

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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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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Volume 26, Number 2 Summer, 1991

CONTENTS

- 3 Letters
- 4 The Little White School House on the Prairie
Harlan Seyfer
- 14 Dog Sled to Private Car: The Peregrinating Hills
Thomas C. Buckley
- 22 Walter Sanborn and the Eighth Circuit Court
Thomas H. Boyd
- 28 A Matter of Time
- 30 Books, Etc.
- 31 What's Historic About This Site?
First National Bank
of White Bear Lake

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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

A Matter of Time

1851 140 Years Ago

► On July 3, 1851, the *Minnesota Pioneer* reported a "great conflagration in San Francisco" and declared that "we often had occasion to notice the frequent fires which San Francisco has been subjected to. Lately we had to record the nearly complete destruction of Nevada City."

St. Paul already had experienced its own disastrous fires. The newly erected First Presbyterian Church, the first Protestant church in St. Paul, burned to the ground in 1850, moving the town council to enact an ordinance requiring all building owners who used stoves or fireplaces to keep fire buckets on hand. It was not until 1854, when the stylish Sintomine Hotel in Lower-town burned down, that a hook and ladder company was organized and it was composed of volunteers. (For an account of St. Paul's volunteer firemen, see the Winter, 1990, issue of *Ramsey County History*.)

► Back east in New York City, the glimmerings of Central Park appeared as the city proposed the creation of a park that would extend from Sixty-fourth to Seventy-fifth Streets and Third Avenue to the East River. St. Paul already had three parks which had been established two years earlier, in 1849: Rice, Irvine and Smith (now Mears) parks.

► A new federal law required that postage henceforth be paid in advance by the sender, not the recipient, of the mail.

► In Minnesota, the steamboat *Franklin* made its first run up the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers to Traverse des Sioux. On board was Alexander Ramsey, governor of Minnesota Territory, at the head of a delegation authorized to arrange for a treaty with chiefs of the Dakota nation. The treaty opened

some 40 million acres of the "Suland" to settlement.

1891 100 Years Ago

► William McKinley was campaigning for governor of Ohio on the Republican ticket and the Republican newspapers expected him to win. He did. Seven years later he became the twenty-fifth president of the United States, only to be assassinated by a troubled anarchist. His vice president, Theodore Roosevelt, succeeded him.

► Crime was no stranger to Minnesota, either, nor was the rough justice that was a hang-over from frontier days. Eli Mullinnox, described as a desperado by the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, shot and killed John Johnson and his son while trying to steal Johnson's bay horses at his farm near Farmington. A posse of armed citizens was organized, reportedly with the intention of lynching Mullinnox and his partner, Peter Brizendine.

► On a lighter note, the Twin Cities Derby for 1891 got off to a brilliant beginning with 15,000 spectators thronging the quarter stretch and grandstand for sixteen days of continuous racing at the track near Hamline University.

This was Kittsondale, the million-dollar stable and racetrack built by Norman W. Kittson near what is today University and Snelling Avenues. The stables, which cost \$60,000, were Kittson's pride and joy. Constructed in the form of a Greek cross, they measured 248 by 180 feet and held sixty-four box stalls. Kittson also owned Erdheim, a world-famous horse farm outside of Philadelphia, where Iroquoise, the first American horse to win the British Derby, was raised and trained.

► Help-wanted ads in the St. Paul newspapers reflected how some city folk earned a living. Three or four "in-

telligent" young men, "those preferred who can operate the typewriter," were wanted for office work. A "competent girl" was sought for general housework at White Bear Lake. A "boy" was wanted in an office, with the pay \$10 a month, and an experienced man was needed for work in a livery barn.

1916 75 Years Ago

► The Twin Cities were in the grip of a heat wave. The mercury hit 92 degrees on July 5 and three died from the heat. The newspapers reported "a score of protestations" caused by the hot spell. All was not well up on the Iron Range, either. Striking Mesabi workers were ordered by Governor J. A. A. Burnquist to disarm. Five of the strike leaders were jailed at Hibbing, including the secretary of the Mesabi Local of the I.W.W. They were accused of inciting a riot.

► Declaring that she was insane at the time, a jury acquitted a St. Paul woman of walking into St. Casimir's Polish Catholic Church and shooting and killing Father Henry Jayeski. The assistant county attorney, C. D. O'Brien, Jr., commented that, "the state has no desire to punish this woman if she was insane when she killed the man." Her comment, as she returned home to her husband and two children, "I am going to be good!"

