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ON THE COVER: Minnesota Boat Club picnic at Crosby's Bottoms, Ca. 1890.

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Breaking Prairie

The Plowing of America: *Early farming around St. Paul*

By Rodney C. Loehr

Farming in the St. Paul area goes back a long long way. Centuries before the white man crossed the Mississippi, the Indians were cultivating the boundless prairies. Unfortunately, the Indians left no written records of their endeavors, so a troubled historian, burdened with sources and footnotes, is tied to the white man's account of early agriculture in Minnesota.

Who came? Explorers, missionaries, soldiers, trappers and fur traders, refugees, wanderers and outcasts. These mobile people generally did not remain sedentary long enough to turn the sod. True, the soldiers at

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Fort Snelling, tired of poor food and incessant drill, often found raising a garden much more interesting and rewarding than the daily fatigues. Yet these military gardens at Fort Snelling can hardly be considered settled agriculture.

Swiss refugees from the Selkirk colony in Canada came to Fort Snelling in 1821 and the fort commandant, Colonel Josiah Snelling, in a typically American, compassionate manner, allowed them to squat on the military reservation which then included much of present-day St. Paul and Minneapolis. By 1839 the Swiss, French-Canadian, Indian and half-breed population on the military reservation may have numbered 150 to 200 persons. Some of these squatters may have done a little farming, particularly in the Highland Park section, but their trafficking in whiskey and Indian women led the harried fort commander, Major Joseph Plympton, to

drive them off the reservation in 1840. Some of these displaced persons went to Little Canada; others scattered to St. Paul, St. Anthony and Stillwater where their presence may well have cemented the foundations of future greatness.¹

The settlement of Minnesota was part of the general westward movement. Some of those who came followed lines of latitude from the East in search of better or cheaper land. John D. Schofield, for example, tired of a Connecticut farm that was full of stumps and stones and in 1849 headed west to Minnesota for better land.² Others came from northern and western Europe in search of a better life or to escape Europe's incessant wars.³

In the autumn of 1854, at the time of the Crimean War, the *Daily Minnesota Pioneer* reported that the war was increasing German migration and that the Germans were "choosing rather to find peaceful homes in the American wilderness than to run the chance of getting their brains dashed out for the glory of some imperial master or petty prince no better than themselves."⁴ Later the same newspaper, under the heading "Glad To See Them," recorded that: "The Black Hawk, yesterday, brought up one hundred and fifty German immigrants. Having escaped the

oppression of their 'Fadderland' these men naturally turn their attention to that point where they can enjoy the largest liberty. We welcome them to Minnesota."⁵

The trip to Minnesota, however, was not without adventures and dangers. When the steamboat *Galena* arrived from downriver in the summer of 1854, it had nine cases of cholera on board. The *Minnesota Daily Pioneer* recorded this incident and urged that, "Persons travelling on the river should be extremely careful about running into any excess of any kind. A change of diet, together with an immoderate use of stimulants no doubt, were the causes that led to their attack. . . . We entertain no fears that it will prevail here as an epidemic. But in case it should visit us, we advise our readers, to diet sparingly, and above all things not to give way to unnecessary and groundless fears."⁶ One of the sufferers died and his "remains (were) enclosed in a zinc coffin and immersed in alcohol, for conveyance to his former home."⁷

