

The Lowry Hill Neighborhood Historic Context Study



Prepared for the
Lowry Hill Residents Inc.
by
Landscape Research LLC
2006

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(LHRI)
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by

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Management Summary

The Lowry Hill neighborhood bridges the northern tip of Lake of the Isles across the upland and steep bluff that extends toward the southwestern edge of downtown Minneapolis. Long before electric streetcars connected the area with downtown or the lakeshore was transformed from marshland to parkway, Thomas Lowry envisioned a landscape of large, handsome houses set along wide, tree-lined streets. By 1910 much of this residential landscape was complete, and development continued until about 1930. During this period, the success of E. Lake of the Isles Boulevard improvements and electric streetcar connections along Hennepin and Douglas Avenues invited construction of many high-quality, single-family houses as well as apartment buildings.

This historic context study was commissioned by Lowry Hill Residents Inc. (LHRI). Carole S. Zellie of Landscape Research LLC conducted the research and prepared the report. The historic contexts examine the components of neighborhood development that created the architectural and landscape framework of today's neighborhood. The focus is residential development, especially between ca. 1874 and 1930, with separate sections on apartment building construction and commercial and institutional development. Another chapter provides short biographies of many of the area's leading architects. The East Isles neighborhood, which shares a similar pattern of development along Lake of the Isles, is the subject of a companion study conducted for the East Isles Residents Association (EIRA).

As detailed in this study, the historical significance of the Lowry Hill neighborhood is based on its associations with:

- Thomas Lowry, Roswell P. Russell, and other real estate developers whose subdivisions created the late 19th-century neighborhood framework
- The Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners, which created and enhanced neighborhood park and transportation amenities
- The business leaders who established homes on Lowry Hill and in East Isles and hired the city's leading architects and builders, which resulted in areas of exceptional residential architecture.

Lowry Hill contains some of the city's finest examples of late 19th- and early 20th-century residential architecture. Although several historic streetscape patterns characterize the neighborhood, some of the wide streets, large lots, and broad front yards intended by some of the earliest real estate developers are very evident, particularly along the lake and north of Franklin Avenue. The zone of high-styled houses along and near **E. Lake of the Isles Parkway and Mount Curve Avenue** is representative of the investment of the city's business leaders and their architects. These partnerships produced extraordinary Queen Anne and Romanesque and Period Revival Style houses between 1874 and 1930. Franklin B. Long, Lowell Lamoreaux, James MacLeod, William Channing Whitney, William B. Kenyon, Charles Sedgwick, and Theron P. Healy are among many notable designers and builders. A **mixed, middle zone** of high-styled houses created for a similar clientele as well as of speculatively built houses extends from Douglas to Franklin Avenues and partially to W. 22nd Street, along with several blocks of moderately priced houses from ca. 1910. Masonry **apartment buildings** dating from ca. 1900-1930 are concentrated along and near the Hennepin Avenue commercial corridor. Some are representative of the styles and types popular with the turn-of-the-century "luxury market," while later apartment buildings housed an expanding workforce that included many single office and retail workers as well as small families. This fabric is shared with the Wedge neighborhood, particularly at the Franklin-Hennepin hub. The west side of Hennepin Avenue also retains a variety of early 20th-century business blocks.

Despite the conversion of many large residences into rooming houses and apartments during and following the Great Depression, the Restricted Residential District zoning enacted in 1913, among other factors, kept new apartment building construction at the area's edges. Residents' resistance to high-rise construction along the bluffline helped slow building demolition. Nevertheless, the number of "tear-downs" has accelerated in recent years, particularly along Groveland Terrace and near the lake.

Period of Significance: ca. 1874-1930

This study suggests that the neighborhood's period of significance is ca. 1874-1930, extending from the construction of Thomas Lowry's house at 2 Groveland Terrace to waning residential and apartment building construction on the eve of the Great Depression.

Historic Context Study Recommendations

This historic context study was concurrent with a historic resources inventory of the Calhoun-Isles area conducted by consultants Mead & Hunt. Further evaluation of the historic context study and the inventory findings will assist in future neighborhood planning.

The context study suggests that certain early additions, most notably Groveland Terrace, Summit Park, and Lakeview, and the apartment zone centered at the Franklin and Hennepin Avenue intersection (shared with the Wedge) are among candidates for further study. In addition, there are many individual properties exemplary of the work of the city's leading architects during the period ca. 1895 to 1930.

*Cover: Edmund G. and Nell Walton House and Garden, 802 Mount Curve Avenue, ca. 1900
(Minnesota Historical Society)*

Historic photographs in text: Minnesota Historical Society and Hennepin History Museum

Management Summary

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Introduction

This historic context study describes the historical and architectural development of the Lowry Hill neighborhood. The focus of the study is on the period between 1872 and 1930, with discussion of late-twentieth century change. Current planning boundaries shown on page 7 include approximately 56 blocks between Kenwood Parkway on the north; W. 22nd Street on the south; Hennepin Avenue on the east; and Morgan Avenue, Kenwood Park, and E. Lake of the Isles Parkway on the west. The earliest non-agricultural residential development of the area began in the early 1870s and was generally complete by 1915. The East Isles, Kenwood, Loring Park, and Wedge (Lowry Hill East) neighborhoods adjoin Lowry Hill.



The view from Lowry Hill, 2006

Lowry Hill Residents Inc. (LHRI) commissioned the study and Carole S. Zellie of Landscape Research LLC conducted the research and prepared the report. A companion study of the East Isles neighborhood, which shares a similar pattern of development along Lake of the Isles, was conducted for the East Isles Residents Association (EIRA). Lowry Hill and East Isles neighborhoods share a late-19th century development pattern, one based on transportation and the improvement of Lake of the Isles. The W. 22nd Street boundary between East Isles and Lowry Hill was apparently created for planning purposes and does not follow any natural landscape feature or significant historical division.

The present neighborhood boundaries include approximately 56 blocks between Kenwood Parkway at the north; W. 22nd Street on the south; Hennepin Avenue on the east; and Morgan Avenue, Kenwood Park, and E. Lake of the Isles Parkway on the west.

What are Historic Contexts?

A historic context study provides a framework for evaluating historic resources relative to specific themes, time frames, and locations. In urban areas, context studies typically focus on themes such as real estate development, architects and builders, and economic and social characteristics. They are useful for many types of preservation planning, including local and National Register of Historic Places designation, and typically accompany or precede historic resources inventories and evaluation. This study focuses primarily on residential development. As in the Wedge neighborhood on the east side of Hennepin and in East Isles to the south, the history and significance of the Hennepin Avenue and W. Lake Street commercial corridors (Uptown) should be evaluated in a separate study focused on their larger pattern of commercial development. Previously completed local historic context studies, on file with the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission that are applicable to Lowry Hill, include “Street Railways, 1873-1954,” “Neighborhood Commercial Centers, 1885-1963,” and “South Minneapolis.”

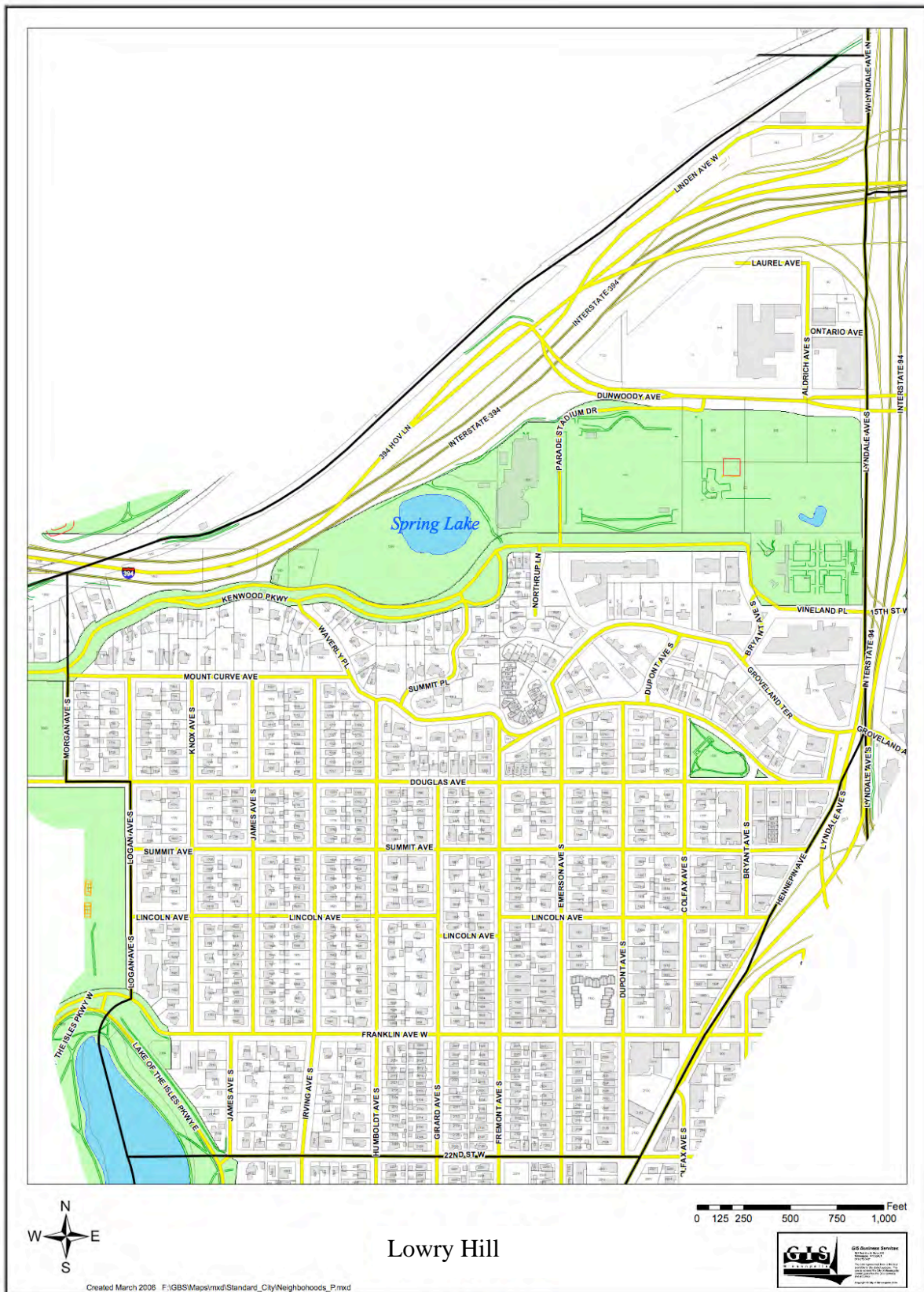
The context study is based primarily on historical research and does not involve an intensive architectural survey. In 2006, however, consultants Mead & Hunt conducted a separate historic resources survey of portions of the Lowry Hill and East Isles neighborhoods for the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. The inventory results contributed to the historic context recommendations in this report. Historic photographs from the Hennepin History Museum, Minnesota Historical Society, and Minneapolis Public Library illustrate most of the report. Where possible, captions note which properties have been razed.

Sources

Standard works on the early history of Minneapolis include John H. Stevens's *Personal Recollections of Minnesota and Its People and Early History of Minneapolis* (1890); Issac Atwater and John H. Stevens's *History of Minneapolis and Hennepin County* (1895); and Marion D. Shutter, *History of Minneapolis, Gateway to the Northwest* (1923). Sociologist Calvin F. Schmid's *Social Saga of the Twin Cities* analyzes Lowry Hill from sociological and economic perspectives. Theodore Wirth's *The Minneapolis Park System, 1883-1944* (1946); Board of Park Commissioners Annual Reports (1900-1950); Lanegran and Sandeen's *The Lake District of Minneapolis* (1979); Stephen Trimble's *In the Shadow of the City*; and Berlowe et al., *Reflections in Loring Pond* (1986) provide excellent information on aspects of the development of the Lowry Hill neighborhood.

The Hennepin History Museum's Confer Collection, Minneapolis Public Library Photo Collection, and Minnesota Historical Society Visual Archives contain many photographs of the area. Especially useful to the study of architects and builders are the annual neighborhood calendars published by Bob Glancy and JoAnn Hanson (1986-). Aerial views (ca. 1928-1950), studies conducted by the Minneapolis Planning Department (1964-2006), National Register of Historic Places nominations and inventory forms and other research files of the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission were also consulted.

Real estate sections of the *Minneapolis Journal*, particularly articles and advertisements for Lowry Hill lots, houses, and apartment buildings, were important in studying the rapid growth of the area after ca. 1895. The consultant reviewed U.S. Census of Population Schedules (1860-1930), Hennepin County and Minneapolis maps and atlases (ca. 1860-2000), City of Minneapolis building permits, Hennepin County property records, Minneapolis city directories (1875-1975), and the *Dual City Bluebook* (1885-1923).



Lowry Hill (City of Minneapolis, 2006)

Chapter 1

The Lowry Hill Landscape before Thomas Lowry: 1852-1874

Early White Settlement and Landscape Change

The neighborhoods comprising what is today known as the larger Calhoun-Isles area share a landscape of glacial lakes; the Kenwood, Lowry Hill, and Loring Hill neighborhoods are also united by the Lowry Hill landform. This long glacial moraine is shown on an 1839 map of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation as the “Devil’s Backbone,” situated north of a small island-studded lake. The ridge reaches from north of Cedar Lake to south of Loring Park. Near Hennepin Avenue, the north face of the ridge was once described as a wooded bluff that was “too steep to climb.”¹ An 1854 government survey map shows the marshy edges of Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles, and grass and marshland on the present-day Sculpture Garden and Parade. Lake of the Isles is separated from Lake Calhoun by a narrow isthmus.



L: Survey Map of T29R24W (1854); r: inlet between Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles, ca. 1875

Spring Lake—tucked below I-394 on Kenwood Parkway—had various early names, including Clark’s Lake and Huron Lake. Frank W. Wiltberger, who grew up on the site of the Basilica of St. Mary in the 1860s, remembered it as a “veritable hole in the ground, reaching into the bowels of the earth.”² Surveyors recorded four islands in Lake of the Isles in 1854 and 1858; the two southernmost islands were “elevated knolls protruding above the swamplands and shallow waters that then prevailed between Lakes of the Isles and Lake Calhoun.”³ By 1885, they were named Maples Islands and were owned by J. Pierce and Roswell P. Russell. Two larger islands at the north—named Raspberry and Mike’s—were also owned by Russell.⁴ Lowry Hill is within the Bassett Creek floodplain and the low-lying areas were subject to flooding. A swamp was also located in the vicinity of Emerson and Franklin Avenues, near the site of Douglas School erected in 1894.

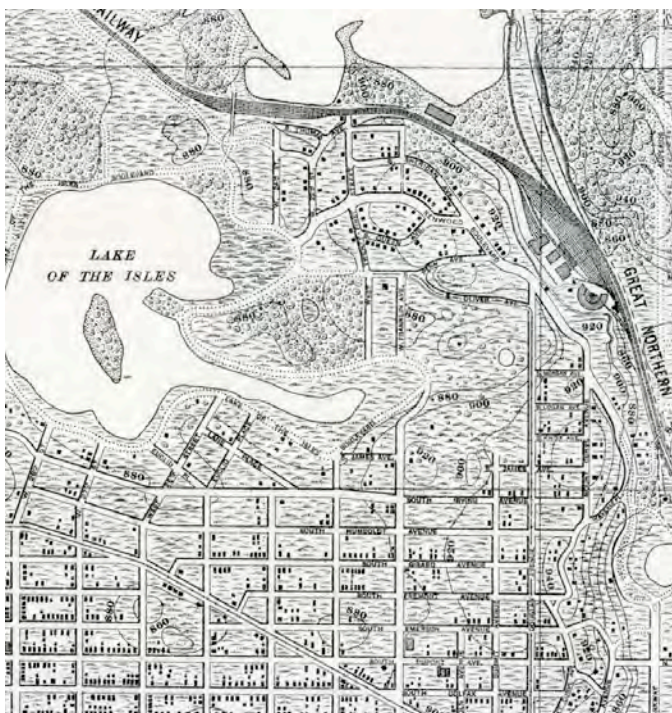


Lowry Hill (top left) on the Bird's-eye View of Minneapolis (1879)

Along its length, Lowry Hill was interrupted by several ravines, including those at Hennepin Avenue and Waverly Place. In 1854-57, the ravine at Hennepin Avenue was “partly filled and graded” for the military road built between Fort Ridgely (in present-day Renville County) and the Falls of St. Anthony.⁵

In 1851, the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux opened the land west of the Mississippi River to land claims, and the reduction of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation lands in 1852 invited permanent white settlement. While some claimants near the Falls of Saint Anthony quickly laid out blocks and lots with an eye toward quick sales in the new townsite of Minneapolis, the landscape of marshes, lakes, and prairie near present-day Hennepin Avenue supported farms. Before the treaty was ratified in 1852, some claimants obtained permits from the secretary of war to locate on the military reservation, but others were squatters.⁶

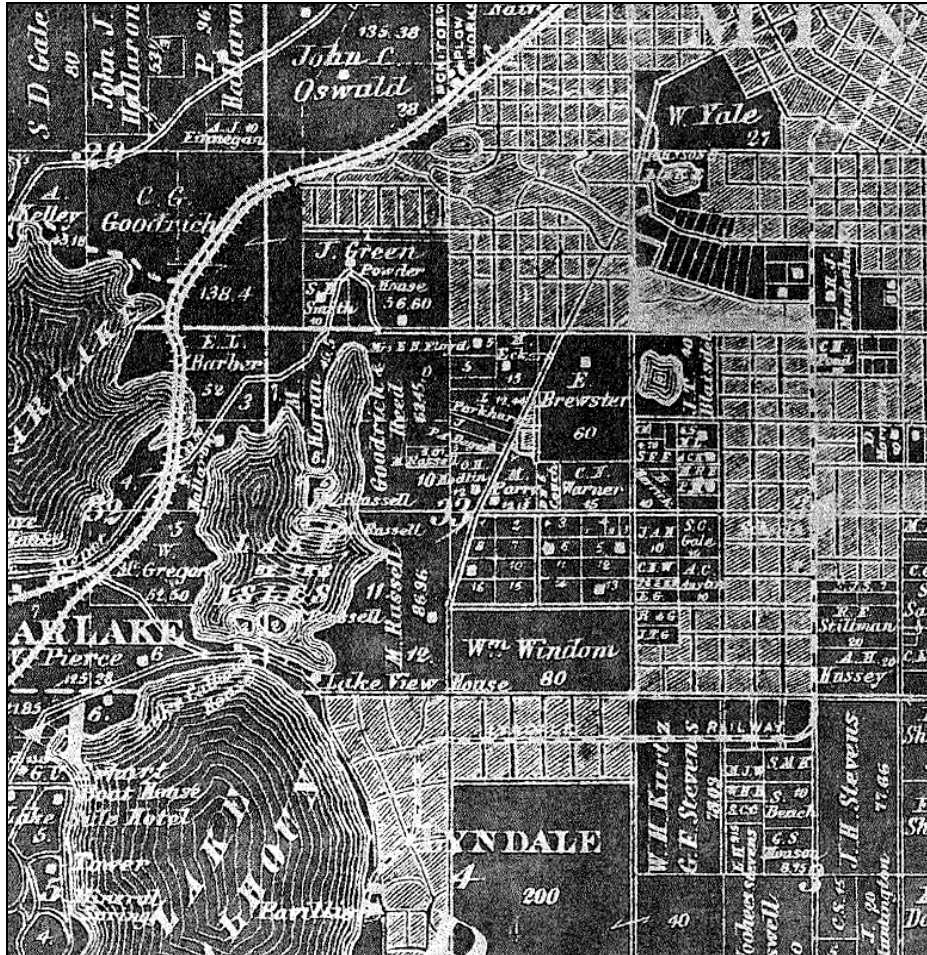
A few early residents reported on Native American presence in the area during the years after the treaty. In 1932, an early resident wrote about the story of Keg-o-ma-gosieg, who made annual treks back to the Loring Park area. According to the account, Waverly Place (off Mount Curve Avenue) may be part of an Indian trail shown on a map drawn by missionary Gideon Pond, and an Indian grave site was formerly located near Morgan and Mount Curve Avenues.⁷



Contour lines for Lowry Hill are shown at far right on the ca. 1900 Survey of the Mississippi River (Mississippi River Commission) N>

As Lowry Hill was graded for road and building construction in 1854-57 and again in 1870 and 1886, the soil was used to fill swamps around Spring Lake and around Johnson's Lake in present-day Loring Park. One observer described the hill before the 1886 grading "as steep as the roof of a house;" such steepness is suggested (although probably exaggerated) in an 1879 bird's-eye view.⁸ An 1895 topographical map (see page 9) shows the ridge that extends from Cedar Lake at the north to the vicinity of 22nd and Nicollet Avenue on the south; spot elevations vary from 880 to 920 feet. By the date of publication of the map, however, portions of the ridge had already been cut down for road and residential construction.