1941 50 Years Ago

► Not yet at war but seeing the need for preparedness, the country was responding to the threat from events in Europe. The FBI arrested twenty-six men and three women in the "greatest spy conspiracy that the United States had ever uncovered," the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported on July 1. Twenty-two were German-born. In Washington, Minnesota Governor Harold Stas-

sen urged the House Rivers and Harbors Committee to develop a St. Lawrence Seaway as vital to the country's defense and economic welfare. In Minneapolis, a federal grand jury was completing a probe into the Socialist Workers Party. As indictments of party leaders for subversive activities were awaited, the party announced a seminar on the history of the Bill of Rights. ► Leon Gleckman, once a St. Paul political boss, met his death on July 14 when his automobile plowed into an abutment beneath the St. Paul Union Depot. Gleckman and his partner, Morris Roisner, were among a number of St. Paul men who figured in the early prosecutions for income tax evasion soon after the government nailed Al Capone, the notorious Chicago gangster, on the same charges.

Gleckman and Roisner, who headed an Eastern syndicate that was shipping in illegal liquor from outside the country, were convicted and sent to Leavenworth. Back again in St. Paul, Gleckman figured in the series of sensational kidnappings that terrorized St. Paul in the early 1930s. Gleckman was seized one morning as he was approaching his suite in the St. Paul Hotel. Held for ransom in Hurley, Wisconsin, he was released when the ransom was paid. Other victims during that lawless era were Haskell Bohn, son of the founder of the Bohn Refrigeration Company in the Midway district; St. Paul brewer William Hamm and banker Edward Bremer. The Barker-Karpis gang eventually was convicted in the Hamm and Bremer kidnappings.

► The cost of streetcar rides would go up in Minneapolis and St. Paul if the Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company had its way. Proposed new fares: six tokens for 50 cents, a five-cent increase.

► St. Paul residents responded to Uncle Sam's plea for aluminum. A total of 39,880 pounds of the metal was collected by 500 Boy Scouts and 100 volunteer truck drivers.

► Department stores, in 1941, advertised fur coats for \$59, washing machines for \$64.95, vacuum cleaners



Kittsondale, as it was being demolished in 1942. Photo: Minneapolis Star-Journal.

for \$48.50, three pounds of coffee for 87 cents and a package of cigarets for 10 cents.

1966 25 Years Ago

► At Cape Kennedy, the Lunar Explorer headed into space after heavy rains had delayed its launching. It was hoped that the rocket would unlock some of the secrets of the moon that the Russian Luna had failed to detect.

► Labeled "a blessing" by President Lyndon B. Johnson for the nineteen million Americans who qualified, the Medicare program was launched with 93 percent of all hospitals across the country deciding to participate. The program offered hospital insurance for a fee of \$3 a month. In St. Paul the start was quiet, with no rush to participate by those over sixty-five years of age.

► The darker side of the news revealed itself in Athens, Georgia, where two Ku Klux Klansmen, identified as the trigger men in the "nightrider" murder of Lemuel Penn, were each sentenced to ten years in a federal penitentiary. And from Chicago came the news that two were killed and thirty-two injured in a new outbreak of racial violence. For three nights in a row, police battled hit-and-run gangs of black youths who set fires and looted stores.

