

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

The African-American  
Community and the Cuba  
Pageant of 1898

Page 15

Winter, 1999

Volume 33, Number 4

*Timber, Steel, Law, Politics*

*St. Paul's Pioneering Lawyers—Page 4*



*The signing of the Briand-Kellogg Pact in Paris on August 27, 1928. Frank B. Kellogg is seated at the table. This copy of a painting of the historic event is from the Minnesota Historical Society. See article beginning on page 4.*

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 33, Number 4

Winter, 1999

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

The winter issue of *Ramsey County History* opens with a fascinating account of how some pioneering lawyers who were involved in cases relating to the timber and steel industries helped shape and change the practice of law and politics in Minnesota. Written by Samuel H. Morgan, a retired St. Paul attorney, this article ranges from President Theodore Roosevelt persuading Frank B. Kellogg and Cordenio A. Severance to represent the government in key anti-trust cases in the first decade of this century to the great 1962 election recount involving incumbent governor Elmer L. Anderson and his challenger, lieutenant governor Karl F. Rolvaag.

David Riehle's article examining the reaction of the African-American community in St. Paul to the fighting in Cuba in 1898 reminds us that the struggle of African-Americans in Minnesota to obtain full civil rights didn't begin in the 1960s. By using information culled from the pages of St. Paul's articulate and influential African-American newspaper, *The Appeal*, Riehle demonstrates that the decision to go to war with Spain in 1898 brought out complex reactions from the local African-American community. What Riehle finds in the coverage of the pageant in *The Appeal* is clear-cut ambivalence as to the meaning of the war for the civil rights of African-Americans in St. Paul.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*

## *Growing Up in St. Paul*

# Eleanor Joins the Family at the Fish Hatchery

*Muriel Mix Hawkins*

The new resident coming to the State Fish Hatchery in St. Paul was expected, and, needless to say, a group of people gathered there to await the arrival. The truck came to a stop. Here was a young baby with a large head, big ears, long spindly legs and a body that didn't seem to match with the name Eleanor attached to her. She was frightened of the strange, new surroundings and the admiring group of people, but an improvised, large-nippled bottle full of milk went a long way in helping her begin to adjust. She was then allowed to explore her new home-to-be. We children were as interested and fascinated with this baby as anyone. Eleanor was a moose.

A farmer in northern Minnesota had discovered the calf among his herd of cows. Soon it became apparent that there was no mother nearby and this little one was likely an orphan. Because this happened during Franklin Roosevelt's presidency in the 1930s, the farmer decided to name her Eleanor. (There was a suspicion that the farmer was a Republican.) Legally, he couldn't keep a wild animal, so he notified authorities and they decided that the Fish Hatchery was the best place for her. During those years of the 1930s, we children—Donald, Norma and I—were growing up at the Fish Hatchery below the southern edge of Dayton's Bluff. Our father, Oliver Mix, was regional manager of the hatchery and we all lived in a house on the grounds.

As soon as Eleanor arrived, she was placed in a large, enclosed area that contained a reservoir pond and, more than that, a resident companion for Eleanor—a deer named Betty. There also was a wooden shelter designed to shield them from the winter winds, with straw as their bedding. While Eleanor always was on

hand for her bottle, the time finally came for her to be weaned so she could drink from a bucket and eat the food set out for her and Betty. Our father enjoyed the animals and after work he would go to the "lot" to visit the young moose. We frequently accompanied him, entering the pen to pet and talk to both deer and moose. Dad had spent his boyhood on a farm, so it was he who took the time to teach young Eleanor to drink from the bucket. It took a bit of struggling and lots of splashing of milk before she became adept at it.

The animals' diet was mostly grains and fresh vegetables. A moose with long legs and a short neck isn't interested in grazing from the ground but rather will reach overhead for vegetation or stand in a pond and search for food above or just below the surface of the water. Thus it was understood that the animals needed food from the woods. A truck dispatched to northern Minnesota would return loaded with fresh cut willow branches and these would be left in the enclosure. They were a treat much liked by the two animals.

During Eleanor's years with us at the Fish Hatchery, few people saw her make use of the pond although occasionally our father would see her taking an early morning swim. Eleanor was to become quite an attraction for visitors to the hatchery. We children liked to stand nearby and listen to the comments they made. It was amazing to me the number of people who had no idea just what this animal was. I would try to inform them, but what did a child know!

