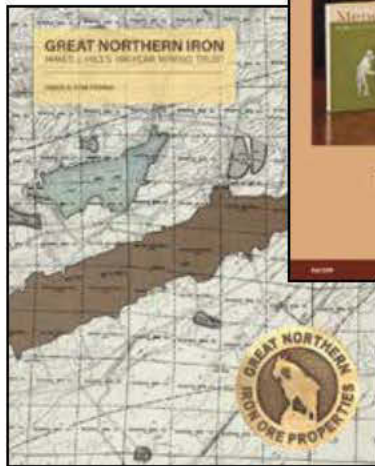
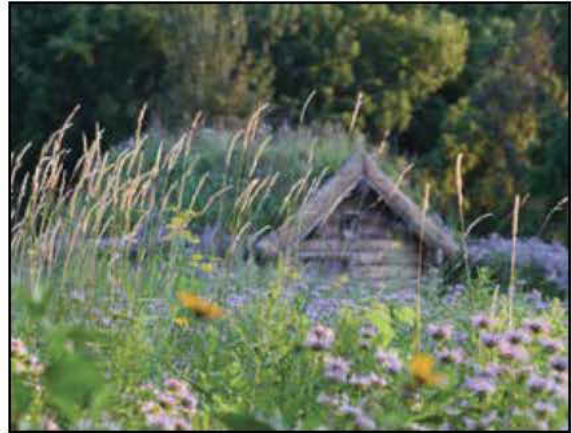


RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT

July 2019 - June 2020



From top right, clockwise:
Gibbs Farm soddy; children
dancing at a Gibbs Farm day
camp; portrait of suffrage leader
Theresa Peyton by Klaire
Lockheart; *Great Northern Iron:
James J. Hill's 109-Year Mining
Trust* by James A. Stolpestad;
Ramsey County History, Fall
2019, Vol. 54, #3; the renovated
Red Barn.

R.C.H.S.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE MISSION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY:
Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends,

As lovers of history, I know you recognize that with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are in the midst of a global historic event the likes of which we have not experienced in decades. Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) continues its work in preserving unique collections, assisting teachers, educating students, presenting one-of-a-kind programs, and developing thoughtful and relevant exhibits, and your faithful support is making it possible for this work to continue. Thank you.

The George Floyd tragedy brought long-simmering tensions around systemic racism and injustice to the forefront of our minds. It also sparked global protests with the goal of seeing significant change in our society so that the systems we rely on work better for everyone. As students of history know, these are complex circumstances and events; along with protests came violence and rioting that harmed many people. In the past, RCHS has condemned violence used against peaceful protesters at Standing Rock. RCHS continues to take that same stance, whether it is bad actors rioting and causing destruction or law enforcement using disproportional force—violence begets violence and is not a solution to challenges we face in our community.

While these two extraordinary events were occurring, RCHS closed the books on its 2020 fiscal year on June 30, having accomplished a great deal. *Great Northern Iron: James J. Hill's 109-Year Mining Trust* by James A. Stolpestad published in April and tells a fascinating story of industry, mining, and the Hill family. We also completed the transformation of the Red Barn into our first year-round education space at Gibbs Farm. You can still safely visit Gibbs Farm; we just ask that you make an appointment first.

COVID-19 has dramatically reduced earned revenue at RCHS, with the loss of spring school tours and summer camps. We adopted cost-savings measures and are actively pursuing all funding options available to us. This has allowed RCHS to retain its core staff, without which we could not serve our community.

In response to distance learning and social distancing needs, RCHS pivoted to mostly digital programming. Students and teachers can take virtual tours of the Saint Paul City Hall/Ramsey County Courthouse and the Gibbs farmhouse and school. Our well-loved History Revealed programs also have moved online. One benefit

of this type of programming is that we can reach larger audiences than before. In fact, three hundred viewers recently joined in on one program!

This fall, we will open *Persistence: Continuing the Struggle for Suffrage and Equality, 1848-2020* as an online exhibit, with physical exhibit components to be installed at various locations next year. This exhibition on women's suffrage and activism since the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment a century ago is timely in an election year and highlights the contributions of women to our community.

RCHS continues its efforts to become a more complete and inclusive history enterprise. For us, this means actively and thoughtfully seeking and presenting history related to people and places that have not received as much attention in the past. It also means that we have made it a priority to increase the size and diversity of our Board of Directors to add more voices and more wisdom from the entirety of the population we serve. RCHS is honored to be participating in the nationwide Facing Change: Advancing Museum Board Diversity and Inclusion program designed to support this work.

We also are leading an effort to add more inclusive art to the council chambers of the courthouse. These new, locally created works will be unveiled in August.

RCHS preserves the stories and artifacts from our distant past as well as history being made today. This history has incredible highs and abominable lows—and there are lessons to learn from all of it. Your historical society is committed to capturing as much as we can from as many perspectives as possible. To do less is to rob current and future residents of Minnesota of the wisdom of past generations. Our members and donors like you make it possible for our Board, staff, and volunteers to do the hard work of preserving our past while informing, and hopefully inspiring, all of our constituents. Thanks again for supporting our work and for all you do to make our community a better place.

