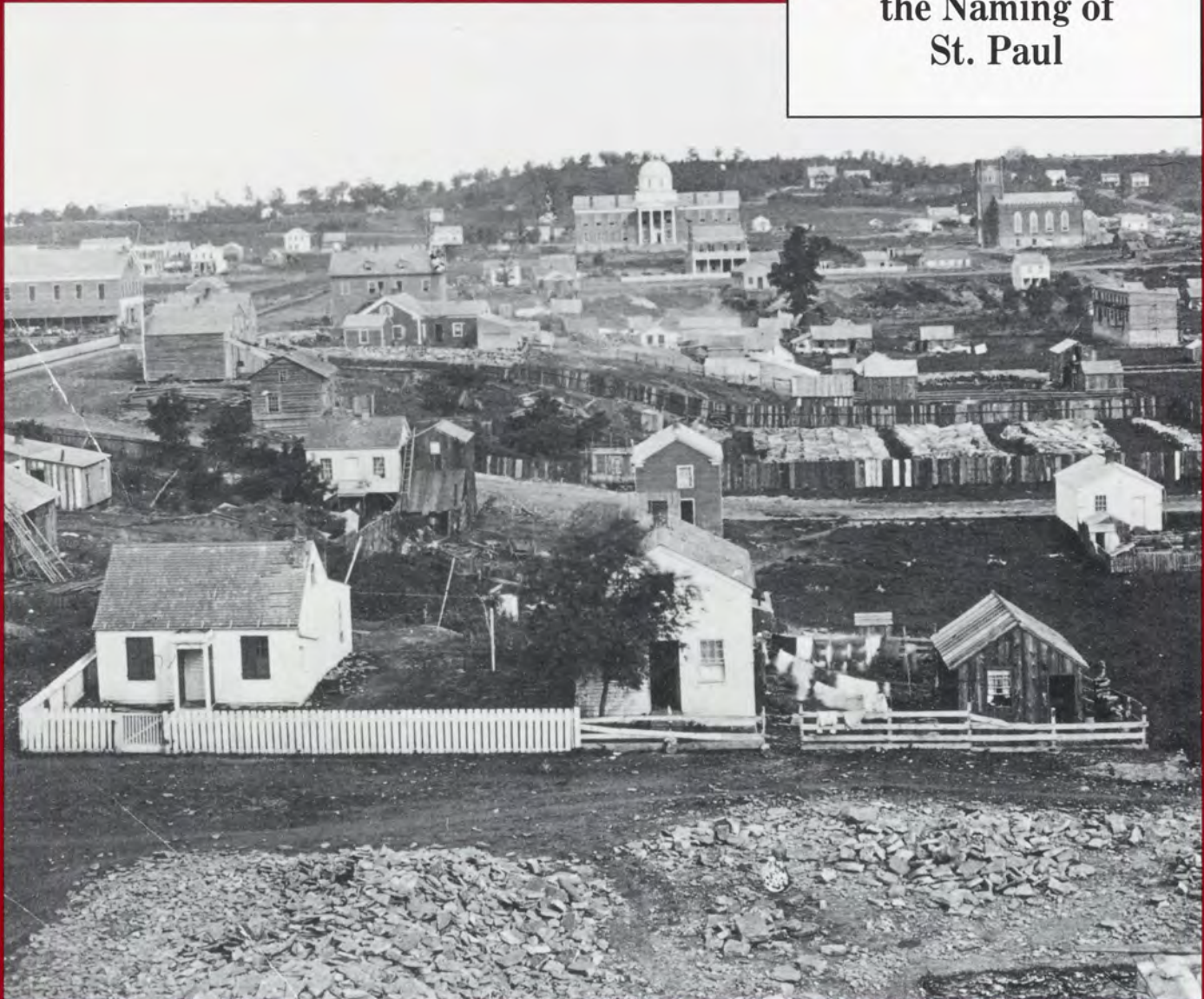


RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

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

What's Historic About This Site?

Highland Park's Reminder of Its Past: The Davern and Colvin Homes

Editor's Note: This is the seventh in a series of articles on Ramsey County's historic sites.

Robert J. Couser

St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood, although the site of some of the city's first settlements near Fort Snelling, was one of the last residential areas of the city to become heavily settled. The present-day character of the neighborhood, which is bounded on the north by Randolph Avenue, on the east by Interstate 35E and on the south and west by the Mississippi River, has evolved largely from the architecture of homes and buildings constructed after the 1940s. However, Highland Park's Davern Hill retains, in the William and Catherine Davern farm house and the Alexander and Sarah Colvin house, structures that represent not only some of the first permanent settlements of the St. Paul area in the mid-1850s, but also, the city's early expansion into what is today the Highland Park neighborhood.

