

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Summer 2008

Volume 43, Number 2

On Courage and Cowards
The Controversy Surrounding
Macalester College's Neutrality
and Peace Association, 1917

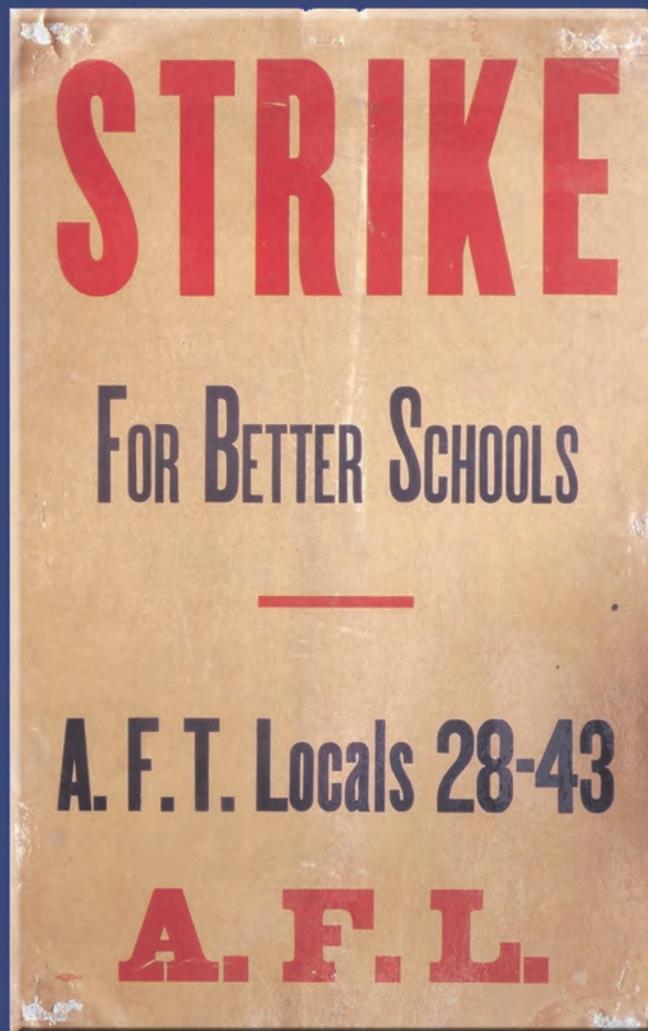
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Strike for Better Schools

The St. Paul Public Schools Teachers' Strike of 1946

Cheryl Carlson

—Page 3



This strike notice was one of many that St. Paul's public school teachers carried in the 1946 teachers' strike, the first strike by teachers in the United States. It is reproduced here by permission of Local 28, American Federation of Teachers.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 43, Number 2

Summer 2008

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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The Ramsey County Historical Society inspires current and future generations
to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program
of presenting, publishing and preserving.

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and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon*

A Message from the Editorial Board

Sometimes, current events remind us of our own past experiences. But history can provide perspective on the present as well. In these times, confronted with tough school levy and budget issues, we can read Cheryl Carlson's article on the St. Paul teachers' strike of 1946 and see when times were really bad: St. Paul elementary classrooms had up to fifty students and some had no soap or towels in the bathrooms. An outdated and corrupt city-based funding system, an uninterested business community, and families who sent one-third of St. Paul's children to nonpublic schools made a "perfect storm" for inadequate funding. But with the strike, teachers, administrators, and students worked together to apply pressure, leading ultimately to St. Paul's adoption of the current independent school district model. In the same vein, Emily Skidmore's article on the Macalester Neutrality and Peace Association points up a passionate disagreement on the merits of the United States' entry into World War I in 1917, much as the current debate goes on over U.S. involvement in the Middle East. But sentiment quickly turned to strong support once Congress voted in favor of the country joining the conflict in Europe.

Patricia Hampl's *The Florist's Daughter*, along with a number of other recent titles reviewed in this issue, offer a bouquet of books for summer (or fall!) reading: histories of a pioneering Native American interpreter and legislator, the St. Paul Public Library, the German-founded brewing industry, and the streetcar era in the Twin Cities. Diverse, entertaining, and great reads.

