

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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Spanish Influenza in 1918:
The Year St. Paul Found
The 'Wolf' at Its Door

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Spring, 2005

Volume 40, Number 1

The Force that Shaped Neighborhoods
1890–1953: Sixty-three Years of Streetcars
And Millions of Dollars in Investments

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Selby Tunnel. A Selby-Lake car on its way downtown emerges from the east portal of the Selby Tunnel. Built to relieve the grade on Selby Hill and replace an awkward cable-counterweight system, the tunnel cost \$366,000 when it opened in 1907. The west portal of the tunnel on Selby has been covered over and sealed. The east portal is still visible, albeit in considerably deteriorated condition. Minnesota Transportation Museum Collection.

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

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect, preserve and interpret the history of the county for the general public, recreate the historical context in which we live and work, and make available the historical resources of the county. The Society's major responsibility is its stewardship over this history.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

The completion of the light rail line between the Mall of America and downtown Minneapolis within the past year and the possible construction of additional light rail in the metropolitan area have encouraged considerable discussion of the streetcar era. Without indulging in either nostalgia or finger pointing, transportation historian John W. Diers takes us through the complex history of the electric streetcar system in St. Paul in our Spring issue. His account is based on wide research into the predecessor systems, the economic pluses and minuses of streetcars, the human side of streetcar employment, and the ever-present competition from automobiles after 1920.

The Spring issue also includes an intriguing look at the effect of Spanish influenza on the city of St. Paul in 1918, a time when there was a world-wide influenza pandemic. Susan Dowd, a devoted researcher of old newspapers, shows us how St. Paul dealt with this deadly disease and survived far better than many other cities of that time. This issue of our magazine also includes another in our ongoing series, "Growing Up in St. Paul," with a delightful piece by historian James Bell that recalls his boyhood on Hague Avenue and Fry Street in the first half of the last century. Lastly, Steve Trimble supplies a look at St. Paul history through the eyes of four contemporary novelists who use St. Paul as the backdrop for their fiction. These novelists have steeped themselves in local history and used it to enliven and enrich their stories of the human condition.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Letters to the Editor

More about Opera

Mr. Trimble's good article about St. Paul's operatic group was a very pleasant surprise. I wish he'd listed all the group's productions and given some criticisms. This association is one of plenty started by amateurs that got out of hand. These opera lovers probably would have been wiser to stick to their original plan of putting on amateur versions of opera, but when they started to play to a paying public, they were in another world of professional casts and professional managers. Early planners could have called this group "The Musical Theater" and killed arguments about whether *La Dolce Pizza* was grand opera, operetta, musical skit or a musical, and whether it was first or second rate. But the founders only made vague plans revolving around opera until they suddenly found themselves in the entertainment business. No? Mr. Trimble probably agrees?

So much for that. Your material has been good, but add a swath of color to future texts. They do plod now and then. E. g. In *The Tales of Hoffmann*, the fellow who played Spallanzani was unluckily near-sighted and tried to insert Olympia's windup key a little south of the proper place in her back. Olympia turned abruptly and smacked Spallanzani with a hard right, nixing the stage illusion that she was only a doll.

The article about using building permits to locate nothing more than a parking ramp strikes me as a zero.

Walter N. Trenerry, St. Paul

The Garland Brothers

In the Spring 2001 issue of *Ramsey County History*, Bob Garland wrote about the Garland brothers and their twin Queen Anne houses. Any more information on the Garlands and who they were?

Forest Holmes

William H. Garland and Field Garland manufactured trunks and excelsior, a packing product made from shredded wood. William also represented the Chicago and Northwestern Railway as a land agent. F. V. Garland's Trunk Store & Factory was located at 378 Robert Street in 1902. There also was a Garland Luggage Store at Sixth and Cedar in 1937.

Remembering the Opera

The great story in the Winter 2005 issue, "The Legacy of the St. Paul Opera Association" brought back memories for me in a number of ways. The photograph of cast member Roy Irons in the 1930s production of *Martha* was a surprise. I didn't know he was a member of the St. Paul Opera. He was an active member and frequent soloist with the Hamline Methodist Church choir under the directorship of Mary Fellows. This I remember well because I grew up at the Hamline church. My family were long-time members.

As I read further, I saw no mention of the production of *The Chocolate Soldier* during the 1951-1952 season, April 17, 18 and 19, to be precise. It was billed as "A Light Opera in Three Acts." I was in the audience to watch Lorand Andahazy and Anna Andrianova and dancers of the Andahazy Ballet Borealis Company. It was 1952 and I was in my second year of study at the ballet school. I was enthralled by the beauty of the dancing and of the costumes, which were native to Serbia and Bulgaria, the setting for the opera. The entire production was a magical event for a twelve-year-old girl attending her first opera. Later that year I saw *La Traviata*.

Sandra Weinberg, Hastings

Sandra Weinberg has written a "Growing Up in St. Paul" memoir of her years as a student at the Andahazy School of Classical Ballet. It will be published in

a forthcoming issue of Ramsey County History.

Origin of Dale Street

I've been searching but I can't find where Dale Street in St. Paul got its name. I'd greatly appreciate any wisdom you might share.

Colby Sullivan,
HHH Institute of Public Affairs

The name appears on maps in 1871. Dale at that time was the western border of St. Paul. Dale is a common street and geographical location name that sometimes indicates a valley or depression in the land.

What's in a Name?

I know there's a Selby Avenue in St. Paul. I'm guessing it was named in honor of a Mr. Selby. Can you tell me anything about him?

Trimm48@aol.com

Jeremiah W. Selby (1812-1855) came to St. Paul in 1849 and purchased for \$50 a forty-acre farm on St. Anthony Hill where the St. Paul Cathedral now stands. On this land Selby built a house and made a living growing potatoes and vegetables. The street was named in 1854.

That House on Marshall

We just bought a house at 492 Marshall Avenue that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The registration says it was built by Captain J. W. Jacobs and the architect was J. H. Healy. Do you have any information on Jacobs or Healy?

Carolyn Anderson, St. Paul

This Marshall Avenue house was placed on the National Register in 1978 as part of the Woodland Historic District. Healy was not the architect. He is listed as the builder.



Another view of Wildwood Amusement Park on the south shore of White Bear Lake. This postcard view was mailed to Mrs. H. Freedland of Red Wing, Minn., on August 12, 1912. From historian Robert J. Stumm's postcard collection and used with his permission.

R.C.H.S.
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