Agricultural Landscape



G. M. Warner, Map of Hennepin County, Minnesota (1879). John Green owned acreage north of Franklin, adjacent to the Goodrich property (Groveland Addition), which was formerly farmed by Denis Peters; R. P. Russell owned the land fronting Lake of the Isles along its southeastern shore; he also platted outlots south of W. 26th Street in the present-day Wedge neighborhood.

The boundaries of today's Lowry Hill and East Isles neighborhoods fell outside the Minneapolis corporate limits established in 1856. Expansion of the city limits in 1867 annexed a small portion of Lowry Hill north of Franklin Avenue and east of Girard Avenue S.⁹

In the mid-1850s, early industrialists were investing in property around the Falls of St. Anthony and developing the waterpower there, while farmers—some likely dreaming of future land sales—claimed

land in sections 28 and 33 of Minneapolis Township. Section 28 included the present-day Lowry Hill and Loring Park neighborhoods. Section 33 included East Isles and Wedge neighborhoods, extending along the length of the eastern shoreline of Lake of the Isles east to Lyndale Avenue, and south to present-day Lake Street. In 1883 remaining portions of Section 28 and Section 33 were annexed to the City of Minneapolis.¹⁰ Among early settlers with the greatest influence on the development of Lowry Hill and neighboring East Isles were Denis Peters, John Green, and Roswell P. Russell.

In 1854, Denis Peters, a native of Ireland, claimed 160 acres of land, including Lowry Hill between Kenwood Parkway and Franklin Avenue and from Lyndale to Humboldt Avenues. According to one witness, “Anyone wandering out into that dark, mountainous and swampy forest, or attempting to navigate the government road, might have seen his little, unpainted shanty occupying the site of the present Lowry House.”¹¹ In 1865, Peters sold part of his property, “described as rough, hilly, and swampy,” to Calvin C. Goodrich, then a resident of Ohio. In 1872 Goodrich sold a half-interest to his son-in-law, Thomas Lowry, for the platting of the Groveland Addition.¹²

Before the sale to Goodrich, Peters sold off at least one parcel of his property. In 1857, for example, he sold ten acres to J. H. Hart, who may have built the house that still stands at 1904 Girard Avenue S.¹³ Moving west, Peters next farmed in the Chanhassen Township with his wife Elizabeth and eight children.¹⁴

John Green (1816-unknown) was a native of New Brunswick. In 1851 he arrived in Minneapolis and pre-empted a claim extending from Penn Avenue on the west across the brow of Lowry Hill to Humboldt on the east, and south to Franklin Avenue.¹⁵ John and Mary Green had three children. The Green farmhouse was located in the vicinity of Knox and Franklin Avenues; Mary Green (1831-?) still lived at 1800 Franklin in 1900.¹⁶ The Green’s daughter Luella married real estate dealer N. H. Emmans. Emmans platted Green’s Additions (1898-1909), the last large parcel on Lowry Hill opened to development.¹⁷



Roswell P. Russell in ca. 1890

Roswell P. Russell (1820-1896) was a native of Vermont who arrived at Fort Snelling in 1839. Calling him “A pioneer of the pioneers” in 1893 Atwater noted that Russell was the “first white man, now surviving, who looked upon the falls of St. Anthony, in its almost pristine wilderness . . . and the first, who selecting a picturesque claim on one of the emerald lakes [of Minneapolis], still makes the place his home, though changed from the country farm to the center of a populous suburb.”¹⁸

In 1847 he opened St. Anthony's first store and was the Receiver for the U. S. Land Office from 1854 to 1857. He also owned flour and planing mills, served in the state legislature, and held City of Minneapolis offices.¹⁹ In 1851 Russell secured a claim extending from Lake of the Isles east to present-day Lyndale Avenue, and from W. 26th Street south to Lake Street. Russell's claim shanty, probably dating from ca. 1851, his ca. 1858 farmhouse, and his spacious mansard-roofed brick house (ca. 1873) were built at Hennepin Avenue and W. 28th Street (later the site of West High School, 1908).²⁰

In 1872, Russell platted Russell's Outlots. Located in the present-day Wedge neighborhood, this parcel was bounded by Hennepin and Lyndale Avenues on the west and east, and by W. 26th and Lake Streets on the north and south.²¹ The outlots were later sold to others and divided into building lots. On the west side of Hennepin, Russell subdivided part of his frontage as Russell's Addition (1879) and his shoreline property as Lake of the Isles Addition (1882). The Lake of the Isles Addition extended along the lake on the east to Humboldt Avenue on the west, and from Euclid Place on the south to Franklin Avenue on the north. It was platted in partnership with Thomas Lowry and others.²²

Lowry Hill and Lake of the Isles area farms in 1860 and 1870 were typical of small subsistence operations in Hennepin County. With their proximity to Minneapolis and St. Anthony, however, there were good opportunities to sell produce and butter in the urban market. Russell, for example, reported 110 improved acres and four milk cows in 1870. He owned four horses and produced 200 bushels of wheat and 900 bushels of rye. He also produced 350 pounds of butter. John Green reported 30 improved acres, one horse, and three milk cows. He grew 160 bushels of wheat and produced 250 pounds of butter.²³

By 1880, much of the tillable land along the eastern shore of Lake of the Isles was still devoted to agriculture although most of it was platted into residential additions existing primarily on paper. Hennepin Avenue was fronted by a few farmhouses as well the houses of carpenters, gardeners, and others. In addition to drivers of wagons loaded with goods and supplies of every description, among summer users of the heavily traveled road were vacationers en route to a group of new lakeside hotels on Lake Calhoun. A few Lowry Hill buildings, including 1904 Girard Avenue S., may remain from this short agricultural period.²⁴

Chapter 2

Thomas Lowry, Lowry Hill, and Minneapolis: 1872-1910



Thomas Lowry House, 2 Groveland Terrace, ca. 1880, looking northwest across what is now Walker Art Center and the Sculpture Garden. Marshland, grain elevators, and factories are in the background. The steep ridge shown in the foreground was graded in 1886.

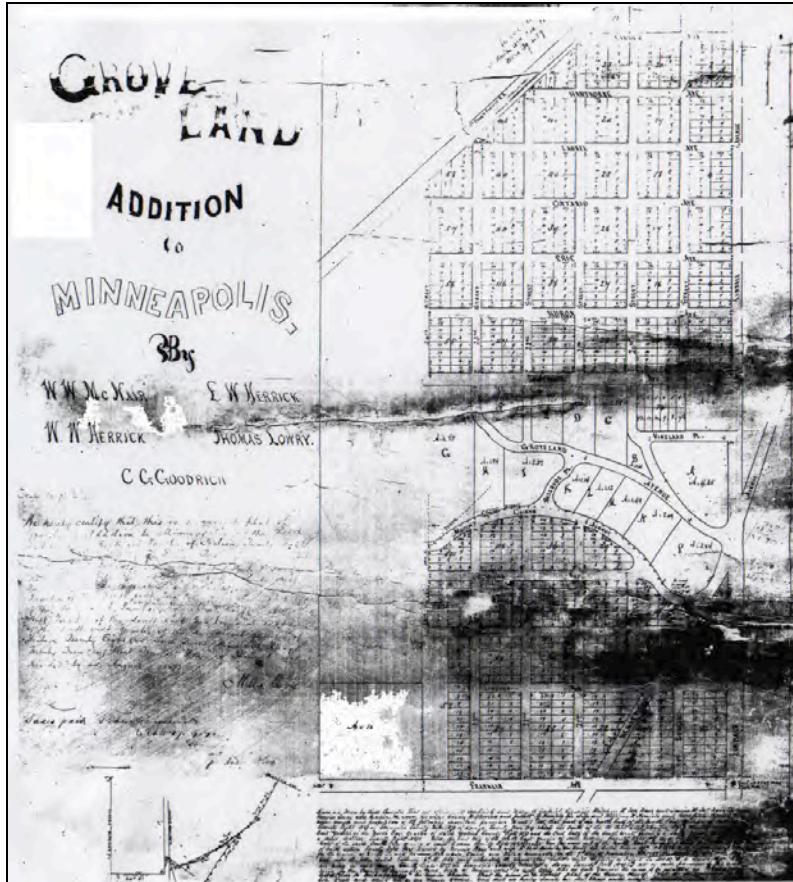
Thomas Lowry (1843-1909), a native of Illinois, arrived in Minneapolis in 1867. Trained as a lawyer, he soon turned to real estate and acquired extensive holdings across the city. Following their marriage in 1870, Thomas and Beatrice Goodrich Lowry resided in a \$5,000 house on Seventh Street near Third Avenue S. at the heart of the downtown residential district that generally did not yet extend south beyond Twelfth Street S. During this period Lowry was an investor in a variety of real estate ventures, including Lowry's Addition south of Franklin Avenue between Park and Portland and the South Side Addition near Minnehaha Avenue.²⁵ The South Side Addition near the shops of the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad (CM&StP) was platted in partnership with Dorilus Morrison, owner of the Minneapolis Harvester Company. Morrison was the owner of Villa Rosa (1858), a mansion at the rather remote location of 24th and Stevens Avenue.

Groveland Addition

In 1872, Lowry and his father-in-law, Calvin C. Goodrich M.D., attorney William W. McNair, and real estate dealers E. W. and W. W. Herrick platted 220 acres atop the steep ridge extending north to a low-lying, marshy area and the two-acre Spring Lake. It included 148 acres purchased by Goodrich from Denis Peters.²⁶

The 75-block Groveland Addition was bound by Lyndale on the east, Fremont on the west, Franklin on the south and the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad tracks on the north. The northern blocks reached into the edges of what then was central Minneapolis, and skirted the triangles that later constituted a series of Hennepin and Lyndale Avenue bottlenecks. Approximately 400 of the southern lots atop Lowry Hill were intended for the construction of high-value residences.²⁷ The low-lying land between Vineland

Place and present-day Dunwoody Boulevard was not suitable for immediate construction. Beginning in the 1870s, the blocks farthest to the north—including Superior, Ontario, Laurel, Hawthorne, and Linden—developed with a fairly dense combination of single-family houses, flats, apartment buildings, and the Laurel and Lafayette public schools, as well as industrial sites such as the cylindrical gas plant of the Minneapolis Gas Light Company.



Groveland Addition to Minneapolis, 1872 (Hennepin County Recorder)

On the bluff west of Hennepin, Lowry reserved about 16 lots of an acre or more each for villas set on landscaped grounds. At the time, however, some of these parcels were unbuildable because of the steep terrain.

In 1874 the Lowrys built a brick Second Empire Style mansion and barn on “Lot A,” a five-acre parcel on the corner of Hennepin and Groveland Terrace (2 Groveland Terrace). This property, “which was to make the area known as Lowry Hill,” included the present site of the Walker Art Center and the first Guthrie Theatre.²⁸ Attributed to architect Leroy S. Buffington (1847-1931), the richly decorated, steam-heated house contained a ballroom, an art gallery, a drawing room, and smoking rooms.²⁹ A mansard roof and five chimneys crowned its red brick exterior. Lowry’s property was then beyond the extension of just-developing city services such as sewer and water, and public transit was non-existent. In 1874 the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota* described the Groveland Addition’s promise:

“The beautiful Groveland Addition is rapidly becoming a most charming village in itself. The wide Hennepin Avenue, which passes through it, is firmly macadamized, and the spacious lots are fertile and prolific. . . . Those seeking delightful residence property should view this favored spot.”³⁰

Another early writer noted that the streets conformed “to the natural undulations of the surface and run in graceful curves.”³¹ While there was a scattering of expensive houses around Loring Park, and Roswell P. Russell’s fine brick house anchored the area near W. 28th Street and Hennepin, the Lowrys were pioneers. The Groveland Addition was platted just as the Minneapolis real estate industry was gaining steam in the decade after the Civil War, but the Panic of 1873 derailed it. In 1875, Lowry began advertising the residential lots, along with his other holdings.³²

Minneapolis Street Railway Company

During this period, the Minneapolis economy was in a “collapsed and discouraged condition,” and money was difficult to obtain.³³ Lowry nevertheless concentrated on developing his interest in his streetcar company, which soon added great value to his real estate investments. In 1875, he organized the Minneapolis Street Railway Company with William S. King, a resident of Nicollet Island and the owner of extensive property near Lake Harriet.³⁴ The company’s first horsecar route ran from Bridge Square to the University of Minnesota, and despite a low profit margin, Lowry worked to extend the system ahead of the real estate development. Another route ran from Plymouth Avenue, along Washington Avenue to 12th Avenue S. and along Nicollet Avenue, then south to Franklin Avenue. Despite the slow and uncomfortable service, one witness noted the car line bound together the “east and west divisions of the city” and suggested “what might be towards furnishing the people with transportation.”³⁵

By 1876, the horsecar line was extended south of downtown along Lyndale Avenue, with a short spur turning west at W. 27th Street to a car barn at the northwest corner of Dupont Avenue S.³⁶ Nearby, in 1879, a short-lived, steam-powered “motor line” (the Lyndale Railway Co., later renamed the Minneapolis, Lyndale, & Minnetonka Railway Co.), was run down Nicollet Avenue to W. 31st Street and west to Lake Calhoun to serve several summer hotels.

The Residential Context

Residential development in Lowry Hill and East Isles began just as private investment in a transit system was being organized and as mill and factory owners, bankers, and other business owners as well as laborers were moving toward the edges of the central city. Until the 1870s, some the city’s earliest neighborhoods near the Falls of St. Anthony on both sides of the river housed both wealthy mill and factory owners and their employees in fairly close proximity. Few of the city’s elite lived at much distance from the central city.³⁷ As commercial and industrial growth crowded residential quarters after the Civil War, however, their houses were rapidly converted to multiple-family units or replaced by commercial buildings.³⁸



L: Bridge Square (Hennepin at Nicollet Avenues), ca. 1882; r: a downtown residential district: 7th Street at 3rd Avenue S, ca. 1875

During the 1880s, great wealth amassed from the development of the region's natural resources, including waterpower, timber, and minerals, and from related manufacturing. In this decade, one author noted, "Never before had so many Minneapolitans had so much money."³⁹ The city's elite residential areas were generally located in the vicinity of 10th Street S. and along Harmon Place, along Hennepin Avenue to about 12th Street S., in a small enclave on Nicollet Island, along Park Avenue, around Fair Oaks Park near Nicollet and Franklin Avenues, and in southeast Minneapolis along and around Fifth Street S.E.⁴⁰ The new curvilinear streets on the south side of Loring Park also drew the builders of expensive dwellings.⁴¹

Early Years on Lowry Hill: ca. 1872-1892

About a year after Groveland Terrace was platted, architect Franklin B. Long (1842-1912), built an Italianate Style house at 41 Groveland Terrace, then Lot L just west of Lowry's Lot A.⁴² In about 1890, the building was extensively remodeled with new wings, including one with a prominent Romanesque arch that sheltered a carriage drive. In the 1890s, Long and his son Louis—in partnerships or independently—authored nine houses on Groveland Terrace, including No. 25 where Long also briefly resided, and at least 15 others on Lowry Hill and in East Isles.⁴³



F. B. Long House after remodeling in ca. 1890 (razed); r: H. B. Beard (right) and J. D. Blake (left) houses, ca. 1890 (razed)

Up the hill on Mount Curve lots, a few frame houses were constructed before Henry Beach Beard built his now-razed, red-brick Queen Anne Style house at 1106 Mount Curve in 1884. Situated mid-block between Groveland Terrace and Dupont Avenue S. (then Hillside), the building featured broad, spindled porches and balconies and a prominent corner tourelle. Along with Thomas Lowry's and J. D. Blake's, the house was featured in *Minneapolis Illustrated* (1889).⁴⁴

Beard (1843-unknown) was a native of Connecticut and a Yale graduate. He began his career as a minister but was employed in insurance and real estate upon his arrival in Minnesota in 1869. Beard's investments in the Summit Park Addition (1878) and Beard's Subdivision (1880) extended the length of Mount Curve Avenue to the west as far as Humboldt Avenue. According to one account, Beard "graded Mount Curve at his own expense."⁴⁵ Beard, like Thomas Lowry, also developed real estate near the city's factories. He platted New Boston near Lowry and Central Avenues for the construction of homes for factory managers and workers in the industrial district of East Minneapolis and secured an extension of the Lowry's street railway up Central Avenue for the benefit of the development.⁴⁶ John D. Blake,

another East Minneapolis real estate dealer, erected a brick house next door to Beard's, also in 1884.⁴⁷ Blake's Kasota stone house was enlivened by balconies offering views of the new Central (Loring) Park and Minneapolis.

