

CURATOR'S CHOICE

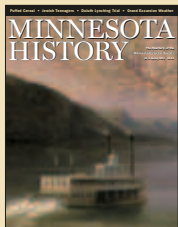
ARTISTS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN have been embellishing the surfaces of functional objects since the beginning of time. The Society's museum collections are rich in examples of these aesthetic contributions to daily life. Decorated surfaces can enliven objects of clay, glass, metal, birch bark, leather, wood, or fiber. Those shown here incorporate plant motifs and span nearly 100 years, from the late-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century.

The Minnesota Crafts Council's annual festival, to be held at the History Center June 25–27, 2004, offers visitors the opportunity to see countless examples of surface design in the work of 140 contemporary craft artists—and perhaps to acquire pieces to enhance their own everyday lives.—*Marcia Anderson and Patty Dean, MHS museum collections*

Drawn and scraped birch-bark makuk, about 7 inches high, made by Ojibwe in the midtwentieth century; black-and-white carved-porcelain vase by Matthew Metz, Houston, MN, 1995; molded stoneware jar with handles, designed in 1929, part of Red Wing Potteries' "brush ware" line (gift of Anne Paine Williams); and sterling silver spoons and salt holders with a hammered design and gold-wash interior vermeil decoration, a wedding gift, about 1870, made in Massachusetts but sold at a St. Paul jewelry store (gift of James Taylor Dunn).



PHOTO BY ERIC MORTENSON/MHS



MHS COLLECTIONS

About the Cover

The verdant bluffs and clear skies of Minnesota Territory greeted travelers steaming up the Mississippi River with the Grand Excursion of 1854. This promotional Rock Island-to-St. Paul junket introduced capitalists, journalists, and the nation to the splendors of the region. A detail from Ferdinand Reichardt's 1857 oil on canvas, *View on the Mississippi River*, captures the idyllic environment, set against a detail of J. H. Young's hand-colored 1856 map of Minnesota Territory. For more on the Grand Excursion, see the article on page 36 and TimePieces inside the back cover.



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