

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Growing Up Working at a
St. Paul Jewish Delicatessen

ROBIN J. DOROSHOW, PAGE 18



The Matriarch of the Art Colony

**Early Twentieth Century Art
in St. Paul as Seen Through
the Career of Alice Hügy**

DIANE TROUT-OERTEL, PAGE 1

By the Numbers . . .

In 1976 the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation began year-round recreation programming for individuals with developmental and/or physical disabilities. The Adaptive Recreation program that began in 1968 with one six-week summer day camp program at one city park became, by the 2000s, an award-winning program offering a wide variety of activities geared toward including people of all levels of ability and interests. Read more in Nancy Sanchelli Guertin's moving article about working at the day camp in the early 1970s on page 23.

Did you know that as of 2023, St. Paul's Adaptive Recreation program has:

Over **180** popular activities offered annually at sites throughout the city;

Over **45,000** hours of participation;

Over **900** hours of volunteer service;

Over **1200** on their mailing list;

Two full-time and **ten** part-time staff;

And is the recipient of **three** national awards for excellence?

Information provided by Colleen Tusa, Director of Adaptive Recreation, St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation.

ON THE COVER



The two images on the cover represent "The Matriarch of the Art Colony," Alice Hügy, the subject of Diane Trout-Oertel's profile that begins on Page 1. The larger painting is by Hügy herself and is titled "Phalen Lagoon" (1930), while the portrait of Hügy was painted in 1922 by her friend and peer Clara Mairs. Both are now in the archives of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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MOLLIE SPILLMAN

Message from the Editorial Board

I'm thrilled to be the new chair of the Ramsey County Historical Society editorial board. I've been on the editorial board for several years, and I wrote an article for the magazine in 2020 about Perrie Jones, the founder of the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library. The three stories in this issue convey a sense of the depth and breadth of life in Ramsey County that Ramsey County History covers.

The three articles in this issue describe art, food, and parks—three of life's great pleasures.

Diane Trout-Oertel's article about Alice Hügy is a fascinating portrait of an artist who was an integral part of the Saint Paul art scene during a time of tremendous shifts in visual art. Hügy's career began during the 1890s and came to a close during the 1960s—a long stretch of history that saw the flowering of many different art styles, from Post-Impressionism to the dawn of Pop Art.

It's been said that everyone should work in food service at one time in their lives, and it's clear from Robin Doroshov's interview with her cousin Rick that his time at Cecil's Delicatessen proved to be a highly influential lesson on how to handle interpersonal relationships. This article is a reminder of how food brings us together, and how the places we eat can become deeply ingrained in the fabric of a neighborhood.

I took a special interest in Nancy Sanchelli Guertin's article "Close to You," as I have a family connection to Newell Park. My grandparents lived on Hewitt Avenue, just a block away from the park, for nearly forty years. My mom grew up playing in Newell Park and having adventures with her Cocker Spaniel named Rusty. She watched the then-new Pierce Butler Route being built. When I was a kid, the hilly and tree-filled Newell Park was always a highlight of visiting my grandparents. It was a place where my imagination soared.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Ramsey County History, and I look forward to engaging all of the communities of Ramsey County through this magazine.

Mark Taylor
Chair, Editorial Board

Early Twentieth Century Art in St. Paul as Seen Through the Career of Alice Hügy

DIANE TROUT-OERTEL

In the 1880s, Minneapolis was already on its way to becoming Minnesota's art capital with the emergence of cultural organizations that thrived and gave rise to the museums that secure its prominent position in the art world today. While St. Paul eventually developed its own reputation in the art world, progress was intermittent and driven by individuals motivated by a passion for art rather than by institutions. Perhaps the artist who best represents these grassroots efforts is Alice Hügy, who was called the matriarch of the St. Paul art colony. Although this designation may seem a stretch for a person whose name is barely recognized today, it indicates that Hügy was held in high esteem by her contemporaries, and reflects her continual involvement in the local art scene from the 1890s well into the twentieth century. Her long and diverse career as illustrator, painter, teacher and organizer is interwoven with the early history of both commercial and fine art in St. Paul.

In the early 1890s, opportunities for acquiring a fine arts education were limited in St. Paul, which had no organizations in place comparable to the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts and the Minneapolis School of Art.¹ At the time, studying with one of the city's resident professionals was the only local option for aspiring artists of modest means like Alice Hügy, who was taking lessons from Julius Segall while supporting herself by designing graphics for newspaper advertisements.^{2,3}

Recognizing the need for affordable art lessons, a St. Paul ladies' art club stepped to the plate in 1893 and arranged for classes to be held in the attic of the Metropolitan Hotel on the west side of Smith Park, now Rice Park.⁴ Hügy was one of the first to take advantage of the new opportunity. She attended the night drawing



Portrait of Alice Hügy by Clara Mairs, 1922. Hügy had brown hair, brown eyes and wore wire-rim glasses. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

classes taught by Burt Harwood, who had studied in the Académie Julian in Paris and was a member of the Art Students League in New York.

St. Paul School of Fine Arts

The fledgling school became incorporated as the St. Paul School of Fine Arts (SPSFA) in 1894, with Harwood serving as its first director. Soon the faculty included Orlando Cheeks, Knute Okerberg and Grace McKinstry. Cheeks, also a member of the Art Students League, gave drawing lessons and Okerberg, who had studied modeling in Paris and Stockholm, was in charge of the sculpture classes. Painting was taught by McKinstry, who had been one of the early students at the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts and had later studied at the League and Cooper Union in New York, as well as the Art Institute of Chicago and the Académie Julian in Paris.⁵ Heavily influenced by the Art Students League



St. Paul School of Fine Arts students in the attic of the Metropolitan Hotel, 1893. The teacher in front of the class is Burt Harwood. Seated in the back row are Paul Manship, far right, and Alice Hügy, second from the left. *Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

in New York, where students were members, the new school in St. Paul adopted the League's curriculum, which in turn was based on the French academic system.⁶ After acquiring basic skills, students copied drawings by the masters and then progressed to drawing humans, working first from plaster casts and later from live models, as did the sculpture students who modeled in clay. The life classes used nude models and women worked alongside men, which was rare in the 1890s, even at the Académie Julian. From the beginning, women were treated equally to men and played important roles in the school.

From 1895-1899, the SPSFA held summer classes in the historic Sibley House in Mendota, which was comfortably furnished and provided sleeping quarters for students and staff.⁷ Located near the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, the site provided magnificent views and was an ideal place to practice the plein air method, which advocated sketching and painting outdoors.⁸ Hügy would later recall that Burt Harwood taught the techniques of the French Impressionists, which emphasized light and pure color, shunning black, while Grace McKinstry taught a more representative approach to painting, as did Alexis Fournier, who had established a local reputation and was now successful in the east and abroad.^{9,10} Illustrator John Norval Marchand taught methods that had earned him a reputation in commercial art. When the program expanded to include

instruction in decoration and design, noted muralist Elizabeth Chant and the McKey sisters, who designed tapestries and costumes in New York, were brought in.¹¹ The informal atmosphere of the house was conducive to a variety of creative activities, such as putting on plays, which benefited from the piano in the parlor. The school's summer program at the Sibley House came to an end when the DAR took over the historic property in 1900.

In 1897 the SPSFA moved its regular program from the top floor of the Metropolitan Hotel to more spacious quarters in the Moore Block at Seven Corners.¹² By then enrollment had doubled and the school was developing a good reputation, which helped its students gain admittance to respected schools in the East and abroad.¹³ An article in the *Saint Paul Daily Globe* stated "The school was modeled on the same plan as the best schools of the country . . . Several of the St. Paul students have gone direct into the Academic Julian in Paris, being admitted with high rank."¹⁴ Other students continued their studies in New York or found employment there.

A 1902 article in the *Globe* identified Hügy as one of the SPSFA students who had moved on to positions in established firms in New York. "Another earnest, promising student was Miss Alice Nugy [sic]. This young woman is also in New York in the employ of a large designing house on Fifth Avenue of that city and is doing good work. She was in the employ of W. L. Banning, of this city, for some years, and abandoned a position with this house paying \$1,000 per annum to go to the great city."¹⁵

W. L. Banning Jr. was one of the first local firms to produce advertisements in-house. Originally, advertising agencies had merely purchased large amounts of space in newspapers at a discount and then resold spots at higher rates to companies, who were then responsible for their own ads. Early advertisements consisted mainly of text, sometimes accompanied by simple images reproduced from pen and ink drawings, but by 1900 advertising in the Twin Cities was about to change dramatically in response to the introduction here of the halftone process, which produced more realistic images and required special skills and equipment. Demand for these more sophisticated illustrations gave birth to the modern ad agency that employs a



The St. Paul School of Fine Arts held summer classes at the historic site in Mendota which included the Sibley House, Faribault House (pictured) and several other mid-nineteenth century buildings associated with the fur trade. Circa 1897, courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

multidisciplinary staff. Hügy may have gone to New York to absorb cutting-edge developments in the advertising field in preparation for the revolutionary changes about to take place in the industry at home.

Upon her return to Minnesota, Hügy found employment with the St. Paul branch of the Bureau of Engraving, the Minneapolis company that had introduced the halftone engraving process to the Twin Cities in 1898.¹⁶ President J. C. Buckbee's son, Charles E. Buckbee, and nephew, Norman T. Mears, who were in charge of the office, later purchased the branch from the parent company and changed its name to the Buckbee-Mears Company of St. Paul.¹⁷ While Hügy worked there, she continued to take classes at the St. Paul School of Fine Arts, which moved to the third and fourth floors of the newly erected St. Paul Auditorium at 48 West Fourth Street soon after it was completed in 1907.¹⁸ The long-awaited civic venue addressed perennial complaints that, unlike Minneapolis, St. Paul did not have an exhibition hall, a library and an art gallery.¹⁹ The auditorium, which was large enough to host major events and accommodate a symphony orchestra as well as various kinds of popular entertainment, also incorporated a museum, art gallery, and art school, leaving St. Paul with only one serious deficiency. The city would not have an adequate

space to house the public library until 1917, but meanwhile it would offer its residents a different educational opportunity.

St. Paul Institute School of Art

Two receipts for tuition at the "St. Paul School of Art" dated April and May of 1908 are included in Hügy's papers at the Minnesota Historical Society. She may have saved these particular receipts as a memento, because the school was about to be reorganized and absorbed into the recently established St. Paul Institute of Arts and Sciences, also headquartered in the auditorium. The Institute was a part of St. Paul's overall plan to raise the cultural opportunities of its residents, especially the poor.²⁰ Composed of seven schools—Commerce, Domestic Art and Domestic Science, Education, Fine Arts, Science and Industrial Arts, evening high schools and evening grade schools—the Institute was a private undertaking that collaborated with the public school system. The "St. Paul Institute School of Art" offered twenty-one different classes, about half in the fine arts and the others in the applied arts.²¹ Its location in the spacious auditorium not only enabled the school to expand its program, but also exhibit the students' work. Hügy would later recall, "The most important activity at this point was composition, with exhibitions

and criticism every two weeks. The influence was now not quite so impressionistic. Black was permissible, since Robert Henri in New York was using it so effectively.”²²

Opportunities for students to show their work soon increased significantly. The annual art exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair, which had hit a low point during the early 1900s, gradually began to feature fine art again and often included art school exhibits.²³ The art exhibit at the fair, which increased in quality dramatically after the Minnesota State Art Society took charge in 1914, would continue to be one of the best opportunities for Minnesota artists to display and sell their work and Hügy participated frequently.^{24,25} Soon there were several other options. The Artists Society of St. Paul, formed in 1914, sponsored exhibits open to local artists who qualified for membership by submitting their work to a jury. Hügy, who was one of the founding members, served on juries and acted as its corresponding secretary at times. The Society’s exhibit at the Institute in December 1914 gave Hügy and fellow student Clara Mairs special recognition.²⁶ In November 1917, Hügy, Mairs, and Elsa Laubach Jemne were among the artists included in an exhibit at the newly completed

St. Paul Public Library, which would host many other art exhibits in the coming years.²⁷ Major exhibits were sponsored by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) after it was opened in 1915 by the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts.²⁸ Beginning in 1918, an annual MIA event known as the Exhibition of the Work of Local Artists drew from work by a group that included Hügy, Frances Cranmer Greenman, Clement Haupers, Jemne, Mairs, Edward Brewer, Floyd Brewer, Syd Fossum, Elof Wedin, Jo Lutz Rollins, and Ada Wolfe.²⁹

The St. Paul Institute School of Art, which had struggled financially, closed in 1916 due to low enrollment and it would be several years before St. Paul had a functioning art school again.³⁰ Artists associated with the school organized the Art League of St. Paul, giving a name to the informal art colony that had begun to form around Mairs, Hügy, and Haupers.³¹ The group, which also included Bob Brown,³² Harry Byers, Joseph LaFond, George Resler, Jack Smith, and Ben Swanson, continued working together in the school’s former space in the St. Paul Auditorium, sharing resources such as live models.³³ Going forward St. Paul’s art colony was a fluid group as new artists appeared

St. Paul Institute School of Art exhibit at an early Minnesota State Art Society exhibition. The Society included exhibits by Twin Cities art schools in its annual expositions, which were held all over the state until 1914, when they became part of the Minnesota State Fair. *Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*





A group of artists at Pig's Eye Island, St. Paul, in 1926. Artists include Clara Mairs, Clement Haupers, Alice Hügy and other members of the St. Paul art colony. *Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

on the scene and others left temporarily to work and study elsewhere, as did Mairs and Haupers, who spent much of the twenties abroad. In contrast, Hügy was ever-present on the art scene in St. Paul.

