RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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Setting the Record Straight

The Scoop that Helped Save a St. Paul Landmark

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Architect of St. Paul's West Side

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Winter 2024 Volume 59 • Number 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.*

Architect of St. Paul's West Side

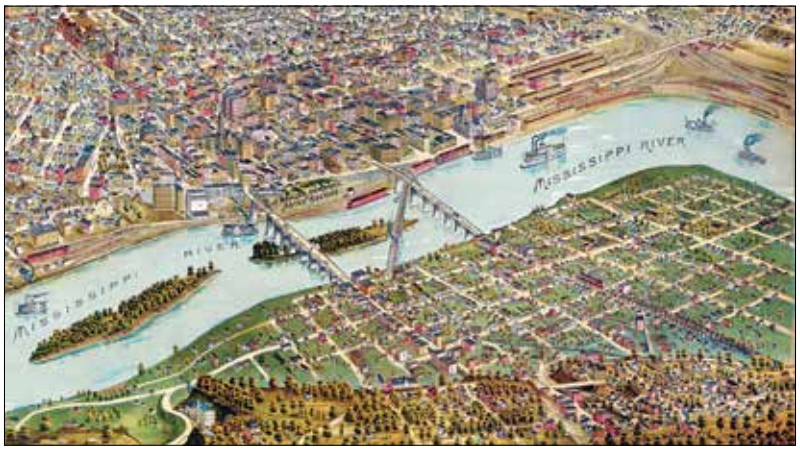
H. Emil Strassburger

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]



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.*

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

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 throughfares 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]

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.

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

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

The Anton Mortensen House, 65 George Street East. *Courtesy of Daniel R. Pratt, ARCH³, 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, ARCH³, LLC.*

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 ARCH^3, 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.wsco.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*ODYyMzU2MDYoLjE2OTg3MTAwODg; "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.

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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.

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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.

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Setting the Record Straight

The Scoop that Helped Save a St. Paul Landmark

LINDA KOHL

The year was 1968, and urban renewal was in its heyday. Grand (or "fusty," some might say) old buildings in the Twin Cities were disappearing to make way for sleek, modern (or "soulless," some might say) new buildings.[1]

In St. Paul, construction of a new Federal Courts Building at Kellogg Boulevard and Robert Street was complete. Designed in the modernist and brutalist architectural style and characterized by hulking, block-like structures and a lack of ornamentation, the building was the antithesis of what it was replacing.[2]

With its turrets, towers, and gables, the Old Federal Courts Building across Fifth Street from Rice Park was often described as a castle. Opened in 1902, it housed federal offices and agencies for Minnesota and much of the upper Midwest—circuit and district courts (including judges' chambers and courtrooms), immigration and naturalization offices, the Internal Revenue Service, the Bureau of Investigation/FBI and other federal agencies, a US Post Office branch, and district offices of senators and congressional representatives. Notorious gangsters, including Alvin Karpis, had been tried and convicted here. Prohibition had its roots here, yet by the 1960s, the building was considered obsolete.[3]

St. Paul city and county officials and other community leaders had known for years that something eventually would have to be done with the nearly empty, deteriorating, but still glorious pile of granite that graced the north side of Rice Park. Yet, no one was quite sure what, despite a number of committees formed in the late 1960s to develop viable solutions.

In the end, a newspaper scoop would help save it.

In the late 1960s, the Old Federal Courts Building had seen better days. For a time, its future was uncertain. *Photo by Joan Larson Kelly, courtesy of Minnesota Landmarks.*

In 1966, a modern Federal Courts Building was built six blocks from the Old Federal Courts Building. Today, the facility is called the Warren E. Burger Federal Building and US Courthouse in honor of former US Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger of St. Paul. *Courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*

Out with the Old?

For years, committees had been formed and studies commissioned to devise a new use for the old building. But there didn't seem to be any urgency to find a solution, even as, one by one, offices and agencies relocated to the new federal building and courthouse six blocks away.

The building—now sixty-six-years old and suffering from neglect—was still beloved, and most people at the time believed it was safe from destruction. An unscientific poll published in the *Minneapolis Star* in October 1968 declared that metropolitan residents overwhelmingly believed the structure should be restored:

> Eighty-six per cent of those interviewed agreed that the Federal Courts Building, now being vacated with the construction of a new building, should be preserved. Actually, there seems to be little question that it will be saved. St. Paul officials now are engaged in an attempt to find new tenants.[4]

That assumption turned out to be overly optimistic. The building was, indeed, in danger.

The headline in the December 17, 1968, *St. Paul Dispatch*, the city's afternoon paper, shocked readers: "Old Court House May Be Traded for Parking Lot." The story, by reporter George Beran, sounded dire:

> St. Paul's old Federal Court House, the belle of Victorian architecture standing north of Rice Park, may be swapped for a lower-Loop parking lot.
>
> Whether the belle survives the wrecking ball is in doubt.[5]

Unbeknownst to the public and many preservation-minded officials, the City of St. Paul had quietly dropped its plans to acquire the old courts building. The story quoted a top official of the federal General Services Administration (GSA), the building's landlord, saying, "The city won't be able to come up with a proposal and [the city] said it would not object to exchange with private interests."[6]

The article further revealed that the federal government was negotiating with a private St. Paul developer—whose identity was not disclosed—to trade a parcel of property in what is now known as Lowertown for the old courts building. The Lowertown property at an undisclosed location would provide parking for employees and visitors to the new building. In an even-up trade with no cash involved, the developer would take ownership of the Old Federal Courts Building.[7]

In the next days, more stories ran, each adding details, mystery, and intrigue. A story in the December 18 *Pioneer Press*, St. Paul's morning newspaper, confirmed that the city had quietly all but abandoned its chance to acquire the old building. St. Paul Mayor Thomas Byrne acknowledged that negotiations for the swap that would leave the Old Federal Courts Building in private hands were "just about complete." Never mind that only a few months before, Byrne had given his "personal pledge" to an audience of more than a hundred architects that the city would become the owner of the building.[8]

"Speculation Grows Over Dealings On Old Courts Building," read the headline in the *Dispatch* that same afternoon:

> The Old Federal Courts Building continued today to be the central figure in a mystery-suspense downtown-real-estate story. . . . New interest in the old building was reawakened Tuesday when it was learned that the General Services Administration (GSA) has practically completed negotiations between the federal government and a St. Paul real estate developer or combination of developers to acquire the building. . . . Several persons who wanted the city of St. Paul to take over the building to insure its preservation are in the dark as to the identity of the person or persons with whom GSA is negotiating the trade, which is to involve no money.[9]

Soon, part of the mystery was solved. A December 18 story in the *Minneapolis Star* revealed that the private developer proposing the swap was Austin John Baillon, a real estate broker. A follow-up article by reporter Kathryn Boardman in the December 20 *Dispatch* confirmed that the developer proposing the swap was Baillon,

This early, undated photograph (circa early 1920s) shows a structure at the corner of E. Fourth and Broadway that housed the St. Paul Rubber Company for many years, followed by other companies, including Rotary Press Company and E. W. Honsa Printing Company. For a time, there was talk that the building would be demolished and replaced by a parking lot. *Courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*

president of Baillon Real Estate Company. In a classic understatement, the story acknowledged that the trade proposal was "somewhat complicated."[10]

Through foreclosure, Baillon had acquired an old industrial building at 300 E. Fourth Street, three blocks from the new Federal Courts Building. Baillon proposed to demolish the Fourth Street building and build a parking ramp there for employees and other users of the new courts facilities. That ramp would be traded, even-up, for the Old Federal Courts Building, giving Baillon control of the building's fate. While Baillon said he wanted to preserve the structure, he made no guarantees: "I do not want to commit myself unequivocally to the preservation of the building but we have had a number of inquiries from prospective tenants and it would be torn down as a last resort."[11]

An editorial in the December 20 *Dispatch* bleakly summed up the situation:

> The fate of the old Federal Court building apparently is out of the city's hands. The huge, dark building on the north end of Rice Park is vacant except for a post office on the main floor. Earlier, it was thought that the federal government would give the building to the city for a small price, probably $1. The great need for parking space, however, for the new Federal Court building at Kellogg and Robert has killed this plan because the government wants to trade the building for land suitable for a parking ramp, and the city has no such land available. The building will probably go to private developers.[12]

Top city officials and others who had been working to preserve the building were furious. Two of them, Frank D. Marzitelli and Malcolm E. Lein, wrote a scathing letter to Fourth District US Rep. Joseph Karth:

> The shocking announcement that negotiations between Baillon Real Estate Company, a private real estate agency and the GSA to trade the Federal Courts Building for parking facilities was a critical blow to support of the Arts in Saint Paul. . . . Furthermore, it cannot help but damage confidence in any public agency involved in those proceedings. . . .
>
> It can only be concluded that instead of serving worthwhile purposes the building will be destroyed.[13]

The two letter writers carried considerable political and civic weight. Marzitelli, a former St. Paul City Council member, was then executive vice president of the city's Port Authority and president of the Saint Paul Art Center board. Lein was director of the art center, which for years had been trying to acquire the Old Federal Courts Building from the federal government for a nominal sum to preserve it as a museum or gallery.[14]

In mid-January, the Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) "question[ed] the propriety of conducting secret negotiations to seal the fate of the publicly owned building which graces the north side of Rice Park." And both RCHS and the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) expressed "fears that demolition may be the cruel fate of the 67-year-old landmark of gingerbread architecture."[15]

