

The Conservation and Preservation of Blackhawk State Park, 1917 - 1927

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The Conservation and Preservation of Blackhawk State Park 1917-1927

Abstract: Local historian John Henry Hauberg persisted throughout the 1920s to transform Rock Island, Illinois' amusement park into a state park recognizing the land and its history.

By Bonnie Thornton

INTRO

Black Hawk State Historical Site (BHSHS) is a present-day hiking and camping grounds enjoyed by the Quad City community in eastern Iowa and western Illinois. The grounds are located on the bluffs of the Rock River in Rock Island, Illinois, complete with a view for miles around, including Vandruff and Credit Islands. In addition to pleasant, green spaces, BHSHS also contains a museum memorializing the land's attachment to the Mesquaki and Sauk nations and the Civilian Conservation Corp's Depression Era improvements; the trails are also marked with plaques commemorating both its tragic, and later quaint, histories. Standing on the bluffs upon the river, enjoying the view for miles around begs the question: How did such an enjoyable, natural space come to be part of the Quad City community?

BHSHS came to my attention a year ago after enrolling in a Public History course. The course introduced me to Augustana College's Special Collections, which led to my acquaintance with the man, John Henry Hauberg (JHH), the extensive manuscript collection filed under his name, and two boxes which specifically contain a lot of personal information related to the creation of BHSP and the history of the area. My curiosity didn't disappear once the course ended. Instead, it persisted and led to the approval of a research grant. This grant gave me the opportunity to explore the question catalyzing this inquiry: how did this natural space come to exist as part of Rock Island?

The purpose of this history is to investigate and expand upon this question. Although the area consists of centuries worth of history, my inquiry discusses the shaping of the land of Black Hawk State Park (BHSP) throughout the decade, 1917 – 1927.¹ Indeed, it wasn't until the mid-1920s that people even considered BHSP by that name; instead it was referred to by locals and

¹ I will henceforth refer to the area as Black Hawk State Park instead of BHSHS, as it didn't achieve this designation until 1979.

tourists as the Watch Tower Amusement Site or Watch Tower Park. Within the 1917-1927 timeframe, various important conceptual threads wove together to form the themes illustrated in this narrative. These themes relate to how people perceived and interacted with natural sites; assigned land the value; understood tourist entertainment and city development; as well as thought of, portrayed, and interacted with, Native Americans.

The threads of my narrative will illustrate these themes in the form of a local history which primarily draws from files and photographs located in the JHH manuscript collection, as well as *Rock Island Argus* articles. Supplemental readings contextualize the movements that influenced the rhetorical shift in how Legislators and civic organizations discussed the Black Hawk area, which led to its eventual conversion into a park. This work provides a cohesive account of how intentional campaigning and story-telling led from the area as being exclusive to white seekers of industrial thrills, to being a space the Illinois Legislature considered a site of natural beauty, and important native history.

Although Beth Carvey, staff member of BSHSHS has provided some historical narratives related to the area's history, my investigation is the first comprehensive analysis of its usage as an amusement park and legislative conversion into a natural park. Carvey's essay on Hauberg, although detailing that he was in large part responsible for the area's conversion into a park, doesn't comprehensively explain the campaign process within a broader context. The piece implies that it was history that led to the park's conversion. Another public historian, Michael Sherfy, similarly touches on Hauberg and BHSPHS, and writes in relation to its Legislative approval, "It is often unclear whether he [Hauberg] was more pleased that it commemorated Black Hawk's memory or that it preserved the beauty of Rock River Valley."² This statement

²Michael Sherfy, "A Persistent Removal: Black Hawk, Commemoration, and Historic Sites in Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 100, no. 3 (2007), 248.

implies that nature also served as a primary factor in the park's creation. Was it history or nature that led to the creation of BHSP? I argue that both factors were essential to its creation.

Local histories of state parks remains an understudied section of environmental, public histories, and my work fills a regional gap of how BSHS fits within the state park movement, arguing that it's driven by both interest in natural preservation and historic conservation. The following sections elaborate upon the industrial, tourist, and Native American histories associated with the BSHS. The narrative is chronological, in keeping with 1921, 1925, and the culminating 1927 legislation. Two words essential to this inquiry, conservation and preservation, will be explored in the following section.

I. CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

Conservation? Preservation? Don't they mean the same thing, with an -ion suffix? The answer to that question is no, although the concepts are similar. Let's first explore the term 'conservation,' and how it was defined within the early twentieth century. An excellent description of this term may be found in the book *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement 1890-1920*, by Samuel P. Hays. Hays defines conservation in the early twentieth century as 'the preservation in unimpaired efficiency of the resources of the earth...' ³ This definition directly relates conservation to an economic estimate of land value and what the acres could continue to provide as a source for development; he describes conservation as a scientific, pragmatic approach to the utilization of resources. This approach emerged from scientific researchers and the federal government of the United States.

Another definition of conservation is expanded upon by historian Karl Jacoby in his book *Crimes Against Nature*. Jacoby defines conservation as 'the comprehensive body of rules

³ Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Atheneum, 1979 [c1959]), 123.

governing the use of the environment to achieve its vision of a national, state-managed landscape.⁴ Federal or state, top-down policy restricted action and interaction with the land by both local and indigenous peoples from the areas whence they'd lived in the name of a public 'good.' Eminent Domain payouts to locals constituted one part of the legal justification for mandating their removal from the parks-to-be.

Conservation in the early twentieth century, then, in the United States involved the creation of state and/or federal land management policies to save some resources for later use, as well as to efficiently use resources now. Regardless of whether the conservation movement is interpreted as a pragmatic necessity, or whether it's interpreted as a violent movement at the expense of the woodland proletariat, historical land conservation involved: assessing land to determine its value; and securing land based on its resource/monetary value. It was therefore the acreage to be considered important for a legislature or agency to decide it will manage it.

Activists and legislators eventually secured BSHS not as a place to conserve, however, but as a place to preserve. Historian Norman Tyler writes about the principles of historic preservation, dividing the movement into two parts over time: the first part being the early eighteenth century, and the second part emerging during the latter part of the twentieth century. During the eighteenth century, Tyler identifies the early trend in historic conservation as lobbying by private, wealthy individuals (usually women's groups) who had time to spare. Historic preservation efforts in the United States usually followed two paths: one, private efforts involving fundraising to save significant landmarks and two, public (government) efforts focusing on the protection of natural landscapes, features, and parks because of their historic significance. These two strands of historic preservation merged within federal legislation in

⁴Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Los Angeles: University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2001), 4.

1949.⁵ The blend between preservation of a natural landscape, combined with an emphasis on the historic value of the land led to BHSP's founding. Private individuals principally held the land and initial historic preservation efforts were based on interactions between wealthy individuals before being introduced to the public eye.

Local historian and leader John Henry Hauberg recognized the land's potential as a natural and historic site. An enthusiastic scholar and civic leader, Mr. Hauberg is best described by scholars as a 'prominent philanthropist and reformer... deeply committed to social progressivism and regional history.'⁶ Mr. Hauberg's married Susanne Denkmann in 1911. She was a daughter of the lumber baron who formed part of the Denkmann Weyerhauser lumber company. This lucrative union gave him the financial freedom to become an avid researcher of the Black Hawk War, traveler, organizer of local community groups for adults, and leader of youth groups such as the United Sunday School Band (U.S.S.B.) and the local YMCA chapter. Due to his interests in Native American history and the Black Hawk War, the Watch Tower area especially interested Mr. Hauberg.

II. THE WATCH TOWER AND THE RAILROAD

What is this Native American history, tied to the Watch Tower land, which interested Hauberg so much? A brief summation is that caucasian settlement of the Tri-City territory throughout the 19th century included the forced dispossession of land from bands of Sauk and Mesquaki by incoming settlers. Territorial encroachment and disputes precipitated the Black Hawk War, which definitively served as the catalyst for the permanent removal of the Native Americans from the area. The Federal U.S. Government forcibly removed the remaining Sauk

⁵Norman Tyler, Ted Ligibel, and Ilene Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice* (Second Edition) (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc, 2009), 42.

