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**Dakota County History**

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Dakota County Historical Society & Museum
130 Third Avenue North, South St. Paul, MN 55075
651.451.6260 Fax 651.552.7265
e-mail: dchs@nmtn.org

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**We are a membership organization:**
Membership is open to all interested in history. The Society offers a research library; displays and exhibits of historical artifacts, documents and photographs; lectures and presentations; and educational programs for students.

Society members also receive:
*Over the Years*, a semi-annual magazine.
"Dakota County History," a quarterly newsletter.
Discounts in the museum’s gift shop.

**Memberships:**
Individual ..............$20  Family ..............$35
Sustaining ..............$50  Corporate ..............$250

The portion of your membership above $17 is tax deductible.

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**News from the Director**

**Museum Murals Restored**

Artist John Acosta returned to touch up the floor map and wall mural of historic Dakota County that he along with Carlos Menchaca and Jose Lopez originally painted in the 1980s.

Moving exhibits on and off the Great Hall floor along with wear and tear from visitors had gradually taken its toll on the original works.

Generous gifts from the S. St. Paul Lions, S. St. Paul VFW Post 295 and the Hrvatski Dom Croatian Hall helped fund the restoration.

John added a small star on seven existing images on the floor map. Students and other visitors will have the challenge of finding the seven stars. Students will be asked to explain the historical significance of the image that the stars are painted on.

**Interns Complete Projects For Society**

As they head back to school, I would like to thank four interns who helped the Society earlier this year.

Jonathan Alt, a graduate of Henry Sibley Senior High School, who researched the history of the Brandtjen Farm, where WWII German POWs worked in the 1940s.

Patty Speegle, a University of Wisconsin, River Falls senior, who produced several display cases for the museum, including ones on “ice harvesting” and “early bridges and ferries” in the County.

Lindsey Strandberg, a junior at Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia, who designed educational games for elementary and for middle school students when they visit the museum.

Emily Retka, a senior at University of Minnesota, Duluth, who photographed and digitized artifacts for display on the Society’s web site and who wrote “Curator Corner” articles for our newsletter.

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**Cover**

Photographs of the entrances to the nine public libraries in Dakota County. How many can you recognize?
SLIDES AND SOCIALITY:  
The Story of Kaposia Kamera Club  
New museum exhibit opens Thursday, September 13, 2001

Sociality is defined as an instance of social interaction and the tendency to associate in or form social groups. On April 24, 1957, a group of fifteen people gathered in the audio-visual room of the South Saint Paul Junior High School to organize and formalize what would soon become the Kaposia Kamera Club. Forty-four years later, the still active club gathers semi-monthly to share their photographic passions and, maybe more importantly, to socialize.

Starting this September, the Dakota County Historical Society tells the story of the Kaposia Kamera Club through the exhibit Slides and Sociality. Photographic prints, old equipment, awards and club memorabilia will be part of the exhibit as well as a look at the social aspects of club membership.

A reception from 6:30 to 8:00 pm will be held on opening night including a slide presentation of club activities and images from past years. The exhibit will run through January 31, 2002.

Opportunities For You To View and Study County History Up Close

We are looking for volunteers to be an Exhibition or Collection Assistant. Volunteer positions can be either a regularly scheduled shift or on-call as needed for specific projects.

As an exhibition assistant you will help the museum curator with creative tasks such as painting, prop development, signage and installation.

As a collection assistant you will help the museum curator with organization tasks such as shelving artifacts, inventories, and housekeeping.

Training will be provided.

In these positions, you will gain a hands-on understanding of the artifacts and stories that help define the history of Dakota County.

Please contact Amy Miller, curator, at 651-451-6260, Tuesday through Friday, 9 am - 2 pm, if you are interested.

The Society is seeking a Library Assistant to organize and shelve our collection of books, documents and photographs. You can set your own hours in this position.

To serve the many researchers who use our library, books, documents and photographs have to be organized and accessible. The volunteer would help shelve and file existing library resources and also assist with adding new materials to the collection. Training will be provided.

While working in the library, the volunteer will be able to spend time reading and viewing many of the interesting stories and photographs related to Dakota County.

Please contact Rebecca Snyder, research librarian, at 651-451-6260, during our regular hours, if you are interested.
The Public Library in Dakota County

by Bill Wolston
Photographs of today's libraries by Russ Withrow

Prior to 1959 public libraries in Dakota County were village or city libraries. Minnesota statutes set organizational guidelines and the state also loaned books to local libraries and associations. Organizing and maintaining a local library depended on private financial support, persistent volunteers, and if lucky a Carnegie grant.

