

# The Trailer Park that Became a City

Hilltop and the Importance  
of Mobile Home Parks as  
Endangered Historic Places

Hilltop in 1952—  
"a new kind of suburbia."





## Eduard Krakhmalnikov

**N**ESTLED AT THE southern end of Anoka County, the city of Hilltop is easy to miss while driving along Minnesota State Highway 65 (Central Avenue). Surrounded by the northern Minneapolis suburb of Columbia Heights, Hilltop is a geographic oddity: an enclave both in form and in function. Made up largely of mobile home parks, the city is an archetype of manufactured (mobile) housing communities in Minnesota—their overlooked history, their necessity, and their uncertain future. Inexorably tied to broader forces of population momentum, economic pressures, and personal choices and subject to unwarranted stigma, such communities are, like all others, places where bonds coalesce, children grow up, and the elderly age in place. From the hard-pressed to the hardworking, from choice to necessity, manufactured homes have always been home.

How mobile homes came to Hilltop, and indeed how and why the city came into being, is rooted in the steady surrender of unincorporated land to the suburban tract. Mobile home parks, originally constrained to undeveloped land at the margins of fast-growing urban areas, did not, and could not, mimic the expansive quality of postwar suburbs. As a low-budget alternative to suburbia, parks

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participate in the American dream in their own detached, frugal way, becoming “a new kind of suburbia,” a place that millions call home and millions more disparage.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, faced with increasing maintenance costs, zoning restrictions, and unceasing development pressures, the future of these parks is uncertain. Four miles from Hilltop, the Lowry Grove mobile home park in St. Anthony, a stalwart from the 1930s, was sold to a developer and demolished in June 2017 to make way for new high-density housing. The predominately low-income residents were evicted, and some struggled to find alternative affordable housing. In October 2017 the development plan was rejected by the city; the developer then posted a sign reading “Opening Soon Lowry Grove RV Park.” Such pressures on mobile home parks are not new. Unless the parks are cooperatively owned and maintained, the land the manufactured housing sits on is privately owned. The parks exist only as long

*An early house trailer, pulled by a 1916 Packard, built by Minnesotan Albert Noyes.*

## During the Great Depression, the negative attitude toward trailer residents developed—an attitude that became so pervasive that it remains to this day.

as private owners or, as in the early days of Hilltop, municipal regulators want them to be.<sup>2</sup>

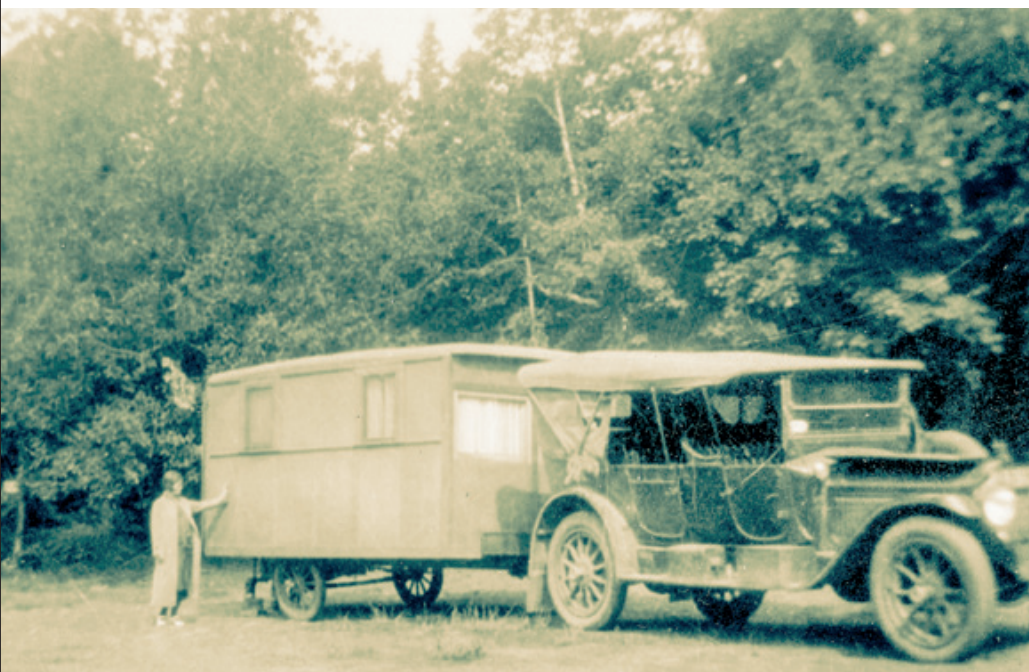
Hilltop’s story is one of taking a stand—the periphery protecting itself against suburban sprawl. The city incorporated in 1956 to protect a grouping of mobile home parks from imminent threat, a moment of steadfastness that has kept the parks in existence. Today, the 250 mobile homes in Hilltop are reminders of an American built environment whose heritage is in peril, a story that has at best only been intermittently examined. The history of mobile homes begins in earnest a century ago with the rise of the automobile.

