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JOHN BACHOP GILFILLAN 1835-1924

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To quote the Minneapolis Tribune on August 21, 1924, "A man like Mr. Gilfillan is too unique to be replaced. His memory cannot and will not die."

CHRONOLOGY:

- J. B. Gilfillan b. 1835 d. 1924
Arrived at St. Anthony 1855
- 1872-73 Territory opened for settlers (There was a greenhouse and a sawmill north of Parkers Lake)
- 1891-93 Watts and Malmstedt sold to Gilfillan 530 acres north of lake on Watertown Rd
- 1913 Minneapolis Daily news reported that Gilfillan acquired additional acreage Approximately 100 acres including the wood area where log cabin was built
- 1921 Gilfillan sold to Earle Brown
- 1923 Earle Brown ^{Gilfillan} gave property to the City of Minneapolis Value: Approx. \$250 per acre
- 1923-1933 Gilfillan home occupied by the Arthur Birong family. He was Superintendent of the Workhouse farm operations
- 1931 City Workhouse built Prior to this the inmates lived in Camde and were transported daily to their work on the farm
- 1933 Gilfillan house torn down; brick house built for Superintendent of City Workhouse O'Brien, Lockwood...)
- 1970 Workhouse farm operations closed
- 1975 Property transferred to Hennepin County on a trial basis
- 1977 Hennepin County became permanent owner
- 1986-87 Property transferred to City of Plymouth; park development began. Park building named "The Pavilion" (from the dance hall located on the south shore of the lake...which burned in 1924)
Parkers Lake Park developed on north shore of lake; additional development north of County Road 6 includes large playfield, picnic shelter (on site of Gilfillan home) and kids play area

JOHN BACHOP GILFILLAN (1835-1924)

Born in Vermont of Scottish descent, John B. Gilfillan came to St. Anthony in 1855. There was no City of Minneapolis -- just a frontier village. That was the year the first suspension bridge over the Mississippi opened. In 1860 he was admitted to the Minnesota Bar, and at the time of his death he was Dean. Also, in 1860 he became City Attorney for St. Anthony, serving four terms. Three years later he served four terms as County Attorney. During these years he drafted a bill for the organization of a school board which eventually developed the current school system of Minneapolis, and for ten years he served on the school board. In 1880 Governor Pillsbury named Mr. Gilfillan a Regent of the University of Minnesota. As Chairman of the Regent Committee he was instrumental in bringing Cyrus Northrop to Minnesota to succeed Dr. Folwell. As a member of the State Senate Committee on University lands, he directed the negotiations for the sale of the old experimental farm and the purchase of the present site near Como Park. A gift of \$50,000 for the purpose of aiding needy and deserving students through the University has long borne Mr. Gilfillan's name. During this time he was part of the law firm of Lochren, McNair and Gilfillan. He served for a decade in the State Senate. In 1908 he compiled the "History of the University of Minnesota" for the State Historical Society, and also prepared a pamphlet regarding a controversy over the naming of "Minneapolis". He served one term in the Forty-Ninth Congress. He was President of the First National Bank for a year, and also served as Chairman of the Board. In 1921 he was the oldest practicing attorney in Minneapolis.

His wife, Rebecca, died in 1884, and in 1893 he married Lavinia Coppack. They made their home on Clifton Avenue in Minneapolis with his three surviving children, John Jr., James, and Janet. (A fourth, Robert, apparently died in infancy.)

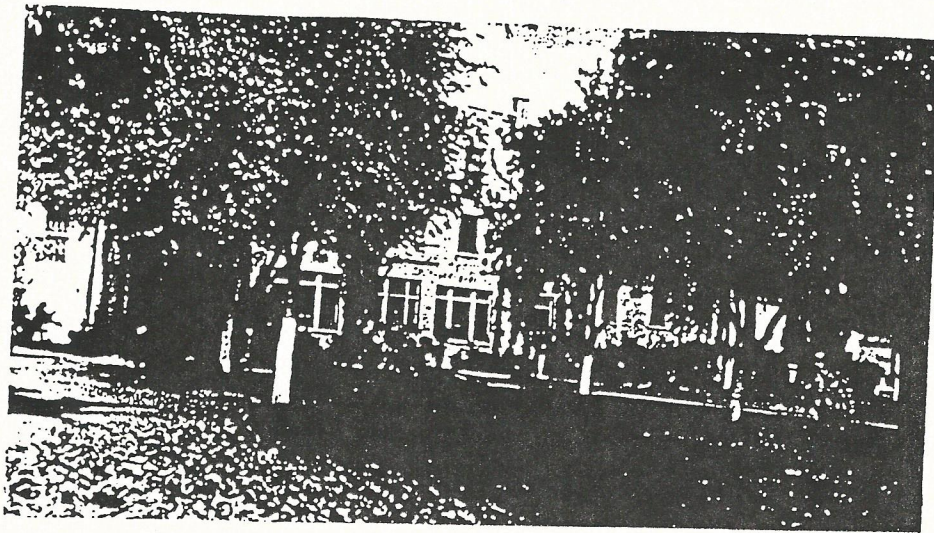
They maintained a large Victorian home at Parkers Lake in Plymouth. North and west of the lake he built a log cabin (15' x 30' with a fireplace) for his children, which some say served as a retreat from their step-mother's parties. Miles Dickey of Wayzata got the contract to build the cabin (for \$300 and James Wm. Creelman (a neighboring farmer) helped build the fireplace. The wooded area was designated as a deer park, and in the fall of the year, the hunters hung the deer they had killed from the rafters of the cabin.

