

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

The St. Paul Society
for the Hard of Hearing
*Kristin Mapel Bloomberg
and Leah S. McLaughlin*

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Winter 2010

Volume 44, Number 4

Recollections of Cathedral Hill

A Glimpse of Old St. Paul from an Up-and-Down Duplex
on Holly Avenue

Mary Reichardt

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One of the distinguishing features of the up-and-down duplex at 444 Holly Avenue in the Cathedral Hill neighborhood is its spacious front porches that encourage conversation and reminiscing about old St. Paul on warm summer days. Photo courtesy of Mary Reichardt.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

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ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON DECEMBER 20, 2007:

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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A Message from the Editorial Board

Sometimes, reading history fuels our imaginations. This issue contains some great moments that we can conjure up in the comfort of our armchairs. Kristin Mapel Bloomberg and Leah McLaughlin's history of the St. Paul Society for the Hard of Hearing lets us join in when a hard-of-hearing person went to the movies in St. Paul and, thanks to technology pushed by the Society, could for the first time "hear with ease the slightest whisper . . . the baby's gurgle, the villain's chuckle." We are there, too, when Norm Horton inched along drifted roads during the Armistice Day Blizzard to get home to fill the oil heater for his family, after working his shift at the Ford plant. And we share Mary Reichardt's thrill when, on purchasing her house on Holly Avenue, she received a postcard from the Dow family, the house's longtime former owners, opening up a rich vein of family and neighborhood history. Join us to read these stories, and contact our editor if you have your own to share.

Anne Cowie, Chair, Editorial Board

Recollections of Cathedral Hill

A Glimpse of Old St. Paul from an Up-and-Down Duplex on Holly Avenue

Mary Reichardt

I've always been fascinated by house history. I confess that I half believe in Edgar Allan Poe's theory in "The Fall of the House of Usher" that houses are sentient, although I hope I never find an ominous fissure presaging disaster in mine. After years of restoring and researching a St. Paul Midway-area bungalow, the time was right for my move across town to historic Cathedral Hill, an area in which I'd always wanted to live. I settled into a newly created condo, one of three, in a 1913 home at 444 Holly Avenue. Once the initial shock of displacement subsided and I had a handle on decorating, I was ready to start digging into the home's history. Imagine my surprise when just at that time a postcard appeared in my mailbox with the greeting "Dear Person." Lucky me! House history came knocking in the person of George Dow Sr. and his family.

George's daughter, Liz Dow, wrote the postcard.¹ Her father had grown up in this house, she stated, and her paternal great-grandparents had built it. George Dow was now in his 90s; would it be possible to let him stop by some time? Would it! The Dows have now visited a number of times, Liz and I have become friends, and best of all I have enjoyed the charming and still exuberant George Dow and heard his fascinating stories. The early history of this house is worth telling, with fascinating characters and rich ties to St. Paul's history.

The Sovereigns Build a Home

George Dow Sr.'s grandfather, Allen John Sovereign, was a railroad man, a division superintendent for Northern Pacific Railroad. According to family lore, he had a private railroad car, complete with a butler, in which the family traveled around the country. Originally located in Staples (where Sovereign Hall is named for him), he moved his family—wife Mary Jane and daughter Flora—to St. Paul in 1913 where he built a grand home for them at the corner of Arundel Street and Holly Avenue. He also purchased several investment homes in the area, one on Goodrich and one on Laurel av-

enues. The Holly house was built as an up-and-down duplex: Allen and Mary Jane Sovereign resided downstairs while Flora and her new husband, Harry L. Dow, moved in upstairs. The 1930 census notes that the younger couple paid Mary Jane Sovereign, by then a widow, a rent of \$50.00 per year.

Deed records show that, while still living in Staples in 1910, Allen and Mary Jane purchased the Holly lot for \$3,000 from Mrs. Edna R. Ogden and daughters Edith H. Ogden and Virginia Ogden Kelly. Edna Ogden, then living out of state, was the widow of Henry S. Ogden of the well-known Ogden, Merrill, and Greer dry goods store, located at Sibley and Sixth streets. According to the St. Paul building permit, cost of the home's construction was estimated at \$8,000, a royal sum at the time. One of the later homes constructed on this part of Holly, the frame two-story home was built in a modified Arts and Crafts "transitional" style with overhanging eaves decorated with corbels. Two open front porches, one up and one down, span the width of house and are supported by heavy square pillars.