Anne Cowie,
Chair, Editorial Board

Book Reviews

William W. Warren: The Life, Letters, and Times of an Ojibwe Leader

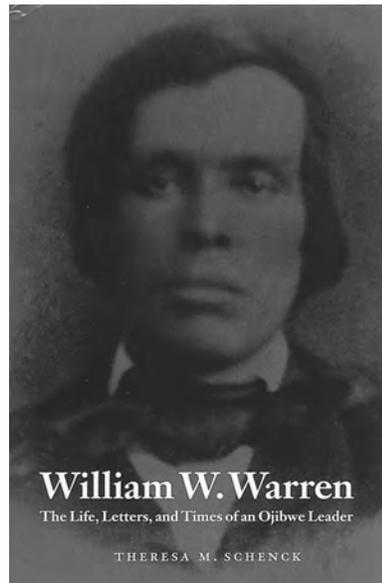
Theresa M. Schenck
Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2007
204 pages; \$45.00
Reviewed by David Thorstad

Theresa Schenck has written more than a biography of one of Minnesota's most interesting nineteenth-century figures, as the title suggests. It is "rather a study of the man in relation to the times and the events that touched him or in which he played a role." By frequent and lengthy citation of Warren's letters, "I intend the reader to enter into the mind and heart of William Whipple Warren."

She has succeeded. She documents events in Minnesota history that are not well known and that rarely turn up in school curriculums, including the repeated forced removals of Ojibwe westward in response to white encroachment, accomplished with duplicity on the part of territorial Governor Alexander Ramsey and other authorities, as well as traders, both white and mixed blood. Ramsey repeatedly lied by claiming that the whites had no designs on Ojibwe lands, but in fact the treaty period was a land grab by whites. Native inhabitants occasionally resisted, but generally they responded peacefully to the cultural and territorial assault. Warren collaborated in the removal process, but Schenck reveals the contradictory nature of his efforts to convince Ojibwe elders to agree to removal. Warren did not consider him-

self an "Indian" (he was three-eighths Ojibwe), even though he looks more "Indian" than many Ojibwe today. In letters to Ramsey, he refers to the Ojibwe as "our Indians," suggesting an identification with the white authorities. Yet at the same time, during the removal of 1851, he claimed that his goal was to unite the Ojibwe bands into one tribe that could negotiate from a position of strength.

While serving as an interpreter, War-



ren collected oral histories from elders and chiefs, with a view to publishing a storehouse of knowledge about a way of life that was disappearing. His *History of the Ojibway People* (written in the 1850s, but not published till more than thirty years after his untimely death in 1853 at the age of twenty-eight) is his legacy, but many notes for other works, including on the colorful Missis-

sippi band chiefs Hole-in-the-Day the Elder and Younger, and other chiefs, as well as one on Ojibwe religious and medicinal practices, are mostly lost.

One is struck by how peripatetic the Ojibwe were, traveling long distances at great hardship and loss of life, to accommodate the authorities' stipulated locations for payment of annuities (which amounted to around five dollars) and removal from their ancestral lands. Hole-in-the-Day the Younger alone made six trips to Washington, D.C., between 1855 and 1867—reflecting the widespread belief that the "Great Father" located there would mediate favorably disputes with state authorities.

Striking too is the air of ambition, self-confidence, precociousness, and intelligence that Warren displays from a young age. At age twelve, for example, while beginning studies at Clarkson Academy in New York, his first letter to his father describes how he reached the head of his class after a mere two weeks, and although his spelling is not perfect, and he claims to have already forgotten his French, he confidently predicts that he will surpass his classmates in Latin: "The master says who will beat will have a premium and my Grand father says he will make me a pair of pumps if I shall beat them and there is no question but I will beat them." He concludes: "I wrote this letter without any help but excuse me for bad writing. Do not expect such bad writing next time." Indeed, by his mid-twenties, some of his letters to the editor were written in eloquent English.

In 1850, Warren was elected to the second Minnesota territorial legislature

from the Sixth District, which included Crow Wing and Sauk Rapids. Even today it is hard to imagine a Native American as dark-skinned as Warren being elected to the state legislature. Warren promptly resigned his position as a farmer at Gull Lake (the authorities sought to turn woodland Indians into yeoman farmers, an effort that Warren aided) and moved his family to St. Paul, where they resided at a comfortable boardinghouse-hotel owned by Henry M. Rice at the corner of Exchange and St. Anthony. He served on the Committee on Territorial Affairs and the Committee on the Militia.