1901-3

tile from France
a butler's pantry
a Dutch windmill on roof (D.W. Carr?)
weather vane
Power generator, cistern, well
livery barn, servant @

from
Carver.
1923

1st fl. 6 rooms 3 fireplaces 1 bathroom
2nd fl 5 rooms 2 fireplaces 2 bathrooms
3rd fl 4 rooms 1 fireplace
(attic)



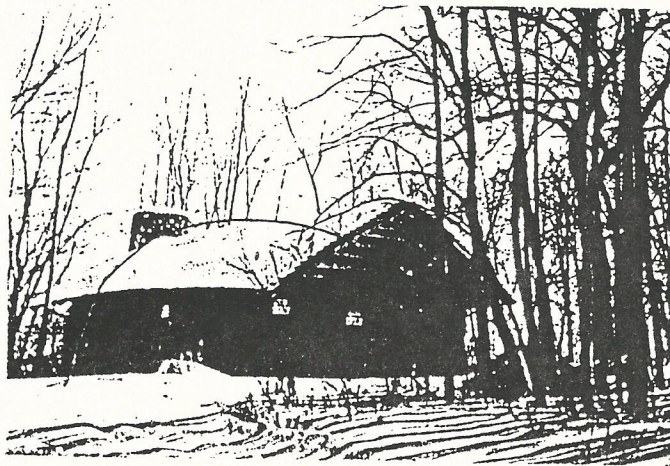
HOME OF JUDGE JOHN B. GILFILLAN (c. 1920)

This "Victorian" home (60 ft. x 40 ft.) stood on top of the hill which is now the site of Plymouth Parks picnic shelter north of County Road 6 and Parkers Lake.

The first floor had six rooms, three fireplaces and two bathrooms. Second floor had five rooms and two fireplaces and two bathrooms. Third floor had four rooms and a fireplace; also, balconies.

There was a huge kitchen and a butler's pantry; walls were decorated with French and English tile.

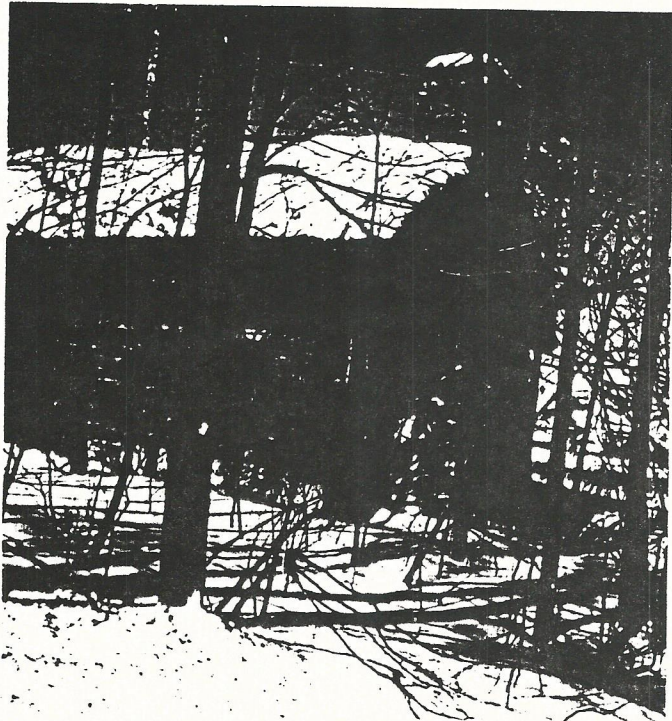
They had their own power generator, a cistern and well, a livery stable, servants' quarters, a large swing and a grape arbor.



THE GILFILLAN LOG CABIN was built in the early 1900s across the road from their home on the hill, and west of Parkers Lake.

The family called the wooded area around the cabin a "deer park" and in the fall of the year, hunters hung their bounty from the rafters of the cabin. For the Gilfillan boys it became a "retreat from their step-mother's parties."

THE OLD LOG CABIN



Built by John B. Gilfillan in the early 1900's for his three children across the road from their home on the hill, and west of Parkers Lake, the cabin became a "retreat from our step-mother's parties".

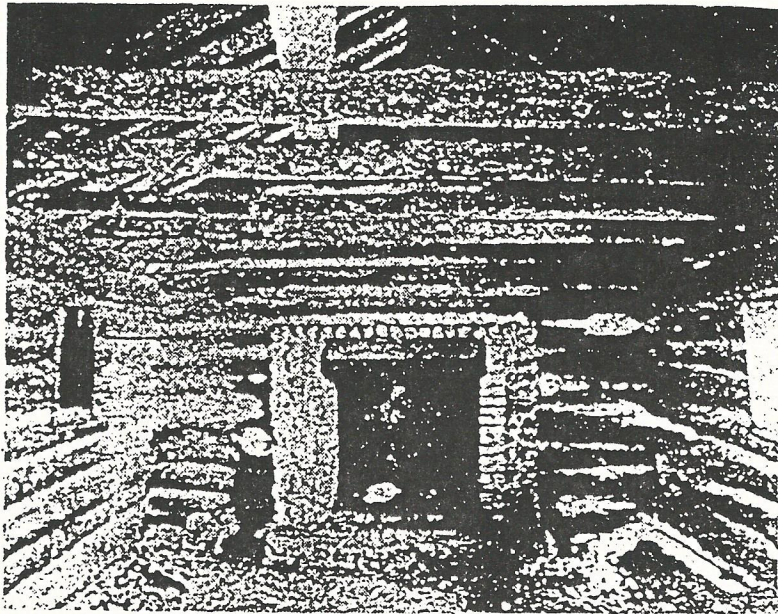
Miles Dickey of Wayzata contracted to build the cabin for \$300, and James W. Creelman, neighbor to the west, built the stone fireplace.

The family called the wooded area around the cabin their "deer park" and in the fall of the year, the hunters hung their bounty from the rafters of the cabin.

The cabin measures 15 ft. by 30 ft.