St. Paul School of Art

In 1924, members of the Art League of St. Paul mobilized in the Court Block at Fourth and Cedar with the intent of reviving the former St. Paul Institute School of Art, albeit with a slightly different name and a new mission that signaled a return to the philosophy of St. Paul's first art school. The "St. Paul School of Art" was incorporated in 1927 with a structure modeled even more closely after the prestigious Art Students League in New York, in that its students, who were referred to as "members," managed the school.³⁴ Sympathetic to modern art and encouraging students to develop their own style, the school was considered more progressive than the Art School of Minneapolis.³⁵ A review of the school's exhibition at the library in November of 1927 by art critic James

Gray of the *St. Paul Dispatch* gives credence to this appraisal. Gray emphasized the variety he saw in the style of the exhibitors, who included Hügy, Dewey Albinson, Ben Anderson, Haupers, Jemne, Mairs, and Ben Swanson.³⁶

Lacking wealthy patrons, the scrappy school had no home of its own and was ever in search of better accommodations. In 1926 the school had moved from the Court Block to 107 East Third Street. Two years later it moved to a larger space on the third floor of the Essex Building at 23 East Sixth Street, where the school had room to exhibit the students' work.³⁷ Taking advantage of the variety of subject matter readily available nearby, Alice Hügy could be seen instructing her classes throughout downtown St. Paul.³⁸

In 1932, the St. Paul School of Art moved to smaller quarters at 341 Selby Avenue, where it would remain throughout the Great Depression.³⁹ The first few years of the depression were the hardest for artists, whose situation improved in 1933 when the federal government came to their aid with the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), which hired unemployed

professional artists to create sculptures, paintings, and other forms of art for public buildings and parks.⁴⁰ Cameron Booth, who had left his position with the Minneapolis School of Art in the fall of 1929 to teach at the St. Paul School of Art, and was now its director, became involved with the program, which was administered in Minnesota by Russell Plimpton, Director of the MIA.⁴¹ The PWAP was soon superseded by the Federal Arts Project (FAP), one of several programs under the Works Progress Administration.⁴² Booth was asked to be local administrator but recommended Clem Haupers, an instructor at the St. Paul School of Art, for the position.⁴³ Haupers was put in charge of FAP in Minnesota and later all seven states in the Upper Midwest.⁴⁴ FAP was designed to maintain and develop the skills of trained, not necessarily professional, artists who were in need. Hügy was not eligible for PWAP because she had an income at the time, but under the State Emergency Relief Program, she taught painting from 1934-35 at the St. Paul Arts and Crafts Center, which offered various creative opportunities for the city's residents. When FAP became operational in 1935, she was hired to do paintings for hotels and offices.⁴⁵ FAP supplied various kinds of artwork for both private and public "clients," including schools and many government buildings throughout the state. FAP paid all labor costs and the recipients of the art paid for supplies.⁴⁶

Booth continued to serve as director of the St. Paul School of Art throughout the Great Depression, energizing students with his enthusiasm and elevating the school's reputation by exhibiting the work of artists associated with the school in public places, notably the St. Paul Public Library.⁴⁷ The school's activities were an important means of maintaining morale within the St. Paul arts community during the Depression, as were those of the Club Montparnasse. Founded in 1930, the club sponsored a variety of educational and entertainment events that incorporated the graphic arts, music, dance, drama and literature. Hügy, who served as its art chairman, organized and participated in its art exhibits. A review of the club's show at the library on June 14, 1934, called special attention to the paintings of Haupers, Mairs, Hügy, and Lowell Bobleter.⁴⁸

Saint Paul Gallery and School of Art

In 1939, the St. Paul School of Art moved a fifth time to the most permanent home it would ever enjoy. Thanks to a generous gift from Roger and Mary Shepard, the school acquired the Chauncey and Martha Griggs House at 476 Summit Avenue built in 1883. The addition of a large skylight at the top of the mansion created an ideal environment for studio classes, and the large rooms below provided perfect settings for exhibiting the students' work as well as the permanent collection the school had begun to acquire. Reflecting the school's new mission, which was to increase opportunities for the students and faculty to exhibit their work, the organization was renamed the Saint Paul Gallery and School of Art (SPGSA).⁴⁹ The school also continued to accommodate classes in various buildings downtown, as it had been doing while located on Selby.⁵⁰

Although Hügy was not listed as a faculty member in the SPGSA's brochures, she taught at the school's downtown locations and her work was regularly shown in its exhibits.⁵¹ In 1957, the SPGSA held an exhibition entitled '30, '40, '50: *Three Decades of Painting in St. Paul*. The artists, who were invited to show one work from each decade, included Hügy, Haupers, Mairs, Jemne, Bobleter, Floyd Brewer, Alexander Oja, Morris Pleason, and LeRoy Turner.⁵² The catalogue noted:

These artists are the men and women who made and kept art a living reality in St. Paul through the lean depression years, the war years, the frantic post-war years . . . They have represented Art to their community, and they have represented their community to the art world. Such museums as the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Library of Congress have bought their work. They are the personification of the local art scene of the last two and one-half decades, but their show is not a backward look; it is rather a promise that this city has, and will continue to have, vital, dedicated artists to make art a living reality.⁵³

In 1960, SPGSA started an annual Art Mart for the purpose of selling works by local artists. Hügy, Floyd Brewer, Peter Lupori, and Henriette



Art students at the St. Paul Institute School of Art, which occupied the third and fourth floors of the St. Paul Auditorium. Circa 1912, photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Diebold were featured in a newspaper article covering the inaugural event. In the photograph, Hügy is working on an abstract painting, likely a sign of her failing eyesight rather than an indication that she embraced the direction art took after WWII. By then Hügy's sight was seriously impaired and she was participating less in the school's activities, but she continued to maintain an interest in every aspect of the St. Paul art scene, and could be seen squinting at the work shown in local exhibits.⁵⁴

Architect Malcolm Lein, who had become the first non-artist director of SPGSA in 1947, presided over profound changes to the organization during his long tenure. Under Lein's leadership, the school enlarged its permanent collection, staged high-profile exhibitions, and opened up the curriculum and shows to craftspeople.⁵⁵ In 1961 the SPGSA organized the first of several biennials, juried competitions that invited participation by artists all over the country. Originally focused exclusively on drawings,⁵⁶ later biennials were patterned after the school's "Fiber, Clay, Metal" exhibit first produced in 1952. Of particular importance was a traveling exhibit organized by the school, which was known by then as the St. Paul Art Center. Sponsored by a federal grant, the "U S Information Agency Craft Show" opened in Berlin and toured Europe before making the rounds back in the States, bringing international attention to the school.⁵⁷

The St. Paul Arts Center

In 1964, the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art moved downtown to a new, modern building that was designed to serve as both an arts center and a science museum.⁵⁸ Its new location in the St. Paul Ramsey Arts and Science Center allowed for the SPGSA's large art collection to be taken out of storage and shown to the public. As its new name implied, the St. Paul Art Center began to prioritize exhibition over instruction. Its educational program was surpassed by those at the University of Minnesota and local colleges as well as the School of Associated Arts that had been started by Lowell Bobleter in 1948.⁵⁹ In response, the organization changed its name and character in 1969, when it became the Minnesota Museum of Art (MMA), downplaying education and aligning itself with the whole state rather than the city. Coincidentally, Alice Hügy's death in 1971 paralleled with the end of the line for the 1894 St. Paul School of Fine Arts and its successors, all of which she had participated in, first as a student and later an instructor. During its intermittent and peripatetic history, St. Paul's namesake art school had operated under six different names in nine different locations, but it had always emphasized education until this point.

In the near future, the MMA would phase out its educational programs and offer a wide range of exhibitions under yet another name, the Minnesota Museum of American Art.⁶⁰ After

residing in the Jemne Building for twenty-five years,⁶¹ the museum moved to Landmark Center for another two and a half decades, then to the West Publishing Building and most recently to the historic Pioneer Endicott Building at corner of Fourth and Robert Streets, where it is now located and branded as “The M.”⁶² As for St. Paul’s art colony, when local artists found themselves without an organization to rally around in the 1970s,⁶³ they found a way to continue to work together by moving into affordable space in Lowertown’s abandoned buildings, sparking the transformation of the decaying historic warehouse district into a vibrant neighborhood. Alice Hügy would have approved of how today’s St. Paul Art Collective and its Art Crawls carry on the grassroots tradition that has historically characterized the art scene in St. Paul.

Alice Hügy the Artist

Hügy initially made her mark in the field of commercial art. By the age of sixteen, she was producing pen and ink drawings for newspaper ads and other promotional materials for St. Paul companies, including the Hamm’s Brewery, Grain Belt Beer and the Elk Laundry.^{64,65} Her drawing style was influenced by the work of Charles Dana Gibson, whose illustrations appeared frequently in *Life* and several other major publications.⁶⁶ Hügy’s designs for the New England Furniture Company featured a young, attractive woman named “Priscilla,” her version of the Gibson Girl, the iconic image that Gibson had created around 1890.⁶⁷

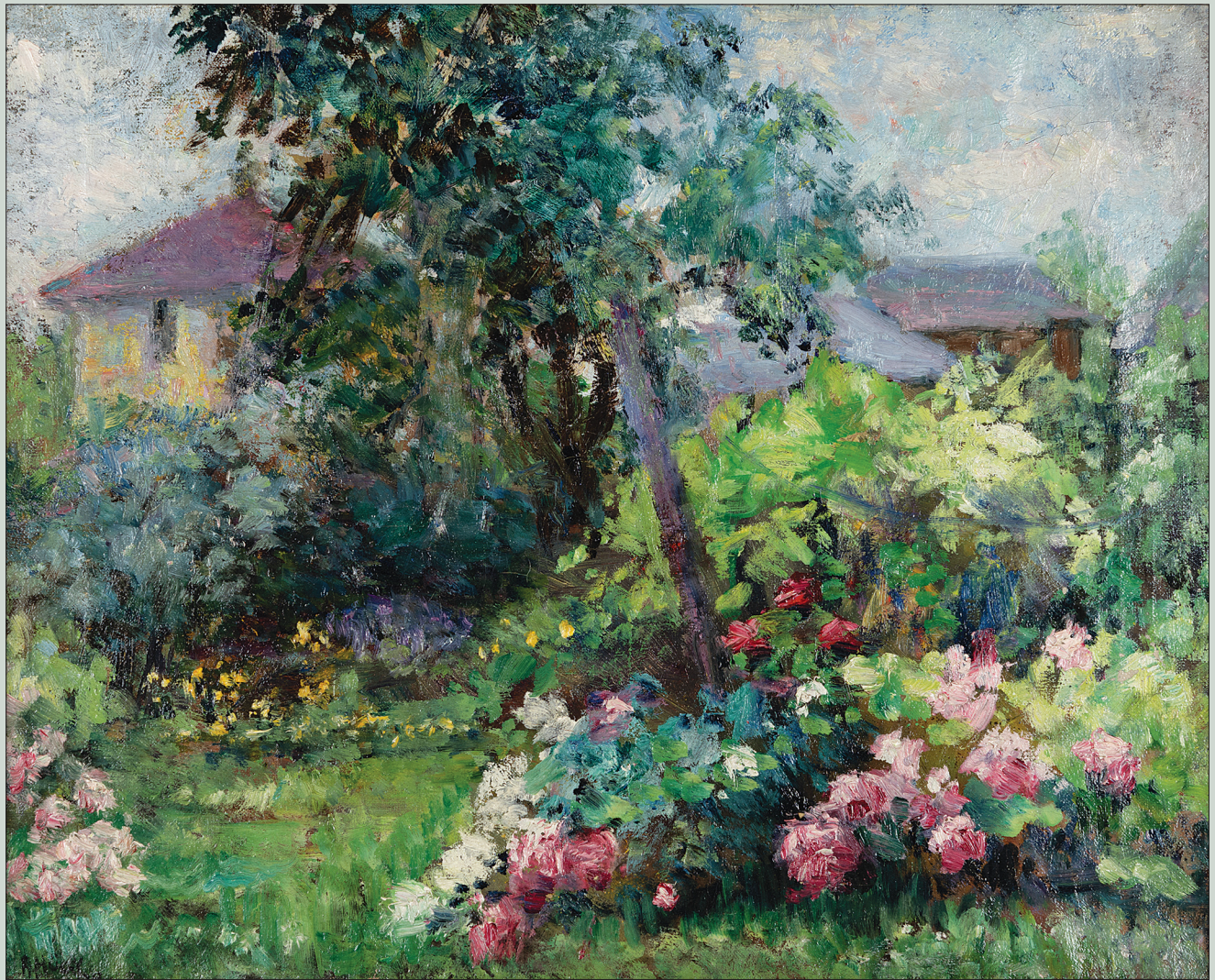
While building her reputation as a commercial artist, Hügy pursued her dream of becoming a fine artist by taking art lessons. Her first teacher was Julius Segall, who had studied at the Royal Academy in Munich. Segall, an art teacher at Hamline University, was also giving private lessons in downtown St. Paul.⁶⁸ Hügy recollected drawing in lead pencil from plaster casts of famous Greek sculptures and copying drawings by Albrecht Dürer, the legendary artist from Nuremberg. When the St. Paul School of Fine Arts opened in 1893, she was one of its first students, and she continued her study through the 1910s, becoming a central figure in St. Paul’s first art colony.