Our interest in the two animals didn't diminish with time. When mother made an apple pie, we children would save the peelings and take them to Eleanor for a treat. She took the pieces from our fingers

gently. She enjoyed attention and she stood quietly when Don or Norma were lifted onto her back. If we tried to pet Betty, it wouldn't be long before Eleanor would arrive on the scene and emit strange, plaintive noises. It was evident that she was jealous of any attention paid to Betty, but there also is no doubt that Eleanor was there to protect them both. One day some boys encouraged their dog to dig under the fence, then "ragged" the dog to attack the two animals. Eleanor gave the dog her heels and sent him flying over the fence. He and the boys skulked away.

The time of year arrived when hatchery personnel had to prepare the exhibits for the State Fair. One of the first tasks was to lower the water level of the reservoir pond within the animals' enclosure. The pond held many rough, sport and primitive fish; these were seined out and placed in a cement holding pond to await a final selection. The men would be busy with the net, amidst the mud of the lake bottom, and there would be large containers nearby for the fish. This was just the sort of opportunity that looked interesting to Eleanor. She would be down at the water's edge, trying her best to get into everything and making a nuisance of herself. It was up to us children to divert her attention and coax her away. The solution always was temporary because Eleanor soon would be back. She and Betty went to the State Fair, too, ensconced in a prominent cage at the front of the old Conservation Building on Machinery Hill.

On one occasion, Eleanor seized a delicious opportunity to explore the larger fenced area that lay beyond her enclosure at the hatchery. The fence was low near part of the reservoir pond and Eleanor simply waded out to the area and went



*Eleanor, who came to live for a time at the State Fish Hatchery in St. Paul. Behind her is Donald Mix, the author's brother. Photo dated about 1935 from Muriel Hawkins.*

over the fence into a wooden, swampy area with a creek that supplied water for the fish ponds. As she was happily exploring her new surroundings, several boys saw her as they were doing their own exploring. They dashed to the hatchery and excitedly reported that the moose was loose. Several men with rope in hand went to get her, but Eleanor proved to be too wiley for them. She would allow them to get only so close, then move away. Finally they sent for our father who talked to her as he slowly moved closer. Suddenly, however, she realized that she had been tricked and there was a rope around her neck. She set off at a wild pace, dragging at least half a dozen grown men through the wet and mud. Finally they managed to calm her and return her to her own enclosure, none the worse for the experience. As for the men, they were a sight to behold.

Eventually the time came to find new homes for the animals. The area around the hatchery was fast changing, so Eleanor was sent to Itasca State Park

where she would have as a companion a bull moose living there in a large pen. Soon stories filtered back that "our" Eleanor would have none of him. She would leap the fence and take off to explore, perhaps looking for people. If she found them walking along a road, she would join them. We could imagine their surprise, and perhaps fright, at encountering this large, friendly animal. Such episodes caused concern that she could be hit by a car, perhaps even shot. So it was decided to send her to the Como Zoo.

After a time, we made a trip to the zoo to visit Eleanor. We spotted her on the other side of the pen she shared with other animals. Dad called her: "Eleanor! Eleanor!" She looked to see where the call was coming from, then quickly made her way over to us. She had not forgotten. We could tell that she was glad to see us. We talked to her and petted her through the fence but, too soon, we had to leave. Eleanor followed us along the fence and watched us go.

Not much was said until we were in our car going home. Then Dad said, matter of factly: "We're not going to visit Eleanor again." And we did not, because we had come away so sad and heartbroken at what we had found. Eleanor was no longer the shiny-haired, plump, sassy animal we remembered; she seemed sad, her hair was dull and she was very thin. Not long after the visit, we learned that "our" Eleanor had died.

The small, innocent, orphaned calf had no choice but to accept what largess and understanding people could or would offer her. It perhaps was a "given" that a number of us at the hatchery were her replacements for a lost parent. It was sad that she was unable to live out her life in the surroundings where she had grown from a calf to a mature moose.

*Muriel Mix Hawkins wrote of her childhood experiences growing up at the State Fish Hatchery in the fall, 1997, issue of Ramsey County History.*

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*The four-act pageant presented as  
a benefit for the American League of Min-  
nesota in November, 1898. See Dave  
Riehle's article about St. Paul's African-  
American community and the Spanish-  
American War beginning on page 15.*

## R.C.H.S.

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