

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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James J. Hill's yacht, the Wacouta of St. Paul. See Page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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On the cover: The *Wacouta*, James J. Hill's yacht, passing through the locks at the Sault Ste. Marie, seen in the background.

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Volume 25, Number 1 Spring, 1990

CONTENTS

- 3 Letters
- 4 Railroader as Yachtsman
James J. Hill and the Yacht *Wacouta*
Thomas C. Buckley
- 12 Eugene Debs, James J. Hill and the Great Northern Railway's Strike of 1894
Tamara C. Truer
- 14-15 St. Paul and the 1940s Revisited in Pictures
- 20 The *Wacouta* in Two World Wars
- 22 Book Reviews
- 23 Cooper and Goodrich and the Famous Duel
- 24 A Matter of Time
- 27 What's Historic about this Site?

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the "new" *Ramsey County History*. In 1987 the Society's Board of Directors established a task force to develop a strategic plan. One of the principal recommendations of that task force was to publish our magazine on a quarterly basis. For that purpose an Editorial Board was established and as a result of their efforts over a two-year planning period, we are proud and happy to present to you, our members and our readers, this new, enlivened format. You will note the additional new features, such as "A Matter of Time," Letters to the Editor, book reviews, descriptions of St. Paul's historic sites and other features.

We hope you will enjoy this new format, and request your comments and reactions to it. We also would like to remind you that we always are looking for manuscripts, for writers and particularly for reminiscences, those colorful and personal accounts of your experiences and memories of St. Paul and Ramsey County. If you would like to contribute to our new magazine, just call the editor.

—William S. Fallon

A Matter of Time

1850 140 YEARS AGO

► On March 6 the *Minnesota Pioneer* announced that Vetal Guerin had deeded the land bounded today by Wabasha, St. Peter, Sixth and Seventh streets to Bishop Joseph Cretin for erection of a cathedral. Not to be outdone, Ramsey County commissioners acquired land from Guerin for a courthouse and jail on present-day Wabasha and Fourth streets. David Day, registrar of deeds, announced a \$10 award for the best plan. He collected it himself for his design of the courthouse.

► Knocking on wood, the *Pioneer* stated that cholera had never been known in Minnesota. (The great cholera epidemic was five years in the future.)

► In January, county commissioners gave James and Isaac Goodhue permission to operate a ferry across the Mississippi at the Lower Landing. J. R. Irvine was granted ferry rights at the Upper Landing.

► White sand from "Mr. Lambert's" well was sent to a Cincinnati glass manufacturer and found to be "superior to any other in making glass." A glass manufactory, the *St. Paul Chronicle* declared on February 20, would be established in St. Paul.

► The *Pioneer* of the same date announced that a "superb" party was being planned at the American House, with music from the band at Fort Snelling.

► Part of the Red River ox cart train that left St. Paul the preceding summer was robbed by Indians who carried off, among other things, a church bell destined for the Selkirk settlement.

► The price of oats had fallen in January to 40 or 50 cents but hay was abundant.

1890 100 YEARS AGO

► In March St. Paul newspapers reported that leading citizens James J. Hill, Col. E. F. Drake and Governor William Merriam were calling for an increase in factories in St. Paul. There was, said Merriam, "too much tendency among capitalists to invest their money in securities; also in large buildings."

► George Kennan, the Great Siberian traveler, writer, lecturer and "exposer of the exile system in Siberia," (and grandfather of George F. Kennan, former U.S. ambassador to Russia) was in town to speak at the People's Church. London papers reported that his articles were widely circulated in Russia, until censors stopped their distribution by mail.

► On March 5, 500 members of the Farmers Alliance took over the capitol to plan their state convention.

► The Northern Pacific's passenger agent announced that same day that the outlook for immigration to the Northwest was never better, although snow blocking the rails would delay emigration.

► Newspapers in March were advertising 1,000 acres of fertile land in southwestern Minnesota belonging to the land grant of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad for sale for \$7 to \$10 an acre.

► T. F. Oakes, the Northern Pacific's president, was in St. Paul and denying emphatically that the railroad's general offices would be moved from St. Paul to Chicago.

► William H. Lightner was elected president of the Minnesota Boat Club. J. L. Hudson Clothier in the Ryan Building advertised \$1 shirts for 73 cents. The lot on the northeast corner

of Fifth and Jackson was sold to Merchants National Bank for \$87,500, the highest price yet paid for frontage in St. Paul. And a woman seems to have been poisoned by her kid gloves. The coroner said it wasn't the gloves. "Infectious material" on the gloves caused a fatal abscess of the brain. Out in Helena, Mont., a "society woman" horse-whipped a man in a city park for forcing his attentions on her daughter.

