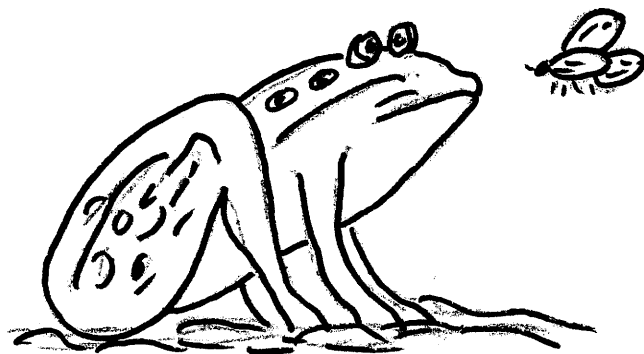


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Frogtown

1867-1875

A.H. 1935



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MELROSE AVE. (UNIVERSITY AVE.)

AURORA AVE

FULLER ST.

MARTIN ST.

ST. ANTHONY AVE

RONDO ST

CARROLL ST.

RICE ST.

JOSETTE (cathedral)

FARRINGTON

VIRGINIA AVE

WESTERN AVE

2nd Hoffmann Home + Store
Merz

Farrell
Caulfield

Irish Settlement

Police Station

St. Joseph's Church

IGLEHART ST.

ST. JOSEPH'S ACADEMY

FROGTOWN in 4th Ward & Paul Martin (1847-75)

FROM RICE TO FARRINGTON and FROM RONDO TO FULLER STS.

Herz
Batzet

Negroes

Beckman
Remer
RAVOUX
Beasom
Guerin
Schillo
Wilkert
Hoffmann
Joe, Rondo
Peglow
Caulfield
Witwer
Scheld

Faster Galusha

Streit



This History of Frogtown was presented to me during the summer of 1935 as a gift following graduation from Derham Hall High School in St. Paul. The Appendix and other papers pertaining to early St. Paul and family history were given to me a few years later.

The Very Reverend Alexius Hoffmann, OSB, was born John Mathias Hoffmann on January 31, 1863 in St. Paul, Minnesota. His parents were John and Mary Magdalen Hoffmann (nee Ackermann). He attended elementary school at the Assumption Parish School before going to St. John's at Collegeville in the Fall of 1875. He was invested as a novice in the Benedictine Order at Latrobe, Pennsylvania in 1880 and pronounced Solemn Vows in 1884. He was ordained priest on December 19, 1885.

He was vice president of St. John's University from 1891 to 1899 and appointed to the chair of dogmatic theology at the seminary there in 1896, which he taught for the next 37 years, instructor for hundreds of priests who served in the Middle and Far West. In 1905 he was appointed librarian at St. John's, a post he held for the next 22 years.

Gifted with ability to learn languages he pursued literary studies along with research in the fields of theology and philosophy and civil government. Along with his other duties, he was called upon to assist in the production of the first Catholic Encyclopedia, was archivist of the monastery at St. John's and also served as historian for the Benedictine Order in North America. He was also a collector of data relevant to early Minnesota history.

In 1923, Pope Pius XI bestowed upon Rev. Alexius the degree Doctor in Sacred Theology by a special bull in recognition of his classroom work. He was the author of numerous periodical articles and five books: "College Life", "St. John's University", "A Benedictine Martyrology", "Life and Miracles

7/11/99 MHS MANUSCRIPTS, T.

of St. Benedict", and "A Liturgical Dictionary".

Of his ordination to the priesthood he writes:

".....I was still fourteen months below the canonical age and had to have all the dispensations that can be given. Two of us were to be ordained. We were sent to St. Paul about December 15, 1885 and arranged with Bishop (later Archbishop) Ireland to ordain us in Assumption church. He willingly consented by saying "Gladly will I do that for you for I know your parents and I believe not many of your parish has everseen an ordination." It was the only ordination ever held in Assumption church and I am proud of it. On Saturday December 19, 1885 Bishop Ireland came over to Assumption church and there ordained me and Reverend Lawrence Steinkogler priests in the presence of the entire congregation. A bigger crowd had never been present at any time. On Christmas Day, 1885 I sang my First Holy Mass."

Deo Gratias

June 1, 1938 A.H.

The rest of my career I will try to describe sketchwise as it would take a lifetime (and I am now 75) to tell it all."

- - - - -

Father Alexius spent his remaining years at St. John's writing memoirs and letters for our family. He died on July 6, 1940 and was buried at St. John's. His immediate family consisted of: Father, John Hoffmann 1827-1907: Mother, Mary Magdalen (Ackermann) Hoffmann 1838-1924: Sisters, Mary (Sr. Ursula, OSB) 1864-1956 and Katherine, 1871-1872: Brothers: George, 1866-1872, Frank 1869-1952, Matthew, 1873-1955, James 1875-1957, and Frederick 1878-1956 (my father).

The area about which he writes as being his childhood home is roughly the area encompassed by the Technical and Vocational Institute near John Ireland Boulevard, and Ravoux St. now runs east and west rather than north and south.

Mary E. Hoffmann

April 1978

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FROGTOWN

By

The Very Rev. Alexius Hoffmann O.S.B.

Prolog

If the casual discoverer of this singular pen and ink production is amazed that the author - himself a Frog - does not prefix a poetic dedication to it, author aforesaid makes bold to plead that he is a little embarrassed by the lamentable fact that his Dictionary of Rhymes has so few good-looking words to rhyme with "frog". Behold such words as ; hog, dog, bog, fog, log, Gog, Magog, Demagog. What can one achieve with such awful words at the end of an inspired line? One might as well dispense with a dedication.

Lest the patient reader imagine that this is an imaginary history, permit me to say that it is as true as any other history of Minnesota or any part of that great State - even if the author cannot embellish the narration with pictures. He may, in the course of events, resort to cartography and offer maps that may not be absolutely accurate in point of latitude yet sufficiently so to enable the reader to infer that it is not Utopia.

Sources: 1. The swamp of the old Town. 2. The circumambient terrain from Bunker Hill to Swede Hollow. 3. Sundry histories of the town once called Oeuil de Cochon and later given a better name. 4. His own memory, for it was his fate to live, suffer and enjoy in that locality many years ago.

As no book is really made by only one man but by an entire informal syndicate, it will not be necessary to apologize for sundry references to other

men's writing even if the latter antedate the founding of Rome.

Acknowledgements are due to the "Historical Atlas of Minnesota" by a Connecticut Yankee by name of A.T. Andres (!) printed 1874 in Chicago, which has a Plat of St. Paul as it was intended to be by the men of that time; also to Neil Williams' histories of St. Paul and Minnesota; also to my contemporary Frogs many of whom have not flourished into this day.

