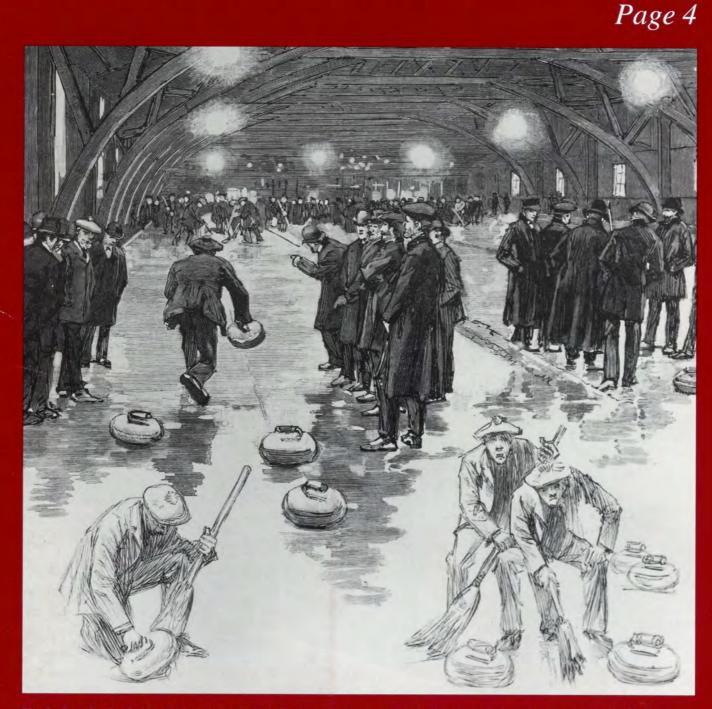


The Bungalow Craze And How It Swept The Twin Cities— Page 15

Winter, 1996

Volume 30, Number 4

St. Paul Curling Club's Colorful History—



The St. Paul Curling Club in 1892, a sketch by T. de Thulstrup for Harper's Weekly. See page 4 for the history of curling in St. Paul.

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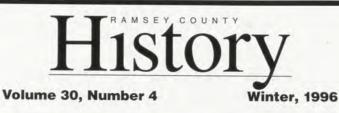
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Reviewed by Colles Baxter

A Message from the Editorial Board

amily roots are an important part of the texture of history in St. Paul and Ramsey County. Recently the Board of Directors of the Ramsey County Historical Society learned that the late Mary Daggett Sheehan (Mrs. Cyril Sheehan) made a bequest to the Society in her will in memory of her grandparents, Daniel W. and Mary Collins Kelly. Born in Ireland in 1839, Daniel Kelly came to the United States about 1844. Initially he and his brothers lived in New Jersey, but four Kelly brothers, including Daniel, migrated to St. Paul in 1856. There Kelly completed high school and then worked as a contractor hauling supplies to the West. Later he was successful in the hotel, real estate, and insurance business. Daniel Kelly died in 1922.

The Ramsey County Historical Society greatly appreciates the generosity of Mrs. Mary D. Sheehan. The lead article in this issue of our magazine tells the story of the St. Paul Curling Club. Given the population of St. Paul in the 1880s, many of the early members of the Curling Club probably knew Daniel Kelly as a business associate. Together the memory of Daniel Kelly and our article recall a prosperous era in St. Paul's history that could enthusiastically support the formation of a sporting institution such as the Curling Club just over a century ago.

John M. Lindley, chairman, Editorial Board

WARREN SCHABER 1933-1995

The Ramsey County Historical Society lost a good friend when Ramsey County Commissioner Warren Schaber died last October at the age of sixty-two.



The Society came to know him well during the twenty years he served on the Board of Ramsey County Commissioners. We were warmed by his steady support of the Society and its work.

A thoughtful Warren Schaber at his first County Board meeting, January 6, 1975. Photo courtesy of Jan Geisen, Ramsey County Records manager.

We remember the big things: the long series of badlyneeded restoration projects at the Gibbs Farm Museum, which

he steadfastly supported, both as chair of the County Board's Finance Committee and as chair of the board itself. We also remember the little things, such as the time squirrels, trapped in the schoolhouse, chewed through the window sills and emergency funds were desperately needed for repairs. That brought a chuckle from Commissioner Schaber as he supported our request.