William Quin Davern was an Irish immigrant who claimed land and established a farm on the military reservation north of Fort Snelling in about 1849, the year Minnesota became a territory. Davern and other pioneering settlers initially called their organized community "Niven" in honor of William Niven, one of the community's early leaders. In 1858, the area was organized as Reserve Township and now is part of Highland Park.

Davern began construction of his family home in about 1862 on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. The William and Catherine Davern farm house remains one of the oldest farm houses still standing in Ramsey County.

In 1909, Alexander and Sarah Colvin



The Davern Farm House about 1929, after the front porch was removed but before the northern addition.

built their home adjacent to the Davern farm house on land that was part of Davern's original homestead. At that time, both houses were beyond the fringes of the expanding St. Paul metropolis. Today they serve as unique and historical reminders of earlier times.

Both the Davern and Colvin families were leaders and contributors to their communities. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, William Quin Davern became one of Reserve Township's most prominent citizens. Alexander R. Colvin was a well-known St. Paul surgeon, while Sarah T. Colvin was one of Minnesota's most noted women as nurse, suffragist and political activist from 1915 through the 1940s.

THE DAVERN FAMILY

William Quin Davern was born on June 24, 1829 in County Clare, Ireland, into a

proud and accomplished family. The original Gaelic family name was O'Duibhdabhoireann, which means "the dark featured man of the rock (dubh = dark, d'a = of the, boireann = a large rock)." The name referred to the large rock at Ballynalackin on the seashore near Lisdoonvarna, in County Clare, where stand the remains of the once strong castle of the "Davoren" family. In the 1700s, the family name was Anglicized to O'Davoren and then Davoren. The O'Davorens had a strong family history of higher education. From about the early sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century, the O'Davorens operated a law school in a stone fort in Bhoireann, Ireland. This was said to be medieval Ireland's most famous school of Brehon law, the old Gaelic code of justice abolished under James I of England.

William was the youngest of the seven children of Austin Davoren and Ellen



The Davern house at 1173 Davern Street in 1990.

Cooney. While other members of his family pursued a college education in Ireland, William chose to seek a new life by emigrating to the United States with his oldest brother, Dominick. Dominick was forty-two years old and William was just seventeen when they sailed on the ship *Clarence* from Galway, Ireland, arriving in New York in 1846. At this time, William changed the spelling of his name from Davoren to Davern. He and Dominick initially settled in Springfield, Massachusetts and later made their way west along the Ohio River by steamboat to St. Louis, Missouri. In May, 1849, the Daverns traveled north on the Mississippi to Minnesota Territory. That first summer, William found work in the lumber mills of St. Anthony.

The following spring, William settled on and made claim without title to 160 acres of unoccupied land in the military reservation that surrounded Fort Snelling, the United States army outpost which had been established in 1820 at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. At the same time, other settlers made similar unauthorized claims on reservation land, where over the next several years, they

built their homes, cultivated the land and invested their capital.

In 1854, the United States government announced that the military reservation land on which Davern and the others had settled would be offered for sale by public auction. In order to protect their new homesteads from outside speculators, Davern and the other settlers formed a Claim Association. A notable resolution of the association read as follows:

Resolved that we repair to the land sale *en masse*, to protect our homes from the bids of wealthy and sordid speculators, the homes and improvements which have cost so many of us long years of toil and labor, and the expenditure of all our means, the homes which shelter our wives and little ones, the homes doubly endeared to us by the privations, cares and anxieties which we have all experienced in their security, the only spot in fact which we can justly call our home, upon this fairest portion of God's footstool, and which we will protect from the ruthless hands of those who would eagerly tear them from our possession.

The Claim Association's resolutions

were circulated in the territory's newspapers to give public notice to outsiders that their bids would not be tolerated. The auction of 4,503.89 acres of Fort Snelling reservation land took place in Stillwater on September 11, 1854. Davern and other claimants had met before the auction and decided that there would be only one bid per piece of property, in effect preventing any competitive bidding from outsiders.

On the day appointed for the sale, according to the *Minnesota Democrat*:

A thousand people were on the ground at Stillwater, ready to act decisively, had occasion required. The claimants dressed in red shirts, all armed, and having clubs in their hands, were arranged in a circle so large as almost to prevent outsiders from being heard, even if disposed to bid. One outsider only made an attempt to bid, and he was soon disposed of. The sale commenced at nine a.m., and was finished in three-quarters of an hour with great efficiency by the auctioneer, Frank Collins. The remainder of the day was consumed in making out the papers for the purchasers, who were congratulated on being released from their long suspense, and getting lands so valuable to them and the territory, at the government price of \$1.25 per acre, without disturbance or violence of any kind.

