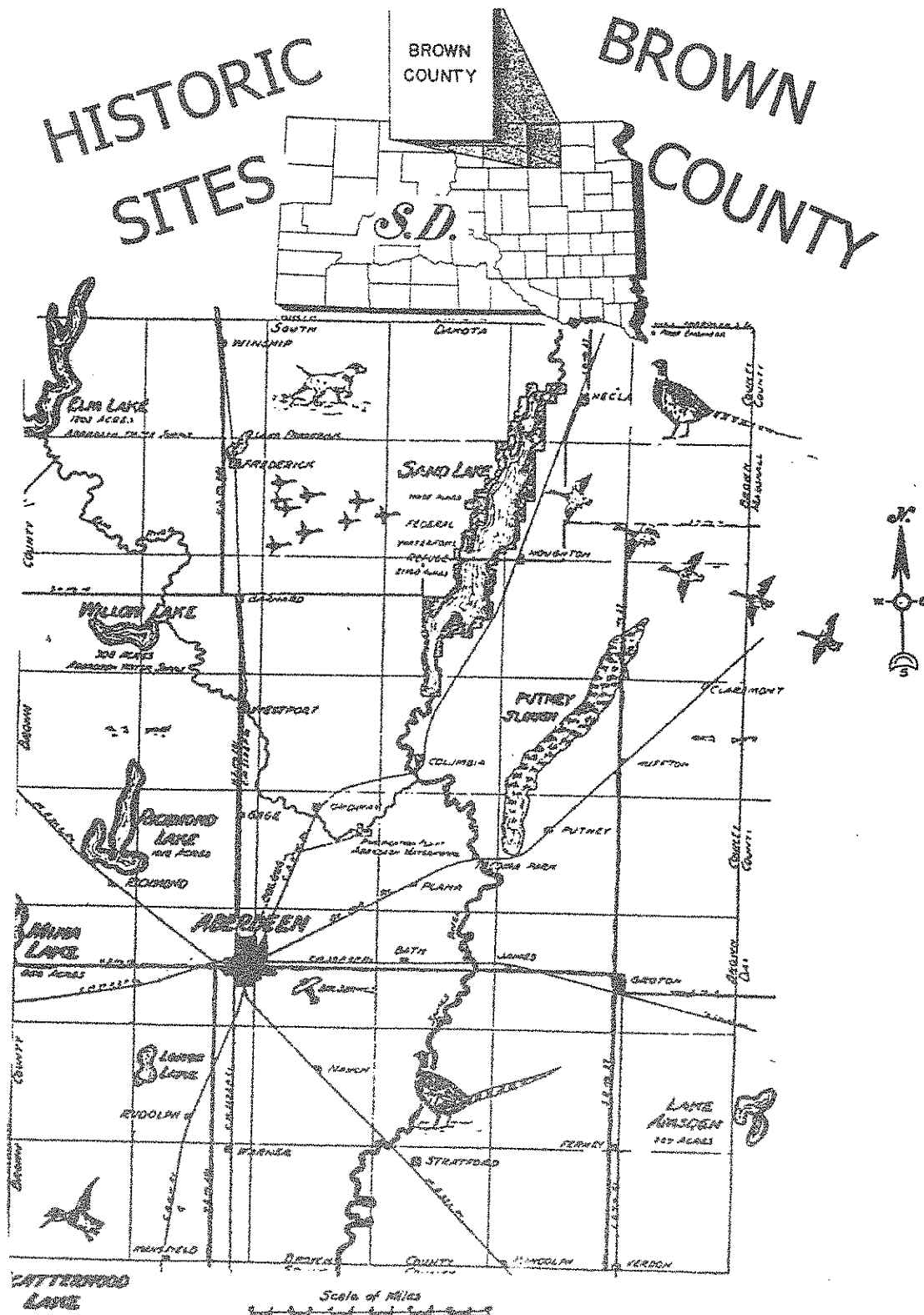


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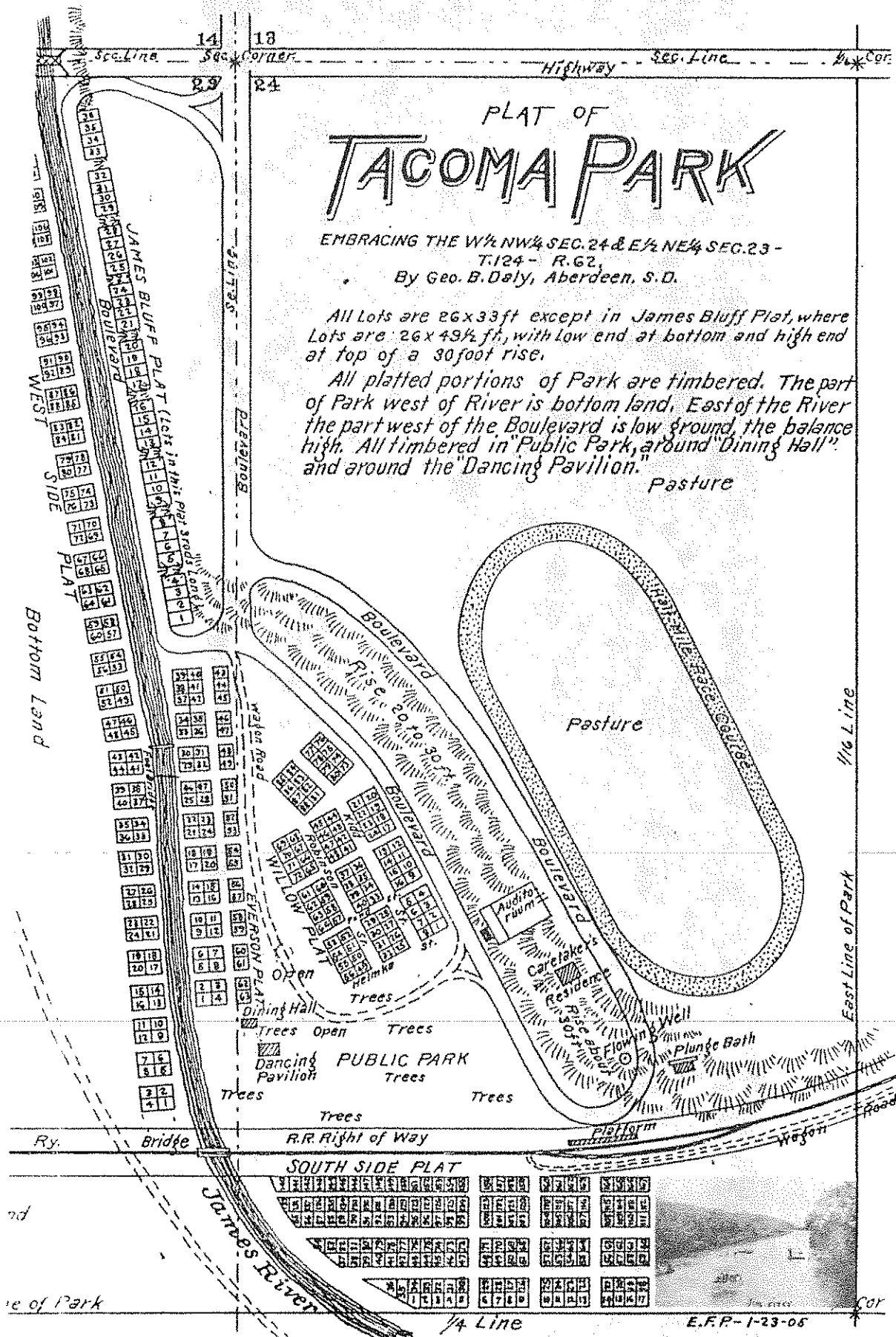
JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES



Dr. Art Buntin

PUBLISHED BY THE ABERDEEN/BROWN COUNTY
LANDMARK COMMISSION

2001



PLAT OF TACOMA PARK

EMBRACING THE $W\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SEC. 24 & $E\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SEC. 23 -

T. 124 - R. 62,

By Geo. B. Daly, Aberdeen, S.D.

All Lots are 26x33ft except in James Bluff Plat, where Lots are 26x43 $\frac{1}{2}$ ft, with low end at bottom and high end at top of a 30foot rise.

All platted portions of Park are timbered. The part of Park west of River is bottom land. East of the River the part west of the Boulevard is low ground, the balance high. All timbered in "Public Park, around "Dining Hall" and around the "Dancing Pavilion."

Pasture

Pasture

SOUTH SIDE PLAT

E.F.P. - 1-23-05

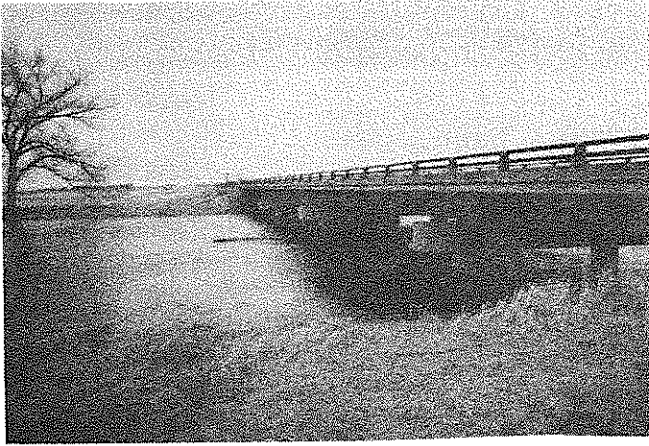
JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES BROWN COUNTY

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JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

THE JAMES RIVER



PART I BROWN COUNTY: JAMES RIVER IMAGERY

Dakotans familiar with the James River have formed varied perceptions of that river and its landscape. These include a river of many bends with a slow flow of minimal elevated descent--a river which takes several weeks for its crest to leave Brown County during high water seasons. Images arise of the Jim's water, ice and fish, its banks, bridges and bottom lands. That imagery includes the river's nearby sloughs, marshes and farmsteads and the people who lived, worked, fished and relaxed along the river. As Dakotans traversed the waters, crossed and recrossed the river, they challenged the isolation of distance, socialized and moulded natural landscape into historic sites. This interaction of humans and environment created a heritage for past, present and future generations.

PERCEPTIONS OF 1839: NICOLLET & FREMONT

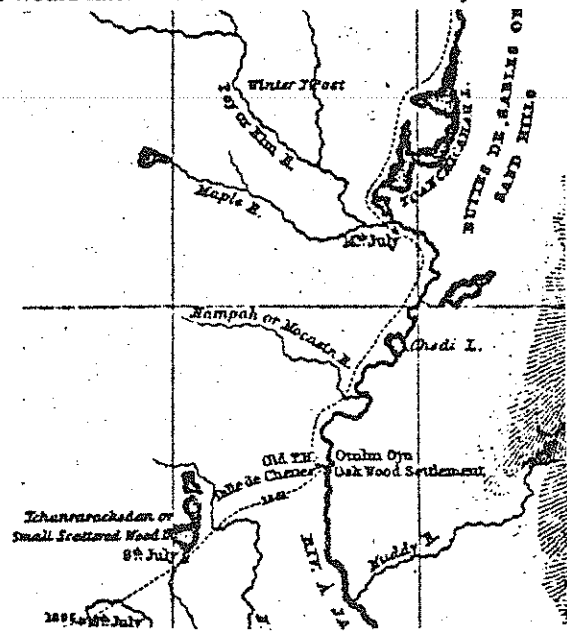
John Fremont and Joseph Nicollet in July 1839 journeyed overland from Ft. Pierre on the Missouri to the James River, called by the Sioux Tschan-sansan. On July 10 they arrived at what the Dakota Sioux called "Otuhu-oju, "where the oaks spring up"-- the Oakwood trading site, future Rondell in southern Brown County, latitude 45 degrees 16' 34", longitude 98 degrees 7'45". Four days later they moved northward along the river

to its junction with the Elm and then proceeded along the James as far as latitude 46 degrees 27'37" N, Bone Hill in future North Dakota.

Nicollet agreed with previous travellers that the vast prairie watered by this river was "perhaps the most beautiful" within the territory of the United States.

He noted the river's width as from 80 to 100 feet and shore water marks indicated that the river widened to 100 yards in rainy seasons.

Nicollet observed: "The shores of the river are generally tolerably well wooded, though only at intervals; the trees consisting principally of elm, ash, bar oak, poplar and willows." Over a century later in 1954 a U. S. Geological survey, contour map of the Aberdeen area which included all of the James River in Brown County verified the lack of continuous wooded river banks. However, this map of 1954 focused on two major wood and brush areas of the James in Brown County. These were the river banks between Columbia and Tacoma Park and southward the Rondell Park area. Nicollet's companion Fremont wrote that the timbered fork where the Elm and the Jim joined was an important winter crossing point for Indians moving between the neighboring east and west uplands or coteaus in their westward quest for buffalo. River bank timber furnished both fuel and shelter. In the 1830s riverbank trees and vegetation registered in the minds of both Indian and explorer as it would later in the minds of Brown County settlers.



Nicollet route to and along the James River 1839

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

Congressionally designated in 1861 as the Dakota River, the James, more commonly known as the Jim, had been popularly called the later name after the designation--Jacques--given by French fur traders. Thomas J. Gasque discusses "Names of the James: A Case for Congress" in Dakota History Conference papers of 1991. In the 21st century, as in the 19th and 20th centuries, the sinuous James weaves southward from the 7th standard parallel north marking the North Dakota/South Dakota border. At that point, according to the Brown County Atlas of 1905, the river is at an altitude of 1280 ft. and flows through Brown County to the 5th parallel north where Brown County borders Spink County at an altitude of about 1255 ft.. From there the James continues its way south where it joins the Missouri river near Yankton just north of the Nebraska border. In South Dakota Brown County is the most northern county and the first of eight counties through which the James flows.

RIVER BANK TIMBER

For white settlers the timbered banks of the James provided logs for initial dwellings and fuel as well as game and fish for the table. George Daly's history of 1905 reveals that river bank timber proved especially significant in February 1881 when the snow drifts blocked trips to distant provision centers. For several months ox drawn wagons plowed through the snow to the river banks for fuel to keep home hearths burning. Also, prairie antelopes sought the river bottom for food and shelter and became easy targets for hungry settlers. As settlers became seasoned they nurtured natural groves and supplemented them with transplanted trees and seedlings to develop shady oasis on a mostly treeless prairie. The 1905 county atlas recognized the river's timbered banks:

"The James river is usually fringed with timber, sparse in places, but with long stretches of native timber and bushes from a few rods to half a mile wide. The most extensive of these are in Gem township, and from Columbia to a few miles below Tacoma Park."

Its volume and flow is strengthened by spring snow melt, spring and summer rainfall, and more recently in the 1990s by reservoir releases from North Dakota's Jamestown and Pipestone dams.

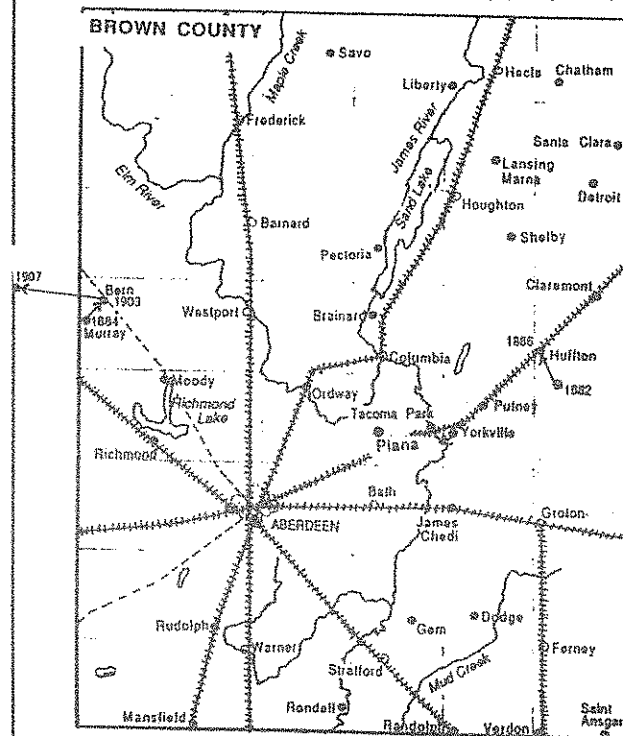
RIVER BENDS, NEIGHBORING TOWNS & FARMS

Within Brown County, the river twists and turns over an estimated 100 river miles as it edges and

traverses 14 townships and divides that county into a west and east half. River bends account for varied orientation of bridge crossings--some east to west, others south to north. The river accounts for some devisiveness between towns and people on both sides of the river. The Jim is also significant in motivating cooperative efforts by those living east and west of the river. East river towns in several miles proximity to the river are Hecla and Houghton in the north, Putney in the center and Stratford in the south. Fewer towns developed within several miles of the west bank: Plana and Bath. The river served as a magnet to attract Brown County townfolk from Aberdeen and other towns ten to fifteen miles from the banks of the Jim.

County maps of 1884, 1905, 1911, 1940, and the 1980s and 1990s indicate farmsteads developed and expanded in proximity to both sides of the river. In time ownerships changed although a few families retained ownership for decades. Farm homes might be as close as a mile from the river bank or as far as five or six miles with river bottoms serving as pasture or hay land. West bank Burtons and Petersons and the East bank Sheridans, Siehs, Evensons, Johnsons, Allens, Slacks, Humphreys and Ashfords played a role in the early development of James River country.

JAMES RIVER AND NEIGHBOR TOWNS 1905



JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

TRIBUTARIES AND RIVER VOLUME

Tributary streams--the Maple and Willow Creek flowing into the Elm--and the Elm drain the Leola Hills watershed to the west and the northwest corner of Brown County. The Elm joins the James south of Columbia with a force that at times almost isolates that community and after 1936 its riverside park. In the 1930s and after, Elm River dams were constructed to hold in reserve some water; this lessened the Elm's potential flood contribution to the James and stored water for Aberdeen's use. To the north of Columbia Hecla has occasionally been cut off from its western trade area and Hecla bridge crossings threatened. West of Ordway Moccasin Creek flows southward through Aberdeen, joined by Foote Creek south of Aberdeen, eventually to merge with the James north of Stratford.

THE SEASONAL JAMES: HIGH & LOW WATER

In some years the narrow James has overflowed its banks into the lowlands; in drought years it has been at low level and even dry in places. As early as August 1879 Edmund Cook observed the James River during a dry season south of the Rondell area in future Spink County:

"The river bed was at some places and for short distances as dry as a bone; thence again for a mile, more or less, water stood in pools to a depth of about four feet and in the evening these pools teemed with muskrats. An occasional beaver dam was found and the adjacent groves furnished ample evidence of ...these resourceful builders."

Residents have varied views and have given many designations to the James. It has been a dry and narrow channel for many years especially during the late 1920s and 1930s. With tongue-in-cheek observers referred to the dry channel as the racing, rampaging and roaring Jim, actually a succession of frog ponds, an eye sore, a dry, weed-infested riverbed in which farmers drove their vehicles. It has earned a reputation of being "the flattest river in North America", sluggish, lazy, limpid, quiet and meandering with many bends. Bottom lands a mile or two adjacent to the river which do not experience frequent overflow contain soil-rich farm lands and productive hay land.

The James was dry in summer 1925, spring and summer 1926 before fall rains resulted in a four-foot rise in vicinity of Yellowstone trail bridge east of Aberdeen. The Aberdeen Evening News in September 1926 reported that during the summer farmers had

driven long distances in the stream bed with "the bottom affording a firm roadway, albeit a winding one."

During the dry 1930s forty-five year old M. F. Eichler of Columbia observed in an Aberdeen Daily News article of January 29 1935 "I have lived on the bank of the Jim river for 33 years. In these years I have seen the river dry six different times." During his boyhood he and his father dragged a harvesting header and neighbors pulled a steam threshing rig across the river bed one half mile south of Sand Lake as there was no bridge at that time. In order to get river water for the engine by ditch digging he and his uncle "drove a team on a hand-plow about 40 rods into the Sand lake bed," Furthermore, in October 1931 he and his cousin "walked cattle across the river bed without even a sign of mud on our shoes." His explanation for dry river bed of early 1930s was

"The river will dry out much sooner now than years ago, because the river bed has filled in about two feet in the years that I have lived here. This is caused by vegetation growing in the stream and stopping the current from flowing, and also by muskrats digging the banks into channel."

Eichler recalled further impact of sedimentation:

"Twenty- five years ago I had a large sail-boat that required about three feet of water to float it. At that time I could take it up and down the river, but now I can hardly take a row boat with an outboard motor in the river, even when the water level is the same as it was at that time."

In contrast to the dry channel image, a more menacing image emerged in certain flood years such as 1897, 1916, 1942-43, 1950-51, 1953, 1969 and more recently in 1993-94 and 1997-99. Image labels appeared envisioning the mighty James, the lusty James, the swollen James, the dangerous James which claimed drowning victims, the turbulent James whose ice flows have knocked out bridges and whose windwhipped white caps lapped at buildings and grades and covered roads impeding transportation and forcing some evacuations.

As early as the spring of 1881 melting snows of that Great Snow winter provided the James with a high water year. After a dry 1889-92 period, a rising James attracted observers in spring 1893.

High water also seized the attention of the Aberdeen Weekly News for May 13 and 27 and June 3, 1897. The James River Crossing of the Great Northern was blocked preventing trains from reaching Aberdeen. Box cars were strung along the track to prevent water

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

from floating the tracks. Waves that could almost ride over a box car were reported in early June.

THE JAMES: AN ELEMENT IN INDIAN-WHITE CONTACTS

The James River conjures up varied historic images of pre-settlement and settlement times. For Indians before 1880 it served as a focal point for hunting, fishing and trapping as well as a crossing point to and from the Missouri River area. Indians camped and used the cover of its timbered shores. Indians as well as early settlers used the river bank for shelter dug-outs. Prior to 1880 Indians visited white trading posts and rendezvoused at sites such as the juncture of the Elm and Jim rivers, York Crossing and Rondell in present Brown County and nearby Armadale Island--the Dirt Lodges--in Spink County.

In 1835 Major Joseph R. Brown established the Oakwood Trading Post at the Rondell location, about three miles north of the future Spink county line. Pierre Le Blanc, initially in charge, occupied a log hut, traded and trapped during the winter and in spring returned to Big Stone Lake. In Fall 1836 he returned to find a burned building. Le Blanc selected a new location a mile further south near the site of the future Rondell postoffice. During the hard winter he quarreled with a Yankton Indian and refused him food. Later the Indian killed LeBlanc while he was taking up his traps on the Jim river. With his death the post at "the point of cottonwoods" was abandoned. Another was established some 20 miles to the north where later the Manitoba/Great Northern railroad crossed the Jim.

Twenty-four year old French fur trader Francis Rondell (Francois Raundelle) in 1842 settled near or at the site of the abandoned Oakwood Post. George Hickman's interview in the Warner Sun of March 13, 1885 asserts that Rondell built a log store 25'x30' and a log hut which later burned. After nine years trading with the Indians, he married a Sisseton woman and moved northeast to live among her people. James Humphrey and Henry Slack visited him at Waubay in 1878. When establishing a post office, Humphrey used the Rondell name as the official name of that location after postal authorities rejected his first suggestion. Humphrey was also responsible for naming Rondell township when it was organized.

The east bank of the James from the Rondell ford northward became one feature of the government road from Fort Pierre to Fort Sisseton in the 1860s and 1870s. In the aftermath of the Minnesota uprising of

1862, Indian scouts based at Fort Wadsworth (Ft. Sisseton) established outposts with orders to stop Sioux from migrating eastward across the James to hunt bison and cause problems for white settlers. Three of these twenty camps were at Ordway on the Elm River, Cotton Wood Grove on the James two miles south and one mile east of Tacoma park and one at Oak Grove, seven miles east and seven miles north of Mellette.

Thus, the James became a geographical reference point in Indian relations during the 1860s as it would be in the 20th century demarking competitive teams from west and east of the river. The shadow of the Yanktonai and Drifting Goose loomed over the earliest settlers prior to 1880 and lingered on in the 1930s and 1940s as the name of a Girl Scout camp along the Jim at Rondell.

Temporary intruders--soldiers and surveyors, traders and trappers--had preceded Brown county's white sooners of 1878-80. The rich soil of the river bottoms and the stumpless, prairie uplands attracted settlers who envisioned easier plowing than possible in eastern woodlands. However, they found river bank timber and in time planted shade trees. Tales of a fertile James River Valley--its timbered river shores and bottoms and its stumpless prairie grasslands helped populate Brown County in 1880-82 thus contributing to the Great Dakota Boom of the 1880s.

PART II FOUNDATION DECADES: SETTLERS ALONG THE JAMES PRIOR TO 1900

TREE MINDEDNESS: TREEPLANTERS & LOVERS

The Tree Claim Act of 1878 motivated future settlers of Brown County to supplement homestead laws in the quest for free land. That law required a proving-up period of tree planting before ownership could be achieved. For settlers of 1879 and the early 1880s proofs could be submitted to the land office by the late 1880s and certainly during the 1890s. Newspaper items appear frequently in the late 1880s and 1890s focusing on trees, groves and shade in the treeless prairies and praising successful efforts of tree planting and filing of proofs. Numerous suggestions were offered on trees appropriate to the prairie.

In these pioneer years settlers relied initially on the seeding method rather than the transplanting method of tree growth. However, in time transplanted trees increased the shade of urban areas. In May 1892

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

Ambrose J. Allen of Rondell supplied many Aberdeen sites with shade trees from his "beautiful natural groves" on the Star Farm according to Aberdeen Daily News reports.

The Aberdeen Daily News of June 3, 1892 praised C. H. Church who lived about 3 miles north of Plana. and who was "one of the most successful farmers of Brown County". With about 12 acres and 15,000 trees, he had succeeded in raising "one of the finest groves of trees on his claim to be found in Brown County." The editor urged "it is well worth the time of anyone to ride out and see them".



THE DALY CORNERS GROVE

Illustrative of pioneer tree planting and later efforts is Columbia township's Daly family who provided a synopsis of their family history. Two miles north of Columbia and four miles from where the river bends northward in section 26 of Columbia township, the Daly families filed for land in April 1880. The four Dalys occupied corners of sections 7, 8, 17 and 18 in what became known as Daly Corners. In constructing initial shelters of 1880 George B and John C Daly hauled roofing poles from the James River banks. In time the Dalys planted trees. The groves of J.C and George B. Daly became one continuous grove which served as a social center for central Brown County.

On September 20, 1888 the Brown County Sentinel's editor wrote about "Evergreens in Brown County". He indicated that George B. Daly had given and transplanted for him the previous spring a dozen two-year old scotch pine trees from the Daly grove. The fact that they survived the summer with only some weeding proved the sturdiness of that tree type. They were alive, healthy and showed "vigorous growth". The editor elaborated:

"Out of hundreds of evergreen trees that Mr. Daly has planted on his place the percentage of loss has been very small, and as they are most desirable trees for ornament and the most valuable for wind breaks, his success in their growing is of importance to this part of the country."

In 1927 John B. Daly explained the origins of the Daly school yearbook name--the Blue Spruce. In 1888 through the mail for \$1 he purchased 100 seedlings of Rocky Mountain Spruce. Back of his claim shanty on the homestead's southwest corner, George B. Daly planted them for a two-season growing period. They became "well-rooted little trees about ten inches high." Then in the early evening after supper he carried two at a time to the Corners where a more permanent house was under construction. His love of trees is reflected in his concluding remarks:

"The moist earth was kept packed around the roots as I carried them, and carefully placed them in the holes which had been prepared for them. There were about thirty of the little Spruces, and all made such a beautiful growth as to delight any tree planter, or, in fact any tree lover who came this way. Who could say how many appreciative persons, during the course of nearly forty summers, came to feast their eyes on my dear Spruces! The keen joy that I took in watching them tower thirty feet skyward compensated me a hundred-fold for the care I gave them."

The Compendium of Biography of 1899 described George B. Daly. After teaching school in Columbia 1883-84, he

"returned to his farm and has made it one of the garden spots of that region. He has taken much interest in experimenting with trees and shrubs, and his evergreen trees around his home are the pride of the county. His experiments lead him to the conclusion that the green ash and elm are the best South Dakota trees."

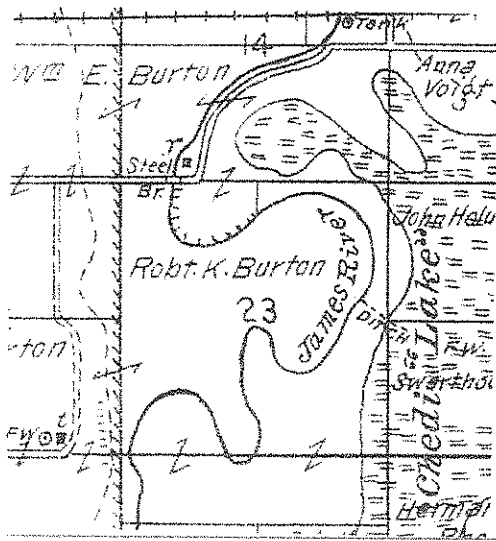
By 1896 the state's governor proclaimed May 1 as Arbor Day--one evidence of a growing tree mindedness in the state and Brown County. The Brown County Sentinel editorialized on April 30, 1896:

"Every tree that sways in the winters tempest and whose leafy foliage comes forth in the springtime with its inviting shade offered alike to the rich and the poor, lends grace to the landscape. There is beauty in the symmetrical form of a tree and music in its leafy foliage rustled by the summer breezes.. A few hours devoted to the planting of trees and shrubs will go a long way towards making our homes more pleasant and attractive."

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

FAVORITE GROVES:

To the settlers of the 1880s, the 1890s and beyond the tree claim, the grove, was a sight to behold in the midst of treeless prairie. The shade in summer and the wind protection at all times made the grove an ideal picnic and social center. Trees also reminded one of eastern environments from which the settlers came. Both non-riverside groves and riverside groves received newspaper and mouth-to-mouth publicity alerting county folk to picnics and celebrations held at those sites. In addition to Daly Corners groves, Aberdeen, Groton and Columbia newspapers refer to varied groves. The Brown County Sentinel between 1893 and



Burton's grove

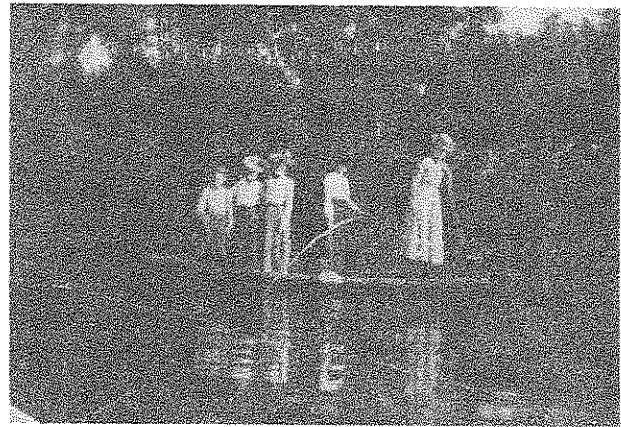
1897 reported frequently on Heath's Grove, south of Columbia. One set of Heath grove campers in late summer 1897 felt "the bank of the beautiful Jim one of the most pleasant spots on earth to take an outing".

BURTON'S GROVE

Burton's grove in Henry township on the west bank of the James became a well-known picnic site. William Burton and brother Robert homesteaded in 1881 a large acreage on the river flats. Using Minnesota box elder seeds they cultivated many trees, built picnic tables and hosted picnickers from the surrounding area including Groton and Aberdeen. Robert K. Burton's land occupied extensive frontage on the Jim which swings eastward in the north and then southward and

westward to encompass Burton's land opposite the easterly Chedi Lake depression.

In mid July 1892, as they had in 1891, Aberdeen's Episcopal church Sunday school youth and adults left by carryall and carriages at 9:00 a.m. for Burton's grove on the then "raging Jim", no longer dry as in 1891. The Daily News of July 15 reported their venture. While there they boarded a pleasure boat for a ride up and down the Jim. The river abounded in fish for those who paused to do so. The Burtons provided stable facilities, ice, flowers as well as the grounds. Attractive to the eye was the orchard with its apple, plum and cherry trees and white and red currant patches. A few rods from the river bank they picnicked in a grove near the house.



Aberdeen Youth Boating at Burton's Grove

Additional Jim river groves featured in local papers were Benson's grove, Hunstad's Gem township grove, Mogen's James river grove 7 1/2 miles south of Bath characterized in June 1894 as "one of the coolest and loveliest on the river" Johnson's and Everson's riverside groves southeast of Columbia and in Rondell township Ambrose J. Allen's (after 1892 Ashford's grove) and Jim Humphrey's grove, and after 1917 Fiery's farm at Rondell. The Elm which feeds into the James also was known for its riverside groves.

DAMMING THE JAMES: LAKE COLUMBIA

Briefly (1883-1886), steamboats sailed upstream from Columbia into present North Dakota with the creation of Lake Columbia in the years 1879 to 1882.

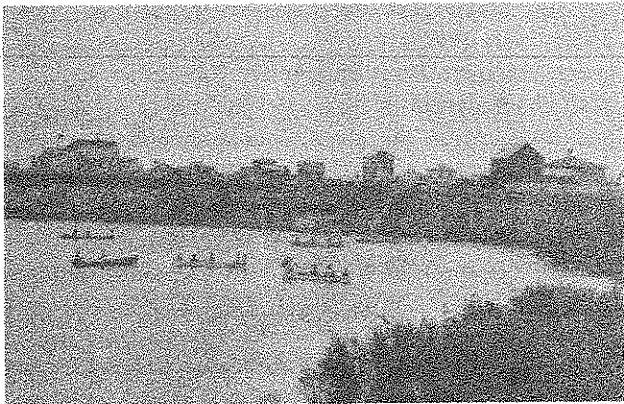
A man-made lake on the western edge of Columbia, had its beginnings with the construction of a small earthen dam in 1878. By spring 1882 construction of a more substantial dam built south

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

of town on the river for a three-story flour mill which by 1883 was in operation. Its mill pond became a good fishing pond. The Columbia dam filled the broad marsh to the west with water to create that lake. An artesian well contributed to additional lake water.

The Nettie Baldwin, built in Jamestown and fitted in La Moure was a 65 foot long and 18 foot wide, coal fired stern wheeler, steamer. The Nettie Baldwin made its first trip from Columbia to La Moure in May 1883. It was enlarged in 1885 to 80 foot long by 20 foot wide. Its last voyage upriver was June 19, 1886. After that it was tied up on the western edge of Columbia. Shortly after June 1886 the mill dam gave way. Lake Columbia became mud and eventually ended up as pasture. From time to time backwaters from a flooding Elm and Jim River returned the lake bed to its watery past where boating and fishing was possible..

The Early History of Brown County published in 1970 contains two accounts about Lake Columbia; one by F. M. Folson and one by Adene Williams. About 25 excursionists in early June 1884 travelled about sixty miles on the Nettie Baldwin steamer from Port Emma to Columbia. The excursionists of 1884 viewed Sand Lake as "a lovely sheet of water, four miles long and two miles wide, skirted by trees of various sizes from the undergrowth of willows to trees twenty feet in height."



Boating on Lake Columbia

Adene Williams in 1883 arrived at Columbia from Ohio on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and after several days boarded about 8 a.m. a steamer for a trip up the James River. She recalled:

"Finally they got up steam and the boat was under way. But not so fast! It refused to leave the shore more than two or three feet. Then they used a long iron rod as a lever and tried to push it out as they would a little row boat, still in vain. Finally the captain and all the crew had to get and push, those on shore still bantering. But finally we were really off....The boat glided lazily along the narrow stream until we came to the lake which really deserved its name. The boat had to stop from time to time to clear the grasses and moss from the machinery and wheel."

A Brown County Sentinel representative reported the excursion of May 30, 1883 to Port Emma. Due to overflow of the river bottoms which hid the shore line, passengers found it difficult to determine the natural channel.

RAILROADS IMPACT JAMES RIVER TERRITORY

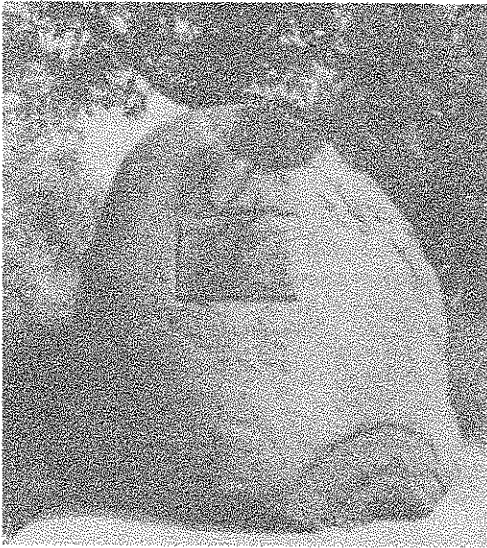
By 1885 the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad line paralleled the upper James which it crossed at future Tacoma Park. The Manitoba crossing of the James became a picnic and fishing destination before the 1890s and Tacoma Park's Chautauqua era. In 1889 that rail line became Great Northern which serviced Tacoma Park camp meetings until 1922.

Eastward some miles from the river the Chicago and Northwestern in 1886 extended rails northward 40 miles beyond Columbia east of the Sand Lake marshes to Houghton, Hecla and towns in future North Dakota. This competed with steamboat freight traffic and contributed to the demise of Jim river steamboating. The James River railroad bridge just south of Columbia became a focus of concern during river flooding seasons. Rail transportation helped populate area towns and contributed to the numbers who enjoyed recreational activities provided by the Jim River.

METAMORPHOSIS OF THE JAMES: SAND LAKE

In the presettlement era Indians had utilized the Sand Lake area of the Jim River as part of their mobile life style. As early as 1845 Catholic priest Augustin Ravoux, accompanying white trappers, gave mass to a Cuthead Indian village near the shores of Sand Lake. A monument in the Sand Lake picnic area marks the spot. By the 1880s Sand Lake had become a settlers' hunting, fishing and trapping site. At the conclusion of the trapping season in October, 1889 trapper Layton reported to the Brown County Sentinel that he had caught seven hundred muskrats and other fur bearers at Sand Lake.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES



Monument to Indian/ White Contacts 1845

This Sand Lake, Mud Lake region through which the James flows from its North Dakota origins appears to have been less timbered and more marshy than the James River between Columbia in central Brown County and Rondell in southern Brown County. As early as July, 1864, Capt. L. S. Burton reported on the amount of timber along the James River between the mouth of the Elm River and the mouth of Bone Hill River in northern Dakota. They camped at Sand Lake which he described as "about seven miles long and in the widest spot about a mile wide....after passing Elm River not a tree was seen...The water in the lake does not exceed two feet in depth in any place."

At Sand Lake the James expands covering the flood plain. This lake and marsh area of the James River drew people more for its fish and wildlife than its scanty timber. People also picnicked on the shores of Sand Lake since 1884 when the annual Sand Lake picnic began. According to Mrs. Harry Hoover in the Early History of Brown County the Afseth place on Sand Lake seems to have been the only early place where there were trees which favored summer picnicking.

The Brown County Atlas of 1905 described Sand Lake thus:

"Its east and west banks are high and dry, its waters clear and free from reeds and rushes, and in fine weather numerous boats and launches ply its surface, especially during the duck hunting season. It is the most beautiful sheet of water in the county."

Residents of Houghton which was settled in 1880-1883, visited Sand Lake west of that town. There they found wild ducks and geese, prairie chickens and other birds. They encountered wild flowers such as prairie roses, wild sweet peas, Indian paint brush, and wild honey suckle. The Brown County Atlas of 1905 describes the river west of Houghton:

"the channel is almost lost in a series of lagoons and marshes, in places disclosing broad expanses of clear water, but more generally grown up to reeds and rushes. Higher portions of land stand out as islands here and there. This part of the river has been a famous hunting ground for water fowl in season. Hundreds of pleasure seekers come here annually for an outing during the hunting season."

Creation of the Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge in the 1930s, construction of dams and other improvements in that area of the James, have added to that river's historic significance. Those who hunt, fish, trap, photograph, bird watch and sightsee have found recreational pleasure along the lakes through which the James flows as well as further south into southern Brown County.

FISHING ON THE JIM: 1880S & 1890S

Favorite James River fishing sites in the 1880s and 1890s were in the Columbia area at the junction of the Elm and the Jim and Columbia Lake. After 1886 the Manitoba crossing of the Jim at future Tacoma Park became popular for combined fishing and picnicking as noted in the section labeled Manitoba Picnics. Rondell in southern Brown County also became noted for fishing as well as picnicking. Furthermore, fishermen frequented the banks of the Jim in the more central Gem township; however those residents often moved northward to the Columbia area to fish. Jim River fishing provided area merchants business in the fishing tackle department. Aberdeen, Groton and Columbia newspapers took notice of varied excursions to the Jim. In both decades groups and individuals casting from the river banks, bridges or boats found both fun and fish. If occasionally unlucky in finding fish, they philosophized that at least Jim river fishing was a fun experience.

COLUMBIA AREA: "MECCA TO WHICH SPORTSMEN JOURNEY" (Aberdeen Weekly News June 8, 1893)

The Brown County Sentinel reported that "Hon. C.J.C Macleod drove up from Aberdeen this morning

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(May 1) for a fish in the Jim" and that numerous young people from Groton had come on a fishing excursion on April 30, 1890. That paper also quoted the Aberdeen News: that thirty Aberdonians were headed for the junction of the Elm and Jim near Columbia: "The fishing is said to be superb. Several parties from this vicinity have brought home some excellent catches."

In May of 1890 James river fishing received further attention. On May 14 some fifty Aberdonians went north to fish near the juncture of the Jim and the Elm. The Brown County Sentinel noticed that some of these had brought "bait" in the form of original packages, a term to describe liquor sold for medical purposes during prohibition. Both men and women became "somewhat hilarious" by day's end and behaved in "a most disgraceful manner".

The Sentinel of May 22, 1890 indicated that citizens as far south as Warner had fished in the Columbia area. Included were the Hon. Anson Green: they "hooked about fifty of these fish in one day". County receiver C J.C.Macleod of Aberdeen had spent several vacation days sporting with "the festive pickerel" --fishing on the Jim was therapeutic for county officials as well as for others. In early June 1893 a Columbia news item in the Aberdeen Weekly News referred to their Jim river area as "the mecca to which sportsmen journey. Every day the banks of the Jim are lined with visitors enjoying the fine fishing." A Bath news item in the Weekly News of June 15, 1893 supported this assessment: "Fishing parties are going out from this vicinity toward Columbia nearly every day and they report good luck." Fishermen from Gem township patrolled the river in their area and also gravitated northward to the Columbia vicinity.

In May 1893 the Aberdeen Weekly News observed that river levels were reasonably high although receding. Trappers floated down the river to Rondell in a covered flatboat and informed people there of wildlife encounters and fishing opportunities along the route. That December the News reported that the iced-over Jim served as a route for Santa Claus aboard another type of boat--a Christmas boat--which carried Christmas eve presents for an event sponsored by the King's Sons and Daughters. In winter the Jim served ice skaters as well as a surface for some ice fishing, and a source for ice to offset summer heat.

RONDELL: "A VERY NICE PLACE FOR A FISHING PARTY!" (Aberdeen Weekly News May 26, 1898)

Rondell in southern Brown County developed a reputation as a fishing grounds particularly after Fall 1894 when J. E. Humphrey dammed the James in preparation for spring/summer irrigation in 1895. Rondellites eyed the river in April to watch for water rising and with it the emergence of more fish. Even in October 1893 Rondell folks had prepared for winter storage pickerel and pike secured from the nearby Jim.

In early May 1895 the Rondell reporter for the Aberdeen Weekly News alerted Aberdonians to the Rondell fishing grounds so close to Aberdeen: "there is a fine stage of water at the present in the Jim and fish are reported quite plentiful, a fact which Aberdeen sports who travel all the way to Big Stone would do well to note." By May of 1898 the Rondell correspondent for the Aberdeen Weekly News observed that "scarcely a day passes that does not bring from one to a dozen fishing parties to Rondell. The fish are plentiful, the banks of the river are beautiful and, taken all in all, Rondell is a very nice place for a picnic or fishing party anyway."

BROWN COUNTY'S RIVERSIDE SETTLEMENT 1878-1879

In 1876 Dakota Territorial legislators altered county boundaries of the Jim River slope. One large, unnamed and mostly treeless area became Brown County. Legislatively created in 1879, it was organized in September 1880. In 1878-1879 the first sooners (squatters without registered landoffice claims) entered Brown County.

In their quest for homesteads and trading opportunities some pioneers of 1878-79 and the early 1880s focused on the James River, its fording places and its timbered banks as they traversed the mostly treeless prairie of Brown County.

According to William Hickman in Andreas Atlas of 1884 four Missouri River homeseekers--Clarence D. Johnson, Benjamin Arrendall, William Young and sister Hattie Young wagoned their way eastward in August 1877 along the old Ft. Pierre - Ft. Sisseton military road to the Jim River. They forded the river at the site of the future York bridge and staked claims on the west bank where the 6th standard parallel crosses the river. In March 1878 they cut rails from river bank timber to fence five acres each of the Johnson and Young claims.

In spring 1878 Minnesotans --the Everson party: Ole, Ben, John Everson and Will Hawes-- moved from Lake Kampeska westward to explore the east bank of

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

the James in future Spink County where they encountered an Indian village and then travelled northward into future Brown County where Ole and John Everson in April 1878 spotted the west bank sooners of 1877.

Ole Everson recalled in his diary, printed in the Early History of Brown County, the spring penetration of the area west of Lake Kampeska, the search for a camp site and their appreciation of timber. On April 14, 1878 he wrote "After leaving the hilly couteau, we drove all day west. Land seemed perfectly level. We could not even find a hill to break the wind." On April 15 he observed "We got to the river about twelve o'clock and we drove into the first grove that we came to." It was a spirit lifting experience. The dense grove gave some protection from an evening thundershower.

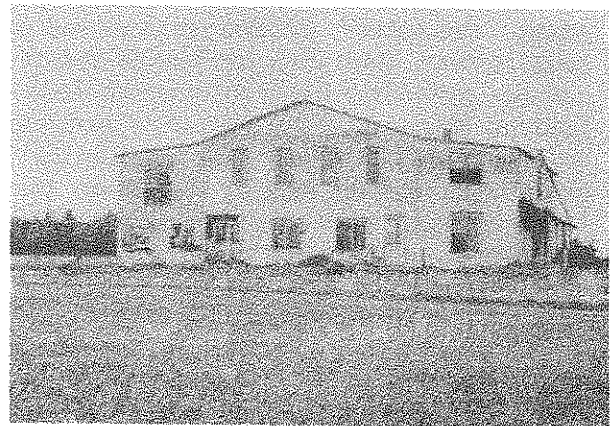
The lure of timbered groves motivated a northward journey on April 16, 1878 in search of what they previously had been told was a "Large lake with about 700 acres of timber." They noted "nice groves all along the river". They camped in a spot with "some good timber". On April 18 they found four whites (the sooners of 1877) across the river who informed them that the lake was 12 miles upriver but it was not timbered. Apparently Eversons verified that by a visit upstream. Upon return, the west bankers ferried them across the river in a canoe for an overnight stay before Ole and John rejoined Ben Everson and Will Hawes down river where they located claims on the east side of the Jim. When Thomas F. Marshall surveyed the area in 1879 he found Ole Everson on the SW of section 12 and Ben on the NE of section 11, township 124, Range 62. and the west bank Johnson claim further north in section 35, township 125, range 62.

A month later in May 1878 Minnesotans including James Humphrey moved from the Armadale site in future Spink County into southern Brown County. Encounters with Drifting Goose's band were influential in a northward movement as far as Chedi Lake, an overflow area for the James east of that river in future Brown County. Returning to Marshall, Minnesota Humphrey told Henry H. Slack about the winding, groved banks of the Jim River valley. In late May 1878

Henry Slack staked a claim along the timbered, west bank of the James (future Brown County section 13, township 121, range 63) but after several weeks left an uncompleted log cabin and retreated on June 7 to Waubay Lake due to pressures from Drifting Goose's Indian followers. The whitemen reclaimed their site later on January 1, 1879 but did not try to finish the log

cabin. While camping nine days in a tent, they made a dugout in the river bank and covered the dugout with logs. In 1904 Humphrey recalled trapping and hunting that winter: "We had six deer and antelope hung up in the trees at one time, and furs, consisting of beaver, mink, fox and other skins which brought us a little money in the spring." In his reminiscences of July 2, 1904 James Humphrey told old settlers at a Tacoma Park meeting that his May 1878 venture had been motivated by one William Sullivan who had travelled the government trail in 1855. "He told us about the beautiful prairies and that where they crossed the Jim River there was quite a body of timber."

Humphrey settled on the SW half of section 24, township 121, range 63, west of the old Roundelle Oakwood Fur Trading Post site. In April 1879 Humphrey built a log cabin and in November started a small store. The Slack family joined the settlement as did other families. Mrs. Harrison Slack's account on "Rondell Township" in Early History of Brown County contributes important information. In fall 1881 Humphrey built on the river's east side his hill top store which became larger with time and became the social center of pioneer Rondell Township. It contained a blacksmith shop, post office and living quarters with a dance hall and lunch counter on the second floor. Religious services and funerals were held in the structure. In April, 1880 James Humphrey had received a commission as postmaster --a position held for 20 years.



Rondell Store and Post Office

The Humphrey Brothers "new" store featured on Christmas eve 1883 a tree and dance which was reported as "a great success". On March 25, 1885 the Rondell correspondent for the Brown County Sentinel

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reported that the "Humphrey Bros are doing a good business. They have on hand a good stock of dry goods, groceries and garden seeds which they are selling as cheap as anyone in the valley."

In April 1885 the Humphrey store hosted a meeting on division of Brown County into two counties and Rondellites later voted seventy one (against) division and seven for division while Aberdeen and Warner favored division. However, county voters elsewhere joined with Rondell in defeating division.

In time there developed under the shady oak and elm trees a Rondell picnic ground used by settlers for miles around.

Further north in spring and summer 1879 others arrived including William B. York from the Kampeska area. Claim holders Ole and Ben Everson returned with their families and John Everson with bride in June 1879 to their claims (sections 2 & 12, township 124, range 62). These pioneers of 1878-79 preceded Brown County's great settler migration of the 1880s and their consequent search for social opportunities in the James River Valley.

HO FOR THE WOODS! 1880S & 1890S PICNICKING AND CAMPING ALONG THE BANKS OF THE JAMES

During the spring, summer and even into the fall seasons Brown county newspapers reported in the 1880s and 1890s numerous picnics at varied sites. A few select sites were more frequented than others; they developed a reputation as summer resorts and picnic groves. This publicity included pre-picnic and post-picnic accounts which often comment on attendance, activities, sponsoring groups, location with shade and facilities, weather and any unusual or newsworthy events. Reporting is usually more extensive for the longer camp meetings than for the one-day picnic. Factors affecting rural attendance were road and bridge conditions as well as conflicts with irregular haying and harvesting due to unusual weather.

Generally, accounts portray these James River outings as pleasurable contributing to happy memories and providing opportunities to praise crop growth along the route to the picnic site. However, occasionally the rascally reporter reminds readers that a fun outing might include some negatives such as drenching rain storms, an occasional sunburn, woodticks, and mosquitoes. Additional inconveniences and hazards of James River excursions were boating accidents, drownings and near drownings.

In reporting on Alliance and Populist picnics and

camp meetings, as contrasted to religious camp meetings, conservative republican papers revealed some political bias but do provide a perspective on politics of those decades as well as depicting picnic or camp meeting events. Illustrative of this is the Aberdeen Sun's comment on August 4, 1892 about Ignatius Donnelly, a Minnesota People's Party speaker, who addressed populists in July 1892 at Rondell in southern Brown County.

"Donnelly worked his mouth for an hour or so telling the farmers what poor creatures they were and how they were set upon and robbed by all other classes." At the request of the sponsors, the audience contributed \$60.00 to \$80.00 for his services and \$20.00 for his expenses which occasioned the Sun to comment:

"After much grumbling a good sized roll was put together and Mr. Donnelly was paid for "services" which are dear at any figure. Independents are now trying to figure out who the robber is any way, and in this locality at least will no longer swear by "ig" the demagogue."

Newspaper accounts indicate a growing awareness of the attracting power of the Great Outdoors and a recognition of the need felt by farm and town folks to escape from routine and heat. Furthermore, these news reports testify to a scattered population's felt need to socialize as they learned to conquer distances by means of team, train and in some instances by bicycle. In the 20th century the automobile supplemented or replaced these transportation vehicles in the escape to the river, the lake and the woods.

Riverside picnics, especially those hosted by an organization, featured boating, swimming, bowery dancing on a platform or in a pavillion, free ice water, band and vocal music, competitions such as river tub races, foot races, pony races, trotting and running races, most beautiful baby contests, greased pig and pole events, shooting and throwing galleries, pasturage for the horses, political addresses, baseball games and fireworks on the Fourth of July. Picnickers might also find time to fish and to supplement picnic baskets with items from food and drink concessions.

Group picnics of the early 1880s soon became traditional and were referred to as annual picnics well into the 1890s. Thus we hear of the annual Brown County farmers picnic, the annual Sand Lake picnic, the Methodist Episcopal annual camp meeting and the annual Alliance and Populist Industrial camp meeting. The Modern Woodman of America began such annual

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meetings also. The Old Settlers of Brown County also initiated annual gatherings at Rondell in 1882.

Decoration or Memorial Day and the Fourth of July were occasions for commemorations and picnics at various James River sites in Brown County as well as in the major towns. Political rallies and religious revival meetings with immersion in river waters were held along the banks of the James. Sunday schools and public schools held end-of-the-term picnics at James River groves. In addition to group and organizational picnics, individual families and small parties of picnickers also headed for their favorite grove along or near the James.

