

St. Paul's Architecture: A History

By Jeffrey A. Hess and Paul Clifford Larson

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

278 p. Cloth, \$34.95.)

St. Paul's Architecture was years in the making. So many years, in fact, that some probably wondered if it would ever be finished. The book resulted from the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission's desire to showcase the splendid architecture of the capital city through historical narrative, an approach that is a step up—a giant step up—from the “field guide” format many cities adopt to showcase community architecture. The narrative stems from the city's Historic Sites Survey, a 1980s study that involved examining the built environment on virtually every street. In essence, its goal was to pin down precisely what St. Paul offered in the way of structural legacy. With survey in hand, Hess and Larson set about producing the most thorough account of St. Paul's architectural story.

Although the book took longer than many, including the authors, had hoped, the finished product demonstrates what can be accomplished with rigorous research and meticulous writing, characteristics that are hallmarks of both authors. Hess is a cultural historian who founded one of the country's earliest historical consulting firms in the Twin Cities, while Larson is a Minnesota public historian with several architecture-related books to his credit. Both intimately understand St. Paul's built heritage.

This intimate knowledge is evident early and often, as the authors write as if articulating the life story of an old friend—which is precisely what they are doing. The prose is sharp and witty. For instance, while describing the towering profile of the St. Paul City Hall and Ramsey County Courthouse, that wonderfully Moderne monument, Hess observes that the structure terminates “in a thin frieze, as if the building might momentarily resume its vertical growth.” Such witicism is peppered throughout the lavishly illustrated book.

The stars of this work are the buildings of St. Paul, of course, and numerous public, commercial, residential, and spiritual structures are highlighted, including prominent ones like the U.S. Courthouse and Post Office (Landmark Center), the Cathedral of St. Paul, and the St. Paul Public Library and James J. Hill Reference Library. But plentiful lesser-known buildings are also here, such as the delightful William H. and Ida Garland House and the organic-looking Bethlehem German Presbyterian Church, as well as the New York Life Insurance Company Building, a fantastic dual-



towered Renaissance-Revival edifice that was razed in the 1960s to make way for the less-is-more philosophy of modernism. Like this building, some of the structures featured in this book are now gone, yet many remain.

Hess and Larson do not treat the buildings in isolated vignettes but weave each into a tapestry that is the tale of St. Paul's architectural maturity. Indeed, the authors employ the city's architectural components to move the narrative forward through time, seamlessly blending the record of one into the next. Moreover, the authors ensure that the architects who shaped St. Paul receive substantial acknowledgement for their labors. They, too, are vehicles that help advance the story of St. Paul's architectural journey from rawness and crudity to early Classical Revival, Victorian, and Picturesque styles, progressing to the modernism of the recent past and, finally, to the architecture of today. In a sense, what we end with is an eloquent history of St. Paul told through its structural face.

A thoroughly informative and enjoyable read, *St. Paul's Architecture* is a must for those who view architecture as a reflection of societal disposition. Even more, the work should be on the shelf of any who call St. Paul home, for it is their story, emanating from the facades of the neighborhoods and commercial districts that make up one of America's most attractive major urban centers.

Reviewed by Denis P. Gardner, author of the award-winning *Minnesota Treasures: Stories Behind the State's Historic Places* (2004).

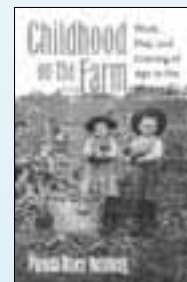
Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest

By Pamela Riney-Kehrberg

(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas,

2005. 300 p. Cloth, \$34.95.)

Through extensive and painstaking research, Pamela Riney-Kehrberg has written the story of the children who grew up on midwestern farms between 1870 and 1920. She tells the story neatly in chapters devoted to work, play, education, child welfare, and growing up and leaving the farm for the city. This is a tough subject to research, but she has done a fine job of locating children's diaries, letters, memoirs of adults who grew up on farms, and documents created by their parents, teachers, and government agents who looked after their well being.



Riney-Kehrberg argues that the primary fact of rural children's lives was work. Their labor contributed to the family's income, gave their parents—mothers, in particular—a bit of respite from constant drudgery, and trained them in the work that some of them would pursue later in life. Unfortunately, that work also limited play time and access to schooling. Rural children, however, used their imaginations, farm equipment and animals, and the few store-bought toys they had to invent games and play scenarios that kept them and their friends entertained between chores and field or house work. Church and school also provided entertainments for young people along with occasional trips to town for the circus or a movie.

The book is richly illustrated with family photographs and illustrations from farm magazines. One chapter is devoted to a wonderful collection of photographs of twins whose farmer father was also an amateur photographer. Excerpts from children's diaries (the author defines childhood as extending to age 21) allow the reader to understand her subjects' experiences from their immediate perspective without the rosy glow of memory, which tends to guard the child and parents from too intense a gaze.

