HENDERSON PARK:

The Design and Development of
Kalameezoo's Most Fashionable Suburb, 1888 - 1932.

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Henderson Park, located within the West Main Hill area, has been one of Kalamazoo's most attractive neighborhoods for almost eighty years. Situated high on the rolling hills at the western edge of the city, in an area that was once quite heavily wooded, this neighborhood, Kalamazoo's first "landscaped" development, presents a rather singular appearance. Its winding streets and sloping lawns follow the lay of the land, providing a "naturalistic" setting for homes which are, on the whole, large, simple and well-spaced. The entire neighborhood exudes a feeling of space, ease and natural beauty.

Bordered on the north by West Main Street, on the south by Academy, on the east by Monroe and on the west by the city limits, this neighborhood and the area immediately surrounding it (referred to today as the West Main Hill neighborhood) represent an interesting and important stage in the history of the city of Kalamazoo. With Henderson Park designed in the late 1890's and developed, for the most part, between 1900 and 1930, this neighborhood was built during a period of tremendous industrial growth, while Kalamazoo's population was booming. Inhabited, on the whole, by Kalamazoo's leaders in finance, business and industry, Henderson Park reflects the new prosperity experienced not only in Kalamazoo, but all across the nation.

In this paper, it is my intent to examine and explore the West Main Hill area in terms of its design and development, dealing, with, in particular, its relation to the rest of the city. Because of the special nature of the design of Henderson Park, this paper will deal, for the most part, with this neighborhood. However, it is, I feel, impossible to deal with only Henderson Park for, as we shall see, the entire West Main Hill area plays an important role in the history of Kalamazoo.
The village of Bronson, commonly referred to today as the city of Kalamazoo, was founded in the Territory of Michigan in 1831. Located in the south-western corner of the territory, about forty miles east of Lake Michigan and midway between Chicago and Detroit, this village was established in an area that was still quite wild, with few settlements and little population. Fully three quarters of the land was, at this time, timbered with, for the most part, oak. The forest was interspersed with prairie land, "oak-openings," marshes, bluffs and ravines.1

The village of Bronson was situated in an oak-opening in the Kalamazoo Valley and surrounded by hills. The settlement was, in the beginning, quite small, occupied by only a few families. Platted, for the first time, in 1831, the village of Bronson was contained within the limits of North, South and West-nedge Streets, and the river.

The West Main Hill area was, at this time, located in the township of Kalamazoo, with the majority of the area being designated as Section Sixteen. According to an Act of Congress passed in 1785, "the sixteenth section of every township [in the Northwest Territory] will be set apart for the use and benefit of the public schools."2 This meant that, although the land was not expected to be used as the site of the public schools, it was to be maintained or sold by the township for the support of the schools.

This Act was, to a certain extent, modified when the Territory of Michigan became a state in 1837. It was then stated in the Constitution of Michigan that, firstly, public school lands in the State of Michigan were to be used only for the benefit of the primary schools and, secondly, that the State of Michigan would be the owner and, therefore, the custodian of the land.3 With the creation of a state-wide perpetual fund, established and maintained with the profits and proceeds from this land, much more money was made available to the schools and pressure was relieved from the individual townships, as they were no longer fully financially responsible for the schools.
The segment of Section Sixteen containing the West Main Hill area and the land west of it was sold, in 1842, to James Taylor, for the sum of $275.00. Taylor, an early settler of Kalamazoo, had arrived in the village in April of 1836, during a real land boom. A Scot, Taylor had come to the United States a mere three years earlier and had settled in Caladonia, New York. However, "imbibing the Western fever, which became rampant in those days," he moved, with a wave of other pioneers, to Michigan.

In Kalamazoo, Taylor opened a meat market, becoming one of the village's first butchers. Setting up shop downtown on East Main Street, he ran a prosperous business and soon married another early settler, Helen Gilchrist. A few years later, the Taylors settled on a homestead at 2 South Street, just a little west of Portage.

Continuing to prosper, Taylor invested his savings in forty acres of farmland, buying the portion of the primary school lands located on and just west of West Main Hill. This land, hilly, and, for the most part, wooded, was used, in part, for the raising of sheep. The Taylor farm was, according to the Kalamazoo Gazette, enclosed with fences, with the entrance gate where Grand Avenue and West Main Street intersect today.

