

The Women Who Have Shaped the Ramsey County Historical Society

ANDREA SWENSSON, YOUA VANG, MEREDITH CUMMINGS

For the past year, Ramsey County Historical Society has focused its lens on its own past in observation of its seventy-fifth anniversary. Founded in April 1949 by community historian Ethel Stewart and her fellow officers from the St. Anthony Park Area Historical Association,¹ and wholly inspired by the value Stewart saw in a nineteenth century farmstead inhabited by Jane DeBow Gibbs and her husband, Heman, Ramsey County Historical Society's mission has been shaped by determined women working tirelessly to preserve important stories.

From the founding of this very magazine by Virginia Brainard Kunz sixty-one years ago to the countless others who have since contributed to the magazine, collected artifacts, created exhibits, and served on RCHS's various boards and committees, women have been at the heart of this organization at every step of its now seventy-six-year story.

Women have been underrepresented in academic historical studies, though some progress has been made over the past half-century. In 1966, only 27.9 percent of master's degrees and 12 percent of doctorate degrees in history were earned by women, while in 2014 those numbers had risen to 48.9 percent of master's degrees, and 42.9 percent of doctorates in the discipline.²

On the local level, those trends are subverted by the large number of "amateur" female historians who have taken it upon themselves to dig into their local communities and teach themselves how to properly archive materials, display artifacts, and navigate the bureaucracy of preserving important buildings. And yet even in these smaller institutions, the historic figures tied to each home or landmark are most often men, to an overwhelming degree. Nationwide, only four percent of historic landmarks are designated for women.³

Considering these statistics, Ramsey County Historical Society's determination to uplift the story of Jane DeBow Gibbs at the Gibbs Farm is significant. "We always say Jane and Heman—it's never Heman and Jane," remarked Gibbs Farm director Sammy Nelson. "She's the star of our story."

"We know so much about the women who lived here because they left a lot of letters and records," added Janie Bender, the manager of youth programs at Gibbs Farm. "For all the houses in the Twin Cities that have been preserved, there aren't any others that are specifically focused on a woman or a woman's story. That's really unique."

At this milestone moment when RCHS pauses to reflect on its *own* story, it is undoubtedly a story of women persevering through challenges to connect the past to our present moment. These are just some of the many remarkable women who have made the organization what it is today.

—Andrea Swenson

Jane DeBow Gibbs, Ida Winona Gibbs, Abbie Gibbs Fischer, and Lillie Belle Gibbs Le Vesconte

It's interesting how a single event from the past can determine the version of history we know in the present. Around 1834, the mother of six-year-old Jane DeBow died. A missionary family brought the youngster west, setting the course of history. While Rev. Jedediah Stevens and other missionaries attempted to establish a relationship with members of Cloud Man's Village at Lake Calhoun, known today as Bde Maka Ska, Jane (about 1828-1910) happily played with the Dakota children there, making friends and learning the language. As a teenager she moved to Illinois, where she met and married Heman Gibbs,

The Gibbs family on the front lawn of their farm home circa 1890. (L-R): Abbie, Lillie, Frank, Jane and Heman. Ramsey County Historical Society archives.



then traveled back to the newly formed Minnesota Territory in 1849 and purchased land. Before long, Jane unexpectedly reconnected with her now-grown Dakota companions, whose ricing trail ran from the Minnesota River to Forest Lake and intersected the Gibbs homestead, which was established on Dakota land.

This story is serendipitous and may have been lost to history had Jane's children, particularly her three girls, not worked to preserve it. Daughter Abbie (1855-1941) lived at the two-story farmhouse her entire life. She changed little at the property, even as life in the early twentieth century brought new innovations and technology. When the home was saved in 1949 (see Ethel Stewart entry), the homestead looked much as it had nearly a century earlier.

Jane's oldest daughter, Ida (1852-1922), was an avid letter writer, and her correspondence to her sisters has helped researchers understand the nuances of their daily lives at the turn of the twentieth century. Jane's youngest daughter, Lillie (1865-1945), was the family chronicler. She left behind written examples of school assignments and drawings from her childhood (see

Terry Swanson entry), and as an adult, documented her mother's remarkable story. The history of this early Minnesota family is preserved today and shared in numerous books, articles, and at Gibbs Farm—all because of a single event that led to the rest of the story.

That doesn't mean history is set in stone. RCHS recently learned that Jane, in her later years, (knowingly or unknowingly—we aren't sure) participated in an early science experiment in 1897. Ernest Hummel, a St. Paul watchmaker who had created a teliograph—an early telegraph—conducted a test at the offices of the *St. Paul Globe*. He succeeded in sending two photographs through the machine. He chose one photo of Albert Scheffer, a local businessman with ties to the paper. He also transmitted the image of "[Mrs.] H. R. Gibbs," as the paper noted. RCHS was unaware of this history until contacted by an historian from France.⁴

Ramsey County Historical Society exists because of the preserved history of the Gibbs family—saved in large part by the Gibbs women.

—Meredith Cummings

Ethel Stewart

Ethel Stewart (1879-1959) said, “No!” In 1942, when the University of Minnesota announced plans to demolish the old Gibbs farmhouse, near Larpenteur and Cleveland avenues (on land the U had recently acquired), Stewart and a small group of citizens from St. Anthony Park were determined to block the move. It took more than a simple “No” to win the fight. In fact, it took nearly seven years of negotiations, offers to move the house elsewhere, collaboration with a Gibbs family member, and an appeal to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners before the group’s informal St. Anthony Park Area Historical Association (SAPAHA) got close to a “Yes.” There was just one more hitch: The SAPAHA was not incorporated nor was it a county-wide entity. In an emergency meeting, association members voted to incorporate as Ramsey County Historical Society in 1949. The commissioners said “Yes.” Funding was approved. The rest is history.⁵

Local historian Steve Trimble researched the “activist” a decade ago. Early evidence of Stewart’s interest in history appears in high school speeches and college papers, and she purposely incorporated history into her work as a teacher.⁶ Her work continued as she and the members of the new society fundraised and convinced generous donors to support the opening of Gibbs Farm Museum in 1954.⁷

As organizer, historian, and curator of the nascent Ramsey County Historical Society, Stewart was so integral to the organization that the board of directors met at her house and she stored many of the first RCHS artifacts in her home. After she passed on October 7, 1959, the president of RCHS at the time, Hal E. McWethy, wrote that, “The large quantities of exhibits, books, documents and maps found in Mrs. Stewart’s home after her death were immediately moved to the [Gibbs Farm] Homestead. These exhibits and books, as well as all other exhibits possessed by the society have now been carefully inventoried in a permanent record.”⁸

Writing in one of the earliest RCHS newsletters, Stewart declared: “To be of real value a county historical museum should not merely be a variation of many others of similar nature scattered all across the country, instead it should make some significant contribution to



Ethel Stewart was photographed dressed in period clothing and churning butter at the Gibbs Farm in October 1954, the year it first opened as a public museum. *Ramsey County Historical Society archives.*

the understanding of the changes in life, habits and people within its own area. It is hoped that such will be the case in the unique presentation of the evolution of pioneer farm home building in Ramsey County as typified in the restoration of the Gibbs homestead.”⁹

As the organization closes the chapter on its first seventy-five years, Stewart’s steadfast commitment to saving the Gibbs Farm and laying the groundwork for the historical society continues to inspire the employees and board members of RCHS. Perhaps the former director of the Minnesota Historical Society, Russell W. Fridley, said it best when eulogizing Stewart after her death:

Among Mrs. Stewart’s beliefs was an abiding conviction that an appreciation of history was urgently important to one’s existence. The force of this belief found expression in the irrepressible and contagious enthusiasm with which she met the manifold problems and assignments that face every historical organization. Even at an advanced age and in ill health, her interest in historical work and in the Ramsey County Historical Society and its welfare never waned. Her interest retained a remarkable consistency and vitality at all times. When all is said and done, all of us are indebted to this grand lady for her unique contribution in Ramsey County and the State of Minnesota.¹⁰

—M.C. and A.S.

Virginia Brainard Kunz, founder of *Ramsey County History* and former executive director of RCHS, poses with her seminal book *St. Paul: Saga of an American City* in 1977. *Ramsey County Historical Society archives.*



the magazine won two awards of excellence from the American Association for State and Local History. John Lindley, who assisted the editor with the magazine for seventeen years and stepped into her role as the society's second editor after her death, said, "Virginia was the engine that made *Ramsey County History* go. She had a vision of what a county historical society magazine could be."¹⁴ That magazine—her legacy and a gift to readers of history—just celebrated its sixtieth birthday. Thank you, Virginia Brainard Kunz.

—M.C.

Anne Cowie

Anne Cowie is an RCHS legacy. Her father, Henry H. Cowie Jr., was a member of the society's board of directors. So it may not have been surprising when his daughter, Anne, followed in his footsteps and volunteered with RCHS. What was surprising was her age. She was seventeen when she penned her first article for the society,

Virginia Brainard Kunz

"Stick with the facts, Max!" So insisted Virginia Brainard Kunz (1921-2006) as remembered by members of the RCHS editorial board.¹¹ Kunz served as the organization's executive secretary/director for twenty-seven years. In 1964, she founded *Ramsey County History* magazine, serving as its first editor for over forty years.

The "facts" mantra was likely engrained in Kunz thanks to her education as a journalism major at Iowa State University. After college, she returned to her home state of Minnesota, becoming one of the first women journalists at the *Minneapolis Star* during World War II.¹²

Stepping into roles mostly assumed by men didn't phase Kunz. Anne Cowie, who worked as Kunz's researcher at the society, remembers her first boss as a powerhouse, "cajoling county officials, soothing board members, and singing [RCHS] praises to anyone who would listen."¹³

Kunz was tireless. She authored fourteen history books between 1966 and 2004 along with countless articles. As editor, she worked with a miniscule budget, searched out local history that told a good story, and mentored her authors through the publication process. Under Kunz,



Anne Cowie has been an important part of RCHS since 1967, when she wrote her first article for *Ramsey County History* as a high school senior. *Ramsey County Historical Society archives.*

“Marshall Sherman and the Civil War: St. Paul’s First Medal of Honor Winner,” in 1967. Interestingly, Henry wrote his first—and only—article for *Ramsey County History* magazine the year prior. A lawyer, his piece was titled “Minnesota’s Libel Laws.” Anne would continue to take after her father when she eventually earned a JD from William Mitchell College of Law.¹⁵

RGHS Executive Director Virginia Kunz hired the younger Cowie to create two urban history exhibits beginning in 1974. She was twenty-four, still pursuing her education, and earning \$4.25 an hour at the society. At the time, RGHS had a small office tucked in a corner of what would eventually become Landmark Center. The building was scheduled for a complete renovation, but it had not started in earnest, so Cowie produced the exhibitions in the north lobby—one on urban homesteading in Irvine Park and another featuring a circular display that presented the history of St. Paul in the 1850s, complete with an overlay of the city 125 years later. In 1976, she received a grant to host expert speakers on the history of the Mississippi River, and she produced a related video.¹⁶

By the 1980s, Cowie had moved on, working as a Ramsey County law clerk and raising a family. Still, she joined the RGHS Board of Directors and served on the society’s editorial board. She also wrote multiple book reviews and additional magazine articles. Cowie and Laurie Murphy (also an RGHS legacy) were the only women members early on. Cowie quickly realized the men mostly ignored the young ladies. That’s when she learned to stand up, say her piece, and make sure she was heard. Her insistence, patience, and ability to view issues through multiple perspectives, along with her dry sense of humor soon garnered respect from board and committee members.¹⁷ In 2006, she was named editorial board chair—a position she held for fifteen years, overseeing sixty-two issues of the magazine. She remains a respected supporter of the organization fifty-seven years on.

—M.C.



Priscilla Farnham was executive director of RGHS for two decades. *St. Paul Rotary Club portrait, Ramsey County Historical Society archives.*

Priscilla Farnham

The world has changed many times in the nine decades that Priscilla Farnham has been alive. “I was quite old when I took on the executive director [1991-2011] role for Ramsey County Historical Society, and I left when I was about eighty years old, but it was time to move on,” she shared.¹⁸

Some leaders express concern over the work they left behind, but Farnham falls into the reconciliation phase when she talks about her time at the organization. In 1991, the society’s work centered around publications, a hat tip she sends to the first editor Virginia Kunz, and Farnham didn’t feel it shifted until she hired Mollie Spillman into the director of collections and exhibitions position. With Spillman in place, the preservation of items—and history—changed focus in the work that was being carried out.

