

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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Members of the Junior League of St. Paul rehearsing for the 1936 Junior League Cabaret, one of the League's more entertaining fund raisers. Left to right are Mrs. John Driscoll, Molly Turner, Betty Evans, Betty Scandrett, Betty Fobes, Edith Shull, Clotilde Irvine, Mrs. Thomas Wheeler, Alice Bartles and Betty Rugg. See article on the Junior League's seventy-five years of service to the community beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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A Message from the Editorial Board

In the early 1960s, a few schools on the cutting edge of higher education began to give special attention to the issue of race relations, and the contributions of racial and ethnic groups in national and local history. By the early 1970s, the contributions of women and the lives of average citizens, aside from those in the labor movement, were also singled out as subfields deserving special focus in the curriculum. However, those fields have long been recognized by state and county historical societies as worthy of attention. When the Editorial Board set about to expand the size of *Ramsey County History* and enhance its scholarly depth and breadth, the magazine already had a tradition of articles in these fields, which we determined to continue.

This issue contains three articles which contribute to the field of women's and family history. Scheduled for future issues are two articles in the areas of minority and ethnic history: the contributions of the Mexican and Jewish American communities to the history of St. Paul, as well as an article on the High Bridge, that vital link to the West Side, a neighborhood that was home to both communities.

—Thomas C. Buckley, member of the Editorial Board

Books, Etc.

Early Candlelight

Maud Hart Lovelace

With an Introduction by Rhoda
Gilman

Paperback reprint (Borealis Books
edition)

Minnesota Historical Society Press,
1992

In the first half of the nineteenth century, while there were some regular Native American encampments scattered about this area, Fort Snelling was the spot where permanent, East-Coast-North-American and European heritage settlement also took root.

The presence of the United States became very visible in 1820 when Colonel Josiah Snelling and his command set about building a military post on the bluff above the juncture of the Mississippi and the St. Peter's (Minnesota) rivers. St. Paul began when squatters were removed from close proximity to the Fort; and St. Anthony (eventually part of Minneapolis) began when Franklin Steele, sutler at the Fort, got word that the east side of St. Anthony Falls was open for settlement. Stone buildings, instruction in the three R's, Sunday church services, regular washdays, gardening, regular medical treatment and other characteristics of the eastern urban environment, were first evident at Fort St. Anthony, later renamed Fort Snelling.

Unfortunately, little is currently in print for those interested in reading about that early history. Marcus Hansen's *Old Fort Snelling* and Evan Jones' *Citadel in the Wilderness* are out of print. So, too, is Edgar Wesley's *Guarding the Frontier*, a useful volume that deals more widely with the history of early military posts in this region. What is readily available is a tightly written, profusely illustrated



Maud Hart Lovelace, above. Her hero, fur trader Jasper Page, resembles Henry H. Sibley, below.



forty-four page volume by Steve Hall titled *Fort Snelling Colossus of the Wilderness* and Francis Paul Prucha's *Broad Axe and Bayonet*, on the role of the Army

in the development of the Northwest from 1815 through 1860. But now, the reprint of Maud Hart Lovelace's *Early Candlelight* provides a historical novel to add to that slim list. The novel was originally published in 1929, reprinted for Minnesota's Territorial Centennial in 1949, and reprinted now in the centennial year of the birth of Mankato's most famous author.

Historical novels have served an important function in attracting people to the more serious study of the past. However, as Rhoda Gilman points out in her introduction to this second reprint of *Early Candlelight*, "Such books are neither common nor easy to write."

Maud Hart Lovelace and her husband, Delos, moved to downtown St. Paul for a winter and she went daily to the Minnesota Historical Society to study the history of the soldiers, Indians and civilians who inhabited the area around the Fort a century earlier. The resulting novel centers around the romance of one Deedee DuGray and Jasper Page, a fur trader who resembles Henry Sibley. Through their story passes a parade of historic figures. Plenty to entice those infected by the history bug to read further. However, parents can relax, assured that although this is a romantic historical novel, youthful purchasers will not be exposed to the obligatory salacious drivel that permeates so much of that literature today.

For the historian or history buff, historical novels, like vacation trips to historic sites, can be a sedentary busman's holiday. From the comfort of the favorite chair, such readers can read for pleasure, yet watch to see how many liberties the novelist has taken in adjusting past events, what characters in the novel are based on historic figures, and

what historic figures have been accurately presented. In this novel, there are regular appearances by, or references to, figures like Taliaferro and Dr. Emerson, Little Crow and Black Dog, McLeod and Renville, Galtier and Goodhue and the Pond brothers. They should keep historians interested.

