

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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Fall 2006

Volume 41, Number 3

The 1894 Pullman Strike
and the Death of
Switchman Charles Luth

Page 14

A Little-Known Railway That Couldn't
The St. Paul Southern

—Page 4



Looking west from the Robert Street Bridge, this 1920s photo shows a St. Paul Southern car headed outbound for South St. Paul and Hastings. Between 1900 and 1910 the combined population of these two Dakota County communities increased 38.5%, encouraging construction of the interurban. But the line's ambitions to build on to Cannon Falls and Rochester went unfulfilled, and it eventually succumbed to automobile and bus competition. Photograph courtesy of the Minnesota Transportation Museum. See John Diers's article beginning on page 4.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 41, Number 3

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THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN JULY 2003:

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect,
preserve 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 over this history.

CONTENTS

- 3 Letters
- 4 *A Little-Known Railway That Couldn't
The St. Paul Southern*
John W. Diers
- 14 *The 1894 Pullman Strike in St. Paul
and the Death of Switchman Charles Luth*
Gregory T. Proferl
- 24 *Growing Up in St. Paul
Memories of Frogtown in the 1930s*
James R. Brown
- 27 Book Review

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A Message from the Editorial Board

Transportation is the theme for this issue's two main articles: a history of the short-lived St. Paul Southern electric interurban railway, and an exploration of the social and economic implications of the 1894 Pullman strike in St. Paul. The latest addition to our series, "Growing Up in St. Paul," presents a lyrical account of childhood in the Frogtown neighborhood in the 1930s. And a book review introduces a significant compilation of the letters of Bishop Loras, who sent priests from Dubuque in the 1850s to minister to the population of the new Minnesota Territory.

These articles, with their varying subjects and approaches, illustrate the different ways this magazine addresses its mission to preserve and highlight the many facets of Ramsey County history. We hope you will be able to contribute a little extra this year, through our annual appeal, to strengthen the financial base that allows us to present such great material on a continuing basis.

Anne Cowie,
Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

I Remember Mr. Lange

I graduated from Mechanic Arts [High School] in 1934 and I knew Mr. Lange a little. He called me from home-room one day because he heard that I was interested in wildflowers. He had a jack-in-the-pulpit ripe spate on his desk. He said that he had a home on an island in Lake Michigan—I think he also said he owned that small island, but I'm not sure about that.

Did you know he wrote at least one boy's book—about a boy and his Indian chum? I read it when I discovered it in the children's library downtown.

There is a statue of him in Como Park (and perhaps he is buried there) to the west of the tennis courts (and on the same piece of land) among some trees and set back from the road a bit.

I am still interested in wildflowers and have a few in my backyard—some trilliums, a jack, and some solomon's seal. I graduated from Hamline U[niversity] in 1938. While there, I majored in math, but minored in biology.

. . . It has been many years since I lived in St. Paul.

*Ruth (Drager) Dubbeld
Portage, Mich.*

We checked with John Mittelstadt, Lange's grandson, on the cabin on Isle Royale. He says Lange didn't own it; he only used it. In addition there is no statue of Lange at Como Park. While he was governor (1939-1943), Harold E. Stassen participated in the dedication of a plaque in Lange's honor at Como Park. Lange is buried at Acacia Park Cemetery in Mendota Heights. We're glad to hear from a 1934 graduate of Mechanic Arts and encourage other MAHS alumni to share their memories of that high school with us.

The House on Iglehart Avenue

What family owned the house at 1661 Iglehart Avenue when it was first built in 1911? Who subsequently owned it up to 1954? What family owned the House in the Woods at Aldine Street and Carroll Street railroad crossing until 1962? Has there been any development at the vacant lots between the 1600 block of Iglehart and the railroad tracks? I'm a member of RCHS and have a love for the city of St. Paul.

*Thomas Joerger
Landisville, Penna.*

According to the St. Paul Building Permits Collection at RCHS, E.H. Berry built the house at 1661 Iglehart in 1923 for an estimated cost of \$3,500. The records we found indicate that in 1954 the house was sold to Ben Jacobs. He sold it in 1959 to Glen Joerger, who may be related to you. In 1964 the house became vacant.

The house you call the "house in the woods" may be the one at 296 Aldine at the corner with Carroll Street. George G. Taylor built it in 1890 for an estimated cost of \$2,450. In 1954 Clarence Dell bought the house and in 1959 it became vacant.

*The vacant lots you refer to actually comprise a public park bounded by Iglehart, Carroll, Hershel, and Aldine streets. According to local street expert Donald Empson's new edition of *The Street Where You Live*, the city purchased this one-and-one-half acre park in 1929 for \$35,000. It's known as Aldine Park.*

The Drake Marble Company

I'm a volunteer docent and researcher for the Buffalo and Erie County [New York] Historical Society. I'm researching a "mystery" building that survived the Pan American Exposition held in Buffalo in 1901. I say "mystery" because we have not been able to determine its usage. It is not a large building, only the size of a two-car garage with glass windows all around and a Spanish tile roof. We know where the building was located by using photographs. The building is not on the map, but at its location, the following is printed: "Drake Co" and "Petrified Wood." The Official Guide to the Pan American Exposition lists "The Drake Company, St. Paul, Minn., Petrified wood table tops." It also says the company was in two buildings, neither of which was close to our mystery building.

*Richard Szczepaniec
Buffalo, N.Y.*

The Drake Marble Company was located at South Robert Street and Plato Boulevard, beginning in 1905. In 2001 this building was extensively renovated and remodeled and now houses the Drake Bank and other offices. Our research on the Drake Marble Company at the 1901 Exposition shows that on some maps two relatively small buildings can be seen immediately north of the "Infant Incubator Building" in the midway portion of the exposition grounds. This would put these buildings between present-day Elmwood and Lincoln Parkway and Amherst and Bedford Streets, probably at Amherst.



This headstone in Oakland Cemetery marks the final resting places of railroad switchman Charles Luth and his wife, Pauline. For more on how Charlie Luth died in St. Paul's labor violence of 1894, see Gregory Proferl's article beginning on page 14. Photograph by Maureen McGinn.

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

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