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Bruce Lindquist tells Hall tales.

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We thank our sponsors for their generous assistance in making our new book, "Places in the Park" possible.

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Volume 18.4 / WINTER 2019

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Holy Cow!! This is our "Ha Ha Ha Ha" issue, a collection of stories about the pioneering **Hankes** and **Hamiltons**, and **Halsey Hall**. And we welcome guest columnist Bruce Lindquist to the Park history family.

– Bill Beyer, FAIA

A PARK LEGEND'S ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER BEGAN 100 YEARS AGO

BY BRUCE LINDQUIST

One hundred years ago this fall, one of St. Louis Park's most colorful and charismatic residents launched a career which, to this day, brings smiles to the faces of anyone who ever heard his gravelly voice or read his unique sports columns.

Halsey (Holy Cow) Hall, the beloved and entertaining Twins and Golden Gophers broadcaster and newspaperman with a national reputation, penned his first bylined story for the Minneapolis Tribune in November 1919.

And for 55 of his 79 years, he resided at the same cream-colored stucco house at 3231 Alabama Avenue, just behind the fence from Holy Family Catholic Church, and two blocks from my mother's Lake Street home. His trademark may have been his exuberant "Holy Cow" reaction to a great play, but the consummate professional was also fond of repeating a salute to his stable life in the Park: "Same house, same wife (Sula), same suit – must be the gypsy in me!"

So when Halsey was inducted into the prestigious Minnesota Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2001 as a charter member, he came full circle: That gallery of our state's broadcasting royalty is housed within the Pavek Museum of Broadcasting, a treasure-trove of world class radio and television artifacts at 3517 Raleigh Avenue in the Park – a mere mile from his old homestead!



Halsey and his wife, Sula in 1935. They lived on Alabama Avenue for 55 years.

and Times of Halsey Hall," said that the venerable sports broadcaster, "... remains synonymous with the first man to ever use the expression on a baseball broadcast," and reported Hall to be, "One of the most beloved sports and media personalities the Upper Midwest has ever known."

Any mention of his name conjures up images of green onions, cigars -- and maybe a glass of scotch or two. And stories! When Halsey passed away of a heart attack at his home on Dec. 30, 1977, I don't ever recall hearing of so many humorous stories about a man, from so many different people – before or since.

Stew Thornley, in his 1991 book, "Holy Cow! The Life

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One oft-repeated tale occurred during a Twins game in Chicago in 1968, when the ashes of Halsey's cigar ignited a large mass of ticker tape from the wire machine that had piled up on the press box floor. Smoke drifted up, and Halsey turned to see his sport coat, which was draped over his chair, in flames. The fire was brought under control, but not before a large hole had burned through one of his signature jackets.

When major league baseball arrived in the Twin Cities in 1961, my brother and I, in our early teens, were all in. During batting practices prior to a Twins home game, we would routinely wander up to the broadcast booth at the old Met in Bloomington, stand on our tip-toes and say "hi" through an open window to Ray Scott, Bob Wolff (later Herb Carneal in '62) and Hall. Most of the time they would pretend we weren't there.

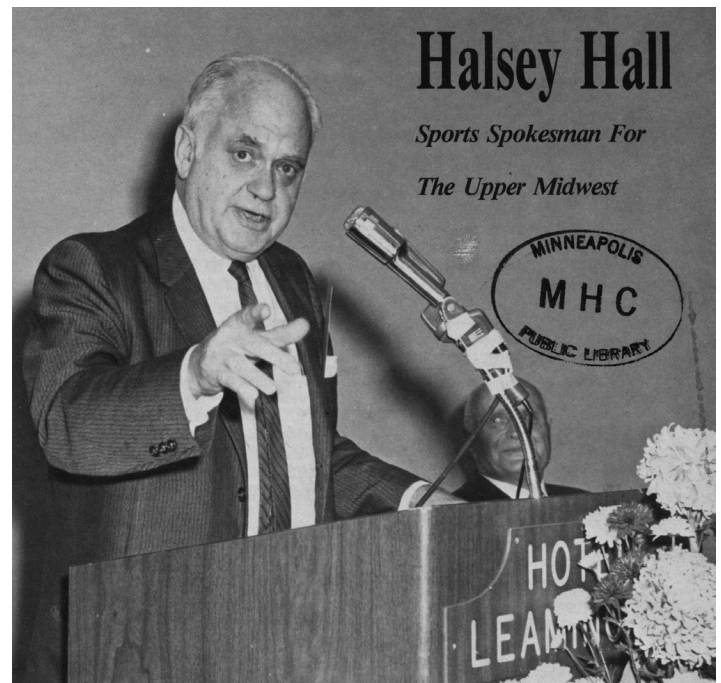
But on one occasion, Halsey was chewing on an old stogie, and appeared to have something exotic in a cup on the counter, then raised it, looked down at us, and in a booming voice, said something to the effect, "Welcome to the bigs! Now go find your seats!" In an instant, we high-tailed it down the stairs and to the cheap seats – and we loved it. That was Halsey!