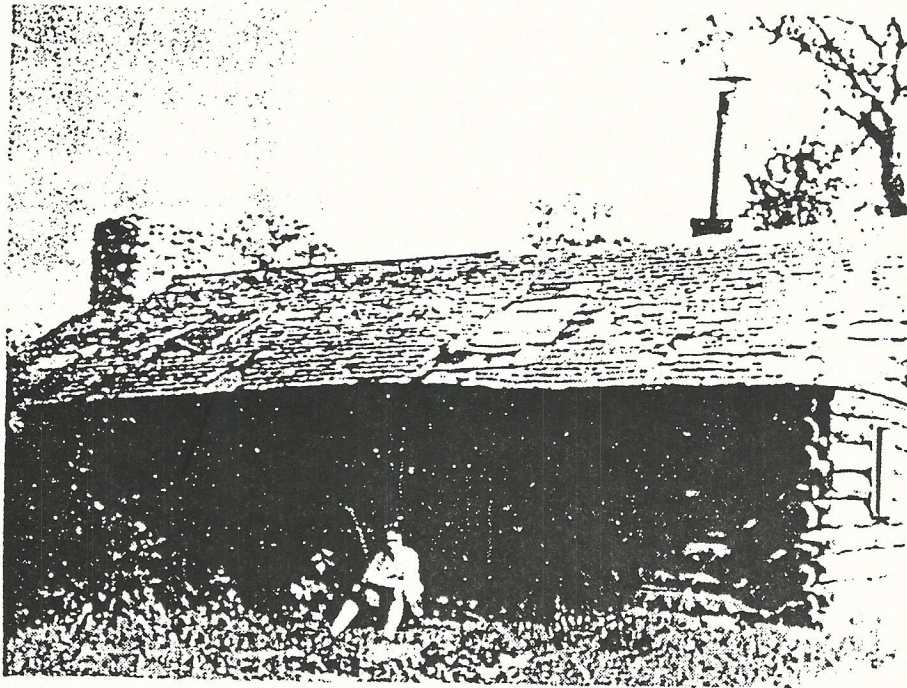
On the north shore of Parkers Lake, a log cabin was built for the youngest Gilfillan son who was living at home and needed a retreat from his step-mother's parties. Miles Dickey got the contract to build this cabin and James William helped to build the fireplace. Judge Gilfillan kept deer in the area and it was said that in the fall of the year, the hunters hung the deer that they killed from the rafters of the cabin. The cabin had a dirt floor and was built very solidly for it still stands today. Generations of neighborhood children played in the cabin. Today it is identified as an historical site and is being considered for preservation.

Near the cabin on the north west corner of Parkers Lake, was a house that the minister, Reverend Robinson, lived in the early 1900's.



Interior of the cabin with its large stone fireplace.

(From the Minnetonka Herald)



Carol Creelman sitting in front of the cabin.

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Projects, people win preservation prizes



Photo by Eric Sutherland

The gingerbread Cutter House, now a fraternity house, was honored for restoration after a 1991 fire.

The "Gingerbread House" on the University of Minnesota campus was designed by Ernest Kennedy in 1856. This architect is believed to have designed the Gilfillan House which stood on the hill north of Parkers Lake from the late 1880s until 1933.

The Gilfillans made their winter home on Clifton Ave. in Minneapolis; the home near Parkers Lake was their summer home, accessible by the Luce Line Railway.

(from the Minneapolis Public Library Special Collections)

Architecture

By Linda Mack
Staff Writer

Preservationists in both Minneapolis and St. Paul recognized deserving organizations and renovation projects earlier this month during National Preservation Week.

In Minneapolis, such monumental buildings as Minneapolis City Hall shared the limelight with the gingerbread Cutter House at 4th St. and 10th Av. SE. The Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity contributed \$900,000 to restore the 1856 house after it was gutted by a fire in 1991.

From "Tales from Iowa" Ellen Meyer

JUDGE J.B. GILFILLAN

His obituary in 1924 said that the Honorable John Bachop Gilfillan, 89, was the oldest member of the Minnesota Bar Association, but it didn't say how he came to be known as "Judge." Old history books containing brief biographies of city fathers give no clue either, although each devotes several pages to details of his life and work. One unauthenticated news item, however, stated that "Minnesota Supreme Court chief justice Gilfillan, in the summer of 1892...ruled in favor of the small town of Wayzata against the Great Northern Railroad, compelling the railroad company to keep Lake Street in a good state of repair." In that case, he deserved to be called "Judge," but more about the railroad controversy later.

Gilfillan had come to Minneapolis at twenty years of age, intending only to visit his sister and earn enough money teaching school to pay his way through Dartmouth College. That was 1855, the year that the first suspension bridge was completed across the Mississippi River at St. Anthony. And the rapidly growing city-to-be offered such a variety of opportunities for an ambitious young man that Gilfillan decided to stay.

He taught school for several years and started the grade-school system in St. Anthony. He studied and practiced law, was city attorney and county attorney, serving four times in each office, followed by nine years in the State Senate and one term in the 49th Congress.

Named a regent of the University by Governor Pillsbury in 1880, Gilfillan helped establish the Farm School and transferred it to a new location near Lake Como. Moreover, he was chairman of the regent committee that brought Dr. Cyrus Northrop to succeed Dr. W.W. Folwell, the University's first president. After serving eight years as regent, the Judge gave \$50,000 to the U. of M. to establish the Gilfillan Trust Fund for deserving students.

Gilfillan also served as president of the First National Bank for two years, and later as chairman of its board of directors. Somehow he still had time to write a pamphlet called "Who Named Minneapolis?" to settle a controversy in which he supported Charles Hoag as deserving the honor. Eventually he compiled a "History of the University of Minnesota" for the State Historical Society.

When Mrs. Gilfillan died in 1884, she left motherless their three-year-old daughter and three sons aged five, eight and eleven. (Another daughter had died earlier.) As a result of the loss of his wife, Gilfillan took his family abroad soon after finishing his Senate term. Placing the children in a Dresden school, he spent nearly three years visiting Egypt, the Holy Land and every country in Europe, except Portugal. He attended Queen Victoria's jubilee celebration in 1887 and the funeral of William I of Germany the following year.

In 1893, when the Judge married Hannah Coppock, the couple became active in the "high society" of Minneapolis and were said to have "an enviable social position." Before long the new Mrs. Gilfillan was entertaining her fashionable friends at their new summer villa, overlooking Parker's Lake, where the Judge owned some 500 acres. Their splendid mansion stood atop the hill on which, in more recent years, superintendents of the City Workhouse have established their homes. Perhaps it was at his wife's suggestion that the Judge built a log cabin for his youngest son, still living at home and needing a retreat when his stepmother's parties were in full swing. It is said that when the Judge took bids for the tamarack logs and construction of the building, Miles Dickey won with such a low bid that his disgruntled competitor, Alexander Frick, complained: "Dickey must've stole those logs." It was a cozy cabin called The Playhouse by the daughter of the farm manager and her playmates, but it was more than that. What playhouse ever had a handsome brick fireplace and was still standing a century later?

It took a large staff of hired help, indoors and out, to run the Gilfillan estate. Of all the employees, Tommy Frick had fondest memories of Ross, "the colored coachman in his swallow-tailed coat and high hat," who took the Judge to catch the morning train at Wayzata's old red depot and picked him up there in the evening. The black harness with brass trimming shone in the sunlight when Ross used to give the Frick children a lift on their way to country school. And the green plush seats of the elegant carriage felt as soft as the moss that carpeted the woods.

