

SPRING/SUMMER 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

PO Box 305
Excelsior, MN 55331
952-221-4766
info@elmhs.org
www.elmhs.org

ELMHS

Executive Director:
Rachel Houck

ELMHS

Board of Directors

Acting President: Scott Dake
Treasurer: Cheryl Ahlcrona
Secretary: Francesca Landon

Directors: Andrew Punch,
Mark Read, Tad Shaw, Lisa
Stevens.

Emeritus Board Members:
Jerry Holl, Betty Peck

The Harborage

Hometown Healer Dr. Edward R. "Uncle Ed" Perkins

The town doctor holds a key role in a rural area. Dr. Edward R. Perkins served in that role very well and contributed to Excelsior so much more.

Dr. Perkins was not only a physician, but also a patriot, politician, community activist, and entrepreneur. Born July 31, 1842 in Albion, New York, he moved with his parents to Minneapolis in 1854. He enlisted in Company D, Second Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, June 27, 1861, and received a disability discharge October 16, 1862 with the rank of corporal, having taken part in numerous engagements. He married Julia Chase, of Minneapolis, on February 25, 1864. In 1869, he followed his father, Thomas H. Perkins, to Minnetonka Mills where his father built a flour mill. He helped with the management of the facility until it was sold in 1871 to Hedderly & Vroman. This was also when he began to engage in politics, becoming a perennial Republican convention delegate and activist for the remainder of this life. In the mid-1870's, he dabbled in the Grange movement, an influential American agricultural advocacy group, of which he was later nominated for the Master of the State Grange in 1874. Though active on a state level, he only held office locally, being elected to Minnetonka Justice of the Peace in 1876, Excelsior Village Council in 1886, Excelsior Village Council President in 1887, and numerous years on the Excelsior Board of Health.

(Continued on page 3)



Dr. Edward R. "Uncle Ed" Perkins with little Harold Johnston whose baby brother was born that day. Taken 12 days before his death, May 9, 1910.

The Society Column

From the Executive Director

I would like to start by correcting an oversight from the previous newsletter. In November 2020 ELMHS was fortunate enough to receive a grant from the Wedum Foundation in the amount of \$2,000 to help cover operational costs. Dana Wedum Kennelly was the foundation liaison who advocated for us and helped us through the application process. Thanks to Dana and the Wedum Foundation, we were able to put this money toward costs that other grants do not cover such as rent, utilities, payroll, etc. Unfortunately, I left the Wedum Foundation off of the list of supporters in the Winter/Spring 2021 edition, and now would like to extend my apologies for that oversight and offer a huge THANK YOU to them for their support!

Next, I am pleased to announce that we will be doing some in-person programming this summer and fall including History Cruises on the *Lady of the Lake* and Tapping History at the Excelsior Brewing Company. Keep checking our website for all the latest updates on these programs and more!

Special thanks to our volunteers and board members listed below for all they did to keep ELMHS running smoothly throughout the turbulent 2020.

Rachel Houck, Executive Director

Volunteers and Board Members:

Cheryl Ahlcrona	Andrew Punch
Christian Belz	Mark Read
Deanna Bunkelman	Lori Schlottman
Scott and Joey Dake	Tad Shaw
Sharon Dana	Jean Small
Steve Kobs	Lisa Stevens
Francesca Landon	Mary Upgren
Scott McGinnis	Kathy White
Bruce Noll	Tom Williams
Kirsten Pardoe	
Aaron Person	

Lake Minnetonka Historical Organizations Study Update

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

Our consultant for this project, Arts Consulting Group, has now completed a benchmarking study of three other US historical organizations; interviews with twenty stakeholders; two virtual "town hall meetings" with twenty-six individuals and a comprehensive survey of 588 people. Next steps include the development of two operational models for further exploration and a public report on the findings of the study.

The Society was heartened and inspired by the outpouring of interest and enthusiasm for the history of our area and the support for this project. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has participated in the interviews, town halls and surveys and look forward to sharing what we have learned later in the year.

VISIT OUR ARCHIVES BY APPOINTMENT

Make an appointment to learn more about the people, places, businesses and buildings of Excelsior past and present. Our enthusiastic volunteers are ready to help you with your research.

**Visit the ELMHS Archives in the Historic Excelsior Public School located at
261 School Avenue, Lower Level, Excelsior.**

For an appointment contact us via email at info@elmhs.org or call 952-221-4766.

(Continued from page 1)

Perkins turned his attention to medicine in 1873 when he began, at age 31, his instruction with Dr. William H. Leonard of Minneapolis. The following year, he entered Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia. He graduated in the spring of 1878, and settled in Excelsior. The *Tourist & Sportsman*, June 8, 1878, announced his arrival in Excelsior. "Among the valuable accessions to the population of Excelsior, is that of Dr. E. R. Perkins, whose card will be found in another column. As so many invalids make a home at this resort during the summer, it may be a matter of interest to them to know that good medical advice may be procured at any moment, without the delay and expense of sending to the city."