Each building project and new street opening involved the cutting and filling of Lowry Hill. In addition to this incremental reshaping, in 1886 Thomas Lowry financed a final regrading of the slope, with the fill deposited on the low-lying ground of the present Sculpture Garden and surrounding area.



Cutting down Lowry Hill, reportedly in 1886

The 1880 census suggests that Albee Smith, a lawyer, and John Gluck, a merchant tailor, also built large houses on or near Lowry Hill within a few years of Lowry and Long. By 1885 there were about 30 houses east of Humboldt Avenue S. between Groveland Terrace and Franklin Avenue. City directories list those of John Speedy, proprietor of the Speedy & Company wallpaper firm, at 1724 Colfax (by 1882), and William C. Cheney, an insurance dealer, at 1776 Fremont (by 1882). Lawyer Edgar Twitchell was at 1910 Fremont; Holman R. Drew, a real estate dealer, at Girard and Summit; Nathan A. Cooper, proprietor of the Minneapolis Carriage Works, at 1828 Girard; Rufus D. Young, a real estate dealer, at 1902 Girard; and shirt maker C.A. Langley at 1715 Irving Avenue. (House numbers may not correspond to those of today.)

By 1889, new arrivals on Mount Curve Avenue included lawyer Millard F. Bowen who purchased lots in the Summit Park Addition. He built a shingled house perched on a tall stone foundation at 1413 Mount Curve in the Summit Park Addition that was featured in the *Northwest Builder and Decorator*.⁴⁸ The lack of public transportation to downtown Minneapolis was not an obstacle to these builders, since most of them probably owned private carriages and one—Nathan A. Cooper—was a carriage manufacturer.

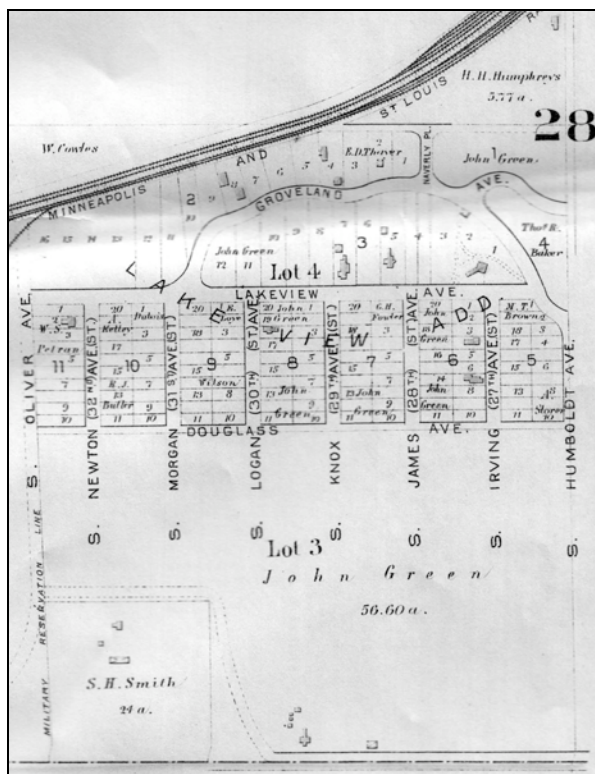


M. F. Bowen House, 1413 Mount Curve, in 1889 (razed)

With their mansard roofs and overscaled trim, some of the houses of the 1880s increasingly appeared old fashioned, but the smooth shingled surfaces of the Bowen and some other houses acknowledged new ideas. Around Loring Park and Fair Oaks and on Harmon Place and Park Avenue, weighty masonry mansions with low-sprung arches and broad roofs were built for people whose new fortunes demanded a new scale. In 1887, for example, Henry Welles (1821-1898), a sawmill owner and the first mayor of St. Anthony, completed a 20-room Richardsonian Romanesque Revival mansion and elaborate carriage house at 1731 Hennepin. Designed by W.D. Kimball, the buildings were placed just south of Thomas Lowry's property on Hennepin Avenue.⁴⁹ Some of the houses were furnished with the latest technology such as electrical wiring, although service was not yet available in that part of the city.⁵⁰ The Lowry Hill builders were typically "early acquirers;" by the turn of the century some of the city's first electric cars were parked in carriage driveways.

West of Humboldt as far as Newton Avenue, the Lakeview Addition had only about 11 houses including three on Groveland Terrace and three on Lakeview Avenue (Mount Curve). John Green still owned 56 unplatted acres between Franklin and Douglas Avenues. During this period the edges of Lowry Hill were still devoted to farming. In 1880, the agricultural community still included the family of John and Mary Green, their 17-year-old daughter Luella, and a farm laborer and his family who lived with the Greens. The farmhouse appears to have been near Franklin and Knox Avenues. Other nearby farmers recorded by the 1880 census included Frederic Peterson, a Danish-born dairyman, and Martin Eckes, a Prussian gardener.⁵¹

For those on and near the western edge of the bluff in the Lakeview Addition, the vista from Lowry Hill included other neighbors at the base of the hill near the Minneapolis and St. Louis railroad shops. In 1880, the view encompassed about 40 railroad workers housed in shanties. Most of the men were ages 18-30, and native born, but a few were natives of Scotland, Ireland, or Finland.⁵² Over the next decade, in addition to the Monitor Plow Works (ca. 1875) and Minneapolis Elevator Company Elevator A (1879), a slaughterhouse and lumber sheds were also part of the vista.

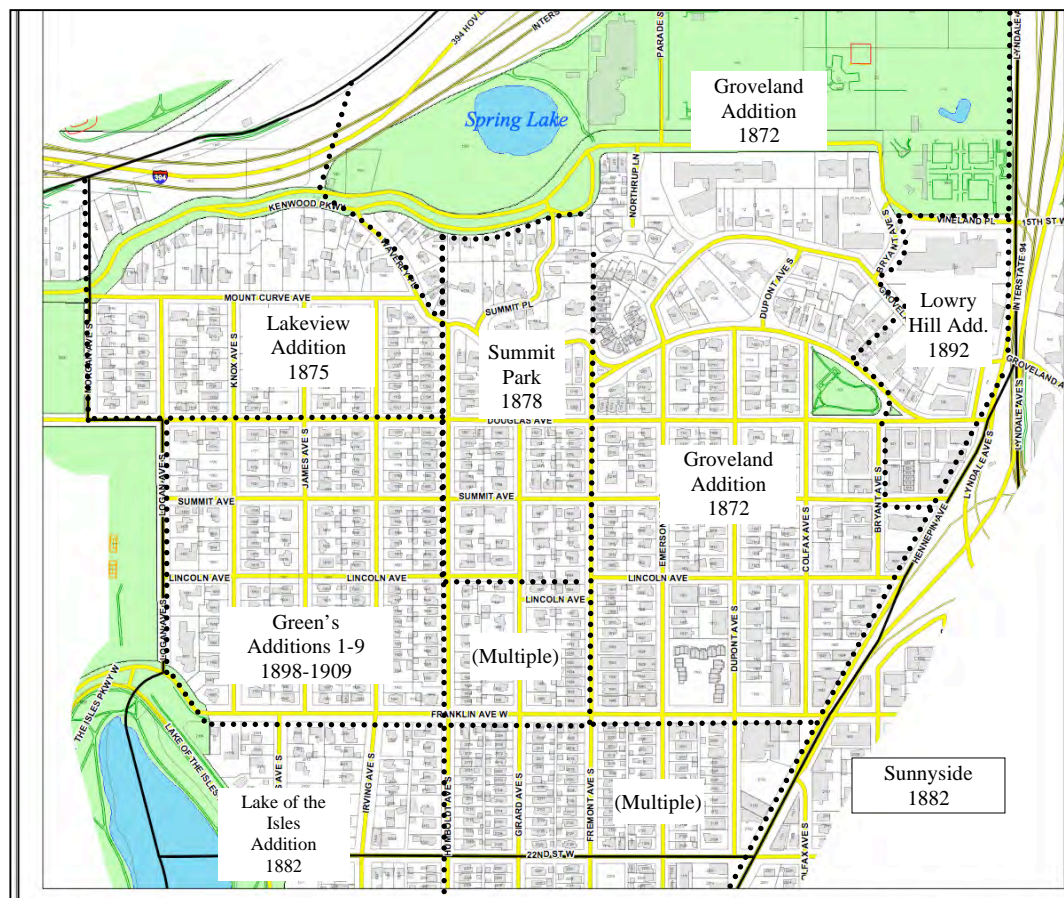


Lakeview (Mount Curve) Avenue and the Lakeview Addition in 1885 (Complete Set of Surveys and Plats of Properties in the City of Minneapolis, Minn.)

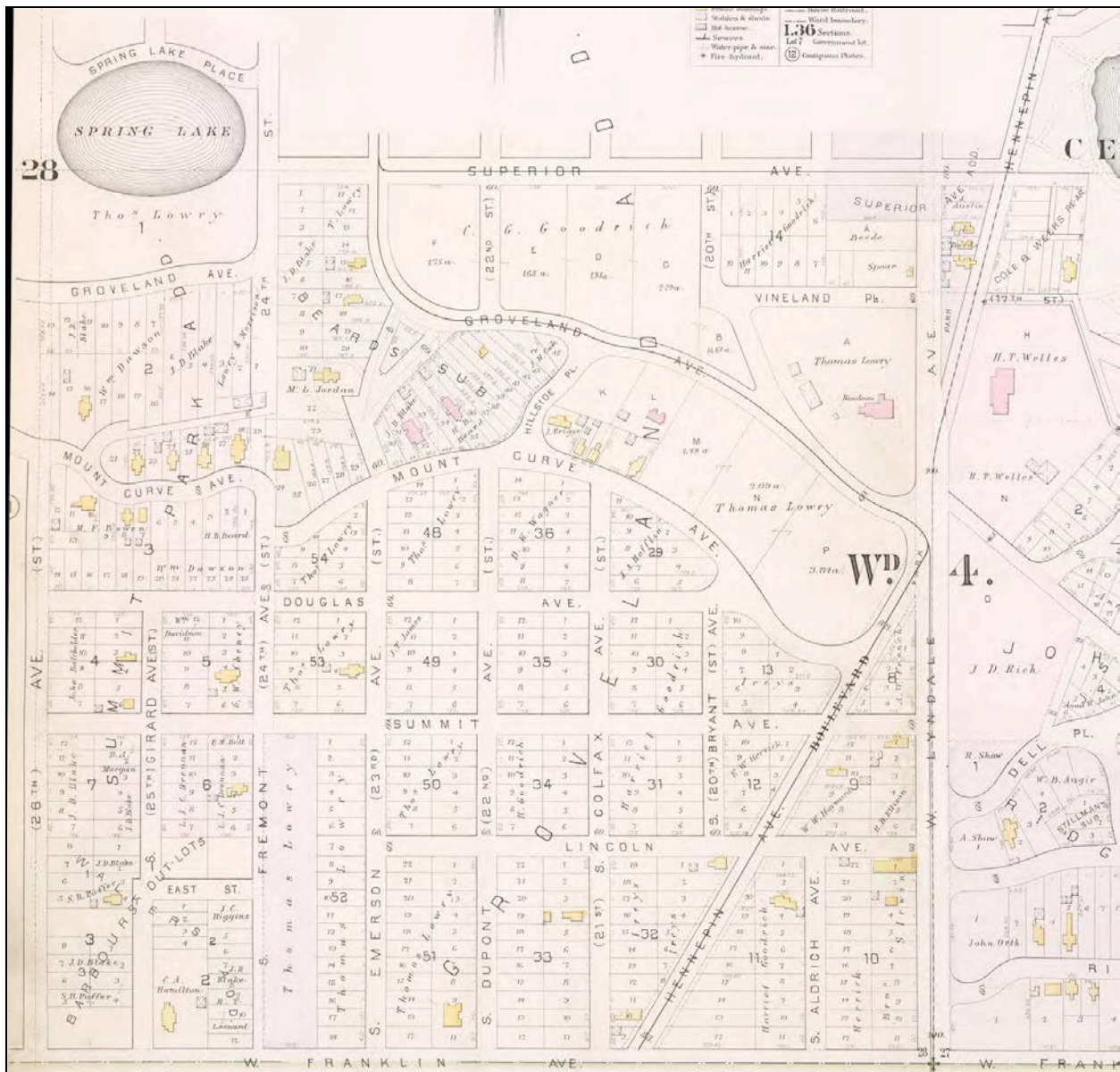
Lowry Hill Additions and Subdivisions

By the mid-1880s, much of the future residential template was established for Lowry Hill between Spring Lake and Franklin Avenue, although relatively few streets were open or houses yet built. In 1875, civil engineer George B. Wright platted the three-block Spring Lake Addition. It featured Spring Lake Place, which curved around the small lake's northern edge. The next additions involved extensions of Mount Curve: Lakeview (1875) extended between Humboldt and Oliver Avenues and included the important crest of Lowry Hill west of Humboldt, as well as the low-lying area along the railroad tracks. Lakeview was platted by Hastings miller Walter C. Cowles and Polk County miller F. C. Penney. Summit Park (1878) was situated between the Groveland and Lakeview Additions, and was platted by Henry Beard on land purchased from Thomas Lowry and Calvin C. Goodrich. Beard also platted Beard's Subdivision (1880), which divided three large parcels of the Groveland Addition into narrow lots. Green's Addition (plats 2 through 9) were laid out between 1898 and 1909 by N. H. Emmans. Most of these additions north of Franklin Avenue offered 50-foot lots set on 60-foot streets. Developers who gave their new plats attractive names sometimes created lingering place names. Around 1900, for example, city directories listed the address of some Girard Avenue residents as Summit Park.

South of Franklin, with the exception of the Lake of the Isles Addition (1882), streets were narrower and many of the lots were smaller than those to the north. The Martin Eckes farm became Anderson, Douglas and Company's Second Addition in 1887; the plat provided 40-foot lots on 50-foot-wide Emerson and Fremont Avenues.



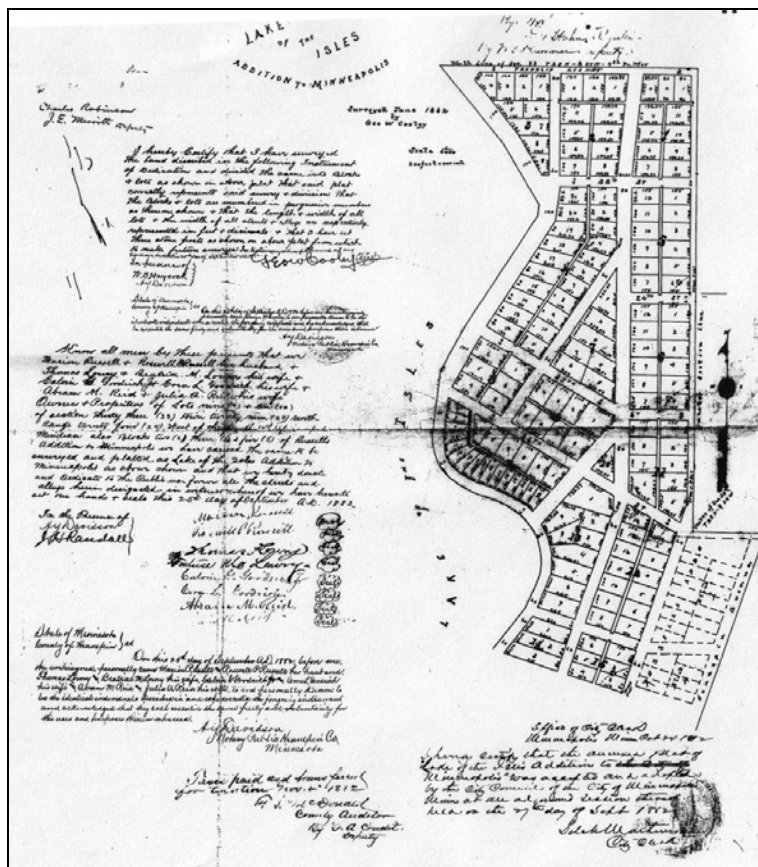
Map of Additions and Subdivisions in Lowry Hill, ca. 1872-1895. Approximate boundaries are shown; see 1885, 1903, and 1914 maps for rearrangements and other additions and subdivisions. (Map base: City of Minneapolis, 2006).



Lowry Hill north of Franklin and east of Humboldt (shown as 26th Ave.) in 1885. Masonry houses are shown in pink and include those belonging to Lowry, Long, Beard, and Blake on Mount Curve. (Complete Set of Surveys and Plats of Properties in the City of Minneapolis, Minn.)

East Isles Additions and Subdivisions

Below W. 22nd Street, residential development for East Isles during the same period existed primarily on paper. In 1882 Roswell P. Russell laid out the Lake of the Isles Addition with Thomas Lowry, Calvin G. Goodrich, and shoe manufacturer Abram M. Reid. Most of the lots on each of the 16 blocks had 100-foot frontage. Three years later there were only five houses erected among its 16 blocks, and a total of about 15 houses and farmhouses across all of the area south of Franklin Avenue. There were only six houses along the Isles shoreline by 1892, including one at 2647 E. Lake of the Isles Parkway. Russell's 15-person household near 28th and Hennepin comprised a good percentage of the area's total population. In addition to 60-year-old Roswell and Marion, his 50-year-old wife, eight of their children age 9-29 were in residence. The oldest were employed in their father's flour mill and in farming. Three farm laborers were among household boarders.⁵³



Lake of the Isles Addition, 1875 (Hennepin County Recorder)

In 1879-1881, tracks for the westward route of the Hastings and Dakota Division of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad (CM&StP) were laid along 29th Street. In 1884 portions of Lake of the Isles shoreline where the railroad tracks crossed a small inlet between the lakes were filled.⁵⁴ The filling absorbed two small hillocks along the shoreline that once comprised two of the lake's four islands. This construction occurred at the same time the Minneapolis Park Board was working with landscape designer H.W.S. Cleveland on parkway plans, including those for Lake of the Isles. Rail construction brought dangerous grade crossings as well as industry to the blocks between the lake and Hennepin Avenue. A solution was not achieved until 1912, when a grade-separation project that extended for nearly three miles was undertaken, and by construction of The Mall between Hennepin Avenue and Lake of the Isles Parkway.



