

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

Louise and Her Legacy

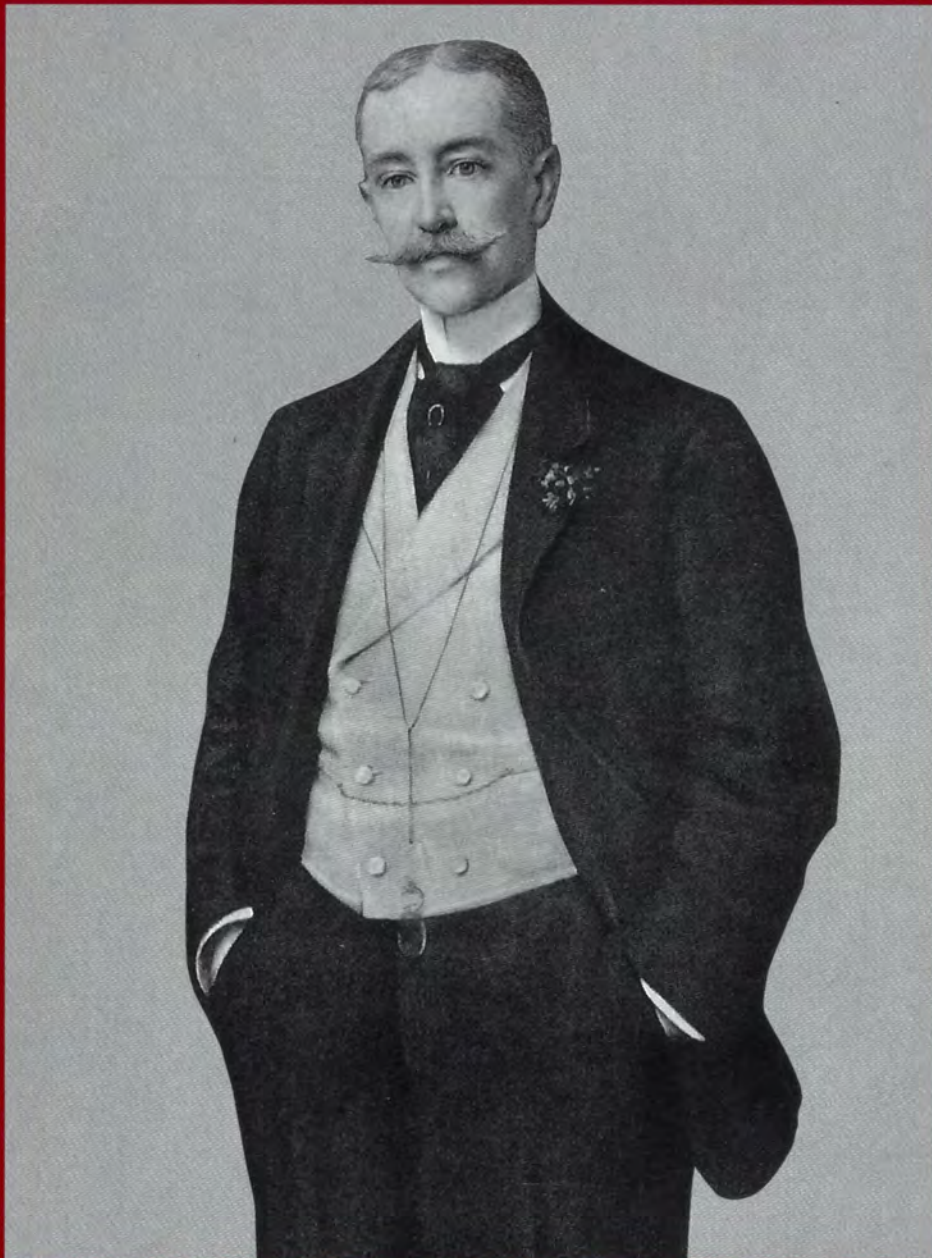
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Fall, 1999

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

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 34, Number 3

Fall, 1999

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## Message from Editorial Board

This issue of *Ramsey County History* brings together the stories of two related, and yet different, major figures in the history of St. Paul during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They are Chauncey Wright Griggs and Crawford Livingston. Griggs came to St. Paul from New England in 1856. Crawford Livingston left New York for Minnesota in 1870, and relocated to St. Paul a few years later.

Crawford Livingston was a canny investor who prospered from railroads, utilities, insurance, and land sales. Chauncey Griggs put his money into supplying coal and wood and into transportation, land sales, the wholesale grocery business and, finally, the lumber business. Their habits of hard work and a willingness to seize upon business opportunities helped both to acquire large personal fortunes. The 1915 marriage of one Livingston daughter with one Griggs son meant that their parents' stories became even more intertwined. Today the names of Chauncey Griggs and Crawford Livingston live on in St. Paul in the Crawford Livingston Theatre, in streets named for Griggs and Livingston, and in the Burbank-Livingston-Griggs house still standing on Summit Avenue.

John Lindley, who chairs the Ramsey County Historical Society's Editorial Board, has brought the Livingston and Griggs careers and their families to life. His research on these two business leaders is based on work in more than twenty archives, libraries, and manuscript collections in Minnesota and elsewhere. To do this, he has had the help of many people who have provided information and suggestions along the way, particularly Tom White of the James J. Hill Reference Library; Jim Szevich, an independent historian, researcher, and genealogist of St. Paul; Virginia Brainard Kunz, editor of *Ramsey County History*, and Molly Spillman of the Ramsey County Historical Society staff.

In addition, this project would not have come to fruition if the author had not had the encouragement and support of Patricia Sweney Hart, a Griggs descendant, and Mary Griggs Burke, a Livingston granddaughter. They have been extraordinarily generous in sharing family stories, letters, photos, and ideas about Chauncey Griggs and Crawford Livingston because they wanted others to know how these two men helped to shape St. Paul's history.

*Priscilla Farnham, executive director, Ramsey County Historical Society*

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# “... No Time or Sympathy for One Who Wouldn't Work” Crawford Livingston, Colonel Chauncey W. Griggs,

*John M. Lindley*

**O**n January 18, 1912, Crawford Livingston, a successful former St. Paul railroad entrepreneur and businessman who recently had established a Wall Street brokerage house in New York City, wrote to his daughter, Mary Steele Livingston, about his new firm, Livingston & Company. Livingston's son, Gerald M., known in the family as Gerry, was the lead partner in this new financial house, while the firm's letterhead identified Gerry's father as a “special partner.”

The senior Livingston commented first on Mary's report in her most recent letter to her father that the weather in Cable, Wisconsin, where she was staying, was “quite mild now as it is only 12 below zero.” Then he added:

Gerry is very much pleased with his business. They have a very nice office, and so far have done very well. I work as hard as any of them, so hard that I do not get my afternoon nap any more and have lost 5 pounds in weight.<sup>1</sup>

Crawford Livingston was then sixty-four. Because of his wealth, he could have chosen a more relaxed and comfortable pace for himself. Apparently he didn't.

His attitude toward life and work was not unique. In another parental letter, dated April 16, 1913, Chauncey Milton Griggs, ten years younger than Crawford Livingston, wrote to his sons, Everett and Ben, the day after their grandmother, Martha Ann Gallup Griggs, died in Tacoma, Washington.

His letter is a tribute to his sons' grandparents, especially their grandmother, for her selfless role in supporting her husband and her family through the years that preceded their coming to great wealth. He wrote:

Here was a woman who did her share, not only in the acquisition of her family's capital, but in helping others to help themselves. She had no time or sympathy for one who wouldn't work.

You boys have a grand inheritance from your immediate grandparents on both sides. They were producers, they were workers, and after all it's the only kind of life that brings satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

The boys' grandfather, Colonel Chauncey Wright Griggs (1832–1910), had come to St. Paul in 1856 where he had started in business and took time out to serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. He then had returned to Minnesota and St. Paul where he had achieved great financial success, first in supplying wood and coal to Minnesotans, then in the wholesale grocery business,

and after 1888 in the timber industry in Washington State.

Although the Griggs and Livingston families would not be linked until 1915 when Theodore Wright Griggs, the boys' uncle, married Mary Steele Livingston, these brief comments from two parental letters written in the second decade of the twentieth century reveal a shared belief in hard work, personal industry, and the value of financial endeavors. They also help to explain why Crawford Livingston and Colonel Chauncey Griggs achieved so much in their lifetimes.

## **Griggs, Livingston, and St. Paul**

While the story of the Griggs and Livingston families follows a parallel course through more than fifty of the most colorful years in American life, Crawford Livingston remains an elusive figure in St. Paul history. Chauncey Griggs does not. The roots of both men lay in the



*The Burbank-Livingston-Griggs house at 432 Summit Avenue, as it looked in the 1880s. It was the home of Crawford Livingston and his family and later of Theodore W. Griggs and his wife, Mary Livingston Griggs, Crawford Livingston's daughter. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

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## and Their Roles in St. Paul History

East, but Livingston's remained there. Even though he married into one of Minnesota's pioneer families, and his St. Paul associates included General Henry H. Sibley and many of the city's more formidable leaders, Livingston lived much of his life in New York. Griggs did not. He put down new roots, first in Minnesota, then on the West Coast. The imprints of both these men, however, still lie on St. Paul, in the Crawford Livingston Theatre in downtown St. Paul, in the Burbank-Livingston-Griggs mansion that still stands on Summit Avenue, in St. Paul's Livingston Street, in its Griggs Street, and in the Griggs-Midway Building on University Avenue.

Colonel Chauncey Wright Griggs came from an old New England family. Born on December 31, 1832, in Tolland, Connecticut, he was the son of Captain Chauncey Griggs and Heartie Dimock Griggs. Captain Griggs had fought in the War of 1812, been a judge of probate in Tolland County, and had served in the Connecticut legislature. Heartie Dimock Griggs was descended from early Massachusetts settlers, some of whom had fought the British in the Revolutionary War.

Young Chauncey Griggs was educated at Monson Academy in Massachusetts and, for a time, was a teacher. In 1852 he moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he lived with his sister, Frances, and her husband, Guerdon Williams. Between 1852 and 1857 Griggs supported himself in several occupations. He was a bookkeeper in a bank in Detroit, and part owner of a livery stable and transfer business in Ohio and Iowa; he operated a general store in Ohio, and sold furniture in Detroit. Finally, in early May 1856, Chauncey Griggs moved to St. Paul in Minnesota Territory "where he engaged in contracting, merchandising, and real estate." The Minnesota Territorial Cen-



*Chauncey Wright Griggs and Martha Ann Gallup Griggs. These photos are used courtesy of Patricia Sweney Hart.*

sus for 1857 identifies Griggs as a "lumber merchant." The next year he became engaged to Martha Ann Gallup, who had been born in Ledyard, Connecticut, on September 7, 1834, the daughter of Christopher Milton Gallup and Anna S. Billings Gallup.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time that Chauncey Griggs was making a start in St. Paul with his new bride, Crawford Livingston was growing up in New York City. Born on May 6, 1847, he was the only son and youngest child of Crawford Livingston (born on October 22, 1811) and Caroline C. Chapman Livingston (born in 1818). They had married on May 27, 1833, and two daughters, Frances (1836-1847) and Elizabeth (1842-1917), preceded the younger Crawford's birth in 1847.<sup>4</sup>

The Livingston family is a long and distinguished family in American history. Robert Livingston (1654-1728) is con-

sidered the founder of the dynasty. He emigrated from Scotland to America in 1673 and, with the help of a royal land grant, settled south of Albany, New York, on the east side of the Hudson River on an estate of 160,000 acres. As the "First Lord of the Manor," as Robert Livingston later came to be called, he definitely was an aristocrat, a gentleman of property, and some of his descendants helped to mold the youthful republic of the United States. His grandson Philip signed the Declaration of Independence. Philip's brother William signed the Constitution; William's son fought the British in the Revolutionary War and later served as a justice on the U.S. Supreme Court. Robert R. Livingston, a member of another branch of the family, was a member of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence, administered the oath of office to George Wash-

ington, and served as the new nation's first secretary of state. He had also helped Robert Fulton in building the first successful steamboat, the *Clermont*, which for a time held a monopoly on steam transportation on the Hudson River between New York and Albany. Other Livingstons served in Washington in the House of Representatives, or the Senate, or in other public positions.

#### Fourth Lord of the Manor

The senior Crawford Livingston was not called to a life of governmental service, but unlike many Livingston family members in the first half of the nineteenth century, he had not retreated from the public world for a private life of aristocratic ease. In her book, *An American Aristocracy: The Livingstons*, historian Claire Brandt wrote:

It is worth noting that the enterprising William and Crawford Livingston sprang from the unlikely loins of the "Fourth Lord of the Manor," the feckless Peter R. Livingston. They were the offspring of his fourth son, Moncrief, a prosperous citizen of the town of Hudson, New York, who managed to instill in his sons the wisdom and initiative to break free of the manor and bustle profitably in the outside world.<sup>5</sup>

William A. Livingston (1805–1860) was older than the first Crawford by six years. The two brothers early on became involved in the express business between Albany and Buffalo, New York. In 1841 Crawford Livingston, Henry Wells, and George E. Pomeroy established the firm of Pomeroy & Company, which provided express messenger service via the railroad and stage lines between Albany and Buffalo on a once-a-week basis. Given all the difficulties in railroad and coach travel at that time, the early trips between the two cities typically involved four nights and three days of travel. Henry Wells often acted as the messenger, carrying valuables such as gold, silver, currency, and commercial paper in a carpetbag. The three entrepreneurs also encouraged local producers to use their service to ship luxuries such as fish, game, fruits, and the like. Thus in 1842 Wells carried oysters to Buffalo at the cost of \$3 per

hundred. The arrival of such a delicacy soon became a local event and was advertised in the newspapers.

By 1843 the three partners were able to offer daily express service using a large trunk to hold their growing volume of freight. Initially Wells paid about \$15 for a ticket for himself and his excess freight; later he would negotiate for a reduced fare. In the meantime Pomeroy & Company became Livingston, Wells and Pomeroy, then Livingston, Wells and Company. In 1845 the company began to compete with the U.S. Post Office for the delivery of mail. At the time, postage for delivery of a letter from New York to Buffalo was twenty-five cents. Livingston, Wells and Company charged six cents and still made money. The government didn't like the competition and responded by cutting its rate in 1848 to a uniform cost of three cents for the entire United States. The private express companies couldn't make a profit at that price.

By this time William G. Fargo had joined Henry Wells and the Livingston brothers in the express business. In 1846 the firm set up European offices in London, Paris, and New York. Crawford Livingston managed the New York branch, and the volume of business grew to the point that even after Henry Wells joined him in New York, the strain of work was detrimental to his health.

