

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

Architect to Kings:
Wigington and His Ice Palaces

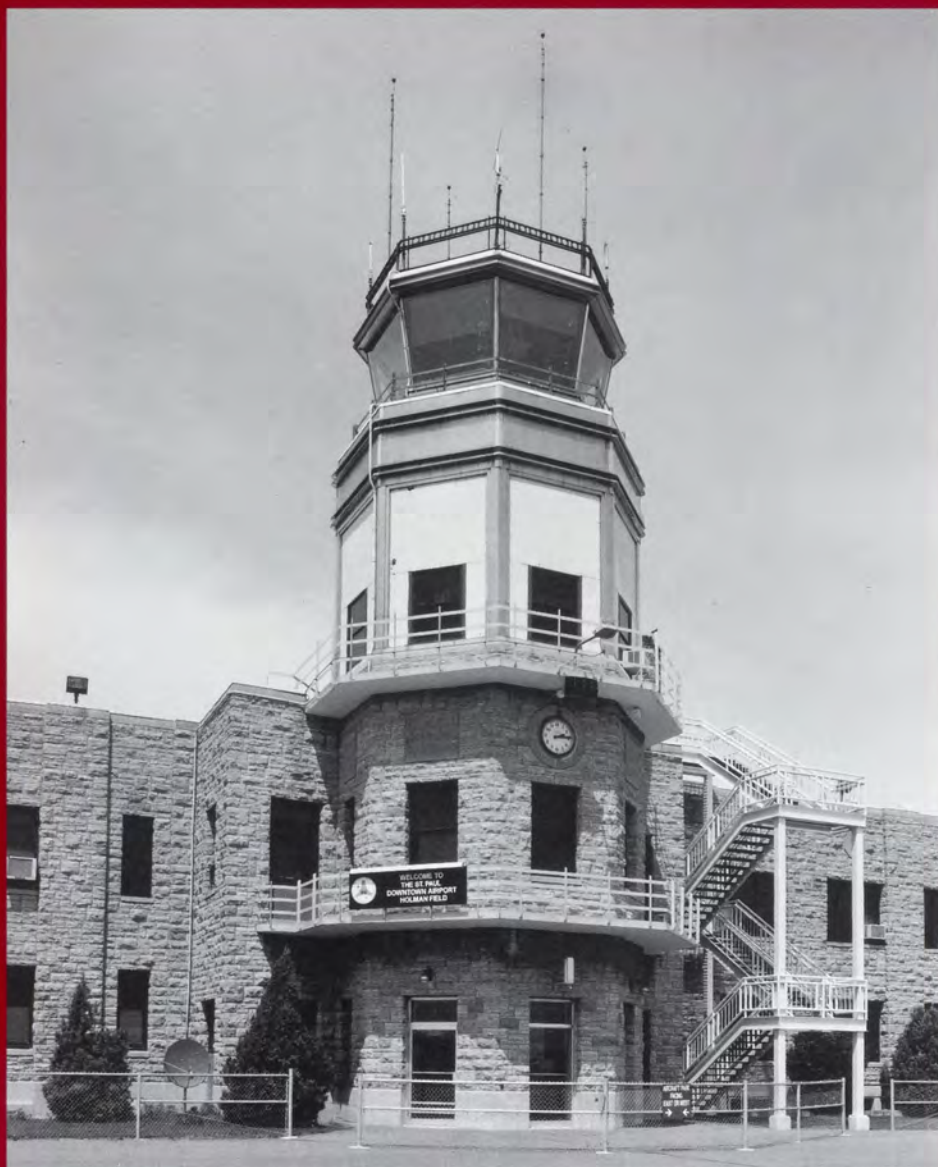
Page 12

Winter, 2000

Volume 34, Number 4

Three National Historic Sites
Clarence Wigington's Architectural Heritage

—Page 4



The Holman Field Administration Building designed by Clarence W. Wigington in 1939 and built with resources provided by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This is one of the three Wigington buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Photograph by Don Wong, Don F. Wong Photography, Bloomington, Minnesota.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 34, Number 4

Winter, 2000

CONTENTS

- 3** Letters
- 4** A Water Tower, A Pavilion, and Three National Historic Sites:
Clarence W. Wigington and the Architectural Heritage
He Left to the People of St. Paul
David V. Taylor
- 12** Architect to the Kings of the Carnivals
'Cap' Wigington and His Ice Palace 'Babies'
Bob Olsen
- 16** Transplants from Europe
Germans, Poles, Italians—Settlers on the Levee
Greg Schach
- 21** Growing Up in St. Paul
First a Tiny Stucco Starter Home; Then a New
Post-War Suburb Beckoned
Joanne Englund
- 24** Books

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Message from Editorial Board

The Editorial Board of *Ramsey County History* is delighted to publish in this issue two fine articles on St. Paul's Clarence W. Wigington, who is believed to have been the first African-American municipal architect in the United States. Dr. David Taylor, dean of the General College at the University of Minnesota, is currently working on a biography of Wigington. His article gives us a sense of Wigington as an architect and as a pioneering civil servant at a time in this country when African-Americans faced many obstacles and handicaps to achieving professional careers. Wigington not only rose to a leadership position within the city's Office of Parks, Playgrounds, and Public Buildings, he also was a leader in the local African-American community throughout his working career.