⁶ Jane Simonsen, "Descendants of Black Hawk: Generations of Identity in Sauk Portraits," *American Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (2011), 304.

and Mesquaki to a reservation in Kansas. Many Mesquaki returned to Tama, Iowa, in 1857 when a federal policy permitted them to repurchase their land.⁷ They still maintained their connections to the land along the Rock River, something of which Mr. Hauberg and other citizens were well aware.

Still, this inherent awareness didn't halt settlers from developing the land to suit their own interests; in the case of the Watch Tower area, this interest was that of the entertainment business. From 1888 – 1917, the Watch Tower Amusement Site entertained thousands, as the land in question existed as an amusement park complete with a toboggan slide into the Rock River, an outdoor concert venue, an ante-bellum style hotel complete with columns and a wrap-around balcony, a private lodge, and a trolley with a 5 cent fare to get there!⁸

How did these amusing attractions and luxury spaces come to be within the Tri-Cities? It began with Bailey Davenport. Mr. Davenport served as the mayor of Rock Island before, during, and after the Civil War period, and again in the 1870s. He owned hundreds of acres in the Rock Island area, which included farmland, residential areas, and manufacturing sites that contained sandbanks, river access, and a coal mine producing roughly two tons of coal per year.⁹ He also helped found Merchant State Bank, increasing both his wealth and influence, on both sides of the river. In the 1880s, Mr. Davenport became proprietor of the Watch Tower land and furthered his development interests by investing in the Rock Island & Milan railroad.

Investing in rail transportation was a good business move in the late 19th and 20th centuries, as the railroad was the primary mode of transportation for both people and products in the United States. Apart from the Rock Island & Milan line, the Tri-City area also contained the

⁷ Kerry Trask, *Black Hawk: The Battle for the Heart of America*, (New York: Henry Holt, 2006).

⁸ August 6, 1978 *Rock Island Argus* article: *The good, old days at Watch Tower Park*.

⁹ "Davenport of Note: Bailey Davenport," *Richardson Sloane Special Collections (blog)*, <http://blogs.davenportlibrary.com/sc/2013/01/11/davenport-of-note-bailey-davenport/>

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, and Rock Island and Pacific Railroad tracks. These lines transported not only travelers, but also coal, grain, and livestock. Davenport owned 25% of the investment shares in the Rock Island and Milan line, for a total of \$10,000.¹⁰ In 1882, this street company laid down ‘seven miles of track from downtown Rock Island down 11th Street to Milan, with a branch going east and [specifically] terminating at Davenport’s ‘Black Hawk Watch Tower Inn and the Watch Tower Amusement Site.’¹¹

The Amusement Site itself was an investment of Davenport’s, capitalizing on the amusement park movement sweeping the nation -- a movement for amusement that led to the development of land to entertain the public, and that of garnering clientele for the purpose of successfully operating an amusement park business. *Electrical Dreamland: Amusement Parks, Movies, and American Modernity*, by Lauren Rabinovitz cites 1894 – 1896 as the beginning of the amusement park movement, which peaked in the 1910s and ultimately declined in light of WWI and the Great Depression. By 1911, 75% of all parks were owned or controlled by rail companies whose passenger cars travelled to them directly.¹² Mr. Davenport’s Rock Island and Milan line constituted one part of this percentage. He opened the Watch Tower Amusement Park in 1888, and managed it until his death in 1890. Following his death, astute businessman D.H. Louderback became the proprietor of the land and the Rock Island line. Mr. Louderback’s investment in the line allowed him to maintain transport toward the amusement operations connected to the Watch Tower Amusement Site.¹³

Cheap transport raised questions among different community members about how such attractions affected civic values. These conversations were happening across America.

¹⁰ June 6, 1882 *Argus* article: *Street Cars*.

¹¹

¹² Lauren Rabinovitz, “*Electric Dreamland: Amusement Parks, Movies, and American Modernity*,” (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) p 11.

¹³ MSS 385, box 1, folder 1, Augustana College’s Special Collections.

