

- P3 / PRESIDENT'S LETTER – Growing membership and collections
- P2-P4 / SLP'S OLIGARCH FOUNDERS – Goodrich, Goodrich, Walker, Lowry, Davis, et al
- P5-P7 / SKUNK HOUSE MYSTERIES, SOLVED – Joseph Hamilton the Builder and Skunk Hollow backfill
- P8 / HINKLE/TIMIAN FAMILY – We trace five generations in the Park
- P12 / THE VILLAGE IN 1900 – An old map yields new meanings



REeCHO

PARK HISTORY TODAY

Collect. Preserve. Share.

Volume 23.3

Fall / 2024

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Society has just completed a collaborative exhibit and walking tour program with Hennepin History Museum – “Skunk Hollow: The Story of a Swamp.” While researching the topic, we uncovered more good stories than we had time or space to include, so we’ll tell some of them now. We profile some of the key people who shaped the earliest Park development in Skunk Hollow, profile a family with Park roots five generations deep, and solve a few mysteries of history that had eluded us, weaving in tidbits from our unparalleled website, compiled by Jeanne Andersen.



The St. Louis Park Library is hosting our collaborative exhibit with Hennepin History Museum – *Skunk Hollow: The Story of a Swamp*. Stop by and see it before Christmas, if you can.

NAMING SKUNK HOLLOW (IN THE GREAT SWAMP)

In our Summer, 2023 *ReEcho* we told of Minnesota’s first sugar beet factory, located just west of today’s Park Tavern, raising a literal stink by dumping their processing wastes into Minnehaha Creek starting in 1898.

After 1917, a stink of a different color commenced courtesy of Republic Creosote Company/Reilly Tar & Chemical, as creosote byproducts were dumped in the Great Swamp for disposal, lending a 50-year aroma to several nearby neighborhoods.

Hwy 7 came along during the Great Depression, adding a slice across the swamp, and moving the stink boundary a bit north. So, maybe the northern boundary of Skunk Hollow eventually became Hwy 7.

The ownership of much of the Great Swamp started with the Goodrich family’s real estate speculation in 1867. Goodrich Street, with its unusually broad boulevards remains the most elegant and historic street in town. The Minneapolis capitalists who plotted and platted St. Louis Park never actually lived here, but they controlled how the land developed. We dip into Minneapolis history, showing how the Goodrich/Lowry/Walker real estate empire helped form today’s city.



Dr. Calvin Goodrich bequeathed over 700 acres in the Great Swamp (shown in green) to his son, Calvin Jr. and son-in-law, Thomas Lowry. Added to Mayor Joseph Hamilton’s 120-acre farm, the lands comprised half of T.B. Walker’s 1892 “Rearrangement of St. Louis Park.” The red-dashed squares are quarter sections of 160 acres.

GOODRICH, LOWRY, WALKER, GOODRICH & DAVIS

Could be a law firm, but it's just the partial cast of Minneapolis real estate speculators behind the founding of St. Louis Park, and the attempted transformation of the Great Swamp into a regional hub of industry. Minneapolis was incorporated as a town in 1867, population around ten thousand. There and then, in a town the size of today's St. Peter, MN, Thomas B. Walker and Dr. Calvin Goodrich, both Ohio boys, both chainmen on surveying crews who saw firsthand the value of raw land by slogging across hill, dale, forest, field, and swamp, could not have failed to connect. Between 1860 and 1880, Minneapolis would grow by over 700 percent as land was bought, sold and re-sold. It was boom-time.

DR. CALVIN GOODRICH

Calvin Gibson Goodrich was born in 1820 and arrived in Minneapolis in 1867 as an old man of 47. Trained as a physician, and practicing in Oxford, Ohio from 1828 to 1868, Dr. Goodrich was also keenly interested in real estate speculation. In 1868, he uprooted his prosperous medical practice there to move his family to Minneapolis, very likely because "out west," land was still available on the cheap. He was accompanied by children, Nellie (17), Beatrice (14), Calvin Jr., (12), and Charles, (9), plus wife Mary Wall Goodrich. Mary died in 1874; Calvin remarried in 1875 but was dead by 1880. The good Doctor had come west to scout the landscape in 1867, (the first year you could get a railroad ticket from Ohio to the promised land) and purchased a 148-acre farm on the southwest edge of town for \$5,180 or \$35/acre. He also likely purchased, for much less, over 700 acres of what would two decades later become St. Louis Park, including most of the Great Swamp and Skunk Hollow.

THOMAS LOWRY

Thomas Lowry, born in 1843, also arrived in Minneapolis in 1867 to practice law. He soon came to specialize in real estate law. A kindred spirit to old Dr. Goodrich, with a mind-boggling fact from MNopedia:

"...more than one-third of the property that is now Minneapolis passed through Lowry's hands...Lowry became interested in streetcars as a way to drive the development of his outlying real estate holdings. In 1875, he became part of the revived Minneapolis Street Railway Company along with Colonel William S. King and out-of-state investors. King ran the company at first, but in 1878, Lowry became president. He held the position for the rest of his life and made the streetcar company his primary business."

Lowry also became kin to Dr. Goodrich, marrying Calvin's daughter Beatrice in 1872; Tom was 29 and she was 18. Tom eventually hired his new brother-in-law, Calvin Jr., to help run the streetcar system. When Dr. Goodrich died in 1880, Lowry and Junior were named administrators of his estate, and masters of all the land he had amassed. From Minneapolis Historical.org:

In 1872, the Goodriches and the Lowrys had their suburban 218 acres platted as the Groveland Addition. The first house to go up, in 1874, was the Lowry's own two-and-one-half-story house. The lot,

containing the house, a large barn, a windmill, and outbuildings, covered an entire block on the brow of the hill facing Hennepin Avenue where the Walker Art Center now stands...Calvin Goodrich died in 1880, and his children and their spouses inherited a greater interest in the Groveland Addition. In 1886, Lowry hired a contractor to chop the top off the hill and deliver 300,000 cubic feet of fill to the low, marshy area where today's Walker Sculpture Garden now sits. With sales still minimal, Lowry next decided he needed some exemplary houses in the area. He hired his friend and neighbor, architect Frank Long, who had built his own house at 41 Groveland Terr.

