

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

*St. Gaudens' New York Eagle:
Rescue and Restoration
of a St. Paul Icon*

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Fall, 2002

Volume 37, Number 3

Lost Neighborhood

**Borup's Addition and the Prosperous
African Americans Who Lived There**

—Page 4



A duplex at 555–561 in one of St. Paul's Lost Neighborhoods. This and other houses in the long-since razed Borup's Addition were the homes of pioneer African Americans who came to St. Paul after the Civil War. See article beginning on page 4. Photo by Camera Shop, Minnesota State Archives, Minnesota Historical Society collections.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

In February 1998 the Board of Directors of the Ramsey County Historical Society reviewed the Society's Mission Statement and reaffirmed and adopted the following statement:

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect, preserve, communicate and interpret the history of the county for the general public, recreate the historical context in which we live and work, and make available the historical resources of the county. The Society's major responsibility is its stewardship of this history.

This issue of our quarterly magazine once again carries out the Society's goal of discovering and communicating Ramsey County's past. Historian David Riehle gives us a fascinating look at another of St. Paul's "Lost Neighborhoods," known as "Borup's Addition" in the late nineteenth century when this area was home to prosperous African Americans. Next, Christine Podas-Larson describes the construction of the ten-story New York Life Insurance Building, completed in 1889 at Sixth and Minnesota, and the creation of its magnificent sculpture, the *New York Eagle*, by the renowned Augustus St. Gaudens and his brother Louis. Although the building was torn down in 1967, the *Eagle* has survived and soon will soar again over St. Paul at Summit Overlook Park.

Long-time Society member and family historian Joanne Englund's "Growing Up in St. Paul" essay focuses on her grandmother Minda's experiences in spiritualism while living in the Midway district. Included is a remarkable photograph of Minda and the other women who worked at the Bohn Refrigerator Company about the time of World War I. Finally, *Ramsey County History* returns to an earlier era in state and local history with an account of the life and times of the colorful fur trader and entrepreneur. Norman W. Kittson.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

Whither Dodd Road?

I'm curious about Ray Barton's Growing Up in St. Paul article on page 16 in your magazine published last spring. It mentions Dodd Road as being the location of a grade school. Perhaps, it said, it was in the Cherokee Park neighborhood (wherever that is). Living on the south side of the Minnesota River and Fort Snelling, I was always of the assumption that "Dodd" built his road from St. Peter, Minnesota, (passing very close to my town) to Fort Snelling. Was Dodd Road extended beyond Fort Snelling later? Is the St. Paul Dodd Road in honor of a different Dodd? Just curious. It must have crossed another river (Mississippi?) somewhere.

*Diane Christianson,
Elko, Minnesota.*

Dodd Road was named for Captain William B. Dodd. St. Paul historian J. Fletcher Williams writes in his History of the City of Saint Paul, that in February, 1853, Dodd "was engaged in getting up a subscription to lay out a road from Saint Paul to Traverse des Sioux. The amount needed was raised and the road laid out." Dodd also founded St. Peter and his road did link that southern Minnesota town with Fort Snelling. Dodd was killed in 1862 as he helped defend New Ulm during the Dakota Conflict. The road was eventually extended into St. Paul. It is now Highway 149 and it crosses the Mississippi on the High Bridge that leads from West St. Paul to the downtown district. Cherokee Heights Park lies at the southern end of the bridge on a high bluff overlooking St. Paul across the river. Travelers in Dodd's time would have crossed the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers by a ferry operating at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers below Fort Snelling.



St. Joseph's Catholic Orphan Home at 1458 Randolph Avenue, St. Paul, as it looked in 1960, two years before it was torn down. St. Paul Dispatch-Pioneer Press photo from the Minnesota Historical Society collections.

A Poignant Story

Janet Sands's story in last spring's issue of the magazine of her years at St. Joseph's Orphanage was a truly poignant account of what once happened to families in crisis. Were there other community resources as well?

Jean Swan, St. Paul

Yes, several. One was the Homemaker Program established by United Charities of St. Paul (now Family Service) and operated for twenty years, from 1949 to 1969. Unlike St. Joseph's Orphanage, this was an effort to allow children to remain in their own homes during a family emergency.

What was the Tivoli?

My grandparents used to talk about a hall called the Tivoli where they attended concerts when they were young. What or where was the Tivoli?

May Andrews, Inver Grove Heights

That probably was Grote's Tivoli. It was located down on the Mississippi River below the bluff at about Wabasha and Second Street and it was a popular gathering place for the Germans of Ramsey County. A pavilion and concert hall, Grote's Tivoli offered local and imported beers, as well as an orchestra that played German melodies and folksongs, reminiscent of the popular resorts along the Elbe and Rhine Rivers in nineteenth century Germany.



Minda was a Spiritualist and apparently subscribed to the Spiritual Science Magazine, copies of which were found among her belongings after her death. See Growing Up in St. Paul article on page 17.

R.C.H.S.
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