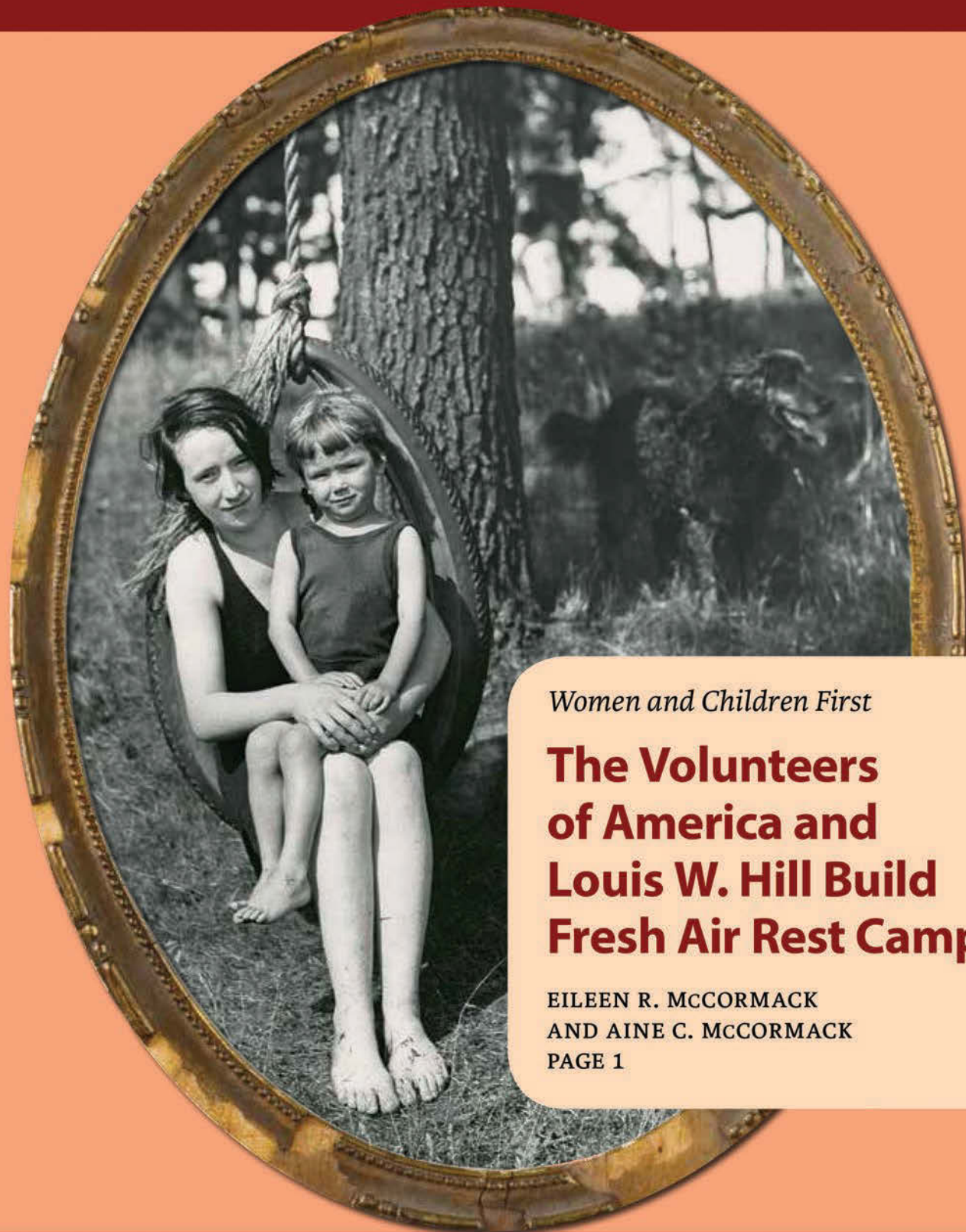


RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Public Archaeology

**Unearthing the Past in Ramsey
County and Beyond**

JEREMY L. NIENOW, PAGE 14



Women and Children First

**The Volunteers
of America and
Louis W. Hill Build
Fresh Air Rest Camp**

EILEEN R. MCCORMACK
AND AINE C. MCCORMACK
PAGE 1

By the Numbers . . .

During this COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesotans have come together to support one another; cheer for and cry with one another; and deliver food, sew masks, stay inside, and check in with friends and family. This is civic engagement at its best! We thought we'd share how volunteers from the past and present made/make an impact. (All of this issue's articles highlight the remarkable efforts of volunteers and community stewards.) Working together is what makes our world go 'round.

Number of women and children who visited the Volunteers of America (VOA) Fresh Air Rest Camp in North Oaks between 1922 and 1950.

50,000+

Number of Volunteers of America locations/services in Minnesota in 2020.

110

Number of Ramsey County MAHSC volunteers who helped on public archaeology projects.

52

Number of judges (community servants) who heard testimony in *Clara Anderson v. City of St. Paul*?

9

Number of years Clara Anderson's attorney Paul C. Thomas worked on her case?

3

Number of volunteer hours at RCHS in fiscal year 2018-19.

14,500+

Thank you, volunteers: past, present, and future! You make a difference!

ON THE COVER

In the 1920s, the Volunteers of America leased land on Louis W. Hill's North Oaks farm and established a Fresh Air Rest Camp for

poor working mothers and their children.

This young woman and her child were treated to two weeks of rest and relaxation.

Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.



Contents

- 1** *Women and Children First*
The Volunteers of America and Louis W. Hill
Build Fresh Air Rest Camp
 EILEEN R. MCCORMACK AND AINE C. MCCORMACK
- 14** *Public Archaeology*
Unearthing the Past in Ramsey County and Beyond
 JEREMY L. NIENOW
- 19** *Clara Anderson v. City of St. Paul*
A Woman's Fight to Save Her Job in the Face of Discrimination
 JOHN H. GUTHMANN

Message from the Editorial Board

The articles in this issue reflect efforts to help our citizens and achieve justice. Eileen and Aine McCormack reflect on the history of the mother and child rest camp that once operated on the shore of Lake Gilfillan in North Oaks. It was run by the Volunteers of America and funded largely by Louis Hill Sr. John Guthmann documents the case of Clara Anderson, who worked as a bartender during World War II but was dismissed when soldiers returned home. Her constitutional challenge to the city ordinance prohibiting her employment was rejected by the courts. It was not until the 1970s that discrimination on the basis of sex was stringently addressed. Finally, Jeremy Nienow describes how volunteer archeologists have been digging through literal layers of history as part of a collaborative project with other historical societies.

