

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Life on the Farm:
A Changing World With
Changing Fortunes

Page 13

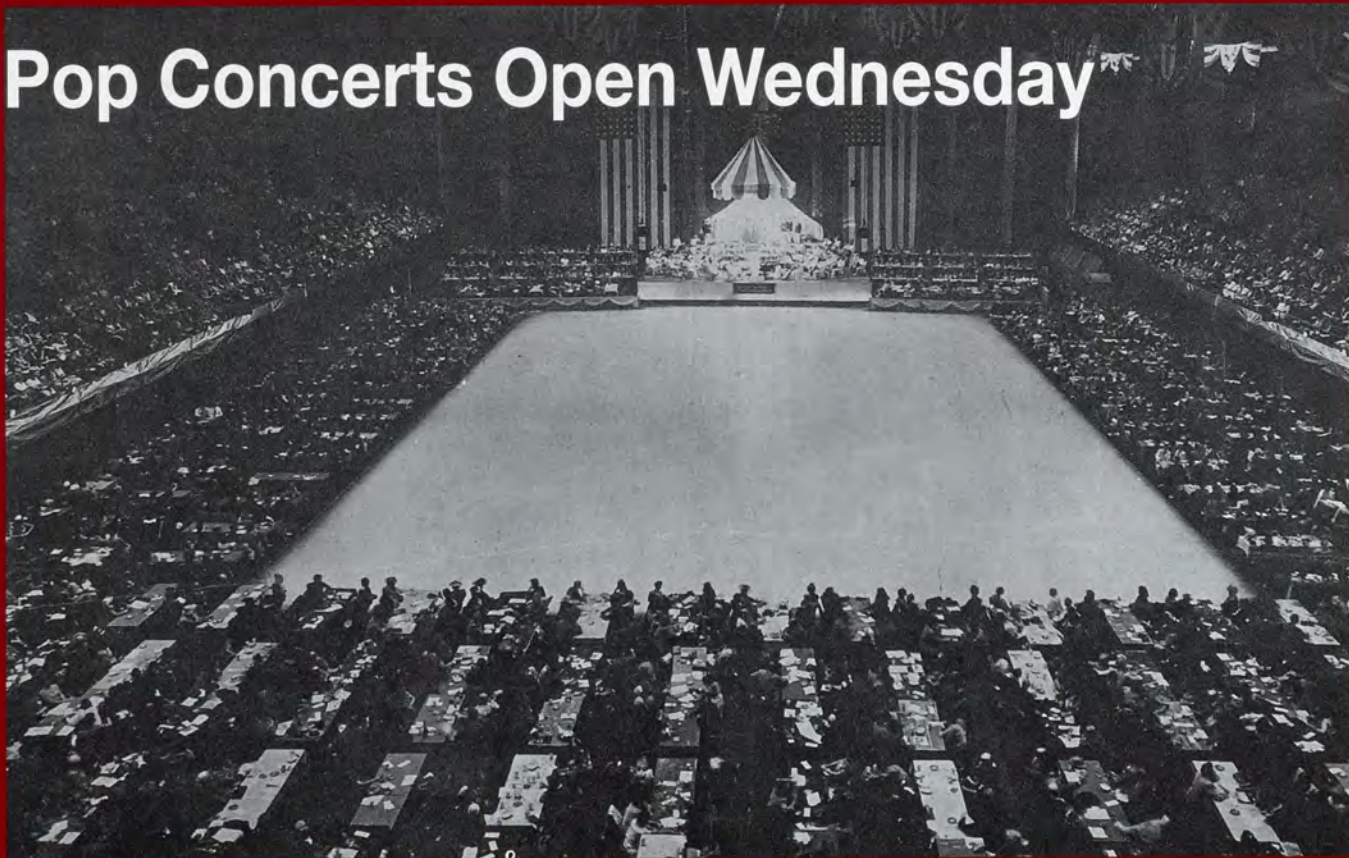
Summer, 1999

Volume 34, Number 2

Escaping the Heat on a Hot Night
The St. Paul Figure Skating Club and
Those Popular Summer Pop Concerts

—Page 4

Pop Concerts Open Wednesday



St. Paul's Pop Concerts were famous nationwide, the St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press noted in its rotogravure section for July 18, 1943. "Literally the only show of its kind in the world," the newspaper reported that the St. Paul Pops was a cooperative venture. St. Paul supplied the Auditorium arena, the Figure Skating Club the talent "for the spectacular ice shows," the Civic Opera provided the chorus, and the Musicians' Association the seventy-piece orchestra, many of them members of the Minneapolis Symphony." See article beginning on page 4.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 34, Number 2

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Publication of *Ramsey County History* is supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie, Jr. and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon

Message from Editorial Board

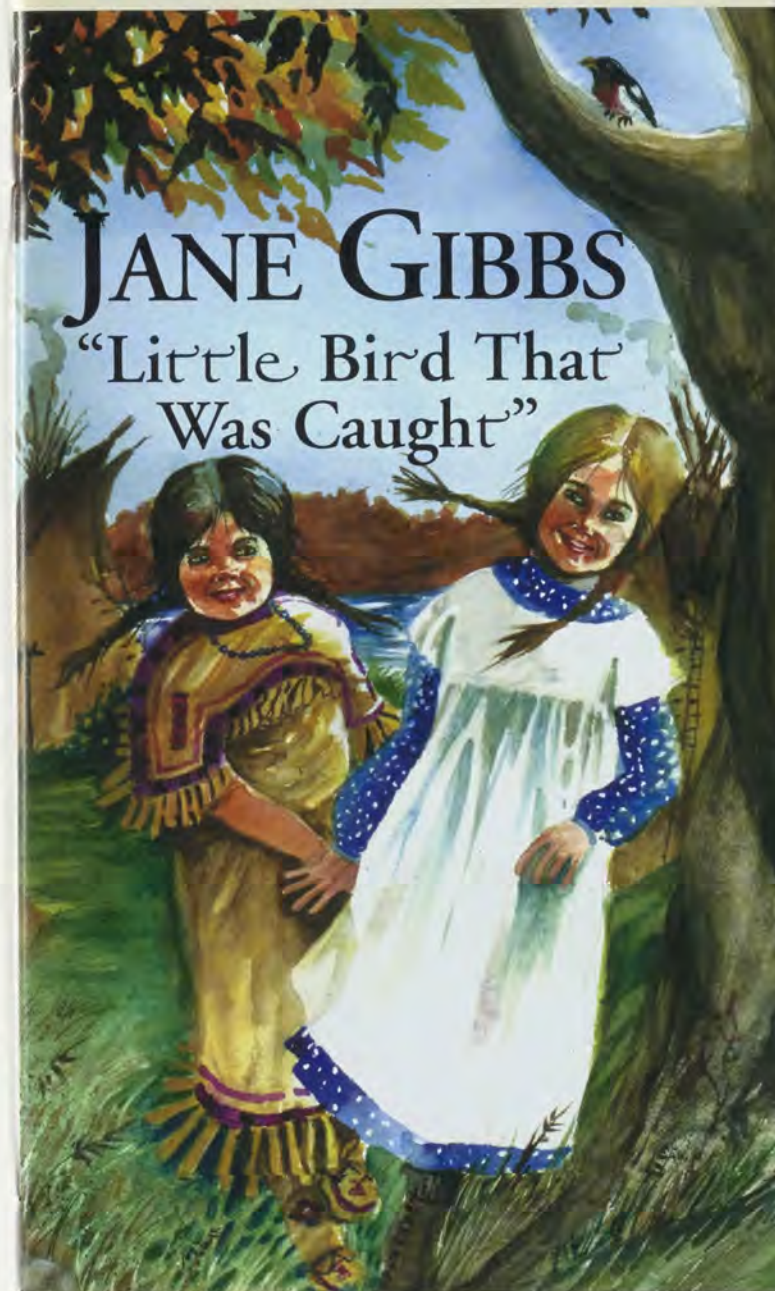
Given the record-setting heat that much of this area has experienced in the summer of 1999, this issue of *Ramsey County History* opens with Kathleen Ridder's history of the origins and early years of the St. Paul Figure Skating Club, which provides a verbal form of cool relief. With roots dating from the late 1920s and the efforts of St. Paul skating legends Eddie and Roy Shipstad and Oscar Johnson, the club got its legal start in 1936. It produced not only a number of regional and national skating champions, but also introduced the Summer Sessions and Pop Concerts that helped train young skaters.

Moving on from the Pop Concerts, authors Henry H. and Samuel H. Morgan share with us their careful research into their family history and Ramsey County real estate records. They trace what happened to the family farmstead which, in the 1880s, made up a substantial portion of the authors' great-grandfather's net worth in excess of \$600,000. The 160-acre farm, located on the western edge of Ramsey County was not the victim of corporate agribusiness at the turn of the century, but was, as they explain, more like the cherry orchard in Anton Chekhov's 1904 play of that name. What emerges from the Morgans' account is a cautionary tale about the uncertainties of the national economy earlier in this century. Next, two longtime practitioners of the art of governing, Thomas J. Kelley and Judge John T. Finley, record their memories of helping Ramsey County join the twentieth century.

Finally, the Ramsey County Historical Society has been saddened to learn of the recent death of Faith LeVesconte, the wife of the late Lester LeVesconte who was the grandson of Jane and Heman Gibbs. Faith LeVesconte was a longtime friend and supporter of the Gibbs Farm Museum, established by Lester LeVesconte's grandparents in 1849 and now maintained by the Ramsey County Historical Society.

—John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

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Growing Up in St. Paul

The Story of Life on the Farm In A Changing World with Changing Fortunes

Henry H. and Samuel H. Morgan

This is the story of our mother's side of our family on "the farm." Much of this information comes from stories that she and her mother (our Grandmother Hollinshead) told to each of us and to our late sister Ann Morgan Ober. Dr. William H. Hollinshead also contributed stories he heard from his late father, "Billy." We have drawn substantially on material included in Henry's recently published book, *Four Pioneer Families of Minnesota*.

