



Paradise Lost, © 2007 Jeff Strate

The small lake was hidden by hardscrabble hills thick with October oaks and birches. Deadfalls serrated its irregular shoreline. As Dick Gleeson and I angled down to the water's edge, we saw a pair of mallards arc and wheel, landing just beyond a muskrat lodge. We stopped to listen. The soft, skimming splash of their touchdown reached us, then disappeared into the silence of a million still leaves.

A ghostly galleon with lowered sails hove into view skimming the surface so that it barely rippled. The untamed terrain of southwest Edina in 1955 sparked schoolboy thoughts of explorer Henry Hudson's ship *The Half Moon* inching up a river past the Catskills in 1610. I thought of the secluded basin as Half Moon Lake.

My friend Dick's family grew corn and raspberries nearby on land cleared by pioneer Gleesons in 1878. They were among the last of the Irish, Yankee and Scandinavian families who had farmed the area; the forests, marshes and creeks, which edged their fields, were still preserves for deer, fox, muskrat, pheasants and kids.

Their parents had attended Cahill School, a one-room relic from Civil War times. Dick, his brother Mike and I went to its six-classroom, modern namesake that had been built for the influx of children from the new housing developments. My family lived in one of these, a snug colony of curvy lanes, modest homes and vacant lots with "For Sale" signs called Creston Hills; Edina's first subdivision in what was then the sticks below Sixty-Sixth Street.

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From a kid's slant, the best thing about Creston Hills was Shaughnessey's farm. Our subdivision's western frontier whistled with meadowlarks along a barbed wire fence from Lake Cornelia south to gravel-surfaced 70th Street. About half way, the fence dipped into Shaughnessey's pond, an elbow-shaped lagoon that could be rafted for a pirate's approach to a corncrib and field. From there, we could spy on Old Man Shaughnessey limping about his pasture in an arthritic farm truck checking on his 15 or so cattle. No one knew where Shaughnessey lived. There was no farmhouse.

The pasture was studded with cow pies. Smaller kids like my brother Smiley could be tricked into squishing the lightly crusted ones and the solid plates could be flipped like Frisbees or tossed on fires for curls of weird green smoke. Just prying them off the grass would ignite a panic of tiny beetles scooting for cover.

But the herd was the pasture's chief attraction. Shaughnessey's Herefords would mosey from knoll to marsh, munching clover in bucolic repose. Take your eye off them and they'd vanish, sometimes for days, and then suddenly reappear near the fence or off in the distance -- solid and still as hay bales. Among them was a bull that we knew could gore any trespassing kid into a bloody pulp.

One morning bellowing moos startled Laguna Drive out of bed. Some neighbor kid, Keith or Little Joe, had opened the gate where our street dead-ended at the fence. To see cattle trampling the very lawn you had mowed the day before was astounding. To be eye-balled by the half-ton bull itself, nostrils steaming, saliva dripping, horns lowered, close-up, through the kitchen screen door presented a terrifying but irresistible challenge.

My band of mostly hiney-cut pals hatched a plan to surprise the bull on his own turf. Knocking about in backyards, tree forts and TV dens, we spun out theories of bovine temperament, the top speed of charging bulls, and the perils of jumping barbed-wire fences. We built up our collective courage and headed west.

From the safe side of the fence we spotted the steers in the pasture then shifted down wind of their noses, the way Hopalong Cassidy would. We ducked through the barbed strands one at a time then watchfully darted through bunches of golden rod and oak trees moving closer to the herd. As the cattle spooked, we whooped after them like cowboys in a stampede. But on some of our later raids, the bull would hold its ground and then lurch at us causing us to scurry off to the nearest tree or fence like those crazed cow pie beetles, hollering all the way.

Getting caught by Shaughnessey was just as frightening a prospect as getting caught by his bull. One fall day, the Old Man caught us cannon balling onto the shucked corn cobs piled in his crib. He jumped from his truck yelling and cursing, but before we could make out the scowl on his face or take his measure as a mortal being, we fled for the far side of the pond. Too bad. Old Man Shaughnessey took up residence, pitchfork at the ready in the darker corners of our boyish imaginations right next to The Mummy and Ed Gein. We'd talk about him around campfires and give him due consideration on Halloween but never again went to the corncrib.

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Cahill Elementary School provided the boys of Creston Hills with access to the world of girls that was both more intriguing and risky than that afforded by sisters. Although we'd never admit it, Tom, Jimmy, Don, Arlie and I would jockey to be near some girl on Mr. Bergquist's school bus or deflect a ball at one of them on the playground hoping that she might toss it back. Carol - cute, freckled, brunette braids - could climb trees, play bombardment ball like a banshee and swing a bat like Mickey Mantle. In proximity of such perfection, shy guys like me nudged social evolution at the pace of a Soviet Five Year Plan.

The flirting process could play out during lunch when groups of boys and girls walked down the big 70th Street hill to Cameron's Cahill Store. Within this country cozy of groceries, soda pop and candy was untold opportunity. A horizontal, ice cream freezer with hinged door pads laid anchor within site of the front counter. The trick was to root around the fog inside until, say, Carol or Barb or Katy got to the cash register and then move in with an orange Dreamsicle and a "Ohhh, hi there" ... which might lead to a walk back up the hill with one of them ... which could provide claim to having a girl friend ... which in the fifth grade was unlikely but something my Creston Hills pals thought about with increasing frequency.



Cameron's Cahill Store

The big hill between the school and the store was the first stretch of West 70th Street to get paved and became the site of the Cub Scout Pack 87 push mobile race. The event was organized by the dads and attracted business sponsors, a Boy Scout color guard and the attention of the *Edina-Morningside Courier*. A police car came to set up traffic barricades near Cameron's.

At the crack of a starter pistol, pairs of pushies rolled off a plywood ramp under a string of pennants, and whooshed by cheering families including my sister Sally and our apprehensive mother. Speculating fathers waited at the finish line.

The gravity monsters were kid-crafted from planks, peach crates, spikes, U-nails, curtain rods, washers, cotter pins and assorted oddball wagon and scooter wheels. My brother Smiley fitted his assemblage with long-retired Soap Box Derby wheels from a neighbor. Official Derby wheels were as coveted as a Babe Ruth baseball card or a good slingshot.

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They could earn any kid's jalopy a checkered flag.