Collaborative efforts also are required of us now in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. Websites with information include:

- **More RCHS COVID-19 info:** <https://www.rchs.com/news/rchs-and-gibbs-farm-covid-19-updates/>
- **State of Minnesota COVID-19 info:** <https://mn.gov/covid19/>
- **CDC COVID-19 info:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

On the next page, we share RCHS's response to the crisis and our attempts to keep history alive for you, our members. Work continues on improvements at the Gibbs Farm, and our website now contains additional resources. Most significantly, part of our mission is to preserve the stories of Ramsey County residents, even as they happen. We invite you to complete a survey about recent events and how they have affected your lives. Your responses will become part of our archives for future generations to reflect on. Go to <https://www.rchs.com/news/history-of-covid-19-in-ramsey-county/> to participate.

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. Thanks to Hill Farm Historical Society for their financial support.

Dear Friends of the Ramsey County Historical Society,

We hope you are well, and your family is in good health and good spirits in this challenging time. The staff, board, and volunteers at Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) are safe and busy working remotely. We are committed to retaining our talented staff, and there is a great deal of work to do even if we are not open to the public. We will come out the other side of this pandemic, and students and adults will still need the resources we provide.

In the meantime, we have increased available content online through the website as well as via our Facebook page. If you are not already following RCHS on Facebook, do so today to access a variety of history posts. Please tell your friends to do the same!

Construction of the very first year-round education space at Gibbs Farm is continuing! This critical project is transforming our Red Barn from an uninsulated, seasonal space into a year-round facility that will increase our capacity by 3,000 students annually. We are grateful to the Katherine B. Andersen Fund for a matching grant of \$45,000 to help close the gap on the project—we are still accepting up to \$40,000 in pledges, payable over the next two years to secure this matching grant and ensure the entire project is completed as planned. Please contact Chad Roberts at chad@rchs.com to participate in this project.

We strongly encourage you to explore the 3D tours of the Gibbs farmhouse and one-room schoolhouse—these are outstanding resources created by the Gibbs team with the assistance of Nienow Cultural Resources. See <https://www.rchs.com/news/gibbs-360-tours/>.

We expect to continue publishing our award-winning *Ramsey County History* magazine on its normal schedule. I am also excited to share that *Great Northern Iron: James J. Hill's 109-Year Mining Trust* by Jim Stolpestad is now available and selling fast! This is a tremendous story encompassing mining, the Hill family, and so much more. The book is well written and absolutely beautiful. See <https://www.rchs.com/news/northern-iron/for-ordering-information>.

Staff and artists are continuing their work on “Persistence,” our upcoming exhibition celebrating women’s suffrage and activism from the past 120 years. We expect this exhibit to open on August 18, 2020, and hope to see you there. We also are in the final stages of the “St. Paul City Hall/Ramsey County Courthouse Council Chambers Art Project.” Artists have submitted their work, and we expect installation to take place over the summer. Watch for our social media and email announcements for more details in May.

As you know, history doesn’t stop, and right now we are living through an extraordinary time. To help record this event in our community, we ask you to share your COVID-19 experiences via an online survey available at our website—<https://www.rchs.com/news/history-of-covid-19-in-ramsey-county/>. Our Editorial Board Chair Anne Cowie has more to say about this on the preceding page.

From all of us here at YOUR RCHS, please stay safe—we look forward to seeing you as soon as circumstances allow!

Regards,



Chad Roberts, President



Jo Anne Driscoll, Chair of the Board



Chad Roberts



Jo Anne Driscoll

The Volunteers of America and Louis W. Hill Build Fresh Air Rest Camp

EILEEN R. MCCORMACK AND AINE C. MCCORMACK



City children were treated to new experiences at the Fresh Air Rest Camp at North Oaks. They rode horses and donkeys, fed the goats, raced across open meadows, and thrived in the outdoors. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

WOMEN, BABIES IN REST CAMP AT NORTH OAKS

Throughout the summer it is planned to have groups of mothers and children spend two weeks' vacation at the farm, under the direction of the Volunteers of America.¹

An escape from the hot dusty city—up to the lake or out to the country—was de rigueur for the privileged elite in 1920s St. Paul. For the city's poorer residents, however, a multi-week stint of fresh country air and relaxation was an unimaginable luxury.

The Ford children in the early 1920s, likely on the porch of one of the several homes their family rented while in the midst of financial difficulties. *Back row (L-R):* Beaumont and Hamilton. *Middle row:* James. *Bottom row (L-R):* Patricia and Lorraine. *Courtesy of Hamilton Ford Family Archives.*



From 1922 to 1950, the Fresh Air Rest Camp at North Oaks, located on the James J. Hill farm and administered by the Volunteers of America (VOA) made a dream vacation a reality for thousands of women and their children, thanks to the generosity of St. Paul businessman Louis W. Hill. The VOA organized similar camps in other urban areas of the United States, but the one in St. Paul was considered one of the finest.²

Adjutant Irving Starr, the local VOA commander, observed, “. . . the mothers who are out here . . . have no money to spend on vacations and often both they and their children would be very ill if it were not for the healthful rest which is made possible by Mr. Hill's wonderful kindness.”³

This was certainly true for the Frank J. Ford family, who lived in St. Paul. Early on, Frank, his wife, Angeline, and their five children had managed to make a decent living for themselves. Frank was a cook and then manager of the Great Northern Employees' Cafeteria for several years. Then he got sick, and Angeline had to take work as a salad girl at the Golden Rule, a department store in downtown St. Paul, for just twelve dollars a week.⁴

Twelve-year-old Hamilton, or “Ham,” as he was called, knew that wasn't a lot of money. He was very aware of the worry in his father's eyes, the exhaustion in his mother's body, and the hunger in the empty bellies of his brothers and sisters.

While he didn't know how it happened, in 1926, Ham, his siblings, and his mother were invited by the VOA to spend two weeks at their country camp. Angeline rested while the children swam, played with farm animals, and ran with lots of other kids in the fresh outdoors.⁵

And so it was for thousands of other mothers and children for twenty-eight summers at North Oaks—all thanks to the determination and hard

work of the VOA Adjutant Starr, his wife, Martha, and the very charitable Mr. Hill.

