

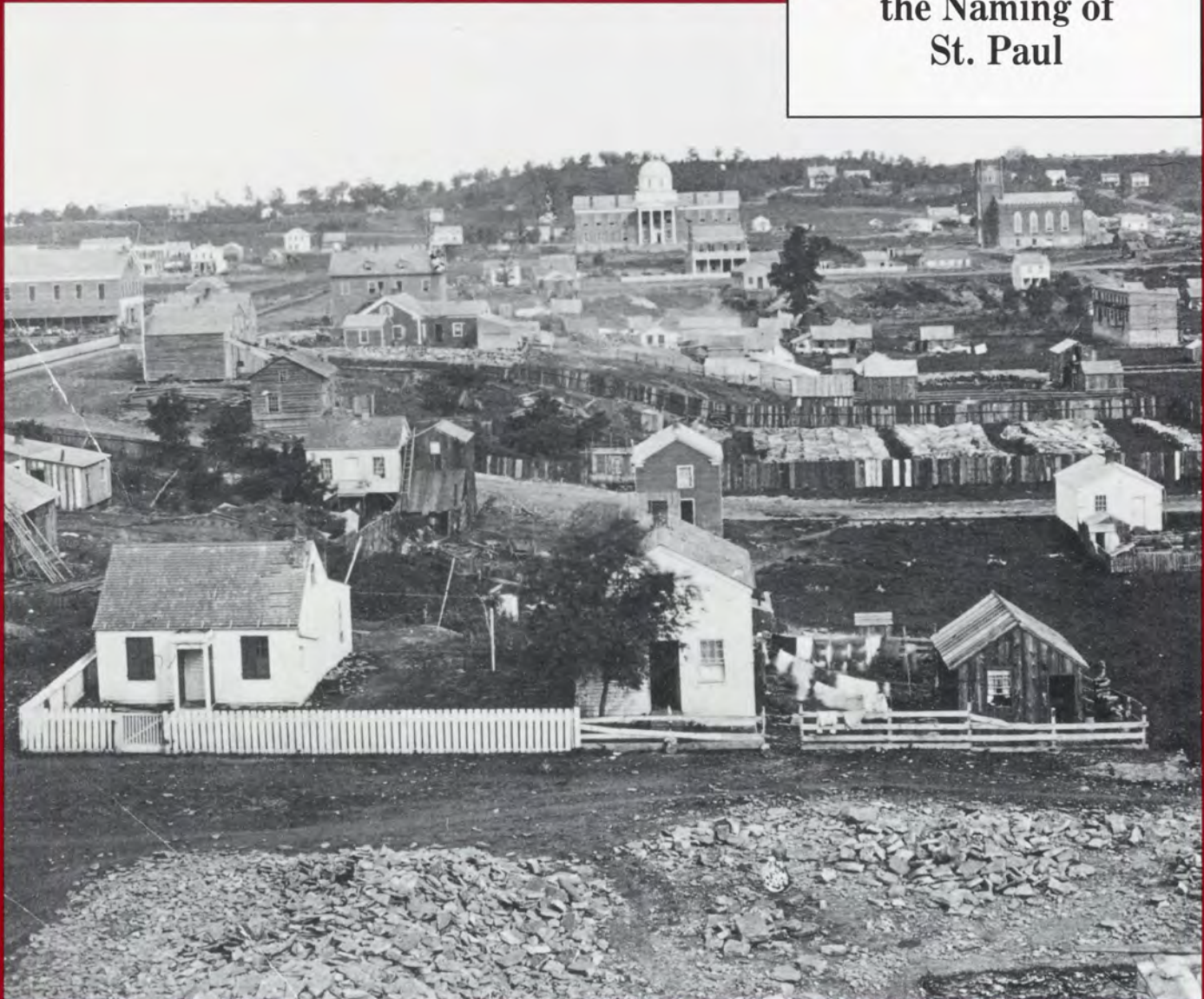
RAMSEY COUNTY

History

A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Fall, 1991
Volume 26, Number 3

Special Issue:
150th Anniversary of
the Naming of
St. Paul



St. Paul in 1857. This is one of nine panoramic views shot that year by B. F. Upton from the roof of the Ramsey County Courthouse at Fourth and Wabasha streets. In this view to the north, the building with the pillars and the dome is the territorial capitol at Tenth and Wabasha streets. The articles beginning on page 4 are published in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the naming of St. Paul and trace the early history of the settlement on the Mississippi that once was known as Pig's Eye.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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On the Cover: St. Paul was the capital of the Territory of Minnesota, when this view was photographed by B. F. Upton from the roof of the Ramsey County Courthouse in 1857. See articles on St. Paul's early years beginning on page 4.

Acknowledgements: The photograph on page 3 is from the Ramsey County Historical Society's photo collection. The map on page 10 was created by the design firm of Rummel, Dubs and Hill. Photographs of the Davern house in 1990 on page 23, the Daverns on page 24, Dr. Colvin on page 27 and the Colvin house on page 28 are from the author's collection. The Fuller family photograph on page 25 is from the H. B. Fuller Company. All other photographs in this issue are from the audio-visual collections of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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Publication of *Ramsey County History* is supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie, Jr.

A Message from the Editorial Board

Four members of the Society's Board of Directors and Editorial Board have had the good fortune to serve on the St. Paul History Sub-committee for the writing of *Saint Paul—The First 150 Years*. The sub-committee came together under the auspices of The Saint Paul Foundation to assist the book's author, Virginia Brainard Kunz, with comment and criticism of her manuscript that celebrates the history and cultural diversity of the people of St. Paul. The opinions of the committee members were as varied as their ethnicity. The group included representatives from the Native American, Southeast Asian, African American and Mexican American communities of Ramsey County, as well as those of European ancestry.

The book that Virginia Kunz wrote reflects the experiences of their people and their vision for St. Paul and its cultural richness. Featured in this issue of *Ramsey County History* is a section of the book along with special articles on "Pig's Eye" Parrant, Abraham Perry's family and the Davern house, an early farm house set within an Irish community in what is now Highland Park. Together they all contribute to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the naming of St. Paul.

—John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

The 150th Anniversary of the Naming of the City

St. Paul and the Rush to Settlement — 1840

Virginia Brainard Kunz

As 1840 dawned, nine cabins were strewn along the bluffs that rose above the Mississippi, several miles downriver from Fort Snelling, on land the Dakota had ceded to the federal government in 1837. The cabins formed the hamlet that was known along the river as Pig's Eye, a name bestowed upon it by the presence of Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant, and his tavern near the foot of present-day Robert Street.

Clefts in the bluffs about a mile apart created two convenient landing places at the river's edge—the Lower Landing (now called Lambert's Landing) at the foot of today's Jackson Street, and the Upper Landing at the foot of Chestnut Street. Except for the bluffs, the landings and the mighty river itself, the site bore little resemblance to the city of today. The river bottom was studded with ancient, stately trees. Stands of cedar and tamarack followed the base of the Summit Avenue hill and a dense forest of elms surrounded the Upper Landing. A bog extended from present-day Washington Street and Kellogg Boulevard, past Assumption Church on the north and Seven Corners on the west. A stream ran through this area and drained into the Mississippi at the Upper Landing. At Cedar and Tenth streets, another stream tumbled over a ledge, creating a small waterfall; the stream drained into a sizable lake at Eighth and Robert, then ran through a deep ravine along Jackson Street and into the river.

The settlement already had seen its first birth, its first marriage, and its first death—by murder. On a September morning in 1839, John Hays' body was found in the river below Carver's Cave, his head bashed in, apparently by violent blows. A few months earlier, Hays, Edward Phelan and William Evans, all recently discharged from the army at Fort Snelling and all natives of Ireland, had taken up some of the first claims in what is now St. Paul. Evans had selected a spot on Dayton's Bluff; the tract of land Phelan and Hays ac-

quired extended from Eagle Street on the west to Minnesota Street on the east. The two men shared a log house half-way down the bluff near Eagle Street.

Upon the discovery of Hays' body, Phelan was immediately arrested and hauled off to Prairie du Chien, 300 miles away, to await trial. The evidence was circumstantial. Hays, regarded as a decent sort of man, had saved some money. Phelan, who was penniless, had a reputation for cruelty and earlier had threatened Hays. After a hearing, Phelan was released for lack of evidence. (Some years later a Dakota Indian, Dowah the Singer, confessed on his deathbed that he had killed Hays.)