The Farm

In the early 1860s our great-grandfather, Daniel Andrew Jackson Baker, purchased farmland on the western edge of Ramsey County. It comprised 138 acres of rolling meadow and woodland on high ground overlooking the Mississippi River. The acreage was located on the St. Paul side of the Ramsey-Hennepin County line lying generally between University Avenue on the north and St. Anthony Avenue on the south, and extending from Raymond and Pelham Avenues on the east to Emerald Avenue on the west.

The farm was not what one might call a working farm; it produced no cash crop. There were animals—a couple of cows to provide fresh milk, some chickens for fresh eggs and for broilers, Horse Robert and a couple of work horses, and sometimes other farm animals—plus large vegetable and flower gardens. A hired hand did many of the heaviest chores, but family members all did their part in the many tasks throughout the year in the house, in the barn, and in the fields.

Our grandmother Cornelia Baker, who was born in 1860, grew up in her father's house on the farm. Later, when she married Henry Rice Hollinshead, another house was built just up the road west of the Baker home. The Hollinshead house

was on a knoll. At this late date, this story can best be told largely in sketches of our family members who lived there, namely:

Great-Grandfather

Daniel Andrew Jackson Baker, a.k.a. "Judge" or "D.A.J. Baker," widower of Cornelia California Kneeland

Great-Grandmother

Ellen Rice Hollinshead, widow of William Hollinshead

Grandmother

Cornelia Anna Baker Hollinshead, widow of Henry Rice Hollinshead (we called our grandmother "Gammy")

Uncle Bill

Cornelia's older brother, William Henry Hollinshead, or "Billy"

Mother

Cornelia Hollinshead

Aunt Nan

Nora Hollinshead, our mother's younger sister

Daniel A. J. Baker our great-grandfather was a "man of parts," as people used to say of men of multiple talents and accomplishments. He was the eleventh child in a family of ten girls and was one of a number of young men who came to the Minnesota Territory from the small town of New Sharon, Maine, to make their fortunes in the "Promised Land." He always spoke of Maine as "a great state to be born in." Here in Minnesota he made his fortune and lost it several times, with many adventures along the way. He was a lawyer, schoolteacher, county school superintendent, horticulturist, real estate developer and promoter, bon vivant, student of the Bible, and (briefly) a judge. He donated the land for the Baker School (now Baker Court) where his grandchildren had their early education before going on to St. Paul Central High School.

Judge Baker was a large, robust, and



Judge D. A. J. Baker's home, probably in the 1870s, on the farm in the Twin Cities' Midway District and near the present-day junction of Highway 280 and I-94. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs with this article are from the authors.



Daniel A. J. Baker in the late 1870s or early 1880s when he was around fifty-five to sixty years old.

heartly man who often rose to greet the dawn. He walked several miles a day, even in his later years. He loved people, politics, and controversy. Named for General Andrew Jackson, who later became the first Democratic president of the United States, D. A. J. Baker was certainly an ardent Democratic partisan. The children learned to be little Democrats, although Billy would become a Republican.

Judge Baker had a strong voice with a touch of a New England accent. He frequently quoted from the Bible and would extract a memorized verse from each of the children as they sat down for dinner. To frustrate him, Billy diligently searched the New Testament for the shortest verse: "Jesus Wept," in John, Chapter 11, Verse 35. Thus Billy accomplished his grand-



William Hollinshead, circa 1858.

father's purpose in spite of himself—learning the Bible, part of the family's Puritan and Quaker heritage.

Above all Judge Baker was best known for his hospitality. The following description of one of his entertainments tells us something of these parties at the farm. This party probably celebrated his sixty-first birthday.



Ellen Rice Hollinshead at about the age of sixty in 1886.

A Regular Feast

Judge Baker Entertains His Friends on the Occasion of His Anniversary in a Right Royal Manner.

The hospitable home of Judge D. A. J. Baker, at Desnoyer Park, was the scene of an exceptionally pleasant gathering Tuesday evening, a number of the Judge's friends having assembled to celebrate with him his *forty-oneth* birthday. Those who have ever been so fortunate as to partake of the Judge's hospitality all know that on such occasions his home is not his at all, it belongs to his guests; but one thing they cannot lose sight of is that the Judge has been and is there.—No one acquainted with St. Paul society will expect us to analyze and delineate Judge Baker's manner of manifesting his presence among his friends, how could they dodge his attention? Now, when we add to this that he was assisted in receiving by Mrs. Hollinshead, his daughter; Miss Josie Small, his

