

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Eliza Edgerton Newport and
St. Paul's Floating Bethel, 1891-1903**

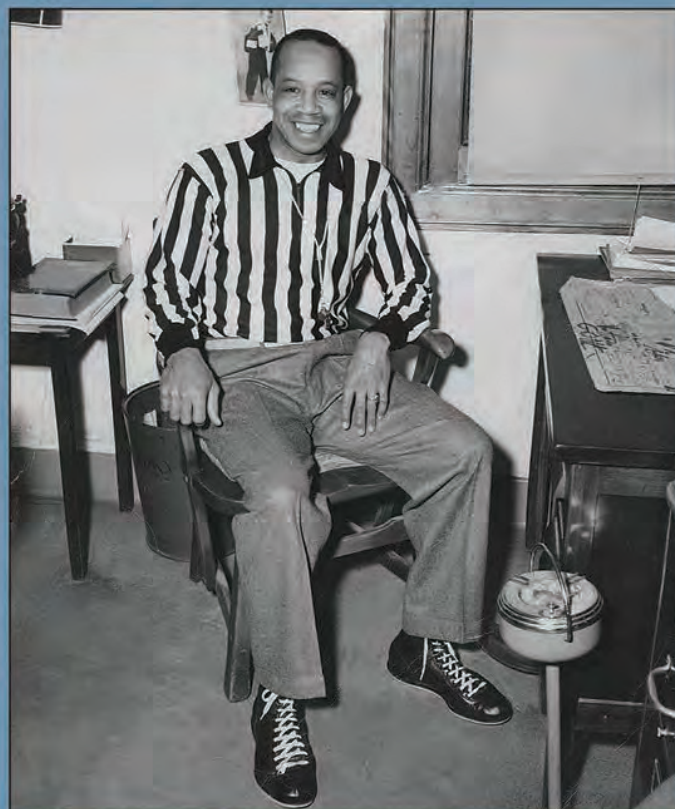
CHRISTINE PODAS-LARSON, PAGE 11



*Remembering One of
Our Community Legends—*

Jimmy Lee

FRANK M. WHITE, PAGE 1



Jimmy Lee was a respected go-to sports authority in the Rondo Neighborhood, St. Paul, and throughout Minnesota.

By the Numbers . . .

Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities (UGMTC) oversees the Bethel Hotel, located at 435 University Avenue in St. Paul. It is the descendant of St. Paul's Floating Bethel.

Number of UGMTC locations, including the Bethel Hotel

5

Number of emergency shelter beds available for men in need at UGMTC

194

Number of beds for men at the Bethel Hotel, UGMTC's transitional housing program

107

Number of men served at the Bethel Hotel in 2018

1,286

Number of men enrolled in UGMTC's Christ Recovery Center programs

81

Number of women and children who found safe shelter through UGMTC in 2018

108

SOURCES:

Brian Molohon, V.P. Development, UGMTC
www.ugmtc.org/

Christine Podas-Larson's article, beginning on page 11, brings the story of St. Paul's Floating Bethel to life and celebrates Eliza Edgerton Newport, whose charitable work changed lives.

ON THE COVER



Jimmy Lee was an award-winning golfer. His love for golf and all sports led to a decade-long stint as a local sports columnist.

Contents

- 1 *Remembering One of Our Community Legends*
Jimmy Lee
FRANK M. WHITE
- 11 **Eliza Edgerton Newport and St. Paul's Floating Bethel, 1891-1903**
CHRISTINE PODAS-LARSON
- 22 *Home Is Where We Start From*
The Tazewell: 100 Years in the Life of a St. Paul Apartment Building
AINE C. MCCORMACK AND EILEEN R. MCCORMACK

Message from the Editorial Board

Some of the most fascinating parts of local history are the connections between the writers, their subjects, and even the readers. In this issue, Frank White introduces us to his childhood hero, Jimmy Lee, a respected black athlete and sports officiant. Lee wrote a column for the local African-American press and became the first black umpire in the Big Ten. Christine Podas-Larson tells the story of her great-grandmother, Eliza Edgerton Newport, a society woman who championed the working poor. Newport, an ardent temperance supporter, helped establish the Floating Bethel, a boat anchored on the Mississippi that provided beds, meals, and classes for those who needed support. Finally, Eileen and Aine McCormack present the history of the Tazewell Apartments at Laurel and Western. The Tazewell was home to middle-class tenants, including young professionals, teachers, stenographers, and railroad workers. In reading this article, I discovered that the authors included my favorite elementary school teacher, Gertrude Berg, who lived there for forty years. Thus, I happily confirm that Miss Berg did not, in fact, reside on the second floor of Linwood Park School, as I always assumed in fourth grade, but had her own life at the Tazewell, entirely out of school!

