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Historical Society
1900 E. Camp St.
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Mining
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Tower-Soudan
Historical Society
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ROOTPRINTS

Tiffany Windows Welcome Visitors

By Thomas Vaughn

For more information on the writer, see page seven, the beginning of another of his articles, "Enjoy Hospitality of Historic Proportions at Olcott House." He can be reached at thomvaughn@msn.com.

“A composition of various colored glasses worked together while hot,” was articulation enough for Louis Comfort Tiffany when probed about his audacious glass crafting techniques.

Historians now know more. From the workshops of Tiffany Glassworks, founded in 1878, emerged a mesmerizing new form of hand-crafted glass known internationally as *favritte*. Tiffany took full advantage of nineteenth century aesthetic, chemical and mechanical innovations. Art Nouveau, a style emphasizing simple curves and natural forms gained preeminence in the 1890s. Tiffany integrated this movement's principles into his products. This can be seen in Tiffany's stylistic use of lead within windows. By experimenting with different thicknesses and shapes of lead, Tiffany became adept at integrating lead into the form of a window's subject matter rather than relying on lead strictly for structural support. Tiffany perfected certain plating techniques to give his windows a dimensional texture and depth uncommon in stained glass. He imbedded bronze alloys, reapportioned sand and lime, and intensified air pressure during glass blowing to shape,

contain and direct light in new ways. All of this effort paid off when he won a grand prize at The Paris Exhibition of 1900.

Tiffany also lived during fortuitous economic times. Those with recent wealth in New York built extravagant Renaissance, Colonial, Romanesque and medieval mansions along “millionaires mile” between Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street. They wanted the suffused elegance of Tiffany works to permeate their homes, and Tiffany obliged. Over four thousand

churches of all denominations were rising around the United States. Not since the Middle Ages had so many houses of worship welled up from the land simultaneously. Urban planners sought a celebration of human craftsmanship within public spaces. White House interior decorators contracted with Tiffany to beautify America's first residence. Demand side economics benefited Tiffany.

Residents of Duluth, Minnesota received their abundance of this highly

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Top section of *Minnehaha*, Louis Comfort Tiffany's stained glass window, now in the entrance door of the St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center (the Depot)