Phelan returned to St. Paul and made a new claim near the site of the Hamm Brewery and on the creek that bears his name. Still troublesome, he was indicted in 1850 for perjury (unrelated to the Hays murder) by the first grand jury to sit in Ramsey County. Phelan fled before he could be arrested. He joined the trek to the California gold fields, but came to a violent end while crossing the plains.

The first marriage introduced an element of high romance into the hamlet. James R. Clewett, a young Englishman drawn to the west by a love of adventure, had come to Mendota several years earlier as an employee of the American Fur Company. Mendota—at that time a predominantly French settlement—was the social center of the region. The dances held there to enliven the long winter months were alight with the Gallic love of life and color. With all the gallantry of their French an-

Editor's Note: On November 1, 1841, Father Lucien Galtier dedicated the Chapel of St. Paul and asked that the frontier community, then known as Pig's Eye, be named for the chapel. As part of a community-wide celebration of the 150th anniversary of the naming of St. Paul, a new history—Saint Paul—Its First 150 Years—is being published in October, 1991, by The Saint Paul Foundation. The history begins with Lieutenant Zebulon Pike's treaty with the Dakota, the original inhabitants of the region, for land on which to build a fort; the construction of Fort Snelling; and the arrival of the early settlers, including the infamous Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant, in what is now downtown St. Paul. Published here, with the Foundation's permission, is an adaptation of the section of the book that describes the building of the chapel and the first forty years of St. Paul's history. The book, which traces the history of the city through 150 years, will be available in area bookstores and at the Ramsey County Historical Society after November 1.

cestry, the men dressed for these occasions in black coats and trousers, fine cambric shirts and brilliant woven sashes. They were tireless dancers, as Denis Cherrier, a fiddler who furnished the music, remembered long afterward.

It was at one of these dances that Clewett first saw Rose Perry, the young daughter of Abraham Perry. Clewett went home with the Perrys that night and stayed there until Rose agreed to marry him. They were married on April 9, 1839, by the Reverend J. W. Pond, a Methodist missionary laboring at Kaposia.

In September, 1839, the first white child in the settlement, Basil Gervais, was

to 1880

born. He was the son of Benjamin Gervais and his wife, Genevieve Larans, a native of Berthier, Canada.

With Protestant missions already open at Kaposia,* Red Rock and Lake Harriet, and the community that included Mendota, Fort Snelling and the site of St. Paul, the Catholics at Dubuque began to see the need to assign a priest to the region. They sent the newly-ordained twenty-nine-year-old Frenchman, Lucien Galtier. He arrived at Mendota in the spring of 1840.

Born in France in 1811, Galtier was studying theology there when Bishop Mathias Loras of Dubuque arrived in Europe. The bishop was seeking laborers for his vast vineyard in the heart of North America, and Galtier was among the missionaries he recruited. Father Galtier's assignment was to minister to approximately 185 Catholics, including the French from Canada as well as others at Mendota and the Pig's Eye settlement. Actually, Galtier was out of his jurisdiction at Pig's Eye. The little community was east of the Mississippi within the Territory of Wisconsin and, therefore, the responsibility of the bishop of Detroit. No matter. There was no other priest within hundreds of miles.

Galtier soon cast about for a site for a chapel. Years later, in 1864, he wrote a firsthand account of the building of the Chapel of St. Paul and the naming of the settlement for the chapel.

"Three different points were offered," he wrote, "one called La Point Basse, or Point LeClaire [the point down the river still known as Pig's Eye], but I objected be-

* The Dakota village on the Mississippi, below Dayton's Bluff. In the 1840s, the village was moved to the site of South St. Paul. Red Rock was at present-day Newport.



Dakota men in Washington, D. C., in 1858 for the negotiation of a treaty with the federal government. Photograph by Fredericks. Below is Chief Little Crow. Photograph by Whitney.



cause that locality was exposed to inundation. The idea of building a church which might at any day be swept down the river to Saint Louis, did not please me.

"Two miles and a half further up on his elevated claim [now the southern point of

Dayton's Bluff], Mr. Charles Mousseau offered me an acre of his ground, but the place did not suit my purpose. I was truly looking ahead, thinking of the future as well as the present. Steamboats could not stop there; the bank was too steep, the place on the summit of the hill too restricted; communication difficult with the other parts of the settlement up and down the river.

"After mature reflection, I resolved to put up the church at the nearest possible point to [Fountain] Cave,* because it would be more convenient for me to cross the river there, when coming from Saint Peter's [Mendota], and because, also, it would be the nearest point to the head of navigation, outside of the [Fort Snelling Military] Reservation line.

"Mr. B. Gervais and Mr. Vetal Guerin, two good quiet farmers, had the only spot that appeared likely to answer the purpose. They consented to give me jointly the ground necessary for a church site, a garden and a small graveyard. I accepted the extreme eastern part of Mr. Vetal's claim, and the extreme west of Mr. Gervais'.

"Accordingly, in 1841, in the month of

* Near Shepard Road and Highway 35E.

October, logs were prepared and a church erected, so poor that it would well remind one of the stable at Bethlehem. It was destined, however, to be the nucleus of a great city. On the 1st day of November, in that same year, I blessed the new basilica, and dedicated it to 'Saint Paul, the apostle of nations.' I expressed a wish, at that time, that the settlement would be known by the same name and my desire was obtained.

"I had previously to this time fixed my residence at Saint Peter's [Mendota], and as the name of Paul is generally connected with that of Peter, and the gentiles being well represented in the persons of the Indians, I called it Saint Paul. The name 'Saint Paul,' applied to a town or city, seemed appropriate. The monosyllable is short, sounds well, and is understood by all denominations of Christians.

"When Mr. Vetal Guerin was married, I published the bans as being those of a resident of 'Saint Paul.' A Mr. Jackson put up a store, and a grocery was opened at the foot of the Gervais claim. This soon brought steamboats to land there. Thenceforth the place was known as 'Saint Paul Landing,' and, later on, as 'Saint Paul.'"

Nearly sixty years later, Isaac LaBissonniere, who at the age of eighteen had helped build the chapel, remembered its construction. He was one of the first eight men who volunteered to do the work. His father, he said, served "by general consent" as general superintendent of the project. Others among them were Benjamin and Pierre Gervais, Pierre and Charles Bottineau, Francois Morin and Vetal Guerin—a constellation of French names.

"The ground selected for the site . . . was thinly covered with groves of red oak and white oak," Isaac LaBissonniere recalled. "Where the cathedral stands [near Sixth and Wabasha] was then a tamarack swamp. The logs for the chapel were cut on the spot and the tamarack swamp in the rear was made to contribute rafters and roof pieces. We had poor building tools in those days and our work was not beautifully finished.

"The logs, rough and undressed, prepared merely by the ax, were made secure by wooden pins. The roof was made of steeply slanting bark-covered slabs, donated by a millowner of Stillwater. The slabs were carried to St. Paul by a steam-



Father Lucien Galtier



The Chapel of St. Paul

boat, the captain accepting in payment a few days' service of one of the men. These slabs were landed at Jackson Street and were drawn up the hill by hand with ropes. The slabs were likewise put to good use in the construction of the floor and of the benches.

"The chapel, as I remember it, was about twenty-five feet long, eighteen feet wide, and ten feet high. It had a single window on each side and it faced the river. It was completed in a few days, and could not have represented an expenditure in labor value of more than \$65."

On All Saints Day, November 1, 1841, Father Galtier dedicated the little chapel. It was located on Bench Street, now Second Street, between Cedar and Minnesota streets. The "small graveyard" Galtier mentioned was at what later became Third (now Kellogg Boulevard) and Minnesota Street.

Galtier was transferred to Iowa three years later and Father Augustine Ravoux

succeeded him. In 1847, Ravoux extended the rear of the chapel to forty-five feet and added a small belfry to house the bell of the *Argo*, a steamboat that had sunk in the Mississippi.

In 1851, after the diocese of St. Paul had been established and Joseph Cretin named bishop, the humble little bark-roofed log building became the cathedral of the diocese. Three more cathedrals were to follow. Two were built on the square once known throughout St. Paul as the "cathedral block." Bounded by Wabasha and St. Peter, Sixth and Seventh streets, "cathedral block" was on land owned originally by Vetal Guerin, who sold it to Bishop Cretin. The present cathedral on Selby and Summit avenues was completed in 1915.