More Controversy

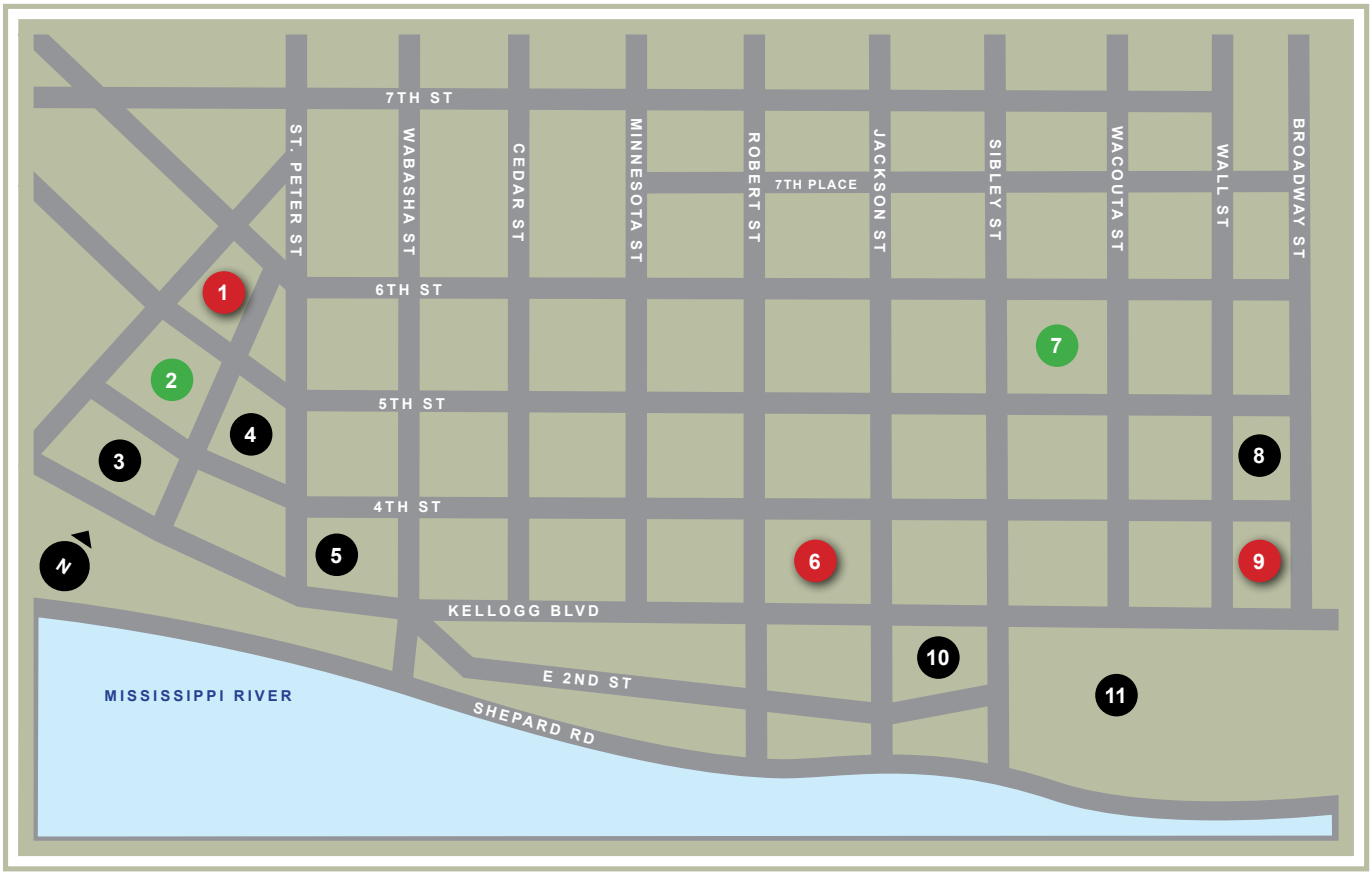
While the initial story and those that followed had helped galvanize a community into action, the controversy would get worse. In January 1969, Beran uncovered another stunning development. Six months earlier, in July 1968, the National Historic Sites Committee of the US Interior Department had decided that the building did not qualify as a historic monument. Beran reported that the committee found that the building "is not nationally significant either

on historical or architectural grounds within the meaning of the Historical Sites Act of 1935." Federal officials neglected to tell St. Paul officials of the decision until January 16, 1969. The news came in a letter from Robert T. Griffin, assistant administrator of the GSA, to Representative Karth. The letter also said that the building was not federal surplus and, thus, could not be donated to the city or anyone else for $1.[16]

Regional GSA Administrator Richard Austin explained, "We don't consider it surplus. We consider it a public asset to use in solving a dire parking problem for employees and patrons of the new Federal Building and main Post Office." Still, there was a glimmer of hope. Beran's story also explained that the GSA was seeking additional proposals for a parking swap in the wake of criticism of the secret negotiations. And it noted that a bipartisan group of legislators was planning to introduce a bill demanding preservation of the building.[17]

The next day, another Beran article indicated that Russell Fridley, director of MNHS, had asked the National Park Service to include the structure in its register of significant city and state sites. The request, Fridley said, was designed to buy the city more time to come up with a preservation plan. "Officials, however, are stumped over how to finance such a plan," the story concluded.[18]

Today's Lowertown Commons (9) was developer Austin John Baillon's proposed location for a much-needed parking lot that never materialized. *Map compilation courtesy of Joy Yoshikawa.*



1 Old Federal Courts Building (Landmark Center)
2 Rice Park
3 Central Library (George Latimer Central Library)
4 The St. Paul Hotel
5 St. Paul City Hall-Ramsey County Courthouse
6 Warren E. Burger Federal Courts Building and US Courthouse
7 Mears Park
8 St. Paul Farmers' Market (since 1982)
9 Former St. Paul Rubber Company (Lowertown Commons)
10 US Post Office (Custom House)
11 Union Depot

The following week, the Federal Courts Building Study Committee of the Saint Paul Art Center met to explore options to preserve the building. Baillon was in attendance. It is unclear if he was a member of the art center board or was simply requested to attend the committee meeting on January 29, 1969, after the first stories broke. With both Marzitelli and Lein present, Baillon talked about his proposal. He emphasized that he'd spent "considerable time and effort" on the deal, which had been tentatively approved by the GSA, and that he "will proceed with his plans for the development for the property involved in the proposed trade for the Federal Courts Building." While he said his company would cooperate with any group that wanted to acquire the building, "[he] confirmed that if the building could not be operated successfully on a commercial basis it would have to be torn down and the property sold."[19]

Less than a month later in February 1969, Beran reported another bombshell: Baillon, "has virtually abandoned [his] attempt to swap a proposed parking ramp for the old Federal Courts Building." The move came after multiple delays, including pushback from RCHS and MNHS, as well as the submission of an official nomination to place the building on the National Register of Historic Places. In withdrawing his proposal, Baillon said that "he cannot delay disposing of the Lower Loop site."[20]

While the Old Federal Courts Building was not yet entirely safe, the immediate threat had dissipated. Wheels had been set in motion. Within months, the Minnesota Legislature passed a resolution requesting the GSA to either give the building to a public entity or "dispose of the building in another manner that will insure the preservation of its historic and architectural value." In May 1969, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places and put on the "surplus property disposal list."[21] That meant the city could finally acquire it for $1, provided it came up with a suitable plan for reuse that met federal government requirements.

It took more than three years, but on October 20, 1972, ownership of the Old Federal Courts Building was transferred to the City of St. Paul in a ceremony in Rice Park, presided over by Mayor Lawrence Cohen.[22]

Correcting History: Setting the Record Straight

Somehow, in the course of recording the history of how the Old Federal Courts Building was saved, the contributions of the St. Paul newspapers and its reporters were disparaged. One of the earliest historical accounts was *The Old Federal Courts Building: A Landmark Reclaimed* by author and architecture historian Eileen Michels, published in 1977. In recounting the events of 1968, she wrote:

> Public reaction was intense and negative chiefly because of misleading newspaper publicity. A headline mistakenly proclaimed that the Old Federal Courts Building was to be razed for a parking lot. Although totally inaccurate, the story galvanized the public. Government offices in both Washington, D.C. and St. Paul were inundated with letters, telegrams and telephone calls protesting the trade. It was a meaningful demonstration of public affection for the building, and, in a sense, a turning point. From that point on, step by step actions eventually resulting in the transfer of the building to the city of St. Paul four years later received ever increasing public support.[23]

The account was correct about the impact the scoop had in galvanizing public reaction but wrong about the article's inaccuracy. None of the stories, nor the headlines, stated that the Old Federal Courts Building would be razed and replaced by a parking lot. The St. Paul newspaper stories correctly reported that the proposed swap involved trading a parcel in Lowertown for the Old Federal Courts Building. It was a building on the Lowertown property that was meant to be razed for a parking facility—not the Old Federal Courts Building.

How did the incorrect allegations of inaccuracy of the newspaper stories and headlines surface almost ten years after the stories first appeared? It is unclear, but some evidence exists that supporters and champions of the building's restoration may have played a role.[24]

Perhaps preservationists were concerned that their efforts to raise money to save the old building would falter if people thought it was

about to be torn down anyway. Maybe they were angry at the St. Paul newspapers, whose editorial writers had not been consistently enthusiastic or supportive about efforts to preserve the building. For example, William Sumner, editorial page editor of the *Dispatch*, famously called the building an "architectural freak," a "funny-looking building, rather ugly, in fact" and suggested "[t]he thing ought to be taken down and grass and trees planted in its place."[25]

At the same time, Baillon may have been surprised and dismayed by the outraged public reaction to his development plan. He reportedly told people that the stories were inaccurate, and, according to his son, Paul Baillon, he had no intention of tearing down the Old Federal Courts Building.[26]

It is also certainly possible, perhaps even likely, that the complicated nature of the deal—and an ambiguous headline—were confusing to readers, especially casual readers who were not city government insiders. Yet, all they needed to do was read further to understand that an old St. Paul building might be razed for a parking lot. The structure proposed for demolition was the vacant and decrepit industrial building in what is now known as Lowertown.

Whatever the source or sources, the idea that the initial stories were misleading or inaccurate was not challenged by later writers, including Biloine (Billie) Young whose book, *Landmark: Stories of a Place*, was published in 2002, thirty-four years after the first reports appeared. Young described the initial story as "a small miracle [that] occurred in the form of a misleading article in the *Pioneer Press*. . . ."

> The article created a sensation. Public reaction was swift and vehement. Citizens, whom no one had any idea cared about the Old Federal Courts Building, besieged public officials. The phones in Mayor Thomas Byrne's office rang constantly and letters and telegrams protesting the trade poured into city hall and offices in Washington, D.C. To everyone's surprise, a great many people cared about the fusty wedding cake of a building bordering Rice Park.[27]

Later magazine stories, including one in *Ramsey County History,* and online posts repeated the allegations about the supposedly incorrect newspaper articles. Even a display in

Back to the Source

RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When researching history, primary sources are essential to truly understanding topics big and small. These sources provide firsthand information with the least amount of bias—an essential quality that makes them incredibly important to understanding events that happened decades or centuries in the past. Primary sources include census records, city directories, letters, memos and other original documents, and, sometimes, newspaper articles from long ago.

Ramsey County Historical Society was approached by the author of this article to correct history. We've carefully reviewed her sources and looked into additional sources, including other newspapers that reported on the Old Federal Courts Building between 1968-1969.

In this case, a couple sentences in one paragraph of an otherwise excellent 1977 history of Landmark Center and its predecessors were incorrect: "A headline mistakenly proclaimed that the Old Federal Courts Building was to be razed for a parking lot. Although totally inaccurate, the story galvanized the public,"[a] and, thus, citizens and public officials rallied to save the building.

Those lines, which may have come to be through word of mouth or speculation, are not correct. The headline, while not inaccurate, was ambiguous. However, the newspaper article itself and (and others that followed) correctly stated that a developer wished to swap the Old Federal Courts Building for an abandoned building in Lowertown. The Lowertown building was to be bulldozed to provide needed parking.

Over the years, misinformation about the article has been repeated in multiple stories about saving and restoring Landmark Center. Had authors and editors gone back to the original source, they would have discovered the error. For the record, this includes work completed by Ramsey County Historical Society. We apologize for getting this piece of history wrong.

Mistakes do happen. As a history organization, when an error comes to our attention, it is important to correct that history.

After a decade of overcoming obstacles and through tremendous community collaboration, the former Old Federal Courts Building reopened as Landmark Center on September 9, 1978. *(L-R)*: US Rep. Bruce Vento, US Vice President Walter Mondale, Ramsey County Commissioner Warren Shaber, Elizabeth W. Musser, US Rep. Donald Fraser, Frank Marzitelli, Georgia DeCoster, and Second Lady Joan Mondale.