As Smiley's racer shot off the ramp in the first heat, it was clear he'd take the whole shebang. By mid-hill he had five yards on his competitor and at the 3/4 mark was still gaining speed with his big, ball-bearing-smooth gyros. Jaws slacked as he blurred past the finish line. But Smiley couldn't stop. He had broken the sneaker speed barrier and his Keds pressed into the asphalt were useless for braking. My kid brother lost control, veered toward disaster with the front fender of the squad car, but then swerved away to a bumpy incline and a dusty stop in the parking lot of St. Patrick's Church. A grin cracked his set face as we swarmed up to his winning plank. Portable radios and pocket calculators were unknown to us; the informational super highway and virtual reality were 30 years down the road.

A wade in Nine Mile Creek and a cold pop at Cameron's prompted three-mile, round trip bike runs in the summer. We'd cruise west on 70th Street past the cornfields, Arneson's Tree Nursery and Highway 100 to the creek. We'd usually find chubs and minnows in the small stream and kids from school at the store, sometimes with their horses. We'd hang out together comparing, say, the kick of Red Hots to Atomic Fireballs.

Sometimes we'd bike further on - south to Dewey Hill Road. It was widely believed by all Cahill School boys that at the west end of the old farm road, hidden beyond the tamaracks, was a nudist camp. None of us knew any one who had actually seen anything, but the prospect of spying bare naked ladies playing volleyball in the sunshine made the coming of summer exciting for reasons that could never be shared with a Sunday school teacher.

The woods and meadows east of Creston Hills featured a bridal path that looped north to the McNellis Stables at 66th and France Avenue. The ranch smelled of manure, leather and dust and fizzed with flies and horse snorts. The wranglers there preached the same Code of the West as Hoppy: "Respect yer horse and don't get bucked in the head." Keeping our distance from the giant creature's hindquarters, we'd stroke their bellies. Their sad eyes made us whisper to them as a mother to a child.

For kids with only pocket change, the horses were more for admiring than for riding; but bicycling on their trail didn't cost a dime and on a Schwinn the path became a roller coaster of dips and curves with overviews of Lake Cornelia. The path snaked by a forest clearing framed with sumac and wild grapes that sheltered an orphan apple tree. The understanding was that Johnny Appleseed had planted it just for us. We'd visit the tree to smell its blossoms in May and check its fruit in August. The plan was to eat the apples that the worms hadn't, then hurl the rotted ones like hand-grenades at one another while careening along the path on our bikes.

"No where" or "maybe over to Don's house or the pond" was about as precise as we could be with our diligent moms before heading off on our forays. Sometimes "no where" was a spongy tongue of willow and snake grass that jutted into Lake Cornelia. *The Point* was good for splashing about with our dogs and watching gulls dive bomb for minnows.

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Our Norwegian Elkhound Torfin was the only one who could track us with certainty. From *The Point*, we might zig along a reedy shore then zag through some backyards into the pasture. If the herd wasn't around, we'd angle up and over an oak ridge to a pair of hidden mallard ponds, then follow them north to 66th Street and a vast marshy extension of Lake Cornelia. Circling us through the brush and foxtail grass would be Torf, flushing up pheasants, field mice and a few imaginary reindeer from Lapland. The marsh was policed by solitary great blue herons and it protected an island that Smiley, our friends and I named "Paradise." We laid claim to being the first to set foot on it and no one disputed this even though it was bisected by the cut of an old wagon road.



The price for getting to Paradise was sopping wet socks, shoes and pants. Torf was usually first to plunge into the knee-deep muck. We'd follow the curled white brush of his tail in single file through the cattails. Swamp smells and ooze, suction burps and bugs. Tarzan stuff. Soaked, we bashed through to drier colonies of sweet gale, willow and aspen to a cathedral of oak and maples. Leaves formed its overhead knave; a Virginia creeper vine clung to a towering veteran; and ferns and duff carpeted its floor. We would stop to smell the dark green, to listen to the chorus. We knew only the flashier soloists by name - the cardinals and woodpeckers. The rest, hundreds of smaller birds, produced a sparkly background of warbles and chirps.

In winter, after a heavy frost or a wet snowfall, Torf and I would race over the frozen lake directly to *Paradise*. There we would find and walk into an embracing, white-flocked filigree of stems, branches and twigs. Only the reds of dogwood canes and the khakis of marsh grass streaked the soft wash. Only chickadees and a hound in search of phantom elk ruffled the lace.

No one could name the precise day it happened; the pasture was large and kept secrets. Some of us overheard grown ups talk about something called "real estate" and a company named Rees Thompson Scroggins. Some of us just figured it out on our own, but one by one, the kids of Creston Hills came to know that Old Man Shaughnessey wouldn't return to plant corn or put cows in the pasture.

Early one spring morning, earthmovers began scraping out a road along the oak ridge that hid the mallard ponds. A week later, the machines turned east and plowed a 40-foot wide swath through the field to Laguna Drive. The pasture gate was ripped out and dumped into weeds next to a tree that had been knocked over. Our parents no longer talked of a pasture, but only of this lot and that lot and something they called "*Woodhill*".

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Bulldozers came to remove hills and dig foundations for the new houses. Other machines were brought in to lay pipes, mix concrete and tar roads. Tanned men with tools and truckloads of materials came to lay bricks, nail-up lumber frames, install ducts and snake-in electrical tubing. More trucks dropped-off entire kitchens and complete lawns of sod rolls and nursery trees and shrubs. The rhythmic hammering of nails that had occasionally underscored life in Creston Hills attained concerto status with the coming of Woodhill. We were proud that the whole world seemed to come to our pasture out in the sticks of Edina.

My gang put Woodhill to use months before anyone lived there. When the workmen left at five, we moved in to hurl dirt balls at one another and scramble around basement excavations. We shinnied like monkeys over frames of 2 by 4's punching out pine knots and picking at beads of honey-colored sap. Both smelled of turpentine and were worth squirreling away in a sock drawer for future appreciation.

The defining phrase of the era wasn't authored by Ike from the White House or by Axel from his Channel 4 tree house. "Don't track in mud" shot like bullets from every Creston Hills kitchen several times a day from first thaw to first frost. Linoleum police, sisters and mothers armed with mops, grimly guarded all back doors: "Check Point Charlies" through which no shoes caked with *Woodhill* mud could pass.

Like the Minneapolis Lakers and Ford Fairlanes, Woodhill seemed to be good for everybody: Old Man Shaughnessey, we figured became rich and retired to Sarasota; homebuilders prospered; we got lots of new neighbors and Edina grew bigger and bigger.