July 14, 1935

I

Pre-history of Frogtown

When the triumvirate of Sam, Cham and Japheth divided the Earth into three parts, to wit Asia, Africa and Europe----upon second thought it strikes me that I ought not to begin so far back with this narrative for fear I should grow tired of conjuring up reminiscences before I arrived at the discovery of America. So the starting will be much later, say with the year in which Minnesota was born, that is to say in the year 1849. Though the chosen abode of Japhetites, they elected to call this delectable piece of Northland "Minnesota" for men were poets in those days and would not find delight in common words or names such as North-home but must have a name redolent of the soil. "Minnesota" is really an Indian word, in fact two Indian words, probably misspelled. "Minnesota" sounded esoteric and everyone would ask "What does it mean?" The loving inhabitant, when asked that question would probably answer, "Those are two Indian words. Minne - which means water and sota which means.....well, you know what soda water is...something like that." The name began to stick and Minnesota entered into the Union of States as a Territory.

But what about the pre-history of Frogtown? Well, that will begin at no exact date yet somewhere in the nineteenth century. Sources on Frogtown will be sought for in vain in the Historical Collections of Minnesota for the name is too recent, probably not antedating 1860. This region, in particular Ramsey County, was, previous to the Civil War, the camping ground of some Sioux Indians hard by their hunting grounds at the time. When the Great White Father who lives on the banks of the Potomac (another Indian word) authorized the establishment of Fort St. Anthony, later called Fort Snelling, and placed an Indian agent there about 1820, the neighboring Sioux living along the Minnesota River all the way from

Lac Qui Parle to Kaposia (another Indian name) and Pig's Eye, got acquainted with the garrison and yearned for government protection in the shape of blankets and food rather less than for Bibles which the missionaries tried to popularize for a spell. The Fort was on a promontory at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and so stood sentinel between the Sioux and the Chippewas, the latter of whom roved about northern Minnesota while the Sioux haunted the southern part by order of the U.S. Government. The Fort became a rendezvous for members of both tribes who were on no means speaking terms with each other. Off and on, the Chippewas (or Ojibwas as some called them) who - say what you will - were more warlike than the Sioux came down the Mississippi to scalp a few Sioux just to impress the latter with the truth that might is right -- and love was all right in its place.

Both the Chippewas and Sioux had an eye matrimonial upon the white settlers and soldiers for a uniform fascinates. French-Canadians in northern Minnesota freely married Indian women (the poets called them "maidens" of course) and Sioux women married French-Canadian and other white settlers. When the Selkirk settlers of Pembina, N.D. were driven out by floods and whatnot and realized, to their dismay, that they were not actually in Upper Canada but just south of the 49th north latitude which forms the boundary line between the United States and Canada a number of them drifted down the Minnesota River and camped, some of them on the Fort Snelling side of the Mississippi and others on the opposite bank in what was part of the military reserve and later was called Reserve Township of Ramsey County.

At the foot of the bluffs opposite the Fort one of those ex-Canadian immigrants - Pierre Parrant by name - and "Pig's Eye" by nom de plume as it were, established a "blind pig", i.e. an illicit avocation since "minnewaukan" (spirit water) was under a ban on the military reservation. Pierre Parrant sold the

soldiers (and officers) ardent spirits and wrought such havoc among the soldiers that the commandant at the Fort told him to "move on" with his merchandise. Whereupon Parrant moved on and established a new stand several miles farther down the Mississippi at a place for many years known as Pig's Eye.

At this time a few of the Pembina immigrants had fixed their abode on the present site of St. Paul. Parrant continued to supply the wet goods in consequence of which the place was named - or called - Pig's Eye, which ugly name it bore 'til the first newspaper man who came here - Mr. ^{James} Goodhue - brought about a change. That is to say, he alone did not bring it about. To understand this it will be necessary to know a few more historical facts. Bishop Matthias Loras was bishop of Dubuque since 1838. Now at that time his diocese extended far up beyond the present state of Iowa, as far as the northern boundary line. Minnesota lying West of Old Man River, including therefore Mendota and the Fort, were subject to his spiritual jurisdiction. The latter did not, of course, reach across the Mississippi River. Bishop Loras visited St. Peter (or Mendota) and the Fort in 1840 and left the Rev. Lucien Galtier, the youth "with the heart of a man and the face of a Madonna" to be pastor of Mendota. That was in 1841. Now one day someone told Father Galtier that across the River some men needed a priest to polish their religion, for most of them were of his faith. So Father Galtier got into a canoe and had himself paddled across to the other bank.

At that time the place known as Pig's Eye was in the Territory of Wisconsin as the early French maps call it. But folks who could spell better made it Wisconsin and Pig's Eye was in Crawford County, Wisconsin more than 200 miles from the county seat which was in Prairie du Chien! Ecclesiastically, it was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Detroit(!) in Michigan. Consequently it was outside the proper jurisdiction of the Bishop of Dubuque. The matter had presumably been arranged between the two prelates. Be that as it may, it is too

late for the present historian to investigate what canonical steps were taken to authorize an Iowa priest to erect a mission in the diocese of Detroit. We can only speculate that the bishops exchanged jurisdictions with respect to border places as they frequently do to this day.

At Pig's Eye Father Galtier built a chapel of logs on Bench Street near the Wabasha Street bridge(then, of course, non-existent) and called it St. Paul's for was not the church on the other side, at Mendota, dedicated to St. Peter? And were not the two Princes of the Apostles to remain united even after Death? Bishop Loras sent Rev. Augustine Ravoux from Dubuque to establish an Indian mission on the Minnesota River in 1841. He spent some time at Mendota and also visited the mission of St. Paul alternately with Father Galtier. The latter left for another mission and Father Ravoux was in charge of both places, eventually attaching himself to St. Paul, never to leave it again.

In 1844 the diocese of Milwaukee was created and "St. Paul's" came within the jurisdiction of the Bishop who felt little inclination to travel across Wisconsin for the purpose of confirming "a few half-breeds" as long as the Bishop of Dubuque could so easily go up to St. Paul's by a river boat. The settlement slowly grew. In 1848 came Mr. ^{James} Goodhue, a newspaperman, who wished to start a local paper. In an irreverent state of mind he thought of calling it "The Epistle of St. Paul". Some of the people were as bad as the Corinthians and deserved an epistle from St. Paul but not such a one as Mr. Goodhue would print! Two years earlier, the people of the Territory of Wisconsin applied for recognition. They had made the St. Croix River their western boundary. When the news reached St. Paul the people were puzzled, not knowing where they belonged; they were no longer in the Territory of Wisconsin and there was as yet no Territory of Minnesota, and the region west of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers was Iowa if anything, so that the wedge-shaped strip between the Mississippi and

St. Croix Rivers was, as a matter of sober fact Utopia, which means literally No-man's-land. So there they were! Still the people did not despair. They decided to create a new territory and call it Minnesota. Congress made some difficulties. It was to be a real Territory, a potential empire - large enough for one at all events. It was to extend westward from Lake Superior as far as the Missouri River, without stepping upon the toes, or head, of Iowa. Did Congress realize what a vast tract of country it had added to its other worries? The big politicians did not worry much for in the new Territory there were so few white men that their votes would not cut much of a figure in a national election. The real trouble would come when the question of statehood would be mooted - would it be a free or a slave state?