Added to this was the strain of competition. In 1847 Butterfield, Wasson and Company set up a rival business on the New York Central Railroad, drawing on \$50,000 of capital stock. Realizing that the bitter competition hurt both firms, the owners of the two companies agreed to join forces on March 18, 1850. They called the new firm the American Express Company and capitalized it at \$150,000. By this time, however, Crawford Livingston was dead, probably from tuberculosis.

Because the articles of association for the American Express Company provided that shares of stock could not be sold to "married women, infants, or irresponsible persons," the Livingston family story that Crawford's widow had to sell his shares of stock is probably accurate. The records for this period are frag-

mentary, but the likely purchaser was Crawford's cousin, Johnston Livingston (1817–1911), because it was about this time that he became involved in the express business of Livingston, Wells and Company.<sup>6</sup>

An 1835 graduate of Union College in Schenectady, New York, Johnston Livingston, the second Crawford Livingston's uncle, had studied engineering and worked for a time as a surveyor for the Erie Railroad. By 1852, when Henry Wells and William Fargo established a new business, Wells, Fargo & Company, Johnston Livingston was a member of its board of directors. Wells and Fargo set up their firm to transport gold dust, bullion, silver, and other valuables from California to the East after the board of directors at American Express had voted not to expand into the California market. Because their competitors had carried some \$68 million in gold from California to the East the previous year, the organizers of Wells, Fargo felt the risks of such a venture were worth setting up a separate firm that might reap a portion of the potential profits from the Gold Rush. Because some American Express directors also were Wells, Fargo directors, the two businesses essentially had an interlocking directorate with American Express concentrating on express business in the East and Wells, Fargo in the trans-Missouri West. Wells, Fargo is today known for its banking business, but the firm didn't actually get into banking until 1853.<sup>7</sup>

Having in all likelihood sold her late husband's stock in the express business, Caroline Chapman Livingston remarried in 1852. Her second husband was Professor William Franklin Phelps (1822–1907), a professional educator. Born in Aurelius, New York, William Phelps attended district schools during the winter months and worked on his parents' farm in the summers. When he was sixteen, he began teaching in rural schools and did so well that he was invited to attend the State Normal School at Albany. He graduated in 1846 and joined the Normal School faculty where he taught until 1852. During his time in Albany, he also earned a master's degree from Union College.



Professor William L. Phelps. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

In 1855, after a period of poor health, Phelps accepted an offer to be the principal (today the title would be president) of the New Jersey State Normal School at Trenton, which was due to open its doors that fall. For the next nine years, as Phelps built the New Jersey Normal School's academic program and physical facilities, he gained a national reputation as an educator of teachers.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime, Phelps's step-son, Crawford Livingston, had received his early education at Albany Academy and in Burlington, New Jersey. He moved to New York City where in 1864 he was associated with a stock brokerage firm located on Broad Street. The firm took the name of White, Livingston & Kendrick. When Livingston's health took an adverse turn, he left the brokerage business and served for two years as deputy treasurer for the state of New Jersey.<sup>9</sup>

### Chauncey Griggs and the Civil War

Although the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 seems to have had no significant impact on Crawford Livingston's career, it did change the life of Chauncey Griggs. Perhaps because Minnesota had

become a state just three years earlier, Griggs, along with many others, decided to take up arms in defense of the Union. Griggs, who had been operating a general store, dealing in real estate, and had invested in a lumber mill in St. Paul, set about organizing and recruiting a military company. He was mustered into the Union army as a private in Company B of the Third Minnesota Infantry. Soon Griggs received a commission as a captain and within three months in 1861-1862, he was promoted to the rank of major, due to gallantry in the field. Later he was advanced to lieutenant colonel. Initially the Third Minnesota regiment was stationed in Kentucky where it helped guard the Union supply train, but in 1862 the regiment moved to Tennessee to support the Union advance on Nashville and Chattanooga.<sup>10</sup>

While Chauncey Griggs was away defending the Union, Martha Ann Griggs traveled with her two infant children, Chauncey Milton Griggs and Herbert Stanton Griggs, to her family's home in Connecticut. She made the trip in stages. She and her children first went to Milwaukee, then to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and from there to Detroit where she stayed for a month with relatives before going east by train to Connecticut. There she and her children lived until 1864, when they returned to Minnesota.<sup>11</sup>

In July 1862, the Third Minnesota met its first serious test in battle. The regiment had been ordered to protect a Union supply depot at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. A Confederate cavalry force under the command of General Nathan Bedford Forrest made a surprise attack on July 13 on the Ninth Michigan infantry regiment. The commander of the Michigan unit called on the Third Minnesota, which was only a short distance away and had earlier repulsed a Rebel attack. When the commander of the Third Minnesota, Colonel Henry C. Lester, rejected Griggs's request to take a company to aid the other unit, the men from Michigan were overwhelmed leaving the Minnesotans alone to face the Confederates.

When Forrest's men attacked the Third Minnesota's camp, Lester refused to allow his men to go to its defense.



Colonel Chauncey W. Griggs in his Civil War Uniform. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

Lester judged the Confederate force was much larger in number than it actually was; so when Forrest demanded he surrender, Lester called his captains together and urged them to do so. Griggs and four others voted against surrender, but they were outvoted. After Lester surrendered his command without a fight, Griggs and some of the other officers spent three months in notorious Confederate prisons at Madisonville, Georgia, and Richmond, Virginia, before they were freed through a prisoner exchange. The enlisted men were paroled.

### Dismissed and Promoted

President Abraham Lincoln subsequently dismissed Lester and the others who voted with him from the army, but Griggs was promoted to colonel and ordered to reorganize the regiment. In January 1863, the Third Minnesota became a part of General U. S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee. Assigned to the Sixth Division, Sixteenth Corps, Griggs and the Third Minnesota built defensive fortifications on Haines' Bluff and Snyder's Bluff in the rear of Grant's army as it besieged the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Vicksburg was a key to the Union strategy of seizing control of the Mississippi River. Because

the Confederates were unable to break through Grant's forces surrounding the city, Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863.

The rigors of military service had taken their toll, however, on the colonel's health. Suffering from malaria and believing that the Federal victories at Gettysburg in the east and Vicksburg in the west meant that the Union eventually would prevail, Griggs resigned his commission and returned to Minnesota. There he found his business interests also had suffered from the war.<sup>12</sup>

Instead of settling again in St. Paul, Griggs decided to live in Chaska, a rural community on the Minnesota River about forty miles upstream to the west of the capital city. There he welcomed back his wife and children and set about making a new start in brickmaking, dealing in wood and coal, contracting and delivering supplies to the government, and representing Scott County first in the Minnesota House and later in the state Senate. Two more children were born: Heartie Dimock Griggs and Herbert Stanton Griggs, in 1866 and 1868, respectively, while the Griggses lived in Chaska.

As part of rebuilding his business life, Griggs and William B. Newcomb of St. Paul built a barge to ship grain and wood down the Minnesota River to St. Paul. Then on August 20, 1869, Griggs and Newcomb joined James J. Hill in establishing the firm of Hill, Griggs & Company, with Hill as the senior partner. Although Hill and Griggs also were very profitably engaged in the steamboat business transporting people and freight between Moorhead, Minnesota, and Fort Garry, Manitoba, between 1872 and 1878, their main focus was on the fuel and transportation business centered in St. Paul. Thus the Griggs family moved from Chaska to the state capital in 1869.<sup>13</sup>

### Livingston Moves to Minnesota

While Chauncey Griggs was off in the South fighting the forces of the Confederacy, William Phelps was dealing with declining enrollments at the New Jersey Normal School due to wartime enlist-



*The Lower Levee at the foot of Jackson Street around 1870 when Chauncey Griggs joined James J. Hill in the firm of Hill, Griggs & Co., a fuel and transportation business. The firm's transfer house is just in front of the big elevator. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

ments. But the situation in New Jersey was not nearly so difficult as it was at the fledgling normal school in Winona, Minnesota. The Winona State Normal School had first opened its doors in 1860, but the trustees closed the school in 1862 after the war broke out. When in 1864 they decided they could reopen it, they offered Phelps the principalship. He accepted. Phelps not only reopened the school, he also energized its academic program, obtained state and local money to build a new physical plant, and set a high standard of excellence in training teachers that other normal schools soon came to emulate.<sup>14</sup>

Although the professional opportunity represented by the position at Winona was probably the most important factor in Phelps's decision to leave New Jersey for Minnesota, there was a family reason as well. Some time before 1864, William Phelps's parents, Halsey Phelps and Lucinda Hitchcock Phelps, had moved from New York to Winona on the west bank of the Mississippi River some eighty miles south of St. Paul. Winona County records indicate Halsey Phelps died there in 1859, his widow in 1876.<sup>15</sup>

Crawford Livingston, at the age of twenty-two, followed his step-father to Winona in 1870, in part because of the

supposedly beneficial effect of the Minnesota climate on his health. There he was employed first as the general purchasing agent and later as general ticket agent for the Winona & St. Peter Railroad (W&SP), the second railroad to begin operations in Minnesota. The *Winona City Directory* for 1875 lists Crawford Livingston as a boarder, but not at the residence of Professor Phelps.<sup>16</sup>



*James J. Hill. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

Railroading got its start in Minnesota in the 1850s. On March 3, 1855, the Territory of Minnesota had incorporated the Transit Railroad Company and authorized it to build a line from Winona west to a point on the Minnesota River. In 1857 the Congress granted lands amounting to 4.5 million acres to the Territory of Minnesota to assist four railroads with the construction of lines. One of these four land grant roads was the Transit. Investors, including the future first governor of Minnesota, Henry H. Sibley, bought stock in the Transit, and ground was broken for the line in June 1858. The financial crisis of 1857–1859 caused all work to be suspended, the road was unable to pay the interest on its bonds, and it went bankrupt. Reorganized in 1862 as the Winona & St. Peter Railroad, the line received a grant of land from the state of Minnesota and had secured new investment money from an eastern financier, D. N. Barney, who became president of the W&SP.

Danforth N. Barney was not only the railroad's president, he was also a director and the president of Wells, Fargo & Company. Between 1862 and 1873, construction of the W&SP moved westward from Rochester to Waseca to St. Peter and Mankato on the Minnesota River and finally to Watertown, Dakota Territory. In 1867 Barney and the other W&SP investors sold the line to the Chicago & North Western, which allowed the road to continue to operate under its own name. The eastern firm retained, however, ownership of more than 1,678,804 acres that had been part of the 1857 land grant to the road.<sup>17</sup>

Before the Civil War, the most common way to make money in the United States was through the buying and selling of land, although fortunes were made, and lost, by other means, of course. Banking, manufacturing, and maritime shipping all had been vehicles for creating personal wealth before 1865. But after the war, the demand for investment capital in the growing economy, which was often fueled by investment money from Europe, meant that an enterprising individual, such as Crawford Livingston, could use the emerging financial markets in the nation to achieve great wealth. The importance of land as a moneymaker

continued in the last third of the nineteenth century, as Chauncey Griggs and Crawford Livingston understood, but canny and resourceful investors such as these two transplanted Easterners increasingly resorted to the financial markets to realize their business goals.

### Land Grants to Railroads

Given the substantial capital investment that construction of a railroad required before it could actually begin carrying paying freight and passengers, the Congress made land grants to railroads to encourage individual investors, businesses, or governments to buy securities from the roads. The railroads then would have the funds to purchase land, construct the roadbed, and lay the track, buy the locomotives and rolling stock, and pay their employees and other debts. These land grants were not gifts; the railroads, in turn, signed contracts with the federal government agreeing to carry any and all shipments by or for the United States over their lines at one-half the cost of current freight rates.

Because the early records of the W&SP were destroyed in a fire in the 1880s, there is no way to determine whether Barney or any of his associates (one of whom was Johnston Livingston, another Wells, Fargo director) may have had any involvement in Crawford Livingston joining the railroad in 1870. It is certain, however, that the job was a valuable introduction to railroad operations, financing, and management.

Financing a railroad, given its high fixed asset costs, was a complex matter in the last third of the nineteenth century. Railroads could, and did, borrow money to help pay their start up costs. The interest on these loans added, of course, to their costs. Alternatively the roads could sell stock. But, as Jean Strouse points out in her fine biography of J. P. Morgan,

[s]elling stock instead of borrowing would have required no fixed payments, but stocks in America's fledgling capital markets were still considered highly speculative, and cautious investors wanted bonds—mortgages on the road's property, issued at high rates of interest. Most U.S. roads were capitalized primarily with bonded debt.<sup>18</sup>

Thus railroad leaders used the financial tools of loans, the sale of common and preferred stock, the mortgaging of the road's property with the sale of bonds, and the promotion of sales of acreage adjacent to the road's line to pay the investment costs in building the line. The lands that the railroads had acquired through federal land grants they typically sold to immigrants and other settlers who were seeking farmland, and to real estate developers who were buying acres on which they could plat town sites in the areas of the West that the railroads had recently opened to rapid settlement. This was the making of an education for the young Crawford Livingston.

Just at the time the early railroads in Minnesota appeared to be ready to take off, the Panic of 1873 intervened. Jay Cooke (1821–1905), a New York banker who had marketed U.S. government bonds to finance the Union effort in the Civil War, had invested heavily in the Northern Pacific (NP) Railroad, and become impossibly overextended. Cooke's financial fall not only thrust himself and the NP into bankruptcy, but it also helped initiate one of the worst depressions the United States had yet experienced.<sup>19</sup>

However, out of this depression came financial opportunity for another resident of St. Paul, James J. Hill. In the spring of 1878 Hill and three other wealthy investors were able to buy control of the St. Paul and Pacific (SP&P) Railroad, which at that time was owned by the bankrupt NP. Because Hill had to commit much of his personal fortune to the purchase of the SP&P, he began in the mid-1870s to gradually withdraw from some of his other business investments. He sold most of his shares in the Red River Transportation Company in which Colonel Griggs was also an investor. Hill could see that the railroad soon would prove to be a more efficient and cheaper way to transport people and goods between the Dakotas and Winnipeg.

### Problems with Bills

Hill's growing preoccupation with the SP&P also would come to benefit Chauncey Griggs. Hill, Griggs & Company advertised in the early 1870s that



they could supply the Twin Cities market with wood and coal, particularly anthracite coal, which was harder and burned cleaner than other types of coal. Up to this time wood had been the standard fuel in heavily forested Minnesota, but Hill and his partners had worked diligently to persuade their customers to switch to coal. They knew that coal would grow in importance for the railroads and other industries as well as for heating homes.

The Panic of 1873, however, meant that many fuel buyers weren't able to pay their bills with Hill, Griggs & Company. Hill, Griggs, in turn, then had trouble paying their suppliers of coal. Griggs, who was eight years older than Hill, seems to have been the object of many of the appeals from customers who asked for more time in paying for their fuel. He seems to have been more willing to consider the problems of his customers as a consequence of the economic depression and to look favorably on their appeals. Hill, on the other hand, saw the situation differently.