US Vice President Walter Mondale spoke to a crowd in the Landmark Center cortile at the building's reopening. *Both images courtesy of Minnesota Landmarks.*

Landmark Center about the struggle to save the building repeated the error:

> In late 1968, a St. Paul newspaper reported that the old Federal Building would be razed to make way for a parking lot. The angry response of many St. Paul residents to the news, later proven false, showed that support for the building extended far beyond a few dozen historians and architects.[28]

The newspaper stories of late 1968 and early 1969 resulted in a reprieve for the beloved edifice. They had awakened the public to the very real possibility that the building could be lost. Over the next decade, a small army of dedicated preservationists, civic leaders, and volunteers (including Rosalie Butler, Mayor Thomas Byrne and the City of St. Paul, Georgia DeCoster, Russell Fridley and the Minnesota Historical Society, Edward H. Hamm, Virginia B. Kunz and the Ramsey County Historical Society, Joan Larson Kelly, Malcolm E. Lein, Frank D. Marzitelli, Joseph S. Micallef, Minnesota Landmarks, Elizabeth W. Musser, Terry O'Brien, Ramsey County, Donald Salverda, Dick Slade, Nancy Weyerhaeuser, multiple foundations, organizations, and so many more),[29] mounted efforts to develop plans, raise money, acquire the building, restore it to its former glory, and find tenants. Despite setbacks at many a turn, the restored building opened to the public in 1978 as the newly renamed Landmark Center. Today, forty-six years later, the building serves as a vibrant cultural center, housing a musical instrument museum, a wood art gallery, a permanent art collection, special art exhibitions, and offices of local cultural, history, and arts organizations. It hosts theater productions, concerts, dance performances, speeches, lectures, naturalization ceremonies, and is a popular venue for special events and weddings.

At the same time, for the sake of history, the early role played by St. Paul newspapers and its reporters in saving Landmark Center should not be minimized. These journalists galvanized early efforts to rally the public to preserve the grand old building, which was in more danger than anyone knew. Their accurate reporting helped save it.

Linda Kohl *worked as a reporter, editor, and weekly columnist for the* St. Paul Pioneer Press. *While at the paper, she met and married reporter George Beran. In 1991, she was appointed commissioner of the State Planning Agency by Gov. Arne H. Carlson. After serving six years in various roles in the Carlson administration, she became associate vice chancellor for public affairs of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, where she worked for fourteen years until retirement. In 2023, her daughter, Molly Beran, chose Landmark Center as the venue for her wedding to Todd Chaney.*

Since opening in 1978, Landmark Center has served as the venue for hundreds of arts and cultural performances, including this program by Minnesota Boychoir under the direction of Mark S. Johnson (*far left*) in 1995. *Both images courtesy of Minnesota Landmarks.*

NOTES

1. Biloine W. Young, *Landmark: Stories of a Place* (St. Paul: Minnesota Landmarks, 2002), 5; Katherine McLaughlin, "Brutalist Architecture: Everything You Need to Know," *Architectural Digest*, July 12, 2023, https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/brutalist-architecture-101.

2. "Warren E. Burger Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse," US General Services Administration website, www.gsa.gov/about-us/regions/welcome-to-the-great-lakes-region-5/buildings-and-facilities/minnesota/warren-e-burger-federal-building-and-us-courthouse.

3. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory–Nomination Form," submitted by John R. Ferguson (MNHS) and certified by Russell W. Fridley, designated state liaison officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, in Frank Marzitelli papers, box 8, Mayor's Committee 1968-1969 subject files, Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter, MNHS); Eileen Michels, with a chapter by Nate N. Bomberg, *The Old Federal Courts Building: A Landmark Reclaimed* (St. Paul: Minnesota Landmarks, 1977), 49, 54. Bomberg, legendary longtime police reporter for the *Pioneer Press*, wrote a chapter about St. Paul's colorful gangster era and the trials that occurred in the Old Federal Courts Building, some of which he had covered; US Rep. Andrew Volstead, who had an office in the building, was author of the Volstead Act. In 1919 when the prohibition law

Learn More

This brief article focuses on a narrow time frame from December 1968 to May 1969 when news articles detailing the tenuous future of the Old Federal Courts Building helped galvanize the public to work together to ensure its survival. For a broader, more in-depth history of the OFCB and what is today Landmark Center, go to: "Landmark Center – Old Federal Courts Building," Historic Twin Cities, November 17, 2021, http://www.historictwincities.com/2021/11/17/landmark-center/.

passed, taverns closed their doors, and the bootlegging era began.

4. "St. Paul Landmark: Poll Favors Saving Courts Building," *Minneapolis Star*, October 29, 1968, 63. This unscientific poll was based on showing an unknown number of people photos of six old buildings in the Twin Cities and asking them to vote on whether the buildings were or were not attractive and should or should not be saved.

5. George Beran, "Old Court House May be Traded for Parking Lot," *Pioneer Press*, December 17, 1968, 21.

6. Beran, 21.

7. Beran, 21.

8. Phil Lee, "City Finds Fed Building Out of Reach," *Pioneer Press*, December 18, 1968, 1; Dick Horning, "Byrne Pledges City Will Own Old Post Office," *Pioneer Press*, February, 22, 1968, 19.

9. Kathryn Boardman, "Speculation Grows Over Dealings On Old Courts Building," *Pioneer Press*, December 18, 1968, 18.

10. "US May Swap St. Paul Court Building," *Minneapolis Star*, December 18, 1968, 31; Kathryn Boardman, "Firm Would Swap Ramp For Building," *Dispatch*, December 20, 1968, 1.

11. Boardman, "Firm Would Swap," 1.

12. "What Now for Rice Park?" editorial, *Pioneer Press*, December 20, 1968.

13. Frank D. Marzitelli and Malcolm E. Lein, letter, to US Rep. Joseph Karth, December 23, 1968, in Frank Marzitelli papers, MNHS.

14. Marzitelli and Lein letter; Frank D. Marzitelli, Biographical Note, in Marzitelli papers, MNHS.

15. "Secrecy Over Courts Building Fate Hit," *Dispatch*, January 16, 1969.

16. George Beran, "Additional Proposals Sought in Swap of Old Courts Building," *Dispatch*, January 17, 1969; Robert T. Griffin, letter, to Rep. Joseph E. Karth, January 16, 1969, in Marzitelli papers, MNHS.

17. Beran, "Additional Proposals;" Griffin, letter.

18. George Beran, "Historical Status Urged," January 25, 1969, *Dispatch.*

19. Malcolm Lein, memorandum to chair and members of the Saint Paul Art Center's Federal Courts Building Study Committee regarding the committee meeting of January 21, 1969, 2, in Marzitelli papers, MNHS.

20. George Beran, "Real Estate Firm Drops Offer to Trade For Courts Building," *Dispatch*, February 19, 1969, 1; "Apartments in Lowertown St. Paul Lowertown Commons, Real Estate Equities website, www .reeapartments.com/apartments/lowertown -commons/?utm_knock=g. The building at 300 E. Fourth Street was never demolished and stands today across from the St. Paul Farmers' Market. Now called Lowertown Commons, the 1905 revival-style building, originally the St. Paul Rubber Company, has been renovated into apartments.

21. House File 235/Senate File 247, in Marzitelli papers, MNHS; William A. Schmidt, letter to Rep. Joseph Karth, May 19, 1969, referenced in letter from Frank D. Marzitelli to George Vavoulis, April 3, 1972, 2, in Marzitelli files, MNHS. At the time, Vavoulis, former mayor of St. Paul, was regional administrator of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

22. Michels, 74.

23. Michels, 68.

24. Georgia Ray DeCoster, letter to Katherine Lanpher, April 2, 1995, 3, in Landmark Center Subject Files, Ramsey County Historical Society. Georgia DeCoster was hired by Frank Marzitelli as the executive secretary of the Mayor's Committee to Preserve the Old Federal Courts Building in 1969. In 1995, she wrote a twelve-page letter and addendum to Katherine Lanpher, then a *Pioneer Press* reporter who had written a story praising the contributions of Elizabeth Musser in saving the building. DeCoster wrote, "Public fear that the OFCB was to be torn down for a parking lot was the specific instance that triggered preservation efforts. That fear was unfounded, but it helped galvanize civic action. The public outcry against demolition convinced Mayor Byrne and the Minnesota congressional delegation that an effort should be made to save the building." Michels credits Georgia DeCoster and Elizabeth Musser in providing information for her book, and both were likely sources for Billie Young's book, as well.

25. William Sumner, "Is the Old Courts Building Worth Saving?" *Dispatch*, October 7, 1970, 14.

26. Paul A. Baillon, son of Austin John Baillon, interview with author, September 1, 2022. Paul Baillon was about ten when the stories ran. He said his father, who died in 2012, told him people had misconstrued his intent regarding the building, that "the newspaper stories got it wrong" and that "somehow the rumor got started" that he was going to tear the building down for a parking lot. Editorial note: Amy Mino, executive director of Minnesota Landmarks, Zoom interview with editor, January 16, 2024. According to Amy Mino, in 1970, Baillon joined the Minnesota Landmarks Board of Directors, helping to raise money in those early years to restore the building.

27. Young, 5.

28. "Bob Roscoe, "An 'Architectural Freak' is Saved," *Ramsey County History* 53, no. 1, (Spring 2018): 24; Lisa L. Heinrich, "Landmark Center: Old Federal Building was rescued from demolition in early preservation effort," *Lisa Stories* (blog), July 31, 2018, https:// lisastories.com/2018/07/31/landmark-center-old -federal-building-was-rescued-from-demolition-in -early-preservation-effort/; A "Building in Jeopardy" framed poster display on first floor of Landmark Center.

29. DeCoster, letter to Lanpher, 1-12.

Notes to Sidebar on page 15

a. Eileen Michels, with a chapter by Nate N. Bomberg, *The Old Federal Courts Building: A Landmark Reclaimed* (St. Paul: Minnesota Landmarks, 1977), 68.

It Takes a Village

Building Community in the Hamline Midway Neighborhood

KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON

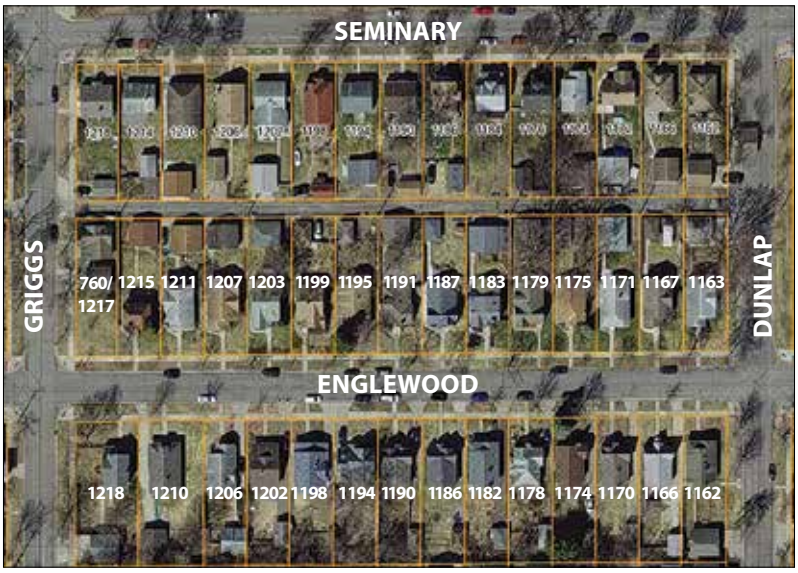
> Henry Schaettgen, 77 years old, 754 North Hamline [A]venue, for the past 40 years associated with the development of the Midway district, died Saturday night at his home after a month's illness.
>
> Mr. Schaettgen was born in Germany and came to St. Paul 48 years ago. Shortly after coming here, he entered the real estate and contracting business.
>
> He was a Mason and a member of United Commercial Travelers. Surviving are his widow, Annie Dora, and two daughters, Dora S. and Mrs. Theodore H. Mertens all of St. Paul. . . .[1]

Henry Schaettgen's 1935 notice of death was brief—as most obituaries of regular, everyday people tend to be. But there's also usually something extraordinary about most people, as was the case with Mr. Schaettgen. You see, over decades, he helped create an ordinary, everyday neighborhood in St. Paul's Midway—a place that ordinary residents called and continue to call home.

