

CHAPTER XII

THE WAR AND THE SUBURBAN MOVEMENT AT FLOOD TIDE

1941-1952

In attempting to tell the story of the last ten or twelve years of development of St. Louis Park, one is astounded at the changes that have taken place. But trying to find some threads of major movements leads one to assert that the two movements with the greatest impact were World War II and the three fold expansion of the population. Though non-residents often are critical of the village, it had certain attractive qualities, many of which are psychologic rather than physical. These qualities induced about 15,000 persons to move there. To be sure, many problems were created but there was still faith in the old processes of problem solving which were practiced in local government; realization of the problem, solutions are proposed, and finally that the best solution is chosen, though it might not be 100 per cent effective.

It was a leisurely Sunday afternoon on December 7, 1941, when many people were eating dinner, when the Japanese bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. Few, even governmental officials, expected the attack. The United States found itself in war, with little or weak preparations, though conscription had begun a year earlier. Within a few days the Nazis had declared war and our nation was engaged in a global struggle. The nation gird for a long and total effort which was to defeat two enemies of democracy.

The first impact upon the village was to take men and women into the services at a more rapid rate. The exact number of servicemen is difficult to determine, but somewhat over 800 have been known to have joined or been drafted into one service or another. By 1944 the Congregational Church had a service flag with ninety-five stars on it and the First Lutheran had sixty men and women in the service, with other churches having similar records. Within a short time the sad news began to come to families of the loss of their sons and daughters. Several lists have been compiled of the number who gave their lives but none seems to be complete.

On the home front the exertions to support the war effort were great also. A ration board was established, headed by S. E. Ainsworth and in 1942, rationing was begun which eventually covered fats, canned fruit, meat, coffee, sugar, and many other items. Housewives carefully counted coupons before going to the grocery store, and in some cases could not buy certain items because of shortages. By 1945, there were distributed 13,500 ration books in St. Louis Park. Gasoline rationing was a serious problem for the commuters who worked in Minneapolis. Scanty rations, which most people were content to endure, were accepted with little grumbling because most families had sons and daughters in the services. Commuters pooled together to use each other's cars but when the gasoline rations were used up many rode the public buses. Those who drove also had to use tires carefully and sparingly, and speeds were limited to increase tire and gasoline mileage. "Black Market" became a new word which covered that group of buyers who put individual welfare above public and bought meat, tires, gasoline, and other items

from unauthorized dealers. Besides these things other controls were also used to get channelize maximum supplies to the war fronts while trying to equitable distribution at home.. Wages and salaries were put under certain regulations which tried to prevent them from rising to unnecessary levels. Rents likewise were regulated, though there were not too many homes in St. Louis Park which were for rent.

While the above mentioned devices were largely a restraining type of controls there were also many ways in which citizens could help the war effort by voluntary efforts. Housewives were encouraged to save tin cans which were needed for scrap metals. For example, in March of 1943, housewives in St.. Louis Park collected nine tons of tin while four months later sixteen tons were added to the pile. Then too, homemakers tried to save fats and oils which could be used as glycerols and glycols to be used in soaps and gunpowder. There were periodic paper drives which was to relieve the pressure on the industry which could thereby turn its efforts to more important endeavors. The government encouraged homeowners to turn the thermostats to lower temperatures to conserve fuel.

Civilians made preparations for active resistance in case the nation would be invaded or bombed. A Civilian Defense Council of a thousand members was formed under the chairmanship of L. V. Downing which was to give air warden service, police and fire protection, do salvage work and many other activities. The women, likewise, organized a Victory Aid for St. Louis Park to assist the Civilian Defense Council. By 1945, they had 350 block workers, sixty lieutenants and fourteen captains under the chairmanship of Mrs. A. B. Melbourne. One can rejoice today that the services of these two organizations were never needed but one must note that the dangers of war were well brought home to residents through these organizations.

Not only did people voluntarily conserve and "make do" but they also brought their purses to the support of the war. Workingmen generally had their employers deduct sums from their pay envelopes to buy one or more bonds monthly. Bonds were sold in convenient sizes and would gain about one-fourth in face value at the end of ten years because of the compounding of interest on the principal. Not only were there payroll deductions for bonds but house-to-house solicitors sought for additional funds. Two examples will suffice: In 1943, a crew of over one hundred people made a bond drive which was to net \$200,000 but which was oversubscribed by \$60,000. In the next year, two hundred solicitors began a drive to collect \$340,000, and similar drives were made in other years of the war. And then, in addition to the support of the government, there was a voluntary support of ancillary war agencies like Red Cross and United Service Organizations (USO) and Community Chest. In 1942, for example, the village subscribed \$5,192 to the War Chest campaign. One could not say that the people at home had forgotten that they were part of the war machine which was trying to defend the nation.

