

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

In the Beginning:  
The Geological Forces  
That Shaped Ramsey County

Page 4

Spring, 1999

Volume 34, Number 1

*Special 150th Anniversary Issue*

Ramsey County And Its Territorial Years

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"St. Paul in Minnesota," watercolor, 1851, by Johann Baptist Wengler. Oberösterreichisches Landes Museum, Linz, Austria. Photo: F. Gangl. Reproduced by permission of the museum. Two years after the establishment of Minnesota Territory, St. Paul as its capital was a boom town, "... its situation is as remarkable for beauty as healthiness as it is advantageous for trade," Fredrika Bremer wrote in 1853, and the rush to settlement was on. See "A Short History of Ramsey County" and its Territorial Years, beginning on page 8.

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 34, Number 1

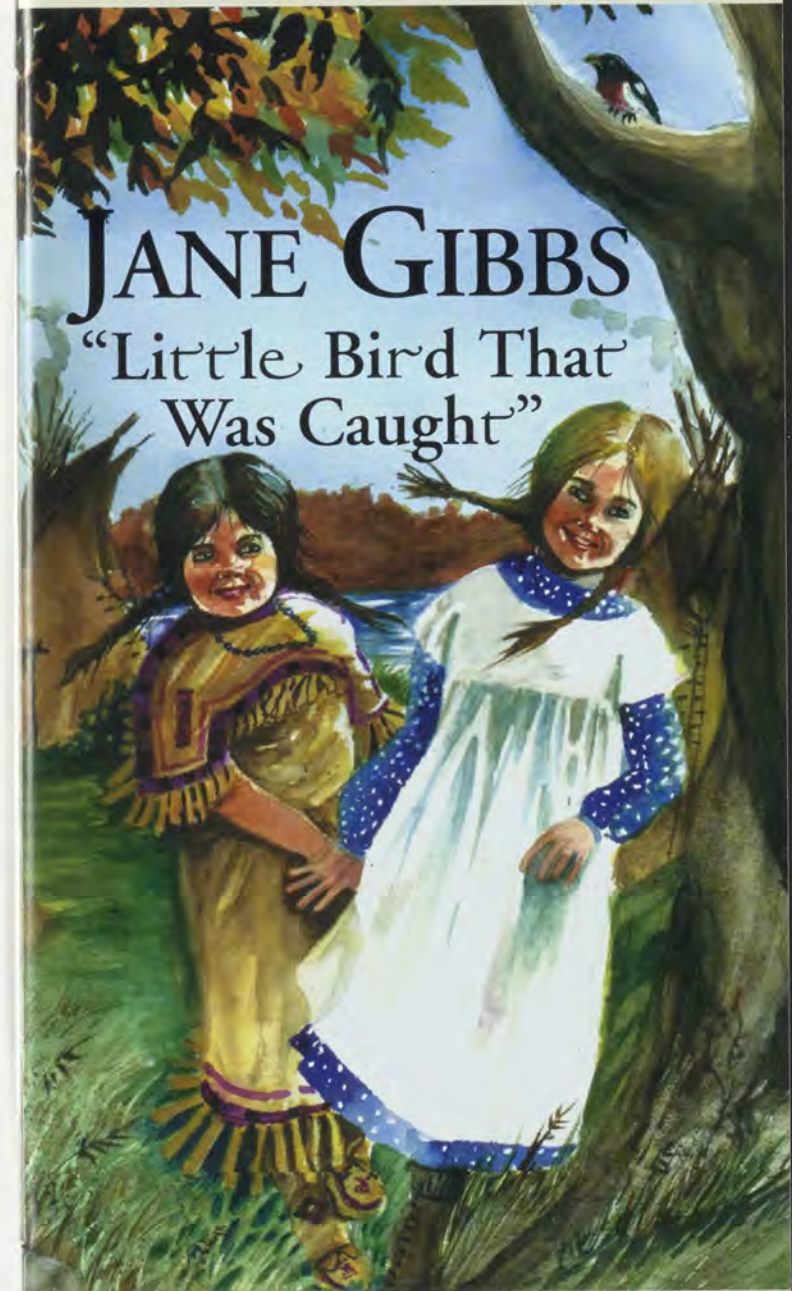
Spring, 1999

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ployees to form a company to enlist and fight in the then-raging Civil War. The Dakotas were shocked that Galbraith would not even hold a council with the chiefs. On August 15, Galbraith left the agency with his recruits, heading for Fort Ridgely (He believed that due to his corrupt misappropriation of Indian funds, he would be removed from office and disgraced.) On August 17, the soldiers' lodge held a council and decided that every able-bodied man should join them in a march to St. Paul, if necessary, to get their annuity money.

Late in the evening of August 17-18, the soldiers' lodge learned that four young Dakotas had murdered five white people at the Acton settlement [in Meeker County]. Most of them saw this as the beginning of war. The lodge went to Little Crow to demand his leadership of the warriors. Little Crow was obligated to follow the lodge's directives, but he suggested at first that the four be taken to Fort Ridgely. Many argued against this, saying that they probably would not be paid their annuity money or given their desperately needed provisions. Little Crow eventually agreed with the majority who wanted to wage war against a faithless government and traders who would not give them credit when they were starving.

Within hours, the Lower Agency was burning, and the Dakota Conflict of 1862 had commenced. Little Crow later justified the war, saying, "[W]e made a treaty with the government and beg for what little we do get, and can't get it until our children are dying with hunger." During the six-week conflict, some 500 whites lost their lives and the Dakotas either were chased or removed from Minnesota. All of their treaties were abrogated by Congress and various monies were not restored until the 1900s. Thompson and Galbraith were exonerated from any part in the matter by their political cronies.

*Mark Diedrich, a descendant of Minnesota pioneers of the 1850s, writes and publishes books about the Dakota, Ojibway and Winnebago. His past works include, Old Betsey, the Life and Times of A Famous Dakota Woman, and his latest book is Sitting Bull: The Collected*

*Speeches. This article has been reviewed by Dale Weston, a direct descendant of the Dakota chief, Cloud Man, and instructor in the American Indian Studies Department at the University of Minnesota, and also by Tom LaBlanc, Dakota orator, poet, lecturer, author, and Dakota exhibit interpreter at the Gibbs Farm Museum.*

## Ramsey County History Preserved in Its Survey Office

**B**ottles, wooden posts, gun barrels, and pipes in the Land Survey Office of the Ramsey County Public Works Department reflect much of the county's history and the contribution the county's surveyers have made to that history.

The original surveys of the county and their markers date back to the time land was parceled using a rectangular public land survey system set forth in the Ordinance of 1785. Today, most land in the United States is parceled in a grid system of townships, which are thirty-six miles square. All measurements for Ramsey County originated from a baseline, the south line of the state of Wisconsin, and the 4th principal meridian, which also runs north through Wisconsin. Ramsey County's five original townships were White Bear, Mounds View, Rose, New [Little] Canada and Reserve.

In the 1890s, a Ramsey County resurveying project began. The original wooden stakes, set during the late 1840s and through the 1850s, were beginning to rot and disappear and usually were replaced by large granite monuments. Many counties followed the need to resurvey and used many kinds of monuments, including bottles, gun barrels, wagon wheel hubs, motor valves, and capped pipes.

Minnesota has an old law requiring each county to mark the northeast corner of each township. Survey office files containing hand-penned maps and notes, which mark corners by "the center Burr Oak" or "two chains north from the lone

White Pine," are as important today as they were in pioneer days in identifying the accuracy of county boundaries. Before land could be sold to private citizens, a United States patent was needed and it could not be granted until after the original Public Land Survey was completed in each particular area. The major job of the county then was to maintain land records, the survey system, and administer justice. Original surveys were conducted with 60-foot-long wire chains. While the terms still exist, measurements of links, rods, and chains now are calculated by laser reflections, satellites, and other computerized survey tools. Notes are saved to computer disk and calculated by machine to eliminate human error between those original monument positions.

