

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Sinclair Lewis
Was Wrong
See Letters

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Fall, 2001

Volume 36, Number 3

The Financial Angel Who Rescued 3M

The Life and Times of Lucius Pond Ordway

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Lucius Ordway with his daughter Katharine around 1909. Photograph from H. H. Irvine, III. See article beginning on page 4.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

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Virginia Brainard Kunz and John M. Lindley

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

A Message from the Editorial Board

Reading the story of my great-grandfather, Lucius Pond Ordway, written for this issue of *Ramsey County History*, was exciting for me because I really knew very little about him. Today those who do know about his career typically are aware only of his efforts to keep the fledgling Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company—3M—afloat during its uncertain early years. Many men and women who played a role in the history of Minnesota have extensive files at the Minnesota Historical Society, but when I looked there for information about Ordway, I found only five photographs of him. I knew there had to be more to his story.

Working from a few specific leads provided by those of us who are his descendants, the Ramsey County Historical Society has been able to construct an interesting account of Ordway's life, his family, his many business associates, his varied contributions to the city of St. Paul, and his era that spanned one of the liveliest periods in our states' history. Many people contributed to this work. John Lindley did the research into Ordway's life and career, and Virginia Kunz turned these raw materials into a highly readable story. Along the way, they had help from family members John G. and Marge Ordway, Alexandra Bjorklund, and David Nicholson, who shared their memories, photographs, and family papers.

I'm particularly grateful to Carl Drake who gave of his time and memories of the Drake and Ordway families. Kevin Howley, a genealogist with a wide knowledge of New England families, volunteered his time and expertise. Jim Erickson of the Ramsey County Historical Society's staff, provided information about St. Paul's Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church, and Molly Spillman, the Society's curator and archivist, helped gather Ordway photographs. Thanks also are due to Martha Mitchell, archivist at Brown University; Eileen McCormack, associate curator of the Hill manuscripts at the James J. Hill Reference Library; and Loralee Bloom, 3M project archivist at the Minnesota Historical Society.

My final thanks go to Priscilla Farnham, executive director of the Ramsey County Historical Society, for her support for the idea of finding out more about Ordway and her willingness to see this project through to completion. I hope you enjoy reading this biographical account of the life and times of Lucius P. Ordway as much as I did.

Richard H. Nicholson, member of the Editorial Board

The Financial Angel Who Rescued 3M

The Life and Times of Lucius Pond Ordway

Virginia Brainard Kunz and John M. Lindley

As the family story goes, in 1883 a young man, twenty-one years of age and just out of college, walked the railroad tracks from Minneapolis to St. Paul where he would begin a career that would earn him a fortune and loft him into the upper ranks of his adopted city's leadership.

Just why Lucius Ordway paused in Minneapolis before trudging on to St. Paul is lost in the passage of time. Perhaps he simply was visiting family friends before joining a small plumbing company in the state's capital city. Although Ordway remained in the plumbing business for the rest of his life, his name has been linked most visibly to the rise of a fledgling manufacturing company now known as 3M. He was far more than the financial force behind the nascent 3M, however. He was among a band of entrepreneurs from the East who arrived in St. Paul during the last half of the nineteenth century to build railroads, establish banks and insurance companies, found mercantile houses, and drag the city out of its pioneer past.

Like his peers, Lucius Pond Ordway's credentials were impeccably New England, although he actually was born in Brooklyn, New York, on January 21, 1862. The Ordways were descendants of an old New England family with roots that traced back to one James Ordway, born in 1621 in Worchestershire, England. With other emigrants, he arrived in Newbury, Massachusetts, around 1635 or 1640. There, in 1648, he married Anne Emery, also born in England but in 1632. With a group of other pioneer settlers, James Ordway moved to Cocheco (now Dover), New Hampshire, where he owned the site where the Cocheco Mills later were built. The Ordways eventually returned to Newbury, lived out their lives there and established a family line that is alive with old New England names:

Their son John married Mary Godfrey

Their son James married Elizabeth Heath

Their son Moses married Anna Huntington

Their son Moses, Jr., married Persis Ordway, a cousin

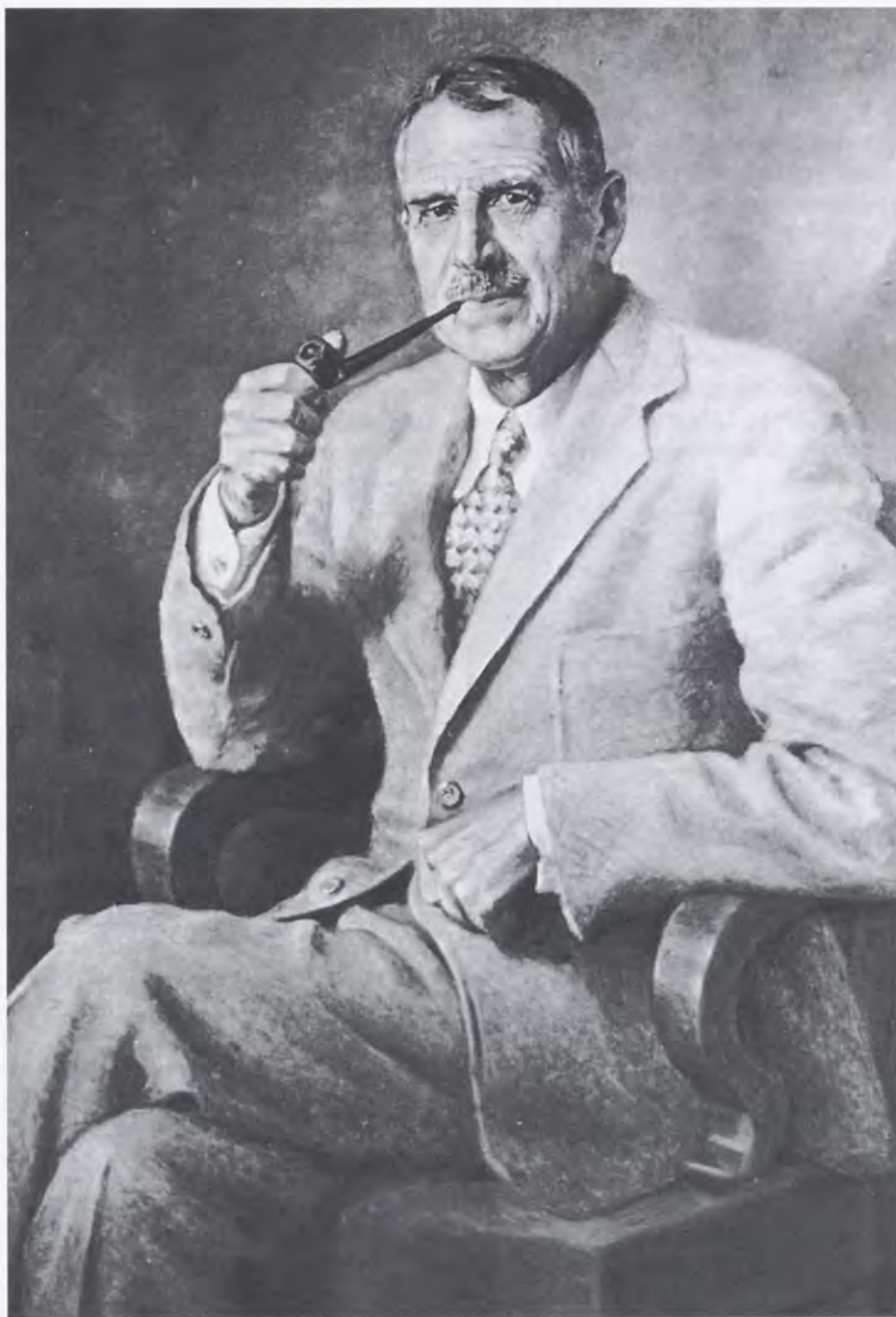
And when *their* son, Aaron Ordway, who was born in 1792 in New Hampshire, married Catherine Pond in 1818, the name Pond would continue down the Ordway family line. Aaron and Catherine Pond Ordway's son, Aaron Lucius Ordway, was born in 1821 in Franklin, Massachusetts. He married Frances Ellen Hanson in 1859 in Providence, Rhode Island, and they had two sons, Samuel Hanson Ordway in 1860 and Lucius Pond in 1862.

For some years after the births of his sons, Aaron Lucius evidently divided his time between Brooklyn and Providence. Records from the period list him as a dealer in coal and iron in the 1870s and 1880s. He was, according to the *Providence City Directory*, lodging at the Narragansett Hotel in downtown Providence in 1879, indicating that he was indeed traveling back and forth between the two cities, perhaps developing significant business connections with important people in Providence and quietly paving the way for his first son's success.

An Illustrated History of Rhode Island, 1636-1896, published in 1896, suggests that Ordway was associated with the New York Dyeing and Printing Company with offices at 98 Duane Street in Manhattan and a factory on Staten Island; or he was the New York representative of the W. F. & F. C. Sayles Company, a major manufacturing firm in Providence; or both. Certainly, Aaron Lucius Ordway seems to have sensed that opportunities

awaited him in those years after the Civil War. By the 1870s the second phase of the Industrial Revolution had gathered steam in America. Mechanics from England and Europe flooded into the country, bringing with them new ideas for new products. In New York Aaron Lucius Ordway, as the New York Dyeing and Printing Company's representative, was approached by a company worker, one of those immigrant mechanics with an idea. Richard A. Rupp and Peter R. Townsend, authors of a history of the Arkwright Manufacturing Company in Providence, tell the story of James Gee. A native of England, Gee's dream was to operate his own business manufacturing bookcloth, a durable cotton fabric used to cover hardbound books. Gee, in true entrepreneurial fashion, "began his venture in his wife's kitchen, experimenting with dyes, starch and other materials, and used her ironing board and flat irons" to perfect the process. Then, the authors wrote, Gee sought out "a prominent New York businessman and capitalist, Aaron L[ucius]. Ordway, and asked him to finance his work." Ordway brought Gee to Providence, introduced him to William F. Sayles, and explained that Gee could produce quality bookcloth if he had the proper machinery and tools. The result was that Gee secured a patent and entered into partnership with Ordway and Sayles.

"On May 27, 1880," the authors wrote, "an act of the Rhode Island General Assembly Incorporated William F. Sayles, Frederick C. Sayles and their associates for the purpose of manufacturing, bleaching, dyeing, printing and finishing cotton, woolen and silk goods, and for the transaction of other business incidental thereto." The name of the new corporation, capitalized at \$400,000, was Interlaken Mills. In 1883 Aaron Lucius Ordway became Interlaken's first presi-



Lucius Pond Ordway. Portrait from Our Story So Far, the 1977 history of 3M. Unless otherwise noted, all other photographs with this article are from the Ordway family, with reproductions in the Ramsey County Historical Society archives.

dent and owner of 300 shares of capital stock. By the mid-1880s he seems to have abandoned the selling of coal and iron to concentrate on Interlaken.

Inventors like Gee would have found Providence a fertile ground for launching new endeavors. The city had been an

important industrial center since the Industrial Revolution arrived in America around 1830. Newly-minted manufacturers saw the need to establish their plants along the New England rivers that would provide power. The Pawtuxet River flowing through Providence drove a cluster of

cotton mills that lined the east and west banks, including the Arkwright Mill, established as early as 1809. After its formation in 1880, the Interlaken Mill company built a dye house and bleachery on the Pawtuxet's west bank, then reached across the river to purchase Arkwright.

A biographical history of manufacturers published in 1901 noted that "the Interlaken Mills are among the most important of our Rhode Island industries," and they filled a niche for the great New England cotton mills of the nineteenth century. At first the gray cloth Interlaken used was woven elsewhere, then shipped to Interlaken for bleaching, dyeing, and finishing into bookcloths of various colors and designs. In 1900 Interlaken bought the Harris Manufacturing Company, built in 1822 in Harris, Rhode Island, and began to manufacture its own cloth.

Aaron Lucius Ordway, as an officer of one of the Sayles family's enterprises, would have held a respected position in the business and social life of Providence, with some introduction into the circles of the city's elite. The Sayles family was important in industrial New England. Another of Ordway's connections to Providence circles came through the Chafee family, one of Rhode Island's most distinguished families. Zachariah Chafee was president of the Builders Iron Foundry in Providence, a fourth-generation Chafee family firm, and Aaron Lucius' coal and iron dealership might have led him to Chafee.

In 1880 Lucius Pond Ordway's older brother Samuel graduated from Brown University, then a small Baptist-oriented college and, chartered in 1764 in Providence, the seventh oldest university in the country. Chafee's son, another Zechariah, was Samuel's classmate. So was Charles Evans Hughes, the future American jurist and statesman, and thought by many to have been up to that time the greatest chief justice of the United States since John Marshall early in the nineteenth century.

Hughes, who was born in 1862 in Glens Falls, New York, enrolled at Brown in 1878. In a college with some 250 students, many of whom lived in Providence, Hughes and the Ordway brothers could hardly have overlooked

each other, although they seem not to have been close friends. Brown was an understandable choice for Hughes, whose father was a Baptist minister. For the Ordways, who belonged to the Congregational church, the attraction likely was that they could live at home. Certainly the curriculum would have appealed to both families, and the faculty was strong. As they were at most American institutions of higher learning in the nineteenth century, courses at Brown were heavily classical and literary. There was Greek and Latin, of course, and medieval and modern history, psychology, philosophy, and logic, but the curriculum barely recognized science and the professions not at all. Although the world was changing all around them and a spirit of reform was invading American life, reading lists for Brown's students included little American social criticism; not much had been written at that time and academia tended to identify with ancient and European cultures. Students read Scott, Goldsmith, and Schiller. While Dickens, Thackeray, Hugo, and Balzac offered excursions into social criticism, it was with a European orientation.

Even so, undergraduate life at Brown during the years Samuel and Lucius Ordway were students was lively. The city of Providence introduced students to the world of theater, opera, and light opera. Edwin Booth played there in *Hamlet*; Joseph Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle*; Clara Louise Kellogg sang *Aida*. Politics seem to have drawn scant attention, although Merlo John Pusey, in his 1951 biography of Charles Evans Hughes, noted an undergraduate bent toward the Republicans in a letter Hughes wrote his father on October 31, 1880:

Last Monday night was a great night in Providence. The grand state demonstration on behalf of Garfield & Arthur took place & as it was to pass the campus, we were busy all afternoon in illuminating our rooms and the outside grounds.

College spirit in that distant past reflects an innocence that long since has been lost. Pusey's biography offers a glimpse of the exuberant collegiate life Samuel and Lucius Ordway shared with their classmates:

Hughes got a prompt introduction to Brunian tradition in the sophomore-freshman class fight called a football game in deference to the fact that a football was somewhere in the melee. A few days later came the forbidden cane rush, which also led to fist-swinging of the free-for-all variety. The speciality of Brown students in forbidden amusements was bonfires. A great blaze was likely to flare up on College Green in spring or fall whenever there was a varsity triumph or other cause for an eruption of college spirit. Human moths seemed to fly toward the flames and for a few precious moments there would be boisterous singing and dancing.



Aaron Ordway, 1790–1879, Lucius Ordway's grandfather.