Civic Engagement and Community Service—Louis W. Hill

Hill's generosity was vital to the Starrs' new endeavor. His willingness to lease lakeshore land at his North Oaks farm to the Volunteers of America for one dollar per year was the important first step in their project.⁶

Hill inherited the farm in 1921 on the death of his mother, Mary T. Hill. Louis' father, James J. Hill, began purchasing the property ten miles north of St. Paul in 1883. North Oaks served as the summer home for the Hill family, as well as a working farm of orchards, experimental crops, distinctive breeds of cattle and hogs, and extensive herds of dairy cows and sheep. The pristine surroundings included numerous lakes, woodlands, and meadows that provided endless opportunities to hunt, fish, or experience nature on a long walk. In Louis' youth, summers at North Oaks meant freedom to explore, and it was where the younger Hill developed his lifelong love of outdoor adventures and his understanding of the importance of physical activity, which he passed on to his own children. North Oaks was where the Hills came together, where the family was at ease, and friends stopped to visit. In 1906, Louis built a home for his own family on the property, and the farm remained a special and beloved place in their lives for decades.⁷

Hill's philanthropy and sense of social responsibility were passions he inherited from his parents.⁸ His giving manifested itself in small and large acts of personal charity in the city of his birth. Throughout his life, he was involved in multiple social welfare and charitable projects to help individuals and strengthen the city. One of these organizations was the Goodfellows.

Organized by a group of St. Paul businessmen in 1914, the Goodfellows provided food, clothing, fuel, and gifts for the poor in the city during the holiday season. Hill embraced the logistical challenges of the storage and distribution of donated material and made space available at his Great Northern Railway building, where the office staff handled all the paperwork at Hill's expense. The Goodfellows used local charitable organizations, including Volunteers of America, to distribute their gifts.⁹

And the charity work continued. In 1934, Hill and his wife, Maud, created the Lexington Foundation, which operates to the present day as the Northwest Area Foundation.¹⁰ Hill brought the same intense work ethic and business acumen to his philanthropy that he brought to the boardrooms of the Great Northern Railway or the First National Bank of Saint Paul. He was a hands-on person, especially when a project captured his interest, and when approached by the Starrs in 1921 about providing a place for poor women and their children to rest and relax, he became deeply involved.¹¹

Civic Engagement and Community Service—Irving and Martha Starr

Since their arrival in the city in 1913, Irving and Martha Starr provided relief for St. Paul's poor and forgotten citizens with various programs, including a Volunteer Prison League, a Girls' Club, an Industrial Department where men could live and work, a Sunday School, a Working Women's Home, and other services.¹²

The Volunteers of America's service mission in St. Paul became, by the early 1920s, a larger part of its work than the evangelical mission of saving souls. Robert and Miriam Nolte in their history of the Volunteers in Minnesota wrote, "Ministering was equated with preaching."¹³ The Starrs were ministering in other ways



Louis W. Hill opened nineteen acres of his North Oaks farm for the proposed VOA-sponsored rest camp. The camp was meant for women who were their family's single breadwinners and main caretakers. *Courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*

The Volunteers of America in St. Paul

In 1865, William Booth founded The Christian Mission in London, England. “We are a salvation people—this is our specialty—getting saved and keeping saved, and then getting somebody else saved.”^a Booth’s work paid off. The organization grew and was renamed the Salvation Army in 1878. Chapters spread to the United States two years later.

Booth’s son Ballington and Ballington’s wife, Maud, arrived in America in 1887 to take charge of the Salvation Army “across the pond.” The movement’s focus under their charge gradually added social service programs,^b which conflicted at times with the strictly missionary aims of the original founders.^c

The philosophical differences grew insurmountable, and in early March 1896, the Booths resigned from the Salvation Army and organized a new movement—Volunteers of America (VOA). Although the social service activities that had caused the split were a part of the new organization, the Salvation Army’s emphasis on saving souls remained the new group’s main priority in the early years.^d Article I in their new Constitution stated, “The Volunteers of America is a movement, military in its methods . . . organized for the reaching and uplifting of all sections of the people and bringing them to the immediate knowledge and active service of God.”^e

Many of the new VOA members were former Salvation Army workers, so posts of the new organization in several areas were quickly established in existing venues. The first meeting in Minnesota occurred April 24, 1896, in Minneapolis under Paul Humphreys, a Salvation Army secretary.^f On January 18, 1897, St. Paul held its initial gathering in their newly acquired building—Market Hall at 443 Jackson.^g

To build a base of volunteers, organizers and leaders continued to devote the early years to evangelical work. Issues of *The Volunteers’ Gazette* reported the success of the St. Paul post in numbers of souls saved and popularity of meetings. “Many Souls Have Been Converted and Good Crowds Attend the Meetings Outside and Indoors,” the paper reported in June 1907, and by the end of the summer, “. . . we must have had three to four hundred people at the open air meeting.”^h This evangelical mission continued even as the service mission evolved: Poor families received Thanksgiving food baskets, and that Christmas, the VOA collected shoes and clothing for the poor and hosted a Christmas party for children, with food and gifts for all.

Irving Starr joined the VOA in 1902. In 1907, he married Martha Louise Meyer, who worked alongside her new husband. The Starrs first operated out of the Chicago office, becoming commanders of the city’s Slum Mission in 1912. Less than a year later, they transferred to St. Paul and lost no time in advancing the VOA mission there, particularly the service agencies.



Irving and Martha Starr, along with a strong staff, dedicated volunteers, and financial and community support from individuals and organizations, firmly rooted the Volunteers of America in St. Paul and Ramsey County over a century ago. The organization still operates today. Photos from *The Volunteers’ Gazette*, courtesy of the History Factory.

After two years, *The Volunteers’ Gazette* reported that Staff Capt. and Mrs. Irving Starr were to be congratulated on the new Volunteer enterprises they established in St. Paul. The meetings were well attended, souls were getting saved, and the people of St. Paul were rallying to help.ⁱ

Poor families received food, clothing, and coal across the city. The Working Girls’ Home, which had opened in May 1912 before the Starrs arrived, enlarged its services in 1914. Later that year, Martha helped organize the Volunteer Prison League, conducting meetings inside prison facilities to extend the missionary work of the Volunteers and help recently released men integrate back into society.^j

One astute move was to establish a close relationship with city and county officials, including L. C. Hodgson, a Volunteers supporter and the mayor of St. Paul. Hodgson often applauded the couple’s efforts in columns that ran in *The Volunteers’ Gazette*.^k

In July 1916, a group of St. Paul businessmen donated a building on North Smith Avenue to the Volunteers for use as an Industrial Home for Men. When donations of old clothes, shoes, furniture, newspapers, and magazines arrived at the facility, the men repaired and cleaned the items before the organization distributed them to the poor in the community. The VOA used the second floor of the building as living quarters for those men who needed a place to sleep.^l

The hard work continued, and by 1922, when the Fresh Air Rest Camp at North Oaks opened, the Volunteers held an important place in direct social services activity in St. Paul.^m

For nearly 125 years, Volunteers of America has continued helping those in need. Today, the VOA changes “the lives of more than 24,000 people in over 110 Minnesota locations,” focusing on families, community justice, senior services, education, mental health services, residential treatment, housing, and help for people with special needs.ⁿ For more information, go to <https://www.voamnwi.org/minnesota>.

through their many service programs, “. . . they [the Starrs] were dealing with reality . . . it was a decision to which nearly every branch of the Volunteers of America [would] come.”¹⁴ Then as now, children were often uppermost in the minds of the agencies involved in private welfare. The Minneapolis and St. Paul VOA chapters hosted holiday events and many outings during the year. Picnics in parks and at lakes, athletic clubs for boys, day camps for both boys and girls, craft classes, and holiday parties were all VOA programs developed for children.

