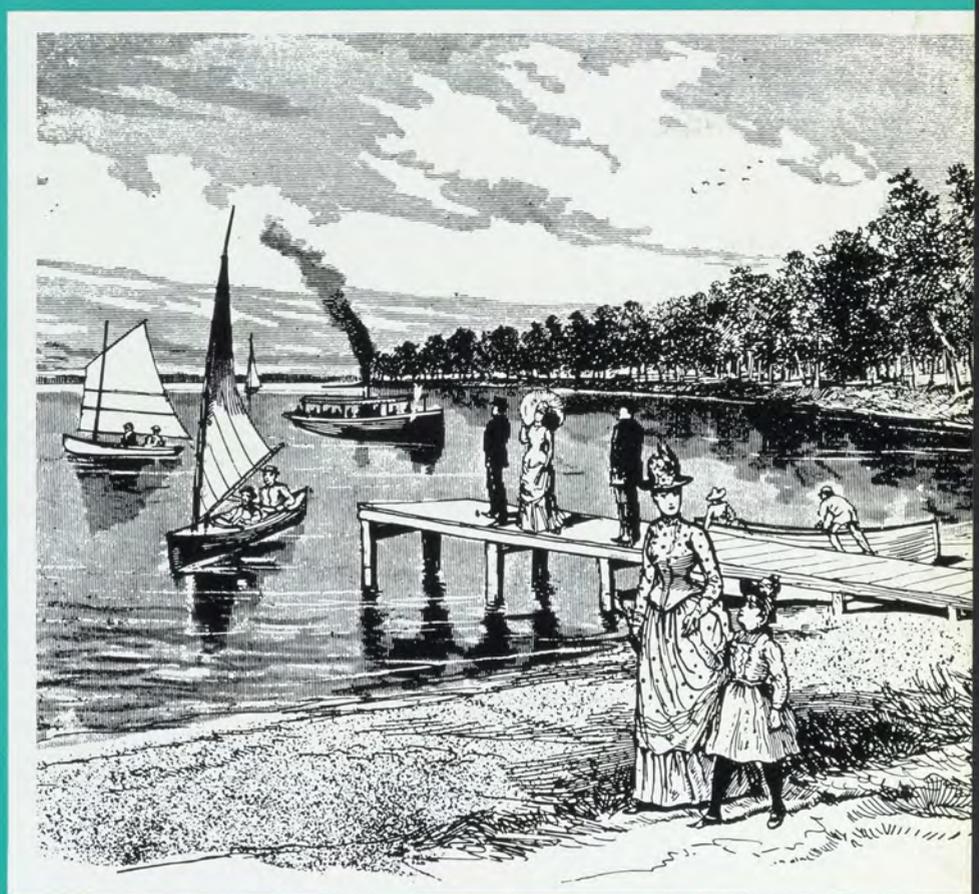


RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY



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ON THE COVER: During the 1880's, a steamboat took Sunday visitors to North St. Paul on a trip around Silver Lake. Price was 25 cents a person. This tranquil scene of the lake appeared in the March, 1888, issue of The Northwest Magazine and is reproduced here, courtesy of the Picture Department, Minnesota Historical Society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Unless otherwise indicated, pictures in this issue are from the Picture Department of the Minnesota Historical Society. The editor is indebted to Eugene Becker, picture curator, and his assistant, Dorothy Gimmestad, for their help.

kind old man with whom suffering was always a bond of friendship."⁶

Randall has been described as a man of medium size, and always finely dressed. "He invariably carried a gold-headed cane and his movements on the street were of an energetic character. He had a soft, pleasant voice, winning ways, and was always polite. We might say that he was the advance courier of gentlemanly culture and true civilization."⁷

WHEN RANDALL came to St. Paul, he brought with him one of his three sons, William Randall, Jr. Before his death in 1851, this son displayed a marked gift for caricature and contributed sketches to some of the early political literature.⁸

A second son, E. D. K. Randall, was born in New York in 1839, educated in the east, and came to St. Paul in 1856. For a number of years he worked in the wholesale notion and toy business. He also traveled as a salesman. He was a member of the Baptist Church and described as being a "stirring man, full of energy, hope and good deeds."⁹

The third son, John H. Randall, was born in Massachusetts. At age 15, he moved to New York and worked in a wholesale silk house until 1857, when he came to St. Paul to look after his father's business. In 1862 he worked in the office of the chief engineer's department of the old St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company. Later he became general freight agent, assistant treasurer and chief clerk of the company under

the administration of George Becker.