Longtime SLP resident Michael Krogan has cherished memories of the days (and nights) he worked as an Andy Frane usher at the Met while in high school during the '60s, and said that while he came across many unique characters, Halsey stands out in his mind. "He was friendly but rather gruff. I recall his constant cigars, and the old beater he used for transportation at the time. It stood out in the Twins reserved parking area where the executives, important employees and the players parked. Inside the car, you would think that Mr. Hall had been to a rummage sale – and purchased most of the stock."

In addition to his broadcasting plaque in St. Louis Park, Hall is also a member of the Minnesota Sports Hall of Fame, and after his death, the Minnesota members of the Society for American Baseball Research organized themselves into a regional chapter and renamed the group: The Halsey Hall Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research – which is active to this day.

Media types come and go in this highly-competitive Twin Cities market – many completely forgotten in a matter of weeks. A century later, however, the enduring legacy of the man from Alabama Ave shows no signs of fading.

Bruce Lindquist is a graduate of Minneapolis West High School and the University of Minnesota School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and is a U.S. Army veteran. Over a 30-year newspaper career, he served as editor/publisher in Austin (Minn.), and at Madelia Media, publishers of six periodicals covering southwestern Minnesota. He is no stranger to the Park. After his father passed, his mother



Above, Halsey on the cover of Hennepin County History magazine in 1982; below, West High School Seniors cheer on University of Minnesota Golden Gopher's football coach at a report meeting in the Nicollet Hotel in 1947. Halsey on the left with Bernie Bierman, center. Photos courtesy of Hennepin County Library.



purchased a home at the corner of Lake and Blackstone in 1975. For the next 40 years, Lindquist fondly recalls coming to SLP for many memorable family holiday gatherings in the home across the street from the old Lake Street Park, and its often-used hockey rink/football field. For more than five years now, he has been a resident of Eliot View Road, serving as treasurer of its neighborhood association.

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!

If you haven't yet heard, we are excited to share that we recently published a new book titled *Places In The Park: A Physical History of St. Louis Park, Minnesota*. The first comprehensive history of St. Louis Park since the 1970s, it tells the story of St. Louis Park through all the various physical aspects of the city, such as railroads, schools, industry, and development. It draws heavily on prior research and writings, but adds newly sourced maps, photographs and facts. This 64-page book is professionally bound in full color and glossy paper making it ready to add to any library!

I am grateful to Board Trustee, Bill Beyer, who took on this project and dedicated the past year to researching, writing, editing, and publishing the book to ensure it was printed in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Milwaukee Road Depot's placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Speaking of which, we had a wonderful 5th annual holiday lighting of the Depot (and book launch party) in December. The city even installed new lights on the Depot for the celebration!

I must also thank the many sponsors that generously donated funds to cover the majority of our printing costs for the book. Their generosity means proceeds from the sale of the book will directly fund the operations of the Historical Society. Sincere thanks to AAA Minneapolis, Citizens Independent Bank, Discover St. Louis Park, Nordic Ware, Rotary of St. Louis Park Noon Club, Sota Clothing Company, The Pratt Family, and Henry Solmer.

You will soon be receiving a membership renewal letter from us, and I hope you consider continuing your support. We will include an option to purchase a book along with your membership renewal, but if you can't wait, know you can order a book on our website or, if you are local, you can stop by the front desk at the Rec Center to purchase a copy. They are \$20 each.

Thanks, as always, for your support. Please consider sharing your memories of St. Louis Park for this newsletter or stop by office hours to say hi!

With Park pride,

Ted



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Founded in 1971, the St. Louis Park Historical Society collects, preserves and shares the history of St. Louis Park. The *ReEcho: Park History Today* is an official publication of the Society.

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A HANKE FAMILY SKETCH

Louise Hanke Watson penned/typed a mini-memoir which was bequeathed to the SLPHS along with a gaggle of photos of the pioneering Hanke family. Here's what Louise had to say about the family's earliest years in the Park:

"America: Mother and both children were very ill for nearly the entire first year. Both daughters died, and were buried in Columbus Grove [Ohio]. There was very little worth living for until the second year, when Charles, the oldest son, was born. When he was only an infant, the family decided to come to Minnesota. Driving in a covered wagon through Chicago to the Mississippi, the family reached St. Anthony Falls by river boat...The family lived very poorly through the two year's (sic) of Minnesota's "hard times," until Anna was born, when it was decided to go on a farm. Then the farm owned by Mr. Pratt was used by the county as a boarding place for the poor. This place was bought, and the poor boarded for the rest of the year, until other arrangements could be made."

