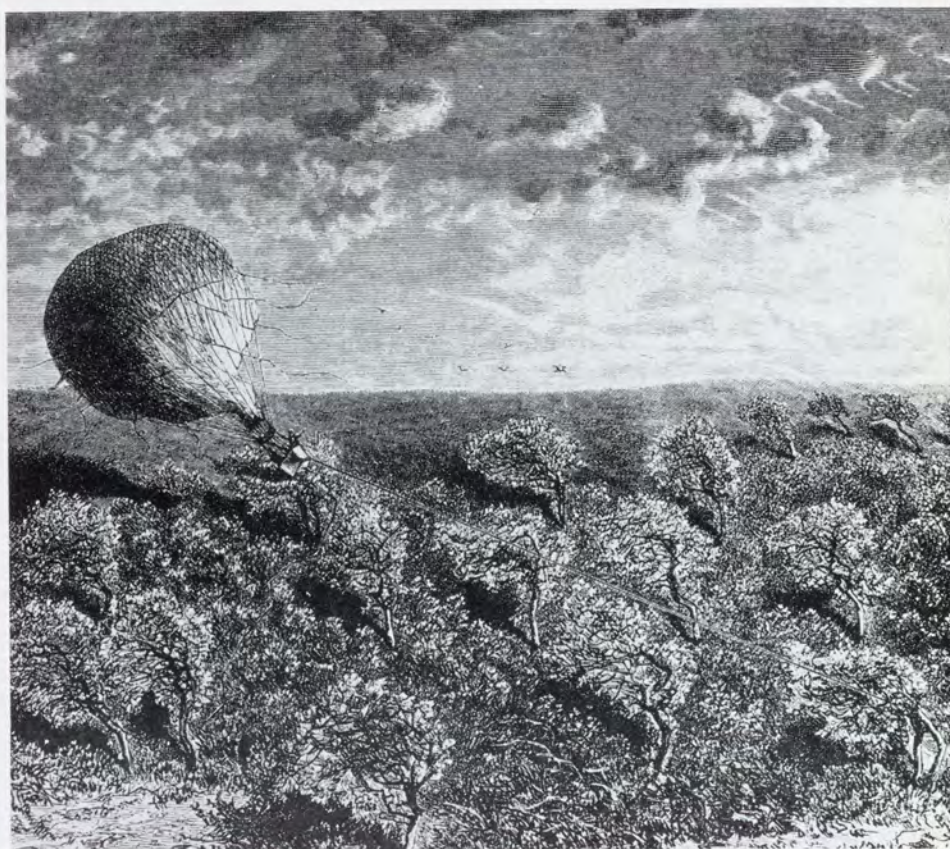


RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY



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ON THE COVER: "The branches of the trees bend beneath the car," said the caption under this picture of a balloon ascension which ran into a bit of difficulty. From *Travels in the Air* by J. Glaisher and published in 1871, the picture shows the hazards balloonists encountered, particularly in forested areas, such as those around White Bear Lake. This and all other pictures on the following pages are, unless otherwise credited, from the picture collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

The Story of White Bear Lake

Hardship and Struggle in a Rugged Wilderness

By Nancy L. Woolworth

THERE is a legend about White Bear Lake—a legend which undoubtedly has lost nothing in its telling and re-telling—concerning a white bear slain in mortal combat by a brave Sioux hunter on Manitou Island. It is said that the spirit of the white bear still haunts this lovely island in the lake.

But the true story of the Santee Sioux who lived beside the lake before the Civil War never has been set down, and the history of the first White Bear Lake settlers who struggled against many hardships to survive in the beautiful but rugged wilderness is not generally known.

THE INITIAL STEP that was to provide Americans with their first knowledge of the White Bear Lake area was taken by the Indian agent stationed at Fort Snelling. Major Lawrence Taliaferro, who escorted the Sioux chiefs and braves to Washington, D. C., in the fall of 1837. They went to negotiate a treaty with Secretary of War Joel Poinsett and it was during this meeting, on September 29, that the Indians ceded their lands between the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers, south of Forest Lake, to the newly-created territory of Wisconsin.