All was not mayhem, however. After supper, students would gather on the chapel steps to sing. They followed the tradition of burying their *Chaucer* texts when the course ended, and once they dressed up as Chaucer's characters in *The Canterbury Tales* to parade through the streets of Providence. The occasional lark perhaps made up for the fact that the university's physical plant left much to be desired. Pusey described an "unmistakable odor of decay pervading Uni-

versity Hall" and Hope College, a dormitory built in 1822, was even grimmer. Kerosene lamps lighted the halls, Franklin stoves warmed some of the rooms, and coal for the stoves often was stored in the students' closets, along with their washstands. There was neither running water nor baths.

When Samuel Ordway moved on from Brown to Harvard Law School, Hughes commented upon his decision in his autobiographical notes edited by David J. Danelski and Joseph S. Tulchin and published in 1973:

I had heard that Samuel Ordway, the valedictorian of 1880, was making a fine record at the Harvard Law School and I thought enviously of such advantages, but I did not feel that my parents should be burdened with the expense of a law school course.

His parents did, however, meet the challenge and Hughes graduated from Columbia Law School in New York City. The rest of his illustrious career is history.

Samuel graduated from Harvard Law School in 1883 and began to practice in New York City. The younger Chafee, who had succeeded his father in the family business, was one of his clients, as is indicated by some correspondence between the two men. For example, Chafee wrote him on February 6, 1891, concerning an unidentified legal matter:

My dear Sam: What you say in yours of [the] 4th is o.k. so please send the \$75.00 to Builders Iron Foundry, Providence, and accept my thanks for your long continued, and, under the circumstances, very successful efforts. Very truly yours, Z. Chafee

Another note, dated May 4, 1891, was addressed to "Mr. S. H. Ordway, 31 Nassau St., New York, N. Y.":

Dear Sir: I am happy to say there were no objections to our legal proceedings, and we were able to obtain a favorable decree on the 20th of April. This gives me more time, and I would now be very glad to take up the class matter whenever you can come on. I saw Lincoln yesterday, and he agreed to meet you at any time you may name. I will endeavor to get together some of the collegians at such a time, and now await your convenience. I am Yours Truly, Z. Chafee.

* * * *

The world into which these young men emerged as they completed their educations was far different from the small-city, small-town, semi-rural world of their earlier years, and they would make their way in it. By the 1870s the country was in the midst of a revolution in American life, fueled by the Industrial Age and the rise of the giant corporations. The Homestead Act of 1862, the year Lucius Ordway was born, and several Pacific Railroad Acts opened vast tracks of land to new settlers. In 1867 the spanning of the continent was completed with the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Point, Utah. Three years later John D. Rockefeller formed the Standard Oil Company and Andrew Carnegie set out to create the steel company that would dominate American industry. W. F. Woolworth launched his first five and ten cent store in Utica, New York, and, in 1878 the first commercial telephone exchange opened in New Haven, Connecticut.

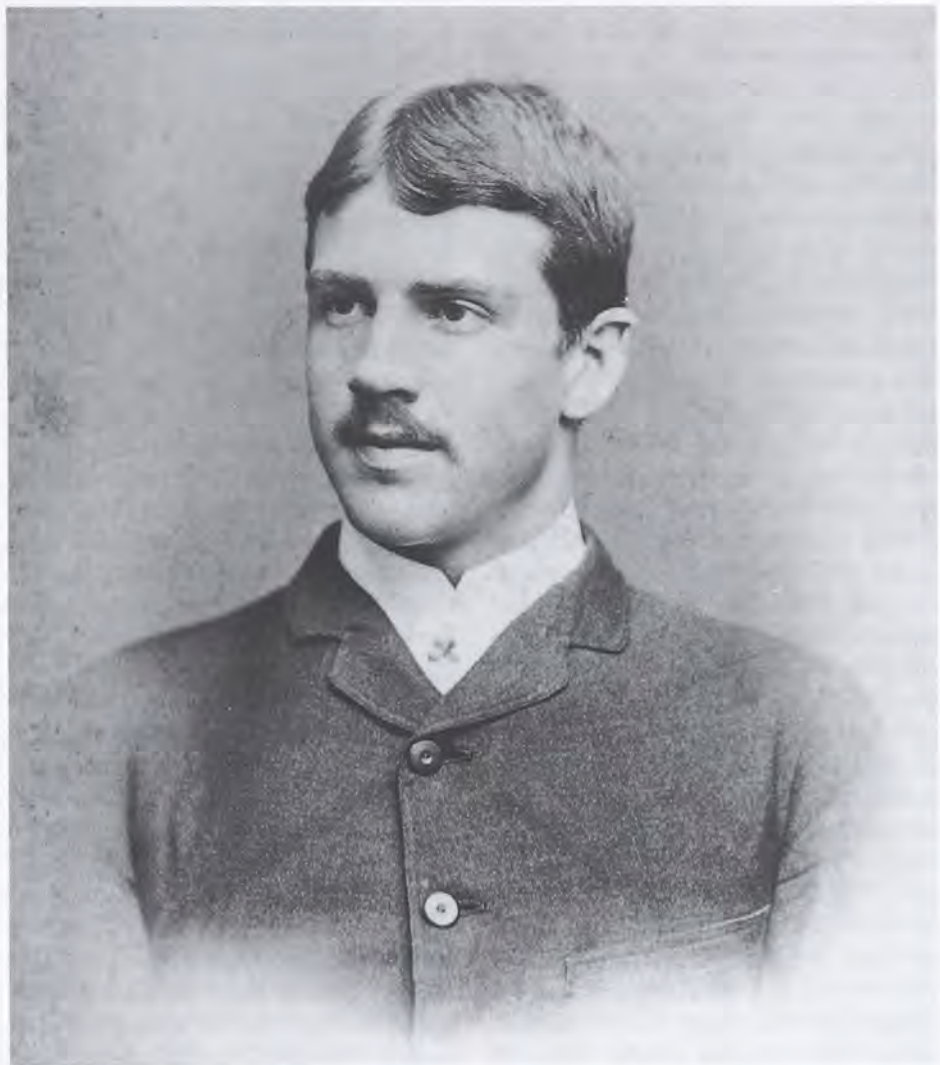
The last decades of the nineteenth century also marked the dawning of the age of reform, a movement set off by the free-booting corruption that had washed over the country in the wake of Ulysses S. Grant's presidency and the administrations that followed him. There was William Marcy Tweed's looting of New York City's treasury and that was only the beginning. The *Crédit Mobilier* scandal entangled Ohio's Representative James A. Garfield in charges of trading political favors for shares in the company building the Union Pacific Railroad; the government was defrauded of internal revenue taxes; and bribes were being exchanged for jobs in the western territories.

In that climate it is scarcely surprising that much of Samuel Ordway's legal career would be devoted to reform issues. In 1891 he was a rising young New York attorney in the law firm of Spencer, Ordway, and Wierum. In 1901 he became an assistant district attorney and by 1906 he was a member of the Commission to Revise the Tax Laws of New York State. In 1909 Charles Evans Hughes, now governor of New York, appointed him to a commission investigating speculation in securities and commodities.

Samuel Ordway's real interest, however, lay in Civil Service reform. Bitter partisan wrangling over the political spoils system of providing jobs for party adherents had led to the passage of the Civil Service Act of 1883, and for many years Ordway was chairman of the executive committee of the Civil Service Reform Association. He was president of the New York State Civil Service Commission between 1915 and 1917, and after America's entry into World War I, he served as a member of the United States District Board for New York City's Selective Service Board. He was appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of New York in 1917, succeeding Benjamin N. Cardozo, the future Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. After failing to win re-election,

Ordway was named Public Service Commissioner for the First District of New York. He continued to practice law until his death in 1934.

Brown University's records do not contain quite so fulsome an account of Lucius P. Ordway's years there as they do of his brother's, but they do show that Lucius enrolled at Brown in 1879 and left in 1883. His college yearbook lists him as president of the Bicycle Club and "Class Statistician," a rather obscure post, it would seem. Apparently he was not a particularly active "statistician," although it is easy to assume that the "statistics" published in the 1883 Yearbook were compiled by Ordway himself, despite the statement that they were "obtained at great labor and expense by the board of editors." Perhaps Ordway was



Lucius Ordway as a young man. Taken in Providence, Rhode Island, this photograph probably dates from 1883, the year he graduated from Brown University and set out for St. Paul.



Frances Hanson Ordway, Lucius Ordway's mother. Date unknown.



Aaron Lucius Ordway, Lucius Ordway's father. Date unknown.

poking fun at himself, if as "Class Statistician," he did indeed list his "present occupation" as "talking," his "future occupation" as "expanding his chest," and his "matrimonial prospects" as "rank." Elsewhere in the yearbook he is listed as "Eloquent Expounder of Ethics." College humor in those days might not have been intentionally unkind, but it certainly lacked subtlety, as well as requiring a certain amount of interpretation. Whatever else, Lucius Ordway seems to have been a skillful conversationalist with a well-honed self-deprecating sense of humor.

Upon graduation in 1883, he turned his face west. It is not known why he chose to settle halfway across the country from home and family, but he was not alone in doing so. His descendants are puzzled as to why Ordway chose Minnesota, and particularly St. Paul, but, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, it is possible that several factors drew him there. Despite its vivid Irish coloration and the fact that it was becoming more German than anything else, St. Paul had been a powerful magnet for Yankee enterprise since 1849 when Minnesota Territory was created, with St. Paul as its capital. History offers a certain pattern: European invaders, the ex-

plorers, arrive first and the army follows to protect the third wave, the New England Yankees who, seizing the main chance, organize the government and the community.

These Old Stock Americans, as they were known, had been pouring into Minnesota for several decades before Ordway joined them. As John C. Rice wrote in *They Chose Minnesota*, they arrived from Maine, Upper New England (Vermont, New Hampshire), Lower New England (Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts) and, particularly after the Civil War, New York. The 1880 census figures reveal that 25.1 percent of Twin Cities residents were from Lower New England and that more than 7,000 Minneapolis residents and another 2,000 in St. Paul had listed New England as their place of birth. It is not unreasonable to suppose that before he began his hike along the railroad tracks to St. Paul, Ordway was visiting friends among those New Englanders who had settled in Minneapolis.

Ordway also had a personal link to the Minneapolis-St. Paul community. His mother, Frances Ellen Hanson Ordway, died of tuberculosis in 1873 when Lucius was eleven, and several years later his fa-

ther remarried. His second wife was Alice Woodward, who had been born in London. Alice Woodward Ordway was a member of the New Jerusalem Swedenborgian Church in Providence, a church founded in London in 1788 by followers of the Swedish scientist, philosopher, and theologian Emanuel Swedenborg. In the New England of the nineteenth century, Swedenborg's theology was one of those unconventional currents that swept through the mid-nineteenth century period of religious innovation. It was a social reform movement, as well. Swedenborgians advocated medical and economic reforms. They were interested in utopian communities, and that appealed to the Transcendentalists, including Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry Thoreau. Swedenborgian theology also had an impact on such writers and thinkers as William James, William Blake, Carl Jung, even Helen Keller. Then there was John Chapman, an "extraordinary missionary" with an unique method of "spreading the divine truth." According to a church history,

[Chapman's] temporal employment consists in preceding the settlements, and sowing nurseries of fruit trees, which he avows to be pursued for the chief purpose of giving him an opportunity of spreading the doctrines throughout the western country.

Chapman was better known in the nation's folklore as "Johnny Appleseed." He carried with him, along with his fruit seeds, all of the Swedenborgian publications he could find and he distributed them as he progressed through the Midwest.

From 1863 to 1866 the pastorate of the New Jerusalem church in Providence was held by the Reverend Edward Craig Mitchell, a charismatic figure, a man of many parts, and a leader typical of the dynamic churchmen who peopled the pulpits of America at that time. Mitchell would figure prominently in Lucius Ordway's personal life. Born in 1836 into a distinguished American family of English descent that included a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Mitchell had determined to enter the ministry but, prudently, decided to pursue some practical training first. He studied law at the University of Pennsylvania and was ad-

mitted to the bar, then went to work for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as assistant editor. The ministry continued to beckon, however. In 1862 he was ordained in the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) Church and that led him to the church in Providence. In 1872 Mitchell removed to Minnesota where he established two Swedenborgian churches, one in Minneapolis and the other in St. Paul. Four years later, in 1876, he settled permanently in St. Paul.

C. C. Andrews, in his *History of St. Paul*, describes Mitchell in the flowery but probably accurate language of that era:

Of strong mental gifts and attributes, Mr. Mitchell is a very accomplished gentleman in all true essentials. He is a scholar, a thinker, a litterateur, a theologian. . . . Without the semblance of dilettantism, he is refined and polished. And on proper occasions he can be a man of business, familiar with business principles. . . . In financial circles also Mr. Mitchell is known as an investor of large amounts to trust funds in connection with his Eastern relatives.

The description of Mitchell as an investor as well as a clergyman might have been an oblique reference to one of the reasons he seemingly moved smoothly into the business and benevolent circles of St. Paul. Good works and charity for the "worthy poor," a pragmatic form of altruism, were intensely important for St. Paul's wealthy and practical civic leaders, among whom Mitchell soon found his place. For many years, he served on the board of the St. Paul Society for the Relief of the Poor; he organized the St. Paul Day Nursery or Creche and the free kindergartens of St. Paul; he was president of the Free Kindergarten Society of St. Paul; the St. Paul Academy of Science; vice president of the Humane Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Animals; and he belonged to the Minnesota Historical Society.

The Ordway family, of course, knew Mitchell in Providence and a benign influence by Alice Ordway over her second stepson, as well as a family friendship, might have been a factor in Lucius Ordway's decision to come West. Another might have been the connections Mitchell

could provide as Ordway made his own way in his adopted city. Arriving in St. Paul in 1883, Ordway went to work as collector for the firm of Wilson & Rogers, a "plumbing establishment" founded in 1868 by Thomas P. Wilson, a Civil War veteran, and located in the 1880s at 316 and 318 Robert Street.



Samuel Hanson, left, and Lucius Pond Ordway around 1864.

Wilson, who came to St. Paul with his parents in 1856, was born in 1841 on the campus of Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, where his father was a divinity student. The young Wilson watched St. Paul grow from a population of little more than 9,000 people living along dirt streets in hastily-thrown-up structures to an imposing midwest city of more than 40,000 by the 1880s. A teacher to begin with, he enlisted in the Fourth Minnesota Volunteer Regiment after the outbreak of the Civil War and rose to the rank of major during the next five years of campaigns throughout the western theater. He seems to have been a respected businessman. Early records suggest that Wilson was a prudent manager of the firm's business affairs. Wilson & Rogers evidently was making money and paying its bills in

part, at least, because Wilson was adroit at lining up business from the City of St. Paul and the State of Minnesota. He invested in real estate, possibly the reason he could retire from Wilson & Rogers in 1886 when he was only forty-five. He later served as receiver of the Union Pacific Railway and as one of the appraisers of James J. Hill's estate.

In 1918, in ill health and increasingly despondent over his decision to move from his old homestead to a suite at the newly-built Minnesota Club, he "ended his life by swallowing cyanide of potassium while in his home at 503 Rondo Street," the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported on September 3, 1918. He was seventy-seven years old.