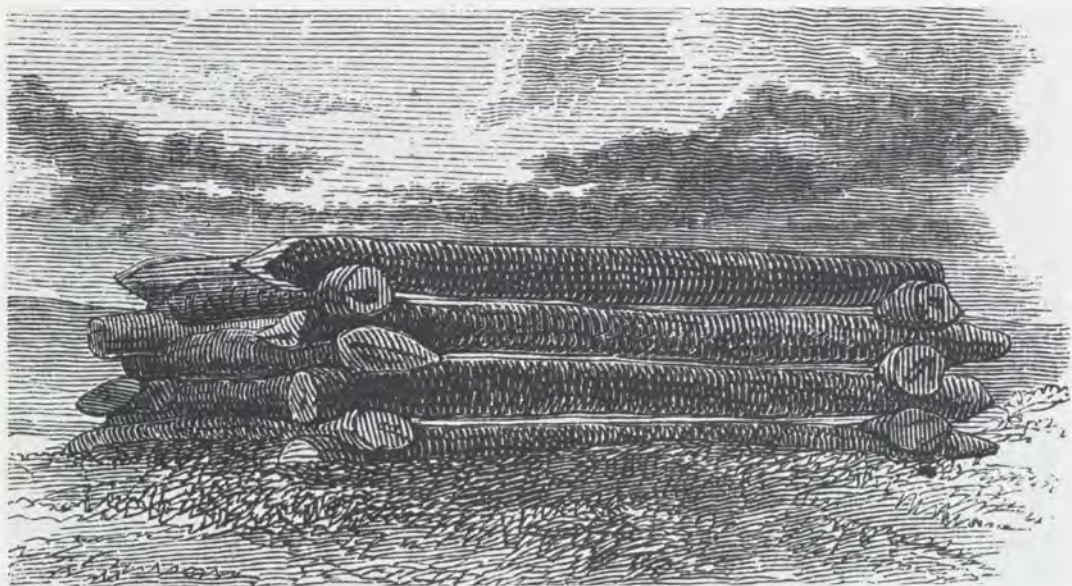
If one survived the perils of disease en route to Minnesota, crowding in the St. Paul terminal might prevent a happy landing. One weekend late in October, 1854, six steamers arrived at St. Paul, bringing around a thousand passengers and "an immense amount of freight." The freight could be dumped on the levee, but the passengers needed shelter. The *Minnesota Daily Pioneer* warned that, "Among the things now most needed in our city are a few more good hotels and boarding houses. On Sunday night after the arrival of the boats, nearly half of the passengers were compelled, for want of sleeping apartments, to return to the boats — all our hotels being crowded to running over."⁸

Most of the newcomers were prospective farmers, looking for land. Minnesota's rolling, fertile prairies gave the settler a wide choice in selecting land for settlement. North of the present Twin Cities the Great Pinerias limited settlement until the land could be cleared. But to the south and west the wide river terraces and oak openings of the Minnesota river valley, once the land had been acquired from the Sioux Indians, attracted a swarm of settlers to its fertile soil.

After the settler had made a choice of land, his problem was to get some kind of legal right to protect his possession and to show improvement of a claim. He could, of course, buy the land from the federal government whose minimum price was \$1.25 an acre, cash

Dockside farewell in Germany: for the emigrant, a better life.





The claim shanty was not much to look at, but for the settler it was home.

down. Later he could buy land from the state or a local governmental body or from a railroad. At any time he could buy land from a speculator who might be willing to sell on credit. The problem for the possessor of land was to get legal title.

Squatting on public land was an old American custom, hallowed by tradition. Squatting was so widespread that in 1841, when the popular Log Cabin bill became law, squatting was recognized as a rightful method of obtaining land and was legalized. The squatter was supposed to be an actual settler who had made some improvements on his claim and who intended to turn his claim into a home. What the squatter needed for his protection was a legal description of his holding, and that had to await federal land survey. After survey, the land was opened for sale at a public auction with a minimum price of \$1.25 an acre. Under the 1841 law, the squatter could acquire up to 160 acres without competitive bidding and at the minimum price of \$1.25 an acre, provided he had made some improvements and had actually lived on the land for a certain period of time.⁹

Beneficial as the 1841 law was, it did not meet the needs of squatters who for various reasons had not met its requirement before the auction was held. The solution for the squatters, who generally were young men, was to form a claim association whose members agreed to protect each others' claims, not only at the auction sales, but also during absences when a member might have gone back East — to acquire a wife or for other laudable purposes.

If a speculator appeared — and speculators, especially those from the East, were generally disliked by local farmers and landowners who saw them as opportunists who profited from their neighbors' hard work — a human ring might be formed around the auctioneer to prevent the approach of the speculator within bidding distance. If the speculator was a stubborn fellow much inclined to exercise his rights, threats of various kinds, including the prominent display of a halter rope with a noose in it, usually kept him from bidding on claim association land. After all, there was plenty of land left for the speculator.¹⁰

In 1854 one such auction at the Stillwater land office was triumphantly reported by the *Daily Minnesotan* under the heading "Good News From Stillwater." The account read as follows: "It will be seen by the letters from another place from Mr. Owens, who was present at the Land Sale, in Stillwater, yesterday that the claimants were all fully protected in their rightful ownership to their farms, by their being struck off to them at the Government price of \$1.25 per acre. This is emphatically a triumph of the people." On another page the same newspaper reported that "The 'Land Sales' so far as the portion of the Reserve on this side of the Mississippi is concerned, were concluded half an hour since, and the boys have just got through cheering. Every claimant had his claim knocked down to him at \$1.25 per acre. It took Frank Collins just three-quarters of an hour to close out Uncle Sam's old military consignment of that



Watercolor by Jean Baptist Wengler. St. Paul in 1851 was only 1,294 strong. But . . .

portion of town 28 situated in this district. No counter bidding. The people have triumphed."¹¹

Disliked as the Eastern speculator was, he was a necessary part of the Middle Western frontier that needed capital for its development. The Eastern speculator was a conduit through which Eastern capital could reach the West.