White Bear Lake today is an American city of more than 19,000 people. Nestled between three lakes—White Bear, Bald Eagle and Birch Lakes—it has, like many suburban communities, a maze of streets



One of the first houses in White Bear Lake, built in the 1850s by William Stiles or Styles. Picture from the Ramsey County Historical Society's files.

lined with houses; four-lane highways and a shopping center that sprawls between two of its lakes.

But 130 years ago, before the Sioux ceded their lands, the area was a wilderness. Virgin forests of elm, ash, linden, black burr, and white oak, tamarac and sugar maple¹ sheltered the game and other foods gathered by the Indians who brought their "tipis" and camped upon the shores of the three lakes. Ancestors of the Medewakanton (Spirit Lake People) band of the Santee Sioux scoured these forests for deer, ate fish caught in the lake, dropped berries into their canoes, collected maple sap from trees on Manitou Island, picked cranberries from the marshes of White Bear Beach, picked blueberries near Hugo and gathered wild rice in the lakes around Centerville.² Only occasionally was the peace broken by war parties of the Chippewa from the north looking for Sioux scalps.

Once the Treaty of Washington was signed, the land around White Bear Lake became public domain, and it was opened

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Nancy L. Woolworth is a 1954 graduate of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She received a master's degree in history from the University in 1959 and then turned her attention to researching and writing in the field of history. This is her seventh published article. Others have appeared in such publications as *North Dakota History*, *The Michigan Archaeologist*, *The Dearborn Historian* and the *Detroit Society for Genealogical Research*. She is the wife of Alan Woolworth, museum curator for the Minnesota Historical Society.



White Bear Lake's first school house, photographed by Alan Woolworth from a booklet, *All About White Bear Lake*, published in 1890 by A. Perkins.

up to government scientists and surveyors for study. Joseph N. Nicollet was the man who put White Bear Lake on the map. The first official American survey and scientific study of this region was made by Nicollet, who did a topographical map of White Bear Lake. Traveling from St. Anthony Falls to Madeleine Island, he passed just west of Bald Eagle Lake, following an old fur trade trail. He gave White Bear Lake its first name, "Bears Lake" from the literal translation of its Dakota name, "Mahto-mde."³

IN THE SPRING of 1847, advancing Wisconsin settlements and the opening of Mississippi steamboat service to St. Paul brought more people into what is now the Ramsey County area. At the same time, the United States Surveyor General's office in Dubuque, Iowa, sent surveyors into White Bear Township to survey the sections and run the town lines. During the fall and winter of 1847, James R. Marsh and Isaac N. Highbee cut their way with axes through the forest underbrush. They crossed swamps and marshes on horseback and walked over open prairie to survey the township land into lots for future settlement.⁴

The United States Land Office was opened in Stillwater in August of 1848. Soon, pressures began to be exerted upon government officials by lumbermen, fur traders and land speculators to open up the southern townships for cash, pre-emption or Mexican War land warrant sales.⁵ Although White Bear Township was not opened for entry by Presidential Proclamation until

the summer of 1850, a few squatters made their pre-emptory claims to this land several years earlier.

In 1849, a New York mechanic, Isaiah B. De Webber, built a small claims cabin on the northwest side of White Bear Lake near what is now the intersection of Lake Avenue and United States Highway 61.

The first real estate boom in White Bear Lake's history took place during the summer of 1850. Whole government lots (between 40 and 80 acres) were purchased quickly with military land warrants bought up by land speculators or other investors. The first speculator to purchase land in White Bear Lake was the Connecticut-born Methodist minister, the Reverend Benjamin F. Hoyt. On September 4, 1850, he bought the land along what is now Lake Street, opposite Manitou Island.⁶ Others who bought land in the early 1850's were the fur trader Henry M. Rice; the land agents Abraham Lambert, George C. Nichols, Charles C. Conroy, and Charles Bazill; lumberman Jonathan McKusick, and two farmers from Ohio, Richard and William Freeborn.