The 1884-1885 *St. Paul City Directory* lists Ordway as a salesman for the company and renting rooms at 118½ West Third Street, an address between Washington and Franklin streets that today has been swallowed up by the Xcel Energy Center. Two other men, bachelors at the time who would become lifelong friends, were living at the same address: William H. Lightner, a young lawyer, and James P. Elmer, who served five years in the British Merchant Marine before settling in St. Paul to begin a varied career, mostly in railroading. However, in 1884 and 1885 Elmer also was working for Wilson & Rogers. Later, Ordway managed the city desk for the company, which now had a new listing. The *City Directory* announced that it was dealing in "Plumbing Supplies, Steam and Sewers."

Lucius Ordway's rise from then on was swift. In 1886, when Wilson retired, Ordway became Rogers' partner, and the firm's name was changed to Rogers & Ordway. He was twenty-four years old.

In St. Paul in the 1880s Ordway was in the right place at the right time. It was a golden age for American cities as they became immersed in the enormous building boom of that decade. The country had recovered from the devastating Panic of 1873 when Jay Cooke's heavy investment in Northern Pacific Railway stock brought on the failure of his banking house and plunged the country into a serious depression.

In St. Paul's downtown, small frame

structures of the 1850s were being methodically demolished and replaced by the multi-storied brick and stone buildings the advent of the passenger elevator had made possible. By 1884 a massive new City Hall/County Courthouse was under construction on the block bounded by Fourth, Fifth, Wabasha and Cedar. The Pioneer and Endicott buildings at Fourth and Robert, the Germania Bank Building at Fifth and Wabasha, the Merchants National Bank at Fourth and Jackson, all were built during this period, and all needed plumbing. So did the warehouses that were crowding into Lower-town, displacing the once-elegant residential neighborhood dominated by Baptist Hill. Elsewhere in the city, people were building new homes in farther-flung residential districts. The city's wealthy business leaders were moving up to mansions on Summit Avenue. A scant block away, substantial wood-frame dwellings were lining up along Western Avenue, only recently the edge of the city. All of these new homes needed plumbing, too. Wilson & Rogers responded, advertising themselves as "Jobbers in Supplies for Pump Dealers, Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters, Mills, Railroads and Breweries," with offices at "18 east 3d street." The *St. Paul Dispatch* for January 2, 1883, noted:

That St. Paul has marvelously grown, both in business and in buildings during the year 1882 has been patent to every citizen. But few realized how really great had been that [growth]. . . . The progress of the city has been so great that it is almost impossible to keep pace with it, even in imagination.

In 1882, the newspaper reported, 2,825 buildings were erected, costing a total of \$10,040,760. The Manitoba Road, under James J. Hill's control since 1879 as the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company, "expended \$600,000 in permanent improvements in St. Paul." The Northern Pacific, St. Paul & Duluth and the Omaha roads together spent another \$360,000 to expand "their permanent improvements in St. Paul. . . ." Fifty-four streets covering eighteen miles were graded that year at a cost of \$300,000. Four miles of sewers and twenty-six miles of sidewalks were laid; there were 4,308 real estate sales totaling \$9,038,

634, and the city's hotels had 319,000 guests. The *St. Paul Daily Globe* reported on January 1, 1883, that "The very large increase of postal business at this point has necessitated a remodeling of the basement and first floor of the postoffice to secure the necessary room."



John M. Gilman, pioneer lawyer and legislator

In the spirit of a robust competition Minneapolis and St. Paul shared, Minneapolis organized an industrial exhibit in 1886 that highlighted industry and the arts. St. Paul countered with a joyous Winter Carnival marked by a huge, turreted ice palace.

The firm of Rogers & Ordway was bound to boom in such a vibrant setting, with all that new construction. The firm's address, now at 180 to 184 East Third Street, and its listing in the 1891 *City Directory*—"Railroad and Mill Supplies, Steam, Gas, and Water Goods, Well Machinery, Pumps and Plumbers' Supplies"—reflect not just the company's and the city's growth but also the growing sophistication of the company's offerings.

* * * *

On April 29, 1885, Lucius Ordway married Jessie Gilman. In early May the *Pioneer Press* described the Ordway-Gilman nuptials as the "brilliant wedding of the week." Edward Craig Mitchell performed the ceremony in the bride's home at 314 West Third Street. Attendants were her sister Katharine, who in 1887 would marry James P. Elmer; Carrie Drake,

daughter of railroad-builder Elias Drake, who in 1885 would marry William H. Lightner; Isabel Bend, whose father was Brigadier General William B. Bend; Lucius' brother Samuel, who came from New York for the ceremony, and those future bridegrooms Lightner and Elmer. These young men and women, members St. Paul's small Yankee community, would assume business and social leadership roles in a city that would produce many other leaders from many other of the city's communities—Irish, German, Jewish, to mention just a few.

Jessie and Katharine Gilman were the daughters of the renowned attorney and legislator, John Melvin Gilman, who came to St. Paul in 1857. Gilman was another one of those pioneers whose forebears had emigrated from England and settled in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. He was born September 7, 1824, at Calais, Vermont, the son of John Taylor Gilman and Ruth Curtis Gilman, both natives of Vermont. His father, a physician, died a few months after his son's birth, so the boy spent his early years with his mother and stepfather. Graduating in 1843 from nearby Montpelier Academy, he read law with a Montpelier firm and was admitted to the bar in 1845 (1846, according to another account).

Moving on to Lisbon, Ohio, in what was then the far west, he practiced law for the next eleven years. In 1849 he was elected to a term in the Ohio state legislature, and in 1857 he married Anna Cornwall, who also had grown up in Calais. That same year they moved to St. Paul, a city of 9,973 residents, only 1,700 of whom had been born in the United States; the rest were immigrants from some twenty other countries.

The Gilmans were just in time to be caught up in the nation-wide Panic of 1857, another serious financial debacle set off this time by the bankruptcy of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company in far-off New York. In St. Paul cash dried up, real estate speculators and merchants were ruined, banks closed, people were thrown out of work, St. Paul lost half its population, and Ramsey County was forced to issue scrip.

Undaunted, Gilman opened the Smith & Gilman law office with James Smith,

Jr., as his partner. W. B. Hennesy described Gilman in *Past and Present of St. Paul, Minnesota*, published in 1906:

His cases were many and success rarely failed to crown his efforts in the class of litigation entrusted to him. The complexity of a case never deterred him and he brought to bear upon the intricate and involved questions of law keen discrimination and logical reasoning, resulting in correct deductions. His aim was to continue rather in the general practice of law than to become a strict specialist and early in his career he manifested marked strength of character and a thorough grasp of legal principles through the ability to accurately apply these, rendering him a devoted advocate and safe counselor.

Gilman was a Democrat and politics attracted him, as it did other pioneer lawyers. When the Democrats nominated him for Congress in 1860, he made "a remarkable stumping tour with his opponent, Hon. William Windon," but he lost. In 1864 Gilman ran against Ignatius Donnelly for the same seat, and again he lost. However, he was repeatedly elected to the state Legislature—in 1865, 1867, and 1876. In the campaign of 1870, he was chosen chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee.

The beginning of the Civil War in 1861 temporarily cast a cloud over his position as a leading Democrat. In some sections of the country the role of the Northern Democrats in the crisis and whether they would support President Lincoln's call for troops was hotly debated. And widely feared. Sentiment in Minnesota toward raising a regiment was tested by a rally on the Capitol grounds. In a speech, Gilman declared his support of the Union. One historian noted:

His remarks at the time were considered somewhat extravagant. Many now living will remember the speech well. Thereafter he made many more speeches in support of the prosecution of the war and the abolishing of slavery.

John and Anna Gilman had five children, all of them born in St. Paul: Hayes, who died in infancy; John, born in 1859; Marcus in 1861; Jessie in 1862; and Katharine, known in the family as Kittie, in 1868. Jessie was just fifteen when, on a spring



The Gilmans' daughters: Jessie, left, and Katharine, known as Kittie.

weekend in 1877, she lost both of her brothers in a tragic drowning accident.

Saturday, April 28, was a school holiday and the boys decided to spend it hunting ducks at Pig's Eye, now a lake but then a slough that drained into the Mississippi three or four miles downriver from St. Paul. Once known as the *Grand Marais*, it had been the site since 1839 of a small settlement of French Canadians and, with its marshy land filled with tall grasses and rushes, it was a favorite place to hunt waterfowl. In the spring of 1877, it also was a dangerous place for the two boys, one sixteen, the other eighteen. The river, swollen by spring flooding, had backed up, turning the slough into a lake three to ten feet deep with a soft mud or quicksand bottom.

According to later press reports, "Mr. Gilman's man drove them down in the morning and left them there, receiving instructions to return for them at 6 o'clock in the evening." The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* for May 1, 1877, carried a heart-breaking story of what happened next:

At 4 o'clock, a Frenchman living near Pig's Eye states that he heard cries for help, and

going down to the margin of the slough he could see a small boat apparently overturned and two boys clinging to it. At that time it was very cold, and the waves were running very high indeed. As the Frenchman had nothing but a small and unseaworthy boat he could not afford them any assistance. After looking at them for some time, he saw one of the boys let go and sink, and soon after the other, apparently not able to hold on any longer, let go and went down in the same way.

This Frenchman for some reason thought the boys belonged in St. Paul, and he accordingly came up here to tell what he had seen. He appears to have done this very imperfectly though, for as far as can be learned, he simply told the story to one or two persons at or near the Merchants Hotel. He did not go to police headquarters with his information, nor did he tell anyone of prominence who would be likely to look into the matter.

In 1877 neither telephone nor telegraph linked such outlying areas as Pig's Eye with St. Paul, travel was by horse-and-wagon, and sounding an alarm was a matter of many hours. In the meantime, Gilman's driver had arrived to collect the boys but found them missing. After a fruitless four-hour search, he returned alone. Gilman was alarmed but hoped his sons had found shelter and would turn up by morning. When they did not, St. Paul police and Gilman friends began a search that was described at great length by the newspapers in many long columns over several days. No divers, no rescue boats were available then. It was three days before the boys' bodies were found at the bottom of the lake. The press followed the tragedy closely. On May 4 the *Pioneer Press* described,

"The Funeral Ceremonies Over the Remains of John and Marcus Gilman—A Most Touching and Solemn Occasion—The Services at the Church—The Funeral Cortege to the Double Grave—Side by Side Undivided in Death."

The services, held at Christ Episcopal Church, were conducted by "Rev. Mitchell, of the Swedenborgian Church." Burial was in Oakland Cemetery.

According to all reports, John and Anna Gilman never fully recovered from their loss. Gilman himself steadfastly

declined any further role in public affairs, limiting himself to his law practice and his real estate investments. After the death of his wife on October 31, 1895, he moved from his home of many years to live with his daughter Katharine and her husband, James P. Elmer, at the Angus Hotel (now the Blair Apartments) on Selby and Western avenues.

The Gilmans' old home at 314 West Third Street was at the lower end of the just-completed Selby Avenue streetcar tunnel, and the noise of the trolleys as they rushed past on their way downtown disturbed Gilman. He sold the house, but on September 26, 1906, he had returned to help his daughters remove some of the furniture. He died there from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was eighty-two years old. Edward Craig Mitchell again officiated at the funeral held this time at Mitchell's own home at 534 Summit Avenue.

No letters, no documents, no diaries, no family accounts have recorded the story of how Jessie Gilman met Lucius Ordway. It's highly likely, however, that they knew each other through Swedenborgian circles. Mitchell's Swedenborgian Church had attracted not just John Gilman and his family but other St. Paul leaders as well, including William R. Marshall, a future governor, and William J. and Edward H. Cutler of the firm of Noyes Brothers & Cutler, pharmaceuticals.

The church had made a hesitant start in 1860 with a meeting in Marshall's office on "Wabashaw" and the adoption of a constitution for the St. Paul Society of the New Jerusalem. The Society was short-lived, however, its meetings ending when the Civil War began. It was formally organized again in 1873 with Mitchell at the helm and Marshall as chairman, Gilman as secretary, and Edward H. Cutler as treasurer.

At first the group met in rooms at the YMCA, a move that caused the resignation of two disapproving YMCA board members. Next the Swedenborgians bought the old Methodist Church on Market Street across from Rice Park, the site today of the St. Paul Hotel. There they held services for the next ten years. Finally, "the location proving inconvenient," a church



The Gilman home at 314 W. Third Street (now Kellogg Boulevard). This was Jessie Ordway's childhood home. She and Lucius Ordway were married here in 1885, "the brilliant wedding of the week." Gilman sold the house in 1906, the year before this photograph was taken, because of the noise from streetcars rushing through the Selby Avenue tunnel (at right). Minnesota Historical Society photo.

history noted, "they disposed of the property advantageously, in 1886, and subsequently purchased the site of our present building, at the corner of Virginia and Selby Avenues."

The little church, an architectural jewel patterned after an English country church, is known today as the Virginia Street Swedenborgian Church. Designed by Cass Gilbert, it was described in the local press as "the most striking and picturesque little chapel to be found in the Northwest." Ordway himself does not seem to have been a member. According to his descendants, he grew up in a strict New England Calvinist culture, but because he had known Mitchell in Providence, and the congregation in St. Paul had remained small, it is easy to suppose that he and Jessie Gilman met there or at the homes of church members.

Lucius and Jessie Ordway would have five children: John Gilman Ordway (born January 20, 1886); Samuel Gilman Ordway (born on January 20, 1887); Lucius Pond Ordway, Jr., (born December 12,

1890); Katharine Ordway (born April 3, 1899); and Richard Ordway (born March 2, 1903). They lived first at 257 Summit Place, where the St. Paul Technical College stands today. The house was designed for them by Lucius Ordway's close friend, Cass Gilbert, who was just beginning the important years in his career. It was in a neighborhood with substantial homes that were filling in the farmland acquired in 1849 by J. W. Selby, city assessor, Ramsey County commissioner, and a member of the 1852 legislature. In 1882 Norman W. Kittson, fur trader and James J. Hill's business partner, abandoned his earlier residence in Lowertown and built a French Empire-style mansion on the site of the present-day St. Paul Cathedral. Kittson was not alone in leaving Lowertown to the encroaching railroads and warehouses. In the 1880s, Amherst H. Wilder completed his "baronial castle" across Summit from Kittson, and James J. Hill moved from his graceful mid-Victorian home on Ninth and Canada to the brooding Ro-

manesque mansion he built next door to Wilder. Then he ordered the Canada Street house torn down.

After Ordway became his partner in 1886, Rogers seems to have played a lesser role in the company's management. The company continued to prosper, however. In the early days plumbers and steamfitters often called for their goods and early each morning there would be a line of contractors waiting for supplies at Rogers & Ordway. Next, Ordway opened a branch in Duluth. In 1892, he bought Rogers out and, merging his St. Paul firm with the Duluth branch and the newly-formed Minneapolis branch of the Crane Company of Chicago, he joined in a partnership with Crane's president, Richard Teller Crane to become Crane & Ordway. The new company, located at 248-250-252 East Fourth Street, was incorporated on December 21, 1892, with Richard Teller Crane of Chicago as president; A. M. Gilbert, vice president of Crane's company in Chicago, as vice president and secretary; and Ordway as treasurer and general manager. It was capitalized at \$200,000 with 2,000 in stock. About that stock, Crane noted in his autobiography:

I became convinced that it was much better to keep the stock [of the Crane Company] in the hands of my family and a few of our important men who were working for the success of the business. This proved to be a sound business policy. So far as I know, ours was the first corporation to adopt the plan we have followed in regard to the capital stock; that is, requiring employees who are allowed to purchase stock to surrender it to the company on leaving its employ.

