

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Setting the Record Straight

**The Scoop that Helped Save
a St. Paul Landmark**

LINDA KOHL, PAGE 10



Architect of St. Paul's West Side

H. Emil Strassburger

NICOLE FOSS, PAGE 1



By the Numbers . . .

When researching the built environment, building permits and related materials are invaluable. These documents provide addresses; building specifications; filing dates; names of owners, contractors, and builders; project costs; and other details. In this issue, all three authors focused on the built environment. Two writers—Nicole Foss and Krista Finstad Hanson—spent hours reviewing permits at the Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center—the only location where early city permits are housed.

Thanks to support from the Dietz Family Foundation of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation and a Legacy Grant, RCHS is now creating a web-based portal providing online access to our nearly 2 million pages of permits and other documents by year's end. This project has been financed, in part, with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. Check out the stats below to learn more:

Year the City of St. Paul's License, Inspection, and Environmental Protection Office donated its building permits from 1883 to 1975 to RCHS:
2003

Year our Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center opened:
2010

Number of St. Paul building permits housed at RCHS:
385,000

Number of pages of permits that will be available online by end of 2024:
Nearly 2 million

Number of research requests received at RCHS in 2023:
1,429

Please visit our Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center for building permits or other research needs in the lower level of Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth Street.

SOURCE: RCHS Director of Collections and Exhibitions Mollie Spillman.

ON THE COVER



Architect H. Emil Strassburger spent about fifteen years making his mark on St. Paul's West Side. Photo and name plate courtesy of John Riley; Architectural tools courtesy of Dmitry Makeev (compass) and the Collection of Auckland Museum Tamaki Paenga Hira (ruler) via Wikipedia Commons.

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Message from the Editorial Board

A city boasting a variety of architecture, St. Paul is a testament to both change and preservation. Economies boom and bust, peace follows war, buildings stand or fall. An architect's work endures or gets scraped by a bulldozer. Most often, the prevailing styles and civic leaders of the time dictate what stays and what goes. Architect Emil Strassburger is a perfect example of this, as Nicole Foss reveals to us. His work is much admired and played a big role in developing St. Paul's West Side, but most of it is gone today. Linda Kohl tells us that sometimes there is only a serendipitous series of events that spares landmarks, like our own Landmark Center. And sometimes, modest well-built homes endure far longer than their bigger, flashier counterparts, as Krista Finstad Hanson details for us in her piece on the Hamline Midway neighborhood.

Whether your home, your office, or your favorite cultural landmark looks like the ornate layers of a wedding cake or a sleek functional design of steel and glass, the common denominator is people. Regardless of the architectural styles of the day, the buildings of our city belong to the citizens who make up our businesses and neighborhoods. As immigration ebbed and flowed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so did the prevailing styles of architecture across the city. To follow the threads of these structures is to discover the tapestry of St. Paul.

Anne Field
Chair, Editorial Board

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Ramsey County History has revised its numbering system. At the start of each calendar year, the first issue will be labeled No. 1. This issue is Winter 2024, Vol. 59, No. 1. Note that with this change, Vol. 58 includes only three issues for 2023.

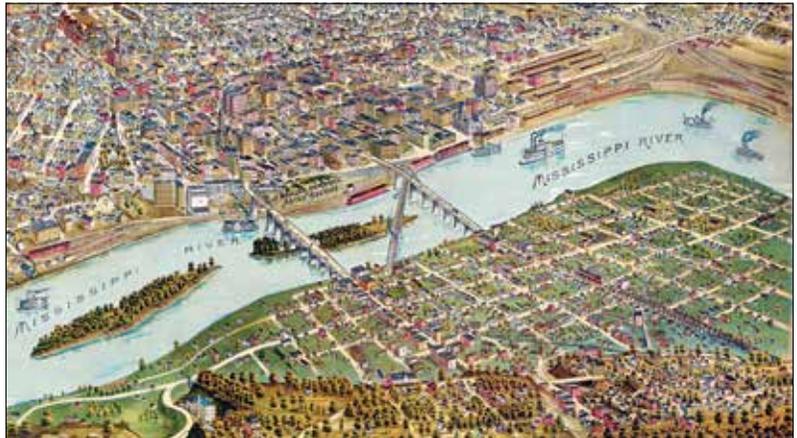
H. Emil Strassburger

NICOLE FOSS

Nearly thirty years into Minnesota's statehood, St. Paul was undergoing a building boom. By the mid-1880s, the economy had rebounded in the aftermath of the American Civil War and the Panic of 1873, fueling an influx of new residents and the construction of buildings to house and employ them. Keeping pace with the rest of the city was the West Side. A relatively new addition to the capital city, the neighborhood, located southeast of St. Paul proper, was so named because of its position on the west side of the Mississippi River from the perspective of steamboats traveling north.¹

German-trained architect Heinrich Emil Strassburger entered the milieu of the West Side's rapid growth by way of San Antonio, Texas, in 1884. He brought with him formal European training, an eagerness to make his mark, and a willingness to experiment with the styles of the day. Strassburger is notable as the only formally trained architect to base his practice in the West Side during the neighborhood's largest period of growth from the mid-1880s to the late-1890s. He is also recognized for several distinctive residential designs that remain as part of the Victorian-era architectural character of the West Side bluff today.²

