

SUMMER 2020

Our Mission

To preserve, document and classify the physical history of the Lake Minnetonka area. To provide a means by which everyone can share in the history of the lake area. To stimulate interest in the cultural heritage of the area.

Founded in 1972, the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society preserves the history of Lake Minnetonka and the communities of Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Shorewood, and Tonka Bay.

The Society's Museum and Archives hold a large collection of historical artifacts and documents and the Society regularly presents programs for youth and adults and publishes books on topics of local historical interest.

ELMHS
PO Box 305
Excelsior, MN 55331
952-221-4766
info@elmhs.org
www.elmhs.org

ELMHS
Executive Director:
Rachel Houck

ELMHS
Board of Directors

President: Deanna Bunkelman
Vice President: Tom Williams
Treasurer: Cheryl Ahlcrona
Secretary: Scott Dake

Directors: Francesca Landon,
Andrew Punch, Mark Read, Tad
Shaw, Lisa Stevens.

Emeritus Board Members: Jerry
Holl, Betty Peck

The Harborage

Still Going Strong, Thanks to You!

By Rachel Houck, ELMHS Executive Director

There is so much is happening in our state and nation right now, that I thought it was important to take a moment and give you an update on the state of ELMHS. But first, I want to take this opportunity to thank our members and donors for being so faithful in their support during this critical time. Your generosity helps keep the lights on, and your notes of encouragement lift the spirits of our staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to collect, preserve, and share the history of the Excelsior and South Lake Minnetonka area. We are so grateful to have such an amazing community!



Boat builder Andrew Peterson innovates on Lake Minnetonka, ca. 1902. Courtesy Hennepin County Library.

During this time, our Archives and Museum will remain closed. Any new updates, including plans on reopening, will be posted on our website. We have also had to cancel many of our programs including the April and May Tapping Histories at the Excelsior Brewing Company, and the June and July History Cruises on the *Lady of the Lake*. We rely on the donations and ticket sales from these events to pay expenses such as rent, staff salaries, and preservation supplies. Any additional gifts you are able to give at this time to help offset this lost revenue would be greatly appreciated.

For now, the August History Cruise is still on the schedule (see page 5), and we are developing new protocols to protect our passengers including lowering capacity to meet social distancing requirements, making hand sanitizer available, and requesting that passengers wear masks on board. In the event these programs must also be cancelled, we will issue refunds and post updates on our website.

In spite of these challenges, we are continuing to carry out our mission by developing *new* and innovative ways to bring history to the public. So, if you need a history fix, or just a distraction, see page 4 to learn about programs we have created to bring history to your home, such as Collective Access, a virtual tour of Lake Minnetonka history, and Water Street Wednesday. We also encourage you to email us with any other research requests, questions, or program ideas. We miss you and would love to hear from you!

The Society Column

Annual Meeting Postponed

The Board of Directors has made the difficult decision to postpone this year's annual meeting and cancel some of our programs in order to ensure the health and safety of our members, volunteers, and guests amid the current COVID pandemic.

We are aware that delaying the annual meeting has an impact on electing board members, as well as approving a budget for FY20/21. Per our bylaws, both the current board members and the FY19/20 budget will remain in place until the annual meeting can safely be held. A new date will be selected when the Minnesota Department of Health deems it is safe. Members will be notified once a new date is determined.

The board has reviewed and approved amendments to our bylaws, which also require approval by our membership. Copies of these amendments will be sent to members via email or USPS. We strongly encourage all members to send their preferred email address to director@elmhs.org in order to reduce printing and postage expenses.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we navigate through this challenging time. Please visit our website elmhs.org for the most current updates or email us at info@elmhs.org if you have any other questions.

We hope you and your families are safe and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,
Deanna Bunkelman, ELMHS Board President

COVID-19 Impact Stories and Artifacts:

We are actively seeking artifacts and stories relating to the current COVID-19 pandemic. We want to know how this is affecting *you*. What are you doing during this time? Maybe you made some masks, helped a neighbor or had a neighbor help you. We are encouraging you to journal your experience so that it can be saved and shared. Some of the most cherished artifacts we have at ELMHS are not great works of art, but rather the journals, diaries, letters, photographs, and stories that tell us about the personal experiences of everyday people. These deeply personal documents help later generations not only learn from the past but connect with it on a deeper level.

Help us save history by saving and submitting your stories or artifacts. For more information or to submit your stories email us at info@elmhs.org or visit our website www.elmhs.org. You can also submit material via mail to P.O. Box 305 Excelsior, MN 55331.