Minnesota was admitted as a Territory in 1849. What about Frogtown? Still in the womb of Time. Just wait. Events began to crowd. The old log chapel was there still, mirroring itself, if that were possible, in the river at the bottom of the bluff. Counties were created and the Government began to survey the public domain. Then in the summer of 1851 arrived Bishop Cretin, the first bishop of the diocese of St. Paul, a real Frenchman who must have felt lonesome among the rugged Canadians, but was no doubt consoled by the presence of Father Ravoux.

Father Ravoux, in view of his Lordship's coming, had bought some property for a Cathedral at the corner of Sixth and Wabasha Streets. The reader is privileged to harbor a doubt whether there really was a Wabasha or a Sixth Street at the time, but that is the locality. Eventually, a fair-sized building was erected upon a foundation of stone, all three stories to serve as a cathedral pro tem, Bishop's residence, priests' house, seminary and church. Most of his earliest spiritual wards were Franch-Canadian but only for a short time. Early in the 1850's came a number of Irish and, especially, German immigrants, many of whom got stuck at St. Paul and set up their hearths there. By 1854 the number was so considerable that it was necessary to hold three services on

8

Sunday - one for the French, one for the Irish and one for the Germans. Each group heard a sermon in its own language.

Some of the Germans remained in "Lowertown"; others went to that part of Upper Town lying west of the old Capitol and reaching to Seven Corners. This district between Wabasha on the east, Sixth on the south, Summit Avenue on the north and Seven Corners toward the west was known among the German settlers as "Bönnenviertel" (Beanville). The German women specialized in raising beans. Why not? Every little garden, for every little house had a little garden, bristled with beanpoles. If the reader is curious to learn why so much attention is bestowed by the writer upon this spot or district, let him know that the writer's cradle stood, if not among these beanpoles, at least in a small house fronting on St. Peter Street, left side going up the hill, halfway between Tenth Street and College Avenue.

Yes, patient reader, that is the place where I saw the light(lamplight)one winter's night in January (the 31st to be exact) 1863, during the Civil War. The exact hour was a point of contention between my parents; Mother asserting I was born just before midnight of January 30, Father that it was just after that hour. Be that as it may, I was there clamouring for lunch. I took no part in the Civil War for obvious reasons, the main one being that they had no uniform small enough for me else I would have fought at the Battle of Gettysburg and possibly would never have seen Frogtown.

Our little home was a frame house; the builders were Richard Ireland(the father of the archbishop-to-come), Tom Grace (brother of the then Bishop of St. Paul), my father and perhaps a plasterer. The "house" was about 12 feet long and 10 feet wide; this was in 1861 when it was built at the time of my parents' marriage. Later an addition of the same dimensions was added, also a shed in which the kindling was kept and where Father did his home tasks in wagon making.

There was no well or pump and Mother got her water from a sort of communal pump and well about fifty yards away "downhill empty, uphill full" she told me.

Our house was a drab color with brown trim, two rooms - a front room or "parlor" and the living room in which cooking and all else was done. I began to study the world from my cradle as Mother sat sewing by kerosene light, making uniforms for the Union soldiers. She was well-paid for this work but it was hard work for in a day when very few had sewing machines she had none. As she sewed Father would read the newspaper to her.

There we lived for about four years of my life. Now it so happened that my step-grandfather had come from Philadelphia to St. Paul with his wife and her daughter, Mary Magdalen, who became my mother. They settled in St. Paul in 1858 three weeks before Minnesota became a State and established themselves in a "shanty" near the old Capitol somewhere between Cedar and Wabasha Streets. Three years later Father married their daughter and the two set up housekeeping. About 1864 the shanty fell prey to flames and my grandparents bought a house on Rondo Street between Rice and Josette (later Cathedral Place). The house was a two story or rather one and a half story frame building. It was a medium sized house with a cellar having a pump in it. Another smaller house stood next to it.

Shortly after my grandparents moved out to Rondo Street, my father who was a wagon-maker and cabinet-maker felt that he needed a change of occupation. He decided to open a grocery store on Rondo Street the fact being that at this time the street had no mercantile establishment, not even a saloon. What Mother thought of it I cannot say. I only knew that we were going to leave St. Peter Street and move to Rondo Street in Fröschenburg. Here we are in Frogtown at last!

Here it is my duty to speculate a few minutes. For one thing the name of Fröschenburg was certainly given by Germans just as they had named Böhnenviertel already described, and "angst und Bang", later Bunker Hill where the State Capitol stands now. Why was "Angst und Bang" so called? That takes us back to the year 1862 or slightly before when the Indian troubles were brewing. The denizens of Bunker Hill dreaded the Indians; whenever any Indians were seen out that way the men would form night patrols while the rest of the family quaked in their shanties. "De wild es einen Angst und Bang" some one said (loosely-"The savage is all fear and anxiety" - MEH) and the phrase stuck until the Indians had all been corralled. Not so Fröschenburg! That name was not an aspersion upon the nationality of the people for not all were Germans; there were also Irishmen and Canadians.

That it was bestowed by a German is beyond doubt. That it was made up by denizens of Böhnenviertel is most likely for in the absence of street names in a wild region there people here helped themselves even as they did in New York City of old where they had Manhattan, Harlem, Bronx and the Bowery.

The German settlers were not frog fanciers nor frog-eaters - the Canadians may have been. The French are nicknamed Johnny Crapaud(frog) because, it was said, they ate live frogs. Fröschenburg is meant to mean a burg or borough inhabited by frogs, jumping, trilling frogs.

The frog habitat was a swampy area from Rice Street westward almost to Western Avenue. When our family settled on Rondo the swamp still extended westward to Farrington and from Rondo to Martin Street(later Central-MEH). A considerable part of the area was covered with scrawny tamaracks or larches, and a few bushes. As the years flew on, drainage put an end to the swamp. Today there is no trace of it.

This swamp country was the place where the frogs lived and "croaked". As you walked on the road on a summer's day, the frogs and froglets which had come

out of the "jungle" to bask in the noonday sun would jump off in all directions as if they had pressing business elsewhere.

At night they were domiciled in the pools, puddles and mud. As darkness fell they would decide to have evensong; one was the "choragus", he started the chant. Sad to say, despite years, milleniums of practice, the frog managed to grow proficient in singing but one note as far as I could discover. He would intone a trillano, sustaining the note and the quaver. Sometimes I would hold my breath instinctively, waiting for him to take a breath but he would not do so. He was followed by a neighbor and in due course of time the whole swamp was musical; big frogs with a tenor, little frogs with a soprano voice - and they ~~rendered~~^{rendered} a long programme conspicuous for its noise rather than its harmony. There were not as many different notes, or keys, as frogs, for frogs of the same age and training (I surmise) held about the same note. At intervals a shrill voice would suddenly stop. The owner may have been outdone by some other virtuoso and gone to wet his whistle in a puddle, or some homunculus may have thrown a stone at the choir.

As the frog sits stolidly hunched up on a log or stone his proportions are inartistic and inelegant. One would not surmise that in such a lump so much elasticity and vigor are stored up. Suddenly break in upon his philosophizing and see him jump. Say, six feet! and he may be only six inches long. That would be twelve times his length" Man, could you equal that even if you were a tumbler? You are, say, six feet tall: try to jump seventy-two feet. It will always be true that greatness must not be measured by inches of stature but by magnitude of achievement. The frog is certainly an achiever!