The one-day basket lunch or dinner picnics constituted the majority of such events but did not receive as much publicity, if any, as the week or ten day camp meetings unless that picnic fell on the Fourth of July or on some special occasion. Moreover, transient fun seekers who attended the longer camp meetings for the day and then returned home in the evening may be considered in the basket picnic category although they might secure some food and drink items at camp concession booths.

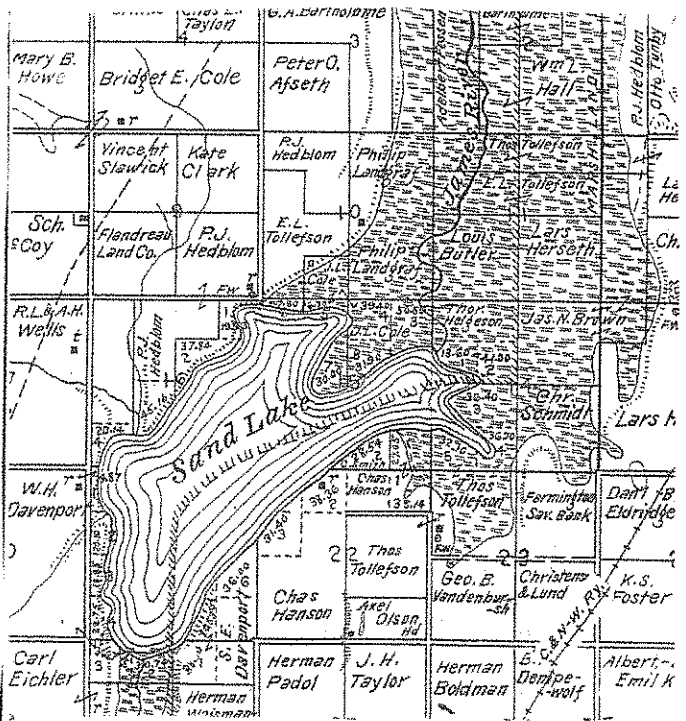
Brown County settlers of the 1880s and 1890s--farmers and villagers or town residents--socialized by means of varied picnics and other social gatherings described generally above. These seasonal gatherings near riverside farm groves and nearby structures took place in northern Brown at Sand Lake, in southern Brown at Rondell and at a more centrally located Columbia Lake, Everson's grove, Yorkville Crossing and Tacoma Park.

SAND LAKE SOCIALS 1880S-1890S "ENJOY A HAPPY DAY IN COMMON" (Aberdeen Daily News, June 24, 1891, p. 4)

In the settlement era of northern Brown County early settlers--both town and rural residents--visited the shores of Sand Lake through which the James River flowed. They trapped, fished, hunted and picnicked. However, for most hunters picnicking was incidental to the hunt. For example, in October 1889 Ambrose J. Allen, bonanza farmer of Rondell in southern Brown County, and some of his neighbors came north to Sand Lake hoping to shoot geese. Yet, pioneers remembered picnics as a Sand Lake activity.

Former Jennie Kilpatrick, (Mrs Harry Hoover in 1965), recalled in the Early History of Brown County, SD that the Afseth place on Sand Lake was the only early place where there were trees which favored

summer picnicking. The lake's west bank due to proximity drew many Brainard township picnickers as well as some east river folks from Columbia, Houghton and Hecla for special picnics.



Sand Lake: Brown County Atlas of 1905

During the years 1884-1889 and into the 1890s the Sand Lake annual picnic became a tradition. On the occasion of the sixth annual picnic Saturday June 22, 1889 publicity in the Brown County Sentinel of June 6 stated: "These picnics always have been very pleasant affairs." They included at least speakers, a baseball game, and a bowery dance. These picnics occurred on both the east and west banks of the lake which in reality was an expansion of the James River and often offered boating as an attraction.

The 8th annual picnic of June 20, 1891 took place on the east bank of Sand Lake during the concluding year of drought and depressed economy. It drew an estimated 2000 people. The Hecla and Shelby Glee Clubs provided music. Superintendent of Schools Sheldon gave a twenty minute speech encouraging farmers not to despair about recent crop failures and to look forward to "one good crop". Honorable Fred B. Smith reminded folks that "Dakota was the best country on earth" and that they met that day "as friends

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and neighbors to forget for the time being their petty differences and to enjoy a happy day in common."

The conservative Aberdeen News for June 24, 1891 reported this event as "a lively picnic" because of Father Robert Haire's unscheduled speech which the paper branded as "Seditious Language". The paper zeroed in on disruptive Independent Party elements. The News reporter referred to J. Douglas of Hecla as securing the speaking platform for Father Haire by howling "equal to that produced by a dozen prairie wolves." Haire then championed the poor and oppressed, attacked concentrated wealth, favored those who labor with their hands, attacked usury and exploitive interests of bankers.

The News described Haire as "a smooth, wordy and rapid talker" who had quite a power to excite the hotheaded and make them forget for the time being that they are American citizens."

Chairman Lyon concluded with words about free discussion of issues, peaceful settlement of differences and restrictive laws to control monied corporations. Then the people adjourned to a baseball game between east and west river teams. The evening concluded with dancing and rowing by the young people. Nature contributed to the liveliness of this picnic through intermittent thunderstorms which interrupted speakers, ball game and picnic dance. During a drought year the picnickers no doubt looked upon this rain as a hopeful sign for future planting and crop growth.

Columbia in July and August 1891 sent many picnickers—including two city tennis clubs—to Sand Lake—on July 4th and twice in August. The Annual Sand Lake picnic moved to the west side of Sand Lake on June 25, 1892. It featured Reverend S. G. Updyke of Aberdeen's Congregational Church who spoke on "Ends of Government." Saturday July 28, 1894 north and central Brown County settlers met for their annual picnic on the west side of Sand Lake. Baseball and boating supplemented political speaking, food and socializing as key features. An estimated 500-600 people attended what the Aberdeen Weekly News labeled a "Populist picnic" in part because of the speakers—Aberdeen's S. H. Cranmer and George K. Williamson along with Columbia's C. W. Atkins and governor candidate Judge Isaac Howe.

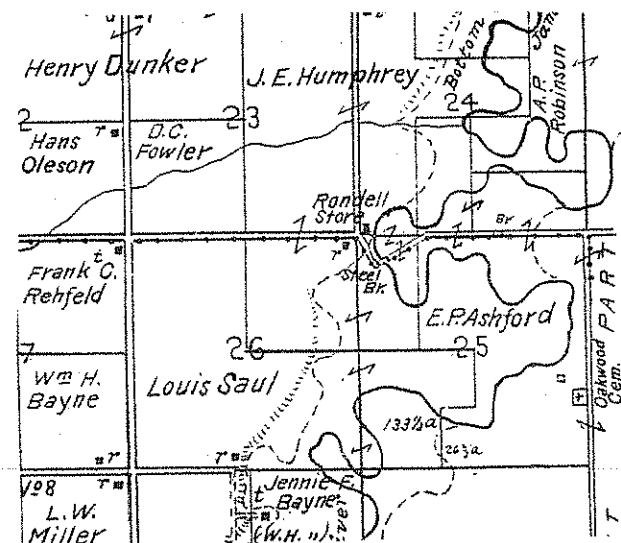
RONDELL PICNICS 1880S-1890S

"Let us leave dull care behind and spend a day in the woods." (Aberdeen Republican July 9, 1885)

At or near Rondell the Humphrey and Ambrose J.

Allen groves, across the river from each other, provided meeting spots for area residents and even for some as far north as Aberdeen.

A.J. ALLEN'S GROVE: In summer 1884 about 400 to 500 attended the first farmers' picnic on the river banks opposite Ambrose J. Allen's grove. Thirteen days after Rondell's Fourth of July picnic which had featured basket dinners under the trees, bowery dancing and boating on the river, the farmers held their second annual picnic. In 1885, a year of good crop prospects, Ambrose J. Allen opened his grove which sponsors claimed to be "a much more shady and beautiful place" for picnicking than where it was held in 1884. The Allen grove had a large dancing pavilion. Many Aberdonians followed the Aberdeen Republican's advice: "Let us leave dull care behind and spend a day in the woods."



Humphrey and Allen (Ashford) Groves -Atlas of 1905

Post picnic publicity of July 23, 1885 indicated some 700-800 people from southern Brown and Northern Spink had attended on Friday July 17th as well as "nearly everybody" from Aberdeen according to an Aberdeen News observer who also praised the picnic setting: "the magnificent shade of the grove" and "the many and beautiful trees". Two well-known Aberdeen men spoke—C. A. Bliss and Frank H. Hagerty—as well as A. J. Allen and two others. Bands from Warner and Aberdeen played throughout the day in and around the pavilions and dancing arbor. Spink County's Athol team defeated the Brown County champion Warner team 18 to 14.

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The third Brown County farmers annual picnic met at Allen's grove in July 1886. The Aberdeen Cornet band provided music. A baby show became the chief attraction. Prize categories were: prettiest baby, nicest twins, best-looking triplets, handsomest quartett. Rules allowed red-headed babies and preference was given to the children of bald-headed parents.

On June 28, 1887 both the groves of A. J. Allen and Humphrey were sites of the annual Old Settlers Association Picnic which had begun at Rondell in summer 1882. At 9:00 a.m. the Aberdeen Cornet band opened events in Allen's grove. After noontime speeches, picnickers moved to Humphrey's grove for races and a baseball game. On Saturday June 16, 1888 the Farmer's Alliance held a basket picnic in Humphrey's grove. Speakers informed audiences about progress of the Farmer's Alliance movement.

A crescendo of praise promoting Rondell groves as ideal picnic sites appeared in newspapers of the late 1880s into the 1890s. The Brown County Sunday School Association district convention held in Rondell groves received attention of the Aberdeen Daily News in June 1888: those groves were "a delightful spot...particularly suited for summer gatherings". The News posed the question: "Why should not Rondell or Armadale become the Chautauqua of Dakota?" On July 18, 1888 after many Aberdeen men and women including Frank Hagerty had picnicked there the Daily News observed: "The shade trees of that popular summer resort", labeled "Classic Rondell", provided "diversion from life in town" and deserved high praise.

Four years later on June 30, 1892 the Aberdeen Sun printed the Rondell correspondent's observation that "picnics are coming and going on all days of the week. Rondell will soon be a pleasure resort of South Dakota--only one thing lacking--a railroad."

On June 21, 1890 the Rondell Farmers' Alliance scheduled a basket picnic at Allen's grove with A. V. Van Doren as speaker. Public visitation to Allen's Star Farm and grove culminated in 1892 before he sold for \$20,000 to E. P. Ashford in October of that year. Upon learning of this sale, the Aberdeen Sun editorialized about Allen's 12 years at Rondell: "His place is one of the very best in this part of the state and in addition to good buildings contains a fine grove with an abundance of fruit trees, small fruits etc. It is a model farm in all respects." Aberdeen and Huron newspapers cited Allen's success to counteract the prevailing image of an impoverished state after the boom times of the 1880s.

In Allen's last summer of ownership his grove in June and July 1892 became the center of much activity. On June 8, 1892 Allen's grove hosted a religious camp meeting with well known singers and speakers including Warner's Rev. Williams and good pasture for the horses. At the end of June 1892 Aberdeen folks went to a Rondell picnic. Both young and old enjoyed "the forest and shade" as well as visited Allen's Star Farm with its many shrubs and trees.

Allen's grove featured Rondell's Fourth of July celebration in 1892. Participants viewed Allen's three-year old steer to be exhibited at the 1893 world's fair in Chicago. A ten cent admission fee or twenty five cent family ticket allowed entrance although ice water was free. Hundreds gathered that July 4th--"old men with their families, young men with their best girls"; they dined "under the vine and the oak trees". Afterwards Brother Beebe mounted a platform and made patriotic remarks which only a few closer to the platform heard.

According to the reporter for the Aberdeen Sun of July 7 there were distractions away from the platform: small boys with firecrackers; a ball throwing gallery which gave cigars for hitting "a baby"; dogs running to and fro as well as crying children and independent party supporters whispering to each other. After the speech, the crowd moved to the river banks to view a tub race: "after splashing around in the water for some time, the competitors swam down the river on the tubs turned bottom side up." Horse races concluded the event with Mr. Allen winning first prize in the trotting race and Mr. Wilson in the running race. For a young fellow and several girls this was not the end of the day as the reporter noticed them boating on the river as others were leaving. With this event the reporter observed "Rondell is getting to be quite a summer resort".

Other picnics in later July strengthened Rondell's image as summer resort. The old settlers held a rally in Allen's grove July 16, 1892. A. J. Allen's promotion article in the Daily News of July 8 announced a folksy welcome: "Barn room and hay free. The latch string is on the outside." In order to fund horse racing competition, sponsors charged a gate fee of twenty five cents for families and ten cents for single men. Preceded by a literary program, the races were varied: several farmers' trotting races including a three minute and a free-for-all for trained horses and one for untrained horses. Others could compete in a free-for-all running race and a pony race. Aberdeen and Warner

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bands played while prominent speakers addressed issues.

After October 1892 Allen's grove became Ashford's grove and received less newspaper coverage as a picnic site. In summer 1897 news items of Rondell grove picnics seem scarce. One explanation might be a flooding Jim and bridge access problems as this was a season of high water. The Humphrey grove received most of the publicity after 1892.

HUMPHREY'S GROVE

"The shade on the banks of the Jim is free as air and there will be plenty of ice water on the grounds for all." (Aberdeen Weekly News, June 4, 1896)



James E. Humphrey

Humphrey's grove hosted picnics before 1892; also the grove and Humphrey's nearby hall were often connected in grove events. On June 21, 1890, for example, the Rondell Farmers' Alliance scheduled a basket picnic at that grove with A. V. Van Doren as speaker.

Rondell became noted for its observance of Decoration or Memorial Day. The Daily News of June 6, 1892 reported that Rondellites and people of nearby towns observed Decoration Day at the Oakwood Cemetery where they focused on the grave of veteran E. P. Rose. Recitations and choir singing followed the grave ceremony; then the people moved to Humphrey's hall where Aberdeen's Reverend Knight spoke. The day ended with a picnic dinner in the nearby grove.

The precedent of three sites--cemetery, hall, picnic grounds--as constituent parts of the observation had been established. By 1898 America had veterans of the Spanish American War to honor as well as the Civil War. This added an even more serious and patriotic tone to the 1898 event.

Memorial Day 1898 best represents the culmination of this tradition for the foundation years. Late May marked the beginning of the recreation season as well as being a time of remembrance. Traditionally, three sites were involved: the hall, the Oak Grove Cemetery, which was about a mile from the Rondell bridge, and Humphrey's grove.

From the hall a procession formed to walk and to ride toward the cemetery. Early in the day for miles along the roadways teams streamed toward Humphrey's hall to be ready for the 10:30 a.m. procession. Warner and Rondell school children led the procession and behind them Aberdeen's Captain J. H. Hauser led the G.A. R. members. Next walked the W. R. C. ladies followed by the Woodmen and others in carriages. They honored with flowers, wreaths and prayers the Civil War and Spanish American war veterans. The speaker of the day Captain Hauser had been staying at the home of E. P. Ashford, now a six-year owner of the former Allen Star Farm. The reporter in the Weekly News of June 2 estimated that "every town, and the countries lying between, within a radius of twenty miles must have been represented at Rondell memorial day." He included the towns of Mellette, Verdon, Conde, Rose, Ferney, Warner, Mansfield, Rudolph and Aberdeen.

Upon leaving the cemetery people returned to the grove where families and neighbors--perhaps 700 people--gathered in groups to dine. About 2:00 p.m. they returned to Humphrey's hall which was soon packed--standing room only. Many stood outside unable to hear Captain Hauser's address.

The Modern Woodman of America organization was expanding in membership and units in Brown County during the late 1890s. On Friday June 12, 1896 the Warner and Rondell units of the Modern Woodman of America hosted a public picnic at Humphrey's Rondell grove. They rationalized that the seeding and planting season had concluded, that farmers would welcome a holiday and such a meeting would help promote membership in their organization. Speakers, vocal and band music and other entertainments as well as eating made it a "gala" day. In the evening picnickers danced at the grand ball held in Humphrey's hall. Pre-picnic publicity predicted "the largest crowd ever assembled in our Humphrey's grove...several camps will attend in a body, while the public for miles will go en masse." On June 4, 1896 the Woodman committee challenged rumors that a gate fee of twenty-five cents would be charged: "The shade on the banks

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

of the famous Jim is free as air and there will be plenty of ice water on the grounds for all"

The summer of 1898 proved to be a busy picnic season at Rondell. Rondell's Modern Woodman of America hosted a daytime picnic and dance at "the grove near their hall" on Friday June 17. They constructed a large bowery for dancing. Woodmen served evening supper in their hall for \$1.00, the money to be used for enlargement of the hall.

Lacking an area-wide July 4th celebration and despite a July Fourth event at Armandale in Spink County, Rondell settlers held a neighborhood, daytime picnic in Humphrey's grove followed by an evening social dance in the hall. Also, in early July the Wesleyan Methodists held a camp meeting at Humphrey's Rondell grove. Their tented city broke up on the evening of July 4. Campers invited others to join them for a six o'clock breakfast. Evangelist Reverend L. D. Wheeler of Des Moines, Iowa led the meetings and his wife's singing inspired many. Evangelists claimed about twenty five new converts especially amongst the youth.

Later in July and August 1898 Rondell groves were in constant use. On a July Friday Rondell young folks hosted a picnic for about thirty couples in Humphrey's grove, then adjourned to Humphrey's hall to see the play "Persecuted Dutchman". Afterwards, they returned to the grove for supper followed by dancing until day's end. On a Tuesday in late July Warner's Methodist Episcopal Sunday School picnicked at Humphrey's grove.

Newspapers referred to some grove activities without designating that these were Humphrey's grove or some other nearby river groves in the Rondell area. Mid July and August reports in the Weekly News testify to another type of summer activity besides regular picnicking. About twenty campers established a camp "just over the river at Rondell" as a base for seeking work, harvesting or other labor. Also, in mid August the sons of A. M. Geary set up a camp along the river bank during hay-making season. After helping secure bottom land hay, they remained in camp at night while their dad returned home each evening.

PICNICKING AND CAMP MEETINGS IN CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY

In central Brown County the banks of the James provided numerous picnic sites as well as ample fishing grounds. Amongst these was Columbia Lake, junction

of the Elm and the James, Johnson's grove, Everson's grove, Tacoma Park. & York's Crossing.

COLUMBIA LAKE, THE JIM & NEARBY

GROVES: 1880S-1890S

On February 7, 1883 the Brown County Sentinel of Columbia praised the lake created by a dam:

"The lake on whose shore our young city stands...varies in width from one half mile to five miles. The lake abounds in fish, pickerel being the most plentiful. In the spring and autumn innumerable flocks of geese, brant and ducks cover the water or darken the air with their spread pinions."

The James received winter usage although more limited than in other seasons. In winter toboggging down the lake's north bank onto lake ice became popular. A Brown County Sentinel reporter observed on Feb. 23, 1888 the sport which attracted crowds during pleasant days and moonlight nights:

"The genuine toboggan is not numerous, and some of the apparatus used in its stead is wonderfully and fearfully made. One of the machines is called the "go-devil" and it appears to be well named. It is made of one barrel stave and a piece of scantling and the boys who ride on it display considerable ingenuity and skill. When seated on it, the rider's body forms one angle and his legs the other angle of a letter V, and how he manages to keep his equilibrium while going down the incline is a mystery to the unskilled".

In summer the lake attracted visitors from Brown County. Anna C. Lawrence in her memoirs written about 1948 and printed in the Early History of Brown County shared childhood impressions of the lake on a visit of July 4, 1885:

"Our father and mother took us to Columbia for the celebration. We rode in a lumber wagon.... We children were fascinated by the size of Columbia Lake which lapped its foamy waves on either side of a dirt road--there were three people drowned that day in the lake."

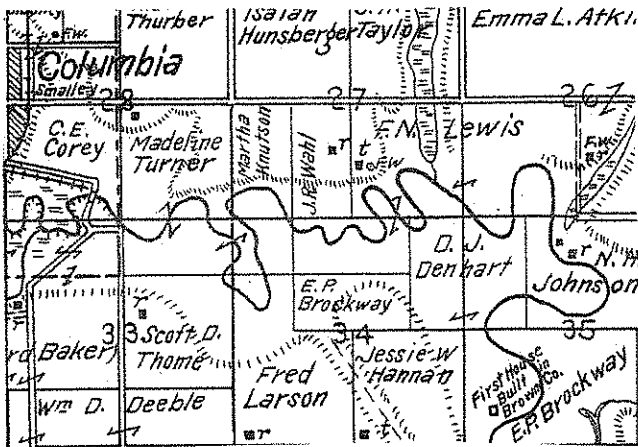
By May 1, 1890 the Sentinel reported the lake filling up due to rising level of the Jim: "Owners of boats are putting them in fine shape for rowing and sailing and boating is becoming a popular past time." Despite the deterioration of the Mill dam and the Mill's closure, the Brown County Sentinel asserted in late May 1892 "Lake Columbia is as handsome a body of water as you can find in the state of South Dakota."

Madge T. Harris, six years old in 1883, recalls in the Early History of Brown County her steamboat

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

watching and fishing life at Columbia in the mid 1880s:

"The river was just back of our house about a block or so. My brother and I would often run down to the boat landing when we heard the whistle to watch them unload. The two days would be there to load and carry any cargo that might be there. Often the boat would have excursions on a Sunday up to points north. We would watch as the boat sailed off, the railing lined with passengers, and the large water wheel at the back tossing up water.... After the flour mill shut down and the mill dam had gone out and with it Columbia Lake, the Nettie Baldwin lay abandoned at anchor on the James River just below our place--parts of it were disappearing but we still stood on its deck to fish."



Map of Johnson Grove along the James River

JOHNSON'S GROVE

"UNDER THE COOL SHADE OF THE TREES!"

According to the memories of Columbia's Mrs. Mary Johnson and Mr and Mrs. John Everson of Aberdeen, former Columbia residents prior to 1905, the first pioneer celebration of July 4th in future Brown County occurred in 1879 at this site south of future Columbia. They remembered in July 1936 that a ballgame and dancing to the tune of John Everson's and Lester Blackman's violins were featured. The Aberdeen Evening News reported this event, which had nineteen participants including the Slacks who had wagoned up from Rondell. In 1879 these settlers had concerns about roaming Indians. Mrs. Everson recalled several occasions when early settlers hid themselves in brush along the river banks at night when rumors of Indians circulated.

Fourth of July 1879 Johnson's grove



Johnson's grove southeast of Columbia in section 35 of Columbia Township became a popular picnic spot. Writing to Hamlin Garland in September 1935 Frank C. Hedger recalled the Fourth of July 1882 at the Johnson ranch on the James river:

"sitting on a rail fence and watching horse racing, bucking broncos, baseball and many western sports, that were all new to me and my Michigan bringing up. I presume you was sitting on the same fence that day, for the whole of Brown County seemed to me to be there."

Seven years later the summer of 1889 was busy at Johnson's grove. On June 25, 1889 Aberdeenians, many of them Presbyterians, drove in the forenoon to this grove, picnicked and fished there in the afternoon and returned to Aberdeen in the early evening. Amongst these was the Frank Hagerty family, Reverend Wallace and about twenty other men, women and children. A month later on July 25, 1889 the Methodist Sunday School picnicked on that site and that July, also, a farmers' picnic featured Judge Conklin as speaker. The Brown County Sentinel on August 1 reported that there was not a large crowd because farmers were preoccupied with haying and harvesting. On Monday afternoon August 26, 1889 the Columbia Lawn Tennis Club picnicked at Johnson's grove with the Clover Leaf Club and other friends.

On May 10, 1890 numerous children were at this grove for a Saturday picnic which the Sentinel reported as "a day of fine weather in the woods".

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

When the temperatures were well over 100 that newspaper observed on July 31, 1890 that

"It is quite the fashion to have regular Saturday afternoon picnics at Johnson's grove. About twenty persons went down last Saturday afternoon to escape the hot sun and the burning wind and enjoyed themselves hugely under the cool shade of the trees."



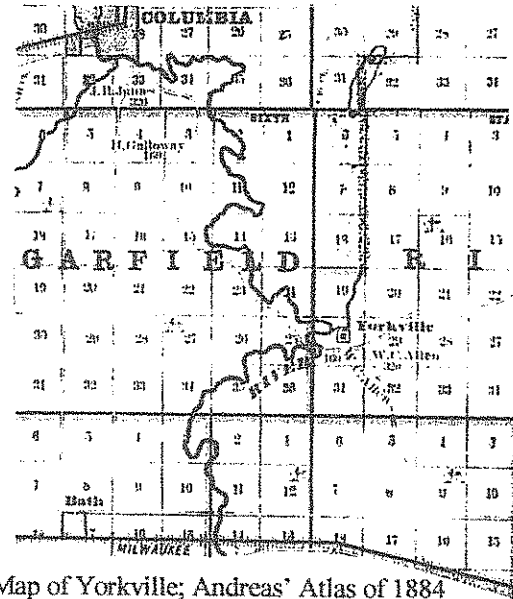
First house in Brown County 1878 Clare Johnson

YORK CROSSING:YORKVILLE

This ford of the James River had usage previous to the establishment of the more northerly Columbia, Johnson's grove, Everson's grove and Tacoma Park. Doane Robinson's Brown County history in the Historical Atlas of South Dakota of 1904 refers to Sully's second battalion on its march to the Missouri in 1864. That unit escorted 150 Idaho bound, emigrant wagons across present southeast Brown County northwesterly to future Yorkville where they crossed to the James river's west bank.

The York crossing site, about two miles south of the Manitoba crossing at future Tacoma Park, two and one half miles south of and two miles west of Putney, served as a less frequented riverside picnic spot and will be considered in more detail in an upcoming section on crossing the Jim. However, some picnicked on that site during its time as a ferry ford (1880-83) and bridge site (1884-1907). On July 14, 1888 a combined Sunday school picnic and District Convention met at the York crossing grove. Sunday schools from

Columbia, Ordway, Bath, Claremont, Groton and other adjacent places attended. The Sentinel referred to the site as "a pleasant picnic resort".



Map of Yorkville; Andreas' Atlas of 1884

CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY: EVERSON'S GROVE: 1890S

About four miles south of Columbia Ben Everson's riverside grove (sections 11&12) in Cambria Township vied for attention as a popular socializing and camp meeting site especially in the early 1890s before the era of Tacoma Park chautauquas. On July 10, 1890 the Brown County Sentinel described Fourth of July activities at "the grove" where about 500 persons gathered early in the forenoon for the noon picnic dinner and platform speaking. Richard H. Garland presided, Miss Florence Griggs and Miss Kittie Runrey gave recitations. Speakers included Ordway's F.A. Luce for 30 minutes while J. M. Kline of St. Lawrence spoke over an hour about Independent party ideology. Close to suppertime the celebrants departed for home.

Small groups picnicked at this grove at other times than the major, lengthy camp meetings held by the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Populist Industrial Association. On June 16, 1893 public school pupils celebrated the end of their term by picnicking at Everson's grove. On Saturday, June 27, 1894 five girls and three boys from Columbia picnicked at the grove. One memorable portion of that day involved a chase of a horse that had broken his moorings, escaped and swam the river. In the pursuit the horse lost part of his harness.

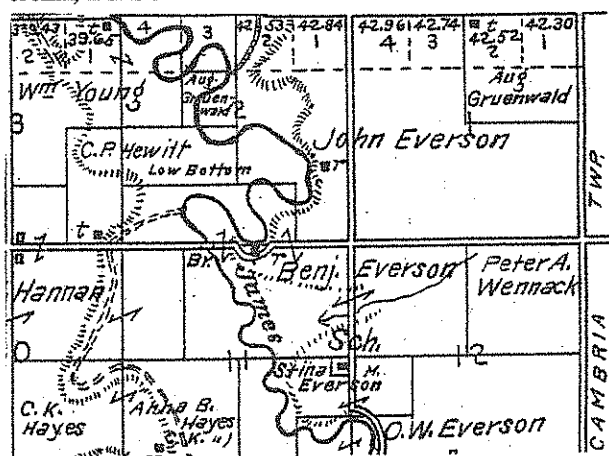
JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

INDUSTRIAL CAMP MEETINGS 1892-97 "THIS ENCAMPMENT HAS BECOME AN INSTITUTION OF THE COUNTY"

GEORGE B. DALY 1895

JUNE 19- JUNE 24, 1893: Referred to as an "Industrial Campmeeting" in contrast to a religious camp meeting, the Farmer's Alliance hosted a six day meeting June 19 to 24th, shorter than the ten day meetings of the Aberdeen District of the Methodist Episcopal Church which were held in that grove June 30 to July 13th. Tent pitching took place on Monday June 19 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at which time a rather small crowd participated in dedicatory singing, reading and speaking events. Tuesday about 300 heard three speakers--Dr. E. W. Fish, A.M. Andrews in the morning and at 2:00 p.m. H. L. Loucks. The day concluded with a 8:30 p.m. song service.

By Wednesday the audience had grown to about 600. Dr. Loucks spoke twice including advocating more national control of the liquor traffic. Ex commander of the G.A.R Gen Paul Van Devorst spoke on Friday designated as Old Soldier's Day. On the concluding day--a Saturday--St. Paul's Dr. Fish, a word smith and spellbinder, spoke two hours on the money question. Mrs. Cranmer followed on temperance and evils of open saloons. She railed against the liquor interests who evaded prohibition laws and the state constitution. In the afternoon the Garden Prairie brass band provided musical intervals. Bath's four-member glee club provided opening and closing platform singing. Merry-go-rounds, swings and a dancing bowery provided additional entertainment. Four refreshment stands, one manned by Columbians R.L. Wilson and A. G. Ramharter, provided lemonade, ice cream, fruits and lunch.



Everson's grove: Brown County Atlas of 1905

Looking forward to the 1894 camp experience, the Sentinel of July 27, 1893 had heard that Eversons would improve the grove by building stables and improving grading to make "a good grove" even better.

THIRD ANNUAL ?? There is no newspaper record of a week long industrial campmeeting held at Everson's grove in summer 1894. Possible reasons for this was that the Methodist Episcopal Camp Meeting had been booked for the ten day period in late June through July 4th, the Populists had scheduled their county convention at Aberdeen's Grain Palace Tuesday July 8 and they had their July 4th picnic at Cassels grove two and a half miles southeast of Aberdeen since the Methodist camp meeting had been extended to the Fourth of July. Yet in 1895 the populists labeled the meeting of that year as their Fourth Annual meeting which meant they claimed their activities of 1894 as a Third Annual meeting and that they claimed a first meeting in 1892.

FOURTH ANNUAL JULY 3-7, 1895: This five-day meeting Wednesday through Sunday began with tent pitching day for those who planned to stay overnight or longer. George B. Daly in his pre-encampment publicity cited the Association's objectives as nonpartisan and aimed to educate through exposure to nationally known thinkers. He indicated that "this encampment had become an institution of the county". One article referred to the Brown County Chautauqua Association as sponsor. For some years the Chautauqua idea had already been implemented in Madison, SD and at Big Stone Lake in the Ortonville, Minnesota area.

Booking speakers in advance posed a problem of speedy replacement as some cancelled for health reasons as did Senator Kyle. Local persons sometimes substituted as well as being the originally scheduled feature speaker. Such was the case when Aberdeen congregational minister Rev. Dent spoke on "The Christian in Politics".

If the camp meeting included the Fourth of July as it did in 1895, 1896 and 1897, special efforts were made to have a varied program. In 1895 the Association provided bowery dancing with music by the Yunker stringband. It involved youth and adults in greased pig and greased pole climbing competitions, sack, wheelbarrow races and footraces. Aberdeen's S. H. Cranmer voiced patriotic remarks and Mansfield's L. H. Gerhard read the Declaration of Independence.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

FIFTH ANNUAL INDUSTRIAL CHAUTAUQUA ASSOCIATION MEETING: Wed. July 1--Monday July 6 1896. At a preliminary planning meeting on June 17 forty to fifty members elected a Board of Directors and authorized Aberdeen's J. A. Brown to operate a refreshment stand for a fee of \$80.00. They also gave a franchise to the Yunker Bros of Liberty township to run the dancing and amusement bowery. They estimated the cost of the upcoming program to be \$250.00 according to the Daily News of June 18, 1896.

Tent pitching and stand set-up occupied Wednesday July 1 followed by area and out-of-state speakers on the remaining days. St. Paul's J. M. Hanson, H. L. Loucks and U.S. Senator James H. Kyle were amongst featured speakers.

Saturday the Fourth of July proved to be the big day of that week. About 250 tents had been pitched on the grounds; an estimated 1200 to 1600 rigs or teams were present and an estimated 6000-7000 persons in attendance. According to the Aberdeen Daily News of July 6 "this was three times as many as ever before seen on the grounds at any one time." Reasons cited were excellent weather and the absence of celebrations at neighboring points. The Brown County Sentinel reported that young people made up the majority of the crowd and thought they were attracted more by merry-go-rounds, bowerys and shooting galleries than intellectual fare of the speakers, even though those orators were "men of fine attainment." Baseball game watcher young Dan Coley remembered that day as a fowl ball hit him in the face. Col Price of Letcher was one speaker that day. Publicity promised that he "will uncork his eloquence, as bubbling and sparkling as champagne when released from original packages". President George Gates of Iowa College also spoke on "Jesus and Politics". The Association was so impressed by the turnout that they begin to think of buying a grove for permanent use.

SIXTH ANNUAL JUNE 28- SUNDAY JULY 4, 1897

Rain dampened the opening days of this encampment; yet attendance, according to the Daily News, was greater than during the first two days of the 1896 camp meeting.

On July 1 the Aberdeen Weekly News, critical of populism and socialism, described the commercial aspects of such an assembly:

"Fallman is there with his phonograph car, and a man named Foley has set up a barber chair in the

shade of one of the largest trees. He was busy yesterday (Wed.) with the hirsute adornment of his Populistic friends and declares if given half a chance he will turn out a sleek looking crown of smoothly shaven plutes. Messrs Kidd and Fox, representing the Labor Exchange, have a stand and lunch and meal headquarters and proposes to rake in the shekels from the hungry hordes. Dexter G. Brown and others also have well located stands for the sale of peanuts, out of sight crackerjack and other hot stuff."

Thursday July 1 was the first pleasant day and a good crowd took advantage to hear in the forenoon Chicago's Walter Thomas Mills speak in the open air on the co-operative vs the competitive system. In the afternoon "Coin" Harvey spoke in the big tent erected by the Nashville colored students.

Friday July 2 proved to be a day of excitement in at least two instances. A river boat upset in about 14 feet of water spilling five people from Aberdeen and Bath into the James. Aberdeen's T.F Blodgett brought two of his lady companions to safety but a boat crew had to rescue amateur swimmer J.L. Lee of Bath and his ladies.

At 10 a.m. in the grove the POPS held the People's Party county convention to elect delegates to the judicial convention. A sudden adjournment blocked the anti Kyle element which tried to oust Senator Kyle from the party. Name calling such as liar had occurred. The Daily News claimed the event heightened dissension within the party and so indicated in headlines "Split Asunder; Great Populistic Scrap... at Everson's Grove". The Daily News observed "a wave of indignation went up in the grove that fairly shook the very leaves in the trees." The adjournment motion followed. Some hissed at Cranmer's resolution: "that James H. Kyle in no manner represents the People's Party, and the People's Party of Brown county condemns and repudiates the corrupt bargain by which he was elected and condemns and repudiates James H. Kyle".

The concluding day Aberdeen congregationalist Reverend Dent gave the Sunday morning message and Mrs. Cranmer spoke in the afternoon. A reporter of the Daily News of July 6, 1896 gave a final and somewhat negative assessment of the camp meeting. Attendance had been less than in 1896 due to rainy weather. Headlines blared "Grounds resemble a mud hole." Descriptive terms applied to Everson's grove were: damp, very muddy, unpleasant. Also, water had blocked the big slough bridge keeping thousands from the northeast away. Furthermore, there had been bad

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

feeling between management and the Nashville student entertainers who had not drawn the anticipated audiences. Evidence of tensions were :bombardment of the big tent with cannon crackers which tore a hole in the Nashville tent canvas and the report that someone had knocked down one of the colored women entertainers.

Such experiences motivated decisions for a change in location for future camp meetings. The Brown County Sentinel reported July 29 talk of abandonment as a "strong probability":

"It is not thought probable that a really better grove may be obtained, but the low lying land at Everson's proved a rather disastrous thing for them on account of the rains during the recent camp meeting. Besides everything was not entirely satisfactory between the management of the concern and the owner of the grove the present season."

A committee of men from Columbia, Aberdeen, Hecla and Putney were to picnic at different groves on the river to find a desirable quarter section in which to erect permanent buildings for annual camp meetings. Their first meeting would be at Tacoma Park further down the James River.

GOSPEL TIME:THE RELIGIOUS CAMP MEETING, THE PROMISE OF SALVATION, SONG AND SHADE AT EVERSON'S GROVE: 1892-94

From 1892 through 1894 the Methodist Episcopal Church District held camp meetings 13 miles northeast of Aberdeen at Everson's grove before moving their 1895 meeting to Tacoma Park. Considering "beautiful" Everson's grove as "one of the most attractive and convenient places of the district", they met for about ten days in June and July depending on scheduling conflicts with the Farmers Alliance or Populists who also valued that spot for summer meetings since 1892. Except for 1892, the Everson grove camp meeting schedule included Fourth of July for 1893 and 1894. In 1892 the Methodist camp began July 7 after a week's postponement. Traditionally, grove camp meetings promised an elevating experience; they were perceived as a means to rest, to meditate, to listen , to revitalize body and soul through closeness to nature and thus to God. Tuesday was Epworth League day with messages and activities aimed at youth. The first Sunday July 10, 240 participated in communion. On the fourth day reporters spotted twenty to thirty tents belonging to overnightrers. At some meetings conversions occurred and over fifty joined the church during the 1892

meetings. A conservative estimate placed attendance on the last Sunday at 2000.

First daily services began at 9:00 a.m. although many were breakfasting, listening to bird song and strolling about the camp earlier. The nine o'clock morning hour was based on the belief that "a good night's rest is as beneficial as anything to assist people in carrying out the duties of the day." With the ringing of a bell at 10:30 campers headed for the service tent to sing. Camp meetings recognized the power of music and song. Preacher Hickman from Doland cited biblical text and delivered "hedge hammer blows" at those who considered themselves sinless.

Noon break followed as worshipers returned to their tents. Women prepared food; children ran about; men walked and talked about the preacher's words and about finding bait to fish in the James. After mealtime, many fished; some visited neighbors and others strolled under the shady trees until three when divine services resumed in a tent which could not hold all those gathered there. Worshipers voiced testimonials to God's goodness until 6:00 p.m when supper energized them for a final evening meeting.

The ten-day camp meeting of 1893 began June 30th, actually Thursday evening June 29. and closed Sunday evening July 9. Publicity in the Sentinel for June 29th promised "plenty of spendid shade, good water; provisions and restaurant ,cheap hay and grass for horses". Another publicity slogan in the Daily News of June 20 aimed at tenters and daytime attendees from both North and South Dakota. It focused on "Song, Salvation and Rest on the shady banks of the Jim River"

Reports in the Sentinel of July 13, 1893 indicated that crowds were larger that summer despite a circus in Aberdeen which drew thousands on July 4. During most of the meeting thirty-two tents occupied the grounds; fourteen ministers attended. The daily schedule for 1893 set an early prayer meeting at 6:00 a.m. with classes at 9:00 a.m.followed by preaching services at 10:00 a.m. On Friday July 7 seven were baptized, one of whom was immersed in the James. Four were baptized through immersion on Saturday. An estimated 3000 people attended the last Sunday services-- a 10:30 am, a 3:00 p.m. and a 8:00 p.m. preaching service, each with after meetings. Everson's grove had proven to be an "orderly and the most pleasant place to attend church services." On July 5, 1894, the Brown County Sentinel characterized the ten-day session , June 23 through July

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

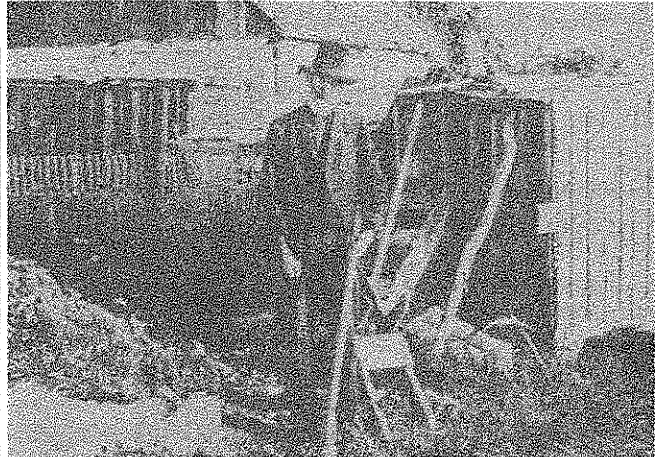
14 as "the most successful that has ever been in Everson's grove." A public invitation in the Aberdeen Weekly News for June 7 included "the unsaved and people of all creeds and classes" and the promise "we will do thee good". A large canvas auditorium provided sheltered space to hear the pastors. An Aberdeen orchestra and chorus added the inspiration of music to gospel time. At the opening Sunday June 24 with its three preaching services nearly 1000 people attended. Northfield's Reverend Mr. Cory preached in the morning, Reverend C. E. Hager in the afternoon and Reverend F. A. Burdick in the evening. Over 100 tents had been pitched by that day. An estimated 3500-4000 attended Sunday July 4. The Aberdeen Weekly News for July 5 reported that many Aberdonians as well as other county folks had travelled "long distances" to reach the grove and "enjoy the shade" on the Fourth of July.

One weather related event marred the proceedings according to a Columbian report of June 29. On June 27 about six inches of rain fell within a few hours. Rain flooded the camp meeting. A capacity crowd had gathered in the large main tent when a large tree sailed by the tent, to be stopped by another tree within a few inches of the main tent preventing harm to the folks within. This watery experience may have been a motivating factor in the decision to seek another site for the next camp meeting. This was the last Methodist Episcopal camp meeting held at Everson's grove; in 1895 they met at a site further downstream--Tacoma Park. At the Tacoma location on July 4, 1894 the Bethany Christian church hosted an "old time picnic" for the congregation and friends. In addition to tables of food, they amused themselves in boating and playing games. Tacoma Park, a tangle of brush and trees, was soon to become a more well used and advertised site.

CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY:

TOM JAMES & TACOMA PARK GROVE

In April 1908 the seriously ill Tacoma Park pioneer Tom James entered the county hospital in Aberdeen, a victim of aging and a hermit style of living in his shack at Tacoma Park. He had homesteaded the park site in 1880-81 but lost control about 1883 through a \$350.00 mortgage foreclosure; James had declined to pay interest according to the Aberdeen Daily News January 20, 1910. Since that foreclosure he had been permitted to live in his house at the park site where he survived by various means.



Tom James at Tacoma Park Dwelling

Thirty four years after his hospitalization the Groton Independent on September 17, 1942 referred to Tom James, the former owner of a quarter section that became Tacoma Park, as a legend whose image may vanish with the passage of time.

"Years ago he was a part of the park "scenery". His tall figure, white flowing beard and his patched up cabin afforded visitors a bit of primitive color as they enjoyed picnic dinners under the spreading trees of what was once Tom James' domain."

This "peculiar old man" seems to have chosen that site:

"because of the river where he fished and trapped and the wooded bank which furnished him firewood. There he lived fishing in the river, trapping furbearing animals for the small amount of cash income he needed. But evil days came. There were taxes on his land and he couldn't pay them. At length, the ownership of his acres passed to other hands. But it didn't affect his mode of life too much. He was still permitted to occupy the cabin he had built there. He still fished in the river, he still gathered produce from his garden and picked bushels of wild grapes from which he made wine. In later years he also had a couple of boats or so which he rented to people who wanted a boat ride on the river when they came to picnick there."

"As the popularity of the park increased ...Tom James became a sort of attraction. They found pleasure in seeing the odd figure and his patched up cabin. Neighbors who had won his confidence were welcome visitors to his shack. In earlier years he would play his fiddle for them and sometimes in return for a bit of hard likker, he would regale them with generous samples of his ample store of aged grape wine."

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

In the Aberdeen News of March 1, 1953 Richard Dresselhuys wrote about the park and Tom James. Citing old settlers as sources, Dresselhuys claimed that James named his wooded claim after Tacoma, Washington. To others at that early stage the area did not look like a groomed park. "It's beauty was almost entirely hidden by vines and underbrush that wove in and around the thousands of trees making the place almost inaccessible."



Putney picnickers at Tom James Grove :1889

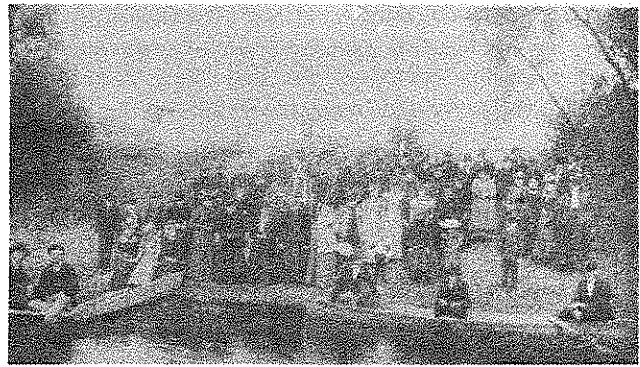
THE MANITOBA CROSSING

Before Tacoma Park became a recreational center for camp meetings and Chautauqua-like events, it was known as a fishing and picnic spot where the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba (after 1889 the Great Northern) railroad bridge crossed the James. Popularly called the Manitoba Crossing, it became a favorite spot for area fishermen and picnickers., especially those from Aberdeen. The Aberdeen Daily News reported many such excursions in 1888 and 1889.

Illustrative is the Daily News account of Wednesday, July 25, 1888 that about twenty Aberdonians, young and old, boarded the morning passenger train to picnic and fish at the Manitoba crossing. They returned on the afternoon train. On Thursday July 26 another group planned to take the train to picnic and fish at the same site. This group included Manitoba and Northwestern rail agents Kearney and Lovejoy. The Daily News also announced that a youthful excursion party boarded the Manitoba August 9, 1888 "for a few days recreation at the crossing of the Jim".

The Aberdeen Daily News on July 12, 1889 reported that "a large number of citizens will picnic

today at the Manitoba crossing of the Jim. On July 21, 1889 the paper indicated that "a number of citizens picnicked on the Jim yesterday near the Manitoba crossing". On Friday August 2, 1889 the paper reported "a party of some twenty young ladies went out to picnic upon the sinuous James yesterday. They took the Manitoba, and opened their lunch baskets near the railroad bridge."



Religious services at Tacoma Park during Reverend William J. Hyde 's Groton ministry 1886-1888

CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY: TACOMA PARK THE ME RELIGIOUS CAMP MEETING 1895

After three years of camp meetings at Everson's Grove, the Aberdeen District of the Methodist Episcopal Church had a one-summer stand when it held its 1895 camp meeting in Tacoma Park further south along the James River. They looked forward to a joyful "blessing time" in a new natural setting but found it necessary to locate elsewhere after that summer. The Daily News of May 23, 1896 reported that financing, church politics and wishes of district ministers for more frequent special meetings at other sites were determining factors.

One rural complaint sceptical about access to the new site surfaced in the Brown County Sentinel June 13, 1895 a week before the meeting:

"As every one has to go with teams, which will have to be left on one side of the river, and the people cross on the railroad bridge or ferry, the attendance will probably be very small as a great many will not care to attend under such circumstances."

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

Planners scheduled Tacoma Park's first religious camp meeting for June 20 to July 2, 1895 as distinguished from one-day picnics such as that held there by the Bethany Christian Church on July 4, 1894. This was several years before the Populists moved their encampments to that site. The Great Northern had built a sizable platform for Methodist camp meeting passengers leaving or entering the train according to the Daily News of June 2, 1895.

Daly News publicity of June 14, 1895 promised pastors and parishioners daily sixty cent hack and fifty cent round trip train service from Aberdeen. Horses could be pastured at ten cents a day on an eighty acre site with additional low rates for food, hay and straw. A boarding and lunch tent featured ice cream, cold drinks, baked goods, fresh or smoked meats. Two meeting tents, one 40 x 60 feet and one 50 x 50 feet were to be program centers. Ladies were assured a sanctuary on the south grounds while gentlemen gathered in the north grounds and to the northeast beyond the railroad. Camp superintendent Reverend J. S. Akers in pre-camp publicity promised space for "hundreds of tents in the most delightful shade." This vision also included excellent water from new wells, "delightful" river bank walks under eye appealing trees, and inexpensive skiffs for boating.

By June 22 park grounds had assumed a city-like appearance when tents totaled close to fifty. On June 22 and 23 the Epworth League youth convention further enlivened the camp meeting. Spirited song services preceded and followed ministerial exhortation. Praise meetings heightened emotional intensity.

A highlight of the week was the Friday morning old folks program reported in Daily News of June 29. Fifteen older Christians with 35 or more years as Christians testified. Youth and the elderly sang, in the spirit of older times, "How Firm a Foundation". Elderly faces lighted up as they reviewed the past and rejoiced in present salvation. To the words of "We are Marching to Zion" Methodist youth came forward to shake hands with these elders whose Christian experiences totaled 676 years.

TACOMA PARK

INDUSTRIAL CAMP MEETINGS: 1898-99 THE PROMISE OF MORE SPACE AND SHADE

ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 27-JULY 4, 1898

In 1898 the Industrial Association transferred its attention to the James River grove area known as

Tacoma Park located at the Jim River crossing of the Great Northern railroad. Unpleasant relations with Everson as well as greater suitability and accessibility were factors in changing sites. Meeting in Columbia the association board planned for the 1898 encampment. The Weekly News of February 3 reported that the association board had secured an option on Tacoma Park property along the James, and planned to secure a charter of incorporation.

A Weekly News description of May 26, 1898 informed readers of the newly purchased 160 acre grove located 12 miles equidistant from Aberdeen and Groton at the Great Northern crossing of the Jim River:

"The river runs through the center of the tract with a fine grove on either side, and the railway crossing very near the water. There is excellent pasture and plenty of it on the land, supplying a deficiency that troubled the encampments at Everson's."

Sale of concession rights was one funding source. At its June 15th, 1898 meeting in Tacoma Park the Association board let bids for hay and pasture privilege, stands, the dining hall, sports, phonograph, barber shop and dancing. Building plans included a dining hall twenty by eighty feet and a dancing pavilion thirty two by sixty feet with a tent for speaking. They let a fencing contract to enclose 100 acres for pasture on each side of the Jim so that horses might have proper care. Several wells were to be sunk. A Great Northern train schedule between Aberdeen and Tacoma Park was published.

Thus, from June 27 to July 4, 1898 Tacoma Park, already known as a picnic and camp meeting ground, hosted its first encampment of the Industrial Park Association. The published train schedule of Park Week 1898 provided for no morning trains except on Sunday July 3 with a 9:30 a.m. departure from Aberdeen and on Monday July 4. There was no Friday train scheduled in the program for July 1.

Program booking had occurred somewhat late; however, by mid June they had lined up Grennell College's Dr. Herron, characterized by Association president George B. Daly as "one of the most famous revolutionary apostles in the world" and featured at the 1895 encampment. Also booked were Winona, Minnesota's Reverend L. L. West, "the Northwest's most eloquent congregational preacher" and an outstanding orator, Chicago's Walter Thomas Mills who had spoken in 1897 at the Everson Grove camp meeting. To balance these intellectual powerhouses who would present two free lectures a day, Daly promised

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

readers of the Daily News July 3 varied relaxing physical activities among which were river boating and bathing, dancing, baseball and croquet. Also Aberdeen's opera house manager Charles Gottschalk arranged for a Saturday July 3 performance by Miss Clara Thompson. Her latest illustrated performance reflected the Spanish American War era as did many of the afternoon orations at the Park.

On June 29 Walter Mills, the star attraction of the camp meeting, aroused passions of the republican press. His thoughts on American-born women angered J. C. Hall of Ordway who wrote two letters June 30 and July 2 to the Brown County Sentinel and the Daily News which stirred an anti Populist tirade wrapped in defense of American women. They censured the Populist managers for failure to stop the speaker and interpreted such inaction as support of Mills' view on immigrants contrary to that of the Republican Party. It seemed to the press that Mill's words "stinking Yankees" referred to the Republican Party.

Mills characterized "Yankees"—those with several generations of American descent—as the least desirable class of Americans and that women of this class were less virtuous than European women. Eyewitness Hall indicated that Mills had said most women streetwalkers and prostitutes (fancy women) were English speaking Yankees. Hall countered with the belief that American women excelled those of other nations in intelligence, generosity and virtue. At issue was a debate over a referendum for women's suffrage which Mills supported.

The anti-Populist Daily News reprinted Hall's June letter and referred to other remarks that Mills made in its issue of June 30, 1898. It charged that he was arousing prejudice against the Republican Party and trying to win people to Populism.

In its July 9th issue the Daily News reported that the Populist state committee had endorsed Mills' "insults to American citizenship" in the Ruralist of July 7. That article glowingly referred to Mills as "an orator known all over the United States, a man devoted to social issues, brilliant, witty and a powerful speaker, one of the very best who has ever attended our grove meetings." The Ruralist declared Mills spoke from a practical, down-to-earth standpoint, not that of religious enthusiasts.

Thus, the first Industrial Assembly at Tacoma Park ignited press reaction and confirmed the press's anti-Populist, anti-socialist views which colored reports of activities at the Park. This attitude reveals itself in a

Sentinel report of July 7 on the Fourth Of July at Tacoma Park:

"The day at Tacoma Park was uneventful. The stands and eating houses gathered in the sheekles while the orators of the day Messiah Mills and Ayers talked politics from a Populist standpoint. A few athletic sports were indulged in, but owing to no provisions for this class of amusement but little could be done. Bath and Columbia indulged in a ball game which was void of scientific playing owing to the poor condition of the ground."