Inspirational message on the School Avenue sign for the Congregational Church of Excelsior, 2020.

Veazie Collection Gives New Context to Area History

By Scott D. McGinnis

Earlier this year, Sue Veazie loaned some family archives to ELMHS so that our volunteers could digitize and document the collection. This included 24 letters from 1895-1898, one photo album from 1895-1900, numerous loose photos, and three journals from 1893 and 1895. These remnants of a time past belonged to the Philo family consisting of three sisters Marion, Grace, and Edith and their mother, Effa Philo. Effa's husband, Jewell K. Philo, died in 1886 when his daughters were ages 8, 10 and 11. They lived in La Grange, Illinois and the collection documents their summers spent in Glooskap cottage on the Hazen J. Burton estate in Deephaven from 1895-1900.

The correspondence includes letters from George Donaldson, son of Lawrence S. Donaldson of Donaldson Department Store fame, detailing his fears of going to war in the Philippines in 1898. Two of the journals were written in La Grange, however, the 1895 journal of Edith Philo details their summer life in Deephaven, describing bicycling expeditions, tennis, golf, and sailing.

What makes the collection even more remarkable is that the photo album and loose photos precisely capture in images what was described in the journal. For example one journal entry reads,

June 2, 1895, Sunday morning.

We met Ward [Burton] coming to meet us and to our amazement also saw a swell young man with him, white trousers and fixed up quite swell. We three girls were scared and as we had not been off from our wheels [bicycles] with our bloomers on, each one tried to get in back of the other. And we were all mad enough to swear at Ward, he came swooping down on us however and we had to go on. The young man was as straight as a ram rod and was swinging a golf stick and playing with one of the balls. What was our surprise to see in the young man, as we drew near May Ripley dressed in a suit of Wards.

The three journals, 24 letters, and 133 photographic images have been digitized for the ELMHS collection and the originals returned to Sue Veazie with the Society's gratitude for her sharing such a valuable collection. To see more of the Veazie Collection visit MNCollections.org.



Portrait of Effa Philo (left), Grace Philo (front), Edith Philo (rear), and Marion Philo (right). Photo by Harrison, Central Music Hall Studios, Chicago, Illinois, ca. 1890.



Ward Burton (left) wearing a lady's hat and holding a "golf stick" and May Ripley (right) with a pipe clenched in her teeth and wearing Ward Burton's clothes. June 2, 1895.

History at Home

Collective Access:

Through our participation in Minnesota Collections, run by the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums, we have made thousands of artifacts from our collection accessible to the public. This means that if you visit the website MNCollections.org you can see artifacts and images from the Excelsior Amusement Park, pioneers, sailing, and much more for *FREE!* We are continually adding new artifacts so make sure you check back often to see the latest updates. You can also see what the other twenty participating organizations have made accessible. This program was made possible in part by a grant from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund administered through the Minnesota Historical Society.



Excelsior Amusement Park, promotional lighter. Available on MNCollections.org (1991.001.0001).

Water Street Wednesday:

We want your memories! Log on to Facebook or Instagram every Wednesday to see a mystery historic building or event from Water Street. Write your guess in the comments section along with any memories you have that pertain to that building, place, or event. The answers for the mystery image will be posted the following week along with a new image for the current week. The memories that are shared will be collected and preserved for future generations.



Water Street in Excelsior, 1937.

Lake Minnetonka History Virtual Tours:

Coming soon!

The ELMHS is proud to announce two new historical tours of Lake Minnetonka created in partnership with Deephaven, Minnetonka, Wayzata and Westonka historical societies as well as the Museum of Lake Minnetonka. The tours use two Google Platforms; Earth and My Maps for virtual tours that will take you around the lake to experience the greatest hits of Lake Minnetonka area history from your home, bike or car. The tours include perspectives and images of these sites that you've likely never seen before, all curated by our fellow historians around the lake. **The tours are completely *FREE* and will be available June 5. Access the tours via our website at elmhs.org/virtualtours.**



Map of Lake Minnetonka showing Minnetonka Lake Park Association Grounds, 1879.

Voices of Excelsior Project

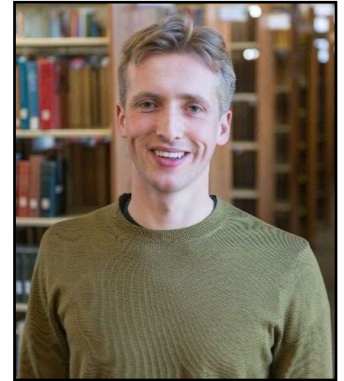
This spring the Society began preparations for an oral history project called “Voices of Excelsior.” The purpose of this study is to preserve oral memories of businesses in the historic Excelsior downtown area.