Taylor was an important resident of Kalamazoo. He was a village trustee in 1847 and was involved in the founding of the Michigan Female Seminary in 1856. In 1844, Taylor was a member of the executive committee of the Kalamazoo Clay Club, supporting, as a Whig, Henry Clay for President.

James Taylor died in 1882, having farmed the West Main Hill area for almost forty years. He bequeathed his land to his children, leaving the actual farm buildings and fields, his implements and animals, to his only son, Anthony G. Taylor, expecting, it seems, the farm to be his son's livelihood. The remainder of the farmland, including the West Main Hill area, and the property on South Street were left to his daughter, Mrs. Mary产业发展以及韦.
Between the arrival of James Taylor in 1836 and his death in 1882, Kalamazoo underwent tremendous change. A mere five years old when Taylor came, Kalamazoo had been founded by Titus Bronson in 1831. Located on a large and navigable river, at the junction of four major Indian trails, this village was, in the same year, selected as the county seat of the recently established Kalamazoo County. Expected, by its founder, to become a thriving metropolis, it was a tiny settlement, occupied, at the end of the year, by only fifteen families. Although sites had been set aside for a courthouse, a jail, schools, churches and a cemetery, Bronson, or, as it was to be renamed in 1836, Kalamazoo, was still a "paper town."

The village did, however, experience a real land boom in 1834, '35 and '36. With the lure of the West continuing to draw many Easterners, many pioneers arrived in this area of the country. Michigan, formerly inhabited by Indians and fur traders, became settled as its rich, fertile land was discovered by the white man. Kalamazoo, in particular, drew settlers. In fact, the land office located in Kalamazoo and serving Kalamazoo, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, Branch, Allegan and Van Buren Counties, reportedly did more business during this time than any other land office in the nation. Land speculators and settlers alike thronged the village, buying land and bringing business into the community.

The tremendous influx of new residents into Kalamazoo noticeably slowed with a nationwide depression in 1837. However, by 1840, Kalamazoo had recovered and the business and population of the village continued to grow. By 1860, Kalamazoo was no longer a pioneer town. Indeed, it had become one of Michigan's most stable agrarian communities and had opened up new opportunities for growth, having recently acquired such urban amenities as the telegraph and a
railroad.

In the 1970's, Kalamazoo became involved, to a certain extent, in the Industrial Revolution. Business and industry became much more plentiful and, by the 1880's, Kalamazoo was finally ready to make the transition from a country farm town to an industrial center of national import.

The West Main Hill area had, until 1882, a simple history. Used to raise money for the public schools in the pioneer days and, in later years, farmed and used for the raising of sheep, it played a stable role in the development of Kalamazoo. However, after the death of James Taylor in the early 1880's, both the West Main Hill area and the town of Kalamazoo were about to enter a new age.
In 1882, Mary Henderson inherited much of the East Main Hill area from her father. The land was not immediately used for any new purpose; indeed, it is possible that her brother, Anthony Taylor, continued to use it for farming. However, in 1883, Frank Henderson, James Taylor's son-in-law, conceived of a new use for the area.

Frank Henderson was, at this time, one of Kalamazoo's leading businessmen. Born near Syracuse, New York, in 1841, he moved to a farm in Dowagiac with his family in 1855. In 1860, at the age of nineteen, he came to Kalamazoo and became employed as a clerk in the Walker hardware store until 1864. At that time, he became a partner in the Henderson and Brown Company, manufacturing saddlery and trunks. Married in 1867, to Mary Taylor, he bought his partner out and continued to run the business on his own until 1873, when he became partners with T.F. Giddings, a manufacturer of fraternal and societal regalia. When this partnership broke up in 1873, the men, in essence, traded roles and Giddings retained the trunk business and Henderson retained the regalia business.

In 1893, Henderson was to consolidate with the Chicago branch of the Ames Sword Company and, having worked his way from the bottom to the top in the Kalamazoo business community, create the Henderson Ames Company. Reported to be a "model, modern manufacturing plant, constructed of brick and heated with steam," the Henderson Ames Company proved to be one of Kalamazoo's most profitable businesses, manufacturing cloaks, swords, hats and the like, for fraternities and societies. The Henderson Ames Company reflected an important stage in the industrial growth of Kalamazoo and Henderson was well-regarded in the business community. As his obituary states:

For his success in business life Mr. Henderson certainly deserves much credit, having by his own efforts worked his way upward and become one of the wealthy men in the city. He possessed energy, enterprise, capacity and the result of many hard labors in such a manner are the fruits of his labors.
Frank Henderson's achievements did not extend only into the business world. An active church member and a prominent club man, Henderson participated in many sorts of community activities and enjoyed private amusements as well, including, in particular, singing and fishing. He also fulfilled his civic duties as, at one point, a member of the City Council and the Board of Education. Today, however, Henderson is remembered for one permanent contribution to the city of Kalamazoo -- Henderson Park.

