

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

Alfred Adler and his 1937  
Lecture at the St. Paul  
Women's City Club

Page 11

Fall, 2003

Volume 38, Number 3

*St. Paul Underground*

The University Farm Experimental Cave and  
St. Paul as the Blue Cheese Capital of the World

—Page 4



Caves like these in the Twin Cities bluffs along the Mississippi River were used for ripening the Roquefort-like cheese that almost caused an international incident with France. See article about Minnesota's Blue Cheese beginning on page 4. Photo from the National Butter and Cheese Journal, January 10, 1935.

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 36, Number 3

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

This issue of *Ramsey County History* opens with Greg Brick's absorbing examination of how and why agricultural researchers at the University of Minnesota produced a Roquefort-like blue cheese in the caves on St. Paul's West Side from the 1930s to the 1950s. Many local people know that in the days before modern refrigeration, St. Paul's pioneer brewers had taken advantage of the constant cool temperatures in the caves to store beer, and some people knew the caves had been used for raising mushrooms, but author Brick introduces us to the little-known world of blue cheese production in these caves.

Additional articles in this issue present Roger A. Ballou's account of a 1937 lecture by the famous psychologist Alfred Adler at the Women's City Club and Susan C. Dowd's research into the mysterious 1902 death of an unidentified, beautiful young woman near the railway station at Dayton's Bluff.

Fall is always a great time for apples. To honor this year's apple season, Ralph Thrane, the resident horticulturalist at the Society's Gibbs Museum in Falcon Heights, contributes a summary of his work in choosing and growing the Heritage apple varieties that have been planted at the Museum. This issue closes with author DeAnne Cherry adding another piece to our ongoing series, "Growing Up in St. Paul," with her recollections of her teenage years living on St. Paul's Avenue in the 1950s.

The Editorial Board of this magazine also wants its readers to be aware that Paul Nelson's article about St. Paul's smallpox epidemic of 1924 that appeared in the Summer issue has caught the eye of a present-day researcher at the Medical School of the University of Minnesota and is being used in conjunction with contemporary studies of this dread disease. Our thanks to Paul for his timely work that may, in a small way, contribute to the future betterment of all.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*

# Letters to the Editor

## Revisiting Family History

It was such a pleasure to open the Spring, 2003, issue of *Ramsey County History* and find the article, "Roots in the English John Wesley" by Helen Miller Dickison. It featured a picture of the stained glass window donated in honor of my great grandmother, Caroline Schurmeier. I am the oldest of Caroline's great grandchildren and reside in the Twin Cities. What a joy it was to revisit some of my family history,

Mary Jane Schurmeier Ciccone

## Home for Unwed Mothers

I'm looking for information on the Booth Memorial Home, or hospital, for unwed mothers in St. Paul. We are looking for records of a birth that occurred in 1952.

Dawn Wettern

*The Booth Memorial Hospitals were run by the Salvation Army and there were many throughout the country. The St. Paul hospital was built at 1471 West Como Avenue in 1913 and was a home for unwed mothers and their children until 1971. It was not an adoption agency and it did not place babies for adoption. The Salvation Army has the medical and birth records of mothers whose babies were born there. Booth Memorial is now a treatment center for young women with behavioral or emotional problems. Still run by the Salvation Army, it's known as the Booth Brown House and Hope Transition Center.*

## History of a Neighborhood

I'm interested in the history of a Maplewood neighborhood around McKnight and Mapleview avenues and what was once on that land before the houses were built. I have been looking but am not coming up with anything.

Jane Lynch, Woodbury

*That area was farmland from the 1850s to around the 1920s when highway 61 and White Bear Avenue were paved, an improvement that opened the area to development in the 1930s and 1940s. Maplewood was incorporated in 1957. Pete Boulay at the Maplewood Historical Society would be a good source of information for you.*

## Fire!

What was the White House fire and where did it occur?

