

WINTER/SPRING 2021

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.

E L M H S
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The Harborage

Hometown Healer: Dr. Hugh Custer Arey

In earlier times, the "town doctor" was a fixture in most small American communities. We see the same few names on birth and death certificates in our archives for decades and read local newspaper stories about the respect the community afforded them. They likely knew, and treated, everyone in town, lived down the street and made house calls.

While much has changed over the last 100 years, it seems as if doctors and nurses are still considered equal parts medical practitioner and public servant. Excelsior has had dozens of physicians caring for its citizens since the 1850s, but few stand out more than Dr. Arey.

Hugh Custer Arey was born August 30, 1878 in Winnetka, Illinois, the son of James B. and Estelle (Goss) Arey. His father was a traveling salesman for Auerbach, Finch, Culbertson & Company, a wholesale dry goods firm. By 1880, his father moved the family to Saint Paul where Hugh grew up. His formative years were adventurous, learning to hunt with his father, bicycling with friends to Chicago, and taking a houseboat trip from St. Paul to St. Louis with his future brother-in-law Clifton C. Olds.

Hugh followed the career path of his grandfather, Dr. Nathaniel Hopkins Arey, graduating from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1902. His two-year internship was spent at the City and County Hospital in Saint Paul as a pathologist and bacteriologist. With his internship over, there arose an opportunity in Excelsior to purchase the practice of Dr. Ernst G. Sasse who recently purchased a hospital in Lidgerwood, North Dakota. Dr. Arey opened his Excelsior office on June 10, 1904 above Buzzell's Pharmacy in the Apgar Block, 220-226 Water Street. He shared his office with dentist Dr. Harry B. Child who had office hours every Saturday, later moving to the newly constructed Wood Block at 200 Water Street in August 1905. At the same time, he acquired new living accommodations at the Sampson House a block to the east at the corner of 2nd Street and School Avenue.

The Sampson House is likely where he met his future wife, Mabel Lane. Mabel's parents, Freeman P. and Mary R. Lane spent part of the winter and early springs living at the



Dr. Hugh Custer Arey, Excelsior physician, ca. 1933.

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Sampson House until it was warm enough to move to their cottage at Zumbra Heights, where Hugh and Mabel married on June 20, 1906. Between 200-250 people from Excelsior, Minneapolis and Saint Paul attended and were transported from Excelsior on the 125-foot-long stern-wheel steamboat *Excelsior* to the upper lake estate. Dr. and Mrs. Arey made their new home in a cottage on 2nd Street. Presumably, this was the cottage that her father, Freeman P. Lane, had moved from Zumbra Heights to Excelsior over the ice the preceding winter.

The marriage almost didn't happen as Dr. Arey and Frank J. Stoddard were in an accident on June 17, 1906 when the buggy they were driving in was smashed beyond repair by an auto that didn't even stop to check their condition. Excelsior's first hit and run accident. The accident left both badly bruised but without serious injuries.

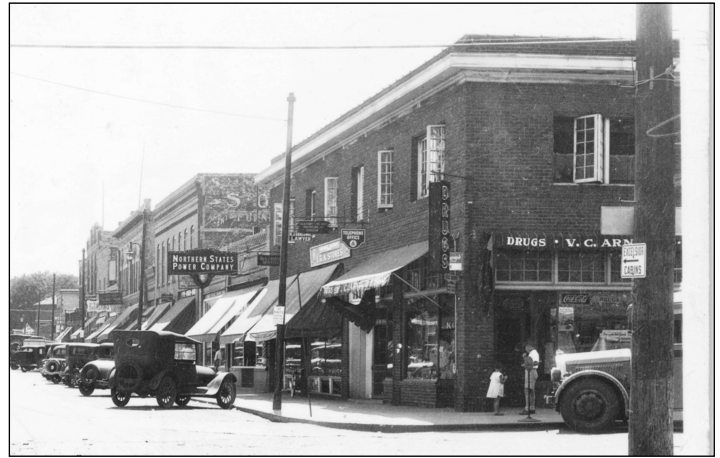
In September 1906, Dr. Arey went to his parent's home in Saint Paul to "relieve" the suffering of his pet dog who had contracted rabies. While attending to the dog, he was bit in the lower lip, thigh, and hand. The next day he noticed swelling and the onset of hydrophobia. He immediately boarded a train bound for the Pasteur Institute in Chicago where he was treated for nearly two weeks before he recovered sufficiently to return to Excelsior.

