

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*From Streetcars to Soccer*

**The Rise and Fall of  
TCRT's Snelling Shops**

JOHN W. DIERS, PAGE 11



*Sunday*, a painting by Cameron Booth.

*St. Paul's Mary Griggs Burke, Abby Weed Grey, and Aimee Mott Butler*

**Three Extraordinary Women  
Who Supported Art and Artists**

MOIRA F. HARRIS, PAGE 1

**By the Numbers . . .**

*Summer slide loss statistics*

Months of math skills lost over the summer  
**2.6**

Months of reading skills lost over the summer  
**2**

Months of overall learning lost over the summer  
**1**

Weeks spent in the fall relearning old material after summer slide  
**6**

Hours per week needed over the summer to prevent any learning loss  
**2-3**

**SOURCES:**

[www.summerlearning.org/?page=know\\_the\\_facts](http://www.summerlearning.org/?page=know_the_facts)

[www.readingrockets.org/article/summer-reading-loss](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/summer-reading-loss)

[www.littlescholarsllc.com/blog/summer-learning-loss-facts/](http://www.littlescholarsllc.com/blog/summer-learning-loss-facts/)

Teresa Swanson's article beginning on page 22 provides information on an innovative program designed to fight summer slide.

**ON THE COVER**



Horses quietly standing in fields or near barns were a favorite subject for Cameron Booth. This large undated oil is called *Sunday*. Courtesy of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, Photo by Karen Kolander.

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**Message from the Editorial Board**

Art lovers, soccer fans, and curious kids might all find something in this issue to spark their interest. Moira Harris writes about three local women art collectors who strengthened institutions with gifts from their informed passions. Mary Griggs Burke journeyed to Japan thirty times, studying and seeking the best examples of fine East Asian art, which are now in the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Art. Abby Weed Grey also traveled, but her inspiration was contemporary Middle Eastern art; those works found a home at New York University. And Aimee Mott Butler furnished the walls of Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation with carefully chosen works by Minnesota artists. The new Minnesota United soccer stadium (Allianz Field) at Snelling and University is rising from the ashes of the old Twin Cities Rapid Transit shops. John Diers shares the history of this bustling center, which once held 400 employees and 200 streetcars while they were repaired and refurbished for their daily runs through the Twin Cities. And Terry Swanson tells us about our RCHS summer program for schoolchildren, *Investigate MN!* We have partnered with other nonprofits to give kids a taste of different aspects of local history, from food to artifacts to the natural world. It's another way that RCHS is bringing history into the present and laying the groundwork for future informed perspectives.

Anne Cowie  
Chair, Editorial Board

*The Ramsey County Historical Society thanks Board Member James A. Stolpestad and affiliate AHS Legacy Fund for supporting the updated design of this magazine. Publication of Ramsey County History is also supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr. and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon.*

## Investigate MN!

TERESA SWANSON

*"Summer Slide is what happens when the skills students learn during the school year are lost or forgotten over the summer. When kids don't practice their reading skills during the summer months, they can fall behind by the time school starts again."*

CHILDREN'S LITERACY INITIATIVE

In 2015, less than 75% of high school students graduated on-time in St. Paul. Since then, graduation rates have increased only slightly. This is a present-day crisis, decades in the making, that threatens the future of our families and our communities.

Committed to not only preserving our history, but using this preserved knowledge to educate and inspire all audiences, Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) operates successful and engaging education programs for more than 15,000 students annually as well as adults and families. With education as a core value at RCHS, low graduation rates are unacceptable to the Ramsey County Historical Society.

In 2015 the Society started a new program designed to help students succeed by utilizing the region's incredible cultural resources to engage and inspire students. This program, *Investigate MN!*, was created in partnership with

the Saint Paul City School and is designed to address one of the key challenges to student success and a primary factor in the achievement gap—summer learning loss, also known as the "Summer Slide." Operating for six weeks during the summer, *Investigate MN!* is unique in that it combines reading, writing, and classroom activities with twice-weekly, hands-on learning in museums and other cultural institutions.