East Isles in 1885 (Complete Set of Surveys and Plats of Properties in the City of Minneapolis, Minn.)

Lowry Hill and the Minneapolis Park Board



Unidentified portion of E. Lake of the Isles Boulevard, ca. 1910

The rapid progress of the operations and greatly improved appearance of the park, after completion of the grading and landscaping of the filled low lands and the raising of the roadway, brought about an immediate response in building operations on adjacent residential properties, and a corresponding increase in real estate values throughout the entire district.

Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System* ⁵⁵

Sale of all of the Groveland Addition lots would take years, but there were few obstacles to its eventual success. The addition's proximity to downtown and its upland location were selling points enhanced in the 1880s by the Minneapolis Park Board's purchase and improvement of Central (Loring) Park, and the purchase or acquisition of land for Lake of the Isles and Kenwood Boulevards (later renamed Parkways). The acquisition and development of Hennepin Avenue as a boulevard between Central Park and Lake Street and the extension of electric streetcar lines along Hennepin and Douglas Avenues in 1890 was also critical.

The Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners was created in 1883 following about 20 years of discussion and consultation from landscape designers, most notably H.W.S. Cleveland (1814-1904). Park board members included the city's leading industrialists, including John S. Pillsbury, William W. Eastman, and Henry T. Welles, with Charles M. Loring as president between 1883 and 1891 and again in 1893-1894. Over the next decades various Lowry Hill residents would serve on the board.⁵⁶ The park board immediately promoted the ideas advanced by Cleveland for a citywide system of boulevards, parks, and parkways linking the Mississippi and Lakes Calhoun and Harriet as well as the small lake in Central (Loring) Park.⁵⁷ The emphasis was on a system, "rather than an acquisition of scattered and unrelated public grounds."⁵⁸ The initial plan was immediately expanded to include Lake of the Isles.

Land acquisition and park development began soon after the creation of the park board. In 1884, improvements to Johnson's Lake in Central (Loring) Park and surrounding parkland were completed. This was the first of the city's lakes to be dredged, and the shoreline was expanded and deepened.⁵⁹ In 1883, Harmon Place and 15th Street on the north side of the park were also improved as Central Park Boulevard.⁶⁰ These improvements encouraged residential development around the park, and also on adjacent Lowry Hill. Landscape designer H.W.S. Cleveland continued to consult with the park board until

the mid-1890s, when Warren H. Manning (1866-1939) of Cambridge, Massachusetts, provided consultation until 1906, when Theodore Wirth (1863-1949) began his tenure as superintendent.



The streetcar on Hennepin at Colfax Ave. S., looking south, in ca. 1895

Hennepin Avenue Boulevard: 1883-1906

Construction of the territorial road in 1854-55 along the approximate route of present-day Hennepin Avenue involved cutting down part of Lowry Hill. This primary route was improved in ca. 1874 with a “major grading project” that removed the crest of the hill, and again in 1886.⁶¹

When the Board of Park Commissioners acquired the avenue in 1883 as Hennepin Avenue Boulevard, it immediately began to pave and widen it to 66 feet between Loring Park and Lake Street, making it one of the best streets in the city.⁶² Electric streetcar service was extended south along Hennepin Avenue in 1890, and west on Douglas Avenue and around the northern tip of the lake to Penn Avenue and the intersection of the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad.⁶³

After the arrival of the streetcar, the two blocks of Hennepin Avenue lots between W. 27th and 28th Streets divided by Roswell P. Russell in 1879 were developed with substantial houses. Brewster’s Addition, laid out in 1884 between W. 21st and W. 22nd Streets, and two parcels south of W. 24th Street also became the site of new middle-class houses. Before the streetcar, the west side of Hennepin Avenue between Loring Park and Franklin was interrupted only by a scattering of houses between those of Thomas Lowry and Russell.⁶⁴

Hennepin’s intersection with Lyndale Avenue was formally marked by the .16-acre Virginia Triangle, opposite Douglas Avenue in front of the Virginia Flats, and above Vineland Place by the .16-acre Lowry Triangle. The tree-lined and landscaped boulevard became “the chief avenue for pleasure driving from the center of the city to the Lake District.”⁶⁵ The 1892 Minnesota Supreme Court, however, ruled that the park board had no right to exclude any vehicle from a street that was laid out and used before its designation as a parkway.⁶⁶ Teamsters had long traveled Hennepin, and the ruling allowed them to continue. By 1906, heavy traffic volume led to decommissioning to a city street, despite citizen protest.⁶⁷ Board president Charles M. Loring lamented that signs of wear were beginning to appear on the street,

and that “droves of cattle have been driven over it . . . and the expensive landscaping is being trampled and ruined.”⁶⁸



E. Lake of the Isles Parkway construction in 1909

E. Lake of the Isles Boulevard (Parkway)

H.W.S. Cleveland’s recommendations to the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners in 1883 did not include Lake of the Isles, which was then a shallow, marshy body of water. Discussion of a parkway around the lake began in 1883, however, and in 1885 the board developed a plan for a 3.57-mile parkway. Property acquisition, including two islands, was completed in 1887.⁶⁹ Parkway construction along the low-lying south shoreline began immediately and was followed by three years of dredging completed in 1893. This operation resulted in “dredging of the north end of the lake to a uniform depth, the partial extension of the water area towards Franklin Avenue, and the creation of about 4.5 acres of shoreline along the swampy east shore.”⁷⁰ Within a few years, Isles nevertheless became a “pool of stagnant water, grown with weeds and lily pads.”⁷¹ Another round of lake improvement that involved extensive filling and dredging was conducted between 1908 and 1911. The result was a raised roadway that was not susceptible to flooding, the addition of about 20 acres of water area, and filling and draining to produce “80 acres of attractive, well-landscaped park area.”⁷² The two islands were enlarged with fill, and the north island was extended to the south approximately 285 feet.⁷³

In 1892 a parcel between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun was purchased from the Joseph Dean estate. This acquisition enabled a future parkway connection to Lake Calhoun as well as a channel between the lakes.⁷⁴ The board also opened 24th Street to link E. Lake of the Isles and Hennepin Avenue boulevards.

The park board thus ensured the success of the early real estate investment along Lake of the Isles and on Lowry Hill. According to a local realtor, building lots facing Lake of the Isles increased in value between 100 and 500 percent after draining, filling, and parkway construction.⁷⁵



L: Kenwood Parkway at Mount Curve Avenue, ca. 1895; r: Spring Lake in 1892 (C.M. Foote Atlas of Minneapolis)

Kenwood Parkway

Planning for Kenwood Parkway began in 1885, when the park board surveyed a parkway from Hennepin Avenue to Lake of the Isles. In 1888, abutting property owners donated land along the proposed boulevard and paid for its improvement to boulevard status.⁷⁶ About one half-mile was graded and graveled by 1888, and most boulevard construction was completed in 1889.⁷⁷ Residential construction along the Lowry Hill portion of the parkway was encouraged by improvement of the Parade.

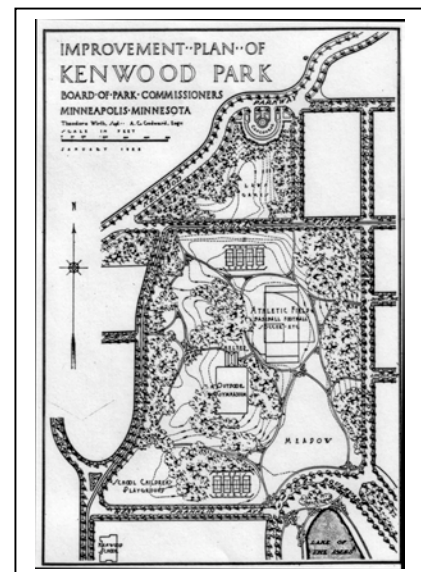
Spring Lake and the Early Parade

In 1893, the Board of Park Commissioners acquired a tract of approximately ten acres south of Spring Lake; the area was described as “low unkempt swampland” that required filling, grading, and seeding.⁷⁸ By 1892, the western edge of Spring Lake was built up with the Monitor Plow Works, a stoneworks, and a planing mill. Most of the adjacent low-lying area in the Groveland Addition was never developed, and in 1903 Lowry and W. H. Dunwoody deeded additional acreage. Warren H. Manning prepared a plan for a landscaped “Kenwood Valley,” and Hiata Park was established on a narrow slice of land south of the lake along Kenwood Parkway.⁷⁹ This property, which became the “Parade,” would eventually include about 65 acres; in 1946 the early property acquisition was called a “master stroke” because of the Parade’s central location and use for many types of recreational activities. Parade improvement preserved views from Lowry Hill across Loring Park to the downtown skyline.⁸⁰

Kenwood Park

In April 1904 it was reported that about “two hundred and fifty loads of ashes, street sweeping and other refuse are being thrown every day into the swamp included in the new recreation park site presented by Thomas Lowry.” Additional clean soil was obtained by “cutting down one of the oak-covered knolls which interferes with the plans for the park.”⁸¹ This was the nucleus of 32-acre Kenwood Park developed at the western edge of Lowry Hill 1928 to 1930.⁸²

R: *Improvement Plan of Kenwood Park, 1922*
(Board of Park Commissioners)



The Lowry Hill Boom: 1892-1910

New York has her Fifth Avenue, Cleveland has her Euclid, and Chicago her Ashland Boulevard, but Minneapolis has her Park and Portland and Kenwood and Lowry Hill . . .

Art Glimpses of Minneapolis: The City of Homes (1898) ⁸³

An important movement in Groveland Addition property is noted in the sale of Mrs. F. P. Wilson and Mrs. Herrick of 28 lots back of Douglas School. Purchased by T. Lowry, the lots were sold for \$20,000. Dealers predict many more Groveland sales, and a “building boom of immense proportions” next season.

Minneapolis Journal, 4 February, 1901

During the 20 years between the Groveland Addition of 1872 and the Lowry Hill Addition of 1892, Minneapolis grew to more than 165,000 residents to rank 18th among American cities in size.⁸⁴ About 37 percent of the population was foreign born. New infrastructure accompanied population growth: the first sewer line was laid on Washington Avenue in 1871, and the Northwestern Telephone Company offered early, limited service in 1878. Gas lighting, along with electrical service, did not advance until the early 1880s. Annexations in 1883 and 1887 expanded the city’s total area from 24 to 53 square miles.⁸⁵



Looking down Third Street in 1906

By 1900 Minneapolis was the world’s largest wheat and flour market, and these industries generated hundreds of subsidiary industries and occupations. In 1899, 600 million feet of lumber were cut in the city’s sawmills, and 20 railroad lines maintained terminals.⁸⁶ At the turn of the century, downtown Minneapolis shed its first and second generation of buildings and grew into a dense zone of masonry structures. Minneapolis promoted itself as a “City of Homes,” as did many other growing cities. Civic organizations and real estate companies advertised the importance of home ownership not just for the wealthy but for all classes. The above quote from *Art Glimpses of Minneapolis* went on to note: “it is not so much in the magnificence of the few homes that Minneapolis is distinctive, as in the comfort of the many.” Headlines constantly reminded readers of the growth and prosperity of the city. Regardless of the cycle of real estate highs and lows, real estate sections in the *Minneapolis Journal* sought to build confidence in the city’s real estate future. One writer characterized the years following the 1893 Panic as a “time of sound development.”⁸⁷ Exponential growth leveled off between 1890 and 1900, when the population reached 202,000. While the housing market sometimes flagged in other parts of the city, the city’s prominent millers, lumber company and manufacturing executives, and bankers steadily created a district of fine houses on Lowry Hill and along Lake of the Isles.

For Lowry Hill, the extension of the electric streetcar along Hennepin Boulevard in 1890 and the westward line to Kenwood along Douglas Avenue were critical in attracting homebuilders beyond downtown. Many lots and houses, especially those along the bluff, were marketed to the wealthiest class of builders, but there was also much boosterism for lots west of Franklin including the Sunnyside Addition (in today's Wedge neighborhood). This area's builders were largely in management and professional occupations that were part of a growing Minneapolis middle class.⁸⁸

The growth of the real estate industry in Minneapolis and St. Paul mirrored that in many other cities. Real estate dealers were among the strongest voices for civic improvement and the effort to increase home ownership. Real estate dealers such as Edmund G. Walton filled the real estate sections with practical advice on home ownership and finance. Realtors sought to professionalize the industry by creating national and local boards; the Minneapolis Real Estate Board was organized in 1892.⁸⁹ By 1904, the *Minneapolis Journal* noted that “the organization has steadily grown in influence until now it has reached the point that it is a strong factor in municipal improvement matters as well as the real estate market.”⁹⁰

Thomas Lowry died in 1909 and was mourned as the “foremost citizen of Minneapolis.”⁹¹ His death occurred at the end of 30 years of construction that had filled many of the lots on Lowry Hill. Between 1910 and 1920, fewer single-family houses were built than during the previous decade, and a number of apartment buildings were completed along and near Hennepin Avenue. During the Great Depression, some grand residences, including Lowry's, were razed because they were regarded as obsolete and of no interest to prospective buyers.

Lowry Hill's New Villas: the 1890s



Entrance to Lowry Hill. Orff and Joralemon, architects

Although laid out 20 years before, Lowry Hill lots were not fully opened to public sale until the mid-1890s, and sales had to weather the lingering effects of the Panic of 1893. The lots were marketed at prices and “on terms that would appeal only to the best class of home builders.”⁹² This project was directed in part by realtor Edmund G. Walton, who later marketed Thomas Lowry's properties in the industrial suburb of Columbia Heights.

The new houses on Lowry Hill received much attention in newspapers and periodicals and in a few promotional photo books. In 1893, the *Northwestern Architect* displayed a drawing of an entrance to Lowry Hill, prepared by architects Orff and Joralemon.⁹³ Business sections of the *Minneapolis Journal* often showed the new houses just completed on Lowry Hill, including those for a new generation of young businessmen. On May 26, 1894, the *Journal* featured the \$15,000 Groveland Terrace house of Stephen C. Tooker. Designed by Orff and Joralemon, the multi-towered building was described as “Chateausque.” Tooker (1860-1940) was a wholesale commission grocer and later the president of the

Tooker Storage and Forwarding Company. The design was also featured in *Architect, Builder, and Decorator* in July 1894. By 1900, four servants assisted Stephen and Clara Tooker and their two children, age ten and three. In 1930, the Tookers were residents of Pasadena, California.



L: Stephen C. Tooker House, as illustrated in 1894; r: W. S. Nott (left) and L.K Hull (W. L. Donaldson) houses, 15 and 21 Groveland Terrace, ca. 1904

Lowry's and the other early houses of Groveland Terrace and Mount Curve were somewhat upstaged by a group of new houses such as Tooker's. These buildings, highly visible to all passing on Hennepin Avenue, announced the next wave of construction on Lowry Hill. Some of the new houses on Groveland Terrace and Mount Curve, including those designed by Franklin B. Long (with or without his son Louis and Frederick Kees), were weighty Richardsonian Romanesque designs, including the William Nott House at 15 Groveland Terrace (1892). William Nott (1854-1923) was a native of New York and the president of W. S. Nott and Company, manufacturers of leather and rubber goods, and the Nott Fire Engine Company. His neighbor at 21 Groveland, W. L. Donaldson, was one of the city's leading department store owners. After Donaldson's death in 1897, Louis K. Hull, an attorney, moved to 21 Groveland from a rented house at 1225 Hawthorne Avenue.

The leading promoter of Lowry Hill lots and houses was Edmund G. Walton (1865-1919). Walton was a native of London who arrived in Minneapolis in 1890 at age 25. He founded the Edmund G. Walton Agency and became the dealer for much of Thomas Lowry's real estate, including Lowry Hill and Columbia Heights. He also developed Walton Park and Seven Oaks Additions in Minneapolis and published *Walton's Home Builder*, which encouraged working-class home ownership.

Edmund and Nell Walton, who had previously lived at 93 Spruce Street at the northern end of the Groveland Addition, built 802 Mount Curve in 1893. Called Grey Court and designed by architects Orff and Joralemon, the picturesque English-inspired exterior concealed a richly detailed interior by John S. Bradstreet of Minneapolis. The building was surrounded by gardens (see cover) sloping down the hill toward Groveland Avenue. The often-photographed Walton House was exemplary of Lowry Hill architects' and clients' interest in Period Revival styles.



L: Edmund Walton House, 802 Mount Curve, in ca. 1900; r: interior designed by John S. Bradstreet

The Walton family photograph albums reveal its interest in travel and love for horses. Photographs of the Walton daughters riding the newly paved streets of Lowry Hill show glimpses of the neighborhood as it appeared under construction. After Walton's death, his wife and one of his daughters moved to California, and the house later served as the University Club. It was razed in 1959.⁹⁴

Thomas Lowry's own corner at Groveland Terrace also gathered new houses, most notably that of George Partridge (unknown-1932). In 1898, Partridge completed a 25-room Renaissance Revival Style mansion at the corner of Hennepin and Groveland Terrace. A partner in Wyman and Partridge, he located to Lowry Hill from his former residence at 504 Tenth Street S. Designed by Frederick Kees and built by engineer C. F. Haglin at a cost of \$35,000, 1 Groveland Terrace was placed near the Hennepin Avenue frontage behind a low wall.⁹⁵ Among its splendid appointments was a third-floor ballroom, complete with elevated stage and sheltered by massive plastered arches.