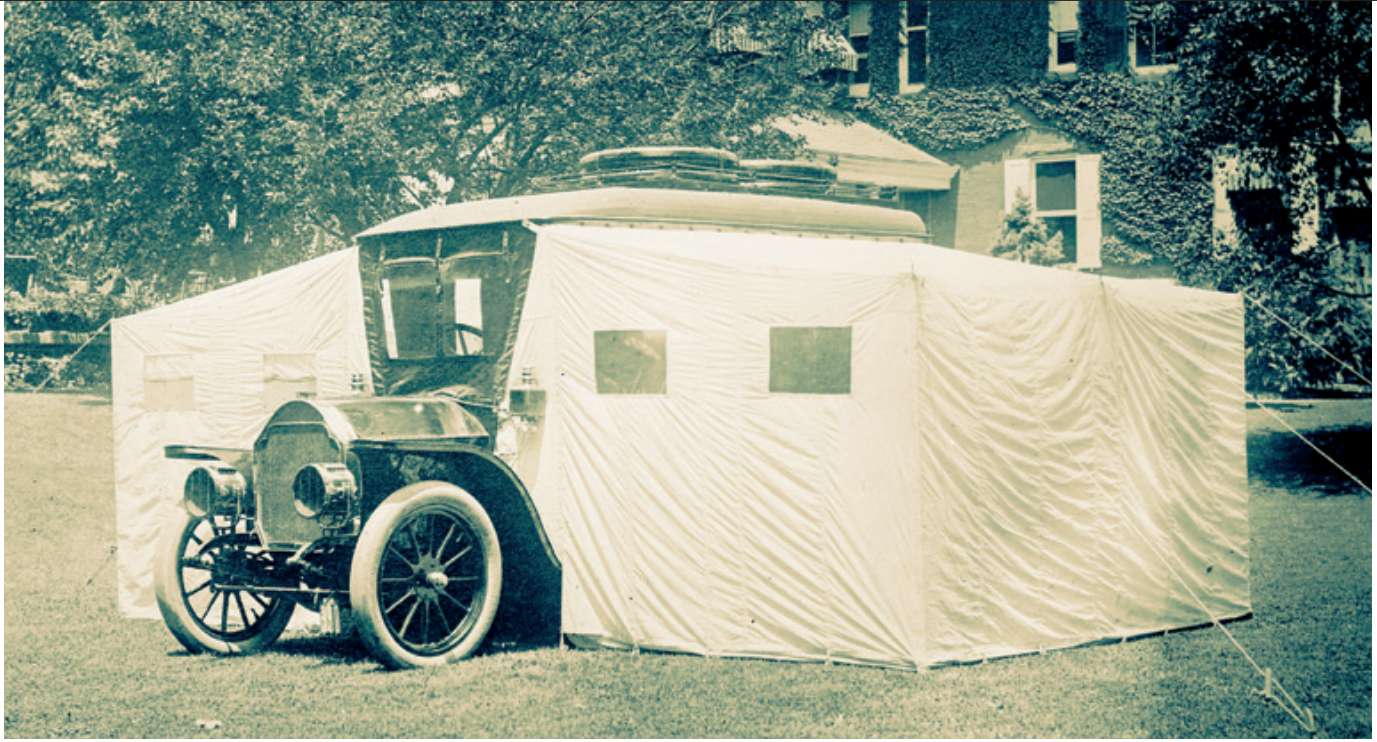
**T**RAILERS AND mobile homes fulfill three primary uses: seasonal or travel homes, stopgap housing needs, and permanent residences. Almost

as soon as Americans began driving automobiles, they hitched things to them. As a travel accoutrement, the proto-mobile home emerged as a camper trailer that, towed behind the automobile, provided a better shelter than a tent. The distinction between the earliest homemade trailers and the manufactured models that appeared soon thereafter was often minor.<sup>3</sup>