Historic sites attract the general public and offer a wide array of materials to interest them in history. Hopefully, this novel will attract some to further reading about that interesting era in the history of this community, and the Minnesota Historical Society's Borealis Books will move on to reprint some of the scholarly works about Fort Snelling.

—Thomas C. Buckley

The Man Whose Dream Came True: A Biography of A. B. Stickney

John L. Reif
Dellwood, Minnesota
John L. Reif, 1991

In discussions of St. Paul's memorable railroad leaders, the focus often is solely upon Empire Builder, James J. Hill. There were other important builders, however. Foremost among them was Alpheus Beede Stickney, who played a fundamentally important role in the city's and the region's development. Consequently, he remains eminently worthy of our attention.

This slim, 110-page volume, authored by his grandson, is a frank celebration of Stickney's life and contributions. The Victorian entrepreneur's principal activities had to do with his leadership of the Minnesota and Northwestern—later, Chicago Great Western—Railroad to link St. Paul with Omaha, Kansas City and Chicago. Stickney's other credits include his role in establishing the St. Paul Union Stockyards Company, the Omaha Grain Exchange and the Metropolitan Opera House and Ryan Hotel in his adopted city.

The author makes no pretense of writing a detached, scholarly, footnoted biography, although he does rely upon such principal works as H. Roger Grant's *The Corn Belt Route: A History of the*

Chicago Great Western Railroad Company (1984). Reif is explicitly reverential toward his grandfather, and his intent here is to explicate Stickney's contributions. Much of the text consists of block quotations from contemporary accounts. One of the most appealing types of such material is the reproduced correspondence by Stickney with his children. That material in his chapter, "Life on Summit Avenue," belies the traditional, if not stereotypical, view we have of emotionally cold, removed Victorian fathers. In this respect, as in his career, A. B. Stickney was an exceptional individual.

—W. Thomas White

Monumental Minnesota: A Guide to Outdoor Sculpture

Moira Harris
Pogo Press, Inc., 1992

To one who travels occasionally in out-state Minnesota, it seems that each town has erected an enormous fiberglass statue of a mallard duck, a walleye or a Viking. To the outsider, this art seems like an unusual throwback to fast-food restaurant architecture of the 1950s and 1960s. However, to Minnesotans, fiberglass statues are a revered tradition. In some communities, the maintenance and upkeep of these statues is a primary civic duty. Visitors will search throughout small towns and refuse to leave until they have discovered the inevitable fiberglass statue.

The preeminent fiberglass statue may very well be "Big Ole the Viking" located in Alexandria which is, of course, the birthplace of America. "Ole" exemplifies the manner in which the character and heritage of a town can be set forth in a fun way. The same is true of Black Duck's statue, "Black Duck."

A survey of these fiberglass statues would be fascinating in and of itself. However, Moira Harris goes further to introduce the reader to the marvelous variety of forms and mediums used in sculpture throughout the state. Indeed, she has prepared an excellent sampling of the more than 620 different pieces of outdoor sculpture located in 150 different communities throughout Minnesota.

Harris presents the classic statuary that may be found in parks, cemeteries and county courthouses throughout the state. While these statues reflect the high ideals of early Minnesotans, they also reflect an appreciation of, for example, the individual firefighter or soldier. Thus, Minnesota's statues have honored men like Albert Woolson of Duluth, the last Union Army survivor, with the same respect as Abraham Lincoln.