The two residences in the duplex were built exactly alike, with three bedrooms



Looking west along Holly Avenue between Arundel and Mackubin streets about 1900. The church spire in the background marks the location of the church that George Dow recalls from his youth while living on this street. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

and one bathroom each. A mirrored built-in buffet and bookcases graced the dining and living rooms. Craftsman-inspired stained glass was also featured in the dining room windows and leaded art glass in the living room windows. Although some modifications have been made over the years, most notably turning the former unused attic space into a third condo unit, the home still retains many of its original features and, from the outside, looks essentially the same as when it was built.

Allen Sovereign died just a few years after moving into the home, but Mary Jane lived in the lower floor duplex until her death in 1939. Meanwhile, the Dow family on the upper floor grew to include three children, Virginia, John, and George. His grandmother's favorite, young George spent many hours downstairs with Mary Jane, an elegant and genteel woman who always dressed beautifully with her signature black ribbon cameo necklace and who carefully put up her long white hair in "kit" curls each night. She was also a clever businesswoman who handled her various investments, including property back in Staples, with considerable skill. The Holly home included a live-in maid, high school girl, Mildred Toenjas, whose family lived on a farm in Rose Township, and a janitor, Pat Jennings, who tended the furnace from his sparse basement room and did occasional work for neighborhood families.

A Dashing Man

Born in 1918, George Dow lived for nearly thirty years in the Holly house, with only a brief interruption for service in World War II as a Merchant Marine. At age 91, his memories of growing up in the neighborhood are still rich with vivid impressions. Harry L. Dow, whom his son remembers as a dashing man, managed a number of theaters in St. Paul that, during his tenure with them in the 1920s and '30s, made the sometimes uneasy transition between vaudeville and film. These included the Shubert (later the World, now the Fitzgerald) and the Lyceum (479 Wabasha) downtown, the Oxford (later the Uptown) at 1053 Grand Avenue, and the Dale at 633-37 Selby Avenue. As a theater manager, Harry was something of a jack of all trades. A talented architect, he designed sets and programs, and his son recalls him



George Dow signs autographs for admirers outside Broadway's Imperial Theatre in 2003. Photo courtesy of Liz Dow.

sitting at the kitchen table drawing charts and sketches well into the night. He hired, supervised, and paid orchestras, vocalists, actors, and ushers, and each night he brought home the day's ticket intake and painstakingly counted it and recorded the numbers on graph paper. He arranged for stage acts to travel to St. Paul from all over the country and would even occasionally fill in for a bit part if an actor became ill. George recalls how Harry designed and erected placards on either side of the stage with the names of the acts.

Vivid still in George's memory, as might be expected from a teenage boy, are the madcap antics of Olsen and Johnson, a vaudeville act from the 1930s that was a sensation throughout the Midwest and whose motto was "anything can happen and it probably will." In 1938, Olsen and Johnson staged their most sensational revue, *Hellzapoppin'*, during which the audience was pelted with eggs and bananas and then, with the house lights off, rubber snakes and spiders. Another favorite at the Shubert were its talent shows, highlighting the accomplishments of St. Paul residents. On New Year's Day 1926, for example, the theater held a Charleston dance contest and, a few days later, one of its many "Kiddie Karnivals" featuring local children.² As films gradually began to replace live stage acts (the Shubert was renamed the World in 1930 to reflect its concentration on foreign films), George recalls the orchestra warming up behind the stage in anticipation of the silent movie about to start. Movie productions were routinely marketed with props that Harry sometimes brought home and put in the yard for the children to play with: George remembers with delight a tent



The Summit Theater, one of the many area theaters young George Dow and his friends frequented, at the junction of Selby and Western avenues in about 1920. Photo by C. P. Gibson. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



When the Victory Caravan came to St. Paul in May 1942, Minnesota National Guard Adjutant General Ellard A. Walsh, center top at microphone, welcomed all the Hollywood stars to the city. The troupe included Cary Grant, center, Joan Blondell, Joan Bennett, Eleanor Powell, Olivia de Havilland, Bing Crosby, Groucho Marx, and others. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

from the 1926 *Son of the Sheik*, Rudolph Valentino's last film.