While he was skilled at directing the County's budgetary process, he also was a warm, generous man who understood the role history should play in the community he served so well. One of his great loves was the City Hall/County Courthouse, and he was the driving force behind the \$48 million restoration of that art deco jewel where he spent his political life. For our part, we documented the restoration, as well as the history of the Courthouse itself, in the Fall, 1993, issue of *Ramsey County History*.

He also was instrumental in negotiating with West Publishing to have the current Government Center West building donated to Ramsey County. The center houses Ramsey County's records, whose preservation is of immense importance to historians.

Warren Schaber was, in the words of John Finley, his fellow commissioner, ". . . the best of what you see in Ramsey County and St. Paul." He epitomized what people think of Minnesotans, and he will be missed. V.B.K.

Books, Etc.

Seth Eastman, A Portfolio of North American Indians

Forward by Duncan MacMillan Preface by Sheila ffolliot and Shepard Krech III

Essays by Sarah E. Boehme, Christian F. Feest, Patricia Condon Johnston Afton Historical Society Press, 1995 195 pages, 100 illustrations (85 color) \$75 (cloth)

Dahkotah, or Life and Legends of the Sioux Around Fort Snelling

Mary Henderson Eastman Preface by Rena Neumann Cohen Afton Historical Society Press, 1995 229 pages; \$45 (cloth)

Reviewed by Colles Baxter

The publication of Seth Eastman, A Portfolio of North American Indians, in tandem with Dahkotah, or Life and Legends of the Sioux Around Fort Snelling is the manifestation of good will benefactors who last fall rescued an historical collection from being sold down the proverbial river.* When the James J. Hill Reference Library in St. Paul determined the need to sell its collection of Seth Eastman watercolors, the largest assemblage of this artist's drawings anywhere, and more than 600 books, Duncan MacMillan and his wife, Sarah, stepped forward to ensure that some of these treasures would remain in Minnesota for at least some undetermined time.

The MacMillans have proved themselves to be both sympathetic and gen-

*Some of this collection is now for sale at a book dealers in New Orleans.

erous trustees of this material. They have not only seen to this tandem publication that enhances our appreciation and understanding of the Seth Eastman watercolors and what they represent historically and culturally, but MacMillan, following his wife's death, has lent the majority of these sketches to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts where a selection is currently on view and where the rest can be seen by appointment in the Department of Prints and Drawings. It is well worth the trip. This reviewer encourages anyone interested in the history and culture of the Plains Indians in general and the Lakota in particular, or anyone interested in the medium of watercolor and the marvelous examples of an accomplished hand working in that medium, to go see these wondrous works. Further, for the geographer or historian interested in the lay of the land in these parts during the 1840s, these watercolors, washes, and drawings represent the only means of seeing what this territory once was.

Seth Eastman, A Portfolio of North American Indians reproduces fifty-six of the sixty-two Seth Eastman watercolors and drawings that James J. Hill collected. The majority of these were executed between 1841 and 1848 when Captain Eastman was stationed at Fort Snelling and later served as models for his illustrations of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's six volume work, Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States. Our appreciation of both the historic and artistic value of these marvelous sketches is enhanced by a forward, preface, and essays, as well as scholarly annotations accompanying each reproductive plate. In publishing these sketches, MacMillan, in his forward, states his goal of presenting Eastman's drawings to a wide audience. His generosity is spurred by the conviction of their monumental worth both as works of American art and as documentary evidence of primarily Dakota and Ojibwa life in Minnesota during the 1840s. Eastman's unromanticized, objective observation of what he saw is noted as exceptional for his time.

In their preface, Sheila ffolliot and Shepard Krech III, the great granddaughter of James J. Hill and the great grandson of one of Hill's friends and business associates, recount the October, 1994, sale of the Seth Eastman watercolors and related books from the Hill Reference Library. These holdings on the history of North America, Minnesota, and the American Indian represent "virtually all the rare materials from [the library's] original collections," the authors note. Assured that the "more significant" volumes are duplicated in neighboring institutions, one still feels sadness that this repository of Hill's original collection, the very books and documents he envisioned making available to those interested in our local, national, and native history, may soon be totally dispersed.

Because this wonderful collection of Eastman's watercolors was assembled by James Jerome Hill, it is James Jerome Hill as railroad magnate, the sometime business partner and correspondent of J. P. Morgan, and the collector of real estate, books, and art, who is the logical focus of the preface to this book. Using documented facts and family history, the authors present a sympathetic view of, and insights into, the man himself and what drove his will to collect. As a result, we understand the context of these watercolors as visual documents of Plains Indians and their fast disappearing way of life and thus appreciate them as an extraordinary compliment to Hill's collection of books on related subjects.