Once when Griggs had quoted prices to a customer for coal that was to be delivered six months in the future, Hill grew exasperated. He judged this was too risky for the firm, given the substantial price fluctuations that could occur in coal at their sources. Thus Hill noted in 1873 in his diary: "Spent forenoon talking over matters with C. W. Griggs. He expressed much sorrow for his conduct on Saturday and desires to try to do better."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately no record of Griggs's thoughts on this discussion have survived.

Even though the coal business remained profitable throughout the depression, this type of conflict between the senior partners put a strain on their working relationship. The two men brought the Hill-Griggs partnership to an end on May 1, 1875, when Hill paid Griggs \$35,000 for his share of the business.<sup>21</sup>

Having sold out to Hill, Griggs stayed, however, in the coal business and competed vigorously with Hill and his new partners. Griggs found Hill to be a determined and resourceful competitor, but Griggs didn't wilt under the pressure from his former partner. When prosperity began to return in the spring of 1876, Hill

wrote to Griggs and proposed that they and the other coal operators divide up the Twin Cities market with an arrangement whereby "everything is going to run smooth and harmonious [*sic*] and that our sales will aggregate over 40,000 tons for this year and our profit will be full."<sup>22</sup>

In his biography of James J. Hill, historian Albro Martin writes "these profits in coal eventually provided much of the seed money with which [Hill] would enter the railroad business."<sup>23</sup> The same point can be made equally well in regard to Chauncey Griggs and his subsequent investments in the wholesale grocery business in St. Paul and the timber business in Washington State.

### Livingston's New Partnership

In 1875 Crawford Livingston formed a different kind of partnership from the type that had involved Griggs and J. J. Hill. Instead of a business partnership, Crawford Livingston got married to Mary Steele Potts on January 28 in St. Paul at the home of General Sibley. The *St. Paul City Directory* for 1873 lists Crawford Livingston as boarding at rooms on the Irvine block, which today would be in the vicinity of Kellogg Boulevard and Seven Corners. No occupation is given in the 1873 directory, but the 1874 directory identifies Livingston as a clerk in the U.S. Harbor and River Improvement Office. In 1875 the city directory lists his occupation as secretary and manager of the Alliance Mutual Life Assurance Society of the United States, and his residence as the Park Place Hotel, which would have been near the present-day site of the Minnesota History Center. The 1873 directory also identifies his future wife's father, Dr. Thomas R. Potts, as physician and St. Paul health officer with offices at 109 Jackson Street.

Livingston family lore includes a charming account of how Crawford Livingston and Mary Steele Potts met. James C. Burbank, a wealthy St. Paul resident who had made his money in riverboat shipping, stagecoach transportation, and insurance, gave a reception in the early 1870s at his mansion at 432 Summit Avenue. Crawford Livingston and Mary Potts were among the invited guests, and

they met at this party. Crawford is supposed to have said to a bystander that he not only would marry Mary Potts, but that he also one day would live in the Burbank mansion with her. In 1875, in a double wedding that included Mary's sister Abbie and Charles W. McIntyre, a former New Yorker who was an agent for U.S. Express Company in St. Paul, Livingston achieved the first of these goals. He would have to wait until 1888 to accomplish the second.<sup>24</sup>



Dr. Thomas R. Potts. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

### The Potts Family

Like the Griggs and Livingston families, the Potts family also had its roots in the East. Mary Steele Potts was the daughter of Dr. Thomas Reed Potts and Abbie Ann Steele. Thomas Potts was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1810. He received his early education there and graduated from the medical department of the University of Pennsylvania in 1831. He then practiced medicine for ten years in Natchez, Mississippi, before moving in 1841 to Galena, Illinois. The 1847-48 *Galena City Directory* lists Dr. Potts as a "practicing physician."<sup>25</sup>

Because the Steele family hailed from Chester County, Pennsylvania, which is west of Philadelphia, Dr. Potts may have been drawn northward by the presence in

Minnesota of at least two members of the Steele family, Sarah Jane Steele, Abbie's younger sister who in 1843 had married Henry Hastings Sibley (1811–1891), and Franklin Steele (1813–1880), an older brother. Sibley was already a leader in the Minnesota region because he held exclusive management of the American Fur Company's trading operations with the Dakota, Ojibway, and other Indian tribes in an area ranging from southern Minnesota to the Canadian border and west to the Rocky Mountains. Franklin Steele had been appointed post sutler at Fort Snelling by President Martin Van Buren in the late 1830s. He also had invested in lumbering along the St. Croix River and in land around St. Anthony Falls, and what eventually would become the city of Minneapolis.<sup>26</sup>

In a letter that Abbie Steele wrote to Thomas Potts in August 1847 from the Sibley home at Mendota, she informs the doctor that she has had a letter from her sister (probably Rachel Steele) "and I suppose I may take it for granted my dear Mother had given her consent." Presumably Potts had written to Abbie's mother, Mary Hume Steele, asking for her consent to marry Abbie, whose father, Brigadier General James Steele, had died in 1845 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Abbie adds that Rachel reported her mother as saying that it was strange that Franklin Steele or Henry Sibley had not written to her because they both knew Potts and could tell her about him.

Abbie then writes that "Mother says if Dr. Potts is known to Frank and Mr. Sibley to be a gentleman of integrity and such a one as they would wish their sister to marry, she cannot withhold her consent. Of course she knows nothing of him [Potts] but what she heard from them. They are now your [Abbie's] guardians, and I know they would not wish you to marry one who was not worthy of you. (No danger of that dear Mother.)"

After some light-hearted teasing that this information might make Potts vain, Abbie writes that a mutual friend probably has told Potts about the long talk the friend had with her:

You say in your last letter you told him to tell me all he knew about you, both good and

bad. He did tell me a great deal that was very good and very pleasing to me for what can be more gratifying than to hear any one speak with such kindness of those we love. It is well he did not tell me any thing bad for I should not have believed him (I beg his pardon, but I could not). You need not refer me to any one my dear Dr. for information as regards your present or past life. I tell you now as I told you before[,] I am perfectly satisfied. I knew my Mother would give her consent. I told you she loves me too well to want to make me unhappy and she is so well acquainted with my disposition she knows well I could not love one day and forget the next . . . did she but know how dearly [?] I love you dearest Dr.<sup>27</sup>

The couple was married on October 28, 1847, at the home of Henry and Sarah Jane Sibley in Mendota.<sup>28</sup>

Correspondence in the Henry H. Sibley papers indicates that Thomas Potts was an able letter writer and a sharp observer of the politics of the day who wanted to move to Minnesota if Sibley could help him get a post there. In 1850 Potts received an appointment as a contract surgeon at Fort Snelling, but before he and his wife moved to St. Paul, a daughter, Mary Steele, was born in Galena on January 11, 1849.

Potts held his position for only eight months. Then he served for a year as surgeon to the Dakota and Ojibway Indians in the vicinity of Mendota. Then he was elected the first president of St. Paul under its Charter of 1850. During the Civil War, Potts again held the post of contract surgeon at the fort. In 1866 he was appointed city physician for St. Paul and later in 1873 was appointed the city's health officer. Not long thereafter, Potts died in St. Paul on October 18, 1874.<sup>29</sup>

One contemporary observer, T. M. Newson, has left the following personal portrait of Dr. Potts.

Dr. Potts was an "institution" of the city, having practiced here for over a quarter of a century, and was well known among all the old settlers. . . . At the time of his death he was the oldest practicing physician in St. Paul. He was a man of strong predilections; full of fun and humor; social in his nature and kind-hearted in his practice. He resided for many years in a small white house on



Mary Potts Livingston, who married Crawford Livingston in 1875. Minnesota Historical Society photo of an original oil portrait owned by Mary Griggs Burke, her granddaughter.

Robert street, and though having a large practice and a number of offices, yet he had only a slight appreciation of money, and left but little property to his widow, who is still living and residing in the family of Gen. Sibley. One looking upon her tall and graceful form and pleasant countenance, though saddened by care and sorrow, is forcibly reminded of the old, old times which have gone, never to return.<sup>30</sup>

Sarah Jane Sibley, the general's wife and Abbie Ann Potts's sister, had died in 1869, not long after two Sibley children had died in infancy. Given Newson's description of Dr. Potts's finances at the time of his death, General Sibley's kindness toward Abbie Potts probably was mutually beneficial. When Sibley became a widower, he was left with four children to look after. In late 1874 Abbie Potts had four also: Mary Steele, Henry Sibley (known as Harry), Charles John, and Abbie. Sibley also may have acted as a surrogate father-in-law when in January 1875 Mary Steele Potts married Crawford Livingston in the General's home. All the newspaper report of the wedding states is that the double wedding ceremony was "quite private" and the family was "in mourning."

The newlyweds soon had their first child. A son whom they named Crawford Jr., or Corsey, as he was known to the family, was born on October 29, 1875.

Although Corsey lived to adulthood, he died in 1904 of Bright's disease. Mary Steele Livingston, their first daughter, was born in St. Paul on December 20, 1876. Three more children followed: Abbie (or Abbian) Frances (1878–1944), Henry Sibley, who died in infancy, and Gerald Moncrieffe (1883–1950), who was also born in St. Paul. The Livingston daughters, Mary and Abbie, received their schooling at a fancy private school in New York City. Gerald attended Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, but he did not go on to college due to ill health.

With five children born within the space of eight years, Crawford and Mary Steele Livingston probably depended from time to time on the advice and assistance of Mrs. Potts and her brother-in-law, Henry Sibley. The Potts-Sibley connection had begun when Dr. Potts was still living in Galena, but an 1870 letter from the good doctor to his wife indicates the two families were close even before the doctor died. The letter, mailed from Duluth in an envelope with the letterhead of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Rail Road, was addressed "Mrs. T. R. Potts, care of Genl. H. H. Sibley, St. Paul, Minn."

As a physician, Potts appears to have gone to Duluth from time to time on railroad business. The Lake Superior and Mississippi road connected St. Paul and Duluth and was one of the principal ways that Hill, Griggs & Company got anthracite coal shipped in from the East. Great Lakes barges hauled the coal to Duluth where it was then transshipped by rail to the Twin Cities.

Potts wrote to his wife "I suppose Mr. Sibley has gone East on Rail Road business from the fact that [J. L.] Merriam and [E. F.] Drake went on about the same time, and from seeing in the newspapers that they had leased their road [the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad] to the Penna. Central R. Road." J. L. Merriam and E. F. Drake were vice president and president, respectively, of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad. Most of the letter concerns, however, the conduct of the couple's older son, Harry. Although both parents had talked to Harry about his habits, Potts wrote that



*The St. Paul railroad yards at the Lower Landing in 1887, the heyday of the railroad era. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

... it will do no harm for his Uncle[Sibley] to talk to him. If anyone has told his Uncle that he saw him drinking, and it should be untrue, his Uncle ought to tell him who it was that so informed him.<sup>31</sup>

Although Potts may not have been much of a businessman in terms of making money from his medical practice, another letter that he wrote to his daughter Abbie reinforces the impression that Dr. Potts was a perceptive observer of the world of business around him. This letter was written in September 1870. In it, he informs his daughter that the Northern Pacific Railroad connection to Duluth was nearly completed. "Persons who are interested here find it a great future for Duluth," Potts wrote, "but for my part, I do not see it. The climate and the long winters will, in my opinion, retard its growth."<sup>32</sup>

### **The Northern Pacific**

Potts's comment is significant because at the time the Northern Pacific plan was to build a transcontinental railroad from Duluth, at the head of the Great Lakes, to the Pacific with a western terminal on the Puget Sound. The Congress had chartered the NP in 1864 as a land grant road, but the first transcontinental route linking the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads had been completed in 1869. The NP expected to be the first northern

transcontinental road. Other railroad leaders, such as James J. Hill, discounted the value of Duluth as an eastern terminus of a transcontinental road and believed that St. Paul was the more logical transfer point. Although Hill and the various leaders of the NP would be competitors at many different times and in many different ways in the future, the choice of Duluth or St. Paul as the eastern terminal would remain central to their different approaches to the problem of building and operating a transcontinental railroad.

That year of 1875 was not only eventful for Crawford and Mary Potts Livingston, it was also a year of change for the Northern Pacific. After the railroad went bankrupt in 1873 and was placed in receivership by the federal court, Frederick Billings (1823–1890), one of the road's directors, worked out a complicated plan for reorganization in 1875 and submitted it to the court for review and approval.

Billings had left his native state of Vermont for California in the days of the Gold Rush. He was one of the first lawyers to practice in San Francisco, where he made a sizeable fortune dealing with litigation involving land claims and investing in real estate. In 1869 he bought stock in the NP. Now living again in the East, Billings soon became a direc-

tor of the road. His involvement in the NP grew and eventually he became chairman of the railroad's land committee. This meant he was responsible for planning and overseeing the NP's handling of land sales and the bringing of new settlers onto the acreage in Minnesota and Dakota Territory that the NP received from the federal government under its land grant.<sup>33</sup>

When Congress chartered the NP in 1864, it had not given the road any subsidy in the form of loans, such as had been the case with the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific. Instead the Congress gave the NP a land grant of twenty sections per mile of track in the states it crossed and forty sections per mile in the territories. This amounted to an enormous 47-million-acre checkerboard on either side of the actual and projected roadbed of alternating publicly and privately held sections of land.<sup>34</sup>

This land grant was a double-edged sword for the NP. It created a tremendous incentive for the road to build westward to the Pacific. It wanted to take possession of this acreage as soon as possible after the government inspectors had approved each new section of track that had been laid and authorized transfer of the public land to the NP. In 1875, for example, the NP sold 475,000 acres in Dakota Territory alone. Thus by 1878 the railroad had realized some \$8 million from land sales to 3,000 purchasers. The Dakotas were experiencing a land boom due to the fertile soil along the Red River of the North, good annual rainfall that began in the mid-1870s, a decline in the grasshopper population, and a growing demand for wheat, which thrived in the rich prairie soil.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, the potential revenue the NP would realize from building westward in the territories and taking prompt advantage of the land grant subsidy meant that the railroad's directors had little incentive to first build a strong short line that would connect the main track that headed west from Duluth through Brainerd with the growing Twin Cities. The lure of the land grant also meant there was not likely to be sufficient money to build the necessary feeder lines along existing tracks in Minnesota

and the Dakotas. These feeder or branch lines would provide populated areas with a steady flow of passengers and freight from the areas surrounding the road and generate a cash flow to help pay for further westward expansion.