Franklin Long's architectural firm, Long & Kees, had designed the Masonic Temple, (now the Hennepin Center for the Arts), and Minneapolis City Hall, and slowly the large lots along the crest of "the Devil's Backbone," or Lowry Hill, started to fill.

THOMAS BARLOW WALKER

Thomas Barlow Walker was born in 1840, and arrived in Minneapolis in 1862, age 22. He immediately signed-on to a surveying crew that went north to map out and subdivide the virgin pine forests, but also surveyed the route of the new St. Paul & Pacific Railroad, which slid through pre-St. Louis Park lands and later became James J. Hill's Great Northern. As noted on our website:

His time in the woods convinced him that money could be made in the lumber business. Land was available for \$1.25/acre, and all he had to do was find financial backers. From 1867 to 1869 he partnered with Dr. Levi Butler and Howard W. Mills to form Butler, Mills & Walker...to purchase pine lands and sell stumpage, but also became involved in the manufacture of lumber...Walker apparently began his acquisition of Minnesota timberlands around 1870.

Walker somehow escaped the financial Panic of 1873 and plowed his savings into his new, block-square estate at 8th Street and Hennepin Avenue. Walker's first house had been built around 1869 on Marquette and Ninth Street, about four blocks from Dr. Goodrich at 4th Avenue South and 7th Street.

T. B. prospered massively over the next 15 years, expanding his lumbering empire to California, and making enough money to develop a significant personal art collection and to found and fund the Minneapolis Public Library. In 1890 he was elected President of the Minneapolis Businessmen's Union, which would consolidate capital's mastery over labor for the next four decades and would launch a huge effort to develop the infant village of St. Louis Park into an industrial suburb serving Minneapolis. And there, his interests aligned with those of Calvin Goodrich Jr. and Tom Lowry. In 1880, Calvin and Tom had inherited Dr. Goodrich's large suburban acreage in the Park's Great Swamp, cheap land for new industry.

The Minneapolis Land and Investment Company was incorporated in July 1890 by T.B. Walker (President), Calvin G. Goodrich Jr. (Treasurer), Louis F. Menage (First Vice President), Henry F. Brown, (Park farmer and Second Vice President), A.M. Allen, (Walker's Personal Secretary - Secretary), Thomas Lowry, and three others. Louis Menage was famous for developing the Metropolitan Building, Minneapolis' tallest, but after the Panic of 1893 his real estate empire was exposed as a Ponzi-scheme, whereupon he and his family decamped to Guatemala for a decade to avoid prosecution. >>continued on page 4>>

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

We recently held our Annual Meeting at which we voted in three Trustees to new terms – thank you to Bill, John, and Rick for agreeing to serve another term! If you want to learn more about serving on the Board please reach out to discuss, we have two vacancies we would like to fill this year.

As always, at the meeting we came up with more ideas than we could execute with our current volunteers, but we are gaining some momentum. To highlight a few things:

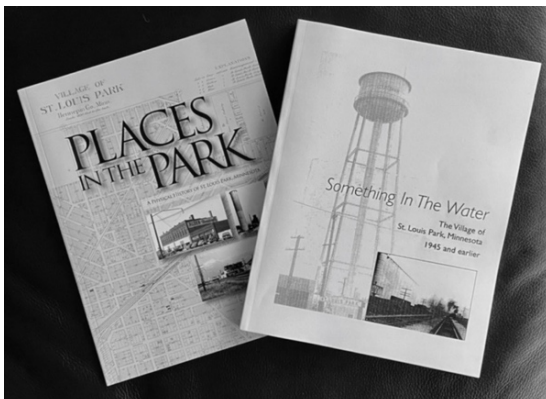
- Kathy continues to get more items from our collection uploaded to Collective Access, the new archival database we will be using. That database is publicly searchable online, you can find a link to it on our homepage.
- Bill continues to discover, research and write new stories for the Re Echo, expanding our knowledge. And we plan to re-enlist him to conduct more walking tours of Skunk Hollow next summer.
- A volunteer has been evaluating our Social Media accounts and providing recommendations for ways we can better engage with the public.
- We have some young volunteers researching some topics that could become additional walking tours and provide much needed updates to outdated topics on our website.
- We have a new volunteer working on an event schedule for next year so we can provide you with regular opportunities to learn about SLP history.

While we are excited about this growth in activity, we are concerned that our membership continues to decline each year. Membership donations are the main source of our revenue to cover the costs of our office space, website, print this newsletter, and otherwise keep the organization running. When you see our push for Give To The Max day this fall, please consider an additional donation to help us close our funding gap for the year. Or consider volunteering for the next year to help us find new members and business donors.

To end on a more positive note, we continue to grow our archival collection. Each month at our Board meeting we marvel over the latest items that have come in. For example, we recently got a class of 1957 reunion booklet, transcription records of Dorothy Henry's 1951 Kiddie Review on WTCN, and an assortment of school related photos from a member of the class of 1979.

What's in your closet, basement, or attic that could be the next new thing for our collection?

With Park Pride,
Ted



REeCHO PARK HISTORY TODAY

CONNECT WITH US

Visit: 3546 Dakota Ave. So., Suite C
St. Louis Park
Saturdays, 1-4 pm,
Or, by appointment

Phone: 612.465.9288

Email: slphistory@gmail.com

Online: <https://slphistory.org>

Follow us on Facebook/Meta

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.