In "An Officer and an Illustrator on the Indian Frontier," one of the book's essays, Sarah Boehme focuses on Seth Eastman's career, tracing his development from his schooling at West Point from 1824 to 1829 to his government commissions for the Capitol in Washington, D. C., at the end of his life. His West Point art courses, under the instruction of French-born Thomas Gimbrede, included the standard copying of reproductive prints of the major western European painters.

This experience was later enhanced when Eastman returned to West Point upon Gimbrede's unexpected death on Christmas Eve in 1832 to fill in as drawing instructor; consequently he taught alongside Charles Robert Leslie and Robert Walter Weir. Leslie had just returned from London and the expatriate circle of Benjamin West, Washington Allston, and Samuel F. B. Morse. At that time the rigid hierarchy of subject matter propounded by the art academies was beginning to break down and Leslie brought back ideas of an expanded subject matter that promoted the familiar, be it from contemporary literature or contemporary life.

Robert Weir found models for the third class course of figure study in books of outline drawings illustrating poetry that John Flaxman and Friedrich A. M. Retzsch, both contemporary artists, had recently published. Boehme points out that these examples were important to Eastman less as standards for handling than as examples of illustration for a specific text.

West Point cadets were trained in the general art of draftsmanship and the particular and practical skills of topographical draftsmanship. In fact, Boehme indicates, landscape and topographical classes preceded those of figural studies at West Point. Eastman's interest and ability in topographical

studies culminated in his authorship of an illustrated book, *A Treatise on Topographical Drawing*, published in New York by Wiley and Putnam in 1837. It became the Academy's official text.

Eastman's reputation as an artist began to grow as he found opportunities both to exhibit and publish his work. The art unions, a recent art market development that promoted American subject matter and genre scenes, purchased art for distribution to their members via lottery. Eastman found homes for his paintings through the Western Art Union in Cincinnati, as well as the American Art Union in New York City. For the latter, his wife, Mary Henderson Eastman, aware of the problems of recognition beyond the Midwest, offered to supply explanatory texts when required.

Another audience was found through his illustrations of five of his wife's publications: The Dahcotah, or The Life and Legends of the Sioux Around Fort Snelling, (1849); The Romance of Indian Life, with other tales. Selections from the Iris, an Illuminated Souvenir, (1853); The American Aboriginal Port Folio,(1853); Chircora, and Other Regions of the Conquerors and Conquered, (1854); and Jenny Wade of Gettysburg, (1864).

Schoolcraft's six volumes (1851–1857) certainly constitute Eastman's best known, and probably most widely distributed, illustrated work. His reputation for all time was guaranteed by this publication whose illustration depends largely upon the sketches and watercolors made in Minnesota in the 1840s and which constitute the major part of the MacMillan collection.

Sarah Boehme's detailed analysis of the Schoolcraft volumes is preceded by an enlightening discussion of Indian subject matter that preceded Eastman's work. She points out the long link of these images, from the earliest New World explorer-discoverer accounts to a written text. The United States government, as settlers moved west and claimed more territory, played a significant role in promoting the illustrated documentation of the land and native tribes. The government's interest, of course, was not purely scientific; military purposes also were served. Expedition leaders were charged to sketch Indian leaders, as well as Indians sitting in council or celebrating their festivals. Samuel Seymour's watercolors from this 1819-1820 expedition to the Yellowstone River were later published as illustrations to the naturalist Edwin James' report.

Through the offices of Thomas L. McKenney, who headed first the Bureau of Indian Trade and then the Office of Indian Affairs (from where else?) the Department of War), artifacts were collected for the Archives of the American Indian. Two collections of portraits of Indian leaders were commissioned as well. Individual leaders who came to Washington as part of tribal delegations were portrayed by Charles Bird King, while James Otto Lewis was delegated to paint the portraits of Indians attending the councils at Prairie du Chien in 1825. Ultimately, McKenny published these portraits by King and Lewis and a number of other artists, with a text by James Hall, under the title: History of the Indian Tribes of the United States with Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of the Principle Chiefs (three volumes, 1836-1844).

As more comprehensive recorders of the American Indian, George Catlin and Karl Bodmer stand out as the immediate predecessors of Seth Eastman. Between 1830 and 1836 Catlin portrayed Indians, their ceremonies and customs, from more than fifty tribes. His 1841 publication, Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Conditions of the North American Indians, made his reputation. The naturalist Maximilian, Prince of Weid's Travel in Inner North America in the Years 1832 to 1834, with illustrations by Karl Bodmer, was published first in Germany (1834-1841), then in France (1840-1843) and England (1843).