Some of the lads in my day used to go out "frogging": kill them with sticks or stones, then cut off their hind legs, skin them and sell them to hotels "downtown". It required many a frog to make a mouthful. The meat was white, almost transparent, and toothsome. I ate some and found them delicious but I was too uppish to catch frogs and murder them just for the sake of their legs! Then there

were toads, the bufo palustris vulgaris, the color of charred wood, warty, hideous. They were bad customers; if one of them hopped across the road in front of you something was bound to happen to you for sure and often something did happen. If they sprinkled a certain fluid upon your hands you got warts. So we avoided toads and got warts nevertheless. To us dwellers in Frogtown, the frogs were not by any means an annoyance. They did not, as a rule, come into our houses to keep us company though some of them would come into our gardens in search, I presume, of the insects that preyed upon it.

A word about the geology of Frogtown. St. Paul has a rock bottom over which is spread a good deal of black soil which accounts for the small marshes and lakes within the limits of the city. Every duck pond was solemnly dubbed a "Lake". They are all gone now, such as Lake Lafond where the church of St. Agnes now stands; Larpenteur's Lake near what is now Dale Street. The latter lay in a bowl and was fed by the rains so that it flourished for a pretty long time, while Lake Lafond had flat shores, was shallow and passed out when drainage was begun.

You will have observed that both these "sheets" of water bore French names. They were, in fact, named for French-Canadian pioneers of Minnesota and St. Paul. At the northern extremity of Ramsey County are Lake Gervais (pronounced Jarvis) and Lake Vadnais (pronounced Vadnis) also named for French-Canadian pioneers. But it is time for me to resume my account of Frogtown.

II

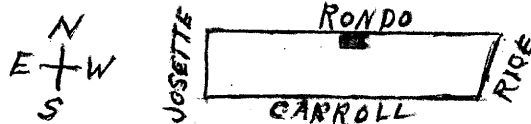
In which will be found an authentic reconstruction of Frogtown or Fröschenburg

In vain will the reader search the maps or plats of Ramsey County for the bailiwick once unofficially known to a group of German settlers there. The various additions to the city by speculators bore the names of these gentlemen; no alderman ever ventured to pin the name of Frogtown to our sector of the Metropolis of Minnesota. And so the name vanished but the place is still there.

Coming up Rice Street you reach a point where Iglehart and Carroll Streets meet. There, on a rising ground, stood the Chateau Rondo, belonging to old Joe Rondo, an early settler who had come from Montreal to Pembina to St. Paul before there was a St. Paul. He was a stocky, sturdy Canadian with an Indian wife and half a dozen of sturdy children, boys and girls. In 1868 I used to think his house was very large: it was square with a hip roof. Two stories high, brick, as plain as might be. There were no fences to keep out dogs or cattle, not an attempt at beautifying the surroundings, not even a tree. By avocation, Mr. Rondo (I surmise the name was Rondeau but the Americans planed it down to Rondo) was a teamster and so was his eldest son. In his leisure hours he devoted himself to bibulosity, studying the contents of a keg of whiskey. Yet I cannot say he was ever drunk in the sense of challenging the law. He was of the prisca gens mortalium who had the enviable faculty of identifying himself with oodles of ardent spirit without abandoning rectitude of gait. In fact, when he had more than was advisable he would remain in his "chateau" and vent his hilarity upon his wife and children with a "blacksnake" which was a vicious whip of black leather used to correct stubborn mules.


Joe Rondo might have been a capitalist. There was a time when he owned a goodly portion of the upper part of the city but traded it off for a few dollars and a keg of whiskey, then moved to where I found him while the other Canadians like the Bazilles, Larpenteurs, Michauds, Gervaises etc. became fairly wealthy. But they are outside of my picture. I shall dismiss Joe Rondo in a minute. Suffice it to say that the city fathers saw fit to bestow his name upon our street. St. Paul grew beyond his dreams and he seems to have suffered from ennui and could not fit himself into such phlegmatic society. So he sold out and moved to Crookston, Minnesota where he died at the age of eighty or so about 1884. (See Minnesota Biographies in the Minnesota Historical Collection.)

The block on which, I believe, Mr. Rondo was the first settler was and still is a very abnormal one somewhat of this shape:



It was at the upper end bounded bounded by Rondo St., on the east by Rice St. which here takes a turn due north, on the south by Carroll Avenue and on the West by Josette St. It was two ordinary blocks in length along Rondo and somewhat shorter along Carroll. The other streets in Frogtown were Ravoux, a mere stump of a street that stopped at our doorstep, Josette, Louis Street, Nina and Farrington Avenues and Western Avenue. The East-West streets were Carroll, Rondo, St. Anthony and Martin(Central). Just when these streets were named I do not know but it was before 1874 when I was living there and cognizant of such things. (The area is now taken by the freeway and the Vocational School, and Ravoux now runs east and west instead of north and south - MEH)

And now I am confronted with the magnum opus of telling who dwelt in Frogtown. First of all I will say what could not be found in Frogtown: there was no church, no school, no store, no saloon, no theater, no library, no photo-gallery, no engine house, no police station.....from which you may gather it

was a very peaceful community and a nice place to live. But the streets were not paved and were neither straight nor level. The street signs were nailed to the fence corners; there was no sewerage, no waterworks, no street lights except a kerosene lamp on a pole at the corner of Rice and Rondo, no electric light, no streetcars, no drinking fountains, no billboards, no parade ever passed through the streets - if you count out funerals - not a single house was built of brick or stone until you got out to Larpenteur's baronial (I thought) mansion of stone. Yes, there was one brick house - Joe Rondo's. I do not recall seeing a log building though the shanties were worse in many respects. 

What then did Frogtown have in those days? It just consisted of little houses or shanties. The former were usually one story, generally facing with the gable to the street from which they stood only a few feet distant so that one could step readily from the door into the street. The shanties were plain board structures, the boards set vertically. Some roofs were shingled, others covered with boards. Most of the shanties were one room affairs with a shed or "lean-to" serving as a kitchen and woodshed.

Joe Rondo, as I have said, lived near the corner of Rice and Carroll Streets. A few steps nearer to Rice was the home of Mr. Schwab, a German Lutheran; next to him was the little frame house, painted white, of Mr. Shortall, an Irishman whose son fell to his death while plastering in the new Assumption Church. On the corner of Rice and Rondo stood the house of Peter Haupers, German Catholic, a one and a half story house, well-built and also painted. Mr. Haupers was by trade a disciple of Vulcan and worked in a blacksmith shop downtown for George Mitsch who had a wagon and smith shop near the present Post Office (Old Fed. Courts Bldg.-MEH) in the triangle formed by St. Peter, Washington and Sixth Streets. He was a tall, vigorous man who wasted few words but saved his energies to make the anvil ring. A man of most regular habits, you

might have set your clock by him. His wife was not so tall, a typical "hausfrau" who cooked, washed and mended for her family and though always cheerful was not accustomed to air her thoughts in house to house gossip. When I last saw Mr. and Mrs. Haupers they attended a banquet commemorating the 75th anniversary of Assumption Church, their parish church, in 1931. They had paid fifty cents each for the privilege of taking part in the banquet which was held in the Hotel St. Francis, corner of Seventh and Wabasha. Mr. Haupers must then have been in his nineties. I sat not far from them on the other side of the festive board. I only wish to say that he certainly took his money's worth out of that feed! And he was entitled to it!