BUT NO REAL settlement was begun until 1851 when interest in farming the area was aroused by James M. Goodhue's *Minnesota Pioneer*. Beginning in the spring of 1850, Goodhue began writing enticing descriptions of the land north of St. Paul, making it sound most appealing to farmers from the east and immigrants from Great Britain. Among the first to really inspect the land, however, were Goodhue's own employees. As announced in the *Pioneer* on April 10, 1851, "A company of young men from Saint Paul, went out to see the country around White Bear Lake, one day last week. The lake is about 10 miles from Saint Paul, and is six miles long by two or three miles wide. They represent it as a fine country, the land is good and much timber. They

⁵Pre-emption was a system under which settlers might buy not more than 160 acres of public lands after residing upon and improving them for at least six months. The Mexican War land warrants dated from an 1847 act of Congress which provided that a soldier who had volunteered for the Mexican War was to be given his choice of a warrant for 160 acres of public lands or treasury scrip for \$100, drawing 6 per cent interest, until such time as the scrip might be redeemed by the government. Land warrants were transferable and many veterans sold them.

saw many deer and killed ducks and pheasants [Ruffed Grouse]. It is on the east side of the river Mississippi, and is subject to entry. We advise those who want farms, to take a look out that way."

Among those who took Goodhue's advice was one of these young "inspectors." Nine days after the article was written, George W. Moore, foreman of the *Pioneer* office until September, 1851, bought land west of Bald Eagle Lake. He used a military land warrant.⁶ Hugh I. Vance of Little Canada, a veteran of the Mexican War and type-setter on the *Pioneer*, built a log cabin on Bald Eagle Lake in 1851 and probably was the first white man to break sod there with a wooden breaking plow.⁷

MANY SETTLERS who read Goodhue's stories about the farm lands around these beautiful lakes and came out to take a look at "the region back of St. Paul" had come by steamboat up the Mississippi River. Finding the hotels jammed with people they headed for this land north of St. Paul where timber could be obtained cheaply to build a log cabin. Among the first settlers to arrive in White Bear Lake was the family of Villeroy B. Barnum. The Connecticut-born Barnum came upriver by steamboat from St. Louis, Missouri, in 1849 with his wife, Nancy; his 13-year old daughter, Mary; his married daughter, Emily, and her riverman husband, William Stiles or Styles. They moved from St. Paul to White Bear Lake in the spring of 1851. Here V. B. Barnum selected three government lots of 175 acres between Goose and White Bear Lakes and had the young territorial county surveyor, George C. Nichols, run out the property lines.⁸ It was on this land, on a hill overlooking Goose Lake, that Barnum and Stiles built a bark-covered tamarac log cabin to house Emily, who was expecting a baby. On May 7, 1851, she gave birth to the first white child born in White Bear Lake—Mary Elizabeth Stiles.⁹

The same spring an educated, British-born, American fur trader from St. Paul and Little Canada, James Reuben Clewett, and

his wife, Rose Perry, followed the Indian trail that led past White Bear Lake to Taylors Falls. They settled in a log cabin on Portland Avenue just south of the Washington County line.¹⁰ Clewett made friends with the Sioux who came every year to pick cranberries, herbs for medicine, and wild rice from the marshes. It was on this farm of 130 acres that they reared twelve children.

With these new settlers arriving that spring of 1851, a way had to be found to get food and other supplies from St. Paul to White Bear Lake more easily than by the old Indian and fur trade trails. On April 7, 1851, those who owned land around White Bear Lake actually joined in prayer with Richard Freeborn when he petitioned the county to put through a road from Little Canada to the three lakes. The petition was granted. The road to White Bear Lake was built first; later, a road was put through to Bald Eagle Lake.

WHILE CITIZENS of Little Canada and Vadnais Heights such as Abraham Lambert, Pierre Paul and Alex McLeod, helped oversee the construction of the road, other French Canadian inhabitants of the area served as axemen and chainmen. In May of 1851, Antoine LaBore and Joseph B. Demarais served as axemen. They cleared out the large trees along the trails to widen them for wagons and carriages. They worked for \$1.50 a day. Pierre

Map of White Bear Lake, drawn for *Ramsey County History* by Nancy L. Woolworth and Edward J. Lettermann, showing the locations of some of the earliest homes in the community as described by the author. Dotted lines indicate modern highways criss-crossing the area.