Crane held 51 percent of the stock in Crane & Ordway; Ordway 49 percent. Rogers was an incorporator and a director, but not an officer. He was, in effect, a silent partner, with Ordway making the day-to-day business decisions and leaving Rogers with even fewer business responsibilities.

Rogers, like others in his St. Paul circle of friends and business colleagues, had a New England background. He was born in Plymouth, New Hampshire, in 1835, and attended Dartmouth before moving to Ohio in 1854. A reporter for the *Cincinnati Concord*, he studied telegra-

phy, then worked for the Little Miami Railroad as a telegraph operator, superintendent of telegraph, train dispatcher, and superintendent of railroads. When the Civil War began, he was assigned by the Secretary of War to remain with the railroad's telegraph service until war's end.

In 1872 he married Sallie Drake, another daughter of Elias F. Drake. Arriving in St. Paul in 1862, Drake had brought the city its first rails, cars and locomotives, laid the rails and put into operation the first railroad in the state. It linked Minneapolis and St. Paul. It's not surprising that Rogers and his bride settled in St. Paul just as the railroads were expanding into the Northwest. Their home was at 449 Grove Street in the now-vanished Lafayette Park neighborhood and the home, also, of his father-in-law Elias F. Drake, Henry H. Sibley, A. H. Wilder, William M. Merriam, another future governor, and other wealthy St. Paul leaders.

Ordway was an astute businessman and Richard Teller Crane was known as an autocrat, Rogers seems to have been neither. He has been described as a genial man, good-natured and jolly who "did not let business cares trouble him. . . . He would be out of the office for half a day



Jessie Gilman Ordway as a bride in 1885.

at a time. He would drive around in his carriage and smoke, apparently without a thought of business and its cares."

Family, friends, business associates therefore were astonished when on the afternoon of May 19, 1893, Charles Rogers jumped off the High Bridge and drowned himself in the Mississippi River below. His act created a sensation in St. Paul. The newspapers were agog; long columns were filled with speculations as to why he would commit suicide. He was, the *Pioneer Press* wrote,

. . . fifty years of age and did not appear so old. There was scarcely a gray hair on his head, and he was a prominent church man and was noted for his kindness of spirit and generosity. . . . He worked himself above his surroundings and he was just in the prime of his life when his family was just beginning to realize the fruits of a well-spent life.

The headlines were typically lurid. The *Pioneer Press* concluded that he had been "Mad for a Minute—Suffering from Temporary Aberration of Mind." The *St. Paul Dispatch* described "A Desperate Man's Terrible Leap from the High Bridge—He Plunges One Hundred and Fifty Feet Into the Foaming Water."

His financial status was probed avidly by the press. Elias Drake died in 1892 and Sallie Rogers inherited "two to three hundred thousand dollars" from her father's estate. Rogers was planning to follow the general exodus from Lowertown to Summit Avenue where he was building a suitably larger house for his family. The manager of the Northwest Cordage Works, where Rogers recently had been named president, emphatically declared that,

I am at a loss to account for Mr. Rogers's action. There was no reason for it whatever. I have knowledge that he was in good financial circumstances, in fact on the very pinnacle of success. He had lately come into possession, through his wife, of a fortune of two or three hundred thousand dollars through the estate of E. F. Drake, deceased. He had purchased a lot on Summit Avenue, and intended erecting a beautiful home thereon. Why, even as late as yesterday I remember him telling me that he had drawn \$10,000 to be used in erecting a dwelling. It must be



Lucius P. Ordway, from *Men of Minnesota*, 1902. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

that overwork caused his brain to become for the moment overbalanced. He has been closeted night and day for the past week with his architect who, by the way, is young Mr. Kimball, of Omaha, his nephew.

Mrs. Rogers, the news accounts continued, "was completely prostrated and could not be seen." "Mrs. Lightner, Mrs. Drake's sister, is also at the Rogers's home and everything possible is being done to comfort the family." "Mrs. E. F. Drake, Mrs. Rogers's mother, told the reporter that in no way could they account for his action. The members of the family appeared to be half-stunned by the report. They could not believe it." Dr. Talbot Jones, the family physician, declared that "all the circumstances point to temporary aberration." Doggedly pursuing the mystery, the *Pioneer Press* announced on May 20, 1893 that "Inquiry at First National and Merchants' banks where Mr. Rogers's money and securities are on deposit, show his financial affairs to be in the best possible condition and everything intact."

Rogers's suicidal leap was suffused with drama; there was an eye-witness. The *Pioneer Press* for May 20 told "the thrilling story" in great detail. J. M. Karl, a nineteen-year-old electrician living at 691 Rondo Street, was crossing the High

Bridge when he saw a man standing near the bridge's lefthand outer rail. A horse and carriage were nearby. According to Karl, the stranger asked him at what point the river was the deepest, and he also said "I am C. S. Rogers and I am president of the Northwest Cordage Works." He added that he lived at 449 Grove Street.

The conversation seemed odd to Karl. Moving on, he turned to see Rogers climbing over the rail. Badly frightened, Karl struggled with him, but to no avail. As he slid over the rail to stand on a two-inch-wide parapet, Rogers calmly told Karl to take his horse and buggy home and "tell Mrs. Rogers all about it." The *Pioneer Press* described the final moments in breathless detail:

Scarcely had he made the remark, when Rogers stepped off the narrow ledge and swung out over the water. The shock as he swung out nearly pulled the heroic lad with him, but still he clung to the man's collar. For the space of half a minute Karl clung desperately to Rogers's coat collar, and then his strength gave way, and he was forced to loose his hold. With a shudder he sank back on the plank walk in a semi-conscious condition. By using all his fast departing strength, he pulled himself up to a sitting posture and gazed fearfully over the side of the bridge to the water where Rogers had disappeared. There was a whirling eddy, and in a few moments he saw the body come up. The face was down, and from appearances Rogers was dead or unconscious. The body floated down about twenty feet from where it struck the water, and then sank from Karl's view.

It was recovered three days later. Rogers left two notes, one to his wife, another to his business partner, both dealing with inconsequential matters. However, Rogers seems to have made a previous attempt to throw himself off the bridge. Three young boys reported that a few days earlier a man who drove onto the bridge stopped and asked them how deep the river was at that point. They identified him as C. S. Rogers from a likeness published in the newspapers.

Summing it all up, the press concluded that "Business troubles he had none, and his domestic life was most happy. It is supposed that Mr. Rogers



Richard Teller Crane, founder of the Crane Company, taken about two years before his death in 1912. Chicago Historical Society archives.

was suffering from temporary aberration brought on by overwork."

In fact, although Rogers was not described as particularly overworked during his last days, there apparently was every reason for his action, at least in his own mind. Far from having no financial difficulties, he was in deep financial trouble—or so he thought. The story of Rogers's suicide, as told by Carl B. Drake, Jr., Elias Drake's great grandson, reveals the intricate relationships among some of St. Paul's families, including Lucius Ordway's. It all begins with Elias Drake, whose son Harry, Carl Drake's grandfather, married Emma Bigelow, the daughter of Charles H. Bigelow. The Bigelows—Charles, followed by his son Frederic—would amass their own fortunes as presidents over a period of more than seventy years of the St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company.

Elias Drake was an astute businessman who made millions in railroading and other ventures during the last half of the nineteenth century, but his son Harry was not. As Carl Drake described his grandfather,

He was not a noted success as a businessman. Everything he touched went bankrupt. He was the typical son of a very wealthy,



Richard T. Crane and his wife with Crane Company Branch House managers on July 4, 1905. Lucius Ordway is second from the left in the back row, behind the man in the light coat. Chicago Historical Society photo.

successful railroad contractor, but he, his sister Carrie who married William Lightner, a brother and a couple of half-sisters all inherited quite a lot of money.

William Lightner, according to Carl Drake, was a "very careful gentleman who maintained Carrie's share of the Drake estate." By 1883 Lightner had become a prominent attorney. He was president of the Common [City] Council of St. Paul and a member of the city's first Charter Commission.

Emma Bigelow, who inherited a substantial fortune from her own father, was not so fortunate in her choice of a husband as a financial manager. Harry Drake's ineptness as a businessman called forth

watchfulness on the part of the Bigelow family. Carl Drake remembered his great uncle Frederic Bigelow, warning Harry Drake: "Harry, don't you ever put any of Emma's money into any of your fool projects, because all you'll do is lose it. If I ever find you doing that, there's going to be hell to pay." Drake added: "So far as I know, Harry never touched any of his wife's money, but everything he inherited from old Elias went down the drain."

One of those "fool projects" was the Northwest Cordage Works. In 1892, when Lucius Ordway bought him out and established his partnership with Richard Crane as Crane & Ordway, Rogers formed a partnership with Harry Drake to deal in lumber. The two men borrowed \$50,000

from Merchants National Bank; co-signer of the note was Emma Drake's father. Money in hand, Drake and Rogers either bought land, or the timber rights to it, on the upper St. Croix River. They hired help, built a flume, logged the property, and cut it into carefully-measured railroad ties. They made a deal with the Northern Pacific Railway to buy the ties skinned and cut to certain sizes. Drake remembered the family story:

They floated the ties, tied together, down the St. Croix. They had a tugboat there and they floated the ties down to the bridge at Stillwater, all ready for delivery. The day after they got the river full of ties, the great Panic of 1893 came crashing down. Northern

Pacific reneged on the contract and Harry and Rogers essentially went bankrupt with a bunch of railroad ties sitting in the water.

The bank called the note and Charles Bigelow, as co-signer, had to pay \$50,000 to clear it. Of course, as Carl Drake noted, Bigelow happened to be chairman of the bank. It was at a time when an insurance executive could also be a bank chairman. Charles Rogers, however, decided he was wiped out. It is ironic that he was not. His wife's fortune from her father's estate was so substantial that when the Rogers's unmarried daughter died years later, she left sizable bequests to her Drake and Lightner cousins.

Lucius Ordway, who was interested in likely investment prospects, was drawn into another of Harry Drake's ventures. The two men invested in some oil properties in California known as the Coaligual Oil Company. As Carl Drake explained it,

They bought thousands of mineral rights to land all over California, to no avail. Lucius Ordway could afford to do that, but my Grandfather Drake just blew the money. I eventually liquidated the company about 1955. In another project, my grandfather and Lucius Ordway bought several fruit ranches in the San Joachim Valley in California. Grandfather Drake supposedly was manager. But, transportation being what it was then, he rarely got out to California and the net result was that these ranches never produced anything but losses. Lucius Ordway finally sold his interest to Grandfather Drake. When my grandfather died in 1933, he left the remaining ranch, the peach ranch, to my Uncle Trevor Drake.

Oddly enough, the peach ranch turned out to be a successful venture. During World War II, the ranch began to make money as a supplier of fresh fruit to the federal government, but by this time Lucius Ordway was nearing the end of his life.

* * * *

What Ordway thought about his former partner's suicide is unknown, but his partnership with Crane was a highly successful stroke of business, a real coup for

a young entrepreneur who had set forth on an unfamiliar business in an unfamiliar city only nine years earlier. The Crane Company was the largest maker of plumbing supplies and fixtures in the United States, with 1,500 employees in Chicago alone.

Richard Teller Crane, thirty years Ordway's senior, was born in Paterson, New Jersey, on May 15, 1832. His father was a builder and architect, but serious financial losses forced young Richard to leave school at the age of nine and go to work in a cotton factory. When he was fifteen he moved to Brooklyn, New York, to work in a brass and iron factory and later in shops that were building locomotives and printing presses. His career from then on would be cast in the realm of the country's growing industrial needs. His next move was to Chicago in 1855, where he worked for his uncle, Martin Ryerson, a steel magnate who also owned a lumberyard. Crane built a small brass foundry in the corner of the lumberyard where he cast couplings and parts for lightning rods.

His brother Charles joined him and they remained partners until Charles retired in 1871. They diversified into producing parts for railroad cars, locomotives, and steam-heating radiators for homes and offices. With state and county contracts, they built heating systems for large public buildings. The Civil War brought them government contracts to produce quantities of metal items. They used their profits to build a large factory to manufacture steam engines and cast-iron fittings.

The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 was a tragic boon for the Crane brothers. As the city rebuilt, thousands of new homes needed pipes and plumbing fixtures. Crane established the Crane Elevator Company to produce steam freight and passenger elevators for the new business blocks that were rising from the rubble. He sold it to the Otis Elevator Company in 1895. His decision, explained in his autobiography, reflects the growing success of Crane & Ordway as well:

After a while . . . it became evident that the fittings business was growing so rapidly that it would be a good line in which to specialize

and we took it up in earnest. Then, as our capacity for manufacturing became crowded, we gradually dropped one after another of our various outside lines, including the steam warming and elevators, it being my feeling that the rapid growth of the pipe and fitting business would afford an enterprise sufficiently large for myself and family to look after.

He believed strongly in what is known today as "R and D"—research and development. He became an innovator as he kept pace with the rapid changes in nineteenth and early twentieth century industry and technology. He set up a laboratory to study the science of metallurgy and conducted hundreds of tests to determine which metal and alloys would be suitable for what purpose. Out of that research came important contributions to metallurgical science and a firmly established reputation for superior quality control in the Crane Company's manufacturing processes.

In his history of the company, J. B. Berryman, a longtime officer of the company, described Crane as "inclined to be choleric," but "underneath he had a warm spot for the men in the shops." He celebrated the company's fiftieth anniversary with a gigantic picnic for 12,000 employees in a Chicago park, and on July 4, 1905, he entertained fifty of the officers and managers of his Branch Houses at his summer home in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Late in life he began to distribute some of the profits in yearly gifts of five to ten per cent of an employee's earnings. Before he died on January 8, 1912, he had given away \$3,500,000.

Lucius Pond Ordway and Richard Teller Crane might seem to have been an odd couple: Ordway genial but shrewd, a New England patrician, a college graduate with wide ranging interests, particularly in education; Crane, according to Berryman, brusque, hard-boiled, equally shrewd, a brilliant inventor and technician but opposed to education beyond the eighth grade, even though his engineering department needed men who could draw and interpret blueprints. However, when they met, the two men liked each other, and each had something to offer the other. Ordway's company had been



Inside Rogers & Ordway around 1890 when the firm was located at 180-184 E. Fourth Street. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

in business for almost twenty-five years and was known in the industry as a prime money-maker. Crane's factory was one of the largest in Chicago, and he needed to siphon off inventory from its bulging showrooms by setting up branches that would sell Crane products to a market that was much larger than the Chicago area. Their partnership was well met.

As Crane explained in his autobiography, the Branch House system started in Omaha, Nebraska, when a jobber, unable to pay his bill, turned back his stock to the company. The company decided to run the Omaha store itself, selling the stock there rather than paying the freight for shipment back to Chicago. Crane soon realized that a Branch House system would save the cost of buying and selling goods between manufacturer and jobber.

Under his partnership with Crane, Ordway acquired four other Branch Houses in addition to those in Minneapolis and Duluth: Fargo, North Dakota; Aberdeen, South Dakota; Great Falls, Montana; and Winnipeg, Manitoba. The branches were successful from the start; they had a ready-made market and seasoned staff in

place. All functioned autonomously. Crane left the operation entirely in Ordway's hands, and Ordway steadily expanded the Branch Houses.

