

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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Zebulon Pike and Fur Trader
James Aird: The Explorer and
the 'Scottish Gentleman'

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Summer, 2005

Volume 40, Number 2

Rendezvous at the Riverbend

Pike's Seven Days in the Land of Little Crow—
The Wilderness that Later Became St. Paul

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A view of Pike Island with Fort Snelling in the distance as painted by Seth Eastman. The fort, of course, did not exist at the time of Pike's 1805 expedition, but Pike had recommended its site as the location for a military fort. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 40, Number 2

Summer, 2005

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN JULY 2003:

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect, preserve and interpret the history of the county for the general public, recreate the historical context in which we live and work, and make available the historical resources of the county. The Society's major responsibility is its stewardship over this history.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

September 23, 2005, marks the 200th anniversary of the signing of what is known as Pike's Treaty—an agreement between a number of Mdewatanton leaders and Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike in which the Native Americans granted an area that includes today's historic Fort Snelling to the United States in return for what eventually was about \$2,000. Historian Gary Brueggemann leads off this issue with a carefully drawn account of Pike's visit to Minnesota in 1805 and the consequences of this treaty.

Complementing Brueggemann's article is a short piece by Duke Addicks, who is a historical re-enactor. Addicks tells readers how he, as a modern-day storyteller, portrays the nineteenth-century Scottish fur trader James Aird, who met Pike just days before the Pike party arrived in Minnesota.

Readers may remember that in our Winter 2005 issue, we carried an essay reconstructing the history of the DeLoop Parking Ramp using building permits in the RCHS's St. Paul Building Permits Collection. In this issue, Steve Trimble gives us a photo essay in which he uses photographs to demonstrate the many ways in which parking garages helped shape the urban landscape of St. Paul.

This issue concludes with a "Growing Up" piece in which Alexandra (Sandy) Klas fondly remembers her aunt, Frances Boardman, the long-time journalist for the *St. Paul Dispatch*. Frances Boardman was a colorful and compelling St. Paul writer whose death in 1953 was mourned by many friends as well as others who had simply enjoyed reading her many theater, music, and other reviews in the newspaper over the years.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

No Fair in '46

FYI: Re the flu article in the last issue of the magazine. Both my parents caught the flu in the fall of 1918 and nearly died. I escaped it. Your picture on page 14 of visitors to the 1946–1948 State Fair: These people wouldn't have been riding to the fair in 1946. The fair was cancelled in 1946 because of the polio epidemic. The streetcar story is thorough but dry. Where are the people who were responsible for the whole megalomaniac—riders and crew?

I rode everyday with regular riders like Frank Gavin, president of the Great Northern, and Gus Barfuss of the pig farm scandal. And there must have been cranky conductors, people who tried to take chickens and pigs aboard, kids who yanked trolleys. Mr. Trimble is right in recommending fiction as a guide to history, but he's not quite a pioneer here. Historians already have mined *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and *The Great Gatsby* pretty deeply. Later historians will in time doubtless get to Mr. Trimble's list. Re "Growing Up in St. Paul:" How about people who grew up elsewhere first?

Walter N. Trenerry, St. Paul

We should ask author John Diers to write a sequel to his streetcar story.

Wilkins and the Auditorium

Who dedicated the Roy Wilkins Auditorium and who was the mayor of St. Paul in 1984?

Sharon Roberts, St. Paul

The Roy Wilkins Auditorium was dedicated in May, 1984, by George Latimer, mayor of St. Paul at that time. Construction of the original auditorium between Fourth and Fifth Streets in downtown St. Paul began in 1903 and was com-

pleted in 1907. Although the auditorium underwent at least four major renovations and reconstructions in its lifetime, the original auditorium remains today.

Thank You!

I belong to five county historical societies in many states. RCHS's Journal is by far the best and keeps getting better! Looking forward to the day that the society will publish hard covers on the county's most interesting past.

Edward Eberhardt, Maplewood

St. Columba's School

When was St. Columba's School built and who was the architect?

jhand@mcgough.com

St. Columba's School was built in 1922 at a cost of \$100,000. The architect was John H. Wheeler who spent fourteen years in the offices of Twin Cities architects, including seven years with Clarence Johnston, Sr. He designed nearly twenty buildings for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, including St. Marks Church rectory, Whitby Hall at the College of St. Catherine, and the main building at Derham Hall.

Sims and St. Paul Statuary

I lived a few years at 599 Sims when I was young. Can you help me with information about that property and why it was named so?

Henry Feist, St. Paul

Some say that Sims Avenue was named in 1872 for John Sims, a carpenter from Canada, who may have invested in this property. The St. Paul Statuary Company, founded in 1905, was located at 620 Sims. In the late 1950s, the company merged with the Brioschi Studios located then at 908-910

University Avenue, and Carlquist and Son, which had been founded in 1902. Amerigo Brioschi from the Brioschi Studio served as president. In 1977 the company did some repair work on the Cathedral of St. Paul.

That Vacant Lot on Como

On Como Avenue between Commonwealth and Hillside is an open lot currently used for parking. What used to be on that site? I'm an architecture student doing a thesis project on this site.

April Janita, St. Paul

The lot belongs to the St. Anthony Park Methodist Church, which is right across the street. The lot contained the Gutterson School, named for Gilbert Gutterson, a prominent local businessman. When in the 1950s, the deterioration of the building began to cause concern, the school was torn down in 1953.

The Twin Cities

How did St. Paul and Minneapolis become known as the Twin Cities?

Lisa Brown, St. Paul

Minneapolis covers fifty-eight square miles and St. Paul fifty-five. The two cities have been referred to as the "Twin Cities" for more than 100 years.

The Engine House on Hampden

What is the Engine House #3 at 923 currently being used for?

Trone Bjorkedal, St. Paul

Built in 1894, it was put into use the next year with two regular firemen and two volunteers. It was one of the last to use horse-drawn engines. In 1981 the building was converted for use as a ceramic studio and residence.



One of Seth Eastman's paintings which he labeled "Permanent Residence of the Sioux" and probably is the village of Ka-so-ja (Kaposia) as it looked in 1846 when Eastman was an officer at Fort Snelling. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

R.C.H.S.
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