

FALL/WINTER 2018

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 are free and open to the public, and hold a large collection of historical artifacts and documents. It regularly presents programs and publishes books on topics of local historical interest.

E L M H S

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: Peter Kizilos-Clift,
Francesca Landon, Mark Read,
Tad Shaw, Lisa Stevens, Jacob
Westman.

Emeritus Board Members:
Jerry Holl, Betty Peck

The Harborage

ELMHS Welcomes First Executive Director!



The biggest announcement to come from this year's annual meeting was the hiring of the first paid employee in the Society's 46 year history, Rachel Houck, as Executive Director. Search Committee chair Scott Dake informed the membership of the board's unanimous decision to hire Houck and described how the process started with a committee, established by the board, to look at hiring a part time admin to assist with the work of the volunteers (something that was approved in the budget by the membership for the past two years).

After lengthy research and meetings with other historical societies who had hired Executive Directors, we concluded that our money would be better spent hiring a part time Executive Director to assist with the advancement of the mission of the Society.

Out of 18 well qualified applicants, six were interviewed by the Search Committee. The committee believed that any one of the six individuals interviewed could successfully serve as the new E.D., but the committee unanimously, and without reservation, recommended the hiring of Rachel Houck to the board – firmly believing that she was an outstanding candidate, and by far the best candidate for ELMHS. The board then interviewed Rachel and enthusiastically extended an offer to her.

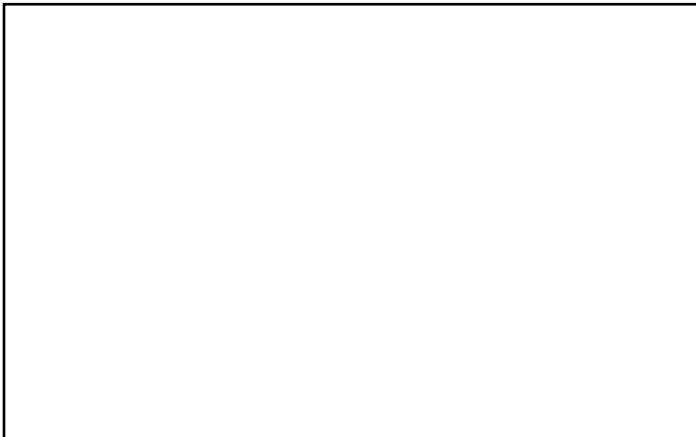
Rachel Houck comes to ELMHS with experience as the Curator of Collections and Exhibits for the Edina Historical Society and as Board President of the Scott County Historical Society. She is charged with leading and overseeing the day to day operations of this Society including the Archives, Museum and Public Programs. The Society's board and volunteers have been excited to welcome Rachel and to work with her to support the Society's mission. Her enthusiasm, fresh ideas and expertise will serve us well as the Society moves into this new era.

Tom Williams
Vice President, Board of Directors

Tapping History Programs

* TAPPING HISTORY CRUISE *

The Big Boats of Lake Minnetonka
on the historic steamboat “Minnehaha”
with historian Scott D. McGinnis



“Belle of Minnetonka,” ca. 1882.

Monday, September 10, 6:00 pm

Boards 5:45 pm behind 687 Excelsior Blvd.,
Excelsior

Tickets:

\$20 ELMHS members, \$35 non-members
At elmhs4.eventbrite.com

Enjoy a peaceful cruise aboard the historic steamboat “Minnehaha” as you hear about the largest boats to ever sail on Lake Minnetonka.

Historian and author Scott D. McGinnis will discuss the brief reign of the 160 foot long, 1000 passenger “City of St. Louis” built for William D. Washburn in 1881 and the 300 foot long, 2500 passenger “Belle of Minnetonka,” built for James J. Hill in 1882.

The “Minnehaha” will follow the routes of these floating palaces as passengers learn of their opulence, their fierce competition and their ability to draw thousands of tourists across the country to a still wild lake.

* BACK AT THE BREWERY *

Tapping History
Second Monday of the month
At Excelsior Brewing Company
421 Third Street, Excelsior
Free & Open to the Public.
Doors Open at 6:00pm, Program begins at 7:00pm.
Seating is First Come, First Served.
For more information: info@elmhs.org,
952-221-4766, www.elmhs.org.