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Looking back, the mid-1950s seem like a time of balance between human enterprise and the wonderful rolling quilt of forest, orchard, meadow and lake that radiated west from our front door to the sea that is Lake Minnetonka and the prairie farms beyond. It was as if Grant Wood, Aldo Leopold, Brenda Ueland, Les Blacklock and Cedric Adams had come up with a plan for the good life and gotten it right. We had little sense then of how profoundly our part of the earth had been altered since the Dakota and Ojibwa peoples were forced to leave it just a generation or two earlier, or of the changes to come.

The area has long been irresistible. In 1852, New York Times writer Elizabeth Fries Ellet trekked through by wagon and canoe writing of luxuriant tall grasses, groves of tamaracks and stately parks of oak. The stream that would power flour mills in Minnetonka, Richfield and Edina was described as a "current fiercely glad" and the lake from which it flowed as a "garland of gems."



The Blue Line Pavilion and the Casino-Roller Rink at Excelsior. (1908 postcard)

By 1867, the railroad began hauling logs from Minnetonka's "embowering" forests to the sawmills and tourists to its shores. Minnetonka became an international resort with grand Victorian hotels and steamboats, a summer haven for the wealthy and a weekend diversion of extraordinary pull for the unguilded. Cottages, marinas, amusements and perfect little towns like Excelsior blossomed on its wooded bays; dairy barns, raspberry patches and roadside melon stands sprouted along the roads and trolley tracks from Minneapolis.

During the 1950s, scores of Creston Hills and Woodhills were stitched into the quilt, converting it into a *Happy Days* heaven of homes, office parks, and schools set among its farms, woods and lakes. Lake Minnetonka, celebrated in song and for its splendid

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sailing, fishing and shoreline properties grew in appeal. As Arthur Godfrey swooned on CBS Radio about landing his seaplane on “Minnah-TAHN-kah in the Land of Sky Blue Wahtahs” and as water skiers circled its coves and bays, the area’s smaller lakes were mostly ignored and spared from over-crowding. That changed in the 1980’s when baby boomers with income began vacating their apartments and starter homes for wooded lots with shorelines.

I was not among them. I moved east to New York City where Minnesota didn't exist until the Twins took the '87 World Series; where Minnesota could be explained as "Jersey without Newark" and then ignored. With daily life infused with Gotham brio and brilliance, one doesn't think much about ones roots. But walking by Mary Tyler Moore in my Upper East Side neighborhood (we traded smiles as if we actually knew one another), I flashed back through her Minneapolis sitcom to equally fond memories of Creston Hills.

Returning to Minnesota in 1993, I was smugly told more times than public radio has pledge breaks, just how glad I must be to be back. I countered with praise for hot pastrami and the New Jersey Pine Barrens. My wife and I settled in Eden Prairie, which appeared to value, as we did, its remarkable town and country feel. A year later the mortgage rates dropped and the bulldozers fired up. The quilt became a Parade of Homes version of strip-mining as farms and woodlots were cleared for new subdivisions. I learned that only small remnants of prairie and oak-savannah, less than one per cent of the majestic Big Woods and only twelve trout streams had survived from pioneer times. Forget the rainforests in Brazil; I volunteered for an Eden Prairie parks referendum and the Minnesota Land Trust.

“One of the challenges for suburban residents,” said historian Dan Philippon in the landmark 2005 television series, *Minnesota: A History of the Land*, is to recognize the way in which the houses they live in and the offices they work in are connected to the landscape around them.”

Muffy and Spencer may have been thinking of that Thomas Kinkade painting at the mall gallery when they built their perfect dream home next to their private reach of babbling brook, but that’s about as connected to the environment as they’ve gotten. And the rest of us, harnessed to mortgage payments, lawn mowers and minivans, have lived in assembly line subdivisions that are paved with sod and asphalt and validated by fake branding. Pardon my snarkyness, but there is no field in *Summerfield*, a town house community in Eden Prairie. *Cone Flower Drive*, *Warbler Lane*, *Fox Hollow*, *Trillium Bay*, *Bearpath* and *Quail Ridge* are listings in both a Realtor’s computer and a necrology of things that were killed off so we could move in.

Development pressures out Lake Wobegon way are increasing. In the 1990s, when the Twin Cities was the fastest growing region in the Midwest, Minnesota was losing 2.8 acres of farmland per hour - twenty four/seven – most of it to sprawling suburban expansion. From the year 2000 to 2005, the seven-county region grew by 168,000 people, the equivalent of two Bloomingtons. The region’s population is approaching the 3 million mark and projections show a blotch of sprawl from St. Cloud south to Northfield.

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Eden Prairie, with more than 64,000 residents, is just now slowing down like Edina did twenty-five years ago. The last of EP's large new subdivisions are being carved from the sensitive landscapes between Riley Creek and the Minnesota River bluffs. Developers of the area must comply with state environmental and historic restrictions and Eden Prairie's zoning ordinances and comprehensive guide plan, a kind of blue print for growth.

Eden Prairie, Edina, Minneapolis - each city in our seven-county region - has a guide plan that must mesh with a master framework for regional highways, parks, transit, sanitary sewers, airports and population densities worked out by the Metropolitan Council, the regional planning organization.*

The powerful agency operates in a complex sphere of competing values and is always mindful of the Minnesota Governor's vision: he appoints its 17-member policy making board. The Met Council is essential for regional sanity and smart growth, but even with its data banks, platoons of professional analysts, planners, consultants, and lobbyists, it earns only mixed grades from critics for being cozy with developers and heavy-handed with communities wanting to retain their rural resources.

The current housing slump may be providing local sprawl combatants with a bit of a breather, but when the rebound begins, the Twin Cities could surge into the lead pack of the nation's hot growth centers. As Las Vegas, Houston and Atlanta choke on sprawl, we'll look mighty inviting.**

Regardless of our tough winters and high business taxes, we've always generated positive buzz from those quality-of-life surveys. During the 1990's our region ranked fifth or higher nationally for low poverty rate, low population density, comparatively short commute times, high median incomes, affordable housing, theater and percentage of people who golf. Our regional park and bike trail systems are the best in the country and folks still say "excuse me" when navigating their grocery carts through Saturday gridlock at Lunds. Edina and Minnetonka remain premier, finely-tuned communities and upstart Eden Prairie was ranked by *Money Magazine* in 2006 as the country's 10th best place to live.

