

SPRING/SUMMER 2022

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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www.elmhs.org

ELMHS

Executive Director:

Rachel Houck

ELMHS

Board of Directors

President: Scott Dake

Vice President: Mark

Read

Treasurer: Lisa Stevens

Secretary: Kirsten

Pardoe

Directors: Andrew

Punch, Deanna

Bunkelman, Bill Heyman,

Tom Kolar, Tad Shaw

The Harborage

Celebrating 50 Years of History

Second part of our series exploring ELMHS' first fifty years.

Our Museum

In 1980, trains to Excelsior were discontinued, the former railway property was bought by Hennepin County and the Society began to lobby for the use of the old 1952 depot at 305 Water Street as a museum. In 1982, the county agreed to lease the depot to the Society and the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society Museum opened to the public with a historical toy display in December 1983. In 1986, an addition to house the historic sailboat *Onawa* was built, and an Excelsior Amusement Park ticket booth was moved to the property, both made possible by longtime volunteer Bob Bolles. Volunteers Betty and Brad Peck faithfully staffed the Museum for decades aided by dozens of volunteer hosts.



Future ELMHS Museum, 1982 [Detail/entities/18467](https://mncollections.org/Detail/entities/18467).

Our Archives

In 1973, librarians Jane Nielsen and Nancy Brown set up an Archives with several hundred files, and fellow librarian Isabel Thibault soon became the Society's volunteer archivist. The City of Excelsior kindly allowed the Society to store their archival materials securely in the city vault for many years. After moving to a closet in what is now Shorewood Community & Event Center in 2006, our archives were moved in 2009 to the lower level of the historic Excelsior Public School building at 261 School Avenue, where they remain (full to bursting!) today.

Longtime archives volunteers have helped the public with their research, dug deeper and answered thousands of questions over the decades. These dedicated individuals have included Betty Peck (with more than forty years of service), Grace Knowlton (a dedicated researcher and archivist who volunteered into her 90's), Lael Grathwol, Suellen Douglass, Maybeth Sheridan, Cary Smith and more recently Scott



Archive volunteers Betty Peck, Joyce Quinn and Grace Knowlton, city hall vault, 1985.

ELMHS
50
YEARS

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The Society Column

From the Executive Director



It is with bittersweet emotions that I inform you of my decision to step down as ELMHS Executive Director.

This was a difficult decision because I have loved working here and getting to know all of you. But as much as I desire to stay at the ELMHS, my family needs me more and I look forward to spending more time with them.

My last day will be June, 14 2022 - the ELMHS Annual Meeting. I hope to see you all there so I can properly say, "goodbye" to each of you!

I am so proud of all the work we have done over the last four years, and I know great things are still to come!

Rachel Houck, Executive Director
Director@elmhs.org

Lake Minnetonka Historical Organizations Strategic Alliance Update

The ELMHS continues its partnership with the Museum of Lake Minnetonka, Wayzata Historical Society, and Westonka Historical Society to explore ways that our organizations can collaborate to better serve the history of the Lake Minnetonka area, now and in the future.

Funded by a Heritage Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Historical Society, the Joint Committee and Arts Consulting Group have completed a benchmarking study, stakeholder interviews, town hall meetings, a community/member survey, financial analysis, and board site visits to each location. We are now finishing a final report of all our findings. The partners are exploring consolidation on an incremental basis and are excited to share the results of the entire study later in the year.

Questions about the process are welcome!

Lisa Stevens, Joint Committee Member
Info@elmhs.org

Betty Peck Remembered

The Society was saddened to learn of the passing of Board Member Emeritus Betty Peck on April 3, 2022. Betty spent more than half of her 95 years as a devoted volunteer at the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, which is indeed history-making in itself.

Betty joined the ELMHS board in 1974 after being recruited as its second treasurer and remained in that role until 2015, becoming a Board Member Emeritus in 2017. Betty was involved in every aspect of the Society throughout her time with us - volunteering in the archives every week for decades and taking more than her share of shifts in the museum with her late husband Wally and later with devoted son Brad - keeping it in good repair and open. She also assisted with research, oversaw the publication and sales of our books, worked on our newsletter and so much more.

For many, Betty was the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society, and for our first couple of decades, when you called ELMHS you reached Betty's home. It is unlikely that we would have survived and thrived without her tenacity and dedication. In more recent years she often spoke of her amazement at how far the Society had come and her pride and enthusiasm were an inspiration to those who volunteered with her. And while Betty knew she couldn't volunteer forever, she *did* ensure that the history of her community would survive her for many generations, which is the kind of immortality from which we can all benefit.