In 1889, Frank Henderson visualized a new sort of suburban development for Kalamazoo. Although the western end of the West Main Hill was already platted into gridded, perpendicular streets, Henderson re-designed and paid for a new plat located on his wife's land, land that she was to soon turn over to his name. With the help of a local surveyor, Frank Hodgson, and, later, a prominent local engineer, George Pierson, Henderson created Kalamazoo's first "landscaped" development. Winding streets were laid out, following closely the contours of the land and wide lots were plotted; with large, sloping lawns. Bordered on the north by West Main Street, on the south by Academy, on the east by Monroe and on the west by the city limits, Henderson Park was originally registered with the city as a plat in 1889. The plat was revised and registered again in 1895.

The first home to be built in Henderson Park was built for Henderson himself. Designed by a notable Milwaukee architect, C.A. Combert, the home went under construction in 1890 and was completed in 1895, at a cost of $72,000. Built in the Queen Anne style, it was Kalamazoo's most elaborate and, indeed, elegant home and it was referred to, by many, as Henderson's "Castle." It was described in the Gazette as follows:

The Henderson home is built of Lake Superior sandstone and the finest quality of pressed brick, and is furnished in mahogany, bird's-eye maple, quartered oak, selected birch and pine. The residence has as complete a system of heating, lighting and plumbing...
The grounds of the home were also considered outstanding, having been designed by one of Kalamazoo's leading landscape gardeners, Annette McCrea.

Upon the completion of this "palatial residence" in 1895, a grand ball was held -- presumably in the third floor ballroom of this mansion -- for the "society" of Kalamazoo. Frank Henderson was, apparently, quite an entertainer, although it is said that his wife, Mary, preferred a simpler, quieter sort of life. Forty years after the completion of the Henderson Castle, the Gazette reported that another celebratory event had taken place in 1895, saying, in regards to Henderson Park,

...the residential section itself was opened with a long parade down Main Street. At the head rode Frank Henderson and Senator Burroughs in a landau. Behind them came the teams and drivers who helped level and grade the section, followed by interested townfolk..."18

Although it appears that the Henderson Castle commanded the attention of the entire city of Kalamazoo in 1895, there were only two other residences built in this neighborhood in this period. One was located at 1511 Grand Avenue and built roughly at the same time as the castle, being completed before 1897. It was built by J.W. Woodworth and Justin B. Keyes, respectively the secretary/treasurer and cashier of the Henderson Ames Company. Keyes was soon to marry one of Henderson's daughters. This home seems to have been torn down in 1922.

Another home was built just outside of Henderson Park, at 1414 West Lovell Street. A small, two-story, white frame house, this residence was first occupied in 1899 by G. Harvey Vincent, a mason. Today this home still stands at the corner of Sprague and Lovell.

Frank Henderson died on January 2, 1899, having been ill since 1896. He never saw Henderson Park develop and his home sat alone on the hill until the rest of the neighborhood developed about 1900. From his early efforts...
were not, however, unappreciated, for as recorded in the Annual Report of the City of Kalamazoo in 1900:

Certain of our citizens have from time to time invested their money and expended no little effort in attempting to make additions to the city along modern lines with the hope that, while profitable to themselves, they may beautify the place and enable people to locate themselves in homes at a reasonable cost amid pleasant surroundings. These projects are worthy of encouragement which should be given with a liberal spirit, having regard to the rights of our citizens and the needs of the city as a whole, and a proper, economical, just and wise expenditure of the public funds.

Kalamazoo witnessed some important changes in the 1880's and 90's. What had been a country town up until the late 1870's became, in the 1880's, an important city. Its population and industry grew until, in 1890, Kalamazoo could boast of 17,853 inhabitants and such industries as the Kalamazoo, Bryant and Barden Paper Companies, and the Upjohn Company.