Amusement parks were not exclusively big city phenomena, as railroads bridged the distance between rural American cities and amongst regions, classes, and races, mixing diverse cross-sections of the population.¹⁴ As people became ‘mobile tourists with new tourist sensibilities,’ they dressed for the occasion of their day-trip amusements, blurring the lines of social divisions. The middle-classed worried about the moral impropriety of mixing different socio-economic classes and genders so they tried to create rules to establish ‘acceptable’ behavior in amusement.¹⁵ Historians Gary Cross and John Walton explain within their text, *The Playful Crowd*, that it became difficult for areas with amusement parks to maintain older, Victorian ideals of propriety and so parks were therefore constantly in the midst of political and commercial pressures between reformers’ interest to ‘clean up’ parks while also maximizing short-term profits by allowing the presence of many social groups.¹⁶

These pressures similarly affected the Watch Tower. As amusement parks fostered a ‘melting pot’ culture, ‘intoxication and immorality’ became two targets for those seeking to reform the perceived lowering of public inhibitions. Indeed, amusement parks became a focus in the rapidly urbanizing world in defining what counted as social values. An anonymous letter penciled to ‘Mr. John Henry Hauberg’ in 1921 expressed moral concerns, “What would Black Hawk think if he could visit his old camping ground... John Looney’s Big house is rented for a house of ill repute and bootlegging. It’s called a club...”¹⁷ The location of John Looney’s house was near the Watch Tower Site, but also a ballground used by boys for their ballgames.¹⁸ The beginning of a financial decline for the Watch Tower Amusement Site, in addition to Rock

¹⁴ Rabinovitz, 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁶ Gary Cross and John Walton, “*The playful crowd: pleasure places in the twentieth century.*” (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) p 56.

¹⁷ Letter to Mr. JHH, May 1921, Box 25 Part VI collections, Indians Folder 39-2(a)

¹⁸ Photograph from JHH Box 25 Part VI collections, Notebook #3

Island reformists' initiative for the moral transformation, influenced some community leaders to think about a new use for the site.

III. DECLINE AND LAND USE DISCUSSIONS

The rise of the automobile and the decline in the Davis operations, which included brick and power companies farther north, led Mr. Louderback to consider the Tri-City line's sale in 1917. At the time Mr. Louderback began to consider selling, the acreage surrounding the lands maintained by the Railway's investors was primarily used by Tri-City residents for farming, coal mining, and amusement. These industrial uses of the land led to locals thinking it would only be good strictly economic purposes. Nonetheless, a small segment of Tri-City leaders, including Mr. Hauberg, recognized the Site's potential to stay and be reverted to a natural park space.

Due to his strong connections with business leaders in the Tri-City Area, Mr. Hauberg quickly learned of the Tri-City's interest in closing its rail line. Upon hearing the land would be parceled and optioned out for sale, he sought to secure the site. The year the Tri-City line began to discuss land sales, 1917, coincided with Illinois' planned statewide Centennial Celebrations. Governor Frank Lowden formed a special commission to plan the celebrations, and that year Mr. Hauberg received a letter from its appointed director, Hugh Magill, with whom Mr. Hauberg had discussed the idea of proposing a state park. Mr. Magill wrote favorably of the idea; "I believe if you can make arrangements to have that property donated to the state, that there will be no question but what it will be accepted... In this way you make certain that these historic spots will never be marred or destroyed..."¹⁹ Magill went on to recommend Hauberg take this matter up directly with Judge Leslie D. Puterbaugh, Director of the Department of Public Works and Buildings, in order to go forward with a park proposal.

¹⁹ Letter from Hugh Magill to Hauberg, 17 October 1917, Box 26, Folder 26, HC.

IV. THE FIRST PARK ATTEMPT: NATIVE HISTORY DISAPPEARS

Throughout the early twentieth century, park proposals were a hot ticket item in both State and Federal legislatures. Local and state parks began appearing in the early 1910s, and the Federal Government founded the National Park Service in 1916. The parks movement blended land conservation with historic preservation. In order for a park to succeed in becoming recognized as a park beyond a local level during this era was by providing a convincing case that the land in question was worth being registered due to both its environmental and historical status.