Welcome to Hamline Midway

St. Paul's Hamline Midway is a vibrant neighborhood that makes up Planning District 11 (Hamline Midway Coalition) bordered by University Avenue and Pierce Butler Route on the south and north ends and Lexington Avenue to Transfer Road to the east and west.[2]

In 2024, Hamline Midway is filled with historic schools, a library, churches, commercial properties, and parks. Public buildings display a variety of architectural styles with designs by recognized architects including Charles A. Bassford, Emma F. Brunson, Carl H. Buetow, Barry Byrne, Fred Slifer and Frank Abrahamson, Charles Hausler, Warren Hayes, Clarence H. Johnston, Sr., Clarence "Cap" Wigington, and others.[3] The neighborhood is centered around Hamline University. All told, this built environment displays many different architectural styles from the last 150 years.



The 1162-1218 section of Englewood Avenue in the Hamline Midway neighborhood is the setting for this short history. *Metro Regional Parcel Dataset, 2024, distributed through Minnesota Geospatial Commons and The Minnesota Geospatial Image Server, 2020 7-county Twin Cities imagery, provided by Minnesota Geospatial Information Office.*

Hamline Midway is also filled with modest houses—bungalows and cottages constructed mostly by local contractors in the nineteen teens and 1920s through the heart of the Great Depression. This includes the 1162-1218 "block" of Englewood Avenue (Capitol Avenue when most were built), between Griggs and Dunlap Avenues.

This section of the street features fourteen houses on the north side of Englewood and fourteen on the south side. It also includes an alley house at 760 Griggs Avenue (also referred to as 1217 Capitol), which was built in 1916, making it the oldest house on the "block."[4]

These houses were originally owned and built by contractors and some of the work crew

who lived near this new development.[5] Early on, the homes belonged to immigrants or the children of immigrants from Germany, Italy, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, and Switzerland—people who had come to St. Paul to start their lives anew.

In the second and third decades of the twentieth century, developer Henry Schaettgen owned much of the land and many of the houses on the 1162-1218 "block," which his son-in-law, Theodore Mertens, helped build. The two German immigrants lived just two blocks away, next door to one another on Hamline Avenue.

Turning an eagle-eye toward the development of this section of Englewood Avenue specifically will highlight how immigrants worked together with American-born city leaders and across ethnic groups to build not only blocks of buildings but, most importantly, community.

Early History

The Hamline Midway neighborhood is located on the ancestral lands of the Dakota and Anishinaabe people—land stolen through a series of broken treaties as a new territory and eventual state evolved.

In the 1830s to '50s, European and Métis fur traders drove oxcarts loaded with furs and supplies through the area from the Red River Settlement and Pembina. Their final destinations? Fort Snelling and awaiting riverboats on the Mississippi in the town that would soon become St. Paul.[6]

On March 3, 1849, Sen. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, proposed adding Minnesota as a territory. It was soon established, and St. Paul became its capital. President Zachary Taylor appointed Alexander Ramsey, a native Pennsylvanian and two-term US representative from that state as territorial governor.[7]

The ninety-acre plat of "Saint Paul Proper" was entered that same year, after which blocks and lots were deeded to early owners. Wealthy, East Coast businessmen bought the original land patents from the federal government and made, or sometimes lost, a fortune, speculating in land development.[8]

From the Abstract of Title for the home at 1198 Englewood Avenue, the original plat for Township 29, Range 23 was surveyed in 1847 by Deputy Surveyor Isaac N. Higbee. The east half of the southeast quarter of Section 27, Township 29, Range 23 was sold by the United States to "Justice C. Ramsey" [sic] on October 18, 1849.[9]

Justus sold the patent to his brother, Alexander, on July 17, 1854. Various deeds and mortgages were bought and sold over ensuing years. History buffs will recognize the names of some owners, including Horace Thompson (capitalist), William L. Banning (president of the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad and namesake of Banning State Park), William R. Marshall (fifth governor of Minnesota), Greenleaf Clark (associate justice, Minnesota Supreme Court), and others.[10]

In 1857, St. Paul's population was close to 10,000. On May 11, 1858, Minnesota joined the Union as the thirty-second state. Soon, a railroad cut between St. Paul and Minneapolis, across the northern part of today's Hamline Midway neighborhood. An 1867 map of Ramsey County indicates this area was then part of Rose Township.[11]

The land where 1162-1218 Englewood Avenue is located was a 240-acre plot owned by Alexander Ramsey, Jones, Sharp, Hewitt & Coffey. The men also owned 160 acres due south of that plot and another thirty-acre plot southeast of Como Lake.[12]

In 1854, a group of Methodists had established Minnesota's first university in Red Wing, naming it Hamline University. Because of the Financial Panic of 1857 and loss of enrollment due to the US Civil War, among other reasons, the school closed in 1869. It eventually moved its campus to St. Paul, thanks, in part, to a gift of eighty acres located between St. Paul and Minneapolis from attorney Girart Hewitt. Hamline University first platted fourteen blocks of the neighborhood, where Methodist ministers and professors established their homes. The school then sold much of the gifted land to finance construction of the new campus, opening the neighborhood to more development.[13]

Hamline University opened in St. Paul in 1880 with sixty students. Englewood Avenue, which runs along the south edge of Hamline's campus, was known briefly as University Avenue. It was then renamed Capitol Avenue. Most of the homes constructed by Schaettgen and Mertens forty years later were on Capitol.[14]

On May 4, 1882, former Governor Marshall (1866-1870) and his wife, Abby, sold a warranty

deed of forty acres, which was the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 27, Township 29, Range 23, to Celestia B. Gilbert and Newington, her farmer husband. The new "Gilbert's Addition" spanned eight blocks and included the 1162-1218 section of Capitol (Englewood) Avenue. The Gilberts came from New York but had been living in Washington County, Minnesota, as early as 1860.[15]

In 1885, the city annexed and incorporated the Hamline Midway area.

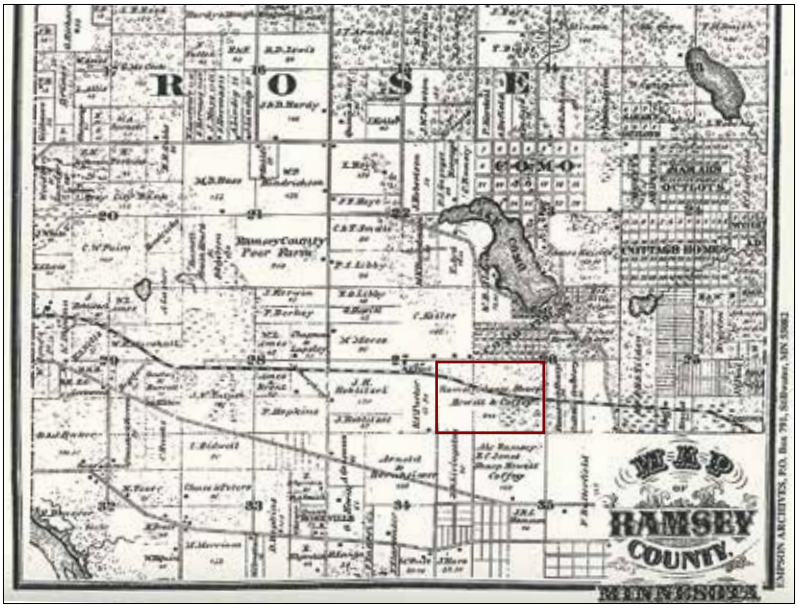
> The streetcar lines helped put in place St. Paul as it is today. Suburbs that had sprung up beyond Lexington Avenue, St. Paul's western boundary until 1887, were linked to the city by both streetcars and railroads' 'short lines.' Surrounded by groves of trees and rolling farmlands, real estate developments clustering around commercial cores grew into separate villages, and then expanded into city neighborhoods.[16]

Once the land was subdivided and platted, new residents moved in. The waves of immigrants coming to America peaked and fell as the wars and famines in Europe peaked and as US politics dictated who could come for however long the window of opportunity to immigrate was open.

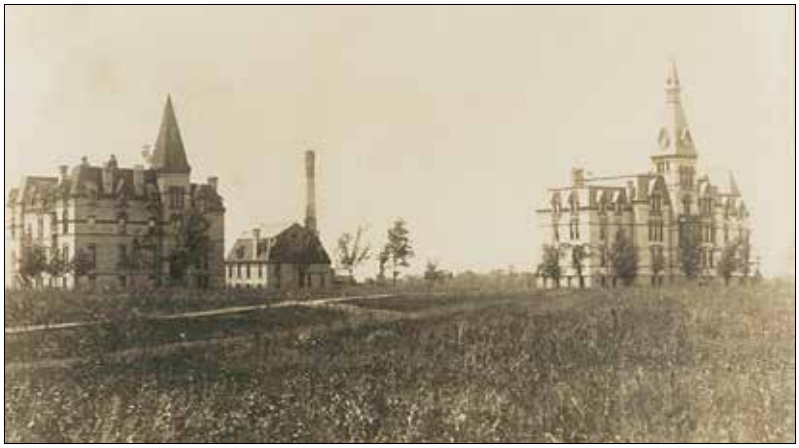
Residents of Hamline village banded together to form civic and cultural groups to support each other and their new neighborhood. Members of the Hamline Commercial Club, the Freemasons, and the Hancock School Mother's Group were key players.[17]

The first two churches—Hamline Methodist and Knox Presbyterian—were housed on the Hamline University campus until they secured their own locations in 1900 and 1914, respectively, through the fundraising efforts of their separate Ladies' Aid Societies. Annie Schaettgen with the Ladies' Aid Society of the Knox Presbyterian Church was an active member.[18]

From 1902 to 1908, neighbors linked to the Hamline Improvement Association worked with the city and the Norwegian Lutheran Seminary to vacate lots to create Horton Park, bordered by Minnehaha and Capitol Avenues and Albert and Hamline Avenues.[19]



A section of L. G. Bennet's 1861 map of Ramsey County shows the part of Rose Township that became the Hamline Midway neighborhood. In the southeast corner is the 240-acre plot owned at that time by "Ramsey, Jones, Sharp, Hewitt & Coffee." This is the current location of 1162-1218 Englewood Avenue. *Courtesy of Donald L. Empson Archives.*



This early image of Hamline University's Ladies Hall and University Hall shows the open prairie when the school was first built. *Courtesy of retired Hamline University Archivist Candice Hart.*

In 1908, villagers started a lending library at a millinery shop on Snelling Avenue. This shop later moved to the basement of Florian's Pharmacy at the corner of Snelling and Minnehaha. By 1920, residents and members of the Hamline Commercial Club (including Henry Schaettgen) had raised $3,000 to purchase three lots at this corner to build a bigger library.[20]

As advocates continued to press city leaders toward their goal of a new library, an "Exhaustive Library Survey" was conducted to learn more about area dwellers:

> According to the census of 1920 the population of this district is 17,700. . . . It was

found that most of the residents could read the English language; that the Germans and their descendants predominated, with the Swedish second and the Norwegian third. Other foreign-born people in the district were Danes, Bohemians, Scotch, Irish, English, Jews, Russians, Italians and Dutch.[21]

It would take another decade, but in 1930, Hamline Library opened its doors, becoming the center of the burgeoning and diverse community.[22]

