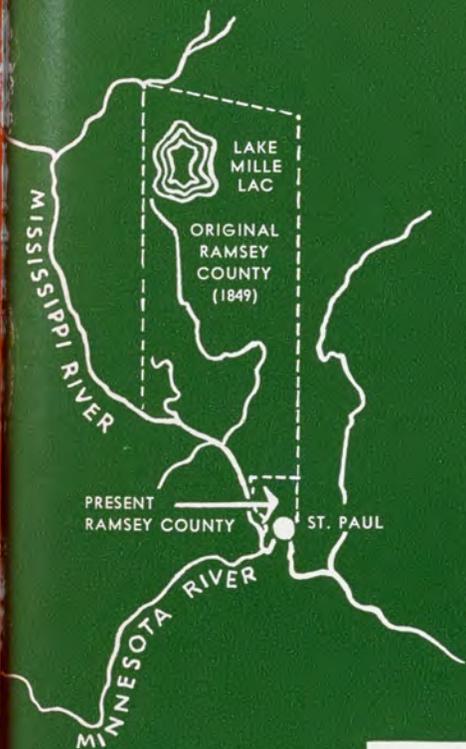


RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY



Fall

1967

Volume 4

Number 2

Ramsey County History

Published by the RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Editor: Virginia Brainard Kunz

Editorial Assistant: Nancy L. Woolworth

CONTENTS . . .

	Marshall Sherman and the Civil War	
	Anne Cowie	Page 3
Fall	Case of the Vanishing Historic Site	
1967	Charles T. Burnley	Page 8
Volume 4	Charles Borup—Fur Trader, Banker, Pioneer	
	Nancy L. Woolworth	Page 13
Number 2	Ramsey County History Receives Award	Page 17
	Forgotten Pioneers . . . IV	Page 18
	Memories of the University	
	Lillie Gibbs LeVesconte	Page 21

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY is published semi-annually and copyrighted, 1967, by the Ramsey County Historical Society, 2097 Larpenteur Avenue West, St. Paul, Minn. Membership in the Society carries with it a subscription to Ramsey County History. Single issues sell for \$1.00. Correspondence concerning contributions should be addressed to the editor. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Manuscripts and other editorial material are welcomed but, since the Society is an eleemosynary institution, no payment can be made for contributions. All articles and other editorial material submitted will be carefully read and published, if accepted, as space permits.

ON THE COVER:

Red River ox carts lined up on Third Street (now Kellogg Boulevard) in front of Cheritree and Farwell's Hardware store in 1859. Charles William Wulff Borup, as agent for the American Fur Company, arranged for carts to haul furs for traders.

ACKNOWLEDEMENTS: Unless otherwise indicated, pictures in this issue are from the Picture Department of the Minnesota Historical Society. The editor is indebted to Eugene Becker, picture curator, and his assistant, Dorothy Gimmestad, for their help.

Memories of the University—1870's

IN THE 1870's the University of Minnesota consisted of the Old Main Building with classrooms and an upstairs chapel, heated by forty-three wood stoves. William Watts Folwell was its president.

"During the 1870's the young people who went daily in and out of Old Main seemed much more like a large family than like the student body of a university. There were 300 of them then, ranging in age from the mid-twenties to thirteen years." Half of the students were enrolled in the college and a few in the preparatory "Latin School."¹

Lillie Gibbs LeVesconte was 79 years old when she wrote down her early memories of the University. She was only five or six years old when she began remembering the university students, most of them friends from her neighborhood, who passed near Heman Gibbs' farm on Larpenteur Avenue in Rose Township. The old farm is now the museum of the Ramsey County Historical Society.

BY LILLIE GIBBS LeVESCONTE

I FIRST BECAME conscious that there was a big school called the University [of Minnesota] in the autumn of 1869 or the spring of 1870. Beyond the hazelbush that bordered the road I'd see three tall young men striding by. They were our intimate friends, Eugene and Albert Hendrickson, and Alvin Quinn. They walked home from their homes on Snelling Avenue. It was pleasing and interesting to me to see that they wore uniforms—navy blue with green braid. They usually carried books.

My sister Abbie told me that they studied Latin. . . . I had a wistful longing to know more about Latin and the folks who were "all dead now." Gene and Al and Allie Quinn talked freely of their student life and referred to the president as "Billy" Folwell.²

We visited other homes where members of the family attended the University. How well I remember Warren [Clark] Eustis,³ a dignified be-whiskered young man, with kind brown eyes. He was the superintendent of the Presbyterian Sunday School that I attended.

THE TIME CAME [1873] when Warren was to graduate, an event of importance. There was to be something called

Commencement. Owing to the unfinished condition of the Main Building of the State University,⁴ the Commencement Exercises were held on the West Side in the Academy of Music.⁵

Of course we all went to see Warren graduate. Some of his folks had confided in us that "Warren goes off by himself so no one can hear him—sometimes to the shore of Rocky Lake to practice his speech."