The State Park Movement in America, by Ney C. Landrum, provides excellent points related to the conceptualization of the term “park.” According to Landrum, parks are nearly unanimously perceived of as good, which is one of the themes connecting multiple variations.²⁰ During the Progressive era, the parks movement was driven by the idea that a person visiting a park space benefitted from an exchange between the person and nature in which the person is restored in some way by recognizing it as a site to take care of and subsequently enjoy. In the public eye, park-goers are determined as benefitting from engaging in wholesome values, embodying modesty and respect for the homeland. The parks movement was also driven and defined by the necessity to create an organized system to manage parks.

Director of National Parks, Steve Mather, called the first “National Conference on Parks” in Des Moines, IA, 1921. The Conference was a formal affair. Formal invitations endorsed by both Governor Harding and President Woodrow Wilson. Steve Mather, the man credited as the main lobbyist and director of the National Park service, sought to hold this conference as a way to determine which issues to address in determining *what* could be considered a park in a way

²⁰Ney Landrum, *The State Park Movement in America: A Critical Review* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 14.

that wouldn't cause conflict between states and the Federal government. Regional approaches to forming a federal system were critical, as it would be difficult to identify an area's historic importance on a national level on a broad scale without local scholarship.

In his letter inviting Mr. Hauberg to organize plans for the Centennial Celebration, Mr. Magill emphasized the importance of saving *historic* spots. In his view, every major warfare including the United States touched Black Hawk State Historic Site area. As a local researcher enthusiastic and interested about sharing his work, Mr. Hauberg likely illustrated for the Centennial Committee and local 'Pioneers' the area's important military histories pertaining to European-American, or strictly European, migrants who settled in the area. Mr. Hauberg also took a sincere interest in the Sauk and Mesquaki peoples and their history in the Tri-City area as well.

Having developed positive relationships with Black Hawk's descendants and the Mesquaki through correspondence, trips, photographs, and interviews, Mr. Hauberg wrote on behalf of his friend, Red Fox, to Mr. Magill in about the Centennial celebrations. Mr. Magill responded, stating, "I have your very good letter regarding Red Fox... The gentleman continues to write me frequently, urging recognition, but it doesn't seem to me that it would be fitting to set aside a particular day all over the state for the Indians, especially when we consider how few of them there are in Illinois." In the same letter, we learn that proposals regarding Watch Tower Park, "... have been somewhat disarranged by the death of Judge Puterbaugh..."²¹

Mr. Magill's and Mr. Hauberg's communications demonstrate that in 1917 – 1918, some high profile members of the State of Illinois weren't ready to acknowledge yet that much of its history involved Native Americans, indicating that that the 'historic spots' to which Mr. Magill referred to needed to be inclusive of white's history alone. Most historical narratives including

²¹ Letter from Hugh Magill to Hauberg, 22 January 1918, Box 26, Folder 26, HC.

Native Americans in the early 20th century depicted Sauk and Mesquaki life using romanticized imagery and prose. In spite of his friendships with certain Sauk and Mesquaki families, Mr. Hauberg wasn't immune to creating romanticized portrayals. "Descendants of Black Hawk: Generations of Identity in Sauk Portraits," by American Studies scholar Dr. Jane Simonsen, explains how Mr. Hauberg's and photos are part of the 'mythologizing of Black Hawk.'²² Indeed, in 1921, Mr. Hauberg received a letter from Miss Georgia Osborn of the Illinois State Historical Society, requesting historic poems written by settlers about Black Hawk. Mr. Hauberg enclosed the following poem in response, which was considered 'to be historical in nature' in its depiction of the Watch Tower's history:

*I love to stand on your lofty height
And view the landscape oe'r and oe'r.
As Black Hawk did in days of yore –
As in silence he wandered to and fro –
And watched the coming of the foe.
Silent you stand, but could you speak
What thrilling tales you would repeat
Of the warriors brave who fought and fell
To gain the land they loved so well.²³*

This poem is but one of many samples depicting the embellished tales that circulated in regional scholarship and popular culture. Although many people in the area referenced Black Hawk, the 'pioneers' of the Tri-City area and proprietors in the region weren't ready to consider Native Americans as a contemporary people; instead, they required mythologized images to justify their own historical narratives of a long-lost Indian people. The exclusion of Black

²² Simonsen, 305.

