



IN THIS ISSUE...

FROM THE PAST:
STATE FAIR ON
42ND & GRAND

OKTOBERFEST ON 10/14

FALL 2023

Cover image courtesy of Annick Sjobakken
with thanks to the Chawla Family

WATERBURY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

From the Waterbury Neighborhood Association

Dear Neighbors,

We hope you're enjoying watching the seasons change around us as kids walk down Polk to school, as Roosevelt's annual TP streams in the wind, and as the leaves and light are changing every day.

Thank you to volunteers who helped out with the neighborhood gardens and for summer events. Neighbors' donations of time, energy, and resources help create our vibrant community. As droughts and hot summers continue, we'll need more support to be able to keep planting flowers on Polk next year- please keep an eye out for calls for volunteers on Facebook and in the Spring 2024 newsletter. If you would like to join next summer, we're happy to have new volunteers anytime.

Waterbury's shared garden space is also funded by a perpetual care account, established through the Waterbury Neighborhood Association. If you'd like to provide a direct donation to that account, we'd greatly appreciate your financial support as well. Donate directly on the website WaterburyNeighbors.org, or you can always mail in a check: please see the membership page in this newsletter for more information.

With thanks,

Waterbury Neighborhood Association Board



Luminaries 2023

It's been lovely to see so many holiday luminaries throughout the neighborhood on December 24 over the past several years. If you have participated in the past, your block captain will contact you in November or December. If you'd like to participate for the first time, or have any questions, please contact us. Thanks to all for making Waterbury especially beautiful on Christmas Eve!

Diane Becker

dianebecker25@icloud.com | 203-858-4051

Alice Peterson

alicevp207@aol.com | 515-326-2363

Celebrate fall with neighbors at
Waterbury's Annual
Oktoberfest

Live Music, Food, Beer, & Kids' Activities
Saturday, 10/14 • 4-6PM
61st & Grand
On the lawn just north of Vibrant Credit Union

SAVE THE DATE

11 MONTH **11** DAY **23** YEAR

Join us at the Des Moines Marriott downtown for a fun evening supporting Roosevelt High School and celebrating Rider pride!
Tickets & tables go on sale September 1st.

SUMMER RECAP 2023



National Night Out

National Night Out was a wonderful event again this year. WNA provided new bike helmets for neighborhood kids, purchased through the Blank Children's Hospital Safety Store. Families also enjoyed painting, balloon art, lawn games, live music from James Biehn of Central Iowa Music Lab and ice cream treats. The DMPD and Fire Department surprised us with a SWAT truck this year, for kids of all ages to check out. Thanks to our volunteer committee for organizing the event, and to Two Rivers Bank for sponsoring food and activities. Hope to see you back out on the Polk islands next summer!



Waveland Trolley Loop Ribbon Cutting

The Waveland Trolley Loop opened this fall on University Avenue, just east of the golf course entrance. The project was a collaboration between the Des Moines Historical Society, the Des Moines Streetcar Friends, and the Waveland Park Neighborhood Association. This "pocket park" was designed to transform a long-neglected site, a former trolley turnaround, into an interactive asset for the neighborhood. Stop by to climb up on the sculpture, take a break from a ride or run on the benches, and learn about local history.

GRAY'S LAKE PARK PLAYGROUND & SPRAYGROUND INPUT NEEDED!

COMING SOON
A destination playground and sprayground will replace the old playground. The new features will compliment the natural beauty of Gray's Lake Park and continue to welcome all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

NEW LOCATION
The proposed features will be located east of the beach, providing greater access from existing parking lot and restrooms.

DONOR FUNDED
The design and construction phases of the project will be donor and philanthropically funded.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
Please submit a survey response and join us at the in-person meetings on August 23 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Municipal Service Center, 1551 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway



FOLLOW THE PROJECT AT:
DSM.CITY/GRAYSLAKE

HOW TO DONATE
Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines website, visit DSM.city/GIVEdsm

TAKE THE SURVEY!



DSM.CITY/GRAYSLAKESURVEY





waterburyneighbors.org



@waterburyneighbors



@WaterburyDSM



HAPPENING IN WATERBURY

New in the Neighborhood

Two new restaurants are opening around Waterbury this fall, Either/Or and Oak Park. The WNA Board reached out to the teams at both places, and we're excited to be able to share information from them as they prepare to open their doors.