Please stay safe and be kind to one another. There is more great history to be made in Ramsey County, and we are here to preserve and share it.

Sincerely,

Chad P. Roberts, President

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS 2019-2020

Gibbs Farm

Gibbs Farm's Halloween Festival in October 2019 set an attendance record with over 800 guests. We welcomed Saint Paul kindergarteners for specialized nature- and animal-focused tours, thanks to a 3M Gives Grant, and hosted the annual event for Dakota Wicohan, one of our Dakota partners. The Gibbs team continues to create digital content and study guides for students and educators to use in their classrooms and through distance learning. These include 3D virtual tours of the Gibbs farmhouse and one-room schoolhouse with the assistance of archaeologist Dr. Jeremy Nienow. We also installed a new pasture fence for the farm animals.

The major project at Gibbs Farm was the creation of the first ever, year-round education facility. This involved an extensive renovation of the Red Barn that included adding insulation and heating and completely replacing three restrooms with four new ones, two of which are fully ADA compliant. The second floor has been removed to allow for a vaulted ceiling and concealed maintenance/utility space, and the kitchen was relocated and updated. We can now provide programs all year, host special events regardless of weather conditions, and offer winter versions of school field trip tours. We'd like to thank the many individuals and organizations that contributed to this effort and have listed their names inside the back cover of this magazine and on our website.

Gibbs Farm continues to develop new ways for families to visit the farm safely with limited daily access and group reservations. The staff also is creating a series of new virtual programs, including story times, craft demos, videos of the farm animals, and "virtual field trips" that encompass full-length Pioneer and Dakota tours available to teachers this fall.

Publishing

We published four new issues of *Ramsey County History*. Highlights include the centennial of the Sterling Club, an African American social club that mobilized against discrimination and created community cohesion through engagement; a reintroduction to the legacies of three writers—Max Shulman, Norman Katkov, and William Hoffman, who captured Saint Paul's rich Jewish history through different writing styles and genres; a

graphic novel feature illustrating the histories of young authors and artists within Minnesota's Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, courtesy of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders; and a look back at Boys Totem Town, a detention home that adapted over a century to help troubled youth. In 2019, the center closed, as staff, correction officers, judges, and community members revamp the county's juvenile justice system. We also feature a remembrance of a summer camp for working mothers and their children on Louis W. Hill's North Oaks Farm, which was sponsored and run by the Volunteers of America.

This year we welcomed new editorial board members Anne Field, Kyle Imdieke, Mark Taylor, and Matthew Wright.

Ramsey County History writer Diane Trout-Oertel won the Minnesota Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians David Stanley Gebhard Award for her article "Emma F. Brunson: The First Woman Registered as an Architect in Minnesota." In addition we published a new book, *Great Northern Iron: James J. Hill's 109-Year Mining Trust* by James A. Stolpestad, which shares the detailed history of the Great Northern Iron Ore Properties formed in 1906 by James J. Hill and Louis W. Hill to acquire, manage, and lease 67,000 acres on the 100-mile long Mesabi Range. For more information, go to www.rchs.com.

From #MinnAsianStories: *This is Home* (2019), reprinted in *Ramsey County History*, Winter 2020, with permission from the Coalition of Asian American Leaders.



Collections, Archives, & Exhibitions

The Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center continues to provide access to 662 linear feet of archival and photographic collections; about 2.8 million pieces of paper. Access to these collections is supported by members and the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Fund of RCHS.

RCHS staff assisted 1,439 researchers. With the help of our dedicated volunteers, 15,616 images from our photo collection were made available online and more are being uploaded every few months. See <http://rchs.pastperfectonline.com> to view and search them. Thirty-six donors gave artifact, archival, library, and photograph collections last year. Some new acquisitions include an oral history of the West Side; artwork by Ronald Keith Finwall; Lower-town and Mears Park archives; a history of Wilson High School; the archives from Cyril Congregational Church; an album from the Annie Shapira Paper family; and the Martin Luther King Tennis Buffs Club history.