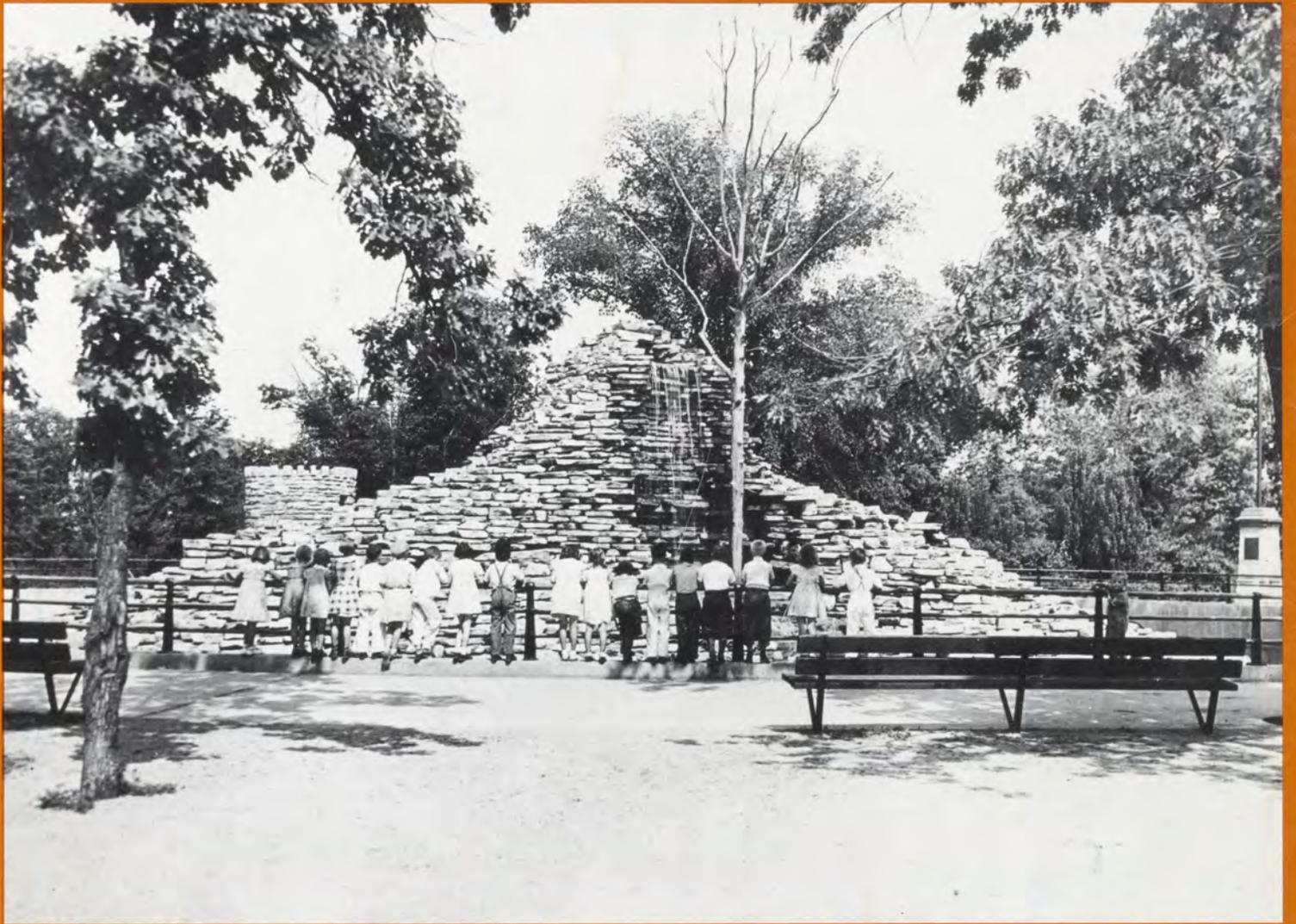
Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs have left a substantial mark on Minnesota's statuary. Throughout the state, there are statues and reliefs created by the talented artists who were subsidized through the Works Project Association/Federal Art Program, as well as other public programs. These artists have left a stimulating legacy too diverse and moving to be referred to simply as "Art Deco."

Minnesota communities have continued to support this same type of creativity by commissioning artists to create fascinating modern works such as Mark Heffelfinger's stainless steel "Ashoka" and Bruce Wright and Mark Nichols' tribute to Barbara Flanagan, titled "All the World's a Stage." Minnesota also has a wide selection of statues cast in concrete that includes likenesses of Princess Owatonna and Chief Decorah, as well as the Itasca Rock Garden. Leaving no medium unrepresented, Harris appropriately documents temporary sculptures that are created out of snow and ice for Minnesota winter carnivals, butter for Minnesota's State Fairs and cloth and wood for Minnesota's parades.

Harris' book certainly lives up to its billing as "an essential tool" to enrich one's travels on Minnesota's blue highways. In addition to discussing many of Minnesota's statues in the text, Harris has provided a complete listing of outdoor sculptures that exist throughout the state.

The short verse that begins this book is a marvelous characterization of the way Minnesotans approach their public art, regardless of what form that art may take: "That it's providential it's so monumental/But best of all they've seen art!" Travelers are encouraged to use Harris' book to "see" Minnesota's art.

—Thomas H. Boyd



Visitors lining the railing at Monkey Island, the Como Zoo's enduringly popular attraction. This photograph was taken around 1940. See the article on *Growing Up in St. Paul*, beginning on page 16.

R.C.H.S.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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