

# **HISTORY NOTE: Resolve to learn more about the history of disability**

by [Access Press Staff](#) // January 10th, 2018

Looking for a new year's resolution for 2018? Why not resolve to learn more about the history of disability around the world? Many excellent resources are online. Here are a few:

One treasure trove is the Disability History Association (DHA). From the stories of post-World War I accommodations for workers in Europe to the complicated history of U.S. psychiatric institutions and tobacco use by patients, the DHA offers a wide range of resources including articles, book reviews and links to online archives from across the globe.

DHA is an international non-profit organization that promotes the study of disabilities throughout history. The website includes, but is not limited to, the history of individuals or groups with disabilities, perspectives on disability, representations or constructions of disability, policy and practice history, teaching, theory and disability and related social and civil rights movements. The association's website states, "This organization is both inclusive and international, reflected in our diverse topics and approaches." DHA offers members a community of historians to connect with, as well as a newsletter, conference information and more. Dues are \$30 per year, with low-income dues available. Learn more [here](#).

Another great online history resources for teachers and others who work with children is linked to the Museum of disABILITY History in Buffalo, N.Y. The museum was established in 1998 by Dr. James M. Boles, president and CEO of People Inc., a large nonprofit human services agency in western New York State. The Museum of disABILITY History is dedicated to advancing the understanding, acceptance and independence of people with disabilities. It exhibits, collections, archives and educational programs create awareness and a platform for dialogue and discovery. It is chartered by the New York State Department of Education Board of Regents.

The museum website offers a virtual tour of the facility itself, as well as many age-appropriate education materials that can be found online. The educational materials are useful for a classroom, group or one-on-one use. Lesson plans are offered to download. A number of short books covering a wide range of disability topics are available for purchase. Learn more [here](#).

A third resource is the online Disability History Museum. Its mission is to foster a more in-depth understanding about how changing cultural values, notions of identity, laws, and policies have shaped and influenced the experience of people with disabilities, their families, and their communities over time.

The museum is a work in progress, with a few sections still under construction. The posted material can be used to learn about a wide range of disability history topics. One focus for the museum is the many social struggles people with disability face, and for using that history to understand the experiences and challenges people with disabilities have today.

The website emphasizes the importance of preserving history, stating, “Young people growing up in the United States today have never lived in a built environment that was not notably accessible, where a public education was not provided to a person with a disability.” Learn more at [www.disabilitymuseum.org](http://www.disabilitymuseum.org)

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*Access Press is interested in reader submissions for the monthly History Note column, to complement the articles written by Luther Granquist and other contributors. Submissions must center on events, people and places in the history of Minnesota’s disability community. We are interested in history that focuses on all types of disability topics, so long as the history has a tie to Minnesota. We are especially interested in stories from Greater Minnesota. Please submit ideas prior to submitting full stories, as we may have covered the topic before. Contact us at [access@accesspress.org](mailto:access@accesspress.org) or 651-644-2133 if you have questions. The History Note is a monthly column sponsored by the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities.*