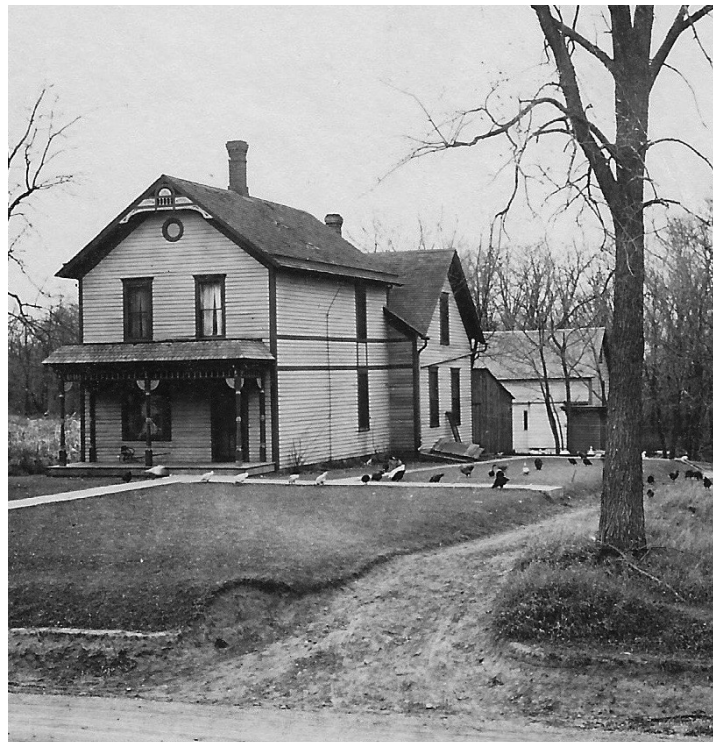
"In 1870 Employment Agencies either did not exist or were seldom used by farmers. One picked up "help" at the hay or feed markets or oftener men came to a farmer's door, bag and baggage, and asked for work... Thus "Dutch Fred" became one of the Hanke household, where he labored without vacation for seventeen years. Some neighbors called him "Old Fred." He was not old nor was he Dutch, but he always seemed old, and at that time most German farmers were called "Dutch", never bothering to make corrections...Yes Fred was more than a hired man; gradually he took over the entire barn and stock management. He was consulted by Farmer Hanke about the weather conditions being suitable for turning the stock out, or for keeping the cows in their warm stalls.

Chickens had always been the pleasure and pastime of Mrs. Hanke. Since there had been always a question in her mind about its pleasure, except for the delight she felt in adding dollars or cents to her "egg money" store, and since she found almost no time to pass, she was indeed glad to turn the chickens over to Fred."

"Never had the flocks been so well cared for, never so well fed. Eggs and young chicks multiplied and grew; likewise "egg money" became a real sum. In fact, Farmer Hanke, who had always looked with scorn upon chicken raising as woman's work for pin money, and as an easy way to make sure of a good Sunday dinner, soon learned he could "borrow" from his wife's treasury, often forgetting to repay. By secretly bartering with neighbors, two dozen chicken eggs for six of goose, duck or turkey eggs, there appeared, before much awareness, geese, ducks and turkeys, each in their own apportioned places, to hiss, quack, or gobble, the pride of the whole family and the joy of Fred."



Twins Lydia and Louise Hanke around 1875. The first Hanke farmhouse (maybe located at what is now 3800 France Avenue) with assorted fowl patrolling the grounds – you can almost hear the joy of Dutch Fred.



A HAMILTON LEGACY

We were contacted by Bruce Deger and Michèle Cassavante from Minneapolis, who, in 1976 had received a baby buggy from their elderly neighbors. The buggy had belonged to Horace Hamilton, a son of Joseph Kellog Hamilton, one of the founders, and the first mayor, of the Village of St. Louis Park. The buggy had reportedly also been used by Horace's older brother, name not specified.

Joseph Hamilton had seven children by three wives. First wife Olivia (Pratt) delivered son Chesley in 1859; Olivia died at age 23 in 1864. Curiously, the 1860 federal census lists Joseph and Olivia on their farm in the Park with a five-month-old son named Lincoln, not Chesley.

The name Lincoln disappears, with one exception. That exception is the T.B. Walker plat map dating from around 1895, (bottom, page 8). Three new east-west streets platted from Joseph Hamilton's farm are named "Lincoln," "Hamilton," and "Chestley." Lincoln and Chestley were, at some point, poetically renamed as 34th and 35th Streets. Hamilton Street remains.

Hamilton married second wife Eliza (Moore) in 1866; she bore three children, Alva, (b. 1867), Leona "Minnie," (b. 1868), and Charles, (b. 1873). Eliza died in 1878, at age 34.

Hamilton's third wife, Sarah (Moore), was Eliza's younger sister. They married in 1883, and she bore three children, Alice (1885), Horace, (1886), and Pearl (1888).