L: George Partridge House, 1 Groveland Terrace, ca. 1900; r: the ballroom; both photographs 1954



L: William A. Ramsey House, 1610 Dupont Ave. S. in ca. 1890-1900; r: the porte cochere



Brick and stone were favored by many of the 1890s builders, but shingled and clapboarded houses remained popular. William Ramsey's clapboard-clad Queen Anne style house perched on the bluff at 1610 Dupont (ca. 1890) and featured a rear porte cochere overlooking the city. Ramsey was the president of a linseed oil company.

Nearly every block between Mount Curve and Franklin Avenues had some construction in the 1890s. A comparison of the 1892 and 1903 Minneapolis atlases shows significant development in the Groveland, Lakeview, and Green's Second Additions. Most of the largest houses were architect-designed and erected at the bluff's edge, but on the north-south streets the standard was a spacious, two-and one-half story building with generous porches and exterior detail. The base price in the mid-1890s was about \$5,000. Dimensions varied, but many averaged 33 x 55 feet and most occupied a single 50-foot lot. Carriage houses were popular, but they were not a standard feature south of Douglas Avenue, testament to the popularity of the Douglas Avenue electric streetcar line built in 1890.

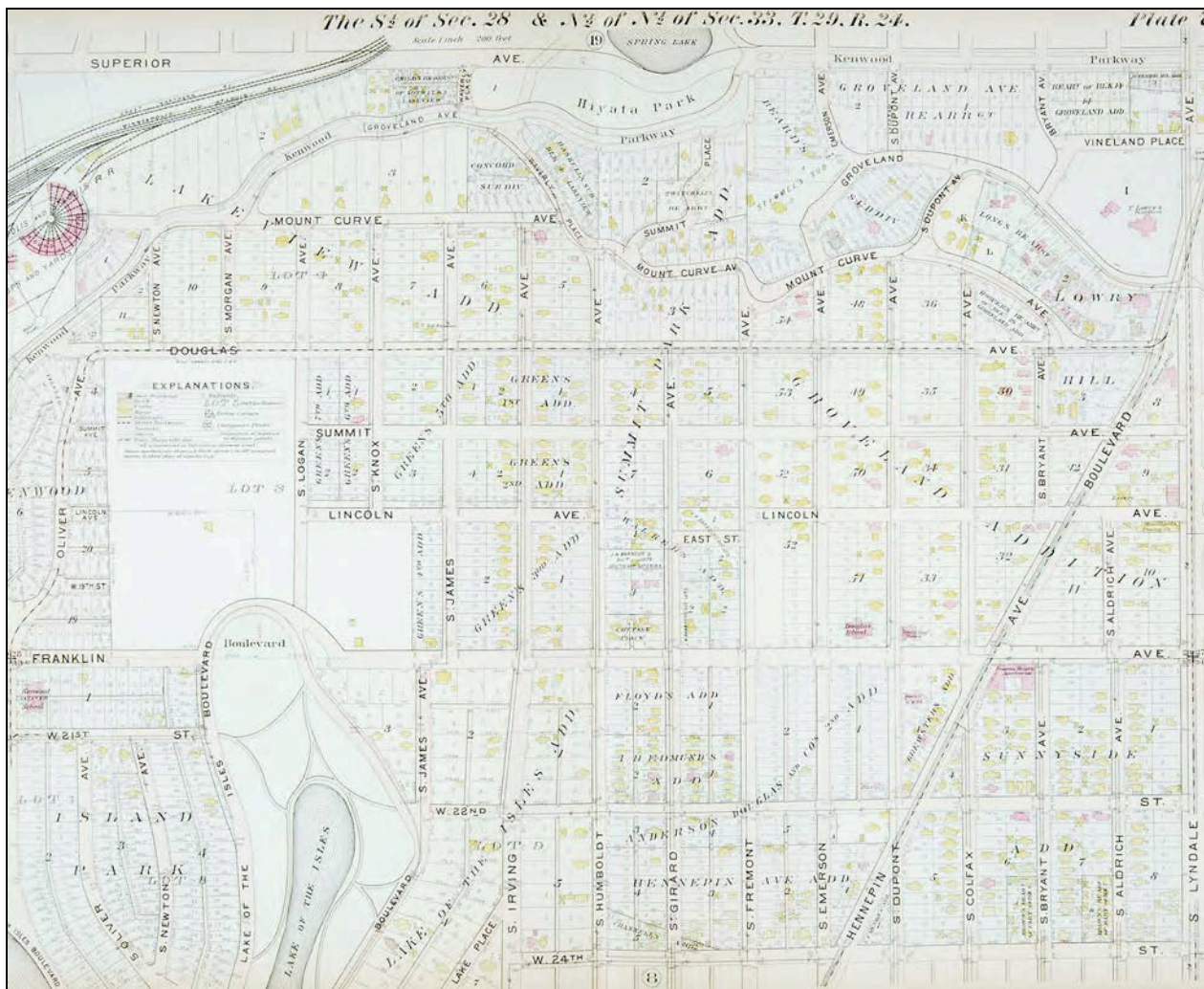
South of Douglas and the bluff, the characteristic Lowry Hill streetscape was taking shape by 1900 as lots were built with large two-and-one-half-story houses. The street widths and lot dimensions established in the original plats provided for a streetscape of broad lawns and, in most cases, well-spaced houses. North of Franklin Avenue, alleys were omitted from the block layout. With few exceptions, most lots were larger than those in Sunnyside and other additions across Hennepin Avenue to the east. Depending on the slope, retaining walls of stone, brick, or concrete lined the walkway. Where alleys were omitted, curb cuts were made for access to a rear carriage house or garage. Building restrictions attached to lot purchases typically specified minimum construction cost and details such as setback from the lot line.⁹⁶



Retaining wall at the Josiah Thompson House, 1532 Waverly Place, in 1904



Lowry Hill north of Franklin and west of Humboldt in 1892.
(Atlas of the City of Minneapolis, C.M. Foote)



By 1903, new construction extended across the Lakeview Addition. Rearrangements of the Groveland Addition into smaller lots are evident. Brick buildings are shown in pink. (Atlas of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Real Estate Board.)

In 1900, the *Minneapolis Journal* noted that during the previous four years Colfax Avenue S. between Douglas and Lincoln Avenues had gone from a street with only one house to “one of the handsomest in the city.”⁹⁷ This block was typical of many. While Romanesque Revival and other heavy Kasota stone “piles” like those built on the large parcels of early Groveland Terrace remained popular in Minneapolis until the turn of the century, the Lowry Hill streetscape was composed largely of English, Colonial, Georgian, and other revival styles that better fit their traditional lot configurations. The building exteriors announced their substantial budgets, with many exceptional designs featuring fine carved stone and wood trim as well as leaded glass and other Period Revival details.

Some felt that the real estate rejuvenation that began in the 1890s was greatly needed. In 1904, the *Minneapolis Journal* noted that while impressive houses were being added to the residence sections of Park Avenue and Clifton Avenue, “Mount Curve hill jumped suddenly into prominence as a new exclusive district.” The writer credited the “Martin purchase and the building of his palatial home, breasting the hill above Kenwood Parkway and the new Parade. Many other purchases followed suit and a new home center was established, where had existed a graveyard of deceased mansions.”⁹⁸ The writer referred to the Charles J. Martin House at 1300 Mount Curve, completed in 1906 and designed by William Channing Whitney. Another *Journal* article noted that the old houses of Mount Curve had “outlived their good looks and become an eyesore on the high ridge which overlooks Green’s Additions and the new Lowry [Kenwood] Park.”⁹⁹

As outlined in chapter 5, by 1900, Lowry Hill and East Isles became an exhibit of the best residential work of the city’s leading architects and builders. In many cases, architects were directly commissioned by clients.¹⁰⁰ In other cases, builders or contractors such as Theron P. Healy, C. C. Johnson, Carl P. Waldon, and John Friedman speculatively built one or even an entire block of houses.

The Dupont Avenue block between Mount Curve and Douglas Avenues illustrates the combination of efforts that often made up the Lowry Hill streetscape. This block of Dupont was part of the Groveland Addition and was divided into 14 lots. The \$10,000 brick veneer house that faced Mount Curve (1700 Dupont, 1895) was built for George W. Frey, a partner in MacKenzie & Frey. Arthur P. Stacy, a wholesale grocer, hired Harry W. Jones for the design of 1023 Mount Curve (1906). On the west side of the street, contractor-builder Theron P. Healy erected three frame houses. The one at 1716 Dupont (1894) was built for Frederick Wagner, an insurance executive; 1720 Dupont (1895) was designed by Lamoreaux and MacLeod and built for confectioner John Dörner, and J. A. MacLeod designed 1784 Dupont. All three were frame with clapboard Classical Revival exteriors and abundant millwork trim; 1720 featured a full classical portico and a large fanlight in the gable end. Healy (1844-1906) was a native of Nova Scotia. He was variously the builder, contractor, and sometimes designer of many fine houses in Lowry Hill and East Isles, and at least 30 houses in the Wedge neighborhood. On Lowry Hill he usually built architect-designed houses.¹⁰¹ Formerly in the maritime shipping business in Halifax, he turned to designing and building after arriving in Minneapolis in 1884.¹⁰²



John Dörner House, 1720 Dupont Avenue S. (1895), in ca. 1920

The lots across the street were vacant until 1908-09, when three expensive houses with matching garages were built by Carl P. Waldon. No architect's name appears on the building permits for these houses at 1715, 1717, and 1725 Dupont.¹⁰³ The budget for each tile-roofed, tan-brick house ranged from \$16,000 to \$18,000.



1725, 1717, and 1715 Dupont Avenue S. (1908-09), in 2006



L: 2115 Humboldt Avenue S. (1901) in ca. 1925; r: 2123 Humboldt Avenue S. (1900), in ca. 1925

Three frame houses on the 2100 block of Humboldt Avenue S. are exemplary of stock plans configured for variety. Numbers 2115 and 2123 were erected in the I. H. Edmund Addition. Dating from ca. 1900-01, the houses each have hipped roofs, with different configurations of second-story bay windows and porch columns above a limestone porch wall. Across the street, the larger lots of the Lake of the Isles Addition provided for more spacious houses and attracted some builders with larger budgets. 2108 Humboldt was built in 1902. One of the dormers set into the hip roof featured a large Palladian-motif window and a foliate cornice molding rather than simple dentils. A two-story bay filled with leaded glass sheltered the stair hall. A 1930s remodeling completely transformed the exterior appearance, as shown below.



2108 Humboldt Avenue S. (1902), in ca. 1925 and after remodeling in ca. 1935(?)

Lakeview and Green's Additions

As realtors worked to sell the remaining lots of Lowry Hill, construction of the typically highest-cost houses continued near the bluff and lake. The Lakeview Addition, which included lots on Kenwood Parkway, was platted in 1875 but there was little development until after 1900. Between ca. 1900 and 1920 Nehemiah (N. H.) Emmans promoted lots in the Lakeview Addition and was the owner of most of the nine Green's Additions on the western half of Lowry Hill. A native of New Jersey, Emmans (1854-?) moved to Minneapolis in 1877 and entered the real estate business in 1882. Also in 1882, Emmans married Luella Green, the daughter of John Green, a farmer and early Lowry Hill landowner.

Apparently, Emmans and Luella divorced and he married Jennie Mabie (Mabey) in 1904. This property was once part of the farm belonging to his former father-in-law.¹⁰⁴ His advertisements for these lots emphasized building restrictions that specified cost and siting requirements. In one he noted that his restrictions “are only such as please the individual purchaser—no flat—no unsightly or ill-proportioned buildings—just nice, attractive substantial homes, laid out on a beautiful model city street. In another he advertised “the successful businessman always puts special value on his time. I am not only able to locate him up in Green's Additions within ten minutes in his car to business, but also border him on 1,000 acres of lake, forest, and park area Nothing like this location for beauty and nature to be found in any city.”¹⁰⁵

BOUNDED BY BRYN MAWER AND SPRING LAKE ON THE NORTH.

For Sale on the Bluff in Lakeview Addition Lowry Hill,
Sixteen Points and a Lot 50 x 135 thrown in.

Streets Graded, Sidewalks, City water, Gas and Electric Transportation.

- 1st. And isn't there a point in favor of Lakeview Addition in landscape views of our City, lakes and forests that daily speaks life and beauty, and ever holds the eyes to search out its details?
- 2nd. And isn't there a point in perfect natural drainage that prevents disease and surface impurities, thus leaving you a clean, dry, healthy home?
- 3rd. And isn't there a point in the pure clear, dry, healthy atmosphere obtained from high points only, compared with the thickly settled level prairies?
- 4th. And isn't there a point in the bright, sparkling illumination of our city by night, obtained from elevations only? Is alone worthy of the highest commend of itself, and is a marvel of beauty.
- 5th. And isn't there a point in the natural pride and ambition of man to aspire to a location for a home peculiar and different from a million of all others in this city, and the consolation, when once obtained, of enjoying something that everybody hasn't?
- 6th. And isn't there a point in the location of Lakeview Addition? Directly between the chain of lakes and the city, and if for nothing more than her attractive thoroughfare, passing Central Park to and from the city, and thus avoiding objectionable districts and railroad crossings.
- 7th. And isn't there a point in the fact that Lakeview Addition as well as the adjoining ones are unblemished with little, old fashioned improvements, thus marring its beauty for ages to come?
- 8th. And isn't there a point in an addition whose owners are well-to-do and have large adjoining grounds with their homes, thus affording you daylight, sunshine and fresh air, and permitting of a social family discussion without your neighbors knowing its details?
- 9th. And isn't there a point that you yourself prefer taking your visiting friends to some elevation on this ridge to there behold the sights of our city and chain of lakes in preference to the older inhabited level portions of it?
- 10th. Isn't there a point in the fact that Lakeview Addition is fancy residence property and will always demand a fancy or fictitious price. We willing pay a fancy price for a fancy horse, a fancy cow, a fancy bonnet, furniture, etc. Why not buy a fancy lot for a home.
- 11th. Isn't there a point in the fact that you can get in on the ground floor at at least one half the price of lots in adjoining additions, giving you double assurance that you can sell if necessary at a profit, yet you are not entirely pioneering as there is already 35 fine homes in the addition, and if you only buy a horse or marry a woman you prefer a young one.
- 12th. And isn't there a point that there is only a little of it, and not enough to go around, that is to say, choice central bluff property in this city and realizing the fact that $\frac{3}{4}$ of what we have is already out of our reach in price, should alone interest us.
- 13th. Isn't there a point in our hard graveled streets enabling us to spin through them at all seasons of the year at the rate of 2:40 and that without any expense of paying or repairing or the impurities that originate from wooden pavements. Compare the contrast with wading through your level streets on a snails gait with your newly painted buggy, and drayman stuck in the mud.
- 14th. Isn't there a point in the old saying that you had better be at the head of the mice than at the tail of the rats and especially when the price of your lot and the annual city taxes are more than double with the rats the difference in annual taxes and interest on the other half of the money alone would be very acceptable, annually, for the good wife and children to have.
- 15th. And isn't there a point that it doesn't cost a farthing more to build you a house on a lot in Lakeview Addition, where you can reap the value and preference of each of my above points, than it does to improve elsewhere, that is deprived of all of them? Therefore the location of your lot is everything.
- 16th. Last but not least, isn't there a point in the unquestionable fact that there is a superior demand, preference and value to all high, overlooking, central residence property in any city?

I shall now leave the value of my above points for you to determine, and if, in your opinion, there is value or even preference in them, please consider them carefully if you are looking for a desirable location for a home, and allow me to give you prices and terms, before purchasing elsewhere.

N. H. Emmans's advertisement for the Lakeview Addition, ca. 1900



*L: Lakeview Addition: Eldred Baker House, 1720 Knox Avenue (1907), in ca. 1925;
r: Theophil Basting House, 1721 Mount Curve (1907), in 1951*

Emmans’s advertising for 200 lots in the Lakeview Addition in ca. 1905 summarized the beauty of the high Lowry Hill site—“35 feet higher than Lowry Hill proper”—the “bright sparkling illumination of our city by night,” and the “well-to-do owners.” Emmans promoted the “clear, dry healthy atmosphere obtained from high points only, compared with the thickly settled level prairies.”¹⁰⁶



Green’s Fourth Addition: 1921 James Avenue (1907) in ca. 1925

One block of Green’s Fourth Addition—James Avenue S. between Lincoln and Franklin Avenues—was built almost entirely between 1904 and 1910. The houses were clad in clapboard or brick and stucco, and many featured spacious porches and multiple dormers set into hip or gable roofs. The house at 1921 James Avenue S. is exemplary. Built for \$4,500 in 1907 by John Friedman, its brick and stucco exterior featured a faux half-timbered facade fronted by a broad porch. The first owner was H. A. Willoughby, a bank cashier.

John Friedman built a number of houses on this block of James Avenue, including his own at 1920 (1908), and also 1928, 1929, and 1941; construction costs averaged \$5,000. John (Jacob) and Samuel Friedman (2308 Humboldt Avenue S.) were Russian-born brothers and merchant tailors-turned-developers. In addition to single-family houses, they also built many apartment buildings (see chapter 5). Friedman also built a row of single-family houses on Fremont Avenue south of Franklin during the same period. They completed nine houses on both sides of Fremont Avenue S. (2001-2019) in 1908-1910, each at a cost of about \$4,000. The houses on Fremont, south of Franklin, were about half as costly as those to

the north. One of the few houses on this block not built by the Friedmans was 2020 Fremont (1908). Built by C. L. Lindquist and offered for sale in 1908, the 10-room, gable-roofed house with a full front porch featured a “reception room, living room, dining room finished in oak, butler’s pantry, 4 large bedrooms, and hardwood floors throughout.”¹⁰⁷ The rest of the west side of the block included 2105, 2109 by Friedman and 2125 by C.L. Lindquist, 2119 by J. H. Edmonds, and 2123 by Friedman. These houses each cost between \$4,000 and \$6,000.