Developing areas — and even developing countries — then, as now, are generally short of capital. Older areas that have accumulated capital may invest or loan capital to new areas which, as a consequence, become indebted to the older areas. Sometimes the capital shortage is so great that it extends even to an actual shortage of money in the developing area, for current goods and services provided by the older area must be paid for and some kind of return must be made on capital investments if the flow of capital is to continue. Until the creation of the Federal Reserve System in 1914 various expedients were tried to meet this money shortage in the debtor areas. Commodity money was widely used in the colonial period. Wildcat banks issued millions of dollars of stumptail currency (irredeemable paper) as part of Jacksonian democracy, and in the 1890's cheap silver was the popular nostrum.

Early Minnesota was short of capital and at times was short even of a circulating medium,

for money was drained back East to pay for goods and services. In the spring of 1855 — a boom time — the *Daily Pioneer* noted that "the money market continues very tight, and money is as hard to obtain, almost as a Roe's egg." Business conditions, however, remained good in spite of the enormous charges for freight paid to the large numbers of steamers landing goods at the levee. One commission house alone, the newspaper said, paid out for freight and labor "at least three thousand dollars per day" for several days. The drain on money had been "exceedingly severe" but there had been no failures among St. Paul businessmen. The future looked bright to the newspaper, for low interest rates and plenty of money in the East would lead to a flow of capital to Minnesota where interest rates were high. Immigrants were bringing in large amounts of money, and Congressional grants for improvements would bring in additional sums. Thus, in time, an abundant supply of money would become available.¹² For several years these dreams seemed to come true. Money and settlers flowed into Minnesota in the early 1850's, and Minnesota became the focus of a speculative land boom that lasted until the crash and depression of 1857.

The acquisition of Minnesota land during the 1850's was made easier and cheaper by laws intended to reward with land grants the soldiers of our various wars and their

dependents. The rewards were in the form of land warrants exchangeable for various amounts of land (40, 80, 120 and 160 acres), and the warrants were transferable and could be sold.¹³

Many recipients of land warrants had no desire to go west and instead sold their warrants. A brisk national market in land warrants quickly appeared, with short and long sales and other elements of speculation. Prices on the New York market fluctuated but generally ranged around 95¢ an acre. Since land could be bought for \$1.25 an acre without warrants, the price of the warrants was always less than that amount in the market.

Settlers might buy a land warrant before they came west or they could purchase a warrant sent west by an Eastern speculator and handled by a broker on the frontier. Those who lacked funds might even borrow a warrant from the broker, promising to pay at some time in the future \$1.25 per acre for the warrant, plus interest on the loan. Warrant in hand, the debtor could locate and acquire land, make a few improvements, such as a small cabin, shelter for animals, some clearing and fencing, sell the land for \$5.00 an acre to a newcomer, pay off the debt and acquire a new holding.

This happy situation could continue as long as money and settlers came to Minnesota. But if there was an interruption in either the flow of settlers or of money, trouble was bound to come. A money panic followed by a depression hit the East in the spring of 1857 when

some over-extended companies failed. Dream castles, built on speculation bubbles, collapsed, money went into hiding, pessimism was widespread, and a severe depression led to bankruptcies and unemployment.

Minnesota, which had been the center of the speculative boom, was particularly hard hit by the depression which lasted here until about 1862 when the war-boom finally reached this peripheral, prairie state. Money simply disappeared, and at Stillwater, school bonds were issued in small denominations in an effort to provide some kind of a circulating medium. Some who could not stand the combination of Minnesota's harsh winter climate and the depression retreated to the East.

Indeed, for these who stayed, life was hardly easy. After locating land the settler had to build a shelter for his family, clear enough land to provide foodstuffs for family and animals, with perhaps a surplus for sale, and help to construct neighborhood conveniences, such as schools and roads. An enormous amount of hard, physical labor was involved. Anyone who has ever grubbed out a stump will know how tedious, fatiguing, and irritating such labor can be.