The Judge had a keen interest in all farm projects, probably a result of his growing up on a Vermont farm. One day a workman, hired to paint the barn, was surprised when the Judge climbed a ladder to inspect some nearly inaccessible places, and insisted on their being repainted properly. Gilfillan also enjoyed climbing ladders to prune limbs from shade trees; the higher the better. Or so it seemed to his Parker's Lake friends and neighbors.

Perhaps it was the same quality of venturesome boldness that led to success in the Judge's professional, business and civic enterprises and made him an outstanding figure in the city of Minneapolis for nearly seven decades. When he died, a Minneapolis newspaper called J.B. Gilfillan "almost the last of the great figures of early history."

TOMMY FRICK'S UNFORGETTABLE OUTING

One of the projects we undertook in the Wayzata Historical Society in the 1980s was to make oral tapes of old-timers reminiscing about the past. My first "victim" was A. Thomas (Tommy) Frick, then 88 years old, who told of an outing he enjoyed at the turn of the century when he was about six years of age.

It began at the big red depot J.J. Hill had placed east of town to annoy Wayzatans during their feud with the railroad. Tom's mother (Mary Winnen Frick) and her sister (Annie Winnen Dickey) boarded the train with three children apiece, plus several picnic baskets, to spend the day in Minneapolis. Here is the rest of the story as told by Tommy Frick some eighty years later.

My mother [Tom recalled] took three of us children [Alvin, August and myself] and her sister took three of her children: Jenny, Clarence and Josephine Dickey. After getting off the train at the new Union Depot on Hennepin Avenue, we took a streetcar and had to transfer at least once to reach Fort Snelling. The old log fort was still standing, but the stone fort had just been completed. As a youngster, I was especially interested in three old Civil War cannon sitting on the lawn. Beside each one was a V-shaped pile of cannon balls brought back from the war.

On leaving Fort Snelling, we crossed over a new bridge, first of its kind to be built over the Mississippi River. Then we walked the narrow path through the woods to Minnehaha Falls where we saw the pole bridge built by my grandfather, Peter Winnen.

Grandfather Winnen was well-known for his skill as a wood-carver, and the rustic bridge he designed and built was proof of his artistry. He was also pretty good at managing the Indians who cut the poles for the bridge and

Patenaude), Alvin, August, Anna (Mrs. Charles Duggan) and Everett. Since the young Fricks also spent most of their adult years in this area, Tom's recollections spanned more than three generations.

Tommy had tales to tell from the moment he stepped into the car at the Wayzata Woods Apartments where he and his wife Vivyen were living. "See that Medical Building?" he queried. "Well, I almost bought the land it sits on, but instead I bought on the wrong side of Highway 101. It was swampland over there, but I built six or eight houses on reinforced concrete slabs...sold some and rented some. Later, when the freeway was to be built [the Highway 12 expressway], the highway department bought all the houses in one bunch. I bought one of 'em back and moved it to Deephaven...lived in it there for years."

Tom then pointed out a two-story, white-trimmed gray house decorated with a white eagle. It stood west of Highway 101, before you cross the bridge over the freeway. "I moved that house," Tom said. "Moved it all the way from Rice Street beside the former Congregational Church. It was built in 1895, and I moved it here and put it on an eight-inch cement slab. Looks good, don't it?"

Riding along Highway 101, Tom talked about the North Watertown Trail that came near Grandfather Winnen's farm. "It began as an Indian trail between St. Anthony on the east and the Hutchinson Indian reservation on the west," he said, "and much of County Road 6 follows that old trail."

After driving east on County Road 6, Tom pointed out the wooded area that lies beyond the stop-and-go signal at Vicksburg Lane. "That's the beginning of Deer Park," he said. "Judge Gilfillan used to keep half a dozen deer in there. Walking home from school, we used to feed them tidbits from our lunch pails. There was a little fawn...Boy, how she liked cake!"

When Tom suggested we continue on County Road 6, we came almost at once to an abandoned log cabin with a big chimney of field stones. "The Judge [Gilfillan] built that for one of his sons, the one that was sorta slow in the head. His mother liked to have him out from under foot when she entertained fashionable company. The boy liked living there summers. Seemed to feel right at home."

At the City Workhouse Tom pointed out where the Frick property met the Judge's. "We had a baseball diamond on that level ground...played lots of games there. My brother Alvin was an outstanding pitcher. Once Watertown gave him \$20 just to pitch a game for them on Fourth of July. Yup, our Parker's Lake bunch was quite a team. Used to play big teams from all around--even from Minneapolis."

Another memory from my passenger's adult years centered on the shore of Parker's Lake nearest the old Luce Line railroad tracks. Tom ran the pavilion there, in 1917, after forming the Parker's Lake Joy Club to promote Saturday night dances.

Back on Vicksburg Lane, Tom tried to decide on the exact location where his parents' house had stood. Although bewildered by the changes, he knew the "south forty" had reached the eastern shore of Gleason Lake, and the "north forty" extended toward Parker's Lake. But the high-school building apparently covers the site of the old farmhouse. Still the area was rich in memories.

We drove up and down a few side streets without finding any landmarks. Then at one corner Tom exclaimed: "Oh, look. See that big house? It used to be a barn. I remember playing there with Major Camp's grandsons."

It turns out that Major Camp, who built a Memorial Chapel at Minnetonka Beach (St. Martin's-by-the-Lake) for his daughter's wedding in 1888, also bought a large farm near Parker's Lake for one of his sons. Camp's son eventually sold it, piece by piece, to Judge Gilfillan, but young Tom and his playmates, of course, weren't bothered in the least by problems of the adult world. Now he gazed with pleasure at the typical barn-like, gambrel roof under which he and his pals had so often frolicked in the haymow. "We sure had fun in those days," Tom said, as we turned toward home.

JOHN BACHOP GILFILLAN
(1835-1924)

Picture

The passing of John B. Gilfillan is an event memorable in the history of Minneapolis. To say that he was the grand old man of Minneapolis would not be quite accurate. Grand he was, but old, never. He accumulated more years than most men fall heir to, but mentally he never passed out of that stage of life known as maturity. In Mr. Gilfillan the city was witness to a play of mental energy that never flagged, though it functioned for a generation beyond the allotted span of three score and ten. There is something amazing in the spectacle of a vitality which the years seek in vain to erode.