However, in 1893 Crane & Ordway faced a perilous time in the life of the country. The crash of 1893 was one of the worst in the nation's history. In that period of free-wheeling railroad development, the Panic of 1893 was touched off by the failure in February of still another railroad, the Philadelphia and Reading. The resulting crash ushered in a four-year depression. There were serious underlying causes to the debacle: industrial overexpansion, dwindling gold reserves, poor harvests in the south and west, and an economic slump in Europe. Thousands of businesses, including a quarter of the nation's railroads, went bankrupt. Nearly 100 insurance firms were forced to close their doors. There were riots in Chicago. Coxey's army of 500 desperate, jobless men marched on Washington petitioning—unsuccessfully, it turned out—for a multi-million-dollar public works program. In St. Paul, workers dissatisfied with yet another wage cut, were out all along James J. Hill's Great

Northern line in the disastrous strike of 1894. The conflict pitted Hill against Eugene Debs, founder of the American Railway Union. Debs prevailed, settling the strike in eighteen days.

Despite the shadow the Panic of 1893 had cast over America's Gilded Age of the last years of the nineteenth century, the depression seems not to have hampered Crane & Ordway. In 1895 the Crane Company in Chicago posted sales of \$6,037,200 and a capital surplus of \$3,282,500.

As for the Branch House of Crane & Ordway in St. Paul, that partnership had been formed a year before the crash. Houses were still going up in the city's prime residential districts, such as Summit Avenue and Dayton's Bluff. Electricity was invading the city. There were two electric streetcar lines, one running along Grand Avenue, the other serving the East Side. They were the forerunners of a network of trolley lines that spread throughout Ramsey, Hennepin, and Washington counties. The interurban lines placed White Bear Lake, a well-known resort town, within reach of ordinary citizens. Wealthier citizens began to buy up lakeshore property for summer homes. Historian T. M. Newson noted with some candor that Manitou Island, separated from White Bear Lake by an inlet, "has recently been purchased by St. Paul and Stillwater capitalists for a private park and ground for summer cottages for their own use." Ordway built a summer home at Dellwood near the White Bear Yacht Club, and James and Katharine Elmer built a cottage next door. Both had broad, screened verandas overlooking the lake.

Ordway always was deeply involved in what was happening in St. Paul. In 1887 he was a founder of the Town and Country Club, along with Crawford Livingston, James J. Hill, Richards Gordon, and others. At first they leased a hotel on the eastern shore of Como Lake, but three years later, the club's 170 members celebrated the opening of a new clubhouse on Marshall Avenue overlooking the Mississippi. Designed by Cass Gilbert, the clubhouse stood on land where in the 1830s a Scotch-Canadian fur trader named Donald McDonald set up a grog shop known as the Halfway House—halfway



The L. P. Ordway and J. P. Elmer summer homes at Dellwood, White Bear Lake. The Ordway "cottage," on the left, was large and airy, with porches off the bedrooms. T. W. Ingersoll photo, Minnesota Historical Society.

between Fort Snelling and the Falls of St. Anthony.

When the Minnesota Club, established in 1874, closed down after membership dropped precipitously in the wake of the Panic of 1873, Ordway took part in its reorganization a decade later. He had barely arrived in St. Paul in 1883 when he signed on, along with 105 business leaders, in the successful effort to resurrect the club. He was a founding member of the University Club. He was its president and a member of its Building Committee in 1913 and 1914 when members decided to construct the clubhouse that stands today on Summit Avenue at the top of Ramsey Hill.

He was a member of the Minnesota Boat Club. He was a director of Merchants National Bank from 1902 to 1929, and after the bank merged with First National Bank in 1929, he remained a director until 1934. He served on the board of the St. Paul Chapter of the American Red Cross for more than twenty years. He belonged to the Informal Club, founded in 1894 when, according to the club's fortieth anniversary history, "several men who felt keenly the need of some sort of social clearing house for ideas kept ask-

ing each other whenever they met, on the street or elsewhere, why somebody didn't start the right kind of a Talking Club. . . ." Its purpose was "the fostering of rational goodfellowship and tolerant discussion," its membership "strictly limited" to fifty, its organization to be informal, to say the very least: no charter, no constitution, no by-laws, just enough structure "to keep it from disorganizing"

Meetings often were held at the Ordway home at 523 Portland Avenue, an ornate Victorian house with corner turrets and gabled dormers where the Ordways had moved in 1894. Members provided the program. On December 3, 1908, the history notes, "Mr. L. P. Ordway has had so much time for contemplation recently that, in the tranquil searches of his leisure, he has evolved 'A New Plan for the Enlistment of the United States Army.' He now desires to submit this plan to the Club before promulgating it." What happened next is lost to history.

In 1903 some of St. Paul's journeyman plumbers went on strike, and Ordway became associated briefly with the Citizens' Association of St. Paul. This was an effort to curb the growing power of labor unions, their closed shops, and

their use of boycotts. He chaired the Association's Committee on Constitution and By-laws and attended Association meetings, but this anti-union effort seems to have petered out.

Jessie Ordway, in the meantime, was an active member of the Schubert Club. A talented musician, she often performed as a piano soloist for the club. On March 14, 1894, a club program noted, she along with "Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Shepley and Mrs. Cole" performed a piano quartette, Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde."

The Schubert Club's beginnings dated back to the 1860s when women gathered in each other's homes to do fancywork while listening to music by talented members. In 1883 the organization became the Ladies Musicale; but some years later members changed their name again to the Schubert Club in honor of the Austrian composer. For Jessie Ordway, music was an abiding interest throughout her life. She staged musicals in her home and she was an ardent supporter of St. Paul operas and symphonies. The Ordways were season box holders for opera in St. Paul, and first night at the opera was the "great social event" of the year. In 1910 they heard Geraldine Farrar

there and they attended a Minneapolis Symphony concert where Madame Schumann-Heink was soloist. She also was active in the St. Paul Chapter of the American Red Cross and served on a number of its committees. She was a gardener, a member of several garden clubs, and she was active all of her life in the Swedenborgian Church.

Lucius Ordway, a serious sailor, was a charter member of the White Bear Yacht Club and its first commodore. The Yacht Club was organized in the fall of 1889 when James M. Welch, a St. Paul dentist, John W. Taylor, and James P. Elmer met in Welch's office to discuss establishing a club for sailors. The following spring, the club opened its doors. Initiation dues were \$5; annual fees \$3.

With such enthusiasts as Ordway and C. Milton Griggs, who were wealthy enough to support the design and building of new boats, it was inevitable that White Bear Lake would become the Midwest center for boat-building and that builders, including John O. Johnson, Gus Amundson, and Gene Ramaley, would open up shop along the lakeshore. It was here, too, that Ordway, almost inadvertently, introduced the famed racing scow.

As Thomas A. Hodgson told the story in his 1997 history of the Inland Lake Yachting Association, Ordway was visiting his father, Aaron Lucius Ordway, in Providence in 1896 when he paid a visit to the renowned designer and boat-builder Nathanael Herreshoff. Ordway had agreed to order a boat for Milton Griggs. Ordway and Herreshoff discussed the designs of flat-bottomed boats and the result was that Herreshoff built the *Alfrida*. Wanting a boat to compete with his friend's, Ordway commissioned Gene Ramaley to design a boat for him and he christened it *Yankee*. It became, in one sailor's words, the "first all-out scow."

Ordway's colors became familiar to sailors up and down the Eastern seaboard, in Canada, and on the country's inland lakes, Hodgson wrote. He helped found the Inland Lake Yachting Association in 1897 and won its first regatta. His interest in yachting, however, went beyond winning and losing races, and his approach to the sport adds dimension to his character, as Hodgson noted:

Lucius Ordway was a man of considerable means, able to play the game with the best of the monied sportsmen. But he envisioned yacht racing as gentlemanly competition between sailors, not between their bank accounts. . . .

In an eloquent presentation at an annual ILYA meeting, Ordway spoke of "developing our sons as sailors." Hodgson wrote:

Clearly, he was aware of the betting on boat races between bookmakers on shore and some of the yachtsmen themselves, and that some owners may have hired outstanding skippers to sail their boats and then placed substantial bets on the outcome. Ordway felt that this unsavory activity tainted the sport of sailing and that the presence of professionals aggravated the situation.

His speech set off a storm of controversy over his appeal to make the ILYA "thoroughly corinthian," but, in time, professionals were barred from the races. Ordway's interest in the welfare of "our sons" was real. For many long, hot summers, he could be seen squatting in a row boat out on White Bear Lake, hat on head, patiently coaching the Yacht Club's young sailors.

Perhaps it was around this time that Ordway first encountered F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose novels reflected so much of the writer's early years in St. Paul. Throughout much of the thirteen years Fitzgerald spent in and out of St. Paul, before leaving for good at the age of twenty-six, he was a regular visitor to the Town and Country Club, the University Club, and the White Bear Yacht Club. He sailed there and attended Saturday night dances there. When he was seventeen, he wrote a Civil War drama, *The Coward*, and later a farce, *Assorted Spirits*, both of which were presented at the Yacht Club. John J. Koblas, in his *F. Scott Fitzgerald In Minnesota—His Homes and Haunts*, published in 1978, lists 523 Portland as a house where Fitzgerald frequently partied as a guest of Lucius P. Ordway, Jr. By that time the house had become the home of John Ordway, Lucius's son.

In 1921 Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda "personally brought the Jazz Age

to White Bear," Patricia Condon Johnston wrote in *Reflections*, her 1989 history of the White Bear Yacht Club. The hedonistic lifestyle of the Twenties, the intense partying, the stream of visitors the Fitzgeralds attracted, did not rest well with the Yacht Club officials, however. They were asked to leave, and they did.

Ordway had other interests. He was an ardent golfer. He helped found the Nushka Club that took part in the first Winter Carnival in 1886. ("Nushka" was said to be an Ojibwa word meaning "Look!") Formed as a toboggan club, the Nushka organized snowshoe tramps out to Merriam Park and back again to a rendezvous at Carpenter's Lookout where an old hotel once stood at the crest of Ramsey Hill and Summit Avenue. Ordway named one of his boats the *Nushka* and with it won the Great Lake Race at Duluth in 1890.

One of a dozen or so social and sporting clubs formed at a time when organized sports were becoming increasingly popular in St. Paul, the Nushka Club was among the most fashionable. Its membership roster read like a *Who's Who* of St. Paul society. Many Nushka Club members also belonged to the Yacht Club, and they held summer and winter outings, dances, and costume balls.

Another organization with a similar roster was the St. Paul Curling Club, incorporated on November 16, 1886, with Lucius Ordway as a member. Five generations of Ordways, beginning with Lucius, have curled there. Curling, an ancient sport that in the 1700s moved from Scottish lochs to North America, stressed rules and behavior and involved the difficult maneuver of sweeping forty to fifty-pound stones about a frozen body of water. In a history of the St. Paul Curling Club, published in the Winter, 1996, issue of *Ramsey County History*, writer Jane McClure described "the first curling match ever played in St. Paul, on Christmas Day, 1885. The match was played on Mississippi River ice near Raspberry Island."

Around 1891 the club erected a clubhouse on the island, but in 1902 member C. Milton Griggs told the club that "The old rink . . . had served its purpose, had introduced the game, but its inaccessibility

in that location had become too apparent and burdensome for continuance." In 1912 the curlers built a new clubhouse at 470 Selby Avenue.

In 1907, along with Dr. Arthur Sweeney and Charles W. Ames, general manager of the former West Publishing Company, Ordway helped organize the St. Paul Institute of Science and Letters. It was the ancestor of the 1950s St. Paul-Ramsey Council of Arts and Science. The Institute's origins traced back to 1870 and the founding of the St. Paul Academy of Natural Sciences by physicians, teachers, and other professionals, including Robert O. Sweeny, the pioneer pharmacist, artist, designer of the Minnesota's first great seal, and the state's first fish and game director.

The earliest organization of its kind in the Midwest, the Academy stored its collections and library in the old state Capitol, only to lose them when the Capitol burned to the ground in 1881. Two years later another collection had been assembled, including a mummy shipped from Egypt by a vacationing St. Paul couple. The city provided three upper floors of the City Auditorium on West Fifth Street to house both the collection and a School of Art. When the Academy closed for good in 1907, its collections were turned over to the newly-formed St. Paul Institute of Science and Letters, which was incorporated the following year.

One historian has described Ordway and his fellow Institute founders as "the best in a generation that produced idealists with a strong sense of the practical." These men saw the St. Paul Institute as a people's university. There were free lectures that attracted as many as 9,000 people; musical programs were conducted with the Schubert Club and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra; there were evening classes that foreshadowed community education programs and Metropolitan State University. Its School of Art and Art Gallery was the forerunner of the Minnesota Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Natural and Physical Sciences the Institute maintained became today's Science Museum of Minnesota.

Ordway's interest in education already was apparent in the rescue of the small, private Barnard School for Boys

established in 1887 as a counter to the sometimes haphazard education offered at the time by St. Paul's public schools. Often overcrowded, frequently poorly constructed, and sometimes badly taught, the city's common schools left much to be desired for some parents. Ordway, like his friends, was sympathetic to the cause of private schooling, a movement that emerged during the 1880s and 1890s in the Midwest. Moreover, as a graduate himself of a private college, he had seen the advantages possessed by classmates who filtered into Brown from the private prep schools of New England.

St. Paul, around the turn-of-the-century, had a number of struggling private schools but the plight of the Barnard School attracted Ordway's interest. It was founded by Robert Arrowsmith, who held a doctorate from Columbia University, and named for Columbia's president, F. A. P. Barnard. It offered boys ten years and older a curriculum of modern languages, classics, and mathematics that "would lead to thorough preparation for the colleges," as well as for West Point and Annapolis.

The school barely survived its formative years, moving about the Summit Avenue neighborhood until it came to rest, in 1890, in the Dakotah, a commercial building that still stands at the southeast corner of Selby and Western Avenue. There it remained for another ten years. Around 1900 one curious father uncovered some lapses in the education of his son, Barnard School student Charles Leslie Ames. In his history of St. Paul Academy and Summit School, published in 2000, author Paul Clifford Larson vividly describes what happened:

On a spring day in 1900 Charles W. Ames went into parental shock. His son, he discovered, could not tell a cosine from a coefficient. Apparently he could not tell the accusative from the ablative either, for three years of Latin grammar had left his mind unscathed.

Calming down, Ames decided that the problem was inept teaching at Barnard, Larson writes, and he set in motion a committee that included others who apparently were just as horrified: Lucius P. Ordway, William H. Lightner, Arthur B.

Driscoll, Chauncey M. Griggs, Frank D. Shepard, and James H. Skinner. They set to work to strengthen the faculty, shore up the curriculum and, in 1903, construct a new building on Dale Street that finally give the school a home of its own. Ordway's name surfaces again in 1906 when, Larson writes, rising disciplinary problems among the students precipitated the first parent-teacher crisis. Ames "hauled the three school masters over the coals for the academy's lack of discipline and esprit de corps." Discipline was important enough to Ordway that a special effort was made to assure him that "the rumpus shows that we are doing something in the right direction." Lucius Ordway remained a strong supporter of the Academy as, over the next few years, these men, friends, colleagues, and parents helped transform Barnard School into the St. Paul Academy of today.