A Closer Look at Henry Schaettgen

On December 16, 1876, eighteen-year-old Heinrich (Henry) Schaettgen immigrated to New York from the German port of Hamburg. [23]

The Baden-born Shaettgen eventually made his way to Guttenberg, Iowa, where, as a twenty-three-year-old, he lived with G. F. and Philipine Wiest. He worked as a store clerk.[24]

In a late-May wedding in 1885, Schaettgen married Wisconsin-born Annie Dora Daacke—a daughter of German immigrants—in Grant County, Wisconsin. Within three years, they were parents to two daughters—Dora Sophia, born March 30, 1886, in Iowa, and Rose Marie, born July 4, 1888, in St. Paul.[25]

Schaettgen worked about twenty-five years as a traveling salesman selling crockery for Wemott Howard & Co Agents at 358-387 Jackson Street. The company sold wholesale china, glassware, and crockery. The Schaettgen family resided at 1271 Capitol Avenue near the north corner of Syndicate Avenue through 1906.[26]

Around 1907, the Schaettgens, including two grown daughters, moved to 754 Hamline Avenue on the northeast corner of Capitol. Contractor and developer Joseph Sweitzer built the home, which stood across the street from the newly developed Horton Park and the Norwegian Luther Seminary.[27]

Between 1910 and 1920, Schaettgen changed professions. Still listed as a salesman in the 1910 US Census, he's noted in the 1920 document as a "builder" in the industry of "houses." He was also listed as a cement contractor.[28]

The Schaettgen women—Annie, Dora, and Rose—were active and involved in the community. Mother and daughters were musical and often performed piano and violin recitals, organized fundraisers, and hosted dinners, as noted in "Hamline Society" blurbs, which appeared in the *Saint Paul Daily Globe* and the *Star Tribune*. As an adult, Dora joined the music faculty at Macalester College.[29]

At some point, Schaettgen began getting involved in real estate development. He worked with builder Herman Elmer to construct nine houses (possibly rental properties), all except two—from 736 to 776 Hamline Avenue between Minnehaha and Seminary—from 1906 to 1922.[30]

Schaettgen also owned or developed twenty-two of twenty-nine properties along 1162-1218 Capitol Avenue (among others). He personally built four houses including 1202, 1206, 1210, and 1218, all in 1920, on the south side of the street.[31]

Not counting the first house at 760 Griggs and the houses built at 1198 and 1194, the remaining twenty-two houses were built by "Theo H. Mertens for H. Schaettgen." Mertens, who came to the US from Cologne, Germany, in 1925, married Schaettgen's daughter Rose. He was thirty-seven; she, thirty-nine. The couple lived next door to her parents at 762 Hamline Avenue.[32]

Schaettgen and Mertens hired a set construction crew. Harold R. Olson, the son of Swedish immigrants, worked for Eureka Electric Fixture Company. Frank J. Sapletal, the son of a German

Newspapers included legal mentions of properties and contracts concerning Henry Schaettgen but no images of the contractor. The Schaettgen women, however, were noted more frequently in the society pages for their community service and musical talent. Here, Mrs. Schaettgen, at eighty-four years old, performs a duet with daughter Dora. *In Pioneer Press, February 27, 1944.*

immigrant, did the plastering. Leo E. Peyer, whose father was Swiss and mother Austrian, served as the plasterer. He and his wife lived in the neighborhood. Neighbor George Diebel was a painting subcontractor.[33]

It appears that by about 1930 Schaettgen stepped back, and Mertens became the primary contractor.[34]

A Peek Inside

By the late 1920s before the stock market crash, homebuilding was on the rise. An article in *The Hamline Tribune* noted the construction of six new homes on Capitol Avenue by a Hamline builder.[35]

These houses were small and modest yet made of quality materials. They were designed in either the bungalow or Tudor Revival cottage style. Most included unique designs with a couple of bungalows and the one or one-and-a-half-story cottage styles repeating on the street. All were likely originally finished with exterior stucco.[36]

Today, most of these homes have original oak floors on the main level, oak doors and trim in the front of the house, and fir doors and trim in the bedrooms. A few feature oak floors upstairs, as well.

Some follow the typical bungalow layout with a rear corner kitchen and bedrooms along one side of the house—a bathroom in between. The stairs to half or second stories are accessed through the dining room. Some homes feature a center kitchen on one side, with bedrooms in the rear. These include a staircase located in a central hallway near the bathroom.

Built-ins are not found here, save for one home. Plaster archways are common between the living and dining rooms. Some homes feature original fireplaces. Some include piano windows. The 1199 Englewood home has a larger kitchen with a breakfast nook. The house at 1203 boasts a front sunroom.

These may or may not be plan book houses, but they generally do not appear as if they were part of a 'tract development' with row upon row of cookie-cutter homes. Some have finished basements; some have bumped out attic spaces. As of 2024, most of these homes have not been significantly upgraded or flipped to any extreme degree.[37]

A contemporary view of the kitchen and dining room at 1199 Englewood Avenue in 2021. *Both images courtesy of Marsha Burgeson, Edina Realty.*

Around the Block

1930s

In the 1930 US Census, twelve households were listed between 1162 and 1218 Capitol Avenue. Nine were owner occupied with property values between $4,000 and $7,000. Rent ranged from $32.50 to $35 a month.[38]

The Andersons lived at 1191, the Lindgrens were at 1195, and the Mathias Diebels at 1198. The Cooks resided at 1202, the Bordenaves at 1203, the Hays at 1206, the Steins at 1207, and the Senlachs at 1210. The Schuler family lived at 1211, the Hedtkes at 1215, the Smith and Aitchison household at 1217, and the Hoglunds at 1218 Capitol Avenue. (Mr. Hedtke and Mr. Aitchison were carpenters who may have contracted with Schaettgen and Mertens.) A census study found that the three adults living at 1217 Capitol Avenue (760 Griggs) were Scottish immigrants. Thirty-six residents of the block were born in Minnesota, with one person born in South Dakota and one in Wisconsin. The parents of some of these household members hailed from Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland.[39]

1940s

By 1940, 1162-1218 Capitol Avenue was filled in and built out, save for one vacant lot. The census that year listed ninety-four people living in twenty-seven homes; the majority born in state. Four households included at least one immigrant—two from Canada, one from Norway, and a married couple from Switzerland/Italy. There were also people born in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. On this census, participants were no longer asked about their parents' place of birth.[40]

Shortly after the 1940 US Census was completed—likely late 1940 or 1941—Capitol Avenue was renamed Englewood Avenue. According to Donald L. Empson, author of the indispensable book, *The Street Where You Live: A Guide to the Place Names of Saint Paul*, "Englewood is a city in California. Many of the street names changed in 1940 were borrowed from more romantic places in that state."[41]

After World War II, available pockets of land in the larger Hamline Midway neighborhood filled in with small one-story ranch homes in the post-war building boom. However, individually rebuilt or remodeled homes are rare in this largely intact neighborhood.

1950s

By 1950, most residents were born in Minnesota. The only outliers were spouses from Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, Wisconsin, and one child born in Oklahoma. This may reflect the movement that occurred during and after the war. Only one household—1171 Englewood—included an immigrant family with a Swiss husband and an Italian wife—the same couple living there in 1940.[42]

A Tale of Three Properties

1198 Capitol/Englewood

One of the earliest structures on the block was not a house but a cement factory. According to the Abstract of Title for 1198 Capitol Avenue, Charles G. and Emma Johnson sold a warranty deed for Lots 9 & 10, Block 7, in Gilbert's Addition to "Gust Albert Johnson and Gust B. Carlson" on September 23, 1914. A 1915 building permit indicates that Burt A. Johnson constructed a small one-story factory—32 feet wide, 20 feet long, and 12 feet high—at an estimated cost of $125.[43]

Johnson was the proprietor of Capitol Cement Works at 1198 Capitol. A quarry/gravel pit owned by Johnson was located on the northwest corner of what is now Griggs Park. It is likely that cement and other materials from this factory were used in the construction of homes on Capitol and surrounding blocks. The factory operated about eight years. Johnson and his family lived next door at 1196. That original home was not there long, and Lot 9 remained vacant for years. As for the factory, in 1923, a house would replace it.[44]

A 1923 building permit on the 1198 Capitol lot where the factory once existed indicates a residence would be built by "S. Ostermann" [sic]. The dwelling was one story with a width of 26 feet, length of 30 feet, and a height of 12 feet at the estimated cost of $2,500. This appears to be the home at 1198 Englewood that stands today.[45]

On June 21, 1926, Albert and Marie S. Osterman sold their two lots to George E. Diebel. Diebel, originally from Ontario, Canada, married Minnesota-born Josephine Gaspard in Stearns County, where they lived from 1895 through at least 1920. They moved to St. Paul in the early 1920s and eventually made their home at 748 Hamline in one of the houses Schaettgen and Elmer built in 1910. The Diebel and Schaettgen families were across-the-street neighbors and friends for decades.[46]

Family history suggests Diebel, a painting contractor and business associate of Schaettgen, bought the Osterman lots for his sons. In fact, the 1930 US Census indicates that son Mathias and his wife, Myra, were living with two children at 1198 Capitol. A third child would eventually join them.[47]

George and Josephine officially sold the two lots on Capitol to Mathias and Myra in 1938. Mathias was a druggist, working first at Como Park Pharmacy then owning his own business at Dale and Thomas.[48]

1194 Englewood

In 1941, Mathias had a new home built on the previously unoccupied second lot next door. The address would become 1194 Englewood, a rename of Capitol Avenue a few months prior.

They sold their 1198 house to Raymond and Bernice Faschingbauer. The family remained at 1194 until 1952, when Mathias and Myra sold the home to his youngest brother Clarence (Clare) and Clare's wife, Fern.[49]

So, who were these next occupants of 1194 Englewood? Fern Fay Monette was born in Michigan in 1920. Her family moved frequently, making stops in St. Paul, New York, Indiana, and Kentucky, before returning to St. Paul in 1935. By then, Fern was a junior and enrolled at a Catholic girls' school—St. Joseph's Academy at Iglehart and Western. She graduated at sixteen in 1937.[50]

Her family attended the Church of St. Columba at 1327 Lafond Avenue, where Fern would meet Clare. Fern attended and graduated from the College of St. Catherine, majoring in English with a minor in education. By this time, the US was headed to war.[51]

The George and Josephine Diebel family in 1924, including (*L-R):* Claudia, Clarence (Clare), Josephine, Catherine, George, Cecilia, Aloysius, Bernard, and Mathias. *Courtesy of the Diebel Family Archives.*

Clare served as a technical sergeant with the US Army Air Corp in World War II from 1942-1945. He and Fern married March 18, 1944, at Westover Field, Massachusetts. After the war, the couple lived at the Diebel family home on Hamline from 1945-1947. Looking to get out on their own, they moved to a Quonset hut at Dale

Homes (and one Factory) Built in the 1162-1218 Block of Capitol/Englewood Avenue (1914-1941)