The Weekly News of July 7 reported that attendance on Sunday July 3 and Monday July 4 reached an estimated 2000 to 3000 persons, probably larger than any other encampment days. In that paper's view the only thing of interest on Sunday was a sermon in the forenoon while Monday was "more alive" with the oratory of W. T. Mills and Thomas Ayers and people events such as baseball, horse and bicycle races.

The meeting of 1898 produced half tone engravings made by amateur photographers Bliss Holles and Elmer D. Strong. These five views document Tacoma Park landscape and activities. Pictures of the Jim river, boating scenes from the railroad bridge, camp scenes and people awaiting the train on the boarding platform proved useful in assembly publicity the following year.

ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 29-JULY 4, 1899

Billed by its sponsors as "a mid-summer outing" and "a solid week of enjoyment and instruction", the Industrial Association camp meeting opened June 29, 1899 for a six-day run. The Association placed in the Aberdeen Weekly News for June 15 an extensive pictorial narrative of its past camp meeting and the meeting for 1899. They pictured their eight years of camp meetings as "a brief season of rest and recreation" for rural folks, a place of renewal for adults and for children a time of "unadulterated fun".

A large crowd had gathered by Thursday noon, opening day June 29. Some had driven a long distance drawn by curiosity, some by political principles and inclinations, and others just eager for an outing. The anti-Populist Daily News on June 29 viewed Populist ideology as "the doctrine of desolation" and in its reporting referred to the meeting as "a festival of doom and gloom".

In this camp meeting there were four morning speakers and readers whereas in the afternoons there were six speakers; this set a pattern for predominance of afternoon as a major time slot for public speakers. Except on Sunday with its Sacred Concert, tent theater

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continued at Tacoma Park in 1899 when the Karl Bayard Steers Metropolitan Dramatic Company performed for evening crowds.

Aberdonians who used train transportation must board the 9:00 a.m. train if they were to be at the park in time for any morning activities or afternoon programs starting at 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. as the next train left Aberdeen at 2:00 p.m. Publicity in the Weekly News of June 22 promised three round trips by train each day. A fifty cents round trip fare could get you to the park in the afternoon after 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. departure from Aberdeen. A 9:00 a.m. Aberdeen departure provided an improvement in the morning connection over that offered in 1898. Those wishing to take in evening events could return to Aberdeen on the 11:00 p.m. train or earlier on the 5:00 p.m. train.

That Thursday afternoon Ignatius Donnelly, a middle of the road Populist, gave the opening address which appeared in the Daily News of June 30. Comparing Americans of 1899 with Europeans of the past who were forced to leave their homelands, he asserted that American conditions were duplicating those forces endangering American prosperity and freedom. He mistrusted daily papers who presented the views of wealthy stockholders.

Donnelly attacked monetary policy calling metallic money a pagan relic and reviewed Populist Party history and fusion with the Democrats. He asserted that westerners must resist eastern money power and that fusion had failed. Donnelly concluded with the words "Let us stand by what we think is right and leave the consequence to almighty God".

The Park Week program for 1899 labeled Friday June 30 as Bryan Day. South Dakota governor Andrew Lee spoke in the forenoon but the afternoon was reserved for orator Bryan. A special train bringing people from Rutland and Ellendale, North Dakota arrived shortly after noon in time to swell Bryan's audience.

The tent with its speaker's platform was too small to hold the numbers who came to listen and so Bryan moved outdoors to accommodate the crowd described by the Daily News as "the largest that ever assembled there". One disgruntled Grotonite later wrote that "pickpockets and thieves were plenty on Bryan Day, with the big crowd and no police to look after them. A report from Putney which appeared in the Weekly News of July 6 seemed to confirm these observations:

"Thieves and pickpockets seem to infest the cave of gloom on the river at Tacoma Park this year.

H. Hydineff of Day county was held up for \$80. Herman Kepeke had his pockets picked and lost \$10 and several others had different amounts taken. Some would not tell of their losses, but admitted they fell among thieves and were done up."

Introduced by George B. Daly, Bryan declared he had found so many good Republicans and so many bad Democrats when he first went to Congress that he had become more tolerant in categorizing one or the other as the good or bad party. According to the Daily News report of July 1 Bryan felt the democratic platform had approximated that of Thomas Jefferson, that Republicans devised strategies to divide the opposition. In an appeal to Populists and Democrats he declared that reformers must unite or be beaten.

Bryan urged a direct vote of the people for the U.S. Senate as a means to weaken corporate special interests and a constitutional amendment to permit an income tax. He believed that republicans prefer to tax the poor and exempt themselves. They put the dollar above the man. Money was their controlling force.



William Jennings Bryan 1899

A favorable image of Bryan enjoying himself at the Park appeared shortly thereafter. With proper dignity yet with informality, Bryan "wandered around freely among the assembled multitude greeting the people pleasantly." His appearance had attracted people from Marshall, Dickey, Spink, McPherson and Edmunds counties as well as many from Brown County. Conservatively, the reporter estimated the crowd at 10,000. Actual count found 2000 rigs tied along the outskirts. Also train specials filled to capacity had arrived from Rutland, ND and Aberdeen.

On Monday afternoon July 3 Thomas H. Lucas, Minneapolis Knights of Labor, spoke for about two hours on "Scientific Socialism." The Daily News of July 5 reported the speech as "the principal feature of the encampment" on Monday. He exclaimed that socialism works to create an environment in which the producing class will share more equally the results of their work. Tracing the evolution of social classes from

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ancient to modern times and the establishment of capitalism, Lucas pointed out that capitalism by producing greater surpluses causes greater suffering for the workers. The capitalist class secures half of what the worker produced.. Panics often resulted from this imbalance. He predicted that such panics would increase in America endangering capitalism and strengthening socialism. He urged listeners to think and study, to develop individuality. Lucas emphasized that only education can prepare people for a new order of socialism.

On Tuesday July 4, 1899 encampment ceremonies opened in the forenoon with "My Country Tis of Thee" followed by S. H. Cranmer's recitation of the Declaration of Independence. Then Mrs. Curtiss sang "Columbia, the Gen of the Ocean" with audience participation in the chorus. Duell county's A. R. Allen spoke on our colonial struggle against Britain and causes leading to the Declaration of Independence. He inferred that American troops in the Philippines were trying to oppress a liberty-loving people and should have been satisfied with Cuba's liberation. Do we propose an era of conquest? he asked. If so, we will have no occasion to celebrate the Fourth of July again.

On the afternoon of the Fourth sports interrupted by rain, games, log-rolling and river races, boating and dancing provided diversion for those not listening to the orators or to those who needed activity after listening to lengthy speeches. Evening fireworks concluded the camp meeting.

This encampment of 1899 drew the ire of a Grotonite who in the July 5th edition of the Daily News described himself as "One Who Was There". He accused the Tacoma Park trust of perpetrating "the greatest outrage of the season". Their posters about a fine summer resort and its conveniences did not live up to his expectations:

"It was very convenient to get a very poor meal at the monopoly eating house, run by the association. The lemonade and ice cream stands were also convenient, with peanuts in small sacks, under the same control. But the most barefaced swindle of the whole was the water supply on the grounds. There was no water fit to drink. After a short time each day the wells would either run dry or be in such a condition that no one could use them."

"Then came the chance of the association for their grab. Wagons with machine tanks on them made their appearance loaded with water. Was it free? Not by any means. It was sold at 2 cents a cup or 40

cents a pail of a gallon. Barrels were placed on the grounds and Jim river water, with a little ice in it, was sold at the same rate. Nothing seemed to be free except a fine breath of air that was not under the control of the management."

"Then they posted large notices not to hitch horses to the trees (which was right), but did not furnish a stable or even a post to hitch them to. You had the privilege of turning them into the association's bare pasture for 10 cents per day and watering them yourself. The dancing platform and theater were under the monopoly also, but those who wanted to patronize either were at liberty to pay their money and take their choice."

This contrasted with remarks from Columbia quoted in the State Democrat of July 7th: "The Fourth was a quiet day in Columbia as nearly everyone was at the grove seeing the fun, and getting wet." A Carlisle report in the Weekly News of July 6 indicated that days other than the Fourth impacted county towns: "Our town was rather dull during the past week, nearly everyone being at Tacoma Park." Tacoma Park also impacted church attendance on Sunday June 30 according to a Putney report July 3: "No meeting at the church Sunday--had to attend the political meeting on the river, of course.

THE MODERN WOODMAN COUNTY PICNIC JUNE 28, 1889 "CHASING AWAY THE BLUES"

The day before the Industrial Camp meeting of June 29, the Modern Woodman held an organizational picnic in Tacoma Park with the permission of the Industrial Association. The Great Northern excursion train awaited Aberdonian Woodmen as well as neighboring town units who rode their rigs to Aberdeen and then boarded the train. Trains departed from Aberdeen at 7:45 and 9:00 a.m. and at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. Return trips left the park at 10 a.m.; 4:00 and 11:00 p.m. By train and team they came to Tacoma Park.

Throughout the day the Aberdeen City band and the Garden Prairie Band played for the picnickers. The Park's natural environment and boating provided the chief morning attraction. Those not bringing their lunch with them went to the dining hall and refreshment stands for such amenities as cold, soft drinks and ice cream.

Following the noon lunch, they proceeded to the speaker's stand presided over by George Bolles. Stirred by the music of two bands and the solos of Warner's

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Mrs. S. N. Wright, the crowd listened to brief remarks by Aberdeen Mayor C. J. Hute. Then the main speaker Senator E. C. Toy of Andover in Day county praised the benefits of organization and the value of optimism in chasing away the blues. A business meeting followed. Delegates were present from the camps of Bath, Columbia, Rondell, Putney, Houghton, Warner, Groton and Aberdeen. They voted to combine the Woodman and the ladies Royal Neighbors as well as elected J.C. Kindschey of Groton to the presidency, J. J. Nelson of Columbia to the vice presidency and A E. Clark of Hecla to the position of secretary and treasurer.

A ball game concluded the afternoon. The Aberdeen High School nine beat the Bath nine by a score of eight to seven. Those who remained for the evening vaudeville performance by the Karl Bayard Steers Metropolitan Company were assured of ample time to get the eleven o'clock train after the show.

CROSSING & BRIDGING THE JIM 1880S & 1890S NORTHERN & CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY

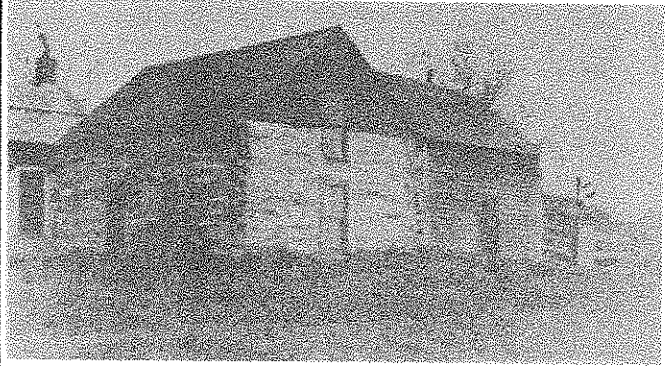
In years and seasons of rising water fording the Jim required resourcefulness and determination whether it be in the pre-bridge era or after. Where there were no bridges, one could row across as did Mrs. Ole Tanberg when she rowed her children across the river during flood stage to attend summer parochial school and to church. She also indicated that in the 1880s many of her neighbors attended church in Gem township by rowing across the Jim in the spring.

Some male pioneers swam or waded the river as did Carl Paepke in the early 1880s on his way to Columbia to sharpen plow shares. In the Early History of Brown County Mrs. A. J. Radke retold the incident: "He swam the river with the plow shares and his clothes held on his head and the shot gun held high in the air with one hand." As late as 1896 Herman Hoeft, according to his daughter Ester Hoeft Smith, returned from Seneca, found no convenient bridge so "he piled his clothes into a bundle tied on his head with his belt and swam the Jim River to the east side."

YORKVILLE CROSSING

During most of the 1880s Columbia, proclaiming itself as "Gem of the Jim", was the county seat. This enhanced the importance of the Yorkville ferry site and the Yorkville bridge built in 1884. William York had claimed this location, a former military ferry crossing of the 1864-66 era, in spring 1878, and brought his

family in spring 1879. Here they built a log cabin from riverbank trees, established a store and later added a frame hotel wing to serve the travellers along that important route.

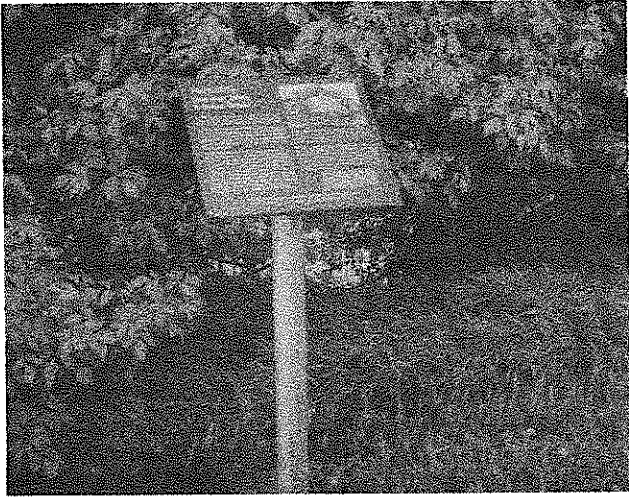


Yorkville post office, store and hotel

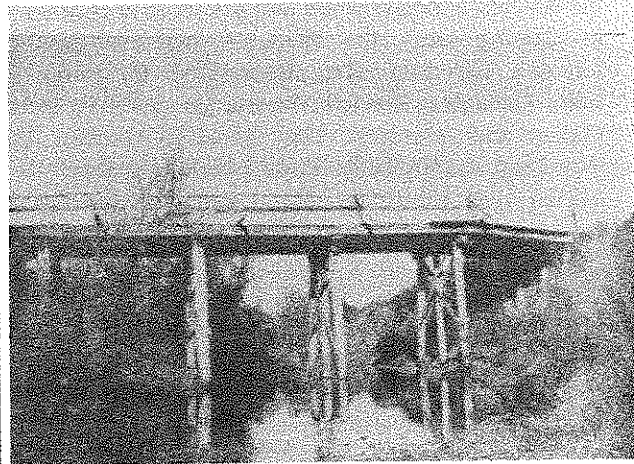
Yorkville became the first post office in Brown County and a stopping place, along with Rondell and Gem, on the stage, mail route from Firesteel to Jamestown in the north. Its postal status ended in February 1883. In the severe winter of 1880-81 the hotel sheltered many area homesteaders. Stella Everson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Everson, was born at Yorkville, the first white girl born in the county. Railroad bridging and construction of other bridges across the James reduced the ferry traffic and eventually the Yorkville bridge traffic. The bridge was auctioned off in 1907.

In 1881 York moved to Groton, established a hotel there and then moved northward to Devil's Lake. Others carried on at Yorkville. Personnel at the York crossing of the Jim first used a tight wagon box to ferry over goods transferred from wagons which were not water tight according to Charles Creed on "Bath Township" in Early History of Brown County. P.C. Cavanaugh began ferry service May 28, 1882. Muddy access to York crossing approach made it difficult for teams. Cavanaugh assisted thirty teams in one day without charge. Later he built a ferry boat which he leased out to other operators as he had a contract for the Milwaukee road in Spink county. Cavanaugh eventually established a farm which included some Chedi Lake land and his home became a landmark for settlers seeking Aberdeen. Groton's W. C. Allen purchased the Yorkville acres in 1886. A Yorkville historic marker may be found at intersection of 128th St. and county highway 18 (400 Ave.)

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES



Yorkville historic marker placed by Aberdeen/Brown County Landmark Commission 1998



Early county bridge over Jim River 1882



James River boating near Yorkville, 1888

Bridging the James began in 1882 and continued into the 1890s. Charles Creed states that "the first wagon bridge in the vicinity" was built across the Jim near W. E. Burton's by B. H. Randall in January 1882.

A bridge was constructed one and a half miles southeast of Columbia. Further north of Columbia grades had been constructed for bridges west of Hecla and near Houghton. Once constructed both approach grades and the bridge were subject to bridge repair as rain and overflow river waters washed out approaches.

Repairs necessitated detours. This was the case August 20, 1884 when the Brown County Sentinel reported "the bridge across the Jim below the railroad will be partially torn out next week for repairs." The paper cautioned that during the three to four repair days team travel across the river at that point would cease.

In 1889 the Sentinel from July into October reported road and bridge stories. North of Columbia teams, under the leadership of grading contractor Andy Stone and bridge builder Capt. Robert Wilson, constructed a grade for a wagon road and bridge across the Jim in August and September. Surveyer Pierce estimated in July that a grade of three feet high would be necessary but in August when county commissioners examined the grade they changed the specifications to over a foot higher than the Pierce estimate. The Brown County Sentinel observed "the character of the grading is much above that of the crossings at Houghton and Hecla." The contractor used 9800 cubic yards of dirt for the grade. In early October 1889 the county commissioners accepted the new grade and bridge and declared it was open for public use.

Observations in the Brown County Sentinel for May 24 and August 23, 1888 testify to the importance to area farmers of the James River bridge west of Hecla. In late May when James water levels were decreasing, valley folks contributed \$200.00 to repair washed out approaches to that bridge. However, river water levels continued to be high enough to delay grade repair. The paper reported "The Hecla people were in

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hopes the grading would be finished in time to haul the summer crop but unless the water falls rapidly it will be late in the season before the grade can be crossed."

In Brown county of the 1880s railroads built bridges across the James in extension of their routes. Moving westward from Groton to Aberdeen the Milwaukee bridged the James east of Bath in June, 1881 while the Chicago & Northwestern constructed a grade across the Jim southwest of Columbia in 1882 when it built a line from Ordway to Columbia. The St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad crossed the James in late 1886 extending its route from future North Dakota to Aberdeen. Those bridges needed repairs by 1890 when in June for about two weeks bridge carpenters were "repairing and rebuilding the Northwestern bridge across the Jim" south of Columbia. Local workers assisted the railroad crew in construction using "several car loads of new lumber".

In the 1890s citizens and county commissioners were watchful of road grade approaches and bridges across the Jim especially in the spring and early summer after heavy rains or river overflow. Bridges and road approaches north of Columbia received special attention in the Sentinel of June 9 and July 28, 1892. Inspections and recommendations aimed to restore "passable conditions". By mid September teams under Columbia's Mayor Taylor began repair of this grade crossing. High water predictions for 1893 resulted in Mayor Taylor's request of area farmers March 1893:

"Manure should be removed and when drawn placed on the grade west of the bridge that the grade may be protected from high water. Place it on either side of the track that it may be put in proper shape after posts have been set on each side of the grade".

In June 1893 concern over the Houghton grade surfaced in the Weekly News. With receding water observers on June 7 suggested that since the grade was no longer water covered, work should begin to make it passable and fill in the badly washed out sections. By mid June observers noted that this west grade had improved somewhat as a few teams crossed daily; but "the road is in very bad condition". On July 18, 1895 the Weekly News reported that the county commissioners appropriated \$40.00 for bridge repair and grade improvement at the James River crossing three miles north of Houghton.

By July 1895 the Brown County commissioners were pressured to build a new bridge across the James River near Hecla. Not until May 1896 did they inspect

that bridge west of Hecla and concluded that "another was absolutely necessary" and bids should be contracted.

SOUTHERN BROWN COUNTY

In the early 1880s Slack's ferry at the Rondell crossing in southern Brown County served a similar function as York's crossing twenty miles to the north. The ferry operated between the west bank Slack home and the east bank Dayton Hill as it was later known. The Early History of Brown County states that one spring a caravan of covered wagons and labor gangs for railroad construction crossed at this ferry. The Slacks provided a stopping place for ferry travelers to eat and lodge.

During the 1890s in southern Brown County repair concerns surfaced over Rondell's two James River bridges. As in the north bridge near Hecla, grade surfaced deterioration was, in part, related to the rising and lowering of Jim river levels and to constant use of the bridges by team traffic. After a series of dryer years beginning in 1884, Rondell observers from February through May 1892 noted the rising river. The Aberdeen Sun of February 4 reported an initial note of elation: "Every farmer along its banks says 'rise water rise'". In April many pickerel and bullheads had reached the Rondell area. By May 5 locals observed that the Jim might overflow its rising banks "which it had not done since the spring of 1884". With a foot decline in river level by the end of May, the Rondell correspondent for the Aberdeen Weekly News reported "Now is the time to make an effort to get a grade to the bridge on the town line. This is an important crossing and something ought to be done to make it passable."

Rondell bridge concerns arose in early May of 1893. The Jim had risen to a higher level than in spring 1892 making the town line bridge impassable. The report from Rondell in late June 1893 indicated that petitioners were pressuring the county commission "to build a grade to the bridge across the Jim on the line between Rondell and Gem."

County commissioners appeared to be slow in responding. However, accompanied by Rondell farmers Ed Mathieu, Robinson and E. P. Ashford the county commissioners inspected both Rondell bridges. In March 1894 they decided to repair and replank Rondell's north bridge for safety reasons.

In the spring of 1897 snow melt produced a flooding Jim River which J.E. Humphrey described in the Daily News for May 5 as the highest water he had

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

seen in his 19 years at Rondell. All nearby bottom lands and the east river picnic grounds were flooded; However, this permitted excellent boating through the trees.

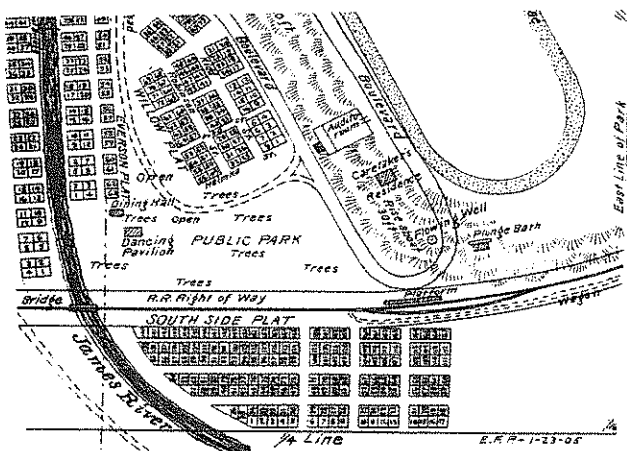
High water led to bridge construction in summer and fall of 1898. Gillette-Herzog Company of Minneapolis secured the contract for six steel trusses ninety feet long. Completion date was set for September 15, 1898. Inability to secure large timbers required by the contract delayed Rondell bridge construction. A report of October 6 in the Weekly News estimated that the bridge might be open to the public by mid October 1898.

Thus, during the 1880s and 1890s concerns about James River crossing points, bridging and grading grabbed the attention of county officials and residents interested not only in protecting trade and market routes but also access to recreational sites along both banks of the river. In these foundation years these picnic and socializing sites meant much to a dispersed farming population and their urban neighbors. Many sought escape from city warmth and routine for the shade and space of Brown County's outdoors and the pleasures offered by the Jim River and associated sites.

PART III TACOMA PARK: 1900 TO 2001

OVERVIEW: TACOMA PARK: SETTING & STRUCTURES

Between 1898 and 1922 Tacoma Park's infrastructure gradually evolved during the Park's Chautauqua era. The plat map of 1905 fully displayed on inside front cover reveals much had been done by that date.



Lower part of Tacoma Park plat map 1905

However, many improvements and additions occurred between 1906 and 1922. In the post-chautauqua era 1923-1968 some changes revolved around the dancing pavilion, food and beverage concessions, the general store, cottages, the race track, river bridges and access roads to the Park. The auditorium fell into disuse.

Between the east river bank and the James bluff and immediately north of the railroad tracks emerged a commercial section. For about a fourth of a mile on the west bank a residential section gradually developed. Some residential lots were platted in the east bank area. This separation provided some quiet for cottagers during noisier celebrations in the public area. A survey map of 1992 locates 16 structures remaining on the west bank and seven houses on the east James bluff.

The broader and straighter stretch of river and the favorable water levels at this location lured fisherman, boaters and swimmers. Manmade dams contributed to these water activities.

TACOMA PARK DAMS

Tacoma Park management authorized dam construction at least four times in order to maintain higher water levels for recreational purposes. By 1905 a dam had been placed southward to raise water to float boats at the Park. In June 1910 "splendid boating" had been assured by damming the James causing a rise by a foot and a half. In March, 1914 Tacoma Park Association secretary Charles Cameron and Director Fred Korte spent a weekend dynamiting the Jim's frozen banks in preparation for construction of a dam three miles southward. In a high water year like 1916 management boasted that the James was riverbank full. In order to maintain that level the Board agreed in mid July 1916 to build a new dam across the Jim which raised the river some three feet and made the boating and bathing better than ever.

Apparently these earlier dams had not been enduring structures. In June 1920 another dam was built, this time of cement. Publicity of 1921 and 1922 highlighted boating, bathing and fishing as a result of the new dam and higher river water.

Dams continued to be essential in later decades, especially in drier years. In 1957 the Park's interlocking steel dam held, but its wing walls which had been made of earth and stone rubble washed out due to heavy spring runoff. The county temporarily repaired the dam by filling the wing wall break with gravel-filled sandbags.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

A dam south of Tacoma Park continues to maintain higher water levels northward. Instructions for canoeist in the 1990s affirm this and indicate a portage might be necessary when boaters encountered the Tacoma Park dam. Although not in the Park, this dam should be considered part of the Park's setting as the higher water levels were essential to the Park's success as a resort.

The promise of space and shade along an adjacent river as well as "something doing all the time" during Park Week drew Brown County folks to the Tacoma Park resort.

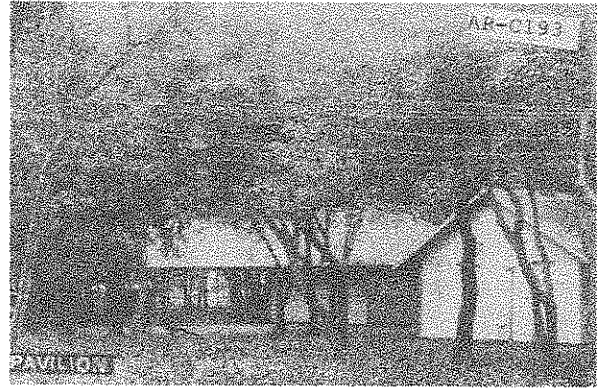
THE DANCE PAVILION

Dancing as well as picnicking proved to be the longest lived activity on which Tacoma Park built its reputation. Each summer the Park Association generally leased the dance concession to a private person or group for a specific compensation; however, occasionally its own members assumed direct management. The board's assurance in June 1901 that "the best order will be enforced" suggests some concern over the kind of person or organization who secured the pavilion concession and image problems such as disorderly behavior and alcohol consumption that plagued public dance halls and barn dances in the early 20th century.

Varied dance pavilions marked the spot until the later 1960s. On the 160 acres of 1898 the Park Association built in that year its first dance pavilion, a thirty-two foot x sixty foot structure. The Aberdeen Weekly News in June 1901 reported "the dancing pavilion will be covered" and cited its floor space as thirty-two feet by sixty-four feet, four feet more than the 1898 figure. Initially dancing appears to have been subordinated, at least in newspaper publicity, to events associated with other Park activities. An improved dancing pavilion forty feet wide and fifty-six feet long with a hard pine or fir covered floor was the major improvement of 1905. By June 1905 the Daily News reported "it is remarkable how popular dancing has become at the park." In 1916 the dance pavilion had a forty foot enlargement, testimony to the popularity of dancing. Nearly two hundred couples could use that floor.

Wednesday and Saturday nights were reserved for Tacoma Park dancing. Management advertised the pavilion as having "the best music and best floor in the state." \$1.00 was the charge. Dance fans were urged to

come early and enjoy boating, fishing and swimming before the dance.



Post card view Tacoma Park dance pavilion

Early July dancing in 1920 and 1921 experienced more excitement than usual due to weather related events. Those who came to dance at 9:00 p.m. Saturday July 3, 1920 encountered a wind storm which broke many trees along the river and blew down the ballpark grandstand on the hill. On Saturday July 2, 1921 Frisco's Ragtime Band played on that memorable cyclonic night. Between six and nine that night dark clouds formed in northern Brown County and about 9:00 p.m. winds struck Tacoma Park, snapped trees, downed power lines, carried away roofs, wrecked the baseball field bleachers, demolished tents and sent campers scurrying.

Wind rocked the dance pavilion; rain and branches swept through the open sides of the pavilion. Dancers huddled in the southeast corner of the pavilion for about an hour. When the rain ceased, dancers swept the water and branches off the floor. The band resumed playing. Ropes which had cordoned off the dance floor and had been taken down during the storm were not replaced. Management announced that the remaining dances were free. Autoists could not leave the Park by car because of road blockage. Since the train for Aberdeen was scheduled to leave at 12:01, about two hours of dancing remained for those who planned to use that method of transportation. Publicity of the last Tacoma Park Week in 1922 focused on the pavilion as a "large dance hall which is open on all sides and is located on the bank of the river assuring the dancers of a cool and pleasant time."

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

Without the stimulus and financial backing previously given to Park Week, pavilion dancing entered an era of irregularity until the Park Association secured capable management and sound financial backing to create "a new pavilion" in 1926. During the post-chautauqua era, the old dance pavilion in July 1926 was enclosed and enlarged with a larger orchestra stage and new floors. Heavy snow in the winter of 1951-52 collapsed the roof in March 1952 ending Tacoma Park dancing during 1952. However, in June 1953 a new quonset-type ballroom opened with great publicity; it housed a sixty foot by one hundred foot dance floor. Along with a concession stand this structure served the dancing public into 1968. In 1960 management constructed a new dance floor, more booths and redecorated the ballroom. In the late 1950s and 1960s Tacoma Park reflected an area trend for decline in public dance halls. During the dance hall era this was a place of youthful dating and an opportunity to meet those of area towns and farms. Here one might meet a future mate, impress his honey, or if married renew the bond of companionship and perhaps relive one's youth. In 2000 the dance hall still stood as a reminder of an exciting past.

DINING HALL: FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONCESSIONS

To feed hungry celebrants who did not bring their lunches the management built a dining hall twenty feet by eighty feet and refreshment stands in 1900. Even if one had brought a picnic lunch, there was always the temptation to buy ice cream, candy and cool drinks at the stands. In 1901 a meat market experiment began and was continued into 1902 with Thomas Hurley, Aberdeen butcher, in charge. Putney merchant C. W. Bowman operated a refreshment pavilion in 1904 and 1905. The Association in 1905 built a fruit and confectionary stand.

The Association board leased dining hall privileges to director and stockholder H. A. Clark of Groton in 1904 and 1905. He provided dinners at thirty-five cents and other meals for twenty-five cents. He also operated a bakery and butcher shop to provide bread and meat products for cottagers and campers. In 1906 the Association granted the dining hall concession to H. A. Clark, lessee the previous two years, and to Mr. Rix of Riverside township with postoffice address at Groton.

Twice the dining hall site of 1900 changed. It had been located north of the dance hall. In 1907 a new dining hall was built twenty rods east of the old dance

pavilion and nearer the railroad tracks. Management in 1913 contracted the Kruger brothers to remodel and to move the dining hall about three hundred feet north of the previous site to the street or boulevard.

The construction of 1907 involved not only a new dining hall but an attached lunch counter. Estimated lumber costs were \$600.00 The structure was thirty-two feet by sixty feet, with one third designated as kitchen (twenty feet by thirty-two feet) in the rear and the remaining area (forty feet by thirty-two feet) assigned for dining purposes.

The Daily American in 1907 observed "although not as an imposing a structure as might be designed, it is certainly roomy." New furnishings were arriving including one hundred chairs. Shortridge and Wilber were supervising the placement of interior furnishings. Aberdeen's Fred Renaud was busy stocking his refreshment pavilion while rival proprietors Jones and Hagan were doing the same. The Daily American reported: "The amount of goods these gentlemen have unloaded at the depot and which they are placing in the stands would give a person the impression that a large grocery establishment was being opened up." A Park Committee of Assessment placed the assessed value of the dining hall in 1910 at \$1000.00

During Park Week 1914 the Park board leased the dining room to Mr. Mahaney, proprietor of Aberdeen's Model restaurant. An article in the Daily News for July 2 stated that Mahaney had prepared the dining hall

"To make a nice, clean restaurant where the people will have a chance to get a first-class meal for 35 cents. Mr. Victor Nelson, an experienced cook, will be there to see that everyone has just what they want at a most reasonable price. Anyone who ever ate a meal at the Model restaurant knows that if Mr. Mahaney is going to serve the meals at the Park, it will be unnecessary for them to take their own food, for whatever he puts up for a meal is always worth the price he asks."

On Monday July 5, 1915 when the Fourth of July was celebrated and an estimated 12,000 people were on the grounds the press reported "every stand and store was doing a land office business." After that experience the Park management in 1916 enlarged the eating pavilion and the dance hall to meet the needs of ever-increasing crowds. Park publicity for that year assured the public "there will be continuous service at the dining hall and lunch stands which will be in charge of reliable parties & regular meals will be served to the public."

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

THE HILLSIDE AUDITORIUM

While dining and dancing appealed to physical and emotional needs, the Association believed a cultural center could stimulate the intellect through lectures and fulfill desires for popular entertainment. In 1900 an auditorium eighty feet x one hundred twenty feet replaced the speaker's tent which had served in the more primitive 1890s. The auditorium boasted seating for over 2000 people who during the next decades listened to politicians, ministers, agricultural leaders, musicians and literary figures such as Hamlin Garland. They would also be entertained by vaudeville acts, dramatic actors and the movies which Aberdeen theater men provided. A Sunday sacred concert was a constant over the years.

The Association levied a small charge for lectures in 1900 to help pay for the auditorium and other improvements. Apparently, by 1900 the auditorium was not complete having the roof covered only by tar paper nailed over roof boards. Shingling awaited the next season. On June 27, 1901 the night before opening of Park Week, workers had about half the auditorium roof shingled. The ensuing showery week reduced tent pitching and slowed down work on Park structures. The auditorium's hillside location saved it from river overflow which at times impacted structures on lower ground.

REVELATIONS OF THE PLAT MAP OF 1905 CARETAKERS HOUSE

In addition to the preceding key structures the plat map of 1905 reveals other structures and sites. To the south of the hillside auditorium was the caretaker's house. Mr. and Mrs. T. S. Teed lived in the home and used the nearby barn or stable which was fourteen feet by twenty-four feet. In 1904 teams had hauled lumber to the Park for building the Teed residence. A flowing well and a plunge bath were located further south on the upland indicating water concerns of the Association.

WATERWORKS, WELLS AND PLUNGE BATH

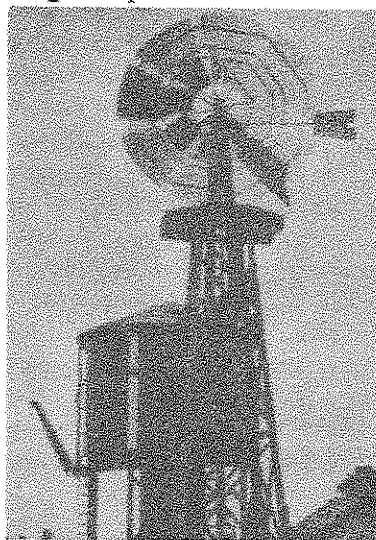
On hot summer days water was an important asset to the resort. Drinking water for the horses and humans was crucial. At the 1899 assembly criticism arose as to water quality and availability. From 1900 on efforts were made to counteract such attitudes. Wells, river water and later a waterworks provided water for the Park. Maintaining a quality water supply was a constant in Park maintenance.

In 1904 water was piped to the west side for tent and cottage usage. An upland waterworks had been developed in 1900 north of the camp grounds. By pump power and gravitational force water flowed to the central camp ground below. That hill top well near the auditorium failed to provide enough water in 1901. Additional wells were sunk providing perhaps a year's supply of water before new wells were needed.

In the past the Park Association often had to haul drinking water five to seven miles. This inconvenience pressured the digging of a deeper artesian well which was three inches in diameter at the bottom.

The Park board authorized a plunge bath to be built on the upland near the flowing well. The site was excavated with sides cemented into the hill earth eliminating the need for side walls.

Near the railroad tracks a water tower serviced train and residents. Some residents utilized river water for irrigation of garden plots well into the 1990s.



Water Tower at Tacoma Park

COTTAGES

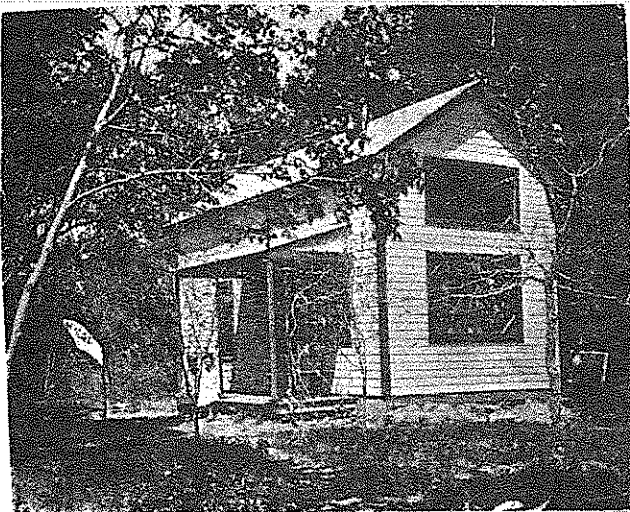
In 1900 stockholders of the Park Association had first choice of lots before opening sale to the public. Well-to-do nature lovers and seekers of vacation hideouts purchased Tacoma Park's platted lots and built cottages, some of which were rented. By 1904 the Daily News credited Tacoma Park as being a summering site for about a dozen Aberdeen families. The Aberdeen Democrat in June 1904 reported the construction of two "unpretentious" but "cozy" cottages, one with twelve feet by sixteen feet

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dimensions belonging to Sheriff Cole on two lots and a sixteen by sixteen foot cottage on Amos Bacon's lot.

Four residential plats were available. One plat stretched along the west bank of the James. East of the James were the elevated James Bluff plat, and the lowland Everson's Plat, Willow Platt between wagon road and the Boulevard, and the plat south of the railroad tracks and east of the river. Each year new cottages arose with "an unusual number" going up during the 1919 season.

Previous to Park Week of 1914 C. R. Kimball donated a large treed lot overlooking the James River. Onto this lot the Park Association moved a small home which became the YWCA cottage. The Young Women's Christian Association wished to use that cottage for young girls to experience the delights of nature in the summertime. The Tacoma Park Association promised cots and mattresses for the Y girls. Each girl was asked to bring a blanket, knife, fork and spoon. During Park Week the cottage served as a rest room for women at the Park. Chairs and hammocks were provided for those desiring a rest break. The Aberdeen Daily News lot description of May 30, 1914 conforms with the persistent publicity images associated with Tacoma Park: shade and cool waters coupled with a new image--a view: "The lot is a fine large one and overlooks the James river. There are several large trees there and it will make an ideal spot for a summer cottage for the girls." Park publicity of 1906 included photos of three cottages, one of which is shown below. An upcoming section will reveal more about stockholders and cottages.



C. C. Larkin's Cottage 1906

RACE TRACK AND PASTURE

The plat of 1905 locates the race track and a pasture area on flat land east of the hillside auditorium. A horse racing track in the early years and a stock car speed way in the non-Chautauqua 1950s, as well as boat racing, added to the variety of the Park's attractions. During Park Week of 1900 a heavy wind blew away a section of the stable roof. A board struck Frank Hill's head and a nail gouged him in the small of the back. At times this serene environment had its dangers.

In the horse and buggy era management had provided pasturage for the horses. A large pasture area, originally one hundred acres and reduced later to sixty acres, had been fenced off since 1898 with hay and water provided for a reasonable fee. The Association leased a pasturage concession as a means of fund raising. Pasturage fees were set in 1898 at ten cents for each horse. In 1905 the Board, as a means of tree protection, urged more use of the pasture instead of tying horses to trees on owners' lots. During Park Week 1905 the Association received \$80.00 from leasing the hay and pasture privilege. By 1911 automobile parking became a concern. In the next decade pasturage use for horses gradually declined and the area was used for automobile parking and in the 1950s as a speedway race track.

RAILROAD PLATFORM AND STATION

The Manitoba (future Great Northern) provided a place to disembark or await excursion trains to Aberdeen as early as 1895 when that railroad built a sizeable platform for the Methodist camp meeting passengers leaving or entering the train. The Great Northern took notice of the human traffic when on July 4, 1902 an estimated 7000 people were on the Park grounds. In 1902 the railroad constructed a new platform at Tacoma Park and added in 1903 a large ticket and telegraph office.

The 1905 plat shows the platform just south of the upland which housed the auditorium. In the following photo a close up view of the station's enclosed end is recorded in a 1916 yearbook photo of Northern State's YWCA women standing in front of the structure. In that same year girl scouts were photographed standing in front of the station's open end with parked car inside.

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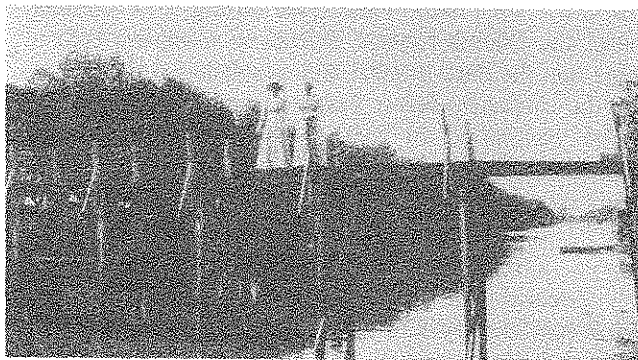
TACOMA RETREAT: Northern Normal sponsored an annual retreat from 1914 through 1919 for its YMCA and YWCA youth. There were 17 boys in 1914 and 40 in 1915 along with faculty for these weekends at Tacoma Park. They rose at 6:30 a.m. and participated in sports and spiritual activities.



YWCA Girls at Tacoma Park Station 1915

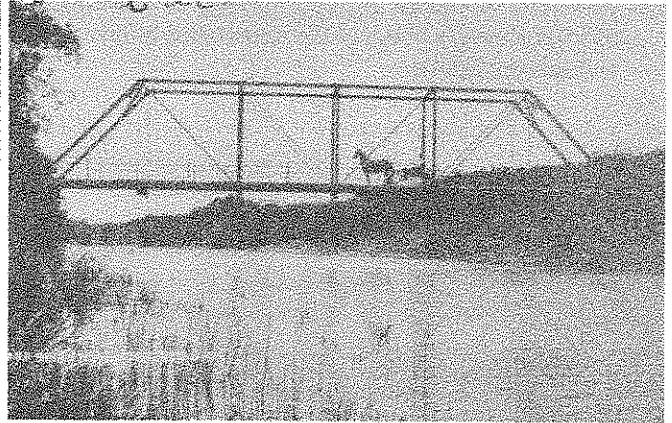
BRIDGES WITHIN AND BORDERING THE PARK

In 1904 a footbridge connected the West Bank of the river to the east bank giving easier access for campers and cottagers. John Helmka of Bath had overcome many difficulties to achieve completion. In 1910 the Park Association Committee of Appraisement had valued the footbridge at \$300.00. Those who used the west side wagon road and parked on that side found that footbridge useful and a timesaver in reaching the public grounds with its dance and dining halls, auditorium, racetrack and after 1909 general store. The Association built a new footbridge across the James in 1916. Following is a closeup photo of the footbridge with two ladies standing between the wire railings. Note the wooden pier support system.



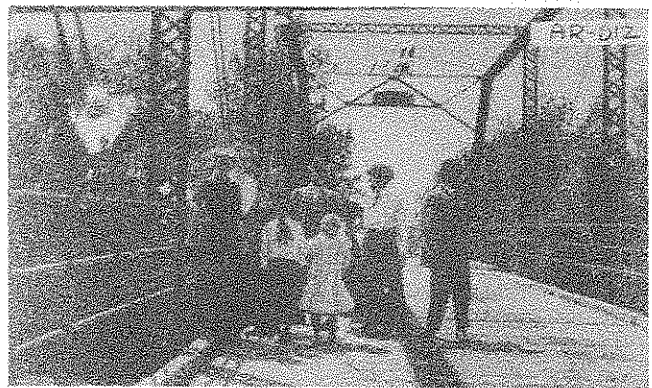
Tacoma Park footbridge & two women pedestrians

A 1901 photo of a wagon bridge with horse and buggy profiled and one with boaters close to the bridge appeared in Aberdeen papers of 1901-1904, E. Frank Peterson's Historical Atlas of South Dakota of 1904 and in various postcards. One photo appears below.



Horse & Buggy on Tacoma Park wagon bridge

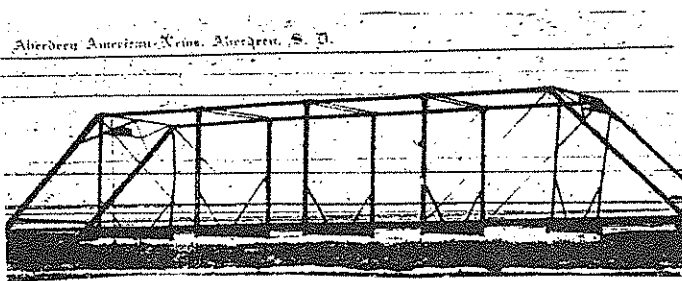
In 1900 Park Association influence is found in the construction of a bridge over the Jim River. The county commissioners decided to build this bridge near the Populist camp meeting grounds disregarding the Yorkville bridge to the south. A supportive argument was that the new bridge would be on the "public highway" while the Yorkville bridge supposedly was on private land. This decision produced criticism of the "reform board" and the charge that many citizens desire the old Yorkville bridge be replaced with a new one instead of building a bridge near the camp ground for the special benefit of a private corporation. Below is a photo of the Tacoma Park bridge about 1911. Nine people pose on the planking of this truss bridge.



Tacoma Park bridge with nine pedestrians

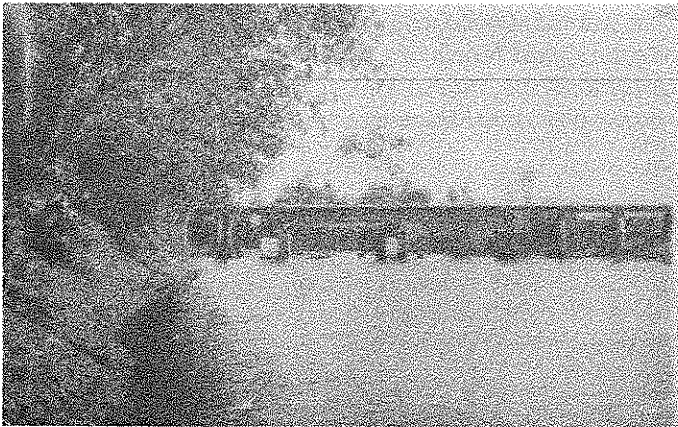
JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

In 1955 this fifty-five year old , 102 foot bridge was removed by truck to a new site near the Elm River on Columbia's west road to replace a township bridge knocked out by ice and high water some years in the past. The Aberdeen American News of February 18, 1955 produced a photo of the transported bridge which is displayed below:



Bridge of 1900 transported from Tacoma Park

The Great Northern railroad bridge crossed the James at the southwest end of Tacoma Park. A profile of that bridge may be seen below:

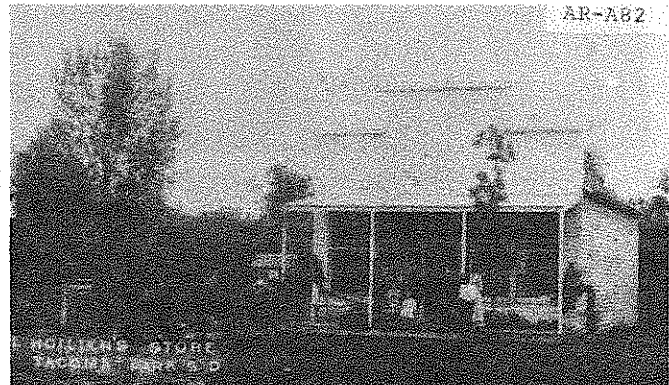


Profile of Tacoma Park's GN railroad bridge

Structures and facilities not built by 1905 and thus not included in the plat map of that year will briefly be described in ensuing paragraphs; some, such as the baseball diamond of 1906 and the general store of 1909 will receive more attention later.

THE GENERAL STORE

Convenience stores specializing in baked goods and meats had serviced temporary campers and more permanent cottagers prior to 1905. Holien's general store in 1909 invited residents in the vicinity to trade; it serviced people in many ways. Over the decades varied proprietors operated the general store. The James during flooding season sometimes besieged this lowland store, especially in the early 1940s. This store's service will be described in more detail later.



Tacoma Park general store 1909

ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS

Since there were both daytime and nighttime Park activities, lighted grounds became essential. More electrification at the Park occurred in 1909 when fifty more electric lights were installed over the entire grounds. In 1910 the Committee of Appraisal valued the electric plant at \$1000.00. In 1919 a new electric plant illuminated the entire Park and furnished power for cottages as well.

At the insistence of cottagers who wished to keep in touch with their home town during their summer stay, the Dakota Central Telephone Company built a line into the Park in 1905 and established a toll station in the caretakers home. Further telephone connections were established in 1907 when the Groton-Ferney Telephone Company put up poles and strung wire into the Park to give direct services.

THE UPLAND BASEBALL DIAMOND

Located on high ground to lessen rainwater accumulations which might delay games, the ball diamond constructed in 1906, became a focal point of morning and afternoon baseball after 1905. Motivated by the competitive spirit, area league teams crossed bats

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and lured large partisan crowds. In 1910 an enlarged grandstand seating 1000 people was roofed over and provided with a screen front. A few years later, the wind blew down the grandstand which had to be rebuilt. In the speedway era of the 1950s a grandstand was also constructed to house racing fans.

TACOMA PARK EQUITY ELEVATOR

That year of improvements 1916 saw the birth of an Equity Elevator at Tacoma Park. National President C. O. Drayton outlined the organization of an equity company at a Farmers Equity meeting Tuesday June 21, 1916. A large number of area people as well as Park people were present. Fourteen signed up to erect an elevator at the Park and forty more were expected to sign before July 10. The initial cost was estimated at \$10,000 and the Great Northern was prepared to build a side track to the elevator once construction began.

A historic survey of 1992 found burned ruins of a grain elevator with concrete foundation and a nearby gable-roofed shed, probably a granary, not far from the railroad tracks

TABERNACLE OF 1920

At a religious camp meeting June 16-17, 1920 the Christian and Missionary Alliance opened its 500 seat Union Gospel Tabernacle which had been constructed on a permanent Park site with permission of the Tacoma Park Association. Throughout the decade and into the 1930s the Alliance held annual camp meetings at Tacoma Park. The church removed the tabernacle to Aberdeen in 1936.

For over seventy years Tacoma Park served as an entertainment mecca, a fun place along the James where one might sit, eat and sleep in the shade or play in the sun for a six to ten day Park Week in the Chautauqua-Steamtrain Era or during the later automobile era. Dance on Wednesday and Saturday nights, picnic and play on Sundays and holidays such as the Fourth of July. Many were the elements that made up this fun time for Aberdonians, area farmers and small town dwellers!

THE CHAUTAUQUA ERA TO 1922: PARK OR ASSEMBLY WEEK

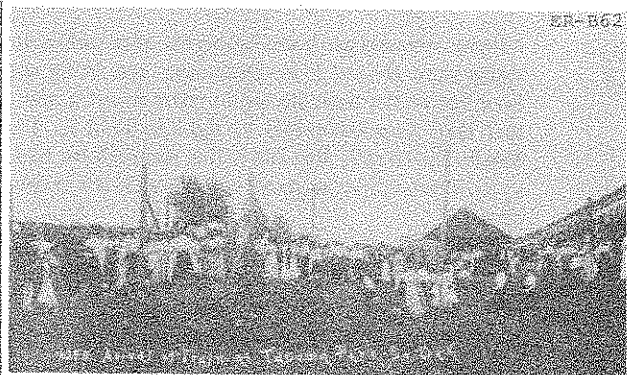
POPULARITY AND PROGRESS

Accessability promotes attendance. Therefore, transportation became important to a resort located some distance from population centers. Roads, rails

and weather were key factors in degrees of access to Tacoma Park.

TRAIN SERVICE AND TRAFFIC TO 1905

Through Park Week of 1922 the Great Northern's steam train service from Aberdeen proved a prime factor in the attendance and profitability of the resort. Initially in 1895 the Great Northern's predecessor, the Manitoba, provided a platform for passengers to disembark or await excursion trains to Aberdeen. In the 1898 chautauqua season two daily trains were scheduled. Whereas in 1901 three trains left Aberdeen (9:00a.m; 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.) and returned from the park at 10 a.m., 4 p.m. and 11 p.m., by 1908 there were six trains in service with the last return trip at midnight. During the 1915 season the last return trip was 2:20 a.m. Newspapers reported aisle-filled cars, four, five, nine and twelve coach trains, and occasionally several hundred patrons left at the Aberdeen station. Trains carried 800 to join an estimated 5000 persons on Sunday July 1, 1900. Fourth of July estimates of Park visitors was 6000 for 1906 and 13,000 for 1919.



Passengers disembark at Tacoma Park

Weather and its relation to attendance was a constant factor during these early years and in the years to come. A running joke surfaced in neighboring towns with the approach of camp meeting time. By 1904 Park Week's reputation was that of a rain maker--a time when area people looked to the skies for showers or "heavy rain (which had) made Tacoma Park famous." Rain, drizzle and mud at times lessened attendance but the pattern of attendance for some days such as Sunday and Fourth of July mounted in the thousands. In 1900 on Sunday July 1 from Aberdeen trains carried 800 to

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join an estimated Park attendance of about 3000 and on Wednesday July 4 Great Northern sold over 3500 tickets on this last day of Park Week.