Monday, October 15, 7:00pm

The Changing Face of Excelsior
with historian Scott D. McGinnis



244 Water Street, Excelsior, 2004 and 2018
Images courtesy of Scott McGinnis.

A longtime observer of this area’s architecture, Scott will present a pictorial history of Excelsior concentrating on the changes in residential and business structures from 2004 to the present.

This timely topic will show remodels and teardowns during this period and Scott will discuss the history of these buildings and the appearance of Excelsior over the years.

Monday, November 12, 7:00pm

The History of Armistice Day and a Remembrance of Our Veterans

with ELMHS Executive Director
Rachel Houck



*Funeral procession for Clarence Clofer,
Water Street, Excelsior, 1919.*

Tonight we'll salute the south lake area's veterans as we remember the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month and the armistice that ended the war to end all wars, 100 years ago.

**What history would you
like us to tap next?**

Is there a Lake Minnetonka topic you've always wanted to learn more about? A speaker you've always wanted to hear speak? Whether aboard the "Minnehaha" or on land—please send your ideas to info@elmhs.org.

Monday, December 10, 7:00pm

***A History of Trinity
Episcopal Chapel***

with historian Scott D. McGinnis



Trinity Chapel on Third Street, Excelsior.

Built in 1862-1863, Trinity Chapel is the oldest church building and the second oldest congregation in the Lake Minnetonka area. Learn about the people who made it possible, including the not particularly pious upheaval of the Episcopal diocese of Minnesota.

Monday, January 8, 7:00pm

***The Diaries of Lydia Ferguson,
Excelsior Pioneer***

with ELMHS volunteer Lisa Stevens

Much of what we know about early Lake Minnetonka history comes from the pages of this frail woman's diaries. She recorded it all, from 1854-1886, in a clear eyed chronicle which includes her own family's tale of suffering, insanity, death, love, endurance and guts. Experience a sepia tone-free view of the past in Lydia Ferguson's own words.



100 Years Ago in the "Minnetonka Record"

Excelsior Service Flag Given Its First Gold Star



"Minnetonka Record," May 24, 1918.

[Excerpted from "Minnetonka Record," Friday, Oct. 25, 1918]

Excelsior Lad Describes Life on Firing Life (sic)

*On the Firing Line.
Sept. 26, 1918.*

My dear Folks:

The day is rainy and the thunder roaring overhead. I think by the looks of things we will pull stakes this evening and make a mover nearer the front. In the last two months I have seen almost seventy-five different towns, some are almost completely destroyed by shell fire and others just a few buildings shattered. It is pitiful to see a prospering town shelled and see the poor old French people going away with the things they can take with them. That makes me harder on the Huns.

My company is out on duty today, but I did not have to go because a bunch of the N.C. went to the front and worked doughboys - digging trenches and putting up wire.

We made a shelter out of a few pieces of tin we took from some Hun dugouts; it kept a little of the rain off.

I am getting fairly rested now, but we sure had some drive. I went for a week with no sleep, believe me, I can stand some. During the night when one has a chance the gas signal sounds almost every fifteen minutes. Sleeping at the front is no small problem.

The Huns ran some in this drive, one had to hustle to keep sight of them. There were a great number of prisoners taken, they sure seemed glad to come with us, and take our wounded back where they could get care.

The dugouts that the Huns left were in fine shape, a fine piano, electric lights, hardwood floors and easy chairs. Don't believe they expected to leave them for they left lots of supplies and some guns. We found a canteen that had lots of smokes and things to eat. It was a good thing because the ground we advanced on was so broken that they could not get food to us for almost four days.

There sure was some bunch of shells bursting in the air and there is no use telling how it was because there are no words that can express. I can tell you some of the experiences that took place when I get home.

I am very well even though we did go through lots of hardships during the first few days of the drive. I suppose

(Continued on page 5)

[*"Minnetonka Record," November 15, 1918*]

Excelsior People Celebrate Signing of Armistice

News of the signing of the armistice came to Excelsior by telephone shortly before three o'clock Monday morning. A few minutes later our people were awakened by the ringing of the fire bell at the town hall. A little later the church bells joined in the chorus, shots were fired, whistles and automobile horns were blown and every other sound making instrument available was employed. Many of the citizens including some fifty ladies, gathered on Water street and continued an impromptu celebration until after daylight.

