

RAMSEY COUNTY

History

A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Ramsey County's
Women Athletes And a
Win at Wimbledon

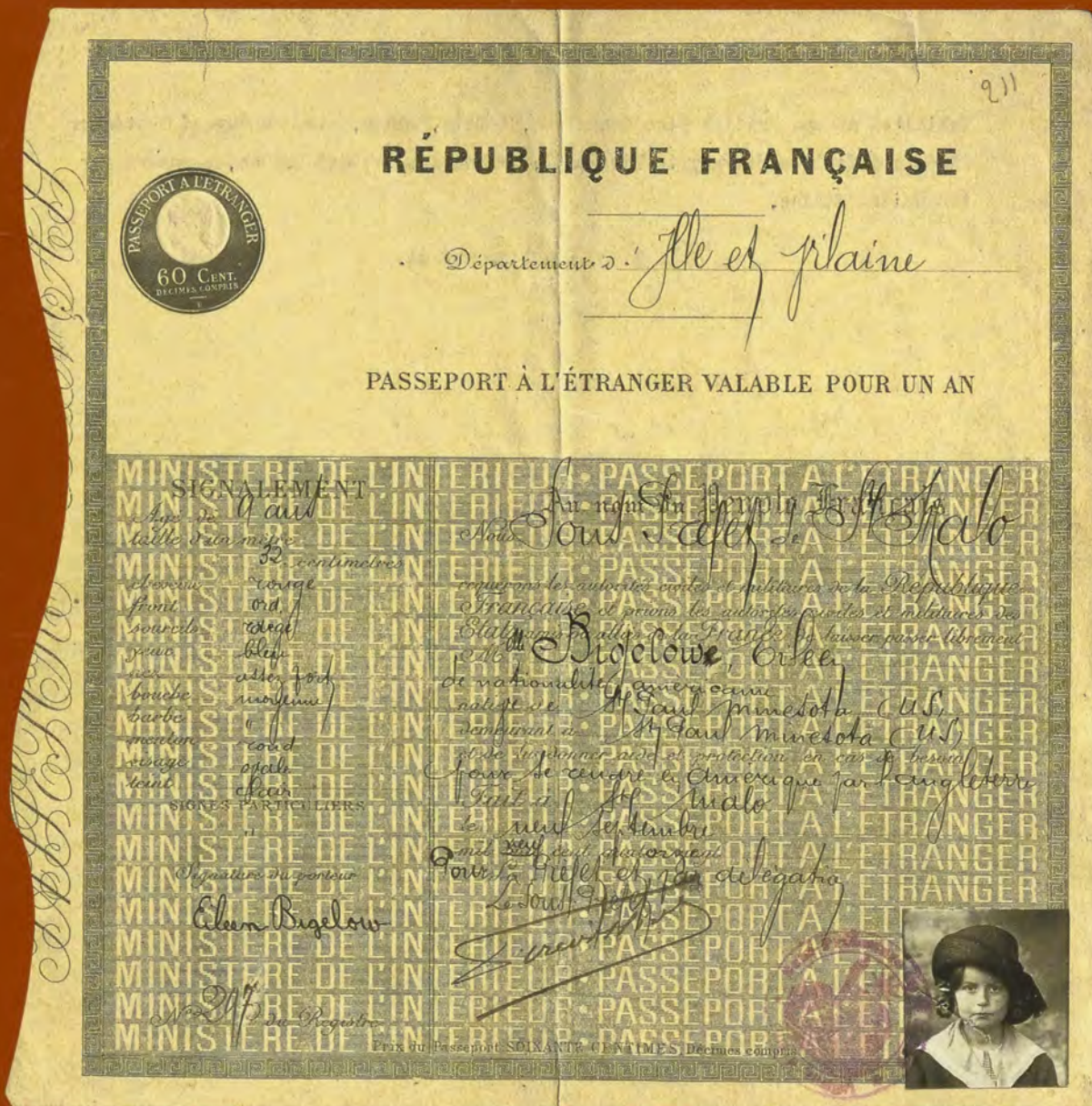
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Summer, 1998

Volume 33, Number 2

Money Belts Stuffed with Gold

F. R. Bigelow's Dash to France in 1914—Page 4



Eileen Bigelow's passport. A notation on the back states: "Exhibited at the British Vice Consulate, St. Malo, France, this 9th day of September, 1914, good for the journey, via Southampton and London, to embark for the United States. H.B.M.'s Vice Consul." Her father's account of his trip to France begins on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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Summer, 1998

