

# R.C.H.S.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## **Ramsey County Historical Society**

75 Fifth Street West

Landmark Center #323, Saint Paul, MN 55102

651-222-0701

[www.rchs.com](http://www.rchs.com)



*Linked in Friendship, Connected in Service*  
**Minneapolis/St. Paul (MN) Chapter**

January 27, 2021

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The Ramsey County Historical Society, in partnership with the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter, The Links, Incorporated, seeks to hire a contract historian.

### **Primary Contact:**

Mollie Spillman, Project Manager, Ramsey County Historical Society, [Mollie@rchs.com](mailto:Mollie@rchs.com).

### **Project Services:**

RCHS is seeking a contract historian to lead the planning of an exhibition as well as related programming efforts to celebrate and commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, to be held in 2022, and beginning in early 2021.

**Closing date: Friday, February 12, 2021, 5pm**

---

### **About the Organizations**

The purpose of this project is to tell the story of the **Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated**. The Links, Incorporated is an international non-profit established in Philadelphia in 1946. The organization has now grown to encompass 292 chapters in 41 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and the United Kingdom. It is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations with extraordinary women who are committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic survival of

African Americans and other persons of African ancestry. The Links, Incorporated membership consists of more than 16,000 members, all professional women of African descent.

The Links, Incorporated core values are friendship, integrity, honesty, service, commitment, family relationships, courage, respect for self and others, legacy, confidentiality, responsibility, and accountability. The members of The Links, Incorporated are influential decision makers and opinion leaders. The Links, Incorporated has attracted many distinguished women who are individual achievers and have made a difference in their communities and the world. They are business and civic leaders, role models, mentors, activists, and volunteers who work toward a common vision by engaging like-minded organizations and individuals for partnership.

The Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter was initiated and organized by Saint Paul native Marion Jones Kennon with assistance from her close friend Phyllis Hannah Ellis as the two co-organizers. Since 1972, more than 70 members have been committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African ancestry in the Twin Cities area. The Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022. The organization reached out to the Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) for help highlighting this milestone with a public exhibition.

**Ramsey County Historical Society** serves more than 20,000 students and educators each year via educational tours and summer programming at Gibbs Farm and classroom outreach programming. Adult programming includes the *History Revealed* program serving an audience of more than 6,000. Core operations include preserving its growing artifact and archive collection, publishing County history, and expanding history programming throughout the region.

The RCHS vision is to be a widely recognized innovator, leader, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community, delivering inspiring history programming, and using local history to educate and increase student achievement. This year, we are focusing on innovative ways to continue our mission of *preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future* using new online tools that will help us reach audiences both near and far. These tools include exciting new virtual tours and activities for students as well as exhibitions, presentations, and publications that reflect and reaffirm the diversity of our community.

#### **RCHS DEAI Statement**

*History informs us, inspires new choices, brings people together, and builds community. Likewise, it can be mis-used to inspire fear, create division, and perpetuate racism and other injustices. We resolve to present history in accordance with our values of Authenticity,*

*Innovation, Inspiration, Integrity, and Respect. We believe that by doing so our community will be more informed, more engaged, and will become stronger.*

---

**Position Description: Contract Historian**

**RCCHS is seeking a contract historian to lead the planning of a proposed exhibition as well as any related programming efforts, completing the following:**

- Work with current members of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, RCCHS staff, and RCCHS Board and/or Committee members to create an Exhibition Committee that will contribute to the development of the exhibition and any related programming efforts. The Exhibition Committee will be responsible for approving the historian's final plan.
- Examine 50 years of Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter artifacts and archives preserved by organizer: Marion Jones Kennon, other charter members and past and current members to ground subsequent research. The historian will also consult documents in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society and any other resources identified during the process.
- Recommend methods for collecting additional information, such as conducting oral histories.
- Develop exhibition themes, an exhibition outline, and in consultation with the RCCHS Curator, identify a basic layout for the exhibition.
- Identify photographs, objects, and documents to highlight and exhibit, in consultation with the RCCHS Curator, and utilizing materials offered for use by the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated.
- Identify vendors for exhibition fabrication and installation.
- Plan community programming in collaboration with the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter. Programming should involve each of The Links, Incorporated five "facets," including (1) the arts; (2) health and human services; (3) services to youth; (4) national trends; and (5) international trends. One example discussed involved working with local community colleges, Girls Taking Action, and Girl Scout Troops to create a girl's forum focused on local issues relevant to youth.

- Identify potential interest and schedules for a traveling exhibition at: the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery, Hennepin History Museum, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Penumbra Theatre, or public libraries such as the East Side Freedom Library and Roseville Public Library. Work with staff to incorporate ideas for alternative viewpoints or interpretations (e.g., highlighting Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter members’ contributions to Hennepin and Ramsey Counties specifically).
- Work with the RCHS Editor to identify topics and scope for related publications such as an article in “Ramsey County History” and an anniversary history book.
- Develop working budgets for the exhibition and any related programming.
- Complete a final research report and annotated bibliography for submission to the Minnesota Historical Society as a condition of a Legacy grant.

### **Project Expected Results**

By preserving and presenting the history of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, RCHS will share a more complete history of the Twin Cities, celebrating an invaluable part of Minnesota’s cultural fabric. With a positive and uplifting narrative, the exhibition will share hope for a more equitable future for African Americans and other people of color, inspiring a new generation of African American women to shape the history of the Chapter’s next 50 years.

The exhibition will be installed in RCHS’s Gallery located in downtown Saint Paul’s Landmark Center. Final exhibit scope and goals will be identified in the planning process. Preliminary goals include engaging a wide range of individuals through the exhibition and all related programming and publication. A traveling exhibition will be created that can be exhibited throughout the Twin Cities region over multiple years.

### **Work Plan and Timetable:**

Once hired, the historian will have six months to complete the exhibition plan.

- **Month 1**
  - Finalize contract with historian.
  - Work with the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, RCHS staff, and RCHS Board and/or Committee members to identify the Exhibition Committee.
  - Meet with the Exhibition Committee.
  - Define preliminary exhibition goals.

- Begin preliminary research.
  
- **Months 2-3**
  - Preliminary research completed.
  - Additional research needs identified.
  - Exhibition goals refined and finalized.
  - Exhibition themes and outline drafted.
  - Exhibition objects selected.
  - Meet with the Exhibition Committee.
  
- **Months 4-5**
  - Finalize themes and exhibition outline.
  - Identify programming options.
  - Identify exhibition layout.
  - Source vendors.
  - Identify potential venues and schedules for a traveling exhibition.
  - Identify topics and scope for related publications.
  - Develop a working budget for all elements of the project.
  - Meet with the Exhibition Committee.
  
- **Month 6**
  - Finalize exhibition layout.
  - Finalize program plan.
  - Finalize budget.
  - Final meeting with the Exhibition Committee.
  - Complete a final research report and annotated bibliography.
  - Presentation to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Chapter, The Links, Incorporated.
  
- **Month 7**
  - Contingency for unexpected delays.
  - RCHS staff submits final research report for peer review.
  - RCHS staff completes final report for the Minnesota Historical Society.

Most of this project can be completed off-site and by phone or video conference as needed. This will ensure the health and well-being of all participants during the project.

Diversity candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

RCCHS budgeted \$9,375 to hire a historian to lead this project. This salary is based on the average rate of research and exhibition planning services from local museum consultants.

**How to Apply**

Please submit your application cover letter, a writing sample, and your resume to Mollie Spillman, RCCHS Curator ([mollie@rchs.com](mailto:mollie@rchs.com)) by **Friday, February 12, 2021**.

Interviews will commence the week of February 15, 2021.