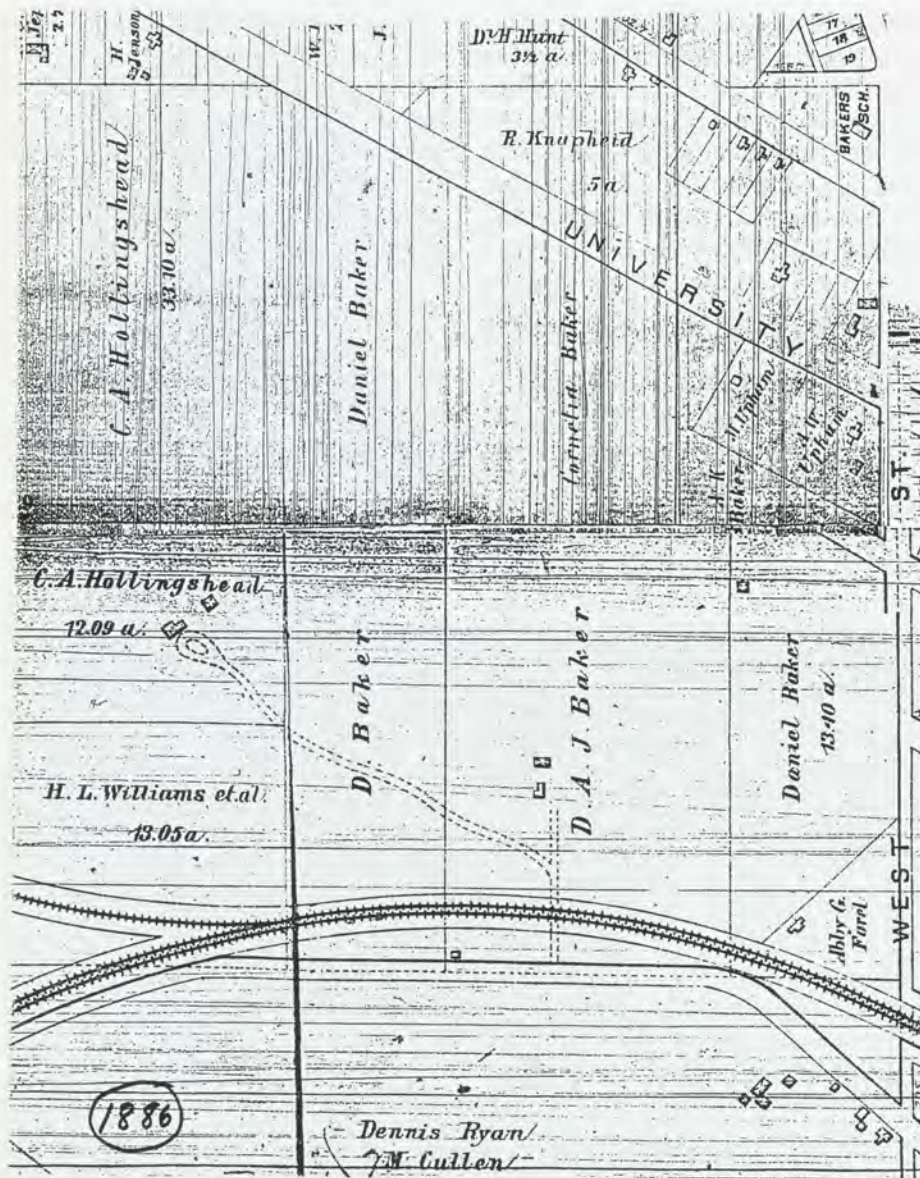
niece, and Dan, his son, all royal entertainers, what more can be said?—It was near midnight before the guests bade their host departing congratulations.

Sometimes getting to one of Judge Baker's parties was a hazardous adventure. Back in the nineteenth century when most St. Paulites still lived "below the bluffs," many of the most prominent in the section known as Lowertown, venturing out on "the prairie" on a blizzard night could be extremely dangerous. Rebecca Marshall Cathcart described one such experience.

Telling of parties, I must not omit one which proved almost a tragedy.—The party was given by Mr. and Mrs. D. A. J. Baker at their farm, now Merriam Park. There was a stretch of prairie to be crossed, reaching from what is now Mackubin street but then called Marshall's farm, to what is now Snelling avenue. The invited guests started about seven o'clock in sleighs to meet at a rendezvous and go all together, which arrangement proved very fortunate and saved many lives. On reaching the crest of the hill, called St. Anthony hill, a sharp wind met them and the atmosphere became filled with snow in a short time; it was a genuine blizzard. The road was soon obliterated, and the instinct of the horses remained their only guide. Mr. John Cathcart led the line of sleighs, and he said afterward that it was much more like a



Henry Rice Hollinshead in fur coat and hat, a photo that was a family favorite.



Plat of "the farm," the Baker property, in 1886. The location of the old Baker School is shown in the upper righthand corner. The school still stands as the renovated Baker Professional Building. The Hollinshead farmhouse is on the left and the original home of Judge and Mrs. Baker is just above the straight north-and-south dotted line that runs through the railroad tracks.

funeral procession than a prospective dancing party. One or two of the sleighs wandered out from the line, but fortunately reached a house on Governor Ramsey's farm, quite far to the north of University avenue, or, as it was then called, the "Territorial road." They were fortunate in finding shelter for the night, as otherwise they would have been frozen to death, there being no other house within miles. The party led by Mr. Cathcart finally reached Mr. Baker's, but how it was impossible to tell; several of the

party were frostbitten, but only one seriously; a Mr. Wolf had his hands frozen and suffered intensely, but recovered eventually without losing his fingers. My brother, William, started for Mr. Baker's in a double sleigh drawn by a fine pair of horses, but had gone only a short distance when he turned back, realizing the great danger of being lost in a Minnesota Blizzard. However, "All's well that ends well," and our party returned home the next morning grateful to the Power that guided them safely.

