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The Story of the *ST. PAUL GLOBE*

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THE *St. Paul Globe* was founded in 1878 when Minneapolis and St. Paul had scarcely emerged from the pioneer era and Minnesota was still on the nation's agricultural frontier. When the newspaper died some twenty-seven years later, the Twin Cities had mushroomed into the largest urban area northwest of Chicago and had become a railroad, milling, and financial center with a hinterland that extended from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains. St. Paul numbered some 40,000 citizens when the *Globe* began publication; when the paper was discontinued in 1905 the city's population had increased nearly fivefold to 197,023.¹ Thus the life of the *Globe* spanned a quarter-century of phenomenal growth and witnessed the transformation of the community it served from a genteel river town into part of a powerful prairie metropolis.

The *Globe* also encompassed a definite political era. In an age when journalism and

politics were practically inseparable, its career roughly paralleled the national rebirth of the Democratic party after the Civil War and its rise to power under Grover Cleveland. The year 1893 in which the *Globe* reached its peak of prosperity also saw Cleveland's second inauguration as president. Like the party for which it spoke, the *Globe* foundered a few years later upon the rocks of free silver and agrarian protest. As a national organization the party ultimately chose to cut loose from the Cleveland tradition and swim with the current of reform, but the *St. Paul Globe*, captured by conservative private interests, went under.

The founder and first editor of the *Globe* was Harlan P. Hall, a political and journalistic maverick who hailed from Ohio. Ten years earlier he had started the *St. Paul Dispatch*, which he continued to edit — and from 1870 to publish as well — until 1876. In that year a stock company purchased the paper and it was "transformed over night" from an independent Democratic to "an aggressive Republican organ."²

The changed allegiance of the *Dispatch* left St. Paul Democrats, who were an overwhelming majority of the city's voting population, without a journalistic voice. Therefore the appearance of the *Globe* in 1878 was not surprising, nor was the fact that

¹ Minnesota, *Legislative Manual*, 1907, p. 510.

² Henry A. Castle, *History of St. Paul and Vicinity*, 1:333 (Chicago and New York, 1912). The *Dispatch* had begun as an organ for the insurgent wing of the Republican party in the heated congressional campaign of 1868. Later Hall veered through Liberal Republicanism and ended up in loose alliance with the Democratic party. See Harlan P. Hall, *Observations: Being More or Less a History of Political Contests in Minnesota From 1849 to 1904*, 79, 108-112, 123 (St. Paul, 1904).

on the second day of publication it received the city's printing contract by a vote of nine to two in the city council. On the following day the Democratic members of the Minnesota legislature called on all party supporters to "personally aid and encourage every effort to permanently establish such a paper," and asked "Democratic brethren" throughout the state to subscribe to the daily and weekly *Globe*.³

In his first issue, dated January 15, 1878, Hall stated: "The *Globe* will be Democratic. Not in the offensive 'organ-grinding' sense, bound to support any man or measure, but in the broad, liberal meaning of the term." He went on to say that the paper would be for businessmen as well as workingmen and would carry "complete Associated Press news coverage."

The *Globe* was a standard four-page affair of the era and contained stories with exotic foreign date lines, such as Constantinople, Belgrade, and Jordan. Sunday editions were six columns wide—slightly smaller in size than the seven-column daily—and carried fiction in addition to news. On January 20 the *Globe* announced that it would become the first St. Paul newspaper to print an issue every day of the year and went on to boast: "This journal will continue to lead, and if the feeble imitators only approximately follow, they will make papers so superior to their past efforts as to astonish the public."

Crowing of this sort reflected the battle for survival in which the paper was engaged. When it was two months old it continued to press for circulation through both its editorial and advertising columns. There were by this time a few business cards and entertainment announcements, but it is evident that most of the *Globe's* advertising revenue still came from the city notices dealing with assessment hearings, judgments, and letting of contracts.

Hall possessed an unlimited stock of indignation, which helped make the columns of his paper lively. In March he began a long and vigorous campaign in opposition

to a school textbook bill that "would lead to a private monopoly of education and learning."⁴ At the same time he endorsed an investigation of the Minnesota Hospital for the Insane at St. Peter. When the results of the probe were revealed, the *Globe* advocated reforms in the administration of the hospital as well as in the treatment of patients, and Hall commented in a characteristic editorial on April 15, that "the outrages are too shocking, and the rascality too great to be overlooked."