Land surveyers once were required to recognize soil types, identify tree and plant species, have the ability to use a quill pen to draw maps, and possess good penmanship. Probably no other profession has made such a mark on the country. When the astronauts were in orbit and were asked, "Are there any works of man that would make you believe the planet had intelligent life?", one of their answers was the pattern imposed by the rectangular survey. The other was the Great Wall of China.

*From Close Up, the newsletter published by the Ramsey County Public Information office.*

### **West is South, North Is...?**

One question has puzzled the residents of Ramsey County: Why is the West Side called the "West Side" when this part of the county so obviously lies to the south of St. Paul? The answer is the Mississippi and the somewhat erratic route the river takes through the Twin Cities. The Great River runs mostly north to south, dividing the nation neatly in two—hence the historic references to "east" of the Mississippi and "west" of the Mississippi. However, at the point near where the Minnesota River joins the Mississippi at Mendota, the Mississippi enters a great bend and flows north and east, so that the west side of the river lies south of St. Paul.

Today most of Ramsey County is fully developed. Modern roads and highways make it possible to travel swiftly from one community to another. But during its early history, most of the county outside of St. Paul was open prairie, a savannah dotted by clumps of burr oak and other trees. Ramsey County's isolated communities developed separately, each of them with a unique history of its own. Over the years, *Ramsey County History* has carried articles on the founding and growth of these communities, as well as much else on county history that reaches beyond its territorial years. What follows are condensed versions of some of these articles.

## *Hardship and Struggle* The Pioneer Years of White Bear Lake And the Township that Bears Its Name

There is a legend about White Bear Lake: A great white bear was slain by a brave Dakota hunter on Manitou Island and, it is said, the spirit of the white bear still haunts this lovely island in the lake.

It was Joseph N. Nicollet, however, who arrived in the Minnesota region in 1836 and gave White Bear Lake its first name. A French scientist and cartographer, Nicollet produced a monumental map, "The Hydrographic Basin of the Upper Mississippi River," located the lake on his map and labeled it "Bear's Lake," a literal translation of its Dakota name, *Mahto-mde*.

The history of White Bear Lake as a community begins in 1837 when the Mdewakanton band, the "Spirit Lake People" of the Santee Sioux or Dakota ceded their lands between the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers to the United States government. The White Bear Lake region at the time was covered with forests of elm, ash, linden, burr oak, tamarac, and sugar maple that sheltered the game the Indians hunted while camped on the shores of White Bear and its surrounding lakes. They fished, collected sap for maple sugar, picked cranberries from the marshes of White Bear beach and gathered wild rice in the lakes around Centerville.

After the 1837 treaty with the Dakota was signed in Washington, the land became public domain, open to surveyors and future settlers. In the spring of 1847, advancing settlement from Wisconsin Territory and the opening of steamboat service up the Mississippi to St. Paul brought more people into the Ramsey



One of the first houses in White Bear Lake. It was built in the 1850s by William Stiles or Styles. Ramsey County Historical Society collections.

County area. During the fall and winter of 1847, James R. Marsh and Isaac N. Highbee cut their way through the forest underbrush with axes, crossed swamps and marshes on horseback, and walked over open prairie to survey the land and carve it into lots. Two years later, a New York mechanic, Isaiah B. De Webber, built a small claims cabin on the northwest side of White Bear Lake near the present section of Lake Avenue and Highway 61.

Within a year White Bear Lake's real estate boom was on, fueled by James M. Goodhue's glowing descriptions in his *Minnesota Pioneer* of the land and its lakes—Goose, Birch, Otter, Bald Eagle, and White Bear. Government lots of forty and eighty acres were snapped up by such buyers as Benjamin Hoyt, Henry M. Rice, Abraham Lambert, Charles Bazill, George C. Nichols, Jonathan McKusick, and William and Richard Freeborn.

While Goodhue's accounts were designed to appeal to farmers from the East and immigrants from Europe, they appealed to his own people as well: George W. Moore, foreman of the *Pioneer* office, and Hugh I. Vance, typesetter at the *Pioneer*. Using a military land warrant, Moore bought land west of Bald Eagle Lake in 1851. That same year, Vance, a veteran of the Mexican War who lived in Little Canada, used his own land warrant to also acquire land on Bald Eagle Lake. He built a log cabin and very likely was the first white man to break sod there with a wooden breaking plow.

The region naturally attracted sightseers. The April 10, 1851, issue of the *Pioneer* reported that:

A company of young men from Saint Paul went out to see the country around White Bear Lake last week. The lake is about 10 miles long by two or three miles wide. They represent it as fine country, the land is good and much timber. They saw many deer and killed ducks and pheasant. It is on the east side of the river Mississippi, and is subject to entry. We advise those who want farms to take a look out that way.

Families who would become the first settlers of White Bear Lake took note. Villeroy B. Barnum, his wife Mary, daughter Emily and her riverman husband, William Stiles or Styles moved from St. Paul to White Bear Lake that spring. Barnum and Styles built a bark-covered tamarac log cabin on a hill overlooking Goose Lake. There, on May 7, Emily gave birth to Mary Elizabeth Stiles, the first white child born in White Bear Lake. Her sister, Mary, fell in love with a young pioneer from St. Paul, Richard McLagan, who had visited White Bear Lake in search of land to farm. Their marriage that year, performed by Ramsey County Justice of the Peace Jacob F. Joah, was the first in

White Bear Lake. Their farm stood on a hill overlooking Bald Eagle Lake.

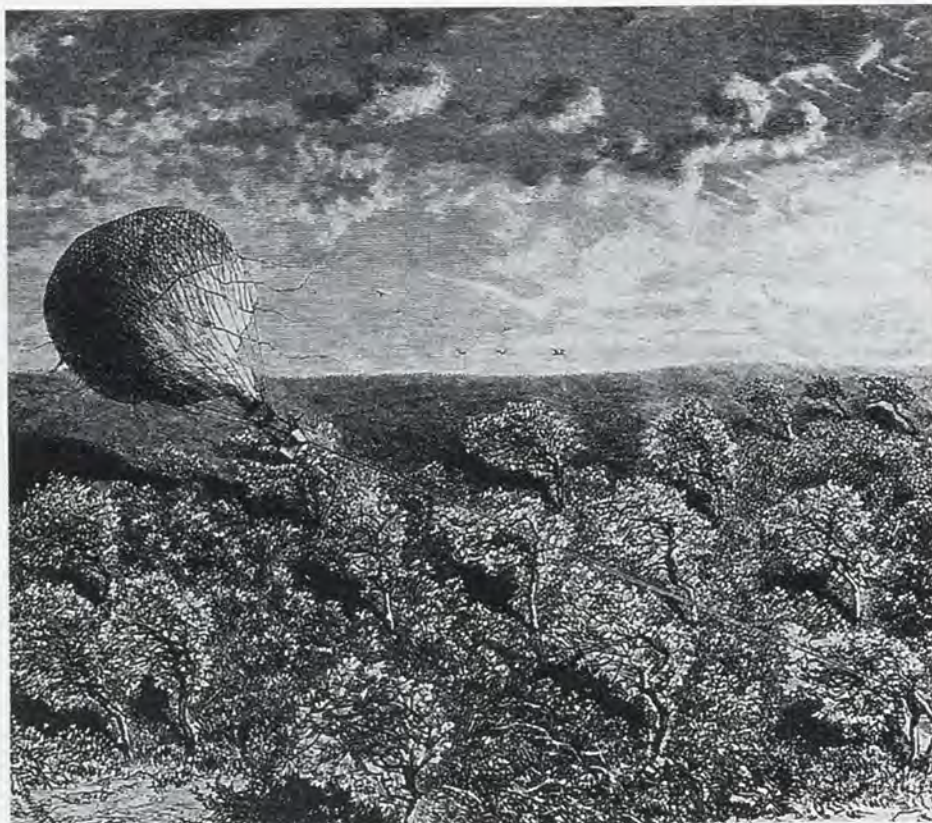
During the summer of 1852, Goodhue traveled by horseback to see for himself the land and lakes he had so graphically described in his newspaper. His vivid account paints a picture of White Bear Lake in its earliest years as a settlement:

Now you here come to two lakes divided by a peninsula and on the shore of one of these, White Bear Lake, is the house and field of Mr. Barnum. It is a charming spot, with a view of the lake in front, extending for miles, the lake surrounded with gently swelling hills, covered with trees, and the whole shore lined with pebbles, white red, black and all colors, including some very beautiful carnelians. In the midst of the lake, like a vast flowerpot, is an island crowded with rock maple trees—so dark beneath the canopy of luxuriant trees, that you can scarcely see to read by daylight—a vast temple of trees, and in the shadowy aisles of which, are birds that sing most sweetly, of a plumage that shows them to be strangers to sunlight. Here, in solitude, the eagle builds her nests of sticks and breeds and educates her fierce children, feeding upon the bass and the pickerel, fresh snatched from the surrounding lake, that is fairly rippling with millions of fishy inhabitants. . . .

In the spring of 1851, the pioneers successfully petitioned Ramsey County for a road that would permit food and supplies to be hauled in from St. Paul. Trees were cleared, old Indian and fur trader trails widened for wagons and carriages. Such citizens of Vadnais Heights and Little Canada as Abraham Lambert, Pierre Paul, and Alex McLeod joined men from White Bear Lake in overseeing construction of the road. With its completion, young people began to rent horses and carriages in St. Paul for picnics on top of the Indian mounds beside White Bear Lake. On July 22, 1851, the *Minnesota Pioneer* reported that:

A picnic party of 14 or 15 ladies and gentlemen went out last week to White Bear Lake, ten miles north, and spent a day delightfully at fishing and hunting.

Thus White Bear Lake was launched as a recreational area, but it also began to acquire a reputation as a health resort. In



*"The branches of the trees bend beneath the car," wrote J. Glaisher in Travels in the Air, published in 1871. The drawing illustrates the dangers faced by early balloonists such as William Markoe. Minnesota Historical Society collections.*

the spring of 1853, V. B. Barnum enlarged his log cabin and opened the first resort hotel. That same year, William W. Webber, Sr., a native of Maine, traveled by steamboat up the Mississippi from St. Louis in search of a place to regain his health. Barnum met him in St. Paul and took him by horse and carriage to his newly opened resort. Boating, hunting, and fishing on the lake, Webber gained thirty pounds, bought Isaiah De Webber's cabin for \$500 in gold, and spread the word among his St. Louis friends of the White Bear Lake health resort. In years to come, people suffering from pulmonary diseases would arrive seeking a cure and spend months in the region.

Still, life on the fringes of northern Ramsey County was rugged for many of the pioneers. William and Richard Freeman, who were farmers, built two log claim cabins, 11 by 13 feet. Beargrease lamps and three small windows covered with animal skins provided some light. Furnishings included two spool-turned beds with feather mattresses, some small

chairs, a crib, a highchair and a potbelly stove. Their cows roamed unfenced outside. Out back, the Freemans planted flint corn, cabbage, rutabagas, potatoes, and other vegetables. The Freemans would move in 1854 to the southern Minnesota county that is named for them.

In 1853, Thomas Milner and his family from Hartipool, England, took ship for New York, then crossed half the continent by oxen-drawn wagon to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, where they boarded a steamboat bound for St. Paul. After a rough trip from St. Paul to White Bear Lake, they opened a farm. Milner raised wheat and corn; his wife taught their children the "three Rs." It was the beginning of instruction in the frontier settlement. A year later, James F. Murray, his wife and their sons, T. Byrson, James C., and Thomas H., traveled from Michigan in a covered wagon. The Murrays would play an important role in the development of the community.

In 1857, with community labor, White Bear Lake's first schoolhouse was con-

structed of tamarac logs at a cost of around \$100. It was 20 feet square, with two windows on each side covered at first with animal skins. Later, glass windows were added and a lean-to built to keep up with the expanding school population. In April, 1858, Thomas H. Murray received \$72.85 from Ramsey County as an appropriation for the village's first twenty-nine eligible students. The following year, James C. Murray provided a corner of his desk in his log cabin, on today's Lake Avenue, for the United States mail. He was appointed White Bear Lake's first postmaster in 1859.

The story of William Markoe and his balloon ascension is part of the lore of the region. On October 8, 1857, Markoe and some companions took off from the Third Annual Territorial Fair which was being held near the site today of the state Capitol. It was Markoe's first Minnesota balloon ascension, and it headed for a complicated landing, due to the wooded terrain that thwarted his first attempt. Markoe tried again in a clearing between White Bear Lake and Hugo, but the car caught on an oak tree. It rose again and landed in a marsh near Forest Lake. Sailing on, Markoe finally landed in Anoka County, packed his balloon onto a farmer's wagon, and arrived safely in St. Paul. Markoe, who settled later in White Bear Lake, had brought to the frontier community the realization that a new era in transportation was dawning.

Then there is the story of Aubrey John Paul and his wife, Laura. They appeared in White Bear Lake in the winter of 1857 after traveling by sleigh from Superior, Wisconsin. Paul was the son of an English baronet and his wife had been a teacher. Paul's father had been sentenced to fourteen years of exile in Australia as the result of his involvement in a financial scandal in England. The disgrace led Aubrey and his wife to flee England and wander incognito in the wilderness of North America. They were known as Mr. and Mrs. John Aubrey in White Bear Lake. The Aubreys built a house on what is now Cottage Park Road. Laura Aubrey taught the village's dozen or so pupils in the village's new schoolhouse and gave piano lessons in her home. They lived in White Bear Lake for the next eleven

years. In 1868 Aubrey's father died; Aubrey succeeded to the baronetcy and he and his wife immediately left for England. It is as Sir Aubrey and Lady Paul that they now are known to history.

*Adapted from "The Story of White Bear Lake—Hardship and Struggle in a Rugged Wilderness" by Nancy L. Woolworth. Ramsey County History, Vol. 2, No. 3.*

## Little Canada— Heritage from the French Canadians

Among the first to explore the region that is now Minnesota, and the first permanent settlers of Ramsey County, were the French from Canada. Even older than the county is the 155-year-old suburb of Little Canada, seven miles north of St. Paul, whose tree-lined streets have rows of mailboxes bearing the proud French Canadian names of Gervais, Nadeau, Ducharme, Donais, Bibeau, Auge, Garceau, Tereau, Melancon, and others. These are the descendants of the French Canadian pioneers who in great part were responsible for settling the earliest communities in Minnesota: St. Paul, St. Anthony and Little Canada, which, according to the 1849 census listed 322 residents to St. Anthony's 248.