The founding hypothesis behind the design of *Investigate MN!* is that by engaging students over the summer months with high-quality learning experiences, the summer slide can be eliminated or even reversed. To put the summer slide problem in perspective, students not engaged in summer programming lose more than two months of math skills and two months of reading skills. Schools spend an average of six weeks every fall helping students relearn what they have forgotten.

Six weeks a year multiplied by twelve years of instruction equals seventy-two weeks, or nearly two school years, of lost time that could be better used to teach more math, history, civics, science, art and music, reading, and more. If students are prepared to move forward at the beginning of the school year, the possibility for better outcomes for students, families, and our community is dramatic.

RCHS President Chad Roberts believes that strategically tapping into the resources of our many wonderful cultural institutions is an effective way to keep students engaged through the summer. To move ahead, a partner was needed, and the Saint Paul City School led by Executive Director Nancy Dana became the first, and incredibly enthusiastic, school partner in the program.

Dana and Roberts share a problem-solving sensibility, and they quickly outlined the program structure: it would be six weeks in length, involve multiple institutions, focus on grade six

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*Investigate MN! is an excellent opportunity for students to make connections to Minnesota's past and present. Visits to Gibbs Farm and other similar locations that provide children with an educational, hands-on experience make history relatable and foster connections that bring these students closer to their own family's history and the greater community.*

SAMMY NELSON, GIBBS FARM MANAGER

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students, and use local history as the core to the curriculum. Student scholars would learn using the methodology that worked well at the City School, enhanced and improved in successive iterations as the program developed in real time. The whole program was moving so quickly it didn't even have a name at this point, but both organizations understood its potential and it was quickly approved for a four-year pilot program. Dana's team suggested the title *Investigate MN!* a few weeks before the first class started and so the program was born.

The Saint Paul City School was and is an ideal partner for the program. Serving almost exclusively students facing daunting economic hurdles, this student body lacks access to resources that would allow them to pursue summer enrichment programs. *Investigate MN!* was needed if they were to complete a summer program. Further, the educational staff is tenacious, passionate, and highly skilled in helping students find success despite the challenges they face outside of school. The expectations of staff are high—and that is reflected in the culture of the school. One example that will become evident in this discussion of *Investigate MN!* is that students at the Saint Paul City School are frequently referred to as Scholars, and the expectation from day one is that these Scholars will succeed academically and go on to some form of post-secondary education.

The inaugural class of 2015 was comprised of 27 middle-school scholars and has grown to nearly 60 scholars in 2018. With the addition of a staff member and students from nearby Jackson School this past summer, the program also took a first step in realizing a major goal of operating the program with students from multiple schools.

### Partnerships Old and New

Long experience has shown that teachers can face significant challenges when they are required to have both the educational background and the content resources to teach to the emergent scope of subject matter included in state educational standards. At the same time, the Twin Cities has a diversity of historic sites and cultural institutions, large and small, that have concentrated on teaching a variety of disciplines including the sciences, history, and the arts. Public educators at these sites have developed

hands-on, experiential programs that enhance traditional classroom learning.

Roberts posited that if school teachers and public educators worked together on developing and implementing comprehensive experiential curricula, a sharing of skills, knowledge, and resources might be attained. The question of how to match up these institutions often comes into conflict with the age-old dual challenges of time and money. One of the original goals of *Investigate MN!* was to foster partnerships and collaboration between local sites and schools, using the program as a prototype for developing such a model. While steps were taken initially to develop more robust partnerships, the realities of managing the day-to-day aspects of a six-week summer program limited those efforts in the first few years of the program.

After the six-week educational outline for 2018 was developed, Roberts implemented a renewed focus on partnership development



From a nineteenth-century locomotive, left, to a weathered caboose, the Minnesota Transportation Museum's historic Jackson Street Roundhouse in St. Paul has all kinds of railroad cars, equipment, and memorabilia in its collections. Photos courtesy of Teresa Swanson.



by inviting a blend of partners that would be the right fit to join the program. *Investigate MN!* in 2018 included a mix of repeat partners from past summers: Base Camp, Gibbs Farm, and Como Zoo, as well as the exciting influx of new ones: Minnesota Transportation Museum, Gammelgården, The Good Acre, Hennepin History Museum, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art. This combination of partners was stellar; each of them brought added depth and meaning to the program and subsequently proved to be committed to fighting summer slide.