By the twenties, she was a locally respected fine artist. In March of 1926, she had a solo

exhibit at the Saint Paul library which ran for three weeks and featured eighty of her works. A news article covering the show referred to her as “Miss Alice Hügy, prominent St. Paul artist.”⁶⁹ The year 1928 was especially successful for Hügy. She received an award for her oil painting “Decorative Arrangement” from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and her watercolor “Trees and Snow” was exhibited in two major shows in other cities, the eighth Annual Exhibition of Watercolors at the Art Institute in Chicago and the annual all-American show in Philadelphia.⁷⁰ The decade ended on a high note for Hügy, whose painting “Swede Hollow” was included in “MN Artists of 1929,” a major exhibit at MIA featuring fifty works by fifty artists prominent in the Twin Cities at the time.⁷¹

Beginning in 1910, Hügy regularly entered her work in art exhibits at the Minnesota State Fair where she received special recognition on several occasions. At the 1917 State Fair, she exhibited “Stormy Sunset” and “October Afterglow.”⁷² Hügy was awarded first prize in the commercial category at the 1924 State Fair for her tempera and ink entry, and in 1928 she took first place in the still life category for “Green Apples.”⁷³ In a major art exhibit at the 1949 fair that featured noteworthy Minnesota artists living and dead, Hügy was represented by four works from four different decades in three different mediums: a pastel portrait “Old Age” (1917), the watercolor “Green Apples” (1927) and two oil paintings, “Gladioli” (1934) and “A Yellow Calla” (1943). Hügy exhibited at the fair in 1951 and sold two oil paintings, “Zinnias in Water Pitcher” (1929) and “October Bouquet” (1949) for \$65 each. In 1954, she was honored with a solo exhibit of fifteen paintings that served as a retrospective of her career.⁷⁴

For the most part, Hügy’s work was representative, ranging in style from realistic to Impressionist to Post-Impressionist. She was versatile and skillful in many mediums, drawing with charcoals as well as pen and ink, painting with oils and pastels as well as watercolors. Noted authority on Minnesota artists Julie L’Enfant praised her skillful handling of the latter as follows: “Hügy was masterly in her use of watercolor, exploiting its capabilities for transparency and layering.” Describing her oil paintings, L’Enfant wrote: “As she had learned at the St. Paul School



Garden, a 16.125 x 20 in. oil on canvas painted by Alice Hügy in 1925.

Rena Neumann Coen, an authority on early Minnesota art, gave this detailed description of *Garden*:

Its vigorous brushwork is similar to that of the French masters, who originally developed the Impressionist style in the 1860s and 1870s. Using the Impressionists' broad brush strokes, which are clearly visible on the canvas, the artist reveals the very means by which she has constructed the painting. She thereby creates an intensely personal relationship with the viewer, since she has not smoothly polished away the strokes of the brush that indicate her presence in the creative process. Typically, too, the broad strokes . . . seem to flatten the perspective of the painting, drawing our attention to the two-dimensionality of the

canvas, almost in a mosaic-like way. They create an overall surface design of bright color that only suggests, rather than precisely delineates, the forms of the flowers, the trees, and even the house in back of the garden. Hügy indulges here in a virtuoso technique that translates, just as Monet and his fellow French Impressionists did, the natural effects of a garden seen in full bloom into a lavish pattern of texture and color. In its unpretentious subject, its seeming spontaneity, and its eminently painterly style, it is a fine example of Impressionist painting in America.

In the Minnesota Historical Society collection.



Phalen Lagoon, a 15 x 21 in. watercolor that Alice Hügy painted circa 1930, depicts the south channel bridge in Phalen Park, St. Paul. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

of Fine Arts, Hügy used the naturalism of the Barbizon School and occasionally the broken brushwork and tactile surface of the French Impressionists, although color was her main interest rather than the subtle play of light.”⁷⁵

Throughout her career, Hügy’s work celebrated the beauty of nature, which she revealed in colorful still life works that were predominantly floral and landscapes that captured scenic areas of St. Paul, such as the Mississippi River Valley and Lake Phalen. Her love of nature was already evident in photographs Hügy took as a young woman, which record what familiar sites in St. Paul looked like at turn of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ Hügy would later paint several of these local parks and landmarks.

Having spent nearly her entire life in St. Paul, except for the five years she worked in New York City, Hügy was popular with local art collectors during her lifetime and her work is still well represented in private as well as museum

collections.⁷⁷ Since her death, Hügy’s work has been included in several group shows. In the fall of 1979, The Swedish Institute in Minneapolis mounted an exhibit entitled “1929,” which reprised the earlier show at the MIA. The brochure identified her “Swede Hollow” as a painting of the “historically significant Swede Hollow immigrant community.”⁷⁸ In 1984, Hügy was included in “Private Collectors and Art by Women,” an exhibition mounted by WARM that showcased works by women that were held in private art collections in the Twin Cities.⁷⁹ Alice Hügy’s work was most recently exhibited in 2007 at the Minnesota Museum of American Art in a group show called “In Her Own Right: Minnesota’s First Generation of Women Artists,” which featured five pioneering female artists: Hügy, Mairs, Frances Cranmer Greenman, Josephine Lutz Rollins, and Ada Wolfe.⁸⁰

Despite her inclusion in these major exhibits, there are some who felt that Hügy deserved more

recognition. Paul Kramer, a successful artist in his own right and the founder of the Kramer Art Gallery, stated, “I suppose the person who probably doesn’t have the kind of recognition that she should have had is Alice Hügy who . . . probably wasn’t in the right circles or come along at the right time . . .”⁸¹ That Hügy didn’t hold the highest positions in the art schools where she taught and the other art organizations she served is likely due to her personality more than anything else.⁸² Hügy was not ambitious and did not promote herself. Alluding to her unassuming nature, Tom Blanck, a collector of Hügy’s work, indicated that her characterization of herself as “just a flower painter” was “total self-deprecation.”⁸³ Pursuing neither fame nor fortune, she seems to have found artmaking its own reward. In her words:

There is no delight greater than the delight of creating something—something all your own which expresses you, apart from every other human being ... this satisfaction is what art does for the artist ... the expression of beauty in art is as important to a human experience as any other. ... Art is the response to the beauty and wonders of the world in which we live.⁸⁴

Alice Hügy’s Personal Life

Alice Elizabeth Hügy immigrated to Minnesota as a young child and grew up on the West Side of St. Paul. She was born on January 2, 1876 in Solothurn, a small city in the German-speaking area of Switzerland. Around 1879 her mother Marie Hügy (née Wanner) died and her father, Louis E. Hügy emigrated to the U.S. and went to Chicago.⁸⁵ She and her sister Anna were brought to St. Paul by her French uncle, René Vilatte, and raised in his home at 429 South Robert Street. During the 1880s and ‘90s, Vilatte operated a butcher shop next to the family home. He reportedly left the management of the meat market to his wife Elise, while he hung out down by the river on the West Side Flats in a shanty at 93 Livingston Avenue. Described as an eccentric free spirit who did not hesitate to voice his opinions, he apparently had an influence on Alice’s personality and encouraged her to become an artist.⁸⁶

By the age of sixteen, Alice was earning a living by producing pen and ink drawings for



newspaper advertisements, perhaps under the aegis of W. L. Banning Jr., a pioneering St. Paul ad agency where she was clearly employed by 1895. Banning published a wide range of products, including Central High’s yearbooks. In the back of the 1893 yearbook, Banning advertised, “We furnish advertising ideas and make all classes of designs and illustrations.” Alice may have designed some of the graphics for Central High yearbooks about the time she would have graduated from there, had she pursued a high school education. Hügy continued to work for Banning throughout the nineties, creating various promotional materials for many St. Paul companies, including the Elk Laundry, the J. George Smith Candy Store, and the Louis F. Dow Company.⁸⁷

Her local accomplishments as a commercial artist and gifted student at St. Paul’s School of

Alice E. Hügy, “Tiger Lilies,” ca 1933, oil on canvas, 30 × 21 3/4 in. Collection of the Weisman Art Museum at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Gift of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project, Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1943.750

The Villate Meat Market, 424 South Robert Street, St. Paul. Standing in front from right to left are Anna Hügy, Alice Hügy, René Villate, his wife Elizabeth and Gustave LeClerq, a business partner. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.



Fine Art enabled her to get a job in an established advertising firm in New York City. Alice Hügy was not listed in the city directory from 1901-1904, the years she referred to when she wrote, "I spent five years in New York doing commercial work for a living and going to all the exhibitions of paintings." When she returned to St. Paul, she took a position with the Bureau of Engraving, which soon became the Buckbee-Mears Company. By 1910 Hügy was self-employed and working out of the family home at 612 Cherokee, built by her uncle René shortly before he died in 1907.⁸⁸ Going forward, she supported herself by doing freelance work, which included producing pen and ink drawings for local businesses and other art, notably a suffrage poster she did for Walter R. Ramsey in 1919, the year Congress passed the nineteenth amendment.⁸⁹

While supporting herself as a commercial artist, she continued to study at the St. Paul School of Fine Art, and later the St. Paul Institute, where she rounded out her education by taking classes in other disciplines such as music, literature, philosophy, and humanity. By 1920 she had become a respected fine artist, teacher, and prominent member of the St. Paul arts community.

Her achievements as an artist and the connections she had made during the twenties led

to steady employment during the Great Depression. She was selected to create public art and teach at the St. Paul Arts and Crafts Center. An article in the *Pioneer Press* noted "During the 1920s and depression '30s, Alice and her classes were familiar scenes, busy in the parks, on street corners, in hidden cul de sacs, sketching and painting the city."⁹⁰ The article referred to her as the "matriarch of the St. Paul art colony," a sobriquet that reflected her longtime involvement in the local art scene. She had been a student in St. Paul's first art school, taught and exhibited for many years in its successors, and been active in various St. Paul art organizations, in many cases as one of the founding members.

Alice's personality likely contributed to her visibility in the community and the respect she enjoyed during her lifetime. She was a colorful character who was outspoken like her uncle, whose influence on her apparently went beyond encouraging her interest in art. Although she voiced strong opinions on politics and religion, she did not use her artwork to send messages, but as her nephew put it, "If she had something to say, she said it."⁹¹ Hügy apparently had little interest in money and was generous. On several occasions, she gave away her paintings for charitable causes. When the city was in the process of purchasing private property for Holman Field,



Photographs of Alice Hügy, 1909. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

St. Paul's downtown airport, she donated the piece of property at 93 Livingston she had inherited from her uncle.⁹²

Hügy became a neighborhood celebrity for her role in preserving Cherokee Regional Park, known for its spectacular view of the Mississippi River Valley, and both Minneapolis and St. Paul's downtowns. In 1923 Hügy led a campaign that resulted in the rerouting of Cherokee Heights Parkway (now Cherokee Heights Boulevard) to avoid the removal of two large oak trees. When the park was later threatened by commercial development, Hügy was at the center of neighborhood resistance that ultimately defeated the project. For her major part in these political battles, she was affectionately referred to as the "Grand Dame of the Riverview-Cherokee Heights neighborhood."⁹³

By 1967 Hügy, who had been gradually losing her sight, was blind and reluctantly gave up her longtime home across the street from Cherokee Park. Her house and its contents, which included hundreds of her art works, were sold to pay for her care at Wilder Nursing Home. Her long and prolific career was celebrated with an exhibit at the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Greater St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce presented her with an Outstanding Citizen award. Hügy died in St. Paul on November 24, 1971, at the age of 95.⁹⁴ Her obituary referred to her as the matriarch of the St. Paul art colony.