One of Kalamazoo's most important achievements in the 1880's was the building of the streetcars. Horse-pulled trolleys came to Kalamazoo in 1881; they were electrified in 1893. Not thought of as vehicles for commuter use, they ran, in the beginning, to the Lake View Amusement Park and the cemeteries. One of the lines ran to the Mountain Home Cemetery, located across from Henderson Park. This line stopped at Thomson Street where, reportedly, there was a turnaround. Apparently, the line could not originally be run any farther west because the horses could not pull the trolleys up West Main Hill.

It is interesting to speculate as to how the streetcars may have affected the development of Henderson Park. To a certain extent, the streetcars may not have been capable of very much effect at all. In the first place, streetcar services were not considered, at this time, to be reliable in the winter when tracks might become snow-covered and impassable, leaving a businessman stranded.
In the second place, women, at this time wore long and crippling skirts and had hourglass figures -- they were incapable of walking very far. Henderson Park, although only three or four short blocks away, may have been too far. On the other hand, women must have worked around such inconveniences before. It seems, as a whole, that the streetcar, although it was capable of doing so, despite these minor objections, did not enhance Henderson Park's chance for development.

At the time of the design of Henderson Park, the Stuart Avenue neighborhood was developing rapidly. Large, luxurious Queen Anne-style homes were built by some of Kalamazoo's leading families. Although not occupied by the richest families of Kalamazoo (many still lived, at this time, on South Street), the Stuart Avenue area was Kalamazoo's most fashionable suburb.

When Frank Henderson designed Henderson Park, he fully expected it to quickly develop with Queen Anne-style homes like his. However, he seems to have attracted the same sort of people who were building on Stuart Avenue, Douglas Avenue and West Main Street. Just beginning its industrial boom, Kalamazoo was not yet large enough to support two neighborhoods of this caliber.

By the 1890's, two important developments had taken place on the eastern end of the West Main Hill area. Kalamazoo College, with a heightening enrollment, had expanded, using more of its land on West Main Hill. Many homes had been built on the lower end of the hill, including such beauties as the Stockbridge estate, located where Stowe Stadium stands today. Carmel, Thompson, Buckley and the lower parts of Academy And Grand were now developed. In essence, Monroe Street marked the western edge of the city of Kalamazoo.

One factor almost certainly affected the development of Henderson Park and, in fact, the rest of the city. In 1893, '94 and '95, just as Henderson was completing the Stables, a depression struck the entire nation. This surely slowed the building of homes in Kalamazoo.

The death of Frank Henderson at the age of fifty-eight also impeded the growth of his new development. Without his vital enthusiasm, the neighborhood
Tackled impetus. Moreover, at his death, Henderson left no will and his affairs were held up in Probate Court for several years. His wife was, during this time, destitute and the sale of land may have been hindered by the legalities surrounding the distribution of Frank Henderson's property.

The 1880's and 1890's were very exciting times for the city of Kalamazoo. There continued to be growth in finance, business and industry. Civic improvements were also made, as the Public Library, several new churches and the YMCA were formed. In 1900, Kalamazoo faced the new century with 24,404 inhabitants. Henderson Park and the Henderson Castle were only one small part of the good times in Kalamazoo.
III.

With the turn of the century, the West Main Hill area entered into a new stage of growth. The Wanikin Golf Club was formed in Henderson Park in 1899. A private club, the Wanikin had a nine hole course, beginning, it seems, at the corner of Henderson and Monroe. It is hard to tell just how large the golf course was. However, with nine holes, it must have extended north to Grand Avenue and quite a ways west. The clubhouse still stands today at 1 1/2 Monroe, reportedly having been moved up the hill from the corner of Henderson and Monroe. A small, white bungalow, its appearance is that of a clubhouse.

There are no records left of the Wanikin Golf Club, leaving us with two important questions unanswered: Firstly, why was the Wanikin Golf Club located on land that was already platted for a residential neighborhood and, secondly, what impact did the course have on the growth and development of the neighborhood? It seems that the golf course must have been built after a realization that the neighborhood was not going to immediately develop. First recorded in the City Directory in 1899, the golf course must have been laid out before the death of Frank Henderson. It is entirely possible that he was responsible for the creation of the course.

It does appear that the golf course had an impact on the growth of the neighborhood. Listed for the last time in the City Directory of 1906, the disappearance of the golf course directly parallels the appearance of new homes in Henderson Park. Earlier interest in building in the Park may have been deterred by the presence of the course.