This is a “three chapter” evolution of Dakota County libraries.
“Before 1959”......when local libraries depended on volunteers and luck.
“1959 to 1969”....when a Federal program created a library incentive.
“Since 1969”......when communities and the County created today’s highly regarded Dakota County Library System.

“Before 1959”
Eighty-eight years of persistence

Approaching 1959 the only public library services in Dakota County were in Hastings, Farmington, and South St. Paul. County residents living near St. Paul often used St. Paul’s Riverview Library. Commuters working in the Twin Cities and Northfield often used workplace libraries.

Step back to June 1871, The Farmington Library

On June 8, 1871, Farmington citizens formed a library association. Rules were drawn up, officers elected and D. S. Cummings appointed librarian. To raise money for books library memberships were set at $1.00. Meetings were held in the offices of L.P. Dodge and D.M. Thurston.

The office in Dr. Dodge’s Oak Street home served as the library. Later it moved to John Thurston’s drug store office. The association dissolved when membership dues could not cover expenses.

On September 21, 1900, a Dakota County Tribune article advocated a 1 mill Farmington levy to start a library. It noted the village had been using the State of Minnesota's Traveling Library with great success. “Our people are hungry for good reading.” Fifty books from the “Free Library” circulated 547 times in less than six months.

In 1917 Farmington opened a 12’ x 12’ library in a back room of “Peter’s Tin Shop.” Out-growing the space the library moved to the corner of Elm and 3rd Street, and next to the Sanford Hospital basement, next to Oak Street, and finally to Farmington’s City Hall Council room.

Dakota County Tribune articles by Mrs. R. F. Nelson described how business and professional men formed a Community Club to improve village life. Their wives organized the library. Early books were donated and purchased with proceeds from teas and bake sales. The first librarian Stella Judson served for years. An interesting arrangement was borrowing books from country schools during vacation time. At some point the village contributed $100 and the county provided aid when the library doors were open to people living outside the village.

The Hastings Library, January 1872

A group of businessmen organized the Hastings Library Association on January 24, 1872, and elected William G. LeDuc president. Subscribers contributed $600, purchased 200 books, and hired Miss Rich to watch over them in a reading room on the ground floor of a business district building. Later, for economy, the room moved to the second floor over the Hastings Post Office. The room was known as the Hastings Library but continued to be financed by private subscriptions.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened:
- A history book says after eight years the room closed. Some books were sold to pay obligations and the rest were given to the high school. Miss Rich was in charge at the closing.
- An 1897 article says Superintendent J. H. Lewis
merged the subscription library and high school library. It continued subscription financing until the city included the library in its 1900 budget.

- A photograph of the reading room is dated 1901.

In 1900 a city library board was appointed and a tax levy dedicated to library upkeep. The acquisition of building funds was unsuccessful. The library was still in the school in 1911 when Miss Stella Telford became librarian. Her salary was $5.00 per month. Miss Telford was also a reference teacher and had introduced the phonetic system in local schools.

Records noted the 1921 Library Board hoped to construct a separate library building. The book collection now approached 7,000 and Stella Telford was still the librarian. It appears the library remained in the high school until January, 1959.

**The South St. Paul Library**

In 1916 South St. Paul Mayor C.W. Clark appointed the city’s first library commission. Soon a capital campaign led to a $10,000 Carnegie Foundation pledge and the donation of two lots at Third and Marie by the St. Paul Union Stockyards Company. Unfortunately World War I delayed library plans until 1919 when an additional $25,000 was asked of the Carnegie Fund.

During this period South St. Paul’s High School invited public use of its library for reading, but not withdrawing books. In 1921 the commission asked the city for $2,500 to purchase books for the high school library for student and the public use.

A setback came in late 1921; the Carnegie grants would not be made. The commission decided the next best option was a reading and lending room.

Upon approval of the $2,500 book grant, a space was rented on Grand Ave. On December 1, 1922, South St. Paul’s first public library opened in the Fitzgerald Building. Mrs. J.M. Rice acted as librarian until the arrival of Miss Cornelia D. Plaister on February 1 from Dubuque, Iowa. For the two months Mrs. Rice’s record book listed 533 patrons.