On July 4, 1902 an estimated 7000 were on the grounds. Increased attendance motivated the Great Northern railroad to improve its facilities at the Park in 1902 and 1903. At Aberdeen Great Northern sold 2000 train tickets to the Park on July 4, 1904.

In its "Park Notes" the Daily News for July 5, 1904 commented on the traffic problem:

"The crowds that went to the Park on the Fourth were put to the utmost discomfort by the failure of the Great Northern to provide anything like adequate equipment for carrying the crowds. The regular train stopped at the Park and carried out a few people, comparatively speaking, but it did not relieve the pressure and the specials had to return each trip scheduled and then did not accomodate all who wanted to make the trip. It is probable that five or six hundred people, tired of waiting an hour or two for a train, returned to their homes after getting down rather than run the risk of hanging on a platform by their toes, and then on arrival at the Park have the uncertainty of being able to get home before morning."

"Those who did get home before the after midnight trains were obliged to get in the cars and sit for an hour before the train started in order to get a seat, and then sometimes had to fight to hold it. To handle the crowds Jim Hill's line should have had at least three times as many coaches as it did in the service."

Exiting the Park provides testimony as to the large numbers in attendance and revealed occasional transportation problems for the return trip. On July 4, 1900 so many had crowded aboard the 9:00 p.m train for Aberdeen that many were forced to wait for later trains or find someone to drive them home in horse drawn rigs, wagons and carriages. A Daily News entry reflecting Fourth of July 1900 presents a vivid picture:

"The evening train back was scheduled to leave the Park at 11:00 o'clock, but the threatening weather caused people to flock to the cars earlier, and at 9 the train was loaded. There being hundreds unable to get aboard, the train pulled into town, arriving at 9:30 and then went back for the remainder of the passengers. When the first train arrived, the rain was pouring down. As the crowd was in clear weather attire and few had umbrellas, there were many who reached their homes from the depot with their holiday finery wet and bedraggled"

BY TRAIN & AUTO: CRUNCH TIME AT TACOMA 1906-22

The attendance patterns of the foundation years 1898-1905 continued to be impacted by weather--hot and sweltering, cool and rainy; however, they generally maintained an upward spiral from 1906 through 1922. The 90 to 92 degree temperatures of late June and early July 1906 helped also to persuade sweltering city folk to seek a cool grove like Tacoma Park. Increased automobile usage along with train transportation marked these later years. Tacoma Park, "THE MECCA FOR EVERYONE", especially on a Fourth of July, lured thousands to its grounds and attractions. Despite growing competition of chautauquas and festivals in neighboring towns such as Groton and Aberdeen, the growth of those Brown County towns was a factor in the increased attendance as well as the varied attractions at Tacoma Park.

On July 4, 1906 a conservative estimate placed park attendance at over 6000. The Daily News reported that sale of train tickets doubled over the sales of 1905. Complaints of inadequate train service to and from Tacoma Park testify to the problem of transporting growing numbers to and from that resort. The Daily American in its July 3rd edition described park events of Sunday July 1, 1906 as "a drawing card":

"so great was the crowd that several specials, besides the regular scheduled ones, were run. In spite of this the service was not ample and every train that left here had its crowd hanging onto the platforms and on the blind baggages and even on the engine tender. The object was to get there, the means were disregarded."

On the Fourth of July 1907, "the hottest day of the year" it seemed to the Daily American that the Park had decreased in acreage since the previous day due to the thousands wandering around the park grounds.

In 1910 Sunday July 3 was the "big day" in attendance which equalled the park's capacity. That afternoon's sham battle was a important drawing card. On Tuesday July 4, 1911, the last day of Park Week, "the largest crowds of the week" attended, an estimated 2500. The Daily News observed:

"Two trains from Aberdeen loaded with 400 people each, went out during the afternoon, and a great many of the people from the surrounding towns and farmers in the vicinity of the park came in during the day. A noticeable thing about the encampment this year was the number of automobiles on the grounds. During the day 187 machines went

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through the gates besides the machines belonging to people who live in the park."

Two years later the Daily News on July 5 reported that Aberdeen and the immediate vicinity had only about 300 automobile owners.

For the eighth grade graduation in 1912 the automobile as a means of transportation received emphasis: "Many will drive and some will go to the park in automobiles. Oneota township has provided three autos for its class, the largest in the county and the largest, rural school class in the state". The Fourth of July in 1913 was closing day of Park Week but in spite of heavy rains in the morning, afternoon crowds awaited the train. Impressed, the Daily News declared "The noon train over the Great Northern was jammed full and there wasn't room for another soul on any of the 9 coaches on the train. It is estimated that at least 300 persons were left behind being unable to find room on the train."

The Daily American looking back two days later on Tacoma Park's Fourth of July, 1913 estimated that "nearly 4000 people were in attendance This was the largest crowd ever at the park on July 4th and had the train service been adequate the crowd would have been larger." The Daily American elaborated further on human behavior and travel conditions that day:

"It is greatly to be regretted that the Great Northern road did not provide proper accommodations for those who went to the park. It is said that over 300 people were unable to find room on the train which went out from Aberdeen on Friday at 1:30 and even the later trains were unable to accommodate all who wished to go. The cars were crowded to their utmost capacity. People crowded the aisles, making them absolutely impassable, ladies and children were compelled to stand in the doors and even on the steps, where at any moment they might have been thrown or crowded off the moving train."

"Distressing scenes took place at the park Friday evening when crowds boarded the 11:30 train for Aberdeen. Women and little children were shown absolutely no consideration, rather many of them were badly bruised and some even knocked down and trampled upon, in the rush to get on board. One incident in particular was that of a lady, with a small child in her arms and accompanied by an older girl, was waiting for the train. After the train arrived, the woman had been trying to make her way to the nearest door, and just as she reached the steps a man, fully six feet tall and weighing over

200 pounds, rudely shoved her out of the way and boarded the car himself."

"The woman was thrown back against the side of the car by the force of the blow, which caused her to drop the baby to the ground. Before she could prevent it, the baby had been trampled upon by several of the crowd in their haste to get on the train, and when the baby was finally rescued, it could plainly be seen that the child was in a serious condition. This is only one incident of many, although perhaps the most serious, and even though the railroad facilities were not sufficient to accommodate all, the fact that such men as those who would strike down and trample upon women and children as was done at the park Friday night, are allowed to mingle and associate with human beings, is to be regretted."

An estimated 4000 people attended July 4, 1913. The impact of rain on July 3 and 4, was dramatically revealed in this July 6th Daily American description:

"Heavy rains fell at the park Thursday and Friday, which made the ground extremely muddy, and it is said that the amount of clothing that was ruined by the mud and water would take a small fortune to replace. The mud had one redeeming feature however to any one with a sense of humor, for the condition of the ground made walking rather risky except where it was level, and some of the tumbles which happened to the celebrators during the day were extremely laughable."

For the glorious Fourth of July 1914 the Daily News reported "several thousand people" from Aberdeen had gone to Tacoma Park: "Every train to the park during the day was packed, most folks taking lunches."

Monday July 5, 1915 was a crunch and crowd day--a celebration of Independence Day--as people within a radius of 25 miles rendezvoused by train and auto at Tacoma Park. An estimated 12,000 people swarmed over the grounds, occupied every nook and cranny and besieged the varied stands and eating places. Although the Aberdeen Daily American reported that the Great Northern had carried 1400 excursionists to Tacoma Park on one train, that paper also noted the automobile era had arrived: "Hundreds of autos were jammed throughout the day on every available inch of parking space and a birds-eye view would have shown a steady stream of machines entering and leaving the grounds in all directions."

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The Aberdeen Daily News at the beginning of Park Week 1915 had predicted that despite a splendid train service, "the automobilists will nevertheless take advantage of the fine roads between here and the park". However, two families of the Columbia area might disagree with such optimism as evident by this Daily News report of July 2:

"The Ed Bernet and W. G. Osthoff families started for Tacoma Park in Mr. Bernets auto Monday evening. They got within a few miles of the park when the auto got stuck in the mud. Harry Hoover came along with his auto and tried to pull them out but broke his machine in the attempt. They then tried horse power but that failed. Finally a large auto came along and succeeded in pulling them out. By that time they decided they didn't have to go to the park and turned around and came home."

The Great Northern charged 50 cents roundtrip for its regular trains to Tacoma Park from Aberdeen throughout the summer of 1916 starting June 30 through end of September. However, during Park Week June 29 to July 5 special trains handled the increased traffic triggered by that annual event. One might depart from Aberdeen on the regular morning freight at 9 a.m. and the regular 7:10p.m. train or board one of the four specials scheduled for 10:30a.m., 1:30p.m., 7:45 and 10:30p.m. Three evening specials enabled people to leave Tacoma park at 6 p.m., 9:10p.m., & 12 mid-night. Real nightowls could board the regular freight train at 2:20a.m.

Even before Park Week 1916 when the Moose picnicked at the Park Sunday June 18, they encountered crowded travel. Having shipped most of their picnic and tenting supplies on the 10:30 a.m. train the major contingent of Moose began at 1 p.m. to board the special train. Due to the large number of passengers the train was delayed until about 2 p.m. when it departed with all seats filled and "crowded in the aisles". The Daily American described their arrival:

"Upon reaching the park the crowd was met by the sounds of cryers calling their wares. Automobiles were lined along the road and under the trees and everything presented a scene of a typical picnic day."

As of May 7, 1916 there were 1584 cars in Brown County; of those 615 were in Aberdeen according to the Daily American of May 17. Mrs. J. H. Kyle, wife of

deceased U.S. senator Kyle, and son James were one of many to motor to Tacoma Park to visit friends and enjoy the attractions during that park week. .

Added to the potential for drowning in the Jim was the possibility to be the victim of an automobile accident. Such was the case of a ten-year old lad who on Sunday July 1, 1917 about 6 p.m. walked in front of John Romans' car as John was leaving a parking spot in front of the park store. Romans took young Ralph Herseth, future governor of South Dakota, to the Herseth cottage where it was discovered that his right leg had been broken between the hip and the knee.

Mortoring to the Park became customary in 1918 and 1919. About a month before Park Week 1919 Tacoma Park on May 28, 1919 was flooded with autos: "never before even on park week was such a large mass of autos seen stacked around the Jim River resort". The Daily News reported that on July 4, 1919 an estimated 13,000 people and over 2300 cars parked on the grounds. During Park Week 1919 management fenced additional parking space on the hill near the baseball diamond and provided a security guard as park grounds held space for only 700 or 800 cars. . By 1919 people transported by auto equaled the numbers brought in by train. Road access became increasingly important to Park management and to potential customers. Rainfall and mud hindered autoists more than trains in reaching Tacoma Park. With the establishment of a state highway system after 1919 the cry increased for graveled roads to Tacoma Park.

According to a Daily News report of June 12 there were over 5100 autos in Brown County up to June 10, 1922. In Park Week publicity for 1922 as part of envisioned "happy hours" at Tacoma Park, management promised "auto tourists will find plenty of fine camping space". The Fourth of July, during what was to be the last Park Week, boasted day-long crowds on the park grounds. Keeping in mind recovery efforts from the great wind storm of 1921 the Daily News on July 6 judged that "the attendance was proof of the return of popularity of Tacoma park under the present management and that it is filling a fine place of entertainment for a great body of the people of the county"

Looking back over eight years of achievement (1898-1905) in program variety, park structures and grounds improvement, the Park Association directors, upon the issuance of the 1905 Park plat, proudly congratulated themselves on fulfillment of both the original entertainment and educational objectives. They

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had brought speakers--both the noted and the notorious--to Tacoma Park tent and auditorium in support of that old Alliance motto: "The Truth Shall Make You Free".

They brought music to the Park grounds, the auditorium and dancing pavilion. Following the lead of Aberdeen opera houses and theaters and in cooperation with them, the Board brought classic drama, vaudeville and picture plays to park campers, cottagers and commuters. In the future they were challenged to live up to the flattering phrases of the past describing Tacoma Park as a prairie paradise and Coney Island, a nature resort, a mecca for relaxation and recreation under the shade of trees and cooled by river waters.

PICNIC AT THE PARK 1900-1923

SMALL GROUP PICNICS

Families and small groups, as well as larger organizational groups, frequented Tacoma Park to picnic and enjoy the grounds during the Chautauqua era. Referring to the Fourth of July 1907 the Daily News observed

"Aside from the public celebrations at Tacoma tomorrow, it is understood that there are many private parties planned, which will seek secluded spots in the Park and along the banks of the joyous James for the day. Many other private parties will be found in various other secluded nooks, enjoying lunch, chasing off the flies and getting whatever repose is possible under the circumstances."

Illustrative of these were church and Sunday school picnics. Transportation to the Park varied as the years advanced. The Congregational Sunday school held its annual basket picnic Tuesday June 28, 1904 at Tacoma Park. Youth reported to the church at 8:00 a.m. to board carriages. Four years later on Friday July 2, 1908 that church's Sunday school took the train at 9:45 a.m. to the Park. Presbyterians and Episcopal societies held a joint Sunday school picnic arriving at the Park on the 9:00 a.m. train and departing on the 5:00 p.m. train.

The Dakota Farmer picnic of Saturday June 5, 1909 is another example of small group picnics. About forty employees reached the Park in a large hayrack drawn by four horses. They spent the time eating, boating on the James, competing in races and in a ball game. On July 4, 1912 the Knights and Ladies of the

Maccabees and their friends came with baskets for the picnic lunch held in a central tent; also the Grand Army Woman's Relief Corps and Sons of Veterans celebrated at the Park.

On Thursday July 12, 1917 a caravan of vets departed from lodge headquarters at 9:30 a.m. for Tacoma picnicking and dancing. On August 4th of that year the Aberdeen Medical Society met at the Park enjoying musical and sports activities. Thus over the years horse power, steam power and gasoline power enabled smaller interest groups to visit this popular picnic site.

ORGANIZATIONAL PICNICS

There were times when larger groups hosted a well publicized picnic at Tacoma Park. Some were scheduled before and after Park Week and others during that special week. In the years to 1922 the A.O. U. W, Modern Woodmen, the Eagles, the Moose, the Knights of Columbus, the United Commercial Travellers, the Thresherman, Odd Fellows and the Farmers Bureau hosted picnics at the Park. These groups often established a headquarters tent on the grounds and provided a registration book and services to members.

The A.O. U. Workman and the Ladies Degree of Honor lodges picnicked at Tacoma Park on Friday June 30, 1905--the Big Day (La Follette Day) of Park Week. Some 400 persons boarded the Great Northern train that morning. Also Grotonites were well represented. The Daily News reported;" Every automobile, hack or carriage was hired to carry people from that town to Tacoma". The lodge's large and well furnished headquarters' tent included a small reading table with Aberdeen and Minneapolis daily newspapers and some magazines provided by the Park Association. Free checking service was available for lunches, wraps and articles at this tent.

The morning session at 10:30 was well attended. The audience eagerly awaited to hear T.M. Simmons, SD Grant Master Workman who spoke on the "Origin and Development of Fraternal Beneficiary Societies". Park visitors were also eager to hear at 2:30 in the afternoon Robert W. La Follette, Wisconsin governor and U. S. Senator elect. George B. Daly, President of the Tacoma Park Association, introduced La Follette who spoke for two and one half hours on "Representative Government".

Lodge members, along with others, visited the new dancing pavilion and enjoyed the music of Cason's

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orchestra. The Daily News reported: "It is remarkable how popular dancing has become at the park."

Those expert at gopher hunting had the opportunity to practice their marksmanship at Dick Thomas' new steam moving target. The Daily News of June 30 reported that fine scores were the result of practice with gopher rifles. "Some of the girls have acquired skill in the hunting of gophers. Miss May Preston, a little Riverside girl, was seen to make successive center shots. The girl behind the gun has a pretty good aim."

Having held their first Tacoma Park picnic in 1899, the Modern Woodman scheduled another for July 2, 1908. This was a multi county affair and encompassed more lodges than the 1899 one. The roundtrip railroad fare for those living 50 miles from Aberdeen was reduced. The first train departed from the Great Northern Depot at 10:00 a.m. The Woodman/Royal Neighbors headquarters' tent was set up at the Park. The Affiliated Royal Neighbors' ladies brought provisions to this tent and served a noon and evening meal. More than 500 woodmen from Brown County and neighboring counties attended. For an hour and a half the national organizer of the Woodman, Boston's Thomas Duffy, recounted their twenty-five year history. Logrolling and prize drills were amongst the other attractions.

GATHERING OF THE EAGLES

The Eagles had at least eight picnics between 1911 and 1921 at the Park. Special trains open to outsiders provided transportation at least three times a day. In 1913 an estimated 600 to 700 were at the Park; over 2000 came by auto. About 1000 attended the 1914 picnic by auto and train. Trains and autos carried about 1500 people on July 13, 1915. In 1911 and 1912 Eagles headquartered in H. J. Glesen's cottage but in 1914 the Eagles Roost was at the Park dining room.

Over 125 people attended the Sunday picnic July 2, 1911. Walking and river boating occupied the morning. Japanese lanterns adorned the cottage lawn where noon lunch was served. They ate roast meats, cold cuts, salads, fresh vegetables, pickles, olives, ice cream and cake. Eagle picnics specialized in races of various kinds--foot, boat, canoe, tub, short sprints, children's races & in 1914 even a fatman's race.

Special features for Sunday July 4, 1913 included Prof. Hayseed and his crew of Reubens, a suffragette quartet from London who promised "not to hurl any bombs, stop any races, or in any manner interfere with

the joyous occasion" which suffragettes had been known to do in Britain. Prof. Honeggere's circus mules performed and Andover's Professor Bishop showed the children his trained monkeys.

Eagles' president promised to dive from the top of the highest tree into the "raging" Jim at 4:00 p.m. A German band marched about the Park to become a real hit. In the afternoon on the diamond the Eagle team confronted the Stratford "bunch" tying with a score of six to six.

Eagles gathered at the fourth Tacoma Park Eagle picnic on Sunday July 12, 1914 between 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. Instructed to bring their own lunch, picnickers viewed an afternoon baseball game in which the Moose defeated Stratford four to two. The Eagle band entertained and Eagle orchestra played at the dance under electric lights.

All-day amusements included the ballgame followed by boating, canoeing, the races and dancing. The merry-go-round was held over from Park Week. Publicity stressed the park's dense shade along the placid Jim River and opportunity to use rowboats and canoes.

The 5th annual Eagles picnic Sunday July 11, 1915 featured a baseball contest between the Moose and the United Commercial Travellers. Boat, canoe and foot races were other forms of entertainment. Evening dancing to the music of the red-and-white costumed, Eagle eight-piece band continued from 10:00 p.m. to 12 midnight. A breeze alleviated the evening heat.

On June 24, 1916 the Eagles band marched from the Great Northern Depot to board the 10:30 a.m. train. Hot sandwiches were served all day at the headquarters' reception tent which was forty feet by one hundred twenty feet in size. In the afternoon Aberdeen met Bowdle on the diamond.

In 1918 the twelfth annual meeting featured a special homecoming for former lodge members. Eagle members operated park concessions for that July 8. Stratford and Groton contested on the diamond for a \$100 purse.

On Sunday July 11, 1920 the 14th annual Eagles picnic featured many new attractions not found during regular Park Week: Watson's wild west show with trick & fancy roping, bucking bronchos which were a farce and a strong man who claimed the ability to lift seven men and hold on his chest a moving Cadillac automobile, a pie eating contest and tug of war. Mediocre riders on plow horses faked falling from their nags to convince viewers this was a real wild west

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show. For those not satisfied management refunded some \$50 or \$60. Adding to the varied entertainment was a baseball game in which the Hub City Cubs clobbered Columbia eleven to four. Also featured were a lightweight wrestling match between 131 pound Frank Backley and Jimmie Tatto from Ft. Yates, and aeroplane flights for passengers as well as fancy flying maneuvers.

With a full lighting system for night dancing from 7:00 p.m. to midnight the Eagles fulfilled their promise of "a good time" to its members and the public.

MOOSE PICNICS

The Moose began their annual Sunday picnic at Tacoma Park in 1911. At their 5th annual meeting Sunday June 18, 1916, the Moose invited the general public to utilize Great Northern train service and join them and their families. Four trains to and from the Park were filled to capacity. The ball game that day went ten innings between the victor Calmenson's of Aberdeen and Hecla. The occasion included canoeing, boating and open air dancing. The Daily News of June 19 observed: "The roads were dotted with hurrying cars filled with groups bound for a family picnic."

The Moose, as well as the Eagles, featured varied contests such as in 1919 when they held a married woman foot race, a race for young women, a race for boys over 18, a swimming contest for boys under 16, canoe races and a foot race for Moose only. In 1919 they promised "something doing from early morning until after midnight". Hundreds of women and children appreciated Park tree shade on that exceptionally warm day. An exciting nine-inning baseball game followed the three o'clock tug of war.

Tacoma Park won over Columbia ten to nine. In the eighth inning Tacoma Park pitcher Everson angered at the umpire's decision left the pitcher's box for the bench and refused to continue for a time. The crowd became incensed. The Daily News reported one unusual event: "Columbia pitcher furnished a moment of comedy by chasing a flickertail gopher...over an acre of ground and into his den." Dancing to a six piece orchestra began at 7:00 p.m. and concluded at 1:00 a.m. A dance special of five coaches left Aberdeen for the Park at 9:00 p.m. Some 500 came to the Moose picnic by train and about 1000 by auto.

A TRIO OF PICNICS

The Knights of Columbus picnic of Sunday June 13, 1915 was well attended. The Daily News reported

that "upward of 450 tickets were sold for both trips" and that passengers made up "one of the largest crowds to ever leave Aberdeen on one train". Despite roads muddied from rain several days previously, nearly 200 autos maneuvered over area road and puddles to attend.

The United Commercial Travelers travelled by auto to their annual picnic on Saturday July 14, 1917. All travelling men resident in Brown County as well as the public were invited to bring food for a noon dinner. The fat and the lean men baseball game provided the chief attraction. Races for all groups and a watermelon contest, as well as an evening dance, helped verify the promise of no dull moments.

The Brown County Threshermen's Association held their annual picnic at Tacoma Park on Saturday June 7, 1919. The County Farm Bureau supervised a multiple hitch demonstration--a method of applying horse power to farm machinery. The business meeting focused on the problem of injury to men employed as threshing machine operators and an insurance increase for thresher employees.

FARM BUREAU PICNICS

During the late Chautauqua era the Federal Farm Bureau began picnics at Tacoma Park--a tradition which continued well into the 1930s. They booked the Park for July 1, 1918, July 2, 1919 and again on Thursday June 30, 1921-- the second day of the annual Tacoma Park Week.

Events differed from other picnics in that there were sewing contests for girls from Brown County sewing clubs, and girls' canning club demonstrations. Home guards drill exhibitions were added features. Talks by home demonstration agents and boys and girls club leaders gave this picnic more of an educational tone. Picnic dinner at noon was sandwiched in between these events.

A 10:00 a.m. horseshoe pitching contest was the initial feature in 1921 followed by an 11:00 a.m. baseball game in which the Groton Pig Club defeated the Hecla Pig Club twelve to five. Speeches by the state governor and the Farm Bureau president followed the noon lunch.

A relatively new organization, in its two year existence, the Farm Bureau, according to the Aberdeen Journal of July 1, had grown in popularity and influence--15,000 members in South Dakota and two million nationally. Therefore, Thursday June 30 was set aside as Brown County Farm Bureau Day. W. S.

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Hall, president of the S.D. Farm Bureau, spoke on the value of farm organization, direct grain marketing by farmers and the need for reduced freight rates. Governor Mc'Master praised farm women and stated "there was no excuse for failure of a young man in this section if he but had willingness to work." He urged farmers to stick to their land and urged longer term credit for farmers.

Farm Bureau Day 1921 continued with baseball at 4:20 p.m. Evening entertainment included pavilion dancing at 7:00 p.m. and at 8:15 p.m. movies in the auditorium.

OLD SETTLERS DAY

A unique picnic event scheduled as a special day during Park Week was Old Settler's Day. Thirteen such picnic days were held between 1904 and 1923. In 1923 there was no Park Week but an Old Settlers picnic was held in the morning with addresses beginning at 11:00 a.m. followed by a noon picnic lunch. In the afternoon eighth grade graduation was the main drawing card.

Usually referred to as a picnic, it was more of a sitting program, a gathering of older residents for reunion and reminiscences. Four major components, aside from informal conversation, made up that day: noon picnic lunch, musical program, ten minute historical talks, a business meeting and election of officers. Following the meeting settlers and others attended a baseball game. The Old Settlers' Association had been formed in March of 1882 at Aberdeen. Humphrey grove near Rondell had been their first summer meeting site and in 1883 Columbia. After a period of inactivity the old association reorganized with about 100 members at the meeting of Saturday July 2, 1904 at Tacoma Park. In the forenoon an old settlers quartet sang two songs and the Mendelsohn quartet of young men entertained. At the auditorium five old timers shared their Brown County experiences in papers. Ole Everson, J. E. Humphrey, T. C. Gage, J. D. Reeves and A. W. Kruger. In the afternoon two quartet songs preceded Senator Gamble's remarks on Dakota history.

Most of the ensuing Old Settlers' picnics followed this pattern of 1904. In 1906 they assembled in the auditorium to hear pioneer papers. W. A. Wens spoke on the settlement of Bath. Capt. J. H. Hauser was reelected president and George B. Daly as secretary. The Daily News of July 3, 1906 called this "one of the most enthusiastic meetings since reorganization." Yet

at the 1907 meeting Hauser was absent due to illness and attendance was low. The newspaper reported need to wake up interest in this event. The group elected J. D. Reeves as President and re-elected George B. Daly as Secretary along with five district officers. From 1908 through 1912 Old Settlers day was held elsewhere.

In 1913 Old Settlers Days resurfaced at Tacoma Park. Following a noon basket lunch, members adjourned to the auditorium where music and speeches followed. The Daily News noted that story swapping time "has created considerable interest". Six old timers gave ten minute talks on Brown County's past: S. H. Jumper; L. T. Boucher; Charles N. Herreid, James Lawson, W. A. Burnham and Frank Brown.



Brown County Old Settlers 1913

On June 29, 1917 a large crowd gathered at the auditorium for an extensive musical program supplemented by speakers from the six Brown County towns of Bath, Aberdeen, Verdon, Claremont, Brainard and Groton. Following the business meeting and singing of America, they adjourned.

On Wednesday July 3, 1918 they gathered at 1:30 p.m. in the auditorium where they heard Sheridan, Wyoming's C. F. Fisher speak on Food administration and Governor Peter Norbeck as well as George Warring, an assistant to Herbert Hoover. Ten minute historical talks concluded the meeting with speakers from Groton, Bath, Stratford, Aberdeen, and Claremont.

In 1920 on June 28 the sixteen-piece Aberdeen high school band played for the Old Settlers. Charles N. Herried, Supt. of schools, J. T. Glen and professor

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A.H. Seymour of the Normal, Hecla attorney, W. H. Morgan, David Vaughn of Frederick, George B. Daily of Columbia and J. H. Firey of Aberdeen shared reminiscences.

The Park's first opening day in 1921 was Old Settlers Day. Picnicking, a ball game and evening dancing in the pavilion marked the day in addition to historical talks.

The final Old Settlers picnic held at Tacoma Park was June 30, 1923 when the annual Park assembly no longer met. The last 8th grade graduation held at the Park was held in combination with Old Settlers Day.

INDOOR STAGE AND SCREEN ENTERTAINMENT 1900-1922

Park week 1900 was the year of the auditorium and abandonment of the tent for lecture and theater entertainment. The Tacoma Park Association built an auditorium 80 feet by 120 feet with a seating capacity of over 2000. A stage was equipped with scenery.

In the years to follow at least fifteen different stock companies entertained on that stage. Some rebooked in succeeding years.

In addition, one projectoscope company, using screen and slides, and several Aberdeen movie and vaudeville entrepreneurs provided those forms of entertainment usually in the evenings but occasionally at afternoon matinees.

Two act dramatizations were frequent. In 1902

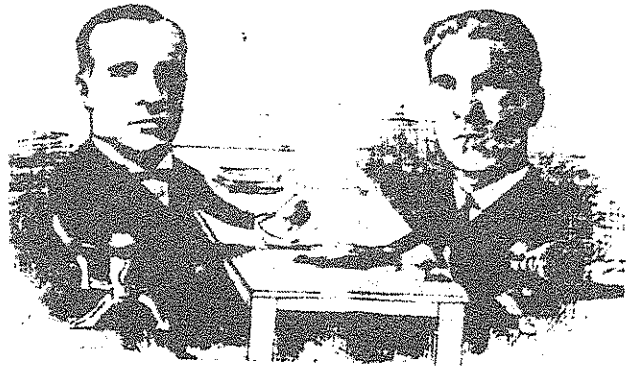
Ed Hall played a hen-pecked husband in "freezing a mother-in-law." Stock companies had a varied repertoire of six or seven plays which they performed on different nights. Some stock players introduced specialties each night. Such musical novelties appearing between acts added to the variety of the stage show auditorium evenings

Aberdeen's Gottschalk Theatre before it burned transferred stock companies which had been playing there to Tacoma Park during park week. Aberdeen's Orpheum Theater followed this practice.

In 1903 the D. W. Robinson Projectoscope Company presented the passion play to what the newspaper judged to be "the largest audience that had yet assembled in the auditorium". That company also played in July 1904 with moving pictures of "Uncle Tom's Cabin". They also dominated the stage in 1907. Projectoscope screening efforts were somewhat similar to the illustrated song slides shown in early Aberdeen movie and vaudeville houses.

Auditorium offerings reveal the growing impact of motion pictures. Park week 1912 was unique in that no stock company was booked to provide evening entertainment at the auditorium. Instead "moving picture show every evening" filled the void.

In 1913 both movies and stock company plays were presented in the evenings at the Tacoma Park auditorium. R.E. Darnell of Groton presented one of these moving picture shows. Aberdeen's H. I. Walker and his partner M. Kellogg leased the auditorium from the park association for six nights of park week 1913. Walker's Aberdeen theater closed during park week so the stock company could present its plays at Tacoma Park. The July 4th show filled every seat in the auditorium. Walker and Kellogg repeated this transfer from theater to Tacoma Park auditorium in 1914.



H. L. WALKER AND M.C. KELLOGG

H. L. Walker and Aberdeen's Orpheum theater, formerly the Aberdeen Theater, had moved from purely staged plays to vaudeville acts and in March 1914 to movies. The auditorium bookings for 1917 reveal that shift in entertainment forms. As in 1913, Walker transferred his regular Orpheum program to the Tacoma Park auditorium for six big days June 29 to July 4. Under Orpheum Theatre management Tacoma Park auditorium offered over 6 days nine vaudeville acts and reels of pathe news. At each performance patrons saw three acts of vaudeville and four reels of movies with a change of program every two days. Adult admissions were 25 cents and children ten cents. Publicity slogans were "visit us--we will entertain you right"; "if you like our show tell your friends; if you don't, tell us." The Orpheum's six piece orchestra accompanied films such as scenic America, Pathe news and "Lonesome Luke."

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Stock players dominated the auditorium stage in 1918 and 1919 but in 1920 a mix of vaudeville and motion pictures resumed center stage. The repaired and reshingled auditorium of 1920 boasted an enlarged theatre troop of vaudevillians along with "home theater" offerings of Max Sennet comedies and longer features such as "the Haunted Bedroom".

Thus, from 1900 to 1922 the Tacoma Park auditorium usurped the role of the previous tent theater and became the center of evening entertainment, both stage and screen, at Tacoma Park. The dance pavilion, constructed in 1898 and which had received less initial publicity, became the auditorium's chief rival as evening entertainment on park grounds.

INDOOR ATTRACTIONS: FORENOONS AND AFTERNOONS

THE CHAUTAUGUA YEARS A FEAST FOR THE MIND

PARK WEEK 1900-1905: AUDITORIUM ORATORY

Public speakers--orators of the day--dominated the tent platform in the afternoons during the first two years of camp meetings in the 1890s at Tacoma Park and were the star stage performers in the new auditorium during afternoon sessions of the ensuing twenty-three camp meetings.

Varied speakers--out-of-state and in-state--shared views on state, national and international issues: overseas wars 1898-99; 1904; 1914-18, anti imperialism, anti-trust and monopoly concerns, labor and agricultural issues such as marketing of farm products and moral issues such as temperance and suffrage. Their personalities and comments on contemporary social, economic and political issues attracted audiences, energized press response and served an educational purpose.

While management scheduled some speakers for the forenoon, planners primarily booked the Park auditorium for afternoon public speaking. Certain days were designated by the speaker's name such as Bryan Day or LaFollette Day. Programs began at varied times. They were scheduled as early as 12:00 p.m., sometimes 1:30 p.m.. More often they were at 2:00 or 2:30 p.m., and usually ended in time to attend a baseball game at 4:00 p.m.

1900: For Park Week 1900 a new auditorium had replaced the tent of 1898 and 1899. It was not constructed until shortly before the beginning of Park Week. A report of June 19, 1900 indicated that "the

frame work of the auditorium has been completed and the work of putting on the siding will begin as soon as the materials arrive, which is expected tomorrow." During Park Week the auditorium was serviceable although the roof was covered only by tar paper nailed over the roof boards. Shingling occurred in 1901. However, seats and stage were ready for the daytime orators and the stock company performers at night.

At the conclusion of Park Week the Aberdeen Weekly News of July 5 revealed the newspaper's anti-socialist and anti-intellectual bias in down-grading Tacoma Park auditorium lectures which in 1900 seemed to challenge republican principles:

"Tacoma Park seems to have lost much of its political significance. In former years people went there to hear the speaking. This year they go to enjoy the shade, the recreation and the change. It is probable the crowds in attendance would be almost as large if there was no speaking at all. A careful observer, who has watched the crowds, says it has seemed to him that two to one are Republicans and that scarcely one out of five goes near the auditorium except to look in at the door."

An estimated 3000 or more were at the Park on Thursday, June 28 and most remained until the 11:00 p.m. train departure. Many had missed an earlier train. Many rural folks had set up tents for the week. Charles Towne of Sioux Falls, Populist nominee for Vice President, was the first to speak on the stage of the new auditorium. In a two hour address, he denounced republican Philippine and Cuban policy and declared that people had died in order that America might secure commerce.

At the auditorium on Friday morning June 29 South Dakota governor Andrew Lee spoke to the Brown County Populist convention which selected delegates to attend the Yankton convention. In the afternoon his son-in-law M. L. Fox belittled oriental trade and pursued an anti-imperialist theme. Speakers bearing monikers such as "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, "Sockless" Jerry Simpson and "Cyclone" Davis of Texas orated in ensuing afternoons.

1901: On June 18, 1901 the editor of the Aberdeen Daily News asserted that the Tacoma Park camp meeting will be "shorter on wind than usual" during Park Week. However, he qualified this by saying that the Populist party though short of votes had "an inexhaustible well of oratory on tap" and orators who "can still talk the ears off a wooden Indian." Even

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though it seemed that in the 1901 program music and drama had encroached on public speaking, the News admitted there would be talk: "A Pop meeting without plenty of that would be odder than Hamlet without the melancholy Dane."

The Park Association directors had voted on Monday May 20, 1901 to cover the auditorium with a shingled roof. On June 27, the night before opening of Park Week, workers had about half the auditorium roof shingled. The ensuing showery week reduced tent pitching and slowed down work on Park structures.

The first public speaking program began on Saturday morning June 29 with Eugene Debs, the Socialist presidential candidate in the 1900 election. Mounting the platform for over two hours, he claimed that a person defending the people's cause could not get elected and that only pro-capitalist laws had a chance of passage on a state or national level. In the past railroads had grown as a result of property confiscations with the few benefiting at the expense of the many. In the future with the triumph of socialism the many would be victorious over the few. On Sunday afternoon June 30 he spoke to 600 who had paid 25 cents each for their seats.

On Saturday afternoon Rev. David Morgan spoke on "The Cause and Cure of Crime". Attributing defective public schools as partly responsible for the prevalence of crime, Morgan advocated industrial training for youth. He denounced use of convict labor which competed with private enterprise and declared that society should accept a man who has served his sentence and give him an opportunity to reenter society. On Sunday morning he spoke again. The Daily News characterized him as a plain talker whose words often had the impact of a dynamite bomb. Some 800 people came from Aberdeen by train that Sunday.

1902: Although Populist oratory continued at the 1900 and 1901 encampments, the newspaper press gradually recognized a transition from purely socialist programs to programs with minimal socialist content. At the conclusion of the 1902 Park Week the Daily News judged that politics was almost eliminated as program fare for that camp meeting. Instead of Populism and Socialism, programs took on modern Chautauqua features.

The "drawing card" for Saturday afternoon June 28, 1902 was Captain Richard Pierson Hobson, "hero of Santiago", who spoke on his adventures in the war with Spain and his role in preventing the escape of the Spanish fleet at Santiago Harbor. Hobson asserted that

Americans should be more appreciative of seamen and the navy's role in American and world history. He predicted the Far East would be a great market for America. On Sunday afternoon Lou Beaucham, the laughing philosopher, spoke on "Moonshine", a laugh producer throughout. That afternoon concluded with William Kidd's memorial service. He had been editor of The Ruralist and one of the Tacoma Park Association directors. On Tuesday afternoon July 1 Henry Wallace, editor of Wallaces Farmer, De Moines, Iowa, spoke on "The 20th Century Farmer".

A large audience greeted William Jennings Bryan Wednesday afternoon July 2. Billed as the main attraction of the day, Bryan spoke for nearly three hours. On Friday July 4 an estimated 7000 people crowded Tacoma Park.

During this Park Week there were only two lectures on socialism and the last lecture on Sunday was an afternoon sermon by Aberdeen Congregational minister Rev. T. J. Dent.

1903: Tenters and cottagers had settled in by Saturday June 27 awaiting Park Week 1903. The Daily News believed there were more campers for an opening day than ever before. More campers set up tents by Sunday morning. In the afternoon president George Daly introduced the orator of the day, W. L. Clark, Asst. Sec. of the National Socialist Party. Columbia's correspondent observed the ensuing events as a severe thunder shower interrupted the proceedings:

"it began to pour down--and pour in through the ventilators causing a stampede to the opposite dry corner and drowning the speaker's voice with the din on the roof but all seemed willing and happy to be interrupted; even the speaker, who was filled with zeal for his cause, found that he could smother the flame a little while longer, and all give themselves up to the enjoyment of the storm."

Clark continued his remarks and affirmed that workers were the only class worth saving as it was the one that produced all necessities. He was critical of the twelve hour day and lowly pay that child labor endured under capitalism.

Monday, June 29 was Carrie Nation Day at Tacoma Park. Fifty-seven year old Carrie, the self-styled "Home Defender", left Aberdeen for Tacoma Park on the 9:00 a.m. train after visiting several saloons and insisting that her driver to the Great Northern station refrain from smoking. The Daily News reported a packed auditorium for her afternoon address.

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Dressed in white, smiling and carrying her hatchet, she pictured herself as a peaceful, home-loving, home-saving lady and asked folks to banish the image of a ranting, raving battleaxe. She explained the motivation behind lecturing and saloon smashing was God directed. Quoting scripture, she recognized that the ballot was an effective saloon smasher but also had faith in God and the hatchet as her sword.



Carrie Nation

She preferred attacking the institution rather than an individual man. Carrie blamed the Republican Party for creating the licensed saloon in order to raise revenue and to pay war debts. Parrying words with a gentleman in the audience, she declared that saloons should not be licensed any more than horse thieves or murderers and closed her two-hour talk with a prayer and singing the doxology.

The Farmer's Institute dominated Tuesday June 30. Audiences heard about potato and corn farming and the home as a place where women developed values and skills. On the following July 1 President Koehler of Northern Normal Industrial School hammered home the idea that education led to suitable and congenial employment, that education was power and public schools should be encouraged as the workshop of youth.

On the concluding afternoon of Park Week 1903 Richard Henry Little of Chicago spoke on "Planting the Flag in Luzon".

1904: Publicity claimed the camp meeting of 1904 to be "the plain people's Chautauqua" where one might fish, ride the merry-go-round, swing on a hammock or "for those inclined to improve their minds" one might proceed to the auditorium where this season the majority of orators were from South Dakota. For once

this proved to be a good weather week conducive to luring campers and non-camping commuters to the Park.

Although many South Dakotans spoke during this week, several were from out of state. The Daily News of June 30 reported on Dr. Toyochiki Iyenegal's eloquent lecture on Japan and the current Russo-Japanese War. Audiences were not likely to forget his definition of the Monroe Doctrine: "America for the Americans & everything else they can get besides."

The afternoon of Thursday June 30 Richard Pettigrew expounded with old time enthusiasm on "Government Ownership of Railroads". He asserted that the United States was the only nation that did not have government owned and operated railroads, that Americans paid excessive rates charged by private lines and that railroads were "the most exorbitant trust in the country". He pointed out that larger shippers received lower rates to the detriment of smaller shippers.

On Sunday July 3 listeners heard both in the morning and afternoon religious messages. Aberdeen's Methodist minister Reverend J. W. Taylor focused on the life and death of Jesus. He urged Christians to forgive sinners as did the optimistic Jesus who advocated salvation through love.

On Monday July 4 the lecture focused on the morning when Coe I. Crawford of Huron eloquently gave an hour long patriotic address in the auditorium. Before Coe's speech S. H. Cranmer gave his usual rendition of the Declaration of Independence followed by Miss Narregang's singing two songs.

1905: A new morning train schedule marked the camp meeting of 1905. Three trains--one at 7:00 a.m., a second at 8:30 a.m. and a third at 10:30 a.m.-- helped fill the Park earlier than in previous years when only one special train departed Aberdeen at 9:30 a.m. These early trains were well filled.

Old Settlers Day opened the seven day event. After a morning business session, Old Settlers and others gathered at the auditorium on Wednesday June 28 to hear music, recitations and short historical talks. About 3:00 p.m. state senator James M. Lawson spoke thirty minutes on the "Hardihood of Frontier Life".

The Daily News reported the chief attraction of Thursday June 29-- Dr. Charles Eastman of Amherst, Massachusetts. Introduced by Association President George Daly at 1:30 p.m., in the auditorium, Dr. Eastman spoke on "The Last Stand of the Sioux"

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(Custer's Last Fight). A graduate of Dartmouth in 1887 and Boston University School of Medicine in 1890, he had become a noted physician, lecturer and author of stories about Indian life and boyhood. He cited friendly Indian-white relations until land pressures forced Indians to hostility. Then he focused on the Sioux and their plains travel and U.S. efforts to place them on reservations in the post Civil War era. He blamed Custer and his men for their fate as they should not have been caught by surprise. The auditorium admission receipts for his talk were \$61.50, a little over his compensation of \$60.00.

Friday June 30 was LaFollette Day and also the day of the A.O.U.W. Picnic previously described. Because of LaFollette's presence, Friday was characterized as "The Big Day of the Week". Five crowded coaches departed Aberdeen at 2:00 p.m. By 2:30 that afternoon the auditorium was packed. The Park Association paid La Follette \$150.00 for his appearance and sold \$171.00 in tickets making a profit of \$21.00.

Saturday's 2:30 p.m. lecture, advertised as "something new" at the auditorium, took the form of a chalk talk by Lorenzo Zwickey. The speed at which he sketched and his ability to do this blindfolded awed the audience.

An estimated 5000 people flocked to Tacoma Park on Sunday July 2. Over a thousand used the train; others came by team. The Aberdeen Weekly News judged that "the crowd was the largest concourse of people that ever congregated at one time in the history of Brown County." The South Dakota State Band played two sacred concerts --one with the morning sermon and at 4:00 p.m.

Park Week 1905 concluded on Tuesday July 4. Mitchell's state senator O.L. Branson gave a patriotic address at 10:30 a.m. At 2:30 p.m. the stock company performed on the auditorium stage followed by Aberdeen's South Dakota State Band at 4:00 p.m. with the Grand Patriotic Concert.

PARK WEEK 1906-1922: AUDITORIUM ORATORY

Auditorium afternoons were primarily aimed to fulfill the Tacoma Park Association's educational goal spiced with musical interludes before and after orators of the day had delivered their lectures or in some cases sermons. Noted state and national speakers were a prime component of the Chautauqua style offerings to relax the body and to feed the mind. Occasionally an entertainer such as a magician or a humorist might dominate the stage, but Park management generally

booked intellectual fare aimed at a rural, agriculturally oriented audience.

Between 1912 and 1923 a special type of lecture emerged when eighth grade graduation ceremonies for rural Brown County schools were held at Tacoma Park. On those occasions the commencement address, comparable to the Chautauqua lecture, climaxed a series of student recitations, declamations and musical interludes.

The Tacoma Park Association faced problems in booking speakers. Board members in charge of booking sometimes traveled to Sioux Falls or Minneapolis to set up schedules. Frequently engagements were broken as a result of transportation problems, illness and other factors. The show did go on sometimes with impromptu replacements which altered the advertising of early June for Assembly Week events in late June and early July. By 1922 the difficulty and expense of securing quality speakers in competition with summer chautauquas in neighboring towns was apparent.

Most forenoon activities took the form of nature walks, games, and other outdoor entertainments and on Sundays a morning sermon. However, the afternoons and evenings saw the biggest crowds especially when morning train service was too early-- 5:00 a.m. or 7:00 a.m. except for a mid-morning special train at 9:30 or 10:00. On Sundays and Fourth of July the morning train schedule might be moved to a more reasonable hour such as 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. in 1908 for example. The train trip from Aberdeen to Tacoma Park was about a half hour ride at twenty-five cents one way, fifty cents roundtrip adult fare. Thus, if one were to be at the Park for a noon picnic or a one o'clock performance, they would most likely get the mid-morning train or the 1:00 or 1:30 p.m. train for afternoons at the auditorium which usually began about 2:00 or 2:30 p.m.

The starting time for auditorium events took into account the need for picnickers to finish their lunches and to give time for train passengers to board the early afternoon special train from Aberdeen. Of course, if you were cottagers and campers already on site or commuters by carriage or auto, train schedules made little difference. Usually auditorium afternoons were followed about 4:00 p.m. by outdoor baseball at the diamond on the hill. An early evening train made it possible to return to Aberdeen without staying for evenings at the auditorium stock company plays or pavilion dancing. However, many wished to be night owls and preferred the later trains.

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TACOMA PARK ENCAMPMENTS: 1898-1922

The first day of each assembly week was tent pitching and preparation day with program usually beginning the next day.

- 1898: Monday June 29 to Tuesday July 4 (6 days)
- 1899: Thursday June 29 to Wednesday July 4 (7 days)
- 1900: Thursday June 28 to Wednesday July 4 (7 days)
- 1901: Thursday June 28 to Thursday July 4 (7 days)
- 1902: Thursday June 26 to Saturday July 5 (10 days)
- 1903: Saturday June 27 to Sunday July 5 (9 days)
- 1904: Monday June 27 to Monday July 4 (8 days)
- 1905: Wednesday June 28 to Sunday July 4 (7 days)
- 1906: Wednesday June 27 to Wed. July 4 (8 days)
- 1907: Thursday June 27 to Thursday July 4 (8 days)
- 1908: Sunday June 28 to Saturday July 4 (7 days)
- 1909: Sunday June 27 to Monday July 5 (9 days)
- 1910: Tuesday June 28 to Monday July 4 (7 days)
- 1911: Thursday June 29 to Tuesday July 4 (6 days)
- 1912: Thursday June 27 to Thursday July 4 (8 days)
- 1913: Thursday June 26 to Friday July 4 (9 days)
- 1914: Saturday June 27 to Sunday July 5 (9 days)
- 1915: Saturday June 26 to Monday July 5 (10 days)
- 1916: Thursday June 29 to Tuesday July 4 (6 days)
- 1917: Friday June 29 to Wednesday July 4 (6 days)
- 1918: Sunday June 30 to Sunday July 7 (8 days)
- 1919: Sunday June 29 to Sunday July 6 (8 days)
- 1920: Sunday June 27 to Monday July 5 (9 days)
- 1921: Wed. June 29 to Monday July 4 (6 days)
- 1922: Monday June 26 to Tuesday July 4 (9 days)

Park or Assembly Week ranged from six to ten days as indicated in the above chart. Tent pitching and preparation or "Get Ready" Day usually preceded the program days and nights although on the evening of Tent Day sometimes there was a performance. Park management designated some days within the week as special days based on the appearance of a noted speaker, holding of a large, organizational picnic, celebration of a holiday or special cause such as Old Settlers Day. These specials intensified in number during our wartime years 1917-19 with such labels as Red Cross Day or Soldiers and Sailors Day. On Sundays audiences could always count on that being Sacred Concert Day.

Among the nationally known persons appearing at the Tacoma Park auditorium was Hamlin Garland who had experienced Dakota life in the 1880s. On Tuesday, the Fourth of July, 1911, his long awaited appearance materialized. He read from his works, "Cavanaugh" and "The Forest Rangers". Garland's diary edited by

Donald Pizer and published in 1968, reveals negative impressions of that visit:

"The county had developed much since my last visit in 1891, but it was not inspiring to me even yet...the little Park along the muddy Jim was pathetic, with its tiny unkempt grove of watermelons and box elders filled with flimsy cabins and huts. The performances in the hall were all of the same pathos. There was little to see or do! I was busy all the morning visiting old friends of fathers. I spoke at 2:30 and left at six, glad to get away. I probably will never see it again. It makes me wonder at human patience."

In contrast state governor Coe I. Crawford four years previously expressed more favorable remarks about Tacoma Park. On Tuesday July 2, 1907 he spoke on state affairs and congratulated "the people of this section...upon the possession of so ideal a place in which to hold these chautauquas".

At least three South Dakota governors spoke over the years as did national and state congressmen and senators. College professors and presidents addressed the regular meetings as well as 8th grade graduations in 1912 and after. Some talks reflected national concerns and overseas events as well as revealed attitudes acceptable to rural America.

Indicative of the variety of lecture themes and programming topics thought to appeal to rural farmers and their families are these select topics: in 1907 railroad reform and "The Panama Canal"; religious and inspirational talks in 1909 such as "The Prodigal Son", "Christianity and Socialism" and "Second Fiddle" in which the speaker urged people to stand tall and not play second fiddle to the more dominating persons. In 1910 audiences heard about "the Romance of Achievement", "Union Labor and the Golden rule", "The Race Problems in the South" and "Why People Still Read the Bible".

Audiences heard answers in 1912 to "What's Wrong with the World?". They also viewed a slide-illustrated talk on "Good Roads and How to Make Them". "Farming to Pay" and "Farming for Profit" instructed county farmers that year. In 1913 audiences were informed about "The White Slave Traffic, Its Cause and Cure", "Alfalfa and Corn Culture in the Dakotas", "Development of Human Skills" and "Present Day Problems".

South Dakota's U.S. Senator Thomas Sterling informed them about "True Liberty" in 1915. Animal

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culture was popular in 1916 with "Cattle and Growing Foods for Them" and "Making Livestock Profitable on the Farm".

Cooperation became a popular theme in 1917 with "Community cooperation" and "Patriotic Cooperation" receiving attention. The Non-Partisan League had its own special day and themes reminiscent of the earlier populist speeches. The wartime year of 1918 was marked by speeches on "Farmers and the War" and "How the Farmers Will Win the War".

Post war concerns emerged in talks of 1919: "The League of Nations"; "Patriotism in our Time" and "Reconstruction Problems". Fears of the present and visions of the future characterized talks of 1920: "Americanism", "The United States of Tomorrow" and Doane Robinson's "Resources and Natural Development of South Dakota."

Unique to Assembly Week 1912 was the addition of a new special day to Park Week--eighth grade graduation of rural county schools described in an upcoming segment. Unique also was the wartime Assembly Week of 1917

The six day Assembly Week of 1917 was the first such gathering after America had entered the Great European War in April. Unique also was the role of Aberdeen's Orpheum Theater management supervising vaudeville and movies at the auditorium. In addition to the 7:30 and 9:00 p.m shows they offered a 3:30 matinee after the lectures and before the late afternoon baseball game. Billed as "one of the most expensive undertakings ever shown at Tacoma Park", Harry L. Walker's booking of three vaudeville acts and 4 reels of movies at each performance with a change every two days added new dimensions to auditorium afternoons and evenings. There were three specially designated days --two familiar ones: Old Settlers Day and Eighth Grade Graduation Day followed by a new one: Non Partisan League Day.

The unique feature of Park Week 1917 was Non Partisan League Day on Monday July 2 and the auditorium address of the league's president A.C. Townley of Fargo, North Dakota. Following a 10:00 a.m. reception and conference in the auditorium, several others of the "flying squadron" which campaigned for their cause during that summer joined Townley on the auditorium platform. The Daily American of July 3 reported that a "splendid crowd" of receptive farmers heard his plea to overcome party, religious and nationality bias and unite fifteen million American farmers.

Using vivid language and comparisons, Townley asserted that unorganized farmer producers would continue to be "helpless as babies in the womb" if they permitted rule making to be dominated by business leaders.

"You buy at retail and sell at wholesale. You succeed under such a system by taking the margin of profit from your own hides or the toil of your children. That is not business." Townley cited examples of wartime profits between 1911 and 1916 in which business made millions, dumped fish and regulated potatoes and fruit while people starved. He claimed plutocrats fear Germany winning and taking over American wealth so they favor war with Germany. Before sending American boys overseas, the plutocrats should be drafted first.

The Non-Partisan League president predicted that change will come either by intelligent organization or by the gun. "You will repeat what other civilizations have done when too much wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few." He compared the business side of farming to a poker game in which "one man makes the rules so that he has most of the cards, looks in the other fellow's hand and whenever he takes a trick it nets him \$20 while a trick for the other is worth only 25 cents."

Continuing his tirade against price manipulation and the "pirates of industry", he urged farmers to wake up. Townley characterized his remarks as horse sense, not oratory.