Benjamin Gervais, that survivor of the Selkirk colony and the expulsion of squatters from the military reservation, was the first white man to claim land in Little Canada. Born in 1786 at Riviere du Loop, Ontario, he had moved at the age of seventeen to the Red River colony at Pembina. He married Genevieve Larans there. They farmed near St. Boniface before moving first to the Fort Snelling area in 1827, then to Fountain Cave and finally to today's downtown St. Paul.

Gervais seems to have been a leader, personable and well-liked. After he left St. Paul in 1844 to take up land and build a cabin at Lake Gervais, a number of his fellow French Canadians followed him to found Little Canada in northern Ramsey County.

Alexander Ducharme was the community's second settler. He had married Rose Angelique Lambert in St. Boniface and they brought with them to the Ramsey County region Rose's parents, Abraham and Angelique De Mers Lambert, and the Lamberts' other children. The families acquired most of the land along the south shore of Lake Gervais where the Ducharmes built a cabin on a hill above the lake. As with other Ramsey County pioneers, they acquired their claims under the 1847 Congressional Act that granted warrants for 160 acres of public lands to Mexican War veterans.

The tiny settlement quickly became a magnet for other French Canadians, and they apparently were a tough, stubborn lot. When the Catholic Church of St. John the Evangelist was built in 1852, pew rent was charged to help fill the coffers. Abraham Lambert objected to paying it but, not wanting to miss Mass, he built himself a folding chair, carried it to church every Sunday, set it up, then carried it home again. In 1846 Jean Garceau and Jean Vadnais, who were married to the Gingras sisters, came from Quebec to settle north of Benjamin Gervais on the east side of Lake Vadnais.

In 1850, the French settlers established a school with Eliza La Barre as its first teacher. Her father and two uncles had come from Canada in 1846. Eliza, whose name later was Anglicized as Labore, married Joseph Belanger, a fur trader since 1836 with the American Fur Company at Mendota. Belanger moved to Little Canada in 1852 to become a grocer.

In 1846, Pierre Gervais took up a claim next to his brother. The following year Louis and Paul Bibeau, Perre Tirroux, Michael Auge and John Baptist Morrisette all arrived from Canada to live near the Gervais brothers. Other early settlers were Augustin and Pierre Paul and Joseph De Lonais (his name later shortened to Donais), all of whom claimed land on the Kettle River Road, one of the original roads in northern Ramsey County.

More newcomers, during the years 1849 and 1850, included Frances Lange-lier, John Baptist DeMers, Louis Gervais, Joseph La Barre, Antoine Beauvier and Moses Le Fevre. By 1850, the arrival of



*Benjamin Gervais, Sr., and his wife, Genevieve Larans. A survivor of the Selkirk Colony and the forced move to Fountain Cave, Gervais was the first white man to claim land in Little Canada. Minnesota Historical Society collections.*

Charles Sampson, Francis Dupre, Eugene LaPierre, Narcisse La Fortune, Charles Belinski, Xavier DeMarais, and Jean LaVigne brought the community's numbers to twenty-eight families. By 1851, there were forty.

Alexis Belland and his wife, Marie Aurore Vincent, settled on Labore Road in 1853. With them came Marie's parents, the Vincents, who took up land next to the Bellands. Their son, Benjamin Belland, married Emma Guerin, Vetel Guerin's daughter, in 1894.

For seven years, between 1844 and 1851, the Little Canada settlers had to travel on horseback, wagon or on foot the seven miles to St. Paul for Mass, baptisms, and weddings at the old St. Paul Cathedral. On October 7, 1851, they heard their first Mass in their own newly organized church, but it was a church without a building. The next day, Joseph Donais donated land on Lac au Savages, half-a-mile west of Lake Gervais, for a

church site. On the same day, Moses Le Fevre donated another twenty acres for the site and Abraham Lambert gave the church twenty acres for a cemetery.

The first building was a log structure erected at a cost of \$500. Large logs were hauled by sleighs over the snow, small logs were dragged by the men and boys of the parish. The parishioners were the laborers who by this time were skilled in the art of log construction. The bell was donated by Bishop Joseph Cretin of St. Paul and on October 7, 1852, exactly a year after the organization of the parish, the congregation heard its first Mass there.

In 1880 work began on a brick structure that would replace the little log church on the same site. Sermons were in French until around 1922. In 1956 the brick church was in turn replaced by a new, Roman style church, and the bell that had hung in the brick church was moved to the new building.

Today the Church of St. John the Evangelist is the fourth oldest Catholic church in Minnesota and the second oldest Catholic church to exist on the same plot of ground and under the same name as the original church structure. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The grave of Benjamin Gervais, marked "Benjamin Gervais, the first settler of St. Paul," lies in the church cemetery, along with those of the stubborn Abraham Lambert, John Baptist Morrisette, and many others.

In May, 1858, the Little Canada area was formed into the township of New Canada, due partly to the efforts of Joseph Melancon. Joseph and his brother, Charles Moses, settled in Little Canada in 1854. Moses became a successful grower of fruits and berries. Joseph ran a blacksmith shop and was well-educated in the law. According to his grand-nephew, Louis Melancon, Joseph had studied in Paris. While the township Joseph was instrumental in forming was named New Canada, the more closely populated area of the community near the church was for a time called St. John's City. Although these names show up on old maps and records, the residents always have referred to the area either as Little Canada or as *Petit Canada*.

Inevitably, the little French community would be infused with new people from other lands. William Kohlmann and his wife emigrated to the New World from the Harz Mountain country of Germany and bought land north of Lake Gervais. About 1870 they built a popular hotel on a strip of land between Lake Gervais and a small lake known first as Fitzhugh Lake and later as Kohlmann Lake. Alexander Ducharme's son, Remi, also saw possibilities in the resort business. He built a steam-powered boat about forty feet long and twenty feet wide and used it to take Kohlmann guests out on the lake. Cost of the boat ride was 25 cents, and if someone brought along an accordion, they could dance on the boat and spend the entire day on the lake.

However, the most dramatic event in the history of Little Canada occurred on July 13, 1890. At first a bright summer day, it was dark and menacing by mid-



Little Canada's Church of St. John the Evangelist in the 1870s. It had replaced the original log structure of 1851. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

afternoon. Around 5 p.m. a huge funnel appeared which, according to all reports, seemed to be heading directly for each and every settler in Little Canada. Actually, the famous Lake Gervais Cyclone, as it later was called, came from the northwest. It struck Moses Melancon's home and carried it along, and it destroyed everything on the west side of Lake Gervais. Not a tree or house was left standing. Several people were killed and many were injured.

Lake Gervais is a deep lake, but those who lived through the storm swore that they could see the bottom of the lake at times and fish flopping about on the sand. Several reports also mentioned fish jumping about on Labore Road, more than two blocks away from the lake, immediately after the storm

*Adapted from "Village in the Wilderness—Little Canada, Heritage from the French" by Margaret Whitney Wall. Ramsey County History, Vol. 1, No. 2.*

## Handy With Pistols— Ramsey County's Territorial Editors

**A**mong the institutions that gave direction to the early community, few were more immediately influential or had longer after-effects than the frontier press. It has been said that American newspaper editors were the vanguard of the westward movement, setting up their presses and issuing their sheets before the forests had been cleared or the sod turned.—Theodore Blegen

St. Paul's newspaper editors, during the territorial years of the 1850s, rattled out a pungent style of prose that was typical, in its way, of the other literary excesses that were so much a part of the Victorian era. Questions of libel sometimes were settled with pistols rather than in the courts of law, and tempers of rival editors flared so frequently and so heatedly that this "era of personal journalism" became a major chapter in the history of Ramsey County.