Led by Christian Belz, a graduate of Minnetonka High School, Concordia College and a long time area resident, this project focuses on stories surrounding pre-1970 Water Street businesses.

Although we have postponed in-person interviews for this project, we are looking into conducting virtual interviews via video conferencing services. In the meantime, we encourage participation in the Water Street Wednesdays campaign on Facebook and Instagram (see page 4) or stories can be submitted via email, Facebook, or by mail to ELMHS, P.O. Box 305, Excelsior MN 55331.

The stories that are collected will be preserved in our Archives for future generations and will provide a valuable primary source for researchers and all lovers of history, ensuring that these human experiences will not be lost.

If you or someone you know has a story to share please contact our Executive Director at director@elmhs.org or call (952)221-4766 to set up an interview.



*Image of Christian Belz
courtesy of Concordia
College*

Programs & Events

History Cruise

Join us this summer aboard the *Lady of the Lake*.

- **August 10, 7:00 pm:** Topic TBD
- **Tickets:** \$22.50 members | 37.50 non-members

*Ticket prices will be refunded in the event these programs must be cancelled to comply with MN Department of Health COVID-19 guidelines.

Purchase tickets after July 1 at [elmhs1.eventbrite.com](https://www.elmhs1.eventbrite.com)



Image courtesy Lady of the Lake Inc.

For information about our programs visit www.elmhs.org/programs--events.

MEMBERSHIP

Members shape the Society's policies and programs, and support our work in preserving the area's history.

Annual member benefits include:

- ◆ Discounts and special member privileges on select opportunities
- ◆ The Society's newsletter and mailings
- ◆ Invitations to special events
- ◆ Voting privileges

Membership Levels

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Platinum | <input type="checkbox"/> \$45 Household |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Gold | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Silver | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Senior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Bronze | |

Or, make an individual contribution of any amount!

\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Mail form and check made out to ELMHS to PO Box 305, Excelsior, MN 55331. You can also join or contribute online at www.elmhs.org. The Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

VOLUNTEERING

- Please contact me about volunteering for the Society. (See panel to right for more information.)

DONATION OF ARTIFACTS

- Please contact me regarding the donation of historical items to the Society. (See panel to right for more information.)

Volunteer with Us!

The Society relies on volunteers of all ages and abilities to fulfill critical roles such as:

- **Archives:** Assisting visitors, scanning, filing, researching, data entry.
- **Museum:** Serving as a host, cleaning and upkeep, data entry.
- **Publications:** Marketing merchandise to vendors, conducting inventories, selling merchandise at events, creating new books.
- **Programs and Events:** Set up and take down for Tapping History, welcoming people, creating new programs.
- **Membership and Fundraising:** Recruiting new members, contributors and volunteers, helping with direct mail and special fundraising events.
- **Communications:** Writing press releases, creating marketing materials, contributing to social media, maintaining our website.
- **Technology:** Maintaining the Society's computer network and hardware, troubleshooting IT issues.

Training in all areas is provided. Contact us at info@elmhs.org or 952-221-4766 to learn more or visit our website at www.elmhs.org/volunteer.

Donate Artifacts

Donations of historic artifacts, photographs and documents pertinent to the history of the south Lake Minnetonka area are welcome. Help us share our community's history with future generations by sharing your history with us! (Due to space limitations, the Society is unable to accept all donations.)



Major George Halstead at his "Hermitage" in Minnetrista, discovered and donated by Excelsior's Lori Anderson while remodeling her historic home.

Thanks for your support!
NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS, AND CONTRIBUTORS
December 1, 2019—March 31, 2020

MEMBERSHIPS

Gold Level

Ron Haberkorn
 Richard & Bonnie McGinnis
 C. L. Van der Schans

Silver Level

Colleen Aldritt
 Deanna Bunkelman
 Jennifer & Tim Caron
 Jean Gray
 Bruce & Barbara Jensen
 Jeff Kamrath
 Dan Shore

Bronze Level

Perry King
 Kevin Wehrmann

Household

Bruce & Susan Benson
 Mark Stanga
 Katy Ullsperger

Individual

Carol Carmichiel
 Michael Goertel
 Brad & Sally Hunner
 Theresa Kiihn
 Judith Allen Kim