The vestry of the old chapel was used for a time by the Sisters of St. Joseph as a school. According to J. Fletcher Williams, the little building became dilapidated and was dismantled about 1856. Its logs were carefully numbered and later hauled up St. Anthony hill to the site purchased for St. Joseph's Academy. The intention was to rebuild the chapel and preserve it as a relic. No one told the men who were working on the construction of the Academy, in the early 1860s, what the logs were for; they burned them to warm hands and coffee. Two fragments survived and were used to make gavels for the St. Paul Cathedral and the Minnesota Historical Society. By 1907, these, too, had disappeared.

If for no other reason, Galtier would go down in history as the man who effected St. Paul's escape from the humiliation of being known up and down the river as Pig's Eye. "No town—not even one having all the natural advantages possessed by St. Paul—could ever have survived the name of Pig's Eye," historian W. B. Hennessy noted in 1906. "And it should be remembered to Father Galtier, of blessed memory, that not the least of his deeds on behalf of posterity was the rescuing of St. Paul from the swinish appellation it was given at the hands of Edmund Brissett."*

* A young Frenchman staying at Parrant's tavern. Seeking to send a letter he used "Pig's Eye" as his return address, since Parrant was well-known along the river.

The newly-christened village of St. Paul was a French-speaking community. The men who built the huts huddled on the bluff above the steamboat landings were, for the most part, rough men of the forests and streams. They were fur traders and voyageurs who spent part of the year working for Henry H. Sibley and the American Fur Company at Mendota, and the remaining months farming small plots in St. Paul. Their wives had learned how to endure the hardships of the frontier. Mary Ann Perry, in particular, was an accomplished midwife and much in demand among the women at Fort Snelling.

Vetal Guerin, whose cabin stood on the southeast corner of present-day Kellogg Boulevard and Wabasha Street, tended a wheat field where the downtown Radisson Hotel and Victory Memorial Parking Ramp now stand. When he married Adele Perry in 1841, their wedding was a riotous event. Denis Cherrier played his fiddle to the point of exhaustion; the guests, who included every man, woman and child in the settlement, feasted on deer, prairie chicken, rabbits, fish and tiers of cakes.

The home to which Guerin led his bride was as spartan as the chapel he had helped build. It was typical of the huts of these early settlers. Logs hewn flat and chinked with mud formed the walls, bark made up the roof, and a large fireplace of mud covered part of an end wall. There was a window and a door and a floor of split logs. Furniture consisted of a chest that did double duty as wardrobe and dining table; several stools; and a bed made of poles set against a wall, filled with hay, and covered with a red blanket and a buffalo hide. Adele Guerin traded a shawl for feathers to soften the bed.

By 1845, there were some thirty families, most of them French Canadian, living in cabins scattered from present-day Seven Corners to Lake Phalen. Because it was a predominantly French-speaking community, interpreters often were needed. The French were for the most part from Canada; the Swiss were represented by Abraham Perry and his family; the Irish by Edward Phelan and William Evans; the Danes by Charles W. W. Borup, fur trader, banker and lumberman; and the African Americans by James Thompson, once the slave of an officer at Fort Snelling.

Thompson married a Dakota woman, was freed, and served as interpreter for a missionary at Kaposia before joining the early settlers of St. Paul.

Also at Fort Snelling during the 1830s was Dred Scott, a slave owned by the surgeon at the fort. Scott later figured in a landmark United States Supreme Court case when he sued for his freedom on the grounds that his residence in Minnesota, a free territory, had made him a free man.



Dred Scott. Photograph from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.

The court ruled that it had no jurisdiction in the case and Scott remained a slave.

Thompson continued to live in St. Paul. In 1849, he contributed 15,000 shingles, 2,000 feet of lumber and considerable money and labor to the building of the first Methodist church in St. Paul. Erected on Market Street, on the site today of the Saint Paul Hotel, the Market Street Methodist Church served a number of different congregations throughout its years.

The Native Americans—particularly the Dakota at Kaposia—were a continuing presence in the village. Among the settlers themselves, the Native Americans also were richly represented.

Elizabeth Beaulieu, Charles Borup's wife, was the daughter of a French Canadian fur trader and an Ojibway woman. Scott Campbell represented both the Scots through his father, a noted trader named Colin Campbell, and the Native Ameri-

cans, first through his mother and later through his wife, Margaret, a Menominee. Campbell was a gifted linguist who spoke French, English and a number of Native American tongues. This ability served him well during his twenty-five years as interpreter at the Indian agency at Fort Snelling. He then purchased Denis Cherrier's claim in St. Paul and built a cabin on the corner of today's Kellogg Boulevard and St. Peter Street.

Scott Campbell and Elizabeth Beaulieu's heritage was typical of the marriages that linked Native American women with men of European backgrounds. In those early years, Native Americans in considerable numbers gravitated about St. Paul, Mendota, Kaposia and Red Rock. They had furs, game and fish to sell or to trade for supplies. Most of these Native Americans were members of the Dakota river bands, the Mdewakanton, but the Ojibway also frequented the area. Enmity between Dakota and Ojibway, dating back many generations to a struggle over possession of the northern forests, occasionally erupted into warfare. In 1842, the battle of Kaposia was fought by warriors from both sides. Gunfire, which lasted for several hours, could be heard in St. Paul. Both sides sustained heavy losses until the Ojibway began to retreat, with the Dakota pursuing them toward Stillwater.

In 1853, more than ten years later, a fight broke out in downtown St. Paul at a trading post operated by William H. Forbes near today's Jackson Street and Kellogg Boulevard. A number of Ojibway attacked several Dakota who had come up the river from Kaposia to trade at Forbes' Minnesota Outfit. A Dakota woman was mortally wounded during a brief exchange of gunfire.

In its early years, St. Paul's first residents bought, sold and traded their claims with bewildering rapidity. Henry Jackson, who was born in Virginia, arrived and bought from Benjamin Gervais a tract of land between Robert and Jackson streets. (Jackson Street is named for him.) With a small stock of goods, he opened a trading post and prospered. In 1846, he became St. Paul's first postmaster. The "post office," set up in his store, was a rude wooden case about two feet square with pigeonholes.

Two years earlier, Louis Robert, who



Little Crow's village of Kaposia in 1848 after it had been moved to what is now South St. Paul.

had been born in Carondelet, Missouri, arrived from Prairie du Chien and bought property for \$300 that thirty years later was worth several million dollars – part of Gervais' claim and all of Pig's Eye Par-rant's claim at the Lower Landing. Robert had been a fur trader on the upper Mis-souri. As one of the original proprietors of the town, he played a major role in estab-lishing St. Paul as capital of the Territory of Minnesota. Robert Street is named for him. His warehouse at the foot of Jackson Street was the first frame house in St. Paul. It was built for him by Charles Bazille, a French Canadian carpenter who also built the first grist and saw mill on Phalen Creek.

Joseph R. Brown was a fur trader, lum-berman, land speculator, legislator and newspaper editor. Born in Maryland in 1805, he joined the army and arrived at Mendota in 1819 to help build Fort Snell-ing. While stationed at the fort, he was the Old Fort Snelling Dramatic Club's first "leading lady." Exploring the surrounding countryside, he traced Minnehaha Creek to its source in Lake Minnetonka. Minne-haha Falls originally was known as Brown's Falls.

Brown became editor of the *Minnesota Pioneer* after James M. Goodhue's death and, as editor, took part in one of the great journalistic battles of the 1850s – the ap-pointment as territorial printer, a political

plum that often made the difference be-tween solvency and bankruptcy for a fron-tier publisher. Brown made ingenious use of his appointment in 1853 and 1854. He sat up all one night writing a "Bill to Sup-press Immorality," inveighing, among other things, against housewives who hung "undergarments" out to dry in Rice Park. Then he introduced his bill into the Territorial Senate, where he conveniently served as a senator, and moved that the bill be read by title and printed. The motion carried and Brown pocketed payment for the printing costs.

Allied to the Dakota bands through his marriage to the daughter of a Dakota chief, Brown later served as an agent for the Dakota. He also laid out the town of Hen-derson; Brown's Valley and Brown Coun-ty are named for him.

