

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Summer, 1991
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Education was a serious matter in 1911 when these boys and girls attended the Stoen School on the western prairie of Minnesota. It has been preserved and restored as the one-room country school at the Ramsey County Historical Society's Gibbs Farm Museum in Falcon Heights. See the articles beginning on Page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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On the Cover: School children pose with their teacher, Andrew Peterson, the man in the hat. Ernie Kittleston, who gave this photograph to the museum, is the little boy second from the left in the front row. See articles beginning on page 4.

Acknowledgements: Photographs with the articles on pages 4-13 are from former Stoen school students and teachers. Those of Walter Hill on page 18; Walter Sanborn and his family on pages 22-27, and Kittsondale on page 29 are from the Minnesota Historical Society's audio-visual library. Other Hill family photographs are from the James J. Hill Papers at the James J. Hill Reference Library, St. Paul, and are used with the library's permission. The photograph on page 31 is from the Ramsey County Historical Society's historic sites survey file.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

While this issue of *Ramsey County History* focuses on the school house at the Gibbs Farm Museum, the peregrinating family of James J. Hill and the career of Judge Walter Sanborn, the Editorial Board already is looking ahead to the fall issue. On November 1, the city of St. Paul will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the naming of the city. *Ramsey County History* will share in this celebration with an article on "the real" Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant, a look back at the early days of St. Paul and a fascinating account of the experiences of one of the city's first settlers—the Perry family. We at *Ramsey County History* look forward to this landmark event next fall and hope you will, too.

We also remain interested in your comments on articles in past issues of this magazine. We're inviting you to bring a bag lunch and participate in the second in our new discussion series based on these articles. Please join us from 12-1 p.m. Thursday, July 18, in Courtroom 408, Landmark Center, St. Paul.

—John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

Recyclable?

I enjoy reading your magazine and learning more about the colorful history of Ramsey County. I do have one small problem with the magazine, however. It is printed on glossy paper that this office, and most other offices, is unable to recycle. I understand that glossy paper looks attractive and is eye-catching. But as more organizations become environmentally aware, a magazine on 100 percent recycled, recyclable paper will grab a lot of favorable attention as well. If there is any way for the Ramsey County Historical Society to make this change for its future issues, it would be greatly appreciated.

—Bob Long, councilmember,
City of St. Paul

Naturally, we hope that our readers will not recycle their copies of Ramsey County History but will keep them instead as part of a permanent collection of material on the history of the county. We're pleased that you enjoy the magazine and you do make a good point. We have only begun to gather data on costs and recyclable papers available, but the Editorial Board agrees that we should make every effort to find a way to publish the magazine in an environmentally responsible manner.

—John M. Lindley, chairman,
Editorial Board, Ramsey County History

Where are the Photos?

After seeing pictures of the old St. Paul homes in the Spring, 1991, issue of *Ramsey County History*, I wondered whether photos were taken of the homes formerly located on St. Anthony Avenue before they were destroyed.

My grandparents lived at 550 St. Anthony in 1900 and at 607 St. Anthony in 1903, and I would love to see what the homes looked like. Also, regarding the historic district of Woodland Park, where can we see the list of "forty-four structures identified on the 1885 Hopkins Insurance Atlas of the district," of which eighteen remain? Exactly 100 years ago my grandmother lived and worked as a housekeeper at 593 Marshall, a house which does remain today.

—Nancy Altman-Zuber, Roseville

Some photos of houses on St. Anthony Avenue are in the photographic collection of the Minnesota Historical Society. Some, also, were published in the September 10, 1910, Quarto-Centennial celebration edition of The Appeal, an African American newspaper published in St. Paul. The paper might be on microfilm at the Minnesota Historical Society. The 1885 Hopkins Insurance Atlas is available at the Ramsey County Historical Society.

More about Photos

Are there any pictures of Pig's Eye Island? —Merl Boulanger, Newport

Check the photo collections at the Ramsey County Historical Society and the Minnesota Historical Society.

St. Paul Institute

What happened to the St. Paul Institute? I seem to remember that it was once located in the old city auditorium on West Fourth Street, but it has disappeared. —Louise Clabeau, St. Paul

It disappeared because it's now the Science Museum of Minnesota. The Institute began life around 1907, having inherited the collections of the St. Paul

Academy of Natural Sciences, founded in 1870. In 1928 the Institute was leasing the upper three floors of the city auditorium. Then it acquired the Merriam mansion on the hill behind the state capitol. As the Science Museum, it moved into the St. Paul Arts and Science Center in 1964, then grew into the museum we see today.

Who was Como Lake named for?

—Elissa Anderson, Maplewood

Charles Perry, the son of Abraham Perry who was one of St. Paul's earliest settlers, took up a 160-acre claim on the lake in the 1850s. Being of Swiss ancestry, and perhaps possessing a somewhat romantic nature, Charles Perry named the lake after Lake Como in northern Italy. (Read more about the Perry family in the forthcoming Fall, 1991, issue of Ramsey County History.)