A gravel pit was also located in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, there are no records at all of the pit. Although it is impossible to determine exactly where the gravel pit lay, it seems to have been on the south side of Henderson Drive. Surely this impediment prevented, for a time, the building of homes on Academy Street and Henderson Drive.

In investigating the period between the neighborhood’s design in 1888 and
its development in 1906, two other possible deterrents have been mentioned. It has been suggested that the presence of the Mountain Home Cemetery may have acted as a deterrent in the development of the neighborhood. Although it is true that, at one time, people feared living near cemeteries due to the threat of cholera, a disease transmitted through contaminated water from, for example, wells dug near cemeteries, this does not seem to be a viable possibility. This fear was, to a large extent, no longer existent at the turn of the century. Cholera was no longer an epidemic in the United States and, moreover, residents of Henderson Park would not have used wells. Although it is possible that the fear of cemeteries remained without logical cause, this, too seems to be disproved by the earlier development along the eastern end of West Main Hill.

It has also been suggested that West Main Hill may itself have impeded the growth of the neighborhood. A steep hill, it had apparently been responsible for a number of horse accidents and, subsequently, deaths. It is true that travel up the hill was not easy, particularly in winter. However, with the streetcar running up to Thompson Street, it seems that the residents of Henderson Park would only have walked up West Main Hill. Both deterrents, although fascinating, appear to be ungrounded.

The presence, then, of the Wanikin Golf Club and the gravel pit may have impeded the growth of Henderson Park. However, with the disappearance of the golf course in 1906, Henderson Park once again entered a new stage in its development.
Henderson Park developed, for the most part, after 1905. Only the Castle, the Woodworth/Keyes home and the home at 1414 West Lovell were built before the turn of the century. Immediately after the turn of the century, the rate of growth in Henderson Park remained slow. In 1902, a home at 1409 Henderson Drive appears in the City Directory. It was occupied by Bentley Pierce, the secretary and treasurer of the Kalamazoo Cold Storage Company, and his family for more than thirty years and it still stands today.

Homes at 330 Monroe and 1555 West Main appear in the City Directory in, respectively, 1904 and 1905. The home on Monroe was occupied by Edmond J. Honeysett, a man employed in one of Kalamazoo's most important trades, cigar-making. His home appears to have been torn down by 1909. The home on West Main was owned by Stillman Jenks, a professor at Kalamazoo College. This home appears to have been torn down by 1921. Both of these homes were located on the outskirts of Henderson Park.

The first real rush of homes occurs in Henderson Park in 1906. In this year, seven new homes appear in the City Directory. Located on Monroe Street, Grand Avenue and Henderson Drive, these homes reflect a new and serious interest taken by the residents of Kalamazoo in the Park.

The homes appearing in 1906 provide an interesting picture of the times to come for Henderson Park. One home, at 1403 Grand Avenue, seems to represent what Frank Henderson expected to be built in this neighborhood. Owned by Carl Ihling, the home was designed with elements of the Italianate style and was later remodeled with "large doses of late Queen Anne details mixed with early Classic Revival forms." This home, the home at 119 Monroe and the home immediately to the west of 1403 on Grand, are architecturally very different from other homes in the area. This home is also worthy of note for another important reason -- its owner, Carl Ihling, was one of Kalamazoo's few auto owners in 1905.
Many homes were built in this neighborhood by up-and-coming young men and their families. For example, the home at 115 Monroe was occupied, in 1906, by William L. LaCrome and his wife, Dora. Listed in the City Directory of 1906 as a laborer, LaCrome was to become City Superintendent of Parks and a well-respected man in Kalamazoo's business community.

Other homes were built in this neighborhood by men already well-established in the business community. Alfred B. Connable, a very prominent city leader, built an enormous house at 1502 Grand. Connable, Kalamazoo's mayor in 1913 and 1914, also owned a car, a large Pierce Arrow. His home, apparently quite a showplace, was located right next to the Henderson Castle and has since been torn down.

Although seven new homes appear in the City Directory in 1906, an old one is mentioned for the first time. This is the Hanlin clubhouse, moved to its new location at 11th Monroe, one block further south. Renovated for family living, this home was owned by Frank Henderson's son-in-law, John J. Whetham, a laborer.