Betty Peck, ELMHS 25th Anniversary, 1977

(Continued from page 1)



Grace Knowlton, 1997

McGinnis and Lisa Stevens. Our “historic” wooden file cabinets have long been replaced by many steel cabinets and state of the art preservation practices. Our archives include an excellent historical photograph collection, local biographical files, digitized obituary files, early newspapers on microfilm, cemetery records, and files with information about many of the homes and businesses in the

area - all a boon to the genealogist or house history researcher. Thousands of images from our archival collections are searchable online through CollectiveAccess <https://mncollections.org/Detail/entities/18467> and on our website, which also lists many other research resources. Our archives are also open by appointment for in-person research. Learn more about our archives at elmhs.org/archives--research-resources.

New History

In the last 50 years the Society has gone from driving to the Southdale Library to use their new “state of the art” photocopier, to making high resolution scans or quick snaps of materials with a cell phone, providing instant delivery to patrons around the world. Handwritten, mimeographed newsletters are now emailed in full color at the push of a button and at little cost to the Society. Card catalogs, typed index cards and scrawled notes on scrap paper have given way to metadata and databases.

In 2018 the Society hired Rachel Houck as part time Executive Director, our first employee. The Society as a whole and our hardworking volunteers in particular, have benefited tremendously from the wisdom, experience and guidance of a professionally trained staff member who has been able to take the Society to the next level. With best practices learned and horizons broadened, Rachel will leave us in a strong position from which to face the future.

Future Dreams

While the Society has come lightyears since 1972, we still have many dreams for the future. Our wish list includes a larger space for our archives, a climate-controlled museum and storage space, a large format, all-in-one printer and sufficient volunteers and funding to continue progress on our many “dream projects,” as well as those we have yet to dream of!

And finally, after being awarded a Heritage Partnership Grant from the Minnesota Historical Society in 2020, the Society has begun an exploration of strategic alignment options with four other historical societies guided by an experienced non-profit organization consultant. This initiative is still underway, and the participants are excited to be working proactively to preserve our shared



An early ELMHS program, 1972

missions and better serve Lake Minnetonka history far into the future.

The Society has been successful over the years due to the hard work, generosity and dedication of its members and volunteers and the support of its community. Members Grace Knowlton and Betty Peck alone put in thousands of volunteer hours over the decades. They and others lived and breathed the Society’s mission and our community’s history lives on through their scholarship and dedication. The Society welcomes the involvement of new members and volunteers to lead us into our next 50 years.

ELMHS Wins Minnesota History Award!

A Minnesota History Award from the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums was awarded to the ELMHS and Hennepin County Library for the August 2020 virtual program, *Votes for Women: Minnesota and the 19th Amendment*. “Truly appreciated the nuance that was used in this project to explain the many different facets and beliefs held by all of those in the movement.” commented one History Awards Committee member.

Congratulations to our Executive Director, Rachel Houck, and to Tracy Hvezda-Lehtola with the Hennepin County Library-Excelsior for their success with this award-winning program! To see the program please visit the Library’s YouTube channel, youtu.be/QW_B3sXwXXo

Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 21 | 10am - 2pm

Museum Open House

ELMHS
50
YEARS

Kick-off our 50th Anniversary at our Museum Open House! We're celebrating with a new time capsule display of artifacts from the 1970's, a scavenger hunt with prizes, tours, volunteers to answer questions, and light refreshments. This event is free and open to the public, so bring your friends and family!

Visit us at 305 Water Street, in the old Excelsior Depot next to the Lake Minnetonka LRT Regional Trail and the Excelsior Library.

Regular Museum Hours this summer: Saturdays, May 21 - September 24, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Wednesday, May 25 | 10am - 1pm

Archives Open House

Join us for refreshments and a tour of our archival collection. Our volunteers will be on hand to answer questions about everything from doing research on local history to preserving your most precious artifacts.

The Society's Archives are located at 261 School Ave, Suite 102 - the lower level of the historic Excelsior Public School building and are open by appointment.