When the automobile came in and there were neither wagons nor buggies nor horses to shoe, Mr. Mitsch's business faded away and Mr. Haupers went into the blacksmithing business on his own "hook". He kept on hammering and welding until the bottom fell out of that business, too. For several years prior to his death (1933?) he still went to Minneapolis by streetcar everyday to work in a foundry of some kind. Rice Street must have felt dreary when he passed away!

Next to the Haupers lived Mr. Venne and his tribe in a shanty with morning glories decorating the entrance and windows. I used to think morning glories were queer flowers because they curled themselves and slept from sundown to sunrise. When they awoke they got no breakfast and yet lifted their trumpets and blew quiet concerts only the eye could hear! The Venne family had emigrated from Germany, from Westphalia. Mr. Venne was a tall, raw-boned bewhiskered man with a strong arm and a soft heart, the kind of heart designed for so small a woman as his patient, industrious helpmeet. We associated with them on the best of terms. Inasmuch as my folks were not from Westphalia - my father was from the western bank of the Rhine and my mother from Bavaria and we spoke a shade of High German

adulterated with a certain percentage of Pennsylvania "Dutch", without a blush mixing up "fenz", "schtove", bucket, stovepipe, etc. with good authentic German flavored with Rhenish and Bavarian spices - we could not readily make out what they said in "Platt Deutsch" unless they conveyed by gestures the import of their words.

Thus it sometimes happened that on my way home from school with their only boy, John, (Yahn they called him) he would ask me to come into the house a minute. There good Mrs. Venne would come tripping in with a long loaf of bread in one arm and a big knife in the other hand and say "Yahny(that was I this time)magot en buttschmear?" The smile and visible question mark in her eyes assured me that she had benevolent intentions despite the knife. So I timidly nodded assent whereupon she sliced off a liberal piece of her own baking, covered it with a deep stratum of butter, sprinkled some brown sugar over the butter and handed me the ambrosian gift. I forgot everything else as beastly hungry little boys will. My conscience asks "Did I thank her?" I am afraid not. I was too full of other things to break out in a hymn of gratitude. Did she mind? Likely not, for a good deed well done is its own reward.

Mr. Venne belonged to that vast army of unskilled labor, working in the streets and constructing the new sewers. I used to watch the men at work. Near Rice Street there was an opening like a well, a shaft they called it. Above it stood a windlass with two iron cranks to be turned by two sturdy men. At a signal from the deep these men would rhythmically turn the cranks and fetch up a large bucket of white sand, the sandstone layer upon which the city was built. When a heap of that was accumulated, horse-drawn wagons carted it away.

Often Mr. Venne would bring home a bucket of that sand, pick over one shoulder, the pail of sand in his free hand. And why? Mrs. Venne belonged to the League of Tidiness! One would not expect to find a member in a house not floored with matched, planed boards but with ordinary sheathing precariously

nailed down by unskilled hammer blows. One item of her hebdomadal domestic routine was to scrub that floor - that is the kitchen, which was also the dining room. And when she had scrubbed it thoroughly she strewed white sand upon it. Being curious to know rerum causas I asked John why she did it and he said the sand helped the floor get dry quicker. I marveled why my mother would not resort to that expedient. The explanation was that we had no such sand!

One evening Mr. Venne came home from his sewer job and said that he was not feeling well; he got pneumonia and succumbed in a few days and there was sorrow in the little house and among the neighbors, too.

Next up the street lived a Mr. Deiring with his wife and grown-up son who was a tinsmith. They had a neat little house and like the Haupers were members of the Assumption parish.

And next to Deirings lived a gaunt, quiet, red-bearded Scotchman by the name of Craig. We called him Mr. "Gregg." He had an English wife and two sons, Gordon and Lindsay and a daughter, Jennie. The family had come to St. Paul in 1858 and settled on Rondo Street next to the Peglows from whose property they were separated by an erratic creek that ran under Joe Rondo's barn, down Rice Street, into the sewer, into the Mississippi and thence to the Gulf of Mexico.

Mr. Craig's given name was Matthew, he was a tall, straight, solemn Scot - Presbyterian, almost Puritanical. Like Ferdinand Peglow, his neighbor, he was a house mover and carpenter by trade. His wife was a gentle, modest woman who devoted herself lovingly to her children. Gordon, as tall as his father, was a carpenter. Jennie was a dainty girl who would sit on the front porch and watch the crushing traffic on Rondo Street, said crushing traffic consisting of a wagon of cordwood, a drove of cows or an occasional Scheerenschleifer (scissors' sharpener) with his ding-dong, ding-dong bell. Jennie, dressed in white and sitting on a rocking chair would "take the air" which caused a slight ripple through her sunny curls. A picture! Lindsay, the youngest, was a year or two

older than I, a kid with English deliberation and Scotch hardiness. He and I were companions for several years. I used to call him "Lindsay" and he called me "Johnny" or "Dutchy" at which I took no offense because that's what I was! It was he who taught me English - I could not attempt to teach him "Dutch". Even at that age he was a clever mechanic with ships as his speciality. I sat on the ground watching his strong fingers carve a little frigate from a block of wood, stick two little masts upon it, fasten paper sails to them and set it on the billows of the aforementioned creek.

How did Lindsay teach me English? By talk - we did not need a big vocabulary. He did not teach me magisterially but would correct me when I uttered a barbarism. The Craigs took the "Illustrated London News", full of engraved pictures of Queen Victoria, statesmen, generals, scenery, buildings. As the pictures were all harmless, the Craig outhouse was plastered with such pictures. Lindsay's talk was always clean - the whole family was that way. Socially, our family, the Peglows and the Craigs (Catholic, Lutheran and Presbyterian) had little contact but we were always friends. Sometime after 1870 the Craigs moved out of Frogtown and I only saw Lindsay a few times after that. He became a high official of the Northern Pacific Railway. Lindsay is a dear memory, that clear-faced, clear-eyed, sandy little Scot. Peace be to his ashes.