The speaker railed against American price fixing autocracy and advocated government control of railroads and food distribution. Referring to the recent registration of ten million Americans, he professed pride in a "manhood that is not afraid of any thing on earth" and that they honored leaders of the revolutionary generation. He suggested it was reasonable to recommend drafting finances of the rich just as young men are drafted, rather than taxing the poor farmer for the war effort. They should share their four billion profits. Such remarks that auditorium afternoon were reminiscent of Populist speakers during the early years of Tacoma Park.

The last Assembly Week was a nine-day affair starting Monday June 26 and concluding Tuesday July 4, 1922. "Come on Let's Go To Tacoma Park...Park Week is on Strong" declared one newspaper advertisement of June 30, 1922. The winds of last July and the spring flood of the Jim had not dampened the Association's will to continue on this 25th year of Chautauquas at the park, really the 30th year if one

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counts the six years at Everson's grove 1892-97. A 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. train and a 1:30 p.m. train provided the means for many to reach the park in time for auditorium afternoons and other activities. Otherwise they would have to wait for the 8:00 p.m. train or come by auto, which as the years passed was more and more the choice of many.

Writing about the Fourth of July, 1922 the Aberdeen Journal used the word "mecca" to describe the Park with its many attractions such as speaking programs, field meets, dances, ball games, evening shows and fireworks. However, one event traditional since 1912--8th grade graduation--was omitted due to scheduling problems and would be held July 28.

Non intellectual activity such as swimming, boating and ball games received publicity for most days of this last Park Week. Thursday and Friday's schedule advertised speaking programs but advanced publicity was very general and skimpy with such slogans as "Good speakers and entertainers". No press accounts were located naming these speakers and their topics.

One must conclude that the Tacoma Park Association's educational goal fulfilled for over two decades was not met in 1922, a symbol of an impending change. The auditorium as a forenoon and afternoon intellectual center appears to be subordinated to auditorium evenings when vaudeville and movies entertained the night owls and those who remained to dance the night away in the pavilion.

AUDITORIUM AFTERNOONS EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATION 1912-23

Just as in 1904 Old Settlers Day was made a scheduled event for assembly week at Tacoma Park, so too in 1912 Tacoma Park management and the Brown County rural Superintendent of Schools collaborated to add another special day--Eighth Grade Graduation-- to Park Week. Tacoma Park set aside the entire afternoon for this event and most of the forenoon during Assembly Week 1912 adding to the variety of special days and events associated with that festive occasion. The Great Northern railway provided special train service for Tuesday July 2, the first commencement for rural 8th graders held at Tacoma Park and in the county.

Arriving early Tuesday morning most of the 137 graduates were at the park by 10:00 a.m. They

gathered at the park auditorium. According to the Daily News for July 2 Miss Mabel Harris drilled them in the class song composed by Aberdeen township teacher Miss Flossie Webb and utilizing the tune of "Red Wing". They also practiced singing Professor Willis E. Johnson's song, "South Dakota". At 11:30 a.m. H. F. Patterson, Superintendent of the Better Farming Association of South Dakota, addressed the male graduates, school officers and relatives. The Daily American for July 6 reported that school officials paid N. A. Brothers, Aberdeen photographer, 50 cents to take a photo of the graduating class for the superintendent's office by 1:30 p.m. When the program began, students, teacher, parents, relatives and friends packed the auditorium.

This first event set the pattern for the ensuing eleven years of such exercises at Tacoma Park. The Daily News for July 2 gave a full report. On a stage decorated with ribbons, bunting and flowers, Aberdeen Congregational minister Thomas J. Dent asked God's blessing. This benediction and inspirational singing by a woman's quartet prepared the audience for a student orator, Ben Miller of Lincoln Township.

In the spirit of the class motto "Excelsior", Ben spoke on "The Necessities of Rural Schools" which received considerable press coverage. He focused on the short seven-to-eight month term of rural schools which put rural students at a disadvantage with city students. His critique of the rural system in farm communities also highlighted lack of reference books and encyclopedias, outdated dictionaries, inadequate heating and ventilation of the country school and the inexperienced teachers who came with only a grammar school education and a few weeks of normal school training. There followed an interlude of instrumental music furnished by Aberdeen's Misses Forrest and Hemsted.

The featured commencement speaker Willis Johnson, Vice President of Northern Normal, focused on "The Value of a Higher Education". Illustrating his remarks with stories, anecdotes and some statistics, Professor Johnson philosophized on such questions as: "Does education pay?" "Are returns commensurate with the efforts employed?" He asserted that one fifth of one percent of American men are college graduates. From this small group came fifty percent of U.S. senators, seventy percent of Supreme Court judges, and seventy five percent of our presidents. He emphasized that Who's Who in America contained a high percentage of college educated persons. Going beyond

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the common school or even high school presented increased opportunities for greater service to humanity.

Focusing on the work ethic, Johnson reminded his audience that young people can be successful through hard work and persistent, conservative effort. Seekers of additional knowledge such as skilled physicians are rewarded for that special knowledge. He defined an educated person as one who thinks deeply and is responsive to the world's beauty and goodness, who has self-discipline and desired to be helpful to his fellows. He continued with the idea that "Education is not conferred with a diploma or acquired with a gown but is a growth from within." Professor Johnson concluded by urging youth to aim for a higher education--at least a high school education. Reciting one of his poems "The Trinity of Manhood" he asked his audience to utilize all three components of that trinity: the mind, the hand and the heart.

Earl Saunders of Garden Prairie followed the commencement address with a piano solo and then Minnie Orth of Ravinia gave her recitation. Having been prepared through prayer, oratory and song the eighth graders were now ready to receive their diplomas. M.M. Guhin, Brown County Superintendent of Schools, did the honors. This first eighth grade graduation included eighth grade pupils of the Aberdeen schools as well as the graduates of rural schools throughout the county according to the Daily News of June 6. Superintendent Guhin preceded distribution of diplomas with a few congratulatory remarks about the effort put forth to earn the diplomas and urged the graduates to advance themselves by enrolling in high school or the Normal.

After receiving their diplomas, the graduates rose to sing the class song practiced earlier in the morning. Most of the graduates had paid 25 cents for class colors and a flower. In exchange they had received much free adult advice, seen and heard fellow students perform and exited with their diploma.

In 1913, the year of Aberdeen's first chautauqua program, school officials gave press recognition to seventh graders who would advance to become eighth graders in the fall. However, it was the eighth graders of 1913 who were diploma recipients. For the second year Northern Normal furnished the commencement speaker--Professor E. C. Woodburn. The number of graduates--about 165--increased over those of 1912. Once again Brown County Superintendent of Schools M.M. Guhin presented diplomas. He urged that all

Brown County teachers be at the Park Tuesday morning July 1 to help prepare for the afternoon event.

The program in the park auditorium began at 1:30 p.m. as it had in 1912. Previous to graduation eighth grade declamatory contests had been held to determine who might deliver the declamation at the graduation ceremonies. Five students were selected: Joy C. Mitchell spoke on "the Newsboy". Hugh McGlintie of Hecla on "Grant's Legacy", and George Hukart of Frederick "It Takes a Man to be Brave" were scheduled after the Willie's violin solo. The eighth graders then sang the class song after which Violent Beechey of Ordway delivered her declamation "The R.F.D. Man". After Hecla's Adeline Van Horn played a piano solo, the fifth student Clark Gage of Lincoln Township assumed the role of Spartacus speaking to the gladiators. Frederick's Nellie Martilla at the piano provided a musical interlude before E. C. Woodburn gave his commencement address. Well over fifty-eight grade teachers including Columbia's George B. Daly, were present as well as the graduates.

Assembly Week's special eighth grade graduation day in 1914 was on Wednesday July 1. The Daily News reported in lower case headlines: "Weather ideal. Roads Good and Crowd Flocks to Tacoma Park This Afternoon to Attend the Graduation Exercises". Of the 142 graduates about 128 were present at the exercises. Thirty minutes before program starting time, the auditorium was filled. This ceremony had special meaning for M. M. Guhin who was retiring as Superintendent of County Schools. Recitations, quartet singing, and singing of the Henry class song preceded the commencement address.

Before leaving Northern Normal and Industrial School for other educational opportunities, Dr. George W. Nash, president of that institution, spoke on "A Trinity of Civic Virtues" which basically were honesty, sobriety and chastity. He emphasized that America's resources and opportunity had helped make the nation great but conditions must improve internally if America wished to continue its national and worldwide reputation. He concluded by focusing on the enduring ideal of dying for one's country with the words: "To love worthily is far better than to die for one's country".

After this series of alternating songs and recitations and the commencement speaker's oration, Superintendent Guhin said his goodbyes and presented the diplomas. Once the benediction was delivered many in the crowd adjourned to the baseball grounds.

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The main attraction at Tacoma Park on Friday July 2, 1915 was graduation of 146 eighth graders. Forty percent of 240 eighth graders had failed their state exams and thus were not able to receive their diplomas. Preceded by recitations and solos from six different schools,, Congressman Royal C. Johnson of Aberdeen gave his commencement speech reported in the Daily American July 3. The Congressman's theme was "The Essentials of Success". Congressman Johnson defined success as the wish to do something and finally achieving that desire. He held up the ideal of education, home life and upright moral living and stressed that "anyone desiring an education can obtain one without any great hardship." Finally Superintendent R. N. Axford with the assistance of deputy superintendent Miss Lucille Trott presented the diplomas.

On Friday afternoon June 30, 1916 at 2:00 p.m. the eighth grade graduation took place a half hour later than in the previous four years. Recognizing the largest class in county history, a new superintendent of Brown County rural schools R. N. Axford presented diplomas to 180 graduates. Probably because of the larger number of graduates and the time involved in presenting diplomas, the program was shorter than in previous years. There were only two musical numbers both performed by the Hecla High School Girl's Glee Club--the commencement song after the invocation and the "Moonlight Song" after the diploma presentations. Frances Dixon's reading "The Absent Guest" was the only such student presentation. Sandwiched in between was Henry C. Johnson, Superintendent of Aberdeen City Schools, speaking to the class that had adopted a class motto of "Ever Onward". His theme was "The New Citizenship".

On Saturday at 11:00 a.m. June 30, 1917 the park auditorium was packed with standing room only for eighth grade graduation. This graduation differed from others in that it took place during wartime and was scheduled for the forenoon in order to conclude before Dr. Schermerhorn's address at 2:00 p.m. With America at war three patriotic songs were featured. As in 1916 the Hecla Girls Glee Club followed the invocation with songs appropriate for the new situation: "Wake Up America" and "Laddie in Khaki". After diploma distribution they sang a concluding number: "The Fairest Flag that Flies". Following the two initial songs, Florence Mitchell's reading and Mildred Lathrop's vocal solo, valedictorian Donald Hoover spoke on "The Test of Courage". Dr. C. V. Gilland, Dean of Dakota Wesleyan University, followed with the

commencement address "Kentucky Days". Superintendent of County Schools then presented diplomas to 177 graduates, more than he had presented in the previous year.

On Friday afternoon July 5, 1918 227 eighth graders received diplomas at Tacoma Park. The class motto--"One Nation, One Language, One Flag" reflected the patriotic, nationalistic mood of that war year when a campaign against teaching of German in South Dakota schools was at its height. Unique to this year was the singing of "America" which even preceded the invocation. Mary Partridge's vocal solo, Erma Swanson's reading and the Goodsels at the piano and violin constituted the entertainment preceding the commencement address by Willis E. Johnson. Superintendent Axford presented the diplomas, his third year performing that function. The audience then rose to sing the "Star Spangled Banner" to conclude the program reported by the Daily American on July 6.

Some 2000 people flocked to Tacoma Park on Tuesday July 1, 1919 to see 250 eighth graders graduate. The program opened at 2:30 p.m., much later than in previous years. A vocal solo and a recitation of "Young Fellow, My Lad" preceded Chaplain Guy Squires' message on "South Dakota Boys in France" which the Daily News of July 2 thought "informative and interesting, a fine tribute to the young men from this state who were in service in the late war." Recipients of diplomas were promised a scholarship to the high school in that individual's district or to any county high school if no such institution was located in the home district. At the program's conclusion the audience proceeded to the park baseball diamond for the Warner-Ashton game.



Class of 1920 at Tacoma Park

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

8TH GRADE GRADUATIONS: TACOMA PARK 1912-1923 BROWN COUNTY RURAL SCHOOLS A PARK WEEK EVENT 1912-1921

DAY AND YEAR	STARTING TIME	NUMBER OF GRADUATES	COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER
TUES. JULY 2, 1912	1:30 P.M.	137	WILLIS E. JOHNSON NORTHERN NORMAL
TUES. JULY 1, 1913	1:00 P.M.	165	PROF. E. C. WOODBURN
WED. JULY 1, 1914	1:30 P.M.	142	DR. GEORGE W. NASH
FRI. JULY 2, 1915	2:00 P.M.	146	ROYAL C. JOHNSON
FRI. JUNE 30, 1916	2:00 P.M.	180	HENRY C. JOHNSON SUPT. ABERDEEN SCHOOLS
SAT. JUNE 30, 1917	11:00 A.M.	177	DR. C. V. GILLILAND, DEAN DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIV.
FRI. JULY 5, 1918	1:30 P.M.	227	WILLIS E. JOHNSON
TUES. JULY 1, 1919	2:30 P.M.	250	CHAPLAIN GUY SQUIRES
THUS. JULY 1, 1920		161	DR. H. W. FOGHT
FRI. JULY 1, 1921	2:00 P.M.	207	PROF. H. G. LAURENCE (HURON)
NON PARK WEEK EVENT FRI. JULY 28, 1922	2:00 P.M.	173	DEAN L. B. SIPPLE NORTHERN NORMAL
SAT. JUNE 30, 1923	2:00 P.M.	287	DR. A. H. SEYMOUR NORTHERN NORMAL

CLASS MOTTOES:

1912 "EXCELSIOR"

1915 "NOTHING BUT OUR BEST."

1916 "EVER ONWARD"

1918 "ONE NATION, ONE LANGUAGE, ONE FLAG."

1923 "A GOOD NAME IS RATHER TO BE CHOSEN THAN GREAT RICHES."

PRESENTERS OF DIPLOMAS:

M. GUHIN, COUNTY SUPT. OF SCHOOLS 1912-14
RICHARD N. AXFORD COUNTY SUPT. 1915-1917
MISS LUCILLE TROTT 1919-
DELO TOWNSHEND 1923

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

A new county superintendent of schools Lucille Trott presented diplomas to the 1920 class of 161 eighth graders. Dr. H. W. Foght of Northern Normal gave the commencement address preceded by vocal and instrumental solos.

In 1921 Superintendent of County Schools Miss Lucille Trott presented 207 eighth graders with diplomas during the 10th annual ceremonies at Tacoma Park. The students who gathered for the 2:00 p.m. Friday meeting represented thirty eight county schools. Rev. Gilbert Stansell not only initiated the program with an invocation but he also delivered a "convocation sermon" and the concluding benediction. Two vocal solos and a cello sola plus one recitation preceded the message. Professor H. G. Lawrence of Huron gave the commencement address. After the students received their diplomas, the audience sang "America", received the benediction and then ventured into the outdoors to visit park attractions or to head home.

School officials in 1922 were unable to schedule the usual graduation at Tacoma Park during Park Week. Therefore, the eleventh graduation ceremony occurred on Friday afternoon July 28, 1922 at 2:00 p.m. Preceded by a piano solo, Bath's valedictorian Ferne Ford gave a recitation. Commencement speaker Dean L. B. Sipple of Northern Normal and Industrial School made his presentation followed by another piano solo. The Aberdeen Journal reported that in the absence of county superintendent Lucille Trott, the deputy superintendent Miss Kathleen Evans presented diplomas to 176 eighth graders.

On Saturday June 30, 1923 at least thirty six schools were represented and 287 students were present at the last eighth grade graduation held at Tacoma Park auditorium. Park Week was not held in 1923 so scheduling proved to be no problem although the day was shared with Old Settlers. During its twelve-year history this was the second time that eighth grade graduation was held on a Saturday. Northern Normal continued its tradition of providing commencement speakers when Dr. Arthur H. Seymour delivered the commencement address. Two piano solos and two recitations were part of the program. Then the new county superintendent Mrs. Delo Townsend distributed diplomas to the eighth grade class which had selected as class motto "A good Name is Rather to be Chosen than Great Riches". Thereafter, the eighth grade county graduations found a home at Northern Normal's auditorium and Aberdeen's Orpheum Theatre.

Twelve years (1912 through 1923) of Graduation Days at Tacoma Park created memories for students, teachers, parents, swelled attendance figures, and contributed to the resort's image of popularity and progress.

CHAUTAUGUA ERA OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS: PARK GROUNDS 1906-1922

A Daily American editorial for June 29, 1909 asserted "Summer is the time for play and the American people are wisely turning more and more to the outdoor life in the summer time." There was evidence of this in Tacoma Park programing and attendance during the years 1898-1905. Moreover, in the later Chautauqua years 1906-1922 activities at Tacoma Park testified to the increased tendency to find refuge from city, town and farmstead cares and heat by seeking the shady green trees and the cool river waters at Tacoma Park.

MARKSMAN COMPETITIONS & FIREWORKS

In addition to baseball rivalry the baseball diamond was the site for other forms of competition. One of these was the Clay Pigeon Shoot and tournament. A fine Wednesday July 4th attraction in 1906, the club shoot consisted of two competing teams for the county marksmen championship. One group of marksmen from Groton and Warner joined Bath to provide stiff competition for Aberdeen. They "kept local marksmen on the jump from start to finish." The seven marksmen of the Bath team achieved a 93 point score whereas Aberdeen's 7 man team earned a score of 117. In addition to team efforts there were individual championship shoots. The Tacoma Park Association awarded D.Martin of Aberdeen a medal in the individual championship. Martin also completed the longest run of the day by shooting 23 birds without a miss.

The Clay pigeon shoot involving crack shots of North and South Dakota enlarged the scope of the contest in 1907. In 1908 on a Park Week Wednesday June 24 another clay pigeon shoot provided 4 prizes totaling \$25.

Occasionally the baseball diamond was the site of foot races and relay races such as those scheduled for July 4, 1913. Fireworks on the 4th of July might be ignited on the baseball diamond. At least seven fireworks displays marked that holiday in 1906, 1908, 1909, 1912, 1914, 1921 and 1922.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

HIGH WIRE FEATS

In 1907 platform acrobatics and high wire stunts were prominent features of open air attractions. Minneapolis' James Daugherty, advertised as strong man, sensational performer and "world's greatest athlete", performed "startling" acts over five days of assembly week June 27-July 2, 1907. Publicity described the amazing feats awaiting those who came to the park: "a platform act of gun spinning, cannon ball juggling, heavy dumb bell lifting, bending spikes, straightening horse shoes and driving spikes through a two inch plank with his hands." The performer's finishing flourish was "the great Sandow bridge act in which he sustains the weight of 15 men without harness or braces." This thirty minute act was featured twice a day plus a high wire performance involving chair work blindfolded and a trapeze act in mid-wire.

HIGH DIVE & FIRE SLIDE INTO THE JAMES

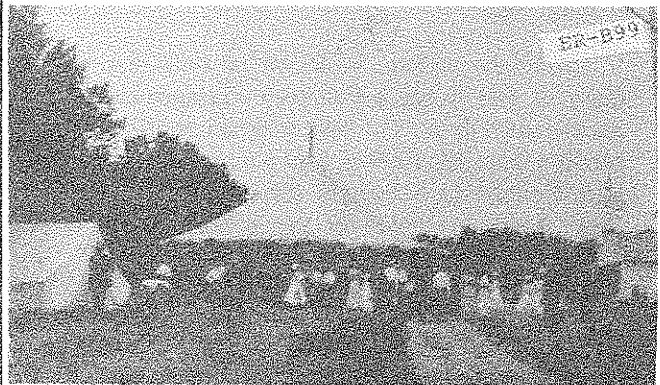
Even more startling were the acts of the "great Diavolo" each afternoon. Publicity promised that he would dive from a seventy-foot tower into a six-foot pool of water. Also, in the evening from the highest available point he would engage in a fire slide. Since he would be encased in an asbestos suit saturated with gasoline, he would be "a living ball of fire 12' in diameter sliding down a wire into a pool of water."

In 1908 the fire slide into the James continued to be one of the free outdoor features as did the high dive both morning and afternoon. Professor Ferdinand G. Ehrle initiated park activity on Monday June 29 of Park Week with his high dive at 10:00 a.m. and again at 6:30 p.m. climaxed by a fire slide into the river at 8:00 p.m. Prof. Ehrle repeated this sequence through July 4 with slightly varying times for the high dive at 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. in addition to the 10:00 a.m. slot. On Tuesday June 30 at 7:00 pm and Wednesday July 1 at 6:30 p.m. a diving dog added variety to the human diving efforts.

Daily performances of juggler Leo Wilder entertained park visitors during Park Week 1910. An outstanding and unique feature of the assembly in 1910 was a sham battle. Highwire exhibitions as well as a "bounding rack" were featured during Park Week 1911. At 10 a.m. June 30, 1921 a horseshoe pitching contest added to the variety of entertainments. Aberdeen's H. R. Schaumann won \$5.00 for the highest score in that contest. Barnyard Golf was featured at the Odd Fellow's Picnic Saturday July 22, 1922. A rope pulling contest occurred on Thursday June 29, 1922.

RACE COMPETITIONS

The Park board arranged for varied races--foot races, more arduous relay races, and sack races at the assembly meetings of 1912, 1913, 1915 and 1919 and offered first and second place prizes of from \$4.00 to \$1.50. On Field Day of Park Week 1919 the Association provided cups and medals for varied races and competitions instead of cash. For variety in 1913 the Association operated a "box ball alley". The merry-go-round attracted park patrons in 1907, 1911, 1912 and 1921.



Tent-covered carousel fronting Tacoma Park store

TROUBLE AT THE KEWPIE DOLL CONCESSION

The Park Association leased out concession rights to various persons to operate varied booths and stands. In 1921 Aberdeen's Dick Crowley and his son-in-law Kruger operated a Kewpie Doll Booth and a shooting gallery. A young Groton boy by name of Rock in the late afternoon of Monday July 4 threw a ball at the target but it glanced off a panel in the Kewpie Doll booth and broke a doll. Crowley thinking that this was purposely done demanded three dollars in payment which Rock refused. Crowley seized Rock while Kruger "closed both the Groton boys' eyes and smashed him in the mouth". At that the crowd reacted by toppling the Kewpie stand and shooting gallery, took away guns which Crowley and his wife had secured, and threw the guns into the river. Kruger was reported to have been dragged from his stand and beaten. Headlines read "Riot at Tacoma Park". This event proved that it was not only on the baseball diamond that red hot action could be found.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

BALLOON ASCENSIONS

**Great Balloon Ascension
At Tacoma Park
Monday Afternoon, July Fourth**

PROF. Wm. HEART, known as "Kid Heart," of
Cincinnati, Ohio.



Daily News ad on Balloon Ascension July 4, 1904

After the balloon ascension of 1904 there was a lapse of four years before park management booked another such event. The park program promised that on Monday June 28, 1909 at 5:40 p.m. park visitors could look forward to a balloon ascension. The Aberdeen Daily News reported on the balloon ascension of Thursday July 1, 1909:

"The balloon ascension was remarkable for several features. In the first place the man who went up in the basket had never made an ascent before in his life and for all his lack of experience the ascent was stated to have been one of the most successful the manager of the balloon has attended. The aeronaut was a young man who is working at one of the restaurants on the grounds and was desirous of the trip. He went up 2000 feet into the air and the descent was made with ease."

In 1910 management promised an air ship and/or balloon ascension daily. They rationalized this feature: in the Daily News of June 13 & 25: "The airship alone is going to attract a very large number of people to the park, for interest in this method of traversing the air is growing every day." High winds interfered with an afternoon balloon ascension for Thursday June 30 but a determined effort later in the day took place. On Saturday afternoon July 2 balloonist John Belnort struck a hitching post and fractured his skull while making an ascension." The Daily American reported the accident that day:

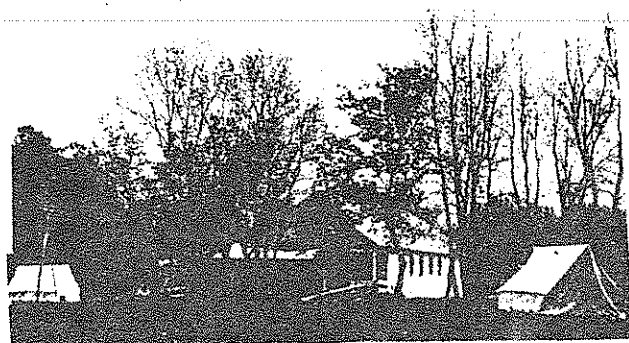
"The balloon rose a few feet, after being released, and the wind carried it along the ground into contact with a post, when it brought Belnort into contact with a post, striking the back of his head on the post

and fracturing it. He also sustained bruises on the nose, knee and one arm. Dr. M. C. Johnston was summoned from Aberdeen, but he was delayed in getting to the Park, his machine running into a post and one wheel being taken off. When he arrived there, he had Belnort taken to Aberdeen at once and removed to Samaritan hospital. There is little hope of his recovery."

Tragedy occasionally reared its face at Tacoma Park when incidents associated with the river, the weather, the automobile and human behavior challenged the image of a happy, care-free picnic and entertainment site. Venturing into the Great Outdoors has a manevolent as well as a beneficent potential. However, in 1911 this accident did not discourage management from booking another balloonist who arrived Saturday July 1 and made his first ascension at 6:30 p.m. Sunday July 2. On July 4, the last day of Park Week 1911, two balloon ascensions were scheduled. A large crowd witnessed the evening ascension after misfortune had visited the afternoon ascension. The Daily News described the accident of the afternoon effort:

"Someone stepped on the rope connecting the parachute with the balloon, and the parachute with the balloonist in it, was cut off from the balloon just as the bag began to rise. The balloon went up out of sight, but the parachute and balloonist remained on the ground."

TACOMA PARK RETREAT



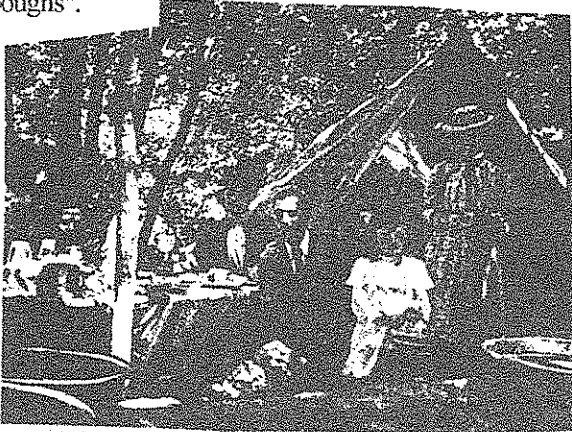
Northern Normal YMCA youth tenting astride
Tacoma Park dining hall May 1919

RELATING TO NATURE: A QUIET TIME

Outdoors and open air environment of Tacoma Park was a recreational feature with its own merits. Tenting, hammocking, strolling, roaming and exploring the green woods enhanced the sense of escapism especially

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

for children. Newspaper descriptions and images abound to illustrate this aspect of Tacoma Park as a pleasure spot. Images that call up the camping experience refer to a stranger's first impressions: "the gleam of white canvases everywhere under the green boughs".



Tenting at Tacoma Park 1906

To the stranger's imagination park tents, along with newly erected cottages, appeared as "a new border town", a "summer city". Conjured up are images of escape from the city's "maddening crowd and noon day heat" to the "good green wood, good cool trees." Reclining in "a cool hammock swing between two forest monarchs, with a fan", one might "doze away the idle hours" if one became tired of strolling, roaming and crowd watching in the park.

The image of a peaceful, quiet park with many scattered beauty spots emerges from park publicity. One of these locations was along the banks and upon the waters where one experienced the "romantic beauty" of the river Jim. July's Daily American compared the park's "shady paths" with Aberdeen's "sweltering hot" city streets.

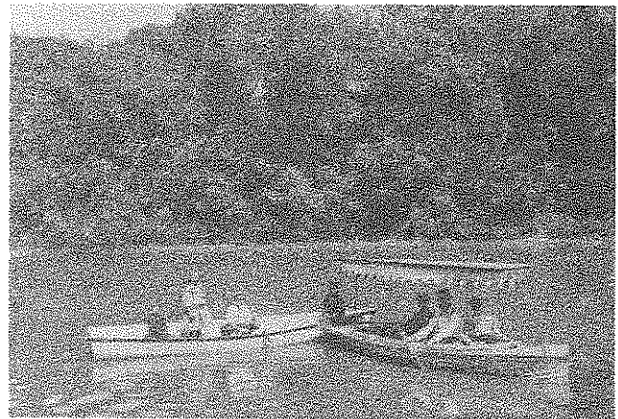


Shady walkway at Tacoma Park 1917

At this "Mecca for everyone", this "leafy retreat beside the stream that has made Brown County famous" the options were many. One might temporarily be somewhat isolated in tent or hammock or one could pass the time intermingling with others -- listening to oratory and music, attending ball games, and watching on a July 4th "others in the crowd surge back and forth". In 1907 to assist strolling and roaming after rainy spells management placed cinders or hay to improve path footing.

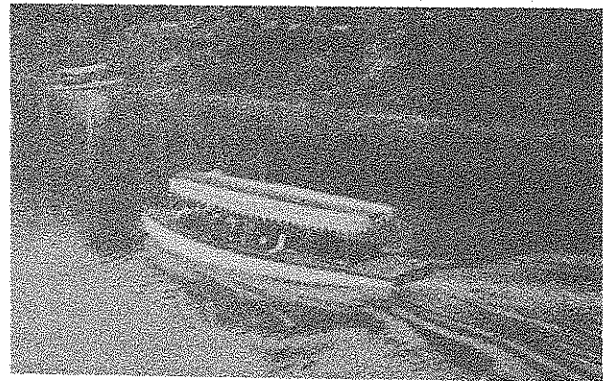
RIVER WATER ATTRACTIONS

In addition to these land and air attractions Tacoma Park highlighted attractions associated with water--Jim River bathing, boating and fishing. Program publicity frequently referred to boating on the Jim.



Boating by Korte family Tacoma Park ca. 1900

In July 1909 evening boating "on the wide expanse of the Jim river" was linked with the word romantic. In 1908 during Park Week five yachts on the river were at the disposal of patrons.

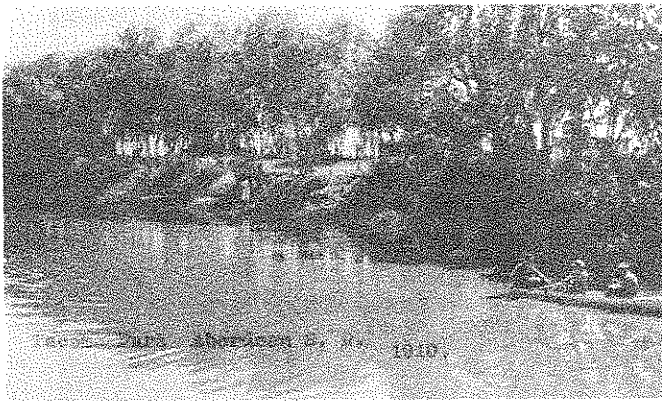


Jim River yacht Tacoma Park: Postcard

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

The importance of a man's boat as a social pleasure craft and equal to auto joy riding, is reflected in a story carried by the Daily American July 1, 1906 with headline: "Gasoline Boat Reported Wrecked". C. E. Lacey of Aberdeen's Lacey Drug had taken his boat to Tacoma Park for a trial spin. Some of his friends hoping to have a little fun invented a story that the boat had blown up and had thrown its occupants into the rapid Jim due to a faulty gasoline engine. The story stemmed from the fact that Lacey brought the boat into Aberdeen for repairs by its builder C.C. Cralle. The boat returned to the river Saturday noon having had the exhaust fixed. The story ended with the remark: "The boat is now ready to do active service on the Jim and Mr. Lacey will treat his many friends to a ride if they can keep their hats on, as the boat travels through the water at a merry clip."

In 1911 attractions of the water were highlighted: "boats have been put into excellent condition and new ones put in commission this summer" asserted a tentative program of June 10. With the arrival of Park Week, publicity announced: "A couple of launches will be running up and down the river every day for the people to enjoy. River boats can be had at any time during the day and fishing rods will also be let." A blurb of June 27 exclaimed: "Have a row on the river. From latest reports, the fish are biting fine now, and half a day of good fishing can be had easily".



Shoreline boating Tacoma Park 1910

During encampments of 1912-1915 boat and swimming races were featured in addition to foot races and horse races on land. At the Eagle's Picnic of 1912 most athletic events were abandoned due to adverse temperature but Ray Rasmusen and his water spaniel engaged in a swimming race. The Daily News for July

11 reported that Ray outswam his "canine friend". The Park Committee on Amusements for 1912 emphasized that "launches and row boats are at the park in large numbers, and the river furnishes excellent sport for both fishing and boating."

One explanation for resort popularity was the availability of "numerous launches and row boats" Another lure was: "excellent fishing ...in all parts of the river and several good swimming holes where those bent on a dip can enjoy themselves." In July, 1913 boat races were advertised. The Daily American of July 5 reported the river's popularity: "the river was covered with pleasure craft of all descriptions, the banks of the stream were lined with strollers and picnickers."



Tacoma Park boating and shore activity .

In June 1917 the press asserted that "the joy of a boat ride on the river", along with "refreshing coolness of the shade trees", would help attract hundreds to the encampment. Press accounts referred to "shady river banks and launches and row boats plying the waters." Boat racing was promised as one of the racing attractions at 6:00 pm. Wednesday July 4, 1917 when "the river is the best this season than it has been for many years."

Aberdonians were reminded during Park Week 1919 that "many are enjoying the boating that the Jim river affords, while others are enjoying a plunge each day in the cool waters of the river." The Daily News reported on a young lad who had secured a couple of boats which he rented to customers on July 4 and netted about twenty dollars, a record take compared to previous days.

Tacoma Park management over the years referred to the level of river water especially when it was at high level due to plentiful spring melt and rainfall. However, there were drier years and as previously indicated

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

manmade dams were constructed to maintain sufficient water level for recreational purposes. Whenever possible management boasted that the James was riverbank full.

Even after Park Week had vanished, the state Fish, Parks and Game Department in 1926 built another Tacoma Park dam to replace that of 1920. Also in 1920, construction of a new boat landing had begun. Daily News publicity of July 1920 declared "The water in the river is high & boating is excellent. Bathing is also reported to be good." The Sunday American of July 4 reported the presence of a dry and smooth beach.

In July 1921 the press reported that the newly completed landing had been one of the park's noteworthy improvements. One line of bold faced print in Daily News program advertisement for Park Week 1921 read: "BOATING--ABOVE THE NEW DAM --NEW BOAT LANDING JUST COMPLETED --SWIMMING" A similar program advertisement for June 1922 highlighted these words: ROWBOATING--MOTORBOATING-- BATHING-- FISHING FINE".

In advertising for a concessionaire in 1922 to take over the boat stand the park management indicated they had "four motor boats and many canoes and rowboats." In June 1922 Tacoma Park Association President O. A. Swanson asserted that, in addition to improvements on the ball park and grandstand, work on the bathing beach and diving boards had been nearly completed.

Thus, over the Chautauqua years the river waters--their coolness, their serenity, their image as a romantic and adventuresome highway for slow and speedy joyrides and a quiet fishing refuge--joined with images of shady banks and green foliage to strengthen Tacoma Park's reputation as a nature resort.

RIVER DANGERS

However, there was another side of the river and the park that occasionally received publicity--death by drowning. This was most evident during Park Week 1916. The press reported drownings of two men-- one on Thursday June 29 and the other on July 5, 1916. John Langbehn, a man in his 40s who had lived north of the Wagon Bridge about twenty years, and his farmer companion Fred Hugo were in a duck boat. Hugo dived into the water for a swim. When he surfaced two girls-- Celia Bambenek and Grace Hoilien--in a nearby launch (motor boat) shouted: "John is in the water and he can't swim". Hugo swam to Langbehn who had surfaced, grabbed him by the hair and by the arm. Langbehn struggled to get loose as they approached the boat. John

Langbehn sank beneath the water where he remained for about two and a half hours before his body was recovered by persons using rakes as drags.

On Tuesday July 4, a hot and sultry day, eighteen year old Carl Hillen who lived north of Columbia tried to cross the James but tired before reaching shore and sank. He had been bathing with three other men about 10:00 a.m. Swimming about a half mile north of the wagon bridge (around the second bend), his uncle Fred Meyer decided to swim to the other bank and Carl, his cousin, followed. As Meyer approached the opposite bank, Carl shouted "I'm afraid I can't make it". Meyer returned to the spot where Carl surfaced and tried to get him to shore. Within a few feet from land, Carl struggled and pulled Meyer under forcing his uncle to let go. It took at least an hour of dragging with fishing poles and rakes before the body was discovered. The press also reported a baby had slipped over the side of a boat but the boaters had quickly rescued it.

These drownings elicited a Weekly News editorial on July 6 regretting the loss of Carl Hillen, the eighteen year old "with a beautiful body to delight a sculptor" of pure mind and tongue, "a superman physically and a man unsullied by liquor, tobacco or profanity" a tremendous loss to the farming community in which he lived. The editor lamented loss of life by drowning which intensified during summer and inferred that lifeguards and safety measures should be in place at "unguarded inland resorts" where picnics, celebrations and gatherings take place.

POPULARITY AND PROGRESS: 1906-1922

One constant for the years through 1922 was the Tacoma Park Board of Directors and stockholders with connections to Aberdeen and neighboring small towns and rural areas.

TACOMA PARK DIRECTORS

Early board member S. H. Cranmer could always be counted on to read the Declaration of Independence at Fourth of July ceremonies during the foundation years. George B. Daly of Columbia and Aberdeen served as President of the Tacoma Park Association during the years prior to 1907 and often introduced orators of the day in the auditorium. He was also editor of the Aberdeen Democrat. This paper often countered unfavorable attitudes found in rival republican papers such as the Daily News. Banker A.E. Clark of Hecla was association treasurer during the foundation years.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

Until his death in 1902 W. E. Kidd, editor of the Ruralist, traveled to cities like Minneapolis to arrange for speakers



George B. Daly, President Tacoma Park Association

The Tacoma Park Association's management policies, building expansion and grounds maintainance show evidence of progress and helped account for park popularity during the years 1906 through 1922. Their management responsibilities were numerous. Fund raising was accomplished through leasing service privileges and booth space to private individuals or groups and selling stock in the Association.

TACOMA PARK CONCESSIONS

Bids will be received by the Tacoma Park board for concessions for Park Week, from June 26 to July 5 inclusive, for the following:

Eating house, two soft drink stands, dance hall, ball park, boating, draying, and all kinds of novelty concessions.

The bids will be received at the office of O. A. Swanson, Citizen's Bank Building, Aberdeen, up to 6 p. m., Wednesday, June 21. The board reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

TACOMA PARK BOARD

Park Concession ad: Aberdeen Journal June 17, 1922

The Association board decided on admission policies. Initially in 1898-99 the Association charged nothing for admission to the grounds or the lectures. However, in 1900 and 1901 it charged a small fee to hear auditorium lectures but charged no admission to the grounds. In 1905 they charged \$1.00 for tenting

space during Assembly Week to help pay for improvements. During the horse and buggy era they leased out the right to secure hay and pasture fees and in the auto era parking fees. The Association was involved in entertainment and educational program development as well as regulation of human behavior at the Park.

FENCING AND FEES:

The improvements of 1907 which included enlargement of grandstand seating as well as a new dining hall and a new refreshment stand necessitated additional revenue measures. Fencing had been talked about in a March 1906 board meeting as a means of keeping stray animals off the park and later to exclude bootleggers. The stockholders annual meeting in January 1907 voted to fence the park grounds. In March questions arose as to the feasibility of charging gate admission and fencing. The Aberdeen Democrat asked for more discussion and suggested that fees may be a lesser evil but the greater evil might be violating the "quiet resting place which nature intended" and replacing it with an "artificial play-ground". The paper posed these questions as to implementation of gate fees: "What is going to be done with those who come in the evening? Those who come on the train for a few hours of recreation? Those who wish to live in tents for the week or more?"

The annual meeting in January had favored an enclosed park north and south of the railroad except that area west of the highway on the west side of the James. The estimated cost of fencing was set at \$500. Materials recommended were ten-foot posts, combined with four barb wires atop five-inch woven wire located at the bottom of the fence.

Single admissions for 1907 were recommended at twenty-five cents, a single season ticket at one dollar and family season tickets at two dollars or more. Tenters were expected to buy season or family tickets. These prices were finalized for Park Week 1907 with refinements providing for free admission to children under eight and for youth, aged nine through eleven, ten cents for a single day. Adults coming only after six p.m. were to be charged ten cents. Patrons might purchase tickets at the Great Northern Depot baggage window, on the train during high traffic days or at several Park gates. Six years later, park management announced it would not charge general grounds admission in 1913. In 1915 Park policy permitted free camping privileges for Park Week whereas in previous years a dollar fee had been collected.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

THE BOOZE PATROL

The Board wished to maintain an orderly Park and developed concerns over liquor as damaging to the Park's reputation. The opportunity to escape from the city or village environment was too much for some elements and Park management expressed concern over behavior at the Park. No drinking or gambling rules were established as barn dances in the countryside and other public dance halls had a reputation for drinking and consequent rowdiness. At intervals the Association publicized, as they did in 1907, their desire that "no gambling is permitted and no intoxicating liquors are to be procured on the grounds." Some years they had enforcement people on the grounds and other years they did not.

A news item in the Daily News July 3, 1901 revealed that evidence existed about bootlegging in the Park vicinity. Arrests were pending. Management considered liquor sales in the grove obnoxious to stockholders who felt such actions were contrary to Association goals. In that year management promised a serious effort to suppress illegal liquor sales at the Park. The last weekend in June 1901 the Park had experienced the "first knock-down fight in its history", a whisky trigged event.

The Daily News of July 1, 1912 reported one encounter by Sheriff J. S. Shaffer and two of his deputies, Thomas Wyckoff and John Frommel, with two bootleggers selling intoxicants in and near Tacoma Park. The sheriff had been shadowing the unlicensed "booze vendors" for several days using a steam launch along the James river to discover their "haunts". The sheriff's deputies purchased beer at twenty five cents a bottle. Then Sheriff Shaffer entered the scene confronting bootlegger Mose Johnson, an ex con., asking him if he had been selling beer which he denied. Nearby bottles Johnson claimed to belong to someone else, but the Sheriff matched labels on those bottles with labels previously sold to his deputies and the jig was up. Johnson & his partner George E. Warner were arrested and taken to Aberdeen. Shortly before their arrest the sheriff's wife, who had been seated on a park bench, overheard the two say, "We got to be careful today. The old man is snooping around here with some of his men".

GENERAL STORE:

The presence of a general store since 1906 was helpful in attracting permanent residents as well as

transient campers. Previous specialty stores such as bakery and butcher shop were not sufficient. Due to increased demand for wider services Tacoma Park's Louis Hoilien, who lived year round in the park and had operated a store serving farmers in the area, opened a new store building on park grounds. A two story structure, twenty four feet by sixty feet, the building's second story served as living quarters. Holien utilized the first floor for store purposes. Justifying the investment, the Daily News of April 5, 1909 argued:

"the summer population of the park is considerable and the revenue derived is said to be no small amount. It would not be surprising if a considerable settlement would some day be established at the park. The News a few months ago related that a schoolhouse with a large number of pupils was established in the park for the children of farmers living near by, and it is a well known fact that several families make their homes in the park through the winter."

An advertisement of June 3, 1909 promised cottagers & campers speedy service in the fulfillment of most needs. Fruit, fresh vegetables and that hot weather item, ice cream, were available. The store provided a draying service for baggage transported to and from the railroad station. The store also provided ice from the park ice house which during the winter had been filled with ice from the frozen James River.

Holien's store in 1909 also sold the Daily News in the evening after the arrival of the train from Aberdeen. In a promotional article the News promised sporting news with big league and other baseball scores and informed the public that the newspaper would also be on sale daily on the grounds. .

After Assembly Week 1911 store management changed due to a shooting. In September 1911 "an intoxicated "Dutch Henry" Langbehn, who owned acreage north of Tacoma Park and had a reputation for blind pigging, raised a revolver and shot Louis Hoilien who was visiting the Lengbehn farm. Hoilien made it back to the Park road behind his barn before he collapsed. His wife and two men camped nearby brought him into the store. A report circulated that Langbehn had threatened to "get the whole Hoilien family". After shooting Holien he entered a tent of Lew Willis and Albin Peterson and threatened to shoot them but they persuaded him to sober up and return home.

In the Fall of 1911 the death of J. M. Cheatham who had taken over the store resulted in temporary closure until Will and Don Cheatham opened it up on June 1, 1912. The Daily News recognized the store's

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usefulness; "its services has been greatly missed by those who generally spend a great many months of the season at their cottages at this popular outing place on the James River". Manager Don Cheatham's advertisement of June 6 emphasized "a new and up-to-date stock" and "highest price paid for farm produce".

By Park Week 1914 the store was referred to as "Stephenson's grocers". One of the store clerks working on a Sunday afternoon in the store cut his left hand. Immediate first aid for the painful hand avoided serious, longterm damage. Store proprietor Ed Stephenson placed advertisements in the Daily American beginning on July 17, 1915 stating: "TACOMA PARK The place for pleasure and rest. I have cottages for rent. Apply at or call up the store. Up-to-date and complete line of eatables and house furnishings, anything you need. Come out and be in the shade." By 1919 Tyler and Peterson were Tacoma Park store proprietors.

The Park store proprietor was not the only business man to grasp the opportunity to profit from camping fever. For Park Week 1919 the Bevo beverage distributors urged people to visit the Bevo booth: "Go to Tacoma Park where its Cool and Pleasant and Drink Bevo." The Branch store advertisement of June 27, 1906 alerted campers about their rental furniture and suggested a more comfortable stay at Tacoma Park would be possible with their cots, springs, mattresses, rockers, tables, tents and camp stoves.

IMPROVEMENTS OF 1916-1922

Between 1916 and 1921 numerous improvements at the Park contributed to its image of popularity and progressive management. The ladies rest room and dining hall addition of 1916, the new boat landing along the James in 1920, the rebuilt grandstand at the baseball diamond after the destructive windstorm of 1921, the new dam of 1921 and new cottages all testified to progress. Perhaps financial overextension contributed to the end of Park Week after 1922.

Thus, in both the foundation years 1898-1905 and the later Chautauqua years 1906-1922 park popularity and increasing attendance and the desire to increase profits empowered the Association to build anew, renovate and enlarge park buildings, to raise the level of river water for boating and fishing and to take pride in beautifying park grounds. In 1919 Assembly Week publicity in the Daily News revealed that the park "has undergone a

thorough cleaning and trimming and now appears as well kept as park grounds of the cities." One evidence of this was a three dollar assessment of cottagers who failed to clean up their property and implement proper trash disposal.

The spotlight so far has focused on management decisions, building expansion, and especially on those who came to Tacoma Park as campers and commuters and how they got there, the happy hours spent there and the varied opportunities for recreation, entertainment & education that were components of the Chautauqua era. What about the Association stockholders, those who leased cottages and became week-long or summer-long residents of that nature resort?

STOCKHOLDERS AND COTTAGERS

The Tacoma Park Association in 1905 had capital stock worth \$6000.00. The stock price had risen to \$10.00 per share in order to attract more capital to pay for the improvements of 1905. Earlier in 1902 the Association had raised stock prices to \$15.00 a share but by 1905 retreated to the \$10.00 figure. At the annual stock holders meeting in January 1906 participants held 223 shares of stock. They adopted a by-law defining the terms by which stockholders held park lots on which to erect cottages or tents. Such dwellers were forbidden to carry on or permit any business on their lots unless the Association consented by an almost unanimous ballot. This was to protect the residential nature of the area. They also elected George B. Daly President, Charles Eygabroad treasurer in place of the departed banker A.E. Clark of Hecla who had left the county. J. H. Pond began a long term as secretary of the Association.

Occasionally, newspaper publicity referred to the cottagers especially on preparation day, the opening of Assembly or Park Week. In late June 1906 the press reported that "everyone who has a cottage and who had not moved into it before yesterday put in a good share of the day in getting settled. There are more cottagers at the Park at the opening of assembly week this year than ever before. Many of the cottagers have repaired their property and many new cottages have been recently erected which add much to the aesthetic appearance of Brown County's holiday ground."

The Daily American devoted considerable space to "The Home Side of Tacoma Park" in its Sunday issue June 30, 1907:

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" Too many people think that assembly week is all there is to Tacoma Park. They have come to believe that the park association exists merely for the purpose of affording the public a grand one week's entertainment and that, when that week is over, Tacoma park is finished for the year. It is true that Tacoma Park is best known by this week of entertainment...one of the best chautauquas of the northwest.....But there is another side to Tacoma park, which Aberdeen and Brown County are coming to learn, and that feature is the wonderful advantage Tacoma Park offers for a summer home."

"Ideal in location, it surpasses every other spot within striking distance of Brown county. Situated on the banks of the quiet, sleepy Jim River, abounding in trees that furnish cool, refreshing shade throughout the day, a few minutes ride of Aberdeen, it offers irresistible temptations to the man who wishes to escape the heat of the city and the worry of business. His wife and children can live there all the summer in comfort, and he can run down for the night and for the Sunday to be with them. Every year more and more Aberdeenites are coming to see the value of Tacoma Park as a place of rest and quiet. The man who from the worry of business and the summer heat would seek relief can do no better than build a cottage at Tacoma Park."

JIM RIVER ICE AND PARK ICE HOUSES

Tacoma Park cottagers and management, as well as those who lived in the vicinity of the James River throughout Brown County, expressed winter-time concerns over availability of river ice for summer use. Many ice houses for storage of ice from the Jim could be found at the Park, at nearby farms or at sites several miles from the river. In October 1893 Columbians were concerned about the low levels of the river and what that might do to next summer's ice supply. The Daily News of Jan 25, 1906 called attention to five families who had worked during the winter to fill their ice houses with "nice clean ice twenty inches thick" sufficient for the summer Tacoma Park season.

Tacoma Park residents most likely followed the same procedure as Bath folks in securing Jim River ice. A member of the Bath community interviewed in 1981 for the Bath Centennial History recalled the reliance on Jim River ice since better quality ice from Big Stone Lake was too expensive for most folks.

"We went down to the river in the lumber wagon.... We cut our ice as early as possible after the first of the year. It had to be cut before the February

thaw or the ice went soft. The best temperature for cutting was around 25 above but we didn't take any chances on an early thaw. We were out there no matter how cold it happened to be and it took a lot of trips to fill an ice house..The blocks of ice were heavy, as much as a strong man could move around. You didn't pick them up, just slid them along, and they were about two feet square and as thick as the ice was, one to two feet was about right."

"We used a gas engine and two men could fill a wagon-load pretty fast. It went a lot better if a half dozen families went together of course. We'd take the ice home and pack the blocks in the ice house. The ice-house was usually dug down at least six feet and we'd stack the ice in rows and cover them with sawdust or straw. The ice house was about 12' x 16' or more and the roof was A-framed with eaves down to the ground. ..In Bath we had our ice houses right into the mid 40s when we finally got electricity. "



Chopping Jim River Ice at Tacoma Park 1896

From time to time local correspondents mention persons living at the Park or visiting people who were residents. Illustrative of this is a 1913 listing by the Daily News of seven cottage owners shaping up their cottages for the summer on Sunday June 8. Also six visitors for the day were also mentioned. Furthermore, the "Activity at Tacoma Park" article noted that Charles Swengle spent time on Sunday readying his launch for a ride on the Jim. Further illustrating this gossip tendency was the society and club section of the Aberdeen Journal for August 8, 1922 which read as follows:

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"**ABERDEEN'S COLONY OF SUMMER RESIDENTS AT TACOMA PARK** includes many little children who live in varied sections of the city while at home and seldom see each other, but during the summer season find great fun in playing about the park. Mrs. Albert Lentz, who is spending the summer there with her children, Jack, Walter, Mary and Albert, invited all the little folks of the park to a wiener roast on Sunday evening. The wieners were roasted over a bright fire and a dainty luncheon was enjoyed with them. The children entertained for the evening were Julia, Virginia, Deloris and Malvina Mikkelson, Beven and Barbara Cochrane, Edward, George and Richard Dresselhuys, Gladys and Pearl Hedbloom, Vivi Slosson, Margie and Courage Christianson and the Lentz children."

Vandals sometimes broke into cottages when owners were not present, especially before Assembly Week. The Daily News reported on June 13, 1910 such an "indiscretion" by young Aberdonians "making merry in one of the cottages at Tacoma Park":

"The owner of the cottage has been aware of the fact that for several Sundays some unbidden guests have been making themselves at home in his cottage and that they had helped themselves to the supplies he had stored in the house and also had been lodging in the beds that he had provided for himself and family when the time should come for them to spend the annual outing at Tacoma park. A man was employed to watch the place and Sunday night he caught the revelers in the midst of their high old time. They begged to be let off but the watchman was true to his employer and reported the names of the young folks. The owner of the cottage has notified the parents and guardians of the young people in question that he will look to them for payment of damages and also points out the advisability of keeping a closer tab on the movements of these gay young men and women. It is alleged that the house is topsy-turvy and that the style of housekeeping adopted by the young women does not meet with the lines set down by the most approved methods."

Even more tragic was the Daily News story of July 16 about twenty-nine year-old Ray Bechtol of Aberdeen who with Mrs. Bechtol and five young people went to the Park for a Saturday outing and headquartered at a rented cottage in July 1918. A painter by trade, Ray Bechtol while cleaning fish toppled over. His friends summoned a nurse at the park. He died before a physician could reach him. A joyful outing thus became a sorrowful one.

