

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

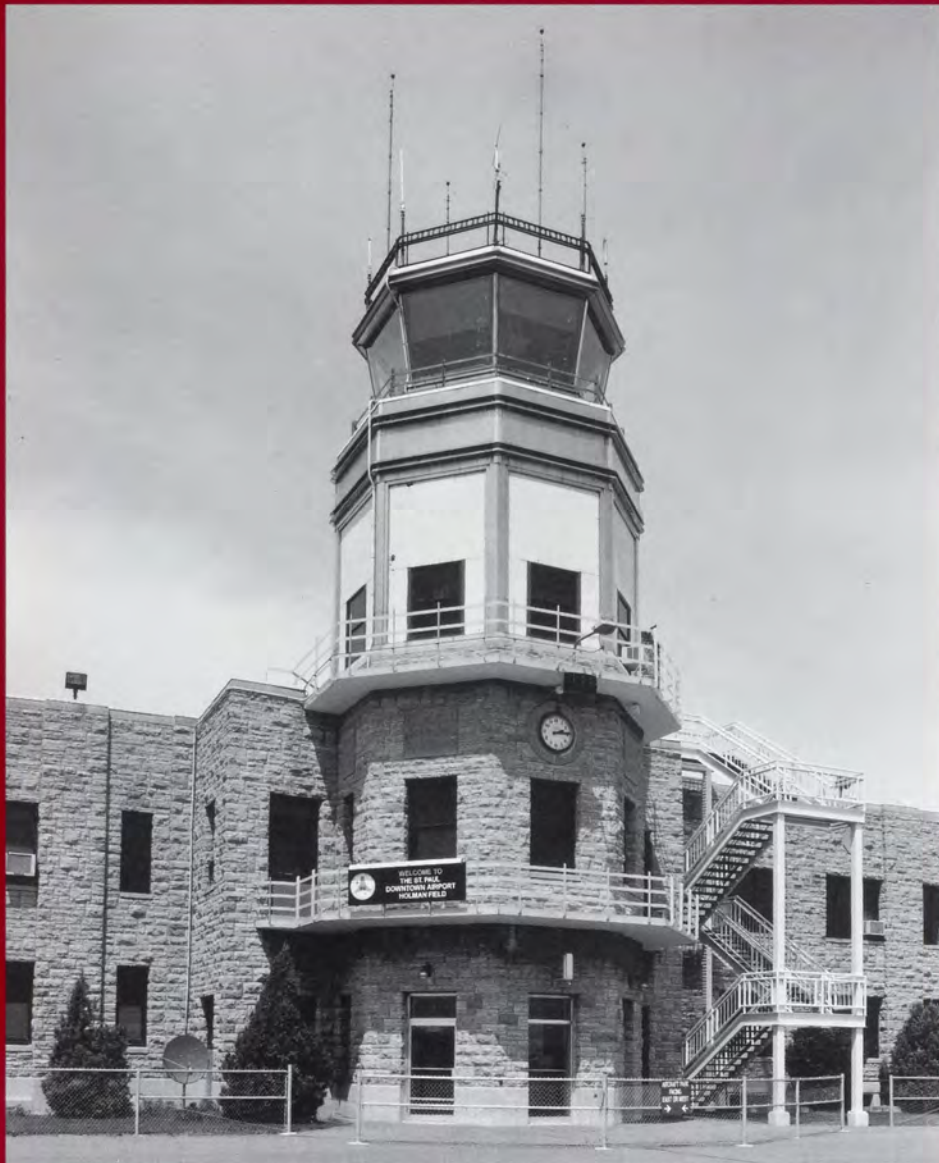
Architect to Kings:
Wigington and His Ice Palaces

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Three National Historic Sites
Clarence Wigington's Architectural Heritage
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The Holman Field Administration Building designed by Clarence W. Wigington in 1939 and built with resources provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This is one of the three Wigington buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photograph by Don Wong, Don F. Wong Photography, Bloomington, Minnesota.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 34, Number 4