Though Riney-Kehrberg attempts to find a balance between the romantic myth of the farm as the perfect place to grow up and the harsh realities of man-sized field work that often prevented children from attaining a full education, she tends to side with the romance of the past. An analytical framework might have provided a means to measure distinctions among rural children of middle-class status and those who were impoverished or privileged. An economic analysis might have revealed how much children contributed to the national, regional, and family economies in which they worked and may have offered an explanation of why their economic value did not translate into more significant personal power, especially as they aged. The chapter on child welfare suggests that when the family economy failed, children suffered intensely even with loving parents, and that more often than not adoptive or foster parents viewed the children as small economic units rather than young people with deep emotional needs. Childhood varied among ethnic groups as well, and while Riney-Kehrberg mentions a few of the prominent northern European ethnic groups, she gives no space to children of African American or American Indian farming families.

This book is a nice compilation of rare and important resources. It is interesting and well written, but the foundation on which Riney-Kehrberg rests her research remains undelineated. Work can be either excellent training for adult responsibilities and skills or abusive. Children can be valued assets in a loving family, rightly proud of their contributions

to the general welfare of the family, or they can be exploited and physically overworked. Though Riney-Kehrberg asserts that we cannot judge nineteenth-century farm families by modern, urban standards, she neglects to give us a set of standards by which we can understand the past.

Reviewed by Barbara Handy-Marchello, an independent scholar and author of Women of the Northern Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homesteading Frontier 1870–1930 (2005), winner of the 2006 Caroline Bancroft History Prize.

The Great Dan Patch and the Remarkable Mr. Savage

By Tim Brady

(Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2006.
240 p., with DVD. Cloth, \$24.95.)



It is difficult for many people today to comprehend the celebrity achieved by Dan Patch. In an age when the public is deluged with information about sports celebrities on a daily basis—celebrities who rise to fame and disappear with remarkable speed—the prominence attained by a horse may seem both quaint and unusual. Tim Brady, Dan Patch's latest biographer, makes the case that it was neither.

Horses have always occupied a particular place in history. Their speed, endurance, and the affection they inspired in their human partners has ensured that the mounts of leaders throughout the ages—Alexander the Great, the Duke of Wellington, Robert E. Lee—would be chronicled in their riders' biographies. More recently, the great American thoroughbred racehorse Seabiscuit has been the subject of a book that spent more than a year on the *New York Times* best-seller list and of a successful big-budget motion picture.

It takes more than nostalgia and affection to transform a horse into a national hero: it demands timing, a story with wide public appeal, and great marketing. Since horses cannot give interviews or create marketing campaigns, it is little wonder that those whose fame has endured were owned by salesmen known for their talent, drive, and *chutzpah*. Seabiscuit's owner, Charles S. Howard, was a car salesman who understood only too well how to capitalize on his horse's life story and exploits. Dan Patch was blessed with a similar owner, though in an earlier time when the automobile was still a curiosity.

Inevitably, then, the stories of great horses are intertwined with those of the people around them. Laura Hillen-

brand skillfully recreated the world of the owners, trainers, jockeys, and farm workers who surrounded Seabiscuit, and Tim Brady performs a similar feat with the story of Dan Patch. Indeed, this book is as much about Dan Patch's intrepid owner, Marion W. Savage, as it is about Dan himself.

Brady does a fine job of reviewing the rise of trotting, pacing, and the Grand Circuit in order to furnish context for his story without becoming mired in details interesting only to aficionados. This is an especially important task, for Dan Patch was a harness horse, not a thoroughbred like Seabiscuit, and this distinction is very much a part of the story. At the turn of the century, harness horses were far more evident than thoroughbreds. Before the automobile age, carriages, carts, and other conveyances—often pulled by harness horses—were the vehicles of choice. The horses that pulled them were widely distributed, and informal race meets, at which local drivers pitted their skill and their horses' speed against each other, became common entertainments. Thoroughbreds, on the other hand, were ridden by paid jockeys, and thoroughbred racing's image as the "Sport of Kings" contrasted greatly with harness racing's more democratic roots.

Succeeding years would see the diminution of harness racing, as thoroughbred racetracks came to dominate the sport. Brady carefully recreates a world in which harness racing was prominently featured at state fairs and scheduled meets in many parts of the country, allowing a star like Dan Patch to achieve name recognition on a national scale that no harness horse could achieve today. He also details the career of Marion Savage, whose entrepreneurial talents and genius for garnering publicity contributed greatly to the celebrity of the horse he made into an advertising icon. From the palatial stables and racetrack at his International 1:55 Stock Farm in Minnesota to the specially equipped railcar that carried Dan Patch to his engagements, Savage cultivated and magnified his horse's image in a manner worthy of a movie star's publicist today. He affixed Dan Patch's image

to every imaginable product sold by his company, and even to the ill-fated railroad line that was his final business effort.