Strassburger designed commercial, residential, industrial, and municipal buildings throughout his career, which included an early stint in San Antonio, fifteen years in St. Paul, and nearly a decade in Crookston, Minnesota. While less than a third of his buildings in St. Paul are extant, most that remain retain fair-to-good integrity and reveal his masterful designs. These feature the Richardsonian Romanesque style, brick interpretations of Stick style with Eastlake embellishments, and at least one exploration in Second Empire-inspired eclecticism. Strassburger's skillfully designed buildings are visually dense yet energized by balanced asymmetry and lively ornamentation.³



West Side Roots

When Strassburger, his wife, Amalie, their three-year-old daughter Gertrude, and infant son Richard arrived in St. Paul in 1884, the West Side had been added to the city only a decade earlier. Previously part of Dakota County, the land comprising the neighborhood was annexed in 1874, and the toll was abolished for the Wabasha Street Bridge, which connected the city to its newest neighborhood across the Mississippi River. The area's geography has charted its development. To the north are the low-lying Flats, prone to frequent flooding, while rising to the south with a steep increase in elevation is the sandstone bluff. A mix of industries, railroad facilities, single and multifamily immigrant housing, and a commercial district characterized the Flats. The bluff was largely residential.⁴

By the mid-1880s, the Flats were ethnically diverse, featuring a large concentration of Jewish residents who had fled the pogroms in Eastern Europe and settled among French Canadian, Irish, and German arrivals, along with some Dakota who had returned to their homeland following their forced removal in the aftermath of the US-Dakota War of 1862. In the early twentieth century, Mexican immigrants, Syrians, and Lebanese arrived, as well. Expedient residences

Note the West Side Flats and bluff area at the bottom of the image in this 1888 map of St. Paul created by Orcutt Lithography Company and published by J. H. Mahler Company. Restored and used with permission by Knowol, <https://www.knowol.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/St-Paul-Minnesota-1888-SM.jpg>.

sprouted up among the industries that sprawled across the Flats in contrast to a few stately limestone houses that remained from early well-to-do arrivals.⁵ The hodgepodge of residential and industrial land on the Flats was bisected by two main commercial thoroughfares that run northwest to southeast—Wabasha Avenue South (originally Dakota Avenue) and Robert Street South. They were knit together by perpendicular cross streets named after states. Over the next fifteen years, Strassburger’s architectural designs would help shape the built environment of Wabasha and Robert Streets South and both the Flats and the bluff.

Strassburger joined a growing number of professional architects gradually succeeding the city’s original master carpenters and masons. German architects predominated among the arrivals of the mid-1880s. Albert Zschocke, born in Zwickau, Saxony, arrived in 1883, the same year as Emil Ulrici, the American-born son of a German father and American mother. Strassburger followed in 1884, and German-born Hermann Kretz arrived in 1886. Among the city’s formally trained architects, Strassburger was the only one to base his practice in the West Side.⁶

Saxony to San Antonio

Strassburger was born to Heinrich Ferdinand, a bricklayer foreman, and Louise Emilie Biesolt on July 11, 1853, in Bautzen, Saxony. Bautzen, known for its intact medieval architecture, is located near the borders of the Czech Republic and Poland, close to Dresden. Strassburger joined older brother Friedrich Oskar, while younger brother Paul followed three years later. Emil and Paul, the only members of the family to immigrate to the US, would remain close throughout their lives. Strassburger received formal architectural training in the early 1870s, although the institution he attended has yet to be identified. On September 18, 1877, he married Marie Amalie Pötschke at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Bautzen. Daughter Gertrude was born in Germany in 1881. Other children would eventually join the family—Richard (Texas, 1884), Henry (St. Paul, 1885), and Ella (St. Paul, 1888). In 1882, at the age of twenty-nine, Strassburger immigrated to America. The following year, his wife and daughter arrived, as did Paul.⁷

The family first settled in San Antonio with Paul as a boarder. Paul found employment as a carpenter, and Emil was hired as a draftsman for Wahrenberger and Beckmann. The firm was founded in 1883 as a partnership between Albert Felix Beckmann, a San Antonio-born, German-trained architect, and James Wahrenberger, an Austin, Texas-born architect who had studied at the Polytechnic in Karlsruhe, Germany. Both Wahrenberger and Beckmann were Strassburger’s contemporaries in age.⁸

It was not long before Strassburger struck out on his own; by January 1884, he had established an office at 245 Market Street in San Antonio.⁹ However, the family’s time there was short-lived. Within a year, they had relocated to the rapidly growing West Side neighborhood of St. Paul with its large German community. Paul followed a couple of years later.

Setting Up Shop

In St. Paul, Strassburger entered the economic and social spheres. He established his architectural practice in a business block along Wabasha Street South, the commercial gateway to the West Side. The two-storefront block was owned by Mathias Iten, a hardware dealer and early West Side resident. Strassburger took on the position of commander for the local lodge of the Ancient Order of United Workman, a fraternal benefit society. He also formed business partnerships. For a short time during his first year, Strassburger partnered with Jacob R. Steiner, a real estate agent and later newspaper manager and editor who worked briefly as an architect. However, they soon parted ways. Steiner’s name did not accompany Strassburger’s on any building permits from this time. Other ventures included the acquisition of real estate with men such as August Jobst, a blacksmith and another early West Sider, and Paul Martin, a prominent real estate developer.¹⁰

