

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

*St. Paul's Biggest Party:
The Grand Army of the Republic's
1896 National Encampment*

Moira F. Harris and Leo J. Harris

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Fall 2009

Volume 44, Number 3

The 1924 Junior World Series

The St. Paul Saints' Magnificent Comeback

Roger A. Godin

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Saint Paul Saints first baseman Johnny Neun, right, dives toward a Baltimore Orioles runner in an attempt to tag him during one of the 1924 Junior World Series games played at Lexington Park. St. Paul Daily News photo, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society. St. Paul Saints insignia reproduced by permission of the St. Paul Saints Baseball Club.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 44, Number 3

Fall 2009

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON DECEMBER 20, 2007:

The Ramsey County Historical Society inspires current and future generations to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program of presenting, publishing and preserving.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

Last summer, St. Paul and Ramsey County hosted the Republican National Convention, which attracted national attention. Impressive as that event was, we may have forgotten other locally held, but nationally important gatherings held here. Our authors explore two of them in this issue. In 1924, the St. Paul Saints defeated a minor league rival, the Baltimore Orioles, to win the Junior World Series at Lexington Park at Lexington and University Avenues. Roger Godin guides us through the story of the series and the excitement it created. In 1896, St. Paul welcomed about 150,000 Civil War veterans and other visitors for the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, an enormously popular group with considerable political influence. Moira and Leo Harris recount the festivities, which included the display of an enormous "living flag" outside the then under-construction Landmark Center. On a smaller scale, we share Nathalie Chase Bernstein's warm story of growing up in the 1930s Jewish community of St. Paul's West Side. P.S. Don't forget, a membership to RCHS (including, of course, this nationally award-winning magazine) is a great holiday gift idea!

Anne Cowie, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

Kudos for Riehle on Erwin

I thought [Dave Riehle's article on W. W. Erwin in the Winter 2008 issue] was terrific. The author had clearly done his homework, knew the man and his significance, and structured the piece in a way that he convinced me of Erwin's significance, too. When writing about an individual, most people make the mistake of focusing on his or her biographical details, even when they don't matter at all to the thesis of the article. Riehle avoided this pitfall so beautifully that I have since used his article in my graduate writing seminar. His whole mention of Erwin's life before the trials is in one sentence in the opening paragraph. Perfect. That tight focus carries through the whole piece, keeping Erwin's importance for the trials foremost. It's really a lovely article. . . . So congrats are due all around—to Riehle, for writing the piece, and to RCHS for publishing it.

I'm astonished and heartened by the interest people in Minnesota take in American history. The very fact that even your county has its own historical magazine is little short of a miracle.

*Prof. Heather Richardson
Boston, Mass.*

Bethesda Hospital Recalled

I especially enjoyed reading the Bethesda Hospital story by Donald B. Swenson, M.D., in the Spring 2008 issue because of my own family connections to the institution. . . . My grandmother, Ida Leontine Bowman, the daughter of a Swedish Lutheran Church pastor, was one of five young women in the first graduating class of 1901 (the others being Dagmar Appelgren, Hilda Carlson, Esther Neander, and Emmy Thornell). My grandfather, Harold Lauritz Stoppelstad, who was born in Norway in 1874 and came to Saint Paul with his family in

1884, graduated from the University of Minnesota Medical School in 1902 and met my grandmother that year while he was interning at Bethesda Hospital. . . . In many ways Saint Paul is a small town, and in every way *Ramsey County History* is a wonderful publication.

*James A. Stoppelstad
St. Paul*

An Independent Woman

I was so happy to see Lettisha Henderson's photograph and "story" in the article about the 1946 St. Paul Teachers' Strike in the Summer 2008 issue. In 1945, my father, Lawrence Boardman, was the City Editor of the, then, *St. Paul Dispatch*. He wrote a five-day feature, with pictures, about the sorry plight of the St. Paul school buildings, about water leaking in bathrooms and in basements. He wrote about the difficulty of teachers working in drafty classrooms, unfit cafeterias, kitchens, and gymnasiums, and filthy playgrounds with no equipment.

About eleven years later, I enrolled our daughter in Crowley Public School. . . . The building had been condemned by the City of St. Paul. The playground was a dirt "area," and the location was just off Robert Street where there was no traffic light. The property was for sale. . . . That day I met Lettisha, who was the principal. She was a woman who was short in stature, had red hair and freckles, and a ready smile. She was a great bridge player, loved to have fun, had a wonderful sense of humor, and appeared to be the last person in the world who would "take on a fight."

With her in the lead, I had the honor of "helping" in the resignation of the superintendent of the St. Paul Public Schools, the demise of Crowley School, and the eventual building of Bridgeview School. I was a young mother in those

days. She mentored me, and I loved her. She was a perfect role model of an independent woman with a love of life, and of living.

*Alexandra Klas
Mendota Heights, Minn.*

Memories of Lee Lawrie

[Paul Nelson] wrote a wonderful article [on Lee Lawrie in the Winter 2009 issue]. . . . Lee Lawrie was my husband's grandfather and a very modest man. I only met him twice before he passed away. He attended our wedding in 1953 and when our son . . . was born in 1955, he came to see him when he was 11 days old and gave him a copy of the Georgia Press book, *Sculpture*, which had come out that year.

I want to thank you for the excellent article. . . .

*Caroline Lawrie
Westbrook, Conn.*

An Error Spotted

I greatly enjoyed the article about Newell Park in the Winter 2009 issue. One word of note, however, in the photo of the Newell Park Improvement Association sitting down to dinner in the pavilion in 1931, there is a banner in the background. The caption states that it is the banner of the Association. . . . That banner is not of the Newell Park Improvement Association, it is a flag of Boy Scout Troop 70, which must have held meetings there. . . . A festive occasion nonetheless, and all the more satisfying to know that the youth of the area were enjoying the fruits of their labor.

*Karen Dosh
West St. Paul*

Ms. Dosh is correct. This is the banner of Boy Scout Troop 70. We regret not being as eagle-eyed as she apparently is.

R.C.H.S.

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The cover of the Official Program for the 30th National Encampment of the G.A.R. in St. Paul in 1896, left, and a Delegate Badge from that convention. The five-pointed star and the "Delegate" bar above the eagle were made of Minnesota copper. The program image is courtesy of the Ramsey County Historical Society. The badge is from the Albert Scheffer family archives, photo courtesy of Moira F. Harris and Leo J. Harris. For more on the G.A.R. encampment in St. Paul, see the article on page 13.