In a similar manner, the home front tried to maintain the morale of the service personnel by writing of letters and the sending of gift packages. Many a mother took from the mailbox a small letter which had gone through a photographic reduction process in order to reduce weight. This V mail, at times, had lines blanked out - lines which might

have given information to the enemy if he had been able to secure the letter. Some St. Louis Park business houses organized campaigns for "Smokes for Servicemen" and cigarettes were sent to distant lands where our servicemen carried the fight. And but few families forgot their sons and daughters in distant lands when it came to gift packages which most often contained food. Postmaster Verne Langdon reported at various times the number of gifts being mailed daily. In October of 1943, he said that the packages numbered from fifty to one hundred packages mailed daily, while around the holiday season the number increased several times.

Within the four years of war two major enemies were defeated and the power centers of the world shifted from Europe to Russia and the United States. Britian, which had "ruled the waves" since she had defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 had seen her fleet worn down to second position during the war, while the United States, which had never defeated a major navy, ruined the almost first rate Japanese fleet, thus becoming the world' s largest and most powerful. American air power grew so phenomenally during the war that by the time the armistices were signed there were but few spots on the surface of the globe which were safe from our bombs if we chose to attack. Only did our slaviv ally have an army which could match the American, and no one on the globe could field such immense quantities of armament and ammuniton. While the United States had escaped in World War I from a debtor status and had become a major creditor on the earth, in World War II, she became the physical and military leader of the world. The current cold war is but a manifestation of the conflict between the two major victors of World War II over which one will take leadership in the changing world.

The Nazis were defeated and asked for peace on May 6-8, 1945 and by August the Japanese had made an armistice. The cry for demobilization was heard in our land and almost immediately men were discharged. The weekly newspapers covering St. Louis Park carried items which read: "16 Vets Return" and "The Park Welcomes 38 Home" and in a short time most all of the 800 plus veterans were home, save those who preferred to remain in the services. Beardless boys who left home a few years earlier came home with captain's bars and maturity, while there were many who were left in graves in every major battlefield in the world.

Veterans who returned to St. Louis Park were encouraged to join the American Legion. This group had been formed after World War I but the first post, Frank Lundberg Post, had little health in it and was reorganized about 1929 and a couple of years later the Legion Rooms on Excelsior Road were built. Under new management and policies the new post rose to 126 members about 1940. With the return of the World War II veterans the number rose to almost two hundred. Another veterans group was the Veterans of Foreign Wars which was organized In January of 1946. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, St. Louis Park Post 5632 had 116 members upon organization and was led by Truman Hedwall, commander and Cyril C. Doyle, adjutant, plus a coterie of other officers. Later a Post Holding Company was formed to own property of civic value, and a V.F.W, Auxiliary was formed for the ladies.

The second great force which was to make an impact upon St. Louis Park was the building boom which followed World War II. The 1940 census showed that 7,737 persons lived in The Park and many knew that the pressure on housing would cause a great number of people to want to build when the war was over. Though the compilations for the 1950 census are not complete the preliminary figures showing population gains indicate that the village had 22,644 people in 1950. Since then the increase has continued and it is estimated that 28,500 persons now reside in the village. This phenomenal growth puts severe strains-upon water, gas, telephone, sewer systems in addition to giving special problems about recreation, schools, government, retail establishments, churches and other service institutions. This thirty-four percent gain in population is a factor which causes and will cause thinking people to struggle with civic problems.