Bibeau was paid the same for working as a chainman for four days under County Surveyor Simeon P. Folsom.¹¹

With the new road open to White Bear Lake, it became easier, in the summer of 1851, for young people to rent horses and carriages at Benson's in St. Paul and bring a picnic lunch to the top of the largest of the nine Indian mounds beside the lake. The first record of such an event was noted in the *Minnesota Democrat* for July 22, 1851:

"A picnic party of 14 or 15 ladies and gentlemen went out last week to White Bear Lake, ten miles north and spent a day very delightfully at fishing and hunting."

In April of 1852, Villeroy Barnum began to rebuild his log cabin. He traveled to St. Paul to purchase pine shingles to cover his house which stood where Reed's Drugstore stands today. Behind his cabin he planted farm crops. As soon as he had finished these tasks, he rode his horse to Stillwater to register his land.

In that same year, his daughter, Mary, fell in love with a young pioneer from St. Paul, Richard McLagan, who had visited White Bear Lake in search of new farming lands. They were married that year before Ramsey County Justice of the Peace Jacob F. Noah. After their marriage, they moved onto McLagan's new farm on a hill overlooking Bald Eagle Lake. Their marriage was the first in White Bear Lake.

During the summer of 1852, James Goodhue traveled by horseback to view the land and lakes that he had so graphically described in his newspaper.

"NOW YOU HERE come to two lakes, divided by a peninsula; and on the shore of one of these, White Bear Lake, is the house and field of Mr. [Villeroy B.] Barnum. It is a charming spot, with a view of the lake in front, extending for miles, the lake surrounded with gently swelling hills, covered with trees, and the whole shore lined with pebbles, white, red, black and all colors, including some very beautiful carnelians. In the midst of the lake, like a vast flowerpot, is an island crowded with rock maple trees—so dark beneath the canopy of luxuriant trees, that you can scarcely see to read by daylight—a vast temple of trees, and in the shadowy aisles of which, are birds that sing most sweetly, of a plumage that shows them to be

strangers to sunlight. Here, in solitude, the eagle builds her nests of sticks and breeds and educates her fierce children, feeding upon the bass and the pickerel, fresh snatched from the surrounding lake, that is fairly rippling with millions of finny inhabitants. The island belongs to Mr. [William] Freeborn of St. Paul . . ."

DURING THE FALL of 1852 and the spring of 1853, V. B. Barnum enlarged his log cabin on the site of the present-day White Bear Shopping Center. He was preparing to open the first resort hotel in the summer of 1853. In that same year, William W. Webber, Sr., a native of Maine, came by steamboat up the Mississippi River from St. Louis in search of a place to regain his strength. The sick man was met by Barnum in St. Paul and taken by horse and carriage to Barnum's Hotel. After spending many days boating, fishing, and hunting on the peaceful lake, he had gained thirty pounds. He went back to St. Louis that fall, after buying Isaiah DeWebber's cabin and land for \$500 in gold, and told his friends about the wonderful health resort north of St. Paul on White Bear Lake. In the years that were to pass, many persons with pulmonary diseases came to the area to seek a cure for ill health. Some, like Webber, returned to St. Paul and never went back to St. Louis.

Many immigrants came in the early



Lady Aubrey Paul, known in White Bear Lake as Mrs. John Aubrey. She was the daughter of Sir John Kay of London. From the files of the Ramsey County Historical Society.



Church of St. John's in the Wilderness, White Bear Lake, also from the booklet, *All About White Bear Lake* (published in 1890) and photographed by Alan Woolworth.

1850's to White Bear Lake looking for farmland and a place to put down new roots. In 1853, the Thomas Milner family of Hartipool, England, took ship to New York, then crossed half the continent by wagon and oxen. At La Crosse, Wisconsin, they boarded a steamboat and ascended the river to St. Paul.¹² Thomas' brother, Isaac W. Milner, helped buy land on Bald Eagle Lake for them. After a rough trip from St. Paul, they arrived to find a tamarac log cabin with just a dirt floor waiting for them on the lakeshore. They began a farm, where the father raised wheat and corn, where the mother taught the children their "three R's" and where game and fish were easily caught and eaten by all.