The role of Norman W. Kittson as one of the most significant of Minnesota's pi-oneers, has been largely overshadowed by his friends and business partners, James J. Hill and Henry H. Sibley. Born in Canada in 1814, Kittson was the grandson of an officer who had served under Wolfe at Quebec. After his grandfather's death, Kittson's grandmother married Alexander Henry, the great explorer.

Kittson became Sibley's partner in the American Fur Company. Together they built a string of posts in the region around Pembina, now in North Dakota, where

Kittson had his headquarters. In 1855, he moved to St. Paul and nine years later, with James J. Hill, formed the Red River Transportation Company. Originally the company operated steamboats on the Red River. Eventually the two men, with their Canadian partners and financiers, ac-quired the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad and built it into the Great Northern.

Kittson amassed a fortune through these ventures and in real estate. Kittson's Addition stretched from the Mississippi to Twelfth Street, and Lowertown to Market Street, the heart of today's downtown. He built the Globe office building and an im-posing mansion on the site of the present Cathedral of St. Paul. His pride and joy was Kittsondale, a million-dollar stable and racetrack, at what is today Snelling and University avenues. He also owned Erdheim, a world-famous horse farm out-side of Philadelphia, where Iroquoise, the first American horse to win the British Derby, was raised and trained.

Kittson is known to have had at least two and perhaps four, Native American wives before marrying Mary A. Kittson of Fort Garry. His will mentioned eleven children, five of whom were Mary's; but based on a genealogical chart drawn up by his grandson, he apparently had twenty-six children. According to family tradition, Kittson acknowledged and provided for all of them.

While Kittson County is named for him, Kittson is perhaps best remembered for his Red River ox carts. These were two-wheeled, oxen-drawn wooden carts widely used by Native Americans for buf-falo hunts. Kittson adapted them to haul furs from Pembina to St. Paul. With their wooden axles devoid of grease, their "big squeal" could be heard for miles. Their drivers, called *bois brules*, represented a mingling of French, Scotch, English, Cree and Ojibway; they wore coarse blue cloth with a profusion of brass buttons and a red sash about their waists.

The first train with six carts arrived in St. Paul in 1844, carrying \$1,400 in furs. Their commerce left approximately \$12,000, spent for supplies, in the tills of St. Paul traders. Within twenty years, more than \$250,000 in raw pelts, buffalo robes, foodstuffs and pemmican (dried meat mixed with tallow) were being hauled

into St. Paul on the Red River carts. Buffalo robes and pemmican, in particular, often proceeded to eastern ports where they were shipped out to British troops during the Crimean War. Thus, St. Paul was a world trade center before it was the capital of a state.

Brown, Jackson and Kittson represented another growing group in pioneer St. Paul: the "old-stock North Americans" whose ancestors had lived in the eastern United States or Canada for several generations. They were joined by others of like background and ability, including Henry H. Sibley, John R. Irvine, Henry M. Rice, and Alexander Ramsey, in directing the affairs of the developing community for the next forty years.

The triangle of land between the Mississippi and the St. Croix Rivers had been part of St. Croix County, Territory of Wisconsin, since 1840, with Stillwater as the county seat. When Wisconsin was admitted to the union in 1848, its western boundary was established at the St. Croix River, and the land west of the river suddenly became a region without law or government. It was referred to as the "rump" Territory of Wisconsin.

Alarmed, a group of St. Paul men met at Henry Jackson's store. (It couldn't have been a large group, J. Fletcher Williams wrote later, "for there were scarcely twenty English-speaking men in St. Paul . . .") Actually, they probably met in the street; as one old settler pointed out, most such meetings were held in the street because there was more room and there were plenty of logs for seats. The meeting resulted in a convention, held August 26, 1848, in Stillwater. There, Henry H. Sibley was elected delegate to Congress from Wisconsin Territory. His assignment: secure the organization of Minnesota Territory.

On March 3, 1849, a bill prepared by Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, proposing Minnesota as a territory, was approved, and the territory was established, with St. Paul as its capital. It took over a month for the news to reach St. Paul. The winter had been long and hard—the worst in many years. The anxious watchers in the little settlement were cut off by snow and ice from the outside

world, except for the occasional mail carried overland from Prairie du Chien. On April 9, 1849, with the river opened to navigation, the steamboat, *Dr. Franklin No. 2* rounded the bend a mile below St. Paul in the midst of a violent wind and rain storm to bring the good news to St. Paul's settlers. The rejoicing was riotous.

Minnesota Territory was still little more than forest and prairie. St. Paul's population was listed as 910 in the territorial census (J. Fletcher Williams lists it as 840); James M. Goodhue declared that when he arrived in the spring of 1849, there were only thirty buildings in the settlement. Although the town site of "Saint Paul Proper" had been surveyed in 1847, it wasn't until 1849 that the ninety-acre plat was entered and the lots or blocks deeded to each owner.

The effect of territorial status on St. Paul was immediate and profound. Within three weeks, the village doubled in size and seventy new buildings were erected, bringing the total to 149 buildings. St. Paul's arcadian period, with its isolation and primitive simplicity, was over.

The organization of the territory soon was under way. Alexander Ramsey, a Pennsylvanian appointed territorial gover-

nor by President Zachary Taylor, arrived in May. Other territorial officers also drifted in: Aaron Goodrich from Tennessee, chief justice; Charles Kilgore Smith from Ohio, secretary of state; Colonel Alexander M. Mitchell, (another Ohioan) marshal; and Henry L. Moss from New York, district attorney.

Seated on beds or trunks in a small room at the Saint Paul House on Third Street, and using a washstand as a desk, the men drew up the "First of June Proclamation" announcing the territorial government organized. St. Paul was incorporated as a town (it would be incorporated as a city in 1854). Ramsey County, its northern boundary extending to Lake Mille Lacs, was one of nine counties carved out of the surrounding wilderness, with St. Paul as its county seat. The territorial legislature began its deliberations in the first "capitol," the Central House, a two-story frame building on Bench Street near Minnesota.

Almost immediately, the legislature plunged into a spirited controversy over the capital's permanent location. It was the first of several debates that would arise in the next few years. This one ended in a draw. Undeterred, the legislators drafted plans for the building that was erected in 1851 as the first of two capitols on the same



Norman W. Kittson's Red River ox carts lined up on Third Street in 1859.



Pioneer St. Paul sites located on a modern street map: (1) the Lower Landing; (2) Louis Robert's warehouse; (3) Henry Jackson's cabin; (4) W. H. Forbes' Minnesota Outfit; (5) St. Paul House; (6) Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant's tavern; (7) Central House (8) small graveyard; (9) Chapel of St. Paul on Bench Street; (10) St. Paul bridge (11) Vetel Guerin's cabin; (12) Ramsey County Courthouse; (13) Scott Campbell's cabin; (14) Edward Phelan's cabin; (15) Upper Landing; (16) Irvine Park; (17) American House, an early hotel; (18) John Irvine's house; (19) Rice Park; (20) St. Paul City Hall; (21) Assumption Church and school; (22) Territorial/state capitol; (23) St. James African Episcopal Church; (24) First Baptist Church; (25) Smith, now Mears, Park.

site at Tenth and Wabasha streets. The first Ramsey County Courthouse was built on "courthouse square," the block bounded by Cedar and Wabasha, Fourth and Fifth streets. The city hall was built in 1857 on the site of Landmark Center.

In the meantime, the first schools had been established. In 1847, Harriet Bishop arrived from Vermont, lured west by a missionary spirit and a despairing letter from Dr. Thomas Williamson, missionary at Kaposia, describing the "deplorable educational and religious condition" of the people of St. Paul. Like others toiling on the frontier, Williamson had another concern. Alcoholism was a grave problem among the settlers, the Native bands and the army at Fort Snelling. Temperance movements were growing in the eastern United States and Williamson wanted to strengthen the movement. The Temperance House, also known as Moffett's Castle, was established by Lott Moffett as a hotel that did not sell liquor. Harriet Bishop, a devout Baptist, helped organize St. Paul's first temperance society.

Harriet Bishop was a remarkable young

woman who described herself, with a typically Victorian flourish, as a "feeble and timid young lady." She apparently was neither. An early newspaper editor described her as "angular, positive, determined—such a woman as is necessary for frontier life . . . tall, with a good figure; a bright, expressive face; earnest and decided in manners, and quick in speech." Her first view of St. Paul, was dismaying.