What a full life was his! Age did not come to him because he refused to spend himself freely. It was not a selfish conservation of energy...he did not believe in penuriously storing up vitality...he lived with an abundance of well directed zest. There was never an unemployed moment in his long life. Every day was filled with purpose -- public and private. To him Minneapolis was not merely a geographical point, where fate had fixed his existence; it was a living force, something to love, to strive for and to improve. His city was a church...a noble symbol to which he dedicated his services.

Minneapolis owes more to his sense of civic responsibility than it could ever acknowledge. It is the common fate of the pioneer to be forgotten in the pressing welter of the present. History is not popular reading, but the indifference and ignorance of new generations can never efface the facts.

Mr. Gilfillan was held in special reverence.. his legal ability was marked, his integrity a byword. Other lawyers speak of him as representative of the best of their guild; his mind and heart at once commanded respect and affection of all.

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|| Gilfillan to Earle Brown who "gave" the property to the City of Minneapolis. The home was occupied by the Birong family until the brick home was built. ||

... PICTURES ...

(Sept. 8, 1900, from)

... PICTURES ...

(*) More detail is available as to this chronology.

... PLANS OF PLYMOUTH H.S.
... and PLYM. PARK DEPT. ...
FOR RESTORING/RELOCATING
THE CABIN to a park
location.

Defended by Lawyer

Judge J. B. Gillilan Declares Laws Here Protect Women and Children.

Jurist Replies to Assertions Assailing the Alleged Discrimination.

Citations From the Laws of the State Given to Refute Charges

JAN 24 1915

Judge John E. Gillilan has come to the defense of the laws of Minnesota pertaining to women and children. In a statement made in an advertisement for the production of a suffrage play by Mrs. Virginia Bly in The Tribune of Sunday, Jan. 17, in an interview, Judge Gillilan said: "Under the caption, 'Minnesota Statutes Discriminate Against Women,' in The Tribune of last Sunday, I found the following: 'It is true that there are laws on our statute books that definitely discriminate against women, especially the married woman, in regard to both her property and her children. We are always told proudly that Minnesota has an equal guardianship law. We have not. It is equal only so far as the custody and control of the education of the child is concerned. A mother cannot in Minnesota represent her child in court during the life time of the father. She cannot bring action for injury to the child if the father is alive. A mother cannot bring action for the seduction of her daughter if the father is living. The husband can control and will away the joint earnings of himself and wife. The wife cannot do this. Joint earnings in this case are understood to mean that the wife is conducting the home and rearing and bearing children also earns. If the wife dies the husband has their entire earnings. On the death of the husband, the wife has only one-third. At the wife's death, the husband becomes absolute owner of the homestead. On the death of the husband, the wife has only a

share of it during the minority of her children.'

Minnesota Statutes. "It would seem to me somewhat farther with the statutes of Minnesota that the foregoing statements are slightly misstated to say the least. The following are some of the provisions of our statutes bearing upon the above matter: "Section 7142—Woman shall retain the same legal existence and legal personality after marriage as before, and every married woman shall receive the same protection of all her rights as a woman which her husband does not have, including the right to appear in court in her own name alone for protection or redress. "Section 7143—All property, real, personal, and mixed, and all choses in action owned by any woman at the time of her marriage shall continue to be her separate property notwithstanding such marriage, and any party wrongfully taking such property of every description, and the profits thereof, and all avails of her contracts and industry, free from any liability on account of his debts, as a liability as if she were married. "Section 7144—In cases where the husband, by any means, has wrongfully taken away from a woman any property, real, personal, and mixed, she and he shall be sued as if unmarried, and without joining her husband. And if a woman marry while a party to a pending action, she shall thereupon be designated by her married name. "Section 7145—Whenever it appears necessary or convenient the probate court may appoint a guardian of the person of a woman or estate of her property, or of any other person or estate, appointed by will and who is a resident of the county or who resides without the state and has property within the county.

Woman as Guardian. "Section 7146—A woman shall not be designated by reason of her marriage as a guardian of the person or estate of any other person, and no guardian shall not terminate her guardianship. "Section 7147—Nothing contained in this chapter shall effect or impair the power of any court to appoint a guardian to protect the interest of any minor interested in any suit or proceeding commenced in or to be commenced, or other matter pending therein, in any case. "Section 7148—A father or in case of his death, or dissolution of his family, the mother may maintain an action for the custody of the person of the child, and the guardian of the child, and the ward, against any person who is not living with or in the household of the child, and there is no bar to such action. "Section 7149—A

mother shall not be appointed guardian of the person of a child, and no guardian shall not terminate her guardianship. "Section 7150—Nothing contained in this chapter shall effect or impair the power of any court to appoint a guardian to protect the interest of any minor interested in any suit or proceeding commenced in or to be commenced, or other matter pending therein, in any case. "Section 7151—A father or in case of his death, or dissolution of his family, the mother may maintain an action for the custody of the person of the child, and the guardian of the child, and the ward, against any person who is not living with or in the household of the child, and there is no bar to such action. "Section 7152—A

