**Local History on the World Wide Web**

Thomas Jay Kemp

**Every day we hear about** the growing number of eBooks that can be downloaded and read on special hand-held readers. Microsoft, Barnes & Noble, netLibrary, and others are promoting eBooks that libraries can add directly to their online catalogs. In addition to these pay-per-view eBooks, thousands of others are already online, practical to use, and—best of all—free.

Over the last five years, universities, major libraries, and special projects have digitized and mounted thousands of books on the World Wide Web, making them freely available to anyone. The Library of Congress’s *American Memory Project*, the *Making of America*, the *Gutenberg Project*, and *Documenting the American South* are some of the best-known and most successful digital library projects.

There are now well over 25,000 books online. Roughly 10 percent of them are local histories, genealogies, biographies, and similar material of interest to local researchers. Many of these items are scarce, being held by a handful of libraries with limited hours and restricted access. Having these books online not only broadens access but also makes them easier to use, as they are completely key-word indexed. With every word of the text, preface, and appendixes searchable, the pace and reach of our research will increase dramatically. We will be able to search secondary sources quickly and move on to a wider variety of primary sources. These resources will be used by more researchers than ever before, improving the quality of our local histories and genealogies.

The following list of Minnesota-focused local-history materials is a representative sample of the type of local histories, genealogies, and biographies freely available on the web. It is excerpted with permission from *The Genealogist’s Virtual Library: Full-text Books on the World Wide Web* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000. 257 p.). It has been edited slightly for print; remember that urls have no spaces between characters. For an expanded version of this article, see: http://www.mnhs.org/mnhistmag/ebook.

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Minnesota


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Minnesota, the Empire State of the New Northwest, the Commercial, Manufacturing and Geographical Centre of the American Continent. St. Paul: Board of Immigration, 1878. 88 p.

http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbumbib:field(DOCID+@lit(09183T000)):@@@$REF$


Vol. 1: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbumbib:field(DOCID+@lit(0866aT000)):@@@$REF$

For volumes 5, 7, 9, 10, pt. 1, 10, pt. 2, 12, or 15, change letter “a” in (0866aT000) to b, c, d, e, f, g, or h.

Neill, Edward D. A Hand Book for the Presbyterian Church in Minnesota, Designed to Promote Order in and Love...
Old Rail Fence Corners; The ABC’s of Minnesota History. Austin, MN: McCulloch Printing Co., 1914. 333 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(DOCID+@lit(19293To00)):@@@$REF$


Shutter, Marion Daniel. Progressive Men of Minnesota. Minneapolis: Minneapolis Journal, 1897. 514 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(DOCID+@lit(19129To00)):@@@$REF$

Ashmeead, James. Three Score Years and Ten: “Three Score Years and Ten”: Life-long Memories of Fort Snelling, Minnesota and Other Parts of the West. Minneapolis: Harrison & Smith, 1888. 176 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(SUBJ+@band(Fort+Snelling,+Minn.+))

Blue Earth and Le Sueur Counties

George, Alice Mendenhall. The Story of My Childhood, Written for My Children. Whittier, CA: Smith, 1923. 87 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(DOCID+@lit(04681To00)):@@@$REF$

Buffalo Lake (Renville County)


Clearwater Lake (Stearns County)

Dally, Nathan. Track and Trails, or Incidents in the Life of a Minnesota Territorial Pioneer. Walker, MN: Cass County Pioneer, 1931. 138 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(DOCID+@lit(07519To00)):@@@$REF$

Fort Snelling


Van Cleve, Charlotte Ouisconsin. Three Score Years and Ten: “Three Score Years and Ten”: Life-long Memories of Fort Snelling, Minnesota and Other Parts of the West. Minneapolis: Harrison & Smith, 1888. 176 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(SUBJ+@band(Fort+Snelling,+Minn.+))

Northfield (Rice County)

Grose, Ingebrit F. Fifty Memorable Years at St. Olaf, Marking the History of the “College on the Hill” from Its Founding in 1874 to Its Golden Jubilee Celebration in 1925. Northfield, MN: Northfield News, 1925. 46 p. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/lhbum:@field(SUBJ+@band(St.+Olaf+college,+Northfield,+Minn.+))

St. Paul


Wright County