EDITOR

WILLIAM BEYER

WRITERS

TED EKKERS

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

JEANNE ANDERSEN

© 2024 St. Louis Park Historical Society. All rights reserved.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT – TED EKKERS

VICE PRESIDENT – LYNNE CARPER

SECRETARY – KATHY JOHNSON

TREASURER – HENRY SOLMER

TRUSTEES

WILLIAM BEYER

DOUG JOHNSON

JIM MCDONOUGH

MARY LOU NEMANIC

JOHN OLSON

SCOTT ROSS

RICK SEWALL



<< continued from page 2<<

CALVIN GOODRICH JR.

Junior was a 12-year-old in 1868 when his family moved to town, and at age 16 became brother-in-law to the 29-year-old Thomas Lowry when his older sister Beatrice married. Family ties were strengthened when Tom took young Calvin under his wing and hired him as a bookkeeper for the new Twin Cities Rapid Transit Company. Calvin would succeed Tom as president of that streetcar empire after Lowry's death in 1909, and Junior held that position until his own death in 1915.

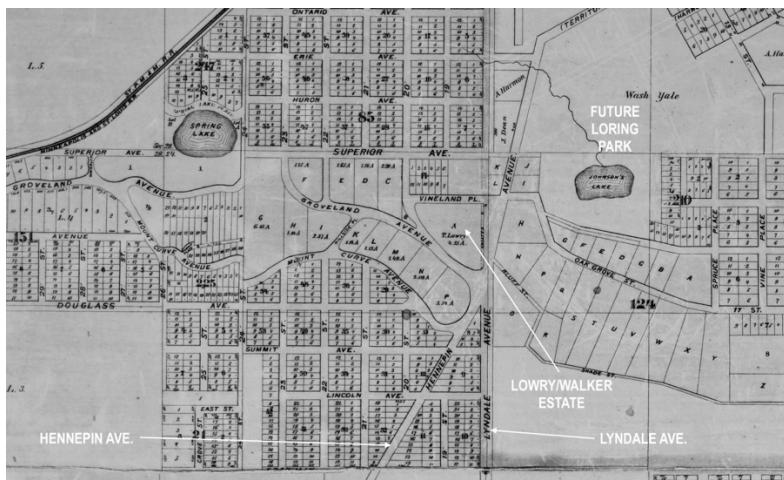
Upon being named TCRTC president, Junior bought a house that established him as a big cheese in Minneapolis – the 20,000 square foot Semple mansion, about the same size as Glensheen in Duluth. William Washburn's Fair Oaks mansion a few blocks south and James J. Hill brownstone pile on Summit Avenue in St. Paul were, however, almost twice as big.

After Dr. Cal's death in 1880, Junior and Lowry controlled over 700 acres of suburban land in what would become the Village of St. Louis Park. In 1886, they filed the first residential plats near the town center and new railroad depot months before the village was legally formed. When Calvin Jr. died in 1915, Tom and Beatrice's son Horace continued building the TCRTC into the best interurban rail system in the U.S. by 1925, connecting all points from Stillwater to Excelsior with 525 miles of track.

SPENCER E. DAVIS

Who? Not a name much known, because Davis didn't arrive until 1892, along with his business, the newly capitalized (by Walker and the MBU), Monitor Drill Company. Walker poached that farm machinery manufacturer from Horicon, WI, much as he had poached the Esterly Harvester Company from Whitewater, WI. Those two businesses aimed to employ over 900 men between them when the population of the Park was under 1,000.

Esterly went belly-up in the Panic of 1893. Monitor survived, and according to our website, "It is impossible to overstate the importance of the Monitor Drill Co. to the history of St. Louis Park during its almost 40 years in the Village." Davis was an oligarch cut from the same anti-labor cloth as the rest and found the fledgling village a bit too raw to bother building a home near the *hoi polloi*. He opted for Minneapolis, on Mount Curve, and resided there until his death in 1913. The house itself would become more famous than Davis years later.



Above, Tom Lowry's Groveland Addition and 1874 estate on Groveland Terrace. Below, the first Walker Art Center in 1925; (T.B. Walker living in Lowry's mansion just up the hill), the monument to Tom Lowry, built after his too early death, the 20,000 square foot Semple mansion, at the east end of Lowry Hill, purchased in 1910 by Calvin Goodrich Jr., and Spencer Davis' Mount Curve home, much later famous as the Mary Tyler Moore house.



ANTI-LABOR

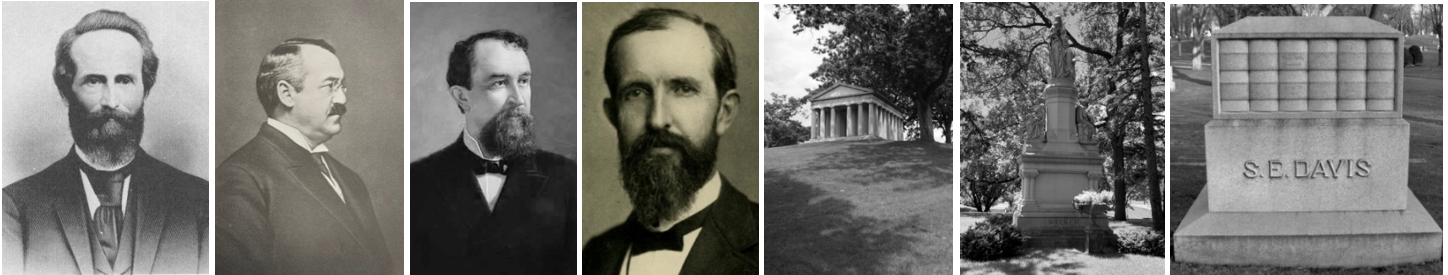
As detailed in William Millikan's 2001 book, *A Union Against Unions*, Lowry tried to reduce costs in the streetcar company by unilaterally cutting motorman wages by two to four cents per hour in April 1889. The labor unions begged to disagree and went on strike. Lowry hired a private police force to run the cars, intending to break the unions. Violence ensued but the unions quickly

agreed to cease if Lowry would arbitrate their differences. Lowry's response: "I do not propose to arbitrate this matter in any form." Calvin Jr. chipped-in: "We have treated with them for two years and during that time they have run our business. Now, to change the order of things, we feel disposed to run our own business."