"A cheerless prospect" greeted her, she wrote later. "A few log huts composed the town, three families the American population. With one of these [J. R. Irvine] . . . a home was offered me. Theirs was . . . the only [dwelling] of respectable size, containing three rooms and an attic."

Harriet Bishop organized a Sunday School and taught a day school for a year. Attendance was small—nine or ten at first—and an interpreter was needed for those who spoke only French or Dakota. Her schoolhouse was the cabin Scott Campbell had built at Third and St. Peter. The school soon expanded into larger quarters. After St. Paul's incorporation in 1849, the town was divided into three

school districts and Harriet Bishop continued to teach in one of them.

Several other schools important to St. Paul's early history were founded in the next few years: the Baldwin School, established by the Reverend Edward Duffield Neill on the present site of Landmark Center; Assumption School, the oldest building still standing in downtown St. Paul, at 68 Exchange Street; and St. Joseph's Academy, also still standing at 355 Marshall Avenue but with origins tracing back to the little Chapel of St. Paul, and the school the Sisters of St. Joseph established in its vestry. (The Sisters also founded St. Joseph's Hospital, the first hospital in Minnesota, to care for the sick in the wake of the cholera epidemic of 1853.)

Harriet Bishop is widely regarded as St. Paul's first school teacher and Harriet Island is named for her. She was preceded, if briefly, by Matilda Rumsey, who established a small school in a log building near the Upper Landing and taught there for a few months.

Both Matilda Rumsey and Harriet Bishop were among several extraordinary women who endured the hardships of St. Paul's early years. Others included Mary Turpin, who married Captain Louis Robert in St. Louis when she was thirteen years old. She arrived in St. Paul with her husband in 1844 when among the few white women in the settlement were Mary Ann Perry, Angelina Jackson, Genevieve Gervais and Rose Clewett. Mary Robert often accompanied her husband on fur-trading expeditions, camping out in a tent or cabin. She and Louis Robert had several children, but only two daughters lived to adulthood.

Mrs. Jeremiah Selby arrived in St. Paul with her husband in 1849. The farm they opened along today's Selby and Summit avenues became the site first of Norman W. Kittson's mansion and later the present St. Paul Cathedral. Mrs. M. L. Stokes established the town's first millinery store on the corner of Third and Washington, where she also ran a boarding house. Angelina Bivens married Henry Jackson in Buffalo, New York, in 1838 and accompanied him to Minnesota four years later. Widowed only a few years after their arrival in St. Paul, both Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Selby soon remarried and moved away.

The number of steamboats docking at the levee was rising steadily, from forty-one in 1844 to ninety-five in 1848. The first newspaper in Minnesota, the *Minnesota Pioneer*, was launched by James M. Goodhue in 1849. The following year, Goodhue issued the town's first business directory. It listed five clergymen, fourteen lawyers, two land agents, four doctors, sixteen mercantile firms, one shoemaker, six hotels, three painters, two blacksmiths, four plasterers, five masons, eighteen carpenters, one silversmith, one gunsmith, five bakers, three wheelwrights, one harnessmaker and one tinner.

The 1850 census listed 1,294 residents of St. Paul and 257 families. About ninety residents listed Canada as their birthplace; more than sixty claimed Ireland as their homeland, while England and Germany were each declared the birthplaces of about twenty residents. Most of St. Paul's settlers were from the East Coast or New England, but "Isabelle Edes" was born in Norway and "Mary Leolter," whose husband, Charles, was from Ireland, was a native of Spain.

Unquestionably, the rush to settlement was on. It was spurred by an event that had tragic consequences for those most directly involved: the Mdewakanton bands of the Santee Dakota people living along the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers across from St. Paul, and the Wahpekute, Sisseton and Wahpeton bands in southern and western Minnesota. With the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota in 1851, the Dakota were forced to give up most of their land, leaving them with two narrow reservations, the Upper and Lower reservations which stretched along the upper Minnesota River in the western part of the state. Their move to the reservations in 1853 and 1854 was only marginally successful. Paid less than the land was worth and promised benefits that too often failed to materialize, the Dakota soon became disillusioned. Promises were broken on both sides and some members of the Mdewakanton bands began to drift back to their old homes near St. Paul. Tensions between two very different peoples grew, particularly among the Dakota who had remained in western Minnesota, and in August, 1862, they erupted into the warfare that has become known as the Dakota

Conflict.

In the meantime, newcomers were crowding into St. Paul. Jacob W. Bass, who established the St. Paul House at Third and Jackson streets, has been described as the first German to arrive in St. Paul. Bass, however, was born in Vermont. One of the first immigrants from Germany was Bartlett Presley, a successful trader who was born in Baden. Theodore Hamm, also from Baden, and Gustav Willius and Henry Meyer from Bremen, arrived in 1856. Hamm owned a boarding house before going into the brewery business; and Willius and Meyer founded a business venture that grew into the German-American Bank. (Years later, the bank merged with the First National Bank of St. Paul).

By 1860, Ramsey County had become one of Minnesota's largest German enclaves. This was due partly to the great wave of emigration from Germany to the United States following the Revolution of 1848—one of the most famous of nineteenth century Europe's political upheavals. St. Paul had a German Emigration Society as early as 1858.

The Germans settled first in the Fifth Ward around the first German Catholic Church, Assumption Church, organized in 1855 on Exchange Street. The parish supported a benevolent society and operated a boarding house for homeless workers. Germans also settled in the Eighth Ward, around St. Agnes Church (where confessions were heard in German as recently as the 1960s). According to the 1860 census, most of these German immigrants had Bavarian or Prussian backgrounds. They brought to their new homes a love of music and theater; such societies as the Turnverein; German language newspapers (the *Daily Volks Zeitung* appeared in 1855); and, above all, that major contribution to the state's economy: the breweries. In 1848, Anthony Yoerg established the first brewery in Minnesota near Eagle Street in Upper Town in 1848. Later, he moved it to the West Side.*

In 1854, the German Reading Society was incorporated. Four years later, the

* *The land across the river lies on the west side of the Mississippi, although it is south of downtown St. Paul.*

German community built the Athenaeum, a frame structure at Walnut and Exchange streets that became a popular gathering place.

Among the first wave of immigrants from Germany to reach St. Paul were the early members of the Jewish community. Joseph Ullman, who was in the liquor business, had emigrated from French Alsace. His wife, Amelia, was another sorely tried but persevering pioneer wife. She left a poignant account of life in a town whose hotels and boarding houses were so crowded that people camped in the streets. Her memoirs are in the Minnesota Historical Society's collections.

"Only a conscientious housewife, only a devoted mother who had lived in St. Paul in those days knows all the inconveniences and miseries that I was forced to endure," she wrote. "Every drop of water used had to be carried across the prairie from a well in a livery stable . . . My child was ill much of the time from lack of proper nourishment, for good wholesome food was difficult to obtain. Fresh vegetables and fruit were unknown. These things being brought up from St. Louis by the boats, they were often in such a condition upon their arrival at St. Paul that their use would have been deleterious to health."

Joseph and Amelia Ullman became part of a small group of Jewish men and women who organized Mount Zion Hebrew Congregation in 1856. Among the other founders were Henry Cali (or Cole), Jacob Newman, Morris and Henry Marks, and Benjamin, Isidor and Emanuel Rose. The Rose brothers had arrived in St. Paul directly from Bavaria. Most of the synagogue's founders were in the clothing or liquor business, but Ullman, forsaking liquor for furs, built up a world-wide business with branches in New York, London and Leipzig.

Despite the fact that they were outnumbered by the German population, it was the Irish immigrants who left an indelible stamp on St. Paul. A partial explanation might lie in their domination of St. Paul politics, and their fraternity in such organizations as the Benevolent Society of Erin and the Shields Guards—a militia named for General James Shields. Further explanation might lie in the sense of community displayed in their vigorous promotion of



St. Paul in 1851—still a cluster of log and frame structures. This is the corner of Third and Robert streets, with Robert running diagonally from the left. The cabin on the right is Charles Cavalier's drug store. Next to it is Bartlett Presley's confectionary and tobacco shop and next to that is William Dahl's book store. The Baptist church stands on the hill in the distance, the site today of Mears Park.



Amelia Ullman, by the artist, R. C. Healy.

such cultural celebrations as their St. Patrick's Day parades, the first of which was held in 1851. The "impromptu celebration" included a flag-raising, speeches and a fired salute. A hastily-prepared supper at Barney Rogers was topped off by a 300-person parade, led by a band, up the village's principal streets.