About nine o'clock a more dignified celebration took place. The entire population of the village and country assembled and headed by the school children and teachers paraded the principal thoroughfares with flags and banners flying. A group of Red Cross ladies carried the service flag by its four corners in the middle of the procession. The flag was raised at the corner of Water and Second Streets, a hollow square formed and the national songs were sung (sic), after which the crowd disbanded. Business houses remained closed however for the day and most of our citizens joined the peace celebration in Minneapolis. Minnetonka cars were crowded to and from the city until late at night.

A Letter from the Board President



I'm very excited to be the newly elected Board President of the Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society.

When my 8th grade class voted me "most likely to become President," I'm sure this is not what they had in mind. Nonetheless, I'm thrilled to take on this new role and bring new ideas to grow and

cultivate our role in our local community.

I did not grow up in the area, but have lived here for 30+ years with my husband and two boys who went through the Minnetonka schools and graduated from MHS. They both were very involved in Scouting and even became Eagle Scouts. My youngest son's Eagle Scout project was the Excelsior Walking Tour brochure, which I hope many of you have already used! Through his project, I became much more knowledgeable about the amazing history of the area and love to share the wealth of history our organization has to offer with others in our community. I've been able to do this at the local events such as, Art on the Lake and 10,000 Lakes Concours d'Elegance, and look forward to the upcoming Apple Day. I feel it's very important for the Society to have presence at these events to foster interest in our local history, as well as to stay connected with so many that already share our enthusiasm for our local history.

I'm also very excited about our recent hire of an Executive Director, Rachel Houck. Rachel brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise in historical societies and museums from her prior experiences. I'm looking forward to working with her, as she brings many ideas and learning to improve our Society.

I welcome your input and ideas and would love for you to become more involved in our volunteer opportunities to help us continue to fulfill our mission. Feel free to email me at any time.

Deanna Bunkelman
ELMHS Board President
President@elmhs.org

A Letter from the Executive Director

My first three months at ELMHS were a whirlwind. The board, volunteers, and community here in Excelsior are so much fun to work with. I am looking forward to getting to know the community better and helping to make history an integral part of the culture here. Everyone I have met so far is enthusiastic about what the future holds for our organization. That energy will be put to good use as we continue to build up our reputation in the communities we serve.

I am so excited about all of the new ideas and projects, but we need some new volunteers to help us make them come alive. We have opportunities for volunteers who want to work on a project for a day, a week, a month or longer! There has never been a better time to get involved. Here are just a few ways you can help...

Long term:

- Staff the Archives
- Join a committee to help with: the newsletter, event planning, marketing, or exhibits
- Be an advocate for us in the community!

Short term:

- Staff our Museum or events
- Refill our brochures at local businesses
- Help with research on specific topics

If you or someone you know would like to help us preserve and share our history, please contact me at Director@elmhs.org.

Thank you for supporting us and helping to preserve your history!

Rachel Houck
ELMHS Executive Director
Director@elmhs.org

(Continued from page 4)

you read all about it in the papers. I see by the New York Herald that is printed over here for the boys, that the event electrified the world and I think there will be many more.

I am sending this letter one mark, a piece of German money, which I got from a prisoner to send to you. Hope you receive it. Love to all.

*SGT. HORACE S. (sic) ALDRITT
Co. B 7th N.S. Eng's. A.E.F.*

MEMBERSHIP

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

Annual member benefits include:

- ◆ The Society's newsletter and mailings
- ◆ Invitations to special events
- ◆ Discounts and special member privileges on select opportunities
- ◆ 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 is staffed entirely by volunteers and welcomes people of all ages and abilities to pursue their passions and assist in areas including:

- **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 appeals and special fundraising events, data entry.
- **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 for preservation in our Archives and display in our Museum. 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.)