Boehme, in remarking about the "visual presence" of Bodmer's portraits, notes that as these volumes were produced for the western market, it is unlikely Eastman saw them. The publica-



Seth Eastman's watercolor, "Dacotah Encampment," circa 1851-1857. Unfortunately, this black-and-white copy doesn't do justice to the original. Reproduced from Seth Eastman, A Portfolio of North American Indians, courtesy of Afton Historical Society Press.

tion does suggest, however, the general interest in the topic—not just as documentaries but also as travelogues from unknown and, therefore, exotic realms.*

Up to this time, the American Indian was largely portrayed through portraiture. Seth Eastman's depictions advance a very different picture. This artist, from his acquaintance with the Dakota, Ojibwa, and Winnebago, presented the American Indian as part of the greater whole—as individuals in nature or as participants in a group activity. That Eastman gained first-hand knowledge of Indians in the Midwest, Southeast (Seminoles in Florida), and Southwest (Comanches in Texas) due

*This reviewer suspects that both Schoolcraft and Eastman knew of the Maximilian/Bodmer volumes. All three editions were collected by the Library of Congress before 1900. It seems reasonable that this library, which served members of Congress, including the War Department, would have been interested in acquiring the information the books contained. It is just possible that these volumes, on top of Catlin's and others, might have spurred the federal government to consider underwriting an encyclopedic account of the North American Indian, his customs and way of life. to his military assignments, plus the fact that he was still in the pay of the army, must have been persuasive arguments in his finally procuring the assignment of illustrator for Schoolcraft's mammoth project. Schoolcraft, too, was familiar with his subject. He had worked as an Indian agent and then had gathered statistics for Congress on Indian tribes.

Seth Eastman, for the first time in his life working full time as an artist, spent five years on the illustrations for Schoolcraft's six volumes. Boehme points out that depending on their own respective and scattered knowledge, as well as reports sent in from the field, their coverage of their subjects was uneven. The analysis of these volumes is detailed and fascinating—from a look at its sources and organization to its perspective born of strongly-held views on Christianity.

For the next ten years or so, Eastman pursued military assignments to Texas, Washington, D. C. (twice), Minnesota, Utah, Maine, and New Hampshire. During that period, his illustrations for the Schoolcraft books reappeared in several of Mary Eastman's publications, much to the consternation of Schoolcraft, who wished to use them to his own ends.**

From 1867-1869 Eastman worked on a commission for a series of nine paintings for the House Committee on Indian Affairs in the Capitol. His illustrations for Schoolcraft again served as a basis for these paintings, as they did for a series of seventeen paintings of military forts which he executed for the House Committee on Military Affairs.

Christian Feest, in his "Introduction to the Plates," dates the drawings in the Hill-MacMillan collection to 1849-1855, identifies six different categories of drawings, and lists the publications in which they appeared. The complicated publication history of the Schoolcraft volumes is specifically detailed. Also listed are public collections that house other Eastman drawings used for the Schoolcraft work. Scholarly essays accompany each image, and care has been taken to identify, under each plate, all publications in which each Eastman drawing is reproduced. Be it a map, scenes of village life, customs or ceremonies, Indian legends, pictographic systems, or artifacts, Feest's commentary is always fascinating and instructive.

In "He Chased Indians," Particia Condon Johnston's essay, she reminds us first of Seth Eastman's era, politically and artistically, then proceeds to give the reader a sense of the man himself—the soldier who also painted. Details of family history reveal a large patrician family who arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony from Wiltshire, England, in 1638.

In 1824, at the age of sixteen, Seth Eastman entered West Point, not Bowdoin College, as his father had preferred, and remained there for five years. Graduating as a second lieutenant, Eastman was sent first to Prairie du Chien and then, in the spring of

**Schoolcraft ultimately won the rights to Eastman's engraved plates. 1830, to Fort Snelling. At this time, some 7,000 Dakota were still living in the Minnesota River valley much as they had been for generations. Johnston describes their yearly cycle of activities and also presents a picture of the military officer's life on the frontier. Mary Nancy Eastman, a daughter born in 1831 of a liaison with Stands-Like-a-Spirit, the third daughter of Chief Cloudman at Lake Calhoun, was both acknowledged and provided for by Eastman.*

From late in 1831 to 1833, Eastman was assigned topographical duties in Louisiana and Connecticut before he was called back to West Point where he served as a drawing assistant until 1838. In 1835 he married Mary Henderson, the daughter of West Point's assistant surgeon, Dr. Thomas Henderson. Promoted to first lieutenant, Eastman continued his study of art by taking private lessons in oil painting from Robert Weir, West Point's newly appointed drawing master.