Social life for Jessie and Lucius Ordway and those who belonged to their close-knit circle of friends was set in patterns appropriated from cities along the Eastern seaboard. Although a happy informality clung to the gatherings of the curlers, the skaters, the sailors, and the golfers, dinners, receptions, teas, and balls were formal. Dinners could be lavish in an era when no one had heard of calories, let alone cholesterol. A dinner served by a St. Paul hostess in 1900 began with raw oysters, moved through soup served with croutons and cream; white fish in shells; chicken patties; pheasants with potatoes, peas, and macaroni; lettuce and celery salad; rumball pudding; ice cream and cake and coffee.

Elegance, refinement, good taste, delicacy, gentility were the watchwords that guided hostesses in a city often thought of as "the Boston of the Midwest." For years, W. J. Sonnen, a St. Paul Fire and Marine manager, wrote in a 1927 memoir,

No professional gentleman would appear in the afternoons without a high hat, long tail coat, gloves, etc., and we of the ordinary force felt a thrill of pride when our officers came in after dinner properly appareled. At noon no gentleman was expected to go home, have dinner with his family, change his clothes and be back in less than an hour and a half.



The Nushka, Ordway's White Bear Lake champion. Photo from the Thomas Hodgson collection and Hodgson's 1997 History of the Inland Lake Yachting Association.

For evening wear, a man's lot was the implacable white tie and tails. Their wives and daughters, in the years before Edwardian tastes brought some sense to women's clothing, were elegantly uncomfortable in tight corsets, underpinnings that began with the corset cover and proceeded through several layers of petticoats before ending in a gown that swept the floor, and often the street as well. It was in their evening gowns, satin, chiffon, and daringly low-cut, that women reflected a more glamorous sophistication.

Sometimes elaborate costumes replaced formal wear. Louis and Maud Hill were famous for their costume parties in the home James J. Hill built for them in 1902 at 260 Summit, next door to his own house. One of those costume parties reportedly was the inspiration behind F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story, "The Camel's Back," published in 1920 in *The Saturday Evening Post*.

The Hills and Jessie and Lucius Ordway were close friends. They vacationed together at Glacier National Park, they belonged to the same clubs, they had many of the same friends, and they were guests at the Hills' frequent parties.

Maud Hill's diary, preserved at the James J. Hill Reference Library in St. Paul, is revealing in its frequent references to Jessie and Lucius Ordway: "Gave dinner for nine," she wrote in 1909, and listed Ordways as among the guests. In 1910: "We gave a dinner dance . . . We danced till midnight," and again the Ordways were there. Later, "Mrs. Griggs" gave a dinner "at St. Paul" that included the Ordways. On April 29, 1915, after Maud Hill's surgery at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota, Jessie Ordway wrote her a warm, affectionate note:

My dear Maud: To-day I hear from all sides that you are on the road to recovery and I want you to know how glad I am that it is all over. What a brick you have been all these months—so bright and cheerful and with such a weight on your mind.

This afternoon I went with Maude [Maud Hill's daughter] to your wonderful new room [a ballroom added on to the Louis Hill house] and Mrs. [Tina] Ward [a family friend] and it is even more beautiful than I had expected—and the organ is all that it should or could be. Mrs. Ward's voice blends so perfectly with the organ. I became so excited over it all, that the first thing I knew, I was coaching them as to how the accompaniment should be played. I didn't go quite so far as to tell Tina how to sing. We all spoke of you so often.

Your mother had guests, so I did not see her. I am moving to the lake tomorrow so as you may well imagine, everything in the house is in a messy condition. Get strong soon—so that you can play in the tournaments—you were the inspiration of the Friday luncheons, so you must help us keep them going.

Tomorrow is my "30th" wedding anniversary—just think of that—I am really nothing but an old frump, and haven't the sense to see it. With much love, Jessie G. Ordway.

* * * *

In some circles there was an earnest attempt to demonstrate that St. Paul was no longer a rough-hewn frontier community but was instead a cosmopolitan city of more than 140,300 people. Automobiles were still considered playthings of the rich, but the streets were alive with

horses and carriages. Property owners were dismayed that the city's unpaved streets would no longer be sprayed to keep down the dust. Lamplighters with their little ladders still made the rounds of residential neighborhoods. Coachmen drove fashionable women on their endless social calls, downtown to shop or to visit their dressmakers or milliners. Calling cards, with their intricate etiquette, were the required form of genteel communication when telephones had not yet penetrated many homes, even though they had arrived in St. Paul in 1878. Twenty years later, it still was considered bad form to issue a social invitation by telephone.

A party thrown the day after Christmas, 1898, by thirty-one "young married people," set off a century-long tradition. Those "young married people" were friends, neighbors, members of pioneer families whose addresses clustered about Farrington, Summit, Holly, and Portland avenues. Like Jessie and Lucius Ordway, they were supporters of education and culture, but they also were well aware that the prosperity of the "Gilded Age" had not washed over everyone. They contributed time, money, and energy to such social agencies as Associated Charities of St. Paul, established in 1892, and the Protestant Home of St. Paul, founded in 1867 as the Home for the Friendless to provide for destitute women and children. Others among Jessie Ordway's friends were active in the fight for suffrage.

Their party, that holiday night, was the beginning of a social club still known as The Assembly. The records are silent as to why these young people formed their club at that time. Perhaps they simply decided to have a party. Oddly enough, the Ordways were not among The Assembly's founders, but Jessie's sister Katharine and her husband, James Elmer, were. Elmer not only was Lucius Ordway's brother-in-law, but he had been a close friend since the early 1880s when both arrived in St. Paul, shared quarters at 118½ West Third Street, and worked together briefly at Wilson & Rogers.

Elmer's career was varied, but no more so, perhaps, than the careers of other men who were establishing themselves in an evolving community. In his



Lucius Ordway, left, and Charles Patterson, dressed for the 1916 Winter Carnival. From the Louis W. Hill, Sr., photo collection, J. J. Hill Reference Library, St. Paul.

1912 *History of Minnesota*, Henry A. Castle wrote of him:

Than the lives of those who have risen from the ranks and by persevering labor and unswerving integrity have conquered fate, there can be nothing more interesting, more encouraging or more elevating. . . . Success may elude for a long period but it is bound to come in time to those who perseveringly strive, as illustrated in the career of the Hon. James P. Elmer of St. Paul, member of the Minnesota State Legislature and general agent of the Equitable Life Assurance Company of the United States.

Elmer was born in New Jersey in 1857 and came to Minnesota in 1880 to survey the Upper Mississippi Reservoirs for the federal government. He moved on to St. Paul, Castle wrote, where he "turned his attention to commercial ventures, and from 1883 to 1897 was successfully engaged in mercantile lines as a manufacturer's agent and a dealer in railroad supplies." He next went to work for the Chicago Great Western Railway as city passenger agent, then as general agent, but he retired from the railroad in 1909 as the insurance business beckoned.

The Elmers were childless. In 1902 they adopted a little girl of nine. Born in St. Paul on June 16, 1887, Agnes Dagmar Maas was the daughter of Hermann A. J. Maas, a driver for George Benz and Sons, wholesale liquor merchants, and Catherina Moeller, both immigrants from Germany. Agnes was barely six when her mother died, and even at that young age she tried her best to keep house for her father. Her son later described her childhood:

Agnes Dagmar Maas knew the meaning of poverty in ways not experienced by very many. . . . Her father remarried a widow, also with a family. Since there was not enough to support, clothe or feed the large family, at the age of nine Agnes was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Elmer. While the young girl's fortunes changed very much for the better, these early years left their desperate memories.

Little is known of the young girl's next few years in the Elmers' home. What is known is that on April 27, 1907, just before her twentieth birthday, papers finalizing her adoption as Agnes Katharine Elmer were filed in Ramsey County District Court and Agnes Elmer became Jessie and Lucius Ordway's niece.

A glimpse of her new life, and that of the circle in which the Elmers and the Ordways moved, can be seen in a scrapbook she kept as a young woman. A newspaper item published in the autumn of 1907 and carefully pasted into the scrapbook noted that "Mr. and Mrs. James P. Elmer have issued invitations for a reception to be given Thursday evening October 3 at the Town and County Club when their daughter, Miss Agnes Elmer, will make her debut." In breathless prose, a following article stated that "The reception has been generally pronounced to be one of the prettiest affairs ever given in St. Paul":

The clubhouse and the wide porches enclosed with canvas were transformed into a veritable sylvan bower as walls and ceilings were thickly covered with boughs of maple in all the glory of their autumn coloring and with Japanese lanterns of artistic shape and coloring suspended at irregular intervals shedding a softened light. It was like a scene

from fairyland. The reception was followed by dancing which began at 10 o'clock.

Agnes led off the dancing on the arm of Frederic Bigelow. A flurry of invitations to breakfasts, lunches, parties, concerts followed: Mrs. Frank Billings Kellogg, whose husband would later win the Nobel Peace Prize, requested "the pleasure of Miss Elmer's company at breakfast and the matinee on Saturday." Mrs. James J. Hill requested the pleasure of her company at a luncheon. Mr. and Mrs. Morton Barrows also requested her company at a wedding reception for their daughter, Dorothy, and Walter Jerome Hill.

When she attended Virginia Borup's wedding later that October, a new name appeared in her diary: "Most perfect wedding I ever saw. . . . Went with Mother and Mr. Ober." Later she had "an awfully good time" at a supper party that included "Mr. Ober." Still later she had dinner at Carling's, a fashionable downtown restaurant. "Mr. Ober host. I sat at his right. . . . Walked home with Mr. Ober."

In 1909, when she was twenty-two, Agnes Elmer began a three-year nurses training program at Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. Katharine Gilman Elmer wrote her daily, and her letters, preserved by the Ober family, open a window into some of the economic concerns of the family. The country had been suffering through another acute depression that began as "the Bankers' Panic" in 1907. She wrote that

Father has been ordered to move to Chicago on the 7th. We are making no plans until he has talked to the powers-that-be. . . . If there is anything doing in the Great Northern, it would develop today. . . . Hope it will be a go, for it is one of the three biggest railroad systems in the United States and the road is ripe for great advances in the passenger department. . . .

It was not a go. "Father . . . feels the Great Northern is off, otherwise he would have heard from Louis Hill . . . but on the other hand [Hill] might have been off hunting."

Several days later she noted that she was "very tired. Tried to save money by going around and paying bills instead of mailing them." The Elmers, however, re-

mained in St. Paul and within a year he had become manager of the Moore Patent Car Company. "Father," Katharine wrote, "is dead sure he is going to make a fortune with the car. It certainly does look good."



Edgar B. Ober

For Katharine Elmer, however, all other matters were swept away by the sudden and astonishing news that arrived from Agnes, barely two months into her nurses training. She had decided to marry Edgar B. Ober, the handsome, well-established St. Paul businessman who was twice her age. Ober had traveled all that distance to New York City to ask Agnes to marry him. Katharine was excited but dismayed. Referring to him as "Sir Gallahad," she wrote: "He has seen so little of you and really knows you only slightly. As far as I can recall, you have only been together two or three times. I don't want you to rush into anything quickly or inadvisedly. . . ."

Nevertheless, Agnes Elmer and Edgar Ober were married in St. Paul on February 23, 1910, in the Swedenborgian Church. Edward Craig Mitchell was one of the three witnesses. An afternoon wedding reception followed at the Elmers' home. The lavishness with which the Ordway family and friends married off one of their own is revealed in a letter Katharine

Elmer wrote Edgar and Agnes Ober while they were on their honeymoon:

Today the man finished packing the presents. . . . The chest of silver went to Bullard's. The rest of the silver is in two packing boxes about the size of medium trunks and is in the safety vault of the National German American Bank in Edgar B. Ober's name. . . . The china and glass [are] packed in five barrels and four packing boxes and [are] down in the storeroom which, by the way, is rented to Mr. Ober at the rate of \$3 a month.

At the time of his marriage to Agnes Elmer, Edgar Buchanan Ober already was something of a legendary figure in St. Paul business circles and Lucius Ordway's close friend. Ober was born in 1866 in Mankato, Minnesota, where his parents owned a wholesale and retail grocery store. Around 1877 the Obers left Mankato for St. Paul where Edgar soon went to work for the railroads. By 1893 he was assistant general freight agent for the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha system. Ten years later he was the railroad's general freight agent.

In the meantime Ober had become interested in a struggling young company in Two Harbors bearing the somewhat misleading name of Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company. In 1903 he optimistically invested \$5,000 in the company's first stock offering. Just what drew Ober's attention to the future 3M is not known but in her 1955 history of 3M, *Brand of the Tartan*, Virginia Huck surmises that Ober knew William McGonagle, one of the new company's incorporators, through their mutual railroad connections. McGonagle was assistant to the president of the Duluth, Missabe and Northern Railroad, and as both men belonged to the Gitchi Gammi Club in Duluth, Ober perhaps met him there.

All might have been well if what seemed to be an exciting discovery near Two Harbors had turned out to be corundum, the hardest pure mineral in the world, next to diamonds. It certainly seemed logical that a fortune could be made selling corundum; it was just what the nation's burgeoning abrasive industry needed for grinding wheels. Problem was, it wasn't corundum. For years the

company that finally did make a fortune in sandpaper stumbled down the wrong path, unaware that they had discovered only an inferior metal that was worthless as a commercial abrasive. That 3M stayed afloat at all in its critical early years was due in part to the persistence and agility of Edgar Ober as a money-raiser and the seemingly endless flow of cash his close friend and fellow investor Lucius Ordway poured into the floundering company. Ordway, however, brought something special to the venture that was just as important as his money. He was already a millionaire and a force to be reckoned with in St. Paul even before that small group of men began mining "corundum." Among those early directors—an attorney, a physician, and several railroad men—only Ordway had managed a major corporation, and he alone had a firsthand understanding of how a manufacturing company needed to operate if it was to become profitable.

At first, for Ordway, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing seems to have been simply a promising investment opportunity offered by a friend. In January, 1905, when Ober sat down with him in his office at Crane & Ordway, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing badly needed rescuing from insolvency. Stockholders were willing to sell 60 percent of the 222,846 shares of the outstanding stock to anyone who would pay the company's mounting bills and provide some capital to build an abrasives plant. Ober knew that Ordway was interested in new investments and that he understood the importance of helping new businesses get established. Ober asked him for slightly less than \$40,000. The deal, completed on May 1, 1905, gave Ordway and Ober control of the company. Ordway, however, made one stipulation: He would have nothing to do with running it. Little did he know that he was gazing into a clouded crystal ball.

Between 1906 and 1909, he did in fact serve as (unpaid) president, possibly to protect his investment, but when that investment crept past \$100,000, he tried not once but several times to withdraw as financial angel. Each effort apparently was greeted by a wringing of hands. In 1906 John Dwan wrote Edgar Ober:

"You state in your last letter that Mr. Ordway can do nothing further in the matter and that means ruin to the Company and great loss to each and every stockholder unless something radical is done."

Ordway himself explained his position during a 3M board of directors meeting at the Minnesota Club: "I've furnished all the cash and credit for 3M that I'm able to. Much as I regret it, you'll have to find someone to relieve me of some of the existing liabilities of the company."