► There was good news elsewhere on the government front. Minnesota post-

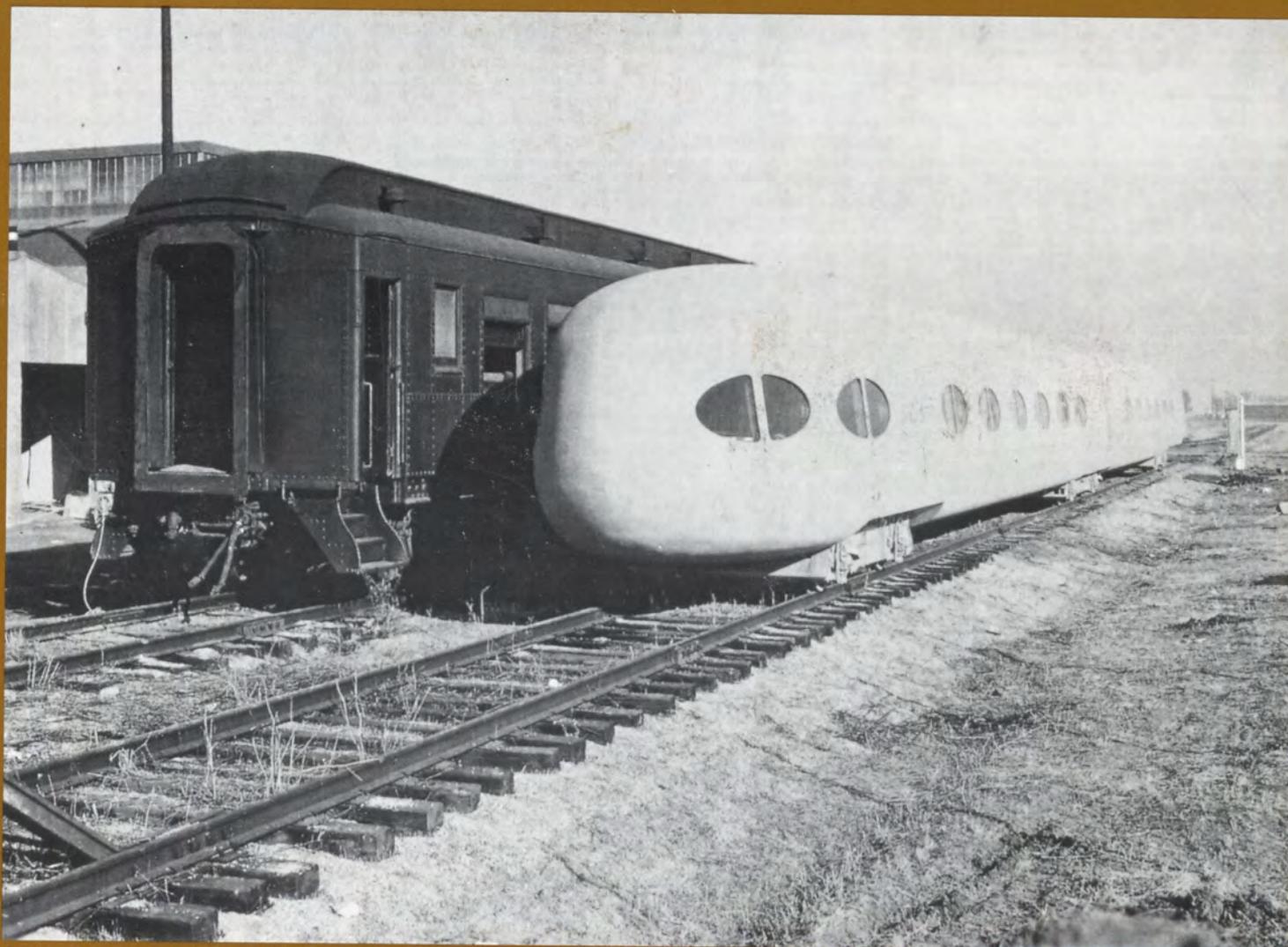
ed a \$50 million cash surplus, Rolland Hatfield, state tax commissioner, announced on July 2.

► St. Paul's beaches were busy as the city sweltered in a July heat wave. The temperature topped out at 94 degrees on July 1, but it was hotter in International Falls, of all places, where thermometers registered 96. Tornadoes and storms also ripped through the state. A twister smashed farm buildings in Nobles County.

► Northwestern National Bank was offering 4 percent interest, a full 1 percent higher than other banks in the Twin Cities area. You could buy two pairs of "fashion" sun glasses for \$1.01, a color television set for \$269.95 and a burger, fries and a shake for 49 cents. A steak dinner at a Bonanza restaurant cost 99 cents, a studio sofa bed \$57.50, an air conditioner \$219 and a 1966 Dodge Charger \$2,989.

► Help-wanted ads continued to reflect America's changing economy. 3M advertised for a computer programmer, IBM for a customer engineer, and the Boeing Aerospace Group announced career openings.

Adapted from research by Mary Anne Beers, Richard Benoy, Joe Podolinsky, Nancy Johnston and William A. Volna, students of Professor Thomas C. Buckley at the University of Minnesota.



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.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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