Settlers near a sawmill were able to build frame houses, but others had to do with very primitive dwellings for a time. John D. Schofield built a log cabin with a fireplace of sticks and mud. Later, when breaking ground for settlers, he cooked over a fireplace and slept in a wagon.¹⁵ Joseph Freeman, who came from England in 1855, raised a log cabin

... by 1857 its population had grown to some 10,000.





The soddy: its weaknesses were evident during heavy rainstorms.

at White Bear Lake. The cabin measured about 11 by 13 feet and was about 12 feet high, with a loft for the children. Two narrow windows were covered with animal skins (not an uncommon material in the early days), and inside were small chairs, two spool-turned beds with feather bedding for winter warmth, a pot-bellied stove and bear-grease lamps.¹⁶

Other settlers had cabins of bark-covered tamarac logs, and some had little more than shelters. Heman R. Gibbs, whose eight by 12 foot claim shanty was mostly underground, had a sod roof and a wooden chimney. When the inevitable fire consumed the chimney, Gibbs walked 17 miles to Stillwater to get a metal stovepipe. The one-room house that Gibbs built in 1854-55 can still be seen in the kitchen of the present Gibbs Farm Museum owned by the Ramsey County Historical Society.¹⁷

Gibbs' sod-house was unusual for the St. Paul area, but was common farther west in the treeless regions, particularly in the Dakotas. Usually, the soddy or sod-house had windows and a doorframe of wood; the rest was made of sod, including the roof which was laid over poles. Heat came from a stove made from an oil barrel that burned knots of twisted prairie hay or buffalo chips and sent curls of smoke up a metal stovepipe jutting through the sod roof. The soddy was said to be warm in winter and cool in summer; certainly its dirt floor lessened house-keeping chores. Its weak-

nesses were sharply evident during heavy rainstorms which tended to send dirt and water from the roof above onto the heads of those below.

A few farmers might have been as fortunate as the Larpenteurs who had stonemasons, bricklayers, carpenters and plasterers working on their house and barn.¹⁸ But most farmers put up their own houses, perhaps with the help of neighbors.

Besides making a shelter, the settler was kept busy clearing land, grubbing out stumps and brush, breaking the sod and raising a crop. Climate placed limitations on what the farmer could grow for himself and his livestock, but perhaps as important was what could be grown for market. The lumber camps provided a market for beans, oats, potatoes and hay, and sometimes wheat, oats, potatoes or even butter might be sent downriver to markets along the Mississippi. Other crops raised in the early days were corn, barley, peas, cabbages, onions, tomatoes, lettuce, and root crops such as turnips, beets, carrots, parsnips and rutabagas.

Even watermelons were grown.¹⁹ Francis Larpenteur found a ready market for the fruit in St. Paul in August, 1856. He sold corn, peas, potatoes, wheat and beef in St. Paul in the summer and autumn of that year, as well. In the autumn of 1857 he sold potatoes for 40 cents a bushel in St. Paul and disposed of turnips to a milkman. But by the middle of

November, 1857, Larpenteur found it difficult to sell potatoes in St. Paul, possibly a reflection of the depression of that year.²⁰

While much of present-day St. Paul was in farms at the beginning, the city grew so rapidly that the downtown area either was not farmed at all or only briefly. The growing city also affected the kind of agriculture carried on in the immediate vicinity. In the 1870's and 1880's farmers in the Highland Park district turned to dairying and truck farming, a rather natural development in those days for farms near a booming city.²¹

Just what could be grown profitably in early Minnesota was a matter of experiment. In the 1870's Captain Henry Anson Castle bought land in the Silver Lake neighborhood and started a trial farm for seeds. About a thousand acres were devoted to the production of the seeds of sweet corn, peas, beans, melons, tomatoes, squash and potatoes. Annual sales of \$30,000 to \$40,000 were reported, but the experiment was abandoned in 1880.²²

Raising seeds would have been a labor-intensive operation, and perhaps a shortage of labor brought Castle's experiment to an end. The frontier generally suffered from a shortage of labor, for there was much work to be done if the wilderness was to be made into arable land. This shortage of labor was met in several ways. Large families provided cheap

The Randall & Jones corn planter of the 1850's. The operator was said to be able to plant about as fast as he could walk.