Thomas McCarthy
 David Stevenson

Senior

Elaine Barber
 Elaine Dunn
 Joseph Finley
 Paula Giovannetti
 Beverly Lane
 Linda Putnam
 Joan Wolfe

Life Members

(No longer offered)
 Bart Baker
 Alec & Marianne Beck
 Bob & Diane Bolles
 Suellen Douglas
 Don & Frannie Douglass
 Kristin & Ken Dowell
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Fayfield
 John Gorecki
 John P. & Jan Gray
 Phil & Eileen Hallin
 Paul Huber
 Ron Hughes
 Dr. & Mrs. Randy Julian
 Mr. & Mrs. Nick Johnson

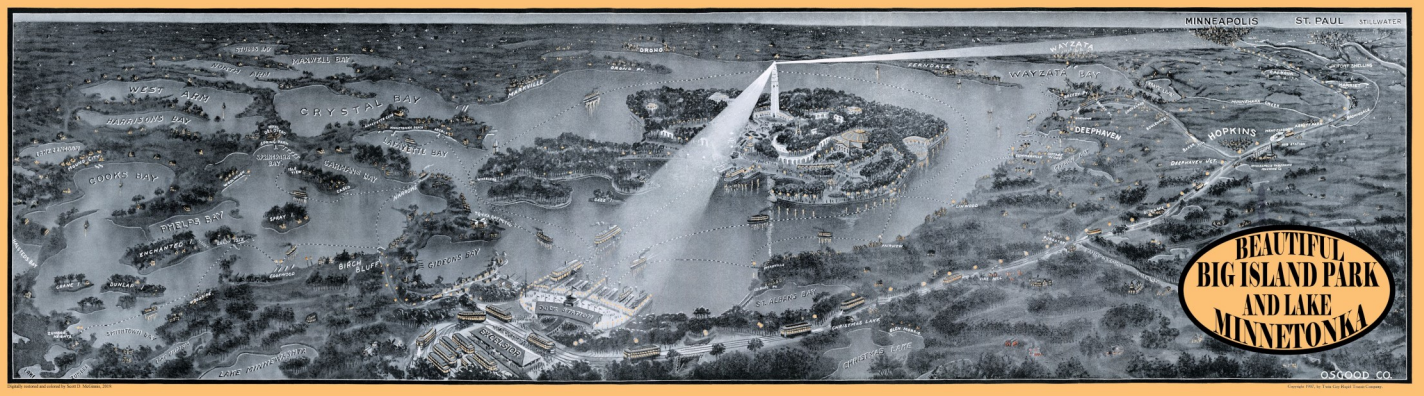
Terrance Kellogg
 Mark Knowlton
 Tom & Carol Knowlton
 Michael Kramer
 Ann Lundsten
 Scott D. McGinnis
 Minnesota Streetcar Museum
 Robert L. Naas
 Bill & Steph Naegele
 Aaron Person
 Sharon Provost
 Kellie & Gary Ringate
 Kathy Knowlton Schmid
 Carol Schmidt
 Dr. Milton H. Seifert
 Tad Shaw
 Lisa Stevens & Jeffrey Hatcher
 Rodney Thompson
 TSP Architecture, Inc.
 Ruth Witrak

CONTRIBUTORS

Tonka Printing
 Cheryl Ahlcrona & Carl Floren
 Dave Barry

Aaron Bean
 John Beard
 Francis Colby
 Scott Dake
 Laura Ekholm
 Rolf Erickson
 Michael Goertel
 Tricia Haydon
 Ron Hughes
 Bruce Jensen
 Tom Knowlton
 Gregory McMillan
 David Oppegaard
 Susan Peterson
 Jim Prokopanko
 Linda Putnam
 Carol Schmidt
 Barbara Spannaus
 Lisa Stevens & Jeffrey Hatcher
 Jake Sturgis
 Gregory Thomas
 Alan Tollefson
 Laurel Traxler
 Elizabeth Utter
 Liz Vandam
 Kevin Wehrmann

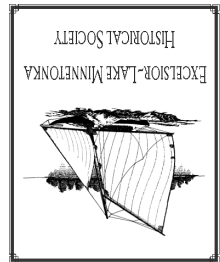
New Print of Big Island Amusement Park Available



You can own this digitally restored print of a 1907 Twin City Rapid Transit Company brochure promoting their Lake Minnetonka attraction - Big Island Amusement Park (1906-1911). Printed on archival gloss exhibition canvas and stretched over a wood frame, 52"Wx15"H. Visit elmhs.org/store for more information.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PO Box 305
Excelsior MN 55331



Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #335
Excelsior, MN
55331