The crisis faced by women who were the sole support of their families was also an important concern for the Volunteers. Many mothers worked long hours at jobs that paid little, before returning home to care for children who often were hungry and in need of clothing, medicine, and food. In an effort to alleviate some of these burdens, the Starrs proposed a Fresh Air Rest Camp designed to provide a fourteen-day, expense-free vacation in the country.¹⁵ In the short-term, the respite would allow guests to recharge, relax, eat well, and gain both physical and mental strength to face their daily struggles.

Fulfilling and Financing a Need: The North Oaks Fresh Air Rest Camp

The most ambitious project undertaken by the Starrs was the construction in 1922 of their Fresh Air Rest Camp. In 1903, the first of the VOA camps was built in Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan. The concept spread to other posts in the organization. When the camp in St. Paul opened, there were summer camps for mothers and children in twelve US cities, stretching from New York to San Francisco.¹⁶

In the early years, many of the VOA camps consisted of canvas tents for the visitors, with perhaps one or two wooden buildings used for dining or medical facilities. By 1925, many camps followed St. Paul’s more “modern” plan and erected wooden buildings to replace the tents.¹⁷

Two weeks were given over to, as the name of the camps implied, fresh air and rest. The mothers relaxed while trained staff cared for and entertained the children and completed all the necessary chores.¹⁸

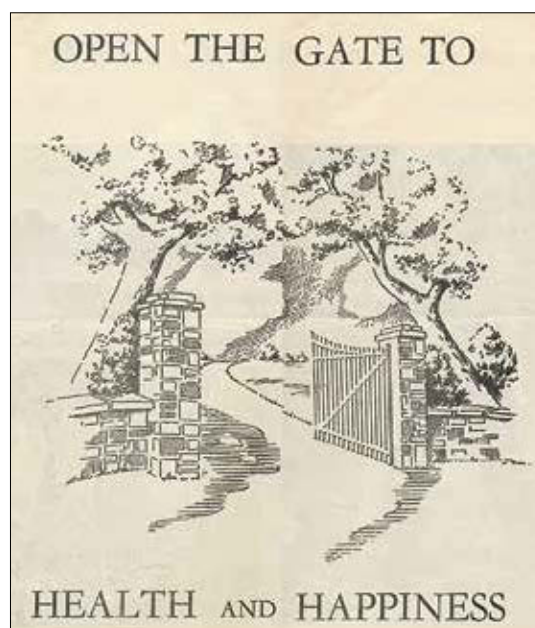
The Fresh Air Rest Camp found a home on the shore of Lake Gilfillan, one of several lakes on the farm. The terms of the lease, dated June 28,

1922, stipulated that the land was leased to the Volunteers of America, “. . . for the purpose of operating and maintaining a free fresh air camp for women and children; (camp to be a charitable institution and not operated or maintained for profit) . . .”¹⁹ Adjutant Starr paid five dollars, in advance, for the first five years.²⁰

Hill did not end his involvement once the lease was signed. During the early years of the endeavor, the Starrs approached him whenever they needed something for the facility, and, of course, there was a perpetual need. Whether it was a large expenditure such as the initial construction of camp buildings²¹ or a smaller one for the purchase of bed linens, Hill was involved in much of the decision-making for the physical camp and its maintenance. The Starrs also solicited donations of goods and services from the St. Paul community, with some success.²² However, the bottom line on the year’s expense sheet—always a debit—most often fell to Hill to balance.

In 1922, for example, he paid \$10,637.95 for construction work, equipment, and operational costs.²³ After the camp became established, the Starrs seem to have relied more on their organizational funds and community involvement, although Hill still remained involved until his death in 1948. In 1927, Martha Starr wrote to Hill thanking him for his help:

. . . because of such aid as you have always given us, we have been enabled to conduct



The Starrs, on behalf of the VOA, solicited funds for their Fresh Air Rest Camp from individual and corporate donors with mailers like this formal tri-fold with a drawing of the camp entrance. It read, in part: “With plenty of wholesome food, rest and directed activities, even the most blighted bodies take on new life and vigor. The spiritual and moral boost received by these children cannot be measured but will count in building the character of tomorrow’s citizens. . . . Please send your contribution to-day . . .” *Courtesy of Eileen McCormack from her private collection.*

one of the finest . . . camps of its kind. . . . We are very grateful and appreciative of being the medium through which you operate in dispensing so much good.²⁴

Hill paid the bills, but he also was concerned about his camp guests. He took time to arrange for the children's recreational facilities and ensured that all the buildings and amenities were pleasant and conducive to relaxation and enjoyment. Hill's close involvement with the camp's operations was illustrated in his letter to Willard C. White of Armour & Company thanking him for a donation of two milk cows for the camp.²⁵ Hill also solicited monetary donations from other business associates, including executives from the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway, the Great Northern Iron Ore Properties, and from the entire board of the First National Bank of Saint Paul.²⁶

Amenities Galore

The camp opened for its first season with eleven cottages, a two-room administration building, toilet and shower buildings, a pump house, a kitchen with storeroom and porch, and a dining hall, where there were individual tables for each family. Ten small cottages, featuring a sitting

room and a large, screened porch with adjustable canvas curtains for sleeping, provided housing for one or two families. A larger cottage with living rooms, bedrooms, and screened porches at each end could accommodate four families. At the beginning of the 1923 season when Hill “. . . learned there wasn't room to care for all the mothers who longed to come, he gave orders to Adj. Starr to hire carpenters and to have more cottages of the four-family type built immediately.”²⁷

That same year, a swimming pool, a sewing cottage, an additional large cottage, a shed for a dozen milk cows, a laundry house, and a tool house were added. The sewing cottage had five machines and two large cutting tables. The mothers received sewing instructions and fabric for those who wished to make clothing for themselves or their children. In addition, the St. Paul Lodge of Elks No. 59 built a large recreation building complete with, “. . . a motion picture machine, piano and phonograph, [to] fill the need of the camp for a gathering place for entertainments and dances.”²⁸

In 1924, the camp added fifteen cottages, a chicken house and yard, a dairy, and a larger administration building. A year later, Hill built a “comfort station” with a modern septic tank and other equipment.

