

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

**Fall, 1990**  
Volume 25, Number 3



*A group of smiling youngsters at the Thomas-Dale Child Care Center, part of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation's Child Care Services Program. Child care issues are one of the many concerns of the Saint Paul Foundation. See article beginning on page 4.*



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**On the cover:** Children at the Thomas-Dale Child Care Center attend one of the many needed child care centers operated by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation in the East Metro area of St. Paul and Ramsey County.

**Acknowledgements:** The photographs on pages 4-19, page 28 and on the front cover are from the archives of The Saint Paul Foundation and used with the Foundation's permission. All other photographs in this issue of *Ramsey County History* are from the audio-visual collections of the Minnesota Historical Society.

# RAMSEY COUNTY History

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

**R**amsey County History welcomes the submission of manuscripts dealing with the history of St. Paul, Ramsey County, and their environs. In particular, the Editorial Board encourages writers to contact the editor with proposals for neighborhood histories, stories about local leaders and their families, accounts of prominent institutions, businesses or organizations and articles on the racial and ethnic diversity of Ramsey County.

The intent of the Editorial Board is to encourage and support writing about urban and local history relating to St. Paul and Ramsey County. Our quarterly magazine needs a continuing flow of well researched and thoughtfully written articles that reflect the richness of the people, places, and institutions of the county. The members of our society are enthusiastic about history. They deserve the best historical writing we can provide to them.

—John L. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board



# Letters to the Editor

## What About Fitzgerald?

I know that F. Scott Fitzgerald, the famous American writer, was born in St. Paul, but where was he born and how much time did he actually spend there?

—Eloise Martin, Mahtomedi

*St. Paul's influence on Fitzgerald and his work is somewhat out of proportion to the number of years he lived here. According to John Koblas' excellent little book, F. Scott Fitzgerald in Minnesota/His Homes and Haunts, Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul in 1886, in a house at 481 Laurel Avenue. He lived there until 1898. He returned to St. Paul in 1908 and remained until 1911. From 1912 to 1919, he was in prep school and college in the East, then in the army during World War I, but he returned to St. Paul during those years for holidays and vacations. In 1921 and 1922 he and Zelda, his wife, were in St. Paul where their daughter was born. In 1922, Fitzgerald left St. Paul for the last time.*

## Harriet Island's Zoo

I remember the zoo on Harriet Island that Thomas B. Mega described in the Summer, 1990, issue of *Ramsey County History*. By the time I was taken to see it as a boy in the late 1920s, there weren't many animals left but my father told me it once had monkeys, rabbits, coyotes, foxes, wolves and other animals. When was the zoo created and how long was it in existence?

—John Johnson, St. Paul

*The zoo was created in 1900 and lasted for more than thirty years. In the beginning, it was quite a novelty. The animals were housed in cages at first, then, after 1919, in a concrete building. They were well cared-for but, after repeated flooding of the island, they were moved to Como Zoo in the early 1930s.*



F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald in Dellwood in 1921.

## More on the Cemetery

You neglected to mention another source of information in your response to Nancy Altman Zuber's letter in the Summer, 1990, issue. She asked about Orchard Center and the old cemetery that once occupied the site at Victoria and Orchard. Zuber should also contact the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department.

—Thomas J. Kelley.

## Hamm House

We've been trying to locate the site of the Hamm family mansion on Dayton's Bluff. Isn't there a little park there now?

—Mrs. C. E. Peterson, Minneapolis

*This great Queen Ann-style showplace that once overlooked downtown St. Paul stood at 671 Greenbrier. It was built in 1887 by William Hamm, Sr., and destroyed in 1954 in a fire set by an arsonist. A small park created by the St. Paul Garden Club and the city's Department of Parks and Recreation marks the*

*site. For a photograph of the Hamm mansion, see the back cover of this issue.*

## Minnesota in the Civil War

The television series on the Civil War has aroused my interest in what part Minnesota, or Minnesotans, might have played in that great conflict. Where can I get more information?