► Fifty young people of St. Anthony Hill were driven in buses and sleighs to Woodruffs Hotel in Merriam Park for an evening of dancing. At the other end of the social scale, a railroad yard worker with a family of four told a newspaper reporter that with his monthly income of \$45 he could rent a "nice" six-room house for \$15, spend \$6.75 a month for meat, \$10.75 for groceries, \$8.25 for fuel and have \$4.50 left over at the end of the month.

► The patent medicine men were out in force that March. "Now is the time," proclaimed Hood's Sarsaparilla ad, "to purify your blood and fortify your system against the debilitating effects of spring weather." A dollar bought 100 doses.

1915 75 YEARS AGO

► The state legislature was in session that March. "The way those Iron Range folks spend money makes Boss Tweed look like a piker," Senator George Sullivan of Stillwater told a committee hearing a bill to limit levies for municipal purposes to \$25 per capita. Temperance advocates' hopes were dashed when the house recommended indefinite postponement of a resolution to place on the ballot a constitutional amendment prohibiting the sale of liquor in Minnesota.*



Northern Pacific train crossing a bridge in Montana.

► Dr. George E. Vincent, president of the University of Minnesota, urged passage of a \$3,887,450 appropriation for the University but found himself defending his own salary and dealing with a suggestion that he return to the state treasury the \$1,500 he had earned in outside lecture fees.

► The war in Europe captured the headlines. The American-born Lady Paget, head of the British Red Cross, died of typhus in Serbia. Her twin sons, the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported on March 26, had worked in the Northern Pacific freight offices in St. Paul. Herbert Hoover, chairman of the American Commission for relief in Belgium, completed plans to feed 2.5 million French civilians stranded behind German lines. In Italy Austrian, German and Hungarian families were fleeing the country as Italy prepared for war on the side of the Allies. The Kaiser met secretly with Emperor Franz Joseph in an attempt to pacify the Italians, while the Austrians crossed the Russian frontier, the Turks attacked the Suez Canal and the British prepared for 60,000 wounded.

► The *Sunday Pioneer Press* reported on March 28, 1915, that Archbishop

John Ireland said the first mass in the new cathedral. It opened for worship to the peals of the historic bell from the old cathedral which had been installed in the new building's southeast turret. The cathedral's indebtedness was down to \$87,974, the archbishop announced, out of a total cost of \$1,497,007.

► As Easter approached, the martial influence in the new spring fashions was noted. Easter suits were selling for \$25 at Schuneman & Evans. "Dressy new coats" at Field, Schlick & Co., came in checks, corduroys and tweeds for \$7.50 to \$45; Italian silk bloomers were advertised at \$2.50 while corsets cost as much as \$10. Sorensen Shoe Stores, 149-153 E. 7th Street, had a carload of shoes at \$2.50 a pair.

► St. Paul Athletic Club members met at the St. Paul Hotel's roof garden "to see demonstrations of athletic stunts they plan to go through when they occupy their new building at Fourth and Cedar." Society women were selling \$1 tickets to the newsboys' entertainment at the auditorium to benefit the work of the Newsboys' Club; 263 Ramsey County boys and girls entered their flocks in an egg-laying contest; live-

stock prices were sagging at the South St. Paul stockyards but the railroads were hiring extra section men for spring maintenance.

► The famous actor John Drew was in town to star in "Rosemary" at the Metropolitan Opera House, attracting the cream of St. Paul society, according to a long list published on the society pages of the March 26 *Sunday Pioneer Press*. And the Woman's Welfare League gave a tea to discuss the organization of a woman's peace party.

1940 50 years Ago

► The *St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press* for March 31, 1940, reflected World War II's "phony war" period before the fall of France in June, 1940. The Russians and Germans were still allies and the Associated Press reported from Bucharest that Turkey would permit passage of British and French warships through the Dardanelles to choke off Germany's supply line that ran from Russia through the Black Sea.

► In Britain, Winston Churchill, still first lord of the admiralty, warned the neutral nations against aid to the Nazis and called on them to join the Allies in bringing the war to a speedy end.

► Determined to tighten their stranglehold on Germany, the Allies planned to waylay Scandinavian ships and disrupt the shipping of raw materials from Mexico to Vladivostok where they could proceed to Germany.

► As springtime warmed the United States, war games were scheduled for the Pacific. The "world's most powerful fleet," the Associated Press reported, was concentrated in three ports, San Diego, San Pedro and Pearl Harbor, and poised for seven weeks of maneuvers in the Pacific, the first since President Roosevelt's declaration of a limited national emergency in 1939. The maneuvers were shrouded in secrecy. FDR himself, it was reported, "won't say yes, won't say no" to a third term but held the edge in popular votes for delegates.

► The FBI was evading a federal ban on wire-tapping by using "ultra-

Time to page 26

Time from page 25

modern" eaves-dropping technology.

► Americans were mailing butter to friends and relatives in war-torn Europe and Theodore L. Cook, president of St. Paul's division of the United Jewish Fund, appealed to the city's Jewish Community to aid central European Jews in their "race against death."

