

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

**Spring, 1998**

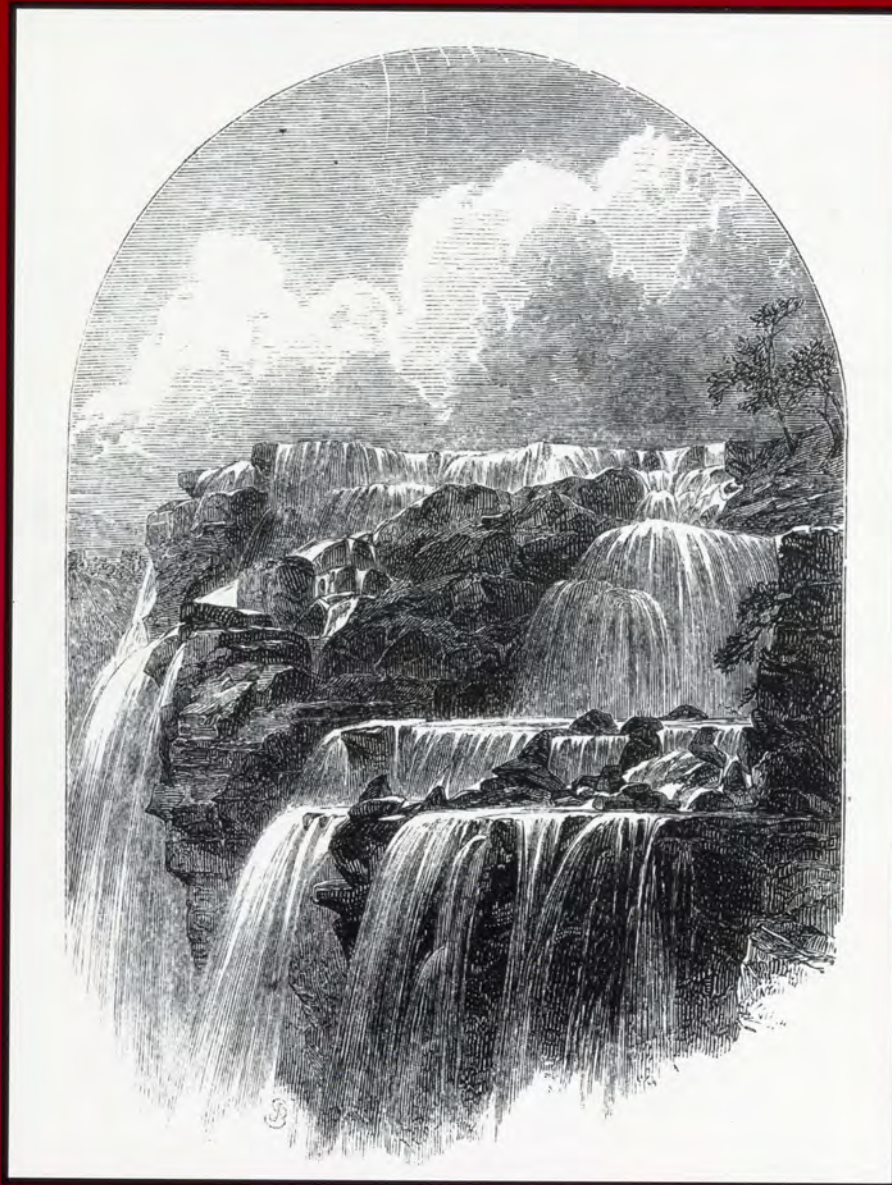
Volume 33, Number 1

Westminster Junction—  
Turn-of-the-Century  
Railroad 'Highway'

Page 9

*Stairway to the Abyss—*

*The Diverting Story of Cascade Creek—Page 4*



*Cascade Creek, from Harper's New Monthly Magazine, in 1860. The creek was named after a waterfall that was described in early travel literature about the St. Paul area. This engraving probably depicts the namesake cascade. The waterfall, now dry, can be seen today along the Mississippi bluffs near Colborne Street. See the article beginning on page 4. Photo from the Minnesota Historical Society collections.*

## RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 33, Number 1

Spring, 1998

## CONTENTS

- 3** Letters
- 4** Stairway to the Abyss—The Diverting Story of Cascade Creek  
*Greg Brick*
- 9** Westminster Junction and Its Tunnels—  
An 1880s 'Highway Intersection' for the Railroads  
*Andrew J. Schmidt*
- 14** The Story of Rose Hanna and Her Journey  
from Old-World Palestine to St. Paul  
*Jean Hanna*
- 18** The Upper Levee—Memories of Its People  
and Its Place in St. Paul History  
*Joe Lepsche*
- 22** Growing Up in St. Paul  
Dawn-to-Dusk: Grand Hill and Its  
Grand Fourth of July Extravaganza  
*Charlotte McKendree Wright Lewis*
- 24** Books, Etc.

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

**T**wo themes run through this spring issue of *Ramsey County History*. One theme is engineering; the other is people. Greg Brick's lead article, which tells the story of Cascade Creek, is another in our St. Paul Underground series, which was suggested some years ago by the late Reuel Harmon. Both this article and that by Andrew Schmidt on the local railroad area known as Westminster Junction represent historical research into little-known sources of St. Paul engineering and transportation history

The theme of people plays a secondary role in the stories of Cascade Creek and Westminster Junction, but this theme is foremost in Jean Hanna's account of her mother, Rose Hanna, and her journey from Palestine to St. Paul in the 1950s; in Joe Lepsche's article on the history and people of the Upper Levee; and in Charlotte McKendree Wright Lewis's reminiscence of the Fourth of July Extravaganza on Grand Hill. These writers convey vividly the enduring diversity of the area's people and how their individual stories are today a part of the larger story of St. Paul and Ramsey County.

*John M. Lindley*  
Chair, Editorial Committee

## Books, Etc.

### *F. K. Weyerhaeuser*

Charles E. Twining  
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society  
Press, 1997  
332 pages; photos; cloth; \$29.95

*Reviewed by John M. Lindley*

At one point in this well-written biography of Frederick K. Weyerhaeuser, author Charles Twining observes: "Lumbering could be exciting and colorful, even romantic in the abstract, but in the end, it was always business." And indeed, that is the single characteristic that dominates this story of the Weyerhaeuser Company under the leadership of F. K. Weyerhaeuser, grandson of the company's founder, Frederick Weyerhaeuser.

Born in 1895, educated at Yale, Frederick K. Weyerhaeuser saw service in World War I as an aviator in the United States army on the Italian front. Following the Armistice and demobilization in 1919, he joined the company business and served in a variety of positions as he learned the timber and lumbering business before becoming president of the Weyerhaeuser Sales Company in 1929. His younger brother, Phil, also was engaged in the family business and eventually headed the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, which oversaw the logging and sawmill operations that produced the lumber sold by brother F. K.'s sales staff.

For more than forty years, F. K. Weyerhaeuser diligently labored at the growth and improvement of the family business. Today the Weyerhaeuser Company is a corporate giant in the United States. Having survived the Great Depression and World War II, the company then prospered greatly in the



*F. K. Weyerhaeuser*

economic boom of the late 1950s and 1960s. At the time F. K. retired as chairman of the board in 1966, the company his grandfather started in 1900 was no longer a corporation whose stock was owned by family members and relatives; instead, it had gone public in 1963 and had expanded into paper, pulp, corrugated containers, folding cartons, and other related industries.

As a biographer of F. K. Weyerhaeuser, Charles Twining is extremely well-qualified, having written several other books on members of the Weyerhaeuser family and the Weyerhaeuser Company. Twining has had access to company and family papers that have given him a clear understanding of the intricacies of lumber sales. In addition to the required archival research a biography such as this needs, Twining has made ample use of interviews with family members and business associates

who knew F. K., whether in the office or at home with his family at 294 Summit Avenue in St. Paul. Although the corporate offices of the Weyerhaeuser Company are located today near Seattle, Washington, the company's roots lie in Minnesota and St. Paul.

F. K. Weyerhaeuser was unquestionably an astute and successful business leader. He kept his eyes focused on his company's core business of making and selling lumber, and he worked hard to educate the public to the value of lumber as an essential building material. He also preached the value of timber as a renewable resource that always would be available, due to responsible forestry practices carried on by private corporations. Weyerhaeuser was a life-long Republican and advocate of the free enterprise system. Excerpts from his public speeches dealing with economic and public-policy issues found in this biography could just as easily have been written today as in the era of the Eisenhower presidency.