The influx of presses and publishers began in 1849 when Minnesota became a territory and it resulted in the establishment of eighty-nine newspapers, eleven printed in St. Paul alone, before Minnesota became a state in 1858. Several were short-lived, while others, through



Joseph R. Brown. Minnesota Historical Society collections.



James M. Goodhue. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

frequent mergers, endured and not only influenced the settlement of Minnesota but also helped shape the political life of the area.

One of the great journalistic battles fought was by editors scrambling for appointment as Territorial Printer. This financial and political plum often determined whether or not a publisher could stay in business, because it involved the printing of public documents, such as legislative bills, all paid for by the territorial government.

Editors vying for the job of public printer found themselves supporting candidates who might help them get the appointment. As political sides were chosen up, each editor found himself the victim of personal abuse from the others. D. A. Robertson, who established the *Minnesota Democrat* in December, 1850, declared, in print, that James Goodhue of the *Minnesota Pioneer* had been "in and out of the Hall of the House of Representatives, threatened to fight and whip members of the Legislature because of certain facts. . . ." to obtain public printing.

Goodhue, Robertson went on, warming to his subject, "is a moral lunatic, and were it not that vice, meanness and corruption of the vilest stamp, are abhorrent to every virtuous feeling, his transparent



wickedness would excite only pity and compassion of the community.”

Such vitriol was bound to have unforeseen consequences, such as the “duel” between Goodhue and Joseph Cooper. On January 4, 1854, Goodhue published a venomous attack on Cooper’s brother, Judge David Cooper, who was a bitter political enemy. Goodhue accused the judge of drunkenness, lechery, and playing cards on Sunday

The next day, Joseph Cooper attacked Goodhue in the street. Both had pistols. The sheriff confiscated the guns, but Cooper had a knife and stabbed Goodhue in the abdomen. Goodhue broke away and shot Cooper with a second pistol he had been carrying; Cooper retaliated by stabbing Goodhue in the back. The two finally were separated but both were seriously wounded.

The affair caused much excitement, not to mention a public meeting where lawlessness was deplored and soothing resolutions passed at restoring public tranquility. Both men survived, but Goodhue died suddenly a few months later, possibly from cholera.

Public printing remained the sought-after prize, the major source of revenue for a publisher during the territorial era. To be Territorial Printer meant “fat takes” as one writer put it, especially in the printing of bills. Goodhue was elected first Territorial Printer. The ingenuity with which editors capitalized upon the public printing almost defies description. Joseph R. Brown, who succeeded Goodhue as editor of the *Pioneer*, was Territorial Printer during 1853 and 1854. Brown sat up all one night writing a “bill to suppress immorality.” Conveniently enough, Brown also happened to be a senator in the Territorial Legislature. He took his bill to the Senate the next day, introduced it and moved that it be read by title and printed. The motion carried.

The next day the bill was read. It provided for the suppression of liquor in the bars of steamboats, enumerated other elements of immorality, and finally asked that no person be permitted to hang the under-garments of either sex on a public clothes-line, describing such an act as detrimental to public morals. The bill was indefinitely postponed, but in the



A log farm home, typical of those erected by farmers such as John Darius Scofield during the early years of Ramsey County’s history. This sketch by Edward J. Letterman is from his book *Farming in Early Minnesota*, published in 1966 by the Ramsey County Historical Society.

meantime Brown, of course, had printed it in his newspaper and netted \$100 for one night’s work.

Not all of these pioneer editors’ time was consumed by political wrangling, diatribes against office-holders or other editors. They also published responsible accounts of the local news and promoted immigration to Minnesota.

Goodhue was perhaps the most visionary of these early editors and can be credited with attracting large numbers of settlers to the Territory with his accounts of how the area looked as he saw it during his frequent rides out from St. Paul. He wondered how else it could be that people overlooked the “wide blooming plains and hills of Minnesota, the virgin Minnesota with her lands as fertile as the banks of the Nile—her forests of ancient pines, her noble rivers, leaping over their rocky barriers in wild majesty, her 1,000 lakes of crystal waters—and above all, her fresh, bracing climate, which fills everything animate within her borders, with youthful vigor . . .”

*Adapted from “Colorful and Handy with the Pistols—St. Paul’s Territorial Editors” by Berneta Hilbert. Ramsey County History, Vol 3, No. 1.*

## A Pioneer’s Early Memories—Farming with Flail and Cradle

**J**ohn Darius Scofield came to Minnesota from New York in 1849. In 1914, when he was eighty-six, he wrote out his memories of a lifetime spent in the “cause” of agriculture. A portion

of those memories, in his own words, are published here. They were given to the Ramsey County Historical Society in the 1950s by his granddaughter, Mrs. A. E. Henry of St. Paul.

In October, 1849, my brother, Elias, and I tied up a small bundle after the style of tramps and turned our faces westward, with Minnesota our objective. We reached St. Paul just as the sun was rising, bright and clear. We thought it a good omen, got a good breakfast at a hotel, then took stock of our possessions. We found we had \$2.50 in cash each and some trinkets of no value, but we had two shirts, and were full of health, courage, and determination to succeed.

Our first job was cutting a pile of poles into stove wood for the schoolhouse in town that was built of logs. When that was done we got a job for winter in what is now Rose Township, hauling out logs from a swamp to make posts, rails, and square timber for use in building. We built a log cabin with a fireplace of sticks and mud, which served to warm the place and cook our meals. We both took claims, put up a small house on one and cleared a small piece of land on each claim.

In the early summer of 1850, I purchased a half interest in two yoke of oxen and a covered wagon with William G. Hendrickson. Elias, being handy with tools, found work with settlers and in town building something to live in. Hendrickson and I broke small pieces of land for settlers in the locality of what is now the University of Minnesota’s St. Paul campus and the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, sleeping in the wagon, cooking our food over a camp fire.

Elias sold his claim and in the fall of

1850 I traded mine for a span of horses and wagon, did jobs of hauling about town and to different trading posts. This was my first experience with living in the city and working for others. Neither Elias nor I were satisfied; we both longed for a farm. We learned there was a farm at Red Rock [across the Mississippi from today's South St. Paul] so we looked at it. There were forty acres broken. Most of it had been cropped to oats for two years. We rented and boarded with the owner, William R. Brown. We seeded four acres to wheat, the balance in oats and potatoes.

There was no wagon road to St. Paul, except that going east to Cottage Grove five miles farther than the Indian trail under the bluff, so as much of our time as could be spared was used in building a road to market. Now [in 1914] the road is in the same place, much improved.

There were several farms in Cottage Grove and vicinity where oats and some wheat were raised which was fed in sheaf or threshed with a flail or tramped out with horses or cattle. As we neared harvest time, we wanted a better and quicker way to thresh. Brown said he would get a machine if we would run it. The bargain was made and a J. I. Case two-horse tread power thresher was purchased. The crop was good. Elias and I cut it with a cradle and bound the sheaves by hand. The four acres of wheat yielded more than 150 bushels. This was made into flour at a little mill completed that fall on Boles Creek below Stillwater. The flour was sold in St. Paul.

Late in the summer, we bought 160 acres of land at the head of Grey Cloud Island. More than half of it was nearly level prairie and the rest was covered with timber. There was a nice spring where we built a small house in the late fall of 1852. An older sister, Clara, and a younger brother, Joseph, had come to us so we had a Scofield family in the far west. In the spring of 1853, I purchased land on the west side of the [Mississippi] river which had been opened to settlement. I sold my interest in the land to Elias, retaining a half interest in the crop, and staked out a claim in the Oak Grove area [present-day Bloomington] where I now live.