Schenck, who also wrote *The Voice of the Crane Echoes Afar*, which includes a discussion of traditional Ojibwe leadership, has organized her book chronologically. In addition to thoroughly documented notes, it has appendixes of Warren's letters and published works, a selected bibliography, and an index. Illustrations include a Warren family tree, photos of Warren and some of his relatives, a view of St. Paul, Hole-in-the-Day the Younger, and one of Warren's letters. Two maps, while helpful, are far from adequate: the map of Minnesota Territory (1849–51) does not show Cass County, and the map of Ojibwe country of Wisconsin and Minnesota lacks more than a dozen place-names frequently mentioned, which makes following the narrative frustrating. Occasional errors include the date given for Warren's last letter: 19 May 1853 on page 169, but 29 May on page 178. No list of abbreviations is provided, though one would have been desirable with the notes and the appendix of Warren's letters. Characters are not always adequately identified (e.g., the missionary Rev. Sherman Hall's Presbyterian denomination is not given). But these shortcomings are minor distractions in a compelling account of a mostly forgotten period of Minnesota Ojibwe history.

David Thorstad is a student of Ojibwe language and culture. He lives in the White Earth Indian Reservation.

Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul

John W. Diers and Aaron Isaacs
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007

350 pages, \$39.95

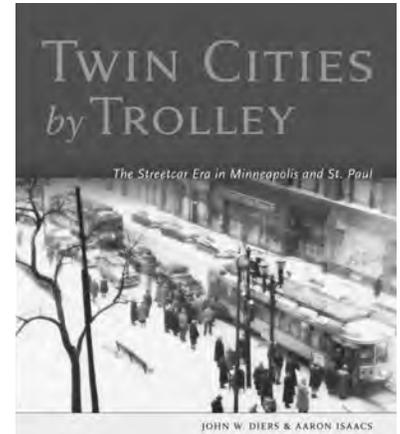
Reviewed by Byron Olsen

As one who grew up in St. Paul with the streetcars and loved to ride them, and as one who is a history buff and a railroad enthusiast, *Twin Cities by Trolley* was a book long awaited by this reviewer. Even if one shares only some of these qualifications, this book is a rich trove of information and nostalgia about our communities as they came of age in the twentieth century. It isn't just about streetcars, or even just about Twin City Rapid Transit Co., the company that built up the Twin Cities transit system. It is about our two cities during this time, and how the streetcars bound us all together with a cohesive web that developed and built up our central city communities as we know them today. A web, I might add, that was not replaced by the freeway system, which instead seems only capable of encouraging endless dispersion of our populace and dissipation of any sense of community.

Authors Diers and Isaacs bring extensive qualifications to the challenge of recounting this major component of St. Paul and Minneapolis history. Both authors spent their working careers in the transit industry in the Twin Cities and both have authored other publications on transit history. Both are longtime members of railroad historical organizations such as the Minnesota Streetcar Museum, giving them both the closest thing to "hands on" experience with streetcar history.

This is a large format book, the better to display the extensive number of photographs recapturing many aspects of the history of the Twin Cities, as molded by the streetcars.

Chapters cover the transition from horse-drawn cars to electric propulsion, spreading the system's track network to far places such as Excelsior and Stillwater, and building the large and well-built



streetcars right here to provide warmth in Minnesota winters and greater room and comfort all year around. The technology of the streetcar is explained in a highly readable manner sufficient for easy understanding by non-technical readers.

Also covered is the development by Minneapolis lawyer and developer Tom Lowry of a uniquely strong transit company with standards of service to the community that were perhaps unmatched anywhere in the United States. The high quality service built financial strength, which sustained the company through the precipitous decline in business during the Great Depression. The subsequent temporary return of high passenger loadings brought about by World War II gas rationing brought a temporary return of prosperity, which only set the stage for crisis by 1949.

Until the system was decimated in 1950 by the postwar rush to abandon transit for automobiles, there was a good deal of local pride in our streetcar system. The conclusion of the authors that might be faulted is their willingness to dismiss out of hand the possibility that municipal ownership could maintain the trolley system's former standard of service to the public. This was already happening in some other U.S. cities at the time. Where it did, it often resulted in maintaining some degree of service orientation, rather than looking only to raw profitability in the face of declining revenue and high infrastructure costs. The hasty destruction of the Twin Cities system, the authors seem to say, was the only alternative available, even though

it trashed a transit infrastructure for pennies on the dollar of value to the community, parts of which could have been used for years and provided a stronger transit presence.

