

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

News Release

Contact: Kirsta Benson
651-439-5956

Dillinger Invades Boutwell's Landing September 17th

The year was 1934 and the nation's "Public Enemy #1" was barnstorming around the Midwest, robbing banks, shooting and causing mayhem wherever he went. John Dillinger spent some of his time hiding out in the St. Paul area and it is believed he even traveled into Washington County for a time.

On Thursday September 17, Dillinger historian Paul Maccabee, author of *John Dillinger Slept Here*, will be the keynote speaker at the Washington County Historical Society dinner meeting. At the event Maccabee will tell of not only Dillinger but of Ma Barker, Baby face Nelson, Alvin "Creepy" Karpis and other notorious gangsters who called Washington County and nearby cities their home

"Dillinger represents an era in time," said Brent T. Peterson, Executive Director of the Washington County Historical Society, "Although it doesn't show the best side of Society at the time, it does show the desperation of the times that people would actually root for a bank robber and murderer. Dillinger has gone down in history in the same way Jesse James did fifty years earlier."

But Dillinger, says Maccabee, "had style. He liked to amuse bank customers with quips and wise cracks during holdups. He would leap over the counters to show off his athletic ability and sometimes fired his Thompson submachine gun into the ceiling just to get people's attention. Witnesses may have been robbed, but they got their money's worth."

The event will take place in Boutwell's Landing in Oak Park Heights, MN. The cost for the event is \$20 per person and \$25 for non-WCHS members. The social hour will begin at 5:30pm, dinner at 6:30pm and the program begins at 8pm. Reservations are required because of limited space. Call 651-439-5956 to make reservations.

John Dillinger might have had a beer in Scandia. Maybe he bought groceries in Mahtomedi. He could have hid out at Crocus Park in Bayport, had dinner at the Club Tara in Stillwater or even robbed the bank in Newport. Come to the event on September 17 and find out if the real-life Dillinger was anything like the bank robber portrayed by actor Johnny Depp in the movie, 'Public Enemies.'

Founded in 1934, the Washington County Historical Society is a private, donor-supported, nonprofit organization with more than 700 individual, family, and business members. WCHS is supported by individual gifts, memberships, earned income, and foundation grants. For more information, please visit www.wchsmn.org.

WCHS is celebrating its 75th anniversary during 2009.