In short, by the mid-1870s the NP lines had been hastily, often poorly, constructed, and were a tempting target for speculators even after Jay Cooke had lost his powerful control over the road. Land rich but financially strapped, the NP got help from millionaire Frederick Billings and his supporters, one of whom was a fellow NP director, Johnston Livingston. Billings's complex reorganization plan hinged on the road's bondholders agreeing to convert their bonds to preferred stock, but it also offered something for everyone who had a financial interest in the NP.<sup>36</sup>

At noon on August 12, 1875, the federal court sold the NP to the only bidder, Johnston Livingston, who represented the bondholders, for \$100,000. Billings had successfully overcome all the legal objections, persuaded the court of the merits of his plan, and made it possible for the NP to extinguish all its debts. The railroad, which by that time had built westward to Bismarck on the Missouri River in Dakota Territory, had 575 miles of track, ten million acres of land, and the legal right to earn about thirty million more acres if it could complete construction to the Pacific before the Congressional dead line of

1880. Not long after Billings righted the NP's financial ship, the directors voted to simultaneously build westward from Bismarck and eastward from the Columbia River.<sup>37</sup> The NP also sought, and obtained, a six-year Congressional extension in the deadline to complete their transcontinental line to guarantee the road would qualify for its land grant.

The NP was not the only railroad that brought immigrants to the upper Midwest states and territories in the late 1870s and 1880s. James J. Hill and his St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba (later reorganized and renamed the Great Northern in 1889-90) also transported many settlers seeking land, and so did other railroads. After the national economy picked up in the late 1870s, there was such a vast influx of immigrants to Minnesota and the Dakotas that railroad historian Michael Malone reported:

The Dakota Boom crested in 1882, during which year forty-two thousand immigrants came to the Red River valley. The promotion-immigration bureaus of the NP, the Manitoba, and the other railroads brought a tidal wave of settlers to the region. By 1890 the valley was settled and no longer in any sense a frontier, and a thin wave of white habitation lapped into the Drift Prairie, beyond to the West. In the first state census of North Dakota (1890), fully 43 percent of the population was foreign-born.<sup>38</sup>



*The children of Chauncey W. and Martha Ann Griggs, left to right: Heartie, Everett, Herbert, Theodore W., Chauncey M., and Anna. Photo courtesy of Patricia Sweney Hart.*

By the time the NP had reorganized and regained solvency, the family of Colonel Chauncey Griggs had grown to six children. Theodore Wright Griggs was born on September 3, 1872, and the Griggs's last child, Anna Billings Griggs, was born two years later. Despite the dissolution of the Hill-Griggs partnership in 1875, the colonel was a busy man. He had formed a successful partnership dealing in real estate, wood, and coal with General Richard W. Johnson, a Sibley and a Potts brother-in-law. In 1877 Griggs entered into another partnership with Addison G. Foster, who had recently moved to St. Paul from Wisconsin and whose brother, Everett, had served with Griggs in the Third Minnesota regiment.

### **Warehousing and Wholesaling**

The Griggs and Foster partnership concentrated on warehousing and wholesaling provisions in the Duluth area, which, as Dr. Potts had observed, was growing due to all the railroad building. The Duluth business soon led the partners to open a general store in 1878 in the Cumberland, Wisconsin, area. Two years later Griggs and Foster bought shares in a Cumberland lumber business.<sup>39</sup>

At the same time that Griggs and Foster were expanding their operations in Duluth and northern Wisconsin, they were heavily involved in real estate sales in Minnesota and the Dakotas. For example, they advertised the sale of lots at Spring Park, Lake Minnetonka. More significantly they also began buying land in the Dakotas in 1880 using shares of NP stock that they had bought at bargain prices when the railroad was under financial duress. By buying rich wheat land in the Red River valley with stock that had subsequently greatly appreciated in value, the partners acquired nearly 100,000 acres for what in some instances amounted to as little as twenty cents an acre.<sup>40</sup> The *St. Paul Globe* carried the following report on how Griggs turned these acres into profits:

Col. C. W. Griggs returned from a month's absence in New York yesterday, in excellent health and spirits. During his absence he sold 30,000 acres of land adjacent to the line

of the Northern Pacific road. The purchasers were eight different parties, who paid cash and will proceed to break one-fourth of their purchases this present season. . . . a great tide [of settlers] is setting in this direction. Minnesota and Dakota are the great centers of attraction.<sup>41</sup>

As if selling land, lumber, and fuel weren't enough, Griggs also found time to serve for seven years as an alderman in St. Paul. In 1882 he chaired a committee of city council members who negotiated the city's purchase of the property, rights, and franchises of the St. Paul Water Company so that the city would own the municipal water works. Once the sale had been completed, Griggs served on the first board of water commissioners. In addition he moved into banking in 1872 and by the mid-1880s he was a director for three banks.<sup>42</sup>

### **Livingston and the Northern Pacific**

About the same time that Colonel Griggs was dealing with the Northern Pacific for land in the Red River Valley, Crawford Livingston began his involvement with the NP. Perhaps his uncle Johnston Livingston, who served as an NP director from 1875 to 1881 and 1884 to 1885, had some connection with Crawford's entry into railroad building. During Johnston Livingston's first term on the NP board, the president of the road had been Charles B. Wright, but in May 1879, the road's directors elected Frederick Billings to that position. Wright had wanted the NP to shore up its finances by building feeder lines and making sure the road had direct access to the Twin Cities. Billings, on the other hand, wanted to push ahead with construction westward. An internal struggle between the proponents of these two strategies had taken place, and those who supported Billings won out. So building the NP westward became the top priority.<sup>43</sup>

In the last third of the nineteenth century, railroads played a central role in the development of Minnesota and the Northwest. Railroads also were the key to Crawford Livingston's rise to personal fortune because they offered a significant investment opportunity. Given his cir-

cumstances and connections in St. Paul and New York, he was in a position to take advantage of the railroads' need for enterprising investors who were willing to take the financial risks and who had the determination to see building plans through to completion. Crawford Livingston could have continued his work for the Alliance Mutual Life Assurance Society of the United States or for the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company of California, who were his employers in St. Paul in the late 1870s. Instead, about 1880 he chose to establish his own firm, C. Livingston & Company, which the *St. Paul City Directory* identified as "money brokers," and to serve as secretary of the St. Paul Board of Trade. Because the railroads were important to Crawford Livingston, an understanding of what was happening to the railroads is central to understanding his business career.

Having overcome the objections to making the completion of the NP as a transcontinental railroad the first priority, Billings became so immersed in the necessary work that he soon failed to see a threat approaching from another direction. It came in the form of an aggressive NP stockholder named Henry Villard (1835-1900), a German-born immigrant who had risen to prominence as a journalist during the Civil War. In 1866 Villard married Helen Frances "Fanny" Garrison, daughter of the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Villard's alliance with the Garrison family opened many doors to wealthy and influential men in post-Civil War America for the bright and articulate Villard.<sup>44</sup>

In the early 1870s Villard returned to Germany for health reasons. While there, he met a group of German investors who owned a majority of the bonds for the Oregon & California Railroad (OCR). Because these investors were concerned about the financial security of their investment in the OCR, they engaged Villard to investigate the railroad's financial condition.

Back in the United States, Villard discovered that OCR's management had been fraudulently reporting the financial state of the road. On behalf of the German investors, he negotiated a deal that gave his employers control of not only



*The Northern Pacific Railroad's celebratory arch in downtown St. Paul in 1883, the year the NP reached the Pacific. By this time, Livingston was deeply involved with the railroad. This photo by W. H. Illingworth looks east down Fourth Street to Broadway. Minnesota Historical Society photograph.*

the OCR, but also the Oregon Steamship Company and the Oregon Central Railroad. Soon Villard was in charge of all these companies, and by 1879 he had formed a syndicate of American investors that bought out the Germans.

Villard formed a new company called the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company (OR&N) to pursue control of the rail and shipping business along the Columbia River. In 1881 when Villard realized that Frederick Billings's construction program for the NP would soon challenge his control of transportation in the region, Villard set about buying control of the NP. He raised \$20 million from wealthy investors in what the newspapers of the day called a "blind pool," an arrangement whereby the investors put up the money without knowing how Villard would use it. Backed by this pool of funds, Villard soon owned enough shares of NP stock to take control of it, too.

Billings and his supporters, such as Johnston Livingston, hadn't realized

what Villard was doing when he started to buy NP stock. After Villard obtained majority control of the road, Billings resigned as president, but stayed on as a director. Johnston Livingston, however, resigned as a director on April 22, 1881.<sup>45</sup>

Villard then set up a holding company called the Oregon & Transcontinental Company (O&T) to oversee both the NP and the OR&N. Now firmly in control of this widespread transportation business, Villard vigorously moved ahead with the Billings plan so that he could link his Oregon operations with the Midwest. By the fall of 1883 after many setbacks and difficulties and at a cost that at one time amounted to \$2 million per month, the NP tracks reached from Duluth to the Puget Sound.<sup>46</sup>

At the same time that Henry Villard pushed the NP to complete transcontinental construction, he too was prodding the road to build branch lines because he judged the NP now had the financial resources to do this work as well. In his report to the NP's stockholders for the

year 1881-1882, Villard summed up his policy:

It is well known that the growth of the great Western railroad corporations is in the largest measure due to the gradual construction of systems of tributary lines. But all these companies succeeded in providing themselves with such local systems only through the efforts, sacrifices, and embarrassments of years. The Northern Pacific is, and will probably remain, the only Company so fortunate as to command that source of prosperity to the fullest extent, and practically without financial burdens, in the early stages of its career.<sup>47</sup>

The practical effect of this strategy was to depend on the high credit rating of the O&T in the financial markets to provide the investment capital necessary to build or complete the branch lines Billings and Villard wanted. The 1880s was a time that was ripe for this kind of railroad construction. In that decade, the rail network of the entire United States grew by 43 percent. In Minnesota alone, railroad trackage increased in the 1880s by 2,315 miles or 54.7 percent, while the state's population grew by 521,053 people.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Right Place, the Right Time**

All of these factors offered great opportunity to Crawford Livingston. If any ambitious and hard-working person was in the right place at the right time, it was Crawford Livingston. Through his family and friends, he had connections with both railroad leaders and potential investors. He also appears to have had his own substantial investment capital. Thus Crawford Livingston was in an ideal position to seize the opportunity to build branch lines for the NP.

Although each of the branch lines Livingston was involved in building has a different history, there are similarities in how these roads were built and incorporated into the NP. A good example of this is the Little Falls & Dakota Railroad Company (LFD). The LFD received a corporate charter from the state of Minnesota on February 19, 1879. Whether Crawford Livingston was an investor in the road at this time is not clear. The largest investor at the time of incorporation appears to

have been Colonel William Crooks (1832–1907), a West Point trained engineer who was a pioneer in Minnesota railroad building. According to the LFD's charter, the road was to run from the Western Minnesota Railroad's station in Little Falls, which was south of the east-west NP line through Brainerd, then southwesterly to Sauk Center and on to Morris, where it would intersect the main line of the St. Paul Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad (StPM&M), owned by James J. Hill. From Morris, the line would have joint use of the StPM&M tracks westward to the Minnesota-Dakota boundary.<sup>49</sup>

Although the NP records indicate that the road's board considered the LFD's plan on April 20, 1880, nothing significant happened until March 3, 1881. That spring the Minnesota legislature granted to the LFD six sections of swamp lands per mile of track after construction of each thirty-mile section of track was completed. The total distance from Little Falls to Morris was eighty-eight miles. The grant amounted to 334,080 acres. Completion of the line also would entitle the LFD to \$164,800 in county bonds.<sup>50</sup>

The grant came just at the time Billings and his supporters were locked in the struggle for control with Henry Villard. When Villard emerged from the contest in full control of the NP, the railroad's directors adopted a resolution on August 18, 1881, to proceed with construction of branch lines, such as the LFD. Subsequently on February 3, 1882, the NP's executive committee adopted a recommendation from the road's chief engineer that five branch lines be built or completed in 1882–1883. Of those five lines, Crawford Livingston had invested in three: the LFD, the Jamestown and Northern, and the Northern Pacific, Fergus, and Black Hills. Although each of these railroads was separately incorporated and could issue its own bonds, the NP effectively controlled the construction of these roads because at some time in 1881, the O&T had purchased sufficient stock in each line to have majority control of the ownership of the railroad. In the case of the LFD, the O&T owned 6,300 shares.<sup>51</sup>

Villard sat on both the NP's and the

O&T's boards. With the O&T holding a majority of the stock in each branch line that was to be built, the O&T paid for the cost of constructing the line and selling bonds in these roads at the rate of \$20,000 per mile of track. The NP, in turn, operated the branch lines, and two years after completing construction, the NP paid six percent interest annually on the bonds sold to those who had invested in the road plus one percent annually to a sinking fund set aside to pay off the bonds. Once the bonds were retired, the NP would own the stock of each branch. In the meantime, the NP would have a right to the dividends and the votes on the stock.<sup>52</sup>

These terms and other details are spelled out in individual contracts between each branch line, the NP, and the O&T. The tripartite LFD contract was dated October 20, 1882, and signed by Robert Harris, an NP director who was also president of the LFD.<sup>53</sup>

In the NP's president's files there is a copy of a handwritten letter of September 11, 1882, from Henry Villard to Crawford Livingston. Villard's letter reads in part:

I have your note of the 6th inst. in reference to my making a proposition for the sale of the Little Falls & Dakota . . . bonds. The proposition should come from you. It is my purpose to receive propositions for these bonds whenever they come to hand, arranging [?] a sale to the highest bidder.

If you decide to make a proposition on the bonds at that time, I will give you an opportunity to do so. I must add that the possibility [?] is that they will bring more than the Otter Tail County bonds [for the Northern Pacific, Fergus, and Black Hills Railroad].<sup>54</sup>

This letter needs explanation. After completion of the LFD, which actually began operation on November 1, 1882, the NP would receive more than \$164,800 in bonds as donations from the towns located along the LFD's tracks. At that time, the NP would be free to sell these bonds, just as it would be able to sell the land the LFD received in the land grant from the Minnesota legislature. On the LFD land grant, for example, the NP grossed nearly \$500,000. Thus if Craw-

ford Livingston was the highest bidder on the LFD bonds and the NP sold them to him, he would be able either to retain or try to resell the bonds to other investors at a higher price than he had paid for them.<sup>55</sup>

### Other Railroad Investments

The O&T and NP had similar contracts with the Northern Pacific, Fergus, and Black Hills Railroad and with the Jamestown and Northern Railroad in which Crawford Livingston had also invested. The Northern Pacific, Fergus, and Black Hills ran from Wadena, which was a town located on the NP trunk line between Brainerd and Fargo, to Fergus Falls, and from there west to Breckenridge and on to Milnor, Dakota Territory. Construction of this branch line was completed in late 1883. The Jamestown and Northern originated in Jamestown, Dakota Territory, another station on the NP trunk line, and ran north to the Canadian border. Begun in 1882, construction was not completed until 1885.<sup>56</sup>

Crawford Livingston also invested in the Duluth and Manitoba Railroad around 1882. On June 1, 1887, Livingston, as president of the railroad, signed a lease with the NP for the construction of a line that would originate at a point on the NP main line in Clay County, Minnesota, and head north through Clay, Norman, and Polk Counties to the U.S.-Canadian border. The line also would run from Polk County to the Red River, crossing it at Grand Forks, and then heading north to Pembina at the Canadian border.