Permit	Date	Type	Address	Original Owner	Extant	Builder	Cost	Comments
64481	1914-11-24	Dwelling	1196 Capitol Ave	Albert Johnson	No		$100	10 x 12 x 12; 1 story
65112	1915-04-09	Factory	1198 Capitol Ave	Burt A. Johnson	No		$125	32 x 20 x 12; 1 story
68483	1916-07-03	Temp Dwelling	760 Griggs/1217 Capitol Ave		Yes	M. Wasserschied	$200	16 x 16 x 17; 1 story
77487	1920-04-07	Dwelling	1218 Capitol Ave	H. Schaettgen	Yes	H. Schaettgen	$3,200	22 x 27; 1.5 story; 1.5 lot (no 1214 lot)
77659	1920-10-16	Dwelling	1202 Capitol Ave	Henry Schaettgen	Yes		$3,200	24 x 31.5 x 18; 1 story
77660	1920-10-18	Dwelling	1210 Capitol Ave	H. Schaettgen	Yes		$3,800	24 x 34; 1 story; 1.5 lot
77662	1920-10-18	Dwelling	1206 Capitol Ave	H. Schaettgen	Yes		$3,800	22 x 36; 1 story
3791	1923-01-24	Dwelling	1198 Capitol Ave	A Ostermann[sic]	Yes	S. Ostermann [sic]	$2,500	26 x 30 x 12; 1 story
29145	1927-10-17	Dwelling	1211 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$3,500	24 x 34; 1 story
30908	1928-04-12	Dwelling	1207 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	Owner	$3,750	26 x 34; 1 story
31227	1928-05-02	Dwelling	1203 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	Owner	$3,750	25 x 42; 1 story
32024	1928-06-09	Dwelling	1215 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$4,500	24 x 22; 2 story
33514	1928-09-06	Dwelling	1199 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	Owner	$4,000	34 x 41; 1 story
35319	1929-03-25	Dwelling	1195 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,750	26 x 34; 1 story
36429	1929-05-11	Dwelling	1191 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,750	26 x 34; 1 story
38120	1929-08-07	Dwelling	1179 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$3,750	26 x 36; 1 story
38121	1929-08-07	Dwelling	1183 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$3,750	26 x 36; 1 story
37289	1929-08-19	Dwelling	1187 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,750	27 x ?; 1 story
39448	1929-10-25	Dwelling	1175 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$3,500	26 x 34; 1 story
39664	1929-11-12	Dwelling	1171 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,750	24 x 36; 1 story
40108	1930-03-05	Dwelling	1167 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	24 x 34; 1 story
40342	1930-03-20	Dwelling	1163 Capitol Ave	Theo H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	24 x 34 x 20; 1 story
43742	1930-03-30	Dwelling	1170 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	26 x 34; 1 story
41194	1930-05-07	Dwelling	1162 Capitol Ave	Theo H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	24 x 36; 1 story
41459	1930-05-23	Dwelling	1166 Capitol Ave	Theo. H. Mertens	Yes	Theo H. Mertens	$3,500	46 x 34
43576	1930-11-18	Dwelling	1178 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$3,500	26 x 34
43736	1930-11-28	Dwelling	1174 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	28 x 34; 1 story
43740	1930-12-03	Dwelling	1190 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	26 x 34; 1 story
43741	1930-12-03	Dwelling	1182 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes	T. H. Mertens	$3,500	24 x 36; 1 story
43845	1931-01-02	Dwelling	1186 Capitol Ave	T. H. Mertens	Yes		$3,500	26 x 34; 1 story
86016	1941-07-25	Dwelling	1194 Englewood Ave	M. H. Diebel	Yes	Conrad Hamm	$5,000	32 x 33 x 19; 2 story

This chart assembles information retrieved from St. Paul Building Permits for 1162-1218 Capitol/Englewood Avenue. The highlighted sections are featured in more detail in the article. *Data from Ramsey County Historical Society St. Paul Building Permits Collection.*

Fern Monette and Clarence (Clare) Diebel married in 1944. *Courtesy of the Diebel Family Archives.*

and Arlington—the site of today's North Dale Recreation Center. There, they lived for five years and had four children. Clare supported the family as a pharmaceutical salesman and a crew leader for the US Census Bureau. He also enrolled at the University of Minnesota hoping to become a pharmacist like his brother but didn't finish.[52]

By 1952, Clare and Fern were more than ready to say goodbye to the Quonset hut. That's when they purchased 1194 Englewood—a decision they never regretted. At this home, the couple welcomed three more children.

The neighborhood was perfect. Fern remembered ten to twelve youngsters on their side of the street, with another eight to ten on the other side—built-in friends who spent hours at nearby Griggs Park playing baseball and softball in the summer and ice skating in the winter. The kids would put on shows in the family's garage, attaching a makeshift curtain over the entrance. Neighbors gathered on the lawn to watch the entertainment.

The house featured a rare attached garage, the only one on the street. Two bedrooms were situated over the living room/dining room and one over the garage. The four Diebel girls slept in one bedroom with the boys above the garage. The children kept toys in the unfinished basement. The family of nine shared one bath upstairs and a toilet and shower in the basement.

In 1959, Fern began teaching at St. Columba's K-8 elementary school, where their seven children were enrolled. She was a lay teacher. The other instructors were Sisters of St. Joseph Carondelet. Fern managed forty to fifty children in her classroom and taught all subjects. About 900 pupils attended the school, with two to three grades of each.[53]

Fern stepped away from teaching in 1976 to serve as the parish secretary for nine years, retiring in 1985. Over the years, the Diebels doted on sixteen grandchildren, several of whom attended St. Columba before the school closed in 2004. Clare passed away in 1990. Fern followed twenty-two years later on October 16, 2012.[54]

After Fern's death, daughter Mary and Mary's husband, Mike Munion, moved into 1194 Englewood Avenue, where they live still today. Diebel family members have resided on this street for nearly a century.

1199 Capitol/Englewood

Then there's 1199 Capitol on the opposite side of the street from the two Diebel homes. On a 1928 building permit, Mertens is listed as the builder of 1199 Capitol Avenue. The 1930 city directory lists Ferruccio (Fred) and Catherine Cardelli as the first occupants. The couple married on October 26, 1926. Fred was born in Ponte Buggianese, Italy, on November 14, 1895. Catherine Eva Romani, the daughter of Italian immigrants living in St. Paul, was born in Ramsey County on October 4, 1902.[55]

Cardelli is first noted in the 1915 city directory living in a boarding house at 315 E. Ninth Street with other Cardellis, likely relatives. He was a terrazo worker. The couple and their first child Joyce (b. 1927) lived at the Capitol Avenue house a few years. It is unclear if their second daughter Sylvia (b. 1933) lived there before the family moved to 1219 Blair Street that same year. By 1935, they'd relocated to San Antonio, Texas, where Fred became a US citizen in 1936.[56]

Other occupants followed the Cardelli's including Ray J. Short (1934-35), Norman and Lois Robinson (1936-46/7), and Edward and Marjorie Mauseth (1948-82). The house sat vacant (1983-84). Steve Bray occupied the home (1985-86), followed by Nancy and William Towle (1987-91). For a year or so, Chad Collman lived there before the Scott Woker family (1994-97).[57]

In 1997, Paul and Krista Hanson, the author of this article, purchased their first home together at 1199 Englewood. They joined the community there and raised two children to

This 1931 view of homes on Capitol Avenue, including 1199 (*front left*), shows the neighorhood in its early years. The second image of 1199 Englewood was taken from the same angle in 2017 when owned by Paul and Krista Hanson. *Courtesy of Krista Finstad Hanson.*

adulthood in that house. With heavy hearts, they sold the property in 2021 and moved outside the neighborhood.

It Takes a Village

While the Hamline district originally rose up around Hamline University, it was soon populated with residents moving from downtown rentals into their very own homes. Ordinary homes, but *their* homes—simple homes built by Henry Schaettgen and his son-in-law Theodore Mertens.

Some were immigrants to the US. While, at first, there was ethnic diversity, there wasn't much, if any, racial diversity.[58] But that has changed a bit. In the twenty-four years the Hanson family lived there, Latino and African American families also called this street home. In 2017, when 1198 Englewood Avenue went up for sale, a refugee family from the Democratic Republic of Congo purchased the property. Today, Annie and Joe Curtis Nelson are raising their children at 1199 Englewood Avenue, and Mary Diebel lives in her childhood home at 1194.

This ordinary, everyday section of Englewood is active, with elders and young parents raising babies to teenagers. Neighbors band together for monthly First Friday Happy Hours (F2H2 events) and other gatherings. An email list and phone tree is put to good use, and residents keep up-to-date via a neighborhood Facebook page in addition to front stoop and backyard fence conversations.

A 1929 issue of *The Hamline Tribune* once noted that "[t]he principal attraction of the [Hamline] community, aside from its parks and general good appearance is the proximity to schools, churches, and lines of transportation."[59] This remains true in this very walkable and convenient neighborhood.

The Hamline Midway Library has been a longtime gathering spot and will be again when it reopens in its new iteration. Favorite hangouts include Groundswell and Ginkgo Coffeehouse. Griggs and Horton parks are open from dawn to dusk for children to play and walkers to rest and watch the world go by. This Hamline Midway neighborhood has been and still is a lovely place to call home. Henry Schaettgen—and his son-in-law Theodore Mertens—would be pleased.

Acknowledgments: Thanks to my compatriots with the Hamline Midway History Corps: Nancy and Steve Bailey, Anne Levin, Philip Reinhardt, and all who attended events at Hamline Midway Library and our Saturday gab sessions at Ginkgo Coffeehouse. We inspired and educated each other and the community. Appreciation to Paul E. Hanson and to historians Donald L. Empson, Paul C. Larson, and Brian McMahon, who offered their wisdom and research. Thanks, also, to former neighbors who shared stories, especially Mary Diebel Munion, the late Fern Monette Diebel, and Mary Pranke Ramos, who shared the abstract of her home at 1198 Englewood Avenue.

***Krista Finstad Hanson** is an English teacher, writer, and historian. She is the author of three books and over 200 freelance articles. This is her third article for* Ramsey County History *magazine.*

NOTES

1. "Henry Schaettgen, 77, Here 48 Years, Is Dead," *Pioneer Press,* January 27, 1935, 6.

2. "District 11 Hamline–Midway Coalition," City of Saint Paul, https://www.stpaul.gov/residents/live-saint-paul/neighborhoods/district-councils/district-council-directory/district-11; Donald L. Empson, *The Street Where You Live: A Guide to the Place Names of St. Paul* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 117, 183-184. "Hamline-Midway Development," in *Hamline-Midway Neighborhood Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota, Summit Project No. 2152-0002,* sponsored by Saint Paul Heritage Commission and the Department of Planning and Economic Development, June 2018, 4. Today's Hamline Midway began as Hamline village and was eventually incorporated into a once larger Midway district, so called because of its location between St. Paul and Minneapolis. Hamline Midway is sometimes hyphenated. District 11 does not hyphenate the name, so it is not hyphenated here.

3. "Architects and Builders in the Hamline-Midway," in *Hamline-Midway Neighborhood Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey,* 20-23.

4. St. Paul Building Permits 65112 and 3791, on file at the Ramsey County Historical Society Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center (hereafter, RCHS). Note: when referring to present day, we call the street Englewood Avenue; when referring to the time when most of the houses were constructed, the street was Capitol Avenue.

5. "Architects and Builders in the Hamline-Midway," 24.

6. "Norman Kittson and the Fur Trade," *Ramsey County History* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1969): 20.

7. Theodore C. Blegen, *Minnesota: A History of the State*, 2nd ed (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), 162-163; Jayne Becker, "Ramsey, Alexander (1815-1903)," *MNopedia,* https://www.mnopedia.org/person/ramsey-alexander-1815-1903; "Minnesota Governor's 1849-Present," Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.lrl.mn.gov/mngov/gov; "Alexander Ramsey," Alexander Ramsey House website, https://www.mnhs.org/ramseyhouse/learn/alexander-ramsey#:~:text=Several%20Dakota%20alleged%20intimidation%20and,Paul%20in%201855. Alexander Ramsey was later charged with fraud in his dealings with the treaties made with the Dakota and Anishinaabe. He was exonerated by the US Senate.