Captain Henry Castle was willing to experiment.

child labor that could be trained on the job. Hired men and hired girls were not unknown on the frontier and usually were neighbor children. In addition there were others who could be hired for special tasks, such as housebuilding, or for extra labor during the hurrying periods of the harvest.²³ In July, 1856, for example, Francis Larpenteur went to St. Paul and hired harvest hands.²⁴ These might be newcomers from the East, immigrants from Europe or the migrant portion of the population which preferred mobility to responsibility.

Another way to meet the labor shortage was to use improved tools, equipment and machinery. These agricultural improvements extended back to our colonial period. In the middle of the 18th century, for example, American improvements of the cradle scythe made it easier to swing and an extra finger (a grain catching projection on the cradle) increased the amount of grain that could be cut. In the 19th century, improvements were made in plows, reaping devices, threshing machines, wagons and many other farm items.

These improved tools, equipment and machines were available to the Minnesota frontier. But new lands brought new conditions and agricultural machines that were still in a period of development, such as the reapers, had to be modified to meet Minnesota conditions. Francis Larpenteur found that his reaper did not work well on rough ground. The sickle broke constantly



Harvesting with a cradle scythe: American improvements made it more efficient.

and had to be lengthened. Wheat was short and difficult to cut and the reaper had to be lowered to cut the oats. Since his reaper only cut the grain, the stems still had to be raked into piles and tied by hand into bundles that were shocked or stacked prior to threshing.²⁵

Threshing was commonly done with a flail and was very hard work. Sometimes a hard earthen floor was prepared, the sheaves were scattered over it and the grain was trod out by the hooves of horses or oxen, as in Biblical times. Using a shovel or a fork, the grain was separated from the chaff by tossing the straw

into the wind which blew the lighter chaff away. The early threshing machine replaced the hooves of animals. A fan created artificial wind.

In 1850 William R. Brown, who had a farm at Red Rock, bought a J. I. Case two-horse-power tread thresher. John D. Schofield, who ran the machine, considered it a great improvement over the flail and the hooves of animals. The grain that Schofield threshed had been reaped with a cradle scythe and bound into sheaves by hand. Four acres of wheat produced over 150 bushels of wheat which was ground into flour at the Bolles mill below Stillwater and sold in St. Paul.²⁶

The labor of animals was vital on the frontier. Besides the odd jobs mentioned above, animals were particularly useful in plowing, harvesting and hauling. Although the 1850 census listed more horses than oxen in Minnesota, the slow but patient ox, which sold for \$90 to \$150 a yoke in 1854, probably cleared more land than did the horse.²⁷ If the breaking plow caught in a root or stump, the ox simply stopped until the obstruction was cleared. But the nervous horse might kick things to pieces and run away. In addition when the ox's days of labor were over, it, unlike the horse, could be more readily killed and eaten.

Minnesota's hard winters necessitated some kind of shelter be made available for farm animals, but cattle ran at large as late as the 1870's.²⁸ The problem had to do with fencing. While settlement was still scattered, animals ran at large and fences were built to keep them

Threshing with the flail was not far removed from techniques of Biblical times.





Farming was of necessity a family affair.

out of fields. As settlement thickened, it became the responsibility of the animals' owner to fence his livestock into a field. When cattle did break out of a field they could do considerable damage.²⁹

The Larpenteurs fenced with rails.³⁰ The old rail or worm fence had followed the frontier west from the Eastern seaboard, and was used here in the Middle West along with board or even stone fences. Neither wood nor stone was available on the treeless prairies, and a number of expedients were attempted. The sod or mud fence was tried. But it was not only ugly; it was also washed away by heavy rains. Hedges of rose bushes or of osage orange trees were either impractical or too expensive. The solution was barbed wire which was ready by the late 1870's. Making and repairing fences were tasks that always needed to be done in any spare time.

There were other tasks that had to be done. Corn-husking filled the late autumn and manure-hauling needed doing whenever the weather permitted.³¹ Little time was left for beautification in the early days. But after a decade, some farms had flowers in the front yard and a few had lawns.³² In the spring of 1857 Francis Larpenteur spaded up a flower garden, planted shade trees, plum trees and shrubbery, and put up a whitewashed picket fence.³³ The garden suffered from drought and from grasshoppers that nearly destroyed it.³⁴

Once the sharp edge of need had passed, other comforts came. The Larpenteurs had a piano in the autumn of 1856.³⁵ In the 1860's

the kerosene lamp replaced the tallow candle. But evening lights in the summer brought swarms of mosquitoes through unscreened windows. People sat outdoors around a smudge pot whose smoke was intended to keep the pesky insects at a distance. Netting around beds kept the mosquitoes from sleepers. In the frigid winters, a pot-bellied stove with a wood fire kindled from corncobs helped to keep the Arctic chill out of at least part of the house, and downy featherbeds kept sleepers snug in frosty bedrooms.

