

## In need of ideas to get the creative juices flowing? Here are some possible avenues of pursuit.

- Most of you are familiar with Laura Ingalls Wilder and the Little House on the Prairie stories. Did you know that Laura lived at one time in Walnut Grove, Minnesota? Inspired by these stories, you could create your own story about a pioneering family in the 1800's. Or you could do a drawing or painting to illustrate one of the events mentioned in books.
- Do you love animals? Have a beloved pet? Could you write about an animal living in Minnesota in earlier times? Could you depict that animal in pioneer times?
- How has life changed in Minnesota over the last 150 years? Can you imagine living without a microwave, cell phone, computer or even a telephone? How about a story or art work based on changes in living conditions?
- Do you know about the Minnesota Indian Uprising of 1862? Santee Sioux Chief Little Crow asked the federal government's Indian agency to provide provisions for his starving people. When he was refused, he led the uprising which caused many pioneers to seek shelter in Minnesota forts. If you wrote a story or created art that told this story, what view or aspect of the story would you tell. Did you know that the Crow River that runs through St. Michael, Hassan, Otsego and Dayton into the Mississippi River is named after Little Crow?
- From 1861-65 the Civil War was a major event in the lives of Americans. A major battle at Gettysburg devastated the 1st Minnesota Regiment. What stories are there to tell? Today Minnesotans are fighting in Iraq. Can you draw ideas from what you have heard about today's soldiers and their families? How different would the experiences be from these two wars? How would the fighting be different?
- Quilts were important at one time for more than just keeping you warm in bed. There were quilting bees which became a way for women to socialize while creating a practical but unique blanket. For blacks, quilts sometimes served to send coded messages to other blacks. They used music in the same way. Why did blacks communicate in this way? This could make a very interesting story. Could you create a paper or cloth quilt to tell a story of Minnesota history?
- What about the famous Dred Scott Case? How did it impact American history?
- Would you like to use famous Minnesotans as inspiration for your work? James J. Hill, Charles Lindberg, Wanda Gag, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale, Harold Stassen, Judy Garland, Sister Elizabeth Kenny, William and Charles Mayo, Roy Wilkins, Frank and Forrest Mars, William Douglas, Warren Burger, Harry Blackmun, Patty Berg, F.Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis to name a few.
- Is there someone you could interview who knows personal stories of pioneer times? Or how the Great Depression affected Minnesotan's lives?
- Before the bridge was built across the Mississippi River between Elk River and Otsego, boats brought people back and forth for business, school, and even for dating. In the winter, when the river froze over people walked or skated across. Can you imagine going shopping, attending school, or meeting a date like that? What might happen to people if conditions on the river were not quite right for crossing?
- The lumber industry was very important in this part of Minnesota as well as in places like Stillwater. Write a story about lumberjacks in Minnesota. What would it be like to travel down river to the big lumber mills in Minneapolis? What would you do if there were a lumber jamb?
- Imagine being a member of a farm family in Minnesota. How would you work the fields? How would you get your produce to market? Most people used either the Red River Oxcart Trail or the Mississippi River. What would it be like to travel on either of those with a load of farm products?
- Minnesota Inventions and Inventors such as Red Wing's Alexander Anderson, creator of a process for puffing wheat. Check out [www.minnesotainventors.org](http://www.minnesotainventors.org) for more recent inventors.

If you need materials such as markers, paints, paper for your work, please call the Arts Alliance at 763-441-4725. We even have a place where you can work Thursdays-Saturdays. We will gladly help in any way we can. We will be delighted to know that you have learned more about Minnesota history and have used your knowledge to be creative. We look forward to reading and seeing your entries.