How often our grandmother told about blizzards on this prairie, which is now the fully built-up Midway.

In 1854, when D. A. J. Baker was thirty-two, he married thirty-eight-year-old Cornelia Kneeland in St. Paul. She and her sister, Henrietta, had traveled from the East to Wisconsin, where they were schoolteachers. She was prostrated there by the smallpox, while suitable attendants stood aloof in fear of taking the disease. Thereupon Colonel Goodhue, who had probably caught a glimpse of the maiden, volunteered his services at her bedside. His proffer was accepted, and Henrietta married Colonel James Goodhue. In 1849, Goodhue took Henrietta, Cornelia, and his printing press to the newly proclaimed Minnesota Territory. In St. Paul, with help from Henrietta, he founded *The Minnesota Pioneer*, predecessor of the *Pioneer Press*.

Our Baker great-grandparents had three children: Asa, who was killed in a logging accident in 1882; Dan, who eventually settled in western Canada; and our grandmother, Cornelia (Gummy). Her mother was almost forty-four when she bore her daughter and died when Cornelia was only fifteen. Our great-grandmother Baker was much loved and greatly missed by all those who knew her.

Our grandmother knew many tragedies in her life, but we never heard her complain. She had a remarkable ability to see life's blessings and to fulfill her responsibilities as a daughter and as a mother. After her husband's death, she managed an unusual household of three generations, keeping both her father and her mother-in-law in check and raising her three children with love, good humor, and kindly discipline. She knew how to do everything—cooking, sewing, gardening, driving horses, and managing the menage.

An Unexpected Death

The Hollinsheads became part of our family in 1880 when Judge Baker's daughter Cornelia (our Gummy) married Henry Rice Hollinshead, son of the transplanted Philadelphia lawyer, William Hollinshead, and Ellen Rice Hollinshead. William Hollinshead, author of the first compilation of Minnesota statutes and

partner in the firm of Rice, Hollinshead and Becker, considered by many the best lawyer of his time, died unexpectedly in 1860.

William Hollinshead's widow Ellen Rice Hollinshead, was a sister of Edmund Rice, an early mayor of St. Paul, and Henry M. Rice, who became a Minnesota senator. As the first environmentalist in the family, he dedicated as a public square the park in St. Paul that bears his name. The authors have found themselves, as a result of the Rice connection, related to a good many St. Paul families.

Ellen's son, our grandfather Henry Rice Hollinshead, was a civil engineer supervising crews laying out railroads, including parts of the Burlington, over

which his grandson later enjoyed riding on the Burlington Zephyrs at speeds up to nearly 100 miles per hour. Some of our mother's earliest recollections of her father were recorded in a sealed letter given to her son, Henry, to be opened after his induction into the army at Fort Snelling in March, 1942. She noted:

You were named after my father of whom I have only two memories. One of squatting between his legs in a "sulky" [a small two wheeled vehicle used in training horses]. The other as he looked when he came into my room to tell me I had a baby sister and that was Nora! He died when I was four so I had to grow up without a father, perhaps that is why "Gammy" has always meant so much to me.

Ellen Rice Hollinshead was the opposite of Judge Baker in almost every way. She was calm, levelheaded, and much less partisan than he. She had come to Minnesota in 1848, even before it became a territory, and lived in Mendota with General and Mrs. Sibley. In the 1890s she wrote chronicles of those early years. She came to Minnesota from Kalamazoo, Michigan, for her health and to be near her brother, Henry Rice, who was in the fur trade. Her auburn hair fascinated the Indians. They would touch it to see if it was hot. Both our mother and her sister Nora inherited that color of hair from their grandmother. Ellen often told her grandchildren stories of those early pioneer days, when everyone in the small commu-



The Deadwood Stage and one of the coaches at the office in Deadwood, South Dakota, around 1880. As a young man, "Daredevil" Dan Baker was a rider for the stage in the 1870s and 1880s. Photograph from the Minnesota Historical Society.



Cornelia Anna Baker Hollinshead, D.A.J. Baker's daughter, at the age of eighty in 1940.

nity of St. Paul knew everyone else, and every person offered others hospitality.

The Hollinshead children loved their grandmother, Ellen Hollinshead, for her wit and wisdom. She was a widely read woman who organized a reading society in Prospect Park. She often read to her grandchildren and introduced them to literary classics. She monitored their studies at school and followed their activities with keen interest. She had not had an easy life, losing her husband, William, in 1860 when he was only forty. Of her four children, Edmund and Nellie died before our mother's birth in 1884, and her son, our grandfather, died in 1888. Only Ellen's daughter, Mary Hollinshead, survived her mother.

