

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

*The St. Paul Volunteer  
Fireman and the Battle  
of Gettysburg*

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**Spring, 2003**

Volume 38, Number 1

*An 'Attempt' on His Life?*

**Sitting Bull's 1884 Visit to St. Paul**

*—Page 4*



*Sitting Bull around 1880, just before his 1884 visit to St. Paul. Minnesota Historical Society photograph. See article beginning on page 4 on Sitting Bull's visit and an alleged attempt on his life. Minnesota Historical Society photograph.*

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 38, Number 1

Spring, 2003

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The Society regrets an omission from the 2002 Donor Recognition Roll in the Winter issue of *Ramsey County History*. The list of supporters should have included the name of Albert W. Lindeke, Jr., a generous and loyal supporter. We apologize for this omission.

## A Message from the Editorial Board

In 1884 the Lakota Indian leader Sitting Bull visited St. Paul. Our feature article in this issue focuses on the circumstances of his two brief stays in the city that year and whether during the latter visit there was an attempt to assassinate the man who embodied so much of the conflict between the white settlers and the native inhabitants of the American West. This issue also includes Civil War historian Patrick Hill's account of Wilson B. Farrell, a St. Paul volunteer fireman, who gave his life as a member of the First Minnesota Regiment in the Battle of Gettysburg and a brief salute to the sesquicentennial of the founding of St. Paul's Oakland Cemetery, where Farrell is now buried. This issue concludes with Helen Miller Dickison's history of today's Fairmount Methodist Church, Minnesota's first German Methodist church, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2002.

Readers of *Ramsey County History* and anyone interested in the history of Ramsey County and St. Paul now have a new resource for history searches: the Society's web site at [www.rchs.com](http://www.rchs.com). On the site's home page, the researcher can click on several links that are of value. One is "Ask the Historian," which provides questions and answers about the area's history that recently have come to Society staff members. Another briefly profiles the histories of some of St. Paul's neighborhoods. All the information on this link comes from the Society's *Ramsey County Historic Site Survey Report*, a major resource in the RCHS library. The final link on the Society web page connects the user to information on the contents of the most recent issues of *Ramsey County History* and ties to a complete listing of articles published in the magazine since its initial publication in 1964. We hope this new link will get many hits from users and increase awareness of the richness of the content of our magazine's back issues.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*

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# *St. Paul's Oakland Cemetery and Its First 150 Years— Pioneers, Politicians, the Public Share These Grounds*

*Chip Lindeke*

Oakland Cemetery's historic existence began when the Oakland Cemetery Association was formed on Saturday, June 24, 1853. Oakland is the final resting place for many of Minnesota's famous politicians, business people, military men, as well as many not so famous pioneers and everyday people. They include Alexander Ramsey, Minnesota's first territorial governor, who was the association's first president, and John E. Warren, a future St. Paul mayor who was appointed its first secretary. Henry Hastings Sibley also served as Association president, having been elected in 1869. The Association has guided the cemetery during its entire 150 years. Oakland continues to operate today, and still has space for many future residents. The growing number of Hmong graves that have appeared in recent years is a reflection of St. Paul's increasing diversity.

Oakland Cemetery was established out of a need by the quickly growing city of St. Paul. While there already was a military cemetery at Fort Snelling, two Catholic cemeteries, and a cemetery created by parishioners of Christ Episcopal Church, there was still a need for a proper and adequate public cemetery for the entire city. Following a failed attempt to create a cemetery at Front and Western Avenues in St. Paul's North End, forty acres of land north of what was referred to as Jackson's Woods, was purchased for \$40 an acre from the Reverend Benjamin F. Hoyt of St. Paul's Market Street Methodist Church. Financing for the purchase was at annual interest rates between 24 percent and 36 percent—quite different from the interest rates available today.

Oakland Cemetery is located several

blocks north of the Minnesota State Capitol, and east of Rice Street. In 1884 the cemetery incorporated the nearby twenty-acre Christ Episcopal cemetery, and also purchased another ten adjacent acres. In 1904, the five-acre Zion Cemetery to the north was added, as well as ten additional acres on the north side. The current cemetery consists of 100 acres and is bounded by Jackson Street on the east, Sylvan Street on the west, Magnolia Street on the north, and Sycamore Street on the south. The main gate to the cemetery is located along Sycamore Street.

Robert Orr Baker, whose definitive history of the cemetery was published in Volume 16, No. 1 of *Ramsey County History*, writes that Oakland's Board hired the noted Chicago landscape architect, Horace William Shaler Cleveland to design and landscape the cemetery grounds. His work is seen today in the layout of roads and landscaping. Cleveland's work is a testimony to the cemetery board's emphasis on creating and maintaining the cemetery as a natural park-like setting with the same winding roadways, and beautiful mature trees created by Cleveland. Cleveland also designed Como Park in St. Paul in 1889–1890.

The current cemetery board and staff are planning events this year to recognize and honor Oakland's 150th anniversary. Family activities on Memorial Day, May 26, to coincide with the regular annual Memorial Day activities and followed by additional activities in late September. There will be trolley tours, detailed guided walking tours, exhibits, and refreshments available in the historic cemetery chapel (currently being renovated).



*Monument marking the grave of Norman Kittson, pioneer fur trader and partner of James J. Hill.*

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*Chip Lindeke (Arthur W. Lindeke, III) is a St. Paul architect with Rafferty Rafferty Tollefson.*



*"Little Sure Shot," Annie Oakley. Photograph from the Annie Oakley Foundation Collection, Greenville, Ohio. See article beginning on page 4.*

**R.C.H.S.**

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