The Minneapolis business and political community sent mixed messages as the city descended into violent chaos. Tom and Calvin Jr. hired scabs from Kansas City to replace striking workers and finally enlisted the Minneapolis police to violently subdue protests. In the end the unions gave up, leading to the founding of the 300-member Minneapolis Business Union in 1890. The MBU was dedicated to advancing business development and destroying organized labor; T. B. Walker was its first president.

The MBU morphed into the Citizens Alliance a few years later and kept its promise to put down labor unions in every way possible – legal and illegal - until 1934. Then, after some of their ranks were murdered by police, union members with baseball bats broke a few heads, and ultimately, the Citizens Alliance.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Dr. Calvin Goodrich died in 1880 at age 60. Calvin Gibson Goodrich Jr. died in 1915 at age 59. Thomas Lowry had contracted tuberculosis in his youth; it came back to get him around 1904 and took him in 1909 at age 66. T.B. Walker lived to the ripe old age of 87, passing in 1927. Their egos are all on display at Lakewood Cemetery, whose first president was Dr. Cal. The Goodrich and Lowry families are together in a duplex mini-Parthenon mausoleum, and Walker and family in the ground beneath a mammoth pillar and statue. We have no image of Spencer Davis, whose kin are buried in a curious, above-ground vault.

JOSEPH HAMILTON

Joseph Hamilton was here first. He came to Minnesota in May of 1855 as a bachelor from Dexter, Maine, purchasing and farming 120 acres whose west edge touched on the Great Swamp. He was married three times and widowed twice, the marriages producing seven children. Joseph abandoned farming to open a general store around 1880, then to become a community leader, instrumental in establishing the Village of St. Louis Park. At a county-ordered election held at Pratt School on November 16, 1886, incorporation of the new village was approved by a vote of 65 - 3.

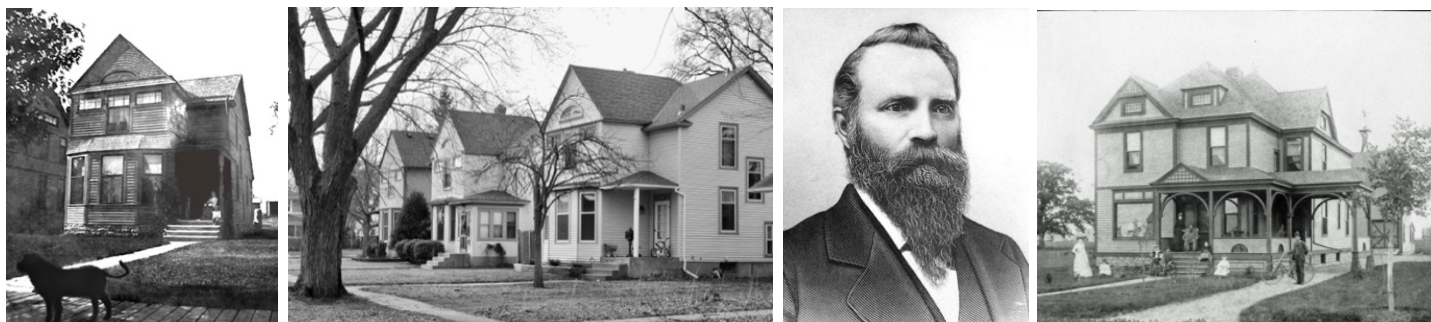
In 1879, Hamilton had become Secretary of Minnehaha Grange #398, (a national organization, founded in Minnesota, dedicated to improving the lives of farmers). Its meeting house was on 50th Street near the Edina Mill. He was the first President of the Park's Village Council (Mayor) from 1886 to 1894, and again from 1895 to 1897 and 1899 to 1900. He was second Village Postmaster from 1889 to 1891. He was Superintendent of Schools from 1888 to 1895. After selling his property in 1890 to T.B. Walker's Minneapolis Land and Investment Company, he reinvented himself once more and became a homebuilder. Hamilton might have cut his builder's teeth constructing some of the hundred "Walker Homes" for the new influx of industrial workers. Walker clearly knew where to get the necessary lumber.

In the 1890s Monitor Drill Company had contracted with Hamilton to build thirteen houses for its employees on company property. Unfortunately, the Monitor site was up against, and in, the Great Swamp, and the houses became known as "13-in-the-hole" for their constant flooding, mosquito problems, and concerns about malaria. Around 1894, the houses were moved uphill to Colorado Ave. at 37th Street in the neighborhood also known as "Quality Heights." Four remain today on Colorado Avenue.

Emerging from the national economic depression wrought by the Panic of 1893, Hamilton built his own ample Victorian home, "Sunnyside," at 5900 Goodrich Avenue in 1896, still standing today. He built other homes for rental in 1898, including three almost identical homes at 6018 - 6024 Goodrich Avenue, all with fan-lite attic windows, bayfronts, and decorative shingling at the gables.