Vernon D. Holmberg

*On January 29, 1909, a huge fire destroyed the White House Department Store and the Fey Hotel which stood at Seventh and Cedar streets in downtown St. Paul.*

## A Slight Quibble

I hope I don't sound like some querulous crank writing to the London Times, but in Carleton Vang's fine account of his "Growing Up in St. Paul" in the Spring issue, he describes sand and gravel "washed with artesian water pumped from deep wells." Artesian water doesn't need to be pumped to the surface because it emerges by itself under the pressure of gravity, the surface of the aquifer being higher than the exit point. Yours for insufferable attention to detail.

David Riehle, St. Paul

## House History

I'm interested in researching the history of my house at 873 Fairmount Avenue in St. Paul. I believe the Donnellys lived there at one time.

William C. Moyers, St. Paul

*Your address is not mentioned in our Historic Sites Survey. You might be in-*

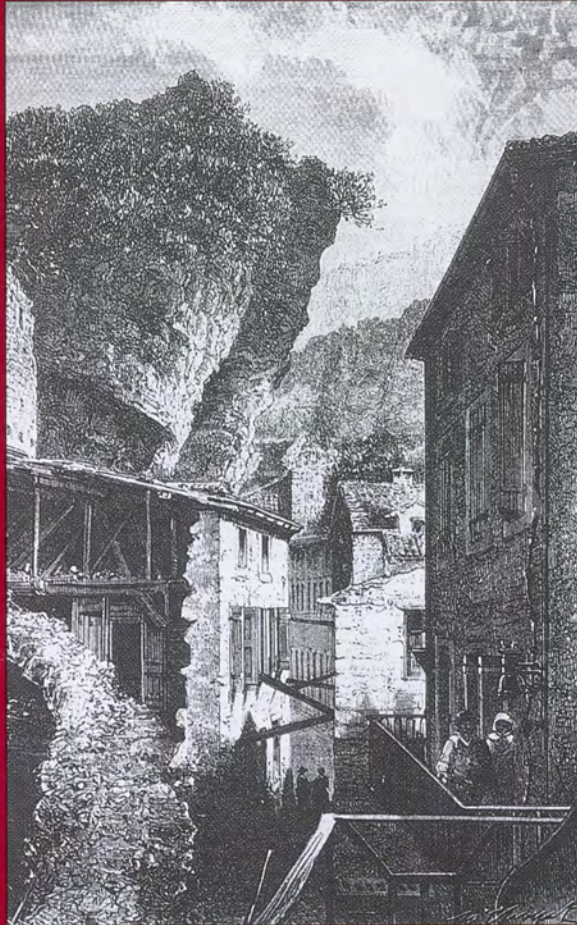
*terested in searching out the Donnelly family in our collection of Polk's St. Paul City Directories from 1885-1998. The directories list businesses and residents of St. Paul with their occupations, businesses and home addresses. Call us at 651-222-0701 for an appointment to work in our library.*

## The Merriam Park Depot

Is there any way to find the exact location of the old Merriam Park Railroad Depot?

Rick Wargo, St. Paul

*In 1880 the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad completed its Short Line, a commuter line linking Minneapolis and St. Paul. The rails followed the northern part of what is now the Merriam Park neighborhood and roughly the path of the old ox cart trail, now Interstate 94. A historic site marker describing the ox cart trail should still be standing just south of 94 and west of Cretin Avenue. Colonel John Merriam planned to develop the area, which he thought would be ideal for a commuter suburb. In 1882 he platted a 140-acre tract bounded by the Short Line on the north, Dewey Avenue on the east, Marshall on the south, Cleveland (then Union) Avenue on the west. He built the depot where the Short Line intersected with Prior Avenue. (He also built the first Longfellow School and established Merriam Park.) Fare to each city was seven-and-a-half cents and the run to either city took twelve minutes. Mileage to St. Paul was 5.8 miles; to Minneapolis, 5.1 mile. The depot was torn down in the 1920s but for many years its sign was visible when driving along St. Anthony Avenue about a block west of Prior.*



*The celebrated Roquefort caves of France where Roquefort cheese has been ripened since antiquity. Development of a Roquefort-like cheese in the 1930s at the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus, almost caused an international incident with France. See article about Minnesota's Blue Cheese beginning on page 4.*

**R.C.H.S.**  
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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