What sets Twining's biography apart from many other biographies of business and corporate leaders is the author's consistent inclusion of details about the Weyerhaeuser family and the intertwining of family lives with the life of the family business. F. K. was not only the business leader, he was also the family patriarch who did not hesitate to criticize another member of the clan who had strayed from the code of behavior expected of Weyerhaeusers. Because family members who held positions in the various Weyerhaeuser companies generally were men and also stockholders in the company, this was not always an easy or painless responsibility. Although Twining clearly respects and likes F. K., he is not uncritically

cal of his subject in his treatment of this side of the Weyerhaeuser story.

In today's era of the professional manager, who may be either male or female and possibly the holder of an advanced degree in business, law, engineering, or computer science, Twining's careful look back at the business and family world of the Weyerhaeusers in the first two-thirds of this century is highly instructive and insightful. This reader comes away wondering if the Bill Gateses of today will be able to handle business and family responsibilities with such skill and joy as was evidently the case for F. K. Weyerhaeuser.

*John Lindley is a past president of the Ramsey County Historical Society, and chairman of the Society's Editorial Board.*

### *We Hold This Treasure*

Steven M. Koop, M. D.  
Afton, Minnesota: Afton Historical  
Society Press  
180 pages, photos, cloth; \$49

*Reviewed by Gail Teas*

In 1897 the Minnesota legislature created the nation's first public hospital for children with disabilities. Since then, more than 50,000 children have received medical care at what came to be called Gillette Children's Hospital.

It was there that children with tuberculosis were nursed back to health, and where thousands who were struck down during the greatly-feared polio epidemics of the first half of this century learned to cope with their weakened muscles. Children still arrive at the hospital with orthopaedic problems such as clubfoot and spinal bifida and with neurological problems posed by cerebral palsy. Time and medical advances have wrought dramatic changes in the halted little lives of children with disabilities, but the mission of Gillette Children's Hospital has remained constant: to improve the lives of the most vulnerable and help them find a place in society.

*We Hold This Treasure*, although published as the hospital passes its

100th year, is not a history of Gillette Children's Hospital so much as it is a poignant account of the thousands of children who passed through its corridors. The story is told in great part in the words of those children themselves as they describe their experiences there, the doctors and staff who cared for them, and how that care changed their lives.

Koop, a practicing physician in pediatric orthopaedics at the hospital now known as Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare, begins his story with Jessie Haskins, one of the forgotten heroines of medical history. A young woman with a disability of her own—very likely scoliosis—she was a student at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, when she dreamed of a place where disabled children with little



means could receive treatment as well as education.

She brought her dream to Dr. Arthur Gillette, a St. Paul physician who was just beginning a practice in orthopaedics. Together, and with the help of several others, they persuaded a reluctant legislature to create a hospital for indigent crippled children. Gillette, at the time president of the Ramsey County Medical Society, promised to personally recruit physicians who would donate their services.

The author writes of the doctors who did so, of the nurses, administrators,

teachers, and therapists, of the efforts to build the hospital near Lake Phalen, of how the need for care finally outgrew those facilities and of the struggle to find a new home. Most important, however, are the children's own stories of their experiences, told in their own words, and based on interviews and correspondence with more than 400 former patients or their families. These excerpts from interviews, letters, diaries, and reminiscences of desperate parents who did not know where to turn, or whom to turn to as they faced a medical crisis are a forceful reminder of how far medicine and society have brought us from the crises that faced many families during the earlier years of this century. Koop also provides a fine history of those achievements and of medicine in general both before and after 1897.

Of particular interest are the accounts of the terrifying polio epidemics and the advent of Sister Elizabeth Kenny and her then-controversial treatment of polio. Her strong, forceful personality, and her imposing appearance created a not-to-be-ignored impression on staff and patients alike, not to mention the medical profession itself. This is an exciting chapter, and it's fascinating to learn, as Dr. Koop traces the origins of the polio virus, that polio is not new. He writes that "people with polio deformities were pictured in drawings from ancient Egypt and medical texts from the Middle Ages described the weakness it caused." What was new, he adds, "were the virulent epidemics of severe, disabling polio."