2115 Fremont Avenue S. and the east side of the block, looking north, in 2006

The City Beautiful and Lowry Hill

The City Beautiful Movement supported by civic leaders and realtors involved the ordering of city monuments and public buildings along a strong network of well-built streets, and these principles also extended to residential areas. Building restrictions were generally observed throughout the city, but particularly in areas such as Lowry Hill. Despite the lot price and width, all blocks benefited by attention paid to uniform setback and similar construction budgets. In 1915 the *Minneapolis Journal* illustrated the 1900 block of Humboldt Avenue, noting:

This is a good example of a residence street solidly and successfully built under accepted restrictions as to location and quality of buildings. Here every property owner has observed the building line, has used his lot for residential purposes only, and has erected a house costing not less than the minimum figure fixed in the agreement. The street improvements are alike and continuous, the boulevards are graded and cared for uniformly, and the tree planting is of elm, set under the supervision of the board of park commissioners. Such co-operation is necessary in the building of a city beautiful.¹⁰⁸

Social Life at the Turn of the Century

In 1883, William Hood Dunwoody erected a stylish if conventional Queen Anne Style residence at 52 Tenth Street S. Illustrated in Atwater's *History of Minneapolis*, the spacious house occupied a double corner lot.¹⁰⁹ About 21 years later, the Dunwoody family moved to Overlook, a \$75,000, 40-room English Revival house set on a steep five-acre site at 104 Groveland Terrace. The house, which included a tunnel with a rail track for coal delivery to the furnace, reflected the success of Dunwoody's career as a merchant and miller.¹¹⁰ After his death in 1914, the house overlooked the Dunwoody Industrial Institute (1924-28) endowed by William and Kate L. Dunwoody. The Dunwoody House was demolished in 1967.



William H. Dunwoody House, 104 Groveland Terrace (1904)



52 Tenth Street S. (1883)

By 1906, lots on Mount Curve Avenue, Groveland Terrace, and nearby blocks were the sites of some of the costliest houses yet built in Minneapolis. In addition to Dunwoody's mansion, a new crop of buildings including those of George H. Partridge (1 Groveland Terrace, 1898), George H. Daggett (40 Groveland Terrace, 1901), L. R. Brooks (1600 Mount Curve, 1905) and Charles J. Martin (1300 Mount Curve, 1906), well exceeded the standard set by Thomas Lowry in 1874. The resources available to furnish the interior of Minneapolis houses at the turn of the century were extensive. European travel was a popular pastime for many Lowry Hill residents, and local decorator John S. Bradstreet (1845-1914) "set standards of taste for the monied class in Minneapolis for almost half a century."¹¹¹ Bradstreet's business was founded in the 1870s, and in the 1880s it popularized Asian and Japanese furnishings and decoration. His eclectic mix of Arts and Crafts, Moorish, and Japanese effects was offered in his downtown Craftshouse. It closed in 1919, though John Bradstreet and Company remained in business until the 1920s.



L: George H. Daggett House, 40 Groveland Terrace (1901);
r: the ballroom

Local gardeners and designers as well as nationally known landscape architects provided plans for the grounds surrounding some of the largest houses, particularly those on the steeply sloping sites of Mount Curve and Groveland Terrace. The Dunwoody grounds, for example, were designed by Warren H. Manning of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Manning consulted with the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners after H.W.S. Cleveland's tenure, and with the University of Minnesota. He also designed a number of Wayzata-area estates.¹¹²



The porch at Eldor Court (George H. Daggett House)
40 Groveland Terrace, ca. 1902

Lowry Hill and adjoining Lake of the Isles neighborhoods were the center of a considerable portion of the city's society, one shared with Park and Pillsbury Avenues, the Fair Oaks area, and the boulevards around Lake of the Isles, Lake Calhoun, and Lake Harriet, which continued to attract a similar group of business leaders and their families. Much newspaper social reporting focused on Lowry Hill, including its clubs, dinner parties, weddings, and residents' trips abroad. In 1899 a holiday event at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Partridge was described in the *Minneapolis Journal*:

The concluding function in honor of the Yale men yesterday was the cotillion given by the alumni at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. George Partridge after the concert last evening. The guests included the young women

of the younger set with several of the schoolgirls who are spending the holidays at home. The rooms were decorated in red and green in honor of the season and doorways were wreathed with southern smilax, while wreaths of holly tied with red satin bows hung over the stairway. In the ballroom the stage was hidden with pine trees and the alcoves were hung with smilax caught back with red ribbons.¹¹³

While Lowry Hill's and other Minneapolis mansions were under construction, many residents were also creating a summer colony at Lake Minnetonka. By the 1870s, resorts and steamboats drew visitors to the lake, and the extension of Thomas Lowry's streetcar line to Excelsior in 1905 further secured the success of the lake as a summer destination and eventually as a year-round location.



L: W.H. Dunwoody summer home; r: Franklin B. Long summer home), Lake Minnetonka, ca. 1900

Servants were an essential part of many upper-income households in Minneapolis, and they constituted a significant percentage of the total Lowry Hill and East Isles population for about 50 years. Whether mansions or more conventional but spacious houses, the Lowry Hill buildings were designed to house female maids, cooks, laundresses, nurses, and male drivers. In some of the largest houses, the numbers of employees outnumbered the members of the employer's family. In 1900, for example, Thomas and Beatrice Lowry's household included their 20-year-old son Horace; Henry Brookman, a German butler; Henry's 29-year-old wife Greta; Christine Hendrickson and Hulda Hagstrom, Swedish cooks; Mollie Malmberg, a Swedish servant; Annie Olson, a Norwegian laundress and her sister Carrie, a servant; and Josephine Carfunga, a German servant.¹¹⁴ In residence at 106 Mount Curve in 1910 (in the former Henry Beard House) was realtor Samuel S. Thorpe. Two maids, a cook, a driver, and a gardener assisted the Thorpe family, which included Thorpe's wife and four children. In the 1880s and 1890s, most women servants were between 18 and 50 years of age and typically Norwegian, Swedish, or German. By 1930, when many households still employed one or two women, they were more likely born in Minnesota or Iowa to Scandinavian or German parents. In 1910, the census taker recorded 12 servants of a total of 50 persons counted on Summit, Colfax, and Bryant Avenues.



Dorothy and Audrey Walton (803 Mount Curve) and three of the Walton family's servants, ca. 1895. In 1900 the Waltons employed Hulda Carlson, Ragna Carlsen, and Ellen Wangberg.

Chapter 3

Lowry Hill: 1920-1960



View from Mount Curve Avenue in ca. 1925

New Construction and Other Trends

Between Lowry's death in 1909 and the end of World War I in 1918, the city's population rose from roughly 300,000 to 380,000; about 23 percent were foreign born.¹¹⁵ Minneapolis continued to modernize its physical plant, including the paving of about one-quarter of the city's 800 miles of streets, by this time used by a steadily increasing number of automobiles. Residential construction pushed farther south and followed the Chain of Lakes as far as streetcar extensions allowed. Single-family construction slowed to a crawl after 1910, but flats and apartment buildings were built along and near Hennepin and Franklin Avenues. New apartment buildings included 1941 and 1945 Fremont Avenue S. (1912). In 1915 the Fleisher Rose Construction Company built two 24-unit buildings at 1929-31 and 1933-35 Fremont, each costing \$40,000.

The Minneapolis economy generally prospered in the 1920s despite the decline of the city's milling and lumber businesses, and remaining lots along Mount Curve and other streets such as Logan and Morgan in Green's Additions continued to be developed with costly houses. In some cases older houses were razed for new construction. New single-family construction included 1120 Mount Curve (1923), H. C. Piper's 1122 Mount Curve (1928), Dr. Charles A. Read's 1418 Mount Curve (1923) and E. F. Burns's 1766 Dupont (1921).



L: Dr. Charles A. Read House, 1418 Mount Curve (1923), photographed in 1925; r: 1705 Morgan Avenue S. (1922)

Development of the lots fronting E. Lake of the Isles Parkway lots north of W. 22nd Street did not occur until 1921, when architect Louis L. Long built his own house at 2115. Emil Kischel, the president of the Northwestern Glass Company, built a Spanish Colonial Style house designed by Clyde W. Smith at 2119.



L: Emil Kischel House, 2119 E. Lake of the Isles Parkway (1921); r: E.J. Dalrymple House, 1817 Irving Avenue S., (1900), offered for sale by Confer Brothers Realty in ca. 1925

In neighborhoods to the east of Lowry Hill, the number of owner-occupants began to decline somewhat after World War I, as boarders and renters found apartments in large, formerly single-family houses. A new zone of attractive houses farther south and southwest in Minneapolis drew owners out of parts of Lowry Hill and from neighborhoods such as the Wedge, and some residents departed permanently for year-round Lake Minnetonka residences.

Through the primary period of apartment building development between 1912 and 1930, real estate sections of the *Minneapolis Journal* featured Lowry Hill houses prominently advertised as highly desirable single-family homes. Many of the city's late 19th-century houses, however, were considered "obsolete," an idea supported by national campaigns such as the Better Homes in America Movement (1925). The mansions and large houses of Lowry Hill near Hennepin Avenue were especially vulnerable to demolition.¹¹⁶



Douglas Triangle Park, in 1925

Lowry Hill residents' attempt to limit apartment construction resulted in Douglas Triangle Park (now Thomas Lowry Park) which was acquired by the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners in 1922. The 2.32-acre property was purchased by abutters to prevent its development, and the Minneapolis Park Board landscaped the site with pools and a pergola.¹¹⁷ Landscape architect Phelps Wyman created the plan.¹¹⁸

The Great Depression

By the 1920s some of the grand houses of Lowry Hill were at the end of their lives. For example, after Thomas Lowry died in 1909 and Beatrice Lowry in 1915, their house was sold to T. B. Walker who resided there until his death in 1927. The house was razed in 1932. Newspaper articles occasionally lamented the passing of Lowry Hill mansions, along with those elsewhere in the city:

I walked through the Lowry house before the wreckers had utterly destroyed its ancient magnificence. Tiled floors, great rooms and an abundance of fine mahogany showed what it must have been in its days of glory. The cheerful home fires burned in the numerous fireplaces and one could easily picture the many distinguished guests that had feasted at its hospitable board.¹¹⁹

In 1937, sociologist Calvin F. Schmid delineated Lowry Hill and the East Isles area, along with portions of Loring Park, Park Avenue, and the Fair Oaks area, as two of the city's as "Gold Coasts." However, the pattern of razing the oldest and largest houses or dividing them into rooming houses and converting to institutional use was becoming well established along and near Hennepin Avenue.¹²⁰ After Louis K. Hull died in 1931, for example, his house at 21 Groveland Terrace survived only for two years. Built by William L. Donaldson and designed by Long and Kees, the house was owned by Hill for 33 years.



Institutional use saved some houses for a few decades. The School of Psychology and Divine Science, for example, occupied the former George H. Partridge House at 1 Groveland Terrace. The building was well cared for by the school, and the lavish interior was recorded by a newspaper photographer before demolition in 1954.¹²¹ The University Club used the Edmund Walton house at 802 Mount Curve until it was razed in 1959.

*Edmund Walton House (center) before demolition in 1959.
American Fore Insurance building is at left.*

In 1946, residents concerned about rooming houses and the deterioration of neighborhood houses founded Lowry Hill Home Owners, Inc. John Rood and Dorothy Atkinson Rood (1650 Dupont Avenue) were among its organizers. Lowry Hill Residents, Inc., is an outgrowth of this group. The growing volume of streetcar and automobile traffic at the Lyndale-Hennepin bottleneck was well documented by the 1940s, and planners began to discuss solutions. Late 1950s planning for Interstate Highway 94 proposed a route through the bottleneck, one originally cutting within 30 feet of Walker Art Center and about 60 feet from the Cathedral Church of St. Mark. By 1959, a tunnel proposal was developed.¹²²



*Left: Lyndale and Hennepin Avenues looking south in 1937;
the Thomas Lowry statue is in its original location in front of
the Virginia Flats. Above: North American Life and Casualty
Insurance Co. (left) and the Walker Art Center in 1957.*

The Future of Lowry Hill: The 1950s and Beyond

Once again it need to be emphasized that the issue in the current controversy over Lowry Hill is not the one high-rise apartment building now proposed. It is the larger question of the future development of the entire hill.

The Future of Lowry Hill (1964)

Although many houses were divided for multiple-family use in the 1950s, sales for single-family use nevertheless continued. In a 1950 *Minneapolis Star* article, however, the writer noted that lack of ordinances to protect homeowners from adjacent rooming-house use was a deterrent to such single-family sales.¹²³ Five-to-seven bedrooms and three-to-five baths were selling points. Lowry Hill Home Owners, Inc. reported “the graystone, brownstone, and brick houses that gave the hill area a distinctive character at the turn of the century are on the way back—property wise.” They noted the single-family sale of the O. J. Arnold House at 1606 Mount Curve Avenue to advertising executive John C. Cornelius. They reported that some of the recent purchasers who had left the district before “are now returning.” A committee was appointed to “welcome back old residents and get acquainted with new ones.”¹²⁴



*Taney House, 1910 Knox Avenue
(1950); date of card unknown*

In the 1950s, a number of old houses were razed for the construction of contemporary houses, and new houses filled vacant lots, particularly along Mount Curve Avenue. One of the most prominent was a \$150,000, flat-roofed modern design for sculptor John Rood and Dorothy Atkinson Rood (1950) at 1650 Dupont Avenue. Similar motifs were employed at the two-story Taney House at 1901 Knox Avenue (1950). The house at 1700 Mount Curve (1960), designed by architects Bliss and Campbell for John Dalrymple, featured the flat roof and smooth, almost windowless walls typical of the period.

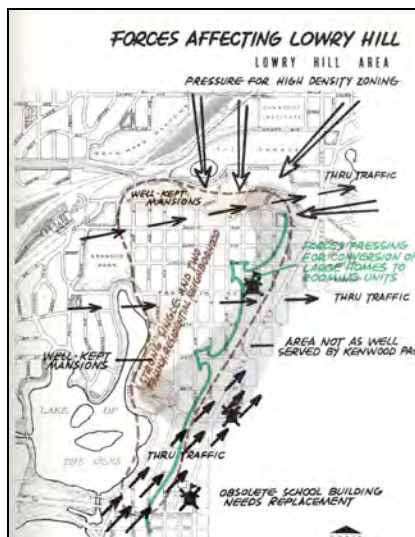
A number of unbuilt lots on Mount Curve Avenue and Kenwood Parkway were developed in the period 1945-1965, as well as other lots dispersed through the area north of Douglas Avenue. One study counted about 25 new houses between Humboldt and Morgan Avenues.¹²⁵



1700 Mount Curve (1960), in 2006

The Battle for Lowry Hill is Launched

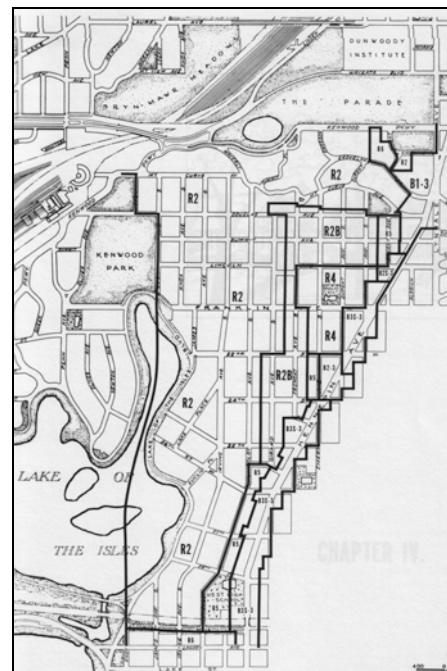
In 1959, developers Reuben L. Anderson and Anthony B. Cherne proposed construction of a 12-story, 55-unit apartment tower on the W. H. Dunwoody mansion site at 104 Mount Curve. The proposal launched a 20-year battle among the Lowry Hill Homeowners Association and the Lowry Hill neighborhood and the developer.¹²⁶ The association maintained that “allowing the encroachment of any apartment dwelling would destroy the single- and two-family residential character of the neighborhood.”¹²⁷ The battle centered in part over spot re-zoning of the parcel.



The Future of Lowry Hill (1964)
1964



Minneapolis Star, November 24,



The limits of Restricted Residence
Zoning enacted in 1913; from
The Future of Lowry Hill (1964)

Following veto by Minneapolis mayor Arthur Naftalin, a 1964 planning study attempted to evaluate higher-density housing. The *Future of Lowry Hill*, prepared by city planning staff for Lowry Hill (west) and East Isles, considered alternatives for a variety of future housing types.¹²⁸ The Lowry Hill residents saw the outcome of a 1963 rezoning in the Wedge (Lowry Hill East) that resulted in the demolition of an estimated 100 houses and the construction of apartment buildings; some of the apartment buildings were nearly a half-block long. Two conclusions of the study were that the decision about the Dunwoody parcel should be comprehensive, and that townhouse-style development was preferable to apartment towers. In 1972, however, new plans drawn by Cerny Associates for Anderson and Cherne again showed a high-rise building, this time a curved 18-story structure with 100 units.¹²⁹ Finally, in 1979, the Minneapolis Planning Commission approved a 41-unit townhouse project developed by Ray Harris and Norman Ackerberg and designed by John Field of Boston. It was completed in 1981.¹³⁰

Construction of the I-94 tunnel occupied the early 1960s. A large area north of Franklin Avenue and west of Hennepin, including the Virginia Flats in the 1700 block, was cleared of houses and apartment buildings.¹³¹ Other new construction included the 1965-1969 redevelopment of the Groveland Terrace and Bryant Avenue parcel opposite the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre. Developer Paul Klodt purchased the parcel—once considered for acquisition by the Minneapolis Park Board—and the property was rezoned in 1963. The construction of the 69-unit building at 104 Groveland Terrace involved demolition of 1770 Bryant Avenue (1895) and other houses.¹³²

David A. Lanegran and Ernest R. Sandeen's *The Lake District of Minneapolis* (1979) focused on the historic and architectural resources of the area. The book was published during a period when old houses were threatened by demolition for apartment building development. In 1984, LHRI was involved in securing designation by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission for the John Lind House at 1775 Colfax (1903).¹³³ Efforts to change the city's zoning ordinance to encourage the preservation of the area's largest houses led to the 1982 passage of the "Mansion Ordinance," which allowed the conversion of large single-family homes into apartments and condominiums. At that time, 19 Lowry Hill properties were eligible because they had the minimum 6,000 square feet and were located on 15,000 square-foot lots.¹³⁴

In 1984, the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission considered the creation of a local historic district encompassing the first tier of properties along Lake of the Isles. Although certain properties have been individually designated, no district was adopted. Reflecting a trend throughout the city, in the 1980s and 1990s many large houses were converted back to single-family use as well as condominiums. In many cases any exterior renovations maintained the building's historic character.