**Continuing Partnerships:  
Base Camp, Gibbs Farm, and Como Zoo**

Located on the grounds of Historic Fort Snelling, Base Camp is owned and operated by Northern Star Council, Boy Scouts of America. It has been included in the first week of the program since the beginning for a simple reason: summer programs necessarily include kids with a range of ages, skillsets, and backgrounds and it is essential to create an atmosphere where they feel safe and valued; Base Camp has been instrumental in that process.

Gibbs Farm has been the principal educational partner with *Investigate MN!* With a dual focus on pioneer and Dakota Indian lifeways, the site, which is owned and operated by RCHS,

fits well with the goals of the program. The staff works with thousands of children and programs each season including their own comprehensive day camps and they embrace collaboration and educational innovation.

An outing to Como Zoo has been a perennial favorite among the scholars. In the past, the trip included visiting the animal exhibits as well as time spent at the pool, and in one sense was a celebration marking the end of a successful summer. When Lauren Kitrell, a former Gibbs Farm site interpreter who was working at Como Zoo as an educator, learned about

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*Gibbs Farm presents an exciting opportunity as an archaeological case study to give people a hands-on way to connect with their cultural heritage and explore the past through the lens of scientific inquiry. Archaeology nurtures curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, which are skills of great benefit in and out of the classroom. It also helps people contribute directly to the interpretation of a local historic site, laying the cornerstone for future conservation and academic study. Best of all, it's fun.*

KASSIE KMITCH BRADSHAW, GIBBS STAFF

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The Good Acre is located in Falcon Heights, Minnesota. Photo courtesy of The Good Acre.



A restored Swedish immigrant home at Gammelgården in Scandia, Minnesota. Photo courtesy of Jeni O'Brien, Gammelgården.



the *Investigate MN!* program, she encouraged the addition of a Legacy Program to enrich the Como Zoo experience.

**New Partnerships:  
Transportation Museum,  
Gammalgården, The Good Acre,  
Hennepin History Museum, and the  
Minneapolis Institute of Art**

The Minnesota Transportation Museum is located at the historic Jackson Street Roundhouse. The museum offers multiple educational opportunities including several restored train cars, a working turntable, and a real blacksmith forge. At an initial conversation with museum director Erik Johnson, he suggested a good fit would be for the Transportation Museum to provide bussing for field trips. The museum owns a collection of vintage buses and this generous offer made each field trip experience more exciting and distinctive.

Sammy Nelson, Gibbs Farm site manager, recommended The Good Acre after partnering with them on several earlier ventures. This remarkable site works to fulfill the Pohlad family's vision of improving the local food system for farmers and consumers regardless of income. Programs Manager Natalie Vandenburg was intrigued by *Investigate MN!* from the get-go and was eager to explore how their involvement could broaden the scope of the program. The inclusion of The Good Acre and discussions about growing and eating food also facilitated the addition of another partner: Gammalgården.

Thousands of immigrants flooded into Minnesota in the decades following the opening of the territory in the middle of the nineteenth century. While more Germans and Norwegians settled here than any other nationalities, Minnesota is heralded as being the nation's most Swedish state. Gammalgården (old Farm), an open-air museum devoted to preserving and promoting Swedish immigration history, is in Scandia, just north of St. Paul. Not only was Gammalgården the logical site to explore this aspect of Minnesota history, but their site director, Lynne Blomstrand Mooratzka, and their numerous volunteers were enthusiastic partners.

RGHS has made reaching across the river to collaborate with the Hennepin History Museum a strategic priority. Several years ago, RGHS and



HHM worked together on a state-wide oral history project focused on the health care professionals that were part of the local response to the HIV/AIDS crisis. Inviting the museum to partner with *Investigate MN!* was a logical expansion of this relationship. Cedar Imboden Phillips, executive director of the Hennepin History Museum, led their involvement in the program. With HHM's extensive collection of historic artifacts and archival materials relating to the history and evolution of Hennepin County, the largest challenge was deciding what artifacts and stories the museum should present.