In 1924 the American Legion became an active building campaign supporter and Carnegie Foundation efforts renewed. A $75,000 municipal library bond issue was launched but lost by nine votes. Miss Plaister resigned in 1925, and Miss Grace Dorival was hired.

In January, 1926, the American Legion renewed efforts. Citizens now passed a $25,000 bond issue, by nine votes. Building plans proceeded and the county pledged $7,500 toward the new library.

Ground breaking for the new South St. Paul Library took place ten years after the first library commission was appointed by Mayor Clark. The cornerstone was set on February 22, 1927.

The South St. Paul Library doors opened August 16, 1927, the first public library building to be built in Dakota County. The commission named it the American Legion Memorial Library.

Miss Dorival created a center for learning and enjoyment at the red brick and white trim building atop the bluff.
"1959 to 1969"
Entering a very different world

The Depression and World War II years were not library building times. But the 1950s set the stage for a boom in library services.

The suburban sprawl following World War II was fueled by the GI Bill, low cost home loans, new building materials, new builders, new highways, and new family formations. Dakota County was one of many counties experiencing Suburbia. Federal and state legislators were well aware of the change and coming expectations of big city services including libraries.

Dakota County’s population in 1950 passed 50,000, up 10,000 from 1940. By the year 2000 it would increase another seven fold to 355,904.

The Federal Library Services Act

In 1956 Congress passed the Library Services Act. The act applied to counties over 50,000 population and cities under 10,000. It was an incentive program for funding new libraries in cooperation with state, county, and city.

To participate, counties were required to levy a one mill library tax to receive federal and state matching dollars. Cities desiring a library were expected to provide the library building and basic utilities. The county would then manage the library, pay all salaries, provide furniture and equipment, and supply all books, magazines, and other reference material.

Over a five year period the federal and state matches were gradually reduced and county levies increased to replace the subsidy. After five years counties handled their own financing.

The Act generated immediate interest. The first state to appropriate funds was Minnesota. Anoka County was the first county to organize, soon followed by Dakota County. Library groups formed in Farmington, Hastings, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Orchard Garden, and Rosemount. South St. Paul, with over 10,000 people, was the only Dakota County city not eligible since it already had a library. West St. Paul lacked interest due to the nearby St. Paul Riverview Branch Library.

Dakota-Scott Regional Library System

In July, 1958, Dakota County Commissioners voted to organize a library system. They had talked to neighboring Scott County commissioners and agreed to create the first “multi-county library system” in the state. The joint effort held a promise of savings in staffing and equipment as they embarked on providing library services.

The Dakota-Scott Regional Library began operations January 1, 1959. The budget included $79,300 in federal and state aid, $31,700 from Dakota County, and $9,075 from Scott County. The first director, Robert H. Rohlf, assembled a staff of nine. Two rooms in a Savage elementary school would house the headquarters and main library.

Dakota-Scott Library opens in Savage

In June the Savage library opened followed by Bookmobile service. During the first two weeks 1,600 people applied for library cards and 3,200 books were loaned. Two Bookmobiles made 91 stops in the two counties over a two-week period. Books loaned per person had to be limited because the system’s book inventory was only 7,500.

Local newspapers carried Bookmobile schedules. This is a June 1959 Mendota/Mendota Township schedule that appeared in the West St. Paul Booster:

**Tuesday: Jun. 16, 30; Jul. 14, 28; Aug. 11, 25**
- Mendota - Post Office - 9:30-11:30
- Lilac Lane & Douglas - 10:45-11:15
- Hilltop & Wachtler - 11:30-12
- Friendly Hills Fischer’s Store - 1-1:30
- Keokuk & Apache - 1:45-2:30
- Co. Rd. 10 & Hy 55 - H. L. Paul Home - 3-3:30
- Co. Rd 10 & Delaware - 3:45-4:15

Farmington and Hastings join County System

In April of 1959 the Farmington Library in the City Hall joined the regional system.

The Hastings Library joined in July. The library had moved from the High School in late 1958 to the basement of 507 Vermillion St. and Mrs. Katherine A. Henry was the librarian. The move was an immediate success. When opened the board emphasized it was not “the” Grand Opening. The official “Grand Opening” came after Mrs. Henry and volunteers had time to obtain and display the books provided by the regional library system. The library was open 15 hours a week, 5 hours each of three days.
A lot of books

During its first six months of operation the Dakota-Scott Regional Library became the fourth largest buyer of books in Minnesota. By year’s end, 24,000 volumes had been acquired and 7,800 borrowers had withdrawn 110,000 books.