Byron Olsen is a longtime trolley enthusiast and member of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Land of Amber Waters: The History of Brewing in Minnesota

Doug Hoverson
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
Press, 2007
316 pages, \$39.95
Reviewed by Gary J. Brueggemann

When University of Michigan graduate Doug Hoverson returned home to Minneapolis in the late 1980s, his knowledge of Minnesota breweries was probably no more than the average Twin Cities beer drinking baby boomer. He was very familiar with the three old local brews: Grain Belt, Hamm's (later Olympia and still later Stroh's) and Schmidt's (later Heileman's and way later Landmark), he "had vaguely heard of Schell's Brewery in New Ulm," but he had little or no knowledge of Minnesota's rich history of brewing and that the state once boasted over 120 local breweries.

That all changed in 1996, when after playing around with making his own home brew, Hoverson—a high school history teacher by profession and a beer aficionado by avocation—began his quest to research and write the full history of brewing in Minnesota. His quest ultimately led him to visit every currently operating brewery and brewpub in the state, as well as the sites of many of the more than 200 long-gone breweries from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although it was a labor of love that included the sampling of an array of tasty beers, Hoverson admitted that "for every hour spent on a brewery tour, a hundred were spent squinting at a microfilm reader, or unwrapping dusty tax records."

The result of Hoverson's exhaustive

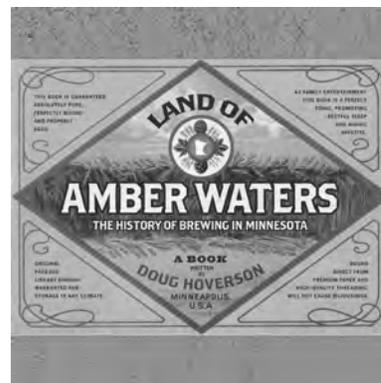
eleven-year project—in which he researched every known brewery that ever operated in Minnesota (a total of 290)—is a lengthy, lavishly illustrated, well-documented, oversized book, entitled *The Land of Amber Waters: The History of Brewing in Minnesota*. Undoubtedly the best overall work on brewing in Minnesota ever published, Hoverson provides a superb synthesis of all the relevant writings that preceded it in combination with his own groundbreaking research. Organized both topically and chronologically and written in a lively, easy-to-follow style, this encyclopedic book creatively covers every aspect of the subject from definitions of beer and how to make it, keg it, bottle it, market it and advertise it, to all of the many topics connected to the history of brewing in general and Minnesota in particular. He even includes a section on the issue of the preservation of old brewery buildings, revealing that "of the 250-odd historic breweries known to have operated in Minnesota, about two dozen still stand to some extent."

Local readers will especially enjoy Hoverson's coverage of the breweries of St. Paul (more than thirty in all), which includes an opening account of Minnesota's first brewery (Anton Yoerg's, established in 1848, on lower Eagle Street), as well as at least forty vivid photos of St. Paul breweriana. Indeed, the treasure trove of pictures of breweries and their colorful advertisements—many of them very rare—is one of the most impressive features of this eye-catching book.

For those interested in German-American history (Germans are the largest ethnic group in both Minnesota and St. Paul) and the impact they made on the country, state, and localities, the book is a must read. Before the rise of the modern brewpubs, the Germans dominated the history of American brewing and the story of Minnesota brewing is mostly the story of German immigrants and their descendants. In the case of St. Paul, Hoverson shows that only two of the approximately twenty-five breweries that operated there in the nineteenth century were founded by non-Germans. The names of the city's brewers reads like a page from a Munich directory: Banholzer, Bensberg, Bremer,

Bruggemann, Emmert, Fleckenstein, Funk, Hamm, Hornung, Keller, Raush, Reichow, Schmidt, Schweitzen, Stahlman, Troyer, Wurm, and Yoerg. At least eight of these families included important civic and political leaders of St. Paul who collectively employed hundreds of workers and donated significant funds to charities. Several played key roles in lobbying the state legislature to prevent the advocates of Temperance from turning Minnesota into a "dry state," an effort that was successful until national prohibition began in 1919.

