RAMSEY COUNTY
History

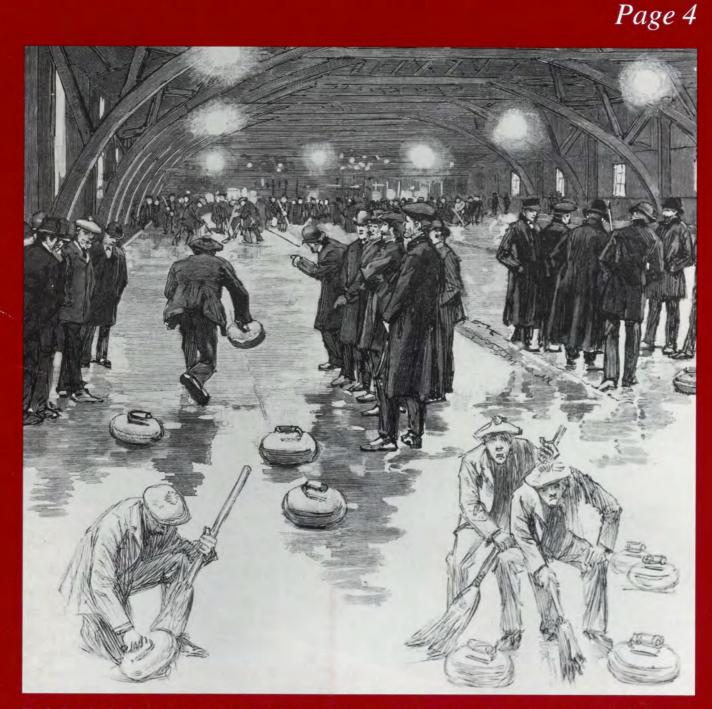*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

The Bungalow Craze
And How It Swept
The Twin Cities—

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St. Paul Curling Club's Colorful History—

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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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A Message from the Editorial Board

Family 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 badly-needed 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.

Letters to the Editor

That Beloved Reo

It arrived too late for my "Growing Up . . ." piece in last Summer's issue of *Ramsey County History*, but at right is a picture of the three Morgan children and some of their neighborhood playmates on the day our beloved Reo was "retired to pasture" around 1925. How many neighborhoods today would have such an occasion? Besides Morgans, the children are Stringers, Turners, and one Cudworth.

Samuel H. Morgan, St. Paul.

Which Birthplace?

What is the birthplace of St. Paul?

Brad Morrison, St. Paul.

There are three candidates. Take your pick: (1) The mouth of Fountain Cave, a few blocks downstream from today's 35E bridge across the Mississippi. (The mouth of the cave has disappeared but vestiges of the cave remain tucked back in the bluff.) Here is where fur trader Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant set up his whiskey shanty in 1838. (2) The foot of Robert Street where Parrant established another tavern close to the river. (3) The site on Bench Street (now Second Street), between Cedar and Minnesota Streets, where Father Lucien Galtier erected his little Chapel of St. Paul and bestowed that name on a settlement that had been known as Pig's Eye.

More About Parrant

When did "Pig's Eye" Parrant first enter the Minnesota/Mississippi River valley?

Ellen Brown, St. Paul.

The "Romulus of our fair city," as one historian has labeled him, appeared at Mendota in 1832. Parrant was a French-Canadian voyageur.

The day the Reo was put to rest. Photo from Samuel H. Morgan.

World War II Memories

My father, who was too old to serve in the Second World War, used to tell me about how he and a group of men patrolled the locks and dams on the Mississippi in the Twin Cities region. I've forgotten the details, but what was that all about?

Tom Harvey, Minneapolis.

He probably was a member of the Coast Guard Temporary Reserve. These were volunteers who used government picket boats and their own craft to keep an around-the-clock watch on the dams and bridges on the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix Rivers. They were guarding against possible sabotage.

Whither Fitzgerald?

I was having dinner at the University Club and got to wondering about F. Scott Fitzgerald. Now we have a theater named after him, too. I know he was born in St. Paul almost 100 years ago but I thought he lived most of his life in the East. How many years did he actually live in St. Paul?

Kristina Mayor, North St. Paul.

You're not the first to ask. His early years in St. Paul profoundly influenced his work, but he actually spent little more than seven years here.

Skyways Here and There

I'm just back from Canada where they are immensely proud of their skyways, which they call "pedways." Just when did St. Paul build its first skyway?

Charlotte Hanson, St. Paul.

The first public skyway in the Twin Cities was built in 1966 and linked the new Federal Courts Building at Kellogg and Robert Street with the Pioneer and Endicott buildings across Fourth Street. It was one of the earliest in the country.

Grand Sliding

Recent articles about the future of Grand Avenue reminded me of stories my grandmother used to tell about living near Grand. She particularly remembered long winter days when she and her friends would go sliding down a big hill south of Grand. Does anyone remember this?

Molly Mason, St. Paul.

James Taylor Dunn, writing in the Grand Gazette back in 1973, described "a single block of Grand Avenue" between Lexington and Oxford. He wrote: "Almost the entire south side of that block was a steep hollow, some thirty or forty feet down. . . . From the earliest days this deep ravine was used informally as a favorite winter sledding hill."

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.