



Roma Saulpaugh

Clarence & Roma Saulpaugh

Mr. and Mrs. Melborn Poppy

Saulpaugh Hotel
Corner of Front and
Main Streets



Clarence Saulpaugh

*“He is Mr. Poppy who owns the Melborn Hotel
and runs the Opera House.”*
~ Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown ~

The Poppy’s were always models of elegance. They were city people; they had come from Minneapolis, and no one in town knew them very well. They lived in the hotel; Mrs. Poppy did not keep house as other Deep Valley wives did. Blond and radiant, she was said to look like the famous beauty and actress, Lillian Russell. . . except that she was stouter, of course. Before her marriage, she had been an actress herself.

She and her husband went to the Twin Cities often, to see plays. But they saw plays in Deep Valley too. When Mr. Poppy built the Opera House, he had two special seats made for Mrs. Poppy and himself. Extra wide, extra deep, and extra comfortable, designed for extra-stout people.

~ Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown ~

Clarence H. Saulpaugh, the only child of Thomas and Eliza (Vinton) Saulpaugh, was born on January 8, 1859, in Rock Island, Illinois. In 1881 he came to Minneapolis, where his father began a railroad contracting business under the firm name of T. Saulpaugh & Company. The stone deposits of Mankato attracted the attention of the Saulpaughs, and they used Mankato stone extensively to construct bridges for the railroad.

In 1888 the Saulpaughs moved to Mankato and built the memorable Saulpaugh Hotel. After his father’s death in 1893, Clarence leased the hotel and purchased a Minneapolis league baseball team. He married Roma Allen of Worthington, Minnesota, on October 28, 1893. They made their home in Minneapolis until returning to Mankato in 1896. Fred Snyder was placed as manager of the hotel while the Saulpaughs spent time between Minneapolis and Mankato.

Mrs. Saulpaugh was not a vocal teacher as depicted in the Betsy-Tacy books. The character of Mrs. Poppy was most likely a composite of Mrs. Roma Saulpaugh and Mrs. Nettie Snyder (see the Moorish Café).

Clarence and Roma lived in an apartment in the Saulpaugh Hotel. The couple had no children. Clarence died on September 19, 1917, and his funeral was held in the center alcove on the second floor of the hotel. He was buried in Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis. His obituary describes him as a “big and kindly hearted gentleman, happy, genial, charitable and courteous at all times.” Roma died in Minneapolis in September 13, 1924 and was buried beside her husband in Lakewood Cemetery.



**View of the Saulpaugh Hotel showing the Main Street entrance
at the right of the building.**

A sign above the Main Street entrance marks the Moorish Café.

GRAND CONCERT,

SAULPAUGH HOTEL,
Mankato, Minn.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16th, 1898.

9 O'CLOCK P. M., SHARP.



MR. CLAUDE MADDEN,
Violinist,

Assisted by...

MISS GERTRUDE SANS SOUCI,
Pianist.

MRS. FRED H. SNYDER,
Soprano.

Program cover from a concert given at the
Saulpaugh Hotel featuring Nettie Snyder as soloist.