From Savage to Dodd to Emerson

In November 1960 the Regional headquarters moved to an empty Dodd School in West St. Paul. The library remained in the Savage school and another library opened in the Dodd School building.

Two years later both headquarters and library moved to a new West St. Paul Branch Library at 40 East Emerson Avenue. The Dodd facility was closed. The new facility housed 40,000 volumes, numerous records, films, and periodicals, and was equipped with a special children’s room.

A new home for Hastings

In December 1964 a successful city bond issue plus generous gifts permitted Hastings to open a permanent 4,500 square foot library at the corner of Ninth and Vermillion Streets. The book collection totaled 9,000. An open house was held Sunday, January 24, 1965.

Books on wheels and Burnsville site

In 1965 a Bookmobile was purchased with a 6,000 book capacity, more space than the first Hastings Library and 30 times as many books. It was the largest vehicle of its kind in the midwest.

Looking for a home on the border

In 1965 an option for five acres on Highway 42 in Burnsville was made for future headquarters of the two county system. The location was in today’s Burnhaven Mall. The cost was $17,000. Later the Burnsville city council agreed to pay the $17,500 site cost and contribute $100,000 to the construction of a library building.

Farmington

In 1966 the small Farmington Branch closed, replaced with a Bookmobile service that actually offered a greater selection of books. However, the closing prompted the city council, with vocal public support, to lay plans for a Farmington Branch which was approved the following year.

Director change and Burnsville branch

During 1966 Robert Rohlf resigned to take a position with the Library of Congress. Ray Smith became the library’s second director.

Temporary Burnsville branch

From the start Bookmobile service was a part of Burnsville life. More stops were added and still more people were there when the traveling library approached. In 1967 headquarters got a good deal on used library shelving from Hopkins. Probably aware of the shelving, the Village of Burnsville approached the library board with an offer. The Village would rent, heat, light, and partially furnish a store front unit in the Colonial Shopping Center if the library furnished shelving and books. However, it was mid-year and the library didn’t have a budget for staffing. The Village solved the problem by offering to pay for a half year of staffing.

It was a deal! The temporary branch opened on July 1, 1968, offering 2,200 books. Sandra Moe was librarian and former bookmobile workers were part-time helpers. By 1973 Bernadine Stevenson was librarian. The library opened 60 hours a week.

Dakota-Scott Regional Library era closes

On December 31, 1968, after nine years, the two county system dissolved. During the previous June, Ray Smith had resigned and Kathryn Loff became acting director. A widening difference in population growth and library goals contributed to the separation. The joint regional system had a library collection of 132,000 volumes. The annual budget had reached $249,839.

The assets of the Regional Library were divided in proportion to each county’s contribution to the partnership. Dakota County’s population now approached 138,000.
Since 1969
The Dakota County Library System

January 1, 1969 marked the birth date of the Dakota County Library System (DCLS). Kathryn Loff was selected as the DCLS director. During its first year the DCLS budget was $382,417. Books circulated that year totaled 475,997.

Dakota County Library facilities in 1969
- Dakota County Library System Headquarters in Emerson Library in West St. Paul
- Emerson Library at 40 East Emerson
- Hastings Library at 9th and Vermillion
- Temporary Burnsville Library at 138th and Nicollet
- Option on the Burnsville Highway 42 site
- Bookmobiles
An early challenge was instituting a uniform circulation and card catalog systems. West St. Paul had the only card catalog system in the county.

Farmington branch opens
Later in January 1969 a Farmington Branch Library opened with 10,000 volumes in the Farmington municipal complex.

MELSA
In 1970 the Dakota County Library System joined the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA). Eight Twin City area systems made their collections available to each other. The expanded resources reduced duplication of collections.

New catalog, first in Minnesota
In January 1971 after 5 years of work, starting in the Dakota-Scott era, DCLS introduced a catalog in book form, the first produced with a computer in Minnesota. It could be checked out at libraries.

Burnhaven Library opens
The Burnhaven Library opened March 4, 1974 on the site acquired in 1965 at 1101 West County Road 42. Dakota County Commissioners had approved construction plans in 1972. The 28,800 square-foot facility opened with over 50,000 volumes and a new record-cassette listening console. Administrative offices of the Dakota County Library System also moved to Burnhaven. The building underwent major remodeling in 1994.