Memorial Day
Monday, May 30

Oak Hill Cemetery Tour

With Scott D. McGinnis

Tour historic Oak Hill Cemetery - Excelsior's burial ground since the 1850's. The tour begins at the top of Oak Hill, just east of 810 Excelsior Blvd., Excelsior *immediately following the Memorial Day ceremony at the cemetery.*

\$5.00 suggested contribution



History Cruises

June 13 | July 11 | August 8

6pm - 8pm

Topics to be Announced Soon

All aboard the "Lady of the Lake" for a cruise on Lake Minnetonka while learning about the lake's history. Experts will share different tales of the lake and its shoreline's history on each of the cruises.

Topics and tick information will be available the month prior to each cruise at elmhs1.eventbrite.com.



1973 "Lady of the Lake" History Cruise

Cruises board at the "Lady of the Lake" dock, Port of Excelsior, corner of Water and Lake Streets.

Tickets per cruise:

\$22.50 for members | \$37.50 for non-members

We heard you!

NEW Virtual Oak Hill Cemetery Tour

Many former Excelsior residents, those who no longer climb the steep Oak Hill, or are away for Memorial Day have requested a recording of Scott McGinnis' Oak Hill cemetery tour, so we've done just that!

With the help of Lake Minnetonka Communication Commission, Scott has gathered the "greatest hits" of his cemetery tour, putting your membership dollars and contributions to work, making the tour available to everyone.

Watch the tour at <https://youtu.be/BBG0Jw-ssmk>.

F.Y.I. . . .

See all of the Society's virtual programs on the "[ELMHS at Home](#)" page of our website.

Tuesday, June 14 | 7pm

ELMHS Annual Meeting & Board of Directors Election

Shorewood Community & Event Center
5735 Country Club Road, Shorewood

The ELMHS Board of Directors invites all members to attend this year's annual meeting in person, to learn about the Society's accomplishments in the past year and plans for the upcoming year, including special plans to recognize our 50th anniversary. We will also elect new board members who will lead ELMHS into our next 50 years. Snacks will be provided.

Call for Volunteers

Saturday, May 14 | 10am - Noon

ELMHS Museum Host Training and Clean Up

Help us keep the museum open by volunteering to host at least one Saturday or throughout the summer. No experience necessary. Training will be held on May 14. Learn more and sign up at www.elmhs.org/volunteer.html.



ELMHS Museum in 1992

We'll also spruce up the museum and grounds on May 14 and could use a little spring cleaning help! All supplies provided.

Museum Address: 305 Water Street, Excelsior

SAVE THE DATE!

Monday, September 12 | 7:00 pm

Tapping History Trivia Contest

DO YOU REMEMBER '72?

Prove it! Amaze your friends with your knowledge of 1972 local, national and international history as you compete for prizes!

Plan to show off your trivia skills at the Excelsior Brewing Company, 421 Third Street, Excelsior.
\$5.00 suggested contribution at door.



Registration will begin in August at elmhs1.eventbrite.com.

Monday, October 10 | 7:00 pm

ELMHS 50th Anniversary Celebration

Pique Travel Event Space, 306 Water St, Excelsior

Groove with fellow ELMHS friends in style - 70's style that is, to celebrate our 50th! We'll honor our founders and devoted volunteers as we take a look back at our last fifty years. *Can you dig it?*

Don't be square! Wear '72 era threads for a chance to win a far out prize. Support the Society's next 50 years through silent and live auctions.

Outta' sight appetizers, cash bar and groovy tunes too! Tickets: \$50 (\$7.27 in 1972) *limited number available*

Watch for details and ticket details elmhs.org/50th.

BRINGING HISTORY TO YOU SINCE 1972!

Run for History 5K

The Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society has been running since 1972!

You can be a part of this legacy by participating in our first virtual fun run in celebration of our 50th anniversary. Run or walk this 5K anywhere, anytime, at your own pace, or with a group. ELMHS followers around the world can celebrate with us! Registration is \$45 and includes a t-shirt, medal, and downloadable bib.



For more details, including registration see elmhs.org/50th.

Thanks for your support!