In July of 1886, the Duluth and Manitoba had executed a mortgage with the Farmers' Loan & Trust Company to secure payment of bonds for the railroad in the amount of \$15,000 per mile. The bonds, with an interest rate of six percent, would be redeemed on June 1, 1897. The underlying purpose of this railroad was to compete with James J. Hill and his StPM&M for traffic to and from Winnipeg, Manitoba.<sup>57</sup>

The significance of Crawford Livingston's role in the financing of branch lines of the NP was tangibly confirmed in the 1883 celebration of the completion of the NP as a transcontinental railroad.



A horse-drawn Griggs, Cooper wagon in downtown St. Paul. The firm, organized in 1882, passed through several changes in its name before becoming Griggs, Cooper in 1890. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

Henry Villard spent an enormous sum of money on this celebration. He invited about 400 guests, including former President U. S. Grant, many of the NP's German and British investors, executives from other U.S. railroads, a number of other foreign visitors, and the nation's press, to travel in four trains to Gold Creek, Montana, for the ceremonial driving of the gold spike to signal completion of the line.

When the party stopped in St. Paul en route to Montana, a celebration with parade and banquet was held. The NP records include a detailed account of all the events, descriptions of all the floats in the parade, lists of local political and business leaders who participated, and the speeches given that day. The head table at the banquet included not only General Grant and Villard, but also James J. Hill, Henry H. Sibley, E. F. Drake, and W. D. Washburn, a Minnesota congressman. Seated at the second table was guest number forty-six, Crawford Livingston.<sup>58</sup>

### Griggs, Cooper & Company

One parade float deserves particular mention because it was sponsored by the

firm of Glidden, Griggs & Company, a business that specialized in wholesale groceries:

This firm had the most ingenious display of the whole division. In the forward wagon was a large engine made of the materials of the grocery trade. The driving wheels were made of tubs, the piston driving rod of a patent broom handle, and the small stack of a white paper basket. This locomotive was one of the most creditable features of the whole procession.<sup>59</sup>

Earlier in 1882 Chauncey Griggs had started the firm of Glidden, Griggs & Company to profit from the growing market for groceries needed by all the immigrants and others who were moving to Minnesota and the Dakotas. Glidden retired in 1884; so the business changed its name to Yanz, Griggs & Howe. In 1889 Jason Walker Cooper (1843-1925) became a partner. After another partner died, and a second was bought out, the firm became Griggs, Cooper & Company in 1890.<sup>60</sup>

Cooper had settled in Minnesota following service in the Union army in the Civil War. Beginning in 1864, he traveled extensively for the American Ex-

press Company. In 1871 he went into the grocery business as a traveling salesman for Beaupre & Kelly in St. Paul, and he worked there until joining Griggs, Cooper in 1889. When Griggs, Cooper was incorporated in 1900, Cooper became a vice president, a position he held until his retirement in 1921. His background in the grocery business and his familiarity with the needs of customers all over the Northwest, helped Cooper move the firm into the manufacture of canned goods and the establishment of a series of picking and packing plants in key locations around Minnesota. Garden and orchard farm products were delivered to these plants and converted to groceries that could be shipped all over the country. This part of the Griggs, Cooper business prospered so well that the firm then got into the manufacture of cans, boxes, crates, baskets, and other containers required for shipping their goods.

The size and efficiency of the Griggs, Cooper operations led to the development of its famous "Home Brand" yellow label goods. At the end of the century, Griggs, Cooper made and packed coffee, all kinds of spices, maple syrup, extracts, mince-meat, canned goods, cornstarch, soda, rolled oats, cheese, olives, herbs, vegetables, and bird-seed under the Home Brand label, which was the company's highest grade of goods. It also offered a standard grade of the same goods, known as the "Bengal Brand." Eventually Griggs, Cooper became the largest wholesale house west of Chicago.<sup>61</sup>

The 1880s in St. Paul was not only the decade for railroad construction, it also was the decade for building mansions on Summit Avenue. Before 1880, only twenty-four homes had been built on this wide boulevard high above the center of the city and overlooking the Mississippi River. During the decade of the 1880s, more than sixty homes joined their predecessors there, a sign of the community's growing affluence. James J. Hill built his mansion at 240 Summit in 1887, but Colonel Griggs and his business partner, Addison G. Foster, built their adjoining homes at 476 and 490 Summit, respectively, in 1883. A young, newly graduated architect from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology named Clarence H.



Johnston designed both houses and their joint carriage house in the prevailing Romanesque style. The Griggs home, with twenty-four rooms, cost \$35,000; the Foster home, with twenty rooms, cost \$23,000.<sup>62</sup>

Henry Villard's 1883 triumph with the Northern Pacific may have been an occasion for civic celebration by Griggs, Cooper and Company as well as other businesses, but the heady feelings brought on the driving of the last spike were short lived for Villard. The cost of completing the transcontinental and branch lines left the NP with severe financial problems. The problems were so great that in January 1884, Villard resigned from his posts with the NP and the Oregon & Transcontinental and left for Germany in an effort to recover his financial and physical health.<sup>63</sup>

### **Livingston and A. B. Stickney**

About this time, A. B. Stickney, who was another St. Paul railroad builder, and his partner, William R. Marshall (1825–1896), who had served two terms as governor of Minnesota in the 1860s and had been a Minnesota railroad commissioner from 1874–1882, were looking for investors for a railroad known as the Minnesota & Northwestern (M&NW) that the two men had acquired in 1883. Although chartered in 1854, nothing had come of this road until Stickney and Marshall obtained its franchise and bought 10,000 shares of outstanding stock in the road. The new owners recognized that they had a potential tax windfall in the M&NW because the road's state charter stipulated that "the company is forever exempt from all local and other taxation in Minnesota except a two percent tax on its gross earnings."<sup>64</sup>

Alpheus Bede (who always went by his initials) Stickney (1840–1916) had been born in Maine to an impoverished family. He obtained a common school education between frequent interruptions to work in factories because his father had abandoned him and his mother. Stickney briefly read law in an attorney's office in Dexter, Maine, but in 1861 he left for Minnesota, following the example of an older brother who previously



*The house at 476 Summit Avenue that Chauncey W. Griggs built in 1883. Designed by Clarence H. Johnston, the brownstone structure cost \$30,000. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

had headed west. Stickney settled in Stillwater, where he served for a time as a postal worker and a teacher before being admitted to the Minnesota bar in 1862.<sup>65</sup>

Although Stickney soon became involved in local land speculation, he moved to St. Paul in 1869 seeking greater opportunities for a young lawyer. There he assisted in organizing in 1871 the North Wisconsin Railway Company, which convinced him that railroading might be a road to a personal fortune. By 1872 Stickney was vice president, general manager, and chief counsel of the newly organized St. Paul, Stillwater & Taylor's Falls Railroad Company.

In 1879 James J. Hill invited Stickney to take on responsibilities as superintendent of construction of Hill's rapidly expanding St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba road. A year later Stickney also took on the duties of general superintendent of the western division of the Canadian Pacific (CP) Railroad, another of Hill's projects.

When Stickney became embroiled in a controversy over a possible conflict of interest relating to land speculation along the CP's route, he persuaded Hill that he was innocent of the charge that he had

taken advantage of his position with the railroad for personal gain. Nevertheless, in 1881 Stickney left Hill's employ to become vice president of the Minneapolis & St. Louis (M&StL) Railway Company. One of Stickney's assignments in his new job was to oversee the construction of the Minnesota Central, a M&StL subsidiary.

The M&StL was a north-south railroad that wanted to expand its service to customers in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois between the Twin Cities, St. Louis, and Chicago. As part of this plan, the Minnesota Central was laid out from Red Wing, Minnesota, in a westerly direction some sixty-six miles to Waterville, Minnesota, where it would intersect the M&StL's main north-south route. About the time the Minnesota Central was finished, Stickney left the M&StL for the Minnesota & Northwestern where he could be in charge. To build the M&NW, Stickney brought in Crawford Livingston, who served on the road's board of directors, and other English and American investors.

Given the departure of Henry Villard from the NP and that road's financial problems in the mid-1880s, Stickney's M&NW was just the sort of new opportu-

nity that would appeal to Livingston. Stickney's plan was to construct the railroad between St. Paul and Mona, Iowa, a small town just south of the Minnesota-Iowa border. At Mona, the M&NW would connect with the Cedar Falls & Minnesota, a railroad leased by the Illinois Central. Once M&NW traffic gained access to lines controlled by the Illinois Central, further connection to roads leading to Chicago was assured.<sup>66</sup>

Before he began to build the M&NW, Stickney set up another Minnesota company called the Minnesota Loan & Debenture Company. Its purpose was to arrange for construction of the M&NW. The Minnesota Loan & Debenture Company hired a firm to lay the road's rails at the lowest possible cost, but it charged the M&NW considerably more than the amount billed by the construction firm. As a Dubuque, Iowa, newspaper subsequently reported about the arrangement, Stickney and his other investors "openly admit that they made their money in constructing it [the M&NW], and that they do not expect to make any by operating it."<sup>67</sup>

Construction began in September 1884, and the 110 miles of track between St. Paul and Mona were completed a year later. Once the M&NW began operating in the fall of 1885, local newspapers speculated openly that larger railroads might attempt to take over the M&NW. But Stickney didn't sell the M&NW; instead he set out to acquire other lines that would facilitate rail connection between St. Paul and Chicago, as well as St. Joseph and Kansas City, Missouri. Whatever may have been his motives in building the M&NW, Stickney found that he liked operating and expanding his road. So did his investors. By 1887 Stickney had become the president of a regional rail system, which he called the Chicago, St. Paul & Kansas City. In 1892 this road became the Chicago Great Western (CGW). By the time Stickney retired from railroading and the CGW in 1908, he had achieved a reputation as something of a railroad maverick, but also as an astute and successful businessman.<sup>68</sup>

### A Move to Summit

Through his association with successful railroad entrepreneurs such as Henry

Villard and A. B. Stickney, Crawford Livingston had achieved both great financial reward and confirmation of his own stature as a leader in the St. Paul business community. When Mary Potts and Crawford Livingston were first married, they had lived at 40 and later 65 Iglehart Street, at the corner of Carroll, near the present-day Capital Approach area. Mary Griggs Burke, Crawford and Mary's granddaughter, remembers that when she was growing up in St. Paul, she took an interest in the poorer residents of the city who she felt were living in slums. Talking with her mother, young Mary was told that there were no slums in St. Paul. Later, as the two were out driving, young Mary pointed to a house and said, "Well, Mother, if that is not a slum, I don't know what is." Indignant, her mother denied that the house was a slum because it was the house at the corner of Iglehart and Carroll Streets where she had been born.

About 1880 the Livingston family moved to 15 Nelson Street, today the easternmost part of Marshall Avenue and not far from the St. Paul Cathedral. In 1881 the family, which by now included four children, moved again, this time to 574 St. Peter Street (194 St. Peter under the city's old numbering system). Built in 1870 by Dr. J. T. Alley in the popular French Second-Empire style, this house survived until 1959, when it was demolished to make way for Interstate 94. While the Livingston family lived there, their youngest son, Gerald, was born in

1883, and their second son, Harry, who was just over two years old, died in 1884 from croup. Surely this must have been a terrible blow to Crawford and Mary Livingston at a time when Crawford's railroad investments were starting to pay handsome returns.<sup>69</sup>

Crawford and Mary Livingston soon found a way to leave behind the painful memories associated with 574 St. Peter Street and to signal their own membership among the leading families of St. Paul. Not far from the stately Summit Avenue homes of Chauncey Griggs, Addison G. Foster, and A. B. Stickney, who built his house at 288 Summit in 1884, stood the impressive mansion that James C. Burbank had built in 1862-63 in the style of an Italian villa. His house, which stood at 432 Summit, was built from gray Mendota limestone. A handsome cupola that gave a wide view of the surrounding area and the Mississippi River below topped its three stories.

In 1883 Burbank's widow sold the home to George R. Finch, a partner in the local dry goods company that eventually became Finch, Van Slyck and Company. The Finch family lived at 432 Summit for only a year before they sold the property to Thomas F. Oakes. At that time, Oakes was first vice president and general manager of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Subsequently, Oakes subdivided the property and the neighboring lot and sold them in mid-1887 to William G. Riley. Early the next year, John J. Watson bought 432 Summit and nearby



*Downtown St. Paul as it looked from Summit Avenue in the 1880s when the Livingston and Griggs families were living on Summit. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

Summit Court from Riley. In 1888, Watson sold the Burbank mansion to Crawford Livingston.

Crawford and Mary Livingston are likely to have long admired the Burbank mansion from the time they seem to have met there before their marriage in 1875. As a business associate of Henry Villard and Thomas Oakes, Crawford Livingston may well have been a guest at the Burbank mansion when Oakes owned the home. Between 1888 and 1968 when Crawford Livingston's granddaughter gave the house to the Minnesota Historical Society, the Burbank-Livingston-Griggs house, as it is known today, was a center of St. Paul society. Although the house is no longer owned by the Minnesota Historical Society, it remains the second-oldest house still standing on Summit Avenue.<sup>70</sup>

### Griggs and Lumbering

In the same year that Crawford Livingston bought the Burbank mansion, Henry Villard returned to the presidency of the Northern Pacific and the Oregon & Transcontinental Company. Between 1884 and 1888, the NP had continued to have financial problems. Villard, however, had been able to secure new investment for the railroad from German bankers; thus he was asked to take charge of the NP once more. By that time he realized that the road faced stiff competition from the Union Pacific for control of rail transportation in the Pacific Northwest. After James J. Hill was able to complete transcontinental construction of the Great Northern from St. Paul to Seattle in 1890, the NP once again felt the competitive pressure from its old Midwestern rival.

In the late 1880s, the NP had plenty of westward passenger and freight traffic, but it needed to greatly increase its eastward traffic if it was going to realize its full potential on operating income. Thus when Thomas Oakes learned that, independent of each other, two pairs of Midwestern lumber mill owners were investigating timber possibilities in Washington Territory, he determined to bring the two groups together. One pair of mill owners was Chauncey Griggs and Addison Foster of St. Paul; the other was Henry



*Crawford Livingston and his family in front of 432 Summit, now the Burbank-Livingston-Griggs house, around 1888. Left to right: Livingston; his wife Mary; a groom; and three of the Livingston children, young Crawford, Abbie, and Mary, who would marry Theodore W. Griggs and live there also. Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

Hewitt Jr. of Menasha, Wisconsin, and Charles Hebard Jones of Menominee. Oakes invited the four men to meet with him in early May 1888, and to discuss freight rates and lumber prices. During and after that meeting, Oakes encouraged them to pool their financial resources and lumbering experience so that they could construct a lumber mill in Tacoma, and he assured them that the NP would be able to provide the mill owners with favorable freight rates for eastbound Douglas fir lumber, allowing them to compete effectively on price with the traditional white pine lumber the Midwestern mills produced.