Anne Cowie
Chair, Editorial Board

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future.

*The mission statement of the Ramsey County Historical Society
adopted by the Board of Directors on January 25, 2016.*

The Ramsey County Historical Society's vision is to be widely recognized as an innovator, leader, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community, delivering inspiring history programming, and using local history in education. Our mission of *preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future* guides this vision.

The Society began in 1949 when a group of citizens acquired and preserved the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, which the family had acquired in 1849. Following five years of restoration work, the Society opened the Gibbs Farm museum (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974). Originally programs focused on telling the story of the pioneer life of the Gibbs family. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, the historic site also began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways, building additional structures, and dedicating outdoor spaces to tell these stories. The remarkable relationship of Jane Gibbs with the Dakota during her childhood in the 1830s and again as an adult encouraged RCHS to expand its interpretation of the Gibbs farm to both pioneer and Dakota life.

In 1964, the Society began publishing its award-winning magazine, *Ramsey County History*. In 1978, an expanded commitment from Ramsey County enabled the organization to move its library, archives, and administrative offices to downtown St. Paul's Landmark Center, a restored Federal Courts building on the National Register of Historic Places. An additional expansion of the Research Center was completed in 2010 to better serve the public and allow greater access to the Society's vast collection of historical archives and artifacts. In 2016, due to an endowment gift of \$1 million, the Research Center was rededicated as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RCHS offers a wide variety of public programming for youth and adults. Please see www.rchs.com for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps at Gibbs Farm, and much more. RCHS is a trusted education partner serving 15,000 students annually on field trips or through outreach programs in schools that bring to life the Gibbs Family as well as the Dakota people of Cloud Man's village. These programs are made possible by donors, members, corporations, and foundations, all of whom we appreciate deeply. If you are not yet a member of RCHS, please join today and help bring history to life for more than 50,000 people every year.

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



William Shields Fallon (1931–2018): A Tribute

William Fallon, former president and chairman of the board of the Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS), couldn't get enough of his history. Fallon was born in the midst of the Great Depression, October 2, 1931, in St. Paul, and his father, William H. Fallon, served in the U.S. Seventh Army under George S. Patton from 1942 to 1946. Both monumental events shaped the way the younger Fallon thought about history beginning early in his life, and as he grew older, he operated with a global view of how important the past is.

Fallon passed away November 27, 2018. He'll be remembered as a loving husband, father, uncle, and grandfather, as a local attorney for half a century, and as a pillar in his community and church. The one interest of his that connected all of these roles was his hunger for history.

According to his longtime friend Father Kevin M. McDonough, "History was not so much an acquired taste for Bill, as it was a genetic inheritance." McDonough explained that Fallon was proud of his rich Minnesota heritage that included a familial connection to General James Shields, a Minnesota pioneer and Civil War general. In addition, Fallon's father was a mayor of Saint Paul (1938–1940), and his wife Jean Marie (Landherr) Fallon's family helped shape the town of Rose Creek in the southern part of the state.

Fallon majored in history at the College of St. Thomas, moving on to earn a law degree from the University of Minnesota. His son Martin Fallon imagines his father might have become a history professor, if he had it to do all over again. Fallon continually read about, studied, and jumped into all things history.

"He was a voracious reader," said Martin Fallon. "In fact, starting in 1982, he kept lists of every book he read. He had three manila envelopes of legal pads listing books; general history, ancient history, modern history, Russian history ... He had a very curious mind."



Fallon got involved with RCHS in the 1980s and served several terms in the 1990s as president and chairman of the board. He was active with the organization as a board member until he retired in the early 2000s and remained an honorary board member until his death. Fallon's son remembers that his father liked working with the Society's first magazine editor, the late Virginia Brainard Kunz.

"He was most proud of that magazine," said Martin Fallon, who himself is now a member of the RCHS Board of Directors and Editorial Board. "For a local historical society, [my father] knew they had a top-shelf scholarly journal."

In his later years, Fallon worked as chancellor of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and, according to Father McDonough, part of Fallon's job was that of chief archivist of the Archdiocese. "He always told me that he considered the chancellor position to be the best job of his life because of the Catholic faith he treasured, because he admired his coworkers, and because he became a steward of 150 years of Minnesota history," McDonough said.