What better way to demonstrate to young students that there are multiple ways to understand history than by including art? In the

One of the vintage buses owned by the Transportation Museum that was used to take students to various sites and museums in 2018. The buses provided great adventure. Photo courtesy of Erik Johnson.

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*Thank you for lending us all of the buses for our field trips. I really appreciated it and I think everyone else did too. I think it's cool that there was a lot of different buses.*

JUSTIS

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Here the students are learning rock-wall climbing at the Base Camp operated by the Northern Star Council, Boys Scouts of America at Historic Fort Snelling. Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.

Twin Cities we are fortunate to have several exceptional art museums and based on some fascinating programming and scavenger hunts available, the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), was approached about hosting a day of the program. Sheila McGuire, Head of Student and Teacher Learning at Mia, created a new, Minnesota-themed scavenger hunt for the program. This broadened the partner base and provided a fresh means to interpret history.

### 2018 Program

Through the leadership and diligence of Amy Barber, a Saint Paul City School Teacher and the principal program organizer over the first three years, *Investigate MN!* has grown steadily. Invaluable experience gained over these years provided the basis for expanding the program to include a second school. Originally conceived for sixth graders, students who would be focusing on Minnesota history, the program has shifted to one serving scholars in multiple grades. In addition, the scholars enrolled in the 2018 program come from diverse family conditions, which directly affected daily attendance in the program. These factors necessitated the development of a six-week plan with interrelated, but stand-alone themes that were geared to address these factors.

### Week I Theme: Introduction by Storytelling and Leadership

Teaching our students fascinating and exciting ways to learn and understand history is crucial if we want to encourage them to become lifelong learners. Setting the right tone in the first week was accomplished by creating a Storytelling Workshop led by local artist Peggy Stern. The training allowed students to explore how art,

storytelling, theatre, and music can supplement more traditional ways to learn. For example, the young people constructed and produced shadow puppet plays that interpreted traditional Dakota stories that were documented by Dr. Charles Eastman (1858–1939), a Dakota who was the great-grandson of *Mahpiya Wicasta* (Cloud Man), with the assistance of his wife, Elaine Goodale. Subsequently, during a visit to Base Camp, students participated in rock-wall climbing, archery, and team-building activities. These experiences set the tone for a cohesive six weeks. The energetic staff at Base Camp was supportive and motivating as they interacted with the students, many of whom had never done these activities before.

### Week II Theme: Minnesota's First People

Dakota were the first group of people to settle in this place we call Minnesota. This has been their ancestral homeland for hundreds of years. The fur trade brought the migration of new groups of Native Americans in recent centuries, most notably Anishinaabeg or Ojibwa Indians. Learning about Minnesota's First Peoples and their lifeways is central to knowing the history of this place.

The staff at RCHS and Gibbs Farm have had a relationship based on trust and respect with members of the Dakota community for close to two decades. At the Dakota villages on the Gibbs site, students learned about the summer bark lodge and seasonal tipi life. They visited the spring maple sugar village, fall wild ricing camp, and learned how Dakota women gardened and tanned hides.

In school the next day, the students prepared and ate a Dakota-inspired feast of *psin* (wild rice), corn, squash and bean chowder, mint tea, strawberries, and cornbread. They also made replica hide bags, corn husk dolls, learned about the importance of buffalo in Dakota culture, and participated in a Minnesota animal hunt.

The Fur Trade was also investigated during Week II. Mapping out the actual size of the sleeping quarters and beds used by the *voyageurs* was eye-opening and participating in a visit to the reconstructed fur trading post (with math problems involved) allowed students to understand the financial realities of that industry. A

A view of the Red Barn, replica tipi, White Barn, one-room schoolhouse, replica soddy, and restored prairie at the Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights. Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.



study of an authentic fur trader's diary set the backdrop for this way of life.

### Week III Theme: Choosing Minnesota

Minnesota's territorial years, 1849–1858, saw an enormous influx of immigrants, thousands upon thousands of disparate groups of people flooded into Minnesota, some from American eastern states and many more from places like Germany, Norway, and Sweden. These were individuals and families who for one reason or another chose to settle here. In 2018, *Investigate MN!* visited two sites which provided focus for understanding Minnesota in these early years.

