

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Life on the Farm:
A Changing World With
Changing Fortunes

Page 13

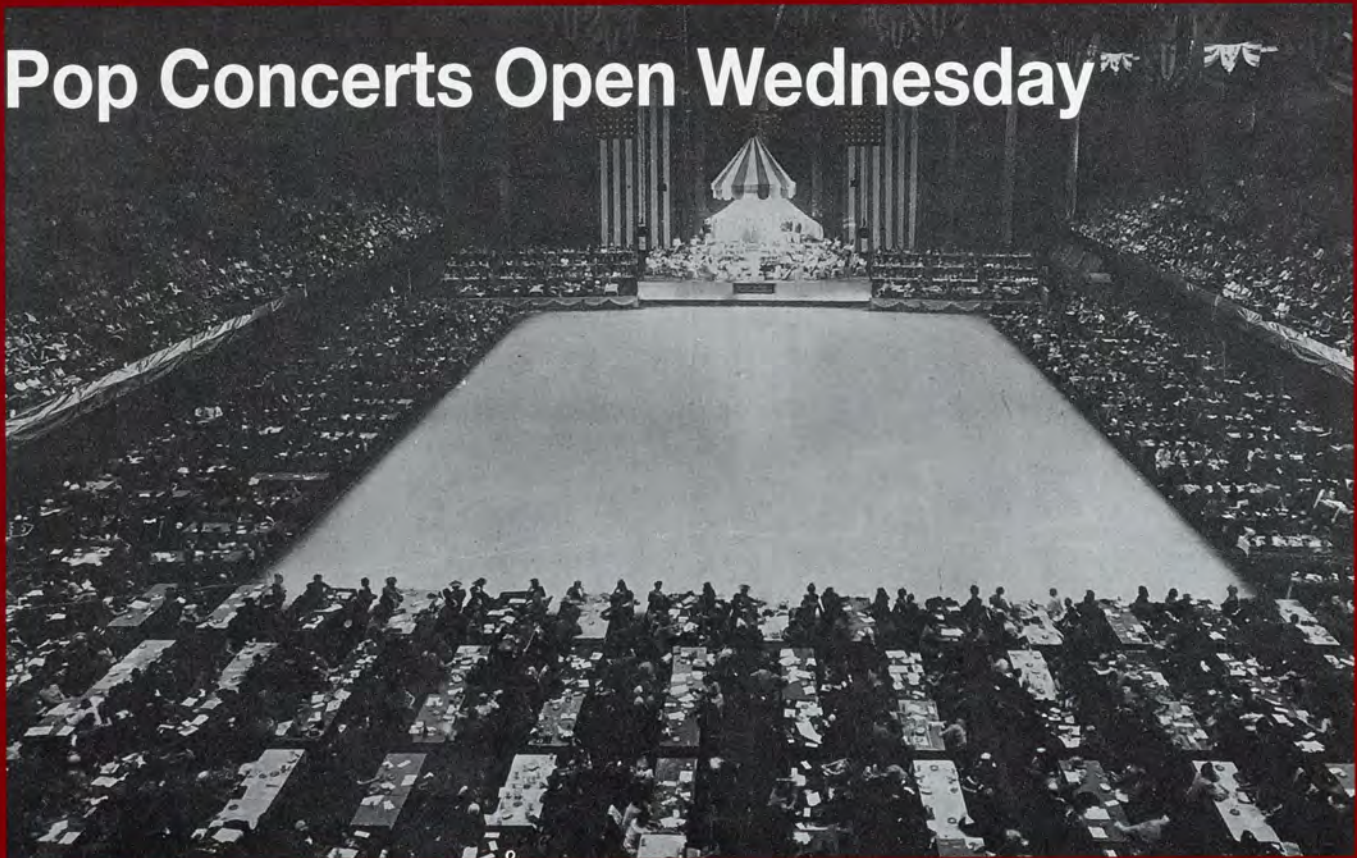
Summer, 1999

Volume 34, Number 2

Escaping the Heat on a Hot Night
The St. Paul Figure Skating Club and
Those Popular Summer Pop Concerts

—Page 4

Pop Concerts Open Wednesday



St. Paul's Pop Concerts were famous nationwide, the St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press noted in its rotogravure section for July 18, 1943. "Literally the only show of its kind in the world," the newspaper reported that the St. Paul Pops was a cooperative venture. St. Paul supplied the Auditorium arena, the Figure Skating Club the talent "for the spectacular ice shows," the Civic Opera provided the chorus, and the Musicians' Association the seventy-piece orchestra, many of them members of the Minneapolis Symphony." See article beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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Message from Editorial Board