²³ Poem by Julia Stafford Hurst, enclosed in a letter from Hauberg to Georgia Osborne, 16 April 1921, Box 26, Folder 26, HC.

Hawk's name from the initial campaign for a park epitomizes the concept of historical erasure. Instead, legislators referred to the land as Watch Tower Park in the first bill introduced in 1921.

V. PUBLIC OR PRIVATE? THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CAMPAIGN 1918 - 1921

Although the Watch Tower's name itself is derived from the fact that Black Hawk supposedly used it as a look-out during the Black Hawk War, white settlers instead associated it with the added suffixes 'Amusement Site' and later 'Park.' As Tri-City land holders began to seek ways to parcel out the land, they continued to think of the park in terms of its amusement and industrial potential, not its potential as a natural site and historic value. Mr. Hauberg steadily sought to acquire options on the land for Watch Tower Park, collaborating with local realtors to get cost estimates, and staying apprised of the national and regional trends and the progressive conservation movement to convince landowners of benefits the potential park space offered.

A letter from Mr. Hauberg to his brothers-in-law, Mr. Tom and Sam Davis, indicates that he had initiated a discussion to option the land for a park began in 1918. In his letter, Mr. Hauberg emphasized the monetary value of the land instead of historical narratives to assign meaning to the land. In his letter, Mr. Hauberg wrote, "Illinois paid \$155,000.00 ... for 300 acres in Starved Rock Park. The reason the price was so high, was, that the owner had calculated the value --- in Dollars, of Starved Rock..." Shortly following this fact, Mr. Hauberg questioned the Davis' if it would "not be possible for you to figure prospective profits..."²⁴ Hauberg continued his collaborations with local organizations and business leaders, and on March 8th, 1921, four years after his initial communication with Magill, representative Glenn Kaufmann introduced bills 309 and 310 on the House floor.²⁵

²⁴ Letter from Hauberg to T.B. and S.S. Davis, 1 November 1918, Box 26, Folder 25, HC.

²⁵ House bills 309 and 310, located in box 27, folder 2, HC.

Bills 309 and 310 concerned state parks and preserves, and represented Illinois' first attempt to dictate an overarching structure for their establishment and management. Bill 309 stipulated who qualified to serve on boards for creating and managing state parks and state museums. It also defined the boards' functions, stating that, "The State Park Board shall make investigations which are of *historic* or *scientific* interest or of *natural scenic* beauty and shall formulate a comprehensive system of State parks, preserves and experiment stations..." and went on to recommend that the board of State museum advisers be composed of "... one expert in each in botany, ethnology, zoology, manufacture and museum administration."²⁶ The language of the bill illustrates Illinois' emphasis on scientific estimation in determining places of ecological importance to the state, as well as historical importance. Bill 310, referred to the appropriation committee, was simply an extension of Bill 309, dealing with the monetary aspect of land areas.

Both bills passed in the Senate, yet failed in the House, partly due to a limited budget. Their introduction, however, inclusive of Watch Tower Park was concurrent with the year as the high-profile, first National Conference on Parks. They situated Watch Tower Park in the public eye and garnered it greater public support. Local civic groups began to actively fundraise, campaign, and defend the Watch Tower site as important to local development of a historical tourist and recreational site.

Meanwhile, certain Rock Island residents continued to try to dispose of their land holdings around the amusement park in order to circumvent financial loss. In 1922, engineers and city officials discussed a proposed highway route that would cut directly through the land by the Rock River. Mr. Hauberg addressed the local Rotary Club to discourage the proposal, emphasizing residents' disapproval. He claimed the proposal would decrease the area's tourist

²⁶ Bill 309.

potential.²⁷ Scenic beauty constituted a major factor in tourist promotion as well as the potential for official state recognition and funding. The city dismissed the proposal, and subsequent news articles increasingly shifted away from the Watch Tower's tragic, war histories and instead toward its natural features, uses, and potential restoration.