An aerial view of the VOA Fresh Air Rest Camp around 1925 on the Hill family's North Oaks property along the shore of Lake Gilfillan. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*



A new library and a building consisting of two wings—one wing housed the new, larger nursery and the other a first aid room—were completed in time for 1929 visitors. By 1930, between 1,000 and 1,900 vacationers each season enjoyed this summer respite from the city. Additional cottages were built by the VOA, with contributions not only from Hill, but from individuals, civic groups, and professional organizations, including the Housewife’s League, the Office Girls Club of St. Paul, the Seth Parker Club, and the Eastern Star Welfare League No. 24.²⁹ Now forty cottages were included in the fifty buildings that stood on the lakeshore. A new kitchen was built in 1931, with a \$500 donation coming from Hill along with an icebox from his Summit Avenue residence. A tennis court, a second swimming pool, and new playground equipment were also added.³⁰

In addition to the cows for milk and the chickens for eggs, the camp was home to goats, donkeys, ponies, monkeys, ducks, and geese for the children’s enjoyment.³¹ The staff planted orchards and gardens on the land surrounding the camp. Hill had his farm workers do the plowing each spring and tend to a large garden. “The garden at the Fresh Air Camp this Summer promises to surpass anything of past years. In addition to early vegetables, . . . radishes, lettuce, peas, string beans . . . there will be a lot of corn, beets, potatoes, squash, cabbage . . .”³² From correspondence in the Hill archival papers and from published reports, it is evident the rest camp was well maintained and employed the newest appliances and utilities, which ensured the comfort of both visitors and staff.

The upgraded rooms and facilities were often vividly described in issues of *The Volunteers’ Gazette*. Perhaps the most enthusiastic description was of the nursery/first aid building in the July 1937 issue: “The color scheme is cream and pink. The wall borders are little pink angels and the curtains are cream with pink dots.”³³ Everything, it seems, was cream and pink, right down to the baby baths. “They are sunken tubs in large cream enameled tables, decorated in pink. There is a space at the side of the tub to spread the towel . . . and it is so arranged that it [the baby] cannot fall out . . .”³⁴ This building was staffed by a registered nurse, and the mothers received instruction, if necessary, in infant care. They normally bathed



the babies and then put them down for naps in the nursery, which adjoined the bath room. One of the mothers stayed with the sleeping children. “Each day a different mother performs this duty; while she is on watch she reads or does hand sewing, whichever she prefers.”³⁵ The first aid room had regular clinic hours for exams and routine care, and the nurse was also available to handle emergencies, including the occasional broken bone.

In the Good Old Summertime— Making a Positive Difference

The staff weighed the children when they arrived at camp and again when their vacation ended. According to Adjutant Starr, “Our earnings are figured in pounds, . . . the children gain an average of 6¼ pounds each in their two weeks’ stay, so we feel we are well paid for our investment.”³⁶ Starr credited the weight gain to “a steady diet of warm sunshine, country air and lots of food and rest . . .”³⁷

Mothers, babies, and small children were pampered at the Fresh Air Rest Camp. The nursery and bath room, for example, were exquisitely decorated and well-staffed, and the dining hall not only provided meals but also served as a place for families to visit. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

A typical day consisted of three nourishing meals and occasional snacks. A playground with swings, teeter-totters, and slides; areas for tennis, baseball, volleyball, and horseshoes; as well as swimming and wading pools stood ready for recreation.³⁸



Before building a Noah's Ark for the camp at Mr. Hill's request, designer A. G. McCoy sent Hill sketches for his approval, including this elephant drawing. McCoy charged Hill \$75 for lumber and paint but otherwise donated his time. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

There was no shortage of activities at the camp. Children got to ride and pet an assortment of animals, enjoyed swimming, and forgot, for a time, about any troubles at home. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*



In 1923, Hill arranged to have a "Noah's Ark," with a five-foot-high wooden elephant, lion, tiger, camel, zebra, and giraffe erected for the children. In a letter to A. G. McCoy, the designer, Hill wrote, "I appreciate very much your offer to donate the labor of erecting and decorating these six animals, and will be pleased if you will go ahead and order the necessary material and proceed with the work, sending me the bills so that I may take care of payment."³⁹

The recreation building was used for playing board games and ping-pong. In the craft room known as "The Bee Hive," children tried their hand at various handicrafts,⁴⁰ and both mothers and children made good use of the many books and magazines in the library.

In the evenings, guests gathered to watch movies, plays, and other programs presented by local individuals or groups. On August 19, 1932, for example, the *Pioneer Press* reported that the St. Paul Elks Lodge No. 59 entertained at the camp: "Oscar Erickson and his orchestra furnished music and dances were presented . . . Frances Latkins gave several readings, John



Hamilton Ford with campers in the early 1970s at the original Copper Cannon Camp for Underprivileged Children just south of Franconia, New Hampshire. The camp relocated in 1976 to 128 acres next to the White Mountain National Forest between Franconia and Bethlehem. *Courtesy of Hamilton Ford Family Archives.*

vacation once a year at least but none [sic] others need it so badly as the mother who is also a breadwinner, and the little brood which she struggles to rear.”⁴⁵

Hamilton Ford—A Camper Remembers

The mothers weren’t the only grateful recipients. The children also left healthier, happier, and, perhaps, more confident. That was certainly true for one boy—young Hamilton Ford.

In 2004, two years before he passed away at age ninety-three, Ford still fondly remembered his family’s time at North Oaks and their relief in eating three solid meals a day instead of watery cabbage soup or leftovers his mother brought home from her shift at Golden Rule. “It was the perfect camp. . . . It was two weeks out of a youngster’s lifetime which left an indelible impression. . . . the food was wonderful, Mother rested, and I even rode a donkey.”⁴⁶

“I don’t think I ever forgot the camp. I knew that someday I wanted to do my share. A half-promise I guess, that, God willing, I’d give underprivileged children the chance I’d had.”⁴⁷

Over the years, Ford grew up, married, started a family and a career, and eventually moved his brood to New Hampshire, where he fell in love with the natural beauty—and found the opportunity he’d been waiting for. In 1963, he established Copper Cannon, a summer camp for underprivileged children in the White Mountains. The camp has hosted more than 20,000 children over more than fifty-five summers giving them “a place to play.”⁴⁸

Mission Fulfilled

As part of the Volunteers of America organization, Irving and Martha Starr followed the original dictates of their founder, Ballington Booth; to save souls and serve others. St. Paul Mayor, L. C. Hodgson saw the VOA work as “. . . creating strong and healthy bodies in which the[y] house strong and confident souls.”⁴⁹ Not only was the VOA fulfilling their very visible social service mission in the community, they were “calling attention to the practical Christianity represented by the Volunteers of America. Every week many visitors go to the Camp and they leave ready to boost and help.”⁵⁰

The VOA Fresh Air Rest Camp remained at North Oaks until after the death of Louis Hill in 1948. By 1949, the farmland was slated for residential development. That November, forty buildings were moved to a new location—Clear Lake, nineteen miles north—Martha Starr reported that the buildings would be repaired and ready for the camp’s July 1950 opening day.⁵¹

Eileen R. McCormack is an independent researcher and writer who has contributed several articles to Ramsey County History magazine. She collaborated with Bilione W. Young on The Dutiful Son, Louis W. Hill: Life in the Shadow of the Empire Builder, James J. Hill (2010), published by Ramsey County Historical Society.