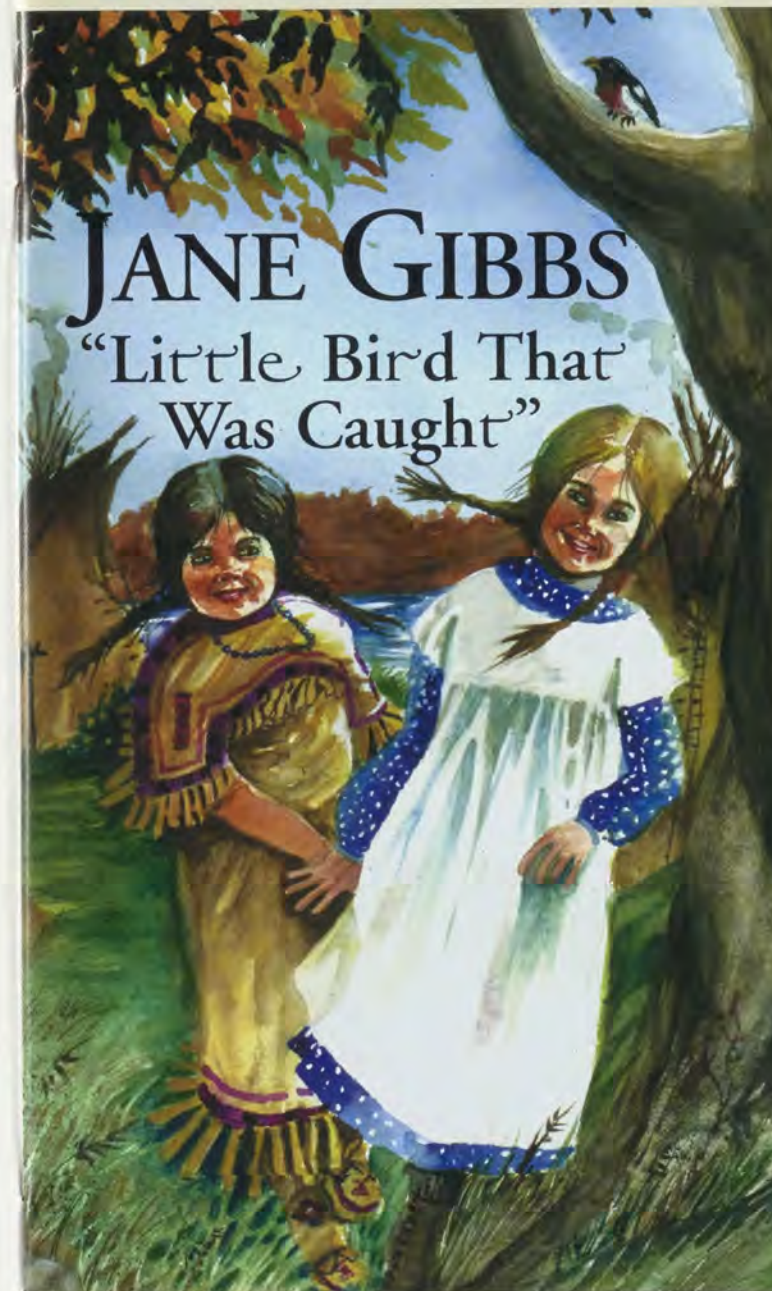
Given the record-setting heat that much of this area has experienced in the summer of 1999, this issue of *Ramsey County History* opens with Kathleen Ridder's history of the origins and early years of the St. Paul Figure Skating Club, which provides a verbal form of cool relief. With roots dating from the late 1920s and the efforts of St. Paul skating legends Eddie and Roy Shipstad and Oscar Johnson, the club got its legal start in 1936. It produced not only a number of regional and national skating champions, but also introduced the Summer Sessions and Pop Concerts that helped train young skaters.

Moving on from the Pop Concerts, authors Henry H. and Samuel H. Morgan share with us their careful research into their family history and Ramsey County real estate records. They trace what happened to the family farmstead which, in the 1880s, made up a substantial portion of the authors' great-grandfather's net worth in excess of \$600,000. The 160-acre farm, located on the western edge of Ramsey County was not the victim of corporate agribusiness at the turn of the century, but was, as they explain, more like the cherry orchard in Anton Chekhov's 1904 play of that name. What emerges from the Morgans' account is a cautionary tale about the uncertainties of the national economy earlier in this century. Next, two longtime practitioners of the art of governing, Thomas J. Kelley and Judge John T. Finley, record their memories of helping Ramsey County join the twentieth century.

Finally, the Ramsey County Historical Society has been saddened to learn of the recent death of Faith LeVesconte, the wife of the late Lester LeVesconte who was the grandson of Jane and Heman Gibbs. Faith LeVesconte was a longtime friend and supporter of the Gibbs Farm Museum, established by Lester LeVesconte's grandparents in 1849 and now maintained by the Ramsey County Historical Society.

—John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

An Exciting New Book for Young Readers



Based on a true story about real people
and events that happened.

PUBLISHED BY THE RAMSEY COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE STORY OF JANE GIBBS AND THE DAKOTA PEOPLE

Jane DeBow Gibbs {1828-1910} was a little girl who lived long ago in a place that someday would be called Minnesota. A family of strangers had taken her from her home in New York State and carried her hundreds of miles away to the far-off frontier beyond the Mississippi River.

