

St. Louis County Historical Society 2011 Annual Report

The Society continued in 2011 with its mission of collecting, preserving, and presenting history to the citizens of St. Louis County, through the care and presentation of its artifact collections, most of which are currently stored at the St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center, popularly known as the Depot, as well as through program offerings, which also originate from the Society's administrative offices in the Depot. In addition, a new agreement was reached by the end of the year with the University of Minnesota Duluth, which perpetuates the operation of the jointly established (originally in partnership with Minnesota Historical Society) archival facility, known as the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center, housed in the Library building (Annex) of UMD. This facility, which is based on the archival collections of the Society deposited in it in the mid-1970s, serves researchers from the University and from the area, as a source of county and regional historical information in the form of paper and electronic records, photographs, and maps.

The Society's relationships with its six Iron Range affiliates also continued. Established by the Board of Commissioners of St. Louis County in 1984 as its Resolution 809, this includes financial appropriation, monitoring of affiliate record-keeping, including yearly audits, and advice to and cooperation with these affiliated historical organizations in projects and programs, as well as governance issues. These

organizations include: Ely-Winton Historical Society, Hibbing Historical Society, Minnesota Museum of Mining (Chisholm), Sisu Heritage, Inc. (Embarrass), Tower-Soudan Historical Society and Virginia Area Historical Society.



Iron Range Schools section of Minnesota Museum of Mining's *Iron Range Life: 1920s to 1950's*, completed in 2011, with Legacy Grant funding.

Collections Highlights

During 2011, 160 artifacts were accessioned (formally accepted and properly recorded) by the Society. These were donations from 24 donors. 64 non-Veterans' Memorial Hall artifacts and 96 Veterans' Memorial Hall artifacts were accessioned.

In addition, 1,336 objects already entered into the database were updated, using information recorded by previous (often handwritten) methods. In most cases provenance records were expanded or verified. The database now contains a total of 7,958 objects accessioned, received from 6,038 donors.

Significant accessions in 2011 include items from former Congressman Jim Oberstar's Duluth office, an Air Force pilot's flight helmet from the Global War on Terror era, three generations of uniforms and related military items from a single family, an extensive WWII medical kit, a painting of Mike Colalillo, and a commemorative flag.

A disaster plan was also completed, with the services of a contracted specialist, and paid for by Legacy Grant funding.

Educational Offerings Beyond Exhibits

"Lunch with the History People" continued with its widely varied presentations in 2011. *Alaska Far Away*, a movie about the Matanuska Colony in Alaska, formed largely of people from St. Louis County and nearby regions during the Depression, followed with a question and answer period by the producer, Joan Juster, was shown at the Zinema Theater. All of the other programs were held in the Depot and included: "Early Development of Duluth and St. Louis County" by Dan Hartman; "The Last Keeper of Split Rock Lighthouse" by Mike Roberts; "Dressmaking and Millinery 1860 - 1910 in St. Louis County" by Susan Mack; "The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety in WWI: Suppression of Free Expression" by Pam Brunfelt; "Minnesota's Gangster Past" by Chad Lewis; and "The History of Lakeside Businesses and Business Owners" by Mark Atkinson.



Joan Juster and guests at Zinema Theater showing of *Alaska Far Away*, July 14, 2011

The Society's news publication, *Rootprints*, continued with its bi-annual editions. It continues to be well received and Society staff continues to pack as much historical information into each issue as possible, with the aim of making it both entertaining and educational.

In addition, Society staff has produced articles for two other local publications: *The Woman Today* and the *Hillsider*, with circulations respectively, of 25,000 and 5,000. Topics covered were the history of the Duluth Farmers Market, the history of the Duluth parks system, the Veterans' Memorial Hall intern-created exhibit, *The 18* (Civil War volunteers from what is now St. Louis County), and a Christmas-themed case exhibit in the Fesler Hallway, utilizing several of the Society's newer maple display cases.

Collaborative Events

On August 25th the Society partnered with the Leif Ericson Viking Ship Restoration Project to hold a celebratory and fundraising event in the Depot's