

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

**Josias King —  
First of the First**

*Page 18*

**Winter, 1992-1993**

Volume 27, Number 4

**Henry Bosse and the Mississippi's  
Passage Into the Age of Industry**

*Page 4*



*St. Paul, photographed in 1885 by Henry Bosse. Photo from the St. Paul District, United States Corps of Engineers. See article beginning on Page 4.*



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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 27, Number 4

Winter, 1992-1993

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## Books, Etc.

### *Lost Twin Cities*

Larry Millett  
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical  
Society, 1992

Reviewed by Andrew G. Earhart

**I**t has been said that a society is not truly established until it has developed its architectural character.

Great halls of exhibition are built to display sculpture, paintings, tapestries and other collections of artifacts from past periods and bygone cultures. Other structures house great musical ensembles and establish a venue for the performing arts. Museums display the histories of industry and science, planetariums provide access to the heavens, aquariums display the most exotic fish and zoological gardens bring to us the most obscure of the animals of the world.

But what of the art of our cities—the sculptures in which we live? We experience history each day as we pass through the built environment. Our society has created an architecture but it, for the most part, goes unnoticed. Yet surrounding us lies perhaps our most meaningful museum, with exhibits that represent the essence of our being, at once letting us experience the past, the present and glimpses of the future.

But of the past, there is little that remains. In St. Paul, aside from Lower-town and Summit Avenue there are only isolated examples of the architectural heritage that would explain much of our social progress. To the rescue comes Larry Millett, architectural columnist for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* with a comprehensive guide to the architectural transition of St. Paul and Minneapolis from the mid-1800s through the present. His book, *Lost Twin Cities*, is at once thorough but not rigorous, with just



*The Andrew Muir house, 545 Summit Avenue, from Larry Millett's Lost Twin Cities. Ramsey County Historical Society photograph.*

enough depth to provide a meaningful understanding of the elements of our architectural past that are forever gone. Treated with equal balance are not only the buildings of Minneapolis and St. Paul but also the social development and architectural influences relevant to the growth of each city.

Although one-third of the book is dedicated to the period between 1880 and 1900, there is sufficient detail to provide a well-rounded tour through time from the settlements at St. Anthony and the Lower Landing through the construction of the Norwest Tower of 1991. The peri-

od immediately prior to the twentieth century deserves the focus that it is given, for it was that period that set the stage for the cities as they now exist and was, perhaps for both, their most dynamic period of growth.

When writing of architecture, it is easy to slip into the realm of exotic academia. The language of architecture can at times be obscure and tedious. Millett has taken obvious pains to avoid these pitfalls. The book is easily read and well illustrated with many photographs not frequently published. The reference notes and bibliography contain more than



enough material for anyone who wishes to study more intensely one or more specific buildings.

I found one of the most enjoyable aspects of the book to be the ability to start reading at any page without any need for an understanding of material presented earlier. Many will read the book cover to cover. All of us will experience a panorama of history and a sense of our social and cultural roots. Millett's credo through six years of research and writing is best conveyed in his own words:

"Whatever else they may be, cities are structures in time, where past and present mingle and the future gapes from empty holes awaiting yet another round of development. But time moves with special and destructive speed in American cities, often erasing our monuments before we have a chance to appreciate them."

Millett has written an important book that also is a work of art. Do we dare listen to his message? Have we learned the importance of preserving historically meaningful structures? Will the Assumption churches and the IDS Towers of today appear in a similar book seventy-five years from now? Only time will tell.

*Andrew G. Earhart is a preservation advocate who writes on the buildings of downtown St. Paul.*

### *Centennial Booklet*

St. Paul: St. Peter Claver Church

*Reviewed by Arthur C. Mc Watt*

On the eve of their centennial, the parishioners of St. Paul's earliest Catholic interracial parish published, with the aid of Dick Bernard as general editor and Father Kevin McDonough, parish priest, a fascinating history of St. Peter Claver Catholic Church.

The booklet consists of interviews with parishioners about their memories of parish life and their feelings about past spiritual leaders. It also includes highlights of parish history and a listing of major events in the life of the church.

The booklet opens with a series of remembrances by some older parishioners of the life of their beloved



*The Ryan Hotel's sumptuous (for that period) lobby as it looked around 1890 and pictured in Lost Twin Cities. Ramsey County Historical Society photograph.*

and diminutive black pastor, Father Stephen Theobald, known affectionately as the "little giant." Theobald was a protege of Archbishop John Ireland, who persuaded him to leave Montreal, Canada, and a career in law and journalism, and to enroll at the St. Paul Seminary, where he made a brilliant record. The opinions of those parishioners who remembered him ranged from those who thought he was overly doctrinaire to those who thought he should be canonized. All felt he was a pious and caring person who always was willing to stand as godfather for those in need of one; on more than one occasion he provided communion clothes for those in need.