Partially as a result of Oakes's persuasive arguments and partially out of a recognition that the sources of white pine in the Midwest were rapidly diminishing, the four men agreed to combine their resources and proceed with a plan to begin lumbering operations in Tacoma. Chauncey Griggs met in New York with other NP leaders and, after much negotiating, signed a contract with the NP to buy 80,000 acres of timberland within

thirty miles of Tacoma. The purchasers also agreed to build a mill in Tacoma within a year that could cut thirty million board feet of lumber annually. The contract also called for additional rail construction to move the timber from the forest to the mill, the building of a second mill, and favorable freight rates on the NP that would assure that the partners and their mill would earn a profit. With this contract in hand, the four Midwesterners incorporated the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company on June 4, 1888, with Chauncey Griggs as its president.<sup>71</sup>

At that point, Chauncey Griggs knew his future lay in Washington Territory and not in St. Paul. The Griggses sold their home at 476 Summit for \$100,000 to James McNaught, general counsel for the Northern Pacific, and moved to Tacoma. Although the colonel was still the senior partner in Griggs, Cooper and Company, he delegated day-to-day management to his oldest son, Chauncey Milton Griggs. His youngest son, Theodore Wright Griggs, also a member of the Griggs, Cooper management, eventually

would rise through the organization to the post of vice president.

Writing in 1886, T. M. Newson, a contemporary of Chauncey Griggs, has left this verbal portrait of the man:

Col. Griggs is a fine-looking man, well-proportioned and possessing excellent business qualities. He is quiet in his movements, cool and deliberate, but effective in results, and has laid a basis upon which he is building up a fortune. He is exceedingly social and pleasant in nature, yet back of all this he is shrewd and scheming. He has made a good public officer, more so by his earnest work than by outward display, and may very justly be classed among our sensible, sagacious, solid, able citizens.

Colonel Chauncey Griggs had a productive and financially successful career in Tacoma. He retired from the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company in 1908 and died at the age of seventy-eight on October 29, 1910.<sup>72</sup>

### The NP and the Panic of 1893

While Chauncey Griggs and his partners were establishing a lumber business in Washington, the Northern Pacific found itself overextended and its treasury fearfully depleted of cash reserves. When the Panic of 1893 hit the country, traffic

over the NP lines was severely curtailed by the worsening economic conditions, and the railroad soon sank into bankruptcy and receivership. Villard resigned on June 21, 1893. Internal conflict among NP directors, the road's creditors, and its bondholders soon followed. Some NP directors sought out James J. Hill in the hope that he might be able to help the NP. As Hill wrote in an 1894 letter to one of his long-time associates,

When I was in N.Y. some of the old "Billings" crowd as they call themselves . . . came to see me . . . wanting to know if I would take into consideration a plan of reorganization with a view of bringing the Nor. Pac. and our own property much closer together. I told them I would consider it . . .

If the Nor. Pac. could be handled as we handle our property, and all the wild and uncalled for rate cutting stopped, it could be made [a] great property. Its capacity to earn money is good, . . . but it has not been run as a railway for years, but as a device for creating bonds to be sold.<sup>73</sup>

Since Frederick Billings had died in 1890, some of his associates, such as Johnston Livingston, who had supported him when he was the NP president, were trying to untangle the mess and to protect their investment in the railroad. Although

railroad historian Albro Martin identifies Crawford Livingston as a member of the "Billings crowd," the evidence for this assertion is not presented in his book on James J. Hill.<sup>74</sup>

Eventually the NP was reorganized in 1897, largely due to the leadership and substantial investment of money from J. Pierpont Morgan, the New York banker. The "Morganization" of the NP, as it has been called, led to the formation of the Northern Securities holding company shortly after the turn of the century, effectively merging the NP and the Great Northern under James J. Hill. The U.S. Supreme Court eventually ruled that the Northern Securities Company was acting in restraint of trade and forced the two railroads into separate management.

Crawford Livingston had by this time turned his attention elsewhere. In the 1890s an independent businessman such as Livingston would not have had much scope for action in an operation dominated by men such as J. P. Morgan and James J. Hill. Not until 1917, after both Morgan and Hill had died, did Crawford Livingston again have any significant involvement with the Northern Pacific, when he agreed to serve as a director of the railroad. Ill health forced him to resign as a director in the spring of 1925.

### The St. Paul Gas Light Company

With his involvement in railroad building winding down in the late 1880s and early '90s, Crawford Livingston put his energy and business savvy into leading or advising other companies and organizations. In about 1886 he bought the St. Paul Gas Light Company and served for a time as its vice president before selling the business to M. S. Frost. He was a director of the Merchant's National Bank, the Title & Insurance Company of Minnesota, the Edison Electric Company, which was located in New York, the Inter-State Investment Company, the Livingston Land Company, and a trustee of the Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company. For a time, he was also president of the St. Paul Board of Water Commissioners.

General Henry Sibley, Livingston's long-time friend and adviser, may have



The 1884 fire that destroyed the Griggs & Foster (as it was then known) warehouse on Third Street, causing \$134,000 in damages. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

played a part in Livingston's decision to take on a senior role with the St. Paul Gas Light Company and the Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company. In 1867 General Sibley had been elected president of both these firms, and he continued in these positions for more than twenty-three years until his death in 1891.<sup>75</sup> Similarly Henry Villard had been an early investor in the Edison Electric Company, and he may have encouraged Livingston to invest in the future of electric lighting and to serve on the company's board.

The purpose of the Livingston Land Company was to sell land in Livingston, Montana. When the Northern Pacific was building its transcontinental line across the Northwest, it often would survey town sites along the projected tracks. According to NP records, on August 18, 1882, the railroad's board of directors considered an application from Crawford Livingston and another investor "to purchase or acquire otherwise an interest in the Company's projected town site of Livingston, in Gallatin County, Montana. The President was authorized to decline these and all similar applications." Some time later, however, the NP's directors must have reconsidered their position and decided to allow Livingston and others to buy the land.

Livingston is located on the Yellowstone River in Park County. In 1806 Lieutenant William Clark, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, and several others in the group were the first whites to visit the site. The NP's surveying party came through the area on July 14, 1882, and they named this location Clark City in honor of Lieutenant Clark.

Several sources on Montana history state that the town's name was later changed to Livingston in honor of Crawford Livingston, who is identified as an NP director. NP records, however, identify Crawford's uncle, Johnston, as the NP director who was honored. It was customary for railroads to name towns for their directors as they surveyed across the West. The NP was no exception. Billings, Montana, is a prime example. When Clark City was renamed Livingston, Crawford Livingston was associated with the NP in Minnesota and the

Dakotas, but he was not a director; thus logic seems to favor Johnston Livingston as the family member for whom the town was named.<sup>76</sup>

### Livingston and His Family

At this time in his life, Crawford Livingston seems to have increasingly focused more of his time and attention on his family. In 1902, for example, he bought 100 acres of land and a large cabin from the North Wisconsin Lumber Company. The cabin, which Livingston called "Forest Lodge," is situated on a cove on Lake Namekagon, east of Cable. Built in 1893, it may have been used as a bunkhouse for the lumber crews, and it may have come to Livingston's attention through his association with A. B. Stickney, who had spent considerable time building railroads in northern Wisconsin.

According to Mary Griggs Burke, Crawford Livingston's granddaughter, "[h]is children were young adults when they began spending time there [at Forest Lodge]. It took the family almost all day on the train from St. Paul to Cable, and another six hours from Cable station to Forest Lodge by horse-drawn wagon."

In the early 1920s, Mary Burke and her mother, Mary Livingston Griggs, spent two winters at Forest Lodge. This



*A young Mary Griggs Burke with her father, Theodore W. Griggs at Forest Lodge, Cable, Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of Mary Griggs Burke.*

is how she recalled that experience:

I remember clearly when I was six and seven the great excitement of being snowed in there for part of two winters. The frozen lake was a magic place with tiny ice castles along the shore. Sometimes the lake made a strange low rumble like the deep voice of a giant. Among its joys, spring brought a blanket of white trillium and other wild flowers spread over the earth. In the fall the brilliance of red and gold maples and glistening white birch awoke us from a relaxed and sleepy summer.<sup>77</sup>

Recorded in the turn-of-the-century guest book at Forest Lodge are the names not only of the many friends and family members who visited there, but also some long lists of the local game that Crawford Livingston and his wife and sons had shot.

In 1902–1903 Mary Livingston, her oldest son Corsey, her daughters Mary and Abbie, and Mrs. E. A. Young, a sister-in-law who was one of General Sibley's daughters, and Mrs. Young's daughter made a cruise around the world. Although Corsey apparently stayed on the boat most of the time, the party visited such exotic places as Egypt, India, Burma, Japan, and possibly China. Not long after their return, Corsey died on March 31, 1904, in New York City from Bright's disease, a form of chronic nephritis. He is buried in Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul.

While the travelers were away from Minnesota, Crawford Livingston's mother, Caroline Livingston Phelps, died on March 12, 1903. She and her second husband, Professor William F. Phelps, had been living at 599 Summit Avenue, and Phelps remained there until his own death on August 15, 1907, from a "lingering illness."<sup>78</sup>

According to the 1899 *St. Paul City Directory*, Crawford Livingston's sister, Elizabeth Willis; his half-sister, Alice L. MacGregor; and Mrs. MacGregor's husband, Alexander T. MacGregor, also were living at 599 Summit, which is one of several row houses there. Today 599 Summit is best known as the house where F. Scott Fitzgerald lived in the summer of 1919 when he was revising *This Side of Paradise*.

Elizabeth Livingston had married Henry B. Willis on December 20, 1883, in the home of her stepfather, Professor Phelps, in Winona. The Winona newspaper account of the wedding stated that Crawford Livingston was unable to attend due to the illness of one of his children. Possibly the child who was ill that day was Gerald Moncrieffe Livingston, who had been born a few months earlier on August 31. Henry Willis was a partner in a wholesale plumbing supply firm. He died on March 12, 1902, at the age of fifty-six. His wife Elizabeth outlived her husband by fifteen years. She died on May 14, 1917, at 599 Summit.

Alice L. MacGregor, Crawford's half-sister, outlived all the Livingston family members of her generation. She had been born in New Jersey on May 13, 1856, when Professor Phelps was the principal at the New Jersey State Normal School in Trenton. Alice MacGregor, who lived to be eighty, died on June 4, 1936, at an apartment at 579 Summit, where she was living at the time.<sup>79</sup>

In 1898 Crawford Livingston built a house at 339 Summit Avenue. In his book on historic homes of Summit Avenue, architectural historian Ernest Sandeen provides considerable information about the house. Designed by Cass Gilbert in the Medieval-Rectilinear style, the house cost \$14,000. Whether Crawford Livingston ever lived there is questionable, however, since several St. Paul city directories for this period list his residence as 432 Summit. Perhaps Livingston intended this house as a gift for his oldest son Corsey or as a speculative investment, but he apparently sold the house shortly after it was finished to Charles H. F. Smith, a St. Paul investment broker.<sup>80</sup>

Although the evidence is somewhat fragmentary, the letters and papers dealing with Crawford Livingston that are available indicate that his Livingston family was important to him. An example can be found in his will. The will stipulated that after he died, which was in 1925, his executors were to establish two trust funds, each in the amount of \$50,000. One fund was to provide income for his half-sister, Alice L. MacGregor, during her lifetime; the other was



*The house, designed by Cass Gilbert, that Crawford Livingston built in 1898 and is still standing at 339 Summit Avenue. Ramsey County Historical Society photo.*

to do the same for his brother-in-law, Charles John Potts, brother of Mary Potts Livingston. As part of his instructions, the will stated that the trustees

shall never invest said trust funds or any part thereof, or any proceeds thereof, in or upon the security of any mining stocks, insurance stocks, bank stocks, or in any speculative stocks whatsoever. I recommend investment thereof in Municipal, State and United States securities, and in first mortgage bonds of old established prosperous railway companies.<sup>81</sup>

As an experienced investor, Crawford Livingston wanted to leave nothing to

chance in spelling out his investment preferences and minimizing any risk to the funds he was leaving to care for these family members.

A second glimpse of how Crawford Livingston took care of other members of his extended family comes from a letter from his son Gerald to Gerald's Aunt Alice MacGregor. While he was alive, Crawford Livingston appears to have regularly sent his half-sister monthly checks in the amount of \$175. In 1927, about two years after Crawford's death, Alice wrote to Gerald apparently complaining that she was having a difficult time making ends meet, even with the income from the

\$50,000 trust fund. This letter is lost. His response, however, is available and it said

I do object to your criticizing my father in any way whatsoever. You must surely realize he not only kept his own family going but his mother, stepfather and two sisters. I think this is something to be proud of.<sup>82</sup>

As the Livingston children grew to adulthood in the first decade of the new century, Mary Livingston and her children traveled extensively. Some of their letters report on trips to Paris, Madrid, elsewhere in Europe, and to the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Crawford Livingston, however, appears to have spent much of his time in New York, where he could be in touch with the financial markets. He also was scouting the Maine coast for a place where he could build a summer home.

In 1910 the Livingstons' younger daughter, Abbie, married then U.S. Army captain Cleveland Coxe Lansing, and their youngest son, Gerald, married Eleanor Hoffman Rodewald. Abbie's wedding took place in the garden of the Livingston home at 432 Summit Avenue. Based on the newspaper account of the day's events, it was an elaborate and well-attended celebration. In contrast, when daughter Mary Steele Livingston married Theodore Wright Griggs, the youngest Griggs son, her long-time friend and suitor, on November 26, 1915, guests were invited to an afternoon tea at the Livingston home in St. Paul and informed that the wedding had been performed shortly before they arrived.

Abbie and Cleveland Lansing and Gerald and Eleanor Livingston made their homes on the East Coast not far from New York City, while Mary and Theodore Griggs lived at 432 Summit Avenue. With the arrival of grandchildren in 1911 and 1912 in the Lansing and Gerald Livingston families, Crawford Livingston had even more incentive to find a summer place that was easily accessible from New York and where he could gather the growing Livingston family together.<sup>83</sup>

One Sunday about this time Crawford wrote an undated letter on stationery from the Sea View Inn at Biddeford, Maine, to his wife Mary. This letter cap-



Mary Livingston Griggs. *Minnesota Historical Society photo.*

tures his excitement and delight in finding a spot on the Maine coast where he could build a house.

I am called back to N.Y.—as usual by important business—and am leaving tomorrow, Monday AM, by auto to Boston. I will use the long distance phone and see if I cannot stay at Salisbury [with Abbie and her husband] before going to N.Y., if not I hope to see you & Mary in N.Y.