Diane Trout-Oertel, an architect and longtime resident of St. Paul, has contributed two previous Ramsey County History articles about notable women in the city's history.

NOTES

1. *Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi, 1890-1915*, Michael Conforti, Ed. (Associated University Presses, Inc., Cranbury NJ, London, Ontario Canada, 1994), 97. (Hereafter *Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi*) In 1883 a private association of art-minded middle and upper-middle class citizens founded the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, which set the City on a trajectory to becoming the art capital of Minnesota. For more information, see Jeffrey A Hess, *Their Splendid Legacy: The First 100 Years of the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, 1985). The trustees of the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts founded the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts (renamed the Minneapolis School of Art in 1910, reflecting the new emphasis on applied arts, and renamed the Minneapolis College of Art and Design in 1970). In 1886 the school appointed New England painter Douglas Volk its first director. In 1893 the school attracted artist Robert Koehler, who taught there a year before succeeding Volk as director. Koehler became a catalyst for the artistic community, founding the Artist League, an association of the area's leading local painters. Interest in the Arts was furthered by exhibitions held in the new Industrial Exposition Building, a large hall built in 1883 on the west side of St. Anthony Falls that accommodated

commercial fairs and cultural exhibits, including shows featuring prominent artists from the East as well as local talent. By 1889 Minneapolis also had a public library, where smaller art exhibits were occasionally sponsored by the Society of Fine Arts. Lacking a suitable venue, art shows and other cultural exhibits were limited in St. Paul to occasional events organized by its women's clubs. St. Paul newspapers were quick to point out that the city was lagging behind its neighbor and cities in the east. See also the *St. Paul Daily Globe*, February 4, 1892 and November 6, 1895. Artists had been immigrating to St. Paul and giving art lessons as early as the 1850s. Noted New York artist Charles Noel Flagg held classes in St. Paul in the mid-1880s. The St. Paul Drawing Academy operated at 54 East Kellogg from 1876-86, according to an unpublished list of art schools in St. Paul, compiled from city directories (1856-1978) by Robert E. Hoag, SPPL item no. F51853.

2. Julie L'Enfant, *Pioneer Modernists: Minnesota's First Generation of Women Artists* (Afton, MN: Afton Press, 2011), 84. L'Enfant gave "Segal" as the artist's last name, which is how Hügy spelled it in an autobiographical statement she wrote for the catalogue of the Fine Arts Exhibition at the State Fair in 1949. An article in the *St. Paul Daily Globe* September 12, 1890, 1,

indicates that Segall gave lessons, at first in the Presley block and later at 50 West Third Street.

3. Ibid, 82; *St. Paul City Directory* (St Paul, R. L. Polk & Co, 1893-9). Hügy was listed in the business section under artists in 1893. From 1896-9, she was listed as an employee of the Banning advertising agency at 317 Wabasha in St. Paul.

4 “Origins, Growth and Achievements of the St. Paul School of Fine Art,” *The Saint Paul Globe*, May 15, 1904, 42; *St. Paul Daily Globe*, September 12, 1890, p 1. The Metropolitan Hotel (1870-1913) was located at the present-day site of the 317 on Rice Park Event Center, formerly the Minnesota Club. The art classes were held in the well-lit penthouse that was added shortly after 1890.

5. *Minneapolis Tribune*, November 18, 1894, p 15; *St. Paul Daily Globe*, January 16, 1895, 5. Burt Harwood later became well known for the Indian paintings he did in Taos, New Mexico beginning in 1916. Grace McKinstry (1859-1936), best known as a portrait painter of notable Minnesotans, was an art advocate, lecturer, and a founding officer of the State Art Society.

6. The Art Students League, which had been founded in the summer of 1875 by students who left the conservative National Academy of Design, became the most influential art school in America. See artstudentsleague.org/about. The SPSFA followed the League’s curriculum until about 1903, when Miss Bonta became director of the school and introduced the method taught by A. W. Dow, head of the art department of Columbia university.

7. *The Saint Paul Daily Globe*, June 28, 1896, 17. A full description of the interior of the Sibley House is provided.

8. *The Saint Paul Globe*, July 11, 1897, 14.

9. *The Broad Ax*, August 13, 1896. Article places Hügy in Harwood’s sketch class in Mendota in 1896. When Harwood moved to Paris, he was succeeded by Ina Norton Barber, who was also a member of the Art Students’ League. *The Broad Ax*, September 16, 1897, has Alice spending three weeks in Mendota attending Miss Barber’s sketch class.

10. Susan Hanson Clayton, “Sufficiently in Earnest: Tracing Institutional Change at St. Paul’s Minnesota Museum of American Art” (Master’s thesis, University of St. Thomas, 2002), 15. Alexis Fournier (1865-1948) made frequent appearances at the summer sessions in Mendota. He spent the better part of 1897-99 in Paris, but he would have been available to teach in the summers of 1896 and 1897, which he spent in Minnesota.

11. L’Enfant, 86. R.S. McCourt, *The History of the Old Sibley House*, Minnesota Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (St. Paul, 1910).

12. The Moore Block was located approximately where the apartment building catty-corner from Xcel Energy Center is today. The SPSFA remained in the mixed-use block until 1903, after which it was headquartered at 48 East Fourth Street (Cedar and Minnesota Streets) until 1908.

13. *The Saint Paul Globe*, October 3, 1897, 5.

14. *The Saint Paul Globe*. February 6, 1898, 3.

15. *The Saint Paul Globe*, September 28, 1902, 23.

16. L’Enfant, 82. “To commemorate our fiftieth anniversary, Bureau of Engraving, Inc,” unpublished booklet on the history of the Bureau of Engraving, 1948, MHS, St. Paul, MN (call no. TR970.B8775 1948). The first successful commercial method of half-tone printing was patented by Frederic Eugene Ives (1856 –1937). The process was introduced in MN by the Bureau of Engraving (not to be confused with the Federal Bureau of Engraving and Printing) was a company started in Minneapolis by artist Edwin F. Bauer and Robert M. Schmerler. In 1900 the firm was joined by J. C. Buckbee, who would serve as its President for the next five decades. Subsidiary engraving plants or branch offices were soon established in Saint Paul, Omaha, Kansas City, Des Moines, Davenport and Milwaukee.

17. The St.Paul branch became Buckbee Mears around 1907. Alice Hügy is listed in the city directory as an artist for the Bureau of Engraving in 1906, and by 1909 she is listed as an employee of Buckbee Mears.

18. The St. Paul Auditorium was demolished in 1982 to make way for the Ordway, which was built partly on its site. A 1932 addition to the west side of the building, designed by African-American architect Clarence W. Wigington, was not demolished and is known today as the Roy Wilkins Auditorium.

19. *St. Paul Daily Globe*, February 16, 1890, Sunday Issue, 1; *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, February 4, 1892, 8. The need for a public building incorporating an auditorium, a public library, and art gallery had been the subject of many other *Globe* newspaper articles after 1890.

20. L’Enfant 90. See “First Year-Book of the St. Paul Institute of Arts and Sciences: A Record of Its Activities from Its Incorporation April 28, 1908 to June 1, 1909,” in the collections of MNHS for more information.

21. The applied arts offered included ceramics, textile design, illustration, photography, printmaking, and industrial design.

22. Hügy autobiographical statement, 1949 State Fair, Minnesota State Fair Annual Fine Arts Exhibition Catalogs, Minnesota Historical Society (hereafter MNHS).

23. Leo Harris, “Fine Arts Exhibits at the Minnesota State Fair, 1885-1914,” *Ramsey County History*, vol. 48, no. 2, 3-11.

24. Grace McKinstry was a founding officer of the Minnesota State Arts Society, created c. 1903 by the Minnesota legislature. From 1915 to 1928 the fair sponsored juried shows of work by Minnesota artists under the leadership of Maurice Flagg, the society’s first director. After suffering a brief setback under the leadership of a gallery owner from New York who featured academic art from New York and Chicago galleries, the emphasis would return to Minnesota artists in 1932, after a group of local artists protested this lack of local representation.

25. Katherine Goertz, “Haupers, Clement

(1900-1982)," MNopedia, MNHS. From 1915 to 1928 the fair sponsored juried shows of work by Minnesota artists under the leadership of Maurice Flagg. After suffering a brief setback under the leadership of a gallery owner from New York who featured academic art from New York and Chicago galleries, the emphasis would return to Minnesota artists in 1932, after a group of local artists protested this lack of local representation. Clement Haupers was then put in charge at the urging of Cameron Booth.

26. L'Enfant, 33.

27. L'Enfant, 90. In 1948 Hügy, Mairs, and Jemne were also included in an exhibition at the library entitled "Eleven St. Paul Women Artists," the catalog for which can be found in the Hauper-Mairs papers at MNHS.

28. *Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi*, preface. The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts was the driving force behind the MIA, the first permanent art museum in the Twin Cities. Founded in 1883, the Society, which initially raised the public's interest in fine art by exhibiting works borrowed from local collections, was largely responsible for establishing Minneapolis as the art capital in the region.

29. L'Enfant, 91.

30. Robert E. Hoag, Unpublished list of art schools in St. Paul, compiled from city directories (1856-1978). Saint Paul Public Library, item no. F51853. The Institute remained in operation until 1926, but dropped references to the Institute School of Art in 1916.

31. Clara Mairs is sometimes credited with organizing the League. Clara Mairs (1878-1963) received her early training at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the St. Paul Institute School of Art. She and Haupers later studied in Paris.

32. Bob Brown's presence in St. Paul was intermittent during this period but he was almost certainly in St. Paul in 1919, the year he married Louise Driese of St. Paul. See Paul Nelson, "Bob Brown: 'Paint What You See,'" *Ramsey County History*, vol 57, no 2, 14-26.

33. L'Enfant, 34.

34. "Winter Catalog of The Saint Paul School of Art, October 1st, 1928, to June 1st, 1929," Saint Paul School of Art and Saint Paul Gallery and School of Art catalog collection, 1928/1929-1962/1963, MNHS. The school was managed by a student body named the Art Students League of St. Paul, which was "open to students who have worked in the School for three months and qualify otherwise." Samuel Chatwood Burton (1881-1947), Professor of Art and Architecture at the University of Minnesota, is thought to have been the St. Paul School of Art's first director. Born in Manchester, England, he was an etcher, sculptor, lithographer and painter.

35. Clayton dissertation, 28.

36. L'Enfant, 95.

37. "The M's Story," accessed July 7, 2025, mmaa.org. See "M Locations Over Time" for dates and locations of the museum's forerunners, from the SPSFA to the MMAA. The chronology incorrectly places the

art school in the Auditorium from 1904-1909. It was located at 46 East Fourth Street from 1904-1907, when it moved to the newly completed Auditorium at 48 West Fourth Street.

38. Garith Hiebert, "Sales, Shows to Honor Artist Alice Hügy, 91," *St. Paul Sunday Pioneer Press*, March 5, 1967, First Sec., 20; Hiebert wrote that Hügy taught for thirty years at the "St. Paul School of Art," a term that also refers to the school during the period it was called the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art.

39. The building was occupied by the Haines Photography Studio for many years.

40. The short-lived program, which operated from December 8, 1933, to May 20, 1934, was administered by the United States Treasury Department, with funding from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The artists were selected based on their artistic qualifications and their need for employment.

41. Nina Marchetti Archabal, "In Memoriam CAMERON BOOTH 1892—1980 A Chronicle from His Scrapbooks," *Minnesota History*, vol. 47, no. 3, fall 1980, 104. Cameron Booth left the Minneapolis School of Art (MSA) to fill the position made vacant at the St. Paul School of Art by the sudden death of Anthony Angarola, a promising young local artist and teacher who had taken over in 1929 for Haupers, who had left for Paris. Several sources have suggested that Booth made the move in response to the commercial direction that MSA took in 1927, when Edmund Martin Kopietz was brought to MSA to change its emphasis from fine arts to applied arts based on his experience at the Chicago School of Art. In the Hügy papers at MNHS, a letter dated May 22, 1930 to Hügy from Sam C. Sabeau criticized MSA's commercial direction and suggested it gave the St. Paul school "an opportunity to become the leading art center in the Northwest."

42. The ambitious employment and infrastructure program created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935. Over its eight years of existence, President Roosevelt's WPA relief program put roughly 8.5 million Americans to work building schools, hospitals, roads, and other public works and also sponsored projects in the arts, providing jobs for actors, musicians, writers, and other artists.