The hospital, of course, was also a school where children could keep up with their classes and even receive their high school diplomas. The author points out that in the early years treatment for orthopaedic problems required time, sometimes painful therapy, and long hospital stays.

Not only are Jessie Haskins, Arthur Gillette, and Sister Kenny important to this history, but so are many more, such as Dr. Arthur Ancker, superintendent of the City and County Hospital that would later bear his name, and Judge Steven Mahoney, a University of Minnesota re-



Boys in their beds on the porch at the Gillette State Hospital for Crippled Children, circa 1930. Photo from the book.

gent who helped find the first hospital's home—a ward at Ancker Hospital. Then there was Michael Dowling, a fellow Carleton College student who joined Jessie Haskins in her initial efforts. Dowling, a well-known figure in Minnesota history, was himself crippled in 1881 when he was trapped in a blizzard and lost both legs below the knee, one arm below the elbow and most of the fingers on his other hand. Nevertheless, he became a newspaper editor and politician. A hospital and a wing at Gillette State Hospital's Phalen campus were named for him.

The book has almost 200 pictures of patients, staff members, and the hospital itself, and an excellent index.

*Gail Teas is a former high school English teacher and administrator of the Pipestone, Minnesota, Community Library.*

### *A Place At The Lake*

Paul Clifford Larson  
Afton, Minnesota: Afton Historical Society Press  
160 pages; 140 photos; cloth; \$45

*Reviewed by Virginia Brainard Kunz*

This delightful, evocative, and heavily illustrated book is just in time for summer reading. Not only will it recapture happy memories among many readers, but it also recreates a bygone era when summer cottages and cabins often were lakeside mansions that were far grander (if less convenient) than today's and often required servants.

As in his earlier books on the Midwest, Larson combines his skills as a historian with a light, deft touch in an engaging text. "If the phrase 'up to the lake' was not born in Minnesota," he observes in his Preface, "it must have arrived on the first steamer. Minnesotans have carried on a romance with their lakes for more than a century, and the affair shows no signs of abating."

While Larson focuses on the Twin Cities' Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake communities, he also roamed Minnesota in his search for those lost or forgotten or barely-surviving summer places. The result is an intriguing history of the state and its people. He begins with the first wave of Southerners who swarmed north to St. Anthony and Minnehaha Falls in the 1850s and proceeds into the rails-and-roads era when trains and automobiles opened the way to Minnesota's more-than-10,000 lakes. His sources—county and local historical societies and associations throughout the state, public libraries, state parks, resort owners, and the Minnesota Historical Society—unearthed for him a trove of old photographs and information from their archives.

One of the book's strengths is that so many of these old lake homes and resorts can be visited today only through the archival sketches and photographs, often color tinted, that are presented in the book. There is, for example, the Breezy Point Lodge as it looked in 1885; the 1890s Lake Park Hotel, created by Minneapolis architect LeRoy S. Buffington, on Lake Minnetonka; the A.M.P. Cowley "cottage" perched on the country road to the depot in Dellwood, in 1890; Frank B. Long's odd steamboat-inspired "Squirrel's Nest" at Wayzata in 1892 and the turreted Queen Anne summer house of Frederick C. Pillsbury, both Wayzata, in 1890; the William Hamm cabin on Chisago Lake, as it looked around 1925.

Larson traces the development in the 1880s of Manitou Island in White Bear Lake by "seven well-placed St. Paul men:" William B. Dean, Charles Noyes, R. M. Newport, W. R. Merriam, C. H. Bigelow, E. F. Drake, and F. B. Clarke. The history of the island, once known as "Spirit Island" for its sacred import for the Ojibway and Dakota bands, traces its history back to at least 1851, and was by the 1870s "a flourishing idyllic woodland spot, host of myriad picnickers and parties of campers," he writes.