HAMILTON, THE BUILDER

We called them Skunk Houses on our website, at least in part due to their location at the east border of Skunk Hollow. They are built on good soil at the top of the slope down to the swamp. In 1898, the year table sugar production from sugar beets began in the state and in the Park, the two residential duplexes, comprising four housing units, were built on lots 9 and 10, Block 67 of Calvin Goodrich Jr.'s "St. Louis Park Addition," part of Dr. Calvin Goodrich's original purchase in 1867.



Above, Hamilton's three spec houses on Goodrich, Joe himself and his 1896 mansion, "Sunnyside." Below, the Skunk Houses, a sugar beet fork from the SLPHS collections, mountains of beets awaiting processing, and the four remaining Hamilton-built Monitor homes from "thirteen-in-the-hole."



All the lots along Goodrich Avenue were excluded from T.B. Walker's subsequent 1890 "Rearrangement" along with Lots 9 and 10 of Block 67. Calvin Jr. was likely reserving lots along his father's namesake street for his friends, or the right kind of people. Which led us to ponder the following:

- The three homes on Goodrich were one diagonal block away from the Skunk Houses, a proximity obscured by the massive piles of fill dumped in the neighborhood when the Dan Patch Railway staggered through town from 1910 to 1915.
- With a village population around 1,300 persons, the likelihood that anyone other than Joseph Hamilton built both was vanishingly small.
- When closely examined by a retired architect with over 50 years of study and experience, the Skunks appear to be side-by-side, mirrored versions of the Goodrich Avenue house plans, stripped of ornament inside and out.
- The fact that the Minnesota Sugar Company required hundreds of temporary workers, on duty 24/7, three shifts a day, for 4-5 months, to manually move 90 million pounds of beets from outdoor piles to indoor processing before they rotted.

While our website story of skunk dens is plausible – both structures have animal-friendly crawl spaces rather than full basements front and back - we think they were built as dormitories for the temp workers, likely single men, in town for five months a year. Dormitories that were left mostly empty when the 1904 tornado swept through the Park, killing all beet processing that year. And when the sugar plant burned to the ground in the spring of 1905, it was over. Perhaps we should start calling them Hamilton's Sugar Beet Houses.

WILLIAM AND HORATIO DAY, PETER SCHUSSLER, AND THE ILL-FATED GLOBE MILL

In 1874, amidst what is still the rainiest June along Minnehaha Creek in Minnesota history, William P. Day and son, Horatio Nelson Day, decided to erect perhaps the fifth flour mill on the Creek between Lake Minnetonka and south Minneapolis. The unusually swollen Creek that year obscured the fact that there was minimal waterpower to be had in that location. Horatio Day built his five-foot-high dam and proceeded to mill flour and send it to market. Until 1875, when calamity claimed the day, and the Days.

That summer, Horatio and Mary Day's 12-year-old son, Cassius was accidentally shot to death by a 15-year-old friend while fiddling around with a pistol at Lake Amelia (Nokomis). Mary fell down the stairs in the mill, breaking her wrist, and the entire family came down with the measles, a serious killer disease back then. A batch of their flour was rejected by a customer as "musty," and the Days decided to get out of the milling business while still alive and return to farming. Horatio didn't last long, suffering three consecutive strokes that left him paralyzed; head was dead at age 46, less than ten years after selling the mill.

The Globe changed hands a few times after 1876, and the intermittent flow of Minnehaha Creek caused one operator to install steam power to augment the weakling water wheel. Around 1882, Peter Schussler followed his dream to become a miller and bought the place from the bank. Unfortunately for Schussler, the Creek continued its fickle flow, a condition exacerbated by the Hennepin County Board deciding to kiss-up to the rich cottagers colonizing the shores of Lake Minnetonka by building an outlet control dam at Gray's Bay to ensure a constant water level on the big lake.

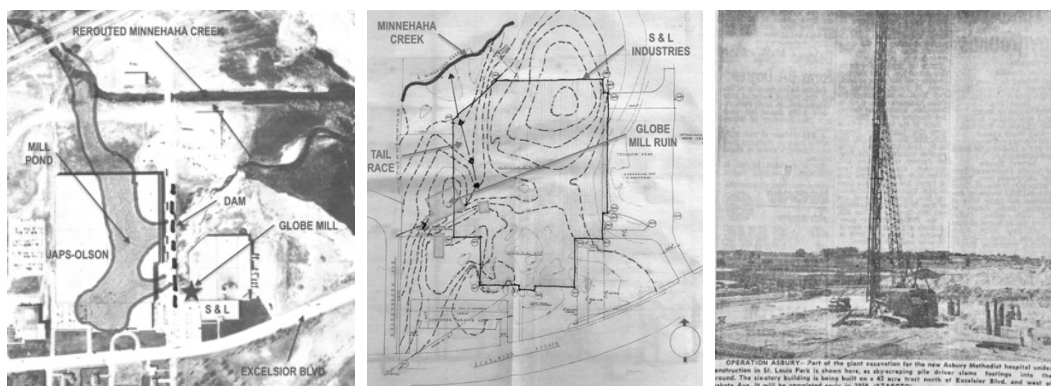
Schussler's romance with flour milling played out over the next twelve years in the state's legal system. He finally prevailed at the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1895, awarded damages that almost surely didn't cover his legal fees. He closed the mill in 1898 and sold the equipment to a place with actual waterpower. The *Minneapolis Journal* amusingly summarized the Schussler legal situation on May 22, 1896:

Who is Peter Schussler? He is the bete noir of the county commissioners, according to them; a snarling dog in the manger, a mean-spirited man who owns a one-horse mill 3 ½ miles below the dam. A man, according to the county fathers, who would see the vast property interests of Minnetonka ruined before he would forego the right to run his little mill with the romantic waters of Minnehaha. He is the man who bobbed up as the champion of the lower riparian owners just when the commissioners had made their peace with the contentious people who wanted damage for overflowed lake-front lands. In a word, Peter Schussler is the head and front of a new phase...It was in 1893 that peter Schussler had begun to fight for his rights. He brought suit in the district court for damages and for the abatement of the dam...Under the rulings of Judge Belden, Schussler is entitled to open the gate and help himself to a natural flow of water. When he did so, deputy sheriffs were sent to watch the gate and keep it closed.