43. Archabal, 105.

44. Clement Haupers, interview by George Reid and Nina Archabal, June 27, 1977, interview no. OH 1.4, transcript pages 2-14, Oral History Project, MNHS. Clement Haupers said he thought he was chosen to lead FAP because he had given art lectures for the State Emergency Relief Program by giving art lectures and contributed prints to Public Works of Art Program plus he had started to manage the art section at the MN State Fair in 1931. Clement Haupers (1900-1982) was well known as an art educator who influenced decades of young artists and an administrator, who was instrumental in developing the visual arts in Minnesota. He began teaching in 1930s at the St. Paul Arts and Crafts Center and the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art and continued teaching until his death. He became the superintendent

of the Fine Arts Department of the Minnesota State Fair in 1931, a position he held until 1942.

45. L'Enfant, 95.

46. Clement Haupers, interview by George Reid and Mary Harvey, December 9, 1977, interview no. OH1.5, transcript p.2, Oral History Project, MNHS.

47. Archabal, "In Memoriam CAMERON BOOTH," 106. In 1942 Cameron Booth won the coveted Guggenheim award and left the St. Paul School of Art to travel in the American West and paint. In 1944 Booth joined the faculty of the Art Students League of New York.

48. L'Enfant, 98.

49. Going forward it would still sometimes be referred to as the St. Paul School of Art.

50. Rena Neumann Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, Afton Historical Society Press (Afton, Minn., 1996); Paul Kramer, interview by Scott Strommen, 27 October 1981, interview OH29, transcript p. 14, Oral History Project, MNHS; Hiebert, Hügy20. All three sources mention the Newton Building at Fifth and Minnesota as a downtown location for the school's classes. Coen wrote that Hügy taught for many years in the Newton Building. She also credited Hügy for establishing St. Paul's first art gallery, an undocumented fact that has been repeated by others many times. She may have concluded this from a line in Hiebert's article regarding Hügy's leading role in "the first St. Paul Gallery and School of Art," a phrase which actually referred to the school of that name.

51. "St. Paul Gallery and School of Art Annual Exhibition of Twin Cities Artists," Exhibit catalog, April 1940, and "St. Paul Gallery and School of Art Second Annual Exhibition of Twin Cities Artists," Exhibit catalog, April 4-30, 1941, Kay Spangler, Minnesota Annual/Biennial Fine Art Exhibition Project Records, MNHS. Hügy sold her watercolor "Spring" for \$35 in the former and an oil "Yellow Canna" for \$100 in the latter.

52. L'Enfant, 99. Hügy was represented by "Green Apples," the watercolor that had taken first place in the still life category at the 1928 Minnesota State Fair, and two oils, "Blue and Purple Irises" and "Common Garden Variety."

53. L'Enfant, 99-100, quoting Marie Peck, Chairman of Arrangements, '30, '40, '50: *Three Decades of Painting in St. Paul*, exh. cat. (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Museum of Art, 1957).

54. L'Enfant, 100; Hiebert, 20.

55. Clayton dissertation, 33-39; "History of the M's Collection," accessed July 22, 2025, <https://mmaa.org/collection/history-of-the-ms-collection>.

56. "St. Paul Gallery and School of Art First Biennial Exhibition," Exhibit catalog, November 1961, Kay Spangler, Minnesota Annual/biennial Fine Art Exhibition Project Records, MNHS. Collection also includes catalogs for the biennials the school sponsored in 1963 and 1966.

57. Paul Kramer, interview by Scott Strommen, October 27, 1981, interview OH29, Transcript p. 42-43, MNHS; Craft Today USA, accessed March 23, 2025, <https://artvee.com/dl/craft-today-usa>. The United

States Information Agency (1953 to 1999) was a foreign affairs agency that promoted U.S. values and interests abroad.

58. Financed by a municipal bond, the building would later become the home of McNally Smith College of Music and is now the home of the History Theatre.

59. The school changed its name twice and moved to various locations in St. Paul. When it closed in 2013, it was known as the College of Visual Arts, located at 344 Summit Avenue. Lowell Stanley Bobleter (1902-73) was a prominent St. Paul artist who at various times served as a director of the SPSA, a superintendent of the State Fair's fine arts department and an art professor at Hamline University.

60. Since the 1990s, the museum exhibits American art with a focus on Minnesota art.

61. The modernist gem on Kellogg was originally built for the Women's Club.

62. "The M's Story." The author disagrees with the MMAA's contention that its history dates back to St. Paul's first art school incorporated in 1894, not only because there was an eight-year gap between the SPISA and the SPSA that left St. Paul without an art school until local artists organized the SPAS in 1926, but because the M's art collection can at best be traced back to the 1940s.

63. Clement Haupers, interview by Thomas O'Sullivan and Elizabeth Knight, April 3, 1981, interview no. OH1.6, transcript p. 23, Oral History Project, MNHS. Haupers suggested that, once the school transitioned to a museum, it did not do much for local artists.

64. Coen, 59; St. Paul City Directories 1893-9. Hügy was listed in the business section under artists in 1893. By 1896, she was listed as an employee of the Wm L. Banning Jr. ad agency at 317 Wabasha in St. Paul. She likely produced her earliest ads on a freelance basis.

65. Hiebert, 15.

66. Hügy autobiographical statement, 1949 State Fair; "Charles Dana Gibson," accessed March 8, 2025, <https://americanillustration.org/project/charles-dana-gibson>. Charles Dana Gibson (1867-1944) was an American illustrator who got his start with *Life* magazine around 1885. By 1890 his illustrations were in demand and he was also doing illustrations for *Scribner's*, *Century*, and *Harper's*.

67. L'Enfant, 86; Coen, 59. Priscilla's image became well-known throughout the greater Twin Cities area.

68. Hügy autobiographical statement, 1949 State Fair; Peter C. Merrill, *German-American Artists in Early America: A Biographical Dictionary*, Friends of the Max Kade Institute for German American Studies, Inc. (Madison, Wisc.: 1997), 117-120; *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, September 12, 1890. Julius G. Segall (1860-1925) was born in what is now Poland. His family immigrated to the U.S. in 1872 and settled in Milwaukee. After studying in Munich, where he was trained to paint in the realistic style popular in Munich, he returned to America to enjoy a long professional career as a representational artist and teacher. In 1890 he and his wife Regina Werner moved to St. Paul, where he taught

drawing and painting at Hamline University for two years and gave lessons downtown. Later he maintained a studio in the Globe Building at 36 East Fourth Street. The Segalls returned to Milwaukee in 1904, where they lived for the rest of their lives.

69. *Saint Paul Daily News*, March 19, 1926. See also *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, March 21, 1926.

70. Hügy autobiographical statement, 1949 State Fair; Coen, 59. Hügy's painting, which is now in the collections at MNHS, had also received an honorable mention from MIA in 1927.

71. "Minnesota Artists of 1929," Kay Spangler, Minnesota Annual/Biennial Fine Art Exhibition Project Records, MNHS.

72. "Minnesota State Fair, 1917," Kay Spangler, Minnesota Annual/Biennial Fine Art Exhibition Project Records, MNHS.

73. Hügy autobiographical statement, 1949 State Fair.

74. Minnesota State Fair Annual Fine Arts Exhibition Catalogs, MNHS. Undated watercolors entitled "Juneau, Alaska" and "Harbor of Vancouver" suggest Hügy made a trip to the Northwest and Alaska.

75. *L'Enfant*, 92.

76. Alice Hügy photograph album, MNHS. Twenty-four photos taken in the 1890s include views of the Indian Mounds, Como Park, Lake Phalen, Fort Snelling, the Sibley House and two buildings now gone, the Armory and the Eisenmenger Ruins.

77. MNHS owns a number of her artworks and the Minnesota Museum of American Art owns a watercolor and a drawing. The Weisman owns an oil.

78. "Minnesota Artists 50 Years Ago: 50 Works of Minnesota Artists of 1929," Kay Spangler, Minnesota Annual/Biennial Fine Art Exhibition Project Records, MNHS.

79. *L'Enfant*, 243. Women's Art Registry of Minnesota was a cooperative gallery that sponsored exhibitions and programs to educate the public about women's art.

80. *L'Enfant*, 11, preface by Brian Scott.

81. Paul Kramer, interview by Scott Strommen, October 27, 1981, interview OH29, transcript p. 82. Paul S. Kramer (1919-2012) was a prominent painter, educator, and gallery owner who studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts after his initial training at SPSCA, where he later taught, eventually becoming director of exhibitions. His public career also included being superintendent of the Minnesota State Fair fine arts department from 1957 to 1974, where he helped usher in a new generation of Minnesota artists.

82. Hügy was not listed as a faculty member in St. Paul Art school brochures, whether due to her lack of academic credentials or her preference to remain solely an instructor.

83. *L'Enfant*, 95, quoting Tom Blanck interview, February 6, 2009.

84. Hiebert, 15-20. Hiebert quoting Hügy for his article in the *Pioneer Press*.

85. *Germans to America*, 1878, 113; census records; *Saint Paul Globe*, February 8, 1899. It is not clear why

their father Louie (Louis) Hügy immigrated to the U.S. in 1878 and worked in Chicago until he joined the Vilattes in St. Paul around 1900. Alice visited her father in Chicago shortly before he joined the family in St. Paul.

86. Coen, 59; Alice E. Hügy, "Alice E. Hügy Papers, 1874-1967," N.p., 1874, MNHS. Note on the back of Vilatte's business card reads, "fled from France during its trouble, where he had been a member of the aristocracy (son from first marriage was the archbishop of Paris or some such); came to this country and traveled and worked along the Great Lakes and with the voyageurs—of which he was one for awhile—settled in St. Paul where he operated a butcher shop with one LeClerc in the '80s and '90s, spent most of his days cursing the U. S. and the Catholic church." Vilatte, who came to America in 1874 (*L'Enfant*, 81), brought Alice, Anne, and new wife to the U.S. in 1880 or 1882. Most census records indicate Alice and her sister arrived in St. Paul in 1880.

87. St. Paul City Directory, 1894-99. Hügy was listed as an artist in the business section in 1894, as an employee of Banning Co. at 317 Wabasha in 1895, as its designer in 1897 and its illustrator in 1899. Originally an engraving and publishing concern, Banning became one of St. Paul's first true ad agencies; *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, May 2, 1895, January 27, 1889, and September 28, 1900. Her sister Anna was salutatorian of her graduation class at Central High School. Both had attended Humboldt School. Anna married Herman J Mehl in 1900 and apparently married a second time because her son was named Arthur Armstrong; Central High School, yearbook collection, 1890-1921, MNHS. The 1893, 1894, and 1897 yearbooks were printed by Banning. The logo Hügy designed for the Elk Laundry, located at 51 West Third Street, can be seen among the sponsors' ads at the back of the 1897 yearbook. See also Hiebert, 15.

88. Hügy autobiographical statement, 1949 State Fair; St. Paul City Directory, 1906-1920. She inherited the house after her stepmother Elise Vilatte died in 1917. For several years her sister Anna Armstrong and son Arthur lived with her. After Anna died, she raised her nephew.

89. *L'Enfant*, 90.

90. *Pioneer Press*, May 1, 1932.

91. Hiebert, 15, 20.

92. *Ibid*; *L'Enfant*, 95.

93. *L'Enfant*, 98; Coen, 60; Hiebert, 20. West Side residents considered requesting that the city council rename Cherokee Oaks Park to Alice Hügy Park. Near the house where Hügy lived is a little pocket of public land called Alice Park that may well have been named in her honor.

94. The *Pioneer Press* reported she was 95, which is supported by the U.S. Security Index that states Alice Hügy was born on January 2, 1876; the Minnesota Death Index states she was born on January 2, 1878. Most sources, including census records, agree with the former.

Growing Up Working at a Saint Paul Jewish Delicatessen

ROBIN J. DOROSHOW

So, what exactly is a Jewish Delicatessen? The word “delicatessen” itself means delicacy in German, but the image it evokes, when coupled with the descriptor, Jewish, is something more visceral: the smell of freshly baked bread, mounds of corned beef and pastrami piled high on caraway rye, half dills, full sours, pickled beets, and the list goes on.

