ALTHOUGH he was not actually a native son of St. Paul, George Resler (1882–1954) came close to being one. Born in Waseca, he moved with his family to St. Paul at the age of seven and grew up on the West Side in the shadow of the city’s downtown skyline. Its presence, looming up across the Mississippi, is reflected in many of his etchings.

He received his first art instruction at Humboldt High School and later studied under Julius G. Segall at the St. Paul School of Fine Arts. At the age of seventeen he went to Chicago, where he worked as a commercial artist and studied nights at the Art Institute of Chicago. Two years later he returned to St. Paul and soon afterward became interested in etching. Since no instruction was available, he taught himself the technique through experimentation and through reading at the public library. He built his first press with the aid of his father.

For many years he conducted a commercial art firm in partnership with Frederick W. Bock, producing etchings and dry points in his spare time. These gradually achieved a national reputation and were widely exhibited. In 1926 a group of the city’s art patrons made possible a trip abroad, and Resler studied in France and Italy for several months. During his later years he was employed by G. Somer and Company.

The ten etchings reproduced on the following pages capture a number of city sights visible now only to the eye of memory; the junk wagon, the streetcar, and the street sweeper have given way to the world of mechanization. The pictures here shown mirror Resler’s love for the city that was his lifelong home and his awareness of its picturesque corners and nostalgic charm. Most of the views were done in the 1920s, although some apparently date from earlier years. They are among twenty-one etchings presented to the Minnesota Historical Society by Dorothy B. Resler, the artist’s wife.
Above are two views of the St. Paul skyline as seen from the Mississippi; at left is a shop on Third Street, which is now known as Kellogg Boulevard.
The scene at top left is entitled “Old Third Street.” Above is a view of Fifth Street, probably about 1910; the first store front houses the office of the St. Paul Water Department. At left is a once-familiar sight — the junk wagon.
At left is a view of "Swede Hollow." The picturesque shantytown, located off Payne Avenue on St. Paul's east side, was razed in 1956. Below is the entrance to one of the mushroom caves beneath the Mississippi bluffs.
In the scene at right St. Paulites enjoy spring sunshine in Rice Park. The graceful arches in the background belong to the Federal Courts Building. Below, the same structure, which served for many years as the city's post office, broods above the river bank at twilight.