The rush of homes did not continue in 1907 as a depression temporarily stayed building all over the nation. However, beginning in 1906, continuing in 1908 and extending through the advent of World War I in 1914, Henderson Park developed steadily, with particularly heavy growth in 1912 and 1913.

According to the Kalamazoo Gazette in 1909:

Kalamazoo is just beginning to appreciate the beauty of Henderson Park and the beautiful residences recently constructed on Grand Avenue and now in the course of erection are tangible proof that the most desirable property will soon be completely built up and recognized as the most desirable residential section of Kalamazoo.

An important factor in this is the fact that this result is reasonably assured when the public is informed by J.T. Wheeler, who has had Henderson Park real estate matters in charge that he has recently disposed of a very large block of lots facing (Henderson Drive) to Charles B. Wilson, who is enlarging the objectionable features of the gravel pit by reducing the entire property to a uniform and beautiful grade to correspond with Grand Avenue...
J.T. Wheeler, another son-in-law of Frank Henderson, appears to have been responsible for the Henderson land before and after the death of Mary Henderson in 1908. He was reasonably successful with this real estate; however, with a portion of the Park under the direction of Charles B. Hays, Kalamazoo's leading real estate agent, the land was sure to develop. And so, indeed, it did. Advertised by the real estate agent as "high, dry and healthy," this neighborhood soon became Kalamazoo's most fashionable suburb, replacing the Stuart Avenue neighborhood. An ad for a plat directly west of Henderson Park reveals the status of the Park, saying:

Prospect Park is a fine and sightly addition in the west end of Kalamazoo - high up on the hill where the atmosphere is clear and wholesome and where the most prominent and fashionable avenues of the city directly lead...Grand Avenue with its beautiful homes affords a fine approach to the Addition. It is within easy walking distance of the center of town and a stroll to the Plat is a pleasure as it leads through the most beautiful and wealthy residential section of Kalamazoo. In stormy weather one can take advantage of the streetcars which now run to the Addition.

During this period, Grand Avenue, Henderson Drive and Monroe Street were quickly developed. The home on Arbor appeared and, towards the end of this period of tremendous growth, Prairie, Prospect and Grove began to be built up, too. Filled with large, beautiful homes with carefully landscaped and tended lawns, Henderson Park was worthy of being deemed the most fashionable suburb in Kalamazoo.

Although the growth of Henderson Park slowed, to a considerable extent, with World War I, it never really came to a halt. The years 1914 through 1917 certainly did not match 1912 and 1913 in terms of growth and, in 1918 and 1919, only two homes were built in Henderson Park. The neighborhood, about to see another period of tremendous growth in the 1920's, was in a period of transition.

The development of Henderson Park after the turn of the century was due,
I believe, to a combination of two things: a continuing increase in Kalamazoo's industry and a corresponding boon in population. As Kalamazoo's industry continued to grow, a need was created for more labor, and, as the population continued to grow, more and more industry developed. A reciprocal circle formed, for the growth in industry was largely caused by Kalamazoo's substantial population and the growth of population was largely caused by opportunities created in an industrial center.

The population boom was the most direct cause of Henderson Park's development. As announced in the 1906 Annual Report of the City of Kalamazoo, the population increased more during the past year or two than during any similar period of time in the history of the city...Dwellings could not be found by many, and on this account there has been overcrowding in many places and the necessity to live in barns, tents and unsanitary places pending the construction of homes....

In 1890, the population of Kalamazoo was 17,853. By 1900, it was 24,404 and by 1910 it would be 37,437. Kalamazoo had more than doubled in twenty years, increasing by slightly under 22,000 people in two decades and, in one decade, increasing by 15,000 people.

Kalamazoo experienced great industrial growth between 1900 and 1910. Although the Industrial Age had caught up with the city a full twenty years earlier, the impact wasn't really felt until after the turn of the century when, in many ways, Kalamazoo began to evolve into the city it is today. One of Kalamazoo's noted historians, Charles Weisert, described Kalamazoo's industrial history in 1927, saying:

The growth of industrialization in Kalamazoo has not been one of spasmodic impulse or directed along some particular and specific line, as has been the case in various Michigan cities, especially on the Great Lakes. The industries and commercial enterprises of Kalamazoo represent the results of a
sane and steady growth along normal channels... and there
is sufficient variation in these enterprises to maintain
a well-balanced general representation of manufacturing,
wholesale and jobbing business. 35