Before we go too much further, let’s have a look at a bit of history: Jewish immigration to the United States began with a trickle back in the eighteenth century when Sephardic Jews (those who originated in the Iberian Peninsula, with some stopping for short or longer periods in South America or on various Caribbean islands following their hasty departure due to the

Spanish Inquisition) made their way to the New World. This small group didn’t venture as far north as the Minnesota and Dakota Territories, but they were the earliest Jewish immigrants to the Americas. Their numbers never represented even one percent of the American population.¹

A wave of German Jewish immigration to the United States peaked around 1850, and some German Jews came to the Upper Midwest. But it wasn’t until the Eastern European wave of Jewish immigration, which began around 1880, that large numbers of Jews settled in this area.²

Many Jews landed and stayed in New York, helping to make the Lower East Side of the city among the most densely populated places on the planet.³ It was at this time that the Jewish

Cecil’s Deli was opened in 1949 at 651 Cleveland Avenue South, where it still resides today. Courtesy Becca Leventhal Kvasnik.



delicatessen became a thing, and it is believed that there were hundreds in that city during the first decade of the twentieth century.⁴

While many Jews remained in New York City and the East Coast more generally, others did move west into the interior of the country, and Minnesota became home to many Eastern European Jewish immigrants. The Jewish deli followed and at one time, there were multiple Jewish delis from which to choose in both St. Paul and Minneapolis.⁵

Originally most, if not all, Jewish delis were kosher, meaning that they abided by the biblical rules surrounding the slaughtering of animals for meat and other food-related prohibitions.⁶

Over the years, some Jewish delis followed these laws strictly, while others became less strict. Some maintained separate meat slicers for kosher meat and non-kosher meat. Some became “kosher-style” meaning that the dishes were reminiscent of original deli food but were not in compliance with strict kosher rules.⁷

Oral History

With this background information, I’d like to turn now to one individual, Rick Dorshow, who spent four years of his youth working at Cecil’s Delicatessen in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul. Cecil’s Deli was first opened in 1949 by the husband and wife Cecil and Faye Glickman and remains a staple of St. Paul’s Highland Park neighborhood at 651 Cleveland Avenue South to this day.

First, Rick is my cousin; and secondly, we spell our last names differently—it’s not a typo. With that out of the way, please meet Rick, who now lives and works in St. Louis, Missouri. Rick worked at Cecil’s from 1970 until 1974 during his last two years of high school at Highland Park Senior High School and his first two years of college at the University of Minnesota.

The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

■ How did you decide you wanted to work at Cecil’s?

Rick Dorshow: My Dad knew Cecil and asked if he needed help when I was in high school. I don’t think I had an interview, just was told to show up one day and start working.

■ What job did you receive?

Rick: I started out as the dishwasher for the restaurant portion of the deli. Cecil’s wife, Faye, oversaw the restaurant and strove to have her employees deliver the optimum service. Faye most likely showed me the dishwasher tasks and equipment. I recall it being pretty warm in the little dishwashing room, and the dishwasher machine was at the end of a horizontal counter that had a sink and disposal at the front end.

■ Was that your position for the entire time that you worked at Cecil’s?

Rick: No, I think I did that for one summer and then was “promoted” to being a baker assistant. The baker assistant job was to help whoever was the baker that day, usually Cecil or David (Leventhal, Cecil’s son-in-law). I would show up at 6:30 a.m. I think, and we would get the refrigerated bagels and bread (already formed and delivered from Baldinger the day before)⁸ out of the cooler. I remember then dipping the bagels in a vat of water and placing them on an oven tray. The bagels and bread were loaded into a giant oven with several rotating shelves. Once baked, these

Rick Dorshow working behind the counter at Cecil’s Deli in the early 1970s. Courtesy of Rick Dorshow.



goods were taken out of the oven and put on racks to cool before being brought up to the deli counter for sale. We did more than one baking in the morning.

At some subsequent time, I was promoted once again to the deli counter. I worked with Cecil Glickman at the counter, and worked with Cecil luminaries such as Mike Bernath, Fast Eddie Brody, and Cecil's son-in-law David Leventhal, who eventually took over the deli. I also worked with Morris Lifson, Todd Lifson's grandfather. He was known as "Big Mo," I think for his kind reputation as he was a normal sized guy. I remember being at the deli when Morris said, "Ricky, I don't feel well." Turns out he was having a heart attack; his son took him to the hospital. Morris survived that but never worked again at Cecil's. Interestingly, Todd Lifson worked at Cecil's years after me.

■ **And you eventually ended up with a management position, right?**

Rick: After another year, I was promoted to Monday night manager. The restaurant portion was closed on Mondays, so after 5 p.m. it was just the manager (me) and one other counter help person. Rick Brody and Doug Watchman were often my Monday night help. I would

come from school and do the Monday night shift as manager. I think I would do another night shift during the week and then on the weekends.

■ **Do you have memories of particular customers or experiences you had while on the job?**

Rick: I remember Wally Hilgenberg and Roy Winston of the Minnesota Vikings came into Cecil's on a Monday, a day after losing to the Detroit Lions. They said they would do better next week.

I remember waiting on a very nice elderly lady, Mrs. Rutman. I was later informed she was Bob Dylan's mother. Her husband often came into the store on Monday nights, telling me he was a friend of Cecil and asking to have some Kosher meat stored in the cooler. I don't think I ever said "no."

Marty O'Neil, the wrestling announcer for Vern Gagne's American Wrestling Association (AWA), would come in quite often and get a pint of potato salad and a pint of coleslaw.

■ **Were all your colleagues Jewish?**

Rick: I think at the time I worked there, everyone was Jewish.

Cecil's founders Cecil and Faye Glickman (*left*), and Faye (*right*) working at Cecil's shortly after it opened in 1949. Faye cooked and created the original recipes for all of the signature items, despite being a vegetarian herself. *Courtesy Becca Leventhal Kvasnik.*



■ **Can you share some thoughts on the job itself? Your favorite and least favorite parts of the job?**

Rick: I had an easy integration to the deli counter, as I already was intimately familiar with corned beef, big fat kosher hot dogs, potato salad, and various rye breads. I did love the smell of corned beef while slicing it. I did have a feeling of accomplishment when an entire order was assembled. That still rings true to this day, the striving to complete a multi-pronged task (such as getting a product through to FDA approval). I absolutely hated having to deal with the smoked fish and herring and would always try to get someone else to retrieve those items.

■ **How did you end up with your nickname, “Rick the Rook”?**

Rick: When I started on the counter, there had not been a “new” person trained in for a long time. There was Cecil, there was David, there was Fast Eddie, there was Big Mo, and there was an even older fellow than Mo named Hymie. Hence Fast Eddie called me “Rick the Rook” and that stuck for the entire time I was there (even though many came after me while I was there).

■ **Do you have other specific memories to share?**

Rick: There was one regular who came in and always got a “plain rye.” He was obviously from the old country, so we decided he thought caraway seed rye bread was an American abomination.

There was an older gentleman who would always want the bread sliced using the regular width slicer as opposed to the thin width slicer. He pronounced the word “regular” as we imagined Dracula would say it as in “I want to suck your blood regular.” What can I say, teenagers . . .

■ **When you left the employ of Cecil’s in 1974, did you move on to another job or what did you do?**

Rick: In the summer of 1974 I got a part-time job on campus doing some scientific research in the Space Science Center with one of my physics professors. I had to wind down the Cecil time and eventually wound down to zero.

■ **Post-Cecil’s, where did your life journey take you?**

Rick: After college graduation, I went off to graduate school in California, chosen because it was warm. I earned a PhD in physics and my first professional job was in Cleveland with an oil company. Fortunately, I was able to attend Twins and Vikings games when they came to Cleveland to play. Then I took a job with a pharmaceutical/device company in St. Louis. Finally, I had the opportunity to convert the research I was doing into its own company and have been extremely happy that I did this.

■ **Can you share some life lessons that you learned during the four years you worked at Cecil’s?**

Rick: Finish what you start. You could not stop filling the dairy case with perishable products until the job was done. I have always translated that into my work and home life. Be kind to people who are obviously not as fortunate as you are.

One of the original crews to work at Cecil’s Deli. Kathy Tschida, far left, was the first waitress hired by Faye Glickman when she was eighteen years old. She worked at Cecil’s till she was in her seventies. *Courtesy Becca Leventhal Kvasnik.*



■ **Do you have any advice you would give to your younger self?**

Rick: Be kinder than you were back then and be more tolerant of others. This I have developed over the years . . .

In Reflection

As children of cousins, Rick and I grew up as part of the Dorshow/Doroshow family cousins' club, where our parents, and other cousins and their spouses, met in one another's homes monthly. In addition to their regular meetings to socialize, we, the children, were beneficiaries of a close relationship, having events and occasional family vacations together. Now as adults with children of our own, we no longer have this organized group, but when we do connect, it is really like no time has passed since we last spoke. So, thank you to my cousin, Rick, for allowing me to ask these questions and for sharing these experiences with me and with the readers of this publication.

Our common Doroshow great-grandparents, and our respective Doroshow/Dorshow grandparents (all of whom were immigrants) were examples of the trajectory of Eastern European Jewish immigration to the United States between 1880 and the early 1920s. In 1924, Jews, along with other groups such as

Southern Italians, were no longer allowed to immigrate to the United States due to the passage of a national immigration law. This law, the Johnson-Reed Act, also known as the Immigration Act of 1924, was a result of widespread xenophobia, culminating in discrimination against Eastern and Southern Europeans in favor of immigrants from Northern and Western Europe. Sometimes it seems that history repeats itself.

Jewish delis have been referred to by historians as third places—spaces outside homes, schools and workplaces that offer a sense of connectedness and belonging.⁹ I am old enough to remember that feeling of belonging in several Jewish delis in the Twin Cities, most of them long shuttered. But Cecil's in Highland Park remains, and I return for that feeling of connection, and the pastrami.

Robin J. Doroshow lives in Golden Valley with her family. All four of her grandparents and four of her great-grandparents were Third Wave Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, all of whom settled in St. Paul, Minnesota. She has been executive director of the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest since December of 2016, and currently sits on the board of directors of the Council of American Jewish Museums.

NOTES

1. Jonathan D. Sarna and Jonathan Golden, "The American Jewish Experience through the Nineteenth Century: Immigration and Acculturation," Brandeis University National Humanities Center, revised October 2000, <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/judaism.htm>.

2. Laura Weber, "From Exclusion to Integration: The Story of Jews in Minnesota," MNopedia, revised April 16, 2025, <https://www.mnopedia.org/exclusion-integration-story-jews-minnesota>.

3. Eric Ferrara, "How Crowded Was the Lower East Side?," Lower East Side History Project, December 4, 2011, <https://www.leshp.org/blog/how-crowded-was-the-lower-east-side>.

4. Ilana Fish, "How Jewish delis shaped American food culture," *Unpacked*, March 24, 2025, <https://unpacked.media/how-jewish-delis-shaped-american-food-culture>.

5. Laura Weber, "From Exclusion to Integration:

The Story of Jews in Minnesota." Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest, *DELicious: A Forshpayz*, written and produced by Dale Bluestein, published online in 2023, <https://www.jhsum.org/copy-of-video-library-1>.

6. "Kashrut: Jewish Dietary Laws," Blood, Gender and Power in Christianity and Judaism Project, Religion 91 and 491 Seminars at Kenyon College, accessed August 1, 2025, <https://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/Religion/Projects/Reln91/Blood/Judaism/kashrut/kashrut.htm>.

7. Multiple oral history interviews conducted by the author, 2018-2023.

8. Baldinger Bakery was another Jewish-owned business, founded in 1888 and most recently located at 1256 Phalen Parkway in St. Paul.

9. Ted Merwin, *Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli* (New York University Press, 2015).

The Day Camp That Launched St. Paul's Adaptive Recreation Program

NANCY SANCHELLI GUERTIN

It seems like every time Twin Cities Public Television has a pledge drive, they haul out concerts and documentaries designed to hit us baby boomers right between our nostalgic eyes. And it works. I sing along to the greatest hits of the '60s done by aging Motown stars and whichever of the Beach Boys are still able. Patti Page and the McGuire Sisters make an appearance to bring in the oldest of us. And then there are the folkies. Judy Collins, looking and sounding lovely as we look back on our lives, finally able to see "both sides now."¹ The documentary on the Carpenters has now made it into the canon. But for me, this goes beyond nostalgia, scooping up my heart and putting it down in another time and place. And all because of one song, their first hit, "Close to You."²

A Job with the City of St. Paul

The year was 1970. I had just returned home to St. Paul from a year of teaching music in the Detroit Public Schools and in need of a job. I had just about enough money to buy a couple of 35 cent taps at Schweitz's Bar and see if any of my old friends had any leads on work. Someone did.

"The Recreation Department is always looking for summer workers. They don't pay much but you spend the summer playing outside," offered my friend the parole officer. We were very young. We didn't need much money but we did need fun.

The very next day I made my way downtown to the courthouse on Kellogg and asked for an application. He was right. Recreation was hiring. I wrote down my recent work history and it looked pretty good. Teaching music in the big bad Motor City. As an afterthought, and just to give myself a little point of distinction, I added that as part of my teaching schedule I taught a



class of Special Ed students, then referred to as mentally retarded, once a week.