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

December 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022

Silver Members

Lydia & Brian Botham
Carol Downie
Ralph Hatch
Jeff Kamrath
Lisa & Jon Lane
Ron & Marcia McDaniel
Bill & Steph Naegele
Patrick & Elizabeth Schiltz
Tom & Barbara Warner

Bronze Members

Mary Jane Barnard
Sally A Dunn
Sandy Hotvet
Aaron Houck
James Johnson
Thomas & Sarah Kolar
Dennis Libby
Doug & Lori McDougal
Susan Queen
Alice & John Reimann
Nancy Steege
Robert Tyler

Household Members

Daniel Feidt
Terry Forbord
John Kieffer
Michelle & Paul Mullenbach
Nancy & Dave Nordmeyer
Rex Rundquist
Karen & Brian Zais

Individual Members

Conley Brooks
Nancy Christianson
Gregory Cotton
Sara Elstad
Juli Englander
Celane Jones
Madeline Kust
Thomas McCarthy
Jim Moffett
Mark Read
Sarah Rossing
Mark Swedlund

Senior/Student Members

Susan Anderson
Dan & Terry Austin
Betty Bright
Rolf & Jean Erickson
Joseph Finley
Max & Sandy Green
Rod Haanen
James Jasin
Karla Jennings
Mary Mann
Jerry & Kathy Martin
Rita Martinez
Michael Mason
Jeanne Moe
Ed & Charty Oliver
Will Skadsberg
Jane Stark
Nina Stark
Barb Sykora
Barb & Bill Tapper
Mary Upgren
Reed Wahlberg
Cheryl Webster

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

Cheryl Ahlcrona &
Carl Floren
Mary & Steve Aldritt
Colleen Aldritt
Jeanne Andersen
Rolf Anderson
Marcia Asp
Mary Jane Barnard
Dave & Kim Barry
John Beard
Deb Lien Bierbaum &
Don Bierbaum
Conley Brooks
Maureen Burns
Jennifer & Tim Caron
Nancy Christianson
Francis Butch Colby
Tarah Cummings
Scott & Joey Dake
Kay Derner
Matt & Kathy Dolliff
John & Meric Dougherty
Laura & Paul Ekholm
Rolf & Jean Erickson
Cecilee A. Faster
Joseph Finley
Melanie Fransen
John Gorecki

John P. & Jan Gray
Max & Sandy Green
Phil & Eileen Hallin
Lindsay Hannah
Ralph Hatch
Aaron Houck
Ron Hughes
Charles Katz
Dan & Allison Kelly
Judith Allen Kim
Susan & Michael Kimitch
Tom & Carol Knowlton
Georgianne Kornfuehrer
Ken Kotzer
Jim Ladwig
Fran Landon
Jerry & Kathy Martin
Thomas McCarthy
Ron & Marcia McDaniel
Mr. & Mrs. Richard
McGinnis
Scott McGinnis
Leone & Pat McGlone
Ruth & Allan McLeod
Gregory & Lori McMillan
Katherine W Miller
Larry W. Opfer
Susan Peterson
John Purdy
Linda Putnam
Hal Roberts
Robert C Savage
Kathy Knowlton Schmid
Maybeth & Ed Sheridan
Fred Simon
Nancy Smith
Nina Stark
Lisa Stevens & Jeff Hatcher
John Strandell
Barb & Bill Tapper
Gary & Kay Thompson
Rodney Thompson
John & Elizabeth Utter
Liz Vandam
Kevin Wehrmann
LaWayne Yaeger

Recent Acquisitions

- Joseph Holt Blunt - Letter from William H. Ferguson to Joseph Holt, February 25, 1856 describing the shortage of cash and pioneer difficulties in securing loans and investment opportunities, including a hand-drawn map of Excelsior Township circa February 1856.
- Chuck Donley - Excelsior Amusement Park, General Mills Employees' Picnic Ticket
- John "Doc" Dougherty - Book, *Passwords for All Seasons*, by Dick Gray
- Doug Fuerst - Pamphlet, Congregational Minnetonka, 1943, highlighting the Excelsior Congregational Church
- Justin Holl - Portion of a cast iron light fixture/ chandelier from the Lake Park Hotel/Tonka Bay Hotel circa 1879
- Robert Huntley - First Church of Christ Scientist, 106 Center Street, Excelsior, Collection of photographs and manuscripts, 1901-2022.
- Tom Knowlton - 140 photograph of Excelsior, MN dating from c1900-1930s, loaned for scanning.
- Steve Kobs - Photograph, Excelsior School Band, 1948
- Jim Ladwig - Book, *70th Anniversary Reunion*, Excelsior High School Class of 1949
- Darel Leipold - Lake Minnetonka Directory, 1983; Mound Directory, 1995; The Excelsior Rotonka, Excelsior Rotary newsletter, 1984-1993; Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Excelsior, Excelsior Chamber of Commerce directories, broadsides, and manuscripts; City of Excelsior, personnel directory, 1980s, newsletter 1981; West Suburban Teen Clinic, newsletter, 1982; Excelsior Bay Yacht Club, membership application, 1989; Old Log Theater, Gospel According to St. Mark, flier; Dr. George F. LaPaul, medicine bottle, c1900; McGuire-Twin City Plumbing & Heating, advertising card, 1980
- Scott D. McGinnis - 126 photographs of Excelsior Apple Day 2003; 229 photographs of Excelsior Apple Day 2004; Glass plate negative of the steam ferry boat Minneapolis at Big Island park, circa 1908; Postcard, streetcar boat Minnehaha, circa 1906
- Jim McNulty - 38"x38" aerial color aerial photograph of the Amesbury neighborhood of Deephaven, MN, 1981
- Julia Mullin - Minnetonka State Bank, deposit bags, c1950-1965 and c1969-1982
- Alvin Schaut - Postcard, Deephaven Bay, Lake Minnetonka
- Lori Schlottman - Majestic Minnetonka, color caricature map of Lake Minnetonka, 1983
- Nancy Steege - Christopher Inn brochure, 1985; Hudson's Map of Lake Minnetonka, c1975
- Lisa Stevens - Postcard, steamboat Puritan, Lake Minnetonka; Photograph, Tonka Belle, July 15, 1954