Still, he continued the loans. By 1910 he had invested \$225,000. It is an open question as to why Ordway did not simply take over 3M, rather than continuing to prop it up with infusions of capital, but he was busy with Crane & Ordway, with his many business and civic interests, and, according to writer Virginia Huck, he "thoroughly disliked routine, detailed work."

Nevertheless, in 1910 he moved the company to St. Paul, the better to keep a closer eye on his investment as well as the company's management, and to place it more firmly within the industrial center of the state. He spent \$35,302 to build 3M's first St. Paul plant, a three-story structure on Forest and Fauquier (now Bush) Streets on the city's East Side. He paid to equip the plant, including a laboratory for experiments in producing the sandpaper that Ober believed would be the company's salvation. And it was.

Ordway may have sensed a future for 3M that had been obscured by its early struggles. He had been in a position to see how Richard Teller Crane used research and development to improve manufacturing techniques, to develop new products, and to invest the profits in other new products. Ordway very likely was astute enough to see how the Crane expertise could be applied to the development of sandpaper and, later, to tape and other products. He perhaps remembered his father's experience with James Gee's home-grown research into manufacturing and dyeing bookbinding cloth. If Lucius Ordway was behind the injecting of research and development into 3M's manufacturing process, he made an even greater, longer-term contribution to the company than the money that at first kept it going.

Ober, who was 3M's president from 1905 to 1906, and again from 1909 to 1929 (the first eleven of those years without pay), had his own creative methods for raising capital. A story that is embedded in St. Paul's business lore describes Ober's encounter with Harold Bend, sometime before World War I. At that precise moment, Ober, as usual, was wondering how to meet 3M's latest payroll. Bend had amassed \$5,000 and was on his way to buy a car. Pursuing his mission, he fell into conversation with Ober, who persuaded Bend to forget about the car and loan him the money. When time came for repayment, Ober lacked the cash and gave him stock in the company instead. During the course of Bend's long life—he died in 1974 at the age of 103—his 3M stock had passed through 192 stock splits. He was one of the last of 3M's early stockholders.

Harold Bend, the brother of Irene Bend, who had been an attendant at the wedding of Jessie and Lucius Ordway, was born on Staten Island, New York, in 1870. The family came west so his father, who had lost his money in a Wall Street crash, could start over. In 1895 Harold Bend helped found the St. Paul-based sugar brokerage firm of Earle-Bend, later Southall-Sleepack, and he remained with the firm for seventy years. "People think Harold Bend made his money in the sugar business," the late Reuel Harmon once remarked. "He didn't. He made it as an early investor in 3M."

The documents available today offer only a sketchy glimpse of how Ordway influenced the broader direction of the company. Their absence suggests that as long as 3M remained in Duluth Ordway relied on telephone calls to Ober to pass along his instructions. However, it is not difficult to see Ordway's fine hand on the tiller, organizing the manufacturing of abrasive and bringing order out of chaos. He knew from Crane & Ordway how to solve the problems of producing a product whose sales did not cover production costs and, as a good judge of people, he knew how to find the right kind of people for 3M's kind of business.

His instructions as president were succinct: no materials were to be ordered without his consent; all expense checks

were to be countersigned by him; expenses were to be kept to a minimum, a profitable price schedule was to be maintained and he was to be kept informed. Therefore, on February 6, 1907, H. W. Cable, 3M's second vice president, sent Ordway "the enclosed list of five and other insurances now in force on all of the property of 3M located in various places. Our Chicago, New York, Milwaukee, and Boston stocks are very fully insured. Our Crystal Bay buildings and machinery and our machinery in Duluth are all fully insured." On March 24, 1908, Edgar Ober wrote John Dwan:

In talking with Mr. Ordway yesterday in reference to the purchase of machinery, would say that he agrees with us that no order should be put in for the machinery until the land question is finally settled, and while I think Mr. Cable understands this, I wish you would drop him a line and make it perfectly clear, asking him to send the order for the machinery, when he has decided where to place it, to Mr. Ordway, under personal cover, and Mr. Ordway will see that it is promptly forwarded to the party with whom it is to be placed. When the order is sent in, I wish you would also have Mr. Cable indicate in his advice to Mr. Ordway the prices of the various items so that it will show what the aggregate cost will be.

Even so, between 1907 and 1909, a period when the country was in the throes of another devastating depression, 3M's operations remained haphazard. There had been little agreement on sales and pricing policy until Ordway took a hand. An experienced businessman, he knew the importance of maintaining that profitable price level. When H. W. Boynton, who was in charge of the company's sandpaper production, cut prices, against Ordway's explicit directions, and when the company's salesman in Chicago was both ineffectual as well as autocratic, Ordway dismissed both of them.

When Ordway insisted on 3M's move to St. Paul, when he built its first plant there and supervised its opening, and when he installed the research laboratory that solved the sandpaper problem, neither he nor anyone else connected with 3M had any idea that within a few years the company would pay its debts and that



The St. Paul Hotel, ca. 1912. C. P. Gibson photo, Minnesota Historical Society.

in years to come its outstanding stock would be worth millions.

Almost from the moment he set foot in St. Paul, Lucius Ordway had harbored a deep and abiding interest in promoting the city. One of the many business concerns that was on his mind, as he struggled with 3M's problems, was the construction of a new downtown hotel. Along with his friends and business associates, most of them members of a newly-formed Busi-

ness League of St. Paul, Ordway realized that the city's commercial life was hampered by the lack of a big hotel. He offered to build a modern, 300-room hotel if \$125,000 could be raised to acquire a site and find a manager. It would be the first "million-dollar hotel" in the Northwest. (Later in his life Ordway would also own the Lowry Hotel.)

Planning for the new hotel began in 1908. Fortunately, an impressive site was available. The old Windsor Hotel stood vacant across Market Street from Rice



Jessie Gilman Ordway in 1910.

Park. The *Pioneer Press* described the eminently suitable corner bounded by St. Peter, Market, and West Fifth Street:

The ground is high and the site is one of peculiar value for a great public building, centrally located and close to the heart of the business district, reached by all arterial lines of the street railway, close to the railway terminals and accessible to the Union Station by direct street car lines, and, above all, at the crest of the great Mississippi bluffs where a building of size must inevitably command a magnificent view, not only of the entire city but of the broad river valley in both directions.

That corner had been occupied since the 1850s. First on the site was the "Monk's Hall," a small two-story frame structure sketched by Robert O. Sweeny in 1852. Sweeny described it as "inhabited by some of the young lawyers of St. Paul who live in the style called 'Keeping Batch' and judging from appearances they live very happily at least merrily." Next, in 1871, came the Greenman House, a sixty-room frame structure painted green and pretentious for its time. It burned down in 1877, and was followed a year later by the Windsor Hotel. Built at a cost of \$75,000, the Windsor was five-

stories high with 200 rooms before it was enlarged in 1881. According to the *Pioneer Press*, the Windsor was what the St. Paul Hotel was to become:

A rendezvous of Western leaders in business and politics, in private and public affairs. United States senators were [selected] within its walls, and the destinies of great political movements of the day were decided at conferences within its walls.

However, in 1906, shabby, no longer up-to-date, lacking modern conveniences (bathroom-down-the-hall), the Windsor sat on its prime piece of real estate, awaiting the wrecking ball. In 1909 it was torn down. In the meantime, the Business League had initiated a flurry of solicitations to raise the \$125,000, secure the site, and find a manager. Within ten days, the fund-raising committee, chaired by Phil W. Herzog and including John I. H. Field, Theodore W. Griggs, Luther S. Cushing, Eli S. Warner, Homer P. Clark, and E. P. James, had the money in hand.

On November 1, 1909, they turned it over to Ordway, along with the deed to the property, "in consideration of his placing a million-dollar hotel upon it." The committee signed up the Roth Hotel Group of Chicago as the operating company under a twenty-one-year lease, and Charles G. Roth was named resident manager.

"Of the 273 subscribers [to the fund], practically all were St. Paul men," the *Pioneer Press* proudly announced, and "of their individual subscriptions, all but \$25 was collected and deposited to the credit of the fund." Ordway then turned to James J. Hill in a letter dated January 11, 1909, and preserved in the archives of the James J. Hill Reference Library.

Dear Mr. Hill: Referring to your very kind offer to assist me in the building of the hotel, I understand that you will lend me up to \$200,000 to be secured either by second mortgage or by preferred stock, I to give you my note at 5% interest due in twenty years, with the privilege [*sic*] of paying on same on any interest date in sums of \$1000 or over. I will need this money along during the summer as the construction proceeds, probably not all at one time. I contemplate placing a first mortgage upon the property of



An undated photograph of Lucius Ordway, perhaps taken during the 1920s. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

\$300,000. If you can arrange so that I could get it as I need it, it would greatly help me. Will you please let me know whether I have correctly stated our understanding. Thanking you for your kindness, I remain, Yours sincerely, Lucius P. Ordway

Construction of the new hotel had begun even before the \$125,000 was in hand. Its design was entrusted to the St. Paul architectural firm of Reed and Stem. Both men had come to St. Paul to practice architecture, Charles A. Reed in 1881, after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Allen H. Stem in 1884, after studying at the Indianapolis Art School and training in an architect's office. In 1904 they opened a second office in New York City. Together, Reed and Stem became widely known as specialists in designing more than 100 railroad stations, including the Grand Central and the adjoining Biltmore Hotel in New York. In St. Paul they designed, in 1904-1905, the Crane & Ordway building at Fifth Street and Rosabel; the University Club; the Minnesota Boat Club on Raspberry Island; the St. Paul Athletic Club; the St. Paul Auditorium; and any number of private homes.

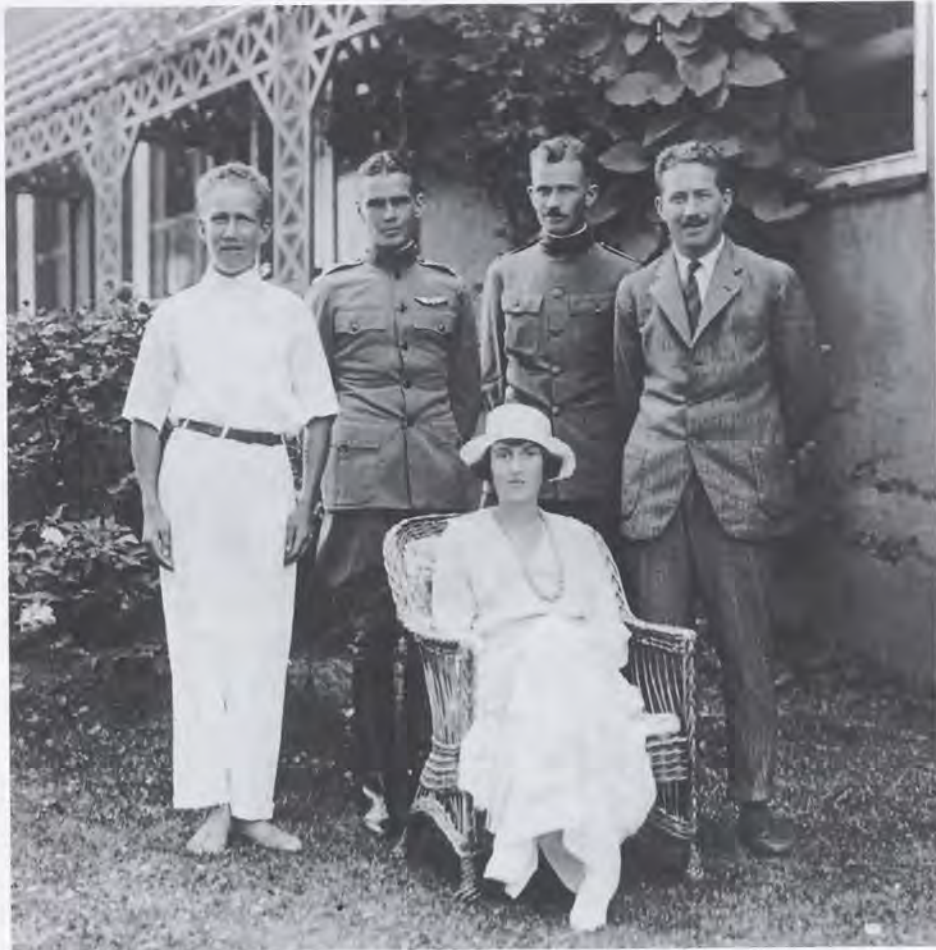
They designed the St. Paul Hotel in Italian Renaissance Revival style and built it of Indiana limestone and brown

pressed brick. The *Pioneer Press* for April 17, 1910, rapturously described the completed building:

Eleven stories above the high ground upon which the building rests, the new hotel rears its imposing height. . . . It is at once plain and ornate. . . . The upper stories include a decorated plaster order, rising above which are the loggias and pergolas of the roof garden, with a wealth of delicate cornices and richly accentuated, although simple, decoration. This crown of delicate lines relieves the plainer walls of the lower stories and accentuates their relation with the architects' main conception, that of a dignified, classical and stately structure of towering proportions: beautiful in its simplicity, devoid of ostentatious or lavish display, but impressive for its simple beauty, and striking because it expresses strength and beauty in line and symmetry, without resort to arrogant display.

Its main entrance opened onto the corner of St. Peter and Fifth Street, rather than fronting on Rice Park, as it does today. The lobby was "spacious and striking;" the eighty-by-forty-foot Palm Room a reminder of "some famous old Pompeiian palace;" the bar (decorously called the Grill Room) "magnificent in walnut with special furniture and . . . three great panels depicting an incident from 'Rip Van Winkle.'" Every room was an outside room and each room had ice water on tap.

St. Paul companies had supplied building materials, fixtures, and furniture. Brass and stained glass electric lamps—"beloved of Napoleon"—for dining room tables were supplied by the Fixture Equipment Company. There was "glass enough to build a glass house," newspaper headlines announced and, with the exception of the first story and the roof, all of its 1,500 window panes came from "the well-known jobbing firm of Noyes Brothers & Cutler." Glass for the roof—5,000 square feet, a quarter of an inch thick and reinforced with meshed wire—came from W. G. Whitehead of St. Paul. Every room had a desk telephone, the equipment "furnished exclusively by the Tri-State Telephone company, complete and up-to-date in every particular, embracing several new ideas in telephone construction never before used in the West." The hotel's two-posi-



The Ordways' five children. Standing, left to right, are Richard; Lucius, Jr., and Samuel in their World War I uniforms; and John. Seated is Katharine, the only Ordway child who never married. St. Paul Dispatch photograph, Minnesota Historical Society

tion switchboard was made by the Dean Electric company. "It will be as easy to get service in Minneapolis as in St. Paul with this equipment."

The Northern Stamp Works furnished the keys to the 300 rooms, "a unique feature being a little nickel-plated ball and chain attached to every key." Carpets and rugs, curtains, table linens, blankets, bedspreads and towels, and "two enormous rugs" in the lobby came from Field-Schlick & Company. Drake Marble and Tile Company provided the interior marble, mosaic, stone and tiling and Schuneman & Evans all the Louis XVI, solid mahogany bedroom furniture. Crane & Ordway announced in a special newspaper supplement that "The new 'St. Paul' is fitted throughout with the finest and most modern 'Crane' heating and plumbing fixtures, furnished exclusively by the

Crane & Ordway Co., St. Paul."