Oak Park

The highly anticipated Oak Park restaurant will open in late October at the corner of Ingersoll Avenue and 39th Street. Construction crews are currently putting the finishing touches on the space, and landscapers are hard at work adding flower beds, trees, and a large kitchen garden that will inspire seasonal menus at the modern-American fine dining space. Two Roosevelt graduates are members of the leadership team. Executive Chef Ian Robertson has returned to Des Moines after years in upscale



restaurants in New York and Chicago. Additionally, Certified Sommelier Sam Tuttle came back to his home town to serve as Wine Director after years working in Colorado and Chicago. To keep informed on the progress of Oak Park, sign up for the newsletter at www.OakParkDSM.com and follow @oakparkdsm on Facebook and Instagram.

2024 Waterbury Neighborhood Association Membership & Volunteer Form

Online Option: Join or renew at www.WaterburyNeighbors.org

Personal Information

First Name:	Last Name:	
First Name:	Last Name:	
Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP:
Email:		
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	

Please Select

- \$30 Family/Household Membership
- \$25 Single/Senior Family Membership
- \$250 Sustaining Membership (10 years)
- \$500 Lifetime Membership
- \$20 Non-Resident Membership
- Gift to the Foundation* of \$ _____

Please send checks to:

Waterbury Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 12054
Des Moines, Iowa 50312

Please make membership checks payable to the Waterbury Neighborhood Association. Membership is voluntary and follows the calendar year.

*Foundation gifts are tax deductible; please make these checks payable to the Waterbury Neighborhood Foundation.

Volunteer Opportunities

I am also interested in the following (please check all that apply):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> One-time Project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardens | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors (it's easy!) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luminaries | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |



Either/Or

You don't have to choose! Either/Or Eatery & Patio opened September 15th. Brought to you by the good folks at Lua Brewing, Either/Or features an elevated take on pub grub, innovative cocktails, and 25+ beers on tap. TVs adorn the walls for your sports viewing pleasure, with bar seating, cozy booths, and a private event space. The huge outdoor area features patio seating, fire pits, heat lamps, games, and a kid-friendly zone. Either/Or promises to be a perfect spot for a date night, watching the game, or casual gathering after soccer and volleyball games at the Aliber complex next door. Located at Grand & 63rd (6222 Grand Avenue), Either/Or is also ideal for a stop pre- or post-ride on the bike trail. Follow @eitherordsm on Facebook or Instagram for info and updates.

If you haven't paid your 2023 dues yet, it's not too late!

First Des Moines State Fairgrounds

Starting in 1854, the Iowa State Fair was held in nine different Iowa cities for a quarter century before it found its permanent home in Des Moines. In the early days, the annual fair of the Iowa State Agricultural Society would be held in the city which would put up the biggest bonus. Des Moines was initially unable to compete with the older cities, and the fair was held in the eastern part of the state.

By 1879, Des Moines was the largest city in the state, had a central location, had the availability to the railroads, and had the accommodations for fair goers. In addition, a prominent Des Moines entrepreneur and lawyer, Talmadge Brown, offered the fair a large tract of land and the necessary buildings at his own expense. A proposal for Des Moines to host the fair was approved by the Iowa State Agricultural Society.

In 1879, the Iowa State Fair was moved to Browns Park, one mile west of the Des Moines city limits. The fairground's south boundary was Grand Avenue, the northern border was Pleasant Street, on the east, the border roughly followed Thirty-eighth Street, and on the west Forty-second Street.

An August 22, 1909, Des Moines Register article by L.F. Andrews described the first Des Moines state fairgrounds:

(Talmadge Brown) enclosed over one hundred acres of it, on which were grand old trees and a natural lake sixteen feet deep of clear crystal water covering an area of about three acres, with a tight board fence eight feet high. He employed B. J. Bartlett, a first-class expert, to lay out the ground with carriageways, walks, a half-mile race track, entrances and exits, and make plans for buildings.

There was a gateway which puts to shame that at the entrance to the present grounds, five large halls for exhibits, separate buildings for officers' headquarters, a reporters' stand with chairs and tables, 315 horse stalls, 40 mule stalls, 250 hog pens floored and roofed, 10 sheep pens enclosed, a large dining hall, an amphitheater to seat 6,000 persons, a system of waterworks consisting of a powerful engine and piping leading throughout the First State Fair ground, the lake supplying the water. Every building and structure were of the most permanent character, designed to last many years, Talmadge manifesting great enthusiasm and pride in his undertaking.