Strassburger’s first-known design in St. Paul was a three-story commercial block for Dr. George Marti, a pharmacist, on Wabasha Street South (*page 3*). The first floor of the building housed Marti’s prescription and sales rooms. The second floor housed offices for medical and legal professionals, and the upper floor included a public hall where fraternal organizations met.¹¹ Strassburger’s design featured entranceways

To see a glossary of architectural terms noted in this article and to see a map and chart with more information on Emil Strassburger’s West Side architecture, go to <https://rchs.com/publishing/catalog/ramsey-county-history-winter-2024-h-emil-strassburger>.

framed by polychromatic pointed arches on the first story and segmental arched windows with polychromatic window hoods on the second story. The building was topped by an ornate, galvanized-iron cornice with diamond-shaped ornaments at the corners, a half-round pediment supported by brick pilasters, and a sawtooth brick pattern below the cornice. Strassburger provided clear visual delineation between the stories with a belt course. He often emphasized the most visible corners of his commercial designs by accentuating them with an ornate bay window, turret, or tower. In this case, there was a canted two-story bay window at the intersection of Wabasha Street South and Fairfield Avenue.

Business is Booming

It was not long before Strassburger received affirmation that his decision to relocate to the West Side was sound. Several clients and commissions followed on the heels of the Marti Block project. Strassburger designed at least nine buildings in the neighborhood—including business blocks, stores, and two residences—in 1885 alone. Eight of these were on the Flats, with one residence on the bluff. Another early business project was the Lawton Block, designed in 1885 for brothers Albert M. and Charles B. Lawton, who owned a real estate, loan, and insurance company. The three-story brick building, which housed the Lawton Brothers and the West Side Bank on the first floor, was described as “very handsome and substantial” in *Northwest Magazine*.¹² It included features found on the Marti Block—most notably a corner turret with an octagonal roof and segmental arched windows with polychromatic hoods. The windows on the elevation facing Wabasha and one bay of windows facing Chicago Avenue featured light-colored stone window hoods, which contrasted stylishly with the dark color of the brick walls.

Strassburger’s commercial commissions on the Flats continued at a brisk pace through the mid-1880s. His office was located in the Iten Block, which originally consisted of two storefronts (numbers 88 and 90), designed by Ulrich in 1884. In 1886, Iten hired Strassburger to create a third storefront on the lot to the north, cementing the architect’s presence and serving as an additional bricks-and-mortar advertisement for his work.¹³



The George Marti Block at 114-118 Wabasha Street South, 1965. In the Ramsey County Housing and Redevelopment Authority collection, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

That same year, developer Martin hired Strassburger to design a large commercial block adjacent to the Colorado Street Bridge along Wabasha Avenue South. The three-story brick block, known as Amity Hall, contained several businesses along with auditoriums where performances were held and benevolent societies met.¹⁴ As with Strassburger’s other commercial designs, the Amity Hall block featured a canted corner at the intersection of Colorado and Wabasha (not pictured).

Strassburger designed another block for Martin in 1887 on Robert Street South, just north of

The Lawton Block at 171-175 Wabasha Street South. In *Northwest Magazine* 4, no. 11 (1886).



the present-day intersection with Cesar Chavez Street.¹⁵ This two-story brick commercial building exhibited a profusion of ornamentation, including polychromatic window hoods over alternating semicircular and segmental arched windows, brick panels, and a series of circular and triangular pediments alternating with turrets supported by brick corbels.



The Paul Martin Block at 468-472 Robert Street South, 1954. In its early years, this block boldly carried the visual weight of the abundance of surface and roofline texture and ornamentation. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*



The Fitzer Block at 92-102 Robert Street South. *In Northwest Magazine 4, no. 11 (1886).*

To accommodate his thriving business, Strassburger soon began employing draftsmen. His work was attracting wider attention, as well. In 1886, *Northwest Magazine* highlighted several of his designs, including the six-storefront Fitzer Block, proclaiming,

Much of the attractive and well designed architecture of the West Side has been the result of the skillful work of E. Strassburger. . . . His busy office at 88 Dakota Ave., is a favorite resort for information concerning the desirable business locations and residences of the West Side.¹⁶

The Razing of the Flats

Over half of Strassburger's designs were constructed on the Flats, however, none would survive beyond the mid-twentieth century. By the early 1950s, the Flats neighborhood was home to a vibrant multiethnic community. While most families faced poverty and lived amid active industrial properties, the enclave was closeknit and enjoyed a strong sense of community, with its own churches and synagogues, schools, corner stores, and neighborhood institutions.

One of the most challenging aspects of living on the Flats was spring flooding. In 1952, a historic flood brought significant destruction to the neighborhood. In 1956, the St. Paul Port Authority announced that it would raze the businesses and residences on the Flats and convert the area to an industrial park. Over 2,000 people were removed from their homes, and almost 500 buildings were demolished, including those Strassburger had designed. In a painful irony, a flood wall was built in 1964 to protect the industrial park that replaced the former community.¹⁷



Robert Street South during the historic 1952 West Side flood. *Courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*

Homes on the Bluff

To view Strassburger's extant work in St. Paul, one must visit the West Side bluff. In 1886, he designed two houses there which employ similar forms and detailing. The first (*right*) he built for himself and his family, which by 1885, had grown with the arrival of son Henry. He designed the other house (*not pictured*) for Andrew Schletz, a brick manufacturer.¹⁸ Both two-story brick homes feature an offset projecting front gable with a paired window surrounded by ornamentation, including shingles and horizontal stickwork. As with Strassburger's commercial designs, the division between the stories is accentuated by a stylized brick belt course. Segmental arches cap the windows. Each front gable originally featured a decorative truss form and vergeboard, which have been lost to the ravages of time and reroofing.