He dramatized the need for construction of a bridge at Fort Snelling by sending a reporter to "ascertain from personal observation" the difficulties of crossing the Mississippi by way of the historic ferry below the fort. The reporter also interviewed several farmers who hauled all their grain to Minneapolis but maintained they would bring it to the St. Paul market if a bridge were built. The citizens of St. Paul responded by approving the necessary bond issue, and the *Globe* followed up its crusade with regular reports on the progress of construction. When the bridge was opened less than two years later, the paper published on its front page a three-column engraving of it.⁵

Another campaign—one which probably did more than anything else to expand the *Globe's* circulation in its first year—was associated with the fall election of 1878. Discontent among the state's farmers found expression that year in the third district congressional race, which pitted Republican William D. Washburn, a Minneapolis miller, against Ignatius Donnelly, Minnesota's perennial reform candidate, who had been reluctantly endorsed by the Democratic party. The fierce contest centered around state supervision of wheat grading by grain buyers and became famous in Minnesota

³ *St. Paul Globe*, January 17, 1878. All citations in this article are to the daily edition of the *Globe*. A weekly edition was also published from January, 1878, to June, 1900, and a semiweekly edition from September, 1899, to June, 1900.

⁴ *Globe*, March 14, 1878.

⁵ *Globe*, March 23, 24, 27, 1878; February 5, 1880.

history as the "brass kettle" campaign.⁶ Hall demonstrated his political independence by throwing himself and the *Globe* strongly behind Donnelly, despite a marked lack of enthusiasm among party regulars. Years later the editor recalled: "I gave my daily paper for the campaign for 25 cents, and sent a canvasser with Donnelly. . . . [Subscriptions] rolled in by the thousand . . . and the more I got the worse off I was. . . . I never took the trouble to figure my loss, but I know it was a good many thousand dollars." Nevertheless, the *Globe* became well known throughout central Minnesota, and Hall estimated that during the campaign it had more subscribers in the rural counties there than any other daily paper attained until well after 1900.⁷

BY 1880 the *Globe* had begun to reach a firmer footing. A column or more of classified advertising appeared regularly, as did theatrical and entertainment notices; display advertising with larger type and a few pictures was coming into use; and many of St. Paul's prominent retail firms were represented. The *Globe* also continued to be the official paper of the city.

On March 5, 1880, the paper presented a review of St. Paul manufacturing. Hall apparently took pride in this type of local coverage, for according to an editorial appearing on the same day, neither expense, time, nor labor had been spared to provide readers with a "complete and thorough" report: "No guess work estimates have been taken, but actual personal visitation has been made to every manufacturing estab-

⁶ Hall, *Observations*, 225-230; William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 3:388-390 (St. Paul, 1926). Grades of wheat were determined by the use of a small brass container with an attached scalebeam, and it was widely believed that this device could be manipulated to cheat the farmer. Donnelly referred to it as a "swindling brass kettle," and this became the slogan of the campaign, which he lost by a narrow margin.

⁷ Hall, *Observations*, 229.

⁸ *The Review* (Mankato), June 28, 1881; Warren Upham and Rose B. Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*, 167, 246, 395, 568, 675, 702 (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 14, 1912).



HARLAN P. Hall

lishment in the city." He also made use of this special feature to describe the progress of the *Globe* itself. By that time the paper employed eighty-five persons and occupied three floors and the basement of a building at 17 Wabasha Street.

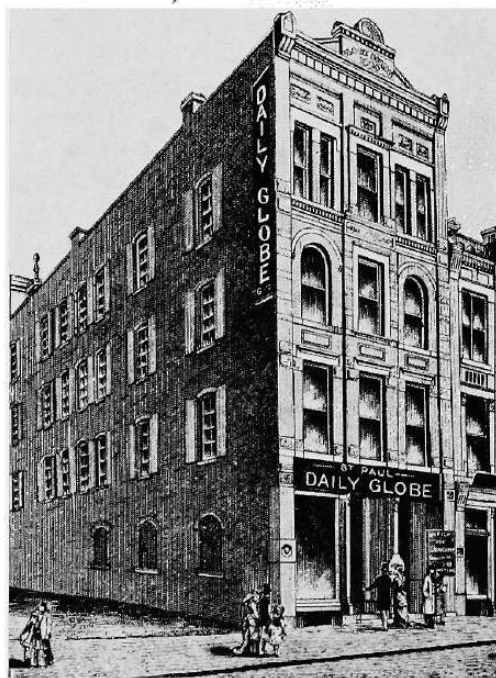
A change of ownership took place in mid-1881, when the *Globe* passed into the hands of a joint stock company composed of Henry H. Sibley, Patrick H. Kelly, Albert Scheffer, William Dawson, Reuben B. Galusha, and Ansel Oppenheim. Sibley, Kelly, Scheffer, and Dawson were St. Paul businessmen and Democratic politicians, Dawson having recently served as mayor of the city. Galusha and Oppenheim were attorneys; the former was employed by James J. Hill's St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway. Hall stayed on as manager and editor, but his name was dropped from the masthead.⁸