As reflected in a supplement to the Telegraph, "Kalamazoo of Today," pub-
lished in April of 1912, Kalamazoo did have quite a variety of business. Even
within the paper industry, Kalamazoo's largest industry, there were many vari-
ations. The proud possessor of the largest paper mill on earth, Kalamazoo also
turned out stationery and envelopes, labels, printed forms, calendars and holi-
day novelty items. Kalamazoo was also a world center for peppermint oil,
celery and stoves. Corsets, musical instruments, automobiles and windmills were
produced here, along with the regalia manufactured by the Henderson Ames Com-
pany. Located in a strategic industrial position, at the center of the inter-
urban lines of Michigan, with extensive railroad service, the city was credited
by Weissert as having an "intrinsic spirit of progressiveness" and it appears
to have been true. 36

Although the growth of population and industry made the development of
Henderson Park almost necessary, other factors were also important. According
to Sam Warner, one of the United States' leading urban historians, there were
two requirements for the successful development of suburban land - good trans-
portation and good sanitation and power services. 37

The Henderson Park neighborhood met both requirements. For transportation,
the neighborhood depended heavily upon the auto and the streetcars. Many resi-
dents owned autos and the streetcar lines, which had run, in the early days,
to Mountain Home Cemetery, were extended, in 1909, to the city limits. With
over twenty miles of track, this system was reported to be "one of the most
efficient street railway systems in a city of its size in the Midwest," with
cars that were clean (without smoke, smell or cinders), comfortable, frequent
and economical. 32

As reported in a piece of propaganda released by the Commercial Club of Kal-
mazoo, called The Lure of Kalamazoo:

Not only is Kalamazoo well equipped in public utilities but the quality of service rendered by them is of the highest class. With an abundance of cheap electrical power, an up-to-date gas system, with nearly a hundred miles of main, a local telephone system with 6,500 phones in operation, and an extensive system of urban car lines, Kalamazoo is better taken care of in these respects than many cities of much greater population. 39

Municipally owned water and light plants and a sewage system completed the public services available to residents of Henderson Park.

Sam Warner also discusses another, less practical, but equally important, factor in the development of a neighborhood such as Henderson Park. He refers to it as the "rural ideal." He says:

In the new land, the rural ideal by its emphasis on the pleasures of private family life, on the security of a small community setting, and on the enjoyment of natural surroundings, encouraged the middle class to build a wholly new residential environment: the modern suburb. 40

The design and development of Henderson Park reflects the rural ideal embodied in what Peter Schmitt chooses to call the "Back to Nature Movement."41 The Back-to-Nature Movement occurred during the 1880's and 90's and continued through the beginning of this century. It was nation-wide. Reflected in the establishment of the National Parks, summer camps for children and the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, the movement took many forms. Magazines such as "Country Life" popped up and "landscaped" suburbs like Henderson Park were designed.

The movement was not a "Back-to-the-Farm Movement." In terms of the suburbs, people were not willing to give up the amenities of urban living. Indeed, the "suburbanite sought a pastoral retreat which was paved, electrified and landscaped by trained professionals. In effect of a private garden spot, but one never far removed from the easy camaraderie enjoyed back in the city."42
The ideal was to work in the city, but live in the country.

Henderson Park enabled residents to do just that. Henderson had designed the suburb with the country in mind. The winding streets and lush green lawns of this Park, advertised as "high, dry and healthy," let people escape from city life and reside in an area that had an aura of space, ease and natural beauty.

The architecture of this neighborhood after the turn of the century reflects the impact of the "Back-to-Nature Movement" on the Henderson Park residents. The former Queen Anne style had been elaborate and pretentious, emphasizing "individualism." Each home added turrets and gables and even, at times, towers. Detail was small in scale but ornate and an "irregularity of plan and massing and variety of color and texture" characterized the style. 43

With a re-emphasis on the "Simple Life" occurring all across the nation, styles changed. Cottages or bungalows came into vogue, along with the Mission Style and boxy Craftsman homes. Many of the early homes in Henderson Park reflect the changes in style. For example, the work of F.D. VanVolkenberg, who designed several homes in the neighborhood, is described as follows:

By holding to the utilitarian element in conception, by fitting the design to the purpose for which the structure is intended, and showing not individuality but a comprehension of the problem and understanding the value of detail and the selection of material, the result has been work of forceful composition, having an air of fitness, usefulness and honesty, and giving a much happier architectural appearance than the work of others who strive for more artificial effects. 44

In all, the residents of Henderson Park got the best of both possible worlds. Within easy distance of shopping and business districts, the neighborhood was found on the rising of separate and specialized elements of the city by geography and architecture. It replaced, in many ways, the Stuart
Avenue neighborhood as the times and minds of Kalamazoo residents changed.