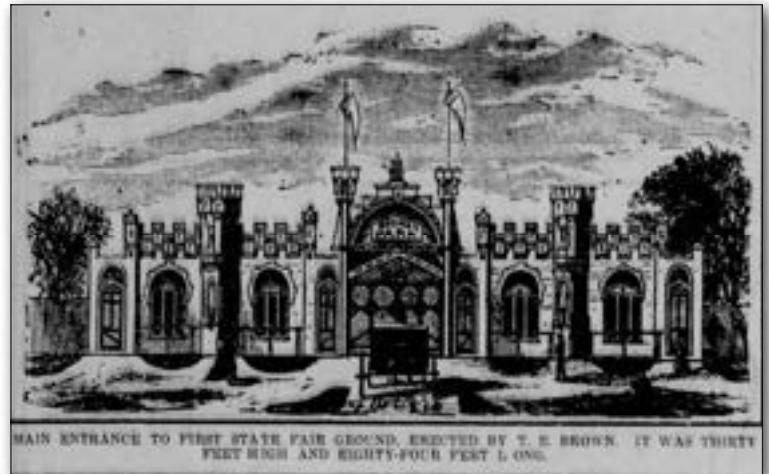
The city council entered into the scheme with a vim. It widened to 100 feet and finely graded Sycamore Street, as Grand Avenue was then, making a grand boulevard to the fairgrounds. The Rock Island laid its track and regularly ran trains there. The exhibit was a grand success, the best ever. The receipts were \$28,626, an increase of \$10,813 over those of the year previous; the premiums paid \$9,726, an increase of \$1,987, so satisfactory was the result, the fair was held

there until 1886. When the legislature took up the subject and appropriated \$20,000 for the purchase of permanent grounds.



The fairgrounds are shown in the above picture. On the left is Grand Avenue. The picture shows the main entrance at approximately 40th and Grand. At the top left is the train depot for the tracks built by the Rock Island Railroad to transport fair visitors. On the right is the ½ mile horse racetrack built around a pond; it had seating for 4,000. The cattle barn, hog barn, and sheep pens were located west and north of the track.

Below is a picture of the main entrance on Grand.



The fair was a major attraction for all of Iowa. It was reported as many as 35,000 people were in attendance in a single day in 1879. The entire population of Des Moines at that time was a little over 22,000. The September 4, 1879, Des Moines Register reported:

It was more than a crowd; it was a crush, a jam, a stream of living humanity, ebbing, and flowing to and from the Fair Grounds all through the day. The streets, the stores, the



hotels, the theaters, and the eating houses were crowded with people on Tuesday night. Before sunrise yesterday, the rattle and roar of wheels began, as the masses commenced moving toward the ground. At 9 o'clock the scene at the Rock Island depot was indescribable. A long train of cars rolled out for the ground, black with people. They were on top of the coaches, wedged in like sardines on the platforms, hanging onto the steps of the platforms by their eyebrows. Men, women, and children, thicker than three in a bed and one in the middle; and five times the number on the platform waiting for the next train.

Here comes the Winterset special and dumps its 800 on the platform. The Atlantic special follows with 1,000 or 1,300 people. The Keokuk special arrives with 1,000 more, and there isn't room about the depot and platform to draw breath. Meantime the hackmen are reaping a harvest. The enterprising ones who adopt the railroad tariff, ten cents, soon get loads, and it seems that there has been, but a drop taken from the bucket. The other hacks which maintain rates and charge twenty-five cents, get loads, and start, and yet no perceptible diminution in the crowd can be perceived.

On the road, it is the same. As far as the eye can reach, there are vehicles blocking up the broad thoroughfare, all loaded with precious human freight...

The crowd surged and eddied around the gates until nearly noon when a calm succeeded the storm. But it was the calm which was the forerunner of a harder blow to follow. After dinner, the rush began again, and the roads were lined with people... There wasn't room in the crowd to swing a cat. A cat! You couldn't have swung a flea, even if you caught the little rascal. Go where you would over the vast grounds you encountered the moving throngs of people...

Anything that Des Moines takes hold of goes through and goes through booming in the boomingest style that ever boomed. The State Fair is no exception. It is the grandest success in the history of the society, and today, if the weather gods be propitious, will see the largest crowd that has ever assembled at any exhibition of the society.

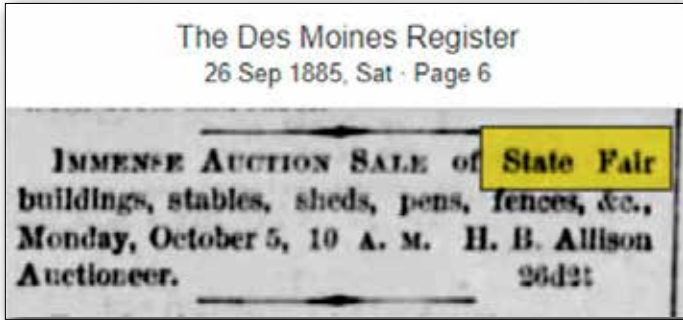
People accessed the fair with carriages and one-horse shays along Grand Avenue. In addition, travel to the State Fair also occurred by train. The Rock Island Railroad built a spur off its main tracks to transport passengers to the fairgrounds. The spur ran from the main line up through a ravine where Tonawanda Drive is now located. In 1879, the train ran every half hour with ten passenger coaches attached. In addition, special trains were scheduled from Winterset and Indianola to bring passengers to Des Moines.