On May 20, 1854, the James F. Murray family arrived in White Bear Lake with their three sons, T. Byrson, James C., and Thomas H. Murray. They had traveled in a covered wagon all the way from Michigan. With them they brought many head of cattle and a shepherd dog to keep the cows in line. That same year, the Freeborn family gave up its land in Ramsey County for other land in what was to become Freeborn County, so the Murrays bought up most of the area along Lake Avenue from Shady Lane to Twelfth Street in White Bear Lake and most of Manitou Island.

That summer they had no hay to feed their animals so the Milners loaned them hay until they could harvest their own. Such was the way pioneers helped each other.

THE LIFE OF these pioneers was rugged and the wilderness they lived in still was untamed. It had remained a haven for bands of roaming Sioux who earlier had claimed the land as hunting ground. Serious problems arose in 1853 when the Chippewas from Taylors Falls shot some Sioux in St. Paul. The Sioux and 25 or 30 young white men, including William Gates LeDuc, chased them to White Bear Lake where they disappeared.¹³ In the fall of 1855, a Sioux hunting expedition near Hugo found some Chippewas camped on Lake Oneka and scalped a few. The Sioux came back to Goose Lake, to their old camp site where the Episcopal Cemetery is today, and held a scalp dance, lasting two days and nights, within sight of the settlers.

With a large number of settlers moving into White Bear Lake, the area began to attract St. Paul businessmen. The year 1856 was so prosperous for V. B. Barnum that in June he sold his hotel on the land between White Bear Lake and Goose Lake. Buyer was John M. Lamb, sergeant-at-arms of the Territorial Legislature and a St. Paul hotel man, who paid \$4,000 for it.¹⁴ Lamb opened up the White Bear House that year, advertising it in the newspapers as a fishing resort where boats and fishing tackle could be had and where billiards could be played in an addition behind the hotel.

THE PERMANENT SETTLERS of White Bear Lake brought with them a love for established religion. Many who came by covered wagon brought their Bibles and prayer books to read and to record family history. On the flyleaf of the Joseph Freemans' Bible is the following inscription:

*"We left England on Good Friday, A. D. 1853. Arrived at Cleveland, Ohio, May the third, A. D. 1853. Left Cleveland, June 8th, 1855. Arrived at St. Paul, June 15, 1855. Moved at Lakeville, were there about two months. Moved and opened up a farm for Louis Semper at the foot of Bald Eagle Lake in Washington County. Moved to Ross Wilkinson on Otter Lake in March, 1861. Moved to Birch Lake in 1863. Moved to the Grove, Lot 2, Sect. 15, Town 30, Range 22, 10/17/68."*¹⁵

The first thing the Freemans did when



Medewakanton Sioux "tipis," a familiar sight to White Bear Lake settlers. Photo by Alan Woolworth from a stereoscopic slide owned by Mrs. Sture Henriksen, Mahtomedi.

they arrived in White Bear Lake was to build claim cabins. They built two log cabins about eleven feet wide and thirteen feet long. These stood twelve feet high with two narrow windows in front and a loft window in the rear for the children. There was a low-hanging door. Inside were small chairs, a collapsible highchair, a crib, two spool-turned beds with feather bedding, a potbelly stove in the center of the room. Beargrease lamps were used to light the cabins. Outside, the cows were allowed to roam at will. Behind the house the Freemans planted flint corn, cabbage, rutabagas, potatoes and other vegetables. Beside them lived the Indians, who often peeked through their windows which were covered with animal skins.¹⁶

Although they had brought their Bibles to read, when there were births, marriages, and deaths the early settlers wanted a clergyman to officiate and administer the sacraments. In the summer of 1856, when Clara Murray, the four-year old daughter of James F. Murray, died, Murray sent for the Reverend John Gillian Riheldaffer, pastor of Central Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. On July 24, 1856, on the Murray lawn at Shady Lane and Lake Avenue, Mr. Riheldaffer preached the first sermon in White Bear Lake over the little girl's body. All those in the community attended the service, including the Indians.

WHILE THE SMALL farming community was harvesting its crops in the fall

of 1857, a strange object fell from the sky which must have startled those working under the virgin forest cover. To those on the ground, the sudden descending and ascending of William Markoe's first Minnesota balloon on October 8, 1857, must have seemed a miracle. According to newspaper accounts, Markoe and his companions took off from the Third Annual Territorial Fair which was being held near the location of today's state capitol. They landed in a clearing near Sixth and Division streets in White Bear Lake at 11 A.M. that day.