*Adapted from "A Pioneer Farmer's Memories of Those Early Years . . ." by John Darius Scofield. Ramsey County History, Vol. 5, No. 1.*

## Wolves and Bitter Cold—A Fur Trader's Perilous Journey

**D**aniel H. Hunt, a New England schoolmaster who became a Minnesota fur trader, spent three weeks during the winter of 1859 traveling alone by dog sled between Fort Garry (now Winnipeg, Manitoba) and St. Anthony. Thirty years later, he wrote an account of his perilous journey, now in the archives of the Ramsey County Historical Society. Portions of it are published here. Hunt eventually gave up the fur trade, married Annie Lockwood of St. Paul, settled down in a house that stood until recently on Old Territorial Road near Cromwell in St. Paul, and became a farmer and school teacher.

Left Fort Garry at 6 in the morning [of January 15, 1859] with my team of dogs attached to a sled upon which I had two robes, two blankets, one rubber blanket, one axe, camp kettle, and provisions for myself and dogs consisting of pemmican, bread, pork, tea, coffee, salt and sugar, all in small quantities, as I did not wish to overload my dogs.

About noon it commenced snowing and snowed hard all day and the next, which made it very hard traveling as the wind blew great guns and I got tired out and was quite sick the third day, but pushed on through wind and snow, reaching Pembina just at dark. Bought two more dogs and left one of my old ones that did not work well.

I traveled on and ate supper, as it was a bright moonlight night. Drove on to the next river, hitched up my four dogs. Laid down in the snow, but could not sleep so about 2 a.m. hitched up my dogs. . . . On I went over that desolate prairie until about nine the next morning when I found enough brush to build a fire, make coffee and thaw some meat and bread. Fed my dogs, who were about tired out, but after an hour's rest, drove on until

three in the afternoon when I found a chance to get wood enough to make a fire and camp for the night. Talk about comfort! Home in a palace and all such things. That night I enjoyed them. . . .

Started early and drove hard all day, got a good camping place at night and the next day the same. Had just got a fire started when a yell such as we might expect to come up out of the infernal pit made my hair stand up. I did not know whether it came from the Heavens or the earth but it seemed to be everywhere, all at the same time, and for an instant I seemed petrified but when that one yell was turned into twenty coming from all around me, I realized it was only wolves.

After getting a warm supper, I laid down before a grand good fire and was dreaming the dreams of the righteous when presto! I found myself out in the snow up to my middle, holding on to my leg and jumping like any other jumping jack—wolves! Wolves! But I soon found out that it was the fire that was biting so hard and after a few extra dives in the snow and a good amount of rubbing that put out the fire, I found that the fire had burned through the rubber blanket, buffalo robe, blanket, pants legging, moccasin, blanket, English hose sock and badly scorched hide and reached a little too near the bone to be comfortable. It took me nearly all the rest of the night to repair damages and started out about four o'clock determined to make a big run that day.

Pushed on until sundown, reaching a camping place where I found fine soft spruce boughs for a bed, having made sixty miles that day, as I was told later by those who knew the road well. My big day's travel was rather too much for me and during the next day I could hardly get along through the heavy snow storm and the snow got so deep that my dogs would lie down every few rods, but I kept on until nearly night when I came to some wigwams near the shore of Cass Lake. Inquiring for the chief's wigwam, I went there and told him that I was sick and needed rest. His two wives took care of my dogs, brought in my bedding, made me a comfortable bed and I laid down with my feet to the fire and got some sleep while they dried and mended my

moccasins and socks. The next morning they furnished me with what fish I wanted for myself and my dogs and on holding out a handful of silver to them, they took only enough to pay them for the fish.

I arrived at Crow Wing on the Mississippi River the second day of February and arrived at St. Anthony the sixth, right glad to get where I could enjoy some of the blessings of society. . . .

*Adapted from "Wolves, Indians, Bitter Cold . . . A Fur Trader's Perilous Journey" by Daniel H. Hunt. Ramsey County History, Vol. 1, No. 1.*

## Cattlemen and Capitalists— The Founding of New Brighton

**T**he New Brighton area's first European settler was also one of the first residents of what is now Minnesota, dating back to the early days of Fort Snelling. He was Charles Perry, who settled at Lake Johanna in 1849.

A number of firsts are associated with Perry. He grew the first crop of potatoes on three acres of land in what became Mounds View Township, selling them at the St. Paul settlement for 50 cents a bushel. He was a member of the first town board of Mounds View Township in 1858, the year Minnesota became the thirty-second state in the Union. The birth of Charles Perry's daughter, Damis, on August 15, 1851, was the first recorded for the township. His first son, George, born November 13, 1854, was the first to die in the area, in February, 1856.

During those early years, the area was so quiet the Perrys could hear water rushing over St. Anthony Falls, about seven miles away. In addition to farming, Perry operated a popular bathing and picnic beach at Lake Johanna, which served as a resort and vacation area in those years of short travel distances. Charles Perry spent the last fifty-five years of his life at his home at Lake Johanna. When he died



*Montana cattle on a law-required rest and feeding stopover in the New Brighton stockyards while enroute to Chicago. Photo from A Centennial History of New Brighton, Minnesota, by Gene F. Skiba and published by the New Brighton Area Historical Society.*

at age eighty-eight in 1904, he was the oldest settler in Ramsey County and had lived continuously in Minnesota for seventy-eight years.

Railroads played a highly important part in the founding and development of New Brighton. Had they not come when and as they did, there would have been no cattle stopover or packing plants there and probably no iron rolling mills either. Rather than precipitate a settlement in the early 1890s, the portion of Mounds View Township that became New Brighton Village might have remained rural in nature, as did the rest of the township for many decades.

On September 30, 1887, the South St. Paul Stockyards were established and by late April of 1887, the Minnesota Stockyards and Packing Company was officially formed on a 900-acre site along the southwestern shores of Long Lake in Ramsey County. The name of New Brighton was credited to W. H. Eustis, who had served as mayor of Minneapolis and owned a show-horse farm in Mounds View Township. The site was named after the Brighton Stock and Rail yards in Brighton, Massachusetts.

The stock yards, completed in September, 1889, could accommodate 5,000 cattle, 10,000 hogs, 20,000 sheep and 500 horses at its thirty acres. The facilities included feed barns, horse barns, an ice house, a depot, a steam driver, a pump

house, packing plants and a roundhouse for the railroad. A four-story brick Exchange Building was built at a cost of \$35,000 to accommodate 150 guests and the commission men's offices.

Following a census taken in November, 1890, listing 196 residents in the 2,030-acre area, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners acknowledged a petition signed by thirty-seven citizens for the incorporation of the village of New Brighton. The first election was held February 7, 1891, at Wick's Store located in the Marston block. A village had been born and its first officers elected.

Jacob and Caroline Beisswenger arrived in 1883. They were the fifth or sixth family to come to New Brighton and the first to remain. They settled on the southwest shore of Long Lake. The Beisswengers had emigrated from the Wittenberg and Stuttgart areas of Germany. Following their marriage in Minneapolis, they bought land on Long Lake and began clearing their dense, tree-studded property. Their land, it has been said, was so dense that there wasn't a place clear enough to plant a potato, and the mosquitoes were so thick that Beisswenger found some respite in escaping to the middle of the lake in his boat to sleep.

Beisswenger built a hotel on the south shore of Long Lake near the present intersection of Tenth Street N.W. and Eighth Avenue. The hotel did well and

was quite an attraction, with its view overlooking Long Lake. Conveniences even included furnace heat and a luxurious bar. The hotel was later destroyed by fire under suspicious circumstances. Beisswenger did not rebuild. He returned to farming but also served as village mayor, trustee and assessor for forty more years.