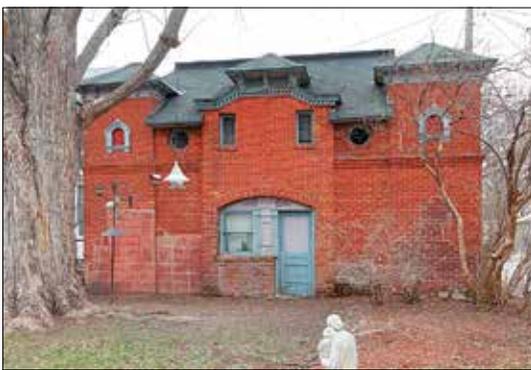
That same year, Strassburger designed a home for Anton W. Mortensen, deputy clerk of the Board of Public Works (*page 6*).¹⁹ This two-and-a-half story brick house has clipped gables on an already complex roofline. Brackets line the eaves, and the offset front gable features a bay window topped by a pediment with a sunburst design. On the east elevation is a two-story bay window also topped by a pediment. Strassburger accentuated the visual division of the first and second story with a decorative belt course and topped the segmental arched windows with ornate hoods. The crowning glory is the Eastlake detail in the front gable. In addition to decorative shingles, there are recessed wood panels, incised and fluted pilasters, a small central semicircular pediment with a star motif, incised vergeboards, and a distinctive wood cartouche. (*See Eastlake Architecture sidebar, page 7.*)



The H. Emil Strassburger House, 78 Stevens Street East. *Original drawing by Jeanne Kosfeld.*

Strassburger briefly experimented with Second Empire-inspired eclecticism through the 1886 design of a category-defying brick carriage house for Edward J. Heimbach, a boot and shoe dealer. Relatively diminutive though the structure is, a suggestion of two stories is accomplished through the corbeled belt course. The roof straddles between hipped and mansard, while the building boldly asserts its presence through a central projection capped by a pyramidal false dormer and dentils. It is flanked by two towers on either end. Fenestration comes in a variety of forms—bullseye, rectangular, segmental arched, and round top—with molded surrounds on the latter.²⁰

Architectural historian Larry Millet described it as “one of the most delightful buildings of its kind in St. Paul.” The Heimbach house itself (*not pictured*) is an extremely handsome example of Victorian-era architecture, but whether Strassburger can lay claim to that design as well is



The Edward J. Heimbach Carriage House, 64 Delos Street West. *Courtesy of Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH³, LLC.*



An Amel Strassburger design at 412 Wyoming Street West. *Courtesy of Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH³, LLC.*

yet to be determined—the architect line on the building permit was left blank.²¹

By 1890, Strassburger had turned away from Eastlake, which was no longer in style, and embraced Richardsonian Romanesque. Two residences that exemplify this style, at different scales, include the house at 412 Wyoming Street



The Anton Mortensen House, 65 George Street East. *Courtesy of Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH², LLC.*

The Dr. Octavius Beal House, 23 Isabel Street West. Both the Beal House and the house at 412 Wyoming are dense and visually substantial with Germanic flair. *Courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*



Grady Flats, 46-52 Delos Street West. *Courtesy of Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH², LLC.*

West (1890) and the Dr. Octavius Beal House at 23 Isabel Street West (1891).²²

The home on Wyoming is an elegant example of a modest but full expression of the style (*page 5*). This two-and-a-half story brick edifice features a two-story corner tower with a conical roof and rusticated bands of stone sills and lintels. The gables boast decorative shingles and stickwork in a half-timber style, while the pedestrian entrance on the facade has a round arch with a half-round transom and double-leaf door.

The following year, Strassburger expanded further on the Richardsonian Romanesque style with a residence for Dr. Beal.²³ The Beal House, located on the edge of the bluff along Isabel Street, commanded quite a view, both to and from the property when it was constructed, although its facade is now screened by trees. This brick structure, notable for its complex massing, has a corner tower with a conical roof with bracketed eaves, a three-part window in the gable surrounded by decorative shingles, and belt courses of rusticated stone dividing the two stories of the house. The entranceway features a round arch with a half-round transom in true Richardsonian Romanesque style.

In addition to designing single-family homes, commercial buildings, and duplexes, Strassburger also designed rowhouses. In 1891, John Grover Wardell, manager of the Spa Bottling Company on the Flats, commissioned Strassburger to create the eight-unit building which became known as Grady Flats.²⁴ Its brick facade features alternating projecting bays, including a central bay capped with two tourelles flanked by two octagonal-roofed turrets. Each projecting bay is bedecked with a graceful wood porch, while the recessed bays of the facade are anchored by broad, segmental arched windows with polychromatic accents of light-colored keystones and springers.

Coda to a West Side Legacy

In an 1888 book on St. Paul's industrial growth and commercial development, Strassburger was described as “the only architect of note on the west side of the river [who] has designed and superintended the construction of many of the best blocks and residences in that section of the city . . .”²⁵ By 1899, he had designed at least thirty buildings in St. Paul, nearly all in the West Side neighborhood.