“I was lucky to have good people,” she states, weighing her words carefully as she pulls from her memories. “Anyways, I was better at managing projects.”

One project of note was developing the Dakota program at Gibbs Farm. Farnham admits that even as late as the early 2000s there was very little that the society was doing to preserve the Indigenous culture, whether due to lack of understanding or lack of resources. Ramsey County was ripe with the history and culture of the Dakota that have inhabited the land. Thus,

the plan was to develop a program with Terry Swanson, director of Gibbs Farm at that time, around those stories.

A board was formed to ensure the developed work was culturally sustaining, and Farnham admitted she made some mistakes along the way. “The first thing I did was ask about canoes, and the advisory board was very polite. There was a big silence in the room, and after a while, someone said, ‘Dakota didn’t use canoes. They used dugouts. Ojibwe used canoes.’ I didn’t know that.” It was through the risk of making mistakes and leading with curiosity that fed the work Farnham did. That forever changed the work of RCHS and its future.

—Youa Vang

Joanne Englund

Joanne Englund’s work at Ramsey County Historical Society was all voluntary—as she did have a day job. With a degree in government administration and writing from Metro State University, Joanne wrote grant applications and program evaluations for the City of St. Paul and St. Paul Public Schools for over two decades.¹⁹

She put her administrative, writing, and leadership skills to work for RCHS for twenty-five years beginning in 1989 when she joined the board of directors. Before long, she was the first

woman to chair the board under Virginia Kunz. Englund also chaired the Gibbs Farm committee for years.²⁰

“Joanne was [and still is] unwavering in her loyalty to the organization . . . logical in her thinking. . .” Cowie added that this quiet, unassuming woman could look at the big picture facing the society, pinpoint the challenges, and devise solutions.²¹ Her connections with city government and grant writing were also assets to RCHS. And, of course, because writing is what she does, she penned three articles for *Ramsey County History*, including a brief memoir of family life on St. Paul’s East Side, then Roseville, in the 1950s and ’60s.²²

—M.C.

Mollie Spillman

In her little alcove in Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul, Mollie Spillman can be found at her desk, glasses often pushed to the top of her head as she is responding to emails or perusing a piece donated from someone who has a connection to Ramsey County. Spillman began her career as director of collections and exhibitions for the organization in 1994. The first decade of her career was spent discovering and uncovering what treasures were housed in the collection.²³



Midway Chamber of Commerce portrait of Joanne Englund and her mother. *Ramsey County Historical Society archives.*



For the past thirty-plus years, Mollie Spillman has overseen collections at RCHS. *Photo by Youa Vang, Ramsey County Historical Society archives.*

“Where my office is now, there was just stacks of things. It was just a snake trail, because no one had done it for so long,” she remembered.

In the last thirty years, the role has changed a lot, and Spillman and her work ethic were a big part of how things were molded into place. Much of the challenge was learning to get the work done and define processes with no staff. Spillman’s talents lie in her methodical way of approaching her work, meticulously looking at each little aspect of the job, gathering her collective knowledge that is stored in the recesses of her brain and rendering it out to the world, so the public can understand collections in layman’s terms. What is not easily definable is how Spillman is so good at bridging gaps and harnessing people and their stories. She attends to everything with an easy-going manner that puts everyone at ease when she enters the room, her smile and laughter lighting up any space she inhabits.

“Part of my job is relationship-building with interns, board members, and colleagues, but also potential donors to the collection. A fun aspect of my job is learning all of these stories that come with the work. You have to draw the stories out of people, because even if the item is a cool thing, how does it relate to us and what story does it tell?” For in the end, we are all just stories.

—Y.V.

Terry Swanson

In 2023, the Bell Museum of Natural History hosted a day for collectors to share their treasures with curious guests. Terry Swanson, a bubbly blond septuagenarian with endless energy and creativity displayed her book research across five tables.

“Boring,” you say? Not in the least! You see, Swanson (1950-2024) wrote and published a historical fiction children’s book a few years ago with RCHS—*Grasshoppers in My Bed: Lillie Belle Gibbs—Minnesota Farm Girl—1877*. It’s the story of a real girl who lived on a farm that, interestingly, happens to stand across Larpenteur Avenue from the Bell in Falcon Heights—yes—Gibbs Farm! As the former manager at Gibbs Farm, Swanson spent hours in the society’s archives “getting to know” the family, so she could share what she learned with guests.

Why? Because when curious youngsters visited the old farmhouse, the replica soddy, and the barn animals around the property, they’d often ask, “What was life *really* like on this farm so long ago?” Swanson was determined to answer that question by focusing on the life of ten-year-old Lillie, the youngest Gibbs daughter.

And so, back at the Bell, Swanson displayed copies of Lillie’s fourth- and fifth-grade essays—including one titled, “What I Did Last Summer.” She transported Lillie’s life in 1877 to 2023, with examples of the girl’s handwriting, her doodles in a dictionary, and her name carefully added to the inside cover of the family Bible. Swanson displayed butter churns, old-fashioned coffee makers, and farm implements, along with



Terry Swanson created exhibit displays to complement her book, *Grasshoppers in My Bed: Lillie Belle Gibbs—Minnesota Farm Girl—1877*, for a 2023 event at the Bell Museum. Ramsey County Historical Society archives.



colorful pop-up characters designed for the book by illustrator Peggy Stern. Swanson could easily capture the curiosity of passersby. That's when she was happiest—when she could share her knowledge with others.

The trained public historian demonstrated this throughout her life, serving as program and site manager at Gibbs Farm from 2007 to 2016 and as the director of collections, education, and programs at the American Swedish Institute before that.²⁴ She also served as a volunteer instructor with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at the University of Minnesota. Of course, she wasn't always the teacher. She was more often the student—a self-proclaimed lifelong learner, always looking around every corner to gain more insight and knowledge of the world around her.

—M.C.

Mari Oyanagi Eggum

Service has played a large role in Mari Oyanagi Eggum's life. First, in administering and facilitating grants for a foundation of former Governor Elmer Andersen all while juggling two young children. Second, in serving on the Ramsey County Historical Society's board for nine years, the last two of those as board chair.

Advocacy and philanthropy were two skills that were ingrained early on into Mari's life. "In my senior year of high school, I remember being voted 'Best All-Around Student' while my brother was voted 'Class Clown,'" she laughingly recalled over coffee in Summit Hill.²⁵ Eggum grew up in a very white-dominated school, wherein she was one of three Asian people in a class of 400 students.

The gravitation to assimilate was very strong, which brought its rewards and challenges.

Eggum recalled her grandparents coming to the United States from Japan seeking economic opportunities and obtaining work building railroads on the West Coast. Her father's side of the family was interned in camps during World War II, and because her mother's side had settled in Idaho which was considered far enough inbound, they weren't affected by the camps. After his release from the camps and integrating back into the world, Eggum's father followed his brother to Minnesota to eventually settle in St. Paul.

So did they eventually find the economic opportunity they were seeking? "Yes, to a certain extent. My dad's side of the family ran the local grocery store, so they did fine. In their minds they were doing okay, and my mom's side of the family ran the town laundromat. They had this culture of hard work that was instilled in them from their parents," Eggum said.

What endured even more were family values and the passing on of Japanese traditions to the next generation. With no regret, Eggum matter-of-factly shared a story about her younger cousin with whom she grew up, who took traditional Japanese dance and participated in the Japanese Citizen's League while she grew up in a more assimilated household. The traditions she valued, she kept, while those she had no recollection of, she let go. The one big celebration she holds onto is a New Year's meal tradition upheld by her grandmother. When she passed away, Eggum and her three cousins continued the tradition. There's sushi, tonkatsu, dumplings, Japanese salad, and anything Asian they can fit onto their tables. The blended history of these lives is blurred as Eggum folds her grandchildren into these traditions.

—Y.V.

Former RCHS board chair Mari Oyanagi Eggum at a recent RCHS event. Ramsey County Historical Society archives.



Meredith Cummings

"To be able to tell people's stories has been really important to me," said Meredith Cummings, editor of *Ramsey County History* from 2019 to 2024.²⁶ Although the magazine has now been in circulation for over sixty years, Cummings was only the third editor to step into the role, succeeding John M. Lindley.

She still remembers the moment the editor job was posted online; she sat up on the couch



Meredith Cummings (center) with Marvin Anderson, chair of the board of directors of the Rondo Center of Diverse Expression, and Chad Roberts, president of RCHS, at a 2023 Juneteenth event in which *Ramsey County History* received a Spirit of Rondo Award. *Courtesy of Meredith Cummings.*

and said out loud, “That’s what I want to do.” Cummings was new to the Twin Cities, having spent the previous twenty-two years working as a journalist, editor, and English instructor in Indiana. The opportunity to learn more about her new surroundings by studying its history intrigued her. “I was an anthropology major. That was my undergrad. And the opportunity to get to know people and what they do in their surroundings, and *why* they do it and *how* they do it—that’s history,” she reflected.

In a relatively short amount of time, Cummings fell in love with Ramsey County history and forged connections with many of the community leaders taking on the work of preservation. “I know more people—better—in Ramsey County than anywhere I’ve ever been. I have gotten to meet some fantastic Minnesotans: the leaders, the historians, the researchers, the people who have kept that history alive,” she shared.

Looking back on her tenure, Cummings says she is most proud of publishing the all-Dakota issue, for which she worked with five Indigenous students at the University of Minnesota to compose a three-part history of the Dakota language.²⁷ “I think it’s just a beautiful issue. It was incredibly hard to do. But I feel blessed that I got to get to know the students, and to work

with them, their instructor, Šišókaduta, and other Dakota scholars.”

She also became inspired by the work of the women who preceded her at Ramsey County Historical Society, including trailblazers like Ethel Stewart, Anne Cowie, and the founder of this magazine, Virginia Brainard Kunz. “Women saw that that this history was going to be lost and made sure that that it wasn’t. There was a board of men who thought they knew it all, but there were also these women who stood up to them: Virginia stood up to them, and Anne stood up to them.” Over time, this institutional legacy informed Cummings’ own approach to her work. “I used to be very, very shy, no confidence whatsoever. But if you don’t say what you think, you’re going to get trampled. All of these women stood up for what they believed in and said, ‘Pay attention. This is important.’ And I hope that I did that as well.”

—A.S.

Sammy Nelson, Janie Bender, and Clare Holte

From May through October each year, an average of 13,000 to 15,000 school children visit the historic Gibbs Farm to learn about life on a farmstead in the nineteenth century and the Dakota traditions that were upheld by the people of *eyáta Othúnwe* (Cloud Man’s Village) at Bde Maka Ska, with whom Jane Gibbs spent time as a child.

In addition to a constant stream of field trips, Gibbs Farm is also open to the public for tours, classes, and an annual Apple Festival. For much of the past decade, the planning of these activities and the preservation of the site itself has been managed by the same team of three women: director Sammy Nelson, youth programs manager Janie Bender, and volunteer and adult program manager Clare Holte. Their collective knowledge of the farm runs deep, from their knowledge of each Gibbs family member to the agricultural needs of the land each growing season to the innerworkings of their large team of staff and volunteers.

Much like Ethel Stewart once hosted RCHS board meetings in her own home, the Gibbs Farm team is so committed to caring for the animals who live on the farm—including geese,



The Gibbs Farm team. (L-R): youth programs manager Janie Bender (holding dog Matilda Jubilee), director Sammy Nelson, and volunteer and adult program manager Clare Holte. Photo by Youa Vang, Ramsey County Historical Society archives.

ducks, chickens, goats and sheep—that the livestock is transported to Bender’s family farm in the offseason.²⁸

Bender said she first encountered Gibbs Farm as a child, when she visited the site on a field trip. “I remember coming and being like, ‘I would like to work here someday.’” Bender is now on the receiving end of questions from young children visiting the farm, from “Do you live here?” and “Is this real?” to the always surprising, “Where do babies come from?”

For Holte, the most rewarding part of her work is coordinating a team of volunteers to care for the eight acres of land, tending to the orchard and planning out the gardens each year. “We have a Dakota crop garden, and then we have a pioneer crop garden, and my goal is to get as close to historic varieties as we can,” Holte shared.²⁹ She has combed through horticultural society journals and old Minnesota State Fair records to learn more about what nineteenth century farmers were growing.