You're Not a Member?

Members shape the Society's policies and programs, continuing 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/Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | Bronze | | |

Or, make an individual contribution of any amount!

\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Volunteering

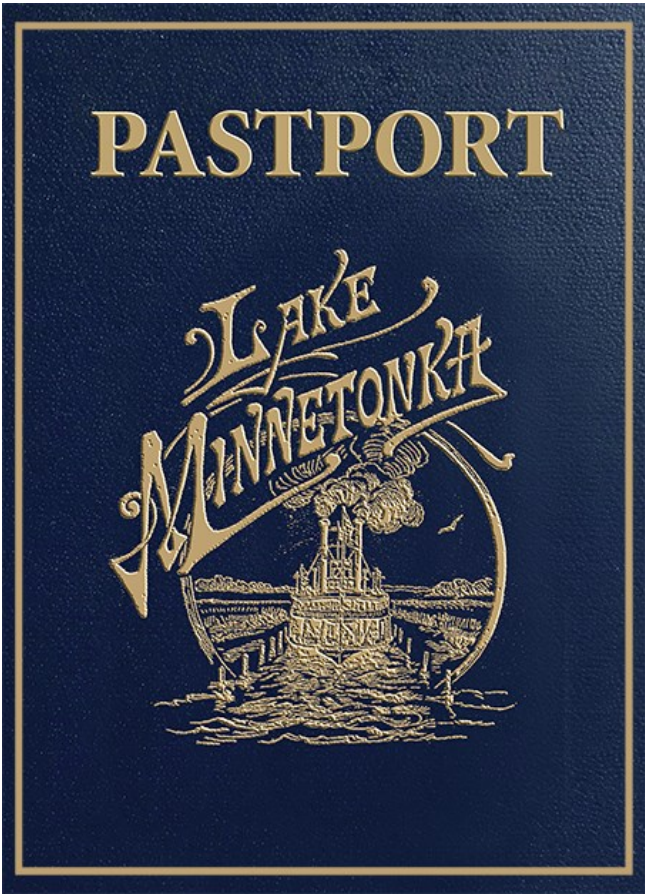
- Please contact me about volunteering. (*See panel to left for more information.*)

Donation of Artifacts

- Please contact me regarding the donation of historical items. (*See panel to left for more information about donating.*)

Mail form and check made out to ELMHS to PO Box 305, Excelsior, MN 55331. Or, join or contribute online at www.elmhs.org.

The Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.



How About A Little Summer Time Travel?

Grab Your *PastPort* and Go!

Amusement parks, clanging trolleys, yellow steamboats, creekside milling mansions, historic lakeside depots, Tonka Toys, and an 800 year old dugout canoe.

There's something for everyone to hear and see as you experience the stories that make up the fascinating history of the Lake Minnetonka area by visiting all seven history organizations around the lake.

To make your journey even more exciting and guide you on your way, pick up a free Lake Minnetonka history "PastPort" at any of the seven Lake Minnetonka history organizations.

Have your "PastPort" stamped at each museum between Memorial Day to Labor Day to earn a chance to win a special "Basket of History!"

Learn more here lkmtkahist.weebly.com.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

PO Box 305
Excelsior MN 55331