The format of the paper remained about the same despite increases in size and circulation. The daily edition now had eight pages of seven columns each and claimed a circulation of 4,200. Two pages were largely

devoted to market and city notices; the classified advertising had increased and often filled as much as three columns. A number of regular features were run, including columns of three- or four-line news items under such headings as "City Globules," "Minneapolis Globelets," and "Around the Globe," the latter carrying world news.

The year 1884, which saw Grover Cleveland elected to the presidency for the first time, was significant for both the *Globe* and the Democratic party. Before this the paper had customarily run single-column heads, using double columns on rare occasions, but after Cleveland's election exuberant banner headlines were splashed across five columns of the front page. "The Earth Is Ours," they proclaimed, when the official returns were in, "and the Fruits Thereof Will Be Duly Garnered. The Democratic Flag [indicated by a picture of the national emblem] Has Been Planted Upon the Ramparts of the Nation and Proudly Floats to the Breeze. The Stars Shine Bright in the Democratic Camp and We're Happy as a Big Sunflower."⁹

THE *Globe* Building on Fourth Street



An editorial on the same day declared: "We have elected Cleveland and we will inaugurate him. . . . The gloomiest places in Minnesota last night were the [James G.] Blaine newspaper offices in St. Paul." For nearly two weeks after the election the numerals "219" appeared in large type, commemorating Cleveland's electoral vote. On November 17 almost the entire front page was dedicated to the president-elect, giving "a careful estimate" of his character, background, and experience.

The party's organ was prospering along with the party. On December 24, 1884, an editorial described the *Globe's* production facilities as "superior to those of any other paper west of Chicago." An advertisement appearing three days later was more specific: it stated that the newspaper was printed from stereotype plates on a \$30,000 press "capable of producing 15,000 completed copies per hour." Editorial resources had also been expanded, according to an account on December 31. They included news bureaus in New York City and Washington and "elaborate" news-gathering facilities in Chicago, where the *Globe's* bureau had a representative on the Chicago Board of Trade. The paper had outgrown its Wabasha Street location and would soon move into a new four-story structure on the south side of Fourth Street.

At the same time there were intimations of change. On December 29 an editorial announced that "negotiations are in progress between the *Globe* company and Mr. Lewis Baker of Wheeling, West Virginia, and his associates, with a reasonable prospect of mutual agreement." If these should be concluded, "the *Globe* will be placed in most excellent hands." The next week, on January 6, 1885, the paper published articles of incorporation and listed the new board of directors. Several of the previous owners were among them, including Sibley and Kelly. The president of the board was Norman W. Kittson of St. Paul, and Baker soon

⁹ *Globe*, November 6, 1884.

came in as secretary and general manager. Another new name among the directors was that of Michael Doran, formerly of *Le Sueur*, who was to be known within the next decade as the "boss" of the state's Democratic organization.¹⁰

BAKER WAS a capable editor, and under him the paper saw its years of greatest prosperity. He made few changes at first, but by 1887 the gradual transition from the format established by Hall to a new and more modern make-up had been nearly completed. The front page no longer carried advertising and was broken up into short pieces rather than presenting a few long stories. The solid gray was varied by many more headlines and illustrations. A more detailed drawing of a globe appeared.

Corresponding changes could be seen elsewhere. Advertising had increased, and more third-page, half-page, and full-page advertisements as well as more illustrations were used. On the editorial page there was a different style of masthead; several long editorials replaced the two-sentence comments of which Hall had been fond. The *Globe* also began publishing letters from readers in a column entitled "Voice of the People," and for the first time it carried political cartoons. Several columns under the heading "Society" told of who had been where the past weekend and who was visiting whom, in the manner of many present-day small-town weeklies.