Aine C. McCormack, along with her mother, Eileen, wrote “Home Is Where We Start From: The Tazewell—100 Years in the Life of a St. Paul Apartment Building” in the Winter 2019 issue of Ramsey County History. Aine’s writing has appeared in Irish America, Dialogue, and Irish Lives Remembered magazines. Aine is the creator of TheIrishInAmerica.com.

A Brief History of North Oaks

The City of North Oaks, a private residential community where a Fresh Air Rest Camp run by the Volunteers of America (VOA) was once located, is in northern Ramsey County. Charles Gilfillan, a St. Paul banker and businessman, began acquiring land around the lakes near White Bear and Mounds Townships in 1876. His mission was to develop a reliable source of quality water for the growing city of St. Paul. Once that was accomplished and the water rights were secured for Gilfillan's St. Paul Water Company, he sold 3,300 acres to railroad magnate James J. Hill in 1883. Hill named the property North Oaks Farm.^a

He used the farm as a research station to develop state-of-the-art agricultural practices suitable in northern-tier states through which his railroad was being developed. The farm also served as a retreat for the Hill family and their friends. The lakes offered swimming, waterfowl hunting, fishing, boating, and ice skating, and the fields and forests were perfect for skiing, sledding, and big and small game hunting.^b

Hill died in 1916. Before her own death in 1921, wife Mary Hill gave the farm to Louis, their second son. A gentlemen farmer, Louis directed the farm operation, even leasing nineteen acres to the VOA for a summer camp for women and children for twenty-eight years.^c

Actual farming operations tapered off in the first half of the twentieth century, and by the time of Louis' death in 1948, little farming activity remained. Upon his passing, he left behind a letter, suggesting the possibility of developing the property for residential use. His children, Louis Jr., Maud, Jerome, and Cortlandt, decided to develop a model village on the farm, forming the North Oaks Company and North Oaks Home Owners' Association (NOHOA) in 1950. Louis Jr. led the company and personally participated in the layout of the residential lots. Development progressed, and in 1956, the "farm" incorporated as North Oaks Village.^d

What is unique about North Oaks is that most farms in the metro area were absorbed into adjacent communities in the early to mid-1900s—broken into smaller land tracts for business or residential development. North Oaks remained a farm until 1950, with no public roads on the 4,000 acres of land. That enabled the community to be developed in accordance with a single vision solely by the North Oaks Company. Over the intervening years, the community has grown to its present 5,523 acres (8.6 square miles).^e

By the late 1980s, North Oaks developers had to decide what to do with the three remaining dilapidated farm buildings dating from 1883. A group of concerned citizens worked to save the structures, leading to the formation of the Hill Farm Historical Society (HFHS) in 1989. The North Oaks Company deeded HFHS just over five and a half acres of land on the shores of Pleasant Lake that included the remaining buildings—the blacksmith/machine shop, the granary, and the dairy.^f

In 1991, residents contributed \$150,000 to begin the restoration of the farm site. The property and buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places by 1999. Restoration of the exteriors and interiors of the buildings continued as additional funds were raised. The project was essentially completed by 2012. From there, HFHS began developing exhibits to depict life on the farm in the early days and tell the story of the Hill family's North Oaks property.^g

Paul Dickson, the current president of the Hill Farm Historical Society, is a resident of North Oaks. He retired from Unisys after a thirty-eight-year career in the computer industry in 2007, which gave him the opportunity to pursue one of his real passions: American history, in general, and that of his local community, in particular.



Only three of the original buildings from the Hill family's North Oaks Farm still stand: (L-R): blacksmith/machine shop, the granary, and the dairy. They are preserved and maintained by the Hill Farm Historical Society. *Courtesy of Hill Farm Historical Society.*

Acknowledgments: The authors acknowledge a research grant (1996) from the Minnesota Historical Society that made possible a trip to the History Factory in Chantilly, Virginia, where

the Volunteers of America publications archive is located. Also, they thank the Hamilton Ford family for their assistance in the writing of this article.

NOTES

1. "Women, Babies in Rest Camp at North Oaks," *St. Paul Daily News*, June 19, 1923.

2. "Our Volunteer Leader Speaks at St. Paul Health Camp," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, September 1932, 3, in Volunteers of America archives, History Factory, Chantilly, VA (hereinafter referred to as VOA archives). Colonel H. Smith, Commander of the Great Lakes Regiment, commended the camp during a visit.

3. Katherine B. Spear, "Tired Mothers Rest in Cool Shade While Their Happy Babes Play," *St. Paul Daily News*, July 1, 1923.

4. Amy Frost Ford and Linda Ford Brown, "The Dream Comes Alive," working manuscript, 1-2, 4.

5. Frost Ford and Ford Brown, 4; Hamilton Ford, telephone interview with Eileen McCormack, 2004.

6. Biloine W. Young and Eileen R. McCormack, *The Dutiful Son, Louis W. Hill: Life in the Shadow of the Empire Builder James J. Hill* (St. Paul, MN: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2010), 286-289.

7. Albro Martin, *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1976), 310-311.

8. James J. Hill's philanthropy was extensive, self-directed, private, and mainly centered on improving St. Paul and establishing educational opportunities from here to the West Coast along railroad settlements. He was hands-on and never established a foundation. After his death, his wife, Mary, restricted her extensive giving to St. Paul Catholic institutions and World War I relief agencies. All her life, she practiced "out-of-pocket" giving to the poor in St. Paul. Her "in-her-own-name" philanthropy was often in the form of trusts that endure to the present day.

9. Goodfellows file, in Louis W. Hill archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society, 1 (hereinafter referred to as LWH archival collection). Members of the Goodfellows (1914-1920) charitable organization were St. Paul businessmen who provided food, clothing, and toys to families in need around the holidays. It was later renamed "The Santa Claus Club." Hill was the organization's second president.