From the 1920s to the 1940s, trailers were used not only by the affluent as comfortable camping accommodations, but also by the mobile poor as makeshift squatter housing. This became especially evident during the Great Depression, when large-scale financial distress and a lack of low-cost housing options created the conditions for an increasing population of permanent trailer residents. During this time, the negative attitude toward trailer residents developed—an attitude that became so pervasive that it remains to this day. To counteract this image, the trailer industry exclusively marketed its product as a holiday vehicle. Regardless, by the start of World War II the trailer had gained tacit acceptability as a decent (or “respectable”), albeit temporary, housing option.<sup>4</sup>

At the time, parks—with their generous, clean public facilities designed for roadside comfort—represented a landscape vision distinct from that of camps, with their rather compact utilitarian nature. Unplanned and unregulated, camps tended to be crowded and unsanitary “eyesores” materializing overnight on vacant land. In reaction to the stigma of transiency, “park” (a term chosen to





*A Stoddard-Dayton camping car built for engineer and politician Thomas Coleman du Pont (1863–1930), who used the vehicle during his supervision of the construction of the DuPont Highway through the state of Delaware, ca. 1910–1915.*

entice desirable visitors) became, like “mobile home” rather than “trailer,” the preferred industry nomenclature in the early postwar years. The name change, however, could not erase a prejudice that remains to this day.<sup>5</sup>

The trailers of the 1930s traveled on new roads and bridges, many funded by New Deal programs such as the Works Progress Administration. Skilled teams of peripatetic laborers brought their trailers to jobsites across the country. Out-of-work farm laborers found, or at least hoped to find, gainful employment in urban centers. Millions were on the move. The underemployed, perhaps initially anticipating trailers to be temporary measures, found them to be more or less permanent. By 1936, roughly 250,000 trailers housed nearly a million people nationally.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, leisure travelers took to the road to visit faraway national parks and warm-weather locales. Opportunity and autonomy, frugality and industry combined to diffuse the travel trailer across the country. In Minnesota, travel trailers could be seen in campgrounds at Scenic State Park in Itasca County and at the long-gone West End Modern Cabins and Trailer Court in Winona.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1940s, American manufacturing rapidly geared up for wartime operations, powered by the quick relocation of the labor force to centers of production that, to a large degree, was enabled by the mass availability of trailer housing. During World War II, utilitarian trailers, most without running water, provided basic shelter to about one in eight wartime workers. To ensure standards and, above all, availability, the War Board underwrote the mass production of standardized trailers. In so doing, the federal government legitimized the trailer as a stopgap measure during times of need.<sup>8</sup>

In Rosemount, ground was laid for the massive Gopher Ordnance Works in May 1942, with production slated to start in January the following year. The size and speed of the project drew thousands of workers to town, topping 19,000 by mid-September 1942. To meet the housing shortage, trailer courts were quickly drawn up in Farmington, Rosemount, and Lakeville, as well as on local farms. Elsewhere nearby, trailer camps

sprang up on North Lexington Avenue in Roseville and on Highway 10 in New Brighton.<sup>9</sup>

With the end of World War II in 1945, trailers became a solution to a different kind of housing shortage. Millions of servicemen and -women came home. They found spouses, birthrates peaked, and new families searched for home and comfort. On December 28, 1945, Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey delivered a message to the Minneapolis City Council on “the need for development of an emergency housing program,” saying, “So desperate has the [housing] problem become that my office has been literally besieged by returned servicemen and their families seeking assistance in their search for living quarters.”<sup>10</sup>

At the time, the War Housing Bureau estimated 10,000 local families were seeking shelter, with most “forced either to occupy substandard housing or to double and triple up with friends and relatives. Vacant stores and unheated places are being used for living quarters, and in some instances families have





ABOVE: Trailer camp at Coates station, Rosemount, 1942. BELOW: Trailer camp on N. Lexington in Roseville, one of several camps that sprang up near ordnance plants to house workers during World War II.





## During World War II, utilitarian trailers provided basic shelter to about one in eight wartime workers.

even sought shelter in automobiles and public places.” In response to the crisis, Humphrey set up the Mayor’s Housing Committee in August 1945; within four months and with limited resources it had established a “trailer colony” on city land at 50th and Lyndale Avenues North to house 107 families. Given the desperate demand, private parks once again filled a need. By the late 1940s, more than 200 trailers packed Lowry Grove in St. Anthony.<sup>11</sup>

