



## MINNESOTA DIGITAL LIBRARY

Press Release  
Minnesota Digital Library

For more information contact:  
Jada Hansen, Scott County Historical Society Curator  
[jhansen@scottcountyhistory.org](mailto:jhansen@scottcountyhistory.org) or (952) 445-0378 or  
Marian Rengel, Minnesota Digital Library outreach coordinator  
[mrregel@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:mrregel@stcloudstate.edu) or (320) 308-5625.

(Shakopee, MN Sept. 20, 2006) – The Minnesota Digital Library Coalition received a National Leadership in History Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History at that organization’s annual meeting Saturday in Phoenix, Ariz. Ben Leonard, director of the Nicollet County Historical Society and a member of the MDLC steering committee, accepted the award, which recognizes the MDLC for “broadening access to historic images through “Minnesota Reflections.”

The Scott County Historical Society (SCHS) joined in the development of “Minnesota Reflections” by sending historic photographs to the Minnesota Digital Library for scanning. The AASLH selection committee chose the Minnesota Digital Library Coalition for this award because of its “ability to collaborate with so many institutions to improve public access to historic images using the highest digital standards.”

Marian Rengel, who is now the outreach coordinator for the Minnesota Digital Library, nominated the MDLC and “Minnesota Reflections,” a collection of digital objects available to the public over the World Wide Web, because both demonstrate together “the power of a shared vision.”

“While the members of the MDLC are the center of this project, the people from the participating organizations are its body, its substance,” she wrote in her nomination of the MDLC for this award.

“Minnesota Reflections” is a collection of more than 10,000 digitized photographs and documents. More than 60 museums and libraries from across the state, including the Scott County Historical Society helped develop this new resource. People may explore the digital copies of that collection at <http://reflections.mndigital.org>. The Minnesota Digital Library Coalition is continuing work on this statewide resource and expects to add more participants and more photographs, artwork, letters, documents and maps to “Minnesota Reflections” in the next 12 months.

Professionals from Minnesota’s library, historical, museum and educational organizations form the MDLC and are working together to create convenient world-wide access to the treasures of Minnesota for its citizens and people around the world.

The Scott County Historical Society participated in this project to further their mission of Searching, Saving, and Sharing the History and Cultural Heritage of Scott County. One of the goals of SCHS is to provide quality, historically accurate programs for teachers, students, and families as a service to the public; this was seen as yet another way that SCHS could help bring history to as many people as possible. What makes the photographs from SCHS significant is that Scott County has always been a point of great cultural mixing, which is enhanced by the proximity to the Twin Cities, for which people commute to and from each day. From the Dakota band that leant its name to the city of Shakopee, to the early Irish, German, and Czechoslovakian pioneers, to the wave of Americans from the big cities of the east, Scott County has always been intrinsically Minnesotan. The SCHS photographs' represent such topics as victory celebrations for world wars, farmers working the land, festivals, historical architecture, small town circuses, life on Main Street, steam boats on the Minnesota River, Presidential visits, and early commerce in action.

The AASLH Leadership in History Awards, now in their 61<sup>st</sup> year, are the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history. The American Association for State and Local History is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history.

The work of the MDLC has been supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency that fosters innovation, leadership and a lifetime of learning, and State Library Services, the Minnesota state library agency, with funding under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The MINITEX Library Information Network is the administrative home of the MDLC and is also providing support for the MDLC.

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