

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

*Who Built the
Minnesota Capitol?*

John Rachač,
Master Carpernter

John Sielaff

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Summer 2012

Volume 47, Number 1

St. Paul's Beaux-Arts Carnegie Libraries
Philanthropic Architecture in a Local Context

Lauren M. Freese

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St. Anthony Park Free Public Library, 1917



Riverview Free Public Library, 1917



Arlington Hills Free Public Library, 1917

Three public libraries in St. Paul; three façades; one gift of money from the Carnegie Foundation to build all three; one architect for all three buildings; and one approved set of architectural plans. What do these façades tell us? The top and bottom photos are from 2010. The middle photo is from 1994. Photos courtesy of the Saint Paul Public Library.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 47, Number 1

Spring 2012

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON DECEMBER 20, 2007:

The Ramsey County Historical Society inspires current and future generations
to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program
of presenting, publishing and preserving.

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Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr.
and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon*

A Message from the Editorial Board

The thread running through the Spring issue of our magazine is buildings and builders. In the lead article, art historian Lauren Freese examines the facades of three Beaux-Arts style Carnegie Libraries in St. Paul. What makes her analysis so interesting is that all three public libraries were built by the same construction company using similar budgets and nearly identical architectural plans prepared by one architect. Yet the facades are not identical. Freese analyzes the neighborhood setting for each library to explain why. From libraries, the focus then turns to the construction of two other St. Paul landmarks: James J. Hill's mansion on Summit Avenue and the Minnesota Capitol. John Sielaff uses little-known records to tell us about one master carpenter, John Rachač, and how he used his skills in finishing the interior of the Hill family's residence and to build the seat of Minnesota's government.

This issue then turns to Kate Jaeger's history of a more recent building effort: the establishment of the Open Cities Health Center (OCHC), which is now in its 45th year. Since its founding, OCHC's mission has been to provide health care to economically disadvantaged residents of St. Paul, especially among people of color, recent immigrants, and those who lack health insurance. This is a remarkable story because it began as a grass-roots effort led by women from the neighborhood OCHC serves. Our final article is a short and poignant account of General John B. Sanborn's brief interview with President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. This excerpt comes from Sanborn's privately printed *Speeches and Addresses*, which the Society has reprinted and will publish this summer.

Anne Cowie, Chair, Editorial Board



Volunteer Highlight

Ralph Thrane

Since before 2003, Ralph Thrane has been the keeper of the Gibbs Museum Heritage Orchard. Ralph gives hundreds of hours of service annually to the Gibbs Heritage Orchard. He hand-selected each tree planted in the orchard and year-round supervises volunteers who monitor tree health and manage pest control. Each year, Ralph is active in the selection of activities for Gibbs annual Apple Festival.

Ralph is a member of the Ramsey County Historical Society Board of Directors. He is an active member of the Board's Gibbs Museum and Development Committees. He has also served on the Marketing and Finance Committees. We are grateful for Ralph's service to RCHS both in his hands-on approach to the Heritage Orchard and his active participation in the overall direction of the Society and Gibbs Museum.

Agriculture is in Ralph's roots. He grew up on a diversified family farm in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. In addition to grain farming and livestock, the farm included a large garden, an apple orchard, and a commercial strawberry operation. Ralph was active in 4H with vegetable gardening and beekeeping projects.

After military service and receiving an MBA from Stanford University, Ralph was employed by Green Giant Company where he rose to become the Director of Corporate Planning and Development. After Pillsbury acquired Green Giant, Ralph continued in agribusiness until he retired as Pillsbury's Vice President in Corporate and International Development.

Ralph has authored a number of horticultural compilations and papers. He has served for over 20 years as a University of Minnesota, Ramsey County Master Gardener. He was Chairman of the Ramsey County Extension Committee and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. He still operates farms in North Dakota and Wisconsin.

Ralph is married to Loanne, who shares Ralph's passion for history. They live in a turn-of-the-twentieth-century home in the Crocus Hill neighborhood of St. Paul.



HandsOn
TWIN CITIES

Spotlight on HandsOn Twin Cities

Ramsey County Historical Society is proud to partner with HandsOn Twin Cities at Gibbs Museum to foster group corporate volunteer projects. In 2011, group volunteers from Target, Xcel Energy, General Mills, Honeywell, Minnesota Timberwolves, Rebuilding Twin Cities and many other local corporations planted gardens, repaired fences, did a variety of site maintenance projects, and put up a tipi. School children from around the Twin Cities were able to experience life in early Minnesota because of the spring and summer support of our volunteers.

The mission of HandsOn Twin Cities is to bring people together to strengthen communities through meaningful volunteer action. HandsOn Twin Cities accomplishes this by working with over 300 nonprofits serving the 9-county metro area which includes Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Scott and Washington.

2011-2012 Annual Membership Recognition

Ramsey County Historical Society would like to thank **YOU**, our 2011-2012 Members. Your membership contributions directly impact the fulfillment of our mission: *to inspire current and future generations to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program of presenting, publishing and preserving.* Thank you very much for your continued support, participation and enthusiasm as we embark together on another year of colorful local history.