10. "History of NWF," Northwest Area Foundation, accessed February 17, 2020, <https://www.nwaf.org/about/history-of-nwaf/>. Established in 1934, Louis and Maud Hill's Lexington Foundation provided short-term help for the city's poor during the Great Depression era and then expanded to support "the arts, medical research, agriculture, and poverty reduction." The board changed the name to the Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation in 1950. The name changed to NWF in 1975. The organization continues to "use its assets to re-

duce poverty and advance sustainable prosperity in its service region."

11. Goodfellows file, 1.

12. Bob and Miriam Nolte, *A Ministry of Service in Minnesota 1896-1996* (Minneapolis: Volunteers of America, 1996), 24, 33-34, 47, 49.

13. Nolte, 36.

14. Nolte, 36.

15. Two weeks was a long time to be away from work, but at the same time, at camp, families received food, clothing, fabric, and other necessities.

16. "Fresh Air Camps Ready," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, June 16, 1920, 1, in VOA archives, History Factory.

17. "A Few Stories of the Fresh Air Camp Life are Told—Five New Camps Were Added This Season Thus Bringing Health to Hundreds More Children," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, September 1925, 10-11; "Our Volunteer Leader," September 1932, 3, in VOA archives, History Factory.

18. "St. Paul, Minn., Volunteer Recreation Camp," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, June 1923, 8; July 1924, in VOA archives, History Factory. For a detailed description of various rest camps in the United States, see issues of *The Volunteers' Gazette* from 1903-1948, VOA archives, History Factory; Spear, 1.

19. "Memorandum For Lease of Land Near Gilfillan Lake To the Volunteers of America," VOA financial and building files, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society, 1.

20. "Memorandum For Lease," 1.

21. The first ten 362-square-foot cottages cost \$310 each in 1922.

22. H. W. Kask, memo to Mr. Louis Hill, June 6, 1922, VOA finance and building file, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society. Jacobs Furniture donated a bed and box spring, and Empire Furniture donated a sanitary couch and pad, as did Standard Furniture and Weyandt Furniture, which also gave a commode, two cots and mattresses, and two armchairs.

23. "Amounts paid to Volunteers of America re Fresh Air Camp at Gilfillan Lake, Year 1922," and "Volunteers of America Camp Report," VOA financial and building files, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society. In 1924, the camp used 5,520 loaves of bread, 175 bushels of potatoes, 500 dozen eggs, 3,025 pounds of meat, 600 pounds of butter, and more.

24. Mrs. Irving Starr, letter to Mr. L. W. Hill, June 8, 1927, VOA correspondence files, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

25. Louis W. Hill, letter to Willard C. White, undated,

Hill correspondence files, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

26. Spear, 1; "Elks Complete Building They Contributed to Fresh Air Camp for Needy," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 3, 1923.

27. Spear, 1.

28. "Elks Complete Building."

29. See VOA files in LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

30. "Children to Enter Outing Camp Monday," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, June 22, 1930; "New Cottages at Rest Camp to Be Dedicated Today," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, August 6, 1930; "1,000 Kiddies Treated to Fresh Air by Volunteers," *St. Paul Daily News*, July 20, 1924; "Volunteers Start Nursery Building," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 26, 1929.

31. Jeanette Spencer, "Great Lakes News Notes," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, March 1925, in VOA archives, History Factory.

32. W. A. Reeves, "St. Paul Volunteer Fresh Air Camp Notes," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, June 1925, in VOA archives, History Factory.

33. "We Inspect the Cottages Where Camp Children Dwell," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, July 1937, 9, in VOA archives, History Factory.

34. "We Inspect the Cottages," 9.

35. "St. Paul Rest Camp Has Valued Addition," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, July 1930, in VOA archives, History Factory.

36. "St. Paul Volunteer Fresh Air Camp And Its Beneficent Work," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, September 1927, 9, in VOA archives, History Factory.

37. "St. Paul Volunteer," 9.

38. "Rest Camp," *The Friendly Hand*, July 1930, 4, in VOA archives, History Factory.

39. Louis W. Hill, letter to A. G. McCoy, June 30, 1923, Hill correspondence files, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

40. "Two Summer Camps With a Big Purpose," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, July 1939, 3, in VOA archives, History Factory.

41. "St. Paul Elks Give Program at Rest Camp," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, August 19, 1932.

42. Seventeen women, letter to Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Hill, June 27, 1924, VOA thank you notes file, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

43. Mrs. Theresa Miller and Family, letter to Mr. L. W. Hill, July 4, 1927, VOA thank you notes file, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

44. Nine women, letter to Major M. Starr, and Mr. and Mrs. Lewis [sic] Hill, July 19, 1921, VOA thank you notes file, LWH archival collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

45. "Rest Camp," 4.

46. Hamilton Ford, interview with Eileen McCormack, August 2004.

47. Steven Sterling, Copper Cannon: a story of sharing, *Northland News—Littleton Edition*, July 23, 1975, 1.

48. "History," Copper Cannon Camp website, ac-

cessed February 25, 2020, <http://coppercannoncamp.org/about/history/>.

49. L. C. Hodgson, "St. Paul Fresh Air Camp," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, July 1923, in VOA archives, History Factory.

50. Hodgson.

51. "Volunteers of America Plan to Move Camp," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, October 22, 1949.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 4.

a. "William Booth," Salvation Army website, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/history-william-booth>.

b. Bob and Miriam Nolte, *A Ministry of Service in Minnesota 1896-1996* (Minneapolis: Volunteers of America, 1996), 10-12. The Volunteers worked in the roughest parts of the cities, helping the poor, alcoholics, indigent, and others.

c. Nolte, 1-5.

d. Nolte, 1-2.

e. Nolte, 8; "The Constitution of the Volunteers of America," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, January 9, 1897, 14, in VOA archives, History Factory.

f. Nolte, 3, 31.

g. *St. Paul City Directory 1897* (St. Paul: R.L. Polk & Co., 1897), 88.

h. "Many Souls Have Been Converted and Good Crowds Attend the Meetings Outside and Indoors," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, June 6, 1907, 13; "Splendid Open Air Services Attract Large Crowds," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, August 17, 1907, 16, in VOA archives, History Factory.

i. "Staff-Capt. Irving Starr, Who has been Advanced to rank of Adjutant," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, March 18, 1914, 5, in VOA archives, History Factory.

j. Nolte, 24.

k. "Mayor Hodgson Fires First Shot in St. Paul Evangelistic Campaign," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, April 1922, in VOA archives, History Factory. L. C. Hodgson was mayor of St. Paul from 1918 to 1922 and 1926 to 1930.

l. Nolte, 33.

m. Camp Children Gain in Weight," *The Volunteers' Gazette*, August 1922, in VOA archives, History Factory; Nolte, 35.

n. "Minnesota," Volunteers of America website, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.voamnwi.org/minnesota>.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 11.

a. Joan C. Brainard and Richard E. Leonard, *Three Bold Ventures: The History of North Oaks, Minnesota* (St. Paul, MN: Beaver's Pond Press, 2007), 3, 6.

b. Brainard and Leonard, 17.

c. Brainard and Leonard, 40-42.

d. Brainard and Leonard, 44, 52-54, 91.

e. Brainard and Leonard, 83-85.

f. Brainard and Leonard, 145.

g. Brainard and Leonard, 145-146, 169.