Planning for reconstruction of E. Lake of the Isles Parkway began in the late 1990s. For some decades, the fill that had been placed at the edges of the lake decades before had subsided and the shoreline converted to marshland. The park board embarked upon a multiyear project designed by landscape architects Sanders Wacker Wehrmann Berghly to refill and stabilize the shoreline. At this time the parkway was evaluated as part of the Grand Rounds and was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.¹³⁵

Chapter 5

Lowry Hill Architects: ca. 1874-1930



*Frederick Ackermann: Elizabeth Quinlan House (1924),
1711 Emerson Avenue S.*

By the mid-1890s, Lowry Hill and East Isles became an exhibit of some of the best residential work of the city's leading architects and builders.¹³⁶ Some of their commissions combined enormous budgets with fine building materials and skilled labor. Many of the city's turn-of-the-century architects—unlike those of the previous generation—benefited from European travel and architectural training at professional schools. Their commissions were regularly illustrated in local newspapers as well as national architectural publications such as the *Western Architect*. Few commissions went to non-Minnesota firms. The C. J. Winton House (1324 Mount Curve, 1910) designed by George Maher of Chicago, and the Elizabeth Quinlan House (1711 Emerson Avenue, 1924) designed by Frederick Ackerman of New York are among this group. Contractors associated with Lowry Hill residential construction between ca. 1885 and 1930 include Theron P. Healy (also a designer), Frederick Anderson, J. H. Edmonds, C. C. Johnson, J. E. Pilgram, C. F. Haglin, F. G. McMillan, and H. N. Leighton.

Among Lowry Hill's most popular architects, listed by date of birth:



*Franklin B. Long: Groveland Terrace houses
(W. S. Donaldson and F.B. Long at left and center), in 1910*

Franklin B. Long (1842-1912), a native of New York who began his career as a carpenter and builder and apprenticed as an architect in Chicago, arrived in Minneapolis in time to design Minneapolis City

Hall in Bridge Square (1873).¹³⁷ After making real estate investments and working for the CM&StP, he returned to private practice in the early 1880s and was in partnership with Frederick G. Kees between 1884 and 1897. The firm designed many of the city's exceptional buildings in the 1880s and 1890s, including the Kasota Block (1884), Minneapolis Public Library (1886), Lumber Exchange (1888-1890) and Minneapolis City Hall and Courthouse (1888). Subsequently, until his death in 1912, Long was in partnership with his son Louis (1870-1925) and Lowell Lamoreaux (1861-1922).¹³⁸ On Groveland Terrace, Long, alone or with his partners, is credited with nine houses, including his own at 25 and 41.

Leroy S. Buffington (1847-1931) is credited with the design of the Thomas Lowry House (1874). A native of Ohio, he was briefly in partnership with Abraham Radcliffe in St. Paul before moving to Minneapolis in 1874. His large architectural practice continued until 1931. In 1887 Buffington claimed a patent for the steel-skeleton method of construction, but his claim was challenged in court and he lost. His noted architectural draftsman **Harvey Ellis** (1852-1904), a native of Rochester, New York, is credited with many distinctive projects during the time he was associated with Buffington in the late 1880s. In the 1870s Buffington's firm designed residences for many prominent Minneapolis businessmen, including Clinton Morrison (1877), George Christian (1879) and Wilson Van Dyke (date unknown). Lowry Hill commissions include that for Arthur Miller at 1706 Colfax Avenue (1906). Buffington was the designer of important commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, including the Pillsbury A Mill and Pillsbury and Nicholson Halls at the University of Minnesota.¹³⁹



William Channing Whitney: A. R. Rogers House, 1415 Mount Curve, in 1906

W. C. Whitney, the architect, has let the contract for the Helene Lawley House at 1716 Colfax to B. Cooperman for \$10,000.

“Money Going into Homes,” *Minneapolis Journal*, May 14, 1904

William Channing Whitney (1851-1945) was the designer of William H. Dunwoody's English-inspired mansion at 104 Groveland (1904). Described as “one of the Twin Cities most fashionable residential architects,” he was accomplished at rendering a variety of Period Revival styles and is credited with the first Georgian Revival house in Minnesota (1886).¹⁴⁰ A native of Massachusetts, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Massachusetts Agricultural College, from which he graduated in 1872. Following an apprenticeship in Boston, he moved to Minneapolis in 1877 and was in partnership with James C. Plant between 1879 and 1885. In addition to designing residences for many prominent families in Minneapolis and St. Paul, he is credited with institutional buildings such as the Minneapolis Club (1893). Jewelry store owner H. B. Hudson hired Whitney to design his residence at 1776 Colfax Avenue (1905). Mount Curve commissions include the Charles J. Martin House at 1300 (1906), the H. B. Waite House at 1325 (1907), and a picturesque English Revival residence for A. R. Rogers at 1415 (1906).



Fremont D. Orff: H. D. Johnson (?) House, 2012 Hennepin Avenue (1902)

Fremont D. Orff (1856-1914) joined the firm of his brother George O. Orff (1836-1908) in Minneapolis in 1882. The brothers practiced together until about 1890. Fremont partnered with **Edgar E. Joralemon** between 1893 and 1897. Before the partnership, Joralemon (1859-1937) worked as a draftsman for Leroy S. Buffington, Franklin B. Long, and the Orff Brothers. He was also in partnership with Charles Ferrin. He moved to Niagara Falls, New York, in 1898.¹⁴¹ Orff and Joralemon authored a number of early Lowry Hill houses, including Edmund Walton's at 802 Mount Curve (1893).



Charles S. Sedgwick: C. C. Wyman House, 1812 Dupont Avenue S. (1900). Photograph ca. 1925.

Charles Sedgwick (1856-1922) gained experience as an architect in Binghamton, New York, before arriving in Minneapolis in 1884. He designed a number of churches including Andrew Presbyterian, the Minneapolis YMCA, and many expensive houses for prominent Minneapolis residents.¹⁴² Among Lowry Hill commissions was that for C. C. Wyman at 1812 Dupont Avenue S. (1900).

George Bertrand (1859-1931) was in partnership with Walter A. Keith between 1890 and 1896 and with Arthur B. Chamberlin (1865-1933) between 1897 and 1909. Known for commercial projects such as the Minneapolis Athletic Club (1913) and the Chamber of Commerce Building (1928), Bertrand and Chamberlin's Lowry Hill residential designs include 1911 Girard Avenue, 58 Groveland Terrace, 1800 Humboldt (1899), 1721 Irving Avenue (1907), and 1717 and 1771 Logan Avenue.¹⁴³



Lowell A. Lamoreaux: John McCarthy/T. A. Jamieson House, 1807 Dupont Avenue S. (1902), date of photo unknown.

Lowell A. Lamoreaux (1861-1922) was the son of a Minneapolis lumber dealer and a graduate of the University of Minnesota. He worked in the office of Cass Gilbert and James Knox Taylor in St. Paul and then practiced with James A. MacLeod (1894-1899) and with Franklin and Louis Long after 1909. For about eight years he practiced on his own, and he is credited with at least ten houses on Lowry Hill and with the apartment building at 1908 Hennepin. Among the best known is the John McCarthy House (later T.A. Jamieson) at 1807 Dupont (1902). The \$12,000 Georgian Revival design was published in the *Western Architect* in 1902. Lamoreaux was noted for the design of residential interiors, apartment buildings, hotels, and City, Swedish and Eitel Hospitals.¹⁴⁴

Ernest Kennedy (1864-1938) was a native of Mankato who moved to Minneapolis as a child. He attended the University of Minnesota, the Sorbonne in Paris, and Polytechnics in Berlin and Munich. His practice in Minneapolis at the turn of the century focused largely on residential design, but among his institutional clients was the University of Minnesota, for which he designed Shevlin Hall (1905). He designed many houses around Washburn Park and in East Isles. Walter A. Eggleston, a real estate dealer, commissioned Kennedy for the design of his Georgian Revival Style residence at 1777 Dupont Avenue S. (1906).¹⁴⁵ His design for the Foss House at 1606 Mount Curve Avenue also dates from 1906.



Ernest C. Haley: N. H. Emmans House

Ernest C. Haley (1867-1954) was the son of architect Joseph Haley and a native of New York. He was well known for his residential designs, including several dozen homes on Lowry Hill. The houses at 1815 (1902) and 1834 Fremont Avenue S. (1903) were built by contractor C. C. Johnson; other houses include 1900 Colfax (1908), 1774 and 1816 Humboldt Avenue S., and 1771 (1900) and 1774 (1901) Irving Avenue S. His proposed design for N. H. Emmans at 1786 James Avenue S. (ca. 1900) was featured in the realtor's advertising.¹⁴⁶



E.H. Hewitt: Phillip R. Brooks House, 1600 Mount Curve; Mary Foss House, 1606 Mount Curve (1906; Ernest Kennedy, architect, in background). Photo ca. 1908.

Edwin H. Hewitt (1874-1939) was a graduate of the Ecole d' Beaux Arts and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and brought experience from Boston architectural firms as well as an apprenticeship with Cass Gilbert. He was in partnership with **Edwin H. Brown** (1875-1930) between 1910 and 1930. In addition to designing four monumental buildings visible from Lowry Hill—the Cathedral Church of St. Mark, Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, the Dunwoody Institute, and the Northwestern National Life Insurance Company (on Loring Park)—the firm designed several prominent houses including one commissioned by Phillip R. Brooks. The \$30,000 residence at 1600 Mount Curve was completed in 1906. Substantial houses on smaller scale included 1801 James Avenue S. (1909). When advertised for sale in 1914, it was called a “distinctive modern home.”¹⁴⁷



William Kenyon: G. F. Thompson House, 1800 Girard Avenue



Mary Donaldson House, 72 Groveland Terrace

William Kenyon (?-1940) was a native of New York who began his practice in 1893. Between 1913 and about 1930 he partnered with Maurice Maine. He designed at least 40 houses in Lowry Hill and East Isles including his own home at 1715 James Avenue S. (1906), exemplary of the half-timbered Tudor designs he favored. While Kenyon was accomplished at heavily decorated, costly mansions, he also executed a number of spacious frame houses. His commissions include 1819 Dupont (1905), 1314 (1931) and 1315 (1909) Mount Curve, 1802 Colfax Avenue S. (1906), and 1800 and 1907 Knox Avenue. He also served as the chief architect for the Soo Line Railroad and designed facilities such as the Shoreham Yards in northeast Minneapolis. In 1912 a portfolio of the architect's work appeared in the *Architectural Record* and featured several Lowry Hill houses, including his own, and those of George F. Thompson (1800 Girard Avenue) and Mary Donaldson (72 Groveland Terrace).¹⁴⁸



*Lamoreaux and MacLeod: J. F. Calhoun House, 1900
Dupont Avenue, in 1904.*

James A. MacLeod (1879-1912) produced richly detailed and highly picturesque Tudor Revival designs. He spent most of his short career in partnership with Lowell Lamoreaux (1894-1899). He lived in an English Tudor house of his own design at 1716 Emerson Avenue S. (1900). Houses at 1808 Emerson and 1123 Mount Curve are credited to MacLeod, and projects produced with Lamoreaux include 1123 and 1203 Mount Curve, as well as 1700, 1720, 1734, and 1900 Dupont and 2006 Girard Avenue S.¹⁴⁹

Jack Liebenberg (1895-1985) and **Seeman Kaplan** (1895-unknown) are well known as the designers of movie theaters, as well as Temple Israel (1927). Liebenberg was a native of Milwaukee who graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Architecture and attended Harvard University where he won the Prix de Rome. Liebenberg and Kaplan's Lowry Hill designs include 1919 Humboldt Avenue S., 1915 Irving Avenue S., 1825 Knox Avenue S., and five residences on Mount Curve Avenue.¹⁵⁰

Chapter 6

Apartment Buildings, Flats, and Residence Hotels

Lowry Hill was part of a zone of high-quality apartment buildings and residence hotels extending from downtown Minneapolis and around Loring Park to the Franklin-Hennepin intersection and south along Hennepin Avenue.

By the 1870s, a variety of multiple-unit dwellings including boardinghouses, rowhouses, and tenements were part of the city's housing stock. Rowhouses, typically rental units, were succeeded by apartment buildings served by a single entrance. By the mid-1880s, apartment buildings of many descriptions were built in downtown Minneapolis and along early streetcar routes such as Lyndale Avenue. James Plant was an architect as well as investor in a number of buildings. His apartment building known as Netly Corner at Second Avenue S. and 13th Street S. (ca. 1890) was called the “most complete” of its period.¹⁵¹

Apartment size and construction cost varied greatly, and by the late 1890s the finer “apartment hotel” became popular, particularly around Loring Park. These buildings offered dining rooms, clubrooms, and maid service as well as elaborately finished units with fine millwork trim and built-in cabinetry. In 1910, when Francis Chamberlain, a banker, and his wife left Lowry Hill after about ten years of residence, their next address was the newly opened Radisson Hotel. The Radisson, like many hotels such as the Curtis on Tenth Street (1905), or the Blackstone at Willow Street and Yale Place, offered short- or long-term quarters for individuals and families who were between their summer and winter residences.

Apartment hotels of various descriptions were particularly popular with Lowry Hill residents who summered at Lake Minnetonka and traveled to California in the winter, then found themselves in Minneapolis without desiring to open a large residence. Some buildings included underground garages for newly acquired automobiles, and most buildings featured fireproof construction. The turn-of-the-century exterior was often based on the Italian Renaissance city palace with a broad upper cornice and classical detail at the entry and windows. Larger buildings were typically arranged in a U-shape around a landscaped entry court. In the higher-end market, the terms “flat” and “apartment” seem interchangeable, although by 1910 most “flat” buildings offered only four units.

Real estate dealers heavily promoted each year's new crop of apartments or flats, stressing their luxury, or modernity and homelike quality. By 1902, when \$1 million worth of construction was estimated, “modern and beautiful apartments” were praised for convenience, central location, and a solution to the lack of good houses for rent.



Virginia Flats (1900), 1775 Hennepin (razed)



*Vermont Apartments, 902 Franklin Avenue (1907).
Franklin Heights Apartments (1902) are at rear.*

The \$55,000, four-story Virginia Flats (1900) was the first major apartment or large flat building on Lowry Hill; it was designed for its prominent triangular parcel at 1775 Hennepin Avenue. (The Lowry Hill Congregational Church formerly occupied the site.) The Franklin Heights (1902), on the east side of Hennepin at Franklin, was among the next built and was followed by the Lowry Hill Apartments (1904). The Lowry Hill was composed of two four-story buildings at Douglas and Hennepin Avenues (701-717 Douglas Avenue). The buildings were owned by their architect, Henry Ingham, and Walter V. Fifield.¹⁵² The Lowry Hill offered 24 suites of five, six, or seven rooms. Next door, the Euclid (803 Douglas Avenue) and Vinje (809 Douglas) were built in 1912. Between 1903 and 1915, a number of other flats and apartment buildings on and near Hennepin were completed, including the Mansfield Flats at 2114 Hennepin (1903), 1808-12 Bryant (1912), two 36-unit buildings at 1921 and 1935 Bryant (1910), and the Summit Apartments at 901-909 Summit Avenue (1912). The Summit Apartments contained 30 apartments and three ground-level stores.

The apartment zone extended west along Franklin Avenue to Fremont Avenue. At 1200-1208 Franklin, (1910), about 20 units in two buildings primarily housed couples and small families. Their occupations included accountants, salesmen, a schoolteacher, a newspaper reporter, and several persons who gave their employment as “real estate.” Across the street, the U-shaped brick building completed in 1912 at 1117 Franklin provided 30 units behind a columned portico.



Mr. and Mrs. J.O. P. Wheelwright will keep their country home at Minnetonka Beach open until the end of the month. They have taken an apartment at the Plaza, where Mrs. Wheelwright's sister is now for the winter.

Minneapolis Journal, *Society Section*, November 17, 1912

Plaza Hotel, 1700 Hennepin Avenue, in 1910

The six-story Plaza Hotel anchored the triangular block of apartment buildings and auto businesses between Hennepin and Lyndale. Completed in 1906 and designed by Walter J. Keith, the elegant six-story building had 175 lodging rooms as well as dancing, dining, and meeting rooms.¹⁵³ In 1910 the hotel's guests included many who were long-term, including employees of the hotel and a variety of families accompanied by servants. In April 1910, attorneys, grain brokers, physicians, and bankers were in residence, along with railroad conductors, an artist, and a clergyman.¹⁵⁴

By 1912 Minneapolis had 1,377 apartment buildings of many descriptions.¹⁵⁵ After 1913, construction of apartment buildings on the west side of Hennepin Avenue was regulated by Restricted Residential District legislation. It prohibited apartments in certain areas, including most of Lowry Hill west of Fremont, but allowed construction along Hennepin and a few adjacent blocks. The boundaries of the district were reflected in the 1924 zoning ordinance.¹⁵⁶

The largest complex yet erected on Lowry Hill was the 55-unit Friedman Court at 1786 Hennepin (1915), developed by John and Samuel Friedman. The Friedmans built a number of apartment buildings and flats on Lowry Hill, including 807-09 Douglas Avenue S. (1912), 1913 Dupont Avenue S. (1912), 1919 Dupont Avenue S. (1914), and 1923 Dupont Avenue S. (1914). S.J. Bowler was the architect for the Dupont buildings. Among their many other projects on Lowry Hill, between 1907 and 1909 they also built nine single-family houses in the 2000 block of Fremont Avenue S.



2000 through 2014 Dupont Avenue S. (1906), in ca. 1920

Varieties of the duplex (or “two-flat”) that were popular east of Hennepin Avenue were not built very extensively on Lowry Hill, in part due to Restricted Residential District zoning. Front and rear porches, hot water heat, modern plumbing, tile and hardwood floors, and generous amounts of millwork trim made some duplex interiors comparable to single-family construction in the area. Some flat buildings, such as the gambrel-roofed building at 2311 Humboldt Avenue S. (1907), were carefully designed to look like houses. The trio of gambrel-roofed flats at 2000 through 2014 Dupont Avenue S., designed by Lindstrom and Williams, was completed in 1906. While most apartment building construction was confined to blocks near Hennepin and Franklin, a variety of duplexes that looked like impressive single-family houses were erected on blocks south of Douglas Avenue.