There she lived in two worlds: the world of the Dakota people and the world of the soldiers and missionaries who lived among them. Her Dakota friends named her *Zitkadan Usawin*, "Little Bird That Was Caught," because they knew she truly was a "little bird" who had been "caught" and taken away by a strange family.

Jane learned to answer to two names, to speak two languages, to call two families her own. She went to school with the Dakota children, and she played their games. But Jane also shared the fear the Dakota knew as they faced an attack by their enemies.

Although she lost her own family, Jane had twice the adventures most people have. This is the story of those adventures. It is based on a true story about real people.

Letters to the Editor

Who was William Crooks?

When I saw the photograph of the "William Crooks" in the spring, 1999, issue, I thought it looked familiar. Didn't I once see this engine on display in the Union Depot in downtown St. Paul? I looked for it again on a recent visit but it's no longer there. What happened to it, and who was William Crooks?

*Marcy Newhouse,
River Falls, Wisconsin.*

You did indeed see the locomotive at the Union Depot, but that was some years ago. When the Depot was shut down in the 1950s, the "William Crooks" was moved to Duluth where it's on display in the museum in the city's old railroad depot. William Crooks came to St. Paul in 1857 as chief engineer of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad and was among the group of men who launched Minnesota's first railroad. The "Crooks" was named for him.

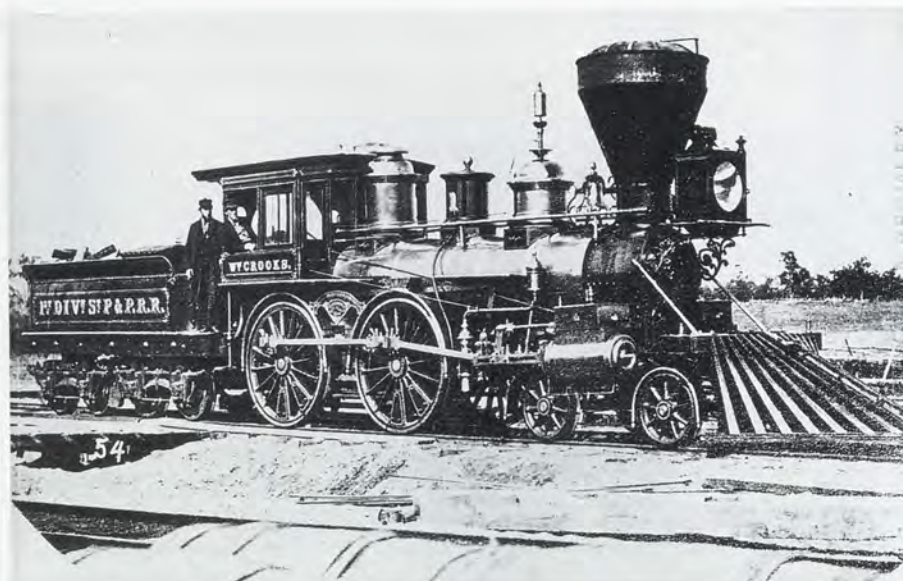
The Great Horse Market

I'm old enough to remember the Great Horse Market at Prior and University which was pictured in the last issue of the magazine. We lived nearby in Merriam Park and my father would sometimes take us children to see the horses and the men working with them. I hadn't known, though, that the St. Paul Street Railway Company was a major supplier of used horses. Of course the horse-drawn streetcars were long before my time.

Richard Evans, St. Paul.

The Dakota and History

I'm interested in the history of Minnesota's Native Americans and the role of the women. They seem to have carried a great load in providing for their



The "William Crooks," shortly after its arrival in St. Paul in 1861. From a postcard in the collections of the Ramsey County Historical Society.

families. How was the work distributed? Was it an even partnership, as we tend to think today?

Amy Ferguson, New Brighton.

Pretty much, although it would seem that the women might have shouldered the greater share of the burden. In his article on "The Dakota Perspective" in the latest issue of this magazine, Mark Dietrich writes that the "men hunted and trapped every variety of wild game. Their women gathered roots and berries, planted corn, harvested wild rice, raised the children; they also cared for the bark-covered lodges, which they used during the summer, and the buffalo-skin tepees used during the winter for ease of travel."

Heritage Trees

I was fascinated to learn from Joe Quick's little book that at least a hand-

ful of ancient trees have survived the onslaught of our so-called civilization. I have a silver maple alongside my driveway that is supposed to be at least 150 years old, and my neighbor has another silver maple that is maybe 200 years old. So I guess it's true that we live among some sturdy remnants of a much earlier era.

George Hanson, Prior Lake.

Goodhue and the Duel

I've read accounts of the famous "duel" between James M. Goodhue and Judge David Cooper's brother, Joseph. It's unfortunate that Goodhue died a short time later. Some accounts say that his death was due to complications from his injuries in that street fight

Louis Muller, West St. Paul



Three generations at the farm, circa 1903: Cornelia Baker Hollinshead, center, with Ellen Rice Hollinshead, left, D. A. J. Baker, right, Nora and Cornelia kneeling. Billy Hollinshead took this picture. See article beginning on page 13.

R.C.H.S.
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