Though they spend most of their time focused on the day-to-day activities of running a farm and museum, Nelson said that the team takes pride in knowing that they are preserving the story of what she describes as an ordinary family. “Jane and Heman weren’t wealthy. They didn’t invent something super specific. And so it gives people a glimpse at an ordinary life in Minnesota in the 1800s. And then obviously Jane’s tie into the Dakota people is really important, too,” Nelson explained.³⁰ “There are a number of places that talk about Dakota history and culture, and places that have Indigenous folks running those programs. I like to see Gibbs as kind of an intro. Whether you’re a child or an adult, we’re a leading point to get people interested so they can learn more about the Dakota people.”

“I hope people find—no matter their background—some connection to Minnesota’s past,” Nelson said. “You don’t have to be a specific kind of person to feel like you belong here.”

—A.S.

Moving Forward

As RCHS looks ahead to its next seventy-five years and beyond, the organization remains committed to uplifting lesser-known stories and securing women’s place in history. To quote Dr. Heather Huyck, a historian with the National Park Service and founding member of the National Collaborative for Women’s History Sites: “America’s story makes no sense with half of its participants missing. . . . There is no site that doesn’t have women’s history. If we are to understand who we are and where we’ve come from, we need to know the whole story.”³¹

NOTES

1. “In Memoriam: Ethel H. (Mrs. C.H. Stewart), 1879-1959,” *Ramsey County Historical Society News*, December 1959, 2.

2. “Humanities Indicators and Departmental Survey,” American Academy of Arts and Sciences, accessed February 28, 2025, <https://www.amacad.org/humanities-indicators/higher-education/gender-distribution-degrees-history>.

3. “Where Women Made History,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, accessed February 6, 2025, <https://savingplaces.org/womens-history>.

4. RCHS looks forward to conducting more research about inventor Ernest Hummel and his connection to Jane Gibbs.

5. Steve Trimble, “An Adventure in Historical Research: In Search of Ethel Stewart,” *Ramsey County History* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 6-7.

6. Trimble, 3-6.

7. Trimble, 7.

8. Hal E. McWethy, *Ramsey County Historical Society News*, February 1960.

9. Ethel H. Stewart, “The Gibbs House,” *Ramsey County Historical Society News* 1, no. 4 (November 1952).

10. “In Memoriam: Ethel H. (Mrs. C.H.) Stewart,” 4.

11. Laurie Murphy, correspondence with Meredith Cummings, March 16, 2024. According to Murphy, a member of the editorial board for the last thirty-four

years, "Virginia always said, Stick to the facts. The facts were crucial." Other board members concurred.

12. "Virginia Brainard Kunz short biography," in Virginia Brainard Kunz, *St. Paul: Saga of an American City*, (Woodland Hills: Windsor Publications 1977).

13. Anne Cowie, "Growing Up in St. Paul: The Peripatetic RCHS in the Mid-1970s," *Ramsey County History* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 8.

14. John M. Lindley, "Virginia Brainard Kunz (1921-2006)—A Eulogy," January 13, 2006, in Ramsey County Historical Society Archives.

15. Anne Cowie, interview with Meredith Cummings, October 4, 2024.

16. Cowie interview; Cowie, "Growing Up in St. Paul," 8-11.

17. Cowie interview.

18. Priscilla Farnham, interview with Youa Vang, December 30, 2024.

19. "Joanne Englund," Linked-in profile, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/joanne-englund-22b61a14/details/skills/>.

20. "Joanne Englund," Linked-in profile; Cowie, interview.

21. Cowie, interview.

22. Joanne Englund, "Growing Up in St. Paul: First a Tiny Starter Home, Then a New Post-War Suburb

Beckoned," *Ramsey County History* 34, no. 4 (Winter 2000), 21-23.

23. Mollie Spillman, interview with Youa Vang, January 27, 2025.

24. Terry Swanson, *Grasshoppers in My Bed: Lillie Belle Gibbs—Minnesota Farm Girl—1877* (St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2022), author's bio.

25. Mari Oyanagi Eggum, interview with Youa Vang, December 11, 2024.

26. Meredith Cummings, interview with Andrea Swensson, February 7, 2025.

27. Deacon DeBoer, Eileen Bass, Justis Brokenrope, Ava Grace, Dr. Rev. Clifford Canku, Heather Menefee, and Šišókadúta, "Dakhóta Iápi: A Brief History in Three Parts," *Ramsey County History*, 58, no. 3 (Fall 2023), 12-34.

28. Janie Bender, interview with Andrea Swensson, January 29, 2025.

29. Clare Holte, interview with Andrea Swensson, January 29, 2025.

30. Sammy Nelson, interview with Andrea Swensson, January 29, 2025.

31. "The History of the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites," accessed February 6, 2025, <https://ncwhs.org/about>.



Additional Reading

For the past sixty-one years, *Ramsey County History* and the publishing staff of Ramsey County Historical Society have documented the stories of this region through magazine articles and books—occasionally turning inward to examine the people at the center of this very organization. Below is a brief overview of some of the research that has been done into the family who originally occupied the historic Gibbs Farm and the early women like Ethel Stewart who contributed mightily to the legacy of RCHS. The QR code above includes direct links to each of these pieces in our digital archive.

William L. Cavert, "Sod Shanty on the Prairie: Story of a Pioneer Farmer," *Ramsey County History* 1, no. 1 (1964), 3-5.

Anne Cowie, "Growing Up in St. Paul: The Peripatetic RCHS in the Mid-1970s," *Ramsey County History* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2014), 8-11.

Anne Cowie, "Marshall Sherman and the Civil War: St. Paul's First Medal of Honor Winner," *Ramsey County History* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1967), 3-7.

Priscilla Farnham, "Expanding Our Understanding of the Past: The Sod House and Dakota Kin at the Gibbs Museum," *Ramsey County History* 49, no. 3, 22-27.

Julie A. Humann, "The Two Worlds of Jane Gibbs: The Gibbs Farm and the Santee Dakota," *Ramsey County History* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 4-13.

Lillie Gibbs LeVesconte, "Spring Wagons and No Roads: A Gibbs Daughter Remembers a Pioneer Family's Sunday as a 'Serious Undertaking,'" *Ramsey County History* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2004), 24-25.

Thomond R. O'Brien, "Digging into the Past: The Excavating of the Claim Shanty of Heman and Jane Gibbs," *Ramsey County History* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 17-20.

Pearl Marea Schenck, *Pearl and the Howling Hound Farm* (St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2006).

Mollie Spillman, "The RCHS Archives and Collections Since 1964," *Ramsey County History* 49, No. 3 (Fall 2014), 17-21.

Terry Swanson, *Grasshoppers in My Bed: Lillie Belle Gibbs—Minnesota Farm Girl—1877* (St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2022).

Steven C. Trimble, "In Search of Ethel Stewart," *Ramsey County History* 49, no. 3 (Fall 2014), 3-7.

Steven C. Trimble, "Hands-On Historian: Ethel Hall Stewart and Preserving the Gibbs Farm," *Ramsey County History* 47, no. 3 (Fall 2012), 3-12.

Deanne Zibell Weber, "A Pioneer Child on Minnesota's Frontier—Jane Gibbs, the 'Little Bird that was Caught,' and Her Dakota Friends," *Ramsey County History* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 4-16.

Celebrating Minnesota's History-Making Women

Minnesota has eighty-seven county historical societies and scores of city or town historical societies and local historical sites. Women have played an overwhelmingly dominant role in establishing and leading some of these organizations. Indeed, many would not exist today without the extraordinary efforts of women in all roles: from the front of house to collections to leadership.

In addition to celebrating the women who have made RCHS, we asked staff from area historical societies to nominate the remarkable women who have worked to shape history across the state of Minnesota. These are just some of the countless women who have dedicated their lives to telling the story of our state.



REBECCA SNYDER

Dakota County Historical Society

Rebecca has been providing top-shelf support for thousands of researchers of local history for decades while also performing many of the necessary operational tasks that come with running a historical society. Her efficiency, skill, and work ethic are a model to which local history leaders should aspire.



CAROL VANORNUM

*Twin Cities Civil War Round Table,
Minnesota Civil War Symposium*

Carol VanOrnum is the glue that has held the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table organization together through challenging times. Although a new board and president are elected each year, Carol's willingness as a volunteer secretary and treasurer to manage the behind-the-scenes-operations has been key to the organization's continuing excellence.

Carol has also secured national recognition of the TCCWRT by her active participation in the Civil War Round Table Congress, formed to encourage best practices in the face of declining round table memberships. As vice president and editor of this group's quarterly newsletter she shares what has made our local organization successful with scores of similar groups.

Many round tables and their programs are heavily male-oriented. Thanks to Carol's consistent leadership on the board of directors, the TCCWRT has produced far more diverse programs and have attracted and retained many more female members. As such, the TCCWRT can be rightfully proud of its seventy-year legacy and ever optimistic of its future.



ALICE THOMAS

Save the Northfield Depot

Alice is the fearless leader behind saving Northfield's depot. She worked to incorporate a nonprofit, move the depot, and restore the depot—which all required research into the depot's history. There were many challenges with saving Northfield's depot, and many continue. Funds needed to be raised to restore the building, and the building needed to be moved. She worked with other volunteers to find creative solutions. She also faced the challenge of people not caring about the depot, so she worked to educate others on the importance. Alice is passionate about her work and her enthusiasm inspires others.



TINA BURNSIDE AND COVENTRY COWENS

Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery

Tina Burnside and Coventry Cowens cofounded the Minnesota African American Heritage Museum and Gallery at a time when there was no Black history museum in the state. They present exhibitions and programs that tell the hidden stories about Black people in Minnesota and their contributions to the community. They also created youth programs teaching curatorial skills to teenagers and adult artist residency and history fellowship programs to provide a platform and opportunities. Tina and Coventry are frequently out in the community tabling at events making Black History, art and culture accessible to the public.

There were challenges involved with starting an institution with limited funding and resources, but they found inspiration to build on the legacy of those who had done this work in the past. Tina and Coventry did not know each other before starting the museum, but joined together for the purpose of serving the community by creating a space to celebrate Black history, art, and culture.



MARY COONS AND CLAUDIA PINGREE

Hanover Historical Society

Mary Coons, right, has been secretary of the Hanover Historical Society since its inception in 2003 and has written three books on Hanover history. She has also done history presentations at the local elementary school, and helped create a time capsule that is buried under a historic schoolhouse bell. Originally seen as an "outsider" after moving into one of Hanover's oldest historic houses in the early 2000s, Mary had to gain the respect and trust of the community and locals in order to learn about and then document Hanover's rich history. She is now well known in the town as a local historian and has made it a big part of her life's mission since moving to Hanover.

Collections Manager Claudia Pingree lives and breathes history. As a former avid antiquer, she is responsible for the Hanover Historical Society hosting an "Antiques Roadshow" style event with a silent auction for the past decade-plus. She will tell anyone she meets about the organization's facility, the Hanover Area History Center, and what they are doing for the community. She is also an avid gardener, and her garden club is responsible for maintaining the site's grounds.



DR. LAURA MUNSKI

East Grand Forks Heritage Village

Dr. Munski's knowledge, persistence, and patience have fed the East Grand Forks Heritage Village, from her work finding grants to her help transitioning the museum into an educational facility. She has also been the instigator in creating pollinator gardens and wildlife habitats on the museum's grounds. Dr. Munski's knowledge, persistence, and patience are an inspiration to all who work with her.

JEAN KEOGH

Montgomery Historical Society

Jean Keogh began her commitment to history in 2005, joining the Montgomery Historical Society as one of its charter members and serving as its longtime secretary. In 2019, she started working to have a portion of the City of Montgomery's downtown commercial district listed on the National Register of Historic Places, providing the historic building owners with tax incentives to preserve and restore approximately twenty-nine buildings along Montgomery's Main or First Street. She helped to gather the historical data and photos of Montgomery's downtown buildings needed for the listing documents, assisted with a town hall meeting to encourage buy-in for this project from the residents of Montgomery, and submitted numerous updates on the progress of this project to the local newspaper to keep the community informed. Her efforts resulted in the Montgomery Historic Downtown Commercial District being listed on the National Register on April 9, 2021. She has also developed a walking tour of the historic district.