One thing that seemed rather incongruous about St. Louis Park was the fact that it was a village, though it was the largest suburb around Minneapolis and had been, for more than a decade. With 22,000 people, many people thought that some reform in government was necessary, and that operating under what was called "horse and buggy" charter was no longer efficient. As early as June of 1938 a group had circulated a petition for signatures which was later presented to the District Court of Hennepin County asking for a commission to study the problem of governmental structure. The court recommended that a commission be established and fifteen members were appointed. Members of the commission were Milo Stevens, R.O. Sewall, B.M. Smith, D. K. Whalen, Morten Arneson, R. W. Mosher, H. J. Kyhlman, Anton Yngve, H. W. Perkins, Mrs. Cecilia Standal, Mrs. A. E. Melbourne, E. H. Shursen, H. W. Darby, John Anderson, and Leland F. Leland. After intensive study of other charters the committee drew up a charter for the village consisting of twelve chapters. The most important change was to raise it from a village to a city and to establish a city manager. A lengthy campaign to "sell" the idea was made. On September 10, 1940 the proposal was submitted to the electorate which rejected the proposal 1,340 to 937, 41 percent being for the charter. This rebuff did not kill the idea of reform and in 1947 another fifteen members were appointed to a committee but with somewhat different personnel, only Arneson and Leland remaining from the first commission. Many other charters were again studied and newspaper articles were written in an educational campaign. In many respects the new charter was substantially like the old one although it was more specific on some points. It provided for a council of six alderman, three elected at large, and three from wards, all holding office for four years. The village would become a fourth class city and would have a city manager who would be selected by the aldermen, as the city attorney would be. Elections would be held on odd numbered years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in December. Opposition groups formed rather quickly to fight the new charter proposal. One group of seventy was led by C. L. Hurd who opposed the charter because he said it had no tax limit, would establish a superman government, and was not necessary because the new village code authorized by the legislature was satisfactory. The Charter Fact Finding Committee took advertisements in the St. Louis Park Dispatch to oppose the charter, and four thousand reprints were soon distributed in the village. The election was held in March of 1949 and showed that the opposition group had won. The election vote was 2,050 against the charter with 1,345 for it. A four-sevenths approval vote was necessary to carry the proposal but only 39.9 percent voted

for it. The issue brought only 38 percent of the electorate to the polls. The reasons for the failure of the charter are not precisely known. C.L. Hurd said that it failed because it appeared to many that their taxes would rise, while another prominent citizen said it failed because some city employees opposed it vigorously fearing that its adoption would cause them to lose their jobs. What the precise reasons for rejecting the charter were is not known but one commentator said that when only 39 percent of the electorate voted the voice of the public was not very strong.

The idea of governmental reform did not die with the 1949 election but was continued. The League of Women Voters questioned each candidate for mayor in 1951 and all expressed himself in favor of some kind of revision of charter. Leo J. Aro and Mel Cooper wanted a village form of government, while C. L. Hurd, Jorge Magnuson, and Irving Nemerov wanted a city manager. Shortly after his election Mayor Hurd announced that a new charter study group would be appointed.

A curious move developed about 1946 when it appeared that the charter proposal would come up for discussion again. There were several who thought that when reforms were begun they should include the changing of the village name. St. Louis Park was too much like the Missouri city name and something better could be found. Hugh McElroy, a realtor, proposed, the name Meadowbrook, while there were a few who wanted Glenwood, that being the name of Theodore Wirth Park at one time. Lydia Rogers, charter commission secretary and compiler of the village directories since 1934, offered to circulate a petition to change the name to Glenhurst or Parkwood, two other names which had been suggested. Mc Elroy withdrew his proposal when he found that there was another municipality in the state with the name Meadowbrook, although he was satisfied with the Glenwood name. Other names proposed were Parkhurst and West Gate, which were somewhat more satisfactory than the two proposed by the Minneapolis man who thought that it should be Minna-Hop or Minna-Ken. The movement to change the name seems to have died when village attorney, E. T. Montgomery, pointed out that to secure a vote on it, a petition would have to be submitted which would contain signatures of twenty percent of the electorate.

For some illustration of what the increasing population demanded of the village one needs only to look at the pressure put upon the government for extension of the water system. While there were virtually no houses built during the war the period after the war saw a burgeoning. And with the war there likewise were but very small, if any, extensions made to the water system because of shortages of materials. The village could boast in 1947 that it had a \$480,000 water system on which it owed but \$132,000. The system was supplying 3,336 water users and there were four hundred more waiting. It was in the process of laying five more miles of water mains to be paid for by special assessments. The village was offering 140,000 worth of bonds for sale which, was to provide resources to complete well number four and to dig wells five and six, and provide equipment. So great had the problem become by 1949 that the council requested \$216,489 from the federal government to make plans for future wells, pumps, etc., which were to be blueprinted and ready in case a recession should cause unemployment. The cost of the equipment and work for this plan was to be around six million dollars.

Nevertheless, the village went ahead with its plans in addition to the overall planning and sold another \$488,000 worth of bonds to continue expansion of the water system in 1950. By 1951 the village government was able to report that there were 6,600 water users, and still there was a backlog of demands.

The sewer system was a similar problem though not quite so urgent. The war prevented the extension of the system but the demands rose immediately after the armistice when materials became available. New sewer districts were created and mains were laid and by 1951 it was reported that there were 2,035 connections and \$200,000 was being expended upon new extensions. In some areas where sewers had not been built veterans and others built their cesspools but the wet years gave some trouble and the village tried to help those unfortunate veterans who could not induce some of the less scrupulous builders to construct a good system.

