

HISTORY OF PARK IS ALMOST READY FOR THE PRINTER

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The long desired and much discussed history of St. Louis Park is expected to be available to residents soon, either through reference at a library or copies published for sale. The history, which will run 13 or 14 chapters on approximately 300 pages, has been written, and all that remains now is working out final plans for publication and distribution.

Research and writing of the history of the Park was done by Norman Thomas, Minneapolis, former college history teacher at Black Hills Teachers college, Spearfish, So. Dak., who is working on his doctorate at University of Minnesota. He has a master's degree from University of South Dakota.

Mr. Thomas was secured for the writing task by Barney Gross, 7713 West Lake St.

But the man with the idea of writing the history, who contacted Mr. Gross and who is paying the costs is S. Earl Ainsworth, 6216 West 35th St.

Mr. Ainsworth, himself a resident of the Park 58 years, said he has been interested in getting a history of the village for some years.

Publication and distribution of the history is being discussed this week by the three men.

Mr. Ainsworth said there are no plans for the number of books to be printed or for their distribution. His only motive for having the book written is his interest in a history of the Park, he emphasized.

The book, which also will contain pictures, may be reviewed by members of the Old Settlers group in the Park, which Mr. Ainsworth founded.

Composed of persons who have lived here 50 or more years, the group held its first picnic in July, 1951, with 65 in attendance.

The history-writing project got underway last year.

Mr. Thomas met members of the Old Settlers group at a get-together, then began contacting all of them for information.

The writer also delved into old records, though, as he said, materials were sometimes hard to find. Old records of Minneapolis township, of which the Park is a part, couldn't be located.

Mr. Thomas has finished writing the history — 250 typewritten pages, double spaced—but he still needs pictures and would like to borrow pictures of old buildings, former officials and pioneers. Old maps also are desired. Mr. Thomas asks persons having old photos or maps to contact him at GL 9241.

The author said his history will cover a century, the white settlement of the area. First chapter of the book, however, will be a sketch of previous history of the region.

Mr. Thomas said he was not able to find out exactly who were the first white residents of the Park. Two bachelors, Thomas and Edward Self came about 1852 or 1853. They lived along the Great Northern near Texas Ave., and traded with the Indians.

Both Mr. Ainsworth and Mr. Thomas affirmed that history has been lost in recent years with the deaths of old residents who pioneered in the area.

The village was incorporated in 1886, and included the area between Excelsior and Minnetonka Blvd., the Belt Line and vicinity of Oak Hill school.

The village lived under two dominant dreams, Mr. Thomas said.

First was that of becoming an industrial area, which started with the T. B. Walker—Minneapolis Land and Investment Co. development effort.

This period ended about 1920, with the idea of a nice residential suburb taking its place, an idea dominant largely to this day.