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

President

Chad P. Roberts

Editor

Meredith Cummings

Editor Emeritus (2006-2018)

John Lindley

Founding Editor (1964-2006)

Virginia Brainard Kunz

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Board of Directors

Jo Anne Driscoll

Chair

Jerry Woelfel

First Vice Chair

Mari Oyanagi Eggum

Second Vice Chair

Roxanne Sands

Secretary

Kenneth H. Johnson

Treasurer

James Miller

Immediate Past Chair

Jo Emerson, Thomas Fabel, Martin Fallon, Anne Field, Tim Glines, Lorraine Griffin Johnson, John Guthmann, John Hamburger, Richard B. Heydinger, Jr., Elizabeth J. Keyes, Judy Kishel, David Kristal, Carl Kuhrmeyer, Joe Lutz, Robert W. Mairs, Jonathan H. Morgan, Robert Muschewske, Peter Nguyen, Chad P. Roberts, George T. Stephenson, James A. Stolpestad, July Vang, Glenn Wiessner, Lee Pao Xiong.

Editorial Board

Anne Cowie, *chair*, Thomas H. Boyd, John Diers, Thomas Fabel, Martin Fallon, John Guthmann, Lisa L. Heinrich, James Miller, John Milton, Laurie M. Murphy, Robert Muschewske, Paul D. Nelson, Richard H. Nicholson, Jay Pfaender, David Riehle, Chad P. Roberts, George T. Stephenson, Steve Trimble, Mary Lethert Wingerd.

Honorary Advisory Board

William Finney, George Latimer, Joseph S. Micallef, Marvin J. Pertzik, James Reagan.

Ramsey County Commissioners

Commissioner Toni Carter, Chair
Commissioner Nicole Joy Frethem
Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo
Commissioner Jim McDonough
Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire
Commissioner Rafael Ortega
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt

Ryan T. O'Connor, Manager, Ramsey County

Ramsey County History is published quarterly by the Ramsey County Historical Society, 323 Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102 (651-222-0701). Printed in U.S.A. Copyright © 2020, Ramsey County Historical Society. ISSN Number 0485-9758.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission from the publisher. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Email address: info@rchs.com; website address: www.rchs.com.

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.

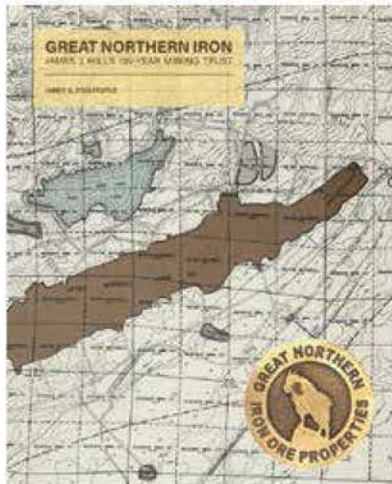
RCHS offers a wide variety of public programming for youth and adults. Please see www.rchs.com for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps at Gibbs Farm, courthouse and depot tours, and more. RCHS is a trusted education partner serving 15,000 students annually on field trips or through outreach programs in schools that bring to life the Gibbs Family as well as the Dakota people of Heyate Otunwe (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



*Great Northern Iron:
James J. Hills's 109-Year Mining Trust*
by James A. Stolpestad

Published by the Ramsey County
Historical Society



For more information and to order the book,
see the website at:

<https://www.greatnorthernironbook.com/>

*Ramsey County
Historical
Society*

Congratulates

**Diane
Trout-Oertel**



Her article

“Emma F. Brunson: The First Woman
Registered as an Architect in Minnesota”
in *Ramsey County History Magazine*

won the

Minnesota Chapter of the
Society of Architectural Historians
David Stanley Gebhard Award

Read the winning article at
<https://bit.ly/3ccpgMW>



Gibbs Farm

*Historic and outdoor adventures
since 1954!*

Day Camps, Saturday Tours,
and More!

www.rchs.com

Social distancing is possible at Gibbs Farm
this summer. Please watch your email and
our Facebook page for more information
about reservations for your family.



GIBBS FARM

*Pathways to Dakota & Pioneer Life
Experience | Understand | Grow*

651-646-8629
gibbs@rchs.com
www.rchs.com

Published by the Ramsey County Historical Society
323 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit No. 3989

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



The building that houses Waldmann Brewery & Wurstery at 445 Smith Avenue in St. Paul was built in 1857. Shown here in 1937, decades after its commercial facade was “remodeled,” it is the oldest surviving commercial building in the Twin Cities. It began as a German lager beer saloon operated by Anton and Mina Waldmann from 1857 to 1863. Such saloons served beer and hearty foods and offered music, family entertainment, lectures, and political debates. Women and children were welcome, and it’s likely Mrs. Waldmann worked with her husband serving both food and drink. As time progressed, women’s occupational roles at bars narrowed. That changed in the 1940s when women stepped into bartending roles that men vacated to fight in the war. Yet, when they returned, those same men wanted their jobs back.

Ramsey County Chief Judge John Guthmann tells the story of one

woman who fought the City of St. Paul to keep her bartending job. Her case against discrimination is long forgotten, yet, today women do tend bar. And, of course, Waldmann, which reopened as a brewery and restaurant in 2017, employs more women beer-tenders than men. It’s also one of four venues for Ramsey County Historical Society’s *History Revealed* programs. Once the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, programming will resume. Learn more here: www.rchs.com/news/history-revealed/.

In the meantime, Waldmann is still providing beer and food to-go at www.waldmannbrewery.com, so grab a hearty meal and a crowler of pre-Prohibition-style lager. Then settle in and read Judge Guthmann’s article, “*Clara Anderson v. City of St. Paul: A Woman’s Fight to Save Her Job in the Face of Discrimination*,” beginning on page 19. *Courtesy of Waldmann Brewery & Wurstery and Minnesota Historical Society.*