Billy's Boyhood

The Hollinshead children's years on the farm present a picture of an idyllic life. The oldest, William Henry Hollinshead, our mother's brother, Billy, was a boy full of energy and vitality, always into vigorous outdoor activities—hunting, fishing, and sports. With friends in the Gibbs fam-

ily, he hunted deer and wildfowl on the nearby Gibbs farm (now owned by the Ramsey County Historical Society) and also east as far as Lexington Avenue. At Central High School he was fullback on the football team that tied the University of Minnesota. He was a fast runner, and he threw the hammer and discus. He loved mechanical and electrical machinery: steam engines, the newly invented automobile, and all the new technology.

At an early age he could use tools skillfully. He and his friends made a large bobsled holding as many as twenty riders. They would launch the sled for an exciting run on a long steep grade from the top of Tower Hill in Prospect Park. He worked a couple of summers for his Uncle Dan Baker, doing horse-team grading for the railroad between Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat, Saskatchewan.

Billy was an excellent student at Central High. He loved mathematics and Latin. He memorized reams of poetry and read all the great adventure stories. He could have gone on to the university but instead chose to develop an electrical construction and installation shop with his friend, Ted Pike, who married his sister, Nora.

The Sisters' Girlhood

Cornelia, our mother, was born two years after "Billy." On February 16, 1884, Dr. J. A. Quinn sent a Western Union telegram from St. Paul to Minneapolis to Mary C. Hollinshead, Grandfather Hollinshead's sister regarding her new niece, born the previous day at her brother's home. "Cornelia & Babe doing well. It is an intelligent girl." We have thought that our mother, "the Babe" was "indeed an intelligent girl!" With all the books that were being read silently in the house during her girlhood and with all the oral reading, too, she was able to read very early. She also learned to write at an early age with help from all her elders. She came to know and love the novels, plays, and poetry of many writers. Later at the university she had the fun of acting in various plays and even decided to try a career in acting, a brief career that led her to the Broadway stage until George Morgan persuaded her to share life with him. Both George and Cornelia Morgan con-

tinued to have a life-long interest in supporting theater arts.

Growing up with so much of nature and beauty in the farm's lovely setting had a profound influence on Cornelia. Ever after, she needed to have flowers and natural beauty somewhere in her life. She wanted her children to know something of what she had experienced. The St. Croix valley at Otisville provided her own family with a wonderful setting in which to learn the beauty and miracle of nature. There she and George built a little cottage with red doors and blue shutters, "Stuga" as one says in Swedish.

Nora and our mother, Cornelia, were not only sisters but also friends who shared play and thoughts with each other. Nora was a beautiful child. She too loved flowers and became knowledgeable about the varieties that her grandfather Baker had planted. She had artistic gifts,



Billy, Cornelia, and Nora in 1890.

arranging flower displays for the house and developing skills in arts and crafts. As a little girl, Nora played with dolls, but she preferred living creatures to stuffed ones. She dressed her little terrier in doll's clothing, put him in her baby carriage, and then wheeled him about the house and farm with little or no protest from the dog.

Nora, and indeed all the children, loved Horse Robert who was a "member of the family" from before our mother was born until she had finished high school. Horse Robert was the chief means of transportation, either by saddle



The Hollinshead farmhouse in 1903.

or by buggy, and he traveled many miles. We often were told by Gammy how Horse Robert knew just where to turn to reach the Baker lot in Oakland Cemetery where, as our mother used to say, "All St. Paul is buried."

'Daredevil' Dan

Uncle Dan Baker, nicknamed "Daredevil" Dan as an outrider for the Deadwood Stage, returned to the farm from Dakota once in a while. Sam Morgan remembers his great Uncle Dan saying to him as he was riding one day with him out to Stillwater: "I well recall my last trip out this road. A Deadwood friend of mine had asked me to check on his friend Cole Younger when I next returned to Minnesota so I hitched up Horse Robert and drove out to Stillwater to say 'Hello' to Cole Younger, who was serving a long prison term there." So Dan was able to tell his friend how that notorious member of the James Gang was doing after the fiasco of the failed Northfield Bank robbery of 1876. Judge Baker drove Horse Robert to the regular meetings of the Old

Settlers Association in downtown St. Paul to see his many friends. By 1890 the advent of the streetcars soon made public transportation available for everyone, but Robert was still important as the family's

friendly means of local transportation.

By 1908 the family had given up the farm and moved to Minneapolis where they lived at 707 Seventh Street Southeast, in a house next door to the home of Frank and Clara Morgan and their only son, George, the "boy next door." With all the lawyers there had been in the Hollinshead, Baker and Rice families, our mother Cornelia felt certain she was destined to marry a lawyer. That lawyer was George, who had shared many of her interests while they were classmates at the University of Minnesota.

Cornelia married George in 1910 when he secured a position with the Steel Corporation's Oliver Iron Mining Company in Duluth. Later that same year her brother, Billy, married Helen Lane who lived in the neighborhood, and her sister, Nora, married Billy's friend, Ted Pike. Grandfather Baker had died in October, 1909, only a few months before Cornelia's wedding. The period of "growing up" on "the farm" was over.

Uncovering a Mystery

In the case of our own family's farm, we long had wondered how the distinguished and at one time reputedly wealthy Judge Baker managed to die leaving essentially nothing. Weren't there substantial proceeds from the sale of this valuable real estate right in the



Cornelia Hollinshead at seventeen, perhaps upon graduation from high school. Ramsey Country Historical Society photo.



