

Curator's Choice

THE ARTS AND CRAFTS movement's values of handcraft and creative expression found fertile ground in Minnesota. Included in the Minnesota Historical Society's furniture collection from the turn of the last century is this tall, handmade canterbury or magazine rack, made by Anthony Edward Ofstie, a Norwegian immigrant born in 1861. The dark-stained, quarter-sawn oak stand (visible in the dining-room photo) features a square top with marquetry of various-colored woods.

Employed for most of his life driving fire engines with Hook and Ladder Company No. 6, Ofstie may have developed his appreciation for woodworking while driving a Minneapolis furniture-store truck. He and his wife, Julia, enriched their southeast Minneapolis home with furniture of his own design. Among the six pieces in the Society's collection today are an unusual table and upholstered armchair made of cow horns and oak. A decoratively monogrammed wooden music-storage cabinet contains a note that Ofstie handcrafted it for one of his two sons, a heartfelt gift of which lofty Arts and Crafts theorists surely would have approved.

—PATTY DEAN, supervisory curator, museum collections



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