

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Aches and Pains of
Property Owners:
Taxes, Fees, 1856–1904

Page 17

Fall, 2000

Volume 35, Number 3

All the Frailties of Human Nature
The Ramsey County Attorney's Office
and Its Colorful 150-Year History

—Page 4



Pierce Butler, Ramsey County attorney from 1892 to 1896 and future associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, with Henry G. Hardy, left, a clerk, and S. C. Donnelly, right, an assistant county attorney. This photo, from the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, probably was taken when the office was located in the 1880s Ramsey County Courthouse at Fourth and Wabasha in downtown St. Paul. See the article on the history of the Ramsey County Attorney's Office beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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A Message from the Editorial Board

In 1999 Ramsey County celebrated its sesquicentennial anniversary of its founding. As part of the effort to look back at the county's past 150 years, this issue of our magazine opens with Anne E. Cowie's history of the Ramsey County Attorney's Office. Trained as an attorney and as a historian, Anne Cowie captures the changes that have taken place in this office over the years and highlights some of the flamboyant individuals who have served as Ramsey County attorney. She also focuses on some of the most interesting and important cases, such as the trial of T. Eugene Thompson, handled by the county attorneys since 1849. What emerges from this study is a greater appreciation of how the work of the Ramsey County Attorney's Office has changed since frontier times and how successful those elected to the office of county attorney have been in adjusting to these changes.

In our second article in this issue, Leo J. Harris, attorney, author and historian, writes about the practical operation of the law for two St. Paul property owners, Martin and Sarah Flanagan. The Flanagans owned two small lots on Broadway Street (which no longer exists due to the construction of Interstate I-94) in downtown St. Paul between 1856 and 1904. Harris's perspective is very different from that of Anne Cowie because he analyzes the Flanagan's real and personal property tax receipts and other legal records to determine the financial consequences of St. Paul property laws for a family of modest circumstances. Over time the Flanagan property on Broadway went from being a lot in a frontier town to a homestead in a prosperous city to being part of a St. Paul slum. One of the most fascinating parts of this story is the way in which the Flanagans found their taxes and assessments increased as St. Paul gradually improved its streets with grading, paving and building sidewalks in the late nineteenth century. This is a circumstance many readers of the present century can certainly understand and appreciate. The Flanagans' experience cries out with the feeling of "the more things change, the more they remain the same."

Finally, historian and author Rhoda Gilman unravels the tangled identity of Cloud Man.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

Missing Information

I was excited to read the summer issue of *Ramsey County History* because we moved from rural North Dakota to St. Paul in 1937 when I was nine years old, lived there until 1954, and returned to St. Paul in 1962. We discovered, however, that several major articles in this issue were cut short and not continued on other pages. Would you supply the missing information?

Eunice Ruth Baker, St. Paul.

We're baffled about the cuts. This has never happened in our thirty-five years of publishing. We suspect it was some sort of electronic glitch that, in a technological age, is hard to explain. For you and our other readers, here is the missing information:

End note 17 on page 12, reads as follows: "The *New York Times* dated February 5, 1999, reviewed an exhibition entitled 'Picasso and the War Years: 1937-1945' which showed some eighty works by the artist for that period. The exhibition was organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and opened in New York at the Guggenheim museum. The review, by Michael Kimmelman, provided an enriching background and depth to Jerome's analysis.

End note 18, also on page 12, reads: "No matter how they change her, I'll remember her that way." It's a line from the World War II ballad, "The Last Time I Saw Paris."

As for the other missing material, the last two lines on page 19 read "is still available from him (at 651-490-3251) or from Park Genealogical Books." On page 23, the final line of copy reads [Minnesota State Bar Assoc] "ation in June, 1999."

'One Minor Correction'

I thought Tom Boyd did a good job of hitting some highlights in his review of my book, *With Satisfaction and Honor, William Mitchell College of Law 1900-2000*, and that John Lindley's review of Boyd's article in the *William Mitchell Law Review* was very well done as well. Both reviews appeared in the spring issue of *Ramsey County History*. I do have one minor correction to what both reviewers said. The [law school's] 2100 Summit building was not on St. Thomas's campus, as both wrote. St. Thomas bought the property and gave it to the law school, which was the fee owner for the eighteen years that the school occupied the building. I think that the only property St. Thomas owned on the south side of the block was the empty lot on the corner of Summit and Finn. St. Thomas did have a right of first refusal (which they rather quickly exercised when we moved in 1976) that enabled them to buy the property for its appraised value (less the value of the land that they had contributed to us) when we stopped using the property for law school purposes.

Douglas R. Heidenreich, St. Paul.

Paris and the Occupation

I was interested in Jerome Hill's description of Paris in the fall of 1944 and his very brief mention of the Hotel Meurice. I was in Paris in the winter of 1945 and I seem to remember that the Meurice had been some sort of a Nazi headquarters while the Germans occupied the city.

Paul Schaefer, Minneapolis.

Correct. It was the headquarters of General Dietrich von Choltitz whom Hitler had appointed commander of the French capital just a few weeks before Allied armies freed the city. Von Choltitz was the German general who resisted Hitler's demand for the total destruction of Paris.

Walter Liggett Revisited

Thank you for using a portion of my letter in the Letters to the Editor section of your Summer, 2000, issue. I agree you made an appropriate selection relative to the Liggett murder. It is tragic, however, that the story of Hubert Humphrey is not told, including the ADM jet, the Cuban sugar embargo, the ADM stock in HHH's security box, plus Elmer Andersen's defeat in the 1962 gubernatorial race (including the loss of many ballots from a usually strong Republican venue). It is particularly noteworthy that Thomas J. Kelley does not consider the loss of the ballots to be germane to his analysis of the recount process! Does he intentionally put a liberal spin on his interpretation of his responsibility toward the freedom of the press?

George C. Brandt, Minneapolis.

Kelley's memoir wasn't intended as an exhaustive analysis of an event that has often been examined. It was simply his own memories of his service on Karl Rolvaag's team. For another aspect of the Recount, see the late Samuel H. Morgan's article in the Winter, 1999, issue of Ramsey County History. Morgan served on the Andersen team. As to Humphrey, that's another article entirely.

Another re the Recount

I read with interest Tom Kelley's story on the Recount in the Summer issue of *Ramsey County History*. I also read the original article in *For the Record—150 Years of Law and Lawyers* published by the Minnesota State Bar Association. The "Recount" was probably the time we first met. It is a fascinating story. Thanks for preserving the history.

M.J. Galvin, Jr., St. Paul.

It's especially fascinating in light of the chaos that has followed the November elections.

No. 431 FA

City Treasurer's Office,

St. Paul, Sept 15 1886

Received of Martin Flanagan the sum of \$ 487.25 Dollars
payment in full for the following assessments made by the Board of Public Works on the hereinafter
described property, situated in the City of St. Paul, to-wit:

Name of Improvement.	DESCRIPTION.	LOT	BLK.	ADDITION	Original Assessment.	INTEREST.	TOTAL.
Broadway Sewing	Shop	3		S. C. Dayton's Improvement	10.00		
"	"	6		do	130.00		
"	"	7		do	130.00		\$ 360.00
Iron Store	"	3		do	40.75		
"	"	6		do	40.75		
"	"	7		do	40.75		121.75
							\$ 487.25

George Rep City Treasurer.
Per [Signature] Deputy.

Martin Flanagan's receipt for his 1886 Public Works assessments. Flanagan family papers. See article beginning on page 17.

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

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