

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

*Harvest of Victims:  
St. Paul's Smallpox  
Epidemic of 1924*

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**Summer, 2003**

Volume 38, Number 2

*Fog and a Dark October Night*

**The Fabled Wreck of the 'Ten Spot'  
In Its Plunge to the River Below**

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*The wreck of Terminal Railway's No. 10 on October 15, 1912 when the 145,000-pound locomotive, tender, and eight cars plunged off the railroad's swing bridge into the Mississippi twenty-five feet below. Photograph from the Davis, Kellogg and Severance Case Files at the Minnesota Historical Society collections. See article beginning on page 4.*

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 38, Number 2

Summer, 2003

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

This issue of *Ramsey County History* returns to the first decades of the twentieth century with two compelling accounts of losses of life: the wreck of the locomotive "Ten Spot" on a foggy night in 1912 and the virulent smallpox epidemic in St. Paul and Minneapolis in 1924–25. In our lead article, labor historian Dave Riehle recounts what happened on the Terminal Railway swing bridge across the Mississippi River on the border of Ramsey and Dakota counties in South St. Paul and how the accident killed the locomotive's engineer. Paul Nelson then tells us how smallpox spread through the Twin Cities, killing many more in Minneapolis than in St. Paul, over a fourteen-month period and how vitally effective vaccination was against that dread disease. In light of current public debate over the need for vaccination of large numbers of the populace against smallpox, Nelson's research provides a cautionary episode from Minnesota's public health records.

Moving from problems in industrial safety and the efforts of public health officials in the prevention of a highly communicable disease, this issue finishes with two charming and nostalgic articles. The first, written by Paul Johnson, is about the enigmatic Minnie Dassel (1852–1925), a long-time St. Paul resident who was well-connected but fell on hard times and yet was always willing to help others in need. This issue concludes with Carleton Vang's recollections of summer swimming holes and the State Fair neighborhood of his carefree youth in the 1930s while growing up in St. Paul's Midway area.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*

# Letters to the Editor

## Home for Unwed Mothers?

Do you know if the building shown here at 307 S. Walnut Street was a home for unwed mothers? And do you have pictures of a Dr. Edward Brown or his family?

*Bonnie Bolash, Crystal, Minnesota*

*Since this house has been standing for 150 years, it would be important to know more about Dr. Brown. A Dr. Edward A. Brown was practicing on Rondo Street in the 1920s and by that time the building had become a boarding house. However, the core of the house dates from 1862, with additions made in the 1850s and 1860s when it was owned by President Millard Fillmore's sister-in-law, Julia Fillmore; after 1868 it was owned by a carpet dealer, John Matheis. Restoration in the 1980s included replacement of the tower and a complete interior renovation with an addition. It's now a six-unit condominium..*

## A Family of Yoergs

I read an article mentioning the Yoerg Brewing Company and Anthony Yoerg Sr., house at 215 W. Isabel. In an abstract for 808 Cherokee, Anthony Yoerg Jr., is mention about 1902 when he sold the house to my grandparents. Was he also involved in the brewing company?

*Cathy Shields,  
ethancathy@sbcglobal.net.*

*In a 1996 issue of Ramsey County History an article by James B. Bell titled "Minnesota's, First Brewery: Yoerg's Final Years, 1933-1952, traced the brewery's origin to 1848 when Anthony Yoerg established the brewery in his house on Eagle and Washington, near the current Excel Center. In 1871 Yoerg moved it into three limestone cave buildings near the West Side*



*The house at 307 South Walnut. Was it a home for unwed mothers?*

*caves at Ethel and Ohio Streets, its site for the next eighty years. His seven children helped run the brewery. Anthony Yoerg is not mentioned as being involved, but his son took over the company in 1933. Anthony Yoerg Jr., had his own company, Yoerg & Savard Real Estate & Loans. He lived at 197 W. Isabel and might have been the real estate agent who sold our grandfather's home.*

## Mazourka Hall

Do you have a resource that would have the name of the theater troupe that was the first to perform in Minnesota in St. Paul at Mazurka Hall in 1851?

*Kelly Danburg,  
Danborgk@augzburgfortress.org.*

*Frank M. Whiting's article, "Theater in Old St. Paul," published in the fall, 1968, issue of Ramsey County History, states that "The first professional theatrical performance in Minnesota Territory took place in St. Paul, August 12,*

*1851 when seven players from Placides' Varieties in New Orleans opened a two-week engagement at Mazurka Hall."*

## The Lunborg House

I live in "the John Lunborg House" at 995 Cromwell Avenue. It was built in 1886 and is one of the oldest standing brick houses in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. Who was Lunborg and what did he do?

*Thomas Whisenand  
The Lunborg house was one of the few brick houses built during the 1880s and 1890s and is rare because of the use of cream colored brick. According to the St. Paul building permit, it was built for \$2,500 by a Minnesota contractor, A. Shingmann. Lunborg was a plasterer.*

# THESE KIDS WON'T HAVE SMALLPOX

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

*Hundreds Take Advantage of School Holiday to Get Vaccinated at City Hall*



*Photograph from the St. Paul Daily News for November 5, 1924. Minnesota Historical Society, Collections. See article beginning on page 10.*

## R.C.H.S.

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