The second section of the booklet deals with the Luger brothers who served the parish as priests for almost three decades. Jerome, the older of the two brothers, established new activities for young parishioners, including a horseback riding club; the parish's first Worn-a-Bit Shop, which helped finance parish needs; and a male chorus, led by John

Whitaker, which sang throughout the archdiocese.

He also planned and organized the building of the first parish school, which opened in 1950, and a convent for the African-American Oblate Sisters of Providence, who formed the school's first staff.

Jerome's brother, Arnold, completed the construction of a new church three years after Jerome's death in 1954. He served long enough to see parishioner Dr. Charles H. Williams designated a Knight of St. Gregory by Pope Paul VI in 1964.

In the early 1960s, Fathers Edward Grzeskowiak and Edward Flahavan served the parish while active in the civil rights struggle. They both helped develop the Twin City Catholic Interracial Council. During this period, lay leadership flourished under the guidance of Owen Howell, Charles Graham, Hugh Schuck, Sr., Isabel Gallaway, Walter and Carole McFarland and William and Fenita Foley. Many of them were important in the fight to depress I-94 after early plan-



ners had suggested an over-pass at Lexington Avenue.

During the 1970s, many parishioners worked to supplement church income through bingo games, the Donut Factory and the school's downstairs bowling alley. In the 1980s, the church became more involved in the Black Catholic conferences, with Teresa Mardenborough playing a prominent role in arranging support.

In its final section, the booklet presents a more formal history of the parish. It describes how the church received its unusual interracial status after the canonization of Brother Martin de Porris, whom Father Arnold Luger called "our co-patron." Father Luger attended the canonization in Rome in 1962.

The booklet also chronicles key events in the life of the parish, beginning in 1888 when it was a mission, and it notes that parishioner Frederick L. McGhee was not only Minnesota's first militant civil rights lawyer but also the state's first influential African-American Democrat. It highlights the life of Toni Stone, another parishioner, who became famous as America's first professional woman baseball player.

Finally, the booklet pays special tribute to Sister Elaine Frederick, who took over the struggling parish school in 1965. She introduced Project Discovery and turned the school into an innovative consolidated school.

*Arthur C. Mc Watt was the author of the article, "St. Paul's Resourceful African-American Community," published in the Spring, 1991, issue of Ramsey County History.*

### *The Minnesota History Calendar 1993*

compiled by A. E. Greiner  
S. K. Press, Box 4703  
St. Paul Minnesota 55104

*Reviewed by Thomas C. Buckley*

A few months ago a newspaper article appeared which reported that when compared to most other Ameri-



*Cover photo for the Minnesota History Calendar for 1993. This is "Picture Rock at Crooked Lake" (Return of the Voyageur) and painted in 1947 by Francis Lee Jaqua. From the Minnesota Historical Society's collections.*

cans, Minnesotans had a more highly developed sense of the special nature of their state. This may be attributed to several factors, ranging from our "continental" climate to a long tradition of vigorous state and county historical societies. Yet, in spite of this heightened sense of uniqueness, it has been virtually impossible to find any Minnesota chronology boasting more than thirty or forty entries. For several years the morning "Almanac" program on WCCO radio would mention a Minnesota event among its list of national and international happenings. However, in recent years that program has been given over to playing extracts from once popular melodies and old radio / TV programs.

Now, for 1993 the daily historic anniversary gap has been filled by "The Minnesota History Calendar." Minnesotans can set off every day with an old festival to celebrate, something particularly necessary from February into April when winter lingers, spring delays, and slush abounds.

Those who particularly like to celebrate centennials will note that we have at

least three in 1993. February 4, April 4, and June 18, respectively, will mark the 100th anniversaries of the designation of the Showy Lady Slipper as the state flower, the adoption of the state flag, and the great fire in Virginia. For 1994, the centennial planners can use the calendar to remind them to prepare for two more: the Hinckley Fire on September 1, and the formation of Roseau County on December 31. In addition, Stillwater can prepare to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of their first saw mill on March 30, 1994; and Minnesotans around the Northwest Company fur trading post at Pine City, and those at the Grand Portage National Monument, can celebrate the 200th anniversary of the canoemen's demand for higher wages on August 3, 1994.

Minnesota history buffs may want to check their birthdays against the Calendar. For years I have celebrated mine, February 15, with that of William Watts Folwell, the founding of Mankato, and the beginning of construction of the Northern Pacific Railway, because WCCO radio told me so. Now that list



must be reduced, since the calendar says Folwell was born on February 14. So those born on Valentine's Day will now be able to celebrate their birth along with those of Folwell, and the late comedian Jack Benny.

For Minnesotans who prefer to look at works of art, the calendar features twelve paintings from the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society. Most striking are those for March, "Duluth;" April, "Picture Rock at Crooked Lake;" May, "River Valley View," particularly for those inconvenienced by the repairs to the Mendota Bridge; June, "Old Home of General Sibley at Mendota;" and October, "St. Anthony Falls: Reconstructing the Falls."