Another governmental service which was added to already existing was that of garbage collection and disposal. As early as the turn of the century the council had designated Bass Lake as a dumping ground but little was done about disposal during the ensuing years except to pass ordinances regulating the places where refuse could be thrown. In 1950 it became imperative that some sort of a system be established and the council resolved to assess owners to collect garbage. But the selection of a dumping ground gave a great deal more trouble. Many cities had used marshy places for dump grounds and eventually built them into sites suitable for building. In St. Louis Park these seemed like ideal places, where the gravel and sand companies had dug out huge holes and then abandoned them. When the village began to use these and other sites the nearby residents raised vigorous objection, especially those near Texas Avenue and Aquila. Petitions were presented objecting to the sites because they said the odors were offensive and that dumping grounds were good habitation for vermin. Injunctions were threatened and lawyers were active. The village was forced to find some other disposal system and an incinerator is under consideration at the present time

The same type of expansion of service was necessary in the fire and police departments in order to protect the greater area, and the greater number of residents. By 1951, the fire department was composed of eleven men, (including Chief "Pete" Williams), who operated three engines and one truck. In the same year a Minneapolis Bank gave them a demonstration truck which had inhalators, tables, chairs, a public address system, cameras and photographic equipment. The department was averaging more than one call per day during the recent years. The police system began the decade with but four paid officers and one car equipped with radio equipment. By 1951 there were ten police officers needed including Chief Andy Nelson and three police cars. Early in 1958 the police force formed a union, The Police Officers Federation, an independent union of which James Dahl is president.

Virtually every activity in St. Louis Park was expanded in the period immediately after the war, and the recreation program was not an exception. It will be remembered that the recreation program was given some support by the W.P.A. but with the demise of that agency at the beginning of the war the school board provided for some of the

summer recreation work. Especially was the superintendent interested in the swimming program which was given at Cedar Lake. In 1946 the St. Louis Park Recreation Planning Committee was incorporated to "stimulate, promote, participate in or carry on any recreational activity designed to improve the physical, mental or moral conditions of the persons in and near St. Louis Park." Fred Roessel, Nathan Epstein, Willard Keller and Carl Johnson were the officers, while the first three named plus Otto Domian, Nelson Swenson and Torval Jorvig became the first board of directors. This organization provided the plans while the school board, the park board and the Community Fund provided the finances. In 1948, a year-around program was planned and Dorothea Nelson was hired as director. Spending around \$30,000 annually, the program provides recreation for all ages of people. In the summer there is baseball, swimming, horseshoe, softball, basketball, badminton, golf, tennis, volleyball, day camps, dancing band, picnics, hikes, crafts, library work, conservation and special trips. For younger fry there is craft work, croquet, horseshoe, table games, shuffleboard, puppets and many other activities. For the very youngest: storytelling, games, simple crafts, sandbox activities and other educational and recreational projects. The recreation department sponsors Fourth of July Celebrations, Halloween Parties, skating rinks and provides club rooms. For adults there is square dancing, basketball party service, the 60 Plus Club, Teen-age dances and crafts. Fourteen playgrounds are operated during the summer and athletic leagues are sponsored in the winter months. Is such a program used and popular? One need only look at the record for 1951 and discover that it is. Almost 36,000 persons attended the various functions on the fourteen playgrounds in 1951. Some 1,259 took band lessons, fifty-eight softball teams played the game, while 1,942 were found in swimming classes. These are only samples of the work done. Said Mr. Gerald B. Fitzgerald, Director of Recreation Training at the University of Minnesota, "If you want to see a good job in recreation, go visit St. Louis Park."

One might wonder what all of the above activities cost the taxpayer and what kind of a tax base was needed to support the expanded programs. In 1941 the assessed valuation of all property was less than three and one-half million dollars while the next year it rose above that figure. True values were over twelve million dollars. Land was valued at three million while buildings and improvements comprised the remaining nine million. Assessor Ainsworth reported that in 1944 there was about fourteen million dollars of true values in the village. He said that there were 3,104 homesteads in the village, and 17,000 parcels of platted property with some 2,588 acres unplatted. That same year receipts from all sources amounted to \$271,275 of which property taxes brought in about \$121,000, special assessments \$86,000 and water revenue about \$36,000, with miscellaneous revenues making up the remainder. By 1948 the village was requiring general taxes to supply \$172,427. The main increase in the cost of government has not been in general taxes but through special assessments required to construct water and sewer systems. The schools are the most costly of any enterprise, as they are in all towns.