Eastlake details on the Anton G. Mortensen House include a wood cartouche, incised trim, and star and sunburst motifs. *Courtesy of Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH³, LLC.*



EASTLAKE ARCHITECTURE

Emil Strassburger’s work in St. Paul exemplified several different architectural styles over the years. Examples of his extant work in the West Side include Eastlake and Richardsonian Romanesque styles. He even dabbled in an eclectic interpretation of Second Empire. (*See the Edward J. Heimbach Carriage House at 64 Delos Street West on page 5.*)

The term Eastlake can be used to refer to an architectural style, a characteristic type of ornamentation found on other styles of architecture (most commonly Stick style), and a broader aesthetic movement that includes furniture and home decor. The term comes from the surname of Charles Locke Eastlake (1836–1906), a British furniture designer and architect by training. Eastlake rejected the mass production of what he considered low-quality imitations of the then-popular French Rococo furniture, which was ornate and full of scrolls and curlicues. Instead, he advocated for a return to more geometric Gothic-inspired design. While his furniture was influenced by Gothic Revival architecture, it was not long before his immensely popular designs, which featured pierced and incised motifs in wood, were, in turn, inspiring architecture, specifically in America.^a

Eastlake’s passion for Gothic Revival had a counterpart in Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), an American landscape designer and author whose publications on architecture were wildly popular during the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. Downing, too, was a strong promoter of Gothic Revival over the then-popular Greek Revival style. He emphasized “truth” in architecture. A house should look like a house, not a Greek temple. Downing preferred stone as a building material, but if one had to build in wood, the material should be emphasized rather than disguised. Downing embraced this to such an extent that the house designs he helped popularize began to

showcase the properties of wood as a material and symbolically represent the internal wood framing of the houses on the exteriors.^b

This took the form of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal beams and sticks arrayed across the exterior of houses. The applied stickwork visually divided the stories of the house, echoing the internal wood frame and was most ornate in the gables, where symbolic trusses complete with kingposts, rafters, collar beams, tie beams, and struts were featured. These embellishments characterized what came to be known as Stick style. In addition to the characteristic “sticks” on the exterior walls, the eaves, gables, and windows of Stick-style houses were ornamented with boards that had been scroll-sawn and incised with geometric and stylized organic shapes and, often, Gothic motifs. In time, this wood architectural ornamentation, which echoed elements of furniture inspired by Eastlake’s designs, became associated with Eastlake’s name.^c

As popular as Stick and Eastlake were, few intact buildings with the style remain. The ornamentation was subject to deterioration from the elements, as well as intentional removal when it fell out of style. Decorative vergeboard, trim, and stickwork disappeared with the replacement of roofs, windows, siding, and the enclosure of porches.

Strassburger’s work does not fit neatly into the Stick style with Eastlake ornamentation category because of his preference for brick as a construction material and the Germanic density of his designs. However, his Eastlake details exemplify a constrained exuberance that delights the observer, especially in the Anton Mortensen House.

In 1901, Strassburger moved his family and practice to Crookston, Minnesota. By this time, much of the West Side had been built. Perhaps the northwestern part of the state offered the possibility of harnessing the momentum of a new building boom. Strassburger remained prolific as an architect, drafting a multitude of plans both in Crookston and in the larger northwestern region of the state. His most well-known building in Crookston is the 1899 City Hall, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Crookston Commercial Historic District. Strassburger and his family remained there for a little less than a decade.

In 1908, he, his wife, daughter Ella, and son Richard moved to Seattle to join his youngest son Henry, who had come to that city two years prior, and his brother Paul, who relocated there in the late 1890s. But, his time and future architectural projects there were short lived. The

following year on October 7, Strassburger died at the age of fifty-six from cancer.

While the razing of the West Side Flats demolished the majority of his known works in St. Paul, and his career was cut short by his untimely passing, Emil Strassburger's substantial architectural legacy can still be found in his residential designs on the West Side bluff of St. Paul, Minnesota.²⁶

Acknowledgments: Special thanks to John Riley; Daniel R. Pratt of ARCH³, LLC; Mark Shepherd Thomas; Ella J. Thayer; Bob Frame; Rolf Anderson; Diane Trout-Oertel; and Jeanne Kosfeld.

Nicole Foss is a St. Paul-based architectural historian with a background in archaeology and museums. She has worked on historic preservation projects throughout Minnesota, as well as in several other states, and has a special fondness for St. Paul's West Side neighborhood.

NOTES

1. Carole Zellie and Garneth O. Peterson, *Historic Context Study Pioneer Houses: 1854-1880* (St. Paul: Prepared for the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, 2001a), 1, 4; Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Saint Paul Historic Context Study, Neighborhoods at the Edge of the Walking City* (St. Paul: Historic Saint Paul, St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and Ramsey County Historical Society, 2011a), 14, 21-22; Patricia A. Murphy and Susan W. Granger, *Historic Sites Survey Saint Paul and Ramsey County 1980-1983 Final Report* (St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society and St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission, 1983), 25.