A unique interior design feature is a domed entrance onto a designer carpet reproduction of Dakota County. Each county library is located on the carpet by a round brass inset.

Approaching the U.S. Bicentennial
The library system searched out historical Dakota County materials for the 1975 anniversary year. An important set of 1849 and 1898 county and state maps were acquired through donations of Burnsville pioneer families. The Living History Project included tape and film recollections of early county life, many of which are now on file at the Dakota County Historical Society.

South St. Paul Library affiliation
In 1975 an agreement was reached between DCLS and the South St. Paul Public Library to open services to each other’s patrons.

Resources expand and director change
In 1976 DCLS added resources by joining the Minnesota Interlibrary Telecommunications Exchange, a cooperative including public and academic libraries.
In 1978, Kathryn Loff became MELSA’s special project coordinator and Roderick MacDonald became the Dakota County Library System director.

Entering the 1980s
Entering 1980s the Dakota County Library System was serving 175,000 people with four branches and two bookmobiles. The collection included 220,000 books plus magazines and audio-visual reference materials.

The Burnhaven Library, the first of the new libraries in the Dakota County Library System
Board gives go ahead for Wescott Library

In 1981 County Commissioners approved plans for the new Wescott Library in Eagan. Wescott was also slated to house the DCLS administration. The location was just east of city hall on Wescott Road. When construction estimates were presented to the commissioners they exceeded the projected funding. The actual bid of $172,000 below the projection was a welcome surprise.

Wescott Library was completed in 1983. The building has an open floor plan enhanced by soft lighting and scenic views from its many windows. It has two and one half levels with the administrative and technical offices occupying the lower level.

A remodeling project completed in 1997 included a conveyor system, the first of its kind in the country, which brings returned items from outdoor and inside return slots to a central check-in.

Galaxie Library opens in Apple Valley

Construction of the Galaxie Library began in April 1989 followed by dedication on October 9, 1990. The Galaxie structure is a wing of the Dakota County Western Service Center building in Apple Valley. The library has 28,495 square feet and opened with a collection of 50,000 books.

Galaxie has been a leading circulation library in the county and in the metropolitan area. Over one-quarter of checkouts are handled by a self-checking machine. The library also offers a Virtual Branch Law Library in partnership with the Dakota County Law Library.

Wentworth Library opens in West St. Paul

In 1992 the Wentworth Library opened at 199 E. Wentworth Ave. in West St. Paul. It is a spacious library with 29,000 square feet including a large community meeting room accessed without going through the library proper.

The Wentworth offers a variety of functional spaces including several individual study rooms. A half circle reading space in a quiet side of the library overlooks a large pond and oak trees.

The library has been very active in community programs. Of special pride is work with the South Suburban Literacy Council. Drop-in hours and tutors help people learn to read on their way to GEDs and English as a Second Language.

The Emerson building offered for sale
With the opening of the Wentworth Library the former Emerson Branch had served its purpose. The Emerson building was offered for sale. The Emerson was the first library constructed by the County and had also housed County library administrative offices.

1993 Hastings Library burns down
On June 4th an illegal entry into the Hastings Library resulted in a fire with more than one million dollars in damage. Over 73,000 books were destroyed. Ironically the library was scheduled to be replaced in the Fall of 1994 with a larger building across from the County government center. The County Bookmobile immediately expanded its schedule to provide service to Hastings library patrons.

By the end of the month the County and City had arranged to provide a temporary library in space available in a former County Human Resources Building. Books and equipment were accumulated from other Dakota County libraries to equip the library. It was estimated that 15 percent of the books were checked out at the time of the fire.

Pleasant Hill Library opens in Hastings
The dedication of the Pleasant Hill Branch Library was September 11, 1994, 15 months after the Hastings Library fire.

The City of Hastings and school district provided the site with the county funding construction of the building. Construction began in August 1993. Pleasant Hill has 16,000 square feet of floor space and opened with 57,000 volumes. It is located at 1490 South Frontage Rd. paralleling Highway 55.

Pleasant Hill has had a consistently active “Friends of the Library” and volunteer support group. They have donated funds for the purchase of audio books and microfiche a well as adult and children’s books. Collaborative programs for children continue to be strong with Kids Kampus and Early Childhood Family Education.

Farmington Library opens
In November 1995 the Farmington Library moved to new quarters in the former Erickson’s IGA grocery store at 508 Third Street, Farmington. The Library is considered a special service library designed to serve the needs of Farmington.