Gibbs Farm, established in 1849, provides visitors with a unique opportunity to experience life as it was for people emigrating from the Northeast, as well as how life changed for them over the decades of the territorial and early statehood period. The visit included four, 30-minute, hands-on stations including the Gibbs family's replica soddy, candle-dipping, the one-room schoolhouse, and the farmhouse kitchen.

Gammelgården allowed the students to witness what life was like for early Swedish immigrants to Minnesota. Touring some of the first structures built in Scandia demonstrated the importance that farming, home, and church played in the lives of these individuals. Prompted by site director, Lynne Blomstrand Mooratzka, St. Paul City School students wrote about their families in advance of their visit. These were shared with Gammelgården volunteers of Swedish heritage who helped scholars draw comparisons between the experiences of their families and those of the Swedish immigrants from so many years before. Giving students the opportunity to see themselves as part of a living timeline offered the opportunity for them to connect to a sense of community.

Following the field trips, several reading exercises about pioneer life and Swedish immigrants expanded the students' understanding of life in nineteenth-century Minnesota. Back at the school, a sampling of Swedish foods like the *knäckebröd*, cheeses, pickled herring, and lingonberries, all of which had been mentioned at Gammelgården, added a sense of depth to the students' sensory appreciation of foods enjoyed by Swedish immigrants. In addition, a shopping



spree using a reproduction of an 1898 Sears catalog was a classroom favorite.

Sharing stories and experiences with a volunteer at Gammelgården. Photo courtesy of Jeni O'Brien, Gammelgården.

### Week IV Theme: Tasting Minnesota

There is a long list of foods like walleye, blueberries, wild rice, Spam, Honey Crisp apples, Pillsbury Flour, and anything on a stick, that are associated with Minnesota. Food and nutrition are woven into the political, economic, social, and cultural scope of human civilization. And so a week devoted to Minnesota foods, past and present, was decidedly an amusing and unique opportunity to explore our history.



When the students visited The Good Acre, they toured the nonprofit's greenhouse. Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.

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*Thank you for showing us all the rooms in the house that is now a museum and for giving us a chance to use the special staircase.*

FATIMA

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The students participated in preparing and tasting butter and ice cream and discovered the hard work involved in nineteenth-century animal care when they cleaned out the chicken coops and fed the pigs at Gibbs Farm. They created the most charming menus for their own future restaurants and planted gardens-in-a-glove containing beans, bok choy, radishes, carrots, and broccoli.

Their hands-down favorite experience of food week was visiting The Good Acre. They toured the facility and greenhouses and picked tomatoes to take home. (One student later helped his mother make salsa from his tomato.) Chef Yia Vang, co-owner of Union Kitchen, demonstrated his family recipe for Hot Tiger Sauce and shared rice and chicken he had prepared for the scholars.



Part of the archeology exercise that the students did at Gibbs Farm required them to work together on typology and morphology projects in solving problems. *Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.*

## **Week V Theme: Documenting Minnesota**

Many people give little thought to how we know what we do about our history; or how we care for and preserve artifacts and documents. Archaeology Day at Gibbs Farm allowed scholars to be involved in several authentic hands-on labs such as typology and morphology assessments and mapping an archaeological site.

A visit to the Hennepin History Museum gave the students a behind-the-scenes idea of how curators catalog artifacts. It was the perfect day to visit as the museum was buzzing with volunteers at work. Some were busy photographing parts of the collection while others were documenting the provenance of objects. Time was also spent in the archives where the

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*Dear Friends at Hennepin History: Thank you for helping us to learn about history! I thought everything was cool.*

AASIA

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When the young people who participated in *Investigate MN!* were at the Hennepin History Museum in Minneapolis, they wore white cotton gloves when they handled artifacts as the museum's interns entered information about the objects into the museum's collections software. *Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.*



archivist had pulled special objects she thought would be interesting to the scholars, such as pictures of clothing students wore to school long ago and samples of sewing that girls did during home economics class.

