

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

*Growing Up in St. Paul—  
Diamonds, Gravel Roads,  
And a Little Chevrolet*

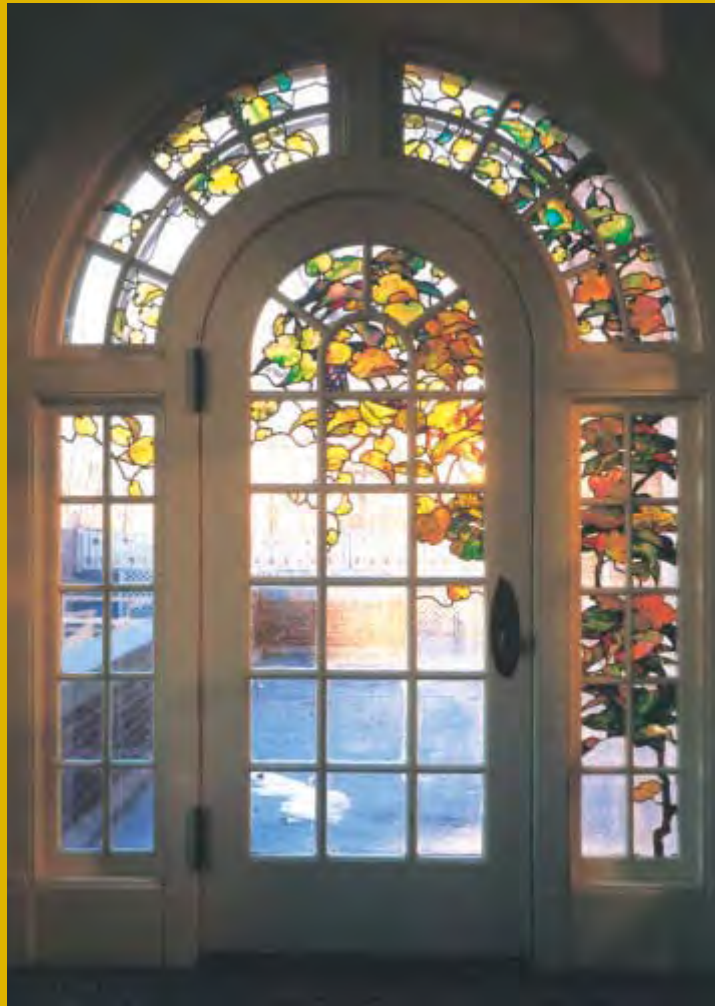
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**Winter, 2003**

Volume 37, Number 4

*The History Behind the Louis Hill House*

**New Settlers, Real Estate Boom, and Speculation**  
*—Page 4*



*The stained glass window Louis J. Millet designed for James J. Hill's house on Canada Street in Lowertown and later installed in Louis W. Hill's house at 260 Summit Avenue. See article beginning on page 4. This beautiful window was photographed for Ramsey County History by George Heinrich.*

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 37, Number 4

Winter, 2003

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## A Message from the Editorial Board

Our winter issue opens with Eileen R. McCormack's fascinating account of the history of the house that stands at 260 Summit Avenue, known to many St. Paul residents as the Louis Hill House. Today Richard and Nancy Nicholson and their family live there and have restored the house to the splendor that it had in the days when the Hills lived in the house, while also adapting it to the conveniences of contemporary living. What emerges from Eileen McCormack's research is a glimpse of a bygone era of St. Paul's elite and of the personality of the home the Hill family built.

Moving from an elegant residential property to a modest commercial and manufacturing part of the spectrum of St. Paul buildings, historian Matt Percy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recounts the history of the building at 333 Sibley Street. This commercial structure is today's Corps of Engineers Centre, which has its origins in the history of Gordon & Ferguson Company, a famous St. Paul furrier. Alan R. (Buddy) Ruvelson, a well-known St. Paul entrepreneur, contributes a "Growing Up in St. Paul" story that begins with his maternal great grandfather's home at 545 Sibley, in Lowertown, not far from the Corps' present headquarters. Publication of an old photo of the rabbi's house in David Riehle's article in the fall issue of *Ramsey County History* prompted author Ruvelson to trace his family's roots to Rabbi B. Rosenthal's home in the area that the plat maps called "Borup's Addition." Fortunately for us, Ruvelson has had a varied and unusual life as a dealer in diamonds, an entrepreneur, a venture capitalist, and public citizen. Whether elegant like the Hill home or modest like the home of Rabbi Rosenthal, St. Paul's built environment can tell us much about who we are and how our city has changed over the years.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*