The library had occupied a 3,000 square foot building next to the the Farmington City Hall since 1980. The move to the IGA store increased floor space to 12,000 square feet.

Community organization, corporation, and foundation contributions of $71,000 to the CLIF fund (County Library In Farmington) helped make the move possible.

William Asp selected as DCLS Director
In 1996 William Asp replaced Rod MacDonald who had retired in 1995.

Construction begins on two new libraries
Ground was broken for new libraries in Inver Grove Heights and Lakeville in late 1998. Originally the plan was to open Inver Grove in 2010. That timetable was shortened when it was determined there would be substantial savings by using the same architect and contractors to do both libraries. A second factor was the higher than anticipated population growth in both communities. It turned out that supplying two libraries also offered savings in books and operating equipment.

Heritage Library opens in Lakeville
The Lakeville Heritage library ground breaking took place November 10, 1998. The library’s grand opening was held on February 27, 2000. Heritage’s location is immediately northwest of the Lakeville City Hall in the new “Town Center” area.
The library building is small by comparison to most of the other county libraries but the architecture creates a variety of open as well as quiet spaces. The use of laminated wood beams has prompted comparisons with Nordic construction.

**The City of South St. Paul Public Library**

The South St. Paul Library, dedicated in 1927, is the oldest of all Dakota County libraries, 40 years older than the Dakota County Library System.

You might recall the Federal Act of 1956 specifically excluded participation by cities with over 10,000 population. However, cooperation between city and county started early when Dakota County contributed a third of the 1927 building cost. Since 1963 the South St. Paul Library has affiliated with the County System offering reciprocal patron privileges.

**Inver Glen Library opens in Inver Grove Heights**

Inver Glen Library ground breaking took place on November 10, 1998. The grand opening took place on March 11, 2000. The building has a striking architectural design and is a cooperative community venture in keeping with the original intent of the 1959 Federal Library Services Act.

Inver Glen is a partnership between Dakota County, the City of Inver Grove Heights, School District 199, and the Inver Hills Community College.

The land on 80th Street was donated by the city and school district and is between the Simley High School and college. The college provided technical assistance. The City and School District contributed $350,000 each toward construction and operating costs.
Directors of the Dakota-Scott Regional Library
Robert Rohlfe ............. 1958 - 1966
Ray Smith ................. 1966 - 1968
Kathryn Loff* ............ 1968 - acting Director

Directors of the Dakota County Library System
Kathryn Loff .............. 1969 - 1978
Rod Mac Donald .......... 1978 - 1995
William Asp .............. 1996 to date

Branch Librarians of Dakota-Scott Regional Library 1958 - 1969
and Dakota County Library System 1970 to date

**Burnhaven Library**
- Burnsville
  - Sandra Moe .......... 1968 - 1969
  - Bernadine Stevenson ... 1969 - 1993
  - Nancy Wisser ........ 1993 -

**Heritage Library**
- Lakeville
  - Mary Johnson ......... 2000 to date

**Inver Glen Library**
- Inver Grove Heights
  - Kalla Kalloway ....... 2000 to date

**Pleasant Hill Library**
(formerly Hastings Library)
- Katherine Henry ....... 1958 - 1961
  - Barb Moen ............ 1961 - 1968
  - Dorothy Ahlgren ...... 1968 - 1989
  - Murray Wilson ........ 1989 to date

**Wentworth Library**
(formerly West St. Paul Library)
- James Ubel ............ 1959 - 1965
  - Bonnie McClellan .... 1965 - 1969
  - Kay Brown .......... 1969 to date

**Wescott Library**
- Eagan
  - Margaret Smith ...... 1983 - 1992
  - Eric Austin .......... 2000 to date

**Library Board of Directors**
Dakota-Scott Regional Library 1958 - 1969
Dakota County Library System 1970 - current

1958 .................. Mrs. Rasmusson
1958 .................. B. J. Novotny
1958 - 1966 ........... Ben Polga
1958 - 1971 .......... Lucille Broderson
1959 - 1964 .......... Mocha Grannis
1959 - 1968 .......... Byron Kehe
1959 - 1969 .......... Alice Nelson
1959 - 1969 .......... LeRoy Scheffler
1959 - 1967 .......... Cormac Suel
1967 - 1973 .......... John McKane
1969 - 1978 .......... Bess Swanson
1971 - 1974 .......... Darwin Jones
1972 - 1978 .......... John Goerri
1973 - 1984 .......... Charles Mertensotto
1974 - 1976 ........... Harry Sieben
1975 - 1977 ........... Richard Laurvick
1977 - 1981 .......... Barbara Moen
1979 - 1988 .......... Elizabeth Fedoruk
1979 - 1981 .......... Marian Bolton
1979 - 1981 .......... Elizabeth Hill
1981 - 1987 .......... Paul Sjolquist
1981 - 1987 .......... Paul Silvi
1981 - 1991 .......... Mary Fischer
1982 - 1994 .......... Gary Pagel
1988 - 1995 .......... Nancy Pexa
1994 - ........... Beverly Ekholm