Jean was also the first female to be elected and serve as mayor of the City of Montgomery (2011-2016) for three consecutive terms. As mayor, she was instrumental in a land swap that resulted in the location of a new Veterans Memorial Park on city property, which was dedicated on Memorial Day in 2011. This park is home to veterans' photos and stories on plaques, some of which also line the downtown businesses. There are over 300 veterans tributes now located in Montgomery as a result of the establishment of this park.



RENEE GEVING

Cass County Museum

Renee has dedicated her life to collections, displays, and the research of Cass County history. In the late '80s, the city of Walker wanted to turn its museum into a liquor store. After a long fight in which she was active in citizen input and protest of the move, the county agreed to build a new museum.

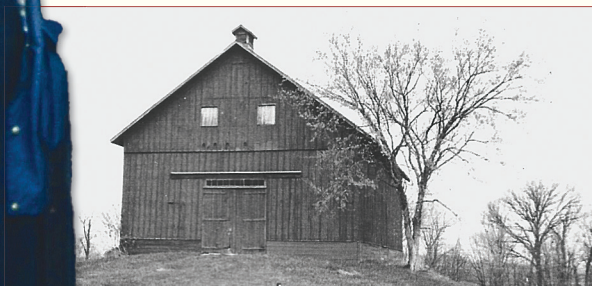
Renee dedicated her adult working life to one entity and continues past retirement age as historian of the Cass County Museum. Her ability to find needles in a haystack in the research department is phenomenal.



JOAN BRAINARD

Hill Farm Historical Society

Joan Brainard and her husband, Ben, were the second people to buy a lot in the then newly formed Village of North Oaks in the early 1950s. Joan lived the rest of her life in her beloved North Oaks. She served on the City Council, the North Oaks Homeowners Association, the Planning Commission and countless committees and task forces in the community. There is a street named after her. Joan was a founder and first editor of the *North Oaks News*. She was the co-author of *Three Bold Ventures*, the story of the founding and development of what became the City of North Oaks. And in 1989, she was an incorporator and an important leader in the formation of the Hill Farm Historical Society and served on its board of directors from its inception until her passing in 2023.



Joan spent thousands of hours researching the details of the Hill Farm. No detail was too small to escape her scrutiny. Her research is preserved in the many exhibits in the Hill Farm buildings and plaques on the property. Without her significant efforts, the Hill Farm would not have been registered on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hill Farm Historical Society is one of her legacies that will live on forever.



BETH MARVIN, MARG MARVIN, AND RUTH STUKEL

Warroad Historical Society, Warroad Heritage Center

Volunteers Beth Marvin and Marg Marvin have been instrumental in gathering Warroad history and dedicated years of volunteer work to researching, collecting, and expanding the Warroad Heritage Center. Beth organized events and fundraisers, and helped gather artifacts and documents from the public to help create the museum. She went through over 100 years of newspapers and books mentioning Warroad, the area, and families from the community, and compiled over 1,500 family files with copies and references to find the missing history of Warroad. She published her findings in weekly historical articles for the local newspaper. Marg has dedicated many years to collecting artifacts and materials that are key to telling the history of Warroad. Many displays that are still currently up were created by her with materials that she has gathered. Former mayor Ruth Stukel was a founding member of the Warroad Historical Society back in 1968, and was also crucial in researching veterans of the area; she is the author of the book *A Proud Salute to Warroad Area Veterans*. Ruth's work is still present today and the museum still benefits from her efforts. She has left a legacy within the community.



WENDY PETERSEN BIORN

Carver County Historical Society

From the purchase of the historic Andrew Peterson Farmstead property and buildings, to fundraising, to getting the property on the National Register of Historic Places, Wendy Petersen Biorn has shown the determination it takes to get projects done and the history preserved. Carver County is still somewhat of a rural county, although growing fast. Funding, fundraising, and hosting programs and events for a small population can be challenging. These challenges have been overcome by Wendy's determination and knowledge, which has made the Carver County Historical Society one of the foremost local historical societies in the region. Without her vision, much of Carver County history would have been lost.

JEAN RAE LEGRIED

Freeborn County Genealogical Society

Jean founded and served as president of the Freeborn County Genealogical Society, served on the Minnesota Genealogical Society for several years, and helped many families in the area trace and document their family roots. She was also responsible for educating the community on genealogical research through her multiple presentations. Jean was not afraid to express her opinion in the newspaper and was a contributing writer for the *Leader-Press* in Glenville, Minnesota, and the *Albert Lea Tribune*.

Jean was an advocate for providing equal rights/accessibilities for disabled peoples in the 1960s and '70s, a time when their needs were not taken seriously. She was born with muscular atrophy and lived with crutches and leg braces until 1951 when she began "traveling on wheels" permanently. Her disability never stopped her from exploring new places or from living life. She was president of the Friendly Handicap Club in 1976, and poured a huge amount of energy and time into making Albert Lea accessible through a program called Access Albert Lea. She was also a mother and wife on top of her many projects.

Jean's ability to create change was strong. She adamantly pursued a goal and backed up her claims through tireless action. She was determined to make everyone feel accepted and comfortable in their own skin. Through it all, she maintained an inviting attitude and wonderful sense of humor. Plus, she never hesitated to express her opinion, regardless of its acceptance within the majority. She was a fierce, fearless woman who loved history, but more importantly, she was willing to change it for the better.



CECELIA WATTLES MCKEIG AND SUE BRUNS

Beltrami County Historical Society, Cass County Historical Society

With at least 17 history books to her credit, and more in her computers, Cecelia is fluent in Minnesota history, but especially Bemidji history. Self-publishing before it was popular, she wanted to not only collect and preserve history but to share it through her books and website; thus, she financially carried her publishing by herself. She prolifically writes articles for local newspapers, books, and social media alongside colleague Sue Bruns. Sue and Cecelia also co-authored *Bemidji 125* for Bemidji's 125th anniversary.

Sue Bruns has been on the board of directors, and indeed, when without an executive director, she took on that roll as well to keep the place running, directing volunteers and doing history. She has taught memoir writing classes and will do so again this October at the History Depot in Bemidji. She continues to dig into history for her articles and books (a book on beer in Bemidji is forthcoming) and to teach people how to search and write family histories.



LINDA SCHLOFF

Upper Midwest Jewish Archives, Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest

Linda Schloff has been responsible for creating exhibits, writing books and articles, and otherwise preserving Jewish history for the upper Midwest region. When the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest (JHSUM) and the Minnesota Historical Society teamed up to create an exhibit about Jewish women in the Upper Midwest that showed how they transported, transmitted, and transformed Jewish life in this region Linda wrote a companion book called, *"And Prairie Dogs Weren't Kosher": Jewish Women in the Upper Midwest since 1855*. The exhibit itself was transformed into a traveling exhibit that was shown in various sites in Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Linda established and edited *Upper Midwest Jewish History* as the society's journal, and has written articles for other journals, co-created a video about the Jewish North Side, conducted numerous oral histories, taught at Macalester for several semesters, and spoken before numerous groups. She also amassed a

sizeable archive devoted to Jewish history in the Upper Midwest, which is housed at the Andersen Archives at the University of Minnesota and accessible to a global audience online.

Through it all, Linda has pushed back on the idea that Jewish history in this region is inconsequential, and has worked to revise the notion that Jewish history in this region is only about anti-Semitism.

KATHY EVAVOLD, LEANN NEULEIB, AND MISSY HERMES

Otter Tail County Historical Society

Kathy Evavold started and continues to oversee the Township Historian program. Due to the size of the county and the number of townships (sixty-two) this was a large undertaking, but it encouraged buy-in and participation from township boards and officers. The program made township residents see their connection to the county and the historical society, and has enriched the Otter Tail County Historical Society's collection.

LeAnn Neuleib is a longtime employee who has created newsletters, posters, social media, and exhibit contributions. LeAnn's skill at photograph, slide and negative scanning is superb, contributing to the image collection. And her love of photography has led to the creation of a thorough database of local photographers.

Missy Hermes continues to bring forward and advocate for the underrepresented people in local history and rural Minnesota. Her innovative "History by the Highway" Facebook live posts were created for a COVID audience to help them get outside and see the history all around them while highlighting the richness of the archives. The series now has a world-wide following, and was even recently transferred to an in-person bus tour through the county.





DIANE MOSTAD

North Beltrami Heritage Center

Diane Mostad and her family manage, maintain, and promote the area at the North Beltrami Heritage Center in Kelliher, Minnesota. Diane works tirelessly to keep the WPA Auditorium Museum relevant to summer visitors with pioneer stories, books, high school yearbooks, and much more local history for North Beltrami County. If one were to ask anyone in the Kelliher area about history, they would say, "Call Diane!"

GEORGE-ANN MAXSON

Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society

George-Ann has maintained the archives of the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society for more than thirty years. She has contributed her first-hand knowledge of the history of the Neilson Spearhead Center and the George W. Neilson family. She handles recordkeeping for nearly all aspects of MHAS business, such as membership lists, meeting minutes, and treasury reports. As a representative of the local Audubon Society chapter, she performs outreach at science, nature and outdoor activity events to connect with other organizations and members of the Bemidji community. She also leads nature walks open to the public where she identifies native plant and bird species and discusses their ecology.



George-Ann has also managed the Neilson Spearhead Young Naturalist Program for the past three decades—a summer program where kids spend a week at the Neilson Spearhead Center learning about nature through hands-on activities such as hiking, swimming, canoeing, foraging edible plants, competing to find the most species, and playing ecology-themed games such as fox and squirrel.

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SUSAN ROTH

State Historic Preservation Office

Susan was the Minnesota National Register of Historic Places historian. She began in the 1970s, when the program was newly created as the result of 1966 federal historic preservation legislation. Under her tenure, the program matured and grew. Susan made state-wide connections with local preservationists and building owners and was an effective ambassador for the National Register program. This required diplomacy in dealing with citizen inquiries, consultants, developers, Minnesota Historical Society staff, and state and federal staff, as well as the citizen review board that met quarterly to consider whether the completed nominations would be accepted for final review in Washington DC.

Behind-the-scenes bureaucrats are rarely recognized, yet each successfully nominated building has yielded civic pride, valuable historic documentation, and in some cases eligibility for tax credits that aid in community vitality. Susan faced these challenges with a tremendous amount of hard work.



NOMINATIONS SUBMITTED BY:

Tim Andersen, Tina Burnside, Teri Hammarback, Missy Hermes, Lois J. Jenkins, Edward Keogh, Erin Maxson, Reeve Needham, Stephen E. Osman, Brent Peterson, Chad Roberts, Sarah Rosten, Titiana Sanchez, Linda Schloff, Brady Swanson, Andrea Swensson, Laura Weber, and Colleen Williams.

St. Paul's Forgotten Radio Pioneer Maurice G. Goldberg

REBECCA E. BENDER

From the Dnieper to the Straight River

To understand how the Abraham Burch family ended up in Minnesota—which led to son Maurice Goldberg's wide-ranging contributions to St. Paul's fledgling radio industry in the first half of the twentieth century—one must start in the small town of Yompila in the Russian Pale of Settlement.¹ For there, beginning in around 1860, at the half-way point between Kiev to the north and Odessa 250 miles to the southeast, near the Dnieper River, sat a crossroads inn. It was run by Joseph and Lillian (Leah) Burch. Leah was an amputee after a bad fall, which, to those who knew her, seemed to have no effect on her drive to make the family inn a success. Travelers in horse-drawn vehicles stayed the night at the inn, where they were offered food and drink, while their horses stabled in a dirt-floor barn. "Though liquors of a rough character were sold, the popular drink was tea, served from a large samovar, in which hot water was kept day and night."²

Abraham Burch, born in 1870 and known as A. B., was the third oldest of the five boys and two girls born to Joseph and Leah. A. B. left home at the age of thirteen to help support the family, performing swamper services at a saloon

in Odessa, i.e., janitorial work (including cleaning the floor and spittoons), bartending, and other odd jobs. At eighteen, during the time of Czar Alexander III, A. B. was inducted into the Imperial Russian Army, where he served about four years, before, atypically, being allowed to leave prior to the usual twenty-five-year servitude. As pogroms and mistreatment of Jews were a way of life in Russia, large numbers of Jews attempted to leave.

At twenty-three, A. B. was the first of his family to arrive in America, landing in Boston, where he worked first as a pants presser for \$2 a week and, later, as a tailor. As he spoke no English upon arrival, he taught himself—learning largely from a combination English and Yiddish children's schoolbook. After scrimping and saving for a few years, A.B. sent for his parents and the rest of the family.