A never before seen photo of 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

February 1—July 31, 2018

MEMBERSHIPS

Platinum Level

Scott & Joey Dake

Gold Level

John Strandell

Silver Level

Cheryl Ahlcrona & Carl Floren

Michael D Bussey

Dan & Brittney Johnson

Dan & Allison Kelly

Duffy Larsen-Abramson &
Dave Abramson

Nell Ray

Kyle Uittenbogaard

Bronze Level

Bitta & Kerry Barnard

Maureen Burns

Betsy & Charlie Jones

Bruce & Jodi Noll

Alice & John Reimann

Debby & Doug Schmidt

Craig & Maureen Shaver

Julia & Steve Sherf

Pat Smith

Pam & Tom Stovern

Household Level

Peter J. Hartwich

Jerry & Justin Holl

Jeff Kamrath

Gary Kiecker

Gary & Joan Marquardt

John & Audrey Rudberg

Dan & Holly Shore

Alan & Martha Tollefson

Liz Vandam

Kathe White

Individual Level

Nicki Craig

Tarah Cummings

Kathy & Mark Endres

Joyce Hummell

Francesca Landon

Thomas McCarthy

Rex Rundquist

June Seamans

Deanne Gray Straka

Ron Wagner

Senior Level

Gregory Cotton

John & Carole Cranbrook

Roger W. Cuthbertson

Kay & Bob Derner

Rolf & Jean Erickson

Max Green

Craig Gustafson

Lyle & Mary Hathaway

Susan & Michael Kimitch

Jim LaHaye

Paul Maravelas & Joni Scheffel

Jerry & Kathy Martin

Sherri McCallson

Pam McDavitt

Leone & Patrick McGlone

Kristin Miller

Lissa Miller

Judy Mueller

Bob Nygaard

Ed & Charty Oliver

Mary Rosati

Marti Sanville

Allan M. Schneider

Sally Sprengeler

Kathy Suddendorf

Mark Swedlund

Rosemary Dupont Whowell

Cyrus & Edna Zulghadr

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

Mr. & Mrs. Nick Johnson

Dr. & Mrs. Randy Julian

Terrance Kellogg

Mark Knowlton

Tom & Carol Knowlton

Michael Kramer

Ann Lundsten

Scott McGinnis

Minnesota Streetcar Museum

Robert L. Naas

Mr. & Mrs. William Naegele

Aaron Person

Sharon Provost

Kellie & Gary Ringate

Kathy Knowlton Schmid

Carol Schmidt

Dr. Milton H. Seifert

Tad Shaw

Lisa Stevens & Jeff Hatcher

Rodney Thompson

TSP Architecture Inc.

Ruth Witrak

CONTRIBUTORS

American Legion Post #259

General Mills Foundation

Craig Gustafson

Jack Post and Family in Memory

of Geneva L. Post

June Seamans

A very special thank you to all of the ELMHS volunteers who have given their
time to the Museum, Archives, selling merchandise at Apple Day, 10,000
Lakes Concours d'Elegance, Art on the Lake and so much more!
We wouldn't be here without you.

ACCESSIONS

February 1-July 31, 2018

Thank you for allowing us to preserve your history for future generations!

- **Lori Anderson:** Photo of the Hermitage and misc. photos of unknown subjects. Excelsior Roaring 20s souvenir button. James R. Olds, City Clerk/Treasurer, Excelsior business card.
- **Marcia Asp:** Photos of Excelsior High School basketball team, 1937; Freed Motor Co, Excelsior; Gideon Memorial Park, 1912; Excelsior Bay, 1910. Curly's Bar tokens.
- **Rolf Erickson:** Digital files of Ellen Wilson Meyer newspaper columns. Misc. assessor's photos and information regarding Tonka Bay and Excelsior.
- **Mary Freid:** Photos of mural at 331 Water St. Postcard showing "Great Minneapolis-Lake Minnetonka Electric Highway."
- **Mike Gaffron:** Slides of Christmas Lake Apartments 1979 tornado damage.
- **Scott D McGinnis:** Stereoview *Hattie May* by M. Nowack; *Belle of Minnetonka at Solberg's Point, Excelsior*. Large collection of *Lake Minnetonka photos 1976-2003*. *TCRT Ferry Boat postcard, 1906*. *Trinity Chapel Excelsior Historical American Building Survey*. *Excelsior Amusement Park tickets for various rides*.
- **Museum of Lake Minnetonka:** Watercolor of Water Street, Excelsior by K. Kupferschmidt, 1999.
- **Mary Kay Schmitt:** Photos of Excelsior Amusement Park roller coaster damage, 1928.
- **Lisa Stevens:** Lake Minnetonka souvenir silver spoon.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Excelsior MN 55331
PO Box 305