On Saturdays the *Globe* carried two sections, the second designated as the "Dakota Edition" and containing news of special interest for the citizens of Dakota Territory. The Sunday editions had grown to eighteen pages, with two or three pages of "want ads," mostly for real estate. In an advertisement on July 2, 1887, the *Globe* described itself as "a Bright, Breezy, Interesting Paper," hav-

ing "More and Better Illustrations Than Any Other Paper in the Country." It claimed a circulation of 14,490.¹¹

The *Globe* was thriving, and so was the community it served. On May 1, 1887, the paper described the growth of St. Paul and Minneapolis as "a tale of two cities that has no counterpart in history," and on the same day it moved once more to larger quarters — this time to the new ten-story *Globe* Building, destined to be for many years a proud landmark of downtown St. Paul.

Throughout the rest of Baker's tenure as editor the *Globe* continued catering to journalistic trends and popular tastes. It soon began to advertise itself as the "leading sporting paper of the northwest." As early as 1886 an increasing public interest in baseball was reflected in stories like the following, which appeared on May 1: "The batting and fielding of both clubs was about even today and the contest was quite exciting. The chief feature of the game was a most wonderful catch by Quinn with the score a tie in the ninth inning and a runner on first base and MacKinnan knocking the ball over the fence and winning the game." To discover who was playing, the reader had to go to the line score.

As the popularity of the game grew, the *Globe* began running baseball box scores. These at first appeared on page one, but later all sports were moved to page five, although this was not yet given special designation as a sports page. By 1891 the paper carried league standings and emphasized the Western League, of which St. Paul and Minneapolis were members, as well as Omaha, Lincoln, Milwaukee, Denver, Sioux City, and Kansas City. The writing had improved, and more detailed descriptions of games were given.

A number of other innovations were introduced during this period. Crimes were reported more prominently and at greater length, and tantalizing headlines were used, such as "Wicked Chicago Women," "Bloodshed at Hamilton," and "Fatal Family Quarrel." More and more pictures appeared, and

¹⁰ Upham and Dunlap, *Minnesota Biographies*, 183; Carl H. Chrislock, "A Cycle in the History of Minnesota Republicanism," in *Minnesota History*, 39:102 (Fall, 1964).

¹¹ *Globe*, May 21, 1887.

page size was increased from seven to eight columns. The public responded, and by 1893 the *Globe* had reached a circulation of 24,000.¹²

DURING the decade of Baker's editorship from 1884 to 1894, the *Globe* remained steadfast in its support of the regular Democratic organization, although this was a period when Minnesota was experiencing a third-party revolt led by the Farmers Alliance and later by the Populists.¹³ The third-party forces no doubt made some election-day inroads upon the Democrats' rank-and-file support, but they were unable to shake the leadership of stalwart Cleveland partisans like Doran.

By 1894, however, the situation was changing. An increasing number of Democrats throughout the West and South were talking of free silver, and the Minnesota Democratic party was badly split. Having been a minority party in the state since 1859, it slipped to third place in the gubernatorial election of 1894, when George L. Becker, the candidate named by the conservative party leaders, trailed not only the Republican incumbent, Knute Nelson, but was also behind the Populist challenger, Sidney M. Owen.

Another misfortune, not only for the party but for its paper, was the sharp depression which had followed close upon Cleveland's second inauguration in 1893. Partly as a result of this, perhaps, the *Globe* experienced financial difficulties, and no doubt Baker saw the handwriting on the wall. He resigned early in 1894 to accept an appointment as United States minister to Nicaragua, getting, according to one source, "as far as he could from the *Globe* office."¹⁴

There followed a period of rapid turnover in the paper's ownership and management. It was edited for a short time by Minnesota's venerable judge, Charles E. Flandrau, as a court-appointed receiver, and it was owned briefly by the estate of Kittson and by the Dawson family of St. Paul. At length, early in 1896, its entire capital stock was

purchased by James J. Hill in order—his biographer claimed—to keep it safe for Cleveland Democracy and the gold standard.¹⁵

Hill bitterly opposed the candidacy and philosophy of William Jennings Bryan, and it was therefore no surprise when the *Globe* broke with its solidly Democratic tradition and came out for William McKinley in the presidential election of 1896. In 1898 it returned to the Democratic fold and supported John Lind, the party's successful candidate for governor, despite Lind's record as a free silver man. Once again, however, in 1900 the *Globe* favored McKinley against Bryan, and on November 8, after the second defeat of the Great Commoner, it declared somewhat prematurely that "Mr. Bryan stands today no more a leader of the Democratic party," and pledged that "from amidst the ruling of defeat and disaster it [*the Globe*] would do all in its power to discover the promise of future success." The paper went on in the same editorial to call for rebuilding the party to "the position which it has occupied for the past 100 years," and in 1904 it supported the nomination of Alton B. Parker, the presidential candidate of the resurgent party conservatives.

