

William E. Lass

Student Research and Writing Scholarship



William E. Lass, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus William E. Lass taught history to Minnesota State University students for 42 years. He earned undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of South Dakota at Vermillion. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. When Dr. Lass was hired in 1960 to teach Minnesota history on our campus, he had never taken a course in Minnesota history. However, his teaching and his students inspired him to seek answers to questions through research – often through unconventional sources. This intellectual curiosity led him to his current standing as the state's leading expert on Minnesota history.

Upon Dr. Lass's retirement in 2002, Minnesota Historical Society Research Fellow Emeritus Alan Woolworth commented "He's a meticulous scholar. He does very detailed, quality research. And he's very good at analyzing material and has a flair for writing."

Dr. Lass is a prolific researcher and writer, as is evidenced by his list of publications including dozens of articles and seven books. He is best known for his two books on Minnesota history. Dr. Lass wrote his first state history book, *Minnesota: A Bicentennial History* (1977) when he was chosen in a national competition as part of a bicentennial project to publish the history of each state and the District of Columbia. The second edition, *Minnesota: a History*, was published in 1998 and is used in schools throughout the state. Dr. Lass may return to this topic for a third edition someday. His other books include *Frontier Photographer: Stanley J. Morrow's Dakota Year* (co-author), *Minnesota's Boundary with Canada: Its Evolution Since 1783, A History of Steamboating on the Upper Missouri River* and *From the Missouri to the Great Salt Lake: An Account of Overland Freighting, Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway, 1819-1935*.

Dr. Lass established a research and writing fund to encourage and support students' intellectual curiosity.

Department of History
110 Armstrong Hall
507-389-1618