I wish you could all have come here & helped me locate the house. I have found a new location, in fact two, & am in doubt which is the best. We have already [sic] done some work on the [one] that I think is the best. It certainly is very beautiful. I am sure you will like it. Monday we start in earnest to build & hope to have it all finished before April 1st.<sup>84</sup>

### Memories of Grandfather

The daughter of Theodore and Mary Livingston Griggs, Mary Griggs Burke, has written an account of her memories of the house in Biddeford, which Crawford named Fortune's Rocks, located at Granite Point, and of her Grandfather Livingston.

He was . . . an elegant gentleman impeccably dressed with a neat, waxed mustache and

a flower in his buttonhole. Pat, his decidedly Irish gardener, grew small button dahlias on either side of the long driveway on Granite Point perfect for this purpose. I can see grandfather walking down this road with his handsome gold-headed cane admiring the flowers and drinking in the sea air.

In spite of his dignified appearance, grandfather had a pixie-like slightly sadistic sense of humor. He loved to tease his grandchildren and play tricks on us and particularly he delighted in stirring us all up so that our parents temporarily lost control of us. I think we all loved him for this, but it did keep us on our toes and guessing. He would suddenly say things like, "none of you are very bright, but you are all good looking." . . .

Grandfather also made up a game called "lazy bones." It took place at breakfast on the sun porch, where those who got to their places at the table first had the right to call later arrivals "Lazy Bones." This seemed to us a most embarrassing name to be called, and we tried to devise strategies to avoid it by creeping in on all fours, hiding behind the maid when she came in to serve, or making a dash for it. We took it very seriously. . . . Occasionally grandfather would dress up in disguise and sit silently at the end of the table until we all began to giggle.

Another very strong characteristic of grandfather was his delight in arguing. He enjoyed it for its own sake. It was a game. Unfortunately for grandfather, his wife would never respond. She often won her point by smiling benignly and quietly going ahead with her plans. An example of this, which my mother described to me, concerned the fact that grandfather wished her [Mary Steele Livingston] to be christened Marie while grandmother preferred Mary, and Mary it turned out to be.

Grandfather, however, seemed to lead his own life in spite of, or perhaps because of, his differences with grandmother. At the time I knew my grandparents, while they seemed to have affection for each [other], they were often apart, only coming together because of their mutual love of their children. Grandmother lived with my parents and me in the house in St. Paul [432 Summit Avenue], which grandfather Livingston had

bought when he had become wealthy. While grandfather stayed with us, it was almost like a visit when he came to his own house in St. Paul. The majority of his time was spent in New York, near his youngest and only surviving son Gerald. . . . Grandmother appeared to be quite happy in St. Paul. She was very beautiful, with large dark eyes set off by a mass of white hair, but she reminded me of a Buddha in her imperturbability. She appeared placid and sweet at all times.<sup>85</sup>

The 1907 edition of *The Book of Minnesotans*, a Minnesota version of a "who's who," carried a short biography of Crawford Livingston that included the statement "now retired from active business." However, it also listed his office as "51 Exchange Place, New York" and his residence as "Summit Av. St. Paul."<sup>86</sup> This information captures succinctly the paradoxical circumstances of Crawford Livingston's life. His home was in St. Paul, but his office was in New York. He was retired, but the evidence that is available from that period in his life definitely indicates he neither had slowed down nor withdrawn from active engagement with the business world.

The address "51 Exchange Place" was the office of Lee, Kretschmar & Company, one block south of Wall Street. At least as early as April 1906, Crawford Livingston was living at the Waldorf-



Theodore W. Griggs. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

Astoria hotel and using the Lee, Kretschmer offices as his local headquarters. Based on information in a letter from Mary Livingston, Crawford's wife, to her daughter Mary, Kretschmar died on December 2, 1911. Mrs. Livingston reports: "Gerry is looking well, and starts to work today [December 6]. Your Father has taken an office for him, and has a partner. I think your Father will probably do most of the work. . . . Your Father seems to feel his [Kretschmar's] death very much and says he misses him greatly."<sup>87</sup>

### Livingston & Company

This letter appears to signal the beginning of Gerald's involvement with what would become Livingston & Company, a stock brokerage firm. According to the *New York Times*, Livingston & Company had its origins in 1893 as Lee, Livingston & Company. Presumably, the Livingston in the firm's name was Crawford Livingston, who was then associated with Lee, Kretschmer & Co. Initially Livingston & Company had its Wall Street offices at the corner of Pine and William Streets in the heart of the financial district. Later in the 1920s, the firm moved to 111 Broadway, not far from the New York Stock Exchange. In 1934, after several years of difficulty due to the Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the subsequent severe economic downturn throughout the country, Livingston & Company merged with the firm of Abbott, Proctor & Paine. At that time Gerald Livingston was a "special partner" in Livingston & Company. He had been elected a member of the Board of Governors of the New York Stock Exchange in 1924, and not long thereafter, retired from the firm, although he maintained his membership in the Stock Exchange.<sup>88</sup>

Among the papers in Crawford Livingston's estate is a copy of a letter Gerald wrote in 1927 to a firm in Cleveland, Ohio. The Cleveland firm had asked whether Livingston & Company would be interested in underwriting a first mortgage of \$1.75 million for a complex of a theatre, some stores, and an apartment house the Cleveland company planned to build. Gerald replied that "Livingston & Company is not a banking house, but

simply does a brokerage business and therefore would not be interested. At one time my father, the late Crawford Livingston, built the Rialto Theatre and was interested in others, but personally, I have no interest in this kind of business."<sup>89</sup>

### The Impresario and the Investor

The Rialto Theatre episode reveals another facet of Crawford Livingston's personality and character. All that is available to explain what happened in the course of this investment are the reports in the *New York Times* in 1916. Oscar Hammerstein, who's identified in the newspaper accounts as an impresario, had had an office in the old Victoria Theatre on Forty Second Street in New York. Apparently the Victoria was being extensively renovated, and its name was changed to the Rialto. When Hammerstein went to the Rialto to go to the office he had had on the third floor when the building had been the Victoria, he was ejected from the theater because, the building manager explained, "he might make a speech to the workmen and delay the completion of the building," which was at the time months overdue. Hammerstein then went to the nearest police station and "asked for police protection from bodily harm he feared would be done him by men working on the Rialto." The police station captain detailed a patrolman to accompany Hammerstein to the theater, but he later reported that police protection was not needed. Hammerstein had withdrawn to another office nearby.

The next day's paper continued the saga under the headline "Oscar In Three Reels." Reel I summarized the previous day's events. Reel II reported that Hammerstein had gone to court and obtained summonses for Crawford Livingston, president of the Rialto Company, and the building superintendent. Reel III explained that later that day Hammerstein returned to the Rialto, only to be again barred from entry. He then explained that he had a lease that allowed him to occupy his offices. The theater's management said he was welcome to use his offices as soon as the building was completed. The



building manager added that if Hammerstein "continues to give an imitation of Mount Vesuvius in eruption," he would be jeopardizing the good will of the theater owners toward him.

The following day the feisty Hammerstein and his lawyer met his adversaries and their attorney in court. The defendants admitted they had kept Hammerstein out of the Rialto because of Hammerstein's interference with the workmen, which had caused delays. The defendants' lawyer assured the court that as soon as the theater was finished, they would permit Hammerstein to occupy his offices. The court then adjourned until the following month when the parties once more gathered before the magistrate.

Once the parties were again in court, the magistrate dismissed Hammerstein's complaint because the memorandum on which Hammerstein based his claim for use of the offices was drawn up after the lease was written, but it had never been signed. Thus Hammerstein had no case.<sup>90</sup>

Hammerstein, the combative opera manager, didn't intimidate Crawford Livingston, who had done his homework on the details of the lease. In true comic opera fashion, Hammerstein emerged from the fray looking foolish, to the obvious amusement of the *New York Times*.

Over the last ten or fifteen years of his life, Crawford Livingston tended his investment portfolio. He bought municipal, state, and U.S. bonds, and he invested in "blue chip" stocks, such as railroads like the Northern Pacific. He owned 7,000 shares of Great Northern Iron Ore Properties, which was probably his single biggest equity holding, but he also invested in more speculative stocks. Crawford Livingston seems to have been very attracted to the fledgling film industry. In the accounting of his stock holdings that is among the papers in his estate, he owned at the time of his death at least 1,400 shares of the Triangle Film Corporation, sixteen shares of the Reliance Motion Picture Corporation, thirty shares in the New York Motion Picture Corporation, eighty-five shares in the Mutual Film Corporation, and 1,300 shares in the Film Exchange Corporation. His executors, however, identified these motion picture stocks, along with at least seven-

teen other stocks in his portfolio as "worthless." Six others were labeled "no market value."<sup>91</sup> Thus, even for as experienced an investor as Crawford Livingston, there were some stocks and bonds that turned out to be losers.

In the papers left from the settlement of Livingston's estate, there's not much, other than the lists of assets, to suggest what investment strategy he may have had. The directions he left for the investment of the trust funds indicate his attitude toward risking money left for the support of others, but it was not a guideline he always followed in investing for himself. The motion picture stocks argue that he was definitely interested in this new medium of entertainment and was willing to take some substantial risks in buying these equities.

By the 1920s, motion-picture production, distribution, and exhibition had grown into a major national industry. Although Livingston's stocks appear to have been those of companies involved in a variety of activities, some such as the Triangle Film Corporation and New York Motion Picture Corporation were movie production companies, and most of the movies these companies produced during Livingston's lifetime were silent films.

Because of his stature as a successful investor, Livingston received letters from time to time from people who wanted his advice on what stocks to buy or investments to make. Among his papers are a few of his answers to these inquiries. For friends who seemed to be somewhat inexperienced investors, he answered their questions courteously but made no recommendations. With others, such as William Hamm, of the Hamm Brewery family in St. Paul, he was more forthcoming, more willing to give an opinion or recommendation. In a 1923 letter to Louis W. Hill, one of James J. Hill's sons, he recommended a plan the Great Northern might use with the independent steel manufacturers to increase the volume of iron ore the GN was hauling for them.<sup>92</sup> The available correspondence is not very voluminous, but it does show that Crawford Livingston was an active investor and businessman even as he grew older and his health began to give him increasing problems.



Mary Griggs Burke. Minnesota Historical Society photo from an original oil owned by Mrs. Burke.

### Providing for His Family

Crawford Livingston's will is dated June 27, 1919. A codicil, in which he set up the trust for Charles J. Potts, his brother-in-law, is dated September 3, 1925, a little more than two months before Livingston's death. Neither the will nor the codicil is lengthy or elaborate. Crawford Livingston essentially left his property to his wife. Should she predecease him, his estate would go to his three children, Gerald M. Livingston, Abbie L. Lansing, and Mary L. Griggs, "share and share alike." If one of these three children predeceased him, Livingston provided that that son or daughter's child or children should have the deceased parent's share of the estate on a *per stirpes* basis. Throughout the will Livingston referred to his oldest daughter as "Marie," as he preferred to address her, and not as "Mary," her mother's choice of name. Livingston also appointed his wife, son, and the husbands of his two daughters as the executors of the will and trustees of the trusts established under the will.<sup>93</sup>

Providing for his family after he was gone was not just a matter of drafting, signing, and witnessing a will. On January 1, 1922, for example, Livingston

wrote to his daughter from New York wishing her a Happy New Year. Much of the brief letter communicates, however, his frustration over getting \$200,000 in bonds to her. Livingston wrote:

... it is all most [*sic*] unbelievable that a man tried to give his daughter \$200,000 & she took so little interest in the gift that he could not get her to acknowledge the gift or tell him where to send them to. If you read of a case like that in a novel, you would not believe it & say such an absurd thing never occurred in real life. Do you know that not only did I sweat drops of blood to make the \$200,000, but I spent days in trying to get good bonds cheap & [i]t took a lot of work to see I got the right bonds, pack them, have them registered at the P.O. & insure them at the insurance Co. I trotted around with them on foot & was pretty well used up when I finally got them off. It's a queer world & queer people in it.<sup>94</sup>

By 1923 Livingston was beginning to feel his age. A letter to a real estate company that he wrote in December 1923, about an apartment at 1148 Fifth Avenue that he planned to rent includes the information that he had been confined to his bed from March 1 to September 28 of that year. Eventually he did move to 1148 Fifth Avenue. In April 1924, he wrote a Long Island golf club that he was giving up his locker there because he had been "confined to my bed for something over a year and do not expect to play golf again."<sup>95</sup> That same day he wrote Dr. James Hall of Oyster Bay, Long Island, that he had been confined to his bed "the major part of the time since I saw you last—same old trouble, high blood pressure, high pulse and itch; none of which seems to improve. In fact I am not nearly so well, so far as I can judge, as I was when I saw you last."<sup>96</sup>

Despite Crawford Livingston's health problems in the early 1920s, Livingston & Company was prospering. In a letter that he wrote his son-in-law, Theodore Griggs, on May 30, 1922, he expressed his very evident pride in how well this business was doing:

I wish you and Mary lived in New York or near here. Gerry has now got a big business, probably one of the largest, if not the largest,

of its kind in this country, which means in the world. I think he is very happy over it. I am only a special partner, but I go down nearly every day. It's hard for an old dog to give up his tricks.<sup>97</sup>

On January 27, 1925, Crawford and Mary Livingston celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in New York City, but neither was in good health. Mary Livingston died first on July 28, 1925, in Biddeford from apoplexy and pneumonia. She was seventy-four. Soon he began to fail. Death came on November 16, 1925, at the age of seventy-eight, from cardiac failure. The *St. Paul Dispatch* hailed Livingston as a "pioneer rail builder," "associate of James J. Hill," and "founder of the St. Paul Gas Light company, which recently passed into the hands of the Northern States Power company." In its obituary, the *New York Times* identified Livingston as a "railroad builder and capitalist" and mentioned his association with Henry Villard and A. B. Stickney in the "development of the Northwest." Both Mary and Crawford Livingston were buried at Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul, where their two sons and Thomas and Abbie Potts also were buried.<sup>98</sup>

Most of the work of settling Crawford Livingston's estate fell to Gerald Livingston, with some help from Theodore Griggs. Much of the surviving correspondence relating to the estate deals with the preparation of an accurate inventory of Livingston's portfolio of stocks and bonds and of determining the values of these properties for tax purposes. One 1926 letter from Gerald Livingston to a partner in his firm indicates that Gerald and an associate planned to go over all the "old book and effects" from Crawford Livingston's office at 51 Exchange Place and they "would destroy all the books and papers except those that the law may require for us to keep." Another letter from Gerald to Tiffany Studios written in 1927 discusses the design and making of a fine hammered Rhode Island granite memorial cross containing the Livingston name and coat of arms that was to be set up at Oakland Cemetery. The cost was estimated at \$8,000.<sup>99</sup>

The estate papers also contain a num-

ber of documents concerning the value of the estate, the tax issues relating to the estate, and the distribution of the property after taxes among the three Livingston children. On October 6, 1926, the *New York Times* reported that when Crawford Livingston's will was filed for probate in Biddeford, which he claimed as his residence after he built his summer home there, the railroad builder left an estate valued at \$10,783,174 to his three surviving children. The inventory filed with the will placed the value of Livingston's real estate at \$90,000, goods and chattels at \$9,384,456, and credits at \$1,308,718. A Gerald Livingston letter dated November 12, 1926, states that the estate paid \$1,488,488.57 in federal taxes. A copy of a 1927 document from the Minnesota probate court lists Minnesota inheritance taxes for the three Livingston children as \$4,205.88.<sup>100</sup>

Crawford Livingston was an extraordinary man in his ability to understand the economics of railroad building and to use this understanding to create a substantial fortune. Although there is much that is not well known about Crawford Livingston's business life, the significant contribution he made to the development of railroads in Minnesota and the Dakotas deserves to be better appreciated and acknowledged than has been the case.