In the decades after 1922 when Park Week vanished as an organized institution, dancing and picnicking, boating, swimming and fishing, the baseball diamond and refreshment stands persisted until the late 1960s. River usage and picknicking continued beyond the 1960s to the 1990s. Aberdeen merchants could no longer use Park Week as an advertising gimmick such as that of the Olwin-Angell Store in the Daily American of June 28, 1919: "Park Week specials Olwin-Angell Store. Can you imagine going without a white tub skirt or an attractive sweater to wear during park week and especially on the glorious Fourth of July?" However, through the years the stockholding cottagers of the Tacoma Park Association continued the seasonal rendezvous and a few remained year-round residents into the 1980s and 1990s. Their persistence testifies to the strength of tradition and to the holding power embodied in that 1907 article "Home Side of Tacoma Park".

THE CHAUTAUGUA ERA: OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS DIAMOND ON THE HILL 1906-1922

On Thursday June 21, 1906 Tacoma Park Association president George Daly and W. J. Ellwood, manager of the Groton baseball team, staked out Tacoma Park's new baseball diamond on the upland northeast of the auditorium. On that site they planned to erect a 100 foot long grandstand which could seat 600-800 persons. Workmen also skinned the diamond to smooth it for fast fielders and others who believed in a fast ball game. They looked forward to seeing the competitive Warner and Groton teams contest the field and also the strong Claremont and Columbia teams.

On the day before Park Week one of the attractions for the Presbyterian and Episcopal Sunday School picnic Tuesday afternoon June 26 was a "Red Hot Ball Game between the Old Men and the Kids" The Daily American described the encounter:

"Things went rosily for the men at all times except when some careless brother allowed an unkind 'liner' to stop on the ends of his fingers. In such an event he was quietly carried off the field and properly soothed and cared for. But such accidents were few, and finally when the strife ended the Old Men strutted off the field, with their arms, and a victory by the score of nineteen to eighteen."

After several days seated in the new grandstand and watching teams play ball on the new diamond

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personnel from the Daily American assessed the new diamond on Sunday July 1. They deemed it an excellent field which has "aroused considerable comment" including the belief that "it is the first really good grand stand that has ever been at the park and as such people are patronizing it just for the novelty of it, if for nothing more." According to the Aberdeen Democrat of July 7 the diamond games in 1906 brought in stand receipts of \$450 and ball ground receipts of \$300. These were the highest income sources for that season of Park Week.

During Park Week varied area teams "crossed bats" at Tacoma Park diamond in the years between 1906 and 1922. Newspapers frequently described the action as "Red Hot" and "Peppy Playing". Often there was a competitive series in which teams played three or four games for a chance to meet in a championship match between winners of the competitive series. Professional salaried teams participated as well as amateur, non-paid players.

Teams represented towns and various businesses, and organizations. Illustrative of the business ties were the "Studebakers" representing the automobile business and Aberdeen's clothing store, the "Apel Bunch". Aberdeen sent teams with names of "Hub City Cubs", "Aberdeen Grey's" and "Red Men". Snake Creek sent a ball team as did James. The Chedi Stars" took its name after Chedi Lake near Aberdeen. Newspaper reporting focused on fielding, pitching and batting the ball and particularly on those players who excelled in these categories.

Reporters also occasionally commented on audience and player behavior. During the Groton /Oakes game of July 2, 1907, a "game for blood", an Oakes player on the sidelines threw a lemon at the referee as a sign of displeasure over the referee's decision—an action which ended that player's role in the game. In 1919 at the July 4th double header during the second game between Groton and Westport news of another sport aroused the crowd. Manager Joy announced to 3000 baseball fans that Dempsey had knocked out Willard. The Sunday American for July 6 described the crowd's reaction:

"there was one of the biggest shooting in the air of hats, coats and score programs ever witnessed in the state. The crowd rose as one man and took about three minutes expressing its feelings, previously wrought up by a giant cracker game between Columbia and Langford."

Occasionally North Dakota teams from Fargo and Oakes came to Tacoma Park competitions. Exhibition

games were held in addition to the actual competitions. Tacoma Park fielded its own team to compete with Aberdeen and others. Geographically, Ipswich in neighboring Edmunds County was the most westerly team to play although Brown County towns of Ordway, Westport and Aberdeen came from the western side of the James. East of the James, Marshall county towns of Britton, Amherst and Langford played at Tacoma Park. Day county towns of Bristol, Andover and Pierpont competed at the Park. The most easterly competition came from Milbank but less frequently than towns closer to the Jim River: Hecla, Houghton, Huffton, Columbia, James, Groton, Claremont, Verdon and Aberdeen. From the extreme south in Brown County Warner and Stratford fielded teams to play on the Tacoma Park diamond as, although less frequently, did Redfield, Mellette, Brentford and Conde in Spink County.

The Board of Directors decided that baseball for 1907 should receive greater attention and generate increased profits by extending the grandstand so as to double its seating capacity. In its Park Week publicity management stated that "baseball is to figure more prominently in the festivities of the week than ever before" and would be "a very important part of the entire session."

The Association initiated new admission policies in 1907 described in the previous section on Fencing and Fees. This necessitated fencing Tacoma Park in order to collect gate admissions and regulate the liquor activities of bootleggers. Auditorium lectures and admission to ball grounds were free unless one desired a grandstand seat for which there was a charge.

With baseball so popular during the past two years Tacoma Park publicity for 1908 asserted that "sports are emphasized this year." Players and fans utilized the baseball diamond and grandstand daily—morning and afternoon—during Park Week 1908. One unique feature of baseball competition during that Park Week was the presence of a lady umpire—Miss Amanda E. Clement advertised as the "only girl in the world who is a professional baseball umpire." Annually the favorite advertising slogan became "baseball every afternoon." In 1909 testifying to the newsworthiness of Tacoma Park ball games, the American News promised full reports of each day's games.

Park Week 1910 opened with an enlarged grandstand which was roofed over and fitted with a screen front. Management claimed the grandstand could accomodate 1000 people. Publicity announced

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"there will be a base ball game each afternoon by the best clubs in the state."

Hometown fans gathered to cheer their players such as the 150 members from Claremont 's Christian Sunday school in June 1911 who watched a closely contested game. Every year Tacoma Park promised "Good Games", "Fast Games". Colorful reporting appeared in newspapers .

Organizational picnics featured baseball; at the Dakota Farmer annual picnic Wednesday July 3, 1912 some picnikers neglected boating and hammocks for "a one-inning ball game with the Columbia team before Columbia's regularly scheduled afternoon game.

Composed of old league stars from small towns near Aberdeen and two Northville players who signed up to play during Park Week 1914, the Tacoma Park team confidently looked ahead to competition with the Hub City Cubs, Moose, Hecla, Amherst and other strong teams. The Tacoma Park team won and lost close games on June 28 and 30. The Daily American observed: "The ball game drew most of the park people, the game proving a good one, and the daily event promises to be the most popular recreation this year."

The Aberdeen Daily News referred to the Groton-Tacoma Park contest of July 4, 1914 as "one of the main attractions at Tacoma Park" Groton won nine to four, the second defeat of the season for Tacoma Park.

In 1915 a twenty-five cent admission charge was made to baseball games such as that of the United Commercial Travellers vs, Britton at 3:30 Sunday on the diamond. The Daily American of July 7 asserted that an estimated 12,000 people were at Tacoma Park on closing day Monday July 5, 1915: "the ball Park was filled for the ball game"

During Park Week 1916 daily baseball games drew the usual crowds. Baseball reporters were quite colorful at times. On Thursday afternoon June 29 Groton triumphed in a "swatfest" over Aberdeen's Calmenson clothier team with thirteen runs while their opposition "garnered a nice lonesome little goose egg". Groton pitcher Milo Cook sent many of the "local willow wielders back to the bench with the bat on their shoulders. He mowed them down with as much accuracy as a French machine gun." The Daily American reporter praised the Groton team for "faultless ball" while characterizing the fielding by the other team's players as "worse than a bunch of grammar school kids learning the first rudiments of the national pastime". On Sunday July 2 and on July 4

Aberdeen battled Ipswich at Tacoma Park. Fans paid twenty five cents general admission and an extra dime for grand stand seats for the initial series game between Ipswich and Aberdeen.

How to be happy? Tacoma Park's partial answer for pleasure seekers anticipating Park Week 1917 was "baseball games and other legitimate sports will be seen every day at the ball grounds" from Friday June 29 through Wednesday July 4. Teams participating in the 4:00 p.m games were characterized as "the fastest and best known teams in this part of the state". "The Big Game", "the snappiest game" on July 4 involved the Aberdeen "Studebaker" team vs the Groton city team. Indicative of the crowds, according to the Daily American of July 6, was the automobile count which placed some 763 cars parking between 3:00 p.m and 4:00 p.m. Over 1500 people witnessed this event characterized by the Aberdeen Daily American as "one of the best games ever witnessed by Brown County fans."

Program listings for Park Week 1918 announced baseball every afternoon, a total of eight games. Contests between Groton and Westport on the Fourth of July filled the grandstand and bleachers. Fans remained to the last due to the closeness of the game. On Sunday July 7, the last day of Park Week, the two contestants once again clashed on the diamond. Sunday baseball continued at Tacoma Park after Park Week through August beginning July 21 when Westport crossed bats with Brentford. Stands remained open to serve people's needs and the dance pavilion opened for evening dancing starting at 7:00 .p.m.

Well before Park Week Tacoma Park attractions involving baseball and dancing formally opened on Wednesday May 28, 1919. During Park Week A. F. Joy, ballgame organizer, promised baseball every day with double headers on both Sundays, Soldiers and Sailors Day July 2 and the Fourth of July. An immense crowd witnessed the ball game between Aberdeen and Tacoma Park. The era of the automobile had definitely arrived. "Never before even on park week was such a large mass of autos seen stacked around the Jim River resort." Additional parking arrangements were necessary for Park Week. The Daily News of July 1 reported:

"Only 700 or 800 cars can be parked on the park grounds and to accomodate the remainder of the cars a free parking space on the hill near the ball grounds has been enclosed and automobilists are

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asked to use this place. A seven-foot wire fence has been put around the space and a guard provided to care for the cars."

On Wednesday July 2, 1919, Soldiers and Sailors Day, every man in uniform was admitted into the double header ball game free of charge. Tacoma Park took on Stratford at 2:00 p.m. for the curtain raiser & Mellette tangled with Langford at 4:00 p.m. completing an afternoon of "peppy playing". On Friday, July 4, 1919 hundreds of people attended the double header ball game at Tacoma Park. About 3000 or 1/4 of the estimated 12,000 people at the park paid admission to see the ball game between Columbia & Langford at 2:00 p.m. and at 4:00 p.m. between Groton and Westport.. Baseball at Tacoma Park continued until Labor Day.

The encampment of 1920 promised "baseball at 4:30 p.m. every day by good ball teams". On July 5 a contest began between "two of the fastest teams in the South Dakota state league"--the Boosters of Aberdeen & the Millers of Miller. That game the Aberdeen Daily News of July 3 characterized as "the biggest attraction of the day...an opportunity for people of surrounding towns to see some real professional baseball and one they should not miss".

This tradition of baseball every day of Park Week continued in 1921. The park baseball manager continued to announce that Tacoma Park had secured "the fastest independent teams in the state". Large picnics such as the Farm Bureau picnic of June 30 included ball games as part of their athletic program. The great wind and rain storm of Saturday evening July 2 hampered baseball for the remainder of Park Week 1921 in that the wind demolished the bleachers.

When the last Park Week opened in 1922 the bleachers had been repaired and fans were promised "the baseball diamond is now in good shape". The Eagles picnic of that summer featured "two strenuous and exciting baseball games". About 400 fans saw the Fats win 5 to 3 over the Leans in one game and saw Columbia trounce the Eagles first team 7 to 2 in the other.

Park management opened bids for the ball park concession and others in mid-June 1922 and promised fans two ball games morning and afternoon for Tuesday July 4, 1922 and afternoon games on the other days of Park Week. At the Odd Fellows Picnic of Saturday July 22 three teams participated in two ball games for prizes. Fans paid a fifty-five cent admission for that privilege.

In retrospect from the years 1906-1907 Tacoma Park baseball received more Association support and publicity. In the search for more revenue & drawing power park management provided grandstand seating and in time as the auto era emerged enlarged the grandstand and extended seating capacity with bleachers & automobile parking near the hill diamond. Growing numbers came to Tacoma Park lured in part by the slogans "Ball game on the Diamond", "Ball game every afternoon".

GOSPEL TIME 1914 TO 1930S

Fun time along the James at Tacoma Park had a more serious spiritual aspect in week-long camp meetings and Bible conferences separate from the more secular Park week sponsored by the Tacoma Park Association. Even Park Week dedicated Sundays to sacred concerts and sermons as well as to baseball and other worldly activities. Humor, song, emotional speeches and socializing with people in the natural setting could be construed as a type of fun time, a joyful "blessing time". After the Tacoma Park Methodist camp meeting of 1895 previously described, an interval of about 20 years passed before camp meeting evangelism surfaced at Tacoma Park.

The nine-day Brown County Holiness Association camp meetings of 1914 and 1916 represent the evangelistic movement at Tacoma Park before the Christian and Missionary Alliance activity of the 1920s and 1930s. The retiring hour for campers was set at 10:00 p.m. Enthusiastic music, song, prayer and Bible readings were interspersed between addresses and sermons.

During the weeks of June 16-27, 1920 before the onset of the more secular Park Week the Christian and Missionary Alliance opened its new 500 seat Union Gospel Tabernacle built on a permanent site at the Park.

Christian and Missionary Alliance

CAMP MEETING

TO BE HELD IN THE

Big New Gospel Tabernacle

Tacoma Park, S. D. June 16-27

Interdenominational, Evangelistic and Missionary



Union Gospel Tabernacle at Tacoma Park

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Throughout the decade and into the 1930s the Alliance held annual camp meetings at Tacoma Park. The Alliance had held eight meetings previous to 1920 at varied locations. Gospel singers, teachers and preachers enlivened the Tabernacle. In 1920 part time railroad engineer and preacher David Fant of Atlanta, Georgia sermonized using railroad allusion with topics such as "His Last Run" and "On the Limited to the Great Terminal". The conference featured information on foreign missions, Bible teaching and music. It claimed to be interdenominational, evangelistic and missionary oriented.

By 1921 the Alliance claimed work in sixteen foreign fields involving preaching in twenty-two foreign languages. The Tacoma Park Bible Conference of June 26- July 10, 1921 preceded by several days the annual Park Week and continued after July 4th, Park Week's concluding day. The Bible Conference featured the usual Bible teachers, missionaries and song leaders. Varied personnel staffed the Bible conference from near and far.

In 1922 the Bible Conference of June 16-25 preceded Park Week which began on June 26 and concluded on July 4. Services were scheduled three times daily-- Bible study at 10:00 a.m. and services at 2:30 and 8:00 p.m. Missionaries from India and South Africa were star attractions. Gospel singers, teachers and preachers informed and inspired many people including some of the Park's campers especially those visiting the Park on Sunday. The concluding Sunday June 25 began early with a prayer service at 7 a.m. The Saturday church announcements had urged people to take advantage of this opportunity and listed the full schedule of Sunday activity at the Park Tabernacle.

The Camp Meeting of 1924 began on Saturday July 12 and lasted through July 20. They had no Park Week scheduling with which to coordinate or compete. Visitors were promised "a real feast of good things"--daily Bible studies, singing, inspiring sermons and reasonably priced room and board, even tents.

In 1925 at its Tacoma Park Tabernacle the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church scheduled Sunday services for 10:30 a.m. followed by Sunday School in addition to its annual Camp Meeting of July 3-12. On Sunday August 23, 1925 and again on Sunday September 25, 1927 newspaper accounts indicate that baptismal services were held in and along the Jim River.

In 1926 the annual camp meeting began Sunday July 11 and ran until Sunday July 18, before the Grand

Opening of the "new" Tacoma Park Dance Pavilion on July 24. Families began gathering on Saturday July 10. Meals and sleeping quarters were available on the Tacoma Park grounds described as "a beautiful place" and an "ideal surroundings" to listen to the gospel messages.

During the eight-day session the usual three daily services were scheduled for 10 a.m. (10:30 for week day Bible study), and 2:45 p.m. for divine healing and missionary talks. Reverend William Christie, who had served thirty years as a missionary to Tibet, delivered a major message in the evening at 7:45 p.m. On Sunday afternoon July 11 a children's special meeting was held followed by Reverend William Christie's appeal to youth to volunteer for missionary work. Over twenty youths of both sexes stood up indicating willingness to travel wherever the Lord decided. Numerous persons from Aberdeen's Wesleyan Methodist Church were present as well as Alliance people. Reverend Herbert Dyke spoke Sunday evening on the practical side of Christian life. Group singing, solos and a male quartette added to the variety and spirit of the meeting.

A highlight of the 1926 camp meeting was the presence of Reverend R.H. Brown of Omaha, radio preacher who had an estimated audience of 100,000. Publicity characterized him as "one of the best evangelists in the country." Reverend Brown arrived at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday July 13 after a long drive of 500 miles. He spoke at the 7:45 p.m. session. People from thirty towns in South Dakota, North Dakota and Iowa filled the Tabernacle. Many were not able to hear him because of the "overflowing crowd" and had to wait until his Wednesday night talk.

In direct and rapid speech preacher Brown showed the ways of man and how "men must reap what they sow". On Wednesday night with clarity and logic Reverend Brown spoke on "The Days of Noah" and demonstrated that disrespect for law and moral obligations had consequences--God's inevitable judgment. Faith, rather than intellect, was the key to acquaintance with God. Reverend Herbert Dyke, who had a varied agenda that week dealing with Bible studies, divine healing messages and evangelistic sermons, spoke in the evenings for the remainder of the week. On Thursday he responded to the question "Why did God send Noah's Flood?" and on Friday his theme was "Where in Hell".

The 1927 camp meeting opened for an eight-day session on Sunday July 3 and concluded July 10. This coincided with the last two days of Tacoma Park's

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Frolic Week July 3, 4 and the four-day presence of the Johnson--Baird Carnival July 7-11 which offered possible competition with Reverend Brown who spoke at the Tabernacle Friday July 8 through Sunday July 10.

The Christian and Alliance Missionary Church sponsored a truck from the Alliance Gospel Hall at 112 So. Lincoln in Aberdeen to Tacoma Park each morning and in the evening at 7:00 p.m. to encourage attendance by Aberdeen residents. Announcements declared: "Everybody welcome. Seats Free".

As in 1926 Reverend Brown of Station W.O.W. Omaha was the star speaker during the concluding three days of the camp meeting. Locally-led community singing accompanied each of Brown's sermons. The camp meeting of Sunday June 24 through Wednesday July 4, 1928 occurred shortly after publicity about public intoxication and misbehavior at Tacoma Park had made the headlines. Those attending were offered meals at the Tacoma Park dining hall. Children attended a daily Bible School from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Miss Mamie Doty, an Aberdeen teacher who had been missionizing in the Philippines the past five years, shared her experiences hoping to strengthen the missionary impulse in her listeners.

Although special June gospel services had been held at 2:30 p.m. Sundays at Tacoma Park Tabernacle, the two big events for the Christian and Alliance Church in 1929 came in late June and early July--their Young People's Rally and the annual camp meeting. On Friday June 28, 1929 the Christian and Alliance Camp Meeting opened at 8:00 p.m. and concluded on July 7. The Aberdeen church cancelled Sunday services for two Sundays so the congregation could attend the camp meeting. This had been an accepted practice in the past and continued into the 1930s.

On Thursday July 4th the Tabernacle was "well filled". On Thursday morning a platform meeting provided speaking opportunities for several pastors including Reverend Phelan of Tacoma Park, and others from Aberdeen, Waubay, Summit and Brindmede N.D. In the afternoon a song and praise session preceded Reverend Larson's speech highlighting the needs of South American Indians. The Young People's Rally was also held on the Fourth of July. For the three Thursday services many drove miles to reach Tacoma Park. Hitchcock, Waubay, Webster, Lily, Summit, Doland, Brindmede, ND. & St. Paul were represented as well as towns near Aberdeen.

This denominational movement to which the Christian and Alliance Church belonged aimed at

strengthening evangelical mission to bring Christ to heathen lands. According to the Evening News of June 29, the Alliance claimed to preach the gospel in seventeen different languages and dialects to people who had no other evangelical missionary assistance. They boasted in 1929 that their movement now preached Christ in forty languages and dialects, a far cry from the 1921 claim of twenty-two foreign languages and sixteen foreign fields.

As the Christian and Alliance Gospel Tabernacle at Tacoma Park moved into the 1930s, they could look with satisfaction on the past decade in which they had demonstrated their belief in the words of Jesus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel as a witness to all nations".

TABERNACLE OF THE 1930S

In the early 1930s amongst the special events aside from weekly dancing at the pavilion were the worship services & camp meetings held at the tabernacle by the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Until 1936 the old Gospel Union Tabernacle of the early 1920s towered over Tacoma Park picnic grounds. However, its use was somewhat limited compared to the activity seen in the 1920s.

In 1930 the annual Camp Meeting was held June 27 to July 6 and took place as the Tacoma Park Fourth of July celebration approached. During camp meeting week two daily services were held at the Tabernacle and three on Sundays. A young people's rally was scheduled on July 4. Each morning a children's service was held. Chicago's Reverend E. E. Johnson was the camp evangelist during that period. The Christian and Missionary Alliance District Charges held their annual meeting in conjunction with the camp meeting. Delegates came from Waubay, Summit, Brinsmede, N.D. and other neighboring points.

In addition to Aberdeen services on Sunday mornings, the Christian and Missionary Alliance held occasional Sunday services at three p.m. in the Tacoma Park Tabernacle. The "At the Churches" feature in the Evening News Saturday edition reveals at three p.m. on Sunday June 15, 1930 Pastor Otto Simon spoke at the Tacoma Park meeting. In the Saturday church announcement Pastor Simon remarked: "The 1930 Tacoma Park camp meeting is history now. How we do thank God for the truth and inspiration which came to us through the various speakers."

Having secured permission from Tacoma Park Association, Pastor Simon on Sun. June 7, 1931 spoke at

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a three p.m. open air meeting in Tacoma Park. Also, on Sunday, July 11 & August 1 Tacoma Park services were conducted.

In 1932 summer services were held occasionally at the Tacoma Park Tabernacle as in past years. On Sunday June 12 at two p.m. Sunday school was conducted at the Tabernacle followed by a devotional service at three p.m. There were no Sunday evening services so Alliance people could attend the Wesleyan camp meeting one mile east of Aberdeen. This provided an alternative to the Tacoma Park site. Furthermore, the Aberdeen hall became the focus of the Sectional District Missionary Convention on Friday evening June 17 instead of at the previous year Tacoma Park site.

In 1933 the Missionary Convention began Monday June 26 but only the Monday sessions were held in the Tacoma Park Tabernacle at two and at the annual camp meeting. On Friday afternoon and 7:45 p.m. the remainder of the sessions were held in Aberdeen at the Alliance Church. On Sunday August 20, 1933 Evangelist L. A. Peabody spoke at the Tacoma Park Gospel Tabernacle at three p.m. On three Sunday afternoons in September 1933 services were held at the Gospel Tabernacle with Sunday School at two p.m. and worship service at three p.m. in addition to morning Aberdeen services.

Gradual disuse of the Tabernacle is evident after 1930. In 1936 the dismantled structure was moved from Tacoma Park to 315 South 2nd Street in Aberdeen and used as a church for ten years. The dance hall, picnic grounds, the river & baseball diamond remained the chief focus of Tacoma Park action.

POST CHAUTAUQUA TACOMA PARK TRANSITION YEARS 1923-1926

The years 1923 through 1926 were transition years between the annual Tacoma Park Week 1898-1922 and the more enduring and lengthier dance seasons beginning in July 1926 and concluding in the late 1960s. Following the last Park Week of 1922 Tacoma Park experienced several years of irregular dance scheduling before the turn around of 1926-27.

Under the new management of L. J. Quinn and A. Thorson, sponsors of the annual Farmers dance, Tacoma Park dancing opened on Saturday June 16, 1923. Two additional evening dances were held in June.

In Fourth of July publicity managers Thorson and Quinn described the Park as a "pleasant, shady place"

to enjoy picnic dinners accompanied by a ball game involving two James Valley League teams. They promised fair treatment and prices for all and an evening dancing finale to the music of the Jazzy Junior Five. The forenoon of Wednesday July 4 was rainy. The muddy roads lessened attendance at Tacoma Park and diverted dance fans to Aberdeen.

After the four dances of June and July 4th there were no publicized dances at Tacoma Park for the remaining Saturdays of July, August and September. Dance fans would have to attend varied barn dances near Aberdeen, Aberdeen's Wylie Park Pavilion or travel twenty-five miles southwest of Aberdeen to Scatterwood Lake's new dance pavilion.

Picnicking, cottage life and evangelistic camp meetings continued at Tacoma Park in 1923 even though dancing was short lived. Illustrative of this is the Friday June 1st school picnic at Tacoma Park where the Putney school celebrated the school year's end.

During these transition years there were not as many publicized picnics hosted by organized groups such as had occurred during the Chautauqua years or later during the revitalized Park years after 1926.

The dance season of 1924 consisted of eight Saturday night dances beginning June 7 and ending August 23. Advertisements were only a line or two at the bottom of the newspaper page indicating that the advertising budget was minimal.

On Sunday June 29 about 350 people representing the Aberdeen Council of the Knights of Columbus picnicked at Tacoma Park. Hecla, Westport, Ordway, Columbia and Groton were represented as well as Aberdeen. Afternoon games, foot races and a ball game preceded the lunch brought by the participating families. The Knights organization provided free ice cream, lemonade and coffee.

In 1925 a week-long evangelistic camp meeting focused on Tacoma Park from July 3 to July 12. Also, over 200 Knights of Columbus and their families from Hecla, Britton, Andover, Bristol, Groton and other nearby towns zeroed in on Tacoma Park for a Sunday picnic July 19. Baseball and other afternoon diversions such as swimming and sports were followed by a picnic lunch at 5:00 p.m.

Perhaps this influx prompted the assertion in the Monday July 20 Evening News that "Tacoma Park was never in so much demand as it is at the present time". One reason cited for its "great popularity" was "that never before has it been as accessible as it is at the present season."

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Despite this assertion, the publicity of 1925 indicates the negative influence of weather on picnics and evidence of a limited dance season. The Cooperative picnic scheduled for Friday June 19 had been cancelled in mid-June because of frequent rains and "heavy roads". Whereas, dancing at Aberdeen's Wylie Park Pavilion began May 19 and was scheduled three times a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, the first dance at Tacoma Park was on Wednesday, July 6 followed by only six publicly advertised Saturday night dances.

In 1925 a new rival to Tacoma Park emerged—Lyra Park resort to the west near Frederick—and remained so during the late 1920s. Aberdeen's Wylie Park, Spink County's Armadale resort and the Scatterwood Lake resort as well as varied barn dances continued to compete for patronage during the summer season.

On July 17, 1925 the Evening News speculated about a revived Tacoma Park. The editor raised the possibility of the Park's sale to Aberdeen's Kruger brothers who owned adjacent farm land. Referring to the Park as "once a great center for summer gatherings and nature living", the paper had learned that John Kruger was buying shares in the Tacoma Park Association. The paper declared Tacoma park has been "The great outing place for Aberdeen people". It suggested that the abandonment of the week-long, annual Chatauquas in recent years had been due to "rival attractions". The News suggested a possible future course of action that the county take over Park development if private enterprise failed to materialize.

TACOMA PARK RENEWED: 1926-1929 "ERA OF THE NEW PAVILION"

Compared to the transition years 1923-25, Tacoma Park's dance season in 1926 flourished although it had a late beginning. Rival Wylie Park pavilion opened May 15 under management of Meda Mason and Lyra Park near Frederick opened Saturday May 29 while the Grand Opening of Tacoma's "New" dance hall occurred on July 24.

The annual meeting of the Tacoma Park Association Tuesday Feb. 2, 1926 in Aberdeen's Municipal Building resulted in rehabilitation plans for the Park as a summer residential and amusement resort. Emerging from a period of financial difficulty, the Association adopted a plan to handle indebtedness. Under the presidency of John Kruger and the directors George Meyers, E. F. Klitz and Steve LaBudd, the Association

anticipated that "Tacoma park will now become what the founders originally intended—development of a beautiful cottage & picnic park for this part of the state."

Prior to Tacoma Park's opening dance, the Commercial Travelers scheduled their annual picnic for 2:00 p.m. On Saturday June 26 the organization provided drinks and ice cream while those attending brought their family food baskets. Competitive games such as races and horseshoe pitching for both juveniles and adults took place between 2:00 p.m. and the six o'clock picnic supper. Evening dancing was featured for enthusiasts and those who preferred listening to music and watching.

Between July 1 and Grand Opening July 24, 1926 carpenter crews worked long hours to enlarge and enclose the old dance pavilion. The publicity of July 1 stated that the orchestra stage had been made larger and the refreshment stand had been remodeled. When completed the pavilion would be "practically a new pavilion...twice as large as the old one and much more substantial." New cement piers assured a proper footing for the dance hall. New floors in an enclosed pavilion awaited the dancers.

Publicity also noted the beneficial effect of rainfall on June 20 and July 1. A new dam had been installed which raised the James River level at the Park to about four feet deep compared to drier river bed elsewhere. Recent heavy rains increased the current for boating purposes. Later, on Friday August 20 World War I veterans, 40 et 8, held a picnic near this new dam one mile south of Tacoma Park.

Manager John Kruger's publicity for the Grand Opening Dance of Saturday July 30 referred to "the New Pavilion" as one with "lots of room on the brand new floor". Potential customers were urged "Don't miss the Fun" which included the "Hot and sweet music" of an eight-piece orchestra—the MerryMakers. Those who were picnicking on Sunday could also see moving pictures Sunday night.

Five Wednesday night dances as well as eleven Saturday night dances were featured during the 1926 season. Wednesday dances appeared only in August and once on September 8. Labor Day Monday was the occasion for hearing daytime speakers and entering race contests and for dancing to the music of Bill Klitz's Melody Boys both in the afternoon and evening. While the season began late, it continued beyond Labor Day into October. Five different orchestras entertained during the 1926 season.



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TACOMA FEVER 1927 A SEASON OF 45 DANCES

Under the management of R. Sawyer, Tacoma Park during the 1927 dance season gained momentum and variety over 1926. Tacoma Park activity demonstrated organized effort and financial support, fuller utilization of facilities with roller skating every Sunday afternoon and evening as well as dancing on varied days. The park's new era is evident by the booking of forty-five dances serviced by fifteen known orchestras. There were four dances with no advertised orchestra. Seventeen were Saturday night dances; thirteen were Wednesday evening dances and ten were on Mondays. Tuesdays and Thursdays had two dances each. There was one dance on a Friday.

Further evidence of renewed vitality was the effort to restore in a different form--the Mid Summer Frolic--the former Park Week last experienced in 1922. The six dances of Mid Summer Frolic Week June 27-July 4 boosted the number for that year. The forty-five dances of 1927 were the highest number of yearly dances in the decades from 1920 to the 1960s. The dances of 1927 even surpassed the twenty-nine dances of 1928 and the thirty dances of 1930.

The 1927 dance season began on Wednesday June 1 and concluded Saturday October 8. During that summer season management flaunted many slogans to attract patrons: "Come early, stay late...Plenty good things to eat." "Good Music and a good time for all" "Old time--New Time music." "You and Everyone will be there." "Where everyone has a good time", "Dance to music that tickles the feet" and "All for Fun, Fun for all".

Adding to the variety of the season were two musical competitions advertised as "Battle of Music" between Billie Young and his ten-piece colored band and the enlarged Granteurs. and on Monday June 20 between the Granteurs and the Yankee Sailors.

Four Gift Dances were held which featured gifts to the ladies and others with novelty prizes for men and women. Furthermore, emphasis on old time music as well as a combination of both old and new time music proved to be a lure. Patrons were urged to "Hitch up old Bessie and come out to have a walloping cracking good time". Women and spectators were admitted for only twenty-five cents; however, their gentlemen escorts were required to pay \$1.10.

FROLIC WEEK 1927

The introduction of Frolic Week June 27-July 4 with roller skating every afternoon and dancing in the

evening spurred attendance and increased Tacoma Park's image as a recreational center. Area residents were reminded that it was "a wonderful evening drive to Tacoma Park". The Evening News described it as "one of the busiest spots in Brown County during the week". Strings of local autoists were observed coming and going from Tacoma and its dance pavilion.

The Fourth of July concluded Frolic Week. The word "Big" was prominent in publicity. "Big Carnival, Big Barbecue, Big evening fireworks." Varied races and a \$500 baseball game between the colored St. Paul Gophers and Aberdeen's C.M. & St. Paul players was a crowd pleaser. Mayor John Wade was amazed at the crowd: "There was hardly standing room at Tacoma Park yesterday".

A carnival not only serviced the Park during Frolic Week but also camped at the Park from Thursday July 7 through Monday July 11. Advertisements characterized the Johnson and Baird Carnival as "clean as a whistle". This was a high class production with "rides that are rides" including a Ferris Wheel, rotary swings and a Merry-Go-Round. Management promised that "every man on the lot was a gentleman, ready to serve you with the latest in modern amusement games at prices that anyone can pay."

Adding to the variety of the season's attractions was the Rodeo and Frontier Days of Sunday August 7. Advertising focused on authenticity ("No Faking") and the thrilling and fast paced nature of the events. Publicity promised "a fast curtain raiser", "a real day in the west", "wildness and whoopee", "a hair raising chaser" along with "a thousand thrills, chills, and spills."

Intermittent baseball games enhanced the season's variety and supported the slogan "something doing all the time". Sunday baseball predominated but concerts, picnics and roller skating were also Sunday features. At the Brown County Community picnic of Tuesday June 7 Putney and Ordway played ball at 10:30 a.m. and an East River team contested with a West River team at 3:00 p.m.

Another kind of ball--Fast Auto Ball--was featured Sunday afternoon August 14. Referred to as "The Game of Thrills"--Something new and different", this was played by the Northern Auto Ball Association of Billings, Montana.

COMMUNITY CLUB PICNIC 1927

Earlier the Brown County Community Club picnic on Tuesday June 7 attracted area people. This annual farm gathering with the slogan "One for all and all for

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one", met at the Park in 1927 and 1928. Several hundred Aberdeen businessmen were invited guests. Each club and member was identified by its own color. Prizes were offered for the largest delegation and those who arrived earliest selected the choicest location for the noon picnic dinner. Townships represented were Portage, Palmyra, Liberty, East Brainard, Franklyn, Westport, Selby, Daly's Corner, East Riverside, Putney, Henry, Nahon, Wright, James, Ordway, Warner, Plainview, Lincoln Aberdeen Home Extension and High Hope.

Baseball began at 10:30 a.m. Putney won over Ordway 7 to 9. A noon picnic lunch followed. Band music and community singing pervaded the auditorium at 1:00 p.m. followed by S D State College president Pugsley who talked about farm issues and predicted a better day for the state. Adjournment to the baseball diamond at 3:00 p.m. resulted in a contest between East and West River teams with the latter winning 14 to 5. At 4:50 men, women and children competed for prizes. Horseshoes warranted a \$5.00 prize. Men's 100 yard race and boy's seventy-yard race each had a first prize of \$1.00 and a second prize of fifty cents. Women vied for the same prizes but only had to cover fifty yards.

Hog -calling contests for men and chicken-calling competition for women warranted a \$1.00 prize. Feats of strength for both men and women were evident in baseball throws for distance. Boys were asked to participate in a penny grab from a pot of pennies. In the evening the Grandeurs furnished dance music until "wee small hours of the morning". A feeling prevailed of a new era of cooperation between city and country folk. On June 16, 1928 another such picnic would be held but in 1929 shifted to the Aberdeen Fair Grounds. However, in the 1930s Tacoma Park hosted many of these community club picnics.

Road conditions and weather favored Tacoma Park in 1927. Only one dance night was cancelled although there was always the need to provide for contingency locations if rain and mud made roads impassable. One of these alternatives was Aberdeen's Roof Garden. Publicity of 1927 focused on the musical heat of Jazz as jazz bands were often booked and urged patrons to praise the bandsman: "tell em they'r hot"!

TACOMA PARK 1928: DANCERS & DRUNKARDS "ALONG THE RIVER AND UNDER THE TREES"

John Kruger, Manager of the Tacoma Park Pavilion in 1928, characterized his establishment as a popular Aberdeen dance resort. This emphasized the Aberdeen

connection. In the era of prohibition he also had to meet the challenge of public drunkenness that endangered the park's reputation. During the 1928 season he booked eight different bands, about half the number of 1927. Thirteen were Saturday night dances. Sixteen were Wednesday night dances. One dance was booked for Friday night. The official opening of 1928 was on Wednesday May 23. The season closed on Wednesday August 29.

Joe Goodrich's orchestra, the primary music provider in 1929, vied with the Grandeurs in 1928 as the bands that were booked more often than others. Goodrich highlighted certain popular songs such as "That's My Weakness Now" and publicized the idea that his band played "the latest music". Another band, Neil Freyberg's Ambassadors, pursued the theme "Music of Merit" which had varied components: "all old favorites" and "everything new and novel in modern dance music"; "music hot and sweet," "entertainment novelties and singing".

On a warm Fourth of July when temperatures ranged between ninety-two and ninety-five degrees Tacoma Park's slogan "dance in a cool spot near the river and among the trees" had its appeal. Fourth of July 1928 received more publicity than in previous years. The Groton Municipal Band of over thirty musicians played concerts during the day and at the ballgame. Freyberg's Ambassadors played afternoon and evening dance music, "hot and sweet". In the afternoon the Groton baseball club contested with the Dakota Giants of Watertown.

On Wednesday July 11 the Workmen Picnic brought AOUW lodges from Langford, Plana, Aberdeen and Claremont to Tacoma Park. Some 300 picnickers brought their own lunches with the lodge providing free coffee and sports events. Admission was charged for afternoon and evening dancing.

Earlier, on June 15 the Brown County Community Clubs held Tacoma Park's biggest picnic of the summer. An estimated 5000 people attended. Thirteen community clubs hosted eighty-eight Aberdeen businessmen as their guests. At 10:30 a.m. two 4-H club teams—one from Warner and the other from Bath—participated in a free baseball game on the diamond. The Groton band held a concert at 11:30 a.m. A picnic lunch followed at noon. A reception committee helped clubs locate on the picnic grounds as eating was organized by clubs. A police force aided in parking and keeping order. Farm relief and hog tattooing were subjects of after-lunch speaking.

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The Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce awarded \$75 as first prize in alfalfa and sweet clover acreage contests. At 3:30 p.m. the American Legion baseball team of Aberdeen contested with the Brown County All Star Team. At 4:30 other competitive events began. Adults ran the 100 yard dash. Boys and girls age ten to sixteen raced for prizes seventy-five and fifty yards respectively. There were three-legged races also. Men and women tested their arm strength with ball throws. Body strength was further tested by a tug of war between East and West James River folk with East River winning. Some contested for prizes in the bean-carrying and the egg-carrying contests. A stake-driving contest tested arm and body strength and contributed further to the variety of the day's activities. Later, a seven-piece dance orchestra--the Revellers--entertained until 1:30 a.m.

At the close of the dance season on Sunday September 2 Tacoma Park hosted a baseball tournament. Putney defeated Bath-Plana 4 to 2. Daly Corners won 2 to 1 over Ordway in the first round and were eligible to play Sunday September 9 for the Brown County Jim River Valley championship.

One blemish marred the Tacoma Park dancing and picnicking season in 1928--the war on drunkenness at the park in which the sheriff used the press to call attention to the problem of "roustabouts and drunks". Within the city limits of Aberdeen, police restrictions on drinking in public places could be enforced. For several years barn dances outside the city limits had avoided closer inspection. In late 1927 Brown County had closed barn dances because of the drinking problem. In 1928 it was Tacoma Park's turn to be visited by the long arm of the law.

A municipal court item in the Evening News for June 18th highlighted concern about Tacoma Park security. Harold Collins had been charged with public intoxication at Tacoma Park on Saturday night June 16. Deputy Sheriff Hoke Lockington collared Collins and arrested him. The judge fined Collins, who had pleaded guilty, \$50 and costs. The Evening News commented on this incident as the culmination of a series of such cases and the perennial problem of behavior at out-of-town dances where city police jurisdiction was absent: "Tacoma Park, always frequented by persons desiring to cut loose from the routine of a work-a-day life, has gained a bad name this year." Sheriff Geisler announced that future dances at Tacoma Park would be rigorously policed. If conditions deteriorated and "this

cropping out of lawlessness" continued, the dance hall and other resorts outside Aberdeen would be closed.

Sheriff Geisler apprehended another intoxicated offender--George Wertman with empty bottle at the Friday night dance June 15. His companion in drinking fled. Using the press to warn other potential drinkers and to assure the public, the sheriff authorized this account appearing in the Evening News June 19: "While out in the woods taking a shot of high powered laugh producer" this offender was fined \$50.00 and costs. The Judge threatened similar fate to other drunks at the resort. The Evening News reported on June 19:

"Disorderly conditions have prevailed too long at Tacoma Park. And drastic measures, according to his honor, must be taken to stamp out this spirit of lawlessness which springs out in the youth as soon as they pass beyond the city limits. The grounds at the Park will be amply policed in the future to keep law and order, and persons are warned that Tacoma Park is no longer a game preserve for those wishing to indulge in pre-prohibition amusement."

Having conferred with John Kruger, concessions manager, the Tacoma Park Association President H. B. Peterson quickly responded and headlines of the June 20 paper announced: "Better Lighting, Police to Make Orderly Dancing for Tacoma Park". Peterson stated:

"orchestra men who have played for dances at Tacoma have stated that the dancing crowd compares very favorably with others throughout the state. The new lighting and adequate policing will make it the most orderly and arid resort in this section. We have considerable ground to police at Tacoma but we intend to have an orderly resort at all costs. Tacoma in my opinion, is the beauty spot of Brown County."

By August 9, 1928 the Evening News headlines announced "Vigorous Campaign Brings Changes in Tacoma Park Dance Hall Crowd". Reviewing the early seasonal behavioral problems of "roustabouts and drunks" the News asserted "the undesirable class once made up the majority of the crowd attending the regular dances there." Early strict regulation seemed to have failed to stop "drunks from invading the park." Drunks numbered two or three a week in the early summer. However, the number had declined. Disorderliness at Tacoma "now is perhaps as rare as in any other dance hall or resort in or around Aberdeen." The News concluded; "With improved lighting and improved appearance of the grounds together with fine orchestras,

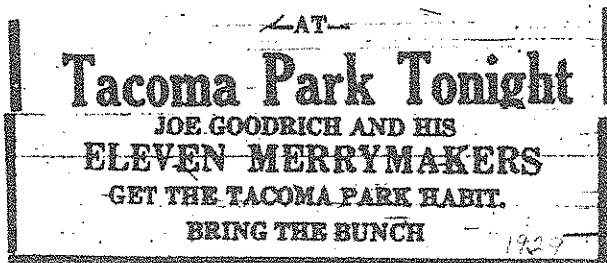
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Tacoma Park is now fully as attractive to the dancing public as other pavilions closer to the city."

"IRRESISTIBLE RHYTHEM":

1929, MERRYMAKERS & THE FOX TROT

At the formal opening of the Tacoma Park Pavilion June 5, 1929, the nine Merry-makers of 1928 had become eleven for the 1929 season with added entertainment of a singing trio and Fred Krug, Hub city singer. Publicists highlighted the pavilion's decoration and its role in the changed appearance of the hall: "one of the most beautifully decorated outdoor dance pavillions in the northwest". In addition opening publicity focused on the pavilion's newly scraped and sanded floor and a large orchestra shell at the south end increasing audibility to all parts of the pavilion.



Tacoma Park ad 1929

The music received attention also: "Latest dance hits direct from the big shows on Broadway while they are NEW--played with that "IRRESISTIBLE RHYTHEM". Joe Goodrich, manager of the Pavilion for 1929 and leader of the Merry-makers, stressed the "dependable music" of one band yet promised variety in that band's style as the unique feature of 1929 compared with the numerous bands booked in 1927 and 1928. Several times during the season audiences were alerted to the fact that "Roads were in perfect condition". Goodrich frequently asked patrons "to bring the Bunch".

John Kruger, pavilion owner, employed Joe Goodrich as manager in the 1929 dance season probably as an image improvement move due to the unfavorable publicity of 1928. The Goodrich Merry-makers consequently dominated the bookings for 1929. Recognizing that booking his own band the entire season might lead to a charge of monotony or lack of variety, Goodrich in rather verbose advertisements stressed variety which was achieved by the following methods: Playing red hot dance tunes such as "Do Something" advertised as "the hottest thing

in Brown County since the Sherman fire" and featuring dance hits from recent movies and musical comedies.

Special dances were prominent such as the Candy Dance at which a pound of Ward Owsley's fine chocolates was given away every ten minutes.: "Be lucky-win a box of sweets. Who cares about graceful figures anyhow when the candy is passed." Another speciality in dances was the "Carnival Dance" featuring confetti, serpentine noise makers and all the trimmings for plenty of fun.

Goodrich posed rhetorical questions to readers of the Evening News:

"What more could anyone ask?--a beautiful pavilion, a good floor, the very best in dance music, dandy crowds, improved roads, refreshments or "Want a Thrill? You'll get it when the winning couple is chosen in this week's Fox Trot contest. It's just as much fun as a baseball game or another contest."

The semi-weekly Wednesday night Fox Trot Contest was perhaps the most visible promotional device. Patrons were asked not only to participate as contestants but also as voting judges to help pick the winner. Beginning on Wednesday June 20 for eight weeks the Fox Trot contest was promoted in large box advertisements. The focus dance song to which contestants must dance was "The Wedding of the Painted Doll", a feature number in the recent movie "Broadway Melody". Advertised as "positively the biggest dance attraction of the summer", the Grand Championship Fox Trot contest had nine couples competing. Three judges determined the winners rather than audience applause as in previous contests. Criteria for judging included dancer's position, smoothness and time, appearance and variety.

Goodrich urged newspaper readers to "Get the Habit" and asserted "if you once get the Tacoma Park Habit you'll never be satisfied to dance elsewhere". He referred to Tacoma Park as Brown County's playground. He claimed the pavilion was not only the most beautifully decorated and finest open air pavilion in the Northwest but also its location on the banks of the James provided "abundance of fresh air". He defined the IRRESISTIBLE RHYTHEM of the Merry-makers as "that certain something" that makes you want to dance--that allows you to dance all evening without tiring."

The Elks were the largest group to hold a picnic at Tacoma Park in 1929. They came on June 21. Afternoon games and baseball preceded the picnic lunch. The evening concluded with dancing. The

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gigantic Brown County Farm Bureau picnic which last year attracted 5000 farmers and business men was held at the Fair Grounds in 1929.

The Fourth of July in 1929 had both afternoon dancing at four and evening dancing at seven thirty. The Groton municipal band played concerts both afternoon and evening. Groton competed in baseball with "a fast Indian team" at 3:30 p.m. The Evening News assessed Tacoma Park's Fourth of July:

"The largest crowd in five years thronged Tacoma Park, popular nearby resort.... The far famed Sisseton Indians were tamed by the Groton nine by a score of 9 to 0 before a good sized gallery of fans. In the evening dancers from far and near packed the pavilion."

At the concluding dance of the season on Saturday September 21 many a couple swayed to the new dance tunes played that night and longingly looked back upon the summer of 1929 agreeing with Joe Goodrich's promotional slogan of June 28: "Music's Good--Floor just Great/ Tacoma Park's the Place to Date".

TACOMA PARK: 1930S

Drawn by the pavilion dance hall, the baseball diamond and the riverside picnic grounds, many rural and urban Brown County folks in the 1930s drove to Tacoma Park, a drive about fourteen to eighteen miles northeast of Aberdeen depending on route. Special holiday inducements on Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day increased that traffic. In the early 1930s some, especially members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, came on Sundays and during camp meeting week to the Gospel Tabernacle as they had done in the 1920s. Pavilion managers proclaimed that "an hour with us drives the blues away".

Tuesday, August 12, 1930.

GRAVEL HIGHWAY TO TACOMA PARK AGAIN URGED; BOARD CONSIDERING

Evening News headline August 12, 1930

Publicity stressed the accessibility theme in the early 1930s before and after the graveling of roads to the Park. Rain and mud always had been a potential threat to Park activity in the past. Despite the acceleration of hard times in the 1930s, the new decade began with pressure on county officials to improve

roads to this recreational center. In August 1930 a gravelled road had reached within four miles of the park. One posed the question: Why had not the road to this popular park been gravelled years ago.?

By the opening of the 1931 dance season the county's promise of gravel roads to the Park had been fulfilled so that one of the publicity slogans was "Good gravel road all the way--Let's Go". The 1932 dance publicity stressed the improved Park accessibility many times: "Good Roads", All graveled roads to the park;" and "Gravel clear into the Dance Hall"

Publicity slogans aimed to lure families to Tacoma Park for an entire day or for an evening focused on the Fun Time theme: "Always a Good Time"; "Everything to Amuse You"; "Plenty of Shade and Refreshments"; "One of the best dance floors in the Northwest"; "Follow the Crowds"; "A nice Evening Drive"

The Tacoma Park dance pavilion hosted 233 dances during the decade. Most were Saturday night dances but there were numerous Wednesday night dances with special features to attract people at midweek. The varied dance bands played at other dance halls and sites throughout the area as well as at Tacoma Park. Band names became well known to dance fans. The size of the band, its style of music, and personality of its leader and feature singers and instrumentalists were important to booking managers and the public. Dancers appreciated novelty numbers and instrumental variety produced by trombone and trumpet, saxophone and tuba, drum, flute, clarinet and accordian.

Season scheduling proved to be difficult at time with so many dance sites wanting their services. The Armadale and Scatterwood resorts, Aberdeen's Wylie Park Pavilion and others offered summer competition to Tacoma Park. It is a testimony to the power of tradition--the "Tacoma Habit" and the innovation of Park managers and personnel that Tacoma Park maintained its position for so many decades after the foundation Chautauqua era.

In 1930 the dance season opened on Saturday May 31 and concluded on Saturday September 27. Earl S. Klitz managed the dance pavilion for the 1930 season. He informed the public that a newly planed and sanded floor awaited them in a setting of lush vegetation due to recent heavy rains. He alerted folks to the fact that the Park road was being improved and that by August 1 fourteen miles should be graveled. On May 30 he issued road directions: "Depart from the Yellowstone Trail eight miles east of Aberdeen, proceed north six miles and then four miles east."

FOLKS—

Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet
With the Blue Ribbons On It
And I'll Take You For a Drive,
Where the Jim River is Flowing,
All the People Are Going, To

Tacoma Saturday Night

1930 Aberdeen Evening News Tacoma Park ad.

Twelve bands played a total of thirty-one dances at Tacoma Park in 1930. There were eighteen Saturday night dances. At midweek ten dances occurred on Wednesday, which became "feature night". The movie theaters developed ways to attract audiences to other nights than the weekend; so too did Tacoma Park dance hall. Management hosted two Wednesday waltzing contests. The best waltzing couple received a five dollar prize each Wednesday. Personnel at the Candy Dance of Wednesday July 29 awarded at fifteen minute intervals a pound of chocolates promoting Aberdeen's Ward-Owsley candy company. The Watermelon Dance of Wednesday August 6 awarded watermelons to those couples with certain numbers. Winners were urged to treat their friends.

Because of their infrequent bookings in this area and their uniqueness, colored bands and girl bands received special attention in the dance world. Patrons were advised in the Evening News of July 24 and 25 that "the coloreds would bring 'Plenty of Punch and Pep' to the dance floor. Words such as "They're sweet and Hot" and "Oh, What a Night" were further used to convey images of energetic music awaiting patrons that night. The theme of the late 1920s on joining friends, and following the crowd to the Park continued in 1930. Publicity focused on the Park's increased attendance, the "larger crowds than ever" idea, as an advertising device to appeal to the desire for sociability that could be found at a dance.

The dance season of 1931 continued past traditions but also implemented certain unique features. The term "Casino" was used to describe the dance pavilion between Wednesday May 20 and Saturday July 4. Thereafter, publicity focused on the words Tacoma Park, Dance and Pavillion. Free dancing on Saturday nights from nine to nine thirty was a device to increase attendance. The Bowery Dance with its bargain prices, so characteristic of the depression era, first appeared at the Casino for the July 4th celebration. Publicity

frequently referred to the word "good" to attract customers: "Good roads, Good floor. Good lung dances. Good Music. Good Crowd. Good time."

Four bands played for the twenty-seven season dances. Bill Klitz and his Melodians, a local band, serviced twenty three of these dances. The season began on Wednesday May 20 and closed on Saturday September 26. County Commission minutes reveal that John Kruger received a license to conduct a dance hall at Tacoma Park for six months under supervision of the county sheriff's office. This reflects a problem of disorderly conduct associated with public dance halls that reared its head from time to time.

The opening dance in 1932 occurred on Saturday May 21 and the last dance was on Saturday October 1, making the season of 1932 the second longest in the decade. Manager John Kruger contracted for eight bands to play at twenty-seven dances. In what seems to be a reply to the rival Wylie Park Pavilion's slogan "Where Aberdeen Dances", Manager Krueger characterized the Tacoma Park Pavilion as the place "where South Dakota dances".

The Saturday night Bowery Plan and "Hard Times Prices at Hard Times Dances" on certain Wednesdays were more prominent in 1932 than in 1930 or 1931. New bands and faces appear in 1932 as well as the familiar name of Joe Goodrich and his Merry-makers. The dance season publicity of 1932 stressed frequently the gravel road theme that made it possible for more people to form an auto party, to join their friends and enhance their dating or married life either as listening spectators or as active dancers. The park injunction "Bring the Bunch" envisioned many possibilities.