THE LAST TEN YEARS of the *Globe's* existence were a period of struggle and con-

¹² *Globe*, May 24, 1887; N. W. Ayer and Son, *American Newspaper Annual and Directory*, 1893, p. 396.

¹³ Folwell, *Minnesota*, 3:168–203. For more detailed discussions of the politics of this era, see Donald F. Warner, "Prelude to Populism," in *Minnesota History*, 32:129–146 (September, 1951); Carl H. Chrislock, "Sidney M. Owen: An Editor in Politics," in *Minnesota History*, 36:109–126 (December, 1958).

¹⁴ William B. Hennessy, *Past and Present of St. Paul, Minnesota*, 191 (Chicago, 1906).

¹⁵ Hennessy, *St. Paul*, 191; *Hastings Gazette*, June 24, 1893; Joseph Gilpin Pyle, *The Life of James J. Hill*, 2:383 (New York, 1917). The exact sequence of ownership in the years 1893–96 is difficult to trace. Some sources place Hill's purchase of a controlling interest in the paper as early as 1894. He apparently tried to keep the transaction from becoming public. Since his personal papers are not open for study, the true date cannot at this time be definitely stated.

stant experimentation. Hill searched in vain for the right editor to put the paper back on its feet, first hiring Joseph G. Pyle, associate editor of the rival *Pioneer Press*. In 1898 Pyle was replaced by George F. Spinney, who in 1900 gave way to William F. Luxton, former editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. After Luxton came George W. Sikes of Butte, Montana, and during its final two years the paper was again managed and edited by Pyle.¹⁶

Each editor tried new and different things to keep the paper afloat. More pictures and larger headlines appeared; editorials became longer, and boldface type was adopted for emphasis; the name plate was once more changed, and this time the pictured globe was dropped altogether. The paper also abandoned its standard front-page format and for a while used a different arrangement practically every day, leaning somewhat towards a circus make-up.

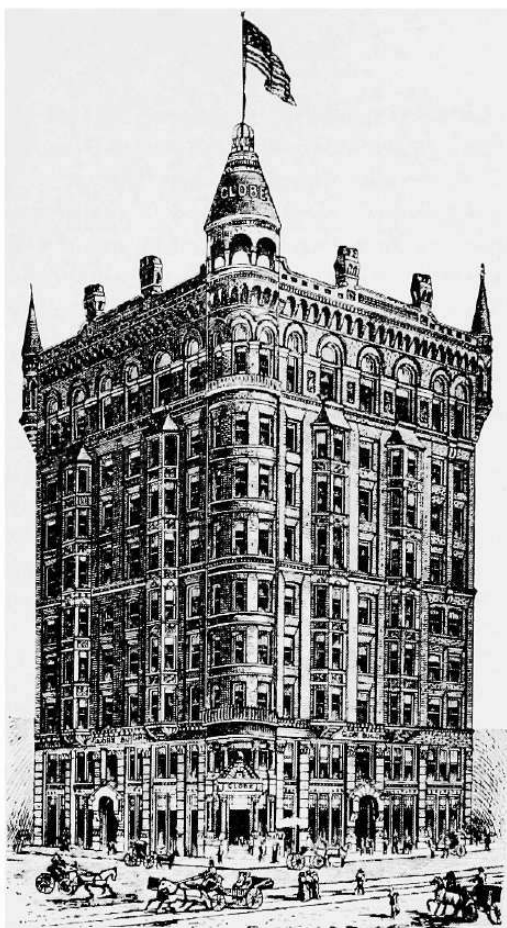
The Spanish-American War lent itself to banner headlines and numerous pictures. Like most newspapers of the time, the *Globe* beat the drums enthusiastically. In fact, a column entitled "Pith of the Latest War News" ran for weeks before the United States officially entered the conflict. After the declaration of war the front page was for some time devoted almost entirely to reports and pictures of the military action.

A few photographs began to appear among the illustrations at about this time, but until after 1900 all were either portraits of people or shots of buildings. Most of the pictures printed were still drawings.