The Areys then moved in November 1909 to the McGrath house at 193 2nd Street. This became one of the central meeting places for various organizations within Excelsior including the suffrage movement, Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka Woman's Club, and various interests of Trinity Episcopal Church.

Dr. Arey had a setback on October 28, 1916 when the Wood Block was destroyed by fire and he lost all his office equipment and library with a reported loss of \$5,000. Charlie Sampson, owner of the Wood Block, immediately set about rebuilding and Dr. Arey moved into his new suite of rooms in late May 1917. The office was composed of a

reception room, lavatory, and x-ray room all tiled and the woodwork finished in white enamel. This would remain his place of business for the remainder of his career.

Eventually, there were two prominent doctors in Excelsior: Dr. Arey and Dr. Milton Seifert. Dr. Seifert was the new-



The Sampson Block Building, 200 Water Street, ca. 1936. Dr. H.C. Arey's offices were on the second floor from 1917-1934. His son, Dr. Stuart Lane Arey, took over the family business and remained here from 1934-1943.

comer having graduated medical school in 1929. Local lore is that they devised a manner to equitably share the patients of Excelsior. Dr. Arey was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church and attended to Protestant patients and Dr. Seifert was a member of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church and administered to Catholic patients.

The Arey family was very conscious of public service in Excelsior. Mabel Arey was the first female councilmember 1933-1935, and Dr. Arey was a councilman from 1908 to 1909, and for several years was the village health officer. Many people know of the influenza epidemic of 1918 but do not recall there was a resurgence in 1920. Dr. Arey, as health officer, closed all the schools, churches, and theaters in Excelsior in January 1920 to help stop the spread of the epidemic. Although there had been no deaths, 39 cases of influenza had been reported in Excelsior and Dr. Arey advised that the closings were a necessary preventative measure.

Dr. Arey's other civic minded endeavors included being a founding member and director of the Hennepin County Tuberculosis Association and camp physician for the Lake Minnetonka Boy Scout camps at Tonkawa on North Arm Bay and Wawatasso on the upper lake. His years of effort for the Boy Scouts of America earned him the Silver Beaver award in 1932.



The Wood Block Building, 200 Water Street, was the home for Dr. Arey's offices from 1905 until it burned in 1916.

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Dr. Arey met a sudden death on May 20, 1934 at the age of 55. He had been in his office seeing patients but went home about noon because he was not feeling well. He died later that afternoon. The shops and the entire Village of Excelsior shut down that Tuesday to attend the funeral at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis. Within days, the Minnetonka Woman's Club established a memorial including a flagpole known as the "Dr. Arey Flag Staff," which now stands at Water and Oak Streets, between Twin City Federal Bank and Excelsior Elementary School. Three hundred people attended the memorial's dedication and the flag was raised by the Girl Scouts for many years. It is still tended by the Lake Minnetonka Men's Garden Club today.

The loss of Dr. Arey was difficult for the Arey family, which included wife Mabel and four children: Stuart L. "Lane" (26), Jane (23), James B. (10), and Hugh C. (7). Lane had graduated from medical school in 1932 and went to Children's Hospital in Chicago for a one-year internship. He returned to Minneapolis in 1933 and began a career as a pediatrician. Upon his father's death, he returned to Excelsior to help support his mother and young siblings by assuming his father's position as physician to Excelsior.



Memorial Day ceremony at the Dr. Arey Memorial Flag Staff, ca. 1940.

New Online Presentation

Monday, March 8 | 7:00 pm
Excelsior Past and Present

With Scott D. McGinnis

Ever walked through Excelsior and wondered, "What used to be here?" During this special virtual program, historian Scott D. McGinnis will unfold the layers of history to reveal the buildings, businesses, and homes that once occupied Excelsior's Historic Business District.