"The procession," the *Pioneer* reported, "returned to the scene of the evening's festivities about nine o'clock where numerous gentlemen . . . made addresses appropriate for the occasion. The company dispersed at an early hour, highly pleased with the first celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Minnesota. May there be many such."

While Irish immigrants settled on farms in communities such as Credit River in Scott County and Shieldsville near Faribault, many of them imitated their brethren in the East and gravitated toward the relative security of work in the cities. In 1850, more than half of the Irish in St. Paul were unskilled laborers. By 1858, however, six of the city's eleven policemen were Irish; twenty years later, a third of the force was Irish.

A characteristic of Irish Catholic life that paralleled Protestant life at that time was the presence of a strong temperance movement. It was a thread running through American social history, as groups throughout the country were attempting to come to grips with the problem of alcohol consumption as they also tried to cope with change. Bishop Joseph Cretin organized the Catholic Temperance Society of St. Paul in 1852; the cause was taken up later by Archbishop John Ireland, one of the best known and most illustrious of the Irish of St. Paul.

Rivaling the archbishop as a prominent leader with Irish ancestry was his friend and associate, James J. Hill, the "empire builder" who founded the Great Northern Railroad. Hill had arrived in 1856, as a young man from a farm near Toronto, to take a job as a clerk with the Dubuque and St. Paul Packet Company.

As early as 1852, Swedish immigrants began to settle in St. Paul. The appropriately named First Lutheran Church—the

first Lutheran church in Minnesota—was established two years later. Like other early churches, its beginning was rocky. Members met in homes. Not until 1867 did the congregation raise enough money to erect a building on the west side of the Phalen Creek valley.

The middle 1850s were characterized by wild speculation in real estate as settlers flooded into the territory. In 1854, speculator Henry McKenty bought several thousand acres of prairie for \$1.25 a acre and sold it the next year for \$5 an acre. In 1855 30,000 people were reported to have landed in St. Paul. In 1857 the city's population stood at close to 10,000. Minnesota's first real estate boom was on, and cost of money was enormous—42 percent interest a year for working capital.

In 1857, the bubble burst. The bankruptcy of a New York financial institution, the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, set off a serious economic debacle that was national in scope. In Minnesota, cash dried up, real estate speculators and merchants were ruined, banks closed, people were thrown out of work, St. Paul lost half of its population, and Ramsey County was forced to issue scrip.

Trauma of another kind had been inflicted on St. Paul earlier that year. A bill to move the capital from St. Paul to St. Peter had, to the dismay of the city's residents, passed the legislature. It was on its way to enrollment and signature by the governor when Joe Rolette, chairman of the Enrollment Committee, intervened.

The story is one of the best-known in Minnesota's history. Rolette was a popular and intelligent French Canadian. The son of an important fur trader in Prairie du Chien, Rolette was at this juncture the legislative representative from Pembina. He was a colorful man who wore Indian garb at home, possessed a well-known sense of humor, and—most importantly—was sympathetic to St. Paul's cause.

Rolette simply tucked the bill into his pocket, walked over to Truman and Smith's bank, locked it in the vault and hid out at the Fuller House in Lowertown. Reportedly, he whiled away the time playing cards while friends gravely reported him heading north on his dog sled. When the time for the bill to become law had expired, Rolette reappeared with it. Subse-

quent legal opinion held that the bill had not passed and St. Paul remained the capital.

During the winter of 1857, a constitutional convention met in St. Paul to prepare Minnesota for statehood. The convention split immediately along party lines, with the Republicans and Democrats meeting separately and drafting two sepa-



John Ireland as a young priest

rate constitutions. Since their rancorous differences not only courted national ridicule but legal challenges as well, cooler heads prevailed and the two constitutions were combined. On August 28, 1857, both conventions adopted the constitution. It was ratified on October 13, 1857, and on May 11, 1858, Minnesota was admitted to the Union as the thirty-second state.

The 1857 census, compiled in preparation for statehood, lists St. Paul's population as 9,973: 1,700 residents were natives of the United States; the remainder represented more than twenty other countries. Again, the largest group of immigrants were the Germans, who numbered 1,350. Irish-born immigrants made up the second largest group. Italy was listed as the birthplace of a twenty-year-old woman, M. Bonfante, and Cuba the birthplace of a soldier discharged from Fort Snelling whose wife was from Ireland. The jobs these resi-

dents held were diverse and many obsolete occupations were noted; but the real estate mania was apparent in listings like "land buyer" and "land agent."

In 1859, 30 percent of the state's population was foreign-born. Immigration records indicate that while the heads of families might have been born abroad, the subsequent birthplaces of their children sometimes revealed the family's migration across the United States.

When the word reached St. Paul on May 14, 1858, that Minnesota had been admitted to the Union, there were no celebrations. Henry Hastings Sibley was quietly sworn as the state's first governor. J. M. Cavanaugh and W. W. Phelps prepared to leave for Washington as representatives, and Henry M. Rice and General James Shields as senators. Within a year, with the first export of grain from Minnesota, prosperity again seemed to be in the air. But in these years just before the Civil War, there was also a sense of foreboding. As J. Fletcher Williams wrote:

"The disunion cloud was darkening the southern horizon and the mutterings of war were heard in the distance." Had the governments in St. Paul and Washington been listening closely, they also would have heard the mutterings in the lodges of the desperately unhappy and disillusioned Dakota bands on their reservations.

In 1860, Republican Alexander Ramsey was elected governor after a bitter political campaign against Democrat George Becker. At a time when aliens could vote four months after applying for citizenship, both candidates were well aware of the voting power of the foreign-born and set out to exploit it. The Republican platform proscribed "no man on account of his religion or nativity," called for free land for settlers, and declared that the party was opposed to any "discrimination between native and naturalized citizens" as well as to any attempt to curtail naturalization rights. Not to be outdone, the Democrats adopted similar platform language. The Republicans swept the election, however, taking not only the governorship but also two Congressional seats and many legislative chairs.

In April, 1861, Ramsey was in Washington. He remembered the day the Civil War began:

"The knots of earnest men . . . in the corridors and reading rooms of the hotels indicated . . . that there was an impending peril. On Saturday night, April 13th, the population of Washington was deeply moved by the intelligence that Fort Sumter . . . had been attacked . . . and that the garrison had surrendered. Early Sunday morning . . . I visited the war department and found Secretary [of War Simon P.] Cameron . . . about to leave his office.

"I said, 'My business is simply as governor of Minnesota to tender a thousand men to defend the government.'

"'Sit down immediately,' he replied, 'and write the tender you have made, as I am now on my way to the President's mansion.'"

This was quickly done and thus Minnesota became the first to cheer President Lincoln by offers of assistance in the crisis which had arrived."

Ramsey was notified that Minnesota's quota of the 75,000 men Lincoln called for would be one regiment of 780 men. The regiment was assembled from groups of militia that had been formed in the 1850s, among them St. Paul's Pioneer Guard and the St. Paul Volunteers. Organized in 1856, the Pioneer Guard was the state's first volunteer military organization. It was much in demand for balls and parades. Its members drilled faithfully at Armory Hall, the third floor of the Bernheimer Block—part of which still exists within the former YWCA building on Kellogg Boulevard.

The Guard was organized into Company A of the First Minnesota Infantry Regiment by its commander, Alexander Wilkin, who was secretary of the territory and had been a captain in the Mexican War. An orderly sergeant in the Guard, Josias King, is credited with being the first to step forward and sign the muster roll as a volunteer for Civil War service. A monument erected in his honor in 1903 still stands near the intersection of Summit and Marshall avenues, below the St. Paul Cathedral.

While Wilkin organized Company A, William H. Acker resigned as adjutant general of Minnesota and formed the St. Paul Volunteers into Company C. Among the volunteers was Marshall Sherman,



Joe Rolette

who was St. Paul's first Congressional Medal of Honor winner and the only medal winner of the Civil War years who was from St. Paul. He was decorated for bravery in seizing the battle flag of the Twenty-eighth Virginia Infantry Regiment during Pickett's charge on the final day of the battle of Gettysburg. After the war, Sherman established the Sherman House, a hotel at Fourth and Sibley streets. It was known as "the best two-dollar a day house in the country." Wilkin, while a colonel in command of a brigade, lost his life at the battle of Tupelo. He was the highest ranking officer from Minnesota to be killed during the war.