In 1838 the National Academy in New York exhibited eight of Eastman's drawings. Later that year he was promoted to captain and packed off to the Seminole War in Florida. In the fall of 1841 he was assigned to Fort Snelling. His wife and three children (eventually there would be five) accompanied him. The 1837 treaty with the Dakota (the first to promise annuity payments), the 1838 war between the Dakota and Ojibwa, and the popular tourist expeditions by steamboat from St. Louis to Fort Snelling combined to force distrust and change upon the people and the land.

The 400 sketches Eastman had accumulated by 1846 he sought to give *en bloc* to a distinguished college in exchange for the educations of his children. This did not happen. When the publishers Wiley and Putnum then declined to buy a hundred of Eastman's views for a proposed book, Eastman sold the entire group to his friend, the artist Henry Lewis who was working on a panorama of the Mississippi.

In 1848 Eastman was reassigned to Texas; Mary and the children returned

East where she campaigned to have her husband assigned as illustrator for Schoolcraft's project. Finally granted a five-month furlough, Eastman returned East, moved to Washington, D. C., with his family and began work on the illustrations.

After five years of work on the project, Eastman criss-crossed the country on military assignments for the next twelve years. Then he returned to Washington to execute commissions for paintings at the Capitol. Of the pictures of military forts he was painting for the House Committee on Military Affairs, Eastman had saved his painting of West Point, his favorite, for last. On August 31, 1875, with the painting complete, Seth Eastman died at his easel.

* * *

Rena Neumann Coen, in her preface to *Dahkota or Life and Legends of the Sioux Around Fort Snelling*, gives an engaging account of the remarkable woman who was Mary Henderson Eastman. Her history is pieced together here from known events in her life, particularly her relatively frequent household moves, her letters, and her publications.

Like Seth Eastman, Mary Henderson's background was privileged. She is revealed as a young woman of intellect and some spunk. At Fort Snelling she mastered her duties as a captain's wife and mother of their children while befriending the Dakota, learning their language, and recording their customs and legends. As her husband's artistic career blossomed, Mary Eastman took on the role of agent-manager. She apparently carried on a lengthy correspondence with the head of the art unions; before their demise in 1852, these associations managed to sell a number of Eastman paintings.

A circular from Schoolcraft seeking information on Indians of the upper Mississippi announced his huge project to Eastman, who then applied for the

*It is interesting that her son, Charles Eastman, having studied at Dartmouth and Boston University Medical School, became a frontier physician and author. job of illustrator and was turned down. Mary moved to Washington, D. C., and "set up camp." She campaigned for a transfer and then a furlough for Eastman, seeking repeatedly the assistance of Henry H. Sibley, delegate to Congress from Minnesota Territory. He ultimately complied; his request was denied, also, but Eastman was granted a furlough nevertheless. It is not clear how the assignment to the Office of Indian Affairs was finally arranged, but Eastman began work on his illustrations for the Schoolcraft volumes in late December, 1849, or early January, 1850. Mary Eastman believed Sibley's letter had been instrumental and promptly sent him a letter of thanks.

A lengthy discussion of Mary Henderson Eastman as an author reveals insights into her character, as well as her ability to pursue her own career, something she saw as a financial necessity. Eastman's military pay wasn't quite adequate to support his family. A woman of strong convictions, she also was capable of change. The publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin in March of 1852 evidently riled Mary's southern juices. Five months later she had produced Aunt Phillis's Cabin: or Southern Life as It Really Is, an apparently weak tale defending slavery as an evil but economic necessity. A different tune is sung in Jenny Wade at Gettysburg. Published in 1864, this poem bespeaks a patriotic outlook supportive of the Union forces, as one might expect of the wife and mother of Union soldiers.

This edition of *Dahkotah*... is the first reprinting of Mary Eastman's book since its publication in 1849. The original contained only four chromolithographic reproductions, while the present volume fairly bursts with twenty-two reproductions of Seth Eastman's watercolors. The originals of the two illustrations in Dr. Coen's text belong to the Duncan MacMillan collection; the remaining twenty-one reproductions, one heading Mary Eastman's introduction and each of the nineteen legends (an enlargement of another serving as the background for the title page) are part of the Minnesota Historical Society's collection. The dedication, to Henry H. Sibley, and the editor's preface of the original publication have been omitted in this republication.