A hop, step and jump from the Craigs lived the Peglows. It lay in the eternal fitness of things that Mr. Peglow was a cobbler, a short, bewhiskered, be-spectacled austere-looking Knight of The Last who lived off his trade, the "mending of soles" as Shakespeare put it. In the family were also Mrs. Peglow, a tall son, Ferdinand, and a stately daughter, Rika. They were Lutherans from Pomerania. Since they lived next door to us we had a look into their doings. One might hear Mr. Peglow "pegging away" lustily from Monday morning to Saturday evening, making new shoes or mending infirm soles. He may not have been able to turn out a shoe for a prince, much less a princess, yet he could suit a plebian foot, the larger the better. He never grew tired of his trade. How could he? He designed the shoe,

knew that no two feet were quite alike; that some men had deformed feet; that some preferred heavy soles, some liked to have hobnails in the heels, some fancied big boots, some half-boots, some laced boots, some gaiters with elastic in the sides. He studied and measured each foot, prepared the leather, cut it to shape, nailed it upon the lasts and then prepared to hammer, stitch and so forth with professional energy only pausing for a short meal. And when at last he inserted the brass eyelets or the blue leather strap at the top of a boot he felt at peace with himself and with society. He looked with a frown at the invalid, decrepit old boots or shoes that lay there in a dusty heap pining for rejuvenation. When the machine-made shoes came in, his throne tottered and fell and he sank back into the inglorious category of mender of pedal integuments until people grew ashamed of mended shoes and then he abdicated and rested from awl toil (oh dear!) and sweat to live in a better world where there is no mud in the streets. The Peglows attended Holy Trinity Lutheran Church at Tenth and Wabasha.

His tall son, Ferdinand, was a house-mover and as such worked with the assistance of a crew of cheap laborers. People were so attached to their houses that if they grew weary of a place, or the taxes were too great, or towering buildings left the little cottage in the shade, they moved their houses bodily from one part of town to another. You see little of that in St. Paul today. When we moved from Rondo to Western, the Vennes bought the house and moved it to Ravoux Street!

In the rear of the Peglow house were piles of heavy timber, huge blocks and big rollers with a number of square holes in them; also a battery of big iron jack-screws. If a house was to be moved the "furniture" above-mentioned was carted to the spot; the house was raised with jack-screws, rollers were laid under it on either side, a capstan with a strong cable was used to pull the house out into the street. The rollers were set upon tracks - wooden planks - and then Exodus commenced. The rope pulled, the men stuck poles into the holes of

the rollers; then ensued sturdy poling, groans from the rollers, crackings from the house as though it were in pain and the house slowly passed down the street to its new site. The people continued to live in the house while it was on wheels! Tell this to a man in 1935 and he will comment, "That must have cost a pile of money!" Well, undoubtedly it had to be paid for but we never stopped to inquire. Sometimes a house would stand still en route for some time - a sign that either the movers were "under the weather" or that the bottom had fallen out of the exchequer and he waited until he was again solvendo, as Cicero would put it.

The house next to ours was that of my step-grandfather, George Weikert. His house and ours stood at the foot of Ravoux Street and kept it from going any farther. He was a small man who had practiced baking when he first came to St. Paul in 1858 but then joined the vast army of unskilled labor and let his services as they were needed - which was all the time in a young city. In summer he sawed wood, worked in the street, in July and August he helped on farms around the city, in winter he went to the River to "make ice"; he also slaughtered pigs made sauerkraut, smoked hams and shoveled snow! At home he had nothing to do but "make the firewood", spade the garden, prune the crab-apple trees and do such sporadic carpentering around the house as would be called for when a piece of flooring came loose or the cellar stairs got out of kilter.

That house at 166 Rondo Street was set on a stone foundation and had a cellar; it was not a cellar for wines and whiskies. Though a Bavarian, he was not a professional drinker. For one thing, one needs money to drink and money did not grow like dandelions. Saloons were far apart so the pioneers who drank beer (five cents a glass with much foam on top and much glass at the bottom) went down to Rice Street and drank just enough beer to be pleasant to one another. Did they drink whiskey? Grandfather told me that while he was still living near the Capitol whiskey was so cheap that a man could buy a dinner pail full of it for fifteen cents. It must have been "pizenous" stuff or heavily

watered. In summer beer, in winter Whiskey and one cannot blame them. Seven months of winter, more or less, every year in a frail house built of boards with countless crannies to let in the Boreal blasts, and again, as far as the men were concerned, ten hours of work outdoors for One Dollar per Diem (or per diadem as a member of the Legislature said) was justification enough to keep some home fires burning beneath their red flannel shirts by laying in a few swigs at fifteen cents cost.

Grandfather was not a highly educated man but he had a fund of natural politeness, courtesy, kindness and charity. He even would have loved his enemies - if he had had any. He expanded his intellectual field by reading the weekly issue of the "Katholische Volkezeitung" and discussing it with his wife. Grandmother was not a reader. Bacon saith "Reading maketh a full man." He said nothing about women. The plebian woman cared not for reading from books in Frogtown; she studied her children, their breeches, their smocks, and stockings and mittens, their aches and their pains, her pots, kettles and pans, her geese chickens and cow, her garden and flowerbed, the medicinal use of herbs, a vast store of knowledge for any human! The women worked all day, so did the men. The latter came home with an empty dinner pail when the cows came home from the prairie, where Lexington Ball Park was in later years (University and Lexington Avenues -MEH). The lord of the manor came home to rest, then the woman's work began anew, cooking, setting the table, washing the dishes, putting the chickens to roost and the children to bed, serving the cats their dish of milk and the dog a dish of left-overs, locking the barn door, getting water for the morning ablutions, darning a few stockings - in a word, getting the domestic mechanism fired up for another day. After all was in shape the man would wind the clock, look for his bootjack and calmly wrap about him the drapery of his humble couch to sleep and snore until another day.

My grandmother, Anna Weikert, was a tall, heavy-boned woman, several inches taller than her short husband. She did not talk much but I liked to visit in her home, go down the cellar and then up to the attic space where from the rafters hung corncobs to dry for popping and herbs for spicing and for medicinal use. In the main room she had a large "Legende Der Heiligen" (Legend of Saints-MEH) with print large enough for a blind man to see. I was most interested in the pictures for a child can see more in a picture than can an adult. Our grandparents were always very kind to us, especially Grandfather who was more loquacious and fun-loving than Grandmother. My mother loved her stepfather dearly; he was a kindly gentleman.

Next to the Weikerts lived the Gerth family, a German and fairly numerous group. Mr. Gerth was a carpenter by trade who later became a contractor. We did not call them Gerth, oddly enough. Mr. Gerth's name was Anton or "Dony" for short and so everyone called them the "Donies" and it wasn't until I went to school that their son, George, told me that his name was not George Dony but George Gerth! Quiet kindly people, they had an invalid son who spent his more than forty years of life helpless in a ~~rocking chair~~, Certainly he must have been a burden to his mother but she never prayed that he be taken from her. We cannot understand a mother's love! In 1898, Mary Gerth became the wife of one of my younger brothers, Frank.

Then came the Schillo home. The Schillos came to St. Paul in 1864. Mathias Schillo was at that time sixty years old: his wife was my father's sister, Katherine. They had quite a number of children, filios et filias, Johann, Eya, Schang (which is not Chinese but their rendering of the French Jean) Matthias, Barbara, Gertrude, Frank and I believe an Anna. Mr. Schillo was an unskilled street laborer building sidewalks and leveling streets.