Seven more military companies were organized in the spring of 1861 to complete the First Minnesota's roster. Most of its officers were St. Paul men: Willis A. Gorman (a former territorial governor) colonel; Dr. J. H. Stewart, surgeon; and the Reverend E. D. Neill, chaplain. Toward the end of the war, Neill became one of President Lincoln's secretaries.

On June 22, 1861, the troops left Fort Snelling aboard two steamships, the *War Eagle* and the *Northern Belle*. Put ashore at St. Paul's Upper Landing, they marched up the bluff, past the cheering crowds that lined Third Street, to the Lower Landing. There they embarked again for the East.

Twenty-one units were recruited in

Minnesota, including the Fifth Minnesota Infantry Regiment with Father John Ireland as its chaplain. Among the enlisted men were twenty-eight Murphys, twenty-five Kelleys, twenty-four Kellys, twenty-three Ryans, twenty O'Connors, as well as O'Sheas, Mahoneys, Maloneys, Callahans, Cassidys, Delanys, Daleys, Doheyns, Bruns, O'Neils, Tierneys, O'Briens, O'Gradys, Collins, Buckleys, Hanleys, McCartys, McCoys, Noonans, Finnigans, Flanagan, Quinns, Kilpatrick and Kirkpatrick.

The First Minnesota became the most famous of Minnesota's Civil War regiments because of its courageous charge of Confederate lines during the second day of the battle of Gettysburg. Only forty-seven of the 262 men available for action survived the charge. In tribute, the number was used many years later to designate the Forty-seventh Division of Minnesota's National Guard.

Even as the First Minnesota was being mustered, St. Paul was plunging enthusiastically into the war effort. Spirits were high. The April 17, 1861, *St. Paul Press* reported that the city was laden with patriotic decorations: "The ladies were all out shopping, amid all the wind and dust, but all they inquired for was for bunting."

Thirty-nine firemen responded to the call for volunteers, and so many policemen that Mayor John Prince told the City Council that it was "impossible for the present number of men to thoroughly guard the city." He called for the entire police force, except for the chief and a captain, to be dismissed so they could enter the army and asked the citizens to form a volunteer night patrol or home guard.

The City Council itself lost two members to the war effort when Aldermen D. H. Valentine and H. P. Grant enlisted. Their colleagues on the Council agreed to hold their seats open and to appropriate \$120 of city funds for each man to buy the sword, belt and sash that were "appropriate to his rank."

St. Paul's generosity in providing funds for soldiers' families was almost its undoing. The Council had voted to give each family \$5 per month. By 1863, however, the Council had to cut costs by compensating only those families with children, and

then at a rate of just \$1 a month for each woman and child.

The women of St. Paul organized the St. Paul Volunteer Aid Society, believed to be the first of its kind in the country. They scraped lint, rolled bandages, baked pies and made almost 900 emergency cases and twenty-five oilcloth guard cases. They supplied the troops with needle books, mosquito face nets, and 600 havelocks, a linen attachment for a cap that protected the neck from the sun.

They sewed all this in stifling heat, that first summer of the war, as they gathered in Ingersoll Hall, a two-story building on the southeast corner of Bridge Square, the intersection today of Kellogg Boulevard and Wabasha. "Ladies having sewing machines are called upon to lend a hand," the *St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat* urged.

Amelia Ullman remembered wartime St. Paul — perhaps before the reality of the casualty lists set in.

"Recruiting stations were established at St. Paul," she wrote. "Patriotism became intense. Everywhere was there the sound of the fife and drum, the splendor of new uniforms and the burnishing of new arms. Homes were broken up by the departure of fathers and sons; the boat landing was almost daily the scene of sad partings."

Early in 1865, a "sanitary fair" was held in St. Paul by the Minnesota branch of the United States Sanitary Commission. Raffles, food sales, and a grand ball raised \$13,496 for the benefit of soldiers in military hospitals. One historian noted that women stepped into men's jobs in the face of some labor shortages. This was one more instance in American history of women taking over the jobs of men who had volunteered for army service.

At least two Minnesota women seem to have enlisted in the army and one fought beside the men. An article published in a St. Paul newspaper in 1912 gave the following account:

"A Mrs. Clayton who, when very young, was in 1856 married in [St. Paul] . . . insisted on accompanying her husband when he announced his intention to enlist. Finding it impossible to dissuade her, Clayton procured for her a suit of man's clothes and a false mustache, and the couple were mustered into Co. A, 13th Missouri Cavalry, they being in St. Louis



The German community's Athenaeum at Exchange and Pine (later Sherman) streets. Built in 1859, the Athenaeum was photographed during a celebration around 1885.

at the outbreak of the war."

She was, the newspaper reported, a bold rider, a brave soldier and afraid of nothing. She served for almost two years. She was wounded twice during the battle of Shiloh and again at the battle of Murfreesboro, where her husband was killed. His death ended her career as a soldier. She was discharged after telling her commanding officer who she was.

Another newspaper story told of a boyish-looking orderly who appeared at Fort Snelling as a member of a squad of men who were joining a regiment of mounted rangers. The headquarters officer was at first puzzled but concluded that the young man was simply under age. At about the same time, the newspaper account continued, the young daughter of a well-to-do Minnesota family had disappeared without a trace. Her father found her at the fort, masquerading as the orderly.

The incidence of women posing as men in order to join the army was not high during the Civil War, but it also was not unusual, military historians maintain. Mrs. Clayton herself reported that she had seen other women in the Union ranks.

As the war ground on, patriotism began to wear thin and a controversial draft was set in motion. St. Paul newspapers reported a confrontation between enrolling officers and provost marshalls, and women and children in a Lowertown neighborhood between Jackson Street, Dayton's Bluff, Sixth Street and the river. The women refused to reveal the names of men eligible for conscription, and a fight began. Attempts to arrest the most belligerent of the women met with a vehement response as one woman picked up an ax and another scuffled with an officer.

In other instances, women locked their doors to keep draft workers from entering, threw dirty water on the workers and threatened them with shovels. There also were men who tried to dodge service. One, according to a news account, pleaded insanity as an excuse for not serving. Ordered to enlist anyway, he jumped out a third-story window overlooking Eagle Street. Although badly hurt, he nevertheless was sent south when he recovered.

Fourteen months after the first troops left Minnesota, and while the men who



The Pilgrim Baptist Church of the African American community. It was built in 1870 at Thirteenth and Cedar streets. A.F. Raymond photo.

governed the state from St. Paul were preoccupied with the pressing demands of the Union forces, a tragic conflict erupted little more than 100 miles to the west. The bitterness and discouragement of the Dakota bands confined to their reservations along the Minnesota broke into the open with the Dakota Conflict of 1862.

The Dakota had been cheated for years by unscrupulous traders. Their annuity payments were delayed by a government distracted by the Civil War; and they were at the mercy of Indian agents who were political appointees and unqualified to work with the tribes. Increasingly angry and frustrated, the Dakota also were penniless and starving by August of 1862. Their annuity payments had not arrived, and the traders at the reservations had refused to extend more credit.

Although the Dakota Conflict was a last, desperate attempt to drive the settlers from southern Minnesota, the Dakota themselves were divided as to the wisdom of going to war. A war party was led with reluctance by Little Crow, even as a peace party formed around Chief Wabasha. Hostilities broke out on August 18, and within two days the entire frontier was aflame. In St. Paul, Governor Ramsey pleaded with the government in Washington to halt recruitment for the Union army so he could assemble a force to protect the frontier.

"No one not there can conceive the panic in the state," he added. Many of the settlers abandoned their farms and fled into the nearest town or to Fort Ridgely. Others arrived in St. Paul. Some never returned to those farms. On August 26, Lincoln responded:

"Yours received. Attend to the Indians. If the draft cannot proceed of course it will not proceed. Necessity knows no law. The Government cannot extend the time. A. Lincoln."

Within less than five weeks, the conflict ended with the battle of Wood Lake, a defeat that was a disaster for the Native Americans. Many of the Dakota warriors fled into the Dakotas; others surrendered to troops commanded by Henry H. Sibley. The captives were held that winter in a camp at Fort Snelling. There they endured great suffering. In December, thirty-eight of the Dakota men were hanged in Mankato. That winter Congress abrogated its treaties with the Dakota people, confiscated their reservations and tribal funds, and moved them to a new reservation on the Missouri River. Fewer than 200 Dakota remained in the region around St. Paul.