As a young man, A.B. also took it upon himself to change the family name. Contrary to the common trend among many immigrants who sought to "Americanize" their names, A.B. chose the opposite path. He wanted to ensure that other Jews in his new home would know he was Jewish, and wanted a name that would help him connect with those of his faith. That is how A.B. Burch became A.B. Goldberg.

After his business partner stole from their joint assets, A.B. moved to the Midwest, settling in Owatonna, Minnesota, on the Straight River—about 5,000 miles from the Dnieper River. There, he started over as a peddler, first carrying his wares on his back, and then working out a deal with a man who owned a horse and wagon, to drive him from place to place.

Once A. B. purchased his own rig, he proposed marriage to 5-foot, blue-eyed, brown-haired Sarah Schwartz. Sarah's path to Minnesota was

A.B.'s Burch (I/k/a Goldberg's) parents Joseph and Leah (circa 1890), who ran the crossroads inn halfway between Kiev and Odessa in the late 1800s in Russia. In the author's collection.





A.B. Burch (Goldberg) and Sarah Schwartz Goldberg (author's great-grandparents) on their wedding day in St. Paul, Minnesota, in December 1898. In group photo, Sarah and A.B. Goldberg are on the right, and Sarah's sister and maid of honor Rose Schwartz is on the left with her boyfriend Arthur Turovh, a Minneapolis fireman, whom Rose would later marry. (Of additional historical note is that Arthur and Rose are the great-grandparents of Minnesota-born singer songwriter Peter Dinklage.) *In the author's collection.*

akin to A.B.'s, though her early years in Russia were not quite as difficult as his had been. She lived in the southern Pale of Settlement in Lepkan, close to modern-day Moldova and Romania. Her mother owned a natural dye business (from plants). Her father was a contractor of small houses, and her grandfather owned and operated a successful leather store. After immigrating to America by way of Germany, Sarah worked first in a Minnesota candy factory—then a cigar factory—before marrying A. B. in 1898 and moving to 127 Rose Street in Owatonna. A. B.'s occupation in the 1900 Census is listed as "buying and selling iron" (scrap dealer).³

Four of the Goldberg children were born in Owatonna. The oldest child was my mother's mother, Minnie, born in 1900. One year later, Maurice was born. Then A.B. decided the family should move to St. Paul, which offered more opportunities to encounter Jewish culture, religion, and education.

The West Side Flats Years

The Goldbergs' first home in St. Paul was at 239 East Fairfield, in the West Side Flats. In this area, bound by the Mississippi River on the north and the bluffs to the south, lived French-Canadian, Irish, German, Jewish, Russian, Polish, Syrian, Lebanese, and later, Hispanic communities in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. The cultures of these coexisting groups thrived for decades



in this densely populated space despite the Passover/Easter spring-flooding of the mighty Mississippi.⁴

The Flats were situated directly across the river from downtown St. Paul and southeast about one and a half miles from the elegant Summit Avenue mansions. A.B.'s occupation in the 1910 census was listed as a "wholesale merchant" in the "junk industry."⁵ In other words, the scrap dealer was still making deals to purchase items discarded or found to be useless to their original owners. In a big lot behind the Goldberg house, which he called "the shop," A.B.—"Pa" to his children—conducted his scrap iron business. His children saw firsthand how "one man's trash, [could become] another man's treasure."⁶

Next to their house, A.B. constructed a building with a retail store on the main floor and

Postcard of the West Side Flats, 1910. West Side Flats in foreground, with downtown St. Paul across the Wabasha Street Bridge. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.



Pictured are (L-R): Arthur, Hyman, Will, Maurice, and Minnie Goldberg, circa 1908. Maurice appears to be tinkering with something, even at a young age. The Goldbergs' youngest child, a daughter named Laia (after A.B.'s mother), was born in 1912, after this photo was taken. In the author's collection.

living quarters upstairs. After unsuccessfully trying "mercantiling," he rented out the space for a boxing gym, a candy store, a barber shop, and then to tenant Aaron Stacker. This "portly and genial man,"⁷ owned a combination grocery store and delicatessen called Levooneh's, where Jewish fare like matzos, pickled herring, and corned beef could be purchased, as well as Hebrew books.

The loft in a large woodshed attached to the back of their home housed pigeons. Occa-

sionally the family had squab for dinner. To make their own fun, the Goldberg kids put on shows in this same woodshed. Oldest son Maurice wrote the plays, and the rest of the children would take on the different parts. They charged safety pins for the admission fee to the woodshed theater performances, except when a young girl whose parents were in vaudeville participated with them. Then they felt justified in charging one penny per customer.

To the Attic and Beyond

In 1915, because of the success of A.B.'s scrap metal business, the Goldbergs, then with six children, were one of the first Jewish families to move out of the West Side Flats and into the city's Hill District. Maurice was fourteen years old when he left the Flats. His father's scrap business remained in the Flats for over 45 more years.

A. B. and Sarah bought a Colonial Revival style home with impressive Tuscan columns between St. Albans and Grotto Streets at 711 Dayton Avenue. The first services at the newly constructed Cathedral of St. Paul (one mile away) were held the same year the Goldbergs moved in. F. Scott Fitzgerald was, around the same time, living seven-tenths of a mile away at 599 Summit Avenue, working on his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920).





Maurice G. Goldberg (far left, back row) served as an usher at his sister Minnie Goldberg's wedding to Samuel A. Gordon on January 2, 1923, at the North Central Commercial Club. Maurice is 21 years old in this photograph. *In the author's collection.*

After a respectable length of courtship, in January of 1923, my grandmother Minnie Goldberg married Samuel A. Gordon, eldest son of Rabbi Jacob Gordon from Minneapolis. Maurice, her brother, was one of the ushers at the wedding.

Three years earlier, in October 1920 when Maurice was 18, he had been licensed by the United States Commerce Department as an amateur radio operator.⁸ In March 1923, Maurice graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and as a second lieutenant in the Signal Corps. As of April 1, 1924, the Radio Service Bulletin official listing of radio stations in the US reported that a radio station was being operated in St. Paul [by Maurice Goldberg, d/b/a Beacon Radio Service].⁹

Maurice selected the call letters "KFOY," which stood for "Kind Friends of Yours." KFOY had its first official broadcast in March 1924.¹⁰ With Maurice's early work in radio, helping others deal with the unexpected challenges of the industry, these call letters became his self-fulfilling prophecy. The location for his first broadcasts was, like Italian inventor Guglielmo

Marconi before him, in the attic of the family home. Maurice was not only the operator and announcer for the station, he also was "the genius who tinkered Saint Paul's first commercial radio station into existence—using home-made parts instead of purchased equipment and guts instead of money."¹¹ The KFOY broadcasting station later moved to the Pioneer Building at 373 North Robert Street, where drapes of monks' cloth eliminated acoustical issues.

On October 7, 1923, at age twenty-one, Maurice (who also went by M. G.), was elected vice-president of the Twin City Radio Club, at its meeting in the mayor's reception room of the courthouse. The following spring, Maurice was reappointed St. Paul district superintendent of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for amateur radio.

The 1920s was a time when crystal sets or "cat's whiskers" were the new thing in receiving radio signals. No battery or electricity was needed, as the crystal detector obtained its power from an external wire antenna. An article in the *Minneapolis Star* noted the far-reaching impact which a certain "radio pioneer" had in the Twin Cities at the time:

A. B. and Sarah Goldberg bought their Colonial Revival style home at 711 Dayton Avenue in 1915, when their son Maurice was fourteen years old. Over the subsequent decade, Maurice began experimenting with homemade equipment to transmit radio frequencies and launched St. Paul's first commercial radio station, KFOY, from that same attic in early 1924. *Photo taken in February 2025, courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.*



Two thousand crystal set listeners in the Twin Cities adjust the “cat whiskers” nightly and listen to programs broadcast by KDKA, East Pittsburgh [the world’s first commercially licensed radio station] and other distant stations. . . .

Maurice Goldberg, 711 Dayton Avenue, St. Paul, former University of Minnesota

student and a veteran radio amateur, has made all of this possible. Almost nightly you can hear him announce KFOY— “Kind Friends of Yours”—and then the re-broadcasting of distant programs begins. . . .

Friends had telephoned him that they found it impossible to “get outside” the Twin Cities because of the static. Goldberg went to his radio room on the third floor of his home and began tuning with his 8-tube super-hetrodyne. He was able to get several distant stations. . . . He put on the loudspeaker, adjusted a microphone in front of it, and began rebroadcasting through KFOY. The 100-watt broadcast station was able distinctly to re-broadcast the East Pittsburgh program. . . .¹²

Another article mentioned Maurice’s helpful spirit in addressing another issue:

Twin City Hearkeners should rise en masse and give Maurice Goldberg . . . a vote of thanks for the checkup on reception conditions which he broadcasts over KFOY each evening at 10:05. Listeners who are quick to blame their sets for imperfect reception

Radio 9ZG 9000. 711 Dayton Ave., St. Paul, Minn.

Your {CW was worked at this station on often 1923

at both a. m. C. S. T. Tone vy gd Audibility 2 Q S S elite

9APW transmitter consists of 100-watt CW set, 9xi circuit Plate voltage 1500, chemical rectification 40 Jars Borax, Aerial 50-60 ft. high, 90 ft. long 6 wires. Counterpoise 13 feet high, 80 feet long, 16 wires. Antenna Current 6 amperes.

9APW receiver consists of Reinartz detector, A. F. two-step amplifier and Western Electric phones.

DX here 4 States, all districts in U.S. & Canada, Alaska, Mexico, Hawaii Porto Rico and Philippines, etc. Will QSR anytime.

Remarks Sorry but have no 9ZG cards, as want to get rid of 75 more

Best 73's Yours radiolly, MAURICE G. GOLDBERG, City Mgr. A. R. R. L.

A ham radio card from 1923, signed “Yours radiolly” by Maurice G. Goldberg, at 711 Dayton Ave., St. Paul. At the time, he was the district superintendent for St. Paul’s ARRL (American Radio Relay League). These cards, also known as QSL cards, were sent to confirm on-air contact. In very light type, it appears Maurice is indicating that he had heard radio programming from as far away as Panama and New Zealand, while living in St. Paul. *Photo of card courtesy of Worthpoint.com.*

2,000 Crystal Set Owners Get Far Stations Through KFOY

Veteran Radio Amateur, Maurice Goldberg, Brings Outside Programs Within Range of 'Cat Whiskers' of Many Fans in Twin Cities.