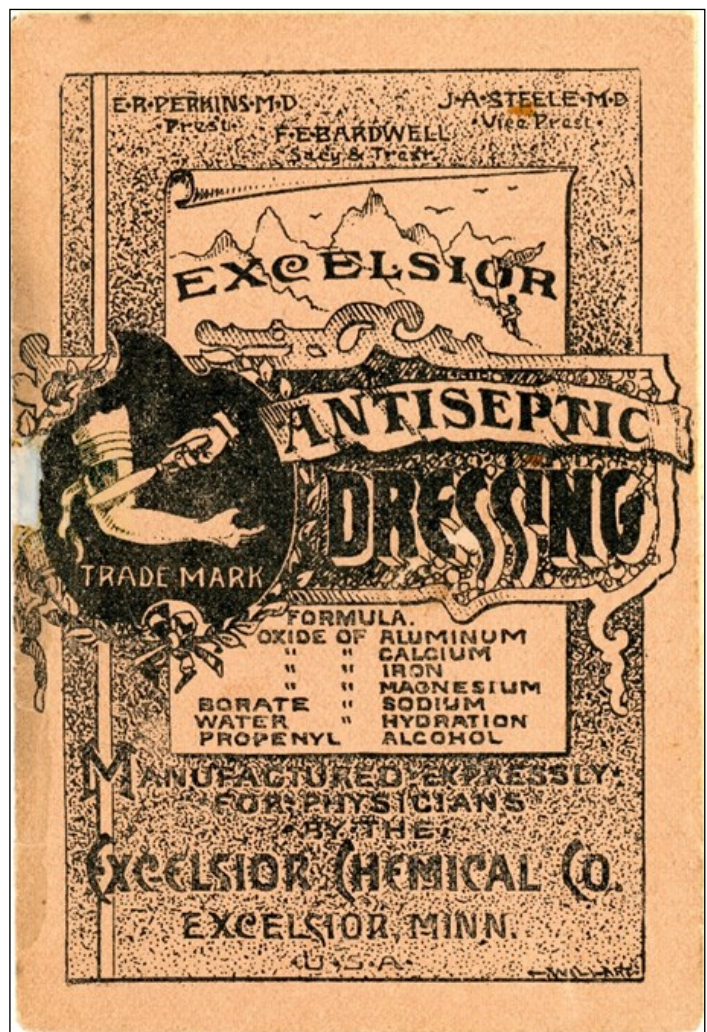
Despite being busy with house calls, he entered several organizations including the Ancient Order of Foresters of America, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the Grand Army of the Republic. He also became involved with and led the charge of several civic organizations including: Minneapolis Academy, Excelsior Improvement Association, Excelsior Improvement League, Excelsior Civic League, and Excelsior Magazine Club.

Among his business ventures was the Excelsior Electric and Water Company. The Excelsior Electric and Water Company was incorporated March 14, 1888 by Edward R. Perkins, Alanson W. Latham, Freeman G. Gould, Adrian E. Apgar, Edward P. Beeman, and Robert B. McGrath. Their dream was to create an electric plant and water works for the village of Excelsior. It would take nearly two decades for this dream to become a reality.

Dr. Perkins' most successful commercial adventure was the Excelsior Chemical Company. The product was Excelsior Antiseptic Dressing produced at the "mud factory" in Excelsior. The compound was commonly known as *Excelsine*. Dr. Perkins spent months developing a recipe for his antiseptic mud, using clays and ores from Lake Superior, Colorado, California, Virginia, Missouri and the old brick yard on the Bardwell place in Excelsior.

Starting in the fall of 1892, Dr. Perkins had his mud factory constructed where the west municipal parking lot is today. It was two stories tall and

20x60 feet. The factory included a mill for crushing the ores and mixing them all together, worktables and drying racks. As a young man, Stuart Dimond worked at the factory. He recalled Richard Perkins, a grandson of Dr. Perkins, recruiting boys and men to work at the factory when there was a batch of mud ready for packaging. They worked at a long table with a big kettle in the middle. Putty knives were used to fill square tins that were then slid down to the foreman to be weighed in at 8 ounces.



Advertising brochure for "Excelsine."

These were next capped and labeled before being shipped across the country. The price was \$1.00 for a one pound can or \$5.00 for six cans.

Directions on the label were as follows: "Cover the inflamed parts with the Dressing from one-eighth to one-fourth of an inch thick, put on with a case knife or spatula. Then cover the Dressing with two layers

(Continued on page 5)

Public Presentations - On the Couch and On the Lake!