Some of the other buyers at the auction included William Finn, John K. Ayd, William Marshall, William Brimhall and Friedrich R. Knapheide. This land was purchased by the claimants for a total of \$5,629.86.

On March 28, 1855, J. Ross Brown, a special investigator appointed by the federal government, reported that the claimants' intimidation had defrauded the federal government of as much as \$300,000. An ensuing government investigation of the disputed auction lasted for more than a year, but the auction was allowed to stand unchanged. On January 2, 1857, 160 acres were deeded by the United States government to William Quin Davern as the SE 1/4 of section 16, township 28 and range 23. Today the original Davern acreage is bounded by Snelling Avenue to the east, Fairview Avenue to the west, Montreal Avenue to the north and about St. Paul Avenue to the south.

When Davern had first settled his land

in 1850, it was hilly and rough. He cultivated the land for farming and cleared three trails which later became St. Paul city streets: Davern Street and Wordsworth and Sheridan avenues, the latter two having been named by Davern after his favorite authors.

Davern became a United States citizen on February 5, 1855. Not only did he become a successful farmer, but he also actively participated in civic affairs. On October 13, 1857, he was elected to Minnesota's first state legislature where, as a Democrat, he represented the Second District in the House of Representatives. While a member of the legislature, Davern played an important role in establishing Fort Road, a long straight tract of passage along today's West Seventh Street from Seven Corners in downtown St. Paul to Fort Snelling. He was instrumental in naming Reserve Township. Davern served as a county commissioner from 1858-59 and he was elected the first chairman of the board of Reserve Township, serving from May 11 to October 2, 1858. He was also the first chairman and director of School District No. 8.

On July 20, 1856, Davern married Anne Maroney, also a native of County Clare, at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Stillwater. They lived in a small cabin which Davern had built on his land just northeast of the present intersection of Davern and Morgan streets. In 1857, Anne died in the birth of their only child and their child died a year later. On November 30, 1862, Davern married eighteen-year-old Catherine Theresa Ryan of New Brunswick, Canada, at the Catholic church of St. Anthony of Padua in St. Anthony. Catherine's parents, Michael and Catherine, had emigrated to Canada from Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1840. Catherine's older sister, Elizabeth, married John Smith in 1850 and then moved to the St. Paul area where the Smiths laid out the beginning of their forty-acre homestead near Montreal and Fort Road. At the age of eight, Catherine moved to the St. Paul area to live first with the Smiths, then at Fort Snelling as a servant of an officer's family until her marriage to William Davern.

In the first year of his marriage to Catherine, Davern began building a new home on the highest hill on his land west of



William Quinn Davern and Catherine Theresa Ryan Davern on the porch of their farm house, around 1900.

the original cabin. The first four Davern children, all boys, were born in the original cabin. Mary Ellen (Nellie) Davern, the eldest daughter, was the first Davern offspring to be born in the new farm house where the family eventually grew to thirteen children. William's brother, Dominick, who became blind shortly after they emigrated to the United States, also lived with William and his family for a number of years. Later, Dominick lived with his niece, Jane Murphy, in Janesville, Wisconsin.

As the Davern family increased in number, so did the farm's prosperity. By September, 1870, the estimated total cash value of William Quin Davern's farm, implements and livestock was \$11,300. That year his farm produced 1,200 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of oats, 2,500 bushels of barley, 400 bushels of potatoes and thirty tons of hay, for a total production value of \$5,400. The Daverns sold most of their barley to a local brewery. Other buildings on the Davern farm included a wooden barn with a limestone foundation, quarters for hired hands, a machine shed, a blacksmith shop, a granary and a chicken coop.

In 1873, Davern acquired a strip of land known as Pike Island from Franklin Steele. The island, named after the explorer, Zebulon Pike, who purchased this

land from the Dakota bands in 1805, consisted of 162 acres at the junction of the Mississippi and the Minnesota rivers. Pike Island was the first place in the Northwest territory where the United States flag was flown.