8. Virginia B. Kunz, *St. Paul: The First 150 Years*, 1st ed (St. Paul: Saint Paul Foundation, 1991), 27.

9. "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, St. Paul Abstract and Guarantee Company, 2.

10. "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, 2-4, 7, 9, 12-13, 15.

11. Kunz, 35, 44; L. G. Bennett, *Map of Ramsey County*, 1867, copy from Donald L. Empson Archives, Stillwater, 1995.

12. Bennett.

13. David W. Johnson, *Hamline University: A History 1854-1994*, 2nd ed (St. Paul: Hamline University Press, 1994), 4, 14-20; Frederick L. Johnson, "Origins of Hamline University," *MNopedia*, https://www.mnopedia.org/place/origins-hamline-university; "Hamline University," in *Hamline-Midway Neighborhood Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey,* 49.

14. "Hamline University: Opening of the School–Large Attendance of Students," *Saint Paul Globe*, September 23, 1880, 2; David W. Johnson, 21; Empson, 11, 68, 90, 204, 211.

15. "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, 13; Newington Gilbert," *1860 US Federal Census*, Woodbury, Washington County, Minnesota, 164, ancestry.com.

16. Kunz, 53.

17. Hamline Midway library scrapbooks and unpublished histories, archived at George Latimer Central Library.

18. "Our Heritage," Hamline United Methodist Church, https://www.hamlinechurch.org/about/our-heritage/; Frederick Melo, "Declining numbers forcing churches to face new futures," *Pioneer Press*, November 28, 2013, https://www.twincities.com/2013/11/28/declining-numbers-forcing-churches-to-face-new-futures/; "Hamline," *Saint Paul Globe*, September 27, 1903, 9.

19. *Park Board Minutes,* St. Paul Park Board Records, Minnesota Historical Society, boxes 1 and 3, vol. 4, 151 and vol. 2, 107, 179, 182.

20. "Three Lots Given St. Paul: Hamline Commercial Club Donates Land for the Library Site," *Pioneer Press*, December 17, 1920.

21. "Study of Future Expansion, Aim," *Pioneer Press*, June 3, 1923; June Denning Holmquist, ed., *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981).

22. Hamline Midway library scrapbooks and unpublished histories. According to neighbors, the Commercial Club met at the Masonic Temple, 1544 Capitol Avenue. This building is no longer extant; a brick apartment building was moved to the site; "Three Lots Given St. Paul."

23. "Henry Schaettgen," in *United States Germans to America Index, 1850-1897*, FamilySearch.

24. "Henry Schaettgen," *Tenth Census of the United States–1880*, Iowa, Clayton, Guttenberg, enumeration 137, sheet 41, ancestry.com.

25. "Annie Dora Daacke," *Wisconsin, US, Marriage Records, 1820-2004*, ancestry.com; "Dora Sophia Schaettgen," *Iowa, US Births, 1880-1904*, ancestry.com; "Rose Marie Schaettgen," *Minnesota, US Births, 1840-1980*, ancestry.com; Schaettgen, Henry," *St. Paul City Directories* (St. Paul: R. L. Polk & Co, 1889-1908), 1172, 1481.

26. "Schaettgen, Henry," *St. Paul City Directories* (1889-1906), 1154, 1195, 1207, 1223, 1225, 1196, 1202,

1188, 1188, 1191, 1244, 1342, 1338, 1408, 1465, 1468, 1493, 1598, 1646.

27. "Sweitzer, Joseph S," *Thirteenth Census of the United States-1910*, Minnesota, Ramsey, St. Paul, enumeration 138, sheet 6a, ancestry.com; "754-754 1/2 N. Hamline Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota," Placeography, https://www.placeography.net/754-754_1/2_N._Hamline_Avenue,_Saint_Paul,_Minnesota.

28. "Schaettgen, Henry," *Fourteenth Census of the United States-1920*, St. Paul, enumeration 120, sheet 5a, ancestry.com.

29. See various articles in *Saint Paul Globe* and *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. The Diebel and Schaettgen families were close. According to Diebel family history, some of Clare and Fern Diebel's children took piano lessons from Dora Schaettgen. Before Dora died in 1961, she willed her house to Claudia and Catherine Diebel, two of Clare's sisters who never married.

30. Review of various building permit index records, RCHS.

31. St. Paul Building Permits in order of house number 77659, 77662, 77660, 77487, RCHS.

32. "Mertens, Theodore H. and Rose M.," *Fifteenth Census of the United States-1930*, St. Paul, enumeration, 62-136 sheet 16a, ancestry.com; St. Paul Building Permits 89152 and 33514, RCHS.

33. "Harold Rodney Olson," family tree and census records, FamilySearch; "Olson, Harold," *St. Paul City Directory* (1930), 1093; "Eureka Electric Fixture Company," *St. Paul City Directory* (1930), 1282; "Frank Josep Sapletal," family tree and census records, FamilySearch; "Sapletal, Frank," *St. Paul City Directory* (1930), 1148; "Leo Emil Peyer," family tree and census records, FamilySearch; Mary Diebel Munion, email correspondence with author, December 30, 2023.

34. "Mertens, Theodore H. and Rose M.," *Fifteenth Census*, St. Paul; "Schaettgen, Henry," *Fifteenth Census of the United States-1930*, St. Paul, enumeration 62-136, sheet 15b, ancestry.com.

35. "Home Building Increases Here," *The Hamline Tribune*, June 28, 1929, 1. *The Hamline Tribune* was "an independent newspaper published every Friday at 1238 Thomas Street" in St. Paul beginning in 1925.

36. "Homes in Hamline-Midway," in *Hamline-Midway Neighborhood Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey*, 26.

37. Descriptions based on observations from author, who lived in the neighborhood from 1997 to 2021.

38. "Capitol Avenue Residences," *Fifteenth Census of the United States-1930,* St. Paul, enumeration 62-136, sheet 19a-b, FamilySearch.

39. "Capitol Avenue Residences," *Fifteenth Census.*

40. "Capitol Avenue Residences," *Sixteenth Census of the United States-1940*, St. Paul, enumeration 90-224, sheet 2b, FamilySearch.

41. Empson, 90.

42. "Englewood Avenue Residences," *1950 Census of Population and Housing*, St. Paul, enumeration 90-407, sheets 6-8.

43. "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, 18; St. Paul Building Permit 65112, RCHS.

44. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota*, Sanborn Map Company, 1927; "Capitol Cement Works," *St. Paul City Directory* (1915), 402. Because of the common names of Albert and Gust Johnson, the author could not determine which of the two Johnsons in the city directory was the correct Johnson.

45. St. Paul Building Permit 3791, RCHS. The name Osterman is spelled with one and two "n's." It is most frequently spelled with a single "n." That is the spelling used here.

46. "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, 18; "George Diebel," *Fifteenth Census of the United States-1930,* St. Paul, enumeration 62-136, sheet 21a, FamilySearch.

47. Fern Diebel, interview with author, April 19, 2007. "Mathias Diebel," *Fifteenth Census of the United States-1930,* St. Paul, enumeration 32-127, sheet 23a, FamilySearch.

48. Fern Diebel interview; "Mathias Diebel," *Sixteenth Census of the United States-1940*, St. Paul, enumeration 90-224, sheet 3a; "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, 18-20.

49. Fern Diebel interview; "1198 Capitol Avenue," Abstract of Title, 22, 23.

50. Fern Diebel interview.

51. Mary Diebel Munion, email correspondence with author, December 28, 2023.

52. "Clarence Arnold Diebel," Find a Grave; "Diebel, Clarence," *1950 Census of Population and Housing*, St. Paul, enumeration 90-517a, sheet 29, FamilySearch; Clare Diebel military information gleaned from photos, registrations, and clippings in Diebel family scrapbook.

53. Fern Diebel interview; Mary Diebel Munion, email correspondence.

54. Mary Diebel Munion, email correspondence.

55. "Fred Cardelli," *St. Paul City Directory* (1930), 1607; Ferruccio, "Fred" Cardelli family tree records, FamilySearch.

56. "Cardelli, Ferruccio," *St. Paul City Directory* (1915), 403; "Cardelli, Ferrucio" [sic], *Texas Naturalization Records 1906-1989*, FamilySearch.

57. Data compiled through an extensive search of many US Census records, *St. Paul City Directories*, and telephone books.

58. "Maps and Data/Ramsey County," University of Minnesota Mapping Prejudice Project, accessed January 17, 2024, https://mappingprejudice.umn.edu/racial-covenants/maps-data. Research on racial covenants in Ramsey County continues as of January 2024, and while it appears there were no racial covenants placed on the properties in the 1162-1218 block of Capitol/Englewood Avenue, one was included for the property across from Horton Park at the corner of Minnehaha Avenue and Hamline Avenue on March 5, 1927.

59. *The Hamline Tribune*, June 28, 1929, 1.

Book Reviews

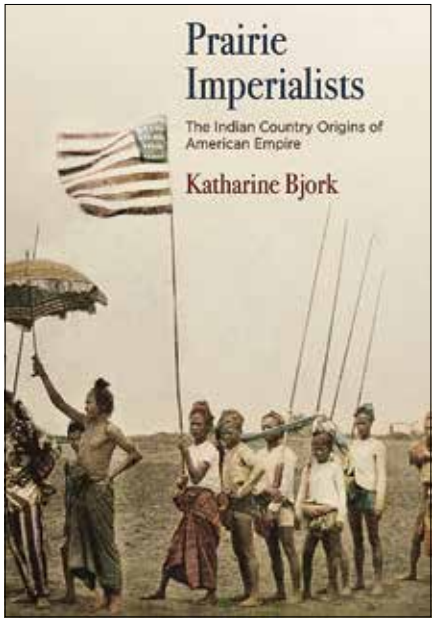
Prairie Imperialists: The Indian Country Origins of American Empire

Katharine Bjork

Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019

352 pages; hard cover, 13 b&w photos, 5 maps, $64.95

REVIEWED BY RENOIR GAITHER



Hamline University professor Katharine Bjork's book, *Prairie Imperialists: The Indian Country Origins of American Empire,* examines an important, albeit often overlooked, period of American imperialism—from America's "Indian Wars" of the late nineteenth century to the nation's emergence as an imperial power in its occupation of the Philippines, Cuba, and other former Spanish colonies. Bjork argues that the logic of US empire and rights of sovereignty established during American territorial expansion and Indian dispossession in the late 1800s was carried into America's later imperial designs abroad. The latest examples include wars involving counterinsurgency in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Bjork highlights the importance of the commonly held, popular tropes of racial superiority among American whites that marked differences between them and "racial others," punitive pacification strategies, and use and valorization of Native auxiliaries and scouts. While these features of imperial encounters are well documented in scholarly literature, Bjork's narrative choices skillfully bring out the motives, values, and internal conflicts of her central characters.

Bjork introduces readers to memorable US military leaders and settings and some suspenseful moments highlighted through the lives and actions of US Army officers Hugh Lenox Scott, Robert Lee Bullard, and John J. Pershing. All served in "Indian War" campaigns following the US Civil War. They later held a succession of colonial offices in Cuba and the Philippines. Concluding chapters focus on Pershing's punitive expedition in Mexico in response to Francisco "Pancho" Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916.