Horace was born the year the Park became a village and his father first became mayor. He had two older brothers, although Chesley was 27 years old and on his own when Horace was born. The buggy most likely originated with Charles in 1873.

Like many of our area's pioneers, Joseph Hamilton was a native of Maine, born in the town of Dexter in July 1835. On May 20, 1855, he took a claim and farmed 120 acres on land just north of present-day Highway 7, south of the High School, and either side of Lake Street.

He took farming seriously, and was elected Secretary of the area Grange when it was formed in 1879. He built a red brick house on the northwest corner of what would become Dakota and Lake Streets. It was torn down in the early 1930s after lying vacant for years.

Hamilton's mansion "Sunnyside" still stands at 5900 Goodrich. Built in 1896, just five years before Joseph's death and when Horace was already 10 years old, it's not likely that the pram ever resided here.

In 1886 Hamilton established the Village's first General Store, about a mile from his farm. He delivered groceries to homes and provided weekly credit.

Hamilton was one of the original incorporators of the Village in 1886, was elected President of the Village Council (Mayor) on December 6, 1886 held that position until 1894. He was elected again in 1895-97 and 1899-1900.

From 1888 to 1895 he served as the Village's Superintendent of

28	1187	1105	Joe. Hamilton	25	11	Farmer
29			Olivia	20	8	
30			Lincoln	5 1/2	11	



Hamilton's mansion "Sunnyside" still stands at 5900 Goodrich. Built in 1896, just five years before Joseph's death and when Horace was already 10 years old, it's not likely that the pram ever resided here.



Schools; from October 26, 1889, to April 4, 1891, he served as the Village Postmaster.

Horace Leonard Hamilton was said to be the first child born after Park became a Village and the first graduate of St. Louis Park High School.

On April 1, 1905, the Minneapolis Journal reported that Horace's "foot was cut off by a switch engine" the week before. The loss of the 19-year-old's foot was documented on his World War I draft registration card.

Horace became a pharmacist – in 1930 he was the proprietor of Hamilton Pharmacy, located at 4159 Thomas Avenue North in Minneapolis. By 1942 he worked at the H.B. Anderson Drug Store at 2401 Nicollet in south Minneapolis. Horace died in 1969.

In 1890 Joseph Hamilton sold his farm to T.B. Walker, sold his store, and became a builder. Monitor Drill contracted with him to build 16-18 two story homes which became known as Monitor Houses. He also built houses on his own, larger than the Monitor Houses but with the similar plans.

In 1892 he built the brick, two-story Hamilton Building on

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WHAT'S YOUR PARK STORY?

Do you have a St. Louis Park story to share with our readers? We would love to hear from you! We're looking for articles, stories, reminiscences and photos.

Submission Guidelines

- Articles are relevant to the St. Louis Park Historical Society audience; 1,000 words maximum.
- Articles are published at the discretion of newsletter staff and may be gently edited to accommodate space limitations.
- Submit your article to slphs.newsletter@gmail.com. Include your name, email address and phone number.

DISPATCH LOOK-BACK

The Dispatch for July 13, 1961 had a particularly on-point cartoon, no doubt anticipating the 58-year-in-the-future gift of Horace Hamilton's perambulator to the Society.

Ha Ha Ha Ha!



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Broadway [6509 Walker Street], which operated until it was destroyed by fire on Christmas Day, 1958.

Was there ever a Hamilton son named Lincoln as recorded on the 1860 census, or was it just a typical name mix-up? Olivia Pratt's mother's maiden name was Chesley. She died shortly after Olivia was born in Maine. Olivia's father, Job Pratt, was born in Lincoln, Maine. Or, did Joseph and Olivia decide on a fancier new name for their only son sometime later? We await a long-lost family letter - which may or may not exist - to tell us.

- Bill Beyer, FAIA



Hamilton built other homes for rental, including an almost identical three-in-a-row at 6018 – 6024 Goodrich Avenue, all still standing. The Monitor houses, below, were first erected in Skunk Hollow, but some were later moved up to Colorado Avenue, where these four reside today. His 1892 Hamilton Building formed, along with T.B. Walker's similar building across the street, "the Brick Block," downtown St. Louis Park for many years. The Odd Fellows Hall on the second floor of the Hamilton Building hosted high school graduations and community meetings for years.





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Joseph Hamilton's 1855, 120-acre farm is shown by the dashed outline. The south edge, Broadway (Walker) Street, became downtown for the village in 1890. The street names honoring his son(s?) bracket today's Hamilton Street. His original 1860 farmhouse is said to have stood at the corner of Main (Dakota) and Lake Street, but Lake Street didn't exist until T.B. Walker created it in 1890. The star on the right marks Hamilton's Sunnyside mansion at 5900 Goodrich, and the star on the left marks three speculative homes he built, all of which stand today.