It would seem that all of St. Paul would turn out for the hotel's grand opening, but that was by invitation only. "Full evening dress will be correct." No ladies allowed. A stag event. A least 300 men, decked out in white tie and tails, attended the opening banquet held in the Palm Room and "given by the Citizens of Saint Paul," at 7:30 o'clock on the evening of April 18, 1910. Attorney Pierce Butler was toastmaster. The response was delivered by Lucius Ordway "whose money built the hotel," the *Pioneer Press* noted. James J. Hill followed with a toast to "The Northwest and the New Hotel." Other speakers included Paul Doty, president of the Business League; Minnesota Governor A. O. Eberhart; Archbishop John Ireland; Governor John Burke of North Dakota, and the



The Maurice and Matilda Rice Auerbach house at 400 Summit as it looked in 1882, in this photo from the Minnesota Historical Society, and the same house as it looks today. Lucius and Jessie Ordway moved here around 1918, perhaps because the house had an elevator. Later they remodeled it extensively.

mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Two orchestras, their players drawn from the "St. Paul Symphony," provided the music and thousands of American Beauty roses the decorations. The public was admitted the next day. The *Pioneer Press* announced that:

An elaborate table d'hote will be served Tuesday evening which will afford St. Paul society as a whole its first opportunity to inspect the new hotel. For the accommodation

of the ladies in particular the management will provide a number of guides to show visitors about the building. The evening dinner will be in the main dining room on the St. Paul street side of the ground floor.

St. Paul's businessmen were understandably proud of their hotel. As Frank Schlick, Jr., summed it up: "Both from a commercial and from a social standpoint, the building of that hotel is one of the most important events that have taken

place in the city for many years. We have now a strictly modern and absolutely fire-proof hostelry." He might have added an elegant hotel, as well. Over the years, at least seven United States presidents would be the guests there: Theodore Roosevelt, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and William Jefferson Clinton.

Seven years later Lucius Ordway was tapped for service in a broader arena. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, he was recruited for "dollar-a-year" service on the Priorities Committee of the War Industries Board established by the Wilson administration. A nation that had spent three years strenuously resisting involvement in the European conflict found itself facing the problem of mustering and supplying a large army. The War Industries Board was assigned to take charge of the country's industrial production and, led by Bernard Baruch, it reported directly to the President.

How Ordway came to the attention of the administration is unknown. However, the Crane Company in Chicago held the contract for building the parts for and assembling the three-inch trench mortars that were essential to the army's ordnance program, and Ordway headed one of Crane's most important branches. At the same time, Lucius and Jessie Ordway were making their own and personal contribution to the war effort. Lucius Pond Ordway, Jr., was serving in the army air corps and Samuel Gilman Ordway in the army's field artillery.

Lucius Ordway joined the board in Washington, D. C.. Its primary function was to organize the civilian industrial and manufacturing war efforts, protect the nation's industrial economy, and make certain the economy could convert to a peacetime basis at war's end. It took almost a year to organize procedures and get the army and navy to cooperate, but by March of 1918 the board finally was functioning. Ordway's role as a committee member was to help establish cooperation between business and government and avoid arbitrary regulations in setting priorities. With the confusion in army and navy purchasing procedures, it was not an easy task.

WAR INDUSTRIES BOARD

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 6, 1919.

29660



PAY TO THE ORDER OF

Treasurer of the United States

15-31

Lucius P. Ordway ----- \$ 1.00

ONE ----- DOLLARS

Vo. No. 3125.

APPROVED:

Woodrow Wilson
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

COUNTERSIGNED:

Bernard Baruch
CHAIRMAN, WAR INDUSTRIES BOARD

E. E. Selsworth
DISBURSING OFFICER 92079

OBJECT FOR WHICH DRAWN:
IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF PATRIOTIC AND VALUABLE
SERVICES GIVEN
VOLUNTARILY
TO THE UNITED STATES
IN TIME OF WAR

Ordway's "dollar-a-year" check, signed by President Woodrow Wilson and Bernard Baruch, chairman of the War Industries Board. From the collection of Ford Ordway.

Ordway was sent to London in June of 1918 to join the War Industries Board Mission there. From August through October, however, he was stationed in Paris as the American representative to the Council International of Armament and Munitions. It is an unfortunate oversight of history that his contributions to that long-ago war effort have gone virtually unnoticed, as well as unacknowledged.

In 1917, before Ordway went off to Washington, he established a trust to provide income for his wife and children during their lifetimes. He was fifty-five years old, with a net worth in excess of \$2 million. Slightly half of that net worth was represented by his various real estate holdings and his 3M stock. Ordway placed 38,226 shares of 3M stock in the trust, stipulating that the beneficiaries of its income were only his wife and children and that he himself would receive no income from the trust. (Almost forty years later, in 1955, the Minnesota Commissioner of Revenue decided that inheritance taxes were due the state from the trust's beneficiaries. Litigation ensued, but the Board of Tax Appeals overruled the state.)

At war's end, Ordway returned to Crane & Ordway as president, but his arrangement with the company soon changed. Richard Teller Crane had died in 1912. In 1922 the Crane Company ac-

quired 79 percent of the Minnesota company and changed the name from Crane & Ordway to Crane Company of Minnesota. Ordway continued on as usual with the company; two of his sons had joined him: John Gilman Ordway, as early as 1907, and Richard, in 1925. Lucius Ordway spent the rest of his working life there. (In 1959 John Gilman and Richard would buy out the Crane interest for \$5 million and restore its historic name of Crane & Ordway.)

In 1918 Lucius and Jessie Ordway moved to 400 Summit, a three-story house built in 1882 for Maurice and Matilda Rice Auerbach. The son-in-law of Henry M. Rice, Auerbach was active in the St. Paul dry goods firm, Auerbach, Finch, and Van Slyke. Their house originally was built in an elaborate Queen Anne style but the Ordways remodeled it extensively in the 1920s. Both of them spent the last decades of their lives there, but for Jessie those years were marred by a crippling form of arthritis that confined her to "the chair," as granddaughter Alexandra Bjorklund remembered:

I never knew my grandmother except in the chair. She had to be in a chaise during the morning. At noon she would be put to bed for a rest. Then she would be in her chaise again until evening when they would take her back upstairs. The house had an elevator that worked with ropes. She could write, but only

with the sort of flat pencils carpenters used, and she signed and wrote everything with that.

Her love of music sustained her, and so did friends who dropped by every afternoon for tea and sandwiches. She listened to the radio, Alexandra Bjorklund remembered; she had a phonograph "that flipped the records for her, and she had a stack of symphonies." The house had a pipe organ "and the entire attic was filled with pipes," but the time was past when Jessie Ordway could play it. The organ eventually went to the Swedenborgian church.

Jessie Gilman Ordway died at her home on May 28, 1944, from a stroke caused by the arthritis from which she had suffered for so long. Her son Richard and his family, who had taken over the Ordways' old home at 523 Portland, now moved to 400 Summit to live with Lucius. Alexandra Bjorklund, Richard's daughter, remembered the scramble to combine two complete households:

Grandfather had a cook, a laundress, a nurse who took care of him, a chauffeur and a family retainer named Emma who had helped raise my father because of grandmother's handicapping arthritis, and then ran the household for her. Our family also had a full staff, so the laundry for one family was done one day, the laundry for the other family another day, but we eventually pared down to one staff for both families without having to fire anyone.



The family gathering for the Ordways' celebration of their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1935. Standing, left to right, are Richard, John, Katharine, Samuel, and Lucius, Jr.

She also remembered her grandfather.

"I knew him well because we lived with him. He was a wonderful person, kind and thoughtful and interesting. He was an easy person to be with but he had strong opinions. He was quite strict on three-minute phone calls. He didn't think it was necessary to converse for an hour with someone you'd just seen. But it was his house and we never questioned his feelings."

And she remembered his concerns for her safety. After attending college, she went to work for the *St. Paul Dispatch* but she continued to live at home.

I had to walk down the Ramsey hill in the dark to catch the streetcar that took me to the newspaper office. Grandfather did not much care for that, but I was allowed to do it until the Crane Company truckers went on strike and occasionally made noises outside the house. I had to join the Newspaper Guild and we all paid a sympathy fee to support the strike. We had little green stickers on our union cards. So grandfather had his chauffeur, Anton, drive me down the hill to the streetcar stop. Only problem was, Anton could no longer see to drive, so I'd get in the

car, shove him aside and drive down the hill. On bad days I'd make Anton pick up all my friends and take them back and forth to the streetcar, too. Of course, eventually the strike was settled and I could walk the hill on my own.

Ordway was active all his life. There is a family story that he once rode his bicycle from White Bear Lake to Lake Minnetonka. During the summers, he swam every day—on his back—the full length of Dellwood down to the Yacht Club and back again. "It made everyone along the shore a nervous wreck," his granddaughter recalled, "because this old man—he probably was in his seventies—was out there swimming alone. They'd all watch out for him. He played golf. When he found it hard to climb those little rises on the golf course, the caddies would get behind him and push. He would follow the Yacht Club races in a motor boat, sometimes getting in the way, so one of us would always go out there with him." However, his eyesight was failing.

He liked to read, so big black containers with straps around them would arrive at the

house. They contained phonograph disks and he'd sit there in the living room and listen to them. He'd get great pleasure from that. He was an easy person to be with. Men from 3M would stop in to consult with him, but he no longer went down to the Crane office. His sons were managing the business.

Inevitably the day came, in the fall of 1947, when Lucius Ordway left St. Paul for the last time. Alexandra Bjorklund remembered that the *Dispatch* had given her time off so she could see him off for Florida. Someone at Holman Field in South St. Paul had provided a private plane. "We all had a sense that he was going to Florida to die. I can still see that white handkerchief waving in the window as he took off."

Lucius Ordway died at his son's home in Palm Beach on January 10, 1948. He was eighty-six years old. Significantly, in a survey of early business leaders, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* singled out Lucius Ordway as one of five business leaders "who made a difference in their communities." Along with Ordway, the newspaper listed William W. Cargill, who with his brothers built the Cargill grain business; George Draper Dayton, founder of the department store that became a retailing giant; Cadwallader Washburn, the pioneer grain miller whose Washburn-Crosby Company became General Mills; and William R. Sweatt, who built Honeywell into a path-breaking high technology company. Along the same theme, Don W. Larson wrote of Ordway in his 1979 history of Minnesota business, *Land of the Giants*: "Only the tenacious determination of Lucius Pond Ordway, a St. Paul businessman who poured a good share of his own net worth into 3M, permitted the company to go from blunder to blunder without collapsing." It is clear from the records of Ordway's busy life that because of him not only did 3M blossom, but so did St. Paul.

Virginia Brainard Kunz is a freelance writer and editor of Ramsey County History. John M. Lindley is a writer and editor, a member of the Ramsey County Historical Society's board of directors and chairman of its Editorial Board.

Sources

Genealogical information in this article about the Ordway family came from two late-nineteenth century letters in the family's possession, several published books on the genealogies of early Massachusetts families, and research at the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston. Martha L. Mitchell, University Archivist at Brown University, provided the little information the university archives has on Lucius Ordway's college years. As the text indicates, this was supplemented with published materials about Brown and the careers of Charles Evans Hughes and Samuel H. Ordway.

The Chafee letters and the published histories of the milling industry in Providence in the nineteenth century are found in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island. Additional information about Aaron Lucius Ordway comes from probate and other records of the city of Providence and from the *Providence Journal*.

C.C. Andrews's *History of St. Paul* (1890) has a wealth of information about the city of St. Paul, its businesses, churches, and civic organizations, as well as its leaders for the early period of Ordway's career. Various editions of the *St. Paul City Directory*, published by R. L. Polk & Company, are invaluable for tracking down the locations of Wilson & Rogers, Crane & Ordway Company, and the different residences of Ordway, Rogers, Lightner, Gilman, Elmer, and others in this article. The Ramsey County Historical Society has a complete set of these directories in its Landmark Center office in downtown St. Paul. Similarly, St. Paul's newspapers (*Pioneer Press*, *Dispatch*, *Daily Globe*, and *Daily News*) provide all kinds of details about people and events that were central to Ordway's life. All of these are available on microfilm at the Minnesota Historical Society

in St. Paul. However, they are not indexed for the Ordway years. Lydia Cutler Schrader's brief history, *Our Church in St. Paul* (1977), has some material on the early years of the Virginia Street (Swedish) Church. Information about the Gilman family also comes from the records of the Schubert Club, interviews with family members, early histories of St. Paul, and the St. Paul newspapers.

Material on the history of the Crane & Ordway Company comes from the records of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Crane & Ordway materials at the Minnesota Historical Society, interviews with family members, and a trade magazine article entitled "Ordway Brothers Buy 100% Control of Crane Co. of Minnesota," which was published in the July, 1959, issue of *Supply House Times*. Although *The Autobiography of Richard Teller Crane* (1927) was published privately and its manuscript was not complete at the time of Crane's death in 1912, it is a reliable and informative history of the first fifty years of the Crane Company. The autobiography also explains how Crane became associated with Ordway. Unfortunately, Ordway seems not to have left any account from his perspective of how these two men came to form their partnership.

Other sources of information on the Crane Company in those years are found in J. B. Berryman's *As an Old Man Looks Back: Reminiscences of Forty-seven Years, 1895-1942, in the General Offices of the Crane Co.* (Chicago: Crane Co., 1943), other published histories of the company, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the manuscript collections of the Chicago Historical Society.

The starting place for information on Ordway's involvement with 3M is Virginia Huck's *Brand of the Tartan: The 3M Story* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955.) The 3M history published

on the firm's seventy-fifth anniversary, *Our Story So Far*, (1977), also is helpful. These published sources depend heavily on the collection of materials on the early years of 3M that are at the Minnesota Historical Society. Because these documents are largely taken from the records of John Dwan, the firm's legal counsel in those years, there are very few letters that are either to or from Lucius Ordway. Nevertheless, this collection does provide insights into Ordway's role in the company. Judith Yates Borger's "It Began When L. P. Ordway Bought 3M—For \$14,000" in the October 1982 issue of *Twin Cities* magazine is a good summary of how Ordway invested in 3M, but the article's primary focus is on the varied careers of his children and grandchildren.

The *Pioneer Press* devoted considerable coverage to the opening of the St. Paul Hotel in April, 1910. Additional information comes from the James J. Hill Papers, Hill Reference Library, St. Paul, files on the architects Charles A. Reed and Allen H. Stem at the Minnesota Historical Society and the Ramsey County Historical Society, and other public records from the period.

The starting place for material on Ordway's role in World War I is Franklin F. Holbrook, editor, *St. Paul and Ramsey County in the War of 1917-1918* (St. Paul: Ramsey County War Records Commission, 1929). *Industrial America in the World War: Strategy Behind the Line, 1917-1918* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1924) by Grosvenor B. Clarkson and *How America Went to War: An Account from Official Sources of the Nation's War Activities, 1917-1920*, vol. 4 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921) by Benedict Crowell and Robert F. Wilson have good explanations of the role of the Priorities Committee of the War Industries Board and the contributions of the Crane Company to the war effort.



Crane & Ordway about 1906 and 1907 when it was at E. Fifth Street and Rosabel. The architectural firm of Reed and Stem designed the building in 1904-1905. See article beginning on page 4.

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Published by the Ramsey County Historical Society
323 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
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