Following the passage of the 1944 GI Bill, which enabled millions of

veterans to attend universities, the housing shortage was felt especially keenly on college campuses. Between the classes of 1946 and 1947, enrollment at the University of Wisconsin doubled, with veteran students increasing eightfold. Similarly, of more than 27,000 students enrolled at the University of Minnesota in 1946, upward of 70 percent were veterans. As part of a suite of measures, including over-capacity student dormitories and temporary barracks within the university’s Memorial Stadium, the University Village proj-

ect began in 1946 as a row of trailers along Como Avenue. Four years on, it housed more than 2,000 people, including 800 children, in a combination of trailers, Quonset huts, and metal barracks. Six miles from the University of Minnesota’s East Bank campus, Hilltop also provided housing for students and their families.<sup>12</sup>

The early postwar years were a boon for the trailer industry. By 1948, approximately 7 percent of Americans lived in trailers; six years on, in 1954, US housing included three times the number of trailers as during the war. With families desiring the stability and comforts of the emerging, consumer-oriented American dream, the trailer industry produced and marketed newer, expanded models with showers and complete kitchens. In the early 1950s, the standard mobile home measured

*Aerial view of temporary “G.I. housing” at 27th Street and East Hennepin in Minneapolis constructed in 1946 to accommodate veterans returning to school.*



eight feet wide by 27 feet long for a total floor area of just 216 square feet, about half the space of a typical two-car garage today.<sup>13</sup>

The 10-foot-wide, introduced in 1954, was the precursor of the even larger 12-foot-wide and later the double-wide—two units hauled separately and fused together on-site. By 1967, the average mobile home's length had more than doubled and, with newer 12-foot-wide models making up nearly three-fourths of all new production, the floor area had tripled from 1950 averages to about 700 square feet. The expansion of the trailer into the mobile home proved a popular choice with consumers: in the decade following the introduction of the 10-foot-wide, annual sales grew more than 300 percent. The wider units were too large to be towed behind the family car and parked by the owner. Instead, they were moved and placed commercially on a preselected site, transforming the trailer into the mobile home: a *purposeful* transition to the permanent. As elsewhere, the mobile homes in Hilltop took on a permanence of their own.

## As elsewhere, the mobile homes of Hilltop took on a permanence of their own.

A permanent foundation, it turns out, is not the sole determinate of communal moorings; in the face of existential threat, mobile home residents chose to protect their homes and community.<sup>14</sup>

**T**HE FIRST AVAILABLE image of Trailer City, a 50-site park adjacent to Highway 65 (Central Avenue)—then a gravel, two-lane thoroughfare—appears in an aerial photograph of Fridley Township in 1947. The following year, Leslie (Les) and Mary Ann Johnson purchased Trailer City, located at 4550 Central Avenue. A 1952 photograph (page 322) shows ordered rows of mobile homes surrounded by undeveloped land. Demand soon outgrew capacity, and in 1955 the Sunnyside Trailer Park was built just to the north of Trailer City.

Suburban development quickly encroached on the territory surround-

ing the two parks. In 1956, a group of Trailer City residents led by Les Johnson requested that the City of Columbia Heights annex the park. The request was denied; the trailer homes were against city ordinances. In response to the rejection, Johnson organized a petition to trigger a vote to incorporate as a separate village. The effort, based primarily out of Trailer City, proposed a village consisting of 80 acres bounded by Central Avenue on the east, Monroe Street Northeast on the west, 45th Avenue Northeast on the north, and 49th Avenue Northeast on the south. The name proposed was Hilltop, after the drive-in movie theater that then stood on the other side of Central Avenue. The largely undeveloped area crested in a hill between 46th Avenue Northeast and 47½ Avenue Northeast. Measuring a little over one-tenth of a square mile, the village contained about 240 residential buildings, 195 of which were mobile homes—164 in Trailer City and 31 in Sunnyside Trailer Park—confined to densely packed strips of land.<sup>15</sup>

Anoka County commissioner Al Kordiak opposed the petition: enclaves like Hilltop were to be avoided. Court rulings, Kordiak thought, would find Columbia Heights should own the land and thereby avoid complicating jurisdiction and oversight. According to an article in the *Minneapolis Star*, reasons why Trailer City residents now wanted to incorporate included a desire to avoid the higher taxes and stricter regulation that joining Columbia Heights would bring. The drive-in theater reportedly decided against being part of the incorporation procedure late in the process.

*Housing crisis creativity: Galen and Elaine Armstrong lived in the fuselage of a B-29 bomber parked on land near Eighteenth and East Hennepin in Minneapolis after World War II.*







Location of Hilltop's four trailer parks diagrammed over aerial view.