"The landing was complicated, however, by the wooded nature of the country. A clear space was finally spotted, and the pilot tried to bring his craft down within it by valving more gas. He was defeated by the wind, which threatened to drive the balloon into the trees on the edge of the opening. All ballast was frantically dumped overboard, and the balloon rose quickly."¹⁷

Markoe tried again in another clearing between White Bear Lake and Hugo, but still his troubles with the ballast remained. The car got caught in an oak tree and more problems developed. It rose again and then landed in a marsh pond near Forest Lake. One of the crew jumped out and walked to White Bear Lake where he found a horse to carry him to St. Paul. The others sailed on into Anoka County where they finally landed. They packed their balloon onto a farmer's wagon and took the road to St. Paul. With this initial aerial visit, William Markoe, who later settled in White Bear Lake, brought to the frontier community the realization that a new era of science and transportation was dawning.

THIS TASTE of scientific experimentation was to stimulate the community's concern for the establishment of a common school. Early in January, 1857, James F. Murray and other White Bear Lake settlers had decided that they would like a school district which would be separate from the Little Canada district. On January 10, they petitioned the county to set up a White Bear Lake School District east of sections 19 and 30 and west of sections 24 and 25.¹⁸

Murray donated his property along the newly-built county road to Bald Eagle Lake for a school grounds. In 1857, with community labor, the first schoolhouse in White Bear Lake was built at a cost of about \$100. It stood at Third and Murray Streets on the

property that James Lonergan was to purchase in 1868. Originally, the schoolhouse was built of tamarac logs. It was twenty feet square and had two windows on each side, at first covered with skins through which curious Indians peered. Later, glass windows were added and a lean-to built to keep up with the expanding school population.

That year, Thomas H. Murray took the first school census in the new district. He reported that there were 47 pupils living there between the ages of four and twenty-one years.¹⁹ In April, 1858, he received the sum of \$72.85 from Ramsey County as a school appropriation for White Bear Lake's first 29 eligible students.

THE WILDERNESS community of log cabins needed a qualified school teacher, and there was one at hand. In the winter of 1857, an interesting couple had arrived by sleigh from Superior, Wisconsin. They were Aubrey John Paul, the son of an English baronet, and his wife, Laura Paul, who had been a teacher. Aubrey Paul's father had been involved in a financial scandal in England and sentenced to a 14-year exile in Australia. The disgrace caused Aubrey and his wife to flee England and wander, incognito, in the wilderness of North America. They arrived, finally, in White Bear Lake, where they were known as Mr. and Mrs. John Aubrey. In 1868, Aubrey's father died. Aubrey succeeded to the baronetcy and they immediately returned to England. It is as Sir Aubrey and Lady Paul, therefore, that they often are referred to by historians.

In 1858, John and Laura Aubrey hired a Mr. Ashton of St. Paul, whom they had known in Superior, to build them a wooden house on Cottage Park Road (Anne Gilmore's house today).²⁰ Laura Aubrey at once began teaching 12 to 15 pupils in the new schoolhouse. She also taught them music on the piano in her home. Many evenings her pupils were served homemade ginger ale by the maidservant, "Tay," and they often remained for dinner.

Following the building of the schoolhouse, the community spirit took on new aspects. A special meeting was called by Ross Wilkinson at Lamb's Hotel on May 11, 1858, to celebrate the statehood of Minnesota and to decide what to do about the community's own form of government.

After White Bear Lake's separation from the Pleasant Lake election precinct in 1858, the citizens of White Bear organized themselves into a township government. Ross Wilkinson, the first settler on Wilkinson's Lake (Rice Lake) and supervisor of the Pleasant Lake precinct, presided over the election of officers. After the canvas of the twenty-seven votes that were cast, James F. Murray was elected supervisor of the Township Board; V. B. Barnum, township assessor; J. R. Clewett and Alex Pepin, township justices of the peace, and George W. Schnabel, township clerk. The first act of the board was to levy a twelve-cent tax per \$100 worth of property. This was a modest levy, since most of the citizens owned lots that did not contain 80 acres.