*Adapted from "Capitalists and Cattle-men and the Founding of New Brighton" by Gene F. Skiba. Ramsey County History, Vol. 22, No. 2.*

## The Great Horse-Market Years at Prior and University

More than century ago, on March 4, 1885, to be exact, the expanding city of St. Paul reached westward from its boundary at Lexington Parkway to annex not only the blossoming developments of Merriam, Union, Groveland, and St. Anthony Park, but also the fledgling Minnesota Transfer Railway's original 200 acres. At the southeast corner of the railroad's property, the intersection of Prior and University avenues, during the last years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, would develop the largest horse market trading center in the Northwest.

The vital and needful presence of the horse along St. Paul's streets and Ramsey County's roads undeniably contributed greatly to the area's economy at that time. Livery/drays operators, wagon/carriage makers, blacksmiths/horseshoers, harness/leather dealers all were established artisans, service people, and merchants whose numbers and businesses kept growing through those years. In the late 1860s, there were ten livery/boarding stables in the city. By 1888, there were more than sixty. In 1900 there were some fifty carriage and wagon manufacturers and 100 blacksmiths and horseshoers in St. Paul.

In 1896, a "Horse Dealers" category was published for the first time in the *St. Paul City Directory*. Four were listed:



*The Great Horse Market at Prior and University avenues around 1900. This view looks south across University from east of Prior. Minnesota Historical Society collections.*

Barrett & Zimmerman, 1933 University Av.

Brown & Dickey, University Av. N.E. cor. Prior Av.

D. Ringer & Co., 69 East 4th St.

H. A. Winslow, 1961, University Av.

Of the four, only Ringer had a Lower-town address. The other three undoubtedly found their Prior and University sites advantageous, since the Minnesota Transfer Railway ran along the west side of Prior.

The Minnesota Transfer, founded as the Union Stockyard/Minnesota Transfer in 1880, was incorporated in 1883 as the Minnesota Transfer Railway Company, a cooperative venture involving nine railroads serving Minneapolis and St. Paul. It was established as a switching and marshaling yard to relieve the congestion that freight traffic was creating at the railroads' respective in-town terminals. In 1888, five years after its incorporation, horses alone totaled 14,566 in the Transfer's "Stock Handled" tabulation. Destined to become the nation's second largest facility, the Transfer had 250 employees by 1893 and was operating more than eighty-two miles of trackage while switching and shunting 1,500 cars per day.

That same year it acquired the trackage of the Belt Line Railway & Transfer Company that had been chartered in 1889 as a primary livestock handler between

Fridley and New Brighton for the Minneapolis Stock Yards & Packing Company. It is no surprise that three out of St. Paul's four horse dealers chose Prior and University for their location. These first horse dealers were livery stable operators or, in the case of Ringer, farm stock salesmen. Others joined this cadre of dealers: J. D. Brooks, 2427 University; Wilson & McGetrick, 1911 University; William Wood, 1945 University.

Demand for good work horses was growing, for the horse was an important adjunct of not only every farm but most businesses as well. Also, there were the "gay young blades" who, if they wish to impress the local girls, just had to have a high stepping Hambletonian hitched to their Mitsch & Hecht gig. The horse population of Minnesota, recorded in the 1880 census at 257,000, was growing fast.

The firm that would become the "wheel horse" of the dealers was Barrett & Zimmerman, and from this partnership emerged one of Ramsey County's legendary entrepreneurs: Moses (Mose) Zimmerman. Henry and Yetta Zimmerman brought their family to St. Paul in 1882, after some years in Davenport, Iowa. Henry entered into a partnership with John D. Barrett, a mule and horse livery man in Minneapolis. Mose soon was helping out around the stables. Within ten years he moved to St. Paul

where he became a peddler selling fruit along the Lowertown streets.

From his experience at his father's stables, he had acquired knowledge of the variant temperaments and needs of the horse and soon was offering advice about horse trades to local farmers and truck gardeners. It is no surprise that Mose Zimmerman's first brokered horse deals were among these farmers and other suppliers to St. Paul's "used" horse market.

One such steady supplier was the St. Paul Street Railway Company. A good, healthy, serviceable horse commanded a price of \$125 to \$150 in St. Paul. A "nag," whose next stop would be the rendering plant, sold for \$25 to \$50. A streetcar carried at least fourteen passengers and no nag could move that car and its impatient load in a satisfactory manner. That is why the company sold off its horses after they had served two years.

Henry Zimmerman died in 1896, leaving his half interest in the Barrett & Zimmerman partnership to his wife, Yetta. She called on Mose to join her and his brother, Max, in the firm. At the age of twenty-five, Mose Zimmerman had found his real vocation: horse dealer. Throughout the next twenty-five years, he bought and sold more horses than any other man in the Northwest. The partnership negotiated contracts with the United States government and the French and British as well, sales that exceeded a million dollars a month and placed demands on a supply line that had to be sure and dependable.

Consequently, Mose Zimmerman crisscrossed the Dakotas and Montana, buying herds of wild horses rounded up by Indian bands and cowboy drovers. He negotiated with isolated settlers, Indian tribal leaders, frontier town wranglers, and shipping agents. Pastures needed for holding areas were rented or purchased as assembly points for car-lot shipments. Into the Minnesota Transfer yards came Mose's "western herds" and from his pens and breaking-corrals at Prior and University, horses went out to the world.

By 1910, this added business activity of land management resulted in the formation of Barrett & Zimmerman, Inc., Real Estate, with Mose as secretary-treasurer. Their horse market, however, re-

mained their primary business through the years of World War I. Thousands of western horses were broken at their corrals and pasture farms before shipment to the Allies. At the end of the war, the firm diversified again, into army goods salvage. Shelves and counters that held horse collars, harnesses, saddles, and buggy whips also displayed army ponchos, pup-tents, blankets, and mess kits.

By 1920, the *City Directory* listing of the firm's business activity relegated "Horse Market" to the bottom rung. Auto traffic was increasing daily. Even Mose bought a passenger car, complaining, however, that "I never really liked it. Now, you take a horse - well, you get to know a horse." In the Twin Cities, the number of livery and boarding stables had reached a plateau between 1895 to 1910 (forty in St. Paul, seventy in Minneapolis), then began a gradually accelerating decrease through the 1920s. Finally, in 1936, only three were listed in each city. The horse had become less and less a viable factor in the economic life of the region and the nation. The internal combustion engine had sounded the death knell for the great horse-trading market at Prior and University.

*Adapted from "The Great Horse-Market Years at Prior and University" by John S. Sonnen. Ramsey County History, Vol. 22, No. 2.*

## In North St. Paul Boom, Boom, Bust, Come-back!

**B**orn in the boom of the 1880s, nurtured through the depression of the 1890s, North St. Paul did not come of age until the 1940s and 1950s, when it joined the ranks of the swelling residential communities surrounding the Twin Cities. A lifelong resident, the late Ernest R. Reiff, summed up its history in 1954:

"Hit by the 1893 depression," he said, "it was a bust. Lots like mine that at one time sold for \$1,500 to \$2,000 were selling for taxes. It took many years for the town to come back." North St. Paul did

come back, but in a different guise than it originally was envisioned. Founded as a great manufacturing city, it was destined, in the opinion of its organizers, to outstrip St. Paul itself.