In 1937 there were fifty-five businesses operating in St. Louis Park, according to the Minnesota State Commercial Directory, a number which seems like somewhat less than most towns of seven thousand people would have. About twenty-five manufacturers

had established there in the 1930's but of the forty-three operating in 1949 there were only three which had been located there before 1930. Those three were Prest-O-Lite, Republic Creosote and Keumpel Chime Clock Company. Space forbids the mentioning of all the various manufacturing enterprises which came to The Park in the late 1940s but one might mention some of the products. One could buy brick, concrete blocks, tools, dies, bolts, ornamental iron, brass and aluminum fittings, metalwares, peanut butter, gaskets, woodwork, doors, electric fixtures, hydraulic equipment, clothing, gas, opera glasses, garages, lenses, dental tools, duplicators, addressers, industrial chemicals, gas tanks, fingernail polishers, coat hangers, water softeners, posthole diggers, built-in kitchens, home radiators, re treaded tires, roller skates, ice cream, screens, garage doors, and many other products. Besides these one could find printing plants which printed various things like service manuals for garages, and a Catholic magazine. Several companies were wholesale firms which handled shoes, cookies, biscuits, and many other things. The S and L Stores, which had almost forty retail stores, maintains a warehouse in St. Louis Park.

Retail stores were also numerous and served the 25,000 residents who demanded food, clothing, hardware, lumber and many other commodities. Several large shopping centers were developed after the war, notably at Excelsior and Wooddale, Minnetonka Boulevard, Lake Street and other places. After the first store which handled only gasoline and automobile supplies was established about 1920, many others followed, there being eleven in 1928 and enough today so that a person "running out of gas" would have to walk but a few blocks to find a filling station.

As for service businesses there are many, and one only need to look in the Rogers Directory to find the names of doctors, lawyers, realtors, dry cleaners/ tailors, and the like. In 1950 the Citizens State Bank was formed and opened its doors for business on January 16. It was capitalized with \$130,000 capital and surplus plus \$20,000 undivided profits. Located on Excelsior Boulevard, it had deposits of almost three million dollars within two years.

While the above discussion indicates that the village had no dearth of business enterprise one might note that the establishments were of a different type than those operating during the industrial era. While the old industry was of the heavy type using coal and iron, the new was what might be called light industry based upon the lighter metal and requiring power supplied largely by electricity. Furthermore, the new industry did not employ as many hands; few, if any employed as many as one hundred men.

Market-gardening, which had once been one of the main occupations of the village, was now virtually gone. The eastern and southern gardeners had sold their properties to real estate firms who replatted the land into building sites. The big gravel pits on the east "ate out" another area which once raised much garden produce. A few still remain, mostly on the north but the business cannot be said to be a main source of income for any large group as it once had been. Likewise, the same thing happened to the dairy farmer - their land was sold and replatted. Today children play, and lawns are mowed, where once the cow grazed.

The platting of new additions "ate up" part of the remaining lands in St. Louis Park and presaged the building of new homes. An aerial photograph of Excelsior Boulevard in 1956 showed much space on which new homes could be built, while a 1950 picture of the same area showed it well built up. Requests for approval of new plats came to the council thick and fast after the war. In 1946, for example, six new subdivisions were platted: Crestview, South Crestview, Westwood Park, Belmont Terrace, Towles Minnetonka Boulevard, and Edes and Norton's Addition. Fine Homes Addition was platted in 1950 and provided for 219 building sites. Many other plattings were also made. With the plattings there was a plethora of requests for building permits. In 1942 only 32 were granted, primarily because the war was in progress and materials were not available. After the war the pressures were very great. In 1949 some 857 permits were granted and in 1950 the greatest number ever granted were allowed, 1,122, which was the third largest number granted in the state, exceeded only by Minneapolis and St. Paul. The village was still third in 1951 when 763 were granted, closely followed by Richfield with 737. Between 1946 and 1952 there were about 4,500 building permits granted in St. Louis Park, more than were granted in Duluth, a city several times the size of the village. No other suburban area around the Twin Cities was in such great demand for building sites.

With the platting of the sites and the building of new homes the mileage of streets likewise increased. By 1951 the village had one hundred and ten miles of streets, eleven and one-half miles of state highways, and ten miles of county roads. There were 575 streetlights which was 251 more than could be found in 1941. And with the growing population was the expansion of the park system which comprised six major and several minor parks in 1951 which occupied an area of about eighty acres.