Spring was the time for tonics whose purpose was to disengage children from the colics of winter and to fortify them against the chills and fevers of summer. One such tonic was called "Root Beer" by a mother anxious to persuade her children to drink the bitter brew. This cure-all was made from a stew of yellowdock, blackroot, dandelion root, cherry bark, and parched corn. Any child unfortunate enough to drink this concoction promptly forgot whatever else was wrong.³⁶

Not all activity was drudgery or hard work. Francis Larpenteur found time for fishing and hunting. In 1856 he visited the agricultural fair in Minneapolis and a year later the fair in St. Paul, which he pronounced an "interesting and amusing scene."³⁷ Christmas, New Year's Day, July 4th, and Thanksgiving were holidays, and on election day in 1858 Larpenteur reported that not much work was done.³⁸ The Larpenteurs attended church every Sunday but, except for the church service, Sunday seems to have been a day of

"vacuous melancholy." His diary entries for Sunday mentioned attending church and then often added such comments as "nothing else worth mentioning."³⁹

Days that are momentous to us seem to have drawn little attention from Larpenteur. His entry for November 6, 1860 — Lincoln's election, which led to the secession of Southern states and to the Civil War — is brief: "we attend the election." On Inauguration Day, March 4, 1861, as the nation slipped into war, Larpenteur recorded: "This evening we attend the concert, nothing else worthy of noticing." And on April 12th, when the shooting started, his entry stated: "dull at

present." The dullness soon evaporated and Larpenteur's entries stopped on August 5, 1861.

As one looks back on early Minnesota, one is impressed by the enormous amount of hard work that was necessary to tame the wilderness. Tools were few, machinery was primitive, and energy came from the muscles of humans and animals. The age of specialization had not arrived, and the settler and farmer had to be master of a variety of skills. These people were optimists who believed in progress, and rightly so, for their labors changed a wilderness into a settled land.

FOOTNOTES

¹Margaret Whitney Wall, "Village In The Wilderness: Little Canada—Heritage From The French", *Ramsey County History* (hereafter listed as *RCH*) Fall 1964, Vol. 1, no. 2, Pp. 8-15; Donald Empson, "Highland—Groveland—Macalester Park: The Old Reserve Township", *RCH*, Fall 1973, Vol. 10, no. 2, Pp. 13-19.

²John D. Schofield, "From A Pioneer Farmer: Memories of Those Early Years Make 'A Chill Run Up My Back'", *RCH*, Spring 1968, Vol. 5, no. 1, Pp. 18-22.

³Nancy L. Woolworth, "The Story of White Bear Lake: Hardship And Struggle in a Rugged Wilderness", *RCH*, Fall 1965, Vol. 2, no. 2, Pp. 3-10.

⁴*Daily Minnesota Pioneer*, September 28, 1854, P. 2, Col. 4.

⁵*Daily Minnesota Pioneer*, October 25, 1854, P. 2, Col. 3.

⁶*Minnesota Daily Pioneer*, June 17, 1854, P. 2, Col. 3.

⁷*Minnesota Daily Pioneer*, June 19, 1854, P. 2, Col. 2.

⁸*Minnesota Daily Pioneer*, October 24, 1854, P. 2, Col. 2.

⁹Merrill E. Jarchow, *The Earth Brought Forth*, Pp. 41-53.

¹⁰Merrill E. Jarchow, *The Earth Brought Forth*, Pp. 54-60.

¹¹*Daily Minnesotian*, September 12, P. 2, Cols. 1, 4, 1854.

¹²*Daily Pioneer*, May 4, 1855, P. 2, Col. 2.

¹³Merrill E. Jarchow, *The Earth Brought Forth*, Pp. 41-53.

¹⁴Rodney C. Loehr, ed., *Minnesota Farmers' Diaries*, P. 24.

¹⁵John D. Schofield, "From a Pioneer Farmer: Memories of Those Early Years Make 'A Chill Run Up My Back'", *RCH*, Spring 1968, Vol. 5, No. 1, Pp. 18-22.