Brady's style is open and easy to read, and if he has not quite the dramatic ability of Hillenbrand, neither does he have quite the cast of characters that surrounded Seabiscuit. He makes the most of those he has, however, and the Great Dan Patch and his entourage come alive as the book progresses. He also deals effectively with the story's evolving context, noting the advance of the automobile age that ended the widespread public interaction with harness horses and set the stage for the decline of harness racing as a sport.

The volume itself is economically produced, which serves the purpose in every instance but that of photography. The book could use more photographs, and those used would have benefited from being printed large enough to command interest and grouped in a section using paper suited to image reproduction. The book also includes a DVD set to period music, which offers a ten-minute viewing of Dan Patch racing, the Savage farm and its magnificent buildings, and a brief encounter with M. W. Savage himself, seated among some of his horse's trophies.

Despite the death of both horse and owner in 1916, Dan Patch remains remarkably well known, thanks to the thousands of collectible items generated by Savage's aggressive use of Dan Patch's image on everything from feed barrels to tobacco tins to postcards and crockery. Already the subject of a 1949 movie and several other books, including one now in final preparation by *Sports Illustrated* editor Charlie Leerhsen, Dan Patch may yet match Seabiscuit in staying power. Tim Brady has contributed an excellent account that helps explain why the fame of Dan Patch has outlasted that of most human sports stars.

Reviewed by James E. Fogerty, head of documentary programs at the Minnesota Historical Society. He has worked with horses and thoroughbred bloodlines for more than 40 years.

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■ The Solon J. Buck award for the best article published in *Minnesota History* during 2005 has been won by food historian Rae Katherine Eighmey. “Food Will Win the War: Minnesota Conservation Efforts, 1917–18” (Fall 2005) examines how the state swiftly and, for the most part, successfully designed a far-reaching food-conservation program and persuaded citizens to radically alter their eating habits. Drawing on a wealth of sources from original recipes to letters, news reports, and government documents, the article illuminates Minnesotans’ domestic experiences during an international crisis.

The Theodore C. Blegen Award for the best article by a Minnesota Historical Society



staff member goes to acquisitions librarian Patrick Coleman for “A Rare Find: The Treaty of Washington, 1858” (Spring 2005). As Coleman says, we may never know how—or where—this original handwritten document survived before it surfaced and was purchased by the Society, but his article carefully explains the events and negotiations that culminated in a treaty whereby the Yankton Sioux “relinquished more than 11 million acres of their land and, thus, their way of life.”

This year’s judges were Daniel Pierce Bergin, a producer at Twin Cities Public Television, and Kate Roberts, senior exhibit developer at the Minnesota Historical Society. Each award includes a prize of \$600.

■ *For a Moment We Had The Way* (Andover: Expert Publishing, 2006, 235 p., hardcover, \$24.95), by Rolland Robinson, preserves the history of “The Way”—a unique Black community organization that worked for justice on the North Side of Minneapolis during the civil rights movement. A former member of the organization, Robinson weaves together archival research, interviews, and his own memories into a series of philosophical, storytelling essays. The book is available from the publisher, 14314 Thrush St. NW, Andover, MN 55304-4966; (877) 755-4966.

■ *Back to the Blanket: A Native Narrative of Discovery* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2006, 628 p., paperback, \$34.95) chronicles seven generations of the Ojibwe roots of its author, James A. Starkey, Jr. This creative nonfiction work explores the collision of Ojibwe and European culture through the eyes of the author’s ancestors, focusing not on bloody conflicts but on the subtler subjugation by way of trade goods, missionaries, diseases, and alcohol. *Back to the Blanket* is available from online book dealers or by calling 1-800-AUTHORS.

■ Peg Guilfoyle’s *The Guthrie Theater: Images, History, and Inside Stories* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 240 p., hardcover, \$37.95) offers a unique look at the famed playhouse’s community and history. With gorgeous photographs and intimate interviews, *The Guthrie Theater* remembers every season and every play with humor, drama, and flair.

■ Seth Eastman, known for his military service and his evocative watercolors depicting Dakota life near Fort Snelling, also made daguerreotypes between 1840 and 1848. He is one 242 Minnesota photographers featured in *Pioneer Photographers from the Mississippi to the Continental Divide: A Biographical Dictionary, 1839–1865* by Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005, 742 p., cloth, \$150.00).