Uncle Schillo came from Wadern which was French Alsace at that time. He spoke little English - "yes", "no", "ten cents beer" but he spoke considerable apocryphal French. He called a handkerchief a "mouchoir", his vest a "gilet"

and a dipper a "boule".

Cousin Matthias Schillo belonged to the Minnesota National Guard. How a military uniform fascinates a boy! Those Guards had a very dressy uniform, light blue trousers with a red stripe up the side, a dark blue coat with glistening brass buttons down the front and on the sleeves, a Kepi or cap similar to those worn by the French Army. Matt also had an immense gun, I could hardly lift it. At the top was fastened a three-edged straight bayonet. How handsome those men looked in parade, more so than the regulars who came from Fort Snelling for July Fourth parades.

I think the name Schillo was probably originally Gillôt. Uncle spoke German heavily larded with French words and refused to speak "Walsh" which would be English. Since he was a man of few words it was of small moment!

Also, near us lived the Remers and they were good customers at my father's store, always settling their accounts promptly. William Remer, eldest son, learned to be a printer and later was part owner of "Der Nordstern" a weekly St. Cloud paper. The fair-haired Ernst left St. Paul and founded the town named Remer near Leech Lake.

Those were the neighbors I best remember so on to other things. On a piece of land near Farrington and Rondo was the Irish settlement. The land was owned by the diocese of St. Paul and the bishop permitted the Irish immigrants to settle there shortly after the Civil War. The families occupied shanties built by themselves; these stood in no particular order but looked as though they had been dropped by Jupiter Pluvius when he had a bad spell. They were higgledy-piggledy, some with a bit of fence and garden. The roofs were mostly of the shed order and from a hole in the roof projected a "chimbley" consisting of a length of stovepipe, not straight upward but modelled after the Tower of Pisa. Still, they let out the smoke.

This ragged colony had many children and a wealth of poverty. The men wielded pick and shovel working on the streets or in the sewers. Be it said to their praise that they demeaned themselves to do so else the "citizens" and aristocrats would never have had sewers to carry off their filth. Wages were sinfully low and so the workers had to confine their wants within narrow limits.

After a cup of coffee at sunrise the men would go downtown with a pick or shovel on their shoulders (they provided their own tools as was the custom) twenty blocks if necessary to earn less than one dollar a day, payable on Saturday at six P.M.. In a small dinner pail they carried some mashed potatoes, a chunk of bacon, a hunk of bread and a swig of coffee from a tin cup screwed to the cover of the pail. Between their teeth was clamped the remnant of a clay pipe, the tobacco was in their pockets. The women also were addicted to the pipe, in fact everyone except the cows and pigs smoked a pipe! The old women had a trick of dragging the pipe for hours without taking it out once; I think they swallowed the smoke.

On occasion the settlement was noisy; that was when they had enough whiskey to exhilarate them. One Saturday evening they had a regular jamboree which flowered into controversy with spades and brooms and picks. The outcome was wailing and bloody heads on men, women and children. Some courageous dweller on Rondo Street ran down to get a policeman. We were at that time outside the fire limits and practically exiles. The policeman had to walk all the way from the City Hall to Western Avenue, more than two miles, to quell the row!

The officer was a Celt himself and marched the whole "caboodle" down to City Hall. There they received a fatherly reprimand with a threat attached and were sent home to sleep off the orgy before Sunday should dawn. They were

not fined because they had no money to pay a fine; there was no workhouse at the time and no jail to board the whole mob. The settlement soon passed out. Came Nemesis: just opposite to the colony the Rondo Police Station was established. Just as Fort Snelling was an outpost to keep the fur companies and Indians in proper "humility" the Police Station kept the peace on Rondo. It made the west end of Rondo secure and a desirable place to live. So much so that in 1875 my father built a large house and store on Western at Martin, but that was after I had left for Collegeville.

But not all the Celts were as cantankerous as those pictured above. At the corner of Western and Rondo was a brown frame house inhabited by the Caulfields. So far as I can remember they had but two children. One was a tall maiden impressively called "Maria" (i as in high). The name Maria had some body to it and sounded like a firebell. This Maria was then still in her maidenhood and lingered many a day before she decided to extinguish her family name by taking a yokemate. She was looked up to with a certain measure of awe for she was a public school teacher.

The Farrells lived on a high spot in the bog near Farrington and Rondo. Mr. Farrell was a stone mason who knew but two roads, the one to work, the other to church. The day's work done, his arms washed up to the elbows, he would sit on his front doorstep and read the Northwest Chronicle and would, if a neighbor stopped by, grow eloquent as only such old contemplatives could. He did not read the paper to his wife and daughter "for there wasn't any use." Nor did he read it to his son, James, who attended the Cathedral School and could read better than his father. Jimmie was my good friend and I think he envied me the chance to go to college. He felt it was his duty to stay home and abide with his aging parents and support them - which he did for many

a year until they needed no more bread, butter or "tay". Jimmie and his sister were still alive and well when they came to pay their respects at the wake for my mother in 1924.

Now it is time to reach out a little farther into the life of Frogtown.

XII

Natural History of Frogtown

Now if I were modern I would subtitle this chapter "Concise Survey of the Geology, Flora, Fauna (or better - the Zoology, Entomology and other ologies) of Batrachyopolis". Seeing that I would soon find myself in too deep waters I had better confine myself to plain style and simplicity of vocabulary. The English language is so poor in words of its own that it must steal or borrow from all sides: an airship is an "aeroplane", a talking machine is a "phonograph" etc.. We steal from the Greek and Latin and yet despise to teach both languages.

Of the geology of Frogtown during the Late Ternary Epoch I have no knowledge of how it appeared. Nobody seems to know. The true scientist has more things that he does not know than things that he knows - and that keeps him properly humble. The substratum of Frogtown is probably like that of the rest of St. Paul. 'Way down is a saccharoid sandstone; above that is a magnesian limestone as in the bluffs you see from the River, and above that is - or was - "juice" mud - I suppose I ought to say "paludine terrain" or swamp and be done with it. You might find fossils in the limestone but not in the mud. The swamp was soft and lumpy as if cows had been walking through it, and the holes were filled with water. It was drained by an overgrown creek that flowed erratically down Rondo Street and shortly before reaching Rice Street swayed off in a southerly direction until it flowed into a sewer at College Avenue. You could see no rocks anywhere in our district.

As for the Flora I suppose the dendrons should be first noticed. The swamp

was covered with scrawny tamarack, academically of the Linnaean genus of Pinus and known in the eastern United States as Hackmatack. Hence, a low-down species of the "murmuring pines" of our northern forests. They were hardly good enough for Christmas trees. The dry twigs were gathered by the poor for firewood.