Next stop was the Minneapolis Institute of Art where students went on a Minnesota art scavenger hunt. Most of these scholars had never been to a large art museum and it's a vast understatement to say they were intrigued and animated by the vast collections at Mia.

### **Week VI Theme: Naturally Minnesota**

There wasn't enough time to review the vastness of the geography of Minnesota in a single day, but a visit to Minnehaha Falls provided the backdrop for an introduction to several geographic themes. A hike to the confluence of Minnehaha Creek and the Mississippi River helped illustrate a lesson on the importance of waterways in Minnesota history.

Como Zoo dates to 1897 and since that time, the zoo has held a special place in the hearts of Minnesotans. Visiting Como Zoo was especially rewarding this year. Scholars started out with a special session entitled Enrichment and Training that allowed the students to see first-hand how zoo animals are cared for and the kinds of special thought that goes into keeping the animals stimulated. Throughout the remainder of the day, these scholars noticed the enrichments placed in each animal exhibit based on the lesson from earlier in the day.

The young people who participated in *Investigate MN!* during their 2018 visit to Minnehaha Creek near the site where the creek joins the Mississippi River in south Minneapolis. *Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.*

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*We enjoyed roaming around and looking at all the creative things you have put out. If we get a chance to return, we most definitely would! Thank you for spending time on the awesome scavenger hunt.*

CHEE

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Four students use information sheets as they worked to identify a specific species of butterfly at the Blooming Butterflies exhibit at the Como Zoo in St. Paul. Photo courtesy of Teresa Swanson.



### **Where Do We Go From Here?**

*Investigate MN!* an idea born of need and based on research data showing the impact of engaging students in the summer. Over the four years of the program completed to far, *Investigate MN!* has grown into a significant educational program. Developing community partnerships has strengthened the ways in which we think about working together to teach history in various settings. Over one hundred young people have gone through this program to date and have dramatically improved their reading and writing skills. We continue to learn about the needs of scholars and make improvements to

make this program even more fulfilling and enriching. With the generous support of several donors, the program has been expanded one additional year. Our hope is that with additional future funding, *Investigate MN!* will continue to expand, add students from more schools, and create a multi-year curriculum.

*Teresa Swanson is a public historian and for ten years was the manager of RCHS's Gibbs Farm. Now retired, she has organized and supervised the Investigate MN! program on behalf of the Society for the past four years.*

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*Investigate MN! has meant so much to me for many reasons, but primarily I feel so thankful that I am able to watch our students gain new experiences in the community in which they have grown up. Our students don't often get enrichment opportunities to extend their learning outside of the classroom and Investigate MN! is a free program for our students to visit Minnesota's historical sites. The program has grown in popularity and our students genuinely appreciate the opportunity to participate in a summer school program.*

AMY L. BARBER, ART EDUCATOR, ST. PAUL CITY SCHOOL

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Comparing and contrasting nineteenth-century pioneer and Dakota lifeways is at the core of the Gibbs Farm mission. Gender roles defined life for both cultures, but while Dakota women relied on traditional ways, pioneer women lived at a time filled with new inventions.

Pictured on the top left is a *psin* (wild rice) winnowing basket fashioned from birch bark, made and used by Dakota women for centuries in the final stage of winnowing rice. On the bottom left is a newfangled device called a Lazy Daisy that women like Jane Gibbs used to churn butter because it was much faster than a simple wooden-dash churn.

Participants in the 2018 *Investigate MN!* program not only learned about these objects, they also used them and tasted the foods associated with them.

*The psin winnowing basket is a reproduction; the Lazy Daisy is an original. Photos by Mollie Spillman. Both objects are reproduced by permission from the collections of the Ramsey County Historical Society.*

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The Minnesota United Football Club expects Allianz Field, its new soccer stadium, to open for play in early 2019. The capacity of this soccer-specific facility is more than 19,000. This aerial photo from August 2018 shows that much of the exterior of the stadium has been completed on the site that was once the TCRT's Snelling Avenue repair facility. University Avenue and the nearby station on Metro Transit's Green Line can be seen on the right. Snelling Avenue runs north-south on the far side of the stadium. In the distance is the Minneapolis skyline. *Photo courtesy of the M. A. Mortenson Company.*