1995 - 2000 .......... Ray Bremer
1993 .................. Claudia Assell
1993 - 1995 .......... Patrick Sellner
1993 .................. Robert Fors
1995 .................. Connie Morrison
1998 .................. Roxanne Mindeman
2001 .................. Donald Olson
2001 - ........... Nancy Johnson
Into the Future

Rapid growth has marked the past several decades in Dakota County, and the Dakota County Library has grown and changed to respond to customer needs. Dakota County Library’s services are developed within the Library’s mission statement which is:

To support lifelong learning for county residents of all ages by
anticipating and responding to their needs for information
encouraging their desire to read, and
enriching the quality of life in their communities.

To meet the needs of a growing population, Dakota County Library collections have grown to more that one million items. As new formats of information have become available, these have been added to the library’s basic collections of books, magazines, and newspapers. Today’s libraries also include videocassettes, compact discs, recorded books on tape and compact disks, and microfilm. In 2001, Dakota County Library became the first Minnesota public library to lend electronic book readers preloaded with digitized books, and one of the first Minnesota public libraries to lend video disks (DVDs).

Computers have revolutionized public library services, and Dakota County Library provides more than 150 computers for public use. These computers give access to the library’s catalog and to 45 specialized online databases, as well as to the internet. The Library has maintained a web page since 1997, which also allows customers to access library services from their homes and workplaces.

Libraries are community gathering places. Each year Dakota County Library provides hundreds of story times and other programs for children, as well as programs for teens and adults. Each year 1,500,000 people visit the eight Dakota County branch libraries.

Dakota County Commissioners over the years have placed a high priority on library services, providing funding for outstanding new library buildings, for expanding and remodeling library buildings, and for library staffing, collections, equipment, and services. The people of Dakota County have responded by making heavy use of their libraries.

William Asp
Dakota County Library Director
Some twenty years ago the Argentineans and British made war over the Falkland/Malvinas Islands in the south Atlantic. I read the newspaper for clues to the origins of the conflict. I found few contemporary reasons and no history. I thought, “I may as well read novels.” I read Latin American novels. Little by little the geographical, historical and cultural landscapes found their ways into my head and I was ready to read the newspaper.

Recently I came upon this comment by John Dewey: Artists have always been the real purveyors of news, for it is not the outward happening in itself which is new, but the kindling by it of emotion, perception and appreciation (The Public and Its Problems). In a novel we may come upon clues to our history, ways of thinking about where we have come from and the resources at hand.

Wendell Berry went off from Kentucky to live in New York, then California before returning to the Kentucky River to write and farm. In Remembering (North Point Press) Berry writes the saga of Andy Catlett: “Years ago, he resigned himself to living in cities. That was what his education was for, as his teachers all assumed and he believed. Its purpose was to get him away from home.” As the novel opens Andy returns to the farm. He loses an arm in the corn picker. He also develops unorthodox notions about how to eat and live.

Andy attends a conference on the Future of the American Food System. He listens to the agricultural economist recite the essential statistics. In the slightly more than a quarter century from 1950 to the 1976 bicentennial year, the tonnage of fertilizer used on American farms increased by 500 percent, work hours required in farming decreased by 69 percent, tractor horsepower increased by 149 percent, the farm population declined from 23 million to 7.8 million, and the number of farms has decreased to about half the number that existed in 1950.

Andy comes to the podium and begins: What we have heard discussed here this morning is an agriculture of the mind. No farmer is here. No farmer has been mentioned. No one who has spoken this morning has worked a day on an actual farm in twenty years, and the reason for that is that none of the speakers wants to work on a farm or to be a farmer.

Our back yard garden produces modestly. I stop regularly at Kev’s Corner on South Robert Street for fresh fruits and vegetables. Kevin Huebscher is the last of several generations on the farm. Hmong people help work the farm. The cupola from the founding settler’s barn is on the roof of Kev’s stand. There were many farms like the Huebscher’s. Fifty years ago folks in the Twin Cities ate regionally.