William Davern's success as a farmer continued, and by June, 1880, he owned 290 acres of land which annually produced 600 bushels of wheat, 400 bushels of potatoes, 200 tons of hay, seventy-five cords of wood, 1,000 pounds of butter, and 400 dozen eggs. Estimated cash value of his farm and livestock at that time was \$14,675. Later records indicate that in 1883 the Davern farm had five horses, fifteen cows, four steers, and six calves grazing on eighty acres of fenced pasture land. There were twelve hogs in a pig pen at the back of the house and sixty-five chickens in the barnyard. There were thirty acres planted in wheat, six acres planted in potatoes and 115 acres of hardwood forest.

William and Catherine Davern were ardent Roman Catholics. In 1887, sixty to 100 families, mostly of Irish decent who lived in the Reserve area and attended services at the old cathedral in downtown St. Paul, founded St. James Catholic Church, with the support of Archbishop John Ireland. William and Catherine Davern

played a major role in establishing the church, located near View Street and Randolph Avenue. The Daverns' second child, Edward, was the second person to be married there.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, farm productivity diminished and most of the Davern children had left the family farm. Davern began selling portions of his land to decrease his property taxes. He sold Pike Island to the government in 1879 for the reported price of \$72,000 in gold coin, and local legend has it that Davern buried the gold somewhere on his property.

The city of St. Paul annexed the last portion of Reserve Township on February 8, 1887. Samuel M. Magoffin, a descendent of a wealthy and powerful family in Kentucky, acquired significant acreage in the future Highland Park area for residential development. A large portion of Magoffin's land was purchased directly from Davern. George Phelps purchased approximately forty acres of Davern's land for \$8,000 in 1890, and obtained additional parcels from Davern in 1893 and 1904. In the early 1900s Davern still kept milk cows on his dwindling farm, selling the milk to the St. Paul Milk Company. Dr. Alexander R. Colvin, a prominent St. Paul physician, purchased portions of Davern's land in 1909 and 1912. Around the time of Davern's death in 1913, much of the remaining farm land in old Reserve Township had begun the conversion to residential use.

William Quin Davern died on June 30, 1913, at the age of eighty-four in the Davern farm house. He had suffered two strokes, which left him comatose. According to his published obituary, "Five of Mr. Davern's children and Mrs. Davern were at his bedside when he died. His demise had been expected for several days." Three of the Davern children, Francis, Austin and Agnes, also died in the family residence. Catherine Davern deeded the home to her daughter, Nellie Davern, in 1915. Catherine and Nellie later moved to 47 Garfield, St. Paul, in 1919. Catherine Davern died on Sept. 13, 1928, at the age of eighty-four. Both William Quin and Catherine Davern are buried in Calvary Cemetery at 753 Front Street, St. Paul.

The Davern's eldest son, William Aus-



Three generations of Fullers in 1923: Harvey Benjamin Fuller, left, founder of the H. B. Fuller Company; his son, Harvey Fuller, Jr., right, and grandson, Harvey B. Fuller, III, lived in the Davern house from 1919 to 1929.

tin Davern, worked as a contractor in St. Paul for ten years. William A. was responsible for grading a large number of streets, including many near Hamline University in 1885 and others on the western edge of the city near the Mississippi River. Later, William A. and his wife operated a grocery located near West Seventh Street and Smith Avenue until 1910, when he was hired by the city as a grading and sewer inspector. William A. was a close friend of Archbishop John Ireland and was a witness to the deed that transferred a portion of the property that belonged to William Finn, the earliest settler of the Reserve area, to the archbishop. Much of this property later developed into the Macalester-Groveland neighborhood and the College of St. Thomas (now the University of St. Thomas) campus. Joseph Davern, the third son of William and Catherine, was a steel and iron subcontractor for the city. He personally placed the fourteen-foot steel crucifix on the new St. Paul Cathedral on May 18, 1914. He and his crew also installed the Golden Horses on the state capitol dome and erected the first High Bridge across the Mississippi River in St. Paul.

DAVERN FARM HOUSE

William Davern began building his farm house in 1862 and completed it approximately seven years later, in 1869.

The estimated cost of the construction was \$600-800. The house, a two-story Italianate style wood-frame structure, was built on a foundation of limestone which had been hauled up the hill from Pike Island.

The original house was smaller than it is today. Photographs of the early farm house show three large windows on the front facade on the main and second floors. There was a front porch supported by four pillars with a small ornate railing on its roof. The front entrance was a double leaf door without windows. There were five chimney stacks. The cornice was decorated with dentils and large brackets.

The southern half of the main floor consisted of a front parlor and a rear sitting room. The back portion of the house, which was built first, accommodated the kitchen, a pantry and the Daverns' bedroom on the main floor. On the back portion's upstairs there were three bedrooms occupied by three Davern daughters. The remainder of the second floor held three to four bedrooms.