The postal system during the past decades of expansion had tried to keep pace with the growing population. The first postmaster as has been noted, was Oliver K. Earle but he was succeeded by Joseph Hamilton. When Hamilton retired from active life he turned the post office over to James T. Davis who kept it in his store until Charley Hamilton became postmaster. About the turn of the century rural free delivery was begun and in 1910 the postal savings banks were established followed two years later by the establishment of the parcel post system which was instituted to strike a blow at the monopolistic express companies. The earliest rural free delivery route was established about 1902 and one of the first carriers on that route was G. M. Whipple. There were later several routes but the last one was abandoned in 1949. In 1915 the present postmaster, Verne Langdon, was appointed but took a twenty month leave of absence during the first World War. Along about 1927 the village had two city carriers but when the local post office was absorbed by the Minneapolis system in 1930 the number was expanded to about seven. Some fifteen people disliked the idea of not having a post office with a local name but the absorption of the St. Louis Park Post Office increased the salary of the postmaster, who became a superintendent of the St. Louis Park Branch of the Minneapolis system, and also increased the amount of service. By 1952 the postal system has fifty employees who serve thirty-one routes. Plans are being made for a new building which will be built near the brick block and a building permit has been issued for twenty thousand dollar structure.

Politically, St. Louis Park showed a characteristic which is common in America, it voted conservatively on national issues and for president, but tended to follow new parties in state affairs. In 1932, though Roosevelt swept the country and the state, St. Louis Park supported Herbert Hoover, 1,160 to 1,069. By 1936 the sentiment had changed, and like most Americans who thought that the reform program should be continued, voted for Franklin Roosevelt giving him about 350 more votes than Alf Landon, the Republican candidate. Lemke, who was trying to break the hold of the two major parties, got but 136 votes in The Park. The 1940 presidential election found The Park safely back in the Republican fold. Wendell Willkie, the Republican candidate received 2,765 votes while his opponent, Franklin Roosevelt, who was running for the third term received 2,090. The popularity of Franklin Roosevelt declined somewhat in St. Louis Park, and the nation as well, by 1944, and was revealed in the election returns. Thomas Dewey secured 3,663 votes in The Park while Franklin Roosevelt received by 2,841, though the county voted for the incumbent. Dewey tried again for the presidency in 1948 running against Harry Truman. St. Louis Park gave Dewey 4,737 votes to 2,963 for Truman. With but one exception St. Louis Park seems to have been of Republican proclivities in all presidential elections since 1932, save one.

In their choice of governor, St. Louis Park found Farmer Laborite Floyd B. Olson to be their favorite both in 1930 and in 1932. In the first election it gave him 885 votes to 602 for Republican R. P. Chase. In the 1932 election it preferred Olson over Republican E. Brown 1,145 to 1,053. Again in 1934 and in 1936 it preferred Farmer Laborites for governor, first Floyd B. Olson and then Elmer Benson. In the Republican groundswell of 1938 the village turned toward Harold Stassen whom it again supported in 1940 when he defeated the Farmer-Laborite candidate H. Peterson, 3,032 to 1,424 with the Democrats coming in third with but 425 votes. The great number of votes is perhaps explained by the fact that it was a presidential election year. In 1942 Stassen was again elected with the help of 2,233 votes from The Park while the Farmer Labor and Democratic candidates had serious declines in the total votes cast in the village, both dropping roughly half. By 1944 the Democrats and the Farmer Labor parties had fused but the result did not result in enough strength to elect a governor. St. Louis Park preferred Ed. Thye for governor over DFL candidate B. G. Allen, the vote being 4,566 to 2,022. In 1946 Luther Youngdahl defeated his opponents by a three to one ratio but in 1948, another presidential year, Halsted, the DFL candidate, ran a somewhat better race being defeated only 5,651 to 2,367. Youngdahl was reelected in 1950 with the help of 5,204 votes from The Park while his opponent, H. H. Peterson, received but 1,866. The Republican Party seems to have gained strength in the village during the last decade. The growth of the G.O.P. seems to be correlated with the expansion of population, especially the great growth after World War II.

As far as the vote for senator was concerned, the village began the 1930s by supporting the Republicans, especially Thomas Schall, but with the upsurge of the Farmer-Laborites it supported Shipstead and Lundeen in 1934 and 1936. But in 1940, when Shipstead rejoined the Republican Party, the village followed (or led) the return to regular politics. It supported Shipstead, Ball, and Thye, though Ball lost to Humphrey in

1948. The village has never given support to a Democrat, though it was willing to break with regularity and vote Farmer-Labor candidates into office.

In local and county politics the only successful village man was S. Earl Ainsworth, who won the county commissioner's office in 1944 by defeating E. Jeppesen, St. Louis Park aiding him with 4,653 votes to 1,638 for his opponent. Again in 1948, Ainsworth was returned to office defeating Jeppesen again. St. Louis Park favored its local son 5,697 to 1,712. Another aspiring resident from The Park was Torval Jorvig, who ran against incumbent Archie Miller for State Senator from the 36th District. While Miller won, The Park gave Jorvig 3,240 votes to Miller's 3,046, and Jorvig carried five of eight wards in the village. Otherwise the local aspirants have had difficulty in winning the nomination in the primary election.