The April 1, 1924, issue of *Radio Service Bulletin* announced the addition of KFOY in St. Paul, Minnesota, to its previously published log. The next month, the *Minneapolis Tribune* reported on KFOY's arrival. *Bulletin* courtesy of the Federal Communications Commission, headline in *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, May 11, 1924.

should first tune in on this station (wave length 252) and obtain Mr. Goldberg's authoritative report on conditions before complaining to their dealer.¹³

KFOY also took seriously its responsibility to inform the electorate. In October 1924, only two stations in Minnesota broadcast the speech of well-known Wisconsin Senator Robert M. La Follette at the Kenwood Armory. One was St. Olaf's college station in Northfield; the other was KFOY, St. Paul (from the home of A.B. and

4

RADIO SERVICE BULLETIN

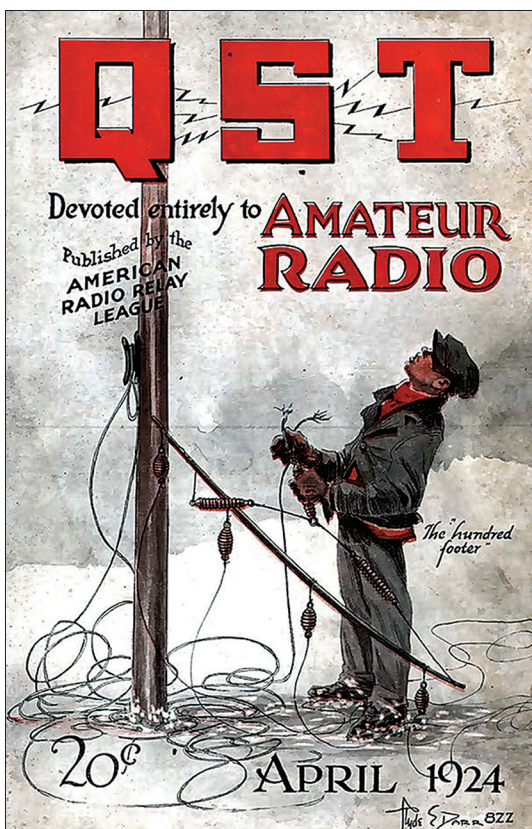
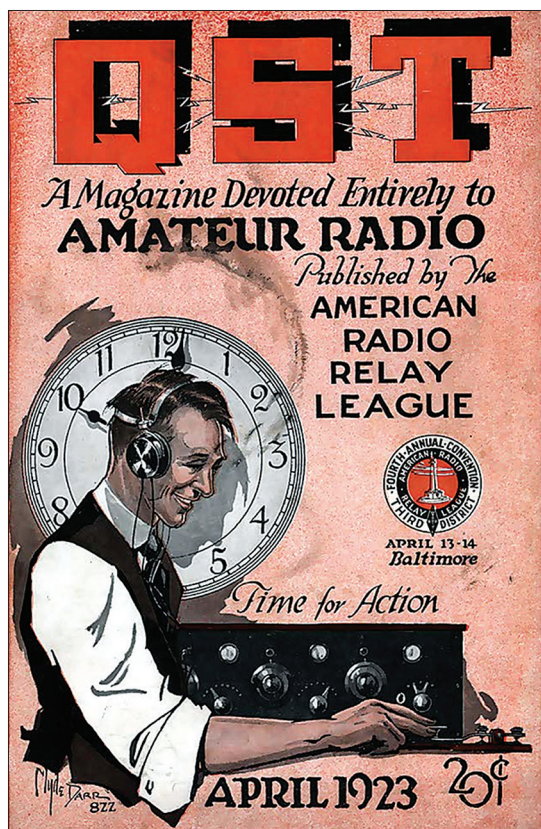
Broadcasting stations, alphabetically by names of cities

[Additions to the List of Radio Stations of the United States, edition of June 30, 1923]

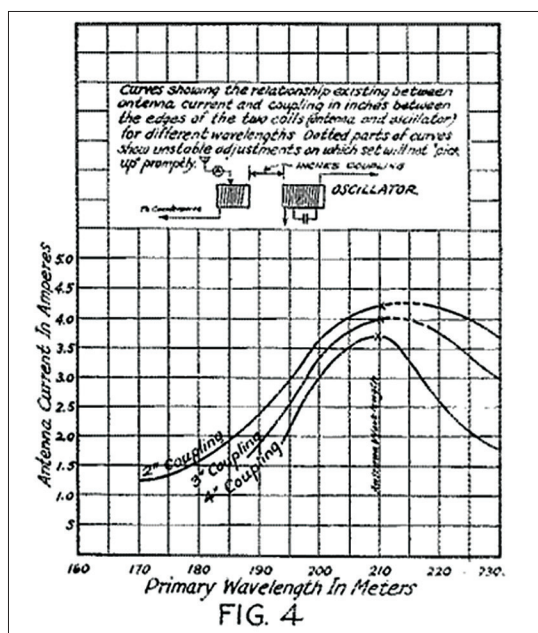
City	Call signal	City	Call signal
Baltimore, Md.	WCBM	Moberly, Mo.	KFFP
Beloit, Kans.	WPAR	Nashville, Tenn.	WCBQ
Bemis, Tenn.	WCBI	New York, N. Y.	WSAP
David City, Nebr.	KFOR	Omaha, Nebr.	KFOX
Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.	WCBN	Pittsburgh, Pa.	WCBF
Fort Smith, Ark.	KFOZ	Richmond, Calif.	KFOU
Galveston, Tex.	KFOQ	St. Paul, Minn.	KFOY
Greenville, Tex.	KFFM	St. Petersburg, Fla.	WCBK
Houlton, Me.	WCBL	Youngstown, Ohio	WDBF
Jennings, La.	WCBJ	Salt Lake City, Utah	KFOV
Los Angeles, Calif.	KFPG	Sioux City, Iowa	KFOV
Memphis, Tenn.	WCBO	Wichita, Kans.	KFOT

Sarah Goldberg). At the time, "Fighting Bob" La Follette was the third-party candidate for president, on the Progressive ticket. He garnered 16.6 percent of the popular vote, the third highest percentage for a third-party candidate since the Civil War.¹⁴

While busy with his broadcasts, Maurice was also continuing to share the results of his experimentation with radio waves and equipment. In April 1924, an article written by Maurice was published in *QST*, the official magazine of the American Radio Relay League. In this article,



Maurice G. Goldberg contributed articles to *QST*, a magazine published by the ARRL. In his April 1924 article, "Loose-Coupled Transmitting Circuits," he included diagrams and gave instructions to radio operators for constructing loose-coupled transmitters, which he found emitted a steadier wave than most circuits. First cover of *QST*, April 1923, second cover and diagrams (on next page) in *QST*, April 1924.



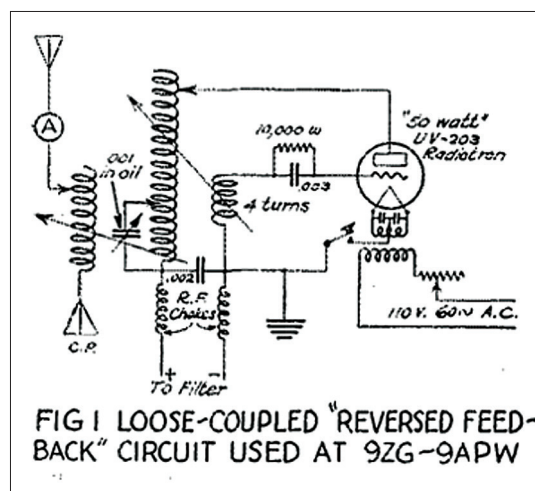
Maurice was educating others regarding his most successful attempts to limit man-made interference with radio signals.¹⁵

Then, on March 3, 1927, Maurice used his engineering talents to perform a breakthrough successful test communication:

M. G. Goldberg, engineer of radio station KFOY, St. Paul, and a pilot of the Northwest Airways, Inc. circled the Twin Cities in a radius of 40 miles and heard music, weather reports [from a government meteorologist] and addresses [including by St. Paul Mayor L.C. Hodgson] broadcast by KFOY for two hours. Weather reports were heard through earphones by the men flying 1,500 feet in the air.¹⁶

This first step led to the installation of voice communication systems in airplanes. Prior to this successful experiment, pilots depended on dot and dash code message systems for weather reports and conditions of flying fields.

Back on the ground, loyal KFOY listeners welcomed the station's customary offerings. According to radio listings in the *Minneapolis Journal*, in 1927, KFOY's typical broadcasts in the evening ranged from classical music performances to financial reports, the "Old Time Dance Orchestra," and the all-important "Reception Reports."¹⁷



The Merger

In addition to founding, financing, and operating KFOY, Maurice was also "technical operator" for WAMD in Minneapolis (Where All Minneapolis Dances). WAMD started broadcasting on February 22, 1925, almost one year after KFOY's first broadcast. WAMD operated out of a studio on Grant Street and Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis and also broadcast from the Marigold Gardens dancehall. Five months later, WAMD moved its studios to the Minneapolis Radisson. WAMD's founder was Red Wing native Stanley E. Hubbard.¹⁸

In late 1927, one unexpected event and one "kind" deed set the stage for the imminent end of KFOY. In November 1927, WAMD's transmitter was destroyed by fire, which took the station off the air. Two weeks later, an article in the *Minneapolis Journal* noted that WAMD would be back on the air, thanks to WAMD's using the 250-watt KFOY transmitter.¹⁹

The story, as told by Hubbard Broadcasting on its website, goes that "by consolidating and trading in WAMD's license and the license of another local station, a new Twin Cities station was born in Saint Paul." Four months after the fire, "On March 29, 1928, President Calvin Coolidge pressed a gold telegraph key from the White House to officially activate KSTP-AM radio's antenna."²⁰

It was not just "another local station" which was consolidated with WAMD to become KSTP. It was KFOY, the first commercial radio station in St. Paul. The story that had been handed down in our family was that my Great Uncle Maurice

liked the thrill of innovation, inventing, and problem-solving to help people, but didn't have much interest in accumulating wealth.²¹ It was believed that Maurice sold his license and all his equipment to Mr. Hubbard, for a much smaller sum of money than it was worth, when Hubbard formed KSTP, and then Maurice moved on to new frontiers. It was recently learned that this story was only partially correct.

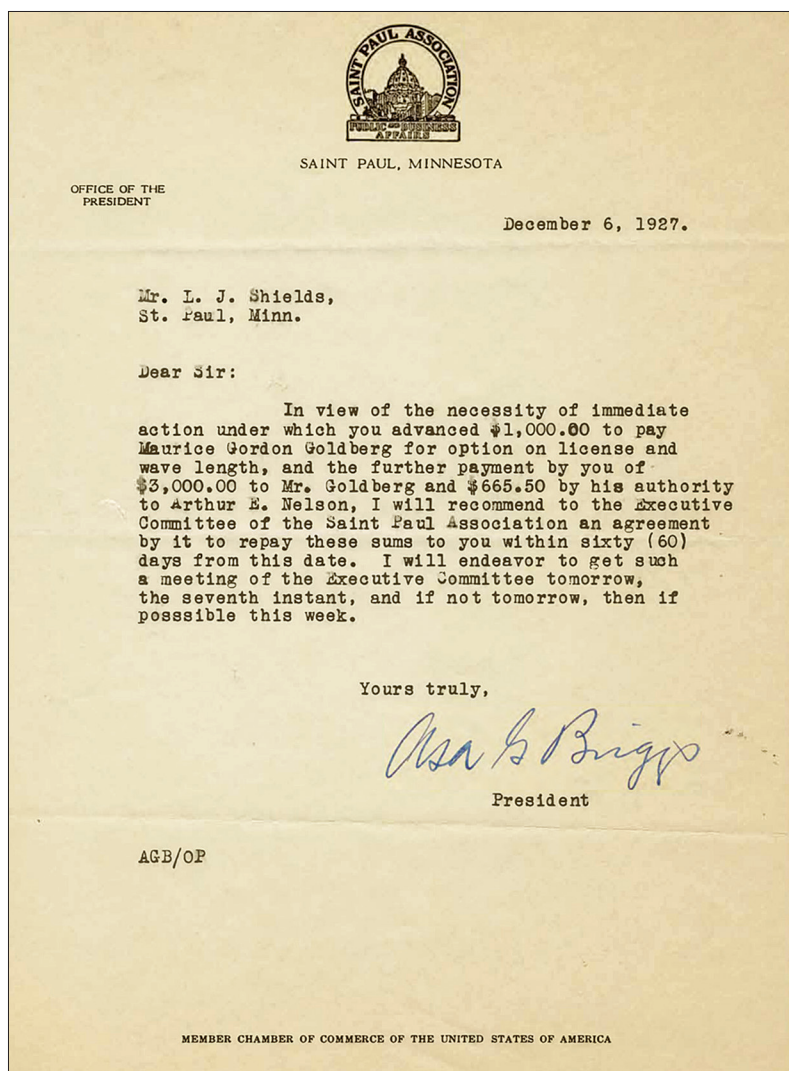
Corrective History

The actual details of this transaction and how it came about were recently rediscovered, almost one hundred years after the events in question, thanks to Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc. archivist Glenn D. Griffin. In responding to an email inquiry, Griffin kindly combed through the archived files.

Interestingly, the deal to combine KFOY and WAMD to form KSTP does not appear to have been negotiated at all by Mr. Hubbard, as has been assumed by many. Though various sources still refer to Stanley E. Hubbard as having "bought" or "founded" KSTP radio,²² Hubbard's name is not mentioned in the unearthed original documents concerning the station's formation. A *Minneapolis Journal* article looking back at the merger stated that for four years, "Hubbard struggled on with his little station [WAMD],"²³ then WAMD's old transmitter burned down. A few months earlier, Hubbard became associated with Lytton J. Shields, president of National Battery Company of St. Paul.²⁴

The contemporaneous documents located by Griffin fill in the rest of the picture. It was Shields, an influential Twin Cities dealmaker and president of the Radisson Radio Corporation and National Battery Company—who until now has been largely overlooked in the history of St. Paul Radio—who got the ball rolling. Shields made a proposal to St. Paul's "Association of Public and Business Affairs" (Chamber of Commerce) to construct and put in operation a new radio station, with headquarters exclusively in St. Paul, to provide "first class service," including not less than one hour per day of "New York remote control service, if this can be obtained."

