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Stearns History Museum receives federal grant

Funding will update Research Center's archival catalog

ST. CLOUD (August 10, 2020) – The Stearns History Museum recently received an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant for \$21,444 to update its archival catalog system. The project will allow users, such as students, researchers, family historians, and others with a curiosity of the region, improved information access.

“Our primary focus is on accessibility,” said Steve Penick, director of archives at the Stearns History Museum. “We have an amazing archival collection of more than 500,000 photos, 1,800 oral histories, 1,800 WPA interviews, and over 18,000 family histories. The new catalog will enable users to search for materials in a much easier way – from family names to various subjects.”

“With the onset of COVID-19 limiting in-person visitation, this project is extremely timely,” he added. “We want to make sure that our patrons can find their history wherever they are, and this will allow that to happen.”

Over the next year, the staff will prepare the current catalog for migration, a process of moving data from the old system to the new one. They will correct misspellings, standardize terms, formatting, and punctuation. Once the data is prepared and moved, the public will have the capability to order photos and materials through a secure, online system.

The Stearns History Museum is pleased to partner with IMLS on this vital project. “As pillars of our communities, libraries and museums bring people together by providing important programs, services, and collections. These institutions are trusted spaces where people can learn, explore and grow,” said IMLS Director Crosby Kemper. “IMLS is proud to support their initiatives through our grants as they educate and enhance their communities.”

For the latest updates about the progress of the project, stay connected to SHM! Please visit our website, StearnsHistoryMuseum.org, and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Questions can be directed to info@stearns-museum.org or 320-253-8424.