¹⁶Nancy L. Woolworth, "The Story of White Bear Lake: Hardship And Struggle in a Rugged Wilderness", *RCH*, Fall 1965, Vol. 2, no. 2, Pp. 3-10.

¹⁷William L. Cavert, "Sod Shanty on the Prairie: Story of a Pioneer Farm", *RCH*, Spring 1964, Vol. 1, no. 1, Pp. 3-5.

¹⁸"Diary of Francis Larpenteur" in the possession of the Manuscripts Division of the Minnesota Historical Society. The diary covers the period July 1, 1856 to August 5, 1861. Hereafter referred to as *FL*. Entrees for August 7, 1856, July 7, 20, 1857.

¹⁹William L. Cavert, "Sod Shanty on the Prairie: Story of a Pioneer Farm", *RCH*, Spring 1964, Vol. 1, no. 1, Pp. 3-5.

²⁰*FL*, August 21, 22, 26, 28; October 29; November 20, 21, 1856; October 21, 23, 27-31; November 14, 17, 1857.

²¹Donald Empson, "Highland—Groveland—Macalester Park: The Old Reserve Township", *RCH*, Fall 1973, Vol. 10, no. 2, Pp. 13-19.

²²Edward J. Lettermann, "In North St. Paul: Boom, Boom, Bust, Comeback", *RCH*, Spring 1968, Vol. 5, no. 1, Pp. 11-15.

²³See the excellent study on hired hands by David E. Schob, *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-60*.

²⁴*FL* July 21, 1856.

²⁵*FL* July 14, 23, 25, 26, 28-30; August 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 1856.

²⁶John D. Schofield, "From A Pioneer Farmer: Memories of Those Early Years Make 'A Chill Run Up My Back'", *RCH*, Spring 1968, Vol. 5, no. 1, Pp. 18-22.

²⁷*Daily Pioneer*, June 16, 1854, P. 3, Col. 3.

²⁸William L. Cavert, "Sod Shanty on the Prairie: Story of a Pioneer Farm", *RCH*, Spring 1964, Vol. 1, no. 1, Pp. 3-5.

²⁹*FL* July 26, 1857.

³⁰*FL* August 29, 1856.

³¹*FL* October 4; November 10-15, 1856.

³²John D. Schofield, "From A Pioneer Farmer: Memories of Those Early Years Make 'A Chill Run Up My Back'", *RCH*, Spring 1968, Vol. 5, no. 1, Pp. 18-22.

³³*FL* May 5, 7, 9; July 24, 1857.

³⁴*FL* June 10; July 16, 22, 1857.

³⁵*FL* November 3, 1856.

³⁶Lillie Gibbs LeVesconte, "Summer Evenings, A Smudge Kettle, Tallow Candles — And Farm Life Recalled", *RCH*, Spring 1969, Vol. 6, no. 1, Pp. 19-21.

³⁷*FL* August 25; October 1, 10, 1856; August 5, 21; October 8-9, 1857; September 27, 1858.

³⁸*FL* October 12, 1858.

³⁹*FL* August 10, 1856.



THE GIBBS HOUSE

at 2097 West Larpenteur Avenue, Falcon Heights, is owned and maintained by the Ramsey County Historical Society as a restored farm home of the mid-nineteenth century period.

THE Ramsey County Historical Society was founded in 1949. During the following years the Society, believing that a sense of history is of great importance in giving a new, mobile generation a knowledge of its roots in the past, acquired the 100-year-old farm home which had belonged to Heman R. Gibbs. The Society restored the Gibbs House and in 1954 opened it to the public as a museum which would depict the way of life of an early Minnesota settler.

In 1958, the Society erected a barn behind the farm house which is maintained as an agricultural museum to display the tools and other implements used by the men who broke up the prairie soil and farmed with horse and oxen. In 1966, the Society moved to its museum property a one-room rural schoolhouse, dating from the 1870's. The white frame school came from near Milan, Minnesota. Now restored to the period of the late 1890's, the school actually is used for classes and meetings.

Headquarters of the Ramsey County Historical Society will be located in the Old Federal Courts Building in downtown St. Paul, an historic building of neo-Romanesque architecture which the Society, with other groups, fought to save from demolition. The Society presently has its offices at the Gibbs Farm. The Society is active in identification of historic sites in the city and county, and conducts an educational program which includes the teaching and demonstration of old arts and crafts. It is one of the few county historical societies in the country to engage in an extensive publishing program in local history.