2. "Obituary, H. E. Strassburger, Architect," *Improvement Bulletin* XXXIX, no. 21 (October 23, 1909): 15; "Record of Birth for Richard Strassburger, May 17, 1884," Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1849-1905, ancestry.com; "Strassburger & Steiner," *St. Paul City Directory* (St. Paul: R. L. Polk & Co., 1885), 884; "Strassburger E H," *St. Paul City Directories* (1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, 1890), 1022, 1288, 1422, 1400, 1446; "Garlough, William," *St. Paul City Directories* (1890, 1891, 1893, 1894, 1895), 928, 560, 1466, 1480, 1487, and 576. In 1890, William H. Matley, who had previously worked as a draftsman for Emil Ulrici, Hodgson & Stem, and A. H. Haas, opened a partnership with carpenter Alfred L. Garlough at 122 Wabasha Street South in the West Side. While Matley left the partnership in 1891, Garlough continued the architectural practice in the West Side neighborhood, advertising as an architect and superintendent, contractor, and carpenter through the 1890s. In 1891, the partnership Mertens & Schwanecke was based at 76 Wabasha Street South. The previous year, their practice was located in the New York Life building.

They do not appear in the "Architects" section of city directories after 1891.

3. Jeffrey A. Hess and Paul Clifford Larson, *St. Paul's Architecture: A History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 69, 251; Mead & Hunt, 21-22.

4. Paul Nelson, "West Side Flats" *MNopedia*, 2022, <https://www.mnopedia.org/place/west-side-flats-st-paul>; Mead & Hunt, 22; Murphy and Granger, 26; Peggy Korsmo Kennon and Robert B. Drake, *Discover Saint Paul: A Short History of Seven St. Paul Neighborhoods* (St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society, 1979), 33; Nelson.

5. Nelson; "West Side History," West Side Community Organization, <https://www.wsc.org/westside-history>; Gene Rosenblum, *Lost Jewish Community of the West Side Flats: 1882-1962* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 25.

6. Hess and Larson, xxiv, 68; "Paul Clifford Larson, letter to Gene Minea, re: Summary Biography on Albert Zschocke," December 12, 1996, ancestry.com. While architect Albert Zschocke lived in the West Side and enriched the neighborhood with his designs, as well, his practice was located in downtown St. Paul; "U.S. Federal Census for Emil Ulrici, St. Louis Ward 2, Missouri," 288, ancestry.com; "Ulrici Emil W," *St. Paul City Directory* (1883), 703; Hermann Kretz Collection, University of Minnesota, <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/8/resources/2223>.

7. "Henry Emil Strassburger," Washington, Death Records, 1883-1960, ancestry.com; "Henry Emil Strassburger," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5219154/henry-emil-strassburger?_gl=1*uqaeq3*_gcl_au*ODYyMzU2MDY0LjE2OTg3MTAwODg; "Obituary H. E. Strassburger," *Improvement*

Bulletin, 15; Marriage certificate of Henrich Emil Strassburger and Marie Amalie Pötschke, Kircke ze St. Petri in Bautzen, September 18, 1877, courtesy of John Riley; "Amalie and Gertrud Strassburg[er] 1883," New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957, ancestry.com; "H. Strassburger 1882," New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger, ancestry.com; "Paul Strassburger 1883," Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934, ancestry.com; "Bautzen: A Medieval Dream," Visit Saxony, <https://visitsaxony.com/cities-towns-regions/cities-towns/historic-towns/bautzen/>; *Improvement Bulletin*, October 23, 1909; Jos Tomlow and Sabine Spitzner-Schmieder, "Die Baugewerkeschule Zittau und das Schülerverzeichnis 1840-1877—Essay," *Wissenschaftliche Berichte der Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz* 116, no. 2616, (2013); Collection of John Riley; Professor Jos Tomlow, Doctor of Engineering at the University of Zittau, correspondence with author, March 27, 2022. While a 1909 obituary noted that Strassburger attended the University of Zittau, he was not included on the student rolls of the university's predecessor during the time he would have been a student. However, documentation, including a drawing of a girder graded for an exam, attest to his formal training.

8. "Strassburger Emil," *Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of San Antonio, 1883-84* (Galveston, TX: Clarke and Courts, 1883), 291; Edward R. Burian, *The Architecture and Cities of Northern Mexico from Independence to the Present* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 294.

9. "E. Strassburger, Architect," ad, *San Antonio Light*, January 23, 1884, 2.

10. "Strassburger & Steiner," *St. Paul City Directory* (1885), 797; St. Paul Building Permit 7380, on file at the Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center (hereafter RCHS); "A.O.U.W. Entertainment," *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, January 23, 1887, 15; "West St. Paul Proper," *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, April 21, 1887, 10; "West St. Paul Proper," *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, June 26, 1888, 17.

11. St. Paul Building Permit 3855, RCHS; "West St. Paul Business Notes," *Northwest Magazine* 4, no. 11 (November 1886): 22; Pamela Kebis, "Rudolph Marti Family Tree," Geneanet, <https://gw.geneanet.org/pkebis25?n=marti&oc=2&p=rudolph>; Diggah1036, "George Marti, 1879," ancestry.com.

12. St. Paul Building Permits 3881, 4197, 4313, 4318, 4509, 4697, 5031, and 5074, RCHS; *Northwest Magazine*, 22.

13. St. Paul Building Permits 7380 and 1213, RCHS.

14. *Atlas of St. Paul, Minn.* (Chicago: Rascher Insurance Map Publishing Co., 1891); St. Paul Building Permit 8633, RCHS.

15. St. Paul Building Permit 10375, RCHS.

16. "E H Strassburger," *St. Paul City Directories* (1886, 1888, 1889), 525, 546, 637, 1400; *Northwest Magazine*, 18.