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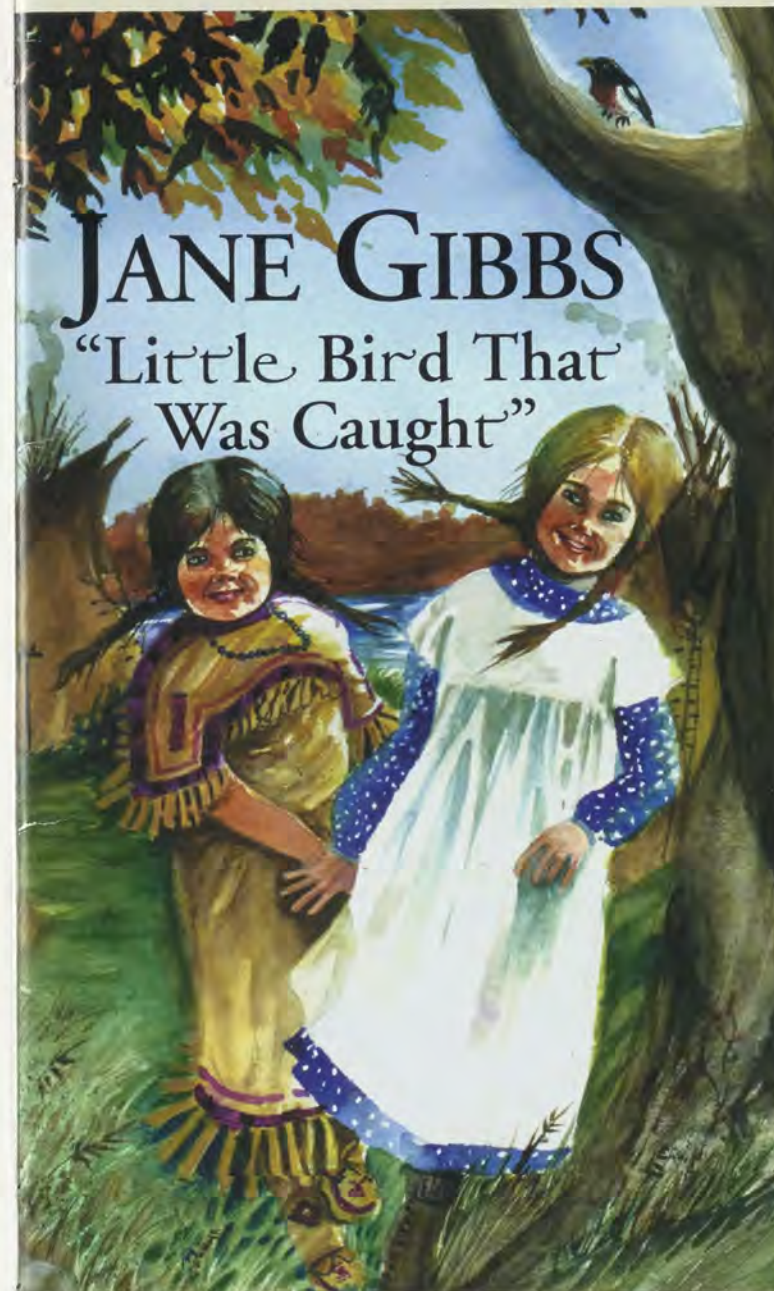
A Message from the Editorial Board

With the winding down of summer 1998 and the beginning of another school year, the lead article in this issue recalls the "Guns of August," F.R. Bigelow's account of his determined efforts in 1914 to join his wife and children in France and to safely leave that country ahead of the swift advance of the Imperial German Army in the opening days of World War I. Although the United States didn't join the war against Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary until 1917, Bigelow's story of how he was able to get to France via Spain, find his family in the maelstrom of a France caught up in fighting a powerful invader, and return to St. Paul in time for the opening day of school for his young children is not only compelling reading, but also persuasive of where the sympathies of many Americans would lean as the war went on year after year.

Equally as fascinating as Frederic Bigelow's account of the world in the summer of 1914 is Kathleen C. Ridder's examination of the notable success of some of Ramsey County's women athletes in the middle third of this century. Women such as Jean Havlish, Mary Meyers, Jeanne Arth, and Bev Vanstrum achieved prominence and public acclaim for their victories in softball, bowling, speed skating, tennis, and golf long before federal legislation prohibited discrimination based on gender in educational programs that received federal funds. From "A League of Their Own" to the Olympics, these women led the way for the next generation of women athletes in Ramsey County and Minnesota. Despite their pioneering efforts, few of these athletes are known today because all too often they and their achievements were regarded as exceptions (which they were for their times) rather than as role models for those young women who would come after them.

