



**Mapping Minnesota
Video Podcast Transcript
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Patrick Coleman: Welcome. My name is Pat Coleman and, among other duties here, I'm the Map Curator at the Minnesota Historical Society, and I wanted to give you a preview, I guess, of the exhibit that's being mounted right now at the History Center, and it will open on February 28th. The exhibit is a rare opportunity for the public to see just a very small selection of our 22 thousand maps that are available any time in the library. What I've done is select a hundred of those maps and put them up here on the 3rd floor of the History Center. This exhibit will open on the 28th of February and will run through the summer into the early fall. So, please come and view those.

The earliest map in the exhibit is an Ortelius map and that was published in 1581, I believe. And we'll take those maps all the way up through the area of travel and exploration, and to the latest map in the exhibit will be from 2009. The focus of the library's collection of maps is the development of information about this area from the first explorers and travelers through this area, and we'll basically show what Europeans were hearing about this area and how the map was being filled in from just a blank space on a page to information as specific as where grandma caught the trolley to go downtown St. Paul and go to work.

If I had to choose a favorite in the exhibit upstairs; the favorite would have to be this latest acquisition: which is a globe that was printed in Paris in 1765. There's really no collection in the state of Minnesota that has a vintage globe like this. These globes were very common and would have been in any educated person's library, they would have been in educational institutions and they were quite heavily used. The most important thing about this globe is that it's based on the work by Willian Delisle. Now, Willian Delisle was kind of the rock star of French cartography. Now the globe that you see here was actually printed forty years after Delisle died. People kept reissuing plates that were done by earlier cartographers.

This map, if you look closely at it, you'll notice that there's a little bit of wishful thinking on it. And that's especially noticeable when you look at the Hudson's Bay and a couple of bodies of water that are running west out of Hudson's Bay creating a Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. There are a number of other things that are not as accurate as Delisle would have liked. The depiction of Lake Superior, for example, is not the most accurate.

The other thing that I've noticed about maps is that they're almost all political, to some extent. And this map, having been printed in Paris, is a very Franco-centric map. If you look carefully you'll see that the map does acknowledge the British colonies on the eastern shore of North America, but they're given a very fine width by this line. The other thing that's kind of interesting about it is the Prime Meridian runs directly through Paris and not through London. And there are some very strange cities, especially if you look closely at the area around the lower

Mississippi. There are a couple of cities whose names I don't recognize and I'm not sure what they depict exactly. But the globe will keep researchers busy for many years to come.