Hoverson amply covers the negative impact that both the Prohibition Amendment and the earlier war against Germany had on the German brewers. He also examines the even greater economic and social forces in the twentieth century that drove the rise of big corpo-



rations in brewing and ultimately caused the demise of all but a few of Minnesota's breweries, the vast majority of which were family-run businesses.

But Hoverson's book is not just the story of Minnesota's lost breweries (over 250). It is also an account of the modern revival of Minnesota brewing. Indeed, one of Hoverson's greatest contributions to the subject is the work he did in meticulously researching the new era of the micro breweries (defined by the Minnesota Department of Revenue as "a brewery producing fewer than 2,000 barrels per year") and the brewpubs (a pub or restaurant that "brews beer for sale on the premises"). According to Hoverson, there are now three breweries (Cold Spring, Schell, and Summit),

four micro breweries and fifteen brewpubs operating in Minnesota. That is a far cry from the 123 breweries that existed in 1875, but it is a dramatic improvement from having only four breweries in operation in 1985. Hoverson reveals that St. Paul's Summit Brewery (founded by Mark Stutrud in 1986) was not only Minnesota's first micro brewery, it was the state's "first new brewery since World War II." Thanks to the construction of its new facility in 1998, Summit now produces over 65,000 barrels a year, which ironically means it no longer qualifies as a micro brewery.

Whether readers of *Land of Amber Waters* are beer aficionados, ordinary beer drinkers, collectors of breweriana, or just people generally interested in Minnesota history, all will be delightfully overwhelmed by the many stimulating visuals and interesting information neatly and creatively crammed into this valuable book. Anyone who reads this book from cover to cover will also grasp its underlying theme: brewers were very important contributors to Minnesota history and their numerous breweries were illustrative landmarks that identified the state as not just the "Land of Lakes" but a "Land of Amber Waters."

Gary J. Brueggemann is a history instructor at Century and Inver Hills community colleges.

*A Noble Task:
The Saint Paul Public Library
Celebrates 125*

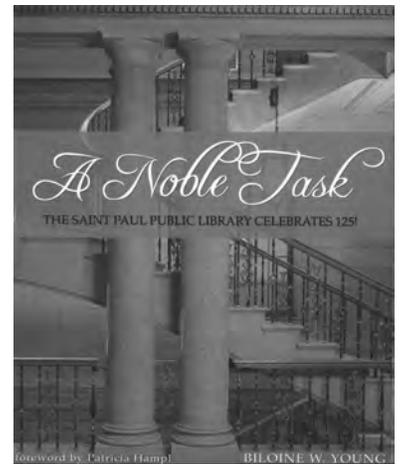
Biloine W. Young
Afton, Minnesota: Afton Historical
Society Press, 2007
211 pages, \$40.00
Reviewed by Lynne M. Young

When I first visited the St. Paul Central Library more than twenty-five years ago, I was working as a librarian in a neighboring suburban library system. Like many suburban systems of the time, everything was relatively new—collections went back only a few years and the buildings were of contemporary,

open design. The St. Paul Public Library was a striking counterpoint to that—a classical (Northern Italian Renaissance-style) building with rooms devoted to specific departments and collections that in some cases dated to the turn of the twentieth century. I remember sheet music from the early 1900s, car repair manuals for early Fords, out-of-print fiction that would have been difficult to find anywhere else and a staff that was very proud of their library and its service to the community. After a recent visit to the Rondo Community Outreach Library, I came away with a renewed respect for the way in which the St. Paul Public Library has responded to its changing community, and I welcomed the opportunity to review Biloine ("Billie") W. Young's new history of the library.

Afton Historical Society Press is known for producing beautiful books. *A Noble Task* is no exception. The cover art, the lavish photo-filled page layout, even the gold-toned end papers, make the book beautiful to look at and a joy to handle and browse. It is more than a coffee table book, however. In dramatic fashion the book traces the development of the St. Paul Library from its inception with the 1863 merger of two membership libraries, the Mercantile Library Association and the YMCA Library, through the opening of the Rondo Community Outreach Library in 2006. The financial difficulties that led to the initial merger did not abate until the library reorganized as a free public library in 1882. Although public support was essential to the library's survival and growth, it did not completely solve the institution's financial difficulties.