![Directional sign to Kev’s Corner on S. Robert Street in Inver Grove Heights](image)

In 1980 I lived in Spain for a while. City people ate regionally and were intent on continuing the practice. Wendell Berry and Andy Catlett appreciate the variety of choices offered by history.

Richard Voorhees
Sibley House Activities

During September the Mendota Mdewakanton “Dakota Series,” previously held in the DuPuis House, will be at the Mendota VFW Hall, five doors east of the DuPuis house. The lectures will be on Thursdays starting at 7 pm on September 6, 13, 20, and 27.

During October the Sibley and Faribault Houses will be decorated for the holidays; the Sibley House in Yankee Protestant decor and the Faribault in French Catholic traditions.

A Holiday Gala is scheduled for October 6 and 7 with music and costumed participants from the Living History Society and La Compagnie.

The final “Mendota Landmark Walking Tour” takes place on Saturday, October 13.

The Sibley House will close for the season on October 31.

Hastings Pioneer Room and Mom & Pop Stores

Dick Darsow of the Pioneer Room often says nothing is happening and then talks about an interesting era of local history. He is currently in pursuit of the corner grocery store. The automobile, suburbia, supermarkets and gas station convenience stores have nearly eradicated mom and pop businesses that previously flourished in towns and country road intersections.

We wish Dick well in his pursuit. In fact we are envious. A subject like this is sure to bring back memories. Where did you or your parents buy nickel candy bars and ice cream cones?

History of Lakeville on Video

On Monday, September 17, the Lakeville Historical Society meeting will include the viewing of a compilation of local history clips. The City of Lakeville has a community video production studio which produces a program called “Focus on Lakeville.” Each program usually includes a history segment. A series of these history segments will be shown at the meeting.

An open house is scheduled for October 14 in the Historical Society’s new facility, the former All Saints Rectory. The Society is developing program and display plans.

Curator’s Corner
End of An Era

In hopes of finding a better life, many Serbian immigrants began settling in South St. Paul at the beginning of the 20th century. They formed the St. Sava Serbian Benevolent Society in 1909 with the intent of keeping the traditions of the old country alive.

Serbian immigrants were proud of their roots, and they wanted to instill this in the youth of the community. Children were taught the native language from an early age. They learned national dances and folk songs from Katherine Bogatch, an immigrant who had a career as an opera singer before leaving Serbia.

The 1920 Census shows that the majority of Serbian-born immigrants in South St. Paul were employed at the local packing plants. In 1923, the community began raising funds for the Serbian Home, which was erected one year later at 404 Third Avenue South. The hall served as a cultural center where weddings, wakes, and dances were held into the early 1980s.

In 1988, the Serbian home was close to being demolished by the city who had acquired the building due to unpaid back taxes. Thankfully, Ted Trkla and other community members pooled money to purchase the building, and in 1992 the hall was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It then became a center for Serbian history and culture.

After 77 years, the Serbian Home and much of its collection had to be sold due to a lack of operating funds. Although the building may no longer be a welcome center for the Serbian community of South St. Paul, memories of the lodge and those who once filled its halls will live on with the preservation of Serbian artifacts.

Over the years, the DCHS has acquired a few Serbian artifacts such as those pictured, and with the closing of the hall, is hoping to obtain more documentary artifacts such as photographs to help further preserve the Serbian heritage of South St. Paul.
MUSEUM HOURS
Tuesday .................. 9 am to 5 pm
Wednesday ................ 9 am to 5 pm
Thursday .................. 9 am to 8 pm
Friday ..................... 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday .................. 10 am to 3 pm
Sunday ..................... Closed
Monday ..................... Closed

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Exhibit Opens
Thursday, September 13, 6:30 - 8:00 pm Reception, History Museum
The history of cameras and photography in Dakota County seen through the lens of the Kaposia Kamera Club. Exhibit runs to Jan. 31, 2001.

City Directory and Newspaper Research
Thursday, September 20, 7:00 pm, History Museum
Mary Swanson, APG member, will speak.

Census Research
Thursday, October 18, 7:00 pm, History Museum
Mary Bakeman, publisher Park Genealogical Books, will speak.

Jessie James Ate Here
Thursday, November 8, 7:00 pm, South St. Paul Library

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