17. Nelson.

18. St. Paul Building Permits 7901 and 8114, RCHS; "Schletz Andrew," *St. Paul City Directory*, (1886), 857.

19. St. Paul Building Permit 8425, RCHS; "Mortensen Anton W.," *St. Paul City Directory*, (1886), 706.

20. St. Paul Building Permit 7876, RCHS; "Heimbach Edward J.," *St. Paul City Directory* (1886), 483.

21. Larry Millett, *AIA Guide to the Twin Cities: The Essential Source on the Architecture of Minneapolis and St. Paul* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2007), 409; St. Paul Building Permit 4682, RCHS; *Atlas of the City of St. Paul Minnesota* (Philadelphia: Griffith Morgan Hopkins, Jr., 1884); *Curtice's Standard Atlas of the City of St. Paul* (St. Paul: D. L. Curtice, 1887); *St. Paul City Directory* (1886), 483. The building permit for the Heimbach House was erroneously recorded as Lot 6 of Block 27 (the northwest corner of the intersection of Delos Street West and Stryker Avenue), rather than the correct location of Lot 1, Block 31 (the southeast corner of the intersection). The owner's name and building description on the permit, contemporary atlases, and the 1886 city directory confirm that the two-story brick house constructed for Edward Heimbach described in the permit was constructed at 64 Delos Street West.

22. M. McGrath, "Historic Sites Survey Inventory Form RA-SPC-5171 for 412 W. Wyoming Street," Ramsey County Historical Society and St. Paul Historic Preservation Commission, 1981, 1-2.

23. St. Paul Building Permit 22583, RCHS.

24. St. Paul Building Permit 24905, RCHS; "Wardell John G.," *St. Paul City Directory* (1891), 1394; St. Paul Building Permit 18153, RCHS. Emil Strassburger also designed the Clinton Flats rowhouse at 128-138 Congress Street East (nonextant).

25. Elmer Epenetus Barton, *City of St. Paul: A Review of Her Growing Industries and Commercial Development, Historical and Descriptive, Prominent Places and People and Local Reminiscences* (St. Paul: E.E. Barton, 1888), 155.

26. "Strassburger Emil H.," *St. Paul City Directory* (1901), 1453; "National Register of Historic Places Nomination for the Crookston Commercial Historic District," National Park Service, 1984, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail/98bcc21f-4a67-452c-91b8-f787foadabb8>; John Riley, great grandson of Emil Strassburger, conversation with author, December 27, 2022; "Strassburger Paul," *Polk's Seattle City Directory* (Seattle: Polk's Seattle Directory Co., 1899), 930.

Notes to Sidebar on page 7

a. Clem Labine and Carolyn Flaherty (eds.), *The Original Old-House Journal Compendium* (New York: Overlook Books, 1980), 254-255; Linda Osband, *Victorian Gothic House Style: An Architectural and Interior Design Source Book* (United Kingdom: David & Charles, 2000), 17-18.

b. Labine and Flaherty, 243; Osband, 17.

c. Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940: An Illustrated Glossary* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985), 15, 76-78, 171, 214; "Historic Preservation: Architectural Styles: Stick-Eastlake, 1870-1905," City of Urbana website, <https://urbanaininois.us/residents/historic-urbana/top100/archstyle/stick>.

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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 Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) strives to innovate, lead, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community; deliver inspiring history programming; and incorporate local history in education.

The Society was established in 1949 to preserve the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, which the family acquired in 1849. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, the original programs told the story of the Gibbs family. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, RCHS also began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways, now telling the stories of the remarkable relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Dakota people of Ĥeyáta Othújwe (Cloud Man's Village).

In 1964, the Society began publishing its award-winning magazine *Ramsey County History*. In 1978, the organization moved to St. Paul's Landmark Center, a restored Federal Courts building on the National Register of Historic Places. An expansion of the Research Center was completed in 2010 and rededicated in 2016 as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RCHS offers public programming for youth and adults. Visit www.rchs.com for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps, courthouse and depot tours, and more. The Society serves more than 15,000 students annually on field trips or through school outreach. Programs are made possible by donors, members, corporations, and foundations, all of whom we appreciate deeply. If you are not a member of RCHS, please join today and help bring history to life for more than 50,000 people every year.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, & Inclusion

RCHS is committed to ensuring it preserves and presents our county's history. As we continue our work to incorporate more culturally diverse histories, we have made a commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion that is based on this core idea: RCHS exists to serve ALL who call Ramsey County home. To learn more, please see www.rchs.com/about.

Acknowledging This Sacred Dakota Land

Mnisóta Makhóche, the land where the waters are so clear they reflect the clouds, extends beyond the modern borders of Minnesota and is the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Dakhóta (Dakota) people. It is also home to the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples, all who make up a vibrant community in Mnisóta Makhóche. RCHS acknowledges that its sites are located on and benefit from these sacred Dakota lands.

RCHS is committed to preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future. Part of doing so is acknowledging the painful history and current challenges facing the Dakota people just as we celebrate the contributions of Dakota and other Indigenous peoples.

Find our full Land Acknowledgment Statement on our website, www.rchs.com. This includes actionable ways in which RCHS pledges to honor the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples of Mnisóta Makhóche.



In Memoriam

In recent months, Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) said goodbye to two admired members of the RCHS Board of Directors—Carl Kuhrmeyer (1928-2023) and Roxanne Sands (1940-2023)—and to David Riehle (1946-2024) a member of our editorial board.