Nora Hollinshead in the early 1900s.



Nora, on Horse Robert, Cornelia, and Nora's little dog at far right.

heart of the Midway? There were few clues from the stories we were told by our parents or our grandmother. Some of us do recall our grandmother often mentioning her father's plans to take the whole family on a grand tour of Europe—but eventually only a visit to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 apparently was all that could be afforded. And 1893, of course was also the year of one of the country's periodic panics.

We wondered why, after the farm was sold, there was nothing left. Perhaps the place to uncover the mystery was in the real estate records relating to the land comprising the farm. When did our family leave the farm? What was realized from its sale? What became of the proceeds?

Our Own Cherry Orchard

Thanks to finding abstracts of the title records, it has been possible to reconstruct the story of how the farm was indeed lost very much like the cherry orchard in Chekhov's play of that title. It appears that beginning in the 1850s and continuing into the 1860s through a series of deeds, some directly from Alpheus R. French, the original patentee from the United States, Daniel A. J.

Baker and his wife, Cornelia C. Baker, became the owners of most of French's 160 acres on the western edge of Ramsey County.

Through all the years from at least the late 1860s and probably from as early as the middle 1850s and up until at least 1893, the years when our grandmother

and her children were growing up, most of this 160-acre farm was occupied and used for crops and pasture by the Baker and Hollinshead families, as evidenced by various affidavits, such as one dated August 17, 1910, by Cornelia A. Hollinshead. But untroubled as life on the farm may have seemed, its continued existence began to be threatened by the rapidly growing Twin Cities.

In 1879, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway, whose only line between St. Paul and Minneapolis had run through Mendota and Fort Snelling, began construction of its Short Line through the Midway. On May 30, 1879, Daniel A. J. Baker, his wife, and their then two surviving children, Dan and Cornelia, deeded a 100-foot-wide right-of-way across the southerly portions of the farm for not only the main line crossing the Mississippi but for its branch line into southeast Minneapolis. Grandmother always told us the railroad paid so little for these rights-of-way that it practically stole the land. Would our family have done better by insisting on an award in a condemnation proceeding? Who knows. The "taking," it must be remembered, occurred nearly a decade before St. Paul's boom of the late 1880s. At all events, our grandmother was treated, as she often told us, with a ride in the first



Nora, left, Cornelia, and the dogs on the porch of the Hollinshead farmhouse.

locomotive to cross the Short Line bridge over the Mississippi.

Nearly a decade later, in 1888, Daniel A. J. Baker, then a widower, deeded a right-of-way for a highway along the north side of its railroad line. This highway, of course, is now known as I-94. As we drive along it today, we know that as we pass the junction with 280, we are driving through the farm.

The Farm Platted

The late 1880s was the period of St. Paul's greatest growth, the decade when the first northern transcontinental railway, the Northern Pacific, reached the Pacific coast. A great celebration of that event took place in St. Paul in 1883. These were the years when James J. Hill, Archbishop John Ireland, and others envisioned relocating the state Capitol in the Merriam Park area. It is only reasonable to assume that D. A. J. Baker, with his long involvement in real estate, was an active participant in this exciting project which, or course, eventually came to naught. This also was the period when most of the farm was platted, even though cultivation of the platted areas apparently continued for several years before lots actually began to be sold. In the summer of 1888, much of the northerly part of the farm that Judge Baker had by then deeded to his daughter, Cornelia, was platted as Hollinshead's addition to Desnoyer Park. A year later, in the fall of 1889, Judge Baker platted much of the farm still owned by him as "Baker's Addition to the City of St. Paul." By this time, with so much of the farm now platted, were not Judge Baker and his daughter on the verge of becoming millionaires? In fact, we have found a report that in the 1880s, Judge Baker was worth \$600,000 plus, a *multimillionaire* in 1999 dollars.

But, alas, like Chekhov's cherry orchard, this farm, too, was destined to prove almost worthless to Baker and his heirs. How could this be? Again, the story is told in the Ramsey County title records.

From the beginning, we find records of mortgage after mortgage being put on these properties. In those days, the typical mortgage ran five years when the whole amount was due. Generally, unless



Young Bill Hollinshead posing as a desperado in 1903. This is how rural Ramsey County looked before the city overflowed the farmland that once surrounded present-day Highways 280 and I-94.

the mortgagor was in a position to pay off the mortgage, he simply refinanced with a new mortgage. This was all well and good so long as one could refinance. But, alas, in the nineteenth century in the United States a financial panic occurred about once a generation, most memorably in 1837, 1857, 1873, and 1893. These were all years of panic when suddenly there was no money to pay debts and foreclosures were almost inevitable.

Contemporaneously with the 1889 plat by Judge Baker, the judge on August 13, 1889, mortgaged the property on which his home was located to the David C. Bell Investment Company for \$7,000, followed shortly by a second mortgage to the same lender for \$12,000. These mortgages were then assigned to the Hennepin County Savings Bank. Then came the panic of 1893 when it was impossible to refinance. On January 26, 1894, Notice of Mortgage Sale was served on Daniel A. J. Baker and in due course the property was sold to the bank, subject to the usual right of redemption. There was no redemption and we find that property was thereafter sold off in lots.