L. J. Harvey, Maplewood.

*To the Last Man, a history of Minnesota's 135th Infantry Regiment by Kenneth Maitland Davis, has a long first chapter on Minnesota's Civil War regiments. The book, published by the Ramsey County Historical Society in 1982, is available at the Society's office in Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul.*

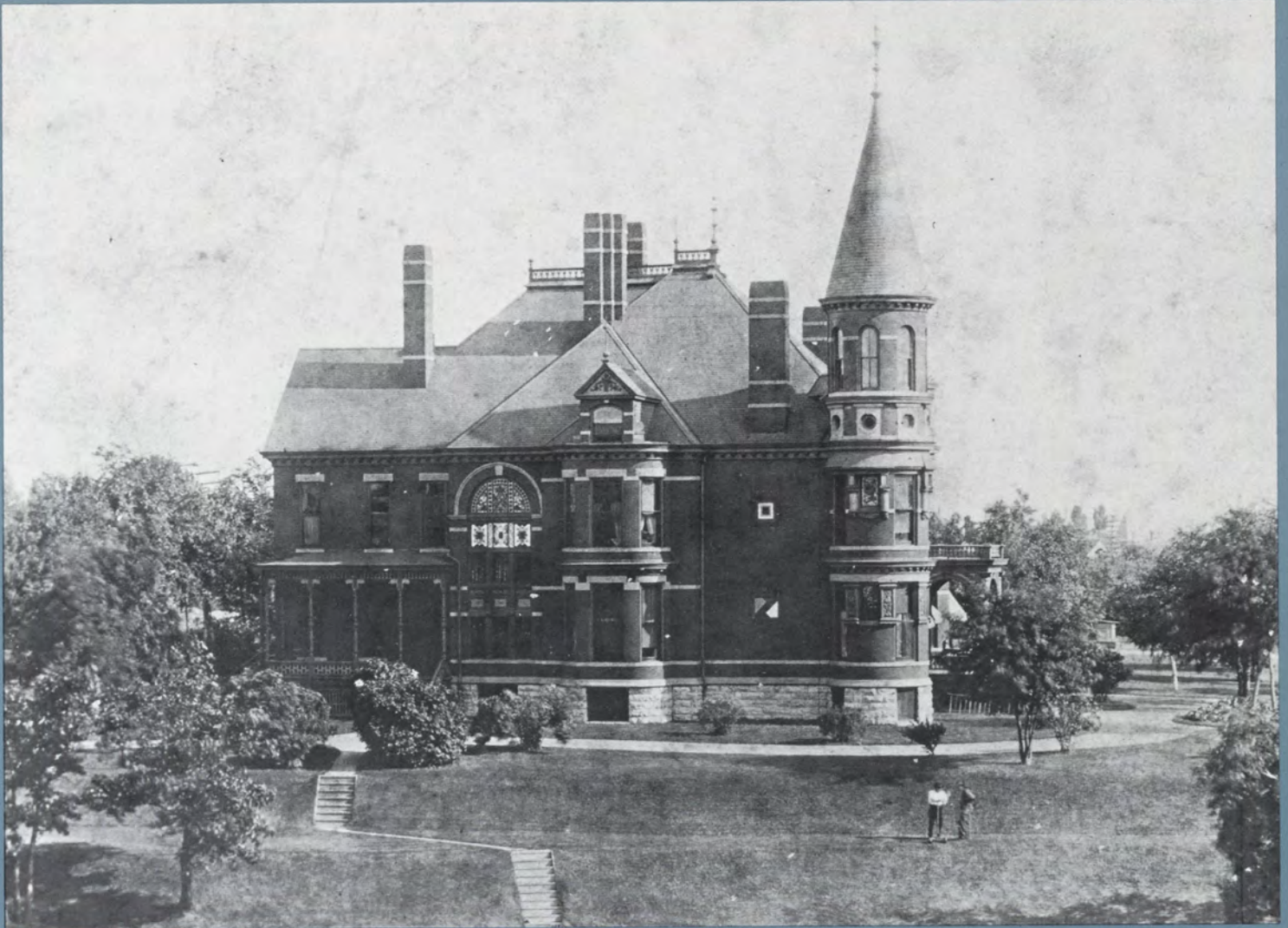
## Study in Contrasts

Whether it was a conscious editorial decision or not, I was fascinated by the juxtaposition of the two articles on water recreation in your Spring and Summer issues. Thomas B. Mega's description of the "recreational" Mississippi river in the Summer issue contrasts nicely with Thomas C. Buckley's article on James J. Hill's yacht, the *Wacouta*, in your Spring number.

Read back-to-back, these articles illustrate how people in St. Paul and Ramsey County relaxed and took advantage of the available aquatic recreational opportunities, depending on their economic and social circumstances in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Yachting may have been the favored pursuit of the very wealthy, like Hill, but as Mega showed, the richness of the Mississippi has given recreational pleasure to more Minnesotans in more ways than we may have been aware.

—Kathryn V. Lindley, Northfield, Minn.





*The Theodore Hamm mansion at 671 Greenbrier Avenue, as it looked around 1900. See page 3.*

**R.C.H.S.**  
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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