Virtual Program

Monday, June 14, 7:00 pm

via Google Meet

Resilient: Life and Death on Lake Minnetonka

with Steve Kobs



DeGroot Hardware Store at 234 Water Street, Excelsior, Minnesota, ca. 1905.

Little known stories connect Excelsior with historic events like the Minneapolis truck drivers' strike and riot, the origin of Roller Derby, and early steps towards equality for women. A cow, some very productive bees, a midnight snack, and one particular spot on a roller coaster all contributed to tragic outcomes. See how area families responded when faced with the unthinkable.

To register: elmhs1.eventbrite.com.
\$5.00 suggested contribution per person.

FYI . . .

Past virtual programs are available on demand to our members through elmhs.eduvision.tv. For more information, see the "[ELMHS at Home](#)" page of our website.

2021 History Cruises

Join us aboard the "Lady of the Lake" for cruises on Lake Minnetonka. Board at the "Lady of the Lake" dock at the Excelsior Docks, Water and Lake Streets.

Tickets: \$22.50 members | \$37.50 non-members, visit elmhs1.eventbrite.com to register.

Monday, July 19, 7:00 pm: *Shipwrecks of Lake Minnetonka*



Scott McGinnis will regale passengers with tales of nautical mishaps. Hear stories of sinking boats, exploding boilers, and many other calamities which have disturbed the serene waters of Lake Minnetonka.

Monday, August 16, 6:00 pm:

***Topic and Presenter
To Be Announced***



Lady of the Lake

Visit elmhs1.eventbrite.com for updates.

For more information: www.elmhs.org/programs--events.html 952-221-4766



Museum Re-Opening

Saturday, July 3!

It's been a while, but the ELMHS Museum will finally be open! During the pandemic, ELMHS took the opportunity to make some major improvements to our Museum. Volunteers Steve Kobs and Mary Upgren did a great job spearheading this effort. The improvements include the addition of audio visual elements, new and updated exhibits, and more fun, kid-friendly interactives.

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

Museum Hours

Saturdays, July 3- September 25, 2021

10:00 am - 2 :00 pm

History Museum Passport

As a special welcome back, five Lake Minnetonka history museums will be offering history "passports." Visit each museum during the month of July, have your passport punched and earn the chance to win a special "basket of history." Visit lkmtkahist.weebly.com for more information.

VOLUNTEER AT OUR MUSEUM!

We still need more Volunteer Hosts at the museum. No experience necessary and training is provided. Email Rachel Houck, ELMHS Executive Director at Director@elmhs.org.

Save the Date

Tuesday, September 14 at 6:00pm

ELMHS Annual Meeting & Board of Directors Election

The ELMHS Board of Directors invites all members to attend this year's annual meeting *in person*, to learn about the Society's recent accomplishments, plans for the next year and to elect new board members and officers. More information will be available closer to the meeting.

(Continued from page 3)

of cotton—surgeon's preferred, but the common will do. Then bandage over all in the usual way. . ."

Excelsine was also prescribed as a chest treatment for pneumonia, pleurisy and puerperal peritonitis. It seemed to be most effective as a topical treatment on wounds and skin conditions such as cuts, abrasions, burns, carbuncles, rashes, and poison ivy reactions.

Following the devastating fire at Hinckley, Minnesota on September 3, 1894, Dr. Perkins took a large stock of his Excelsior Antiseptic Dressing and personally treated many burn victims. Upon his return to Excelsior, Dr. Perkins headed a relief effort that raised nearly \$100 to ease the suffering of those affected by the vast forest fire that destroyed the entire town of Hinckley.

Dr. Edward Rowlandson Perkins died May 21, 1910. During the previous year, he had told friends that his death was imminent. That morning he was on a streetcar waiting for it to depart so he could attend to a patient in Hopkins. He was suddenly stricken though, by a suspected cerebral hemorrhage. "Uncle Ed" had cared for the injured and ill of Excelsior for 32 years. The entire village of Excelsior shut down for his funeral. It was held at the Perkins home and the crowd filled the entire house, lawn and the adjoining street. He was laid to rest at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis next to his parents and grandparents.

Thanks for your support!