Expanding upon David Taylor's discussion of Clarence Wigington's accomplishments as an architect of many St. Paul buildings, Bob Olsen, the author of our second piece on Wigington, examines the architect's work as a designer of St. Paul Winter Carnival Ice Palaces between 1926 and 1942. Both articles feature photographs of buildings Wigington designed. Olsen's article includes photos drawn from the author's own collection of Ice Palace memorabilia.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

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The Ramsey County Historical Society takes great pleasure in extending warmest and most sincere thanks to all of the 1999 supporters of the Society. It is they who have made it possible to offer high quality programs to the community.

A special thank you goes to the Board of the Ramsey County Commissioners for their continuing and loyal support. Their patronage through the years has given a solid foundation on which to build. Rafael Ortega, Chairman; Tony Bennett; Dino Guerin; Susan Haigh; Victoria Reinhardt; Janice Rettman; Jan Wiessner. Special appreciation goes to County Manager Paul Kirkwold and his staff for their quality professional assistance.

R.C.H.S.

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In April 1999 the Regents of the University of Minnesota sold the previously leased land at Gibbs Farm Museum to the Ramsey County Historical Society. A special mail request for financial help went to all of our friends and we gratefully received support towards the land purchase from the following donors:

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For many years the Schroeder Milk Company and Mr. Ernest Schroeder, President, the Schroeder family and employees have supported an annual Dairy Day at the Gibbs Farm Museum. This special celebration draws more than 1,300 guests, many of them families visiting us for the first time. The Schroeder Milk Company celebrates the story of its 114 year old Ramsey County family business and shares a taste of its many products. Dairy demonstrations, music, magic and a petting farm add to the fun of the day. Ramsey County Historical Society salutes Schroeder Milk company for this generous continuing support.

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Many businesses and individuals have helped out this year with gifts-in-kind of objects, expertise or free or reduced cost services. This lowers the overall expenses of the Society and is another way that many have found to support the mission of the Society. Gift-in-Kind contributions were received from:

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George Latimer, Former Mayor, Visiting
Professor of Urban Studies, Macalester
David Loehr, Ellerbe Becket
Walker Lundy, Senior Vice President and
Chairman, Pioneer Press
Julio Mangine, Ramsey County Property
Management
Rob McKenzie, President, United Auto
Workers Local 879
Brian McMahon, Architectural Historian
John Moriarity, Ramsey County Parks and
Recreation
Murphy Warehouse Company
Ann Neuberger, Author, *Jane Gibbs—Little
Bird That Was Caught*
Lawrence Perlman, Chairman and CEO,
Ceridian
Peter Rachleff, Chairman, History
Department, Macalester College

Nick Riley, Intergovernmental Relations,
Ramsey County
Judith Roy, Coordinator, History and
Women's Studies, Century College
St. Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN)
Bert Sandberg, Construction Consultant
Christopher Schmidt, Ellerbe Becket
Schroeder Milk Company
Terry Speiker, Intergovernmental Relations,
Ramsey County
Robert O. Straughn, McGrann Franzen
Carnival Straughn & Lamb, Chartered
Mukhtar Thakur, Director, Light Rail; MN
Department of Transportation
Ralph Thrane, Master Gardener and
Orchardist
Mary Wingerd, Historian
Steve Wellington, Real Estate Developer
John Adams, Chairman, U of MN
Department of Geography

RCHS Volunteer Recognition

Many volunteers provide much needed services to Ramsey County Historical Society. All of our volunteers are deeply appreciated. While we measure their service in terms of hours (1,670 total), the dollar value of their service is also immense. Those who contributed their time and expertise in 1999, along with the number of hours served, were:

Over 200 Hours

Ray Barton 264

Over 100 Hours

Jane Schroeder 154.75
Marge Nelson 129
Nora Meyer 114
Patricia Kane 101.5

Over 50 Hours

Kristina Lanphear 72
Crystal Clift 53
Jessica Kullander 51
Lauren Calcote 50

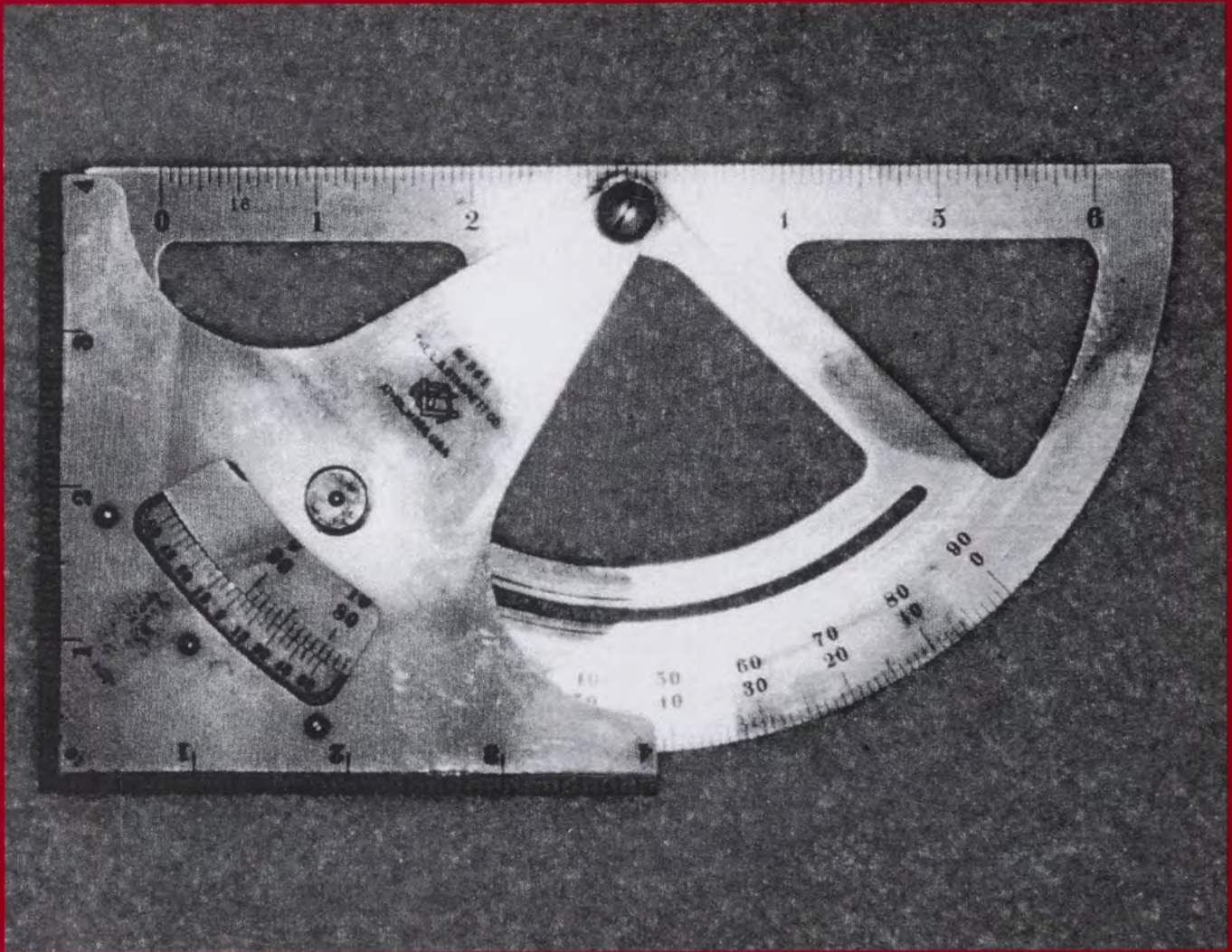
Over 20 Hours

Jessica Henry 48
Ellen Reeher 43
Elaine Fuller 43

Mary Syverson 43
Betsy Connolly 42
Ginger Gilbert 33
Barb Gorka 30
Jared Leese 30
Kristy Van Hoven 30
Martha Melcher 29
Katherine Machowski 28
Debi Rechnagel 28
Jessica Abbot 28
Eva Christopherson 28
Katie Connolly 25
Cathie Humann 24
Chrissy Schumann 23
Jay Van Hoven 23
Bonnie Hanson 22
Diane Thuelke 20
Kathy Johnson 20
Julie Hillenbrand 20
Rick Menk 20

Under 20 Hours

Allison Becker
David Nicholson
Jane Fiegen
Louise Hammerlindl
Gloria Dahlen
Robert Nelson
Roger Hanson
Stephanie Putz
Eleanor Trnka
Delores Young
Robert Young
Mark Lagen
Charlotte DeTournay
Diane DeTournay
June Blomberg
Irene Foot
Geraldine Kane
Bernice Nelson
Henrietta Miller
Phil Miller



An architectural drafting instrument owned and used by Clarence W. Wigington, the first licensed African-American architect registered in the State of Minnesota. See the article beginning on page 4.

R.C.H.S.

RAMSEY • COUNTY • HISTORICAL • SOCIETY

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