Winter, 2000

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Message from Editorial Board

The Editorial Board of *Ramsey County History* is delighted to publish in this issue two fine articles on St. Paul's Clarence W. Wigington, who is believed to have been the first African-American municipal architect in the United States. Dr. David Taylor, dean of the General College at the University of Minnesota, is currently working on a biography of Wigington. His article gives us a sense of Wigington as an architect and as a pioneering civil servant at a time in this country when African-Americans faced many obstacles and handicaps to achieving professional careers. Wigington not only rose to a leadership position within the city's Office of Parks, Playgrounds, and Public Buildings, he also was a leader in the local African-American community throughout his working career.

Expanding upon David Taylor's discussion of Clarence Wigington's accomplishments as an architect of many St. Paul buildings, Bob Olsen, the author of our second piece on Wigington, examines the architect's work as a designer of St. Paul Winter Carnival Ice Palaces between 1926 and 1942. Both articles feature photographs of buildings Wigington designed. Olsen's article includes photos drawn from the author's own collection of Ice Palace memorabilia.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

The Not-So-Good Old Days

I have a vague recollection of a church convention in St. Paul many years ago and the discrimination African-Americans suffered at that time. I was a child but I remember my parents talking about the downtown restaurants that were refusing to serve black people. Since this is Black History Month, perhaps we should revisit that era.

Emily Watson, St. Paul

We have the following letter in our files that reflects that period. Dated May 22, 1929, it was addressed to the old Alveredes Restaurant at Seventh and St. Paul and was written by the executive secretary of the Committee on Arrangements for the Presbyterian General Assembly that was meeting at the St. Paul Auditorium that week.

"We thank you," the secretary is telling the Alveredes management, "for calling to our attention the problem of eating places for colored delegates to ... the Assembly. I have just been in conference with one of our leading local colored ministers, and he suggests that the best place to refer them to is to Utly's Restaurant on Wabasha Street, below 3rd and 4th. They will also be welcomed at the cafeteria on the 5th floor of the Y.W.C.A. building. Also the Bethel Restaurant at the Bethel Hotel is open to them. This is a very good place, but of course, not very convenient to the Auditorium. However, a number of the colored delegates are finding accommodations there. Trusting that the above will help solve your problem and thanking you again for calling it to our attention."

Kellogg in Washington

I was interested in the article about the Briggs and Morgan law firm and Frank B. Kellogg. I think Kellogg had some sort of connection with the Washington National Cathedral where I used to

work. Do you have any information on that?

Jane C. Gayle, White Bear Lake

Pat Hart, who is a member of the RCHS Editorial Board, queried the Cathedral on our behalf and Richard G. Hewlett, the Cathedral's historiographer, responded. "All the evidence I can find," he wrote, "indicates that Frank Kellogg's connection with the Cathedral was through Bishop James E. Freeman." Hewlett surmises that the two met when Freeman was rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Minneapolis from 1910 to 1921. He adds that correspondence in the Cathedral archives shows that Kellogg regularly gave \$1,000 a year to the Washington Cathedral when Freeman was bishop of Washington, and left the Cathedral \$100,000 in his will. Mrs. Kellogg, he adds, arranged to have the ashes of her husband and herself sealed in the Kellogg Bay in the North Aisle of the Cathedral.

Livingston and Hill

The article on Crawford Livingston in the last issue of your magazine was fascinating. I'd heard of Livingston, but only because of the Crawford Livingston theater, and now I'm curious. Did Livingston, as a railroad investor, have any business connection with James J. Hill?