I handed my application to the clerk who read it right then and there. As I was headed out the door she called me back. "Can you stay and interview right now?" she asked brightly. "Sure," I said, all dressed up for an interview in shorts and a t-shirt.

She brought me into the office of the department head, Gerald Prill.³ It just so happened that they did have a job for me, and I could start right away. The City of St. Paul and the St. Paul Association for Retarded Children (then SPARC, now called The Arc) were planning to collaborate on a seven-week summer day camp project using the city's park facilities and equipment, administered by SPARC. "You will be one

The author and a few of the women from the Nor-Haven Home, a residential home for developmentally disabled women, enjoying some free time at Newell Park. *Courtesy Rebecca Sanchelli Sandsmo.*



Camper Eddie at Newell Park ready for a game of Duck Duck Gray Duck. *Courtesy Rebecca Sanchelli Sandsmo.*

of two paid employees,” he said, “but you will be in charge. The department will assist you in any way we can.” He handed me a pamphlet on adaptive recreation and the phone number for the contact person at SPARC. And there I was. Hired and trained.

It wasn’t until decades later that I would learn more. According to the City of St. Paul Bureau of Parks and Recreation Annual Report for 1968, there was a six-week summer day camp program started that year at Newell Park.⁴ I was not told of this at the time and was never connected to whoever oversaw it. I presume that the collaboration with SPARC began in 1970. Also, the city of Roseville had a similar program up and running, but as their camp dates were the same as St. Paul’s, I had no chance to observe, and it never occurred to me to call the director, also a music teacher.

Getting Started

I met with the SPARC contact, Marie Nelson, who was in charge of coordinating the program and she filled in some of the gaps. The collaboration came about, she said, because a number of parents of what were then described as retarded children in St. Paul had made a very solid case that, as tax-paying residents of the city, their children too should be provided with free and accessible summer activities including adaptive recreation for the disabled. Who could

argue with that? No one. This was a very worthy project. Everyone seemed to be in agreement on the mission: a good experience for a group of people who are so often overlooked. But how to achieve that goal? You have to start somewhere. So they hired a twenty-something with a smattering of experience for \$2.50 an hour, assisted by a 17-year-old earning \$1.75 an hour (I was, after all, the boss) and we plunged in together. All in.

The set-up was this: Three sessions at two different parks on opposite ends of the city; Mounds Park on the East Side and Newell Park in the Midway. Each developmentally disabled “camper” would be paired with a teen volunteer “counselor.” SPARC would handle all the recruitment and provide me with the necessary background data on each camper. All activities would be planned and overseen by me and my able assistant, Dickie, a 17-year-old whose main qualifications were a great personality and his own means of transportation to the job sites.

Shortly before camp was scheduled to begin, the city provided a one-day in-service training for counselors at Newell Park. A team of highly experienced leaders from the Rec Department staff demonstrated a wide variety of traditional day camp activities. Everything from arts and crafts to nature hikes to calisthenics, which we would definitely use, to making a lanyard (maybe) to building a fire (never). We got to know each other and our shared mission: our campers and their needs came first.

We met each day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Session one spanned two weeks at Mounds Park, followed by another two-week session at Mounds, and ending in a three-week session at Newell. Campers could come to any or all sessions, and many attended all three. My best guess is that we served 20 to 25 campers each session and were fortunate to have an equal number of teen volunteers. Many of our campers were children with developmental delays due to Down’s Syndrome, seizure disorders, and hearing and/or vision impairments. Some were on the autism spectrum. All were ambulatory but several campers wore leg braces, and one boy wore a very restrictive hip-to-neck back brace. I am happy to say this never stopped him from participating in any activity. Most attended Special Education classes in the public schools but



were not mainstreamed. Nearly all of the adult campers who joined us at session two came from two residential homes in St. Paul, Nor-Haven for women and Greenbrier for men.⁵ This new model of community-based housing drew residents from the overcrowded state hospitals.

For so many kids with special needs, summer was a lonely time. Without school, too many simply sat at home without friends or things to do. Lacking mental and physical stimulation, their hard-won skills began to regress. But the real tragedy was this: they had no fun. The opportunity for a summer camp just for them was welcomed wholeheartedly. On the very first day, dozens of campers showed up at Mounds Park, along with enough teen volunteers to pair up one to one. Our charge was simple: make sure the campers have a great time without incurring any injuries more serious than a bruise.

Here are some of the things we did not have: for four weeks, no indoor facility; no shelter from rain; almost no experience; no medical training; no telephone; no on-site storage (we used Mounds Park Hospital to store equipment). At Newell Park we had a building and a telephone, and a little more experience. This project could so easily have failed. But we had no time to give failure a thought. We all, and I mean *all*, just dove in with our hands and feet and open hearts.

To our surprise and joy, the greater community embraced us and offered whatever they

could. Free bowling at Hafner's Bowl, compliments of the owner, Don. A tour of Hamm's Brewery including a visit from the Hamm's Bear who happened to be a friend of mine from Schweitz's. (This was his summer job.) Watermelon on hot days, provided by one of the local fruit and produce companies, I never knew which one, whose owner was a friend of the bus driver from the Nor-Haven home. A lovely day at Como Park including free rides. In subsequent summers, live music for sing-alongs and dancing with wonderful local entertainer, Bob Pine.⁶ And lots of encouraging words. The families of the campers, and the staff members of the institutions whose residents we served helped us out in a million ways, including opening their common rooms to us on rainy days. Our many teen volunteers, one assigned to each camper, came faithfully every day, and brought enthusiasm and genuine friendship and acceptance to every single camper.

Two federally funded employment programs placed workers with us. One, a group of students from St. Paul Public Schools, and the other, three young women from the Ramsey County Welfare Department. They too became part of our large and loving family. The recreation department field supervisors believed in us and got behind us 100 percent, making sure we had playground equipment, art supplies, and eventually, free lunches. They sang our praises loud and long. A letter to the editor in one of the

Campers building sandcastles at Newell Park, and climbing on the backs and shoulders of strong, patient teen counselors. The author recalls carrying lots of campers all around the parks. *Courtesy Rebecca Sanchelli Sandsmo.*

St. Paul newspapers prompted a call from Councilman Victor Tedesco, then in charge of Parks and Rec, to let me know that he would help in any way he could. A local television station did a story for the evening news. This project just might succeed!

Our Day Camp Family

All things worked together in our favor, but it would have come to nothing without the sweetness and trust of our wonderful campers. For the first two weeks all of our campers were children, lots of them from family homes and foster homes. Children who came eager and ready to play, to sing, to laugh, to try new things, and to love without embarrassment.

At three weeks, adults were added to the mix. Many of these men and women had lived most of their lives in state institutions whose very names, perhaps unfairly, had become synonymous with neglect, despair, and darkness. When these hospitals closed, the residents were moved into newer, dormitory style facilities. Here, a small and compassionate staff gently assisted these often-neglected souls into reintegration with the greater community. Day camp was a first step for some. Many had physical conditions that had never been treated. Their

Camper Jeff and teen counselor sharing a hug in front of the building at Newell Park, which is still there today. Love flowed freely at day camp. *Courtesy Rebecca Sanchelli Sandsmo.*



appearance could be shocking, and I pray we were able to cover our initial reaction because in no time at all we no longer saw the shells, but only the beauty of the pearls within. Fun, adventurous, joyous, and loving. The world was new and bright to those who had lived so long in darkness.

A Day at Camp

We packed a lot of activity into those summer days, and we had very large areas to explore. Though we all wore name tags, and campers were always accompanied by a counselor, I worried that someone could wander off. If they needed help, could they tell someone? So in the interest of safety, we started each day with the "Name Address and Phone Number Club." Campers who could recite this information earned a big yellow star which would be added to our large announcement board amid thunderous applause. By the end of each session, all names were accounted for and thankfully, no one ever got lost.

Then it was on to the field. Soccer games with only one rule: don't touch the ball with your hands. One of our campers, Bobby, was an avid sports enthusiast and a walking encyclopedia of sports statistics. During our morning games he would run up and down the field carrying a large stick with a can attached to the end (microphone and boom, day-camp style) calling our soccer games with exciting sports lingo. Duck Duck Gray Duck with one unwritten rule: the camper, no matter how slow, always outruns the volunteer. Red Rover: same. Hiking all over the parks, encouraging tired, out-of-shape campers to keep on trekking, carrying them on our backs at times. Lovely, indescribable art works of every variety displayed with pride, wherever. Lunch provided by the city and always a surprise, gobbled down with gusto by people who expended a lot of energy each morning. And at the end of the day, all of us sitting together under a shady tree, singing silly old camp songs, falling onto each other with laughter, waiting for pickup by the most grateful parents. For the adults, happy chatter on a restful bus ride home.

One of our campers, Jeff, lived with his grandmother near the old Rondo neighborhood. Jeff was 10 years old, a sweet and shy boy, the light of his grandmother's life. She had no way of

getting him to and from day camp, so arrangements were made for him to arrive by taxi, then ride home with me and a car full of teen volunteers in my rattle trap car. His grandmother, I know, had spent her day missing him, watching for him. She was waiting at the door each day when we pulled up. As we helped Jeff out of the car, she would smile and open her arms. Jeff would run into them, enfolded into the safe and loving world that was the two of them together. After a long embrace, she would remember us, turn Jeff around, and remind him to thank us. And he, a child who said almost nothing, turned around, raised his hand to the side of his face, and with a little wave of his fingers, said softly, "Bye, tomata."

Looking Back

We did our job that summer, and the next two for me. We earned our pay. We gave our campers a summer full of memories. The City of St. Paul's commitment to adaptive recreation grew and continues to this day.⁷ But what we got in return was immeasurable, and hard to describe in mere words. The love and trust placed in us by the most vulnerable people changed our lives forever, every one of us. They brought out our best selves, the people we were when no one judged us on the frills. All that mattered was

who was good, who was helpful, who was loving, and above all, who could share joy. Young and younger, there was no one "old" at camp, we all learned that what we do matters, and it mattered that we lived.

And now, whenever I hear "Kumbaya," I hear Gwen singing it out loud and proud, every word mispronounced. Whenever I see kids playing a game on the playground, I think of Jeannie, thrilled to be the Gray Duck, flapping her arms and tearing around the circle in pure joy, her pursuer trying mightily to be outrun so that Jeannie could plop down safely on someone's lap with a big hug. Whenever I see a man on a mission, I think of Joey, whose mission it was to beautify Newell Park by painting every big rock a different bright color.

And whenever I hear Karen Carpenter sing, I see all of us campers, teens, and two paid employees sitting under a tree, exhausted by a full day of running and laughing and sharing. Singing along together to that summer's big hit played on a six-transistor radio. "Just like me, they long to be, close to you."

Postscript

A short while ago, maybe fifty summers after my first day camp experience, I visited the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department Adaptive

That's Peggy O'Neil

Most of our adult day-campers came to us from two residential homes that were created as an alternative to the overcrowded state hospitals. But a few of the adults did come from their family homes. One of these was a man of about 40 years old named Gareth. A stocky, good-natured man and a perfect gentleman who was a natural fit for the activities and camaraderie of day camp, in spite of cognitive and physical challenges.

Like all the rest of us, he loved music, and especially singing. But unlike the rest of us, he had a marvelous voice. A big, booming baritone that rumbled up from his big frame. He especially loved old-timey songs and polka music and generously taught us a few songs. Our favorite was "That's Peggy O'Neil," done as a call-and-response with Gareth in the lead.

Gareth: If her eyes are as blue as the sky,

Us: That's Peggy O'Neil.

Gareth: If she's smiling all the while,

Us: That's Peggy O'Neil.

Gareth: If she looks like a sly little rogue,
If she talks with a cute little brogue
Sweet personality full of rascality,

Us: (*fortissimo*): THAT'S PEGGY O'NEIL!

While our enthusiasm was commendable, it could not compensate for the complete lack of musicality. Too many clashing versions of the tune. We were, to put it plainly, just awful. It must have been painful for Gareth to hear his favorite music sung so badly. More than once, I saw him begin to lift his hands to cover his ears but he always stopped short, far too polite to risk hurting our feelings when we were having so much fun. A good man, with a fine voice, and a great big heart.



A Certificate of Appreciation was given to the author's sister, Becky. Counselors worked from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every day for two or three-week periods. Their tremendous dedication made the summer fun for so many campers whose joy and gratitude were the true rewards for the counselors.

Photos courtesy Rebecca Sanchelli Sandsmo.

Recreation office. It was large, well-equipped, and staffed by enthusiastic and capable workers busy with lots of programs for everyone. Year-round programming began in 1976 and continues to this day offering a wide range of activities to all individuals. On every wall there are pictures of happy, active, engaged people. If success is measured in smiles, this program has—then and now—met its goal, and then some.

