

EXPLORING

with BRUSH and PALETTE

JOSEPHINE LUTZ ROLLINS

THE EXPLORING expedition which resulted in the water-color paintings reproduced herewith was made possible by the University of Minnesota. A faculty research appointment in 1948 which left me free to devote all my time to painting, some financial help from the Graduate School in 1949, and a fellowship under a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in 1950 enabled me to travel widely in the state in order to see and to record pictorially its historic houses and other significant landmarks.

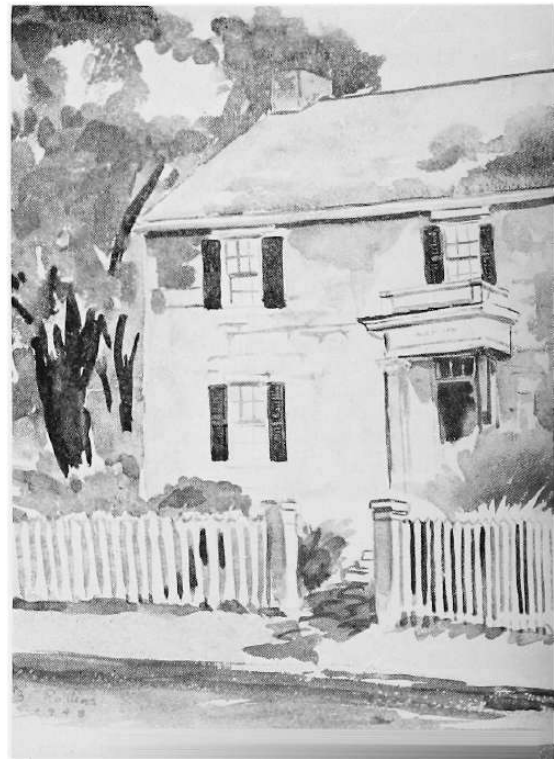
Only a few of the fifty-three water colors thus far assembled are reproduced in this issue. On the cover is pictured the Round Tower built as a part of the walled enclosure of old Fort Snelling. The buildings shown on pages 208 to 210 were erected for use as private residences. A single theme serves to make all these structures a unit, for each is today open to the public as a museum, or is being prepared for use as such. And each building is an object of historic significance in itself worthy of preservation.

It was my interest in Minnesota history

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that led me to undertake the painting of my state's historic landmarks in water color. During the years I spent on the project, I pictured many dwelling houses, from simple cabins to pretentious mansions, as well as churches, stores, hotels, mills, a bridge, the ruins of a lighthouse, and even a cemetery.

Selecting and locating the landmarks to be painted called for extensive historical research. And reaching many of them, with all the clumsy paraphernalia necessary to the water-color artist, often was an adventure in itself. It should be noted that the collection has been displayed in the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society, in the University of Minnesota Gallery, and in



various communities throughout the state, often under the auspices of the Minnesota branch of the American Association of University Women.

THE SIBLEY HOUSE, which is not only the oldest private residence in the state but the most widely known of its historic houses, naturally received high priority on my list of buildings to be pictured. Located at Mendota, within easy reach of the Twin Cities, it was built by Henry H. Sibley, who has been described as "the most prominent figure in Minnesota" from his arrival in 1834 to his death in 1891.

The year after he went to Mendota to take charge of the affairs of the American Fur Company, Sibley built the house he was to occupy for almost thirty years. Its architecture resembles that of some early stone houses in Pennsylvania, with a portico and an outside stairway leading to the attic. The latter often was used by Indians who went there to sleep.

After Sibley moved to St. Paul in 1862, his Mendota residence became successively a Catholic school and convent, an artist's stu-

dio, headquarters for an art colony, and a dilapidated hangout for tramps. In 1910 it was restored and refurnished by the St. Paul chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The organization maintains this handsome reminder of life in pre-territorial Minnesota as a museum. It is open to the public during the summer months.

THE MAYO HOUSE at Le Sueur is an unassuming two-story frame cottage with Gothic gables and a Greek revival doorway. It was built in 1859 by Dr. William Worrall Mayo, father of the famed Rochester surgeons. There Dr. William J. Mayo was born in 1861. Three years later the family moved to Rochester.

The house was presented to the city of Le Sueur by the Mayo family in 1935 after it had been marked as a historic site by joint action of the Minnesota Historical Society and the state highway department. It is used as a community library. In a small room under the gables that once was the office of the old Dr. Mayo are displayed his roll-top desk and some of his medical instruments and books.

THE *William W. Mayo House in Le Sueur*

THE *Sibley House*
at Mendota





THE *Hubbard House* in Mankato



THE *Gibbs House* in St. Paul



THE *Alexander Faribault House* in Faribault

THE HUBBARD MANSION was built in 1871 by Rensselaer D. Hubbard, founder and owner of a Mankato flour milling company. It is constructed of brick, painted white, and is distinguished by a Mansard roof of pink and blue slate tiles, dormer windows, and wide porches. Among the features of the interior are dark and heavy woodwork, tapestried walls, elaborate fireplaces, and bizarre lighting fixtures.

Since 1938 the house has served as a museum and headquarters for the Blue Earth County Historical Society, which purchased the building with a legacy left by the late Judge Lorin Cray.

THE GIBBS HOUSE, built by Mr. and Mrs. Heman Gibbs on land pre-empted in 1849, was originally located on the Red River Trail. It is now on the corner of Cleveland and Larpenteur avenues in St. Paul.

Originally a one-room farmhouse built of tamarack logs in 1854, the structure was gradually enlarged. The present frame house, with its columned porch in Greek revival style, was completed in 1867. Today it is one of the few remaining pioneer farm homes in Minnesota.

In 1950 the house was acquired by the Ramsey County Historical Society, which is restoring the structure for use as its headquarters and museum.

THE FARIBAULT HOUSE was built in 1853 by Alexander Faribault, the fur trader for whom the city of Faribault is named. It is located on a site overlooking the Straight River, where the frontier trader camped as early as 1826. The materials for this Greek revival dwelling were hauled from St. Paul and Hastings.

In 1945 the house was presented to the Rice County Historical Society by the Faribault Foundation, an organization incorporated to raise money for the purchase of this historic landmark. The society is restoring the building, which will be used as a museum.



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