

# St. Louis County Historical Society 2014 Annual Report

## Mission Statement

*The general nature and purpose of the Society shall be the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history and prehistory of St. Louis County and the State of Minnesota. In addition to collecting and preserving objects of material culture and historical research material, the Society shall maintain and operate a museum and materially participate in the collections of a historical research center adequate to serve the region encompassing St. Louis County and northeastern Minnesota.*

*The mission of the Society directly complements the broader mission of St. Louis County government "to provide its people those services mandated and/or expected by its citizens so as to provide a good quality of life."*

## Education through Exhibits (Dissemination of knowledge)

### Mezzanine Exhibit Projects

In May of 2013 work was completed on the Society's Immigrant Waiting Room, located on the mezzanine level of the St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center (the Depot). In 2014 work commenced on two complementary exhibits, building on the immigrant theme, with a heavy emphasis on children and family life.

This project was financed with a grant from the Depot Foundation's Undesignated Fund. One of these exhibits, *A County Built on Iron*, is located in a 76 foot glass-enclosed area in the mezzanine area above what is now the Duluth Playhouse's "Underground" theater. Outside the exhibit are interactive learning stations designed to interest children visiting the Depot. "How we played", "How we learned", "How we worked" and "How we celebrated" are the themes in these stations, positioned under the arches. Content development was performed by Kim Schandel and exhibit fabrication was done by Gordon Manary.

A second exhibit area aimed at children and focused on the lives of immigrant children is located adjacent to the Society's *Immigrant Room*. A Finnish dove-tailed cornered cabin, at "child-sized" scale, is the planned highlight of this exhibit area to be completed in 2015. There are complementary activities planned in conjunction with the Nordic Center to enhance this exhibit component, such as "dress up" activities", a vegetable garden, and many more interactive play opportunities will enhance this exhibit. As of this writing, the installation by Society staff of other exhibit components, some interactive, such as the "chicken coop", are in development. The child-size cabin was modeled after the Eli Wirtanen Farm cabin in Markham, Minnesota.