This book is the story of how the St. Paul Public Library both floundered and flourished through the last 125 years. More than that, however, the story of the library is the story of the people who founded and supported it through the years. It is also the story of the diverse and often fascinating individuals who led the St. Paul Library through 125 years of political, financial, and social turmoil. Beginning with Edward Eggleston in 1863, the directors of the St. Paul Public Library exhibited varying degrees of lit-



erary and academic achievement, visionary leadership, and political acumen. As the current director, Melanie Huggins, writes in her opening note, "We have always been in the business of making the lives of St. Paul citizens better." This book shows how these directors, the staff and supporters of the library went about making citizens' lives better despite many and substantial obstacles and differing philosophical views on the best way to accomplish that goal.

Young weaves the stories of the library, its influential and famous Minnesota supporters, and its directors into a history of the entire community. Although I would have enjoyed seeing the kinds of things we reference librarians love—timelines, tables and summaries of data—*A Noble Task* is nevertheless a very satisfying book, filled with engaging stories, interesting trivia, and a wealth of photographs. It is written in a clear, straightforward style and shows the evidence of extensive research and thoughtful interpretation. *A Noble Task* is an essential addition to the library of anyone interested in St. Paul's history, cultural traditions and future. This multifaceted portrait of a community institution would also be of interest to library lovers everywhere.

Lynne M. Young is the Director of the Northfield Public Library and has been a library lover since her first visit to the Watertown Carnegie Library in Watertown, South Dakota. She is no relation to the author of this book.

The Florist's Daughter

Patricia Hampl

Orlando, Fla.: Harcourt, 2007

227 pages, \$24.00

Reviewed by Laurie M. Murphy

It's about doing the right thing for someone who is dying. It's the art of being there while your parents are dying and figuring out who you are after they are gone. For me, this is the heart of Patricia Hampl's new book *The Florist's Daughter*. At the beginning, Hampl is patiently waiting by her mother's bedside in her final moments of life and trying to decide how she will write her mother's obituary. Hampl laments the struggles of being a daughter, turned caregiver, who is not quite ready to be left alone or orphaned, as we will all be someday. Two hundred pages later, we are back at the final passing of her mother. We have been through a poignant, yet wonderful history of the Hampl family's life together; the biting Irish humor of her mother, the calmness of the Czech father whose clock is based on floral time, the dalliances of the rich who live up the hill, and her wonderful descriptions of St. Paul from the 1950s to the '70s. This is a memoir of how one person sorted out her past and solidified her family relationships.

In all her books, Hampl preserves history for us by clearly naming and describing many familiar neighborhoods and the downtown of "old St. Paul." "It was a world," Hampl writes, "old St. Paul. And now it's gone. But I still live in it." This story gives two insights into nostalgia. One is the way that nostalgia is the engine of history. The other, which I prefer, is that nostalgia is a form of "longing and an aching for history." The sweet, innocent history we remember from childhood. I can still see the Holm and Olson's she describes, the skating rink, the Gopher Grill, the garage under the Lowery Medical Arts Building, and Dayton's River Room.

Pat Conroy, another fine storyteller, says it best in his comment on the book: "Hampl writes the best prose of any American writer, period. The rest of us cannot touch her." Her writing style

is always excellent and leaves this reviewer embarrassed to write a review. Hampl's excellence in writing is why I always enjoy reading her books. She conveys so much meaning and insight with so few words.



By juxtaposing her mother's realism with her father's search for truth and beauty in the world of flowers through the events recalled in this book, we learn how Hampl sorted out and settled on those parental influences that were most important to her, just as we all must do in our own lives.

Do we ever really escape our past? My question is why should we, when it's written about so beautifully as in *The Florist's Daughter*?

Laurie M. Murphy is a life-long resident of St. Paul, a director of the Society, and a member of its Editorial Board.