Another institution which tries to reflect public opinion, if not make it, is the newspaper. J. Linn Nash continued to operate *The Spectator* which had been established in 1937 but at the turn of the decade another paper was published which was to cover events in The Park, *The St. Louis Park Dispatch*, which was published at Hopkins, but maintained an office in St. Louis Park, brought out the first edition on November 7, 1941 with Barney Gross as editor. Little did they know that the war was to begin with the attendant difficulties of newsprint, help, etc., but the paper continued. To make certain that advertising reached all people a shopper-type throw sheet was also printed and distributed, in 1946. Nash sold his paper to a group of Hopkins men who moved the offices to that city. The name of the paper was changed to the *Suburban Press* and continued to operate under that name until in 1952 it was sold to J. L. Markham who was also the publisher of the *St. Louis Park Dispatch* and the Hopkins paper. *The Dispatch* is received in about 28 percent of the village homes.

Under the impact of the growing population the schools likewise had to expand to meet the increased needs. In 1951 the system consisted of five grade schools and a junior-senior high school which is today in the process of being expanded. More will be written about the school system in a later chapter.

Another evidence of the maturity of the village was the growth of clubs and lodges which found a great flourishing after the growth of The Park as a residential suburb. Among the oldest of lodges was the I.O.O.F, St. Louis Park Lodge #202, which was organized in 1892 and has enjoyed a continuous existence since. Among the officers in the lodge one can find almost all of the leaders in village affairs. Likewise, the 'associated organization, the Rebekahs, was almost as old and has had continuous existence. The Masonic Order came to the village much later, the first lodge being formed about 1923 under the name of Paul Revere Lodge #321. Associated with them was the Eastern Star #272, Acacia Chapter which is the women's counterpart of the Masonic. Lodge. The Woodman Lodge has also had some support in the village and the Woodman Circle has been in existence for some time. Though there were thirty or forty Knights of Columbus in St. Louis Park there was no local council. Most members belonged to the Hennepin County Council where Daniel K. Whalen was a prominent figure.

There were in the course of time a number of service clubs organized in St. Louis Park which were dedicated to the improvement of the village in various ways. The Lions Club was formed in 1942 with an original membership of about twenty, some of the officers of the club have been Earl Ainsworth, Russell Dietrick, John Billman and Joe Justad. Five years later the Rotary Club was formed with twenty charter members. The first meeting was held April 1, 1947 under the chairmanship of R.N. Ruedlinger, the first secretary being Harry D. Harper. Carroll Hurd, who also served as president of the club, is at present district governor of the organization which is dedicated to the "ideal of service." One of the main interests of the club is in the development of the school system and associated endeavors, and one of their activities is the sponsoring of an annual career day in the schools. Still another organization in the village, which is largely a service group, is the Sunshine Society which was formed to work in hospitals.

While the foregoing clubs have been denominated service clubs, it should not be assumed that all other organizations had other objectives - the others had worthy service objectives which were often dedicated to educational, propaganda or improvement objectives. St. Louis Park has always had a number of booster and improvement clubs - especially those dedicated to improvement of areas for living purposes. There was the North Side Improvement Association, the Eliot Group and the Park Taxpayers Improvement Group, all of which hoped to better their places of living, and there was the Lake Forest Association incorporated under the presidency of Paul Fisch which hoped to improve their area, as did the Excelsior Avenue Booster Club. In addition there were numerous garden clubs. In 1942 there were seven on record but the number had grown to ten in 1945. Names of the garden clubs, were Brookside, Meadowbrook, Lilac, Brookview, Hill Top, Minnikadha Vista, St. Louis Park, Manor Heights, Cedar Brook and Browndale, to mention a few. The Women's Club of St. Louis Park had somewhat wider objectives than many others. Education of members and securing of needed reforms in the village called them in to prominence at various times. The Better Government League, which had about-twenty-five members, became active in the 1930s and succeeded in securing several reforms in village government. There were also clubs devoted to recreation and sports. Many St. Louis Park residents were found in the Hopkins Gun Club while a local club of sportsmen operated under the name St. Louis Park Sportsmans Club. For the ladies there was the Suburban Women's Bowling League which pursued that sport for pleasure and exercise. At one time there existed the St. Louis Park Social Club which met eight times yearly in the Legion Hall for social purposes, and down in Browndale there existed the Browndale Park Coterie.

