

POSTSCRIPTS

EARLIER IN THE YEAR the editors of this magazine suggested to its readers that reactions and additions to our articles could make an informative occasional section in these pages. Pleased with — though not inundated by — the responses, we offer some of them here as examples and as encouragement.

Frank E. Vyzralek, free-lance historian and former state archivist of North Dakota, who said that he could not “resist passing along the following bit of historical minutia,” sent this postscript to “‘Typhoid Truelsen,’ Water, and Politics in Duluth, 1896–1900,” the article by Ronald K. Huch that appeared in the Spring, 1981, issue:

“The lignite coal mine in which he [Truelsen] and other Duluth men bought an interest and began developing in 1902 was located a short distance east of Belfield, North Dakota. Subsequently, the Northern Pacific Railway built a station there, a post office was established, and a small community grew up. The place was named Zenith, taken from Duluth’s nickname of ‘The Zenith City of the Unsalted Seas,’ which originated with Representative J. Proctor Knott’s speech before the House of Representatives in 1874.

“Thus, Truelsen retained a bit of the flavor of the auld sod’ during two decades of exile in western North Dakota. Today both Truelsen and Zenith are gone, the latter being recognizable only by the remains of the underground mine workings.”

FROM MINNEAPOLIS, Sherman Skogen, who grew up on the north side of that city, wrote in response to “In North Minneapolis: Sawmill City Boyhood,” written by Melvin Lynn Frank (Winter, 1980). Skogen praised the author’s “ability to picture the timeless small-town atmosphere of growing up in a little corner of what was then a vibrant, lusty, midwestern city trying to shed its backwoods conservatism” and added some reminiscences of his own:

“In 1916, with war in Europe and war clouds moving our way, the demand for farm land skyrocketed. My

parents traded their still rather primitive farm for a relatively new fourplex, a duplex, a stable, a modern nine-room house with a driveway, porte-cochere, carriage shed, and other storage facilities to a man who wanted to protect his two sons from being drafted for a ‘Foreign War.’ The property we received in exchange for our farm was located on what was then Crystal Lake Avenue in north Minneapolis (the street name was changed to West Broadway later).

“From this point in time until early 1936 I was a North Sider; despite the fact that my residence since then has been in the suburbs, my basic mental ‘grow-up’ period, recollections, and nostalgia involve the Minneapolis north side — perhaps to an even larger degree than that of Melvin Frank.

“As a childhood contemporary of Melvin Frank, I must agree with him completely that the city’s north side was unique as a place for a boy to grow up. Perhaps never again will we witness a similar combination of time and place with such clearly defined lines of urban and rural society. Here was the city — a vibrant national leader in flour and lumber production — clamoring for recognition not only in commerce, but for quality of life: educational standards, natural resources, and beauty. . . . The dividing line between city living and rural environment was only a few steps.

“There were virtually no areas of suburban development. A boy in search of a place to fish or go camping or even hunting was only minutes away on foot. On the other hand, should one wish to develop ability in sports, the park playgrounds, staffed with professional instructors, were well-spaced throughout the city. Many All-American football players and baseball professionals came off these playgrounds, to say nothing of the hockey talent that filled the ranks of colleges across the nation. And over that relatively short period hundreds of us received our college degrees as a result of talents developed at North Commons, Farview, Camden, and Folwell. . . .

“I well remember the Northland Pine lumberyard

fire. However, here my memories vary [from those of Frank]. There seemed to be a shortage of firemen, and some of my older and larger friends were conscripted to hold hose lines on the outer perimeter. I carried water to exhausted fire fighters who had been pulled away from the deadly heat up near the Twin City Rapid Transit substation. There were many rumors concerning the shortage of firemen when the alarm was first sounded, but nothing was reported officially or in the newspapers.”

JACK HOLZHUETER, associate editor of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's quarterly journal, pointed out a "marked similarity" between artist Theodore Lund of Wisconsin and Dr. Andrew Falkenshiel, about whom Helen M. White wrote in the Spring, 1981, issue. Speculating as to whether the two artists knew one another or whether some of the mysterious aspects of Falkenshiel's life might be facets of his Wisconsin contemporary, Holzhueter provided these parallels:

“Theodore Lund was born in Denmark on July 26, 1810, at Nykobing, Falster, the third son of Olaus and Sophie Peetz Lund. His father was a minister. From 1832 to 1834 he was a student at the Kunstakademiet, Copenhagen, and by 1836 he was working as a miniaturist in New York and in Brooklyn. By 1843, he was in Wisconsin, visiting the Muskego colony of Norwegian immigrants. And in 1846 he purchased land near Racine. (He had married in 1839 in New York; his wife was Norwegian.) He worked as a portrait artist, illustrator, and miniaturist. He also spent a year as an assistant to Alexander Hesler in Chicago, according to one of the Chicago directories from the 1850s. Lund also is listed in various biographical directories of American artists, but as a miniaturist. He traveled a great deal, painting extensively in southern Illinois, Columbus, Ohio, and Louisville, Kentucky. He also worked in New Orleans, and family tradition places him in Florida (not yet proven).

“Nothing we have found so far in family papers suggests that he knew a fellow Danish artist named Falkenshiel. Yet how could they not have known one another? Their careers were practically identical. Or were they? Has someone merely made the logical assumption that there could have been only one Danish miniaturist working in the Midwest at these early dates? [Lund was] a better miniaturist and draftsman than painter. I think the same can be said for Falkenshiel.

You may want to be aware of Lund, just as we now are aware of Falkenshiel, so that we can sort out any confusion in the future.”

LA VERN J. RIPPLEY'S article in the Spring, 1981, magazine, "Conflict in the Classroom: Anti-Germanism in Minnesota Schools, 1917-19," evoked a response from a Maryland subscriber, who described herself as a "faithful reader of the quarterly." Dorothy Schwieger Ranck was a high school student in Faribault during World War I; she won a gold medal award for an essay on "What the Flag Means to Me" in 1917. Looking back, she recalled:

“The inscription on the back of the medal reads . . . ‘awarded . . . by the National Society for Adequate Defense for doing so much to advance our love for flag and country.’ I have often wondered about the rather extreme statement for such a small ‘contribution’. . . Could the Faribault assignment have been a part of the activity of the Teachers’ Patriotic League?

“The general hysteria of the period came through very clearly to me at the time, although I don’t think Faribault was a particular German stronghold. [I remember] the trouble over Charles Lindbergh, Sr., as county fair speaker, and the many rallies and newspaper headlines made a lasting impression on me.

“My name was German — very German — which, in the general hysteria in the air, was an embarrassment to me. It was magnified by the devastating information given in a Friday current-events class that the captain of the submarine which had sunk the “Lusitania” had the *same* name, Schwieger.

“Actually our family had no German orientation of any kind [in] this country. I happened to have the German name because my great-grandmother, an Englishwoman, had married a German carpenter (or architect in some records), in London, Ontario, and had several children before 1856 when a cholera epidemic sweeping through ‘Canada West’ took her husband, Charles Schwieger, and two of their children. After a short widowhood she married an American Episcopal clergyman and moved with her orphaned children to Minnesota. So the cultural setting for my grandfather — one of those children — was entirely English and American even though he bore the German name.” [*Mrs. Ranck's medal is now in the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society. Ed.*]



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