The floors throughout the house were pine. The original staircase, which was located along the northern side wall, was damaged by fire as a result of Davern's careless smoking habits. According to family legend, the fire started when he hung his jacket, with a lighted pipe in the pocket, over a rack adjacent to the staircase. The current staircase, with its newel post that supports an elaborate handrail, was built over the scorched remains of the original staircase.

In 1917, the Daverns' oldest daughter, Nellie, sold the house to Harvey B. Fuller, Jr., of 941 Goodrich Avenue for approximately \$4,500. Fuller was the third son of Harvey Benjamin Fuller, founder of the H.B. Fuller Company. Catherine and Nellie Davern continued to live in the house until the Fuller family took up residence in 1919.

While the Fuller family lived in the house, the front porch was removed and the parlor and rear sitting rooms were enlarged into a single room. The wooden floors were covered with rugs and a large furnace was installed in the basement, with floor registers providing heat throughout the house. Dozens of apple trees were standing south of the house and the remains of the old barn could still be seen in

the southwest corner of the property.

In 1928, Clifton C. Dailey, Sr., secretary of the Drake Marble Company of St. Paul, and his wife, Lucy House Dailey, both natives of Vermont, purchased the house. The Daileys had three children. In 1929, Dailey expanded the house at a cost of \$7,000, using R.J. Elholm of St. Paul as the contractor. The two northern bays were added to the first and second floors and a marble fireplace was added in the dining room. According to the original blueprints, the floors of the northern addition were to be constructed of maple but were eventually oak. The two chimneys on the original northern interior walls were removed.

The original kitchen area was converted into a knotty-pine paneled library and a brick hearth was built around the fireplace. The kitchen was relocated to the new addition in the northwest corner of the house. The southwest porch was enlarged to its present size and enclosed with eight-foot-high screens and mullioned windows. Its floor was covered with tile.

Two new bathrooms were centrally located on the expanded second floor east and west of the main staircase. Each bathroom had a ceramic tile floor and wainscoting. Corridors along the north and south halls provided access to four bedrooms, a study, the two bathrooms and to the original back portion's second floor. The latter was converted into a playroom and a maid's room. The Daileys put in a clay tennis court west of the house where the Davern's pig pen had been located.

In 1938, because of financial difficulties associated with the depression, the Daileys exchanged the Davern farm house for the more modest home of Cleon and Gertrude Headley at 866 Oseola, as part of a "house swap." After moving into 1173 Davern, the Headleys installed a new furnace, added a new roof, constructed an attic area with a walk-in cedar closet, hooked up city water, cleared the lower land to the south of tangled raspberry patches and removed the clay tennis court. In the early 1950s Davern Street, with its steep hill, was paved for the first time; previously, as a dirt road, it was unscalable in springtime because of water from underground streams.

The Davern farm house was nominated

for the National Register of Historic Places Inventory in December, 1982, and was officially entered on October 6, 1983, by the director of the National Park Service. The St. Paul City Council designated the house a Heritage Preservation Site on October 4, 1985.

THE COLVIN FAMILY

Alexander R. Colvin was born in Teeswater, Ontario, Canada, on February 28, 1867, to an Irish-born father and a Scottish-born mother. Following his graduation from Teeswater high school, he studied pharmacy and then moved to Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. He decided to study medicine, and graduated from the School of Medicine at McGill University in Montreal in 1894 at the age of 27. Colvin spent the next two years completing an internship and surgical residency at Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal where he met his future wife, an operating room nurse named Sarah Tarleton. In 1896, he settled in La Crosse, Wisconsin, where he took over the practice of another McGill graduate who had left to study abroad.

On June 1, 1897, Colvin married Sarah Tarleton in Baltimore, Maryland. The Colvins moved to St. Paul that same year and lived on the second floor above Conger's drug store at 349 W. University Avenue. The back rooms of the apartment served as the Colvins' living quarters while the two front rooms were used as an office and waiting room for Dr. Colvin's clinical practice. In 1902 the Colvins left for Europe where Dr. Colvin underwent further post-graduate surgical training in Breslau and Vienna. Returning to St. Paul in 1903, Colvin associated his practice with Dr. Charles Wheaton, Dr. John Rogers and, later, Dr. Warren A. Dennis. In addition, Colvin also resumed what was to become a life-long alliance with St. Paul's City and County Hospital, later renamed Ancker Hospital. In 1918, during World War I, he joined the Army Medical Corps. On July 11 of that year, while stationed at Fort McHenry, Maryland, Colvin was commissioned a major in the Medical Officers Reserve Corps, the highest rank at that time.