Property with Problems

This was about the time our great-grandfather, now long a widower, moved to the home of his daughter, our grand-

mother, Cornelia A. Hollinshead, where our mother was growing up. Was the Hollinshead part of the original Baker acreage held free and clear of liens? Not at all. In fact, the property comprising the farm as our grandmother and her children knew it already had become a property with problems.

Apparently Judge Baker had been concerned from the beginning about his daughter's ability to hold onto the property he was giving to her. At the very time—September, 1882—that he was deeding the northern twenty-three acres of his daughter's portion of the farm to her outright, he was conveying the more southerly portion, running down to the Milwaukee Railroad tracks to men by the names of Henry L. Williams and Henry P. Goodenow, to be held in trust for his daughter, Cornelia. The trust deed provided that the trustees were to collect the rents on the property, pay taxes and assessments, and remit the balance to Cornelia A. Hollinshead, with the provision that she "could if she shall so elect occupy the said premises so long as such taxes and assessments are paid" and that such rents "shall be and remain clear of any debts which Cornelia has or may incur with her having the right to use the net rents for support of her family."

Unfortunately, this trust deed did not,



Cornelia Kneeland Baker, posing for a daguerreotype after 1866 when she was in her fifties.

as contemplated, save the farm from the tax collector. The northerly portion of the Hollinshead farm, which Cornelia's father had deeded directly to her, had been mortgaged before being platted. In 1893, the year of the panic, the mortgage was foreclosed, just as was the case with Judge Baker's property.

As to the remaining unplatted portion of the farm that had been placed in trust, the trustees did not pay or continue to pay the taxes assessed against it. How could Cornelia A. Hollinshead, now a widow with three children, pay years of back taxes? Apparently when the time came that what remained of the farm was finally to be sold for back taxes early in the new century, neither Cornelia nor her father, Daniel A. J. Baker, felt able to pay up what were now years of back taxes. The trustees apparently had never had the funds to pay them. Imminent loss of the farm loomed. Who could help?

At this critical moment, General John B. Sanborn, honored by a statue at Vicksburg for his part in the Union Army's successful siege of that city in 1863, came to the rescue by purchasing the property. Why did he do this? Undoubt-

edly, as a member of the family. His wife, Rachel Rice Sanborn, was a niece of Ellen Rice Hollinshead, the mother of Henry Rice Hollinshead, Cornelia's now long deceased husband.

After getting clear title to the farm, General Sanborn and his wife leased the farm back to Cornelia. The lease, dated November 1, 1903, ran for five years, ending on November 1, 1908, and gave Cornelia the privilege of purchasing the farm at any time during the term of the lease for \$1,800. On the death of the general, the title to the farm, subject to the lease, was conveyed by Rachel Rice San-



William Henry Hollinshead, around 1910.

born, as executrix of his will, to the general's son and namesake, John B. Sanborn, later a distinguished judge of the United States District Court for Minnesota and eventually a judge of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

An Encroaching City

As November 1, 1908, drew near, urbanization was encroaching from every direction. The city was putting in new sewers. Additional rail spurs were about to be laid down. The farm's days obvi-

ously were numbered. Late in 1907, one George A. Meyer, secured a deed to the property and shortly thereafter, on August 18, 1908, deeded the property to Winston Bros. Company, except only the dwelling house on it "which is to be vacated and removed by owner before November 1, 1908," the expiration date of the Sanborn lease. Thus ended the last farm in St. Paul's Midway and a chapter in this city's history.

What, if anything, did our grandmother or her children get for the farm? Perhaps at least some part of the \$7,232 cited as the amount of George Meyer's mortgage given to Cornelia A. Hollinshead at the time of his purchase and apparently paid off so far as Cornelia was concerned shortly before November 1, 1908. If such is the case, what, if anything, was received by our grandmother may have been used up in the family's living expenses in the southeast Minneapolis house where they lived between the time Judge Baker, his daughter and grandchildren left the farm, and the breakup of the family with his death in 1909, followed by the marriages of all three children in 1910. By then, there was nothing left but memories.

Samuel Morgan is a retired St. Paul attorney and a frequent contributor to this magazine. His brother, Henry H. Morgan, who now lives in New York, is a psychologist and author of Four Pioneer Families of Minnesota and Their Puritan and Quaker Heritage. The book, which is the story of the Morgan brothers' Hollinshead, Baker, Rice and Kneeland families, is available at the Ramsey County Historical Society offices, 323 Landmark Center, St. Paul, MN, 55102. Cost: \$49.95. Proceeds go to the Society.



Three generations at the farm, circa 1903: Cornelia Baker Hollinshead, center, with Ellen Rice Hollinshead, left, D. A. J. Baker, right, Nora and Cornelia kneeling. Billy Hollinshead took this picture. See article beginning on page 13.

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

Published by the Ramsey County Historical Society
323 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

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