Mrs. C. M. Kirland's preface is instructive. From her writing, it is evident that, as editor, she had two goals in mind. She sought an objective account based on first-hand knowledge and was proud to announce that Mary Eastman "has no occasion to present the Indian in theatrical garb—a mere thing of paint and feathers . . .".

Mary Henderson Eastman precedes her recounting of the Dakota legends with an "Introduction and Preliminary Remarks on the Customs of the Dahkotah." The introduction situates the people of her stories within the vicinity of Fort Snelling and describes the land and the precariousness of the Indians' situation at that time. Of particular interest are her comments on the plight of the Dakota women; her truly Christian distain for apparent lack of consideration toward another human being promotes some truly feminist observations.

Her friendship with the Dakota women is related with poignancy and a remarkable immediacy. Her sense of humor fairly bubbles over on the page as she relates repartee with Dakota chiefs or another's frustration with her inability to learn to sing "like a squaw."

She divides her "Preliminary Remarks . . ." into four sections: 1. Sioux Ceremonies, Scalp Dance, etc., 2. Indian Doctors, 3. Indian Names and Writing, and 4. Indian Children. These are followed by a list of the Dakota gods. Each of these discussions gives substantive background for the stories that follow.

The tales of her book are primarily vignettes of Dakota daily life. Stories of particular sorrows, jealousies, and revenge are woven in with accounts of religious beliefs and mores. The etiquette of the virgin's feast, marriage, the dog dance, mourning, and similar customs are related with the honesty and directness of the Dakota informer. On the other hand, such portraits as that of "Shah-Co-Pee; The Orator of the



Captain Seth Eastman, U.S. Army. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

Sioux" are pure Mary Eastman, based obviously on her own observations.

Tales of Indian lore also are included. "The Maiden's Rock; or Wenona's Leap," a story known by most Minnesotans who have lived here any length of time and passed by this precipice on the Wisconsin side of the Lake Pepin, is given in detail. "Oeche-Monesah; The Wanderer" is a most engaging Dakota legend that is the poetic equivalent of the Judeo-Christian story of the prodical son. The rich tapestry that Mary Eastman has woven of these diverse stories tells us of the complexities of life on the plains during the 1840s. But it is the voice, clear and true, of Mary Henderson Eastman that engages our attention and acquaints us best with the Dakota friends she knew and loved.

The tandem publication of these two books—the Seth Eastman portfolio and his wife's narrative—is a wonderful marriage; each informs the other and the scholarly essays add much to the literature and our appreciation of the artist, the author, and the Dakota. The scholarship, however, overmatches the reproduction of Eastman's watercolors in both the Duncan MacMillan and Minnesota Historical Society collections.

A random check of the Seth Eastman

portfolio revealed that the size of the reproductions varied considerably; some are reproduced actual size, many are not, and at least one was enlarged. This seems to have had more to do with layout and book design than truth. In *Dahcotah*..., reproductions are frequentlycropped. A number of watercolors in the Minnesota Historical Society collection are attached to their mats by plastic holders, and the cropping corresponds to the overlay of these holders. (It should have been a simple matter to remove the drawings from their mats for photographic purposes.)

The quality of the color reproductions also is disappointing. The blues, light greens, and yellows are lost, with the result that the images are flattened, the sense of aerial perspective lost, and the great delicay of Eastman's hand and his refined use of color is obscured. For a publication whose essential mission was to "present . . . the Seth Eastman watercolors to the wide audience they so richly deserve," the fidelity of the color reproductions should have been of primary concern in what is an otherwise spendid effort.

Colles Baxter, who lives in White Bear Lake, has been curatorial assistant at the National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution; the Department of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery of Art; and the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University. She has served on the board of the Frederick Weismann Museum of Art at the University of Minnesota and is currently a trustee of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Warm Clothes on TV

"Bring Warm Clothes," a television show based on Peg Meier's book of the same title, will be aired on KTCA-TV at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 5. Parts of her other books also will be included in the station's pledge week special program. Meier researched her books at the Minnesota Historical Society and other county historical societies.



Easy to build. This is a partially finished bungalow in St. Paul in 1906. Minnesota Historical Society photo. For more about the bungalow craze of the early years of this century, see page 15.

R.C.H.S.

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