SKUNK HOLLOW: FROM THE GLOBE TO METHODIST



In 1940, the only visible buildings in Skunk Hollow were traces of the Globe Mill on the west and the Skunk Houses on the east. Minnehaha Creek flowed freely through the marshes except for a ditch dug sometime before 1913 from Walker's railroad loop to the bridge at Excelsior Blvd. Theodore Wirth purchased the 230 acres south of Excelsior Blvd. from Calvin Goodrich Jr.'s children in 1925 to create Meadowbrook Golf Course, still a property of the Minneapolis Park Board. After WWII, the properties accessible by Excelsior Blvd from the south were snapped-up and developed. Meadowbrook Estates housing in 1949 had the advantage of plentiful high ground above the floodplain. Salkin & Linhoff's new distribution center took pains to avoid Minnehaha Creek, slicing off floor space at its northwest corner in 1950. Coast-to-Coast Stores' new headquarters in 1953 obliterated the original creek channel to build directly atop the former Globe Mill Pond, ditching the Creek west-to-east.



Methodist Hospital bought its 70-acre site east of the creek from S&L in 1956, then went through multiple delays before opening the suburbs' first new hospital in 1959. The ground's load-bearing capacity had been ignored by the Methodist building committee, but ultimately required the installation of 100-foot-deep driven pilings for support. From the hospital's own written history: "C.G. Retherford, the General Mills executive who headed the hospital board's planning committee for the new facility, revealed years later that he and board chairman Nordstrom had been criticized for 'building in a swamp. But I think it was a beautiful swamp.'" Were Mr. Retherford alive today, he would know that the hospital, the City and the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, made the swamp even more beautiful with the Methodist Re-meander.

SKUNK HOLLOW, POST-WWII - CREEKSIDE AND CREOSOTE ROAD

After one of our walking tours of Skunk Hollow this summer, we paused for hospitality at Dampfwerk Distillery, a current Hollow occupant just across Cambridge Street from the Skunk/Sugar Beet Houses. We noshed on the rear patio with Jerry and Sylvia Timian and current Sugar Beet House owners, Richard and Meta Webb.

Having served 12 years on the School Board and simultaneously eleven on the Planning Commission, Jerry is reasonably well-known around town, and has deep Park family roots. His great grandparents, John and Christina Hinkle, ran a hotel built around 1890 by T. B. Walker directly north of the M&SL depot at Brunswick Avenue. Jerry offered to share some stories of growing up in the Park and some family photos.

JOHN AND CHRISTINA HINKLE

Our website notes that John and Christina Hinkle came to the Park from Wisconsin around 1890 and were operating the Hinkle Hotel directly across the tracks from the M&SL Depot. Jerry couldn't recall where in Wisconsin his great grandparents came from, so we tried to find out. Ordinarily, consulting the previous decade's U.S. Federal Census record might bring some clues, but we discovered that the 1890 federal census records had been almost totally destroyed by fire in 1921. Who knew?

The 1900 and 1920 federal census listed John Hinkle in St. Louis Park working as a machinist. In 1910 he was listed as a saloon-keeper, with a dozen boarders, presumably proprietor of the Hinkle Hotel. Perhaps the Hinkles were one of the 25 families who moved to the Park from Horicon, WI with Spencer Davis and Monitor Drill Company?

We consulted the Wisconsin Census records of 1885, and found no Horicon Hinkles, but one John Hinkle living in Whitewater, WI, the home of Esterly Harvester, a company that employed 500 men there and was also poached to the Park by T.B. Walker to help anchor his industrial vision. A company that opened its new doors in 1892 but did not survive the Panic of 1893.

Jerry's cousins confirmed that John Hinkle came to the Park from Whitewater, likely his job in 1894, and walked across the road to catch on with another farm machinery manufacturer needing machinists – Monitor Drill, owned by Spencer E. Davis. We profiled Davis above as just another run-of-the-mill, anti-labor capitalist, but as it turned out, he had a slightly bigger heart than most. His biographers told the story:

Mr. Davis took a great deal of pride in the friendly relations which always existed between himself and his employes. At the time of his retirement from business in 1908, there were a number of men employed in the factory at St. Louis Park who had been with him continuously since he first engaged in business. These men Mr. Davis regarded as his personal friends and the regard was mutual. From the day he started in business until he retired, he never, for any reason, skipped a payday or postponed payment of his employes' wages. In 1903, to show his appreciation of long service, Mr. Davis distributed among the employes who had been with him for a certain number of years, a gift of between twenty-five thousand and thirty thousand dollars, which took the form of a bonus, the amount being decided by the terms of service. He was a man who took great pride in looking after the interests of his workmen and seeing that their rights were fully protected.

Mind-boggling bonus money at a time a factory worker's wage was two dollars a day, or six hundred a year, at best. And although John Hinkle had not come to town with the Monitor crew from Horicon, he might have easily earned the respect of Davis over the previous decade and received a smaller sum as a bonus in 1903. Which could explain where he got the money to buy a hotel and saloon before the 1910 census. [Ed note: there must have been something in the Horicon water – William Van Brunt, Spencer Davis' pre-Park business partner, distributed \$285,000 to loyal employees in the depths of the Great Depression, after he was no longer associated with the firm.]