Who was First?

Who really was the first in St. Paul, "Pig's Eye" Parrant or Edward Phelan?

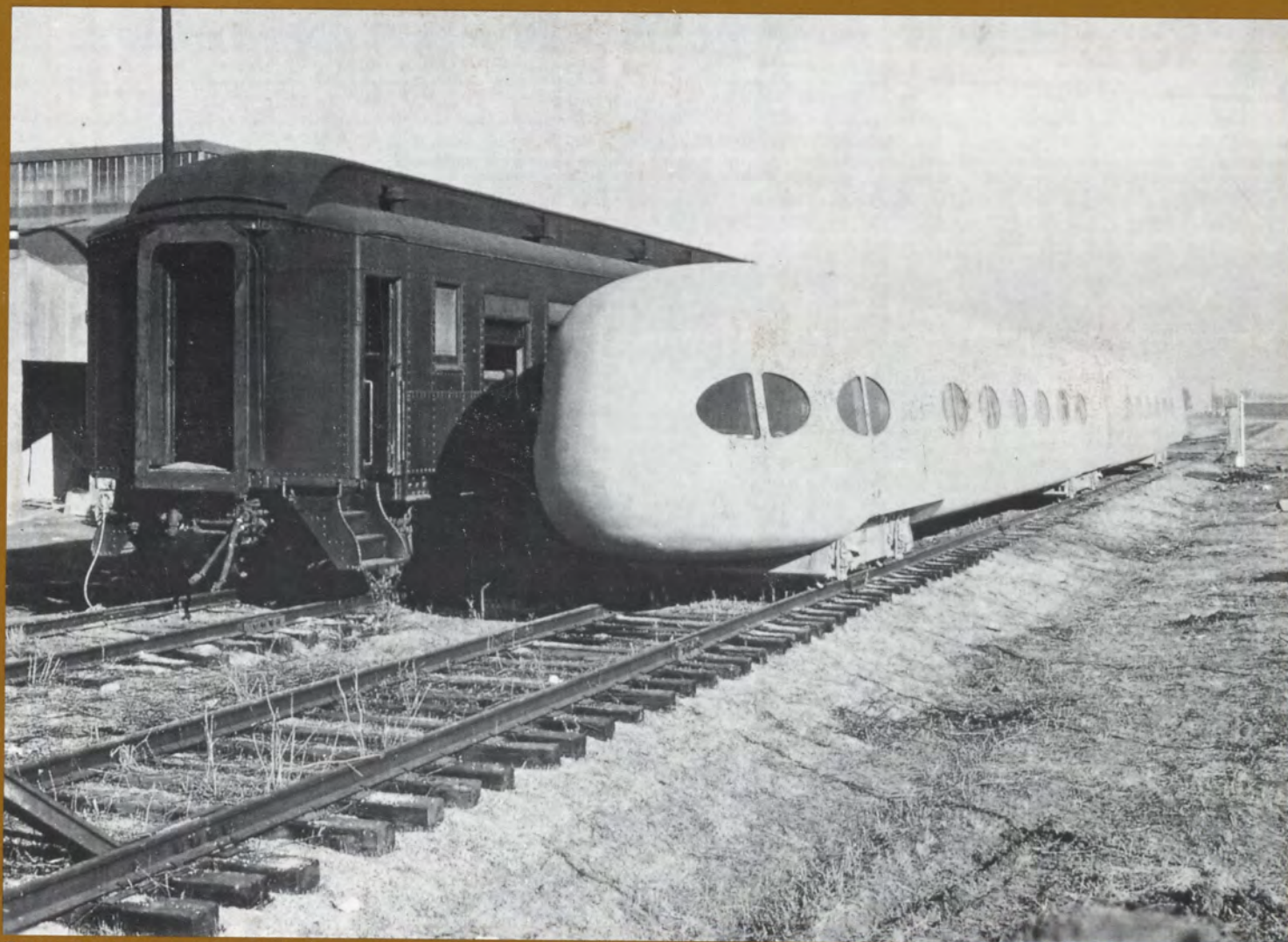
—Gail Friedrich, Bloomington

Good question. They arrived almost simultaneously in the spring of 1838, Parrant taking up a claim around Fountain Cave and Phelan staking a claim near the foot of Eagle Street, below the Civic Center ramp.

Depression Remembered

The article about the Depression of the 1930s brought back vivid memories of the hungry and desperate men who came to our back door asking for a meal. Mother would set up a card table on our back on our back porch and share with them whatever food we had.

—Jane Williams, Elk River



Prototype of a streamlined passenger coach next to a standard railroad coach of the 1930s at Inglewood, California. The new coach was designed by Cortlandt Hill, grandson of James J. Hill. At 32,000 pounds, the bullet-shaped coach was one-fifth the weight of the older coach. See story beginning on page 14.

R.C.H.S.
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