Seven bands played for twenty-six dances during the 1938 Park dance season. This was the greatest number of dances in the last five years of the decade. The season began on Saturday May 21 and ended on Saturday September 17. Five bands performed at twenty-two dances during the concluding year of the decade. The 1939 season began Saturday May 20 and closed on Saturday September 9. Fifty cents for gents was the price for each of these opening and closing dances.

PICNICKING AT THE PARK: 1930S

Building on successful picnics of the late 1920s at which thousands attended, the annual Brown County Farm Bureau and Community Club picnics continued to be held at Tacoma Park during the 1930s usually in mid-June. Newspaper accounts claimed nearly or over

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6000 attended this summer farm festival on June 12, 1930. Crowds thronged to picnics of 1931 and over 6000 attended the picnic of 1932. A joint meeting of the two groups enlivened the Park grounds on June 13, 1933. On Friday June 15, 1934 3000 participated in the Farm Frolic while on Thursday June 20, 1935, 4000 attended, "the largest crowd in years". For the picnics of 1937, 1938 and 1939 no attendance figures seem to have been reported.

The auditorium/dance pavilion served two functions during these picnics--afternoon lecture and entertainment hall and dance floor for evening dancing. Farm-oriented speakers, both national and state, addressed the crowds on varied themes. Music was an integral part of these events. Bands from nearby towns such as Frederick and Groton as well as 4 H club orchestras provided concerts, introduced and concluded speaking and other activities and marched about accelerating the sense of festivity which so characterized these picnics.

Competitive sports and field activity broadened the attractions for youthful and adult spectators and sports participants. Following the noon picnic and orations, a baseball game was a crucial afternoon event. A variety of participatory sports added excitement to the annual event. There were afternoon men and women's tug-of-war, age-graded boys and girls' foot races, hog and chicken-calling contests, even a husband-calling one. Three-legged races and sack races added variety to race contests. At the 1932 and 1933 picnics a carnival with Ferris Wheel and merry-go-round provided further entertainment.

The Community Clubs offered programs in the morning before the noon lunch as well as contests after the baseball game in the late afternoon. Upon arriving at the Park each community or township set up a banner on the Park grounds in order that club and community members might find their hometown or township base for picnicking and competitive games, a rallying point amongst the throngs. Recalling in 1994 these early days Richard Dreselhuys viewed Community Club Day as one in which he learned town and township geography. The vision of clustered banners flapping in the breeze and the excited chatter of young and old remained with him for decades.

There were other group picnics of the 1930s than the Farm Bureau and Community Club picnics. The Farmer and Workers Federation was formed at Tacoma Park in September 1931 when about 3000 people congregated there. They demanded a special legislative

session to enact an eleven-point program which advocated public ownership of power, mines and utilities; direct election of the U.S. president and Vice President; salary cuts for those in higher brackets, discontinuance of a building not yet in progress and use of gasoline funds to feed and shelter the needy. They wished to cancel past taxes over a year old and desired a five-year moratorium on land mortgage principal and interest. Their demands reveal the deepening of the depression, growing insecurity and an affinity with the Populists that gathered at Tacoma Park in the 1890s and early 1900s.

There were at least two Brown County Farm Tours in the 1930s with picnic stops at Tacoma Park where they heard speakers, ate and chatted--Sunday July 19, 1931 and Thursday July 7, 1932.

In addition to organized large picnic groups such as the United Commercial Travelers picnic June 13, 1931 and the Moose Sunday picnic August 2, 1937, families and small groups frequented the grounds at varied times during the summer. Their visits occasionally made the small town newspapers but usually are not documented by newspaper reporting. They continued a tradition established in the 1880s and 1890s when people sought riverside or lakeside tree groves for the shade they provided and a sense of communion with nature and neighbors.

TACOMA PARK IN THE 1940S:

THE TP CORPORATION

The pre-war years 1940 and 1941 found dance prices about the same as in the preceding decade except for a government tax which became effective July 1, 1940. Fifty-cent admission for men plus tax was the cost in these early years. After 1941 wartime and post war inflation occurred and the cost of Tacoma Park dancing rose by 1949 to seventy-five cents. During the decade 189 dances were held on the Tacoma Park Pavilion floor.

The Tacoma Park tradition established in the late 1920s of holding Brown County Farm picnics continued intermittently throughout the decade. Publicity continued to promote swimming and boating as well as picnicking and dancing. Sunrise dances continued to mark Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day. The Fourth of July holiday was the major focus of fun time which usually included picnics, baseball games, varied contests, concerts, speeches, evening dancing and fireworks. "A fine band at a low price", "Where everyone has Fun" or "Fun for

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everyone" and "Excellent picnic facilities. Bring the Family!" were slogans of the Park during this decade.

Publicity frequently reminded potential picnickers that on Sunday the concession stand was open.

Each year of the decade local area teams played baseball on the Tacoma Park Diamond during the July 4th holiday period and during the day set aside for the Brown County Farmers Union picnic. These were afternoon games usually scheduled for three p.m. Local town baseball parks and other resorts dominated the baseball action during the summer season.

However, Tacoma Park baseball on special occasions continued the tradition of the late 1920s and 1930s. Loyal fans followed their teams to Tacoma Park and increased the throngs on those occasions. Nevertheless, over the decades dancing was the more frequent entertainment and enduring lure to the Park. The 1940 dance season opened Saturday May 18 and closed with the Labor Day sunrise dance on Monday September 2. Nine bands played twenty-three dances that season. Depression prices persisted with the slogan "Gents 50 cents--Ladies Free".

Somewhat similar to the midnight movies so frequently found in Aberdeen theaters of the 1930s, sunrise or dawn dances appealed to the staying-up-late syndrome so important to youthful Americans.

Community picnics such as that held by the Bath school Saturday May 25, 1940 continued. The Brown County Farm Bureau hosted the largest organized picnic of the season at Tacoma Park on Thursday June 20. Approximately 1000 attended. Three speakers provided food for the mind. During the day the Groton high school band entertained. Skits by the Groton Go-Getters and Happy-Go-Luckies and songs of the Houghton Snap-dragons further entertained the picnickers. Baseball between Stratford and Columbia and a dance concluded the day's activities.

Seven bands played for twenty-one dances during the 1941 season. Tacoma Park hosted three Sunrise Dances. Sixteen of the twenty-one dances were on Saturday. Men paid fifty cents plus tax and the ladies were admitted free.

Noteworthy gatherings in 1941 were two organized picnics. On Tuesday June 17 about 500 people attended the annual Brown County Farm Bureau picnic. The Future Farmers of America with a strong Groton contingent met on Sunday July 13. Following the noon lunch intermittent rain delayed some entertainment. The ladies' slipper-kicking contest developed keen competition. Pre-high school boys raced the fifty-yard

dash and girls entered the forty-yard dash. There was a girls' kitten ball throw, a balloon blowing and a nail driving contest. About two months after the dance season was over, eighty year-old Mrs. Lena Peterson celebrated her 55th year on her Tacoma Park homestead. Twenty relatives and friends feasted on a chicken dinner and honored one whose roots were deep at historic Tacoma Park.

In the organizational history of the Tacoma Park Association 1941 was watershed year. The capital stock of the old Association which terminated May 4, 1940, was exchanged for equal amounts in a new perpetual corporation as of May 10, 1941. Stock transfer carried with it assignment of any lease then in force upon real estate of the corporation. The annual meeting of stockholders was changed from the second Tuesday in January to the month of May. Stockholders elected a Board of five directors from their own number. Maximum number of shares to be held by any one was thirty-two. Presidential powers included supervision of corporate affairs, signing stock certificates and written contracts. Directors must hold stock in the corporation. Section eight details power of directors:

"to lease, mortgage or sell any of the property of this corporation upon such terms and conditions as they deem proper and shall have power to make and enforce such rules and regulations pertaining to the management and use of property within the parks operated by this corporation as they may think best for all stockholders and leaseholders."

The board assesses leaseholds property yearly in November. Even in 2001 directors lease pasturage lands to area farmers.

In 1942 the dance season opened at midnight Friday May 29 and closed on Saturday September 19. Nineteen of the season's twenty-two dances were on Saturday. In addition to dancing Park publicity focused on picnicking, swimming and boating as well as occasional baseball. Tacoma Park hosted the annual Farm Bureau Picnic on Wednesday June 24. Following a noon lunch, picnickers listened to hall entertainment of instrumental and vocal solos, short skits and talks by 4 H Clubs. Then came afternoon baseball between Columbia and Groton. The evening dance concluded this traditional event.

Access to the Park was always important to attendance. The spring of 1943 was a flood year along the James and the adjacent slough. Water-covered roads to the east impacted Tacoma Park activities even into July as the Groton Independent for July 8 observed:

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"Tacoma Park was available as a picnic spot as in former years, but all who reside on the east side of the river found it necessary to go the long way around via Bath as the roads over the slough to the east of the river are still impassable on account of water."

The Fourth of July crowd did spend time at Tacoma but was less in numbers than usual.

In America's second full wartime year only five bands played for the sixteen dances of 1943. Related to America's wartime manpower demands, this trend of fewer bands continued through 1946. The season started later--June 26--and closed on Saturday September 18 in 1943. As in the year before only five bands played during Tacoma Park's 1944 dance season. However, this time there were twenty dances, all but two on Saturday. No organized picnic groups publicized their activities for Tacoma Park during this war year.

In 1945 Tacoma Park dancing dipped to its lowest point in years. Three bands entertained at twelve dances. Dance bands played at many sites in the region such as Wylie Park Pavilion in Aberdeen, Armadale resort, Scatterwood Lake etc. and during the manpower shortage they could only service so many places. Even in peacetime scheduling bands proved to be a constant problem in the dance hall business. The Brown County Farmers Union did not have its annual picnic at Tacoma Park but did sponsor a Harvest Festival dance and Floor Show on Saturday July 21.

The 1946 dance season at Tacoma Park testified to the postwar revival when five bands entertained at twenty-two dances compared with three bands and twelve dances of 1945. Sixteen were Saturday night dances. The season opened May 18 and closed September 7. On Sunday June 16 and Monday June 17 the Brown County Farmer's Union Picnic continued the prewar tradition of Tacoma Park as a resort center for agricultural America. Since the late 1920s through 1942 the Farm Bureau picnics had dominated the farm group picnics held at Tacoma Park. In postwar Brown County the Farmers Union held two picnics --1946 and 1949--at the Park. Claremont and Columbia provided the baseball competition for 1946.

The Fourth of July 1946 outdid the 1945 Fourth. Publicity identified the Park as "Brown County's finest picnic spot" and urged "Bring the family!" At 11:45 Wednesday July 3 the Sunrise dance drew the night owls and the Thursday night dance at 9:30 p.m July 4th attracted older as well as more youthful dancers. Boat rides, bingo and swimming were available during the

day as well as baseball action at 3:00 p.m between Claremont and Mina.

In the spring of 1947 the Elm and Jim river both flooded impacting highways and farmlands east, south and west of Tacoma Park. Water was close to the doorsteps of some Park cottages. Somewhat relieved the Willard Neudigates, operators of the general store at Tacoma Park, reported on April 22 "that water went down an inch last night". Flood waters remained from Tacoma Park east to Putney Slough. Township roads north and south of the Park were under water. The North-South Dean Highway, a county road route to the Park, was under water for a quarter mile southeast of Tacoma Park.

Such was the setting before Tacoma Park dance season began. There were no publicized organized group picnics by farmers or political groups at the Park this high water season. Six bands played for sixteen dances during 1947. In a season of high water boat rides on the James and swimming were viable recreational options as well as picnicking & baseball on the Fourth of July 1947.

A new manager --S.W. Demmers--presided over Tacoma Park Ballroom in 1948. The season of nineteen dances opened later than usual with no Sunrise Dance on Memorial Day. The first dance was on Saturday June 12 and the final one on Saturday September 25. Unique to this season's dance offerings were the two 9:00p.m. Western jamborees--one hour shows preceding the evening dance on Monday September 13 and Saturday, September 25. Admission prices were twenty-five cents for children to see the one hour show and seventy-five cents for adults to attend both show and dance. Publicity for the season stressed repeatedly "Grounds all gravelled". Concern with weather's impact and access revealed in these assurances are reminiscent of the late 1930s' stress on "roads graveled to the Park". Large organized picnics at Tacoma Park were not publicized in 1948. Former groups scheduled their picnics elsewhere.

Eight bands entertained at eighteen dances during the 1949 dance season which opened Saturday May 14 and closed Monday September 4. In this concluding year of the decade management urged area people that Tacoma Park was synonymous with "Good music--Good Time--Good Crowds". In addition to dancing the major attraction of the July 3rd and 4th holiday were baseball games in which the ladies from Redfield contested with girls from Zell and Orient. The Brown County Farmers Union scheduled another picnic for Tuesday June 14.

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Free ice cream and band music accompanied the noon dinner. Speeches followed as well as foot races and games. Claremont and Savo contested on the diamond. Free movies were shown at 7:30 and at 9:00 p.m.. Door prizes were awarded, one of which was a combination radio-phonograph. Dancing began at 9:30.p.m

TACOMA PARK: THE 1950S DANCING AND RACING

"Spend your weekend at beautiful Tacoma Park". This appeal of July 1950 opened a very short dance season in which only three bands energized the dancers. Management publicized only six Saturday nights with the opening dance July 29 and the closing one on September 9. Newspaper advertisements in the American News were about one inch by one inch or slightly smaller indicating a minimal advertising budget for that short dance season.

The 1951 dance season opened earlier than in 1950 when Harry Eisele played for a sunrise Memorial day dance at midnight Tuesday May 29. He also closed the dance season during the Labor Day holiday at the sunrise dance midnight Sunday September 2. Ten dances were scheduled that summer. One was associated with the Brown County Farmers Union Picnic. Farmer picnickers enjoyed free ice cream; their children played games and the adults listened to Emil Loricks expound on farm problems.

The snowy winter of 1951-52 impacted Tacoma Park's upcoming dance season of 1952. Heavy snow, estimated at two to three feet, collapsed the dance pavilion's roof in March 1952. No dances were advertised in the 1952 summer dance season.

DANCE HALL ROOF CAVES IN AT PARK

THE WEIGHT OF TONS OF SNOW collapsed the roof of the Tacoma Park dance pavilion. It

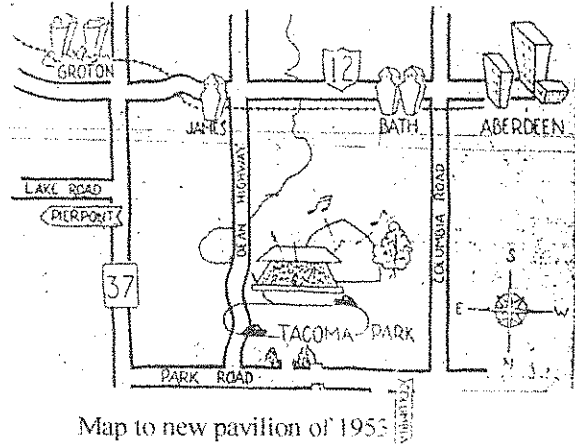
The flooding James also intruded on Tacoma Park in April 1952. By April 17 water on the flats west of the Park was deepening but receded by April 22. The Ray Biermans, operators of the Tacoma Park store, reported an overnight rise in the Jim of 1.5 to 2 feet. With no official dances luring folks to the Park, the Bierman's

apparently felt the need to advertise their store's availability to picnickers and fisherman in 1952: "Oh! July 5th and 6th Tacoma Park Store. Open days and evenings. Full line of groceries, meats, beverages and incidentals. We invite you to stop and let us take care of your needs."

The American News in March 1953 published Richard Dresselhuy's observations on Tacoma Park: Remembering his earlier years at the Park, Richard found it

"no longer an amusement Park but a quiet summer resort made up of some 60 cottages, a few houses, store, post office, and dance pavilion. Two large frame buildings, an auditorium and a restaurant have fallen into disuse and decay."

Perhaps this was a sound judgment given the danceless season of 1952. However, better years were on the horizon with the construction of a new pavilion and a stock car racing track.



A new era of Tacoma Park dancing emerged on Wednesday June 3, 1953, with the first of eighteen publicized dances. The Tacoma Park Association advertised a Grand Opening of what was called the "New Tacoma Playhouse". "All roads lead to Tacoma park" blazed the full page ad. "Come on out! Meet your friends! Have fun on one of the largest dance floors in the country. The claim of a 60' x 100' dance floor with no interfering posts seemed to be a dig at Aberdeen's rival Wylie Park Pavilion which had columns on the floor.

Once again Saturday night dancing loomed ahead and the refreshment bar with its soft drinks--Coca Cola, Seven Up and Squirt--awaited thirsty dancers. Also six brands of beer and Equity Dairy products promised to cool the dancing throngs. Aberdeen Steel Company

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erected the structure and Nelson Electric did the wiring which included indirect lighting for the dance floor.

A feature of the Grand Opening publicity was a beauty contest for women eighteen to twenty eight to represent Tacoma Park at the South Dakota Miss Universe of '53 Pageant in Huron. "Who will be Miss Tacoma Park of '53?" queried the management. Picnicking received billing with the announcement that fifty new picnic tables enhanced the grounds. After 11:30 a.m. on Sundays concessions serviced picnickers, fishermen and boaters. That Fourth of July featured baseball between Aberdeen's Preds and Claremont, a 6:30 p.m. barbecue, a fireworks display over the Jim river at 9:00 p.m. followed by a dance at 9:30 p.m.

THE STOCK CAR ERA 1954-1957

In 1954 twenty-five dances were offered, usually following stock car races--a new feature for Tacoma Park. Park Enterprises built its first stock car track at Tacoma Park in 1954 and expanded to Watertown and Fargo in 1955. In 1956 Park Enterprises leased Aberdeen's Wylie Park Dance Pavilion and Armadale in Spink County.

Modified stock car racing at Tacoma Park Speedway continued for three more seasons with competition emerging in 1955 from Speedy Hollow track north of Bath. Publicity gave priority to the races; dancing seems to have become a secondary but important attraction for weekend races.


Tacoma Park opened earlier in 1954 than rival Aberdeen's Wylie Park Pavilion which opened Saturday June 5. Dancing, racing and picnicking were three of the elements verifying the Park's 1954 slogan "Always fun at Tacoma". For one dollar per person one could enjoy after-race, Saturday night dances. Occasionally in 1954 there were some midweek dances not associated with races. During that dance season from May 21 to September 11 twelve different bands were booked. The stock car racing season extended five Sundays beyond the conclusion of Tacoma Park's dance season for 1954. Beginning Sunday July 17 stock car races shifted from Saturday to Sundays at 8:00 or 8:30 p.m. Park concession stands featured southern fried chicken and jumbo shrimp. The initial free admission to races for children under twelve changed to twenty-five cents for children six to twelve after Saturday July 10.

Opening publicity for stock car races at Tacoma Park Speedway boasted "South Dakota's newest and fastest 1/4 mile lighted dustless track." Wayne Gruendike was the contact man for drivers interested in

competing. Publicity promised North and South Dakota drivers "thrills, chills, spills". Occasional special features were added. Five "Survival Derbys" occurred during the 1954 season. Area merchants sponsored races. Varied names were used in connection with a survival derby: Auto Steeple chase, six-car Junker, Sunday Powder Puff races featured all women drivers in what ordinarily was a man's realm. Jack rabbit races were featured twice. Rainouts occasionally occurred requiring make-up special races at midweek.

The feature race consisted of twenty to twenty-five laps around the one-fourth mile track in addition to the occasional fifteen-minute survival races. On Sunday August 1, 1954 in addition to the twelve-lap main event there was a ten-lap consolation race and an eight-lap trophy dash. A crowd of 1300 witnessed the August 15th races in which seventeen cars participated.

Area folks were invited to a three-day celebration July 3 to 5, 1954 at Tacoma Park. A fireworks display each night, concessions, picnic grounds and plenty of shade were publicity inducements. In addition to Saturday races and dancing, there was a rodeo on Sunday the 4th and Monday the 5th at 2:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. That event featured a wild horse race, bareback riding, bronco busting, Brahm Bull riding, calf roping, bulldogging, chariot races with variations at each performance and a bevy of clowns, cowboys, cowgirls and Indians. That weekend three different dance bands furnished music.

HARVEST CUP RACE
Modified
STOCK CAR RACES
TACOMA PARK
SPEEDWAY 
DOUBLE Sun. Nite
POINTS JULY 31
8 P.M.
6 Race Program
Entire Net Gate Receipts to Drivers
Plenty of Cars.

T. Park Speedway ad : American News July 29 1955

At the Tacoma Park Speedway the 1955 race season included nine Sunday races. This continued the Sunday race pattern established in fall 1954 except starting time was moved from 2:30 p.m. to 8 or 8:15 pm. There were three Saturday races and one each on Monday and

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Tuesday. The Congress of Canadian Race Devils provided a special race feature Friday June 10 at the 8:30 program. Publicity for thrill-night promised twenty-eight hair raising stunts, motorcycle insanity and polo, beautiful girls and a vehicle shot from a cannon and motorcycle polo.

Competition in stock car racing appeared on July 3, 1955 when a track one-half mile north of Bath was opened. Eventually named Speedy Hollow, that track's management advertised modern restrooms and comfortable grand stands. The new track complicated scheduling for the Tacoma Park Speedway. Tacoma offered net gate receipts to drivers to lure them away from Speedy Hollow participation and changed to Saturday nights so as to avoid conflict with Speedy Hollow's Sunday races.

Beneficial to Tacoma Park was the fact that Aberdeen's Wylie Park Pavilion did not operate dances this season. In addition to fourteen race days there were seventeen dances held during the season with eleven different bands.

As in past years special efforts were made to draw people during the July 4th weekend. Management promised a three-day entertainment package. In addition to the Saturday night motorcycle race and dance, Sunday night stock car races at 8:15 followed by free fireworks were intended to keep people for the evening. People were invited to use Park picnic tables and to visit the grocery store which remained open all day to sell picnic supplies. Ballroom concessions offered southern fried chicken, jumbo shrimp and sandwiches. Monday July 4th featured a noon to 2:30 p.m. and 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. open pit barbeque with prime roast beef served under the trees. Ice cream sundaes, beverage, salad, relishes and potatoes supplimented the prime beef and buns. All this cost adults one dollar and children seventy-five cents. The evening concluded with a two-hour talent stage show sponsored by the Aberdeen Junior Legion baseball. Fireworks followed. General admission to the stage show was \$1.25; Children paid fifty cents.

Tacoma Park Speedway racing season for 1956 began Saturday May 19 and continued through the Fourth of July holiday. From July 5 to August 25 there were no races at the speedway. Rival speedy Hollow near Bath hosted stock car racing during the period. Competition with Speedy Hollow race track resulted in policy changes at Tacoma Park Speedway. In order to attract drivers management offered for the races of Saturday May 26 a guaranteed purse of \$400 plus

percentages according to advertisements in the American News of May 25. New admission prices were instituted at the June 9 race--fifty cents per person instead of one dollar and children under fifteen, twenty-five cents.

Park Enterprises sponsored a special event Friday June 15 at 8:15 p.m. Joie Chitwood Dare Devils performed twenty-eight hair-raising stunts with cars and motor cycles. Publicity urged: "See a new convertible shot from 16 ton steel Cannon" and motorcycle Pyramid Riding--well worth the admission price of \$1.00 for adults and 50 cents for children." The opportunity to win a cash prize of twenty-five dollars was promised to customers signing their names.

During the period May 19 through July 3 Park Enterprise sponsored six races but withdrew their sponsorship ending races at Tacoma Park Speedway between July 4 and August 26. In that year Park Enterprises leased Wylie Park Dance Pavilion in Aberdeen and the Armadale facility.

Tacoma Park Speedway, now leased by drivers and owners of cars, reopened Sunday August 26 through September 18, offered five race days. The new management's publicity promised surprises, something different and real fun, thrills and spills, new as well as old drivers who were promised seventy-five percent of gate receipts. Admission prices were increased to one dollar for adults but children under twelve were free. Aberdeen businesses sponsored advertisements. Aberdeen Beverage Company urged "while at the races be sure and enjoy Squirt, never an afterthirst." A Pred's gift certificate of \$25.00 was offered to ladies who registered and won the drawing. During the Labor Day holiday September 2 and 3 area residents were urged to enjoy a picnic before the races. These Labor Day weekend races offered the usual variety -- feature races, consolation race, trophy dash and pursuit race. The last race of the season occurred on Sunday September 18 at 2:30 p.m. with a seven-race program. The Speedway boasted international competition by eight top cars from Winipeg with North and South Dakota cars.

The dancing season at Tacoma Park in 1956 featured twenty-five dances starting on Saturday May 19 and concluding with the midnight Sunday dance September 4. Twelve different bands played.

In 1957 the racing season at Tacoma Park Speedway opened later than in 1956. New management hosted the initial race on Saturday, June 15 followed by eight race days, the last concluding on Thursday

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August 15. The track had been completely resurfaced. The rival speedy Hollow stock car races north of Bath continued in 1957 and 1958 but after 1957 the roar of motors was no more heard at Tacoma Park Speedway. The dance floor and the picnic grounds continued to be the prime attraction of Tacoma Park.

In 1957 new management opened Tacoma Park Ballroom on Wednesday May 29 and closed it on Saturday September 14 with a post-football game dance. Area residents attended eighteen dances serviced by thirteen different bands on the portable stage. Nine of the dances followed the stockcar races.

BALLROOM DANCING RESUMES CENTER STAGE 1958-1959

Tacoma Park dance season for 1958 opened Saturday May 24 and closed on Saturday September 20. Eight different bands played at twenty-two orchestra dances. Also two juke box dances June 11 and 18 appealed to teenage youth as did one platter party on September 12 for pre-teens from nine to twelve. The ballroom was available for private parties and wedding dances. Three Sunrise Dances were held. Concession stand and booth services--lunches and soft beverages--were available at these Sunrise Dances which opened at 10:00 p.m. for socializing and snacking while actual dancing began at 11:00 or 11:30 p.m.

During the 1959 dance season eight different bands played for twenty-two dances including three Sunrise dances. Saturday May 9 was Grand Opening day. Management advertised a redecorated ballroom with new concession stand, booth service and modern rest rooms. Occasionally, a benefit dance championed a specific cause. Canada Dry sponsored two Teen-age Hi Fi Sound sessions. On Friday May 29 an afternoon session 3:30 to 5:30 offered free prizes and beverages with no admission charge while that of June 3, an evening affair from 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. cost fifty cents admission.

Thus, the 1950s ended with a total of 162 orchestra dances. Tacoma Park dances of the 1950s so impressed Nyla LaMee, who grew up in Claremont and attended those dances with others from area towns that in February 2001 she wrote a letter to the editor of the American News in response to David Newquist's description of the dance hall as he viewed it in the winter of 2001. She exclaimed "What I wouldn't give for one last dance at 'The Park'. 'Bittersweet memories' followed as she visualized the nature of a

Tacoma Park dance and the chance to intermingle with area youth:

"The best memories of my teen-age years are of the dances at Tacoma Park, beginning with a "sunrise dance" on Memorial day weekend and ending with another one on Labor Day weekend and one on the Fourth of July....The music of bands like Leo Fortin, with lots of horns and songs like, "The Woodchoppers Ball and "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White". Girls wearing full swinging skirts, with freshly starched cancan slips, peasant blouses and cinch belts. Guys with their ducktail haircuts, nicely ironed shirts with the collars turned up and sleeves cuffed and jeans that fit."

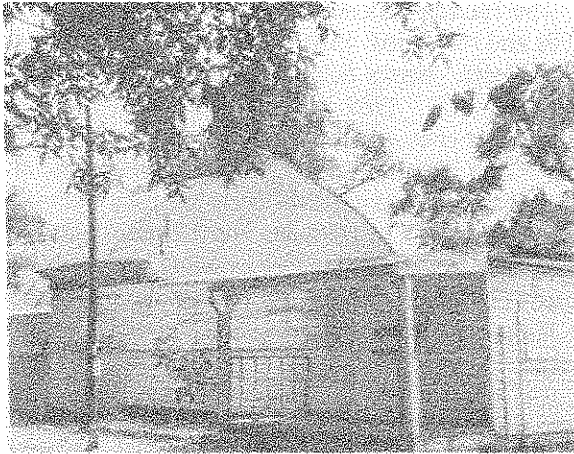
"That dance hall was so packed, it was like the floor came to life. Those boarded up windows Newquist spoke of would all be opened; it was almost like being outside. He was so right about those dances being a social event. ..I'm so glad I was a teenager in the 50s and lived in this area and got to go to dances at Tacoma Park."

Picnicking continued in the era of the new dance hall and race track. In addition to encouraging individual family Sunday picnics at the Park by adding fifty, new picnic tables in 1953, management attracted a few large groups for their annual picnics. The 1950s saw a few publicized picnics by organizations such as the Brown County Farmers Union June 16, 1954 and the Northern Electric Cooperative on June 4, 1955. Both picnics were potlucks with some items furnished by the organization--coffee, ice cream, pop, paper plates and cups. Speakers addressed pertinent issues. Orchestras and high school bands provided music. Northern Electric had door prizes which included a girl's and a boy's bicycle.

DANCE TONIGHT! TACOMA PARK: 1960S

In the 1960s Tacoma Park ballroom, no longer called a playhouse as in 1953, hosted 155 dances, a decline over the 1950s as there were very few dances booked after June 10, 1967. In 1968 only two public dances were advertised, both sponsored by the Brown County N.F. O. and none were publicized in 1969. Throughout the 1960s management continued the ban instituted in 1959 on shorts, slacks and jeans. In the 1960s there were no sponsored picnics advertised for Tacoma Park. Further evidence of popularity decline may be found in the fact that the Park grocery store after 1961 was no longer listed in the Polk Directory of rural places.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES



Northern Electric Photo of dance pavilion
before proposed renovation

The 1960 dance season at the redecorated ballroom opened Saturday May 7 with a new dance floor and added booths. Publicity borrowed the Aberdeen's inoperative Wylie Pavilion slogan and urged people to "meet the gang" at Tacoma Park Ballroom. The sunrise dance of Sunday September 4 concluded the season.

Ten different bands had played for twenty-four dances. Two benefit dances were scheduled. The most significant one, The March of Dimes Benefit Dance, urged people to "Dance that others may walk". Aberdeen's Cosmopolitan club sponsored this seventh annual affair. Seventeen bandsmen played without pay. They were contemptuous of rock and roll and looked back romantically to the era of big bands even though they recognized that such bands had become financially impractical. Representative numbers played were "You Can Depend On Me", "Blue Skies", "Twelfth Street Rag" and "How High The Moon." Bands played for three Sunrise dances that season with doors opening at the usual 10:00 p.m. followed by dancing at 11:30. Two baseball benefits were held to assist the Groton and the Columbia teams.

During the 1961 summer season seven different bands played for nineteen dances at the ballroom beginning with Saturday May 6. Publicity featured "Booths--Lunches--Beer". The Labor Day sunrise dance Sunday, September 3 concluded the season.

Park maintenance proved to be a persistent problem. On Friday June 16 Laurence Mardian, president of the Tacoma Park Association, warned the public about dumping on the Park grounds: "Dump Grounds at Tacoma Park are private property. Outsiders caught dumping rubbish of any kind will be prosecuted."

More bands and dances marked the 1962 season. Thirteen bands played twenty-five dances in 1962. Wednesday dances became more popular, seven compared to eleven Saturday night dances. Advertisements of dance bands reflected popular songs of the decade. Bands who had recording hits were popular and admission to their dances was usually more expensive than the regular \$1.00 admission. Two of these were noted for recordings. Buddy Knox and his Rhythm Orchids had popularized "Party Doll", "Hula Love", "I Think I'm Going to Kill Myself" and "Ling Ting Tong". The Champs had recorded "Tequila Twist", "El Rancho Rock", "Little Matador", "Night Train", "Limbo Rock", "Train to Nowhere", "Midnighter", "Moonlight Bay and "Caramba".

TACOMA PARK	
THURS., JUNE 21	SAT., JUNE 23
Conway Twitty	The Starlites
THE MOST TALKED ABOUT NAME AROUND THE WORLD	THE ONLY DANCE ALL IN THE AREA
\$1.00 Per Person	\$1.00 Per Person

American News :Ballroom ad: June 20, 1962

The peak year of the 1960s was the 1963 dance season at Tacoma Park Ballroom. Sixteen bands played for twenty-eight dances during the season. Wednesday nights were fairly popular with nine dances on that night; two of these were Sunrise dances. However, Saturday night with its scheduled seventeen dances continued the traditional time slot for Tacoma Park dances. Harry Eisele's orchestra, "the band that packs the house", initiated the dance season on Saturday May 18 and concluded on Saturday, September 7. One benefit dance assisted the Columbia firemen.

In 1964 seventeen bands played twenty dances from Saturday, May 25 to Saturday September 12. Eight were midweek Wednesday night dances. As in past years there were three Sunrise dances celebrating Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day.. Four recording bands played during June and July and rated the higher admission prices of \$1.25 and \$1.50.

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Two benefit dances were held, one for the Brown County NFO and one for the Groton Jaycees.

After the peak dance years of 1963 and 1964, the 1965 season at Tacoma Park consisted of nineteen dances, similar to that of 1961. Prices ranged from \$1.00 to \$2.00 for those dances. Ten were Saturday affairs. The season opened on Friday, May 28 and ended with a Labor Day Sunrise Dance Sunday September 5. The no-slack-or-jean dress restriction was in effect throughout the season.

As in previous years the Memorial Day Sunrise dance opened the 1966 season at the ballroom on Sunday May 29. On Saturday August 27 at the concluding dance ballroom manager Wayne Grunendike reminded fans "see you next summer with the best in bands". Twelve bands had serviced fifteen dances during 1966.

Tacoma Park grounds, rather than the dance hall, received publicity on Thursday afternoon June 16 during the 100th anniversary of Sam Brown's Ride. The Park served as a waystop on an epic daylight Trail Ride commemorating Sam Brown's 1866 ride from old Fort Sisseton to Ordway. A Webster caterer provided grub--salads, fried chicken. Hay and oats were trucked along for the horses. Aberdeen's Max Cooper, described their arrival: "They trotted into Tacoma Park shortly after noon Thursday, drank some lemonade, ate some salad and planned to pile into a bus to go on to Ordway." The American News on June 17 showed a picture of four riders labeled "looking for a dry place at Tacoma Park". It had been raining. Horses secured oats, hay and running water from a hose-filled tub.

Tacoma Park's dance season in 1967 was very short. It began on Saturday May 27 and concluded on Saturday June 10. The no-slacks-or-jeans restriction continued during this short season. Newspapers for June 16 and 17 contained a boxed advertisement "Tacoma Park closed for season".

In 1968 two public dances starting at 10:00 p.m. were held at the Tacoma Park Ballroom. Both were sponsored by the Brown County NFO. Customers paid an admission fee of \$1.00. Since 1963 the number of dances scheduled at the ballroom had been dwindling. Indicative of trends for dance halls is the fact that other dance halls such as Wylie Park Pavilion and the Roof Garden had closed their doors during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Although Aberdeen's Trianon Ballroom had a grand opening in September 1961, lack of sponsorship and other factors were behind the demise of public dance halls.

The Tacoma Park Association continued on into the 1990s and still exists in 2001. However, there were no more dances. Nancy Schnoor, American News writer, on January 27, 1985 wrote about the beauty and serenity that characterized this "once glamorous park". One of her grandfather's favorite fishing holes, the James River at Tacoma Park drew her back from time to time in search of solitude. She visualized Drifting Goose back in the 19th century camping here as well as settler Tom James who homesteaded on the east bank of the James. She envisioned the chautauqua and carnival seasons of by gone decades when railroad trains brought people from Aberdeen. She recalled hillside concerts and pavilion dancing, laughing people cruising the James in rowboats, baseball games and the shouting accompanying competitive events such as tug war and greased pig and pole contests. Nancy continued:

"With dawn's light comes reality and nearly all that remains of a more exciting age are a railroad trestle and an old auditorium deteriorated by the ravages of time, weather and neglect. Gone is the suspension footbridge, one of only two river crossings in the early days. Gone too are those proud pioneers who once used the Park as a showcase for man's accomplishments like the invention of the phonograph and the automobile."

"The river itself seems to remain the same--calm on the surface but capable of destruction. While the automobile seems most likely to blame for the park's loss in popularity, the river itself may have been the final factor as recurring floods drove many people out of their homes and the river's instability kept them away."

In an article entitled "Man and Time Take Toll on Tacoma Park" the Aberdeen American News observed in January 1985: "At present, five families call the Park home on a year-round basis with other families and individuals maintaining homes for summer use."

PART IV PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS ALONG THE JAMES: 1900-2000

NORTHERN BROWN COUNTY HECLA CITY PARK AND THE QUEST FOR A RIVERSIDE PARK

Hecla's city park in the years 1929 into the 21st century provided a gathering place for area people. Prior to 1929 those lots served as the Pfutzenreuter private tourist park., 240' x 280' in size. Today the tree-ringed city park is bounded on the south side by

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

County Road #5 which leads westward to the James River. The Hecla Centennial History of 1986 focuses on the park's purpose and functions with three rhyming lines: "Hecla City Park aims to please--Picnics, playgrounds, camping--all of these/ Sheltered by the shady trees." Ten outlets for campers were authorized in June 1985. The Hecla centennial of June 1986 increased interest in horseshoe competition and led to fencing in the horseshoe area with its eight stations. On May 3, 1989 these courts opened at the park's west end.

Between 1961 and 1979 the Park served as a site for the picnic feature of high school class reunions. The Greater Hecla Association hosted annual community-wide park picnics aimed at rural neighbors as well as city folks. Town and Country picnics were characterized by the slogan "Great food, great fun, great time!" Between 1971 and 1990s young people gathered in the park to celebrate special occasions in addition to being present at general picnics with parents and other adults--girls scouts camps, birthday parties and post baseball game picnics.

Between 1940 and 1953 and again in 1970 Hecla looked to extending its park system beyond the acreage of 1929. Despite these efforts however, the city maintained and utilized the original city park. Apparently about 1940-41 some local Hecla people felt the need for an additional park a mile west along the James River which would provide riverside locations such as characterized Columbia Park. Sand Lake brochures recognize a Hecla Recreation Area west of Hecla along the east bank although such proximity to the river during flood season threatens usage as is the case of other riverside sites at Columbia, Tacoma Park and Rondell. However, in summer 2001 many anglers lined the limited shore area to fish the Jim.

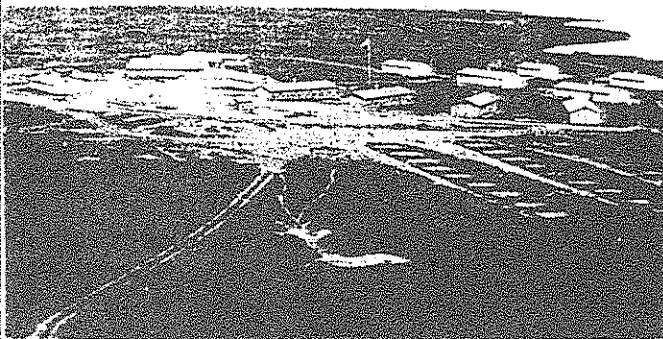
SAND LAKE'S CHANGING LANDSCAPE 1935-2000

In the pre-settlement era the slow moving James river flowed through rolling grassland which surrounded future Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Decades following arrival of settlers, the landscape experienced sweeping changes due to depletion of wildlife habitats by farming and grazing practices.

Recognition of this endangerment to waterfowl resulted in establishment of the Sand Lake refuge in order to preserve the nesting and feeding habitat. In 1934-35 original surveys were made and land acquisition followed in 1935. By the end of June 1935 work had begun on about a dozen permanent structures

at the Civilian Conservation Corps camp established to service the area. This included a mess hall with combined dining room and kitchen. The contract included erection of a 107 foot observation tower, a feature found in all waterfowl refuges.

In September 1935 CCC workers began their four-year task of shaping the land, "the hay basket of Brown County", into a suitable refuge for birds as well as structures to serve as headquarters and work base. They built an eight-stall storage garage, a duck hospital, dry seed storage, irrigation pump house, barn, boathouse, service building for office and laboratory and barracks to house workers. The CCC camp was terminated August 1, 1939 and moved to Montana.



View of CCC camp

Ralph Herseth, camp superintendent, relates in the Houghton Centennial History the work which employed some 200 men: "tear down buildings on farm which had been taken into the refuge area, build pheasant shelters, build duck nests, had a nursery to start seedling trees, transplant trees, an irrigation system for the trees, harvest bullrush seed, bale straw for use in the bird shelters and nests, build bridges and roads and dams, move barns and buildings off the now government owned farms to farms outside the refuge area, build gates to the headquarter entrance, create a public picnic area, tear out fences, put in boundary fences, built the lookout tower at the headquarters." The refuge which emerged has been called a "true jewel" of the Prairie Pothole region, a place to see migratory birds of North America.

In August 1938 Phil Dumont, refuge director, invited service clubs and the public to visit the refuge. He reviewed the accomplishments which included completion of two low-earth dams. The Columbia dam at the south end of the project was 3200 feet long and had a 400 foot concrete spillway. The Mud Lake dam,

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

one foot higher than the Columbia dam and one mile north of state highway #10, was 6600 feet long and had a 100 foot concrete spillway at the east end. Five strand barbed wire strung on creosoted posts surrounded the posted 21,000 acre refuge. Hunting was banned on highways crossing the refuge. These highways were the Weismantel grade, the Houghton grade (#10), four mile or branch grade, Hecla grade (county highway #37).

The changes of 1935-40 impacted both negatively and positively, the farms, towns, travel routes and hunting practices in the vicinity. Brown County commissioners responded in July 1935 to petitions from the Bureau of Biological Surveys requesting closure of 14 segments of road in the Sand Lake area's future federal game refuge. They decided to keep open some stretches including a three-mile east-to-west segment across the James river bottom four miles north of Houghton and a north-south road running north from Houghton in order to connect the town with the above "Branch grade" stretch. However, at least eight other stretches were closed.

Clarence Smith in the Houghton Centennial History 1884-1985, published in 1985, recalled the impact on local farmers and Houghton; he labeled the refuge project an even greater misfortune than the dust storms and drought of the early 1930s. The Refuge

"stretched for miles north and south just west of the little town, cutting off half of its trade area. Farmers sold their land and moved out. Roads were closed and rerouted. Dams were constructed on the James River. The whole area was fenced by CCC workers. They built a high observation tower and extensive headquarter buildings and pens. Farmers were being exchanged for geese, and the geese came by the hundreds of thousands."

Smith further emphasized the negatives over the fifty years since 1935:

"The geese flew over Houghton, but they did no business. They never needed repairs or groceries or supplies. They did not call for mail, or consider sending their children to school. Geese, likewise, needed no roads or civic improvements, and they also paid no taxes. With the hunting season hordes of hunters came cruising along the township roads seeking straggling geese straying outside the refuge. During the wet Fall days these hundreds of cars cut the farm roads to pieces. The rooky hunters from away could not tell a dairy cow from a deer, and they cut the farmers fences and trampled down his corn. The farmers who remained around Houghton have suffered a lot during the last fifty years."

By April 1936 workers had constructed eight islands into what the newspaper termed "a private island empire" for migratory wildfowl. Workers moved over 120,00 cubic yards of dirt in the process. Burrows surrounding the islands were connected by ditches with the James River to insure a continuous water supply. Camp Superintendent Teckemeyr in April 1936 asserted that in order to provide a bird paradise workers planted vegetation in sixteen miles of marsh and eventually flooded it.

In 1936 and 1937 marginal trails were built to provide year-round patrol roads inside the refuge and to serve as a wide fire break; only a few miles of those trails were graveled. Starting in 1936 the Shelter Belt Division of the Forestry Service transferred surplus trees which were grown in a 22 acre nursery on the east bank of Sand Lake. In 1937 about 45,000 of these had been planted in shelter strips.

State Game, Fish and Parks personnel in a statement of 1976 on "Oahe Irrigation Impact on Fish, Wildlife and Deer" favored maintaining the natural river habitat against proposed channelization and testified that the Wildlife Refuge is an important protection, rest and food area for waterfowl. They credited Sand Lake as

"the number one recovery area for mallards and a very important snow and blue goose harvest area. Annually over 50 percent of the snow and blue goose harvest for South Dakota comes from Brown County and areas adjacent to or very closely associated with Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge."

In July 2000 teacher Jackie Wells-Fauth, a product of Columbia area farm country, viewed Sand Lake Refuge as South Dakota's "Magic Kingdom". She looks at Sand Lake with a different perspective than that of farmer Clarence Smith in 1985. In her American News column she suggests a place to visit for those vacationers seeking answers to the question "Where shall we go this year?" For "an outdoor feast" she urges a drive north to Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, north of Columbia and 27 miles northeast of Aberdeen off Brown County highway 16. She recalled childhood days lying on pasture grass looking skyward to see "the sky turn white and gray with those noisy, beautiful birds" who, as they landed, turned the refuge into a "moving snowbank". She felt this bird show is pleasant and exciting, a delight to the eye.

Jackie describes those qualities which make the Refuge a "magic kingdom":

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"Sand Lake itself, traversed as it is by the James River, is hardly the prettiest waterway one will see, but the wildlife who call its shores home aren't noted for complaining and neither are the people who live nearby. Sand Lake can be white and foamy when the wind skips across the surface or it can take on deep mysterious browns, blues and greens as the season and water flow determine. A child never minds the color of the waters. Hot summer days make a few minutes wading a pleasure."

"A walk through the nature trails has always been an entertainment and an education for me. Never am I so aware (nor will you be) of the wildlife living just beyond your fingertips, than when you walk along the trails and take in the self-guiding plaques, designed to tell you all about it. Driving through the area is also a treat. From the Sand Lake Refuge base near Columbia to the edge of Hecla, portions of Sand Lake can be seen by the nature lover."

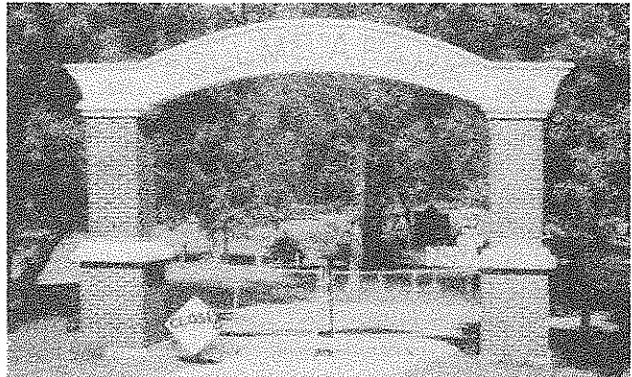
"The tower at the refuge base is a source of fascination. It was always a challenge for climbing. As a child, you wanted to get to the top and then weren't sure about coming back down. As an adult the view from the top is ever more breathtaking than the climb for those who are interested. Viewing the entire area from that vantage point is one of the joys of the trip....There's even a little picnic spot along the highway for anyone who is merely looking for a quiet bit of outdoors to enjoy their Sunday evening meal. Shielded by trees from the road and laced with well-marked wilderness trails....it will provide a satisfying...summer afternoon....Even if you managed to go to Disneyworld this year, Sand Lake is still a magical kingdom of its own".

The most recent recognition of Sand Lake's significance as a site along the James River is its designation by the American Bird Conservancy in Washington, DC as a globally important bird area because of its notable achievement in conserving birds and habitats and providing refuge every year for millions of migratory birds.

CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY: COLUMBIA PARK 1936-2000

Established in 1936, Columbia Park occupies 20 acres about one half mile south of Columbia on the north side of a James River bend. Legally the park lies in range 62, township 125, section 28. An arched gateway, built with brick pillars by Bill Wandry as a

WPA project in 1936, looms adjacent to county highway 16. Labeled COLUMBIA PARK it beckons visitors.



Columbia Park Gateway of 1936

Within Park boundaries are picnic grounds, playgrounds and a baseball diamond. A circular road ringed with post guards provides access to scattered park facilities as the visitor enters under the arched gateway. The access road circles the baseball diamond. A flag pole stands at the southwest corner of the field outside the fenced area as does another flag pole at the southeast end near the scoreboard. The batting cage stands at the north end, the bleachers at the northwest corner. Eight light poles ring the field for nighttime playing. This "new" or renovated ball complex of fenced playing field, concession stand, rest rooms and well with drinking fountain was constructed in 1977, two years before Columbia's centennial.

Riverside location meant occasional exposure to rising waters and temporary evacuation of Columbia Park. Heavy rains in late June 1975 brought the James River at Columbia to flood stage. In preparation workers cleared the park of tables, trash containers and other floatables. Columbia officials locked the park gates and asserted that the park would be unusable during the remainder of summer. Due to this flooding of 1975 the city constructed in 1976 an earthen dike along the river bank south and east of the circular access road, at the cost of several thousand dollars.

The highway wire fencing on the park's west side demarks the border between park and highway and was completed in 1977. Nature altered the Park landscape somewhat on Thursday night June 15, 1978 when "old, majestic trees were yanked out of the ground and twisted where they stood causing a lot of destruction." Aberdeen had clocked 75 mile an hour winds. Saturday June 17. The towns people and nearby country folk

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

gathered to remove the "huge trees" from city park, an example of cooperative effort and pride in their riverside Park. Columbia celebrated its centennial in 1979 with many park activities.

Columbia's city council authorized certain maintenance measures in the 1980s, and issued permits for operation of the Park concession stand, established parking rules and approved the idea of bringing Web water to the ball park. Its spacious grounds made it ideal for family reunions, church related worship services and picnics 1986-1990 as well as end-of-the season baseball picnics. Baseball events seemed to have occasioned many picnics. In the 1980s the city had a park reservation policy and scheduling calendar for baseball games and tournaments. Frequently weekends in June and July were fully booked.

With its on-site baseball diamond Columbia's park had more interaction of sons and fathers, daughters and mothers as Midgets, Pee Wees and T Ballers competed and interacted. In hosting tournaments encompassing numerous Brown county towns and even neighboring county towns, Columbia Park brought youth, parents and town supporters together in one park setting. In so doing place and people contributed to formation of cultural and civic values, town and team pride, coordination skills, self discipline and comradeship. Teams became instruments of peer pressure and a means of guiding youthful energy in positive directions. Picnic bookings, game scheduling and pairing of age and sex groups revealed attitudes toward the sexes and maturity levels. Park activity revealed growing opportunities for girls although boys formed the majority of players on the diamond.

Despite the earthen dike of 1976 the flood danger emerged again in late April 1981 when park and ball diamond were under water. Then in late March 1987 Columbia reported that the park was in danger of flooding. These concerns also continued into the 1990s during periods of high water.

A visit to Columbia Park generates a sense of remoteness from urban life more so than town parks which are bordered by residential homes. The arched gateway and circular drive of the park attract the eye and create the impression of mysterious vistas awaiting as one passes through the gate and follows the winding roadway. Even in 2000 there was sufficient dry ground by May 27 to host the Daly Corners picnic celebrating the placement of a historic sign identifying that Corner.

The river view from the tree-lined and brush-

covered diked area of Columbia Park suggests a scene from a romantic painting of America's wilderness.



Columbia Park River bank view

CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY: DALY CORNERS

Fifty-six year old John Daly and his four sons in 1880 sought land close to the James in the Columbia area but found they could not have adjoining farms since much land had already been taken. Therefore, they homesteaded the corners of sections 7, 8, 17 and 18 two miles north and five miles east of Columbia. On the northwest corner was John C. Daly's tree claim while his homestead was on the northeast corner. Twenty-eight year old George B. Daly's tree claim was on the northeast corner while his homestead was on the southeast corner. Twenty-year old Edward Daly located $\frac{1}{4}$ mile south and eighteen-year old Austin one mile south and $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east. John Daly located one mile south.

The Dalys over time planted a variety of trees suited for the Dakota climate. Daly Corners became noted for its evergreens. The groves of John C. And George B. eventually merged into one continuous grove. The Corners have served for over a century as a social and recreational meeting place for the area. One dance Friday evening March 17, 1899 was held to raise money for the encampment at Tacoma Park.

John C. Daly in his older years gardened and with his buggy delivered his garden vegetables to area residents before his death in October 1906.

His oldest son, George B. Daly, emerged as a leader in the Populist movement and the Tacoma Park Association, served in the legislature before his death in September 1932. He was editor of the Aberdeen State Democrat which championed populist causes. Eighteen Daly children were born at the Corner homes making it

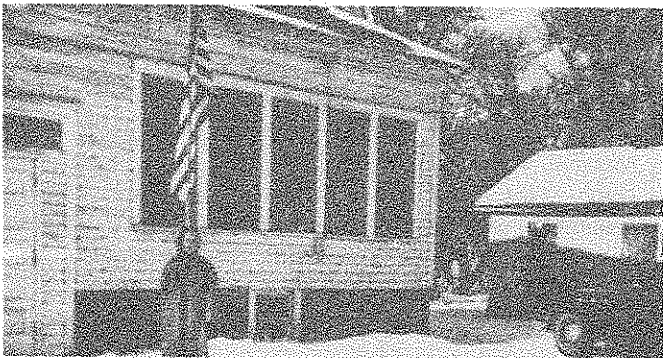
JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

imperative that a school house be built in 1892. The John C. Daly family donated land for the school.

In contrast to other rural schools which lacked students for full time operation, the Daly school was well attended and so remained open year after year. This increased its role as a center for various neighborhood gatherings, participation in spelling bees, hosting picnics, baseball games and dances. In winter spelling contests were popular for the Columbia District schools; one was held at the Daly school in 1899 with five or six other schools participating.

An Aberdeen Weekly News clip for January 26, 1899 spelled out procedures for these weekly Saturday evening bees:

"There will be a team chosen from each school consisting of not more than three pupils. The school missing the least number of words each week will carry home the spelling school banner. After spelling by the team there will be a spelling class consisting of the patrons of the school. After the other classes there will be a teachers' spelling class. Everybody is invited to attend but all who go must spell."

