

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Romance, Melodrama,
Mayhem in Not-So-
Fictional St. Paul

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Spring, 1993

Volume 28, Number 1

. . . *'And A Sprinkling of Jews'*

Work, Faith and the Jewish Merchants *Page 4*



The Swadelsky family in the 1890s, Zlotah Rivkah Swadelsky (second from left) settled with her husband and family on the West Side after emigrating from Russia. She was one of those unsung women of history. Pious herself, she led religious services for the women of B'nai Abraham Synagogue on State Street. She ran a Shelter House for strangers passing through the Jewish community, and organized a Women's Free Loan Society that provided loans without interest to immigrant women to help them buy furniture for their new homes. Photo from the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest. See article beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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Books, Etc.

A Guide to the Minnesota State Census Microfilm

The Grave Markers of Hennepin County, Mn., Volume 2

Early Presbyterian Church Records From Minnesota

Park Genealogical Books
3601 Seventy-eighth Avenue North
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

Reviewed by Thomas C. Buckley

Ask the staff at a county or state historical society to categorize their most numerous and persistent patrons, and your reply will be "genealogical researchers." If you wish to test such a statement, pay a visit to the second floor research section of the new Minnesota History Center. On one side of the hall is the research library where you will always encounter a few looking through the 14,000 bound volumes of family histories.

Walk across the hall to the microfilm reading room and the scene is quite different. It is jammed with microfilm file cabinets, microfilm readers, and people. The vast majority of the patrons are pursuing genealogical research through the examination of naturalization and census records, Minnesota newspapers, tax and court records, etc. Arrive on a Saturday morning a half hour after the room opens and you will be lucky to find a seat at a microfilm machine that works.

Similarly, the most frequent visitors to the offices of the Ramsey County Historical Society, on the third floor of Landmark Center, are genealogical researchers. They come to examine the files on historic buildings, the photo collection, and the city directories.

Park Genealogical Books of Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, published three guides in 1992 to aid Minnesotans in such research. *A Guide to the Minnesota State Census Microfilm* provides in tabular format a county-by-county guide to the Minnesota census records from 1865 to 1905. The numbers of those microfilm reels located at the Minnesota Historical Society, as well as those located at the Family History Centers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons), are listed in the tables.

Dedicated genealogists and historical biographers know that cemetery records can be an invaluable aid in their research. *The Grave Markers of Hennepin County, Mn., Volume 2* is the companion to the first volume published eleven years ago. It includes forty-five pages of grave inscriptions organized in alphabetical order. The inscriptions, numbering over 7,000, are conveniently keyed to the cemeteries, and sometimes the cemetery sections, in Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Champlin, Dayton, and eastern Osseo townships.

Researchers seeking data on individuals buried in those townships should find the volume a convenient time saver. Maps of cemetery locations are provided in the guide, but due to their scale and blurred print, readers will find the bigger maps of the cemeteries themselves much easier to read. The compiler, Alfred Dahlquist, plans to produce a third volume in less than a decade.

Church records are an invaluable source of information on births, baptisms, communicants, confirmations, weddings, deaths, etc. Historians and genealogists seeking information on the members of Minnesota's early Presbyterian churches in Minneapolis and at Fort Snelling will appreciate *Early Presbyterian Church Records from Minnesota*

1835-1871. This booklet contains a transcription of the ministerial record kept by those notable missionary brothers Samuel and Gideon Pond. It includes birth and death records and membership rolls, and is fully indexed.

The entries cover general church activities, with a few eye-catching exceptions. On November 7, 1836, the Fort Snelling congregation met in the quarters of brother Loomis and brought in member Cornelius Way to account for his persistence in a course of sin and wandering. In numerical fashion, appropriate to the military setting, the charges against him were listed as:

1. Neglecting the public, social and closet worship of God.
2. Neglecting daily study of the Holy Scriptures and every other Christian duty enjoined therein.
3. Guilty of hunting, fishing, etc., on the Holy Sabbath.
4. Spent time in vain and sinful amusements of the unconverted, such as organizing theatres, etc.
5. Broke solemn pledge made to the Temperance Society and to the world.
6. Guilty of the heinous sin of taking the name of God in vain.

In this age of less proscriptive religiosity, but with the ever-present electronic snooping, one is left to speculate how the congregation in those simpler days managed to determine that Mr. Way was neglecting his ". . . closet worship . . . and every other Christian duty . . ." It is further testimony to the single-minded determination of those pioneering Presbyterians.

Thomas C. Buckley is an associate professor in social and behavioral sciences and adjunct associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota.



Murder most foul! Colonel Hankins draws on local lore, circa 1868, for his colorfully imaginative "history" of St. Paul's early years. See the article on novelists and not-so-fictional St. Paul beginning on page 10.

R.C.H.S.
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