Carl Kuhrmeyer grew up on St. Paul's East Side and loved the city of his childhood. He enjoyed a forty-two-year career at 3M, first in the role of mechanical engineer and later as executive vice president. Kuhrmeyer was an experienced board member in the East Metro, collaborating on many boards, always with the goal of improving people's lives. He brought humor and tremendous talent to the RCHS board from 2012-2022, serving as second vice chair and member of the Gibbs Farm Transformation Task Force. He and his wife, Janet, were generous contributors to RCHS, providing leadership in the renovation of the Red Barn.

Roxanne Sands brought positive energy to the work of RCHS and made the projects she was involved in more fun for everyone. In her professional life, she was a graphic designer and editor. Civically, she was a member of the Junior League of Saint Paul and City of Lilydale Planning Commission. She joined the RCHS board in 2016 and served as secretary from 2018-2021.

David Riehle was a beloved member of the RCHS editorial board. Over twenty years, he shared his expertise and love of birding, labor, politics, social justice, and railroading in the many fascinating articles he wrote for *Ramsey County History* magazine. Committee members were always eager to learn history through Riehle's unique perspectives.

RCHS is grateful for the diligent work and thoughtful collaboration that Kuhrmeyer, Sands, and Riehle brought to RCHS and the community. They are missed.



The poster features a large yellow sun in the top left corner and a purple butterfly on the right. The title "GIBBS FARM SUMMER CAMPS" is prominently displayed in the center, with "GIBBS FARM" in green, "SUMMER" in white with a red outline, and "CAMPS" in large white letters with a red outline. Below the title, it says "CAMPS FOR KIDS AGES 4 TO 13" in green. A blue button with white text reads "REGISTER AT RCHS.COM". On the right, there is a logo for Gibbs Farm featuring a red barn and a black teepee, with the text "GIBBS FARM" below it. At the bottom, there are two circular images: one on the left shows a child in a blue hat looking at a horse in a field, and one on the right shows a child in a cap holding a bunch of carrots. A green circular area at the bottom center contains a list of camp activities.

GIBBS FARM
SUMMER CAMPS
CAMPS FOR KIDS AGES 4 TO 13
REGISTER AT RCHS.COM

PeeWee Mini Camps
Kids on the Farm
Dakota Camp
Life of a Gibbs Girl
Nature Detectives
Victorian Ladies
Minnesota Time Travel Camp
Farm Survivor



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It Takes a Village

Building Community in the Hamline Midway Neighborhood

KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON, PAGE 19

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CITY OF SAINT PAUL
 DIVISION OF BUILDING INSPECTION
 ROOM 219, CITY HALL, SECOND FLOOR

PERMIT No. 33514

TOTAL FEE COLLECTED \$ 2 25

DOUBLE FEE COLLECTED

TO: BUILD ERECT INSTALL ADD ALTER REPAIR MOVE WRECK

ACCOUNT ORDINANCE VIOLATION MARK SQUARES WITH

9-7 1928
 owl

PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED:

OWNER Theo. H. Mertens ADDRESS 762 W. Mannesha

CONTRACTOR _____ ADDRESS _____

To carry out the work indicated above on the following described property, upon the express condition that said persons and their agents, employees and workmen, in such work done, shall conform in all respects to the ordinances of the City of Saint Paul, Minnesota. THIS PERMIT DOES NOT AUTHORIZE ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, INTERIOR, OR EXTERIOR PLASTERING, HEATING, or any work not fully described herein. Permits for the use of public property, such as streets, sidewalks, alleys, etc., must be secured from the Department of Public Works.

NUMBER	STREET	SIDE	BETWEEN WHAT STREETS
1199	Capitol	N	Guggis & Dunlap
WARD	LOT	BLOCK	ADDITION OR TRACT
10	21	6	Gilberts

FRONT OR WIDTH Feet	SIDE OR LENGTH Feet	HEIGHT Feet	NUMBER OF STORES	CONSTRUCTED OF	CONTENTS Cubical or Square Feet	COST OF WORK Covered by this Permit
34	41		1	Frame		\$ 4000

DETAILS OR REMARKS

COMMISSIONER OF PARKS, PLAYGROUNDS, AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS
 Ex-Officio Building Inspector

BY [Signature]

PENALTY: FOR VIOLATION OF ANY OF THE PROVISIONS OF BUILDING CODE, ORDINANCE NO. 5580: FINE OF FROM FIVE (\$5.00) TO ONE HUNDRED (\$100.00) DOLLARS OR IMPRISONMENT FOR FROM FIVE (5) TO NINETY (90) DAYS.

FORM C80-16 19M 11-26

On September 6, 1928, Theodore Mertens applied for a permit to construct a modest home at 1199 Capitol Avenue (Englewood Avenue today). Mertens signed the application "Theo. H. Mertens for H. Schaeffgen," also a local contractor and Merten's father-in-law. The pair worked together to build most of the houses along the 1162-1218 section of this street. The next day, this permit was issued. As Krista Finstad Hanson conducted research for her Hamline Midway article, she relied heavily on St. Paul Building Permits to understand how and when the twenty-nine homes built here came to be. Author Nicole Foss also made use of these permits for her cover story. The permits are archived at Ramsey County Historical Society and will be available online by the end of 2024. *Courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*