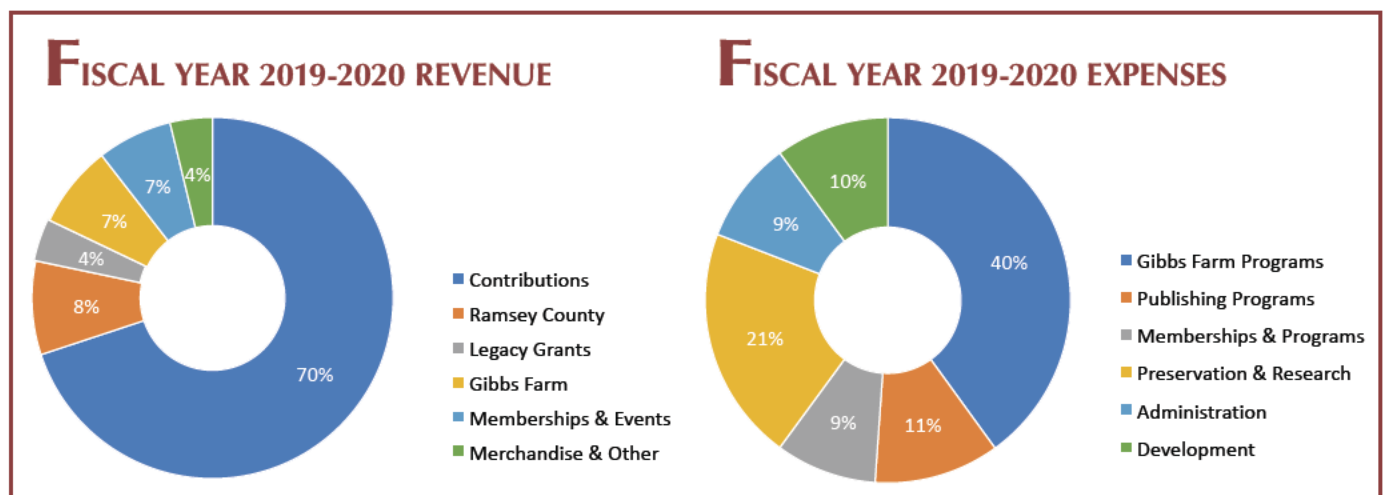
With the support of the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund, RCHS continues to improve its preservation and access to collections: We completed a historic structures report of Gibbs Farm, digitized and cataloged Everett Kroeger negatives, and are conserving Great Northern Railway textiles.

We also are working on a new exhibition for 2020-2021, scheduled to premiere this fall. *Persistence: Continuing the Struggle for Suffrage and Equality, 1848-2020* will explore local suffragists who worked to pass the Nineteenth Amendment in Minnesota and nationally, as well as their philosophical descendants who used their lessons and techniques in subsequent activism. New, original artwork will be part of this exhibition.

As our community struggles through the COVID-19 pandemic and with renewed and wide-ranging momentum building for improving racial equity, RCHS continues advancing its commitment to serve all of Ramsey County. Early work includes photographing signs that read “Heroes Work Here” outside care facilities and signs with “Black Lives Matter” on plywood storefronts. While RCHS works to ensure that this history is preserved, it is not acting alone. Conversations are ongoing with artists, photographers, historians, and media makers on how best to preserve and discuss these issues in the coming months, years, and decades.

Programs

Our adult History Revealed programming expanded again in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, as we partnered with the East Side Freedom Library, Waldmann Brewery, Rosville Library, and other local venues. Safety considerations related to COVID-19 have led RCHS to accelerate its development of digital content with the launch of a YouTube channel and more history material on the website at www.rchs.com. Increased online programming allows new opportunities to bring together speakers and events from further afield than otherwise would be possible and add additional voices to the discussions.



Thank You!

Ramsey County Historical Society and Gibbs Farm want to extend a huge THANK YOU to all of the donors who contributed to the renovation of the Red Barn program space at Gibbs Farm. The Red Barn is now insulated and heated, allowing Gibbs Farm the opportunity to provide programs all year.

Thank you also to Snow Kreilich Architects and Frana Companies for designing and building a beautiful space for our visitors.

Foundations & Corporations

Katherine B. Andersen Fund of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
Lillian Wright & C. Emil Berglund Foundation
Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation
Hardenbergh Foundation
The Nicholson Family Foundation
Richard & Nancy Nicholson Fund of The Nicholson Family Foundation
Trillium Family Foundation
Wiessner Inc.

Individuals

Anonymous
Sue Cammack
Charlton Dietz
Jo Anne and Edward Driscoll
Mari and Tom Oyanagi Eggum
Joanne A. Englund
Priscilla Farnham
David and Genevieve Freier
Timothy Glines and Barbara Davis
Elizabeth Guthmann
John and Jill Hamburger
Richard and Beverly Heydinger
James E. Johnson and Lucy Rosenberry Jones
Elizabeth J. Keyes
Sandy Kiernat
Judy and Edward Kishel
Carl and Janet Kuhrmeyer
James and Gail LaFave



John and Meredith Lindley
Jonathan and Martha Morgan
Bob Muschewske and Leaetta Hough
Mollie Spillman
James and Merrie Stolpestad
Thomas H. Swain
Terry Swanson and Terry Florin
Glenn and Deborah Wiessner
Jerry Woelfel and Becky Garthofner

In honor of Jo Anne Driscoll

Ed and Michèle Driscoll
Mary Jo Driscoll
Mary and Steven Goldstein
Brigid Klein
Chad and Kristan Roberts
Barbara Swain
Thomas H. Swain
Tom M. Swain

In honor of Nancy Landkamer

Jeanne Landkamer

In honor of Anne Sloan Jaglowski

Myrna Weyer



651-646-8629
gibbs@rchs.com
www.rchs.com