After the war, he returned to St. Paul in 1919 to resume his private practice. He was named chief of the City and County

Hospital surgery staff in 1919, a position he held without pay for approximately thirty years, until his death. Colvin was honored on January 19, 1948, by the hospital's surgical staff and other friends and associates at a banquet at the Minnesota Club. On that occasion Colvin said, "I guess no one will accuse me of bragging now, but my chief claim to fame is that I owned and operated the first x-ray machine in St. Paul."

Colvin was a member of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, Minnesota Academy of Medicine, American Medical Association, Western Surgical Association, American College of Surgeons, St. Paul Surgical Society, Ramsey County Medical Society, Minnesota State Medical Association and the American Medical Association. He was the author of twenty-six scientific articles in medical journals, mainly in the area of orthopedic surgery. He died on March 22, 1948, at his residence at 1175 Davern Street, and was survived by his wife, Sarah. Colvin Avenue in Highland Park was named in his honor in 1951.

Sarah Tarleton Colvin was a spirited champion of women's issues throughout her life and was recognized both in Minnesota and nationally for her contributions to the women's suffrage movement, nursing education and political activism.

Sarah was born to Robert and Sallie Tarleton in Green County, Alabama, on September 2, 1865, on her maternal grandfather's cotton plantation. Robert Tarleton graduated from Princeton University in 1859, and was a medical student in New York when the Civil War interrupted his studies. He joined the Confederate Army, eventually attaining the rank of lieutenant. Just weeks after he escaped capture by Union troops at Fort Morgan, the Tarletons were married in Mobile, Alabama, on November 29, 1864.

After the war, Tarleton took the family to Caddo Parish, Louisiana, where he managed one of his father's plantations and where Sarah's younger brother, Robert, was born. Before long, however, the family moved to Mobile where Tarleton died in September of 1868, of war-induced ailments. Sarah was three years old. Margaret, the youngest of the three Tarleton

children, was born the day after his death.

Sarah grew up during the post-war reconstruction period in the South. She attended private schools and was reared by governesses and tutors in Alabama and Baltimore, Maryland, where the family moved in 1878 when she was twelve years old. In October, 1887, Sarah, her mother and sister sailed from New York for Europe where they traveled for almost two years in Italy, Switzerland, France and England, staying in pensions to stretch their financial resources.

As Sarah grew older, she began to feel somewhat dissatisfied with the ideals of her beloved family, who believed that women should demonstrate feminine qualities of submission and never make a nuisance of themselves. She decided to pursue a career in nursing. In December, 1890, she was one of twenty-two students to enter the first class of organized nurses training at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. According to Sarah, this was difficult for her family to accept, since nursing in the South was performed only by nuns in Catholic hospitals or black women.

Following her graduation, she practiced private nursing duty in New York City. In February, 1894, she accepted a position as an operating room nurse at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal, Canada, where she met her future husband. After six months she returned to Baltimore, where she helped organize the Visiting Nurses Association. She was its secretary until her marriage to Alexander Colvin in 1897, and her move to St. Paul with her new husband.

After the Colvins returned from Europe in 1903, Sarah Colvin became active in the training and education of nurses in Minnesota. She was instrumental in merging the Ramsey County and Hennepin County Graduate Nurses Associations into the Minnesota Graduate Nurses Association, known today as the Minnesota Nurses Association, and she served as its first president from 1905 to 1909. She played an important role in the passage of the Minnesota Nurse Practice Act of 1907. That year, she was elected second vice president of what is now known as the American Nurses Association. Later, she served as the organization's first vice president and



Dr. and Mrs. Alexander R. Colvin in 1948.

presided over several sessions of the national convention in Chicago in 1911.

She was secretary and, in 1910, president of the St. Paul Anti-Tuberculosis Society and helped raise funds to build and equip a sanitarium in Ramsey County. In 1930, the Sarah T. Colvin Loan Fund was established in her honor by the Minnesota Nurses Association. The fund provides financial aid for nurses seeking advanced training. She maintained her membership in the state association after she finished her active nursing career. In addition, she served as a member of the Ancker Hospital Nurses Training School Committee in the 1930s.

During the second decade of the twentieth century, Sarah Colvin became actively involved in the women's suffrage movement in Minnesota. She thought it absurd that women should be denied the legal and

political rights enjoyed by their male counterparts.