German Venom Toward America Real, Merchant's Letter Shows

Kaiser Didn't Start War, Neither Did Military, He Writes Judge Gillilan

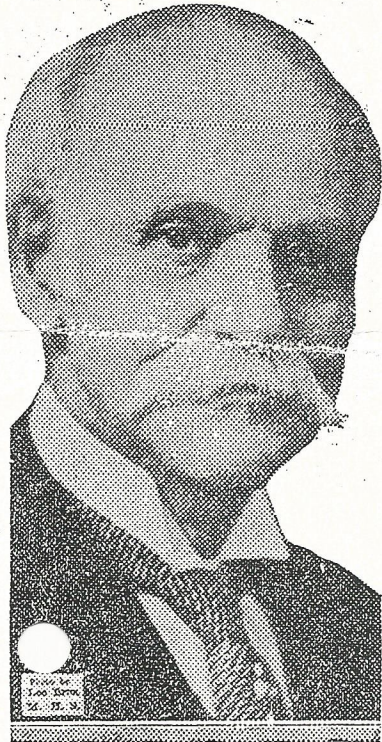
About six years ago when Judge and Mrs. J. B. Gillilan spent some months in Dresden, they had business dealings with a merchant which were not concluded when the war broke out. Mr. Gillilan has recently had correspondence with this German merchant and is in receipt of a letter which is illuminating as to the attitude of the average German toward America and the rest of the world and informing as to conditions which obtain at the present time in the capital of Saxony. Merchant Writes as Follows. After a few business preliminaries, this linen merchant writes as follows under date of November 24: "Indeed, we have very bad and very hard times behind us and may be that we shall have still worse ones before us. Nobody in Germany wished for war, not the kaiser, nor the military, nor the people. The ring around us created by France, England and Russia forced us to strengthen our military powers, but only for a defense sake. Was that correct or not for a nation being placed in the center of Europe, surrounded by enemies? Those powers entered into the war for quite different purposes than they pretended all over the world, namely for purposes of self-interest. France wished for Alsace, Lothringen and more if possible. England for bringing down our industry and commerce, Russia wanted Constantinople and other countries. "We wanted peace, peace, peace! and no war!! But England carefully read out all over the world the grand that we had begun the war and was busy enough to maintain

this lie by cutting our cables and by closing our mails. "As I said before, we had very bad times, particularly in consequence of the inhuman, cruel blockade against a whole people which never before was exercised in such a mean way. The German people and my family, too, suffered by hunger, and our food was poor for years. Meat, butter and fats were all still without today. "Also I must say, we are very angry about Mr. Wilson's attitude in the quarrel; America began by delivering lots of war ammunition and all kinds of tools of war to our enemies and ended by turning entirely on the side of England. What had we to do with America and America with us? "Situation Very Bad Again. "At present our situation is very bad against my business with foreign countries is entirely ruined, because our textile goods cannot be worked; it is impossible to get and import materials of flax or cotton—and, this is exactly what England wanted. "How inhumanly we are now treated by the Entente. That you may perceive by the retaining of our poor 400,000 prisoners of war in France and by the making up of a new blockade in the Ostsea (east sea) by England. "You are writing of your high prices for everything and of your heavy taxes, and this we are sorry to hear. Everything is terribly expensive here, and no money to buy from foreign countries on account of our bad rate of exchange; not to mention the heavy taxes which our enemies are going to press from our people. So we are just standing before a new famine, with a lot of jeering enemies around us who wish to ruin us entirely by taking away the few good things result of the famous treaty of 1919 which has been entirely changed? Wilson's first sketch into a mean revenge. I think that cannot be very friendly

John B. Gilfillan

Memphis, Tenn. Aug. 21, 1924

Member of Minnesota Bar and Civic Leader, Is Dead



John Bachop Gilfillan.

Founder of Public School System, Came to St. Anthony 69 Years Ago.

Was State Legislator, Member of Congress and University Regent.

John Bachop Gilfillan, oldest member of the Minnesota bar, one of the founders of the Minneapolis public school system, university regent, legislator, member of Congress and an outstanding figure in civic affairs for nearly 70 years, died at his home, 222 Clifton avenue, Tuesday night. He was 89 years old.

Coming to St. Anthony from New England as a young man of 20, Mr. Gilfillan had observed the growth of Minneapolis from a frontier village to a metropolitan city and had participated to an unusual degree in shaping its destinies and contributing to its development. A distinguished lawyer, he served his adopted community as one of its first city attorneys and later as a member of Lochren, McNair & Gilfillan, brought the city into prominence as the home of one of the best known legal firms of pioneer days.

Well Known as Educator.

Aside from his law practice, Mr. Gilfillan was perhaps best known for his contributions to the advancement of education in the city and state. He came West as a teacher and taught for a number of years in the typical school of a pioneer district. In 1859 Mr. Gilfillan successfully agitated the matter of establishing graded schools, having previously organized the Mechanics Institute and served as one of its officials. He drafted the bill for the organization of a school board in St. Anthony under which a system of graded schools was organized and upon which the present public school system has been built. Mr. Gilfillan was appointed a member of the first school board and served for almost a decade.

In 1880, Governor Pillsbury named Mr. Gilfillan a regent of the University of Minnesota, on which board he served for eight years and declining reappointment, continued in an advisory capacity for many years. As chairman of the regent committee appointed to select a successor to Dr. W. W. Folwell, Mr. Gilfillan was instrumental in bringing Dr. Cyrus Northrup to the university as its second president. While serving as a member of the state Senate committee on University lands, Mr. Gilfillan directed the negotiations for the sale of the old experimental farm and the purchase of the present farm site near Como park, a transaction which resulted in an important increase in facilities for the institution.

Mr. Gilfillan made a gift of \$50,000 to the university regents in 1901 for the establishment of a loan fund to assist needy and deserving students.

John B. Gilfillan was born of Scotch ancestry February 11, 1835, in Barnet, Caledonia county, Vermont. His early youth was spent on a farm and he attended district school until 12 years old and the family moved to Peacham, Vt., where he entered the Caledonia County Grammar school, the first independent state endowed institution in Vermont and one on a par with the noted New England academies of that time. His rapid progress enabled Mr. Gilfillan to become a teacher at 17 and through that work he was preparing to enter Dartmouth college when in 1855, he came to St. Anthony to visit Mrs. John Martin, his sister.

Deciding to remain here, Mr. Gilfillan obtained a position as a teacher and devoted his leisure time to reading law. When his school term was completed he became a law clerk and student in the office of Nourse & Winthrop and afterward in that of Lawrence and Lochren. In 1860, Mr. Gilfillan was admitted to the Minnesota bar of which he was the dean at the time of his death.

Forms Law Partnership.

His first law partner was James R. Lawrence and later he joined with William Lochren and W. W. McNair, under the firm name of Lochren, McNair & Gilfillan. The successful equity and probate practice of this pioneer firm which continued for 14 years, brought it into prominence throughout the entire Northwest, its work in a group of important will cases attracting wide notice and establishing its reputation as one of the outstanding legal firms of the West.

Following the death of Mr. McNair and the appointment of Mr. Lochren to the district bench, Mr. Gilfillan became associated with Henry C. Belden and Charles A. Willard, this partnership continuing until Mr. Belden's elevation to the bench 14 years later. Mr. Gilfillan then practiced with Charles A. and Stephen Willard, under the firm name of Gilfillan, Willard & Willard, until the former was appointed judge of the supreme court of the Philippine islands. Until his retirement some years ago, Mr. Gilfillan practiced alone.

