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Articles

A New Exhibit Expands the Stories at Split Rock Lighthouse

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ABIGAIL VENUSO

Split Rock Lighthouse is an iconic symbol of Minnesota and one of the most popular tourist destinations in the state. Built as a vital aid to navigation on Lake Superior in 1910, the lighthouse is now a jewel of the Minnesota Historical Society network of historic sites. A major renovation of the exhibit gallery at Split Rock Lighthouse seeks to broaden the stories of the site and the surrounding area and provide a deeper understanding of Split Rock's place in Minnesota history. Site supervisor Abigail Venuso shares the backstory of the exhibit's creation, while Rita Walaszek Arndt, program specialist in the Native American Initiatives department, offers insights into the sharing of Indigenous history in the region.

White Supremacy on Parade

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The Fight to Stop *The Birth of a Nation* in the Twin Cities

DREW M. ROSS

In February 1917, a 300-car parade promoting the Minneapolis Auto Show traveled east from Minneapolis to St. Paul. At its front, a conductor dressed in a white robe and pointy hood led a 20-piece band on the back of a flatbed truck. As the parade ended, 800 cheering marchers, most clad in Ku Klux Klan costumes, swarmed downtown St. Paul. How did this overt display of white supremacy come to the Twin Cities at a time when the Klan was still just a fledgling organization in the Deep South? Historian Drew Ross describes the controversy around the movie *The Birth of a Nation* and how the film may have inspired Klan imitators in the far north.

From the Archives

Minnesota National Forest

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The Politics of Compromise, 1898–1908

NEWELL SEARLE

In this article that first appeared in *Minnesota History* in 1971, historian Newell Searle examines the movement to establish a national forest in northern Minnesota in the late nineteenth century, efforts that ultimately reemerged in the 1970s to create Voyageurs National Park. The article explores early conservation efforts in Minnesota in the face of a strong lumber industry as well as the implications for Indigenous people who have lived in the region for centuries.



CONTRIBUTORS

John J. Moriarty is a conservationist and naturalist who has been working on restoring natural habitats in the Twin Cities metro area for more than 30 years and is currently the senior manager of wildlife for Three Rivers Park District. He has authored and coauthored several books on related topics, including *A Field Guide to the Natural World of the Twin Cities*, *Minnesota's Natural Heritage*, and *Amphibians and Reptiles in Minnesota*.

Drew M. Ross is a writer, editor, researcher, and writing coach. He is the author of *Walking on Sand: The Story of an Immigrant Son and the Forgotten Art of Public Service* (University of Utah Press, 2004) and an article on the design of Greek coins published by *The Mathematical Intelligencer*. He is currently working on a history of Minneapolis and St. Paul that explores how they became twins and managed to stay twins.

Newell Searle is a writer, historian, and policy advocate. He is the author of *Saving Quetico-Superior: A Land Set Apart* (MNHS Press, 1977) and has written articles about Minnesota's natural and human history for such publications as *Living Wilderness*, *Nature Conservancy News*, and the *Star Tribune*. Searle has a bachelor's degree from Macalester College and a PhD in history from the University of Minnesota. During his 35-year career in public affairs, he held positions at Cargill, in the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and at Second Harvest Heartland, among others.

Abigail Venuso holds a bachelor's degree in history from Florida College and has nine years of experience in public history. She has worked for small local historical societies, the National Park Service, and most recently the Minnesota Historical Society, where she is site supervisor at Split Rock Lighthouse.



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Split Rock Lighthouse program manager Jeri L. Bohac analyzes an early photo from the construction of the lighthouse—a major engineering undertaking in 1909–10.

CURATOR'S CHOICE 156

A jewel of the new Split Rock exhibit gallery is the wheel from the *Madeira* barge, which was recovered by divers from the bottom of Lake Superior in 1961—more than 50 years after a major storm smashed the barge to pieces. Split Rock's site manager Hayes Scriven explains the story of the *Madeira* and how the wheel came into the Minnesota Historical Society's possession.

BOOK REVIEW 197

John J. Moriarty reviews a new interdisciplinary collection of writings about Minnesota's natural and environmental history, *Nature's Crossroads: The Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota*.

PRESERVING, SHARING, CONNECTING
(inside back cover)

Shining a Light on Split Rock

A generous donation helped to ensure a rewarding visitor experience at the new Split Rock exhibit gallery.

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About the cover

Split Rock Lighthouse has stood mighty on the cliffs above Lake Superior for more than 110 years. In 2023, the Split Rock Lighthouse historic site is getting a major upgrade to its exhibit gallery that expands the stories being told and offers exciting hands-on activities that illustrate life at the lighthouse through the decades. (MAIN PHOTO BY HAYES SCRIVEN; INSET PHOTO FROM MNHS COLLECTIONS)

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