

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Whistles, Crowds, Free Silver
Election Night – 1896
Page 13

Fall, 1992

Volume 27, Number 3

The
Mexican-
Americans
and their
Roots in
St. Paul's
Past
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Growing Up
on The
East Side
Page 22



Mexican women attending a class in English presented by the St. Paul WPA's adult education department—April 23, 1936.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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A Message from the Editorial Board

This issue of *Ramsey County History* matches in diversity the varied fall colors we now see all around us. Jane McClure writes in fascinating detail about the history of our Mexican American neighbors on the West Side of St. Paul. Tom Buckley reminds us that the presidential election of 1896, matching Republican McKinley with Democrat Bryan, involved in its day as much hoopla, politics and suspense as the election of 1992 appears to have so far.

Two of our regular features—Growing Up in St. Paul and the Historic Site essay—highlight the colorful East Side neighborhood. And finally we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of St. Peter Claver Catholic Church and its century of service to St. Paul's African American community in A Matter of Time for 1892. The Editorial Board hopes you will enjoy the richness of Ramsey County's history found in this issue.

—John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

It's Relf, Not Reif

I was pleased to see the review of my book, *The Man Whose Dream Came True*, by W. Thomas White in the Summer, 1992, issue of your magazine. However, I feel that you should know that my name is spelled Relf, not Reif. Other than that, I believe the article was quite fair. You also might like to know that the book is for sale at Odegard's, Hungry Mind and Lake County Booksellers, in addition to the Ramsey County Historical Society office. The book also will be available at the new Minnesota History Center. Thank you for letting your members know about my book. This is my first attempt at publishing. Several hundred Stickney descendants have purchased copies and I hope they will have their children read them.

—John L. Relf, Dellwood

Please accept our heartfelt apologies for violating the cardinal rule of publishing: always spell the name right.

More About "Mac"

My reminiscences, "Growing up in St. Paul" in your Summer, 1992, issue, brought back more dear memories for me of my parents and my exceptionally happy childhood. I'd like to add a bit more to my account. After his tenure as zookeeper for the Como Zoo, my father, William E. McMahon, became purchasing agent during World War II for Northwest Airlines' Modification Center at Holman Field. Still later he was "Man of the Year" three years in a row at what was then St. Paul Fire and Marine. Mother was an army nurse. After her marriage, she raised seven children, then returned to nursing at St. Luke's Hospital and worked until she was seventy.

—Margaret McMahon Manship,
Mahtomedi



A. B. Stickney, author John L. Relf's great-grandfather and *The Man Whose Dream Came True*.

An Eerie Adventure

I have a story to relate. In July of 1951, when I was sixteen, I visited the Gibbs farm with some friends. We peddled to it at night on our bicycles from our homes in the Midway. We were typical teenagers looking for a spooky adventure and the farm at that time was crumbling and abandoned. One of us was smart enough to bring a flashlight, but it was scary for we had no idea who or what lurked. The house was surprisingly empty, but we did find an old trunk on the first floor containing the skeletal remains of a bat! There was a newspaper dated July 31, 1921, and, up in the attic, a love letter dated 1893 (if I remember correctly) and written presumably by a young woman to a man named Jack Rabbit. I took the newspaper home with me but I no longer remember if I took the letter, too. How-

ever, if they turn up among my effects, I'll see that you get them. I later majored in history and taught it for a time.

—Philip J. Markert, Lakeshore, Minn.

How About a Book?

I really enjoyed reading about Hilda R. Rachey's account of raising her two children during World War II, published in the Winter, 1991, issue of *Ramsey County History*. I'm hoping she will do an entire book about her experiences. I am raising my son myself and I understand her joy in coming home at the end of the work day and seeing her children again. Most people don't realize how happy this life really can be as long as you have your children, even though there may be struggles.

—Laurie M. Murphy, St. Paul

Bathless Bride

The article on old-fashioned weddings in the Summer, 1992, issue reminded me of two incidents that have been passed down as part of our family lore. My mother and father were married in my mother's home in Preston, Minnesota, in 1920. Mother came from an extended Norwegian family and there were so many relatives overflowing the bedrooms and standing in line for the one bathroom that Mother went to her wedding ceremony bathless. Later, when the crucial moment arrived, the minister asked for the ring. "I dropped it," whispered the little ring bearer. "Get down on your knees and find it," the minister ordered. He found it under the radiator, and Mother and Dad finally were wed.

—Eleanor B. Bankman,
Hollywood, Florida



Saint Paul, Minn. Public Baths, Beach and Bathers, Harriet Island

The public baths, beaches and bathers at Harriet Island. Views of St. Paul's parks, as well as the city's vibrant downtown, were popular with postcard publishers, Robert J. Stumm observes in his article beginning on page 18.

R.C.H.S.
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