Elected City Attorney.

Soon after his admission to the bar, Mr. Gilfillan was elected city attorney of St. Anthony, and served in that capacity four years. In 1863 he was chosen county attorney, and was three times re-elected to that office. Mr. Gilfillan was elected to the state Senate on the Republican ticket in 1875, and served in that body for a decade. From the time of his election to the Senate, he was chairman of the judiciary committee and was its chairman for eight years. Mr. Gilfillan also served as a member of the committees on tax laws and taxes, finance and university and university lands. As chairman of the tax committee he compiled these laws into a code which even yet is the basis for the revenue laws of the state. In 1884 Mr. Gilfillan was elected to the Forty-ninth Congress, on the Republican ticket, and served one term.

Aside from his law practice and work in the Legislature, Mr. Gilfillan came into business prominence through his service as president of the First National bank. After retiring from the presidency of this institution, he became chairman of its board of directors.

Compiled History of University.

In addition to his contributions to education and work in behalf of the university, Mr. Gilfillan in 1908 compiled the "History of the University of Minnesota" for the Minnesota State Historical society. He also published an historical pamphlet setting forth the evidence in the controversy regarding the naming of Minneapolis.

Mr. Gilfillan was married to Miss Rebecca Corse Oliphant of Fayette, Pennsylvania, January 20, 18; their family of five children, three and a daughter survive their father. They are Mrs. Edward Avery of New York city, John B. Gilfillan, Jr., Minneapolis; James Gilfillan, Bend, Ore., and Robert Gilfillan. Mrs. Gilfillan died March 25, 1884. On June 28, 1893, Mr. Gilfillan was married to Miss Hannah Lavinia Coppock.

John B. Gilfillan to Pioneers at Reunion

Minneapolis, Minn., Oct. 18, 1923

Friends Mark Anniversary of Attorney's Arrival in City in 1855.

John B. Gilfillan, Minnesota's oldest member of the bar, who came to the village of St. Anthony the year the first suspension bridge was swung across the Mississippi river, celebrated the 68th anniversary of his arrival in the city Wednesday.

Fifty of Judge Gilfillan's friends called on him in the afternoon at his residence, 222 Clifton avenue. The visitors were pioneers who recounted, with him, bits of history of early Minneapolis. There were also dozens of descendants of early residents with whom Judge Gilfillan was acquainted.

First Reunion Since 1898.

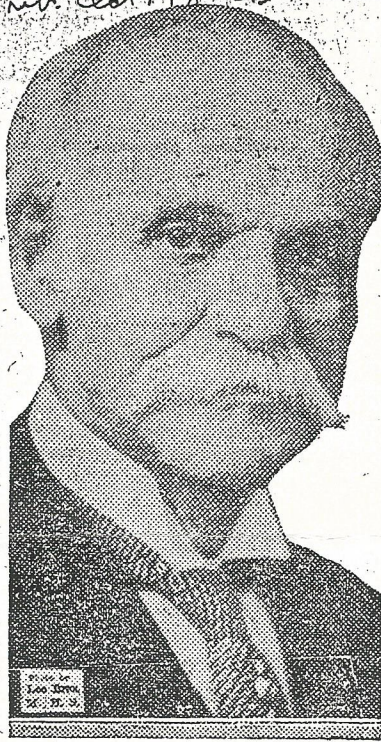
Incidentally, the pioneer's reunion at Judge Gilfillan's home was the first of its kind since 1898. Up to that time it had been the custom for the older residents to gather each year in the middle of October, but with the thinning of the ranks, the custom of meeting annually was dropped 25 years ago.

Among the callers were Dr. William Watts Folwell, president emeritus of the University of Minnesota; Dr. Ly-sander P. Foster, T. B. Walker, T. B. Janney, E. C. Gale, Frank T. Heffelfinger, Dr. M. D. Shutter, Dr. John E. F. Shifell, F. M. Prince, F. A. Chamberlain, C. T. Jaffray, B. F. Nelson and Fred B. Snyder.

Early Families Represented.

At the reception Mrs. Gilfillan was assisted by three women who are descendants of early families in Minneapolis. They were Mrs. Charles Pillsbury, granddaughter of Col. John S. Stevens, who built the first house in Minneapolis; Mrs. Horace Ropes, daughter of John De Laittre, who came to Minneapolis in 1865, and Miss Ruth Hull, granddaughter of W. W. McNair, who was Judge Gilfillan's law partner 50 years ago.

For the special interest of his associates in the First National bank, Mr. Gilfillan recalled at the reception the trying days of the panic of 1857, which occurred just two years after he came up the Mississippi river on the "Lady Franklin."



John B. Gilfillan.

Recalls Panic of 1857.

"Minneapolis was growing fast," Judge Gilfillan said, "and people were preparing to organize the first city government after passage of the act providing for incorporation. Times were trying, and it seemed that no one knew what the outcome would be.

"I remember that no one ever accepted paper money, checks or certificates without first referring to a directory of some sort. When we were given money we would always refer to Thompson's bank note directory, to see if it was good, just as one would consult a telephone directory today."

The pioneer lawyer took delight in telling about the construction of the first suspension bridge across the river—a bridge which Judge Gilfillan contends was the first to span the Mississippi river from the gulf to its source.

First Bridge in 1855.

"The bridge was first opened to the public on July 4, 1855," Judge Gilfillan said. "They had experienced a good deal of trouble building it, and once it was almost destroyed by a tornado. I remember that after it was constructed there had been much satisfaction because the builders had been able to span the river without putting piling in the river. They were afraid that floating logs and ice would damage the bridge."

In his reminiscences, Judge Gilfillan traced the start of the milling industry. He pointed out that the first mill was built in 1820 by the government at Fort Snelling. There was a farm near the mill where grain was raised.

He said he clearly recalled when the Minneapolis Mill company—acquired Wednesday by the Northern States Power company—was first organized in 1856, when William D. Washburn came to the city and was appointed secretary and agent of the company.

Settled in St. Anthony.