Little Crow's fate was a sad reflection of the enmities of that period. After the fighting ended, the chief escaped into the Dakotas with some of his followers. The next summer of 1863, he was back in Minnesota. On July 3, as he was picking berries with his sixteen-year-old son in a little glade near Hutchinson, he was shot and killed by a party of hunters.

For a time, Little Crow's remains were exhibited by the Minnesota Historical Society, then placed in a vault. The frontier was closing, Little Crow's biographer, Gary Clayton Anderson, wrote, Minnesota was entering a new era, and the chief's remains, treated as curiosities, "became an embarrassment." In 1971, they were returned to his descendants for burial in Flandrau, South Dakota.

Throughout the 1860s, African Americans began to migrate to St. Paul in increasing numbers. They were drawn by the labor shortage created by the recruitment of men for the Union forces. In May, 1863, the steamboat *Northerner* approached St. Paul laden with "contraband" laborers headed for jobs at Fort Snelling. The steamboat also was towing a raft with

176 African American men, women and children on board. Calling themselves "pilgrims," they were fugitive slaves led by a preacher, Robert Hickman. The steamboat had come upon the raft drifting in the Mississippi near Jefferson, Missouri, and took it in tow. They were followed a week later by a larger group of 218—including a hundred women and children who were under the protective custody of a chaplain and escorted by an Iowa regiment. Some settled into jobs at Fort Snelling, but others followed Hickman into St. Paul.

Robert Hickman became the co-founder and the first minister of Pilgrim Baptist Church, which was formally organized in 1866. The congregation's first church structure was built in 1870 at Thirteenth and Cedar streets. By 1900, the African American community had established four other churches. St. Mark's Episcopal Church was organized in 1867 but disbanded a year or so later. In 1894, St. Philip's Episcopal Church was formed. St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church purchased its permanent home in 1881, and St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, founded in 1889, erected a building at Aurora and Farrington in 1892.

More than half of the African Americans who arrived in St. Paul after the Civil War were young, unmarried men. At first, they settled around the Lower Landing, and they found low-paying jobs as porters or waiters in the city's major hotels, such as the Metropolitan at Third and Washington—the site today of the Minnesota Club. By 1880 a major employer of blacks had been established in St. Paul: the railroads.

A railroad was first chartered by the legislature in 1857 and received a congressional land grant as the Minnesota and Pacific Railroad. Despite financial problems created by the Panic of 1857, most of its roadbed between St. Paul and St. Anthony had been graded by 1860. On September 9, 1861, a harbinger of vast change tied up at the Lower Landing. On board the steamboat *Alhambra* and on accompanying barges was the locomotive, "William Crooks," as well as railroad cars and iron tracks.

In 1862, the railroad's name was changed to the St. Paul and Pacific. That spring, track was laid between the two

towns and the first run over the new iron road was made by a party consisting of St. Paul's mayor, John S. Prince, the city's aldermen, and a joyous crowd of approximately a hundred.

Economic distractions, however, had accompanied the Civil War. It was not until the late 1860s that lines were laid to link St. Paul with St. Cloud, Wayzata, Willmar, Breckenridge and Melrose.

As St. Paul began to emerge as the transportation hub of the region, the city began to change. Railroad depots dotted the downtown until 1879, when the railroads joined together to build the St. Paul Union Depot on the site of the St. Paul and

Pacific's little depot (a block south of Third Street at Sibley).

The city, itself, no longer contained in the old downtown neighborhood, began to spread outward into its first inner ring neighborhoods. Jobs for the German, Swedish and Irish laborers who were arriving by steamboat and rail also moved outward from the city. The North End, Frogtown, the East Side, the West Side, and the West Seventh Street neighborhoods filled up with the families of men who needed to be close to work on the railroads.

In 1872, the first horsecar plodded along a two-mile track from Seven Corn-

ers to Lafayette and Westminster. In 1874, the Wabasha Street bridge replaced the St. Paul bridge, erected as a toll bridge in 1859. Gas lamps lighted the downtown streets. St. Paul's Volunteer Firefighters, who had protected the city since the formation of the Hook and Ladder Company in 1854, reluctantly disbanded in 1877 as the city moved to a paid force. A velocipede mania seized the city and cyclists raced around Armory Hall. St. Paul's pioneer days were over.

Virginia Brainard Kunz is editor of Ramsey County History and the author of Saint Paul—Its First 150 Years.

Who WAS 'Pig's Eye' Parrant, Anyway?

It is rare for a person to enjoy two reputations concurrently—famous and infamous. But Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant (if that was truly his name) accomplished that in the course of his eventful life.

"Pig's Eye" Parrant, for whom St. Paul first was named, was one of those colorful characters that inhabit western history. While he has been the subject of much legend and lore, not much is really known about him, beyond his contribution to the history of St. Paul. Parrant makes his first appearance in that history as a French Canadian voyageur who was hanging about Mendota, circa 1832, "waiting for something to turn up," in the words of St. Paul's early historian, J. Fletcher Williams. Parrant, at that time, was "past the meridian of life—probably sixty years of age." He is referred to in the old sources as "Paran," "Paren" and "Parrant," and he had been around: Sault Ste. Marie; St. Louis, where he had been employed by the fur traders, McKenzie and Chouteau; and Prairie du Chien, among other places.

Major Lawrence Taliaferro, the Indian agent at Fort Snelling, apparently loathed him. Among Taliaferro's duties was the protection of the Native Americans from the nefarious practices of certain of the traders, and Parrant evidently caused Taliaferro no end of trouble. On August 23, 1835, Taliaferro noted in his journal that he had "ordered Pierre Parrant, a

foreigner, prohibited from trade, not to enter the Indian country in any capacity."

Taliaferro's writ didn't extend far enough. On October 12, he again noted in his journal that Parrant, in defiance of the order, seemed to have entered Indian territory anyway, and if that was true, "a military force would be sent after him and he would be sent to Prairie du Chien."

Parrant's appearance did little to inspire confidence. Williams described him as a "coarse, ill-looking, low-browed fellow with only one eye. He spoke execrable English. His habits were intemperate and licentious." One of his eyes was "blind, marble-hued, crooked, with a sinister white ring glaring around the pupil, giving a kind of piggish expression to his sodden, low features."

Parrant proposed to set himself up as a seller of whiskey, an activity not looked upon with favor by the officers at Fort Snelling. Whatever his other failings, Parrant's judgment in this case was sound. A sergeant at the fort had paid \$80 one cold winter night for a gallon of whiskey that perhaps cost the seller only a few dollars. Parrant also understood the meaning of "location, location, location," even at that distant time. The spot he chose for his business was the mouth of a little stream that flowed out of Fountain Cave, near the junction of present-day Shepard Road and Randolph Street. He chose wisely. Customers could paddle to his door, suppliers

could drop off cargo, and the clear water of the stream could dilute the product and strengthen the profits.

Here, in his lonely gorge, about the first of June, 1838, Parrant erected his whiskey hovel. He was the first, according to historian William Watts Folwell, to stake a claim on the site of what became the capital city of the state. He soon was "driving a flourishing trade, selling whiskey to both Indians and whites," Williams wrote. "Occasionally a party of soldiers, bound on a spree, would come down to his ranch, get soaked with his red-eye and tangle-foot brands, and fail to report the next day. Hence a guard would have to hunt them up, and the poor fellows would sojourn in the guardhouse or wear a ball and chain for a period." Soldiers from the fort would descend on his place and search it but, Williams wrote, Parrant probably hid the liquor in the cave.

Whiskey-sellers, as was Parrant, were a serious problem for the Native American and the white population around Fort Snelling, but the commanding officers at the fort, and particularly Major Joseph Plympton, commandant in the late 1830s, seemed to be indifferent to it, one early writer charged. He suggested a somewhat draconian solution to the problem:

"The situation was bad enough but it seems that might easily have been improved. The commandant at the fort had but to send a file of soldiers to the shack of



The Davern family working in the field north of their farm house, late in the nineteenth century. Today, this field is a residential neighborhood southwest of Montreal and Snelling avenues. See the article page 22 on the families and the homes of the Daverns, who were among the Irish immigrants who settled in what is now Highland Park in 1849, and on the Colvins who followed them.

R.C.H.S.
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