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## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH IN HISTORY

### A Report on The Stearns County, Minnesota Biographical Sketches



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Research Study

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#### Abstract

My intention for this project was to do a comprehensive study of the WPA Stearns County Biographical Sketches. My objective was two-fold: I wanted to find out if the sketches were of value beyond genealogy and I wanted to find out if they contained primary resource material that individuals might use in Stearns County local history studies.

After studying just a few of the sketches I realized I needed to do a short genealogy of the sketches themselves. I began with the grandfather of the sketches, the WPA Project itself. From there I descended to the FWP (Federal Writers Project), the WP, and then the local WP, the work that was done in Stearns County.

Having learned the lineage of the sketches, I was able to do a quantitative study of them, followed by a case study.

I chose agriculture as my case study because I wanted to find out if farmers talked about their own lives and work or did they really feel their lives not important enough to be talked about, as I have often read in scholarly literature. The WPA sketches are unpublished, local history documents written by relief workers during the Depression about "common" people. Farmers, I have come to believe, are considered "common" people. They have not often been written about in history beyond historical novels.

The WPA Biographical Sketches are Americans talking about America. I found my answers.

#### Comments

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Holden, Guerdon Stearns; sec'y Hollenden Hotel Co.; born, Cleveland, Dec. 9, 1881; son of Liberty E. and Delia Elizabeth Bulkley Holden;

educated at University School, Cleveland, Worcester Academy, Harvard University (A. B., 1904); married, Springfield, Ill., June 3, 1911, Elinor Chase; sec'y Hollenden Hotel Co., director

Plain Dealer Pub. Co.; member Phi Beta Kappa, Chamber of Commerce, Country, University, and Harvard Clubs. † Although mainly in Stearns County, the city extends into a neighboring county. ‡ These cities are based in an adjacent county, but extend into Stearns County. References and notes. External links. \* [<http://www.co.stearns.mn.us/> Stearns County official website] \* [<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnsartel/> Sartell Historical Society] - Sartell, MN \* [<http://www.stearns-museum.org/> Stearns History Museum official website].

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