Henderson Park entered a new age in the 1920's. Many new homes were built, not only on Grand and Henderson and Monroe, but on Academy, South and Lowell as well. Prairie and Prospect and Grove continued to develop and homes appeared on Valley and South Prairie Place.

The homes built in the 1920's were different than the homes built ten or fifteen years earlier. The times had changed; the people and the nation were different. The United States and Kalamazoo were entering a new period of prosperity and progress. In the age of flappers and speakeasies, people were no longer drawn to the "Simple Life."

Architecture gained some flair in this new era. Homes were larger and more ornate. A prime example of the change in architecture is located on the southwest corner of Arbor and Grand. On the corner, a large brick house sits high on the hill. Next to it is a rather square blue home and, next to it, is a large Spanish-style home. The houses on either side were built during the 1920's; the home in the middle was first occupied in 1911.

The development of Henderson Park was steady during the 1920's and, by the end of the decade, the Park's lots were almost all sold. Only a few spaces were left on the east side of Monroe. The neighborhood looked, as a whole, much as it does today.

By the Great Depression, Henderson Park was firmly established in the city of Kalamazoo. Even then, as now, the area and the city remained stable. For, as recorded by historian Louis Stolle: "...for several months after the country had been plunged into the depression, repercussions experienced in Kalamazoo were gradual and, in many instances, barely perceptible..." Henderson Park weathered the Depression well.
CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have explored and examined the design and development of Henderson Park, relating it to events in the city of Kalamazoo. The history of the neighborhood has turned out to be fascinating; it parallels any number of important stages in the growth of Kalamazoo and the nation. Today, Henderson Park looks much as it did in 1930. The families and the times have changed but much of the neighborhood remains the same. Frank Henderson would be pleased—a lovely, quiet neighborhood, this area still graces the city of Kalamazoo as he hoped it would in the 1880's. He deserves much credit for this, Kalamazoo's first and foremost "landscaped" development.
NOTES

1. Rose, Mary Jane, Geographical and Ethnological Background of Kalamazoo, Michigan, (n.d.), pg. 9.


3. Encyclopædia Brittanica (Cleveland, Oh.: The Werner Company, 1904), Volume XVI, pg. 240.


7. Ibid., October 9, 1937.


11. Dunbar, Willis, Kalamazoo and How It Grew (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Western Michigan University, 1953), pg. 41, 42.

12. Ibid., pg. 110.


15. Dunbar, pg. 110.


18. Ibid., April 25, 1943.

19. Annual Report of the City of Kalamazoo, 1900, pg. 27.


22. Probate Court Index, 1935.


24. Mr. and Mrs. P. Lawrence Barr, Oral History, May 1978.


29. Ibid., June 8, 1930.

30. Ibid., June 6, 1909.

31. Ibid., May 5, 1912.

32. Ibid., May 23, 1909.


34. The Commercial Club, The Lure of Kalamazoo (1912), pg. 29.

35. Weissert, Charles, History of Kalamazoo County (1927), pg. 171.

36. Ibid., pg. 170.


40. Warner, pg. 11.


I. Printed Materials

Abstract of Title, Lots 22 and 23, Henderson Park Plat. Prepared by the Title, Bond and Mortgage Company, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Annual Reports of the City of Kalamazoo, 1892-1910, inclusive.


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Shumway, Gary L., and William G. Hartley, An Oral History Primer. Salt Lake City,


II. Other Material

A. Oral History and Interviews

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Mr. Alexis Praus, Interview, April 1979.

Dr. Peter Schmitt, Interview, May 1979.


Mrs. Jess Walker, 1115 West Main, Interview, May 1979.

B. Plat Maps 1853, 1860, 1873, 1890, 1910, 1924.

*Topographical Map of Kalamazoo 1919.*

*Records of Deeds and Mortgages, County Register of Deeds Office.*