Due to Harry's position, the entire family, including grandmother Mary Jane, thrived on following the latest stage shows and films. They attended at least several performances each week, sitting in privileged front row seats. Clutching a handful of tickets, young George often led a gang of friends down the hill to the Shubert or the Lyceum. Summit Theatre at the bustling Selby and Western corner, and the Beaux Arts Theatre just a few steps away at 391–393 Selby were also favorite venues. A neighbor's dog, Ricky, who had the run of the area, often accompanied them on these excursions and waited patiently outside until the boys re-emerged. The Dow family also frequently entertained actors at the Holly home with parties that George recalls, with considerable understatement, as "loud." A close friend of Harry's, the handsome actor Richard Arlen, star of the smash hit *Wings*, the first film to win an Academy Award for best picture in 1927, was a frequent visitor. During Prohibition, Flora Dow bought bootleg liquor for these gatherings from a man who delivered it directly to the house, perhaps from the

B & R Cigar Store at 658 Selby, a well-known speakeasy. An intrepid woman, every so often Flora would load her three children and several of their neighborhood companions into her automobile—she loved to drive new cars—and venture cross country to Hollywood where they rented a room close to the studios in order to catch glimpses of stars like Richard Dix, Loretta Young, and Hal Roach. Or she drove east to New York City or south to Chicago with her brood to see the latest stage shows. Too preoccupied with his work to accompany them, Harry stayed home in St. Paul; curiously, he never learned to drive and always walked to his theaters.

With such an upbringing, George remained star struck all his life. While stationed in California during his wartime service, he chatted with Frank Sinatra after a show in Pacific Palisades, and he was thrilled when the Hollywood Victory Caravan, a fundraising tour for the war effort, came to St. Paul on May 9, 1942. The Victory Caravan was a special train that brought as many as thirty film and radio stars on tour to major cities across the country. Welcomed by cheering crowds lining the streets, stars Bing

Crosby, Cary Grant, Claudette Colbert, James Cagney, Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Groucho Marx, Joan Blondell, Olivia de Havilland and others performed a variety show at the St. Paul Auditorium and then, as George recalls and the newspaper accounts verify, took time to interact personally with their fans. Seven years ago on his 85th birthday, while attending a production of *The Boy From Oz* at the Imperial Theatre on Broadway, George was called out of his front row seat and onto the stage by actor Hugh Jackman where he sang and danced to Cole Porter songs for nearly twenty minutes. He received a standing ovation from the audience who assumed that he was a professional actor and who mobbed him afterward for autographs. After a lifelong love affair with the theater, George at last found himself on stage—as if in a dream, as he puts it, but also feeling completely at home.

Neighborhood People

George recalls the Cathedral Hill neighborhood as friendly and close-knit, with much adult interaction with the children. The Bassindales', the Scotts', the Burmeisters', and the Graves' homes surrounded his.³ The Kinkeads lived down the street and the Stewarts just around the corner on Arundel. Robert S. Kinkead (1886–1986), who founded the National Mower Company in St. Paul in 1919 (still run by his descendants), invented the triple-reel industrial mower for golf courses. His son, Bob, was George's closest friend and remained so until his death. Later, the Kinkeads moved from Holly Avenue to a home on Summit Avenue across from the governor's mansion where, much to the boys' delight, the garage sported a circular rotary floor to accommodate the family automobile which did not go in reverse.

Lambert Bassindale (1875–1945), who lived across the street, was a prominent architect who designed many St. Paul buildings including the Great Northern and Northern Pacific buildings, the First National Bank, the Federal Building, and the Lowry Hotel. His wife Blanche was a talented opera singer who once appeared on a Chicago stage in a production of *The Merry Widow*. She gave music lessons, and George remembers that she



George Dow's good friend, Sibley Stewart, enjoyed sculling on the Mississippi River. Here he is training for the Northwest International Regatta in 1937. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

often gathered the neighborhood children and led them in song. Another attraction at the Bassindale home was daughter Maria's pony named Twinkle.