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS AND DONORS

For the period of January 1 to April 30, 2021

MEMBERSHIPS

Platinum Level

Bruce & Barbara Jensen
Dan & Brittney Johnson
Richard & Bonnie McGinnis

Gold Level

Perry King

Silver Level

Colleen Aldritt
Lydia & Brian Botham
Jean Gray
Ralph Hatch
Jeff Kamrath
Steve & Judy Krause
Jim Ladwig
Duffy Larsen-Abramson &
Dave Abramson
Woody Love
Doug & Lori McDougal
Todd McGonagle
Larry W. Opfer
Nick & Kathy Ruehl
Patrick & Elizabeth Schiltz
Tom & Barbara Warner

Bronze Level

Mary Jane Barnard
Jane Cox
Thomas & Sarah Kolar
Jodi Naylor
John Purdy
Susan Queen
John & Audrey Rudberg
Craig & Maureen Shaver
Robert Tyler
Katy & Dewayne Ullsperger
Kathy & Todd White

Household

Eden Prairie Historical
Society
Terry Forbord
John Kieffer

Nancy & Dave
Nordmeyer
Rex Rundquist & Sharon
Gibbons
Lori Schlottman
Tim & Kathy Soboleski
Deanne & Gordy Straka
Gary & Kay Thompson
Karen & Brian Zais

Individual

Joyce Bakko
Deb Bierbaum
Conley Brooks
Nancy Christianson
Gregory Cotton
Tarah Cummings
Michael Goertel
Lindsay Hannah
James Moffet
Julie Moore
Mark Read
Mark Swedlund
Deborah Zachman

Senior

Susan Anderson
Dan & Terry Austin
Elaine C. Barber
Betty Bright
Jo Dahl
Rolf & Jean Erickson
Jean Erickson
Joseph Finley
Drue Gisvold
Max Green
Craig Gustafson
Sharon & Mike Hamlin
Dean Hanus
Kathy Johnson
William Keegan
Beverly Lane

Mary Mann
Paul Maravelas
Gary & Joan Marquardt
Mrs. Joan Marquart
Michael Mason
Jean & Dick Mueller
David & Judy Rients
Stanley Rostad
Dale Rostad
Vernon Schaaf
Mark Scholle
Will Skadsberg
Barb & Bill Tapper
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 Wittrak

DONORS

Rolf Anderson
Aaron & Angie Bean
Nancy Christianson
Francis Colby
James Donna
Carol Downie &
Gregory Thomas
John DuPont
Rolf & Jean Erickson
Craig Gustafson
Carolyn Jorgensen
Ed & Charty Oliver
Susan Peterson
Jack Post & Family in honor
of Geneva L. Post
Carol Schmidt
Nancy Smith
Barb & Bill Tapper
Alan & Martha Tollefson
Nancy E. Youngdahl

Be a Volunteer!

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:

- **50th Anniversary Committee:** Help ELMHS commemorate this milestone in 2022 by planning the celebration activities in 2021.
- **Museum Host:** Greet visitors and provide tours of the ELMHS museum, sell merchandise from the museum gift shop.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers for shifts at the ELMHS Museum, Archives, special events and programs.
- **Communications:** Writing press releases, creating marketing materials, contributing to social media, maintaining our website, etc. Must have experience using Microsoft Publisher or similar software.
- **Public Programs and Events:** Plan, publicize, and execute events for ELMHS including Tapping History, History Cruises, fundraisers, member-only events, and virtual programs.
- **Membership/Fundraising:** Recruiting new members, contributors, and volunteers, helping with direct mail and special events.

Training is provided. To learn more visit our website at www.elmhs.org/volunteer or contact us at info@elmhs.org or 952-221-4766.

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! Learn more here: www.elmhs.org/donate-artifacts. (Due to space limitations, the Society is unable to accept all donations.)

Not a Member Yet?

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 _____

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.

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.*)

ACCESSIONS

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

- **Sharon Graeff:** Two boxes of photographs of the Charles Haralson and Pat Cunningham families including two photo albums, various photographs and negatives of the Excelsior Fruit Growers Association, Minneapolis & Saint Louis Railway Excelsior depot, orchards, and fruit growing.
- **Richelle Hoo:** Interior photograph of King Hoo's Excelsior Cafe, 229 Water Street, circa 1921-1924.
- **Cathy Wistrand Karaffa:** Wistrand family photographs, Excelsior Schools report cards, Excelsior Grade School class photographs, 8x10 photo of interior of Excelsior Congregational Church 1944, May 31, 1940, Excelsior High School newspaper *Minnetonka Breezes*.
- **Scott D. McGinnis:** 2 stereo views of Excelsior Waterfront 1880 and Hotel Saint Louis 1880.
- **McLeod County Historical Society:** 6x10 photograph of streetcar boat *Minnetonka*, circa 1930.
- **Bruce Noll:** Pamphlet, Indian Legends of Minnesota Lakes, A Legend of point Wa-Kon, Lake Minnetonka.
- **Renville County Historical Society:** Old Log Theater program, *Life With Father*, 1969.
- **Alvin Schaut:** color postcard, steamboats *Puritan*, *Excelsior* and *Victor* at Tonka Bay, circa 1907.
- **Lisa Stevens:** Color postcard, cartoon drawing of steamboat *Arthur* at Excelsior docks with Shriners, circa 1906.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Excelsior MN 55331
PO Box 305

