



Minnesota in the Mail: A Postcard History

Bonnie Wilson

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"Arrived safely, will write more later." "Having a wonderful time, wish you were here." The briefest of messages, displayed for all the world to see, is scrawled across the back of a picture postcard of a placid lake or a small-town main street. Historic black-and-white images, gorgeous linen postcards, and contemporary chromes all tell stories of the state and its visitors over the decades. In *Minnesota in the Mail*, curator and postcard collector Bonnie G. Wilson highlights both the images and the curious stories behind them. Using 185 postcards selected from the extensive collection of the Minnesota Historical Society, she helps readers understand the needs and wants of postcard makers and senders, at the same time sharing historical details that go beyond the captions and messages. Grouped in four categories--towns, businesses, families, and vacations--are postcards showing resorts and main streets, the world's largest ball of twine and a barber shop on a railroad train, oversized fiberglass sculptures and ads for flour, an Ojibwe family and a woman baking in her kitchen. Wilson's concise history of the postcard industry is a helpful overview for postcard enthusiasts and novices alike. For those interested in learning how to "read" a postcard--beyond the penned messages and preprinted captions--a postcard primer offers a starting point, while cards and captions throughout the book illustrate this practiced skill. Details about regional publishers, including brief business histories and signature elements, are gathered in an appendix that collectors will appreciate. For over a hundred years, postcards have been created to show off a place and the people in it. *Minnesota in the Mail* uses these exquisitely distilled depictions to display the images and identity of the state itself.

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