* The Metropolitan Council is the regional planning agency for Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Washington, Scott, Dakota and Carver Counties. The Council works to guide efficient regional growth and works with local communities to provide a number of essential services. The agency also collects and treats wastewater; helps plan and fund regional parks and trails; helps provide affordable housing; operates the Hiawatha Light Rail and 91% of the region's public buses. The Met Council is building the Northstar commuter rail; planning for additional LRT routes, operates regional airports; weighs in on the regional highway system and assists communities to plan for future land use and provides the regional framework for growth.

** The Met Council and organizations including 1000 Friends of Minnesota, The North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, Transit for Livable Communities, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability and the Metropolitan Design Center at the University of Minnesota can be considered sprawl combatants.

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More recently, *MarketWatch* named Minneapolis-St. Paul the top location in the nation for small and large businesses citing its "living environment." General Mills CEO Steve Sanger apparently wasn't surprised, telling MediaWatch, "You can live on a lake and get to the office in 15 minutes." But Met Council planners warn that if we could all move to where we wanted -- say, to that unspoiled bass lake out Waconia way -- the region's rural population would double. And therein lies the dilemma: We love the idea of living in the country so much, that we bulldoze further into it each year.

"Eden Prairie got too crowded," laments buyer to Realtor while scouting properties in far out Loretto. "Starter" and "life cycle" homes sprawl along the fens, bluffs and fields of the Minnesota River Valley. "Move-up housing" edges into the rolling fields of Minnetrista; "empty nester" condos are stacked on land that was warehoused in Chaska .

The front page of the December 6, 2007 *Chaska Herald* is dominated by a large photo of officials in winter coats happily waving small green flags above their heads. They were celebrating the completion of another stretch of the new, 12-mile freeway that will connect Chaska to Eden Prairie. Municipal, school, church, and business leaders in the outer suburbs view big new roads and the development of "vacant" land as a means to pump-up their tax bases and memberships.

But such boosterism is myopic and unsustainable. As surveyor stakes pelt Carver County farms like violent hail, the sprawl cycle will begin again, acre by acre. "Right now when a piece of land is developed," warns U of MN ecologist David Tilman in *Minnesota: A History of the Land*, "nobody measures the cost to the quality of ground water, nobody measures the cost to biological diversity. These are never measured. All we measure is the gains of the value of that piece of land. So economics measures [only] half the equation."

Those of us with the trimmed lawns have not factored in the costs of dicing up our hardwood forests and oak savannas and polluting our lakes and streams. When was the last time you saw a Red Headed Woodpecker or felt good about frying up a stringer of sunnies your kid caught in a local lake? When selecting where and how we live, we've danced with an illusion and shunned Mom Nature. As our rural fringe unravels and urban core neighborhoods decay, we'll send a check to the Sierra Club or take an eco tour to Belize and figure we've done our bit for the Earth.

That said, the Cleavers and Simpsons do show up at public hearings to oppose new subdivisions, bigger roads and those garish, oversized-houses slated to replace the modest Cape Codders down the block. They'll defend their property values, neighborhood character and the stand of maple trees on the way to the fitness club, but to big buck developers and road engineers they're chunks of shark chum.

Eleven years ago, Pam Swanson broke into tears during a public hearing on a huge housing project that would demolish the apple orchard near her Eden Prairie home. "I could never ever imagine myself living anywhere but here," Swanson said. "It makes me very very sad, and I don't want to see it happen. And I'll have to leave because it's not going to be my home any more." Since then, citizen groups in north central Eden Prairie, where I live,

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have had to defend Birch Island Woods, Bent Creek Golf Club and a handful of outlots from the developers. Over the past two years, a new neighborhood near Flying Cloud Airport failed to thwart a proposed road over Riley Creek that will now bifurcate the spring-fed stream's scenic valley and generate more traffic.

Former Creston Hills resident Cokie Neiberger told me that in the mid-1950s she waved a hand-painted placard from the edge of a cornfield at passing cars to protest the coming of Southdale. The nation's first, enclosed shopping center included 400 additional acres for commercial, office and residential development. Her son Denny Neiberger recalls that his family loved the fresh country air and living among meadows, oak groves and cornfields.

The folks who currently reside in the homes that were built on those fields have hammered-in yard signs demanding that West 70th Street be converted into a quiet parkway. They oppose the possible demolition of homes for a wider West 70th to the Southdale area. The Big Mo, however, remains with an industry that builds, sells and services thousands of new houses, condos and office buildings each year and has been pressing the flesh at city hall for decades.

It's not that developers have it easy. Before a spade of earth is turned, project proposals need to mesh with a city's guide plan and zoning restrictions and then pass through a gauntlet of reviews, hearings and approvals. But there isn't a developer who doesn't factor it in as overhead and who won't ask for variances - requests to, say, build closer to a shoreline or build a bigger house than permitted.

Land use attorney Tom Casey of Mound and open space activists complain that bureaucratic fog, complex guidelines and insufficient laws enable developers, municipal planning staffs and some elected officials to tiptoe hand-in-hand around concerned citizens and what Minnesotans like to think of as their strong environmental ethos. When he was Mayor of Edina, Fred Richards, became fed up with variance requests. "If these rules are to mean anything we should follow them," Richards complained in 1996 to protracted haggling with a developer over what was then one of Edina's last large, "raw" parcels. A cluster of new homes called *Arrowhead Pointe* now overlooks a lake that was visited by a kid who thought for sure he'd seen Henry Hudson's ship, *The Half Moon*, anchored there.

In the mid-1950s, the forested wilds surrounding the lake were being carefully developed into *Indian Hills*, an appealing ramble of up-scale homes that seemed in harmony with its natural surroundings. But for more than a decade, new houses, some taller than the trees, have been shoehorned into splintered lots. For a million and up, "executive families" get an Edina zip code and a view of another guy's back yard. Arrowhead Lake, a public water and Edina's most scenic lake, is out-of-sight and out-of-mind for everyone but the folks whose homes were permitted by city councils over the years to hem it in.

Pinched visioning in Bloomington and Eden Prairie has forced the public to turn its back on the expanses of the Minnesota River Valley. Rather than a splendid public parkway like Skyline Drive in Duluth or West River Parkway in Minneapolis, the Minnesota River bluffs are capped with houses like sharp spikes atop a privacy wall. Behind them stretches

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the under-appreciated Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge with its riverine forests and bayous. The nation's largest urban wildlife refuge is visited mostly by trail mix munching mountain bikers and bird watchers.