AMONG THE prominent early settlers was the adventurer and frontiersman, James Liberty Fiske, who came to White Bear Lake in 1858. Shortly afterwards, he married Libbie A. Burson, whose father, George Burson, had bought Manitou Island in 1857 for \$80. Fiske and his bride settled down on property they bought from James C. Murray on Lake Avenue. Fiske became friends with the Murrays and together they became involved in the political, educational and religious life of the community. Fiske and the Murrays also became interested in many business ventures, including a large resort hotel called the Murray House (later the Williams House), built in 1859. This was the beginning of the large resort hotels which were to become so important to White Bear Lake during the last half of the Nineteenth century.

The community now had grown to 12 log cabins and a need had arisen for a post office. In 1859, James C. Murray provided a corner of his cherry desk in his log cabin along Lake Avenue for the United States Mail. He was appointed the first postmaster of White Bear Lake in November, 1859.²¹

The newly constructed schoolhouse not only was the community's educational center but it also became an early gathering place for religious education. At first, Laura Aubrey held Sunday School classes in her home, but all the settlers wanted to attend Sunday School. On January 8, 1860, in White Bear Lake's first experiment in religious co-operation, citizens representing a variety of denominations gathered in the

log schoolhouse to organize the Union Sunday School. James F. Murray opened the meeting with a prayer "that they would have the intelligence not to annoy each other with the minor differences in the religions but would rather think to instruct the children in the Bible here in order to make them useful and good as they grow up in life."²² This first Sunday School was to be held each week whenever possible. Duncan Ross, a Mississippi River sailor with Methodist leanings, was the first Sunday School superintendent.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL continued for awhile in the long schoolhouse and the adults heard Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist and Methodist clergymen. But Laura Aubrey yearned for the kind of a church she had known in England. She wrote to friends in England about it and they sent her \$800 to build a church. She organized a "church-raising bee" in the community and even the Indians helped out. John Aubrey hired Cyrus Greves, who stayed with the DeWebbers, to build a church in the Hanoverian style popular in Eighteenth century England. Tamarac logs formed the foundation, the framework was donated by James C. Murray, and Greves built the church of wooden siding. He painted it dark red. On August 29, 1861, with 100 persons on hand, Bishop Henry Whipple of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota "consecrated to the worship of Almighty God the beautiful church of St. John in the Wilderness . . ."²³ on the spot where the Episcopal Cemetery stands today.

THE GUNS of the Civil War had sounded four months before the dedication and the days of the wilderness were numbered. After the Sioux were moved out of Minnesota in 1862, they no longer were a part of the life around White Bear Lake. Most of the virgin timber had been cut. Many of the fathers and sons of the original families went off to fight and some never returned.

But in the fourteen years before the fall of Fort Sumter, White Bear Lake settlers planned and built well. The beginnings of a resort town were there in the hotels that were springing up. The seeds of government, education and religion all were planted by those first pioneers who struggled to make White Bear Lake better than just a wilderness. From these beginnings grew the city of today.

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THE GIBBS HOUSE

Headquarters of the Ramsey County Historical Society, 2097 Larpenteur Avenue W., St. Paul, Minn.

THE Ramsey County Historical Society was founded in 1949. During the following years the Society, believing that a sense of history is of great importance in giving a new, mobile generation a knowledge of its roots in the past, acquired the 100-year-old farm home which had belonged to Heman R. Gibbs. The Society restored the Gibbs House and in 1954 opened it to the public as a museum which would depict the way of life of an early Minnesota settler.

In 1958 the Society erected a barn, behind the house, which is maintained as an agricultural museum to display the tools and other implements used by the men who broke up the prairie soil and farmed with horse and oxen.

Today, in addition to maintaining the Gibbs property, the Ramsey County Historical Society is active in the preservation of historic sites in Ramsey county, conducts tours, prepares pamphlets and other publications, organizes demonstrations of pioneer crafts and maintains a Speakers' Bureau for schools and organizations. It is the Society's hope that through its work the rich heritage of the sturdy men and women who were the pioneers of Ramsey County will be preserved for future generations.