The Rock Island spur is visible at the upper left of the below 1894 drawing of fairgrounds:



The following events led up to the end of the state fair on the west side of town and its relocation to the east side of Des Moines:

- In 1883, Talmadge Brown sold the State Fair Grounds with buildings to a group of investors named the Greenwood Park Association for \$50,000.
- After the 1883 State Fair, the Iowa State Agricultural Society Board of Directors met to discuss the fair. They agreed it was the most successful fair in Iowa's history. However, Brown's Park was too small, and they decided to take steps to find a larger, permanent location.
- In 1884, the State Legislature allocated \$50,000 to purchase land for the fair. The city in Iowa where the fair was to be located had to match the state funding. Des Moines accepted the offer.
- A 450-acre site was secured in 1885 near the eastern city limits of Des Moines. It is the present location known as the Iowa State Fairgrounds.
- October 1885, the buildings on the old State Fair Grounds were to be sold at auction.



- On September 7, 1886, the Iowa State Fairground was dedicated and opened.
- In 1887, the sale of residential lots in Greenwood Park (old State Fair grounds) began.



The owner of the state fair land, Talmadge E. Brown (1830-1891), was born on a farm in New York. He went to Pennsylvania at the age of 16 and studied law. In 1854, he was admitted to the bar and given the commission to practice. He came to Des Moines the same year and opened a law office.

In 1875, he and partners formed the American Emigrant Company, which purchased cheap “swamp lands” in northwest Iowa from the United States Government. The company advertised in Europe to Scandinavians and paid for the passage of over 100,000 immigrants to start farms. The “swamp lands” ultimately resulted in some of the nation’s best farmland once tile drainage was completed. This endeavor left Talmadge a wealthy man.

He was actively involved in the early social, civic, and commercial affairs of Des Moines.

Talmadge had a talent for speculating and a wide range of business skills. As a result, he became one of the largest landowners in central Iowa.

The Talmadge home was located on a wooded acreage at 17th and Grand, see picture below. In 1906, the Sisters of Mercy acquired the old Brown home. They added a four story dormitory, St Catherine’s Hall, to the original house. The dormitory housed 80 to 100 working women.



Other notable Des Moines properties owned by Brown included:

- Gray’s Lake.
- Greenwood Park.
- Linden Heights Residential Development (includes Foster Drive.
- Brown’s Woods (a 486 acre forest west of 63rd and south of the Racocon River, Brown’s granddaughter and great granddaughter sold it to Polk County for \$750,000 in 1972.)

An August 22, 1909, Des Moines Register article by L.F. Andrews described Talmadge Brown:

Its origin in the optimism, public spirit, enterprise, and loyalty to Des Moines is Talmadge E. Brown. Talmadge was a lover of nature. He admired the big, wide spreading elms, and large sturdy oaks which so profusely are scattered all over the territory occupied by the city, and in his purchase of land he invariably selected that on which such trees were abundant.

Old timers will remember the addition he made to the city in 1877, near Cottage Grove, a beauty spot, which he laid out in street and blocks, put the streets in good condition, and erected several fine residences. “Brown’s Addition” was one of the places of distinction in the town and was the nucleus of what is now one of the finest residence sections in the city. It was just such a spot, a veritable park, he selected for his home south of Grand Avenue and west of Seventeenth Street. What now comprises Greenwood Park was another of his early purchases.

He was of sanguine temperament, active, energetic, a man of big affairs. He was a booster for Des Moines, shrewd, perspicacious, bold, tenacious, had the stickto-it-iveness of a bulldog, was independent, self-reliant, and a potent factor in the business affairs of the city. He was a man of few words, spoke direct to the point, was upright and precise in his dealings. He died May 2, 1891, in September.



Waterbury Neighborhood Association
 P.O. Box 12054
 Des Moines, IA 50312



National Night Out 2023

Two RIVERS
 Bank & Trust

Thank you to our neighbors at
 Two Rivers Bank for sponsoring
 National Night Out



Are You New to Waterbury?

If you are new to our lovely neighborhood, we wish you a hearty welcome! If you are looking to get involved in the neighborhood, we always have a need for the following volunteers:

- Advertising
- Assisting at Events
- Fund Raising
- Gardening
- Special Projects
- Web Content Generator
- Welcome Committee

If any of these options sound interesting, please send us a note at news@waterburyneighbors.org



Waterbury Neighborhood

waterburyneighbors.org



@WaterburyDSM