When Mr. Gilfillan came up the river at the age of 20 he had no intention of remaining in Minneapolis. He had been raised in Vermont and was being prepared for Dartmouth college. In order to contribute to his own support he began teaching school, and he struck out for Minneapolis to visit his sister, Mrs. John Martin, and with the intention of getting a job teaching before he returned to college.

The position was obtained and the attractions of the growing village of St. Anthony became so strong that he decided to remain. He studied law and was admitted to the bar five years after he reached St. Anthony. In 1871 the firm of Lochren, McNair and Gilfillan was formed. This was the leading law firm in the city for many years.

Judge Gilfillan drew up the bill for the organization of the St. Anthony school board. He was a member of the Board of Regents at the University for eight years, starting in 1880. He was county attorney from 1863 to 1867 and again from 1869 to 1871 and from 1873 to 1875. He served for 10 years in the state legislature, and a member of Congress from 1885 to 1887.

John B. Gilfillan Funeral Will Be Held on Friday

Minneapolis Tribune Aug 21-24
Services to Be Conducted at
Family Residence at
2:30 P. M.

Funeral services for John Bachop Gilfillan, dean of the Minnesota bar and a prominent figure in educational and legislative circles of Minneapolis and the state for many years, who died Tuesday, will be held at 2:30 p. m. Friday at the family residence.

The services will be conducted by the Rev. John E. Bushnell, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian church, and burial will be at Lakewood cemetery.

The active pallbearers will be F. B. Wells, F. T. Heffelfinger, Dr. John Butler, John S. Pillsbury, Dr. Oscar Owre and P. D. McMillan. The honorary pallbearers will be F. M. Prince, F. A. Chamberlain, Dr. W. W. Folwell, John Crosby, A. C. Loring, L. K. Hull, Alfred F. Pillsbury, C. S. Pillsbury, James F. Bell, C. D. Velle, C. C. Webber, F. B. Snyder, Dr. A. A. Law, Dr. John W. Bell, T. F. Wallace, Horace Hill, George F. Orde, F. G. Winston, A. C. Cobb, T. B. Walker, B. F. Nelson, F. L. Smith and E. C. Gale.

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John B. Gilfillan *Aug 21-24*

There were giants in those days when Minnesota was being settled, when Minneapolis was being founded and built. Most of them came from New England, a sturdy, up-standing lot. Among them was young John B. Gilfillan, a Vermonter of Scotch ancestry. He had prepared to enter Dartmouth, and came out here to visit his sister. But Minnesota laid her charm upon him, and the opportunities in the young city-to-be beckoned him. So he spent the remaining seventy years of his long and useful life here.

He studied law and practiced it. He served in many places—as City Attorney, as County Attorney, as State Senator, as Congressman. He had the Yankee faith in the virtues of education, and translated it into works. He introduced the graded school in St. Anthony. He served as Regent of the University. He helped establish the Farm School. He gave out of his abundance for the benefit of those struggling for an education.

Mr. Gilfillan led a busy life, and it ran parallel to that of his beloved City. He is almost the last of the great figures of its early history. To the last day of his long and well ordered life he did not lose interest in its development. And now his life is ended, but the fruits of his service will increase with the growth and strength of the City and State. In our annals his name will live, together with those of the founders who, like him and with him, have wrought nobly and well in their day and age.

The passing of John Bachop Gilfillan is an event memorable in the history of Minneapolis. To say that he was the grand old man of Minneapolis would not be quite accurate. Grand he always was, but old he never was. It is true that he accumulated more years than most men fall heir to, but mentally he never

passed out of that stage of life commonly known as maturity. In Mr. Gilfillan the city was witness to a play of mental energy that never flagged, though it functioned for a generation beyond the allotted span of three score and ten. There is something amazing in the spectacle of a vitality which the years seek in vain to erode.

Minneapolis Tribune - Aug 21-24
What a full life was Mr. Gilfillan's! Age did not come to him because he feared to spend himself freely. It was not the result of any selfish conservation of physical and mental energy. He did not believe in penuriously storing up vitality. On the contrary he lived with an abundance of well directed zest. There was never an unemployed moment in his long life. Every hour of the day was filled with purpose, public and private. Minneapolis never had a more devoted son than it had in Mr. Gilfillan. To him Minneapolis was not merely a geographical point, where fate had fixed his existence. It was a living force, a sublimated entity, something to love, to strive for, and to improve. To him his city was as a church. It was a noble symbol to which he dedicated his services. Had somebody told him that one's city was a mere political and economic unit in which one found one's self either through the chance of birth or the vicissitudes of wandering, Mr. Gilfillan would not have understood what the language meant. So materialistic a view would have been incomprehensible to one of his idealistic temperament.

Minneapolis owes more to Mr. Gilfillan's sense of civic responsibility than it can ever acknowledge. It is the common fate of the pioneer to be forgotten in the more pressing welter of the present. History is not popular reading, but the indifference and ignorance of new generations can never efface the facts.

Bench and bar alike held Mr. Gilfillan in special reverence. His legal ability was marked, his integrity a byword. He was the type of lawyer that lawyers delight to speak of as representative of the best of their guild. He had the qualities of mind and heart which at once command respect and evoke affection.

When Mr. Gilfillan came to this part of the country, there was no Minneapolis. He settled himself as a lad of twenty in St. Anthony. Before the Civil war, even, he was drafting a bill for the organization of a school board under which a system of graded schools might be brought into existence. It was upon this foundation that the elaborate school system of the Minneapolis of today rests. In 1880 Governor Pillsbury named Mr. Gilfillan a regent of the University. As chairman of the regent committee appointed to select a successor to Dr. Folwell, Mr. Gilfillan was instrumental in bringing Cyrus Northrop to Minnesota. While serving as a member of the state Senate committee on University lands, he directed the negotiations for the sale of the old experimental farm and the purchase of the present site near Como park. A gift of \$50,000 for the purpose of aiding needy and deserving students through the University has long borne Mr. Gilfillan's name. He served for a decade in the state Senate. In 1908 he compiled the "History of the University of Minnesota" for the State Historical society. He served one term in the Forty-ninth Congress.

Mr. Gilfillan's life was one as broad as it was long. A life of such rare values and of such rich completeness is not often given to the world. In Mr. Gilfillan Minneapolis has lost more a father than a son. A man like that is too unique to be replaced. Fortunately his memory cannot and will not die.