Approximately sixty percent of the Minnesota Historical Society's 5,500 historic paintings, prints and drawings are of scenes. With a Lilliputian exhibit area in the old building, but acres of wall space in the new one, we will hopefully see more put on display. Until that time, the Minnesota History Calendar producers should have plenty to select from for future years. Furthermore, as historic entries are added to each day of the year, and as more paintings are made available, a profusely illustrated almanac should be considered by the publishers of the calendar.

*Thomas C. Buckley is an associate professor in social and behavioral sciences and adjunct associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota and a frequent contributor to Ramsey County History.*

### *Minnesota Collects*

Jack El-Hai  
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1992

*Reviewed by Liz Holum Johnson*

As a baby-boomer growing up in Minnesota, part of my childhood play time was spent assembling Cooties, a toy developed by a Plymouth, Minnesota, company which graces the cover of *Minnesota Collects*. *Minnesota Collects* gives readers a savory glance at the

Minnesota Historical Society's tremendous collections, inviting them to visit the newly opened Minnesota History Center in St. Paul.

A quick peek through the pages of *Minnesota Collects* evokes fond memories of past childhoods and life measuring experiences, regardless of age. A more in-depth examination urges us to pore over the book cover-to-cover looking for the familiar. On our way we're constantly surprised by the unusual mix of elements found in Minnesota's past.

Within twelve separate themes, the author and staff at the Minnesota Historical Society seek to give readers a taste of Minnesota history richly illustrated through the collections found at the society. It is no small task. The society's collections consist of 550,000 books, 37,000 maps, 250,000 photographs, 5,500 artworks, 1,650 oral history interviews, 4.5 million newspaper issues, 38,000 cubic feet of manuscripts, 45,000 cubic feet of government records, 165,000 museum objects and 800,000 archaeological artifacts. The twelve chapters in *Minnesota Collects* provide a splendid visual history of Minnesota life shaped by towns, industries, transportation, leisure activities, occupations, ethnic backgrounds, politics, sports, the arts, early exploration, wars and more.

For example, "The Great Outdoors" not only visually records the history of Minnesota's waterways, but delves into tourism, the forest service and environmental battles. In "The First People" we learn about the Jeffers Petroglyph site, Minnesota's finest preserved collection of Indian rock carvings located in Cottonwood County—illustrating the fact that the society's collections are found not only at the new History Center but throughout the state.

A dress constructed from butter cartons worn by Mary Ann Titrud, Princess Kay of the Milky Way, at the 1965 Minnesota State Fair, represents "On the Farm." "Getting From Here to There" is not only depicted by the society's vast collection of railroad records, the largest of its kind in the nation, but also features a letter from Amelia Earhart to the head of Northwest Airlines and an early vintage snowmobile. Minnesota was the

first northern state to volunteer soldiers to the Civil War. In "War Front, Home Front" the collection features the wheel of the USS *Minnesota*, a ship involved in the famous Civil War battle between the *Merrimack* and the *Monitor*, two iron-clad ships that battled for three hours on March 8, 1862, near Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Although the "hardest part of producing this book [was] the task of selecting a few things to represent the breadth and depth of this tangible heritage," the visual sampling chosen represents a rich view of Minnesota's legacy and urges the reader to experience more by visiting the new History Center and other sites around the state.

*Liz Holum Johnson is archivist for the H. B. Fuller Company and a member of the Ramsey County Historical Society's board of directors.*

\* \* \*

Ted Hall has written his second book since his retirement as editor-owner of *The Rainy Lake Chronicle* in Ranier, Minnesota. *Growing with the Grass* is a tale of Old Frontenac, a collection of comfortable and warm memories of his childhood in the village along the Mississippi river's Lake Pepin in the 1930s.

Hall introduces the reader to his family, his school teacher and the church's handyman/once-a-year Santa Claus and to the acquisition of the family cow:

"... Into this orderly bovine society came a flighty young Guernsey named Esmeralda—100% Pure, whose family tree included several 4-H Club prize winners, herself not included but nevertheless haughty. She might have lived out her life in obscurity in a big dairy herd if my mother hadn't been on the prowl for antique furniture at the farm auction where Esmeralda—100% Pure was on the block for sale."

Hall was a reporter and editor for several New Jersey newspapers before joining *TIME* and later starting *The Rainy Lake Chronicle*.





*Henry Bosse's photograph of St. Paul's old High Bridge after it opened to horse-and-buggy traffic in 1889. Because the bridge offered easy access to the Cherokee Heights neighborhood, settlement of this section of the West Side began in earnest. A modern bridge replaced the old bridge in 1985. See article beginning on page 4. Photograph from the St. Paul District, United States Corps of Engineers.*

**R.C.H.S.**  
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