John M. Lindley, chair, Editorial Board

An Exciting New Book for Young Readers



Based on a true story about real people
and events that happened.

PUBLISHED BY THE RAMSEY COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Growing Up in St. Paul

Porches and Parties Around the Piano A Year in the Life of Mary Etta Manship

Margaret Manship

Once upon a time, families sat on their front porches instead of lounging in air conditioned houses; they gathered around the piano, instead of a television set, and sang far into the night; they were linked by long personal visits, instead of E-mail; and long, lazy summer days were just that.

These brief entries from the 1898 diary of a young St. Paul woman reflect a long ago time when life seems to have been simpler, less frantic, although not necessarily easier. Maintaining two homes without today's labor-saving devices was strenuous work, as her diary reveals. Mary Etta Manship was seventeen when she recorded a year in her young life. She lived with her family at what was then 304 Nelson Avenue in St. Paul, and at their summer cottage at Bald Eagle Lake, which they reached by a commuter train from St. Paul's Union Depot to the White Bear Lake and Bald Eagle Lake depots.

She writes of the Spanish-American War that began that April; of her father, Charles, who worked for the St. Paul Gas Light Company; her mother; and her five brothers: Luther, Will, Carl, Albert, and Paul, who grew up to be the renowned sculptor, Paul Manship. And she writes of sailing in a boat her father and brothers built.

May 1, 1898, Sunday

Mama, Papa, Carl and I went out to the lake [Bald Eagle] Friday to cleanup the cottage and get it ready for the summer. We were still out here this morning. Charlie Lott [a cousin] is here, too. This morning I put clean papers on all the shelves. Then Mama and I washed all the windows. Then we finished cleaning upstairs. Just before I got lunch Luther and Will came. At 5:53 we left Bald Eagle on

the train. Charlie went down as far as White Bear with us. When we got to the house in town I got supper and then read the paper.

May 2

I looked over a lot of newspapers that I have all about the Spanish-American War. I have almost every paper that has come into the house since the Maine was blown up [in February in the harbor of Havana, Cuba]. "Remember the Maine!" In the evening some friends came over and we played cards and then I played a few pieces on the piano for them.

May 3

This afternoon Mama and I went out to the [state] fairgrounds where the [Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteenth] regiments of Minnesota Volunteers are camped. We saw several companies drilling. One of them we were watching started to run four-abreast. They passed us and turned a corner and that brought them directly back of us. Just then their leader ordered them to wheel and they were running right at us. I was scared and tried to run out of their way. Another step would have brought them on me, when they were ordered to wheel again. So the soldiers, laughing at us, ran off in another direction.

May 4

Mama and I went downtown and bought some embroideries for my petticoats. When we got back my brother Albert was here.

May 7

I did up the housework and then finished two white skirts to wear under my new dress.

This afternoon Mama, Papa, Will and Luther went out to Bald Eagle. After supper I practiced [on the piano] a lot.

May 14

We went out to the lake today. We have decided to move out to the lake cottage a week from today.

May 21

Poured all day. I practiced my piano. Mama, Papa, Will and Luther went out to Bald Eagle. Carl, Paul and I stayed in town. I paid Paul eight cents to wash the dishes for me.

May 23

Luther's friends came over and the Willis girls and we made a list of plans for this summer.

May 25

I sewed a lot of buttons on a lot of summer underclothes. It took all morning.

May 27

We are going to Bald Eagle today so I packed my things. Mama and I packed trunks and things, getting ready to go to the lake for the summer.

May 28

Oh, what a day! Will got up at half-past four and the wagon came at half-past five. We took the nine o'clock train for Bald Eagle. The wagon got there after 12 o'clock. We unpacked the wagon and the trunks.

May 30

After supper Mama, Luther and I went down to the lake and had a ride in Mrs. Thompson's boat. Our boats are not in yet.

May 31

Rained all day but we now have the house in order and we are settled in.

June 4

Luther got his sailboat in the water and he took me out sailing. We heard someone calling from the pier. It was Carl Taylor, so we took him out, too. Albert met us as we came in. Just before supper Papa and Paul came in from fishing, with over 20 fish.

June 6

Got up at five and went fishing. Never caught a thing! Albert was on the pier when we came in and Paul and some other boys came out. They were fooling around and the pier broke. We all slid into the water up to our waists.

June 12

Took Mama out rowing. It was awful hot. This evening I went sailing but it was too windy.