A duplex at 1941 Irving Avenue S. (1905) in ca. 1930

The Lamoreaux Flats at 1908 Hennepin Avenue, near the corner of Lincoln Avenue, were designed by Long, Lamoreaux, and Long in 1914. This Colonial Revival Style, red brick building was planned to “supply a demand for a better class of apartments than heretofore built.”¹⁵⁷ Each of the 21 units had white oak trim, birch floors, and “porcelain equipped” enameled kitchens. The entry and sides of the main corridor were clad in antique marble, and apartment doors were furnished with cut-glass knobs.

Just before World War I, apartment building construction was very popular at the edges of downtown Minneapolis, and late 19th-century mansions were often razed to make room for them. In 1914, about 3,000 new apartment units were put on the Minneapolis market and civic leaders grew concerned that the city would lose its prestige as a city of homes. The Civic and Commerce Association conducted a study to find out why “the family hotel, the apartment building, and the flat are swallowing up the people of Minneapolis.”¹⁵⁸ Association members were puzzled as to why “people with sufficient means to maintain fine homes prefer to live in family hotels? Why do people with money enough to buy suburban lots prefer to pay rent for a downtown flat?” They surmised that factors might include problems with servants, the

ability to maintain social prestige in an apartment as well as in a detached home, and the aversion of the “man of the family” to maintaining the furnace and shoveling the sidewalk.¹⁵⁹

Between 1913 and 1920, the construction of blocks of new apartment buildings around Stevens Square brought hundreds of small new units on the market. On Lowry Hill, the Belmont Apartment Hotel at 1000 Franklin (1920) catered to a higher income group, like the Calhoun Beach Apartment Hotel (1925) built by the Fleisher Construction Company at Dean Boulevard and W. Lake Street.¹⁶⁰



L: Belmont Apartment Hotel in 1920; r: 900 Summit Avenue Apartments (1928), in 1956

Construction at 900 Summit Avenue (1928) was one of the last Lowry Hill apartment buildings completed before the Great Depression. Designed by Louis Bersback and constructed for approximately \$70,000, the brick and stone-trimmed traditional exterior concealed the modern steel and concrete structure. The 25-unit building featured a parking garage. At the time of its completion, three of the four corners at Bryant and Summit Avenues were occupied by apartment buildings; the Sixth Church of Christ Scientist (821 Summit Avenue) occupied the fourth.



The east side of Lowry Hill, north of W. 22nd Street, in ca. 1928

Chapter 7

Lowry Hill Commercial and Institutional Development

Apart from small grocery shops in several apartment buildings near Hennepin Avenue, few non-residential uses interrupted the Lowry Hill landscape north of Franklin Avenue. In the transformation from territorial road to boulevard to an urban street, however, some Hennepin Avenue commercial lots south of Franklin Avenue were redeveloped two or even three times. On certain blocks between Franklin Avenue and Lake Street, the first generation of a few farmhouses and other agricultural buildings was replaced in the 1880s and 1890s with a collection of substantial houses. Brewster's Addition, on Hennepin between Franklin and W. 22nd Street, was developed with several Queen Anne Style houses belonging to professionals and merchants. Some of these buildings were converted to stores and shops or uses such as mortuaries, as in the case of the Jonathan Kerr House (ca. 1900) at 1900 Hennepin Avenue.

In 1910 a three-story block of stores, with offices and a dance and Masonic hall on the upper floors, was completed at the northwest corner of Franklin and Hennepin. This building (now housing the Burch Pharmacy) was followed by the two-story John Baxter Building at the southwest corner of Franklin and Hennepin (2000-2006 Hennepin, 1007 Franklin Avenue: ca. 1914). For a time, the adjacent J. P. Brown House at 2008 Hennepin was retained for use as Masonic club rooms. In the next two blocks south of Franklin, several late 19th-century houses were demolished for filling station construction, and in 1919 a 200-car public garage was built at 2212-18 Hennepin.



Filling station at 1822 Hennepin Avenue, in 1927. Trinity Baptist Church is in the background (razed)



2200 Hennepin (1906), in 1954

The Jonathan W. Kerr House at 1900 Hennepin Avenue is the sole survivor of the number of large houses that once lined the west side of Hennepin Avenue north of W. 22nd Street. Erected for \$10,000 in 1896, the property included a large carriage barn. Kerr (1854-?), a native of Ireland, was a dry goods dealer. Subsequent owners converted the building to a mortuary, and then to offices. Other houses were short-lived. At 2200 Hennepin, for example, jeweler Rudolph Winter built a large house in ca. 1890 and razed it in 1906 for a three-story brick block housing his jewelry store. The family moved to nearby 2316 Humboldt Avenue S.

Another addition to the commercial zone between Franklin and 22nd Street was the Kenwood Exchange of the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company at 1115 W. 22nd Street. Constructed in 1914 and designed by Hewitt and Brown, the building housed operators and equipment.



Doctor's Building (1936), 301 Vineland Place (razed)

The Doctor's Building stood on Vineland Place between 1936 and 2001. It housed a popular pediatric clinic at a time when most were located in downtown Minneapolis. Dr. Edward Dyer Anderson commissioned architects McEnary and Krafft of Minneapolis to design his stucco-clad medical and dental clinic. Anderson (1892-1967) was the sole owner and a resident of 1778 Irving Avenue S. He served as president of the Hennepin County Medical Society in 1949-1950. In 1954, he retired to Switzerland. Anderson first practiced at this clinic with Max Sehan and dentist Claude W. Bierman. By 1950, those practicing in this building were Anderson, Sehan, Elizabeth Lowry, John Tobin, and Russell Wilder.¹⁶¹ A two-story addition was completed in 1954. The long history of filling low-lying areas at the base of Lowry Hill was evident when clinic construction was planned. Unstable soils on this site initially concerned Building Inspection staff of the City of Minneapolis. Apparently they had recommended no construction, but agreed to a plan showing stucco rather than brick veneer construction and no basement.¹⁶² The building was razed in 2001 for the construction of a glass-walled condominium building designed by ESG Architects of Minneapolis.

Lowry Hill Churches and Schools

New church construction followed the migration of congregations as the city's neighborhoods grew outside of the central business district. On the east side of Hennepin Avenue, the Cathedral Church of St. Mark (1910) and Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church (1916) have long been associated with the gateway to Lowry Hill. On the west side of Hennepin, however, six churches were built between Mount Curve Avenue and W. 22nd Street and three others between W. 22nd and Lake Street in East Isles.

Fowler Methodist Episcopal Church (1894) at 2011 Dupont Avenue S. was designed by Warren H. Hayes (1847-1899), one of the region's leading church architects. A 1906 addition by Harry W. Jones (1859-1935) and a 1918 addition by Bertrand and Chamberlin resulted in the present structure. The building is now the Scottish Rite Temple, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Fowler Methodist Church (Scottish Rite Temple), in 1910

The **Lowry Hill Congregational Church**, a mission of Plymouth Congregational, was organized in 1890 and a brick church was completed at about the same time. The building occupied the prominent Virginia Triangle at the intersection of Lyndale and Hennepin Avenues.¹⁶³ The short-lived structure was replaced by the Virigina Flats (1900). The congregation's next church was completed at 1020 Franklin in ca. 1902.¹⁶⁴ Designed by Charles B. Sedgwick, the building's exterior as first proposed was called "a new style of architecture in this part of the country" and featured a classical dome with Moorish accents.¹⁶⁵ (No photograph as built has been located.) The church was destroyed in a 1923 fire. The congregation completed a new church at 2020 W. Lake of the Isles Parkway in 1929.



Trinity Baptist Church in 1905 (razed)

Trinity Baptist Church at 1920 Bryant was completed in ca. 1904.¹⁶⁶ The stone church designed by Walter J. Keith had a corner bell tower and broad, shingled gables. The building was razed in 1987.

The **Sixth Church of Christ Scientist** was founded in 1908 and the church was completed in 1914 at 821 Summit. Kees and Colburn designed the stone-trimmed brick building.¹⁶⁷

St. Paul's Episcopal Church was housed at 2001 Bryant Avenue S. between 1902 and 1957. In 1957 the congregation relocated to 1917 Logan Avenue S. The new edifice by McEnary and Krafft retained a large residence on the site as a rectory.



First Unitarian Society, 900 Mount Curve (1951), in 1951

In 1951 the **First Unitarian Society**, founded in 1881, moved to 900 Mount Curve Avenue. The new building was designed by Roy N. Thorshov of Thorshov and Cerny and occupied the former site of the William S. Nott House. The building was placed across the sloping site that extends from Mount Curve to Groveland Terrace.



Douglas School in ca. 1896 (razed)

Douglas School (1894) at 1100 Franklin Avenue S. occupied a terraced site opposite the Lowry Hill Congregational Church. The school grounds occupied half the block. Designed by Sunnyside (Wedge) resident Warren B. Dunnell (1851-1931), the building featured a steep roof, central Palladian window, a classical columned entrance, and finials accented the prominent gabled dormers. An addition was made in 1923. In the 1950s the roof was removed as a fireproofing measure, and the building was razed in ca. 1973. Dunnell was a native of Portland, Maine and spent part of his youth in Owatonna, Minnesota. He attended the University of Minnesota, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the Ecole des Beaux Arts.¹⁶⁸ Dunnell designed high-styled residences as well as schools and hospitals for the State of Minnesota. His extant institutional designs include the Minnesota State Training School in Red Wing (1889) and the Minnesota Soldiers' Home in Minneapolis.

Northrop Collegiate School (1917) was organized as a school for girls in 1914. It was an outgrowth of Graham Hall, founded in 1900. The school building at 511 Kenwood Parkway opened in 1917 and was designed by Edwin Hewitt. Blake School for Boys was organized in 1907; it first occupied the William M. Blake house at 200 Ridgewood Avenue near Loring Park, and then relocated to the former John Gluck House at 1803 Hennepin Avenue before the construction of the Blake School for Boys in Hopkins in 1911. The Blake Junior School built at 2201 Colfax Avenue S. in ca. 1915 served as a grade school until ca. 1940.¹⁶⁹ Northrop Collegiate, Blake School, and Highcroft Country Day School merged as the Blake Schools in 1974.

Other Buildings, Structures, and Landscapes

The **Kenwood Armory** (a U.S. National Guard facility) was erected in 1907 at Lyndale Avenue and Vineland Place. The grounds had long been used for athletic and public events and military training.¹⁷⁰ In 1913 the Armory Gardens were opened by the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners. The armory



Armory and Gardens in 1915 (razed), looking south

building was erected on unstable fill dumped from Lowry Hill and was plagued with structural problems from the beginning. In addition to housing military functions, the 22,000-foot drill hall was the site of the annual Minneapolis Automobile Show and other events.¹⁷¹ It was razed in 1934, but the elaborate Armory Garden remained under the management of the park board. In 1988 the Walker Art Center and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board collaborated to create the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden on a part of the former Armory and a portion of the Parade grounds. In 1992 the garden was expanded from 7.5 to 11 acres.



Dunwoody Industrial Institute (1914) in ca. 1925

In 1914 the **Dunwoody Industrial Institute** was built at 816 Wayzata Boulevard (Dunwoody Boulevard) at the northern edge of the Parade. W. H. Dunwoody bequeathed \$3 million to establish the institution, with the purpose to "provide for all time a place where youth without distinction on account of race, color or religious prejudice, may learn the useful trades and crafts, and thereby fit themselves for the better performance of life's duties."¹⁷²



L: Thomas Lowry Memorial dedication, 1915 (relocated)

In 1915 the **Thomas Lowry Memorial** was placed at the intersection of Hennepin Avenue and Lyndale Avenue South in the Virginia Triangle. Exemplary of early 20th-century City Beautiful Movement public memorials, it was designed by Charles S. Wells (1872-1956). A native of Scotland, Wells was educated at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York (1893), the Art Students League of New York (1893-1896 and 1900-1901), the National Academy of Design in New York (1897), and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris (1902-1903).¹⁷³ Wells gained extensive experience as an assistant to New York sculptor Karl Bitter and other nationally known sculptors and architects. Wells executed exterior details and carvings for St. Mark's Episcopal Church (1910), and taught at the Minneapolis School of Art (1912-14 and 1918-1931). In 1967, the memorial was relocated to Hennepin Avenue and W. 24th Street.



*Hennepin and Wayzata (Dunwoody) Boulevard intersection in 1946.
The Alice Ames Home is at right; Lowry Hill is in the background*

The **Alice Ames Winter Demonstration Home** (razed) was constructed in 1925 on a square parcel at northeastern corner of the Parade at the intersection of Hennepin Avenue and Wayzata Boulevard. The project was organized by the Federation of Minneapolis Women's Clubs and was part of the city's fourth annual Better Homes Week. The two-story house was set on a landscaped site including a children's playground and a vegetable garden.¹⁷⁴



Left to right: Walker Art Gallery in 1926, 1944, and 1975

In 1927, lumber dealer and art collector Thomas Barlow Walker (1840-1928) opened the **Walker Art Gallery** in a one-story, Venetian-Gothic-inspired building designed to house his collection. Walker moved to Lowry Hill from his mansion at 803 Hennepin Avenue where he had operated an art gallery visited by about 100,000 people annually.¹⁷⁵ In 1915 Walker purchased the Thomas Lowry house and property at 2 Groveland Terrace and erected the new gallery on part of the site. The Lowry house was torn down after Walker's death, which occurred only one year after the new gallery opened.

In 1944 the building was remodeled with a new Moderne facade by Magney, Tusler and Settler and renamed the Walker Art Center. In 1971, the building was replaced with a new building designed by Edward Larabee Barnes. A major addition by Swiss architects Herzog and DeMeuron was completed in 2005.

In 1955 the former Thomas Lowry property became the site of an office building for the North American Life and Casualty Company. In 1956, an office building for the America Fore Insurance Company was erected on the opposite side of Groveland Avenue at 1752 Hennepin. This building occupied the site of the former George Partridge House (1898) at 2 Groveland Terrace.



L: North American Life and Casualty Company, 1740-1750 Hennepin Avenue (ca. 1955, razed); r: the America Fore Insurance group at 1752 Hennepin Avenue (ca. 1956). Photographs ca. 1956.

The **Tyrone Guthrie Theatre** was completed in 1963 at 725 Vineland Place. The building was erected on land behind the Walker Art Center donated by the T. B. Walker Foundation. Symbolizing the “birth of the not-for-profit resident theater movement,” the building was designed by Ralph Rapson and the 1,441-seat thrust stage by Tanya Moiseiwitsch.¹⁷⁶ The building was razed in 2006 after a new theatre was opened on the Minneapolis riverfront at Chicago Avenue S.

Part of the theatre site was previously devoted to Idea House I (1941) and Idea House II (1947). Erected by the Walker Art Center and called the “first functional modern homes built by an American museum,” they were planned during the national housing shortage after the Great Depression and World War II. Architects hired by the Walker designed the model houses; the interiors and furnishings were selected by Walker staff.¹⁷⁷



Tyrone Guthrie Theatre (1963), in 1966 (razed)

Chapter 8
Preservation Planning



George Daggett House, 40 Groveland Terrace (1901), in ca. 1910. The site was developed in 1969 for the Groveland Apartments.

Six Lowry Hill properties have been locally designated and/or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

Charles J. Martin House	1300 Mount Curve Avenue	Local and NRHP
C. J. Winton House	1324 Mount Curve Avenue	Local
Fowler Methodist Episcopal Church	2011 Dupont Avenue S.	Local and NRHP
Franklin B. Long House	25 Groveland Terrace	Local
John Lind House	1775 Colfax Avenue S.	Local
William S. Nott House	15 Groveland Terrace	Local

As noted in chapter 4, a 1984 study of Lake of the Isles recommended properties eligible for local designation by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission.¹⁷⁸ More recently, a 2006 inventory of portions of the Calhoun-Isles area completed by consultants Mead & Hunt made the preliminary recommendation that certain properties in Lowry Hill, including E. Lake of the Isles Parkway, the Franklin-Hennepin Avenue Apartment Area, the Groveland Addition, and Mount Curve Avenue, receive further study.¹⁷⁹ Recent studies of the Minneapolis Grand Rounds have also examined E. Lake of the Isles Parkway.¹⁸⁰ The inventory results and the present historic contexts study should provide information to guide further discussion about properties eligible for local heritage preservation designation or listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The previous and present studies generally concur that part of the significance of the Lowry Hill and East Isles neighborhoods is based on their associations with:

- Thomas Lowry, R. P. Russell, and other real estate dealers whose subdivisions created the late 19th-century neighborhood framework

- The Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners, which created and enhanced neighborhood park and transportation amenities
- The community of business leaders—beginning with Lowry and Russell—who established homes on Lowry Hill and in East Isles and hired the city’s leading architects and builders, resulting in areas of exceptional residential architecture.

E. Lake of the Isles Parkway, Mount Curve Avenue, and Groveland Terrace and adjacent street are associated with Lowry Hill’s largest and finest houses dating from ca. 1885 to 1930. Such buildings also are dispersed throughout East Isles neighborhood to the south, as is a wide variety of more standard single-family houses. Some of the city’s best examples of apartment buildings and flats (1900-1930) also are located on Lowry Hill. There are notable examples of churches and other institutional buildings. Buildings from the recent past, including houses from the 1950s and 1960s, are also part of the neighborhood. New residential construction continues, primarily in the form of additions and on sites cleared by demolition.

As noted in chapter 4, changing patterns of land use at the edges of Lowry Hill and East Isles, particularly the construction of high-rise housing, have long been controversial. The razing of old houses for new has been ongoing for a century. The recent demolition of a number of architecturally significant houses, however, and replacement with much larger buildings have also raised questions about impact on the historic streetscape.

The Traditional Neighborhood Landscape

The distinctive neighborhood landscape of Lowry Hill is composed of a variety of additions, subdivisions, and rearrangements that established street and lot widths. Residential, institutional, and commercial development between ca. 1885 and 1930 produced a variety of building types and architectural styles with modest as well as extraordinary construction budgets. There is no single type of Lowry Hill streetscape, although certain single-family residential streets have common features relying on uniform setback and the generally uniform scale and massing established by the first generations of builders. While high-style mansions are found on Lowry Hill, much smaller dwellings and vernacular architectural styles are also part of this traditional neighborhood landscape. One characteristic shared by much of the neighborhood’s past building is that building design, materials, and landscape setting are of very high quality.



Humboldt Avenue S., looking north at Douglas Avenue S., 2006

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