Our overall indifference to signature, virgin landscapes saddens me. There is no design shop or nursery equivalent to the organic textures and colors of the prairies, wetlands and woods that Mother Nature has gifted us. Compare any untouched shore to ones that are fixed with docks, riprap, retaining walls and sod. The former look good and take care of themselves; the later are eyesores and pollute. Compare roadside mosaics of native grasses and wildflowers to ones fixed with lawn grass and trees that look like Tootsie Pops. The former look good throughout the year and cost a fraction to maintain.

I bet we all carry a "Builder Bob" gene that compels us to tame anything without right angles. In our bustling 'burbs, only steep slopes, endangered species habitats, Native American burial sites, shorelines and wetlands have had legal protection; most everything else has been targeted for development and a place on the tax rolls.

From November through March when we're crabby with cabin fever and thinking about Sun Country Airlines -- when leafery doesn't mask all the architectural clutter we've tossed on the quilt -- I'm reminded of Dogpatch and Fred Sanford's front yard. Drive around Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Edina - anywhere - to appreciate what I am kvetching about. If you pass by Indian Hills, you'll see steroidal houses - McMansions - hugging a big hill like an outbreak of boils. They overlook six lanes of *Highway 62* congestion at *Gleason Road* - the former site of the old *Gleason* farm with its raspberry patches and cornfields. The pioneer family is remembered with misspelled street signs.

In 1990, the modern Cahill School was demolished, not for the open space that neighbors had fought for, but for a trio of residential cul-de-sacs. Perhaps as an act of atonement, the old Cahill School House was carefully restored into a living history museum. But, oddly, it now sits next to the historic Minnehaha Grange Hall inside a traffic loop that ramps up from Highway 100. The Buicks and SUVs parked at the site belong to customers forking down Belgian Waffles at the Perkins Restaurant across the street. And so it goes.

One would think that those of us with roots here would have been tougher caretakers of the natural and historic landscapes that we enjoyed as kids and then warned the folks out where the meadowlarks still whistle. But you get used to it, I guess - it happens so slowly, vacant lot by vacant lot, that you are not alarmed by it. Maybe a person has to leave home for a decade or more to see the changed landscape clearly - and to fully absorb the enormity of what's been lost.

I revisited Paradise with my 2 ½ -years-old daughter in 1996. Riding on my shoulders, Amy saw an egret wading through its marsh and a chipmunk scampering along its forest floor. We slipped through some cattails to Lake Cornelia's spongy shore for a view of

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Creston Hills and the distant, manicured landscapes that orbit Southdale.

When Southdale opened in 1956, Amy's dad and the kids of Creston Hills became the nation's first mall rats. Instead of jumping pasture fences, picking apples or rafting on ponds, our versions of Huck, Tom, Becky and Jim entered a world of Muzak and climate control to ride escalators past towering metallic trees bolted to concrete in something called the Garden Court.

Paradise is now a nature preserve of sorts. But there, buckthorn thickets choke out the trillium and the roar of steel-belted radials from Highway 62 drown out the cardinals and may explain why so many hikers there wear headsets. It occurred to me that we were standing just about where my brother and I had once used an eight-millimeter Revere camera, with binoculars taped to it for close-ups, to film migrating Canvasback ducks. Amy bobbed a raft of spring-green duckweed dots on the glassy water at her toes. She stood up, focused on the sky and pointed to some seagulls. "Birds," she said smiling.



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End Notes

A bit more about Creston Hills



Jeff and Smiley (John Jr.)



Strate House, Laguna Drive. Creston Hills

Members of the Strate family have lived in Edina since 1930 beginning with Art and Nellie Strate (Division Street). Gloria, my mom, now lives within walking distance of wonderful Centennial Lakes Park and Byerly's Supermarket. Over the years, new sets of owners of our Creston Hills abode on Laguna Drive have enlarged and provided it with different designer motifs. Other Creston Hills homes have also gotten makeovers or have been demolished and replaced with larger houses. Some of the original homes look much like they did in the 1950s.

I attended Edina's Wooddale Elementary School through the 4th grade when my family lived on Beard Avenue about a block south of Minnehaha Creek. The adventures that began from the Beard Avenue footbridge could have sparked a suite of Jean Shepherd yarns. My family moved to Creston Hills in 1954 staying there through 1966.



This 1956 snapshot shows myself, Don Weden, Carol Kessler, Barb Kane, Jimmy Moore and Harry (Bubs) Heckathorn posing at Don's home on Creston Drive on the day we graduated from Cahill Elementary School. Balfanz Road is in the background; Shaughnessy's Pond is unseen to the left. All of us graduated from Edina-Morningside High School in 1962.

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Cahill Elementary School



Principal Richard A. Dols and 6th Grade Teacher Don R. Johnson bookend the Cahill Elementary School, Class of 1956. Katy Olinger (who supplied this photo) is the 5th from the left in the 2nd row. Dick Gleeson is the 9th from the left in the front row.

Jeff wants to know how many others can name each kid. Send an email.

Cahill School Bus #10 Schedule Normandale, Southdale, Creston Hills Morning Pick-up 1955-56 / Mr. Bergquist Driver

a.m.

- 7:59 66th Street / Highway 100 (Normandale Rd)
- 8:00 68th Street / Highway 100
- 8:02 Hillcrest Lane /Southdale Road
- 8:04 66th Street / Cornelia Drive
- 8:05 70th Street / Cornelia Drive
- 8:07 Wooddale Ave. / Dunberry Lane (Creston Hills)
- 8:08 Wooddale Ave. / Balfanz Road (Creston Hills)
- 8:09 Wooddale Ave / 70th Street (Creston Hills)
- 8:10 4494 West 70th Street
- 8:11 70th and Highway 100
- 8:14 Drop students off at Cahill School. Bus departs for students on Valley View & Dewey Hill Roads

Edina-Morningside Courier , Sept 1, 1955

Pop Culture **1955-56**

Joyce Lamont, Cedric Adams, WCCO Radio
WDGY Radio adopts Top 40 Format
Mad Magazine, Disneyland opens ('55)
"The \$64,000 Dollar Question,"
"Axel and His Dog," Clelland Card, WCCO
Ford T-Bird and Crest Tooth Paste debut
"T.N.Tatters," Daryl Laub, KSTP-TV,
"Boots & Saddles" Jimmy Valentine, KSTP-TV
"Wrangler Steve," Steve Cannon, WTCN-TV
"Ain't That a Shame," Pat Boone
"Heart Break Hotel," Elvis Presley
"Hard to Get," Gisele Mackenzie
"Around the World in 80 Days," "Giant," "Lady and the Tramp," Edina & Westgate Theaters

End Notes

Wooddale and Morningside Schools were joined by the new, three-classroom Cahill School in 1948. Cahill added another three classrooms and a combination auditorium, lunchroom and gym in 1952 when Concord School opened. Kindergarten continued on in the old Cahill schoolhouse. From 1954 to 1960 a new wing for Concord was added and Highlands, Cornelia and the Junior High schools opened to accommodate a student population which nearly doubled: 3,720 to 7,186

Cahill Junior Olympics Winner

Edina-Morningside Courier, August 4, 1955

Cahill Playground's track and field team won the Edina Junior Olympics at Wooddale Friday by a whopping 185 points. Chowen Playground was second with 86 points; Wooddale scored 60, Normandale 59 and Concord 19. With temperatures soaring over 100 degrees, several events were cancelled due to the heat and the lower number of contestants, which resulted.

