information useful for all ages.

Lowertown Interpretive Plan

Ramsey County Historical Society, in collaboration with local partners and the Institute for Museum and Library Services, will create a comprehensive master plan for interpreting the history of the Lowertown Historic District. This community-inspired, consensus-based Lowertown Interpretive Plan will be made available to the public, and will be the foundation for future innovative projects and partnerships that interpret and present the unique history of Lowertown to residents and visitors alike.

Fort Snelling and the Civil War by Stephen E. Osman

Teaming up with local author and historian Stephen E. Osman, your RCHS is publishing the first book to look extensively and exclusively at Fort Snelling during the Civil War years. Osman explores how the men of the new state of Minnesota revived the decrepit old Fort, what life was like at the Fort, how the Fort served in the concurrent U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, and how farm hands and city boys were molded into a confident and capable fighting force that fought at Gettysburg and many other battlefields.