June 15

Got ready to go back to town. Mama and Luther picked strawberries and fixed one box for Dr. Goodrich. We all went down to the high school play when we got back to town. Luther took some friends for a ride. I wanted to go, too, so Carl took me for a ride in the Wheelbarrow. What fun!

June 16

Luther took his wheel and I took Carl's. We stopped and looked for fourleaf clovers. Then we went to the Commencement at People's Church. The pupils of '98 sat on the stage.

June 17

We sat on the porch all evening.

June 18

Got to the depot for the 2:15 train to Bald Eagle. Aunt Rachel and Charles Lott were at the cottage when we got there. It was awful hot, so we went sailing with Luther and Albert.

There is a little hotel on the lakeshore called Benson's, and we stopped and bought pop. We had a jolly time. There were 13 of us for supper.

June 19

There was a big picnic out here today, so we all went over to the [train] station to



Mary Etta Manship in 1898 when she was seventeen years old.

see the crowd. We saw two trainloads of people get off; then we came home and went for a row. After a dinner a good wind came up so we went sailing. There were a lot of fellows camped on the island so we went round and round it and we girls waved our handkerchiefs and the boys yelled. After supper we went for a sail with Will.

June 20

We sailed all morning. After dinner we went for a row way up the lake and went looking for moccasin flowers. After supper we all went in the sitting room and sang for two or three hours. What a swell day!

June 21

I played the piano for a long time. Luther wanted to go sailing so Carl and I went down to the shore and put up the sails. The boat leaked rather badly so we had to go in. Will and Carl will see to fixing the boat.

June 25

Luther went over to the races at White Bear Lake. We had three terrible storms come up and our boat was blown from the stake and Mama was awfully worried about Luther. He came home soaking wet and said he'd been in the boat during the storm but the boat had not turned over.

July 1

Rain again but it cleared off and got very hot. We went to pick strawberries. Albert, Luther, Will and I went for a row. Another storm tonight.

July 3

Luther, Albert and I went rowing and we saw Will's boat by the island, so we towed it away but Will did not come out yelling, so we let it go again. It drifted and did not land where it had been. When Will came home he would not speak to us!

July 4

The glorious 4th. We went out and threw firecrackers from the sailboat. Everyone in our crowd was on the lake to watch fireworks. We stayed out a long time singing and having a great time. Charlie and Luther were with us.

July 6

Nice breeze this morning. Went up to Waterlily Bay in the sailboat. The wind came up so hard we had to land the sailboat and walk home.

July 10

Albert, Luther and I went over Bald Eagle Station just to see the crowd coming out from town.

July 22

Fishing with Mama and Papa.

July 23

Boat carnival on the lake.

July 24

Went up to the station to see the crowd. There was a picnic at the hotel today.

July 25

I've done a lot of embroidery this

summer, also practiced my piano. The boys rode their wheels out from town today.

July 29

I went to town this morning and shopping at Mannheimers. Then I got on the [street]car and went out to St. Anthony Park and then back downtown to Papa's office. The cornerstone to the State Capitol was laid yesterday and today there was a parade and all sorts of things going on to celebrate. We met Will in the crowd.

August 2

Our cow had an awful time today. We had to send for a doctor. He said the cow was poisoned. This evening two Dutchmen who were camping up on the lake shore worked with her for a couple hours. Then one of them came in and played the piano. He was dandy at it, I tell you!

August 4

Papa got a letter from his sister, Aunt Addie, in Jackson, Mississippi, and she says she is coming to visit for a month or two. I hope she does.

August 8

We all went for a row, then sat on the shore for an hour or two and then came up to the house. I played the piano for them.

August 10

Will and Luther took Mama and me for a row around the island. Then they took Papa fishing.

August 14

Will and I went over to the station to meet Albert and then went sailing. Our cousin Edith Hallam and her husband came out. It hailed all last night.

August 16

Aunt Addie will be here Wednesday evening. Will took Mama for a boat ride.

August 17

Mama and Papa went to town about Aunt Addie. I cleaned up the house really good for them. Paul and I walked down to White Bear to meet them on the



The Mary Etta, the Manships' sailboat on Bald Eagle Lake. Photos are from the author.

train. Papa had said I should not look at them or pay any attention to them. I was on the platform and Aunt Addie kept looking at me. The last time she saw me was eleven years ago when I was six years old. I stood not far from them with Paul. Papa looked at me and never even smiled, as if he did not know me. But Paul smiled and then, of course, she knew us. Well, after dinner Papa and I took her for a boat ride.