WHEN THE CRASH of 1857 came, Randall's property, because it was mortgaged, went down, and he with it. "Were he the possessor of the real estate in the city which he once owned, he could be the richest man in St. Paul. Litigation followed his death, and the two sons, who ought to be well off, are paddling their own canoes."¹⁰

Randall died July 31, 1861, at the age of 55. While he may not have left a legacy of material wealth, he left two sons who "forgot what might have been" and were thought of as worthy and enterprising citizens. He also left behind him a mental picture of a dapper gentleman strolling down the streets of early St. Paul, a gold-headed cane in his hand, and a smile on his face.

Notes

1. T. M. Newson, *Pen Pictures of St. Paul and Biographical Sketches of Old Settlers*, 1886, page 50.
2. W. B. Hennessy, *The Past and Present of St. Paul, Minnesota*, 1861, page 49.
3. *Minnesota Pioneer and Democrat*, St. Paul, Wednesday, July 31, 1861.
4. Henry A. Castle, *History of St. Paul and Vicinity*, Vol. II, 1912, page 455.
5. J. Fletcher Williams, *History of St. Paul and the County of Ramsey*. Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. IV, 1876, page 365.
6. *Minnesota Pioneer and Democrat*, St. Paul, Wednesday, July 31, 1861.
7. T. M. Newson, *op. cit.*, page 51.
8. W. B. Hennessy, *op. cit.*, page 49.
9. T. M. Newson, *op. cit.*, page 572.
10. *Ibid.*, page 51.

The Governor Talks About History . . .

MEN IN public office often have a sense of history because they help to make history. Governor Harold LeVander spoke out on the importance of history, in a talk he gave August 31, 1967, to the Minnesota Territorial Pioneers. Here are excerpts from his remarks:

"We owe [the pioneers] a great debt. Yet too many fail to acknowledge that debt. We become preoccupied with the present and push aside the past. We become obsessed with our present problems, our present powers, our present successes, our present failures. We have a tendency to ignore the past and neglect the future.

". . . We understand only a part of the

whole. We become like Mrs. Albert Einstein when she was asked if she understood her husband's theories. She replied, 'I understand the words, but I don't always understand the sentences.'

". . . It has been said that we can best pay our debt to the past by putting the future in debt to ourselves. Our fathers have bestowed on us a great heritage, our sons must be bequeathed the same.

"Alexander Ramsey, our first territorial governor, observed that history is 'philosophy teaching by example.' The men who have made Minnesota have given us the example. . . . Now we must learn."



THE GIBBS HOUSE

Headquarters of the Ramsey County Historical Society, 2097 Larpenteur Avenue W., St. Paul, Minn.

THE Ramsey County Historical Society was founded in 1949. During the following years the Society, believing that a sense of history is of great importance in giving a new, mobile generation a knowledge of its roots in the past, acquired the 100-year-old farm home which had belonged to Heman R. Gibbs. The Society restored the Gibbs House and in 1954 opened it to the public as a museum which would depict the way of life of an early Minnesota settler.

In 1958 the Society erected a barn, behind the house, which is maintained as an agricultural museum to display the tools and other implements used by the men who broke up the prairie soil and farmed with horse and oxen.

Today, in addition to maintaining the Gibbs property, the Ramsey County Historical Society is active in the preservation of historic sites in Ramsey county, conducts tours, prepares pamphlets and other publications, organizes demonstrations of pioneer crafts and maintains a Speakers' Bureau for schools and organizations. It is the Society's hope that through its work the rich heritage of the sturdy men and women who were the pioneers of Ramsey County will be preserved for future generations.