

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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The Prince and
The Pearl of
Great Price

Page 17

Fall, 2004

Volume 39, Number 3

Another Lost Neighborhood

The Life and Death of Central Park—
A Small Part of the Past Illuminated

—Page 4



A postcard view of the state Capitol in its heyday when the greenery of grass and trees surrounded Central Park. A layered-cement parking ramp has replaced the park. See the article beginning on page 4 that traces the life and death of Central Park, another of St. Paul's Lost Neighborhoods. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 39, Number 3

Fall, 2004

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN JULY 2003:

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect, preserve and interpret the history of the county for the general public, recreate the historical context in which we live and work, and make available the historical resources of the county. The Society's major responsibility is its stewardship over this history.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

Born in the 1880s and died in the 1970s, Central Park in St. Paul has today passed into urban legend. Fortunately, Paul Nelson has carefully researched the park's history and his account opens our Fall issue. In 1884 four wealthy and powerful St. Paul families donated the land that became Central Park, a rather small space that was laid out formally with walkways, trees, and shrubs and included an ornate fountain. Unlike Como Park, whose city-led development later in the decade was intended as a naturalistic refuge, the practical donors of the land for Central Park conceived it as a neat buffer for their homes against haphazard urban sprawl nearby. Today, or course, all that remains of Central Park is a parking ramp for state government workers.

In celebration of Hamline University's sesquicentennial in 2004, we have John Larson's elegant account of the all-to-brief time that Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein spent at the liberal-arts school in the fall of 1942. Prince Hubertus had a profound impact on students such as Larson through his courageous opposition to the forces of Nazism. Scion of an old and noble German family, Prince Hubertus had fled to the United States in the early 1930s and subsequently worked tirelessly to persuade Americans of the dangers of Hitlerism. Hamline proved to be a generous and supportive host to the prince at a time when the United States was just entering the fight against fascism.

Our Fall issue concludes with the second in a series of Rondo oral histories. Thanks once more to the interviewing skills of Kate Cavett, we learn of the youth, educational, and employment experiences of Kathryn Coram Gagnon, a graduate of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass., who spent much of her adult life as a social worker in the Rondo community.

As a service to the Society's members and friends, we want all of our readers to know that there is now a complete listing of articles that have appeared in *Ramsey County History* over the past forty years on the Society's web site at www.rchs.com. We hope you'll make use of this tool when you want to see if a past issue of our magazine has information bearing on a question about St. Paul or Ramsey County.

John Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

Correction

An art historian has just told me that the painting shown on page 9 of the Summer issue of *Ramsey County History* and identified as "Andromache at the Urn with Hector's Ashes" was instead "Isabella and the Pot of Basil." It's a copy of the 1897 painting by John White Alexander.

Margaret M. Marrinan, St. Paul

James Fulton's House

My grandmother was raised in White Bear Lake and much of the time at the James Fulton house at 4572 Lake Avenue, circa 1893. What information can you give me about the man and the house?

Bob Silverness, Hermantown, Minnesota.

The house was built in 1893 for James Fulton, son of Robert Fulton, the eighteenth century engineer and builder of the first successful steamboat. James Fulton also was an engineer who developed super heated steam. He founded White Bear Lake's first electric company. His son, Cooper Fulton, formed the First National Bank of White Bear Lake with his brother-in-law, Fred Murray. The Fulton house is considered one of the oldest and largest mansions on White Bear Lake.

More About Union Park

John Hinkle, one of the founders of Union Park, gave his house at 1879 Feronia to the Episcopal Home in exchange for the care and keeping of his blind daughter. The house served as the original Episcopal Home and underwent many additions. This must have been the "mansion" mentioned in the Letters column of the Summer issue of your magazine. The house was torn down in the early 1960s to make way for a new care center.

Robert Schwanke, a descendant of John Hinkle

The Toni Company

Both my parents worked for the Toni Company in St. Paul in the early 1950s. They met there and married shortly afterwards. Where was the company located?

Connie Hooge

The Toni Company, the first home-permanent company in the country, was founded in 1944 and locted at 310 East Fourth Street. It become a division of Gillette in 1948.

The Selby Tunnel

I can see the Selby Avenue streetcar tunnel opening just below the Cathedral of St. Paul. Where did the streetcars come out of the tunnel? Is there a map of St. Paul from around 1927?

Larry Mellman, research director, Mellman Advertising Direct.

The streetcars emerged from the tunnel just where you see the tunnel opening. An article, "The Road to the Selby Tunnel, or How to Make It Up the St. Anthony Hill," was published in Volume 37, Number 2, of Ramsey County History. The following excerpt is from that article: "In 1906 construction began on a tunnel that ran under Summit from Nina to Third Street, and reduced the grade of the hill to the point where electrical cars could operate easily. The Selby tunnel was completed in 1907. In 2005 Ramsey County History plans to publish an article on the streetcar era in St. Paul.

The Origin of a Name

I'm interested in the origin of street names in St. Paul, and particularly the origin of the name, Pinehurst Avenue.

Steve Monson, Premier Designs Systems

Donald Empson traced the origins of St. Paul street names in his little book, On the Street Where You Live. "Hurst" is

an Anglo-Saxon word that was revived in the nineteenth century. It means "wooded hill" and is often coupled with the names of trees, as in Oakhurst and Lynnhurst. Pinehurst Avenue's name dates from 1919.

A Female Reformatory

I'm looking for information on the Good Shepherd Home for Unwed Mothers that was located in St. Paul. What dates was it in operation, and is it still in operation?

Jeannie Eddy

The Sisters of the Good Shepherd began their work in 1868 in an eight-room cottage at Smith and Eleventh Street. It was a Female Reformatory, The Sisters had an arrangement with the St. Paul Police Department to accept and rehabilitate, if possible female offenders instead of sentencing them to jail. The Sisters counseled young women accused of shoplifting, truancy, and running away. It is said to be the oldest such institution in Minnesota. In 1887 the Sisters built a large red brick sanctuary at 931 Blair. In 1969 the Home moved to the neighborhood between Turtle Lake and Charley Lake, and the building on Blair was torn down.

The House on Jessamine

Can you tell me anything about the history of the house at 525 Jessamine Avenue in East St. Paul?

Chuck Debevec

This Shingle style house was built in 1888 at an estimated cost of \$7,000. According to the building permit, the property also included a one-and-a-half story brick barn. Its original owner was D.W. McCourt, a St. Paul dentist who might not have actually lived in the house. In 1889 McCourt sold the house to Clara H. Holdridge. A year later she sold it to Charles K. Sharod and in 1903 Sharod sold it to Gustav A. Eisengraeber.

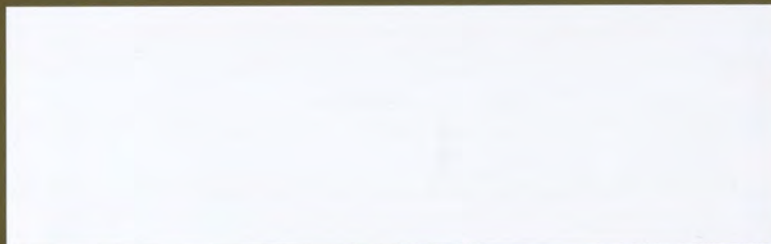


3886. CENTRAL PARK. ST. PAUL.
The James Humphrey house on the left, the Gustave Schurmeier rowhouses on the right. See article, "The Life and Death of Central Park," beginning on page 4.

R.C.H.S.
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