

# Teaching American History 2008 Summer Institute

by Kari Kubicek

The third year of the Blufflands and Prairies: Southern Minnesota's Place in the Fabric of America's Story project programming was kicked off with a four day Summer Institute in early July. This project is part of a four



Cohorts working with archival materials at the Immigration History Research Center.

year (2006-2010) federal Teaching American History Grant project awarded to SSC in partnership with Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative (SW/WC), Winona State University (WSU) and the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). Programming for the third year of the project will focus on immigration, American identity, commerce, industrial development, and World War I.

Thirty one cohort members from both the southeast and southwest portions of the state participated in the Summer Institute each cohort group spending the first two days of the Institute in their own region, followed by the groups meeting up in St. Paul for the remaining days.

Days one and two of the Institute were workshop days for each cohort group. Guest speakers Louise Edwards Simpson, Assistant Professor of History at the College of St. Catherine and Pam Brunfelt, Instructor at Vermilion Community College, presented at both SSC for the SE cohort members and at SW/WC for the SW cohort members. Louise Edwards Simpson focused on immigration to the United States between the years of 1860-1920 and led a dis-

cussion based on suggested readings related to sweatshop girls. Brunfelt provided an overview of industrialization in the United States from the 1860s to the 1920s and led a discussion on suggested readings related to women and housework during this period.

Continuing from last year with a focus on the component of the Lesson Study Process, both SE and SW cohort members worked in small groups to plan, gather primary sources, and develop lesson plans to teach in their classrooms this coming fall and winter. Follow up discussions to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the lesson plan will take place at next spring's Cohort Networking event.

The final components of the first two days of the Summer Institute programming included: 1) the opportunity for a few cohort members to present lessons which they had developed during last year's grant programming to their peers, and 2) a Minnesota Industries Lesson presented by MHS staff for the 6-12 classroom. Evaluation comments were extremely positive and enthusiastic in regard to the cohort lesson plan sharing and the lesson presented by the MHS staff.

The two cohort groups met in St. Paul for the final two days of the Institute. During the morning of the third day, the teachers were introduced to the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) by SSC staff member and SEC facilitator Amy Grover. The SEC process helps to quickly identify gaps in curriculum and instruction and engages teachers in objective dialogue about what and how they teach. The SEC is a research based, online tool that helps teachers identify and visually display the content taught, the cognitive demand, and the instructional approaches used in classrooms and across grade levels.



Cohorts enjoying a scenic ride through the St. Croix River Valley in an antique rail car on the The Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway.

The cohort members also visited the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) and participated in the IHRC's Primary Sources in Ethnic Studies Program. The IHRC is an interdisciplinary research center in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota. Founded in 1965, the IHRC promotes research on international migration with a special emphasis on immigrant and refugee life in the U.S.

The fourth and final day of the Summer Institute began with a tour of the Mill City Museum which also included an introduction to their school programs, the movie, Minneapolis in 19 Minutes Flat Flour Tower Show, and a self-guided exhibit visit. For the final leg of the trip, the cohort members traveled by bus to Osceola, Wisconsin, and boarded the Osceola and St. Croix Valley Railway to journey through the St. Croix River Valley on a passenger steam engine much like immigrants from the past.

*The program planning for the upcoming year has been finalized and is listed on the page 5.*