VI. INDUSTRY TO SCENERY, A MID-DECADE SHIFT

In 1924, Illinois legislators began to support the possibility of reverting previously developed land into natural sites and so it was more inclined to purchase acres to convert to park space. Chicago-based, special-interest group Friends of Our Native Landscape (FONL), active and in contact with Mr. Hauberg as early as 1914, published a booklet of proposed park areas in the early 1920s; yet, it hadn't included the Black Hawk area due to it appearing 'too civilized' and lacking a sense of nature. Their purpose, as explained in the pamphlet's preface, was "directed towards the preservation of what is left of the scenic and historic lands in this state." The stipulations FONL required for a tract to be considered a park, included "...that each tract should contain not less than a thousand acres," going on to cite one of the reasons for this stipulation as being, "...that it requires large areas to preserve the native flora and fauna in all its wild and mysterious beauty. Overcrowded parks or preserves mean the destruction of all such."²⁸

To showcase the area's natural beauty, Mr. Hauberg and certain Tri-City community leaders persisted in fostering other connections with people in positions to advocate state park legislation. In 1924, John Bramhall of the Press Club of Chicago compiled photographs of potential park areas within Illinois, and reached out to Mr. Hauberg to solicit pictures of the Rock River area. Bramhall intended to mail the pamphlet to State legislators, as lobbyists continued to investigate and identify sites that would serve both state and public interests. In his

²⁷ *Argus* article, 8 August 1922, "Hauberg Addresses Rotary."

²⁸ Jens Jensen, *Proposed Park Areas in the State of Illinois: a report with recommendations*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1921?), 4.

letter to Hauberg, Bramhall wrote, “It is the belief of the friends of the forest and parks movement here that such publicity... will greatly aid in promoting the efforts...”²⁹

In his response to Bramhall, Hauberg included five photographs of the area, three of which depicted the Watch Tower area and two of which included Black Hawk’s descendants in ceremonial dress. He also included an *Argus* article pertaining to the proposed park, and touched briefly on the local, mythicized legend of ‘Indian Lover’s Spring’ associated with the Watch Tower. These pictures indicate a shift in popular thought toward recognizing Native Americans as part of the landscape when promoting the site, albeit in a romanticized manner. Of equal importance, Hauberg communicated to Bramhall his belief that, ‘Our Watch Tower, under proper care, can be restored as to wild flowers, etc. etc.’³⁰ In one letter, then, Hauberg represented the area as both historic and potentially scenic, in keeping with the contemporary opinions.

During the 54th General Assembly session of 1925, bills advocating five different possible park sites reached the Senate and House floors, the Black Hawk Watch Tower bill among them. Unlike in 1921, this time, prestigious organizations such as Rotary, the Kiwanis Club, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the State Historical Society of Illinois endorsed the bill. The name of the bill, ‘Black Hawk Watch Tower,’ denotes that romantic narratives of Black Hawk and the Native Americans connected to the land had worked their way into popular thought. People now viewed the site as more than just the ‘Watch Tower’ industrial amusement. Although journalists’ stories still stressed the importance of the land’s association with famous American war heroes such as Zachary Taylor and Abraham Lincoln, descendants of

²⁹ Letter from John Bramhall to Hauberg, 11 January 1924, Box 26, Folder 26, HC.

³⁰ Letter from Hauberg to Bramhall, 24 January 1924, Box 26, Folder 26, HC.

European settlers also officially recognized Black Hawk in name. As in 1921, the 1925 bill didn't come into fruition due to competitive distribution of funds.

VII. THE LEGISLATURE OF 1927: A PARK IS APPROVED!

The failure of the 'Black Hawk Watch Tower' bill in 1925 didn't mean that locals lost interest. Senator Martin Carlson, the central supporter of the bill in 1925, also continued to keep it in conversation with fellow legislators, earning it further support from other members of the Senate. In August of 1926, at the height of the Progressive Era, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article extolling the value of the Black Hawk Watch Tower park for the boys of America; "*Now we strike an Illinois city where the citizens appreciate and extol their superb environment of natural beauty and ... they also impart them to the nation ... Rock Island is a boy's paradise. When Rock Island boys want to play Indian ... they have for it a veritable Indian stage that is as big as all outdoors.*"³¹ The sentiments of this article, encapsulating the concepts of nature acting as moral restorative and of an American identity tied to the land that paradoxically included, yet excluded, Native Americans, ultimately formed the language of the Black Hawk Watch Tower bill, introduced in 1927.