One of the George's close friends was Sibley "Mike" Stewart (1918–1983). Son of Robert D. and Cornelia Stewart, Sibley was a descendant on his mother's side of Henry Hastings Sibley, Minnesota's first governor. Robert Stewart organized annual Olympic-style games for the neighborhood children and spent much time coaching their sports. He would carefully prepare and hand out medals—making sure each child got some prize—and then he would march the gang down to Louis Poses's grocery, a storefront in the Tazewell apartment building near Western and Selby, for ice cream. Cornelia Stewart, the former Cornelia Young, was related to the Livingstons through the Sibleys, and George remembers that the Stewart family spent Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays with their extended clan at the imposing Burbank-Livingston-Griggs house at 432 Summit, today the second oldest existing house on Summit Avenue.⁴

John Frederick Scott (1894–1975), who lived directly across Holly Avenue from the Dows, was president of Minnesota Savings and Loan Bank. In 1928 he ran

for mayor of St. Paul against incumbent Larry K. Hodgson and lost, rather predictably it seems, by a wide margin. Heavily endorsed by the *Pioneer Press*, the popular Hodgson, who as a poet and journalist went by the pen name Larry Ho, twice served as St. Paul mayor (1918–1922 and 1926–1930). John F. Scott did, however, succeed in winning a subsequent con-



One of the adult neighbors who made a big impression on young George Dow was John F. Scott. This photograph by the Kenneth M. Wright Studios is from about 1941. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

test: he was King Boreas VII in the 1941 Winter Carnival. He also had a beautiful singing voice, and George recalls how they listened from the Dows' front sleeping porch on warm summer evenings to Mr. Scott croon love songs such as "I'll be Loving You" to his wife Edna.

The University Club, located just a few blocks away, was a favorite dining establishment for many neighborhood families, including the Scotts and their two children. George recalls them walking in a line to the Club, accompanied by their dog Red, several evenings per week. To this day a local myth insists that the carved signature "John F. Scott" on the University Club's wood bar is that of F. Scott Fitzgerald who—for an unknown reason—distorted his name. George Dow, however, convincingly puts this story to rest: the signature, of course, is that of John Frederick Scott.

Details of Life Long Ago

George's memories of the neighborhood often revolve around everyday details. The children played ball in the street or in Nathan Hale Park, although sometimes their raucous games were broken up by the policeman walking his beat. In winter they would toboggan at the Town and Country Club. They delighted in stealing little chunks of ice from Charles W. Stott Co. Briquet's horse-drawn truck which parked at the corner of Holly and Arundel and distributed ice in the summer and coal in the winter down basement chutes. At dusk, the lamplighter made his rounds, lighting the lamps by hand. The milkman came once a day, and the postman twice. During the Depression, hobos and other vagabonds walked up the hill from the trains looking for work and meals. Mary Jane Sovereign was known for her generosity and their Holly home, according to George, was a destination for many of the down and out.

The family typically bought their groceries downtown at the Golden Rule or the Emporium; a Piggly Wiggly was also convenient by streetcar at Griggs and Selby. Showing admirable entrepreneurial spirit, young George and friends would buy a stack of newspapers for 5¢ each, and then sell them at the many nearby apartment and boarding houses for 10¢ each. With his



Like many of the young people who grew up on Cathedral Hill in the first half of the last century, George Dow attended dancing school at Ramaley Hall near Grand and Dale streets. Professor William Baker, front row far right, taught this class in 1910, which is seen at its end-of-the-year costume party. Future novelist and short story writer F. Scott Fitzgerald, top row far right, was a member of this class. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

friends he also once threw a lighted cherry bomb into the church at 500 Holly during a Sunday service. The boys fled, but their hiding place was given away by the dog Ricky's frantic barking. The kindly minister, however, asked the police to overlook the mischief.⁵ For a time George took art lessons at Ellers' Studio on Summit Avenue and dancing lessons at Ramaley Hall on Grand Avenue. After opening gifts on Christmas day, the Sovereigns and Dows ate Christmas dinner at the Cargills' home in Minneapolis. Mary Jane Sovereign's sister, Alice Jones Cargill, had married into the Cargill family, owners of the elevator and grain trading business that became the international agricultural, financial, and industrial firm of today.

Eleanor Roosevelt's Visit

A great event occurred on Holly Avenue in 1939 when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt paid a visit to St. Paul. According to George, the Bassindales lent their home at 457 Holly for the occasion to the event's host, Adelaide Enright, because she felt her own house was not classy enough.⁶

She even had just the front of the house painted for the occasion. Adelaide Enright was the daughter of James C. Enright Sr. who founded Old Fashioned Millers, Inc. at 536-540 E. Seventh Street in 1909. The company, with its logo "All O' The Wheat," pioneered in the manufacture of whole wheat flour at a time when, for most people, refined white flour was preferred.