August 20

This afternoon Aunt Addie, Paul and I went down to the lake shore to see the boat races. We met Luther there, but there was no wind so no races.

August 21

Will and Luther took Aunt Addie and Mama out in the row boat.

August 23

Aunt Addie and I sat all afternoon on the lake shore.

August 25

Took Aunt Addie for a float around. This evening went sailing.

August 27

Went to a corn roast. I was much obliged when someone roasted my corn on the bonfire for me. We went to the lake shore to eat it.

August 30

Aunt Addie went over to the station and met Aunt Rachel. Cousin Marion came on her wheel. Edith came out with her little girl, Cornelia, on the train. Fearfully hot all day. We had ice cream and it sure tasted good.

September 3

Sailing all morning with Luther, had lunch, sailed all afternoon, had dinner and sailed all evening!

September 5

Mama, Aunt Addie, Carl and I went to town shopping. Then to the house for dinner and then back to the lake.

September 11

Took our last sail today. When we got home the boys beached the sailboat. This afternoon and evening the folks spent calling on their friends around the lake.

September 14

Packed all morning. By evening we were all ready to go back to town.

September 15

Cloudy and we thought the men would not come with the wagon to move us to town. But they did and we sent our trunks in the wagon and we took the train. We got to the house about four o'clock. The wagon did not get here until six.



Sailboats on Bald Eagle Lake. The Manship boys are on the left and the island is in the background.

September 16

I worked all morning and arranged the front rooms entirely differently than they had been before. We thought they looked good but Papa objected first thing.

September 17

I helped Mama unpack the trunks. Papa was still mad. Mama and Aunt Addie went downtown and I was upstairs when Aunt Rachel came. I went downstairs to greet her and lo and behold, Papa had changed everything back as they were last winter. All my work thrown away. I just sat down and cried.

September 18

Albert, Carl and Paul, all of us got on the [street]car and went to Lake Harriet where we had lunch and walked around. Then we took the car to Lake Como, a beautiful place.

September 21

After supper Mama, Paul and I sat on the porch. Papa came out to be with us.

September 30

This evening Will took Aunt Addie and me to see the opera "The Beggar Student" and then ice cream sodas.

October 7

Aunt Addie and I went downtown and bought me a new hat and ribbons and things to trim it with.

October 12

Gentle rain all day. I love this kind of weather.

October 17

Mrs. Fairchild was here this morning. She and Papa are first cousins and she is Aunt Addie's cousin, too. Rained all day.

October 19

Carl has been quite sick. We went down to the doctor's office.

October 20

Luther took Aunt Addie and me to see a play.

October 25

Papa has been hunting for a week. He came home with a whole lot of game.

October 30

I asked Mama if I could give a card party next Friday. Aunt Addie bought me some nice notepaper to write invitations on. I had Paul take the invitations around.

November 4

Ken Lott and Edith Hallam came over. I fixed Paul up nice and everything was ready. About 8 everyone came. We played cards, had refreshments and danced. We had a splendid time.

November 8

After dinner I helped Aunt Addie pack

her trunk. I went down to the depot with Mama, Papa and Luther. I could hardly keep from crying.

November 21

Blizzard. Almost froze us all. Snowed and blew terribly.

November 22

Snow—18 inches. Some places over 2 feet.

December (undated)

So busy getting ready for Christmas. We had Paul's 14th birthday and celebrated Christmas Sunday, though some people had it on Monday. I got a beautiful writing desk from Papa and a nice box of letter paper to go on it from Paul.

January (undated)

One day it was 14 below. It has been so cold we just had to hug the fires.

February 14

St. Valentine's Day and my 18th birthday! Snowed about a foot. Carl has been very sick all month.

April 2

Easter. Above freezing, bright and sunny. Ken Lott, Luther and I went to the St. Paul Church. Beautiful music.

April 5

Mama and Paul went downtown. Spring is here. We'll soon be thinking of Bald Eagle again. It takes a lot of cleaning and hard work to get the cottage ready and the trunks packed and things done here. But I can hardly wait to do it.

In the course of time, Mary Etta Manship married, had two children and moved to California where she lived the rest of her life.

Margaret Manship's account of growing up in St. Paul in the 1930s, when her father, William McMahon, was zookeeper at Como Zoo, appeared in the summer, 1992, issue of Ramsey County History. Her husband, another Paul Manship, is the sculptor's nephew.



She did it! Bev Vanstrum's victory jig at the 1968 State Match Tournament at Edina Country Club. See article on Ramsey County's women athletes, beginning on page 13.

R.C.H.S.
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