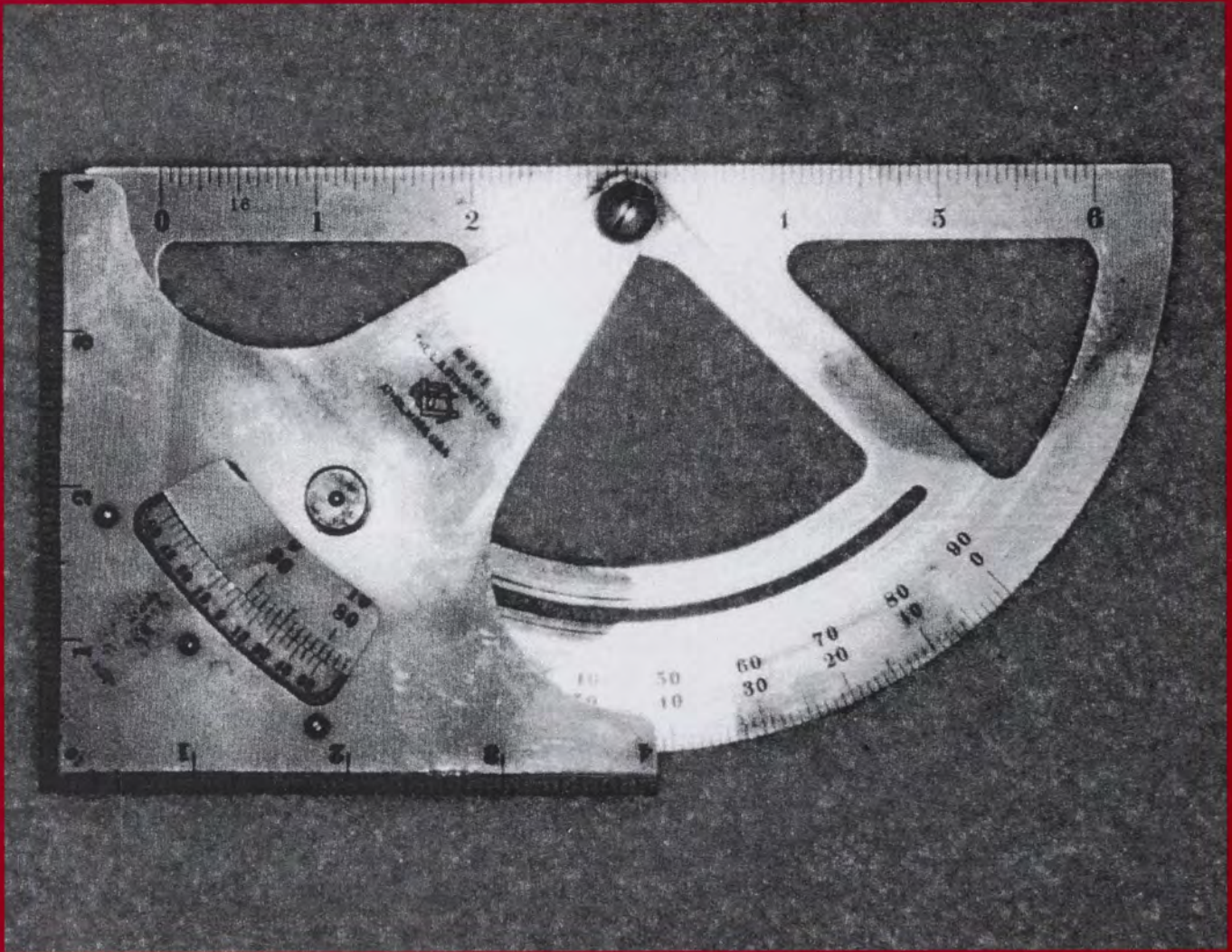
Dudley Shattuck, New Brighton

Not much, apparently. Livingston's money, of course, was in the Northern Pacific, the competitor of Hill's Great Northern, and Livingston rates only one line in Albro Martin's biography, James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest. Socially, of course, they must have known each other since they moved in the same circles, they were about the same age (Hill was born in



Crawford Livingston, from a copy of a portrait and used by permission of Livingston's granddaughter, Mary Griggs Burke.

1838, Livingston in 1847) and both spent considerable time in New York on business.



An architectural drafting instrument owned and used by Clarence W. Wigington, the first licensed African-American architect registered in the State of Minnesota. See the article beginning on page 4.

R.C.H.S.

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