When James Enright died in 1940, Adelaide became president of the company and ran it successfully until her retirement in 1970. Active in women's and other civic causes, Adelaide was also a close personal friend of Eleanor Roosevelt. Their correspondence began in 1933 when Mrs. Roosevelt, writing as president of the National Women's Committee, asked Adelaide to serve as chair of the local women's crusade, part of the Welfare Fund/Community Chest campaigns. By 1935 Eleanor was affectionately addressing Adelaide as "Adel." In her famous "My Day" newspaper columns, she refers several times to her great friend Adelaide Enright, who

helped host her visits to the Twin Cities. In return, Adelaide was a frequent guest at the White House; her personal papers collected at the Minnesota Historical Society contain invitations and name tags from her stays there.

Adelaide Enright's correspondence shows that during the 1930s and '40s she resided at two other addresses on Holly Avenue, 400 and 420, and in both places she entertained Eleanor Roosevelt privately. In 1939, however, the First Lady's visit to 457 Holly was a much-publicized occasion. Mrs. Roosevelt was in town for a series of events sponsored by the St. Paul Women's Institute. Billing it as "St. Paul's Largest Gathering of Women," the *St. Paul Dispatch* reported on September 21, 1939, that downtown streets, especially around the Lowry and St. Paul hotels, "took on a festive, almost Christmas season air" as thousands of women from the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota turned out. On the evening of September 20, Mrs. Roosevelt addressed the Women's Institute at the St. Paul Auditorium on the topic "The Responsibility of the Individual to the Community," and a full agenda of luncheons, teas, and meetings rounded out the two-day program.

One of those events was the Holly Avenue visit. Under the headline "Old Friend Entertains—Mrs. F. R. is Tea Guest," the *Dispatch* reported:

In her candle-lighted home at 457 Holly avenue, Miss Adelaide Enright entertained at tea for her old friend, Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Wednesday afternoon.

Mrs. Roosevelt, looking as if she had had a quiet, restful day instead of an unusually strenuous one, sat before an open fire and greeted committee chairman [sic] of St. Paul's Women's Institute.

She arrived at the Enright house shortly after 5:00 p.m. and was welcomed when she alighted from her car by a group of neighborhood children who had been waiting to see her. Some were on bicycles, some on tricycles, and any number of small boys and girls with their dogs sat on the curbstone and the front steps.

Mrs. Roosevelt smiled graciously at them as she walked up to the door. The Enright home

was decorated with large bowls of gladiolas and other flowers still bright and colorful at this season. There were vases of large cosmos in some of the rooms.

Among the distinguished guests was Mrs. Frank B. Kellogg. Mrs. Roosevelt arose and walked forward to greet her as she entered the room. Mrs. Kellogg is honorary chairman of the Women's Institute.

Mrs. Roosevelt was as alert and interested in every one who met her as she had been early in the morning. She wore a black lace dress with a lighter colored lace yoke. Her hat was a formal, saucer type and she wore a sable scarf.

The table in the dining room was lighted with candelabra and the tea pots were gleaming silver. . . .

Adelaide Enright, a self-described Independent voter, must have fretted about protocol in the invitation list. Although her collected papers do not contain her letters to Eleanor, a note from the First Lady, written a few weeks later on October 9, 1939, states, "I haven't had any repercussions from the Democratic ladies who were not invited to your tea, so I do not think you need worry about that."⁷



Adelaide Enright was a resident of the Cathedral Hill neighborhood. In 1939 she brought excitement to St. Paul when she hosted First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt at tea. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

The House Is Sold

Mary Jane Sovereign died in 1939, and the following year Harry Dow died. George Dow lived on in the Holly home with his mother, Flora, until he married in 1949. When Flora passed away two years later, the house was sold for the first time in its history. The second generation of owners is equally fascinating and once again offers a glimpse into the history and characters of old St. Paul. In 1952 Cecil and Emmy Lu Read purchased the home. Born in 1896 to William Cecil Read and Laura Dawson Read, Cecil Read was a close friend of F. Scott Fitzgerald and had grown up around the corner from the Holly home on Portland Avenue.⁸ He was a year behind Fitzgerald at Princeton University. When Cecil married Emily Lucile Weed in 1927, however, a few years passed with no word from Fitzgerald until "a gift arrived for the Reads. It was a sterling silver plate with this inscription: 'To Cecil on the occasion of his marriage in remembrance of 1000 misdeeds—Scott.'"⁹