Retired Plant Owner Rewards Loyalty of Old Crew.

By Our Own Correspondent.
HORICON, Wis., May 13—Veteran employes of this city's largest industry today received an outright gift of \$285,000 from their former "boss," Willard A. Van Brunt, the 88 year old retired co-founder of the Van Brunt Manufacturing company.
In what may well be called one of the most extraordinary benefactions in Wisconsin industrial annals, a man having no official connection with the company since he sold out in 1918 gives to each of 93 persons—89 employes and six widows—three \$1,000 United States government bonds as an expression of his appreciation of their association, friendship and loyalty.

Our website thoroughly documents the yoyo dances of the Park in those days regarding the consumption of alcoholic beverages. T.B. Walker's teetotaling ways set the tone, but the Park could not decide – 1893-1901, Dry / 1902-1904, Wet / 1905, Dry / 1906-1907, Wet / 1908: Dry / 1909-1915: Wet / 1916: Dry (by six votes, 197 to 191) / 1917: Dry (by one vote) / 1918: Dry (by three votes) / 1920: Prohibition. Owning a hotel with a saloon in the Park was a dicey business.

John and Christina Hinkle raised six children (two boys and four girls). Oldest daughter Lillian was ten years old in 1900 and attended Lincoln School (opened in 1890) for grade school and possibly high school, missing out on the elegant new 1914 high school. She had contracted the Spanish Flu in 1918 which caused loss of her hearing. The flu had been spread across the nation by rail travelers, and the Hinkle Hotel, (or perhaps the saloon-less boarding house by then), where Lillian worked as a waiter, was directly in the line of fire.

Lillian disdained American Sign Language and learned to read lips. In the 1920 census, John Hinkle was once again a machinist. Ernest Timian, from Amherst, WI, was a 31-year-old lodger, working as a machinist at Monitor Drill with John. Ernie and Lillian married in April of that year.

In 1908, Davis sold Monitor to what would become the Minneapolis Moline conglomerate, but jobs stayed in the Park until 1930 and the Great Depression, when operations were consolidated in Hopkins and a suspicious fire destroyed the Park's factory.



Minnesota Historical Society aerial photo looking east (circa 1922), showing the Monitor complex in the foreground, and the SLP village center north of the railroad tracks. Hwy 7 would plow through the middle of this in the mid-1930s, bending to bypass the Monitor site on the north. In 1922, the Hinkle Hotel had been sold, as Prohibition closed all the saloons.

ERNIE AND LILLIAN; HAROLD, CLAYTON AND WINNIE

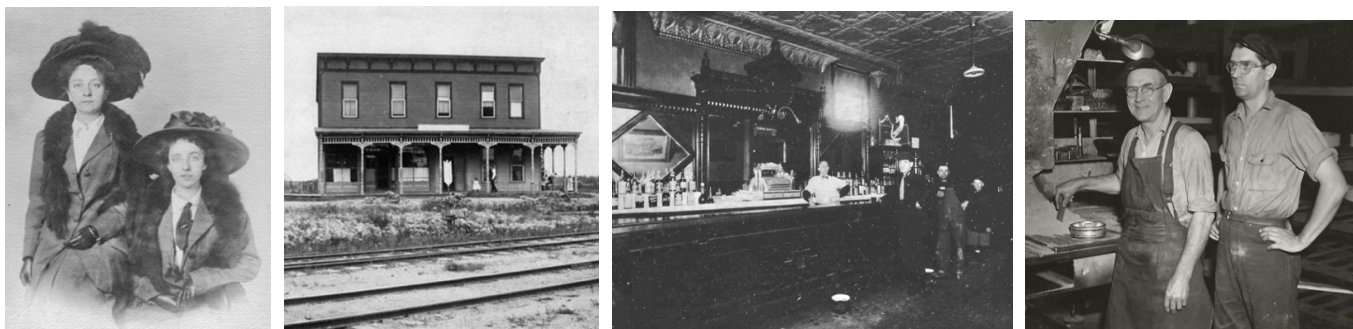
The newlyweds started their family directly; Harold (Jerry's dad) was born in 1921, Clayton in 1924, and Winifred in 1925. They lived somewhere along Summit (now Oxford) Street according to the 1930 census, a couple of blocks east of Skunk Hollow. The stink of sugar beet waste was gone by 1904, to be replaced by the stink of creosote in 1917.

The Dan Patch Railway had slithered through town from south to north from 1910 to 1915, separating Skunk Hollow from the upland residential areas to the east. The three kids grew up while the 1920s roared and the Depression commenced. The boys hunted pheasants in the Hollow, walking along Excelsior Blvd. with their shotguns. (Raising pointers?) Clayton recalled hitting golf balls into the Hollow for fun. But both boys were draft age by the start of WWII, and both joined the Army and saw action in Europe. Big action. Clayton was a sergeant, and machine-gunner in the Battle of the Bulge, and Harold drove tanks nearby, having two of them shot out from under him.

Ernie had lost his job at Monitor/Moline around 1930 and went to work as an investigator for Hennepin County, the Republican administration of Klan-friendly Sheriff Earle Brown at that time. Family lore says he lost his county job when he forcibly removed the Klan from Monitor. He managed to catch on again with Minneapolis Moline as a machinist at the Hopkins plant. The family

had moved from Summit to 3820 Jackson (now Alabama) and then to Edina at the south end of the Great Swamp, just south of Meadowbrook Golf Course.

Clayton, Harold and Winnie were teenagers in April 1939 when the swamp south of Hwy 7 caught fire. It was used to dump creosote wastes from the Republic Creosote/Reilly Tar & Chemical plant and the fire attracted a crowd of gawkers along the highway estimated at over 2,000. The fire was apparently impossible to extinguish and could barely be controlled.