Also in Print

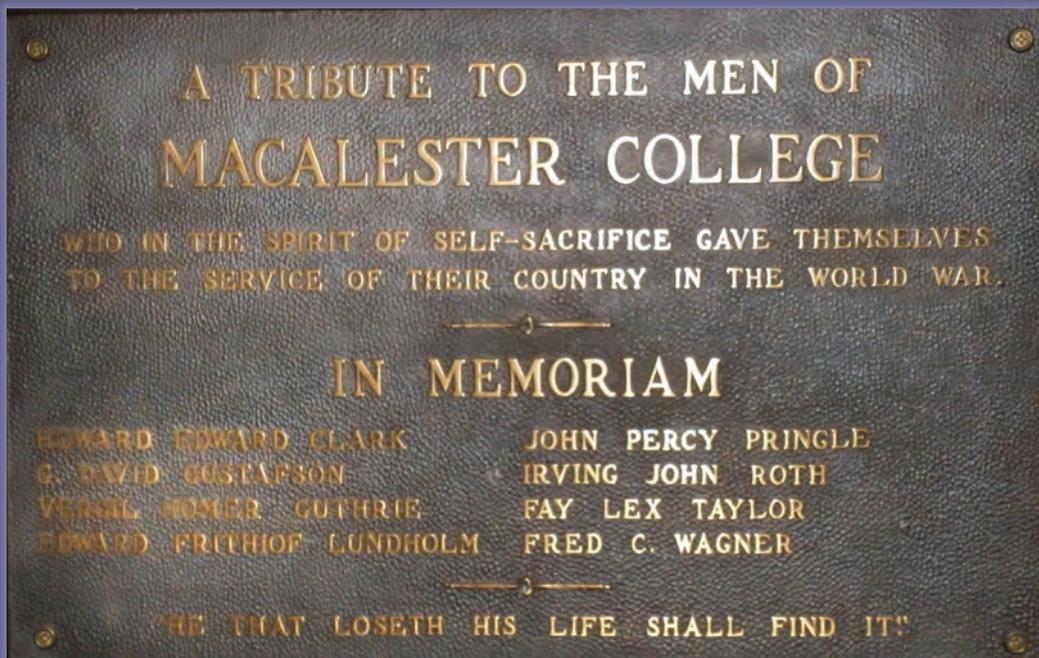
The Brown and MacArthur Families in Minnesota 1870 to Present by Win L. Brown, Judy Brown-Wescott, and Susan Johnson. This self-published family history and genealogy of the Brown and MacArthur families in Minnesota is 220 pages long, contains many photographs and other illustrations, and costs \$19.95. It can be ordered from Win L. Brown, 1398 S. Lemon Avenue, El Cajon, CA 92020-7232.

This volume is a collection of stories

of individuals in the Brown and MacArthur families, both of which have ties to Minneapolis and St. Paul. It concentrates on the grandparents and parents of Win Brown, his siblings, and their close relatives. The book includes interesting details of Win Brown's youth, education, and business career. There is much anecdotal coverage of Win Brown's father's work at the MacArthur Company, of which he was president in the 1940s. The MacArthur Company specialized in manufacturing insulation materials and was a major supplier of insulation in World War II to ships which were built at Savage, Minn. Win Brown also worked for, and retired from, the MacArthur Company, which was initially located on Hampden Avenue in St. Paul. Because the MacArthur Company was involved in a massive lawsuit involving multiple manufacturers of asbestos, the firm was in the news in the 1990s and later.

In 2007 Nodin Press published *The Schubert Club 125th Anniversary Musings and Memories*, edited by Sharon Carlson and Holly Windle, with essays contributed by Mary Ann Feldman, Patricia Hampl, Judith Kogan, Michael Steinberg, Jane Jeong Trenka, and Margaret Wurtele. The book costs \$25.00, is 232 pages long, contains many photos documenting the Schubert Club's remarkable history, and is dedicated to the late Bruce Carlson, the Club's executive director from 1968 to 2006. Many arts organizations publish their own histories. What makes this volume special is its wide-ranging content that covers everything including the Club's concerts, educational programs, museum, finances, administration, guest artists, and commissioned works. It is not simply a chronology full of interesting anecdotes and personal reminiscences, although there are some of these present. Instead it is a colorful, well written, and engaging account of what makes the Schubert Club the superb musical organization that it is.

John M. Lindley



Sometime after the Armistice of November 11, 1918, Macalester College honored those members of its community who gave their lives in the service of the United States during World War I. The college mounted this bronze plaque in Old Main hall. Photo courtesy of Emily Skidmore. See Emily Skidmore's article on page 14.

R.C.H.S.
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