She was a leader of the Minnesota delegation of suffragettes who worked nationally with others to pass the nineteenth amendment to the United States Constitution. In 1915, she joined the Congressional Union, which later became the National Women's Party. That year, also, Sarah Colvin joined a number of her colleagues in a cross-country automobile ride known as the "Woman Suffrage Special," where women from non-suffrage states delivered petitions to women from suffrage states asking for their support.

During World War I, Sarah Colvin joined her husband in San Antonio, Texas, where he was undergoing military orientation. After a few months, they were transferred by the army to Washington, D.C., and eventually to Fort McHenry in Baltimore. During this time, President Woodrow Wilson drew the ire of the suffragettes because he would not openly support the nineteenth amendment, placing the onus on Congress to pass it and send it on to the states for ratification. Accordingly, the National Women's Party targeted the president for public demonstrations. They organized militant picketing in Washington at the beginning of Wilson's first term to raise the nation's conscience about women's suffrage.

The suffragettes' leader, Alice Paul, was jailed many times, but each incarceration was accompanied by a hunger strike, which resulted in her early release from jail. Sarah Colvin was arrested twice during this rebellious time. She was jailed for the first time in late January, 1919, for displaying a banner in front of the White House, but was released after five days. Her second jailing came just days after the suffragettes' most dramatic demonstration. She was arrested on February 9, 1919, and jailed for another five days as one of twenty-four women who picketed and burned President Woodrow Wilson in effigy in front of the White House while the president was in Europe.

The nineteenth amendment was ratified in 1920. Shortly thereafter, the Colvins returned to St. Paul. Sarah Colvin discontinued her active participation in the National Women's Party at that time, but throughout the 1930s she still was regard-

ed as the outstanding feminist and pre-eminent spokesperson for women's issues in the Midwest. She later rejoined the National Women's Party because of her concerns over other women's rights issues. She was elected national chairman of the party's executive council on November 6, 1933, only to resign in frustration a few months later.

Sarah Colvin also concerned herself with local and state political issues in the 1930s. A supporter of the Farmer-Labor party, she had joined the Farmer-Labor Woman's Club by 1932 and served as a member of its governing board. She was appointed to the Minnesota State Board of Education on April 25, 1935, by Farmer-Labor Governor Floyd B. Olson, a man she admired and respected, and she took great pleasure in this important responsibility: the education of Minnesota's young minds.

She had a productive and co-operative relationship with Dr. John G. Rockwell, the commissioner of education, but, as early as April, 1938, she was telling the public that the Minnesota State Board of Education and its commissioner were being undermined by the partisan politics of Farmer-Labor Governor Elmer Benson and his advisors. According to Sarah Colvin, this interference worsened under the administration of Republican Governor Harold Stassen and it finally prompted her resignation on October 20, 1941.

By the 1940s, Sarah Colvin's life was marked by failing health and diminishing eyesight, but she described these times as more peaceful in the memoirs her friends encouraged her to write. Her book, *A Rebel in Thought*, was described as a philosophic discussion of her life's ideas. She died in her beloved home at 1175 Davern on April 22, 1949, at the age of eighty-three, thirteen months after the death of her husband. She was survived by her sister, Margaret Winchester of New York, and her brother, Robert Tarleton of Great Neck, Long Island.

COLVIN HOME

When Alexander and Sarah Colvin built their home at 1175 Davern Street in 1909, their land was undeveloped and located on the outskirts of St. Paul. On this property the Colvins erected two houses, a



The Colvins' home at 1175 Davern Street in 1990.

larger two-and-a-half story house with a 30 x 42 foot foundation and a smaller one-and-a-half story house at the rear of the property with a 17 x 31 foot foundation. Each house had its own separate garage. Both houses were woodframe structures with sidings of cedar shake clapboards. The main house stands on a cliff overlooking Fort Snelling. At that time there were no trees in the area and this allowed for a view of the Minnesota River Valley in the distance. The homes were designed by Thomas G. Holyoke, architect, and built by Robert Sinclair, contractor. The main house was built for a cost of \$6,500 and the rear house for \$1,500.

When the Colvins lived at 1175 Davern, electric power was provided by the city but water and sewage service were not, so the Colvins dug their own well. Roads were poorly developed so they used a horse-drawn snowplow to keep their home accessible during the winter months. They kept two horses and two cows. A small barn with a hayloft, which housed the animals, was built onto the rear of the main garage. The Colvins also had chickens and grew vegetables and fruit on their property.