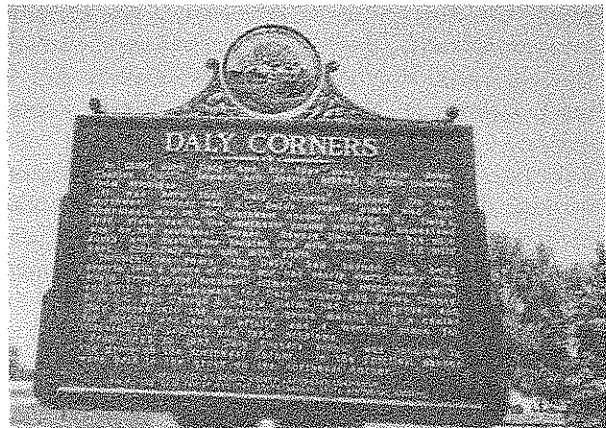


Daly Corners school 1882-1961

The Daly Corners school remained operative until 1967. A special election authorized its beginnings in 1892-93. It started as a one-room school and later expanded to the two rooms when an addition was brought in about 1925. This structure served as a grade school and as a two-year high school. In time some desired a new school district in the eastern part of the Columbia District. Resistance appeared to this division. Thus, a compromise emerged. The courts fixed boundary lines which found Daly Corners in the center of the new district. This justified establishing a centralized grade school.

In 1923 the Daly Corners Community Club was formed. They picnicked with other community clubs including the Shelby club on June 9, 1923 at Daly Corners. The Corners school grounds served as the site for a joint school picnic, field and track meet Saturday May 28, 1925. Eight schools participated. Daly Corners hosted baseball competitions at its diamond; for example, in July 1935 at the Farm Holiday Association picnic Columbia defeated Hecla 7 to 2.

In May 2000 Daly Corners commemorated its past with the dedication of a roadside historic marker followed by a picnic at Columbia Park. In that year Patricia Cutler of Claremont recalled "I remember going to the dances at Daly Corners. When I was 10 years old, my parents ran the concession stand, and I remember big crowds, and good music." Melrose Alberts of Claremont recalled "We went there for a lot of picnics, and Sunday ballgames."



Daly Corners roadside marker: May 2000 dedication

THE GRANARY RURAL CULTURAL CENTER & SCULPTURE GARDEN

In the summer of 1994 John Sieh of Groton planned conversion of his father's granary (built in 1928-29) to a Memorial Art Gallery which might become a cultural asset to Brown County. William Sieh was a significant pioneer in control of noxious weeds and a specialist in growing superior seeds for use in the county. Located in Putney township, the original two storied granary, 30 feet by 30 feet with gabled roof, rested on a poured concrete foundation and floor. Replacement windows of the same size as the originals mark the four sides of the structure. In June 1994 John Sieh moved a 2145 bushel capacity steel bin from Groton to the location. Now painted and restored, it is a component of the gallery

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complex. A 28 foot x 30 foot steel-clad pole building addition had been constructed in 1958 to provide protection when loading grain.



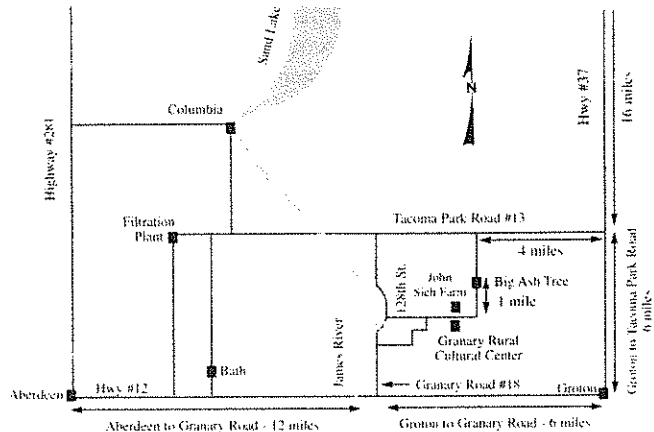
Granary complex

In 1994 John Sieh constructed a 24 foot diameter wood frame gazebo adjacent to the Granary for picnicking and shelter purposes. Brick walkways built in 1994 provided access to the granary, gazebo and bin. The Gallery theme is "Respect for the land and the people who live on it." Interior space was converted into exhibit rooms. Currently those include the balcony Drifting Goose Gallery, the Nicollet Gallery and the main gallery in the James River Room --names associated with James River history. Here is a functional and visible symbol of the state's agricultural heritage. The proximity (about a mile and a half) of the Sieh farm and the new cultural center to the James River warrants inclusion in this narrative on landscapes and historic sites along the James.

In the late 1990s Putney Hall was moved into the complex and thus saved from deterioration and demolition. It is a restored 1912 town hall that seats about 150 and is air conditioned with dance floor/meeting area, balcony and stage. The complex is serviced by BDM rural water system. The Center hosts three major annual art programs: All Dakota High School Fine Arts Exhibition in May, An Arts festival in June; summer fine arts exhibitions through Labor Day.

The most recent feature, and one that will take several years to complete, is the "Walk with Dakota" Cultural Interpretive Landscape and Sculpture Garden. Land forms and native vegetation with life-sized sculpture along the paths will tell the pioneer story. In time a continuous, serpentine pathway will connect all features of the artistic landscape and buildings. Its purpose will be to provide an open prairie setting for visitors who desire quiet contemplation and peaceful solitude which includes nearby soothing songs of the birds. Unique in its features, this prairie complex--close

to the river but not endangered by it--contributes to the idea of a rural retreat embodied in other James River groves and sites of the past century.



Map to granary rural cultural center

CENTRAL BROWN COUNTY JIM RIVER ADJUNCTS THE "BIG SLOUGH"; PUTNEY SLOUGH

In seasons of heavy spring rains and snow melt Jim River overflow impacted adjacent depressions in the Jim River flats, especially east of the River. Two of these came to be known as "the Big Slough" east of and south of Columbia and later as Putney Slough. Another depression east of Aberdeen and the James was the dry but occasionally wet floor of "Chedi Lake".

"The Big Slough" also received water from the Marshall County hills through the Crow Creek Drainage Ditch. This ditch and associated dams and dikes generated concerns over water between farmers north of Tacoma Park and those opposite or south of that site.

Northern farmers wanted flow of water southward off their agricultural land and farmers to the south wanted to dam up that water to prevent it from flooding their farm land. Excessive waters to the east of the James also might cover roads and impede traffic crossing the Jim. At times slough waters interfered with those who wanted to attend Tacoma Park Week or at least caused them to take a longer detour to reach their destination.

As early as spring 1881 George B. Daly in his "Brown County History" of 1904-05 describes one result of a snowy winter (1880-81) and a potential future problem: "If winter snows remain until May the melt impacts sloughs and streams. The big slough, which the previous year was dry as the upland prairie, became a vast lake."

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

In May 1893, according to the Brown County Sentinel, some unknown person cut the dam at the mouth of the big slough east of Columbia causing this relatively dry depression to be filled with water. Maintenance of that dam had caused concerns and continued to nurture bad feelings amongst nearby farmers. For several dry seasons crops had been planted and harvested in the slough. In the spring of 1893 Jim river water flowed into the slough creating a watery body several miles northward from the river. By June 1895 some resumed haying in the Big Slough.

The problem raised its head again in 1897, a flood year. In July county commissioners listened to Cambria Township citizens who wanted the Big Slough dammed to prevent flow of back-up water from the James River.

Mounting concerns about excess water from the coteau hills to the east created pressure for a drainage ditch. Hopefully, this would speed flow of winter snowmelt and heavy rain runoff westward out of Marshall county and then southward into the James River near Tacoma Park. In 1917 such a ditch was dug. A perennial question arose: In high water seasons how to control coteau water and James River water from flooding adjacent farm land?

Local farmers in May 1929 pressured county commissioners to remove the dam at Tacoma Park. This dam was essential to create deeper waters for boating, fishing and swimming in the Park area north of the dam and thus recreational interests clashed with agricultural interests.

In April 1943 James River water filled Putney Slough threatening farmers opposite Tacoma Park and vicinity. Chris Jensen, Putney farmer, prophesized "There'll be fourteen feet of water" in the slough. The Groton Independent for April 29 recognized the flood problem by a headline "Chris Jensen is Commodore of Fleet in Putney Slough". Rail service had been stopped for several weeks and the water-logged residents of Tacoma Park had not received any mail. Bill Wood used Jensen's boat to bring the mail and newspapers to that besieged colony. Other slough residents in their motor boats traversed the slough waters and waves on varied errands. What a contrast to a few years past when writers and photographers wrote dust stories and took dustbowl pictures of an arid Jim!

In May 1950 the control gate on Sullivan Grade became a concern of Putney Slough farmers. Those north of the slough wanted the gate open to get rid of water from Brown-Marshall drainage ditch flooding their land. Closing the gate permitted water to back up

on their farms. Putney Slough farmers wanted the gate closed as had been done previously to protect land from northern ditch water flowing south. Those farmers had built dikes along the Jim River to keep river water from their farms. They threatened to stop maintenance of these dikes if northern farmers were successful in opening the gates and flooding their land.

In April 1952 water covered Columbia Park to a depth of about three feet. That water was on its way southward to Tacoma Park and the Putney Slough area. Farmers were concerned about a break in the dam blocking river water from flowing into the Crow Creek drainage ditch on the west side of Putney Slough. In early April a dike had been built on the Dean Highway east of Tacoma Park to prevent surging waters from spilling into the Slough.

By July 1953 water levels in the James were 39 inches higher than in the Putney drainage ditch. Until river levels dropped, ditch gates remained closed since ditch water could not drain into the higher level waters of the James.

Twenty years later the Crow Creek Watershed District Improvement Plan recognized that in flood season the river waters were at such levels that they were higher than flows coming from Marshall County by means of the Crow Creek drain and had a slowing or stopping effect on drain waters. The result was increased flooding of farmland northward along the entire slough.

Since 1993 Putney Slough has grown in size and has threatened nearby farms. Brown County Road 13, the Tacoma Park Road, in May 1994 was under five feet of water, an experience repeated in 1995 and 1996. In September 1996 the road was reopened after a closure due to summer flooding. This road was a few yards from the century-old Jensen farm's driveway. James River water and water from Crow Creek drainage ditch covered 3000 acres of fertile fields and stretched seven miles north and south and was one mile wide and 14 feet deep in 1994. The John Ries farm, a mile west of the Jensens, had become an island forcing evacuation.

In recent years some farmers including the Robert Jensens, who lived along the Slough and near the James, have sold property to the government for wetland purposes. John Ries in the American News of June 7, 2001 wrote a letter about fishing and bridges but in so doing referred to his earlier experiences. Rather than feeling grateful for finding a buyer of flooded land, he blamed government policy.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

"GF&P resources are not used directly to give more access to river fishing but their "resources are used to keep water on lands so the landowners are forced into selling to the only available buyer.(GF&P). After it is in their hands, then you must be a real sportsman and walk to the site, since it will be full of water. Parking at the site will not be allowed...I am sorry that my family's land is not available for fishing access right now."



Putney Slough edges Robert Jensen Farm

CHEDI LAKE

In Henry Township a few miles southwest of Yorkville, ten miles east of Aberdeen along the Yellowstone Trail, future highway 12, and a short distance east of the James River is a wide marsh-like overflow of that river known as Chedi Lake.

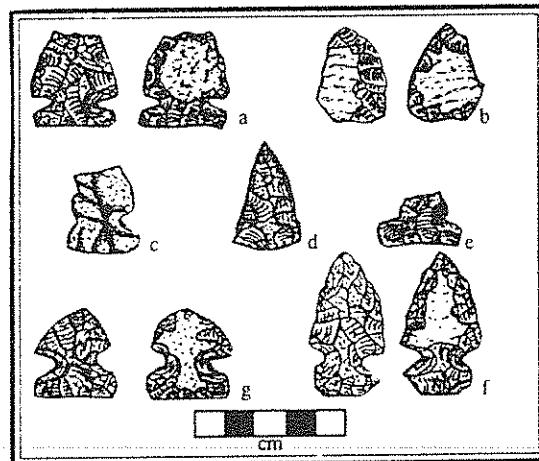
Early pioneers made the lakeshore their home. Philip Adler in 1879 walked north and west on the east side of the James River and stopped on land in dry Chedi Lake bed, made sod shelter and roof of small willow trees and branches cut down along the river. In March 1881 Mr. And Mrs. William Bowles homesteaded near Chedi Lake. John Sieh and wife Josephine settled on its banks..

According to the Aberdeen Daily News of August 14, 1920 this lake was about a mile long and contained about 5.5 miles of land subject to spring flooding from the James which was higher than the Chedi basin. According to the Bath Community History of 1981, road builder H. C. Hansen in 1921 worked on building Highway 12, grading and widening the path and built a new stretch across the river flat. Heavy flooding occurred in the flats along the Jim and the flooded area known as Chedi lake. Local residents solicited funds

and asked H. C. Hanson to build a dike for flood protection.

In 1920-21 a dirt dike 5.5 miles long and two-to seven-feet high was built along the east bank of the James to contain overflow. At its southern end, the lake was drained by means of two ditches with flapper valves permitting only one-way water flow into the James. Thus, some 1500 acres of agricultural land was reclaimed. However, in the 1990s water reclaimed the former dry depression or basin and in so doing covered up archaeological evidence of Indian occupation hundreds of years in the past.

Since the 1950s Roland Sieh has found many bison bones and teeth on the land, portions of a pipestone peacepipe and arrowheads, one traceable to a type dated 9000 years ago. According to the state Archaeological Society's Newsletter of September 1998, most recovered tools appear to be grain grinders, hide scrapers, engravers and other implements.



Indian artifacts Sieh site

In 1981 during a dry cycle archaeologist Ned Hanenberger visited the site, examined soil profiles and found ceramics and artifacts for the Plains Village period. In digs he located chopped stone tools at four or five feet depth. At varied depths he found worked and unworked bone, mussel shell fragments dating roughly 1000 to 1600 AD.

Chedi Lake and its shoreline emerged as a multicomponent archaeological site. Only a small portion of it has been examined. Future discovery awaits a dry cycle and a receding of current water levels as nature has reclaimed the Chedi basin which contributes to the historic significance of Brown County's James River and adjacent sites.

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CANOE ADVENTURES: COLUMBIA TO TACOMA PARK 1980S-2001

Boating on the James River has been a feature in limited stretches where dams back up water in some depth and in seasons of heavier rain and snow melt. This has been true of the Tacoma Park site even into the 21st century and the Rondell Park site prior to 1950. Even in times of low water the Tacoma Park dam makes it possible to have a higher water level from Columbia to Tacoma Park. Today farmers are somewhat surprised to see someone canoeing down the James. Five canoes ventured forth in July 2001. The Aberdeen Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department since the mid 1980s has sponsored canoe adventures on the James.



Canoeists on a Jim River canoe adventure

Access to the James through farmer's property may be difficult and should not be attempted without property owner's permission. Peter Carrels' guidelines for canoeing suggest that access for canoes is best at James river bridges such as the county highway 16 bridge south of Columbia. A second access point is about 14 miles further down river, two mile south and 2.5 miles east of Columbia by auto. River and auto miles differ due to the winding nature of the James.

From the township bridge the canoeist paddles 7.5 river miles to Tacoma Park (county highway #13 bridge). The Park dam may require a portage. From Tacoma Park the canoeist will pass under a new bridge before leaving the river at county highway #18 bridge, an old bridge which is located just south of the new bridge. Distance from Tacoma Park is about eight miles.

The river is bordered by a fairly continuous hardwood forest between the town of Columbia to a bridge several miles south of Tacoma Park, a distance of approximately thirty river miles. The canoeist develops a feeling for nature that is more difficult for the motorist who drives further away from the river or

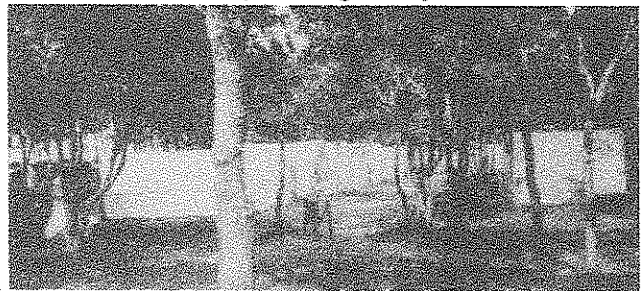
whose view is obscured by trees and foliage. Canoeing through timbered river banks makes one forget temporarily the relatively flat farmland that surrounds the river.

The Park department brochure suggests that canoeists be on the outlook for log jams in timbered stretches although since 1982 local landowners have reduced such log obstructions and the James River Development District has made efforts to clean up the river. Don't park on bridges and secure permission from nearby farmers to park off the road. Don't destroy fences on land or cut those few that cross the river. Don't drink river water. Respect farm property as canoeing is somewhat rare on the James. Landowners are not used to seeing canoes on the river. Expect to travel 15 to 20 miles a day or less for a leisurely pace as there is little current on the James.

Follow these suggestions and canoeing can be a unique opportunity to exercise the arm muscles, commune with nature, view river landscape from a different perspective and appreciate the role of the James in our past and present history. Brown County landowner Dennis Jones commented in July 2001 "the James is a great river for canoeing. It is also not bad for boating."

SOUTHERN BROWN COUNTY RONDELL PARK & DAM

Rondellites continued to observe the changing flow of the James river as Brown County entered the 20th century. On May 7, 1901 locals asserted "The Jim River is with us once again. It arrived at Rondell last weekend and is slowly winding its way southward."



Camping at Rondell: Photo 1912-15

As the decade advanced Jim Humphrey moved from the area and the Humphrey Store was abandoned. About that time Alfred Wenz of the Dakota Farmer photographed that structure. (See p.10.) Camping continued as evident in the above photo of many tents among the trees.

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In September 1917 Oswald Antelman, a hardware salesman for 25 years who had done business with Humphrey, and John H. Firey, Aberdeen druggist and real estate developer, bought the Jim Humphrey farm for \$55.00 per acre. The Aberdeen Weekly News of September 27, 1917 characterized "it is one of the finest farms in the county" with "over 800 acres under cultivation" and noted for "beautiful oak and elm trees".

Roy Antelman in 1917 left a position with the Aberdeen National Bank to take up the agricultural life at the former Humphrey farm. In December 1918 he died. The new proprietor John H. Firey tore down the former general store and its upstairs Humphrey Hall and used the lumber. He kept the former blacksmith shop for a granary.

In time Firey, who developed a great love for his farm, donated a few of his 1200 acres in the late 1930s to the Girl Scouts for a camp and earlier some to be utilized as a public park.

In spring 1928 river waters washed away a part of the bank at the north end of Rondell dam rendering it useless for water storage until the building of a 15-to-20 foot extension. On October 12, 1928 the Aberdeen Evening News editorialized on repair of this Rondell Dam which was essential to improve "permanent good fishing" above the dam. What was needed was continuous maintenance of the Rondell Park "Playground" and the river as a "permanent fish preserve".

The editor observed: "nature has lent her magic touch in beautifying this historic spot. The natural growth of trees, such as oak, elm and ash offer a splendid and enduring park where a day's outing can be enjoyed to the fullest extent." Focusing on the romance and history associated with the site, the editor continued:

"There is not a more attractive spot in the county nor one associated with more romance and history than this beautiful recreation park and local lovers of the great American out-of-doors are now practically assured that it is still to remain a permanent Brown County landmark and gathering place for pleasure seekers."

The Evening News asserted that Brown County lacked recreation spots where sports fishing could be combined with a day's picnic outing: "At times when the Jim has been at its lowest, the water at this dam was from twelve to fifteen feet deep and some really prize fish were taken out. What is more, they frequented the spot in abundance." The News predicted

"now that the dam is to be completely repaired, fishermen will be assured of a good stretch of water, several miles in length, affording them to angle to their heart's content."

On July 2, 1929 the Aberdeen Evening News noted that the dam had not yet been repaired but "immediate steps were underway to repair this dam originally built by J. H. Firey and later taken over by the State Fish and Game Commission."

Reviewing past experience with James River dams, the News recognized the difficulty in damming a stream flowing through flat country: "Apparently sluggish in its current, it can on occasion develop surprising force and when obstructed in its path, find its way around man-made obstacles." The News called the spot surrounding the dam "an ideal picnic ground" with "pleasant surroundings for a week end period of rest and recreation". Mr. Firey had opened to the public those "beautiful and well kept timber lands of oak, ash and elm". It was an historic place where Indians and whites had traded, where wild animals had gathered, as well as tribes. "The roar of the dam is the one thing needed to give the final touch of romance to this beautiful and historic spot."

The McPherson Chapter of DAR decided proper recognition was due for the Rondell Park site. In September 1933 that group dedicated a monument at the site, historic for the first trading post in present Brown County. A giant rock had been secured from Mina and a bronze plaque placed thereon. Aberdeen's Central High School band provided music.

At the time the News reprinted John Firey's earlier historical remarks. He indicated that a bluff formed natural protection against prairie fire and high winds so that trees were preserved, that the Park had a north and west side with the river forming a peninsula-like wedge, that the site had a fur trade history dating back to 1835 and that recently beaver colonies were noticeable along the river through the park.

Firey further commented about the park's condition. He commended the cleaning of the grounds, removal of dead limbs, and positioning of stone fireplaces and permanent tables. State ownership of the dam "insures its upkeep and preservation for all time. Brown County has few natural playgrounds such as this. The present owners willingly and gladly open the gates to the people to come and enjoy a day in the great out of doors without money and without price."

On September 17, 1936 the Northwest Journal had Rondell Park on its mind when it editorialized with the

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

headline "Restore Rondell". The editor recognized that park as "one of the most frequently used picnic grounds in this territory". However, for several years after John Firey's opening of the site picnickers had been careless by leaving debris which Firey had to clean up at his own expense. The Journal urged more government involvement to restore the site and make it a more congenial setting for community gatherings.

Picnics continued to be held at the Park. Illustrative of this were the Old Settlers who hosted a picnic in June 1936 when about 150 people attended and also one in June 1937. County Republicans met on Sunday July 31, 1938 and in June 1939 the Rondell Rustlers Extension Club and families picnicked. On June 3, 1939 the Farmers Union for Spink and Brown counties picnicked there accompanied by a two-day Junior camp June 2 and 3 for farm youth 10 to 21.

In October of 1938 the Rondell Park WPA project received approval. It authorized a main lodge shelter, fencing and landscaping at a cost of \$12,688.00. On November 22, 1938 work began on establishment of a permanent Girl Scout camp at Rondell. The federal project had about a three-month completion time so that the girl scouts could enjoy overnight trips to the camp in spring 1939. Scout officials visited Rondell March 16, 1939 to check on the status of construction.

CAMP DRIFTING GOOSE

The Boy Scouts seemed privileged in that they attended summer camp at Pickerel Lake in Day County. Friends and officials of the Girl Scouts promoted the idea that girls should also have a similar experience with the outdoors.

The first Girl Scout camp at Rondell, 18 miles southeast of Aberdeen, operated from July 9 to July 30, 1939. Thereafter, encampments were held 1940 through 1944. Sessions were scheduled in 1940 for July 7-28 and in 1941 for three weeks beginning July 13. In 1942 the dates were July 17 to August 14 and in 1943 high water caused a later date: August 8 to 22. There were two weekly sessions in 1944 beginning July 30. Officials cancelled the camp for 1945 because of difficulty in securing adequate staff and also because the river was "exceptionally high" making the camp waterfront hazardous.

The camp resumed in 1946 with three sessions July 10 to 31 and again in 1947. Encampments were split into one-week periods. Some years the encampment schedule provided for three or four weeks of camp. This allowed more girls to attend. The camp became

known as Camp Drifting Goose after the Indian leader who had interacted with settlers along the James prior to 1880. High water forced removal of the camp in 1948 to Farm Island at Pierre. In 1949 the cabins were moved from Rondell to Richmond Lake Youth Camp in Aberdeen where the Girl Scouts continued their adventure with the outdoors.

In addition to the main camp with its lodge there were three additional units with three cabins each; a cabin housed six girls making it possible to shelter 54 girls weekly. Each unit had running water with two shower baths. In 1946 Aberdeen service club members financed and installed a new dock at the swimming beach.

Officials assured parents that national Scout safety and health standards were followed and proper supervision provided. The staff included a camp director at least 25 years old with recent training, a counselor for every six campers, a registered nurse, dietician, waterfront director at least 21 years old, and a Red Cross senior life saver for swimming and boating. The camp also employed a cook and a handyman.

The Rondell camp experience included horseback riding with ponies furnished by friends of scouting. At times girls indulged in "dry land swimming", that is running under the hose; but more often girls visited the beach waterfront, learned about proper boating, canoeing and swimming. In 1943 canoeing was offered as this was a time of high water; publicity revealed "the waterfront is an interesting new feature at the camp because the river is high the water is clear and fresh." Counselors insisted on the buddy system when swimming. Girls divided into swimming groups based on their swimming abilities or lack of.

Girls 14 to 18 were eligible; later in 1943 brownies were allowed. Older girls were known as Geezers; younger ones were referred to as gosslings. To play baseball they crossed the river to the diamond near the monument of 1933. In July 1939 evening campfire was a favorite experience; In July the 1939 group sang Mrs. Teal's song "Rondell Moon" and also five adventurous girls crossed the dam to the other shore and echoed "Little Sir Echo" back across the water. Dancing followed in the lodge. In bad weather scouts adjourned to the main lodge for indoor games. One girl wrote in 1940: "Drizzle, drizzle, drizzle, and then came the rain. Grand for the crops but a bit wet for the enthusiastic campers."

In 1940 log raft pulling, badminton, ping pong and bicycle trips supplemented row boat rides and baseball.

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At other times girls staged pageants, circuses with side shows such as "The Swimming Match" which upon entering revealed a match floating in a pan of water. In 1942 an all-day boat trip down river was advertised as a new feature.

Archery, handicrafts working with wood, metal, leather, cork, plastic and beads provided hands-on-experiences. Outdoor cookouts gave girls food preparation experience. Watermelon feeds, cabin serenades, story telling, skits, horse shows, community singing and folk dancing were ways of having fun and getting acquainted. Taps and bedtime came at 9:30 p.m.

Excitement came in August, 1944 about 11:00 p.m. when a counselor's cabin burned as a result of leaving a lighted candle unattended for a brief time. The girls formed a bucket brigade and stopped fire from spreading to the trees and other cabins.

On August 2, 1945 the Aberdeen American News editorialized urging the state to take early action to "restore Rondell Park Facilities". The editor pointed out the shortage of good picnic spots and the importance of picnics to farmers and others who appreciated Sunday recreation opportunities in quiet and shady places. Rondell Park was "one of the earliest recreational grounds in Brown County" and needed attention due to the aftermath of a tornado a few years back.

"The Park for the most part today is as it was then. Most of the stately oaks remain, but those lost through the ravages of time have been replaced by younger growth and give promise to make this a perpetual playground....a storm several years ago blew down a number of trees at the site and left behind it considerable litter and fallen trees. Due to conditions and the labor shortage the grounds never have been cleaned up and as a result are unsightly. The Game and Parks Commission has responsibility for upkeep of dams and recreational grounds. The site deserves attention in the name of conservation as well as recreation: already deer, as many as 14 head, have found refuge there. Beavers are counted in number. Raccoons, muskrats and squirrels often are seen by the casual picnicker and within recent years a rookery of great blue herons has been established."

Such public pressure resulted in action during the ensuing two years.

Those Girl Scouts attending the 1947 sessions at Rondell Park viewed a less littered park than existed previously in the 1943-46 years when visible evidence of tornadic uprooting of many park trees altered the landscape. In the summer of 1946 Game, Fish and Park Department personnel brought a portable sawmill to the

area to cut 25,000 board feet of ash lumber from fallen trees that littered the Park. Fallen trees unsuitable for lumber were left for crews to handle in winter of 1947.

The second, week-long, clean-up phase employed eight men at no charge to the Girl Scouts to cut and to remove more than 50 tons of cured ash firewood, cut from the fallen timber. With Game Commission's and owner John Firey's consent, Girl Scouts were permitted to sell the wood in Aberdeen as fireplace or furnace fuel. A county bulldozer helped clean up the scout campground site. Girl Scout maintenance committee member Mrs Alonzo. L. Ward Jr. exclaimed that the 1947 season would be the first in four years when litter would not curtail activity. Twisted uprooted stumps and fallen trees had been a hardship

Despite this triumph over the power of wind, the power of water--a rising James River--in 1948 ended the permanency of Camp Drifting Goose at Rondell Park. This must have been a bitter pill for eighty-eight year old John Firey who so loved his Rondell acres and had carried on Humphrey's wishes to conserve the grove and to provide outdoor space for public use. John Firey died in September 1949. What might the future be of those private acres and Rondell Park and Dam?

Evidence is slim about usage of the Park and status of the dam since 1950. The 1901 statement from Rondell that "the river is with us once again" fits that park and its roadways since 1993. The James has overrun its banks making the park unuseable and access to the area difficult because of water-covered roads.

The Mina stone on private, fenced land remains to commemorate the Oakwood Trading Post site but its bronze plaque is missing. A roadside sign recognizing that historic site was placed in more recent years and positioned so motorists could see and read it.

Indicative of this decline in usage the county highway department expressed interest in turning over to the township the roads and bridges that presently cross the James at Rondell. The State Game, Fish and Park Department does not include Rondell on its list of public fishing areas but does include Columbia City Park and Tacoma Park Dam. The abandonment of Camp Drifting Goose in 1948 apparently foretold the future fate of that park which became reality in the 1990s. The James River as a force in nature is not to be underestimated.

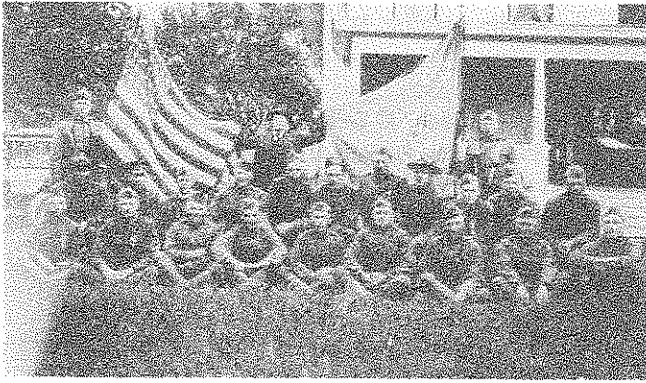
OAKWOOD MEMORIAL DAY TRADITIONS

The power of James River water in southern Brown County remains evident in 2000. Recognized in that year as a century farm owner, Donald Dayton lives two

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

miles south and one mile west of Stratford on land homesteaded by Benjamin A. Day in 1890. River waters have invaded his land. He asserted in July 2000 "the nearby James River used to flood parts of his land every six or eight years, but that has been a constant recently. The last five or six years, I've never seen anything like it--not that wet year after year." In 2000 about 75 acres of his land was submerged compared to one third of his 600 acres several years ago.

Memorial Day traditions of the 1880s and 1890s at Oakwood Cemetery which Rondell pioneers initiated has been continued in more recent decades by citizens of Stratford and nearby rural folks. Since its founding in 1905, more and more of southern Brown activity previously focused on Rondell has gravitated to that community. Measurement of the James River flow and levels are taken at the Stratford-Warner road crossing of the James. Thus Stratford, along with Columbia, receives publicity as to measurement of water levels when spring flooding of the James occurs.



Vets fronting Ashford House on Oakwood Cemetery Memorial Day 1921

The Northwest Journal in its editorial of September 17, 1936 recalled Rondell's role on Memorial Day:

"it has become a time-honored custom to hold a Memorial Day picnic at Rondell each year where practically all the living pioneers of that particular section foregather to visit and recount the incidents and adventures which accumulated during the more than half a century of time since homestead days. And this is more than a mere picnic. It is a real event looked forward to with pleasant anticipation, not unmingled with poignant pangs of sadness and sorrow over the fast-thinning ranks of the older pioneers."

In 2001 those pioneers are gone; continuing traditions becomes more difficult. Yet the Stratford community has carried on Rondell's Memorial Day tradition of ceremonies at the Oak Wood Cemetery about a mile from Rondell. Tom Saunders, a participant in such services in May 2001, recalls that as a Stratford youth about 1940 many from that town came to the cemetery carrying a piano to provide music for the event. Although Humphrey hall and store no longer remains to remind one of pioneer days, the Ashford House of 1910 still stands awaiting renovation and restoration of its wrap around porch--a reminder of the pioneering of Allen and Ashford.



Ashford House built about 1910

Rondell Park and dam are still found on 1997 Brown County road and bridge maps. During non-flooding seasons Rondell's county bridges #54 and #258 are open for travellers who wish to criss cross the James and view what is left of this historic area of southern Brown County.

JIM RIVER IMPRESSIONS FISHING GOOD! ACCESS NEEDED!

Fishing is and has been one of the state's and Brown County's leading outdoor activities. In the 1880s and 1890s when newspapers printed more personal information about the comings and goings of residents, those who went fishing received much attention.. Fishing locations and successes were newsworthy. The reputations of fishing sites such as the former Manitoba Crossing at Tacoma Park and the Elm/Jim River junction have continued over the generations. Today other sites--Missouri River and lake fishing--attract the attention of sports writers and fishing buffs in addition to local Jim river fishing. Yet the James has not been forgotten as a fishing river.

The Regional Fishing Report in the American News of June 8, 2001 assesses James River fishing: "The bite's still going. Most areas along the Jim are yielding

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fish. Some anglers are choosing waders or small boats to navigate the river, in search of deep pockets that hold the fish."

During Tacoma Park's history as a recreation center fishing in the Jim River received some billing along with dancing and other water activities. It was linked with boating and swimming. In an Aberdeen Journal advertisement of June 26, 1922, along with other inducements, readers were advised "The Fishin's Fine." However, fishing appears to have been the least advertised attraction for Tacoma Park. During the Chautauqua era and at later large organizational picnics the site was too crowded for the more individualistic fishing experience. Lone fisherman or a small party of such sportsmen prefer quieter environments and like detectives seek out and often conceal the best fishing spots. Some spots, however, become so well known that they become public knowledge.

Often dams were crucial to raising water levels for water sports and fishing. Also, critical was the generosity of landowners with river front acreage in opening portions of their land and shoreline to the public. This had been the case during the proprietorships of Ambrose J. Allen, James Humphrey and John Firey in the Rondell area and private developers such as the Tacoma Park Association..

In more recent decades property owners have fenced such land and expect fishermen and hunters to seek permission to enter their property. The public finds access to such river water sports more difficult. After 1940 it has been easier for fishermen, boaters and campers to be attracted to nearby man-made lakes such as Mina, Wylie and Elm Lake with their public parks and ramps, and to natural lakes in Day county or Missouri river reservoirs with auto access. Even Peter Carrel's instructions for canoeists notes the role of fences and the need to secure permission to access Jim river shorelines.

Bridges are often associated with fishing and provide sites where fish congregate as well as fishermen. Today fishing on bridges is considered dangerous and often forbidden. The bridge over the James on county highway 16 southeast of Columbia has a sign: no parking, no fishing, no standing. One result of this sign was George C. Nikolas' letter to the editor of the Aberdeen American News May 23, 2000 calling for more public access to the Jim. He pointed out that the county had warning signs to alert drivers about cattle and deer crossing and cautions about bridge

ice but none to warn drivers to look for fishermen. He remarked:

"For the last several years, walleyes have been in great numbers in the Jim. Until more public access is provided to the Jim, fishermen will occupy the bridges, as long as the county commission does not prohibit fishing from the bridges as it did on County Road 16 south of Columbia."



Fishing on the Sand Lake bridge

However, Jim River shoreline fishing and winter ice fishing still occur. The latest edition of the South Dakota Public Fishing Waters brochure published by the state Game, Fish and Parks Department lists as walk-in-fishing sites two James River locations: Columbia City Park, ½ miles south of Columbia, and Tacoma Park Dam, located six miles north, four miles east and one mile south of Bath. The Hecla grade access, 1 and 1/3 miles west of Hecla is also listed along with the wildlife refuge at Sand Lake as a walk-in-fishing site.

Based on experience south of Bath in which he observed fishermen giving away fish so they could continue fishing and not violate the limit, Outdoors writer Lee Harstad in the American News of May 18, 2001 focused on selfish fishermen. He recognized

"fishing is hot on the Jim. The walleyes are jumping onto the shore and everyone is catching fish. That is if you get there early enough, if someone's courteous enough to let you fish near them, or if someone actually leaves after catching his or her limit."

He championed the right of all to fish the Jim and not for a few locals to monopolize the best sites. Harstad advised these shoreline "hogs": "Catch your limit, and move away from your spot and let someone else in." Furthermore, he asked for greater respect of the environment by those who leave beer cans, lure wrappers and dead crap-fish along the banks.

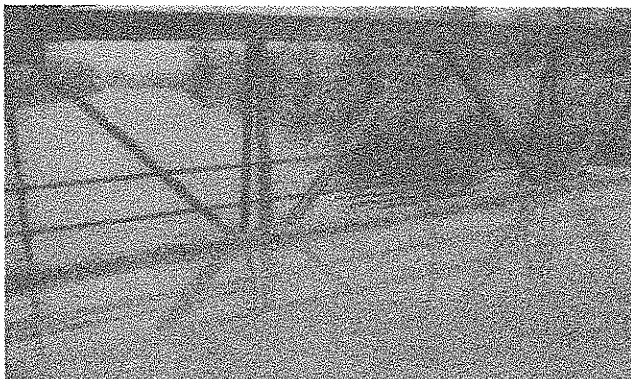
JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

Outdoorsman Harstad felt "the Jim River is a great fish resource...from sunup to sundown and even the night hours, river access places are crammed with people." One might infer from this that more access spots are needed. He hoped that fishing on the Jim would continue to be fun and relaxing and not develop into an "egotistical competition" between shoreline "hogs" who deny others the opportunity to fish the Jim.

Anglers lack adequate boat ramp and fishing site access to the fish-rich James river. Improvements in river access are needed to assure its role as "the resource treasure of the region." The James has developed an image of an "under used recreational river".

Bill Antonides, state conservation officer for Brown County, in an American News article July 30, 2001 asserted that the Jim "is one of the best natural resources Brown County has to offer. It has the best walleye fishing in the state." Thanks to individual initiative of landowner Dennis Jones who values the river for canoeing and boating as well as fishing, and sports club activists newly purchased rivershore land in Bath township about ten miles east of Aberdeen and one mile south of U.S. Highway 12 will be developed to enhance river access and hopefully provide a model for greater access elsewhere in the county.

BRIDGING THE JAMES: 20TH TO 21ST CENTURY BRIDGE ARCHITECTURE & BRIDGE SAFETY



River scene viewed from
Pony Truss bridge at south end of Tacoma Park
American News photo by John Davis July 1993

Brown County bridges across the James may not strike one with awe and wonder as the longer and skyward features of Missouri River bridges, but upon closer examination they can make an impact on one's perceptions of the James. Bridges have varied from foot bridges of Tacoma Park to wagon and later automobile bridges as well as railroad bridges across the James. Triangular frameworks known as trusses identify bridges of the earlier 20th century while more recent bridges lack roof trusses and much of that superstructure found in Pratt or Warren Pony truss bridges.

As population grew and became more mobile, means of transport changed. More and safer bridges were needed to enhance field-to-farm-to market routes, lake or recreational access routes, mail routes, school bus routes and federal aid routes. In Brown county of 2001 there are twenty-one county bridges over the James and at least four closed bridges no longer fit for travel. This is in addition to state highway bridges crossing the James on highways 10, 12 and 212. These bridges link east and west river populations and sometimes north and south folks depending on the river and bridge orientation.

Today's autoist may take bridges for granted as just another part of the highway. They may not realize the safety measures needed to keep them functional. They may not appreciate the architecture of bridges and their contribution to James River imagery, landscaping and access to historic sites. Inspections of bridge superstructure and underwater structures provide insight on the bridge as a means to get to the other side of the river.

Bridge inspector's engineering reports filed in the county highway department's headquarters focus on surface and/or underwater conditions. They reveal width and length, number of spans, lack or presence of the older truss system or more modern decks. Engineers assess condition and alignment of road approaches including surfacing material such as asphalt or gravel. Inspectors note presence and nature of guard rails if any, presence or lack of sidewalks, planking and concrete on the deck, condition of wing walls and pilings underneath. They note adequacy of drainage ditches, debris clogging flow under the bridge, the nature of channel slopes and degree of vegetation along river banks, and any embankment erosion. They report the proximity of bridge deck to the water below at high water. Recommendations to ward off potential dangers are then made.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

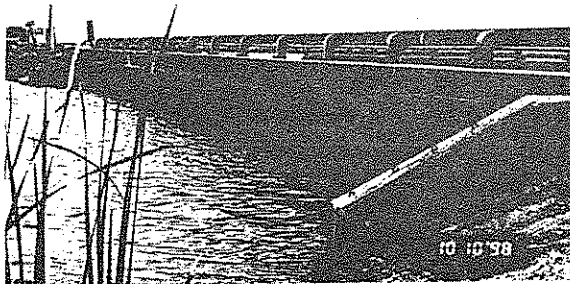
Bridges occasionally are victims of accidents such as that which closed a bridge in August 1984 when heavy machinery went over the bridge and bent the beams or that six-span iron bridge built in 1906 near Houghton which collapsed in August 1935 due to weight of 28 ton rock crusher. This incident of 1935 caused rerouting of traffic on Highway 10 north through Hecla and increased regular travel distance by fourteen miles. Greater traffic in recent decades and heavier equipment sometimes requires that roads be posted for limited weights and even widened. Drift wood or ice damage as well as water flow sometimes requires bridge closure. Some wooden bridges have just floated away under such stress.

Bridges serve as viewing points for the photographer to look up or down the river to record shoreline and boating activities especially at Tacoma Park. Bridges and nearby shoreline have been focal points for fishermen and canoeists. Shoreline snapshots have recorded bridge profiles, which highlight superstructure, below deck space and water flow and depth.

Bridge photography allows comparison and contrast between bridges and their varied environments. For example, a Sand Lake bridge with its nearby grassy shoreline contrasts sharply with the tree lined approaches to the West Rondell bridge located three miles south and 2.3 miles west of Stratford.



West Rondell bridge; looking east (see below) for comparison with Sand Lake lake Bridge



East-west Sand Lake Bridge: Brainard township

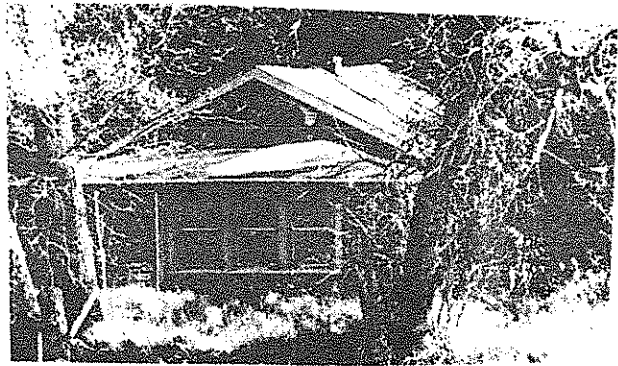
REALITY AND FANTASY: TACOMA PARK REMEMBERED

A contrast of two winter time perspectives reveals the realities of the present as compared to the fantasy of memory about what was once Brown County's playground. Editorial assistant Bob Johnson of the American News in February 1983 and that paper's guest editorial writer David Newquist in February 2001 nostalgically recognized the past and present realities as they wrote about Tacoma Park-a lonely place in winter.

Johnson refers to past Tacoma Park as an ideal picnic site with its "placid river and the huge shade trees." He perceived it as a place for summer homes, a general store, post office, gas pumps in the auto age and a grain elevator. It had been and was still a place of vegetable gardens accessible to irrigation especially noticeable in the dry 1930s. Excited fans had cheered at baseball games and more briefly at auto racing exhibitions. He asserts "Tacoma Park will always have a place in the hearts of those who remember the fun times" and calls up in 1983 a nostalgic vision of its past:

"Tacoma Park is not dead. Some residents still remain. Some are just there for the summer, some have permanent homes. Visiting the Park in the still of winter, it is easy to hear voices. The stentorian voices of politicians exhorting irate farmers of the 1890s to revolt against low farm prices and high interest and freight rates. Voices of children romping at family picnics, voices singing at band concerts and during ball room dancing."

"It is easy to see sights long gone. Excursion trains unloading hundreds of passengers for a day in the shade, Fourth of July fireworks, cliff-hanger baseball games long forgotten by everyone but a few aging participants. Huge chautauqua tents with their speakers and entertainers."



Tacoma Park historic survey 1992 : Cottage

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

More recently at the onset of pheasant season 2001 Park Association shareholder David Newquist, accompanied by his twelve-year old son, visited the long-abandoned Tacoma Park Dance Hall with its galvanized tin roof. As a member of the Association he was responsible for boarding up the hall's windows as a means to keep out wildlife. Headlines condensed his thoughts: "Once popular dance hall goes to turkeys"

"Upon opening the "creaking and rasping doors we heard a rhythmic thumping out on the dance floor. Two wild turkeys ran toward the bandstand and flew up on the stage that still holds a decrepit upright piano. One of the turkeys flew up on the piano and posed there as if waiting for the accompanist to strike a chord before breaking into song".

"A spotlight of sun shined onto the stage through one of the windows on which I had neglected to replace the boards. That image of two wild turkeys in the spotlight on ghost stage is burned deep into my memory. The turkey on the piano did not break the spell by trying to sing."

"Once a place of recreation and amusement for people of the region, Tacoma Park is largely taken over by wild things not the least of which is the James River. Reacting against the destruction of the wetlands that feed it and the attempts to turn it into an open drainage channel, the river has reclaimed Tacoma Park. In recent years, its flooding has made the Park inaccessible until well into summer."

"The ground around the dance hall has been a soupy swamp. I never saw the dance hall in its heyday, but when I mention it to people of the region, they tell me stories with fond smiles on their faces. I hear about favorite bands, I hear about dances that were community celebrations, and I hear about the sunrise dances. On those occasions the band played from around midnight until the sun came up and the dancers had a festive breakfast."

Newquist concludes with a mixture of fantasy and reality: "I would love to attend a sunrise dance at Tacoma Park, to hear the sounds of a big band and see the swirling couples on the dance floor. But my memory of the dance hall will be of turkeys perched on the bandstand."

THE FLOODING JAMES: TRANSFORMED RIVER BANKS

This narrative has focused on imagery of the James river's tree-lined banks and the interaction of man and

river waters before and since the beginning of pioneer settlement. The foliage and trees along stretches of the James distinguish its snakelike course from the broad prairies which constitute the remainder of the James River Valley and the two coteaus which demark the eastern and western valley boundaries.

Since 1993 flooding has gradually altered the river landscape and created problems of shoreline access, crop planting and harvesting on adjoining farmland, travel routes and safety of James river bridges and bridge approaches. Prolonged flooding eventually kills trees whose white skeletons reach skyward along the river, a testimony to the power of flood waters.



Skeleton-like Timber line of flooded James river bank Near Highway 12 bridge

Removal of dead timber from the river channel and from the river banks is one element of landscape alteration along the James. Replacement of that bank timber by new tree plantings is another element which in time may restore the treasured timbered banks of old, that is if flood control measures and climatic changes check the current watery threat to riverbank foliage, trees and the neighboring farmlands.

On November 14, 2000 the American News reported timber removal from banks of the James River in nine counties; over 30,000 tons of timber had been moved. The timber removal and bank stabilization effort cost about \$5,000,000 funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Also involved were Prairie Partners Inc. of Brookings and the James River Water Development District. This project testifies to the need for cooperative effort by agencies other than local townships and counties to revitalize river usage and access. Other than the Missouri, the James is the only South Dakota river which runs through the entire state

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

and impacts the areas southward from Redfield to Yankton as well as Brown County.

The South Brown County Soil Conservation office reports that thirteen sites applied for tree removal in the county but only nine were dry enough to remove bank timber. At a cost of \$1,438,00 workers removed 34,173 trees from the nine Brown County sites. In spite of rainy weather the project was completed by the deadline of July 12, 2000. Some timber served in bank stabilization and mulch in planting thousands of trees in the nine counties including Brown. The James River Water Development planted two trees for each dead or damaged tree removed from river sites in some areas.



River bank tree removal 2000

A dead tree, as the breakup-ice of winter, often becomes a floating menace jamming downstream bridges and narrow stretches. At least some potential damage by floating debris should be hindered by this timber-removal project. In some stretches dead trees still await removal. River banks on property of John Ries near Tacoma Park in Cambria Township was one of those involved in the Brown County project. Ray Larson southeast of Columbia, George Hanson of Gem township and the Heier family near the Rondell area represent other participating landowners along various stretches of Brown County's James river.

This project aimed to inhibit channel clogging—along with other access problems in opening areas for fishing, picnicking or hunting—depends on cooperation of individual property owners along the river. They must balance desire for privacy and undue intrusion of outsiders with preservation of the river's integrity, restoration of its timbered heritage and its flood-damaged lowlands.

Absence of riverbank foliage and live trees impacts bird life along the river. Outdoors writer and bird watcher Jerry Stanford reveals this in the American News of May 7, 2001. He recalls years past when the Jim River south of Aberdeen was "probably one of the few beautiful wooded areas left in the country" and that one could hear bird song and observe bird movement. To him the Jim is "a body of water that if not pristine, sure borders on it." He recalled "there were birds in every tree, birds along the banks of the river and overhead the emigrating snowgeese."

Admitting "there are still isolated areas along the river where stands of trees and shrubs escaped the drowning waters", he treasured these "islands of protection" which provided "transitory shelter to feathered migrants in need of rest and food." Stanford states that during the 1990s river habitat has experienced "tremendous losses", the drowning of twenty-to-thirty foot trees and thick, fruit-bearing bushes due to record high water levels.

He affectionately reflects on the lazy river which snakes its way slowly but speeds up with spring melt and often doubles back on itself: "I love this river. It has and continues to provide an excellent setting in which to observe birds no matter what time of year, but especially in the spring and fall."

Thus, as this narrative reveals the Jim river has birthed impressions and imagery by neighbors and users; it has benefited as well as victimized those along its shores. It has helped in the development of historic sites and structures and it has aided in their demise or isolation from public access. It is living testimony to the struggle of man with nature and man's efforts to mould nature for his use and pleasure. These interactions have left memories both fond and sad amongst older generations.

Despite the increase of alternative river and lake shores, the James will continue to impact memories of present and future generations. Hopefully, this narrative may remind Dakotans and others that there is another river 100 miles east of the Missouri that impacts the state in its north-to-south flow. In the past many locals when they spoke geographically about west or east of the river, they meant the James, not the Missouri. Let us not become indifferent to this river! Preserve and restore its landscape integrity! Possibly state and federal assistance is needed to supplement local efforts to deal with what seems to be a continuing saga of flooded shorelines and consequent access to one of Brown County's richest resources.

JAMES RIVER LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIC SITES

RECOGNITIONS

The publication of this booklet has been partially financed with Federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior through the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Program, Pierre, SD.

Funding and in-kind support from the city of Aberdeen and Brown County has contributed significantly to the research, photo reproduction and publication of this booklet.

Personnel and facilities of Alexander Mitchell Library have been helpful through its microfilm collection of newspapers and Brown County geographic maps. The Dacotah Prairie Museum photo collection has been useful as well as the remnants of its 1993 exhibit on Tacoma Park. Dr. Buntin's research for that Tacoma Park exhibit was funded by a S.D. State Humanities grant and much of that has been useful in preparation of this booklet.

The Brown County Highway Department has been helpful in giving access to its road and bridge book and its files on various Brown County bridges across the James River. The Aberdeen Park, Recreation and Forestry Dept. has provided a canoeing guide and photo for Jim River canoeing.

Community and county histories have given insight through pioneer diaries and remarks about life along the James. The Bath Community History 1881-1981, The Hecla and Houghton Centennial History books, the Groton Centennial History of 1981, the Brown County History of 1980 and the Early History of Brown County South Dakota of 1970 contain useful information.

Helen Berg's writings reinforced the idea of producing an indepth account of James River historic sights. She wrote a four page Dacotah Prairie Museum Historic Pamphlet number 1 in March 1977. It was entitled "Historic Sites along the James River" In 1985 she wrote a 14 page pamphlet for the Brown County Historical Society entitled "Historic James River: Brown County".

Both the Dacotah Prairie Museum and the Brown County Historical Society have endorsed the Landmark Commission's enlarged 21st century booklet covering Brown County's James River, its landscapes and historic sites.

Barbara Kooiman and Mary Schmidt surveyed standing structures in southwestern Brown County for the Aberdeen/Brown County Landmark Commission.

Their report of 1992 included a section with cabin and bridge photos and a 1905 map of Tacoma Park.

The microfilm, copy of Andreas's SD Atlas of 1884 examined in Pierre at the state library along with the Brown County Atlas for of 1904-05 with George B. Daly's History of Brown Country proved useful. Other Brown County Atlases consulted were those of 1911, 1940, 1988, and 1991.

Photos of Tacoma Park from Northern Normal School's yearbook The Pasque are useful for the pictorial portion as well as postcards loaned by Ruth Ronge. Tom Saunders contributed two photos of Memorial Day ceremonies-- in 1921 with the Ashford house in the background and 2001 at Oakwood Cemetery near Rondell.

Newspaper accounts and advertisements were a mainstay of this narrative. Since citing several hundred newspaper references cluttered a rather lengthy manuscript, I have at times positioned sources in the narrative as to day and year but omitted page numbers which properly should have been included in end notes.

Newspapers used were: Brown County Sentinel, Groton Independent, Hecla Journal, Aberdeen Weekly News, Aberdeen Daily News, Aberdeen Sun, Aberdeen Pioneer, State Democrat and Northwest Journal, Aberdeen Evening News, Morning American, Aberdeen Republican, Northern Normal Exponent.

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SAND LAKE REFUGE