Cahill's most glorious sports day may have been during the City Recreation Department's Junior Olympics in 1955. Some Cahill students competed for other playground teams - Dale Anderson (high jump champ) Normandale; Carol Kessler (60-yard dash and ball throw champ) Concord. Cahill Playground's Joe Stedman and Don Wedin (Creston Hills) Barbara Johnson and Lillian Hunter each won several events. Arlie Schepke, Tom Moore (CH), Dick Gleeson, Mike Gleeson, Lowell Green and Arthur Green were also impressive. *Contact Jeff for the full results.*

Cowboys and Indians

Retired Edina City Manager/Parks Director Ken Rosland speaks of an unusual game of cowboys and Indians that was staged by Edina playground leaders at the horse riding stables on Valley View Road, a half-mile northwest of Cahill School. The kids with horses played the cowboys; those without were Indians. The Indians were given old tennis balls to toss at the mounted cowboys. If a cowboy got hit, he or she had to leave the game. Rosland recalls that kids would run right up in front of a jogging horse and fling balls up at their friends. That kind fun is a thing of the past.

Inquiring minds want to know:

Was there a Nudist Colony at the end of Dewey Hill Road?

Stories about a nudist colony at the end of Dewey Hill Road were not ignored by the boys of Cahill School. No tales of such a retreat ever came upholstered with facts or the names of anyone who had actually seen anything, but that didn't stop we lads from visiting the secluded area to see for ourselves. Frank Cardella, a long-time land surveyor and history buff and retired Edina Parks Director Bob Kojetin told me in separate interviews that they've heard about it but, with a chuckle, shrugged it off as fanciful. Marci Matson, Executive Director of the Edina Historical Society says that she has gotten a few queries about a nudist camp but knows of only one archival reference. That reference is quoted in Roger Harrold's handsome book on Braemar Park. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Marth, in a 1970 interview, tell of a shack that was built "which was later used by the first nudist colony in Hennepin County." Ken Rosland says that around 1957, before he became Edina's Parks Director and before the golf courses were built, he found women's underwear draped on fence posts in the area.

Contact Jeff if you have more information on the subject.

End Notes



Overlays by Jeff Strate

Look what they've done to my song, Ma ...

THE STICKS: Farms, oak savanna, woods, wetlands, ponds, Lake Cornelia and Creston Hills occupied this section of Edina from 1949 through 1955. Neighboring subdivisions Woodhill, Southdale and South Garden Estates (below 70th Street) were in the works.

As rooftops, driveways, roads, parking lots, patios and lawns were installed, rainwater no longer flowed slowly into wetlands or was absorbed by the ground to replenish lakes, creeks and aquifers. Instead, the rain became polluted runoff that rushed along gutters and storm sewers into the same ponds, lakes and creeks. The scenario is repeated millions of times throughout the Mississippi River Basin explaining why local ponds stink and why, when runoff from farms is factored in, an algae bloom and dead zone the size of New Jersey has formed in the Gulf of Mexico.

FRANCE AVENUE: France Avenue south of 66th Street has evolved from country lane, to berm-lined feeder road for Southdale to what author James Howard Kunstler would describe as a "geography of no where." Edina's best known street is a broad, anti-pedestrian, carscape with endless parking lots and no sense of place; it is suburban anywhere – Texas, Indiana, California.

However, one of the nation's premier, multi-use developments backs up to France Avenue at its Parklawn Avenue axis. Centennial Lakes features a beautifully sculpted, 24-acre public greenway/park with a chain of lagoons flanked by high density, walkable residential, commercial, medical and class "A" office buildings and restaurants. Spearheaded by United Properties in partnership with other developers and the City, the 100-acre project was completed in 2000 and

End Notes

demonstrates that visionary planning can provide a market smart, people friendly, cosmopolitan space in traffic-dominated sprawl land.



Looking south to Centennial Lakes. France Avenue is the straight diagonal on the right.*

My mother Gloria told me that “back in the ‘50s they thought of Creston Hills as the place out France beyond the slough [Lake Cornelia] on the way to the dump.” I enjoyed hauling trash to the Edina Dump with my dad and sneaking off to the sand and gravel pits that were replaced by Centennial Lakes. Mountains of sand and garbage were big draws to the Edina and Richfield kids who roamed further south into the sticks along France Avenue. In contrast, my own children play the 18-hole putting course, watch model boat races and attend outdoor concerts with their grandma in Centennial Lakes Park. They walk there from her York Avenue condo complex.



EDEN PRAIRIE: EP can boast some 4,700 acres of parks and open space, but much of it is wetland, bottomlands and steep slope. During the 1990s, high-end housing began colonizing its forests, the crest of the Minnesota River bluffs (left), and rolling farmland (right)

* The Images on this page are from the Metropolitan Design Center Image Bank
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The Design Center’s website has hundreds of aerial photos of Edina and Eden Prairie and thousands more of other mostly Minnesota communities. Visit: www.designcenter.umn.edu/

For Centennial Lakes: www.centenniallakespark.com/ and www.uproperties.com/

Resources and References

PARADISE, LAKE CORNELIA AND SOUTHDALE:

“Paradise” is now part of Rosland Park (formerly Cornelia Park) that includes the Edina Art Center (the Maguire home), the Aquatic Center, trails, a softball diamond and other amenities. Kids and grown ups still walk and bicycle along West 66th Street which bisects Lake Cornelia.

Since opening in 1956, Southdale Center has used an air-cooling and heating system that taps well water with a constant 55° temperature. After passing through the system and having chlorine removed, the slightly warmed water is pumped to flow into ponds near Valley View Road and Garrison Lane and Lake Cornelia. The half-century-old system is slated to be shut down by 2010 to comply with new State environmental laws. The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District anticipates that Lake Cornelia and pond levels will fall.