This impressive book’s entries on photographers and others who worked in the photographic trade range from one or two lines with a name, location, and date to biographical essays of several pages. Readers will enjoy the engaging and well-documented stories of itinerant daguerrians, enterprising women gallery owners such as Sarah Judd and Olive Goodwin, and hardy photographers like Adrian Ebell, who with Joel Whitney hauled their heavy equipment to the Minnesota prairies to document the Dakota War of 1862. Many photographers were drawn to capturing beautiful landscapes in the Middle West from central Canada down to Mexico. Considering the difficulty of locating information about photographers during

this period, Palmquist and Kailbourn have done a masterful job of gathering extensive data about many relatively unknown artists. In addition, they have put the pioneer photographers’ work into the context of photographic history and the development of this part of North America.

■ While Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald are famous “lost generation” authors, their contemporary Thomas Boyd is largely forgotten. Brian Bruce’s *Thomas Boyd, Lost Author of the “Lost Generation”* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2006, 188 p., cloth, \$42.95) brings to light the remarkable achievements of this writer who gained fame and then slipped into obscurity.

Unlike stateside-soldier Fitzgerald, Boyd was a combat infantryman in World War I, where he was wounded in a gas attack. After the war he became a literary editor of a St. Paul newspaper. Mentored by Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis, he wrote an autobiographical war novel, *Through the Wheat*, published by Charles Scribner’s Sons. It received broad praise and wide readership for its realistic depiction of war and battle. Some critics compared it to Stephen Crane’s famed description of a Civil War soldier’s experience in *Red Badge of Courage*.

This first full biography of Boyd recreates the events of his life and the exciting 1920s era of literary publishing. Bruce also explores the ascendancy and then the decline of the American novel brought about by the popularity of radio and Hollywood movies. Boyd, Bruce observes, wrote because he liked being a writer and needed to earn a living.

■ *The Street Where You Live: A Guide to the Place Names of St. Paul* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 322 p., paper, \$19.95) is an updated edition of the 1975 publication of the same name. In the new version, author Donald Empson provides additional information concerning neighborhoods, landmarks, parks, and lakes. The historical anecdotes have also been expanded, more photos have been added, and Empson has included interesting tidbits, such as how

the route of Interstate 94 was chosen or the various forms of gravel that make up a street surface. The most interesting information, however, is the street names themselves, many of them honoring an early settler or pioneer developer. The author takes us back to the time when Desnoyer Avenue was the site of a “halfway house” for stagecoach drivers and Cherokee Heights Park was a tourist camp. These rich glimpses of the past, accented by the photos, provide a vision of the birth of St. Paul. While this book offers a wealth of information, its format, unfortunately, makes it a clunky companion for a walk along the avenues.

■ As Stephen Chicoine states in the introduction to his book, *Our Hallowed*

Ground (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, 262 p., paper, \$19.95), almost 170,000 servicemen and women who fought in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II are buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. One of the major impacts of a trip to the cemetery is the huge expanse of white grave markers, which feels overwhelming and even unreal.

Chicoine, however, does not concentrate on the expanse but rather the individual, and herein lies the value of the book. Chicoine selects more than 80 veterans of World War II and tells each of their stories—where they came from and how they served—often with an accompanying photograph. The book is arranged chronologically, covering each

theater of the war. Chicoine does not introduce the different sections with an overarching summary but rather allows the veterans’ lives and accomplishments walk us through those difficult years, putting faces and names to the numbered gravestones.



■ Not one but two recent titles by John Koblas explore the lives of nineteenth-century desperados. *The Last Outlaw: The Life of Pat Crowe* (St. Cloud: North Star Press, 2005, 112 p., paper, \$12.95) offers a biography of a criminal of Jesse James’s stature but without his name recognition, while *Jesse James in Iowa* (St. Cloud: North Star Press, 2006, 224 p., paper, \$14.95) traces the adventures of the infamous delinquent and his gang as they prepared to rob the Northfield, Minnesota, bank. Both volumes are well illustrated with copious notes, sure to satisfy those who hanker for a good frontier tale.

■ *Cut Nose: Who Stands on a Cloud* by Loren Dean Boutin (St. Cloud: North Star Press, 2006, 160 p., \$14.95) explores the Dakota War of 1862 by tracing the life of one leader, Cut Nose, from his earliest days, through the five-week war, to his death sentence and then his “resurrection” at the request of Dr. W. W. Mayo, who used his and other of the Dakota bodies for medical research. Boutin carefully analyzes each of his sources to stitch together an unbiased account of this little-known postscript to the U.S.–Dakota war.

Turning from well-known Dakota history to “Minnesota’s forgotten battle,” one fought by the Ojibwe, *Bear Island: The War at Sugar Point* by Gerald Vizenor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, 112 p., cloth, \$19.95) offers a lyrical approach to understanding the October 5, 1898, skirmish between U.S. soldiers and the Leech Lake Pillagers that the latter, while outnumbered three to one, won convincingly. This elegant volume includes a foreword by Jace Weaver that offers context for Vizenor’s epic poem, which draws on Ojibwe song tradition as it weaves together strands of myth, memory, legend, and history.

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