

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Ramsey County
and Its Early
Courthouses

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Fall, 1993

Volume 28, Number 3

**Newly Restored, Newly Renovated—
The City Hall and County Courthouse**

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Memorial Hall and the God of Peace, restored so that they shine once again in all their glory in the St. Paul City Hall and Ramsey County Courthouse. See articles beginning on page 4. Photo by George Heinrich.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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An Award-winning Team



Ramsey County History has been awarded a Certificate of Commendation by the American Association for State and Local History. Above (from left) are some of the Editorial Board members who guide the publication process: Priscilla Farnham, executive director, Ramsey County Historical Society; Thomas C. Buckley; Virginia B. Kunz, the magazine's editor; John M. Lindley, Editorial Board chairman; Thomas H. Boyd; Arthur Mc Watt; and Thomas J. Kelley. Not pictured: Charlton Dietz, Laurie Murphy, and Dr. Thomas B. Mega. Photo by Richard Strom.

Letters to the Editor

Midway's History

Jane McClure, in her article on St. Paul's neighborhood press in the Summer, 1993, issue of *Ramsey County History* says that many people "might be surprised to learn that early city promotional maps for the western part of St. Paul lumped everything from Summit Avenue to the northern city limits into 'Midway.'" In fact, to this day the Midway business community covers the entire area north of Summit from the Capitol to the city limits. These are the boundaries for the Midway Chamber of Commerce, which has served the Midway community for nearly seventy-five years. University UNITED Local Development Company, a coalition of the Midway Chamber and nine neighborhood groups along University Avenue, is working for economic development throughout the Midway area.

Since the Midway Chamber will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary in October, 1994, *Ramsey County History* may wish to consider doing an article on the history of the Midway business community, from its early years through the creation of such large companies as Waldorf Corporation and Brown & Bigelow to present-day entrepreneurs, such as Hubbard Broadcasting and its satellite service and the Asian-American and African-American businesses emerging now near University and Western Avenue. The Midway area has a colorful history.

—Robert O. Straughn, St. Paul.

Good idea. Actually, we do have in hand a history of one Midway firm which includes some of Midway's history and could be broadened to include more.

Whose Farmhouse?

I was driving along Larpenteur Avenue, heading east from Cleveland, when I



The Wilzbacher farmhouse. Ramsey County Historical Society photo.

passed a lovely old farmhouse. What can you tell me about it?

—Elizabeth Rion, Minneapolis.

That was the Wilzbacher farmhouse at 1865 W. Larpenteur. It is, according to the Ramsey County Historical Society's Historic Sites Survey of 1980-81, a "very significant and rare Italianate style structure" and one of the oldest and most intact brick farmhouses surviving in the county.

Army Building Uncovered

A few years ago workers repairing the north end of the Robert Street bridge uncovered the foundations of an old building. What was it?

—Virginia Anderson, Maplewood.

That was the U. S. Army Quartermaster's Building, a five-story building constructed in 1883 on Robert, between Second and Third Street (now Kellogg Boulevard). The lower walls of the building are still there, but covered over now by the little park west of the American Center. According to Steve Osman of the Minnesota Historical Society, this was the supply depot for the army's Department of the Dakota, created in 1866 and headquartered in St. Paul until 1879 when the command moved to Fort Snelling. The quartermaster depot, however, re-

mained in St. Paul. From here, supplies flowed westward to forts in the Dakotas and Montana. When Kellogg Mall was under construction around 1928, the top four floors of the building were taken off but the lower level has remained and supports part of the mall's concrete platform.

Trout Brook Revisited

I keep reading references to Trout Brook, which, as I understand it, once flowed through the old Lafayette Park neighborhood and the Lowertown district. Whatever happened to it?

—Elinor Bloom, Woodbury.

We're going to be publishing more about Trout Brook in a future issue of Ramsey County History. In brief, Trout Brook is still there. This pretty little stream rises in McCarron's Lake and, while it frequently runs underground as it meanders toward the Mississippi, it surfaces at some points along its route.

What is Red Rock?

I've read with some interest a reference to a red rock in connection with St. Paul history. Where is it and what is it?

—Rodney J. Sorenson, St. Paul.

This was a large boulder that once sat close to the Mississippi at what is now Newport. It was sacred to the Dakota bands who once lived at Kaposia, their village near South St. Paul. The Dakota painted the rock with scarlet bands as part of a ritual in which they gave thanks for a bountiful harvest. As the Newport area grew, the rock was moved several times. In 1990, however, members of the Newport United Methodist Church retrieved the famous rock from its latest resting place, Camp Koronis near Paynesville, and placed it on the lawn of their new church building.



One of the six sculpted ground floor elevator doors, created by E. R. Stewart for the St. Paul City Hall and Ramsey County Courthouse. See articles beginning on page 4. Photo by George Heinrich.

R.C.H.S.
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