Certainly William Fallon, this man who loved history, will be remembered as an important figure in St. Paul's own history. It was an honor working with Mr. Fallon, and we are grateful for all he did for the citizens and organizations of St. Paul and the Ramsey County Historical Society.

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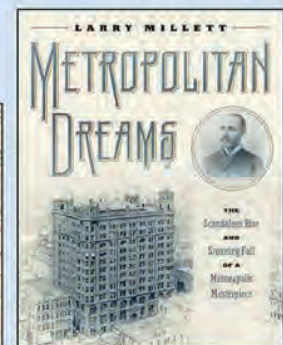
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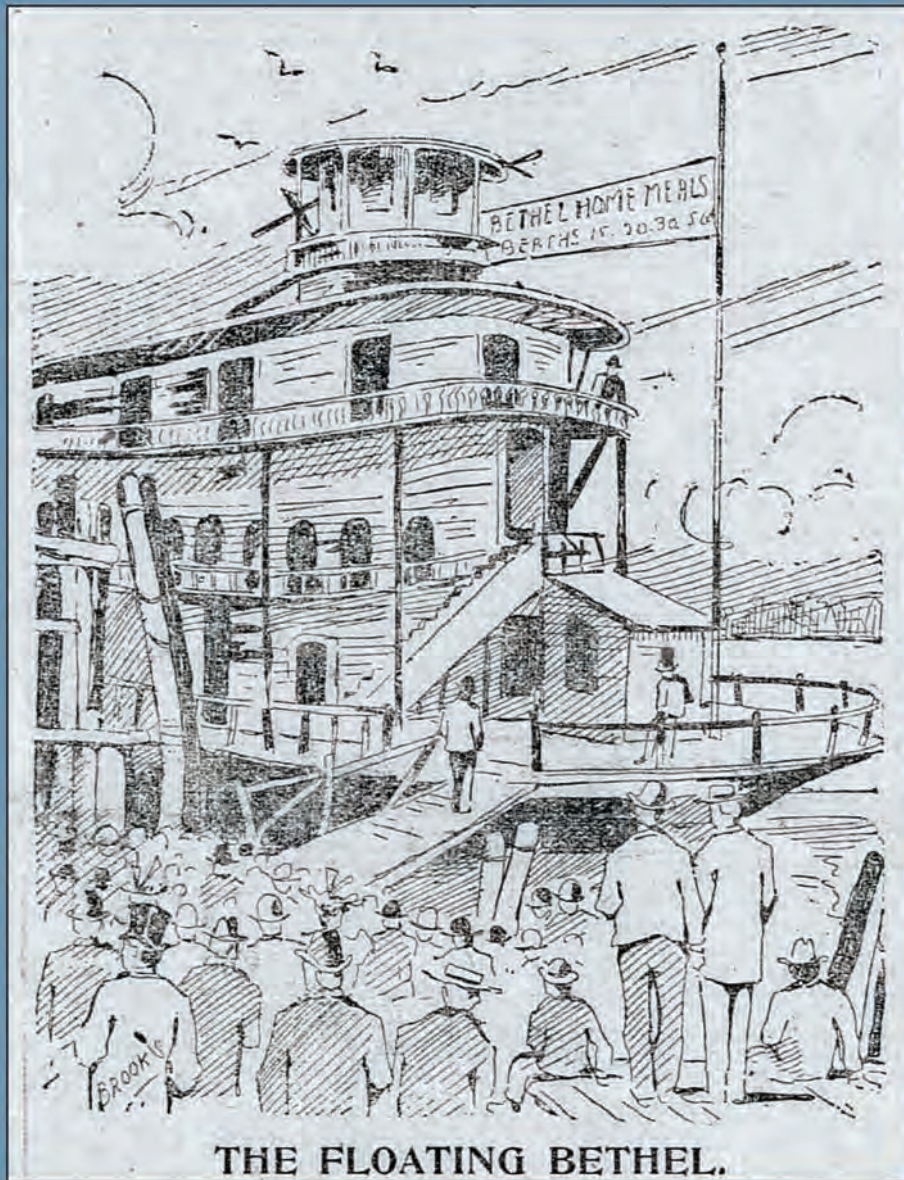
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The Floating Bethel, 1893, two years after it opened on the St. Paul Riverfront at Jackson Street. *The Saint Paul Globe*, July 7, 1893. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.