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If you have questions about membership or wish to speak to the Ramsey County Historical Society Membership Manager, Erika Hiller, please call: 651-222-0701 X6 or send email to: erika@rchs.com

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

323 Landmark Center, 75 West 5th Street | St. Paul, MN 55102 | 651-222-0701 | 651-223-8539 (fax) | www.rchs.com

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Ramsey County Historical Society Benefits

- Subscription to *Ramsey County History* quarterly magazine.
- Unlimited admission to Gibbs Museum of Pioneer and Dakotah Life.
- Free use of our user friendly Research Center, open 10 am-4 pm Monday–Thursday no appointment necessary.
- 10% discount on Gibbs Museum day camps and purchases at both Landmark Center and Gibbs Museum and ticketed events.
- Invitations to many free lectures, demonstrations and exhibits.



Gibbs Museum Volunteers 2011

The physical site continues to benefit from ongoing partnerships with our individual volunteers. Gibbs Museum recognizes and is deeply appreciative of the time and energy the following individuals brought to the site in 2011.

100+ Hours Volunteered • Roy Dorn • Ralph Thrane

50-100 Hours Volunteered • Hannah Mulholland • Ray Schreurs

1-50 Hours Volunteered • Anne Aurelius • Sue Biesand • Allie Brown • Rachel Brown • Jim Bukowski • Rynda Carlis • Charles Coad • John Commors • John Connors • Claire Davis • Ed Davis • Paulette Day • Rosemary Dilworth • Marlene Dorneich-Hayes • Krista Finstad-Hanson • Elaine Fuller • Ginger Gilbert • Eva Hanson • Michelle Heggerston • Mim Heggerston • Peter Hendrickson • Rodger Hintze • Alletta Jervey • John Lamski • Ted Lau • Martha Melcher • Rick Menk • Abby Meyer • Nora Meyers • Kathleen Miles • Mary Miles • Thomas Moyer • Nancy Mulholland • Phyllis Neff • Jarel Norton • Georgia O'Brien • Kevin Olsen • Nels Otto • Roger Peck • Jane Reilly • Terry Robertson • Patricia Rosenberg • Lee Schreurs • Kathy Tempas • Nicole Tempas • Hagdis Tschunko • Franz Young • Laurie Wizkowski

Collections Volunteers, Interns and Student Volunteers 2011

Out of 48 total volunteers in collections and 3241 total hours, 15 Interns and Student Volunteers contributed 893 hours.

2011 Ramsey County Historical Society college interns came from Augsburg, Bethel, Century, Hamline, Macalester, St. Thomas, and UW Madison.

200+ Hours Volunteered • Robin Bowden • Patricia Hubbard • Matthew Raatz

100-200 Hours Volunteered • Richard Arpi • Patrick Bedford • Arthur Bergstrom • Tom Haley • Heather McNeff • Hannah Porter • Ryan Soller • Andrea Szondy

50-100 Hours Volunteered • Mollie Fullerton • Brigid Galvin • Alexander Greff • Christian Jacobsen • Cynthia Kocik • John Lamski • Andrew Lussenhop • Michael McSherry • Lindsay Morehouse • Sally Robertson • Elizabeth Tollefson • Smitha Pennepalli

1-50 Hours Volunteered • Laura Berg • Paulette Day • Charlie Deutsch • Erin DuBois • Brian Krasnow • Rick Menk • Julianne Ragland • Terry Robertson • Bobbie Scott • Cassie Warholm • Dick Wenkel • Jenny Wollner • Susan Delgado • Mary Farrell • Melissa Jones • Anders King • Seth McCrobie • Nate Osterberg • Ellie Patterson • Monique Robbins • Phyllis Waggoner • Alicia Ziebarth

Membership Volunteers 2011

Membership volunteers contributed to programs, mailings and membership outreach in the local community as Ramsey County Historical Society Ambassadors.

100+ Hours Volunteered
Ted Lau

50-100 Hours Volunteered
Mary Long Strid • Larry Valley

1-50 Hours Volunteered
Maureen Austinson • Mimm Heggerston • Andrew Hiller • Aaron McGinn • Frances Siegler • Steve Tremble • Bob Wagner • Chun Xiong

Correction to the 2011 Donor Recognition and Annual Report in the Winter 2012 issue of *Ramsey County History*: The John and Ruth Huss Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation and the Huss Foundation, are members of the Jonathan Carver Council.

Join us for a Season of Fun at Gibbs Museum

The perfect way to pack your summer with lots of great family times

Dakota Day

A celebration of the Dakota, Minnesota's first people.

Saturday | June 23, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Country Festival

Reminiscent of old-time county fairs.

Saturday | July 14, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Pioneer Sampler

The farm comes alive with old-time crafts and chores.

Saturday | August 18, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Apple Festival

A weekend of apple fun — all in the beautiful setting of Gibbs Museum.

Friday | October 5, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday | October 6, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Gibbs Halloween

Celebrate an old-fashioned Halloween.

Saturday | October 27, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Ice Cream Sundays

Special thanks to Schroeder's Dairy for donating the cream and milk that makes our famous homemade ice cream so yummy.

Sundays | June 17, July 1, August 5, Noon – 4:00 p.m.

WOW — What's on Wednesdays!

Visit Gibbs Museum every Wednesday

July 11 through August 22 at 2:00 p.m.



Get an inside look into pioneer or Dakota life
2012 Season Programs are free for RCHS members

R.C.H.S.
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The CSPS Hall in St. Paul displays this photo of John Rachač, a master carpenter who helped to build the Summit Avenue mansion of James J. Hill and the Minnesota Capitol. For more on John Rachač, see page 13. Photo by Julia Kierstine. Photo courtesy of the Czech-Slovak Protective Society, St. Paul.