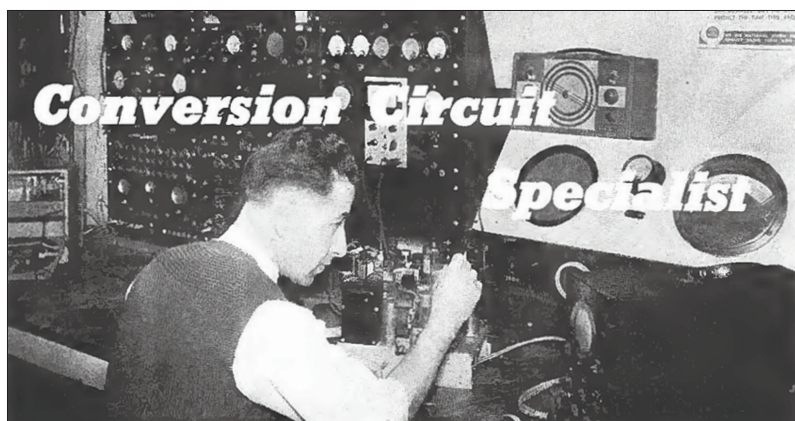
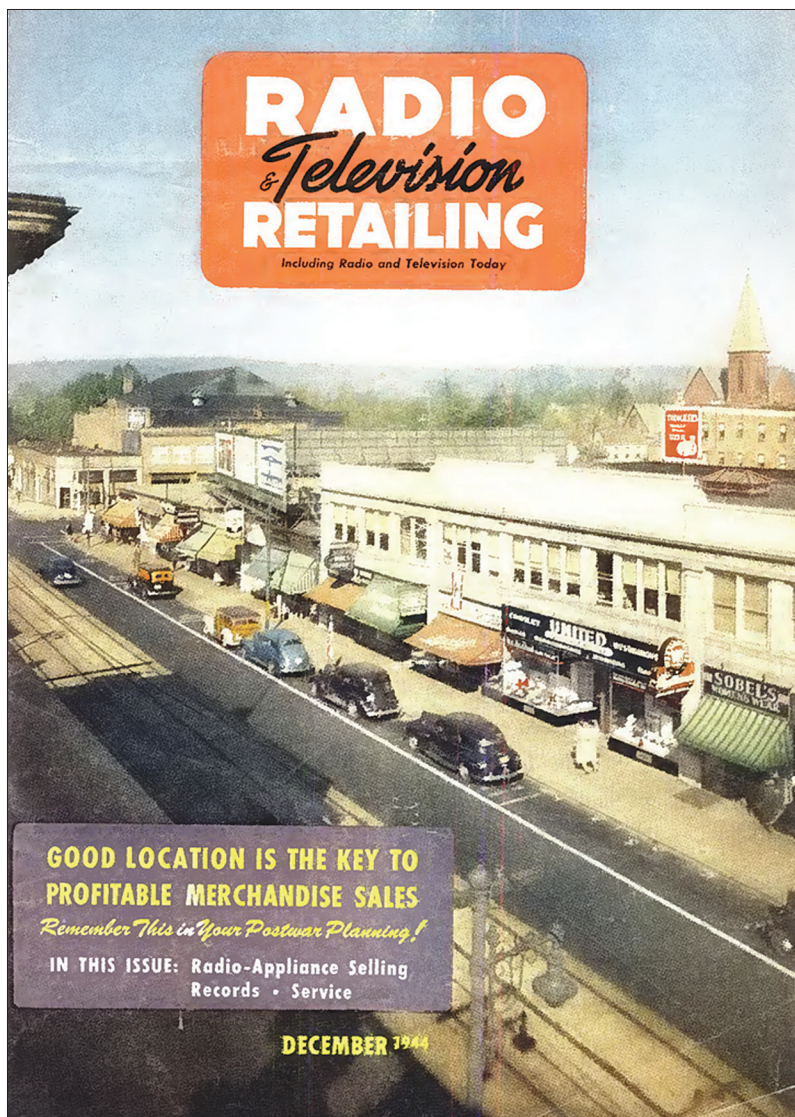
In return, a contract was signed between representatives of the St. Paul Chamber and Mr. Shields, with the following three significant provisions:



- i) The St. Paul Chamber would transfer KFOY and its equipment to Shields' National Battery Company;
- ii) The St. Paul Chamber would lend the National Battery Company \$30,000, which was to be paid back within three years of the first date of broadcast by the new St. Paul station; and
- iii) Mr. Shields' company would pay what the St. Paul Chamber had agreed with Maurice Goldberg to pay for the purchase of KFOY, i.e., \$4665.50 [\$4000 to Maurice and \$665.50 to be paid at Maurice's instruction to Arthur E. Nelson, then Mayor of St. Paul].

On June 1, 1928, approximately six months after fire destroyed WAMD's transmitter and the license and equipment of KFOY were purchased,

A December 6, 1927, letter from St. Paul Association of Public and Business Affairs (the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce) to L.J. Shields, documents the payment made to Maurice Gordon Goldberg for license and "wave length" of KFOY. Courtesy of the Hubbard Archives.



"St. Paul Radioman" M.G. Goldberg was featured for his skills as a "conversion circuit specialist" and photographed working at his Beacon Radio Service Shop, 142 East Fourth Street, St. Paul. In *Radio and Television Retailing*, December 1944.

Shields reported to the St. Paul Chamber that the value of the equipment for the station (according to the American Appraisal Company) was \$219,000. It can be reasonably assumed that the great majority of that equipment came from the KFOY acquisition. The conversion of the equipment value (\$219,000) to present-day dollars amounts to approximately \$3 million, though obviously the equipment, which was innovative in 1928, would now be outdated. With this information, and knowing that Maurice received \$4,000, the belief that Maurice did not receive nearly the value of KFOY in the deal to form KSTP appears to have been confirmed.

By December 31, 1929, a year and nine months after the first KSTP broadcast, \$17,500 had been paid back on the \$30,000 loan from the St. Paul Chamber to the National Battery Company. However, as the previous year had resulted in KSTP experiencing net operating losses of \$20,000, Mr. Shields wanted to negotiate a new proposal. He advised the Chamber that in light of this loss, and though there was no way to estimate what additional funds may be needed to secure a better wavelength or other obligations, he would agree to assume any unknown, large future expenditures for KSTP, in return for some concessions.

The St. Paul Chamber agreed to forgive the remainder that Shields's company owed on the loan (\$12,500), as well as agreeing that St. Paul was no longer required to be the exclusive city mentioned in KSTP's station announcement (as long as St. Paul was still mentioned, Minneapolis could also be mentioned), and to allow the KSTP studio to be located outside of St. Paul's city limits.²⁵

Stanley E. Hubbard was the KSTP Manager and vice-president of National Battery Broadcasting Company, KSTP's licensee, until 1935. Shields passed away that year.²⁶ Hubbard then became the company's president, replacing Shields.²⁷

If We Can't Fix It

A December 1944 article in *Radio and Television Retailing* magazine provides insights as to some of Maurice Goldberg's activities and interests after the KFOY years, while raising children David and Sylvia with his wife Isabel.²⁸ Maurice

was continuing with a desire he likely inherited from his father to find uses for items others discarded, as well as with his quest to help others with his discoveries. The article highlighted Maurice's radio and television repair shop, Beacon Radio Service Shop, which had been in business at 142 East Fourth Street, St. Paul for the previous 20 years. Each day he would come into work, Maurice passed by the sign he had placed outside his store: "If We Can't Fix It, Throw It Away." M.G. Goldberg took that slogan to heart, finding creative ways to keep radios running.

When parts to repair radios started to become scarce, Maurice began experimenting again. He found he could interchange tubes by rewiring sockets. His conversion circuits allowed him to use tubes that were available, though they were not designed for certain radios. Piles and piles of mail were delivered to M.G. Goldberg, as radio dealers and servicemen sought to learn his new techniques. And by 1955, Maurice proved he was no one-trick-pony, publishing articles regarding troubleshooting issues encountered in television repairs.²⁹

Epilogue

I remember Maurice in the 1960s as the tall, soft-spoken uncle in a one-piece work jumpsuit, with the knot of his tie and white dress shirt visible underneath. He drove from St. Paul to St. Louis Park, a Minneapolis suburb, so he could repair our black and white TV in the blond wood console in our den. He always had the tubes we needed and quietly worked with a smile, so I could watch "Lunch with Casey" and, several years later, "The Flying Nun." My mom wouldn't have considered calling anyone else to repair our TV, as that would have been a betrayal of sorts for both her and her uncle.

About forty years after Uncle Maurice's sale of KFOY's license, my mom, sister, and I were waiting near the downtown Minneapolis Radisson for my dad to meet us after he finished work at his North Minneapolis store. We would then typically eat dinner together at the Café DiNapoli, the Nankin, the Forum, or La Casa Coronado, and then would go to a movie. A gentleman in a suit was also waiting for someone at the hotel. While waiting, he introduced himself to my mom.

"My name is Stanley Hubbard," he said.

My mom introduced herself and explained to the younger Mr. Hubbard—whose father, Stanley E. Hubbard, was the man whose station WAMD merged with KFOY to form KSTP—that her uncle was Maurice Goldberg. Mr. Hubbard shook my mom's hand warmly and said simply, "Maurie is a genius." Then my dad's white Buick LeSabre appeared. We wished each other a good evening and went our separate ways.

The last time I saw my Uncle Maurice was at a small family get-together for my eighteenth birthday in 1976, at my grandparents' home at 1696 Watson Avenue in St. Paul. My Baba Minnie's birthday and mine were two days apart, so my parents and sister Nancy brought a joint cake for the two of us. As we were about to sit down for our treat, Minnie suggested that we wait a minute so she could invite Maurice to stop over for cake and coffee.

Uncle Maurice seemed to arrive instantly. The warm hugs, smiles, laughter, and the cheery, hot pink frosting flowers resting on buttercream waves over moist chocolate cake couldn't remove the sadness in the dining room. Both my Baba and Uncle, though they never smoked a cigarette in their lives, had been diagnosed with lung cancer. Maurice passed away in 1977. Minnie died a year later. Each of them, in their own way, made St. Paul and beyond a better place.³⁰

Perhaps the author of the *Pioneer Building Newsletter* from February 1949 said it best, in describing a conversation with Maurice Goldberg:

"What you ought to do, Morry [sic]," we declared, "is put on a salesman and punch up your television sales."

"No point in it," he shrugged, "as it is, I have to work half the night installing the sets people come in and buy."

No, Morry doesn't run his shop for people who like to be sold—he runs it for those who are willing to seek out quality in men and in merchandise.

Acknowledgments

I send a thank you heavenward to my grandmother Minnie Goldberg Gordon, my Great-Uncle Hy Goldberg, and my mother Frima Gordon Bender, for taking the time to share the

family history which enabled me to write this article. Also, without Pavek Museum's Collections Manager Kallie Zieman, Tom Gavaras at RadioTapes.com, Hubbard Broadcasting's archivist Glenn D. Griffin, architectural historian Richard L. Kronick, my late aunt Josephine Berg Simes, and Maurice Goldberg's grandson Randy Pentel, the stories told herein would not have been complete. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my family, who support my desire to preserve history, including Lincoln, Nancy, Barry, Marshall, Malcolm, Sage, Jackson, Abby, and Steven, and to *Ramsey County History* editors Meredith Cummings and Andrea Swensson and the Ramsey County Historical Society for assisting me in my pursuit. It is my honor to tell a small part of Maurice Goldberg's inspiring story—one of a lifetime of curiosity and selfless generosity. I thank him and like to believe that he, a modest man, approves of this piece. Shortly after reconnecting with Maurice's grandson Randy, who shared with me an amusing anecdote about Maurice and a feisty cardinal in St. Paul,

a vibrant, red male cardinal landed on a desert shrub close to me, while I was walking in south-central Arizona. I have since learned that cardinal sightings in that area are rare.