There are the delightful old place names attached to their homes by imag-



View from Lake Elmo Lodge in 1882. Sketch from the Minnesota Historical Society.

inative property owners: "Spray Island," "the Ramble," "Brightwood," "Glooskap" (after an Indian spirit). Then there was the movement from rusticity—very big in the nineteenth century—to the tonier neoclassical with its giant porticos. It was an era when families and friends chose to vacation all together and all at once. In 1880 the Griggs and Foster families built a "vast barnlike structure, its lake exposure wrapped with a two-story veranda" at Spring Park on Minnetonka. Larson writes that "During the summer of 1892 the entire Griggs and Foster families and their in-laws, seventeen people in all, vacationed together at the cottage.

The massive summer house of Walter and Mahala Douglas on Lake Minnetonka, would be of special interest right now. Douglas, a Quaker Oats heir, went down on the *Titanic*, only six years after acquiring the property for his eighteenth century Franco-Italian palace.

"In a fashion typical of nineteenth-century industrial magnate," Larson writes, "Douglas named it 'Walden II,' after Henry David Thoreau's crude pond-side retreat that had come to symbolize the simplicity of life without money or possessions. This latter-day Walden had brocaded walls, Gobelin

tapestries, a ceiling copied from an Italian palazzo, and a morning room decorated in French period style."

Virginia Brainard Kunz is editor of Ramsey County History.

Cascade Creek

*Continued from page 8*

six inches high, spanning the width of the tunnel. The stream has in effect created its own obstacles, as if a runner were to set up hurdles as he goes along.

The West Kittsondale tunnel, built in 1931, is not associated with any known historical stream. Nor, for some reason, does it have any cave formations. To compensate, however, this tunnel has three spiral stairways, rather than just one. Two of them are small-diameter brick spirals situated at points where branches join the tunnel, while the other is a concrete spiral, located under the intersection of University and Fairview avenues. It is similar in design to the East Kittsondale spiral. An interesting difference between the small and large diameter spirals is that they coil in opposite directions.<sup>14</sup>

The story of Cascade Creek is indeed a "diverting" story, worthy of more attention than it hitherto has received. While other streams in St. Paul have been put underground, none have undergone such drastic reroutings as Cascade Creek. Old wine in new bottles.

## NOTES

1. Minneapolis also had a Cascade Creek, as seen on Nicollet's famous 1843 map, *Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River*, but it is better known today as Minnehaha Creek.

2. The anastomosing drainage of the Fort Road wetlands often led to confusion between Cascade Creek and Fountain Creek. See for example Mark Fitzpatrick's "Forgotten Facts About St. Paul" column in the *St. Paul Shopper* for April 25, 1945.

3. *Street Name Changes, City of St. Paul*. This leather-bound manuscript volume is maintained at the St. Paul Public Works Department.

4. Rhoda R. Gilman, Carolyn Gilman, and Deborah M. Stultz, *The Red River Trails* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979), p. 85.

5. Jacket 6, Pigeon Hole drawer. Obviously, then, the waterfall was in existence as late as the spring of 1886.

6. John C. Luecke, *Dreams, Disasters, and Demise: The Milwaukee Road in Minnesota* (Eagan, MN: Grenadier Publications, 1988) p. 144.

7. Donald Empson, "John Ayd's Grist Mill—And Reserve Township History," *Ramsey County History* Vol. 11, No. 2 (1974): 3–8.

8. Jacket 56, Pigeon Hole drawer.

9. An earlier version of the Kittsondale concept was unitary, involving a single, longer tunnel draining to the west. See Sewer Drawing No. 313, "Geologic Section of Proposed Kittsondale Outfall Sewer," dated May, 1927. George M. Shepard was chief engineer for the project.

10. Leonard Metcalf and Harrison P. Eddy, *American Sewerage Practice* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1928), Volume 1, pages 47, 52, and 566. The second edition, contemporaneous with the project itself, has been cited, rather than more recent editions. Today, an impact chamber would be favored in this setting.

11. The complete story of the Cascade Creek diversion is more complicated than this because the Jefferson Avenue sewer had already had an impact on the drainage. Contract 1133, dated 1912, was for an open ditch on Jefferson from "Victoria Street to the Creek West of Chatsworth Street." The creek would drain through the ditch and into the sewer. Contract S-1219, dated 1914, specified that "An inlet shall be provided for the creek on Jefferson avenue about 340 feet west of Chatsworth street." This inlet, choked with sediments and serving as an animal den, was re-excavated by the author in 1998.