The Black Hawk Watch Tower bill, at long last, merited near unanimous approval from state legislators for its passage in June. The Senate bill indicated the site was of 'great historical interest ... it being the place of birth and burial grounds of the Indian Chief Black Hawk, and his headquarters and stronghold during the ineffectual warfare waged by him on the encroaching whites.'³² Within ten years, legislative language gradually transformed from an absence of Native Americans, to including Black Hawk's name, to citing it as a primary reason for the land's importance. The bill went on to cite the city of Rock Island as 'threatening to obliterate

³¹ James Bennet, "Rock Island is Happy Hunting Ground for Boys: City Cherishes Traditions of Heroic Chieftain," *Chicago Tribune* 18 August 1926, 12.

³² *Laws of the State of Illinois*, 1927

the land marks of historical interest' and destroying 'the scenic beauty of said site.'³³ Concepts behind the purpose of land value, then, had also transformed over the decade to conserve natural beauty as opposed to industrialization, directing emphasis toward potential tourists visiting the park.

VIII. CONCLUSION

June 28, 1927, the day before Governor Len Small signed the Black Hawk Watch Tower bill, the *Argus* released an article discussing his plans to hold a pow wow, per the recommendation by Mr. Hauberg. The article closes with the statement that "...if it can be made a reality, the Rock Island state park can be made one of the outstanding parks of the country, and that such ceremonials and festivities will do much to increase its value."³⁴ Ironically, what locals and legislators didn't consider important before --- Native American history and contemporary Sauk and Mesquaki ties to the Watch Tower land --- became an economic incentive and intrinsic factor in its tourist value.

In 1921 and the years leading up to the first introduction of the failed park bills, John Hauberg leaned on the economic calculations of land value and the site's potential to convert back to a natural site as a primary reason in garnering initial support and securing the land to be optioned to the State. Although the bill failed, it demonstrated the actions that active conservationists chose to take in advocating for and securing park sites. This natural aspect of park advocacy remained an integral part of lobbying for BHSP, but as the Progressive Era grew, so did an era of popularized, romantic narratives related to Native American history.

Whereas before Black Hawk and his ancestors were barely mentioned, they began to work their way into the land's narrative as viewed by whites. Again, the 1925 bill failed, but this

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Arthur Donnegan, "Annual Pow-Wow of tribes which once settled land may be held at tower," *Argus*, 28 June 1927.

time reputable civic organizations had the site on their list of important places to defend to keep for future generations. An argument for nature and scenery, although still relevant, began to become secondary to the arguments that continued to keep the Watch Tower within the public eye --- those related to its history. Hauberg published hundreds of pamphlets that were delivered to congressmen and interest groups, continued to give lectures, and work with the press.

Finally, in 1927, Hauberg himself presented volumes worth of Black Hawk's history to State representatives before they nearly unanimously approved the bill to create Black Hawk State Park. The Governor's approbation of Native Americans returning to the site to hold an annual powwow to accent the locale's history, if somewhat trivial, recognized the Sauk and Mesquaki as part of Illinois and indicated that history was a main incentive in increasing tourism. By witnessing them as part of the land and its history, it gave further incentive to restore the trails in the park to be used by people to reinstate vigor and the honorable values associated with nature such as bravery and health.

Through persistent and intentional campaigning, John Hauberg and other local leaders and activists were able to transform the way people perceived a formerly industrial site. Within ten years, Native Americans history became recognized as an important part of the land's value, and the state of Illinois was ready to consider a site as ready to be one of its parks after legislation related to its existence failed twice. A publically collective conscious and usage of this space, in addition to favorable economic shifts and business strategy, led to the creation of a much enjoyed space in the Quad Cities today.

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