► The Reverend Henry Soltau, crusading minister, carried his anti-vice campaign to St. Paul as the Minneapolis Ministers Association called on Governor Harold Stassen for state aid in investigating vice. Speaking to students at Hamline University, Soltau charged that illegal liquor was being sold by Minneapolis taverns operating without licenses.

► Mayor William F. Fallon, campaigning for re-election, told a rally that during 1939, forty-nine new business firms with combined payrolls of \$500,000 located in St. Paul. One firm, he said, chose St. Paul over Minneapolis after objecting to civic conditions there. Nevertheless, he lost to John J. McDonough.

► Breckenridge won the state basketball tournament and the University of Minnesota's head football coach, Bernie Bierman, proposed a state high school football tournament.

► Census enumerators began work in St. Paul as part of "one of the greatest undertakings in the history of government." The first annual exhibition of the work of Twin Cities artists was held at the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art. The Schubert Club honored eight Minnesota composers in a program at Norton Field House at Hamline and pianist Robert Casadesus was soloist with the Minneapolis Symphony under Dimitri Mitropoulos.

► "Pinocchio" was playing at the RKO Orpheum and "Young Tom Edison," with Mickey Rooney, at the Paramount. Sinclair Lewis's new novel, *Bethel Merriday*, was out, to underwhelming revues.

► The Emporium ("locally owned," "locally controlled") advertised a clearance of women's dresses for \$5 each and Maceys ("100% St. Paul owned")

offered to restyle old fur coats into "a smart, useful chubby" for \$15.75.

► In "Little Abner," Marryin' Sam arrived to make Fosdick Flopp and Bes-sie man and wife.

1965 25 YEARS AGO

► In early April, with fighting escalating in Vietnam, President Johnson met with Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson at Camp David to discuss Pearson's suggestion for a pause in air strikes against North Vietnam as a first step toward peace. No agreement was announced, according to the April 4 *Sunday Pioneer Press*. In Moscow, Premier Alexei Kosygin called on "all states to whom the cause of peace is dear" to join in the struggle to "halt aggression in Indochina." Sixty planes from the U. S. carriers *Coral Sea* and *Hancock* bombed a bridge sixty-five miles south of Hanoi and the U. S. was sending more troops to South Vietnam.

► Alabama's attorney general, Richmond Flowers, said in an interview that "segregation as we know it is gone." In Detroit the fourth cross in 24 hours burned on the lawn of a home. News agencies reported that wholesale voting registration of blacks could wrest political control from whites in the deep south.

► Franz Hals' 300-year-old painting of St. Luke, valued at \$140,000, was missing from the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, and the American-born Hope Cooke became queen of Sikkim.

► Minnesota legislators were winding up their session without their free copies of the *Minnesota Daily*. University administrators canceled the free subscriptions, reportedly because they were not thrilled with the *Daily's* outspoken editorials, including those on legislative issues.

► Ramsey County was moving to develop park lands acquired over the years, including a proposed transfer of city-owned Como Zoo to Battle Creek land. The city was studying the suggestion.

► Four river valleys whose waters converged on St. Paul were bracing for floods and more rain was predicted.

Lilydale residents prepared for evacuation and someone suggested putting an outboard motor on Lilydale's new police car.

► An editorial complained that Minnesota had done a poor job of selling the state's tourist industry.

► The Twins opened the new minor league base in Florida and Camilo Pascual was being groomed to face the Yankees in the Twins' season opener at Met Stadium. Jim Kaat was scheduled to pitch the second game.

► A double collar mink stole was priced at \$630 at Rosen Engelson, 62 E. 6th Street, and a mink cape was on sale for \$490 at Field-Schlick. Easter coats for women cost \$29.90 to \$39.98 at the Emporium, which advertised coats for little girls at \$11 to \$17.

► The St. Paul branch, AAUW, heard State Representative William O'Brien describe the Fort Snelling restoration project and Senator Henry T. McKnight, vice chairman of the Minnesota River Valley Development Interim Commission, briefed them on Minnesota waterways.

► Arthur Fiedler came to town as guest conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony's "Adventures in Music" concert at Northrop auditorium and Danny Sewell was playing Bill Sykes in the musical, "Oliver," at the auditorium theater.

► The centennial of Abraham Lincoln's assassination was commemorated with republication of a rare 189-page book, *The Assassination and History of the Conspiracy*, originally published in 1856.

► Seventy mothers from a public housing project, some of them "solo" mothers, were learning homemaking skills in experimental classes conducted by the adult education department of the St. Paul public schools and the A. G. Bush Foundation.

► On "Lucy," Danny Kaye became the unwitting victim of Lucy's determination to get tickets to his TV show and on "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," George Sanders played an English squire who held Solo and Illya captive in a dungeon.



Henry H. Sibley's house at 417 Woodward, St. Paul, from the 1874 Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota, published by A. M. Andreas.

R.C.H.S.
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