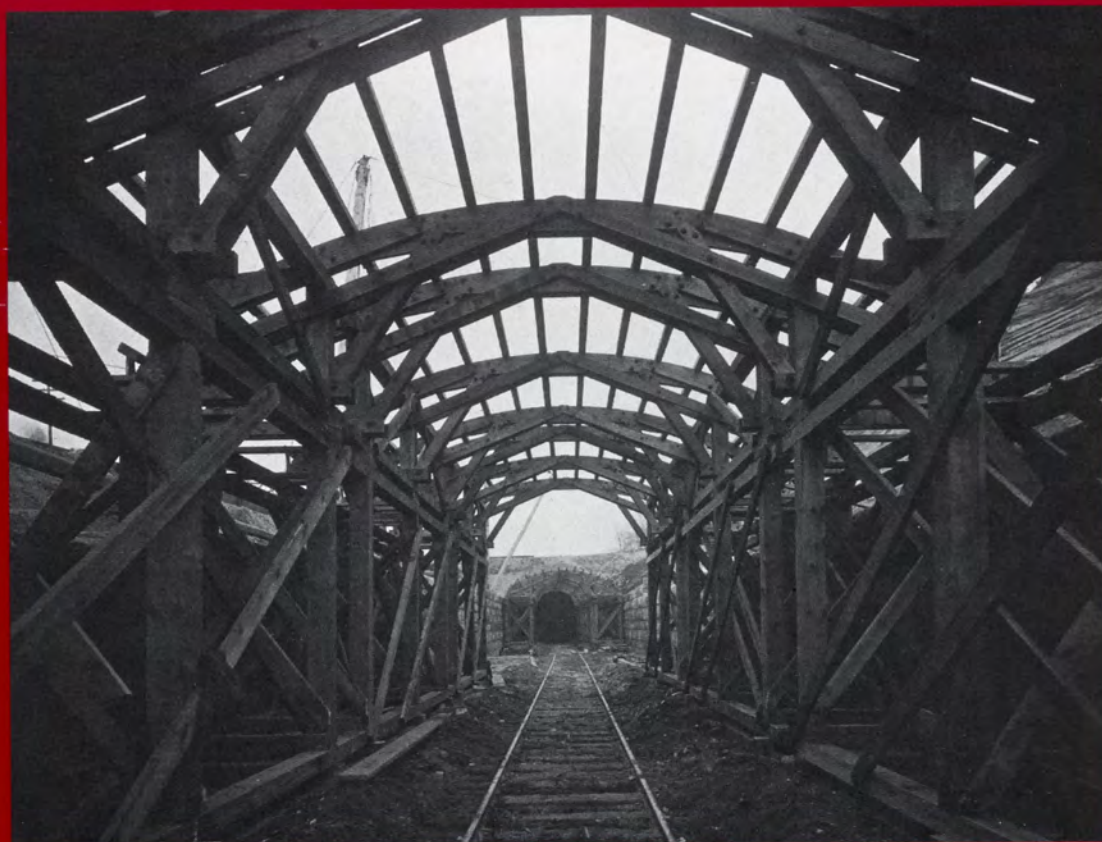
Because the Fort Street sewer, of which the Jefferson Avenue sewer was a branch, discharged to the Mississippi at the Eagle Street outfall, there was a period during which water from Cascade Creek discharged at downtown St. Paul. Thus, even before diversion into the East Kittsondale tunnel, segments of Cascade Creek had been flowing underground through sewers. The construction of Interstate 35E further altered the original drainage.

12. Drawing No. 20585.

13. Contracts 1970 and 1972. Strictly speaking, the term "Kittsondale" does not include anything upstream from the spiral stairways.

14. Contracts 2012 and 2012. The two brick spirals are depicted on Drawing No. 191.

*Greg Brick, after earning a master's degree in geology from the University of Connecticut, worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in St. Louis, Missouri. He would especially like to thank Tony Dagostino, Dave Dickhut, Dick Hedman, and Bill McDonald at St. Paul Public Works for their generous assistance.*



*Centers for the flat arch of the Westminster tunnel. This view, taken on April 9, 1886, is looking toward the south. Photo courtesy of the National Railway Historical Society, North Star Chapter. See article beginning on page 9.*

**R.C.H.S.**

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