Minnesota-born and raised Rebecca E. Bender practiced law in Minnesota for 18 years prior to beginning her second chapter as a mom, teacher, speaker, and author. The excerpts and photos in "Catching Waves" are from Rebecca's recently completed manuscript, Deep Footprints in the Snow: A Minnesota Memoir. Her first memoir/biography, co-authored with her dad Kenneth Bender, Still (North Dakota State University Press, 2019 hardcover, 2022 paperback), won the Midwest Book Award Gold Medal, the First Place Independent Press Award and an Independent Publishers' Award. Rebecca's prose and poetry have been published in various online and print journals. She has also given book talks at events sponsored by a wide range of historical societies and libraries.

NOTES

1. By czars' edicts, almost all Jews, from the late 1700s through the early 1900s, were restricted to living in and working in a designated area in the western part of the Russian Empire. Approximately 94 percent of the total Jewish population of Russia lived in "the Pale" in the late 1800s. Klier, John, "Pale of Settlement," YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2010, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Pale_of_Settlement.

2. Some of the tales of the Goldberg family herein, including this quote, are from Goldberg, Hy, "History of A.B. Goldberg and Sarah Goldberg," circa 1975. Other stories were told to the author for decades by her grandmother, Minnie Goldberg Gordon and her mother, Frima Gordon Bender, or recently learned from her cousin, Randy Pentel.

3. 1900 U.S. Census, Steele County, MN, Population Schedule 1, Owatonna, Ward 3, handwritten, Number 3.

4. Rosenblum, Gene H., *The Lost Jewish Community of the West Side Flats, 1882-1962* (Arcadia Publishing, 2002); Nelson, Paul, "West Side Flats, St. Paul," *MNopedia*, March 30, 2015, <https://www.mnopedia.org/place/west-side-flats-st-paul>. On August 9, 1960, Resolution No. 123 of the St. Paul Port Authority declared the West Side Flats an Industrial Development District. Resolution No. 193 on November 20, 1962, approved acquisition of the property. In all, 2,147 individuals and numerous businesses were expelled. Port

Authority of the City of Saint Paul Records Collection, Minnesota Historical Society; Don Boxmeyer, *A Knack for Knowing Things* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2003); Coleman, Patrick, "A Nostalgic Zephyr: William Hoffman on the Old Jewish West Side," Saint Paul Almanac, January 31, 2012, <https://saintpaulalmanac.org/2012/01/31/a-nostalgic-zephyr-william-hoffman-on-the-old-jewish-west-side>.

5. 1910 U.S. Census, Ramsey County, MN, Population Schedule, St. Paul, Ward 6, handwritten.

6. Goldberg, Hy, "History of A.B. Goldberg and Sarah Goldberg" (circa 1975). This quote, which has morphed into the creed for scrap dealers and antiques sellers, has been traced to the introduction written by Hector Urquhart, to *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, (Campbell, J.F., Edmonston and Douglas, 1860).

7. Hoffman, William, *Those Were The Days*, T.S. Denison and Company, 1957.

8. Pavek Museum of Broadcasting Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 1991, St. Louis Park, Minnesota. About two years prior to this licensing, Maurice's knowledge of radio operations led to his being invited to operate the radio lifelines on an expedition to the North Pole. Maurice, age 16, declined. Author's November 9, 2024, conversation with Randy Pentel.

9. "Radio Service Bulletin, No. 84," Department of Commerce, April 1, 1924.

10. Ingersoll, Charles, *Minnesota Airwaves*,

1912 through 1939 and Radio Trivia, "KFOY—Kind Friends of Yours, the Beacon Radio Service, St. Paul, Minnesota."

11. "KFOY," *Around the Corridors*, Pioneer Building newsletter, February 1949, published by Davidson Owner-Managed Properties.

12. "2000 Crystal Set Owners get Far Stations Through KFOY—Radio Amateur Maurice Goldberg, Brings Outside Programs Within Range of 'Cat Whiskers' of Many Fans in Twin Cities," *Minneapolis Star*, May 11, 1924. Shortly thereafter, an avalanche of postcards and letters from strangers arrived at the Goldberg home on Dayton, causing Maurice to realize that he was onto something. There was a strong demand for rebroadcasting of distant programs. Maurice listened to his listeners and continued these broadcasts.

13. The List'ning Post column by the "Night Watchman," *Minneapolis Star*, February 24, 1926.

14. Dreier, Peter, "La Follette's Wisconsin Idea," *Disent Magazine*, April 11, 2011, also refers to Minnesota Governor Floyd Olson as one of La Follette's "political offspring." Shideler, James H. "The La Follette Progressive Party Campaign of 1924," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 33(4):444-457, June 1950. Though La Follette died in 1925, Harold Ickes, Sr., a senior advisor to La Follette on his 1924 campaign, later was a key adviser to President Franklin Roosevelt for his New Deal in the 1930s.

15. *QST*, Volume VI, No. 9, p. 14, April 1923, M.G. Goldberg, "A Study of Filter Systems for Transmitter Tube Plate Supply," *QST*, Volume VII, No. 9, p. 11, Maurice G. Goldberg, "Loose-Coupled Transmitting Circuits," April 1924. The magazine also noted that a well-respected MIT Professor had relied upon Maurice's previous experiments.

16. "Messages are Sent Flyers by Radio," *Minneapolis Star*, March 3, 1927.

17. "Radio Programs for the Week," *Minneapolis Journal*, May 14, 1927, August 27, 1927, October 1, 1927.

18. Ingersoll, Id.

19. "Three Stations Here Get New Waves," *Minneapolis Journal*, November 26, 1927.

20. "A History of Firsts," Hubbard Broadcasting, <https://hubbardbroadcasting.com/our-company/history/>.

21. This recollection by the author was confirmed in a November 9, 2024, conversation with Randy Pentel, one of Maurice Goldberg's grandsons.

22. The website of Pavek Museum of Broadcasting's Hall of Fame provides, in part, "He [Stanley E. Hubbard] founded KSTP . . . in 1928." Minnesota Aviation's Hall of Fame website refers to Mr. Hubbard "buying station KSTP." Of course, correcting these inaccurate statements concerning KSTP's origins does not lessen the numerous subsequent achievements in radio and

television by either Stanley E. Hubbard, Stanley S. Hubbard, or Hubbard Broadcasting.

23. "How Men and Machinery Built KSTP Broadcasting Leadership," *Minneapolis Journal*, August 11, 1935.

24. In *Ramsey County History*, Spring 2009, vol. 44, no. 1, an article titled, "Minnesota Politics and Irish Identity: Five Sons of Erin at the State Capitol," by John W. Milton, discusses in part Lytton James Shields' uncle, General James Shields.

25. Letters and minutes from Hubbard Broadcasting Archives.

26. Lytton James Shields, Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/151054514/lytton-james-shields>.

27. "Hubbard is named president of KSTP," *Minneapolis Star*, November 26, 1936.

28. "Conversion Circuit Specialist," *Radio and Television Retailing*, December 1944. Another one of Maurice's interests was birding. Maurice was twice president of the St. Paul Audubon Society. The Goldbergs' 20-by-50-foot backyard on Palace Avenue in St. Paul was turned into a bird sanctuary, where Maurice and the author's great-aunt Isabel fed and identified 98 species of birds. Maurice's banding of birds and careful notations in his spiral notebooks, after the birds landed in the mist net in his backyard, provided much previously unknown information regarding migration patterns. "They Turned a City Lot into Yardful of Song," D. Cunningham, *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 29, 1963; author's conversation with Randy Pentel, November 9, 2024; "Bird Migration To Be Topic of [Ramsey County Garden Club] Meeting," (presented by M.G. Goldberg), *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 8, 1970. The Author also recalls, after a number of family meals, watching slides of the birds which appeared in her great-uncle and aunt's yard in St. Paul, with detailed explanations by her uncle.

29. M.G. Goldberg, "Troubleshooting Hum in Television Receivers," *Technicians and Circuit Digest*, 1955.

30. In addition to being an active member of the Osman Shrine Women's Auxiliary, Temple of Aaron Synagogue Sisterhood, Sholom Home Auxiliary, Talmud Torah PTA, and Hadassah, the author's "Baba" Minnie Goldberg Gordon also served as President of St. Paul Women's Coordinating Council for Civil Defense, President of Women's Auxiliary Post 162 Jewish War Veterans (St. Paul), National Vice President of the Jewish War Veterans Auxiliary, Local Chairman for the National Jewish War Veterans Convention, held in St. Paul in 1947, and enthusiastic pianist for all of the above. Despite all her activities, Minnie always seemed to have freshly baked cinnamon, almond kmishbroit (a softer version of biscotti) or mun pletzels (poppyseed cookies) available, and showered her five grandchildren with love and life lessons.

IN OUR COLLECTION

MINNESOTA FROST
MADDIE ROONEY'S SIGNED GOALIE STICK

In Our Collection
shares the pieces
acquired by
Ramsey County
Historical Society.

The collection
contains tens of
thousands of pieces,
including archives,
books, objects, and
photographs, which
are maintained by
Director of
Collections and
Exhibitions,
Mollie Spillman, in
Downtown St. Paul.





MADDIE ROONEY'S SIGNATURE

DONATED BY: THE MINNESOTA FROST
ACQUIRED: 2024
RCHS COLLECTION: 2025.1.4

PWHL Minnesota—later named the Minnesota Frost—joined the Professional Women’s Hockey League on August 29, 2023, filling the void left by the Minnesota Whitecaps, a club that played in the now-defunct Premier Hockey Federation.

Their first signings included Kendall Coyne Schofield, Kelly Pannek, Lee Stecklein, and Taylor Heise, leading them to a fourth seed league spot in their inaugural year.

Like many other PWHL charter franchises, Minnesota powered through without branding for their first season. Before the second season commenced, they were given the name Frost by the PWHL to honor the state’s “deep-rooted love for the ice.” The Frost went on to win the PWHL’s first Walter Cup championship in 2024.

In 2024, the Minnesota Frost donated four items from the 2024 playoff games to RCHS. Maddie Rooney’s goalie stick is one of these items. It was signed by many of the players who played in the inaugural season, including all four goalies. RCHS sought items to document the history of our professional women’s hockey team that plays in the heart of Ramsey County.

SIGNED BY:
CLAIRE BUTORAC, SYDNEY BRODT, KELLY PANNEK, CLAIR DEGEORGE, BROOKE BRYANT, BRITTYN FLEMING, LIZ SCHEPERS,
ABBY BOREEN, TAYLOR HEISE, DENISA KŘÍŽOVÁ, LEE STECKLEIN, NIKKI NIGHTENGALE, SOPHIE JAUQUES, MAGGIE FLAHERTY,
NATALIE BUCHBINDER, DOMINIQUE KREMER, AMANDA LEVEILLE, NICOLE HENSLEY, LAUREN BENCH, MADDIE ROONEY

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A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Established by a community of history lovers led by Mrs. Ethel Stewart, Ramsey County Historical Society (RCHS) has been preserving, interpreting, and presenting the remarkable history of our capital county since 1949. Created to preserve the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, a National Register of Historic Places site since 1974, RCHS has expanded to include publishing, exhibits, preservation, research, and public programming spanning the entire county.

RCHS's vision for the future recognizes the trusted role it plays in our community as a key steward of our shared heritage. As we strive to preserve and share the lessons of the past, our hope is that it will help all of us build a better future for our descendants.

The largest and most popular program of RCHS is Gibbs Farm, serving more than 15,000 students every year as well as thousands of teachers, families and individuals. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, RCHS began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways, now telling the stories of the remarkable relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Dakota people of *Ĥeyáta Othúnwe* (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 and in 2010, it created the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center. Collections entrusted to RCHS total more than four million items ranging from a historic farmstead to building permits to images and maps that capture the unique history of our community.

Our mission, vision, and values guide our work and unite a team of volunteers, members, donors, and staff to serve more than 50,000 people every year while ensuring our history is preserved and accessible. We are honored to have the support of so many in our community and welcome you to join us if you have not already.

Acknowledging This Sacred Dakota Land

Mnisóta Makhóche, the land where the waters are so clear they reflect the clouds, extends beyond the modern borders of Minnesota and is the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Dakhóta (Dakota) people. It is also home to the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples, all who make up a vibrant community in Mnisóta Makhóche. RCHS acknowledges that its sites are located on and benefit from these sacred Dakota lands. RCHS is committed to preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future. Part of doing so is acknowledging the painful history and current challenges facing the Dakota people just as we celebrate the contributions of Dakota and other Indigenous peoples.

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