

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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**Josias King —
First of the First**

Page 18

Winter, 1992-1993

Volume 27, Number 4

**Henry Bosse and the Mississippi's
Passage Into the Age of Industry**

Page 4



St. Paul, photographed in 1885 by Henry Bosse. Photo from the St. Paul District, United States Corps of Engineers. See article beginning on Page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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Letters to the Editor

Pious Pioneers

Thank you very much for your surprising (and very kind) review of *Murder in Minnesota* some thirty years after its appearance. It was fun in the writing—to prove my point that not only missionaries and pious pioneers settled Minnesota—but not so much fun in the research that included getting angry Clerks of Court to rummage in courthouse basements for ancient files. Like any author, I am pleased to find that someone appreciates the book and recommends it to others; and I appreciate being appreciated.

—Walter N. Trenerry, West St. Paul.

More Murders

I enjoyed the review of Walter Trenerry's book, *Murder in Minnesota*. I personally remember two murders as a youngster. My mother used to talk about the "torch murder" that was committed in the charred ruins of the old Aberdeen Hotel just west of the St. Paul Cathedral around 1940. The victim was a girl of eighteen. We lived at 163 Kent then and needless to say, mother wouldn't let any of us out in the evening. Then, in the summer of 1948, a woman named Geraldine Mingo was raped and murdered and her body found in a vacant lot. Both of these crimes caused great apprehension and outrage, and to the best of my knowledge, neither one of them ever was solved. Does anyone have any subsequent information on either of these crimes?

—Philip J. Markert, Lakeshore, Minn.

Readers? Anyone?

Which Street is Where?

I've never been able to figure out the



The first state Capitol between Tenth and Exchange after a new Senate wing was added in 1872. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

downtown streets in St. Paul. They seem to resemble the meandering cow paths that became Boston's equally confusing downtown district. Can you explain them?

—Linda Evens, Edina

Larry Millett explains it as well as anyone can in his new book, *Lost Twin Cities*. He simply calls it "sweet chaos." St. Paul Proper, he writes, had a reasonably orderly beginning but confusion arrived with the 1849 plat of Rice & Irvine's Addition west of St. Peter and around Rice Park. Here the streets ran at a 45-degree angle to those east of the addition. To compound the problem, streets were re-named. Fifth Street became Pearl, Millett writes; Sixth became State Street. He surmises that, while Rice and Irvine might have been trying to promote Upper Town, as opposed to Lowertown, the more likely explanation is that the streets followed the curve of the Mississippi. For more on *Lost Twin Cities*, see *Books, Etc.* in this issue.

How Many Capitols?

How many state Capitols have we had? I keep hearing that the present Capitol is our third. Were they all in St. Paul?

—Susan Kramer, Minneapolis.

Yes, but this is confusing. The first Capitol was completed in 1853 at Tenth and Wabasha Streets. This was the territorial Capitol at first, but when Minnesota became a state in 1858, the same building became the state Capitol. This Capitol burned down in 1881 and a new Capitol was constructed on the same site. It was demolished in 1937-1938, more than thirty years after the present Capitol was completed.

Where's the House?

What happened to James J. Hill's first house? I understand that it stood on Canada Street in Lowertown.

—Alan Kennon, St. Paul.

It did indeed stand on Canada, a street obliterated by I-94. Hill ordered the house demolished after moving his family to their new residence on Summit Avenue.

Oldest Home

When was the Protestant Home of St. Paul founded? I read somewhere that it's the oldest private home for the aged in Minnesota. Is that true?

—William Morse, Maplewood.

Yes, that's true, according to Ethel McClure's excellent and fascinating book, *More Than a Roof*. In 1867, twelve women from the Protestant churches of St. Paul laid the foundations for the Home for the Friendless, which eventually grew into the Protestant Church Home.



Henry Bosse's photograph of St. Paul's old High Bridge after it opened to horse-and-buggy traffic in 1889. Because the bridge offered easy access to the Cherokee Heights neighborhood, settlement of this section of the West Side began in earnest. A modern bridge replaced the old bridge in 1985. See article beginning on page 4. Photograph from the St. Paul District, United States Corps of Engineers.

R.C.H.S.
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