On the rising ground of Frogtown were some small oaks, especially around St. Joseph's Academy. Farther out on the "prairie" were some poplars planted by human hands as around the Larpenteur mansion. There were many native maples, genus Acer. Then came shrubs beyond the swamp. There were hazelnut bushes, sumac of the botanical genus Rhus(toxicum?) bright green in summer with clusters of diminutive crimson berries - oh how sour! - and the leaves, turning gold and crimson gave color to the Autumn scene. Then there was mullein, genus Verbascum, which the Germans called Wällkraut because of its long, thick, hairy leaves and tall pulpy stem sometimes three feet high, covered with small yellow flowers. And milkweed - if you broke the stem a milky pulp -patronized by insects - would ooze out which was very acrid to the taste and was said to produce warts on the hands. And thistles with pink blooms, the delight of the kine. And dandelions (Leóntodan; Loewenzahn; dent de lion) with toothed leaves, very popular for salads.

From the center of the plant shot up a long, slender tube which bore the thin radiate spines(if I may so call them)of the "four o'clocks." We used to believe you could tell the time of day by blowing at the fluffy sphere of the gone-to-seed dandelion: if you had to blow four times it would be four o'clock! Would that I had the gift of James Whitcomb Riley to describe Nature in its varying phases. Listen how he describes :

" And then we'll canter on to catch the bubble of the thistle
As it bumps among the butterflies and glimmers down the sun,
To leave us laughing, all content to hear the robin's whistle
Or guess what Katydid is saying little Katy's done."

Sure enough, "bubble" describes the airy sphere above the dandelion. And

when the dandelion started as a little plant it looked like a golden button lying in the grass: would curl up and sleep after sundown and unfold its many little hands to hail the morning sun. Later on I heard the explanation: that behavior of the flower was due to Heliotropism. Now I know the secret: the Greek word "helios" means the sun, and trope means to turn, and ism is a system or tendency: therefore the dandelion turn toward the sun because it has an inborn tendency to do so. Such is Science!

There were several varieties of clover, everybody was looking for a "four leaved clover", that brings luck. Someone found a five leaved one and was puzzled! And there were nettles, ragweed, goldenrod, Indian tobacco, of which we made our cigars, and others of which I do not know the name.

Flowers. Most glorious of all was the Blue Flag or iris which grew along the shores of lakes and ponds, Its stem resembles that of the gladiola and its flowers are shapeless as if tossed about by angry winds. Within the precincts of Frogtown wild flowers were few and inconspicuous and the scarcity of native flowers was relieved by flowers planted in gardens or kept potted in houses. I have mentioned morning glories trained along windows and doors by strings. Of potted flowers may be mentioned rose bushes, oleanders and geraniums. Garden flowers: tallest of all was the sunflower: hollyhocks serving as landmarks, hedges and resorts for bugs and bees: roses, red and white, tiger lilies blazing orange, impatiens, pansies, poppies, nasturtium; striped grasses. Housewives cherished their flowerbeds: those splashes of color might have been an agreeable sight from a balloon! The shrubs were currant and raspberry. There were grape vines and mock orange(Philadelphus) not edible but used for ornament on shelves and tables; small gourds, squashes, sugar melons, water melons with juicy pink meat and pumpkins(for the pigs!) On Hallowe'en we gutted pumpkins, cut eyes and mouth in the shell and placed a stub of candle inside to "scare people".

It was customary if space permitted to have one or two round flower-beds bordered by stones in front of the house. Some people adorned their windows by setting flower boxes upon the outside window sills. I may say we boys did not rave over flowers: the little girls did that. Lest I forget the detail, the girls used to make small wreaths or chains of white clover flowers, as also chains (of ephemeral duration) out of the stems of dandelions.

Garden plants or vegetables: cabbage and potatoes were in every garden: with corn along the fence for popcorn and for summer suppers: beans, peas, turnips, carrots, rutabagas, onions, garlic, cucumbers and tomatoes. A few people had plum trees or crab apple trees, no real apple trees. Plums and crabs were made into preserves or jams as were tomatoes and currants.

Fauna. Amphibia. In a swamp you will obviously expect to find amphibious creatures above all frogs (*rana palustris* of the illustrious jumping family of Batrachians) bullfrogs of hermit disposition, heard but rarely seen: common frogs, small and large, quondam wiggly "tadpoles": toads black and ugly, harbingers of rain and prophets of bad luck: turtles from two to four inches long, not caught for table. Fish may have been found in some of the ponds but they were few and not "worth the while". The snakes were mostly garters and one or two other varieties, all harmless. Quadrupeds were gophers, most of them in the "prairie", red squirrels, and chipmunks.

The domestic animals were horses, mules, cows, dogs, cats (complemented by mice and rats), and pigs. We saw swallows and martins as well as our ducks, geese, chickens and a few turkeys.

The realm of insects is too vast, extending from the earth to the stars and their names are too sophisticated: yet I will mention a few, butterflies (as we called all of them), yellow, white, crockery brown, black: devil's darning needle (mosquito hawk), june bugs, blow-worms, grasshoppers, mosquitos, bedbugs and parasitic vermin of several kinds!

Ethnology: I wish I could speak of Indians. There may have been some or many in older times: in my day nearly all of them were either north or south of St. Paul. However we saw more Indians than any boy today: Chippewa and Sioux, chiefs, braves, squaws and papooses. In those days the tribes were still directly under the government of the State authorities and would frequently send delegations to St. Paul to parley with the Governor at the Capitol. They would roam around on the grounds, sprawl over the lawn. Tall, picturesque chiefs clad in buckskin, blanket over shoulders and crowned with a "stovepipe" hat decorated with ribbons or a small, round hand-mirror. Sioux (Dahkotas) with a feather or two sticking in their hair: pudgy squaws in the plainest of somber "white folks" gowns, children and papooses. We came, saw and left but never fraternized.

The earliest settlers were French Canadians washed out of the Red River country. They came down hither across country driving their cattle ahead of them, or traveled up the Red River to Lake Traverse and barged down the Minnesota River to Fort Snelling, settling there from 1832 to 1840 in which latter year they were evicted by the Fort's commandant, Major Plympton, and established themselves at "Pig's Eye".

Some remained in the upper part along Third and Seventh Streets, others went to Lower Town. As the town grew and these settlers parted with their holdings they moved farther out and so it came that Joe Rondo made his home in the angle of Rice and Carroll Streets. Later a Guerin family came in and made its home at the corner of Rice and Rondo, and William Baudette, coming from Mendota settled next to them. The Guerins were quiet, unobtrusive people, probably because they spoke no English and but reluctantly learned that language, although their children did so. Joe Rondo's Indian wife (a Kootenai) never showed herself in the street. Baudette died in 1871.

XIII

Germans settled in Frogtown after 1860, not in a close group. The south side of Rondo from Rice to Josette had about six houses owned by Germans and there was a line of four on the other side and this was the densest group for years. We did not mingle with the Poles and Bohemians since none lived on Rondo Street.

The Irish who lived near the corner of Rondo and Western came to my father's store. Father could handle them: they would do the talking and he would weigh and wrap up their purchases and spoke English as good as that of his customers. Some of the old Irish women sprinkled their talk with Gaelic words of exclamation or terms of endearment for the "little wans": Och! Och! or "acushla" (dear). They spoke with a "brogue", "Jarmin" for German, "sints" for "cents", "charch" for church, and when they left the store "God blesha! good marnin!" But then everyone from an "Old Country" had some sort of accent!