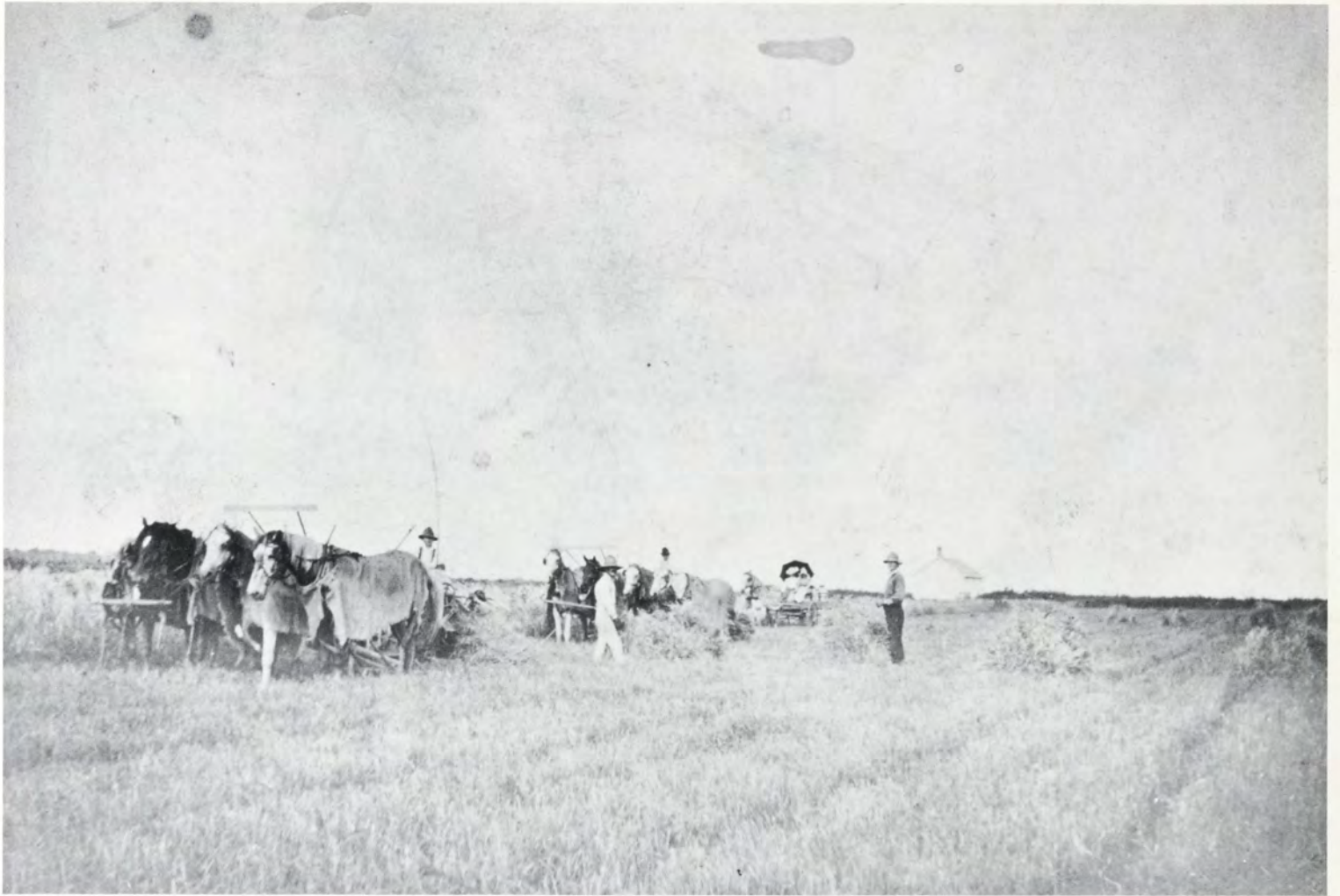
The Highland Park neighborhood continued to grow during the decades that followed and, although an important part of the city of St. Paul, remains today a distinct community unto itself. It was here that, in 1849, William Quin Davern found the freedom and prosperity that America

offered its enterprising immigrants. It was Highland Park's natural beauty that led Alexander and Sarah Colvin to build their home in the area in 1909. Today the homes of these early citizens of Davern Hill serve as distinctive reminders of Highland Park's past.

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Sources

The information in this article was obtained from resources at the Minnesota Historical Society Library and Office of Archives and Manuscripts, the Ramsey County Historical Society Library, public records at city and church offices, the Irish Geneological Society Library and from personal interviews and records of family descendents. An annotated and footnoted copy of this manuscript is available in the office of the Ramsey County Historical Society, 323 Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth Street, St. Paul, MN 55102.



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.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Published by the Ramsey County Historical Society
323 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

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