“Paradise,” October 2007.

Top: A cattail marsh and an oak tree.
Bottom: View from West 66th Street.

The 50s Housing Boom

Edina’s rapid expansion in the 1950’s was guided by very experienced officials who had learned a great deal about planning from 30 years of gradual growth. Browndale Park, a “fashionable,” 1910 “streetcar suburb,” is said to be the precursor to the Country Club District, Edina’s first, rigorously planned development. The Country Club was designed for affluent, car-commuting families of the 1920s but was also served by the streetcar line along West 44th Street, just like Browndale, Morningside and southwest Minneapolis. Trolleys also ran south on France Avenue to 54th Street and I recall Trisler’s Grocery Store and especially Don’s Restaurant where I bought my first, thick chocolate malt - 25¢.

Home Permits Average Over Million Dollars a Month This Year

New Record Pace For Home Building In Edina

During the first seven months of 1955, Edina residential builders broke practically every home building record in the village took out by far the greatest number and value of new residential building permits for any day seven months in village history and continued the Edina building boom at more than a million dollars per month.

seven months of this year average over a million dollars. The 407 permits, with valuations of \$206,100,000 — was the new residential building record for any day for 1955 compare with 300 permits for \$100,000,000 in 1954. Permits for seven months of 1955 total \$1,438,300 for 47 new dealings.

EDINA-MORNINGSIDE COURIER

Serving Minnesota's Finest Residential Area

Year	Number
1955	212
1954	300
1953	238
1952	187

From the front page of the Edina-Morningside Courier, August 4th, 1955.

Some of the following residential subdivisions in south and southwest Edina were conceived in the late 1940s but all began to fill out in the 1950s. The names of these housing projects may no longer be used or remembered but they shared the decade with *Ozzie & Harriet*, George Mikan,

Resources and References

Toby Prin, Coya Knutson, Clancy's Drug Store and especially Village Manager Warren Hyde.

Carolane Addition	Prospect Hills	La Buena Vista
Lindell Addition	Indian Hills	Brookline Addition
Brookview Heights	Creston Hills	Woodhill
South Garden Estates	Southdale Addition	Pioneer Oaks
Normandale Addition	Countryside	Valley View Terrace

In 1955, Sherron Spearing's family moved to Mark Terrace Drive in Pioneer Oaks, a new subdivision just south of Indian Hills. "Our street was very short and had a beautiful sheep farm at one end," writes Sherron. "We always had the most beautiful birds in our backyard." Sherron remembers walking some 50 miles selling Girl Scout Cookies at 25¢ a box and riding the Cahill School bus past the riding stable on Valley View Road. The stable was popular with young girls like her sister who rode the horses and cleaned their stalls. The owner's handsome teenage son was also an attraction says Sherron. "The girls were "google-eyed" and "were far more interested in him than the horses!"

Although Sherron claims that "being a skinny, 5'6" girl in 6th grade who got good grades, didn't interest boys," she confesses that her first kiss came on the Cahill playground. (Romeo's identity remains a secret.) It is amazing to this writer that any expressions of puppy love surfaced at Cahill at all given the barely potable doses of orange juice (spiked with cod liver oil) that we students were made to drink in the morning.

West 70th Activists and Arneson Acres Park

Yard signs demanding that West 70th Street between France Avenue and Highway 100 be re-invented as a parkway have been hammered in along the now tired-looking, non-descript mostly residential street. Residents are responding to a City initiative to select one of several "concept" plans that might be used in the future to accommodate projected traffic increases. The Save 70th activists (mostly residents of what were known as Creston Hills, South Garden Estates, Woodhill and Southdale) would name their version "Arneson Parkway" after Morton and Katherine Arneson who donated their 13-acre tree nursery to Edina in 1969. The Arneson Acres Park emerald includes the Edina Museum and 28 separate gardens.

To the east, 70th Street between France and York Avenues has become a parkway of sorts – a local feeder with three roundabouts, broader sidewalks and appealing greenery leading to the Galleria mall, the new Westin Galleria condominiums and a Super Target store the size of Iowa. Drivers who are not familiar with roundabouts can be initially confused. My way or no way drivers awash in the car culture exhibit mild forms of road rage.

Save 70th activists, the Conservation League of Edina and folks who fight those garish, oversized, ill-fitting houses that are being squeezed into otherwise appealing neighborhoods, carry on in the spirit of the farmers and flour millers who split off from Richfield Township in 1888 to form their own village. In the 1950s, the baton of citizen activism was grabbed by the likes of Cokie Neiberger and the Southwest Edina Better

Resources and References

Government Association -- when Betty Crocker was the mirror image of the archetypical Edina housewife with a husband who was probably positioned in the Bisquick Division.

In the April 28th, 1954 edition of the *Edina-Morningside Courier* column “Edina Etchings,” scribe Harold Kulp wrote: “Edina residents filled the village hall, not just the council chambers, to discuss the pros and cons of village problems ... mainly proposed improvement of streets, relative to the Southdale Shopping Center requirements. The current council is taking the brunt of the residents wrath concerning street widening previously agreed to by the old council... Edina residents are finally aroused over a mutual issue and again I say hurrray for democracy!”

Current Edina Mayor Jim Hovland, explaining in a recent Met Council website article why Edina has the largest percentage of people over age 65 of any city in the region, said, “People love this community and want to stay where they’ve lived all their lives. Edina has kept a sense of the village it once was.” I’d add that that prideful sense of place sets the tone for Edina’s government and school district and continually informs its local politics and community life.

The Last of the Farms



Edina remained agricultural through the 1930s but with urbanization only a few farms operated into the 1950s with only the Foster Green Farm at Cahill and Dewey Hill Roads lasting into the 1960s. Vacant farms waiting for development, like the sad one pictured above (southeast of France Avenue and Interstate 494), rested in contrast to their dynamic surroundings. In the late 1950s the City of Edina began the process of purchasing a cluster parcels including the Hays farm to create the Braemar Park and golf complex.

The Olingers

My Cahill classmate Katy (Catherine R.) Olinger lived in the family farmhouse near Mud Lake (Bredesen Park). Olinger Boulevard, Circle and Road are named for Katy’s grandparents who operated a seven-acre truck farm there that her father Jack farmed until he

Resources and References

joined Minneapolis-Moline in nearby Hopkins. An engaging article about the Olingers - tracing their migration from Germany and Ireland through to their final years of farming in Edina - appears in the Fall 2007 issue of *AboutTown*, the City of Edina quarterly magazine.