Commencement Day arrived.⁶ How often I had admired that building, the Academy of Music; now I was inside of it. Far in the dim past is that Commencement Day, but with my mind's eye I can see clearly Warren as he stood there and "spoke his piece" without reading it. On our way home, and several times later, my father criticized Warren's delivery, saying, "Warren stood



Academy of Music in what is now downtown Minneapolis was scene of the University of Minnesota's early Commencement exercises.

there stiff as a poker—not a gesture.” Others did not agree with this. Warren was one of the first to graduate.

The second Commencement [1874] was held in East Minneapolis in the [First] Congregational Church. Was it five or seven that graduated that day? Anyway, I was there, sitting close beside my father [Heman Gibbs] who was interested in anything that concerned education.

PERHAPS an hour's time was given to the orations by the graduating students. Then distinguished men present were called on for “a few remarks.” One man (I wish I could remember his name), facing the difficulty of making an impromptu speech, found a way out by words that surprised me. He said, “In looking over the audience before me, I see one who is not an Ancient Mariner, but he is an ancient farmer.” Then followed something about the farmer who built an observatory on his land.⁷ I looked up at my father and people near us bent forward to look at him. An amused smile played over his features for he was the farmer mentioned.

The June, 1875, Commencement could be held in the Chapel in the University. I heard someone say that the Chapel was not finished, but it looked grand to me. The large room was filled that day and I, with several other children, had to stand at the back of the room and under the balcony. There was a big brass band in the balcony, and how that balcony shook every time the band played.

BOUQUETS were thrown at the stage in those days, and such pretty ones! Small blossoms surrounded by scalloped paper! One sees them now as “Old-Fashioned Bouquets.”

Governor [John S.] Pillsbury always said the same words at the close of the program: “As President of the Board of Regents” and “as the young men and women”—Well, it was decided that they be given diplomas.

Commencement Day, 1876, was of special interest to me for Eugene Henrickson from our neighborhood was to graduate. I wanted to see his folks go to the Reserved Section, and then his sister was to wear a new dress, one made by a dress-maker. I was sure Gene's Oration was the best on the program; but it was a cold day

and his sister wore a cloak over the new dress.

CLEARER than other Commencement Day that of 1877 abides in my memory. Albert Preston Henrickson graduated that year, and others (from the Presbyterian church) that I knew. In studying the decorations I discovered that the number of graduates and the number of windows in the Chapel happened to be equal. The class, aware of this fact, had a monogram over each window. The subject of his oration was, “The Turk in Europe Must Go!”

The twins, known as “the Eustis boys,” graduated that day; and Albert Weller, who was a very dressy young man and whose hair was always parted in the middle. I was aware that Viola Fuller was wearing the dress that was to be her wedding dress. It was fashioned with an immense bustle.

Miss Campbell was valedictorian. She wore a white dress. In these latter years I have often wished I could meet her and talk over memories that remain with the one-time girl who watched her graduate.

Notes

1. James Gray, *The University of Minnesota, 1851-1951*. University of Minnesota Press; Minneapolis, 1951, page 47.
2. William Watts Folwell was known to his students as “Uncle Billy.” He was president of the University of Minnesota from 1869 to 1884.
3. Warren Clark Eustis and Henry Martyn Williamson were the first graduates of the University of Minnesota in 1873. Gray, page 53.
4. Old Main Building was built in 1858 and burned down September 24, 1904.
5. The West Bank referred to what is now downtown Minneapolis. The Academy of Music was located at Second and Tenth Streets, near the present Leamington Hotel.
6. This first commencement day began with a public banquet by the citizens of Minneapolis to celebrate the occasion. That evening the exercises took place, with President Folwell speaking and presenting the two young men graduating as “twin lions of whom we have no reason to be ashamed.” Gray, page 53.
7. Heman Gibbs at that time owned property on the southwest corner of Larpenteur and Cleveland Avenues, across Larpenteur from his farm. A hill called Mount Gibbs stood on this land, near where West Hoyt Street is now. Gibbs built an eighteen-foot tower, or observatory, on top of Mount Gibbs. His son, Frank Gibbs, recalled that he could see the St. Croix River from the top of the tower. In the development of the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus, Mount Gibbs was leveled off.



THE GIBBS HOUSE

Headquarters of the Ramsey County Historical Society, 2097 Larpenteur Avenue W., St. Paul, Minn.

THE Ramsey County Historical Society was founded in 1949. During the following years the Society, believing that a sense of history is of great importance in giving a new, mobile generation a knowledge of its roots in the past, acquired the 100-year-old farm home which had belonged to Heman R. Gibbs. The Society restored the Gibbs House and in 1954 opened it to the public as a museum which would depict the way of life of an early Minnesota settler.

In 1958 the Society erected a barn, behind the house, which is maintained as an agricultural museum to display the tools and other implements used by the men who broke up the prairie soil and farmed with horse and oxen.

Today, in addition to maintaining the Gibbs property, the Ramsey County Historical Society is active in the preservation of historic sites in Ramsey county, conducts tours, prepares pamphlets and other publications, organizes demonstrations of pioneer crafts and maintains a Speakers' Bureau for schools and organizations. It is the Society's hope that through its work the rich heritage of the sturdy men and women who were the pioneers of Ramsey County will be preserved for future generations.