# Letters to the Editor

## Dance Halls

I was very surprised to see the photo on page 21 of your fall issue of Paul and Minda Sands at a dance hall in 1914. I have the same type of photo of my great-uncle and his two cousins. In fact, it appears to be the exact same crescent moon set. My photo most likely was taken about the same time, but in Minneapolis. You can see the photo on the main page of my web site at <http://www.kinsourcw.com>.

Do you know anything about the dance halls of that time period? From these photos, I am guessing that there was a photographer who went around to various dance halls, drumming up business by taking photos of people at these dances. My great-uncle and his cousins lived in Minneapolis, and the story goes that he would accompany his cousins to dances in Minneapolis.

Kathryn Kelly, [kkelly55@earthlink.net](mailto:kkelly55@earthlink.net)

*In Lucy Kane's Twin Cities/A Pictorial History, she mentions three: the Arcadia Palace at 315 South Fifth Street and the Lake Street Auditorium at 5 East Lake Street, both of them in Minneapolis, and the Coliseum ballroom at 453 North Lexington Avenue in St. Paul. You're probably right about the photographer. Other photographers toured residential neighborhoods taking pictures of children astride donkeys or goats.*

## Why Not Borup's Addition?

That most recent "Lost Neighborhood" piece about Borup's Addition was fascinating. I looked at an old map of St. Paul and it seems that what they're now calling the North Quadrant actually was part of the land Borup owned. Why didn't they name it for him?

Catherine Miles, White Bear Lake

Good question. Anyone know?



Paul and Minda in 1914.

## Mazourka Hall

What or where was the Mazurka Hall? I saw references to it in J. Fletcher William's book, *A History of the City of Saint Paul to 1875*.

Paul Swenssen, New Brighton.

*Mazourka Hall actually was the second floor of the Elfelt dry goods store that stood on the corner of Exchange and Third (now Kellogg Boulevard) streets near Irvine Park. Professional theatrical performances, including Placide's Varieties, were held there. However, it apparently was an all-purpose hall. In the spring of 1851, the District Court of Ramsey County, Judge Aaron Goodrich presiding, met there.*

## The North End

I know where the North End is, but where does it end? In other words, what is its northern boundary?

Melissa Anderson, Maplewood

*Ramsey County Historical Society's booklet, Discover St. Paul, show its northern boundary as Larpenteur Avenue.*

## Camp Coldwater

I've seen some news articles about Camp Coldwater. What was that and where was it?

Larry Morris, Minneapolis.

*Camp Coldwater was established in 1819 on the Mississippi north of Fort Snelling by Colonel Henry Leavenworth, the fort's first commandant, as a place for his soldiers to live as they built the fort itself. A clear spring, which still exists, drained into the river from the camp's site and attracted civilian settlers, fur traders and farmers, who were refugees from the Selkirk settlement near Winnipeg.*

## Street Names

I was wondering if there was a source for finding out who streets are named after. I'm interested in Dale Street in St. Paul. Thanks in advance for your help.

Brandon.Imsdale@toro.com

*There's a wonderful little book in the Ramsey County Historical Society's library called The Street Where You Live by Donald Empson. It was published in 1975 and unfortunately, is no longer available. However, its entry for Dale Street reads, "The name suddenly appears, in 1871, on a number of maps. It was at the time St. Paul's western boundary. Because the land in the area was far more irregular then, the name probably indicated a valley or depression."*



*John LaFarge's stained glass window, retrieved by James J. Hill from his Canada Street house for use by his son Louis W. Hill at 260 Summit Avenue. See article beginning on page 4. Photograph by George Heinrich for Ramsey County History.*

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

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