Several organizations were war-born but some have had difficulty living in peacetime. The American Legion was founded after the first World War and had continued, with a reorganization until today. The Veterans of Foreign Wars was founded after the second great war. During the last war the War Dads was formed to promote moral among servicemen and women but it declined with the end of the war and the return of the sons to the hearthside. A ladies club was formed during the war to try to make mothers a factor in the establishment of peace and to prevent the unneeded attrition of war upon the youth of the nation. The Red Cross took upon itself certain important

duties in the war effort and continued, after the war, the mission of helping those in distress. Likewise the Community Fund was an organization which performed literally thousands of useful and necessary tasks for children's welfare, borderline relief cases, hospitalization needs, and promoted boy and girl scout groups.

Among the educational clubs of the village one should mention the Boy Scouts which, with the Cub Packs, served in many ways great numbers of the youth. In 1949, there were at least nine Boy Scout, Sea Scout and Cub Pack groups operating in the village. But in number of troops, the girl's organizations outnumbered the boys. In 1945 three Campfire Girl's groups served forty-three girls while five BlueBird groups served seventy girls. Nine Girl Scout Troops were active in Brookside area while in the north part the North Side, St. Louis Park area had eight. Four years later, after the great immigration, there were twenty-six Girl Scout Troops in the village, fifteen BlueBird organizations and eight troops of Campfire Girls. Various civic clubs sponsored the many organizations for girls and boys. Likewise, there were many Parent and Teachers organizations which were devoted to the task of learning about school, procedures and operations. Usually there was formed a P.T.A. group for each school which meant that there were from seven to eight groups active.

Of all the clubs in St. Louis Park, the Chamber of Commerce is probably the most representative of economic interests. This organization was preceded by several other organizations of a like nature but none had full time personnel working for them. The earliest group was the Commercial Club, which flourished about 1915, but it continued on and finally died a lingering death with the decline of business and industry. In the 1930s a St. Louis Park Businessmen's Association was formed with the objective of advancing commercial, industrial growth and promoting the general interests of St. Louis Park. In the fall of 1950 the Chamber of Commerce was formed which was incorporated the following year. Barney Gross served as secretary of the organization until he was employed at work in Minneapolis. John Louis was subsequently hired for the position and gives full time to the work. Today the organization is composed of over two hundred members and is rapidly becoming the main source of information about existing and potential economic information about the village.

To serve the expanding population of the village about a half dozen new churches were formed, adding new denominations or augmenting the work of existing churches. The Catholics, for example, had but one church in 1940 but by 1952 there were two within the village and two on the borders which gave service to the residents. And three of these churches had parochial schools integrated with the church. The Methodist churches were merged into a larger organization while the Union Congregational built a new church and a few years later added an educational building to their properties. And of course there were several new churches formed, the discussion and description of which will follow in the next chapter.

The social structure of the village remained much like it had been in the previous decade: home ownership increasing, most people belonging to the white collared group, predominately Republican in politics, and middle class in outlook. While there was still a

large segment who wished to see St. Louis Park remain a residential suburb, there was another less defined but noticeable drift toward allowing industry and business to locate in the village if those enterprises would locate in designated zones. The idea that the village was to be a place of single family residences was modified in the decade to allow apartment houses to be built and several large projects were carried to completion. Instead of the neighborhood store, one could find an increasing number of shopping centers, each of which would provide almost all the services needed by a small village. One could note the development of less expensive housing - row after row of houses, much alike, being provided by large contracting firms. The social groupings were changing because of the new influx of people into The Park and the old five or six group system which seemed so firmly entrenched seemed to be in the state of reorganization - ten or perhaps more, being in the process of formation. Ethnically, the village changed somewhat also. There were perhaps, more Jewish people, but in general the residents were native born Americans, whatever their parents or ancestors were. In a religious sense there were also changes. If a religious census were taken one would likely find more people adhering to the Lutheran faith but certainly there are more Catholics than there were a decade or two earlier. Age-wise St. Louis Park would show significant differences from other satellite cities of the same size. Most towns of the same size find that about one-third of the population is less than twenty-one years of age. A rough estimation using school census and intelligent guesses about total population, (the 1952 federal census is obsolete before the final figures are published-especially as it relates to St. Louis Park) shows that over forty percent of the residents are under twenty years of age. Half or more of the estimated 12,000 youth making up the school population can be found in the public and parochial schools of the village. The great influx of population was and is making a revolution in the village - in school, church, government, wealth, interests, social groupings and in other ways. Only the future can tell what the pattern will be in 1960, but intelligent planning for the future requires a detailed and comprehensive social survey of the village.