Emmy Lu Weed was born in 1904 into an old and distinguished St. Paul family. James Henry Weed, her paternal grandfather, came to St. Paul in 1867 and founded the first insurance agency in Minnesota. The James Henry Weeds lived for nearly thirty years at 261 Summit Avenue, a Gothic-Revival limestone mansion designed by Clarence Johnston. Emmy Lu's maternal grandfather, Alpheus Beede Stickney, was president of the Chicago Great Western Railroad. He and his wife Catherine Hall Stickney also lived in a magnificent home just down the street from the Weeds at 288 Summit (now gone). James Henry Weed's son, Paul Charles Weed, married Emily Stickney in 1900 and the couple had four children, including Emmy Lu. For a number of years they resided at 529 Holly but then moved in 1911 to the large brick home they built at 392 Mississippi River Boulevard. The family summered at a cabin on Deer Lake in Itasca County.

After Emmy Lu married Cecil Read, the couple lived at 1510 Edgecumbe Avenue. The 1930 census lists Cecil's occupation as insurance salesman. The Reads must have been eager, however, to return to the Holly/Portland area that both had known as children for they were

middle-aged empty nesters when they bought 444 Holly in 1952. In 1942, Cecil and Emmy Lu began to winter on Sanibel Island off the west coast of Florida. They bought a home there called "The Gables," and they helped establish St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Mission on the island in 1957. After Cecil's death in 1959, Emmy Lu married Herbert L. Lewis, and the couple continued to reside at the Holly home and vacation on Sanibel.

During this time, Emmy Lu began to take an active interest in conservation efforts on the island. In the mid-1960s, she was instrumental in helping re-dedicate an existing preservation as the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, named after the Pulitzer Prize winner and conservationist. She was also the founding chair of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation. After her death in Florida in 1990 at the age of eighty six, a memorial stone was erected in her honor at the Foundation bearing the words "I am Humble in the Presence of the Starry Firmament." A beloved figure on the Island—a 1986 newspaper article called her "the great lady of Island conservation"—numerous photos of Emmy Lu and the memorial erected in her memory can be found online at the Sanibel Island History Collection.¹⁰

Progressive Thinkers

Although she never lived in the Holly house, a frequent and interesting visitor was Abby Weed Grey, Emmy Lu's older sister. Both sisters were progressive thinkers: as Emmy Lu was a pioneer in the dawning environmental movement so Abby was an advocate of multiculturalism long before such a stance become fashionable. After college at Vassar, Abby Weed spent nearly all of 1925 in Europe. In 1929, she married career army officer Benjamin Edwards Grey, whom she had met on a blind date at a Fort Snelling party. Nearly twenty years her senior, Grey was a skilled investor in stocks and, upon his death in 1956, left his forty-seven-year-old widow a fortune. A few years later, in 1959, Abby Weed Grey signed up for a trip around the world with fourteen women, mostly New Yorkers, that took them to places not normally visited at the time, especially by unaccompanied women, such as Iran,

Thailand, Israel, Japan, Turkey, and India. Wondering how best to spend her time, Grey decided to seek out artists' works in each place they visited. "Wherever I found myself, I would search out contemporary artists and buy their work to show in my country," she later wrote. "I didn't know where to look or exactly what to look for, but whatever it was going to be, it had to express the response of a contemporary sensibility to contemporary circumstances. In every country, I asked, 'Where are your working artists? What are they doing? How are they breaking with the past to cope with the present?'"¹¹

From this time forward, she became an avid art collector and patron, arranging for art and cultural exchanges between Minnesota and various eastern and Middle Eastern countries and providing friendship and financial support to many young artists. To great acclaim, she staged a major exhibition consisting of 1001 works—the number from the Arabian tales—called "One World Through Art" at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds in 1972. In 1975, she endowed the Grey Art Gallery and Study Center at New York University. Located on historic Washington Square Park, the Gallery houses the Abby Weed Grey Collection of Modern Asian and Middle Eastern Art. The initial donation consisted of over 700



