Letter writing may be a lost art here in the early years of the 21st Century, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the art was flourishing. Minnesota Reflections is rich with letters, from young brides, soldiers, prisoners of war, elderly women, new teachers, college presidents, sweethearts, children, and students, all writing home about their lives in Minnesota.

Here, for your exploration, are some of the collections I enjoy reading in Minnesota Reflections. (You should know that all handwritten objects in Minnesota Reflections have been transcribed and those transcriptions are provided with each letter.)

**Hamline University**  
Euphemia Miller Loag, a young bride, traveled to St. Paul in the fall of 1887 with her new husband, a new professor at Hamline University. There are 25 of Effie’s letters in this collection. Her first, written September 9, 1887, is a 14-page letter to her mother full of details about her train journey. It is at [http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/hmu/id/263](http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/hmu/id/263)

**Carleton College**  
Horace Goodhue, who would become one of the first faculty members hired by Carleton College, wrote letters to his fiancé, Bella Bigelow, who was living in New England. There are 18 letters in this collection. Goodhue’s last, dated April 17, 1869, tells of looking for teaching positions in Minnesota [http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/ccn/id/4](http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/ccn/id/4)

**Carlton County Historical Society**  
Three of the letters Oliver Jackson wrote home to his family while he was settled “somewhere in France” during WWI are in this collection, each a poignant reminder of the life of a soldier. His first, from November 11, 1918, is at [http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/carl/id/95](http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/carl/id/95)
Northwest Minnesota Historical Center
This collection, housed in the archives at Minnesota State University Moorhead, has 29 letters written from German prisoners of war to Moorhead area farmer Henry Peterson, on whose farm they worked during WWII. The POWs wrote the letters after finally returning home after the war. Some of the letters are in German, some in English. All of the German letters are translated into English. The May 10, 1946, letter from Jans Johannsen is available at http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/mhd/id/268

Stillwater Public Library
Nellie McCluer's letters are simply charming. This elderly woman wrote most of them to her young friend Maude Conrad. Nellie captures the spirit of Stillwater in the era between the two world wars. The essence of family life shows clearly in this letter from October 16, 1916: http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/spl/id/1370

St. Cloud State University – Sinclair Lewis collection
A discussion of letters in Minnesota Reflections would not be complete without a look at the marvelous set written by famed Minnesota author, Sinclair Lewis. It helps me, in reading these letters written in the 1940s and 1950s, to remember that the home of Sinclair's brother, Claude, is now home to St. Cloud State University's Alumni Services and just a block away from the library at SCSU. My favorite letters describe his travels. This one captures the essence of a driving trip from Madison, Wisc., to Sauk Centre: http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15160coll1/id/1163. (Please note that all Sinclair Lewis letters are protected by copyright.)

Some things to know about viewing letters
• Information about each letter is found in the “Object Description” section below the image of the page.
• Transcriptions are located in the “Description” section below the image and below the “Object Description” section.
• When you are viewing an individual letter, click on the “View Image & Text” button above and to the right of the image window. This opens a window with the transcription next to the image of the letter which makes reading easier. It also provides at the bottom of the window a nice way to move through the pages if the letter.