Crawford Livingston did not achieve the fame and notoriety associated with other Midwest railroad builders, partly because he seems to have lacked interest in the limelight and partly because he spent so many of his later years in New York. Nevertheless, the record clearly shows that he was an extremely hard-working and astute investor who helped make St. Paul and the Upper Midwest a center of commerce in the nation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Without Chauncey Griggs and Crawford Livingston, Minnesota and its capital city of St. Paul might not be what they are today.

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## End Notes

1. Crawford Livingston letter from New York City to Mary Steele Livingston, January 18, 1912, from the Livingston Family letters in the possession of Mary Livingston Griggs Burke, New York, New York. Hereinafter this collection is referred to as "Livingston Papers."

2. Chauncey Milton Griggs letter to Everett Gallup Griggs II and Benjamin Glyde Griggs, April 16, 1913. Copy in the possession of Patricia Sweney Hart, St. Paul, Minn. This letter is reprinted in Henry A. Castle, *Minnesota: Its Story and Biography*, vol. 3, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1915), pp. 1519-1520.

3. Biographical materials on Colonel Chauncey Wright Griggs and his family are readily available. The most complete sources are: Henry A. Castle, *Minnesota: Its Story and Biography*, vol. 3, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1915), pp. 1517-1520; Murray Morgan, *The Mill on the Boat: The Story of the St. Paul and Tacoma Lumber Company* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1982), pp. 8-21; "Ledger's Series of City Builders—No. 23 [Chauncey Wright Griggs]," *The Tacoma Sunday Ledger*, October 31, 1909, 25; Evelyn Burke, "The Griggs Family," probably written in 1942 or 1943, copy in the possession of Patricia Sweney Hart, St. Paul, Minn.; "A Glimpse Of The Lives Of Chauncey Wright Griggs And His Wife Martha Ann Gallup Griggs," author unknown, privately printed February 1978, copy in possession of Patricia Sweney Hart, St. Paul, Minn.; "Genealogy: Descendants of Chauncey Wright Griggs and Martha Gallup Griggs," compiler unidentified, summer 1991, copy in possession of Patricia Sweney Hart, St. Paul, Minn.; and James A. Sazevich, compiler, "Griggs Family Historical Chronology," July 27, 1995, unpublished manuscript, copy in the possession of Patricia Sweney Hart, St. Paul, Minn.

4. Ruth Lawrence, *Genealogical Histories of Livingston and Allied Families* (New York: National Americana Society, 1932), pp. 73-75.

5. Clare Brandt, *An American Aristocracy: The Livingstons* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1986), p. 197.

6. Material on Crawford Livingston's involvement in the express business comes from Alden Hatch, *American Express: A Century of Service* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1950), pp. 15-29; Lawrence, *Genealogical Histories of Livingston and Allied Families*, pp. 73-75; Neil M. Loomis, *Wells Fargo* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1968), pp. 8-9; and Sylvie R. Griffiths, "Johnston Livingston, the Express Business, and the California Connection," *4 Hudson Valley Regional Review* (March 1987): 21-37. Griffiths states (pages 25 and 27-28) that Johnston bought Crawford's share in the express business, but she provides no source for this. She also reports without documentation (page 22) that Crawford died of tuberculosis.

7. Lawrence, *Genealogical Histories of Liv-*

*ingston and Allied Families*, pp. 80-81; Loomis, pp. 13, 15-20; and W. Turrentine Jackson, "A New Look at Wells, Fargo, Stagecoaches and the Pony Express," *California Historical Society Quarterly* (December 1966): 291-297.

8. Christine A. Ogren, "William Franklin Phelps," in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, editors, *American National Biography*, vol. 17 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 432-433 and "William Franklin Phelps," in Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 14 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), pp. 532-533. Details of Phelps's work at the New Jersey State Normal School can be found in the annual reports that Phelps submitted to the New Jersey Legislature beginning in 1856. The reports are printed volumes available at the library of the College of New Jersey, Trenton, N. J.

9. Information on Crawford Livingston's education and early career is from Lawrence, *Genealogical Histories of Livingston and Allied Families*, pp. 86-87, "Crawford Livingston," in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, vol. 42 (New York: James T. White & Co., 1958), pp. 393-394, and "Crawford Livingston," *6 The Northwest Magazine* (January 1888): 10.

10. The details of Col. Griggs's service in the Civil War can be found in Castle, 3: 1517-1518; Morgan, pp. 9 and 11; Virginia Brainard Kunz, *Muskets to Missiles: A Military History of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Statehood Centennial Commission, 1958), pp. 47-48; and Board of Commissioners, *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 2d ed. (St. Paul: State of Minnesota, 1891), 151; and Pioneer Press Co., *St. Paul History and Progress: Principal Men and Institutions* (St. Paul: Pioneer Press Co., 1897), p. 92 (hereinafter referred to as *St. Paul History and Progress*).

11. The account of how Martha Ann Griggs traveled to Connecticut is found in the letter of Chauncey Milton Griggs to Everett Gallup Griggs II and Benjamin Glyde Griggs, April 16, 1913, which is reprinted in Castle, 3: 1519-1520.

12. Detailed accounts of the Battles of Murfreesboro and Vicksburg and the role of the Third Minnesota Infantry in them are in Castle, 3: 1517-1518; Morgan, pp. 11-12; Kunz, pp. 48-51; *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, pp. 151-158 and 162-166; James Lee McDonough, *Stone's River—Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville, Tenn.: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980); pp. 3-10; and Frank J. Welcher, *The Union Army 1861-1865: Organization and Operations*, vol. 2 *The Western Theater* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 199-202, 291-296, 892-899.

13. Morgan, pp. 12-20; Sazevich, pp. 7-13; and Marion H. Herriot, "Steamboat Transportation on the Red River," *21 Minnesota History* (September 1940), 245-271.

14. "Wm. F. Phelps," in *History of Winona County* (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Co., 1883), pp.

800-801; Ogren, 17: 432-433; Malone, 34: 532; C. O. Ruggles, *Historical Sketch and Notes: Winona State Normal School, 1860-1910* (Winona, Minn.: Minnesota State Normal School Board, 1910), pp. 15-25, 36-37, 41-52, 187-189; and Jean Talbot, *First State Normal School, 1860: Winona State College, 1960* (Winona, Minn.: Winona State College, 1960), pp. 1-8.

15. Phelps Family Record Group, compiled August 28, 1996, Winona County Historical Society, p. 1.

16. "Crawford Livingston," *6 The Northwest Magazine* (January 1888): 10 and *Winona City Directory 1875* (Winona, Minn.: W. M. Campbell, 1875), pp. 89 and 108.

17. Information on the early history of the W&SP RR comes from R. E. Miles, *A History of Early Railroading In Winona County* (Winona, Minn.: no publisher, 1958), pp. 3-8. A copy is available at the Winona County Historical Society; Franklin Curtiss-Wedge, compiler, *The History of Winona County Minnesota* (Chicago: H. C. Cooper, Jr. & Co., 1913), pp. 461-469; and Theodore Christianson, *Minnesota: The Land of Sky-Tinted Waters*, vol. 1 (Chicago: American Historical Society, 1935), pp. 398, 425-426.

18. Jean Strouse, *Morgan: American Financier* (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 133.

19. Michael P. Malone, *James J. Hill: Empire Builder of the Northwest* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 35-49 and Albro Martin, *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1991; original edition published in New York by Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 116-154.

20. Morgan, pp. 20-21; Martin, pp. 96-98. The Hill diary quotation is on p. 98.

21. Martin, p. 98.

22. Martin, pp. 106.

23. Martin, p. 107.

24. Richard Edwards, compiler, *St. Paul City Directory, 1873* (St. Paul, Minn.: Richard Edwards, 1873), pp. 278, 292, 356, and 487; the information from the 1874 and 1875 directories is courtesy of James Sazevich; Christina H. Jacobsen, "The Burbank-Livingston-Griggs House: Historic Treasure on Summit Avenue," *42 Minnesota History* (Spring 1970): 29; Eleanor Ostman, "Livingston-Griggs Home Reflects Old World," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, February 13, 1966, pp. 1, 8, and *St. Paul Dispatch*, January 29, 1875, p. 4.

25. *Galena City Directory, 1847-8* (Galena, Ill., 1847), pp. 26, 53.

26. Nathaniel West, *The Ancestry, Life, and Times of Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley, LL.D.* (St. Paul, Minn.: Pioneer Press Publishing Co., 1889), p. 427; Return I. Holcombe, ed., *Minnesota in Three Centuries, 1655-1908*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis, Minn.: The Publishing Society of Minnesota, 1908), pp. 95-97; handwritten Steele family ge-

nealogy, Livingston Papers; Edward G. Longacre, "Henry Hastings Sibley," in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., *American National Biography*, vol. 19 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 913-914; and "Henry Hastings Sibley," in Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography*, vol. 17 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), pp. 144-145; and Rodney C. Loehr, "Franklin Steele, Frontier Businessman," *27 Minnesota History* (Winter 1946): 309-318.

27. Abbie Ann Steele letter to Dr. Thomas R. Potts, August 1847, Livingston Papers.

28. E. G. Gear, chaplain, U.S. Army, handwritten marriage certificate dated March 10, 1864 certifying the marriage of Abbie Steele and Thomas R. Potts, M.D. on October 28, 1847, at Mendota with Henry H. Sibley and others as witnesses in the Livingston Papers.

29. Sources differ on the place and date of Mary Steele Potts's birth. The records of the Oakland Cemetery Association in St. Paul give her birthplace as Pennsylvania and no birth date, but their records list her age at death as 74. Since she died in July 1925, this would place her birth date in 1851. However, a handwritten note from her daughter, Mary Livingston Griggs, to her brother Gerald in the Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers, 1920-1933, in State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Archives Division, Madison, Wis. (hereinafter referred to as Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers), roll 3, p. 0438 [undated but circa 1927] gives the birthplace as Galena in 1849. This place and date are used here. Material on the career of Dr. Potts is from West, p. 427; Lois M. Fawcett, head of Reference Department, Minnesota Historical Society, letter to Mrs. Theodore W. Griggs, October 7, 1955, which quotes from the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota* published by A. T. Andreas (Chicago, 1874) in the Livingston Papers; C. C. Andrews, ed., *History of St. Paul, Minnesota* (Syracuse, N. Y.: D. Mason & Co., 1890), p. 299; and T. M. Newson, *Pen Pictures of St. Paul, Minnesota and Biographical Sketches of Old Settlers*, vol. 1 (St. Paul, Minn.: the author, 1886), pp. 95-97.

30. Newson, 1:142.

31. Thomas R. Potts letter to Abbie Ann Potts, April 12, 1870, in the Livingston Papers.

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81. Crawford Livingston will, June 27, 1919, and codicil to the will of Crawford Livingston, September 3, 1925, both p. 1, microfilm roll 6, pp. 0953 and 0956; the quotation is on p. 0956, in Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers.

82. Gerald M. Livingston letter to Alice L. MacGregor, November 29, 1927, roll 3, p. 0866, in Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers.

83. A newspaper account of Abbie's wedding is in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 21, 1910, p. 5. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported on Mary's wedding to Theodore Griggs on November 26, 1915, p. 1.

84. Crawford Livingston letter to Mary Steele Potts Livingston, no date, from Biddeford, Maine. Livingston Papers.

85. Mary Livingston Griggs Burke, "Remembering Mary Livingston Ripley," unpublished manuscript, no date, pp. 7–9, Livingston Papers.

86. A. N. Marquis Co., *The Book of Minnesotans* (Chicago: A. N. Marquis Co., 1907), p. 311.

87. Crawford Livingston letter to his daughter Mary, April 14, 1906, on Lee, Kretschmar & Co. stationery. This letter establishes that Livingston was associated with Horatio C. Kretschmar at least as of 1906. Mary Steele Potts Livingston letter to Mary Steele Livingston, December 6, 1911 on Waldorf-Astoria stationery discusses Kretschmar's death. Both letters are in the Livingston Papers.

88. *New York Times*, August 15, 1922, p. 13; January 11, 1924, p. 24; September 24, 1929, p. 38; October 3, 1934, p. 32; November 20, 1943, p. 13 provide a brief account of the history of Livingston & Company and of the career of Gerald M. Livingston.

89. Gerald M. Livingston letter to the Paul Brothers Company, Cleveland, Ohio, September 16, 1927, roll 4, p. 0022, in Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers.

90. *New York Times*, April 4, 1916, p. 24; April 5, 1916, p. 24; April 6, 1916, p. 21; May 3, 1916, p. 11; and May 5, 1916, p. 9.

91. Gerald M. Livingston letter to John P. Deering, Biddeford, Me., May 27, 1926, roll 6, pp. 1006–1007 in Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers. John Deering was a judge in Biddeford who had been a witness to the signing of the codicil to Crawford Livingston's will in 1925.

92. Crawford Livingston letter to "Kitty" [Alison], May 5, 1920, roll 6, p. 0230; Crawford Livingston letter to J. W. Smith, Fargo, N.D., July 6, 1920, roll 6, p. 0354; Crawford Livingston letter to Alvin W. Krech, New York, N. Y., July 6, 1923, roll 6, p. 0323; William Hamm letter to Crawford Livingston, March 16, 1923, roll 6, pp. 0418–0419; Crawford Livingston letter to William Hamm, March 20, 1923, roll 6, pp. 0420–0421; and Crawford Livingston to Louis W. Hill, February 1, 1923, roll 6, p. 0423, in Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers.

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94. Crawford Livingston letter to Mary Livingston Griggs, January 1, 1922, in Livingston Papers.

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100. *New York Times*, October 6, 1926, p. 22; Carl Taylor, New York, N. Y., letter to Gerald M. Livingston, November 12, 1926, roll 6, p. 1046; Minnesota Probate Court, *In the Matter of the Estate of Crawford Livingston*, roll 6, p. 0494, all in Gerald and Crawford Livingston Papers.

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