Discussion of the role of Indigenous scouts in these campaigns against Native peoples is laudable and may be surprising to some readers, as it is the through line to use of such auxiliaries today. According to Bjork, ". . . the logic of empire rendered all colonized people scouts." She adds, "The expected role for the Natives in this scenario [referring to the Spanish-American War] was to provide local knowledge and act in a supporting role."[1] Recent examples of supportive auxiliaries in American military campaigns include Iraqi Army scouts and translators, as well as ethnic minorities who formed the Northern Alliance in US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Despite some skepticism among military leadership, use of whites and non-whites as scouts proved advantageous to empire building. Skepticism derived primarily from a deeply-held belief among some that whites engaged in military scouting might lose their own racial identity and superiority. White scouts ran the risk of "going Native" or perhaps compromising their investment in cultural white supremacy. At stake was a kind of "tainting" of white civilization with cultural and racial primitivism.

Bjork writes about Robert Lee Bullard's conflicted relationship between scouting and white civilization: "Bullard thought that white civilization was antithetical to the values of scouting, which he extolled in his writings. He remained equally insistent on the redemptive power of such a connection with the primitive precisely for "super-civilized" (presumptively Anglo-Saxon) men."[2]

However, a belief prevailed that accorded an unwavering valor to Indigenous and African American scouts, due to genetic or racial/ethnic advantages. Bjork notes that such valorization of scouting units was part of America's historic symbolic construction of racial hierarchy, subordination, and traits of inheritance. For example, her discussion of the so-called "immune regiments" of African American troops during the Spanish-American War in Cuba follows this theme.

Critical to Bjork's argument is the persistent friction between romanticized notions of racial "otherness" inherent in the colonized and guarded acceptance of cultural and racial superiority among American military leadership engaged in imperialist warfare.

Bjork notes that imperialism not only attempts to circumscribe new geographic boundaries of sovereignty but cultural ones, as well. The character of American imperialism was—and in many respects, continues to be—shaped by debate over these two margins. American military leaders of this period developed strategies of containment and punitive measures to maintain cultural and physical boundaries between new American sovereigns and racial others in occupied territories following the 1898 war. This book describes these strategies of governance built around a core threat of punitive military violence and "the racial dimensions of political and social life at home."[3]

Prairie Imperialists provides excellent background on the cultural and political mores and conduct of senior military

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leaders and those whose profiles Bjork provides. This book is aimed at readers interested in military history, American studies scholars, and historians. Included are archival black and white photographs and maps that highlight relevant content. At times, it would have been helpful to have the maps placed closer to pertinent discussions. Still, this scholarly, well-researched book includes generous notes, accurate index references and cross-references, and a solid bibliography.

Renoir Gaither *is a poet and former academic librarian. He has held positions at the Shapiro Undergraduate Library at the University of Michigan* and *Magrath Library at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. He is a member of the Ramsey County Historical Society Editorial Board.*

NOTES

1. Katharine Bjork, *Prairie Imperialists: The Indian Country Origins of American Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2019), 16.
2. Bjork, 77.
3. Bjork, 17.

The Heart of the Heartland: Norwegian American Community in the Twin Cities

David C. Mauk

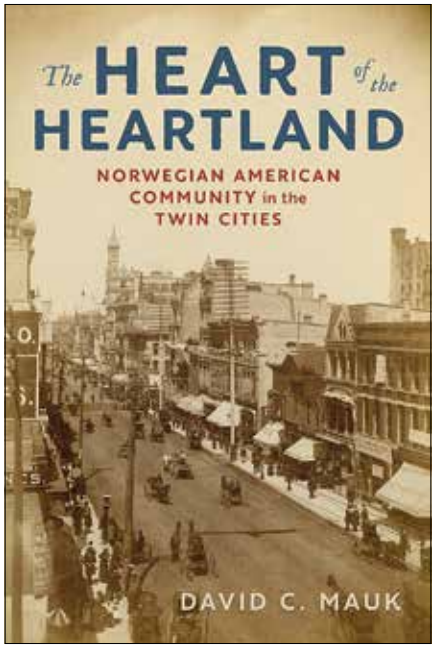
St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2022

472 pages; paperback, b&w illustrations, 7 maps, $29.95

REVIEWED BY MARY LETHERT WINGERD

As the title of this volume suggests, the Twin Cities, especially Minneapolis, have long claimed the title as the heart of Norwegian settlement in America. Even today, generations beyond the peak exodus from Norway, Minnesota is renowned as an ethnic Scandinavian stronghold, though in reality that distinction is increasingly difficult to detect in its present-day multiethnic population.

Still, as David C. Mauk compellingly demonstrates in this densely researched tome, Norwegian immigrants and generations of their descendants played essential roles in the settlement and development of the Twin Cities and the social/cultural ethos that came to distinguish them. The author offers a tour de force of research, mining



every available source to find evidence of Norwegian influence from the outset of white settlement to the present.

Scholars of immigration and ethnicity will find much to appreciate in the level of detail presented here. Such a fine-grained examination of a particular community is invaluable in bringing to light larger patterns of immigrant settlement and acculturation. For example, Mauk traces a little-studied phenomenon of rural-to-urban ethnic chain migration that greatly influenced community development in the Twin Cities. In fact, the greatest growth in the Norwegian community there came well after direct immigration from Norway had slowed. Minneapolis and Saint Paul acted as magnets that drew Norwegians who had first settled in rural Minnesota. They came to the cities with a store of American experience, which enhanced their ability to navigate the urban environment and advance the success of the ethnic group as a whole. This insight and others to be gleaned from this study have broad implications for immigration studies.

One could wish, though, for more information about conditions in Norway that prompted, and then ended, such a significant exodus. Who were these people? What were the political and economic conditions that caused them to pull up stakes in the first place and undertake such a life-changing journey?

Experiences in the home country clearly factored into the way the community grew and developed in Minnesota, as well as its complicated relationship with Swedish and Danish fellow ethnic Americans, and continued attachment to Norway itself. Though we learn here that generations of Norwegian Americans maintained a strong connection to their historic homeland, somewhat more attention to the initial push factors would have enriched an understanding of the evolving social and cultural landscape.

Nonetheless, historians will value the breadth and depth of information in this volume. The general, interested reader, however, may find the level of detail daunting. The fascinating story of the Norwegian-American community often gets lost in a plethora of facts that do little to advance the narrative. It seems unnecessary to know the hour-by-hour schedule of events for every Norwegian celebration or to know the name of every person who headed one of the Norwegian congregations or organizations. And it is impossible to follow the intricate descriptions of neighborhood and ward configurations without a map to function as a guide.

None of this, however, should deter those with a serious interest in the Norwegian-American experience in America. Nor should it detract from the contributions to immigration scholarship made by this volume, which represents a prodigious accomplishment, clearly the result of years of dedicated research by an expert on this subject. There is much to be learned from this authoritative history of the "heart of the heartland," a welcome addition to Minnesota history and to the broad canvas of immigration history as well.

Mary Lethert Wingerd *is professor emerita of history at St. Cloud State University. She is the author of* Claiming the City: Politics, Faith, and the Power of Place in St. Paul *and* North Country: The Making of Minnesota.

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RAMSEY COUNTY
History
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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 Ȟeyáta Othúŋwe (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.

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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 Makhóčhe, 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 Makhóčhe. 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 Makhóčhe.

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

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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.

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

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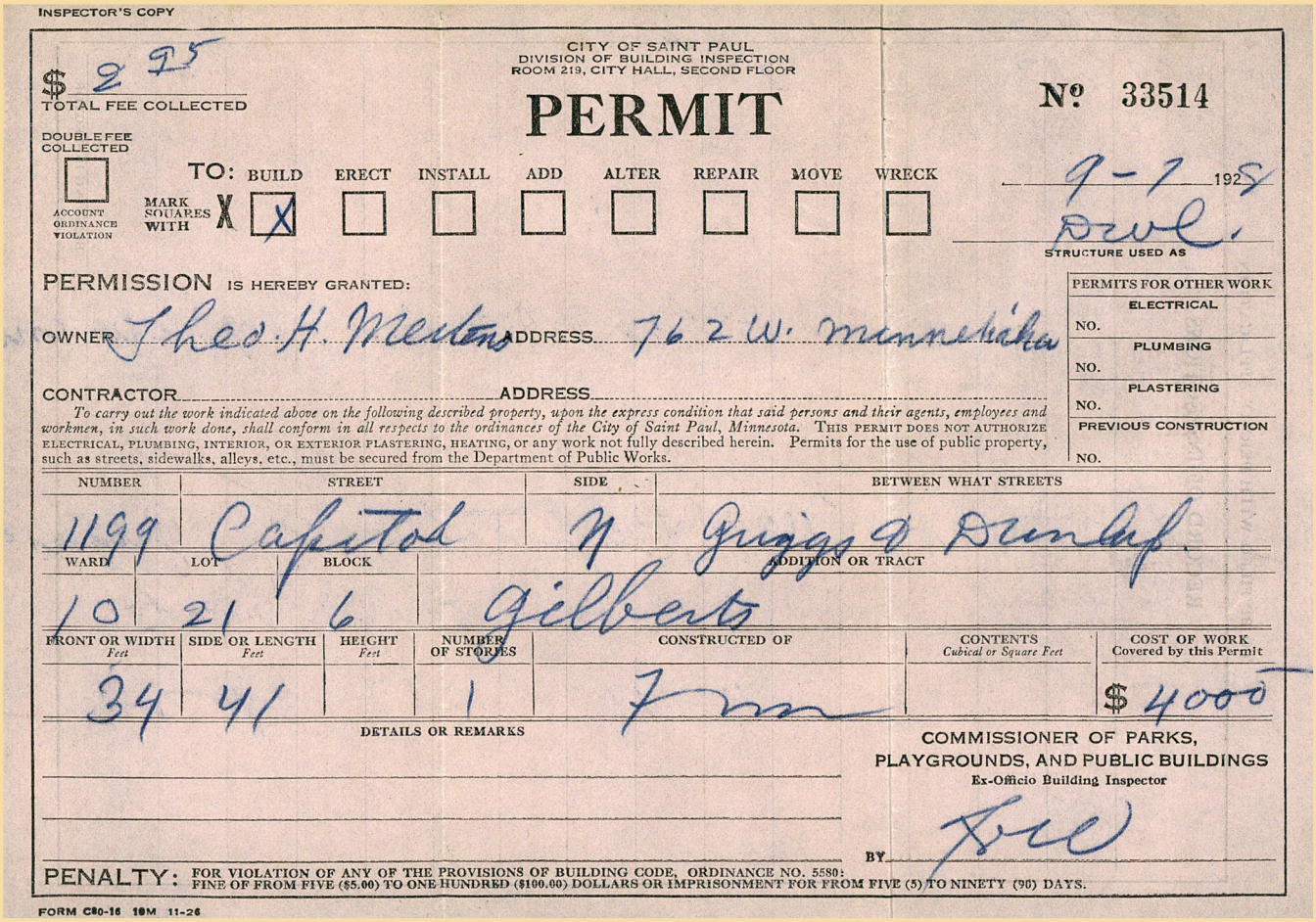
It Takes a Village

Building Community in the Hamline Midway Neighborhood

KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON, PAGE 19



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WARD	LOT	BLOCK	ADDITION OR TRACT
10	21	6	Gilberts

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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. Schaettgen," 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.*