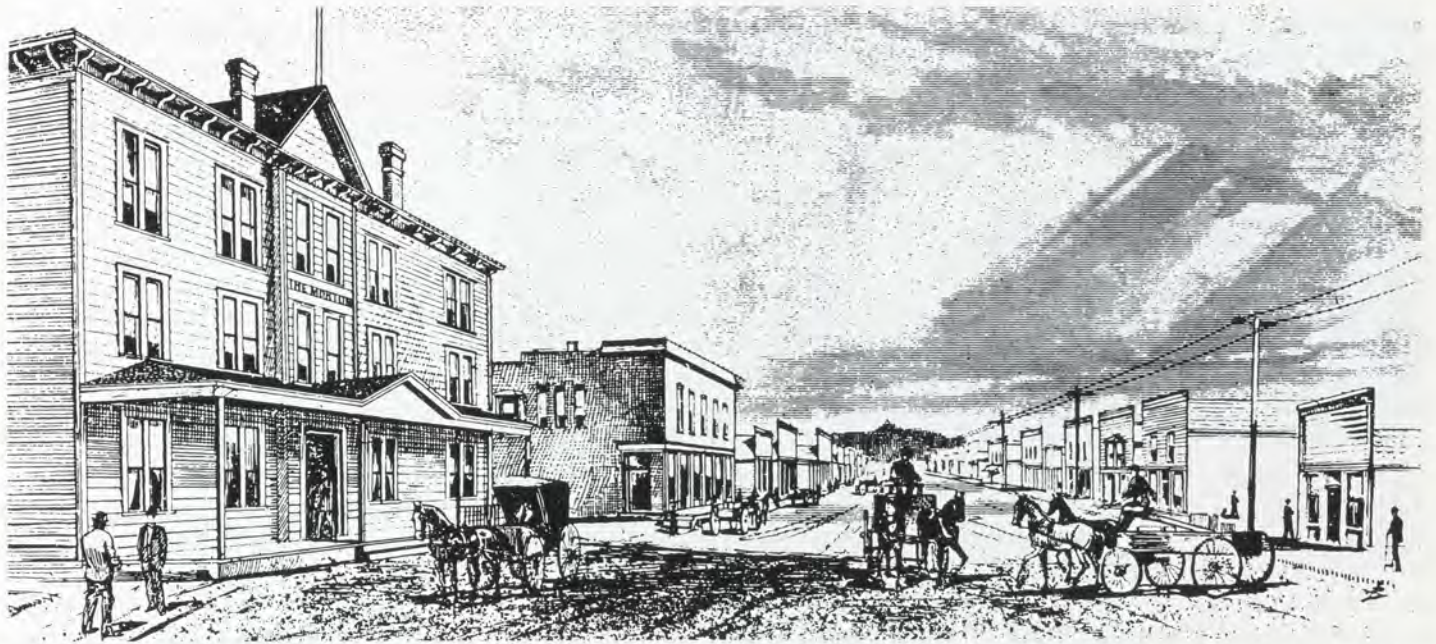
In the spring of 1887, a visitor attracted to Silver Lake in eastern Ramsey County, some six miles northeast of St. Paul, would have noticed only a few farmhouses in the broad stretch of rolling and partly wooded landscape. A few men would be plowing in neighboring fields. Near the gravelly beach of Silver Lake's southern shore stood the summer home of an erstwhile Civil War captain, Henry Anson Castle, soon to become the principal founder of North St. Paul.

Castle had come to Minnesota in July of 1866. In 1877 he had begun buying land in the Silver Lake area. He bought his original tract of 520 acres from William R. Marshall, a former governor of Minnesota, and throughout the 1870s he steadily increased his land holdings around the lake, then known as Folsoms Lake.

In 1874, Castle hired Ernst F. Blaze, one of the community's first residents, to build a small farmhouse for him on the southern end of the lake. Blaze was not the first of the permanent residents around Silver Lake. Hugh Casey had arrived in 1850 and built a farmhouse on his 160-acre tract north and east of Casey Lake. Other families dating from those early days, Reiff recalled, were "the Daltons, the Eberlys, the Bachstroms, the Bernholtz families and the Ruefenachts."

School district Number 2, the second in New Canada township was organized in 1861. In the summer of 1880, the district built a new schoolhouse on Hugh Casey's land. It was the first school within present North St. Paul, and it stood at the corner of what is now Fourth Street and Seventeenth Avenue Northwest.

During the latter half of the 1870s, Captain Castle's operation became known as Hollister, Castle, and Company. The farm was called North Star Seed Farm. In connection with the farm, a seed store, an imposing three-story brick structure, was opened at Fourth and Robert streets in St. Paul. The April 1, 1879, issue of the *Independent Farmer*



North St. Paul in the 1880s. This is Seventh Street and looks west. From the March, 1888 issue of *The Northwest Magazine*. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

and *Fireside Companion* described the farm as consisting of "nearly a thousand acres" with "trial grounds" where seeds were tested "to ascertain not only their qualities, but habits, growth, vitality, adaptability and other peculiarities." The most attractive feature of the farm was the "long rows of thrifty looking peas." Fancy beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, melons, squash, and new varieties of potatoes were listed as being under cultivation. The company's sales were reported at \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year.

When the Wisconsin Central Railroad (now the Soo Line) laid its tracks across his farm in 1886, Castle platted a suburban townsite on the shores of Silver Lake. He named the town "Castle." Some lots were sold, but few improvements were made.

Henry Castle was years ahead of his time. The day of easy commuting between his new town in rural Ramsey County and St. Paul was not yet at hand. It quickly became evident to him and his friends that a different approach was called for in developing the Silver Lake area. So they set about creating a new manufacturing town. Manufacturers were systematically recruited to move to the new town and build their factories there.

By August of 1887, thirteen manufac-

turing concerns were in the process of building factories in North St. Paul. By 1890, there were thirty established manufacturing concerns, and there seemed to be no end to the rise of sudden prosperity on Castle's converted farmland. Toward the end of 1887, the North St. Paul Land Company issued the following report:

The two business streets show many improvements. The business concerns comprise two hardware stores, four groceries, two drygoods stores, one book and stationery store, three meat markets, four saloons, two drug stores, and there are two hotels, a lumber yard, a brick yard, and six boarding houses. . . . Up to December first, there had been sold by the Land Company, of lots and blocks 212,000 dollars, and the value of the improvements made was 630,000 dollars. . . .

As the village grew, Castle converted the southern shore of Silver Lake into a park which soon became a favorite spot for villagers and visitors from St. Paul to spend their Sundays. At first the only transportation from St. Paul was the Wisconsin Central with its five passenger stations, but soon a "steam motor company" came into being. It ran, Reiff recalled, from Duluth Avenue at East Seventh Street in St. Paul to Silver Lake.

"Two little steam engines dragged two cars," he remembered. "and when they went over the grade at the Omaha tracks in cold weather, when it was hard to keep up the steam, the men passengers would have to get out and walk. . . ."

He remembered that Sundays brought crowds to the lake to picnic but that the *piece de resistance* was the balloon ascension which would "perform all sorts of hazardous tricks in the air, then cut loose." There was a steamboat that made a circle of the lake for 25 cents. There also was a row of bathing houses, a toboggan slide for summer swimming, and an ice toboggan slide for winter sliding.

But the year 1893 ushered in a period of hard times that affected the entire country. Most of the manufacturing concerns in the young North St. Paul succumbed to the Panic of 1893, and those that weathered the storm were severely hampered for years to come. Captain Castle doggedly persisted in advertising his lots and the advantages to be derived from suburban living until his death on August 16, 1916.

*Adapted from "In North St. Paul - Boom, Boom, Bust, Come-back!" by Edward J. Lettermann. Ramsey County History, Vol. 5, No. 1.*



Map of Minnesota Territory showing the original counties as they existed from 1849 to 1851. Minnesota Historical Society collections. See "A Short History of Ramsey County," beginning on page 8

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

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