Above, left to right: Lillian and Norma Hinkle, the Hinkle Hotel and its saloon, and Ernie and Harold at Minneapolis Moline. Below, Harold's 1st Grade class at Lincoln School (he's third from right, top row), a clipping of the Great Swamp Creosote fire of 1939, and Harold, Clayton and Winnie.



Winnie married a fighter pilot and eventually moved to Minnetonka. After the war, Harold and Clayton came home alive, although Clayton might have brought some PTSD with him. Jerry recalls being told that Clayton was permanently banned from Bunny's Bar after joining one-too-many drunken brawls, but Clayt was never a big drinker and spent his whole career working for the city of St. Louis Park. Harold got work with his dad Ernie at Minneapolis Moline, married, and started his own family at the beginning of the 1950s, just north of the new Knollwood Plaza, tight to another swampy segment of Minnehaha Creek. Harold and Clayton lived one house apart in new homes on Zinran Avenue and together raised German Shorthair Pointers in the 50s and 60s.

JERRY AND SYLVIA

Post-World War II, St. Louis Park was the fastest-growing town in the state, until it filled up. Jerry Timian was born in St. Paul, but the new family soon moved to the end of the alphabet on Zinran Avenue South. It was up against Minnehaha Creek and its adjacent swamps and meadows – a wonderland for kids - upstream from the old city center and Skunk Hollow. He recalls the years there from 1960 - 1967:

My friends and I mostly biked through the Hollows on what we called Creosote Road, which is what everyone knew it by. It was never called Walker by anyone I knew. The creosote road was a great link between west and east and a lot of us liked to bike over to McDonald's and to the high school to play basketball and have open gym time. After open gym we'd go to Mr. Frank's, a candy store located between McDonald's and Holy Family Catholic Church on Lake Street. The building where the candy store was is long gone. The bike rides down the creosote road were always an adventure because we'd tried to run each other into the pools of creosote. You'd know you were in trouble if you came home with a creosote stripe up your back.

My dad and his brother and their friends lived on or near Alabama close to the Hollows and in the 1930s would hunt rabbits near the creek where Methodist Hospital is now. They would walk down Excelsior Blvd w their shotguns and nobody paid it any mind. They would dam up the creek to create a swimming hole for themselves too. My friends and I swam in the creek near where Knollwood is now and we speared catfish when we weren't swimming. The creek was a lot cleaner back then. Or maybe not?

My cousin Kris, my Uncle Clayt's daughter, just told me a story about when Clayt and my dad Harry were building a fire by the railroad tracks in the Hollow, they started the tracks on fire and the railroad workers made them put out the fire with their new jackets. My grandmother was not pleased by that. My Uncle Clayt used to say that he could hit a golf ball from their backyard on Alabama toward where the hospital would be when there was no hospital and there were just big grassy fields.

Jerry had barely graduated toddlerhood when Knollwood Plaza shopping center opened on August 24, 1955, at Hwy 7 at Texas Avenue. Mayor Russell Fernstrom, Governor Orville Freeman, singer Rosemary Clooney, and Senators Edward Thye and Hubert Humphrey were all there. Humphrey said that he had seen “shopping areas in many parts of the country, but none that equaled Knollwood Plaza for its beauty and construction.”

However, when upstart Target Corp. was building its second discount store in 1962, the neighborhood boys took offense at the loss of their recreational ground along the Creek. Some considered vandalizing the construction site, and they all vowed to boycott the place when it opened. A boycott that ended when Target opened, offering bags of popcorn for nine cents. And the Target air conditioning proved a draw as well. On hot summer days some of the boys would pull small rugs off the shelves at the rear of the store and lounge on the floor, reading novels in the cool air.



Newly-minted Knollwood Plaza in 1955 featured Powers as an anchor; new post-war housing on treeless lots dotted the landscape to the north. Aerial photos from 1945, 1953, and 1964 illustrate the rapid transition of the landscape from farm to city over those two decades. The land between 33rd St. and Minnetonka Blvd. was mined for sand and gravel, to be replaced by Aquila School and park. Park Knoll School (195?) preceded Knollwood Plaza (1955) at Texas and Walker, and Target (1962) pushed development west past Minnehaha Creek.

The Aquila sand pits were a kids' Adventureland as well. On other days, the boys would take their home-made skateboards, (old roller skates nailed to a board), and scoot inside a large storm sewer pipe that discharged into the Creek but was above water level, to spelunk the depths with makeshift candles of Crayola crayons stuffed into spent shotgun shells with wicks added. As Jerry said, it was *dark* in there.

Like most post-WWII Park boomers, Jerry went to college at UM, graduated, and got a job. He married Sylvia, a first-generation American, her parents were immigrants from Norway. She taught preschool in the Park for years after a career as a librarian and editor. They lived in South Minneapolis and Jerry worked in St. Paul until 1989 when they bought their home in the Park. Sylvia and Jerry raised two children, Sonja and Alex, and now have grandchildren about to start school in SLP, representing the fifth generation of the Hinkle/Timian clan to attend school here.



REeCHO
PARK HISTORY TODAY

An official publication of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO.
30308

3546 Dakota Ave. So., Suite C, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VILLAGE LOOK-BACK

As part of our research, we more carefully studied an undated plat map of the T.B. Walker enterprise, thinking it was made around 1895. But the buildings it accurately shows makes us think it was made closer to 1900. We point out many of the key locations discussed herein, to illustrate what Village life was like 124 years ago. Note that the Skunk/Sugar Beet Houses were being built simultaneously with Hamilton's three spec houses, and 622 feet apart, with no giant Dan Patch RR berm to separate them.

