

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

The Legend of Boxer,
Bootlegger
Sam Taran

Page 13

Winter, 1998

Volume 32, Number 4

A 'Journalistic Launching'
A Chronicle of the St. Paul Daily News

Page 4



A cartoon in the St. Paul Daily News celebrating the tenth anniversary of the beginning of publication on March 1, 1900. Photo from the newspaper collection at the Minnesota Historical Society. See the history of the Daily News beginning on page 4.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 32, Number 4

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A Message from the Executive Director

In this issue the Ramsey County Historical Society is honoring Elsie Wildung as a true friend of local history. Born in St. Paul a century ago—on April 30, 1898—and raised there, she and her family are examples of the extraordinary ordinary people who have built our community, the people local history celebrates. Although she remembered the Society in her will with the largest bequest in its history, she was a modest person who lived an unpretentious life and cherished her community. Her fortune came from the community and she has returned most of it to the community. Her legacy will perpetuate the sense of continuity she inherited from those who went before her.

Preserving our history is a way of preserving our common identity, of guiding us as we chart our future. In 1999, the society will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary and the thirty-fifth year of the continuous publication of *Ramsey County History*. And Ramsey County and the Gibbs farm together will celebrate the 150th anniversary of their establishment in 1849, the year Minnesota became a territory. Much of our heritage is kept alive in this magazine, in our archives, and at the Gibbs Farm Museum. We truly are the Society of people like Elsie Wildung; we have much worth preserving.

The Society has just completed a new strategic plan committing us once again to maintaining a tradition of excellence in all we do. There is no better way to secure the heritage we all share than by a bequest or gift to the endowment the Society has established. We are ready to assist any of you who wish to remember the Society in your will, or during your lifetime. Even modest amounts will grow to make a major impact on the future far beyond a modest beginning.

History is a powerful legacy to leave to future generations. Please consider this wonderful opportunity to make a lasting gift to our community by remembering the Ramsey County Historical Society in your will.

Priscilla Farnham

Elsie Wildung Remembers The Society in Her Will



Elsie Wildung
1898-1996

Elsie Wildung was a lifelong resident of St. Paul and her roots stretch deep into the city's history. She was born just a century ago, on April 30, 1898, the youngest of nine children, and she grew up on Dayton's Bluff. All her life she maintained a strong sense of family.

Her parents, Friedrich William Wille and Emma Sophia Volkert Wille, were of German and Alsace Lorraine ancestry, and it was a religious family. Her grandfather, Johann Nicolas Volkert, who was born on February 19, 1822, in Nuremberg, Germany, decided at the age of fifteen that he would like to become a missionary. Accepted by his local Mission Society, he sailed for the United States in 1847 to study for the ministry in Fort Wayne, Indiana. After ordination in the Lutheran church two years later, he served a number of congregations before becoming minister of Emmanuel Congregation, now known as Trinity Lone Oak Lutheran Church of Eagan, Dakota County, Minnesota.

Elsie Wildung's father was a farmer who also worked as a carpenter to help support his family. Her mother was a homemaker. The family attended St. John's Lutheran Church in St. Paul where the Wille children also attended the church school. After she graduated from Johnson High School, and with her brothers no longer at home, Elsie Wille remained there to help her mother with the housekeeping. She was active in

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The Ramsey County Historical Society takes great pleasure in extending warmest thanks to all of the 1997 supporters of the Society. The Society also is sincerely grateful for the support it receives through its memberships and its Annual Appeal. It is all of you together who have made it possible to offer high quality programs to the community.

A special thanks also to the Board of Ramsey County Commissioners for their support: Susan Haigh, chair; Tony Bennett, Dino Guerin, Rafael Ortega, Victoria Reinhardt, Janice Rettman and Jan Wiessner.

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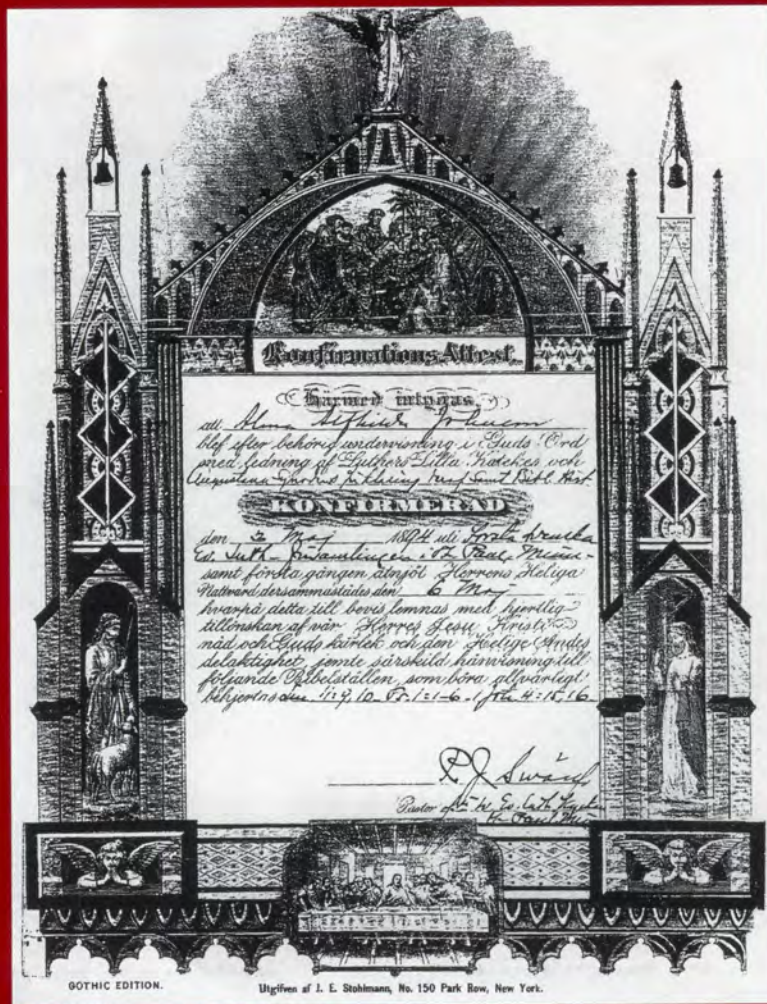
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Alma Johnson's certificate of confirmation from the First Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in St. Paul, May 3, 1894. See "Growing Up in St. Paul," page 17.

R.C.H.S.
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