Tickets: Members-Free, Non-members \$5

Register by 3:00 pm, Friday, March 5 at
excelsiorpastandpresent.eventbrite.com



Please note that ELMHS will be using Google Meet for all upcoming online programs. Our subscription will allow us to have up to 150 participants per program. Registered attendees will receive a link with instructions to access the program.

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

From the Executive Director

I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to our annual campaign. The extra donations helped fill the gap left in our budget and made 2020 our best fundraising year yet! Between the response to our annual appeal letter and Give to the Max Day you helped us raise over \$11,000! This will set us up for success in 2021 as we look forward to more programs, both in-person and online, and work on reopening the museum for the summer season.

Also, thanks to Tom Lapping of Eduvision, our virtual programs will be recorded and saved online so that all ELMHS members can access the content at no additional cost. If you are a member and have not already created your account, please contact me at director@elmhs.org.

Rachel Houck
Executive Director

Volunteer Openings!

The Society relies on volunteers of all ages and abilities to fulfill various critical roles. Right now we are in need of dedicated volunteers to help in the following areas:

- **Communications:** Writing press releases, creating marketing materials, contributing to social media, maintaining our website, editing our newsletter. Must have experience using Microsoft Publisher or similar publishing software.
- **Membership and Fundraising:** Recruiting new members, contributors and volunteers, helping with direct mail and special events.
- **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.

BECOME A MEMBER!

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 donation of any amount!

\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

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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.

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

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Gold

Tom Williams

Silver

Bitta & Kerry Barnard
 Deanna Bunkelman
 Ann Sampson Heimerl
 Bill & Steph Naegele
 Bruce & Jodi Noll
 Mary Pat Peterson
 Nell Ray
 Kyle Uittenbogaard

Bronze

John DuPont
 Aaron Houck

Household

Debby Bluem
 Susan & Brian Mark
 Michelle Mullenbach
 Peggy L Naas
 Cynthia Paul
 Andrew Punch
 Laurel Traxler

Individual

Juli Englander
 Thomas McCarthy
 Edward Oliver
 Alex Stein

Student/Senior

Alan Langstaff
 Jerry & Kathy Martin
 Kathleen Martin
 Robert Sevey
 Maybeth & Ed Sheridan
 Jane Stark
 Nina Stark
 Sharon Starks
 Mary Upgren

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ELMHS SEEKS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Do you love history? Are you looking for a way to serve your community? ELMHS is looking for talented individuals to play an integral role in supporting the Society and planning for its future. Our board is composed of 7-11 members with staggered three year terms who meet on the second Tuesday of each month. In addition to attending board meetings, board members also host at the ELMHS Museum, plan and attend society events, serve on committees, and fill other vital roles to ensure the success of the organization. We are especially in need of expertise in non-profit management, communications, accounting, fundraising and law.

Board members are unpaid volunteers, must be members of the Society and are elected by the membership at our Annual Meeting in June.

To learn more visit our website www.elmhs.org, or send a letter of interest to President Deanna Bunkelman, president@elmhs.org, by Monday, March 1, 2021.

Heritage Partnership Grant Project Begins!

The Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, Deephaven Historical Society, Minnetonka Historical Society, Museum of Lake Minnetonka, Wayzata Historical Society and Westonka Historical Society are excited to be moving forward with their exploration of strategic alliance opportunities! Each organization has appointed a representative and an alternate to a Joint Committee that will help facilitate the project in consultation with Arts Consulting Group (ACG). Key information about each partner has been shared with ACG who has met virtually with each board to learn more about the organizations' mission, history, makeup and culture. ACG is now analyzing this information and will release a Partner Comparison Report to the organizations for discussion and further analysis.

Next steps include membership surveys and virtual town halls, likely in March, which will allow stakeholders to share their ideas and thoughts about preserving, interpreting, and improving access to Lake Minnetonka

history. This member and community input will be crucial to the study, so please watch your email or mailbox for an invitation to these upcoming events and get ready to help us shape the future of lake area history! For more information, contact ELMHS Joint Committee representative Lisa Stevens at info@elmhs.org, 952-221-4766. As always, we welcome your comments and questions throughout this project.

This program is made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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