After George Dow's mother, Flora, died in 1951, the house at 444 Holly was sold to Cecil and Emmy Lu Read. This photograph of Cecil Read from the 1930s shows he was an accomplished hunter. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

works from Abby Weed Grey's private collection. Published in 1983, the year of her death, her autobiography, *The Picture is the Window/The Window is the Picture*, tells the story of her travels and the artists who were her beneficiaries. It also somewhat painfully relates why she chose to by-

pass the University of Minnesota for New York University in establishing her gallery. Widowed for a second time in 1971, Emmy Lu, who was also a talented artist, often accompanied Abby on her worldwide trips and filled her home with many beautiful and exotic pieces. A photograph of one of Emmy Lu's sculptures graces the cover of her sister's autobiography.

Sadly, after Emmy Lu Read Lewis sold the Holly house in 1964, the house-history trail runs cold. Although the house deed lists names still in the St. Paul phone book, letters to the next generation of owners went unanswered. It would be fascinating to know how the house fared during the low period of the 1970s, for example, when calls for urban renewal of the area were increasingly strong and when a Selby Avenue planning book noted how precarious W. A. Frost's newly established restaurant at Western and Selby was because "suppliers of foodstuffs and servicemen are frequently not willing to 'risk' working on the street."¹² But who knows? As in the case of the irrepressible George Dow, perhaps house history will come knocking once again.

St. Paul writer and educator Mary Reichardt teaches at the University of St. Thomas.

Notes

1. My thanks to Liz Dow for her considerable help with this article, especially in providing her notes from an extensive interview with her father.
2. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, January 1, 1926 and January 4, 1926. Sadly, no Fitzgerald (Shubert) Theatre archives seem to exist. One MPR employee stated to me over the phone that there were probably none, and several requests of management went unanswered.
3. Photographs of many of the figures mentioned in this article, such as Richard, Nina, and Sibley Stewart, John Frederick Scott, Larry Ho, Charles W. Stott, and Adelaide Enright, can be found at the Minnesota Historical Society's photo and art database at www.mnhs.org/library/
4. Cornelia Young Stewart (1880–1932), daughter of Sarah (Sally) Sibley and Elbert A. Young, was the granddaughter of Henry Hastings Sibley. In 1875, Henry Hastings Sibley's niece Mary Steele Potts married Crawford Livingston (1848–1925). In 1915, their daughter, Mary Steele Livingston, married Theodore Wright Griggs. The Griggs's daughter, Mary Livingston Griggs Burke,

- subsequently inherited the house at 432 Summit (now generally referred to as the Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House) following the deaths of her parents in 1925.
5. Records show that the Park Congregational Church held services in the church from 1916 to 1926; then St. Paul Gospel Temple used the building from 1933 to 1952. It is not known what congregation was in the church between 1927 and 1932, the time of George's mischief. George just remembers it as "independent." The church, a focal point in early Holly Avenue photos, burned down in a spectacular fire in 1952.
6. My thanks to Althea and William Sell, current owners of 457 Holly, for helping verify some of this information about Mrs. Roosevelt's visit.
7. This information is from the "Adelaide Enright Loomis Papers, 1921–1978" in the Minnesota Historical Society collection.
8. See Matthew Joseph Brucoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, rev. ed., (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 26.

9. John J. Koblas, *A Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald's St. Paul* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004), 34.
10. *The Islander*, March 4, 1986, pp. 1C and 17C. Among many other accomplishments on Sanibel, Emmy Lu Lewis founded the community newspaper that preceded *The Islander*. My thanks to Betty Anholt, librarian at Sanibel Public Library, for providing helpful information on Emmy Lu's activities on the Island. See also *Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation: A Natural Course*, text and research by Betty Anholt, Gwenda Hielt-Clements, Kristie Seaman Anders, and Erick Lindblad (Sanibel Island, Fla.: Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, 2004). The Sanibel Island History Collection photographs can be accessed through the Sanibel Public Library at www.sanlib.org.
11. Abby Weed Grey, *The Picture is the Window/The Window is the Picture* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), 15.
12. Old Town Restorations, Inc., *Selby Avenue: Status of the Street* (St. Paul, 1978), 46.

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The Northern Pump Company produced this poster of naval guns in 1942 to promote the work that its Naval Ordnance Division did to support the war effort. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society. For more on the CCC and working at the Ford plant and Northern Pump, see Norman C. Horton's article on page 19.