By this time the sports page was called "Sports of the Day," and the paper reflected the rising interest in college football. When Minnesota played Wisconsin in November, 1901, the news invaded page one. A banner headline announced: "Badgers Played Football Like Tigers." The score had been Wisconsin, 18, Minnesota, 0. A photograph

¹⁶ Hennessy, *St. Paul*, 191; Frank Austin Carle, "Forty Years of Journalism — 1872-1912," p. 55, an unpublished autobiography in the Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁷ *Globe*, November 17, 1901.



THE *Globe* Building of 1887

taken from the stands showed the players faintly visible in the distance.¹⁷

Two years later the sports page carried a four-column title — "The World of Sports" — and a woman's page had been added: "For the Fair Sex." A "profit-sharing contest" with cash prizes was resorted to in 1903 to increase circulation, and by the end of that year the *Globe* brought out a fifty-two-page Sunday edition with eight pages in color, including a four-page color comic section.

Throughout the years after 1896 the paper showed in various ways evidence of Hill's ownership and influence. This became increasingly noticeable after the turn of the century, when the financier's scheme for consolidation of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Burlington railroads under control of the Northern Securities Company came under public attack and legal challenge. On December 22, 1901, the *Globe*

published a lengthy statement by Hill, defending his actions and denying the charges of monopoly brought against him.

As public suspicion and animosity increased through the succeeding months, his name received ever more prominent and laudatory mention in his paper. On January 4, 1904, a front-page article reported a speech to the state agricultural society in which Hill had pointed to the Orient as a certain market for surplus agricultural products and told Minnesota's farmers that what they needed most was expansion across the Pacific.¹⁸ Several months later, when the United States Supreme Court declared Hill's holding company to be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, the *Globe* defended Northern Securities in impassioned terms and concluded: "the people of the Northwest and the people of the whole country appreciate today as they never did before the ability, the sincerity, and the skill to plan and to execute of Mr. James J. Hill, and what they owe to him."¹⁹ Whether such eulogizing hurt the *Globe* is difficult to say, but growing public recognition of the paper as the voice of Hill's business interests can hardly have helped in its battle to survive.

That the battle was a losing one may not have been evident to the *Globe's* readers. They saw only an up-to-date, lively paper with a circulation that had reached nearly 40,000 by early 1905.²⁰ Nevertheless, the various attempts to modernize and popularize the *Globe*, together with its growing size and increased circulation, all involved greater costs, and advertising revenue failed to keep pace. By 1898 advertising occupied only about 30 per cent of the column space, and in 1905 it had fallen to about 20 per cent.

Thus on April 20, 1905, the *Globe* announced that it was shutting down. "The single and sufficient explanation of this decisive step is found in the fact that the business interests of St. Paul have not been able to give the *Globe* that business support without which no newspaper can thrive,"

said the front-page article. Money was refunded to subscribers; subscription lists were sold to the *Minneapolis Tribune*; the news franchise was killed; and the presses and equipment were disposed of piecemeal to other publishers. Hill thus decisively ended the *Globe's* existence because "he did not wish a paper published in St. Paul to fall into hands that he might not approve."²¹

There are many possible answers to why the newspaper failed when it still held appeal for a large segment of the population and had for years been the foremost local voice of a major political party. In the case of the *Globe* no single answer is enough. Even as early as 1904 Minnesota's Democratic party was showing signs of the atrophy which eventually led to its replacement by the Farmer-Labor party as the representative of the state's popular protest groups. Had the *Globe* not become Hill's personal mouthpiece, and had it been allowed to speak for the more liberal elements among the Democrats, both the party and the paper might have retained their vitality. No one can say. It was a time when many dailies were folding, and the *St. Paul Globe*, laboring under a double handicap, failed in making the difficult transition to a modern metropolitan newspaper.

¹⁸ Hill was at the time seeking to stimulate traffic over his western railroad lines and to expand into the Pacific shipping trade. Pyle, *James J. Hill*, 2:190.

¹⁹ *Globe*, March 24, 1904.

²⁰ Ayer, *Newspaper Annual*, 1905, p. 444.

²¹ Pyle, *James J. Hill*, 2:384.

THE PICTURES on pages 330 and 333 are from the *Northwest Magazine*, March, 1885; February, 1888. The one on page 329 is from the picture collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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Is There Any Doubt?

THE FOLLOWING — and perhaps now non-pertinent — question was asked by the Saint Croix Union of Stillwater on January 23, 1855:

What has become of the Min. Historical Society? We hope that no effort will be spared to revive it to activity.



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