

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Growing Up on
Crocus Hill
—Page 22

Summer, 1995

Volume 30, Number 2

A Powerhouse of Vision, Vigor
Friends of the Library's 50 Years—Page 4



A little girl, seemingly overwhelmed by the riches a library offers, kneels beside her stack of books at an event organized by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library. Beside her a future reader watches carefully. Photo from The Friends' files. For a history of The Friends' fifty years of service to the community, see the article beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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Joseph H. Cash, Herbert T. Hoover, editors
Reviewed by Gail Teas

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in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen
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A Message from the Editorial Board

This issue of *Ramsey County History* provides an unusual look at a non-profit organization—The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library—that for more than fifty years has quietly served the cultural, intellectual, and public-spirited side of St. Paul and Ramsey County. As writer Virginia L. Martin tells us, The Friends began as what they themselves called a “tea and crumpets” society, but today is an initiator of change in the world of the local library. For example, in 1994 The Friends put more than a quarter of million dollars into various programs and activities designed to improve, expand, and upgrade the public library services that are available to all members of the community. Congratulations to The Friends.

John M. Lindley, chairman

Books, Etc.

To Be An Indian: An Oral History

Joseph H. Cash, Herbert T. Hoover,
editors

Introduction by Donald L. Fixico
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society,
Borealis Reprint, 1994
\$11.95 (paper)

Reviewed by Gail Teas

This is a remarkable collection of transcribed oral histories, first published in 1971, in which members of the Dakota, Lakota, Winnebago, and other Native American communities tell of their personal experiences: reservation life, mission schools, the Great Depression, traditions, and life in the 1960s.

Selecting from more than 800 interviews conducted by the American Indian Research Project of the University of South Dakota, the editors have chosen fifty-two for this book. Among them the reader will discover accounts of courage and despair, compromise and survival, spiritual salvation, failure, frustration, and triumph. Those interviewed include such well-known persons as Congressman Ben Reifel and Father Vine DeLauria.

We can also share with forty-year-old Neola Walke, Winnebago, her experiences as a ten-year-old placed suddenly in a Dutch Reform mission school where she was regularly whipped for speaking her Indian language, the only language she knew, and for moving in any manner which suggested dancing. We come to know Mabel Trudell, Santee Sioux, who "played a trick" on the white man who drove her to the polls and told her to vote Republican. She and her husband



Cover of *To Be An Indian: An Oral History*. This photograph from the *Minnesota Historical Society* is of an Ojibway woman at Rainy Lake, Minnesota, around 1910.

voted for Roosevelt who "fixed it so the Government gave the men jobs" during the depression.

And there is Lucille Childs, Mde-wakanton Sioux, who has raised eight children, all of whom have attained higher education and professional status, and who credits the state of Minnesota and the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs for this.

Levi Lawrence, Santee Sioux, tells of leaving the reservation to attend Haskell Institute and becoming a printer. His experience in the West was good, but when he returned to Rapid City, South Dakota, with a wife and family, he was turned down for housing and told "to go to Hell." Mrs. Lawrence

said that in Rapid City they encountered the worst instance of racism in all of their moves.

The last words are those of Cato Vlandra, Brule Sioux, speaking at the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Historical Conference on May 4, 1968: "We're going to use your brains and your money and we're going to raise ourselves to your level—and maybe a little beyond."

Vine DeLauria calls this book "... a unique piece of work ... a revelation to me. In interviewing 'all sorts and conditions of men' among the Indian people [the editors] have used a method that is fully American Indian."

Donald L. Fixico, who contributed the Introduction, was raised in a traditional reservation family in Oklahoma and currently is teaching American Indian history at Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo.

Gail Teas, a frequent reviewer for Ramsey County History, is a former high school English teacher and administrator of the Pipestone Community Library in Pipestone, Minnesota.

"SONS OF TEMPERANCE. The Sons are building a two story house on Third Street; the upper story a Hall for the Society, and the lower one to be let . . . As we are not aware that the Sons hold any meetings now, we beg to hint to them that they ought to meet, if only for financial purposes. Besides that, they have a great work before them in St. Paul. There is still much unadulterated, unwholesome liquor brought to this town, the sale of which ought to be stopped." —*Minnesota Pioneer*, November 27, 1851.



Mayor George Latimer and Garrison Keillor do their own inimitable thing during The Saint Paul Public Library's 100th anniversary celebration in 1982, an event which launched The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library on a new era of expansive growth. Keillor was chairman of the 100th Anniversary Honorary Committee. For a history of The Friends, see the article beginning on page 4.

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

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