Writer Joe Sullivan (using research provided by Katy's brother J.J. Olinger) notes in the article that many of Edina's pioneer farm families including the Delaneys, Gleasons, Mahoneys, Ryans and Joneses attended the 1952 funeral of Jack Olinger (Katy's and JJ's father) at St. Patrick's Catholic Church. Mr. Sullivan writes: "By 1950, except for Ted Asplund and Lewis Jones, farming around Olinger Road had ceased. Once filled with tall stands of waving corn, the fields were overgrown with brush. The former pastures were dotted with crumbling windmills, busted wire fences and deserted farmhouses."

Katy speaks fondly of the horses and stables on Valley View Road, of the hikes to Cameron's Store, the new Cahill School and of safer, simpler times. The semi-retired primary school teacher recalls walking with friends 1½ mile from Cahill Elementary past the store over the Northfield and Southern Railroad Bridge and Nine Mile Creek to Normandale Road (Hwy 100). The girls would then walk up the long hill to Barb Kane's house on 66th Street for Campfire Girl meetings.

Old Man Shaughnessey

Hennepin County Recorder's Office and the Richfield History Museum archives shed light on "Old Man Shaughnessey," the farmer who had chased my pals and me from the pasture. From Oct. 2, 1947 until Dec. 31, 1948 Donald J. Kelly of Minneapolis and Robert J. and Marion Shaughnessey of Richfield owned the pasture until it was sold to Wilford F. Widen who sold it to the Thompson Scroggins Company, the Woodhill developer. Mr. Shaughnessey apparently retained farming rights during Widen's ownership. Mr. Shaughnessey is listed in the Richfield Directory through 1975; Mrs. Shaughnessey through 1986.

Eden Prairie Farms



The Picha Heritage Farm opens its gate each May for the Birch Island Woods Plant Sale, a 10-day benefit.

Farm still operate in Eden Prairie. Terry and Kathy Picha run a small, 105-year old farm next to Birch Island Woods and a landscaping business. The Pichas produce raspberries, wholesale flowers and organic vegetables that they sell at the Minneapolis Farmers Market. The farm hosts the Birch Island Woods Plant Sale in May. Other farmers include Sever Peterson (Sever's Corn Maze and mall parking lot stands), the Dvorak Brothers (organic

Resources and References

eggs, tomatoes, pumpkins and other produce (Flying Cloud Drive and Shady Oak Road) and the Marshall Family's garden market at Pioneer Trail and Eden Prairie Road.

Art Strate's Fruit Stand

Roadside stands that sold fresh raspberries, sweet corn, apples and melons grown on the farms behind them were once common in the southwest suburbs. My great uncle and aunt Art and Nellie Strate lived in Edina but ran a produce stand in Bloomington on France Avenue near the vacant farm pictured on page 21. Cigar chomping Art was not a farmer but, like my grandfather Gerhard Strate, worked for the Stacy Fruit Company where he could get plenty of fresh, locally grown produce as well as bananas, peaches and lettuce brought by steam-powered freight trains to the Minneapolis rail yards near Washington Avenue.

Lake Minnetonka and Captain John Johnson



John Ropestol Johnson (my dad's maternal grandfather) captained the *City of St. Louis*, an excursion steamer on Lake Minnetonka during the 1890s. The elegant, 160-foot long, side-wheeler could carry 1000 passengers and was the country's first inland vessel to sport electric lights. Young Johnson, a Norwegian seaman, brought his sweetheart Mina Lindbo from Norway to Minnesota.

They married and lived in Excelsior. Captain Johnson's Lake Minnetonka Dredging Company built many of the lake's channels, marinas and beaches. Company supervisor Oscar Lindbo described the Minnetonka of 1907. "When I came [from Norway], you could dip water out anywhere and make the finest coffee in the world." My father John and his brothers Ray and Ken Strate shoveled coal on Johnson's steam-powered dredges in the late 1920s. A memorial to Captain Johnson is situated in a beautifully tended plaza at Lake Street and 2nd Street in Excelsior.

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Send comments to Jeff.

Resources and References

Image Credits

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Western Meadowlark, original image courtesy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Postcard of Excelsior, Creston Hills Graduation Day (unknown) Jeff Strate collection.

Cahill Elementary School Class of 1956, official photo, courtesy of C.R. (Katy) Olinger.

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“Current Landscapes/Old Places” Satellite Photo, Google Maps. Overlay, Jeff Strate.

Cameron’s Store, courtesy of the Edina Museum.

Captain John R. Johnson, Excelsior-Lake Minnetonka Historical Society

For More Information

Edina Historical Society and Museum

Arneson Acres Park, 4711 W. 70th St. Edina, MN, 55435,

<http://www.ci.edina.mn.us/> Phone: 612-928-4577.

Richfield Historical Society and Museum

6901 Lyndale Avenue South, Richfield, MN 55423, 612-798-6140

Friends of Birch Island Woods, *Eden Prairie/Minnetonka*

Land conservation and stewardship organization.

<http://www.fbiw.org/> Phone: 952-949-8980

Conservation League of Edina <http://conservationleagueofedina.com/>

Embrace Open Space Campaign/The Trust for Public Land

Tools and links related to open space protection.

www.embraceopenspace.com/ Phone: 651-999-5306

Minnesota: A History of the Land. A landmark, 5-part, TV series about the human impact on Minnesota landscape from ice age to suburban sprawl. This Bell Museum of Natural History/Twin Cities Public Television project includes viewer and teacher guides. Available on DVD.

<http://www.historyoftheland.org/>

Envision Minnesota, Seeks to elevate and shape a more coordinated environmental and conservation vision. <http://www.envisionminnesota.org/>

Local Sprawl Combatants

North Star Chapter, Sierra Club <http://www.northstar.sierraclub.org/>

1000 Friends of Minnesota <http://www.1000fom.org/>

Transit for Livable Communities <http://www.tlcminnesota.org/>

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy <http://www.mncenter.org/>

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James Howard Kunstler, vigilant and vinegary scold of *la conception et la vie suburbain Américain*; author of *Geography of Nowhere* and other perceptive books and magazine articles.

<http://www.kunstler.com/>

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- 4) Catherine R. (Katy) Olinger, phone, week of October 7, 2007.
- 5) JJ Olinger, phone, week of September 24, 2007.
- 6) Marci Matson, Executive Director, Edina Historical gfSociety.
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