SPARC is now called The Arc,⁸ and represents all the regional offices in Minnesota with the exception of the Iron Range. They have moved from their small office in downtown St. Paul into a large new facility in the Midway. In

reading their annual reports over many years, I found that day camp was an idea that they had been trying to get up and running for a very long time, with the backing of many prominent Minnesotans, including Luther Youngdahl, Governor of Minnesota from 1947 to 1951, and his brother Reuben K. Youngdahl, pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church for thirty years.⁹ Their belief in the right of everyone to live a fulfilling life, their persistence, and their collaboration with the City of St. Paul made today's Adaptive Recreation a reality. I like to think that those first summers of day camp were a good start.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Colleen Tusa, Adaptive Recreation Director, St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation; and to the staff at The ARC for providing up-to-date information on the programs and history of these organizations. Special thanks to my sister Rebecca Sanchelli Sundsmo for finding the long-lost photos from a day at camp, and to my sister Kathy Sanchelli Renner for technical help. Most of all, heartfelt gratitude to the campers and counselors, agency staff and community members, and all who believed in this project and made it work.

Nancy Sanchelli Guertin worked for the City of St. Paul for thirty years, primarily at the St. Paul Public Library. She has also worked as a school librarian and a musician. Now retired, she collects and presents stories set in St. Paul's Swede Hollow.

NOTES

1. Judy Collins, "Both Sides Now." *Wildflowers*. Elektra Records, 1967.
2. The Carpenters, "(They Long to Be) Close to You." *Close to You*. A&M Records, 1970.
3. Gerald W. Prill was employed by the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation for thirty-five years, fifteen of those years as Superintendent of Recreation Programs. Gerald W. Prill obituary, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, January 3, 2013.
4. Annual Report, City of St. Paul Bureau of Parks and Recreation, 1968, ARC Minnesota Records, Minnesota Historical Society.
5. In 1970 there were three residential homes for developmentally disabled adults in St. Paul: the Nor-Haven Home for women; Greenbrier Home for

men; and Reaney Heights which served both men and women.

6. Bob Pine obituary, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 27, 2002.

7. Year-round programming for adaptive recreation through the St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation began in 1976 and continues to this day.

8. "History of The Arc in Minnesota," The Arc Minnesota website, updated 2025, <https://arcminnesota.org/about/why-the-arc/history-of-the-arc-in-minnesota>.

9. "Highlight of Convention," in the notes from the National Association for Retarded Children (NARC) Convention held in Minneapolis circa 1960, ARC Minnesota Records, Minnesota Historical Society.

Review

The War at Home: Minnesota During the Great War, 1914–1920

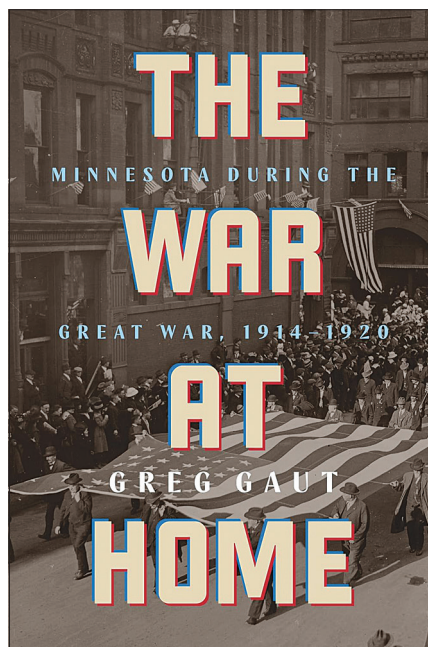
By Greg Gaut, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2025

REVIEWED BY FREDERICK L. JOHNSON

US Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote that during World War I, Minnesota experienced more “interference with civil liberty than any other state.” Historian Greg Gaut explains how the state earned this dubious honor with his compelling new book *The War at Home: Minnesota During the Great War, 1914–1920*. States Gaut, “. . . relatively peaceful and well-mannered Minnesota was an explosive hot spot in this war at home.”

On April 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I. Just ten days later the Minnesota legislature adjourned into war-time obscurity—lawmakers yielded control of the state government to a seven-man Minnesota Commission for Public Safety. Before hurrying out of St. Paul, legislators passed the Minnesota Sedition Act that placed limits on freedom of speech. A military guard would soon patrol the capitol building, while vigilant secret agents of the American Protective League monitored the populace, and self-described 100 percent Americans suspiciously eyed German-Americans, the state’s largest ethnic group. A deep polarization of Minnesotans was underway.

The Minnesota Commission for Public Safety (MCPS), with Governor Joseph A.A. Burnquist at its head, established MCPS branches in every Minnesota county. With the state National Guard heading for combat overseas, commissioners created the Minnesota Home Guard, an armed force under their control. St. Paulite Burnquist and MCPS would intervene after Twin City



streetcar workers unionized in fall 1917 and called a strike. The commission ordered Home Guard companies onto St. Paul streets to put down the following unrest during this major moment of Minnesota organized labor history.

Political intrigue assumed a critical role in the Minnesota war at home. The 1918 Republican Party primary race for governor matched MCPS chair Burnquist with Charles Lindbergh, Sr. and the Nonpartisan League (NPL), a left-leaning farmers’ association. MCPS and its backers were relentless in their attacks on NPLers, painting them all as dangerous subversives. Gaut pays close attention to the statewide aspects of this ugly, sometimes dangerous campaign.

To John McGee, the most controversial MCPS member, the NPL and its leaders ranked with the pro-Germans as serious threats. Testifying at a US Senate committee meeting in Washington, D.C., McGee proclaimed, “A Non-Partisan League lecturer is a traitor every time . . . no matter what he says or does. Where we made a

mistake is not establishing a firing squad in the first days of the war.” McGee also pointed out, “The disloyal element in Minnesota is largely among the Swedish-German people.” Minnesota Swedes—their homeland had been neutral since the Napoleonic Wars—took offense; Germans winced at yet another slander.

Working with an arsenal of primary-sourced research and injecting careful analysis, Gaut examines Minnesota’s war at home with a steady hand. Considering that the subject matter was highly controversial in its day, passions and prejudices were on public display. The author ably uses a three-section organization—The War Across the Ocean, The War at Home, and The War About the War. And an on-going timeline found on each right-hand page is a valuable tool for readers. So, too, was the use of two Minnesota County maps showing boundaries and county seats. It is a handy guide for his wide-ranging study. A perceptive introduction takes readers back to 1917 as America teeters toward war. His concluding “Observations After a Century” points to four “particularly instructive” insights and thoughtful lessons of history.

The 400-page account is a readable and relevant narrative directed at a broad audience while providing rich background detail for scholars to ponder. The photographs and images selected for use are excellent. Not to be missed is the epilogue, “Lives After Wartime,” where the author tells “the rest of the story” about a number of interesting individuals featured along the way. Among them are Clarence “Cap” Wigginton, the St. Paul city architect who led the African American 16th Battalion of the Home Guard, and John McGee, the powerful but flawed MCPS point man.

Minnesota historian Frederick L. Johnson is the author of Patriots Hearts: World War I Passion and Prejudice in a Minnesota County.

IN OUR COLLECTION



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

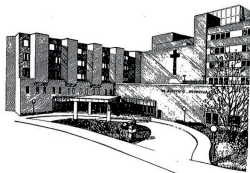
The collection contains tens of thousands of pieces, including archives, books, objects, and photographs, which are maintained by Director of Collections and Exhibitions, Mollie Spillman, in downtown St. Paul.

ALL ABOUT ST. PAUL BOARD GAME
DONATED BY: JOHN MANNILLO
ACQUIRED: 2019
RCHS COLLECTION: 2019.4

All About St. Paul is a Monopoly-esque game that was sponsored by the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce to promote businesses in the city and to acquaint players with navigating the capitol city and interesting locations within downtown St. Paul.

The board depicts a street map of the city with various landmarks and highlights businesses circa 1982. As a bonus, a coupon book was included for players to use at the featured locations.



St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch	
WWTC RADIO 1280 AM THE GOLDEN ROCK STUDIOS	T.M. <i>All About TOWN</i> RULES OBJECT. The object of ALL ABOUT TOWN is for PLAYERS, using dice and playing pieces, to acquire 8 Travel Cards by moving about the gameboard. (The length of the game may be varied by changing the number of cards required to win.) SETTING UP: Unfold the gameboard on any flat surface. Separate the heavy cardboard playing pieces, fold at the perforated lines and insert into the slotted plastic stands. Separate Travel Cards and Surprise Cards from their sheets at the perforations. Redeemable Coupons found on the outside of the box are not a part of the game. They will be honored by merchants depicted on the gameboard. The exact number of moves shown by the dice need not be followed when entering a location. (For example, if you roll an 8 and need only a 5 to reach your destination, just disregard the extra 3 spaces.) But, to land on a space occupied by an opponent, you must have the exact number shown on your throw of the dice. The same rule applies to Surprise Spaces. Surprise Cards and Travel Cards are shuffled and placed face down in their spots on the gameboard. One Player is selected as Banker and gives each player \$100 in ALL ABOUT TOWN money. Players select a playing piece and put it on a Residence Square which has a red band above a picture of a house which is located on the outside border of the gameboard. EXPLANATION OF PLAY: Players each roll dice and the high roller goes first. Banker turns top Travel Card up and all players head for that location. Play proceeds clockwise, each piece being moved the number of spaces shown on the dice along the marked routes (dark yellow and red spaces) on the gameboard. Study the board carefully and see how you can move: Each board location counts as one space; squares at cross streets count as one space; when entering or leaving destinations, you must use the dotted line accesses.
 24-hour emergency care at Saint Joseph's Hospital 69 West Exchange Near 64 and 35E in downtown Saint Paul	



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RAMSEY COUNTY History

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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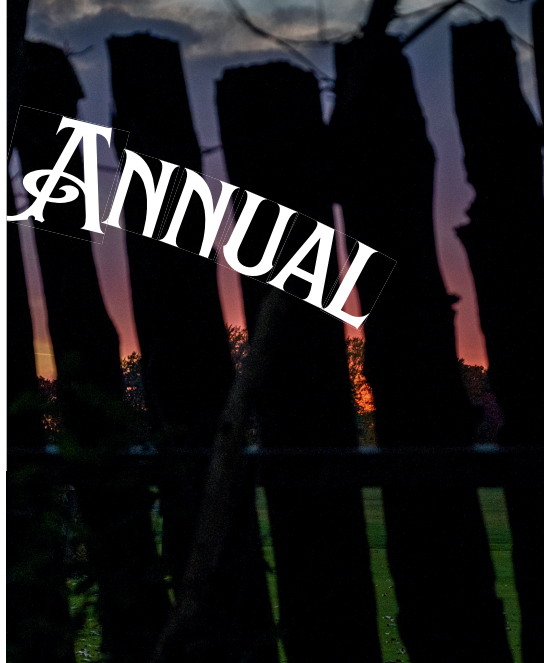
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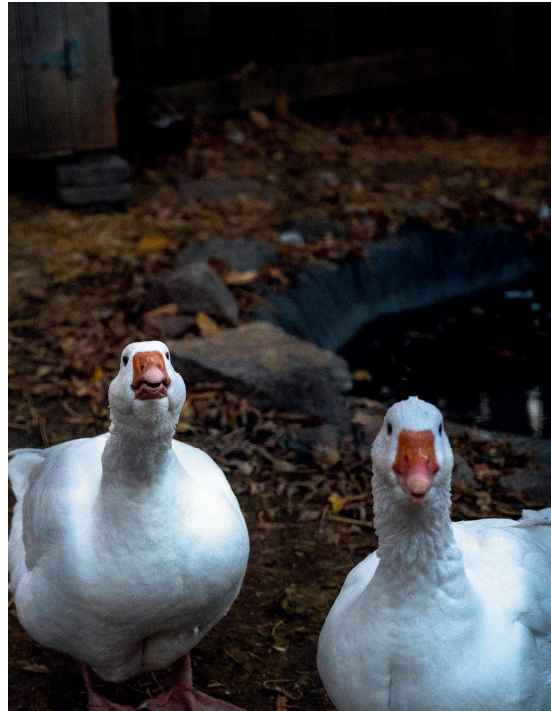
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Close to You

The Summer Camp That Launched St. Paul's Adaptive Recreation Program

NANCY SANCHELLI GUERTIN, PAGE 23

In 1970, Nancy Guertin took a summer job working for the St. Paul Department of Recreation. "They don't pay much but you spend the summer playing outside," she was told. Soon she was managing teenage staff and working with developmentally disabled youth in the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department's nascent adaptive recreation program, which is still going over 50 years later. In a first-person account, Nancy traces the early days of working with day campers and helping the program take shape. *Photos courtesy Rebecca Sanchelli Sandsmo..*