While a name change to Monaco was considered, the petition had already reached an advanced stage and the name Hilltop remained.<sup>16</sup>

A week before the May 1, 1956, incorporation vote, the Columbia Heights City Council voted to cut off water and sewer services to Trailer City. This preemptory move was based partially on a fear (later born out) that the new village would soon build liquor stores that would compete with the city's municipal establishment. Proceeds from the municipal liquor store provided approximately one-third of Columbia Heights' annual budget. The threat to cut off services, however, did not deter residents, who favored incorporation with a decisive vote of 137 to 24. A decade later when Hilltop had grown to contain four parks (Hilltop Properties, Sunnyside Mobile Home Park, Trailer City Park, and Hilltop Mobile Home Community), one Hilltop resident reminisced in a *Minneapolis Star* column, "Nobody resists like one who may have his sewers clogged. It was issues like these that united all of our four trailer parks from a loose confeder-

ation of Yellowstones and Detroiters [brands of trailer homes] into a cohesive whole." Three days after the vote, Hilltop, population 668, officially became a village.<sup>17</sup>

As is still the case today, Hilltop residents owned their mobile homes but rented their land lot from park owners. This ownership model contradicted the surrounding suburban system of parcels that bundled the lot and house together as one entity. In 1960, the year-old Minnesota Municipal Commission recognized the ownership model of mobile home parks as a threat and challenged the existence of the five-year-old Village of Hilltop as a separate municipality. Established by the state legislature to advise on the appropriateness of annexations, boundary changes, and incorporations, the Municipal Commission disputed the permanence and durability of both Hilltop and Landfall, another new village that also consisted primarily of mobile homes east of St. Paul and north of the suburb of Woodbury. While specifically addressing Landfall, the commission chair's stated misgivings about the private nature of the village could have applied to Hilltop as well. If the owners decided to sell, the commission chair argued, the village would no longer exist. The commission perceived mobile homes as temporary structures that did not have the same legal status as buildings. In response, the Columbia Heights City Council directed its lawyer "to study ways of erasing Hilltop from the metropolitan map." The legal challenges from Columbia Heights, however, never materialized. By the mid-1960s, suburban housing had completely encircled Hilltop.<sup>18</sup>

**B**Y THE LATTER HALF of the 1960s, mobile homes were "the fastest growing segment of the housing

industry" and "the most rapidly changing form of housing." From 1950 to 1970, mobile homes as a percentage of all dwelling units more than quadrupled from 0.7 percent to 3.1 percent. If anything, Minnesota exceeded this growth pattern. The state's sales of mobile homes increased 234 percent from 1960 to 1965. In 1965 alone, 18,576 new units were registered in the state; within two years, 47,000 Minnesotans, or 1.3 percent of the population, lived in mobile homes. By 1967 Minnesota had 122 parks, with 39 in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area and another sizeable concentration on the Iron Range.<sup>19</sup>

Given the speed of growth and often-purposeful municipal negligence, many parks were seen as "little more than slums." The newfound popularity of mobile homes—coupled with concerns about their quality and their loophole around tax codes—led to greater consideration by state and local regulators. First distinguished from the transient trailer in 1961 state statutes, mobile homes were now considered and taxed as personal property rather than as motor vehicles, as trailers had been. Tax revenue was distributed half to the local school district, 30 percent to the local municipality, 10 percent to the county, and 10 percent to the state general fund. Compared to similar regulations in other states, the Minnesota method was mentioned in a review of the industry as the "most equitable and workable approach" at the time. The distribution ratios were answers to long-held concerns that mobile home households, many of whom had children in local schools and relied on local services, did not pay their fair share into the system. Anxieties based largely on misconceptions persisted.<sup>20</sup>

A 1967 report on the condition of Minnesota mobile homes and





Hilltop in 1952: rows of mobile homes surrounded by undeveloped land.

population characteristics of those who resided in them discredited “popularly held beliefs which maintain that mobile home dwellers spend most of their lives on the road, that they are predominantly low income, poorly educated, and highly prolific people.” Instead, most residents were found to have enough means to live

elsewhere but chose to live in parks out of desire rather than need. While residents moved for the same reasons as conventional homeowners, they did not take their homes with

them: only 9 percent planned to move their mobile home. Once the homes arrived on-site, they stayed on-site. The question, then, was “not whether the mobile home and its park belong, but where they belong.”<sup>21</sup>

In a 1973 speech to the Mobile Homes Manufacturers Association, US president Gerald Ford confirmed, “Mobile homes have become a major segment of the nation’s housing supply. They are here to stay.” To reinforce this sense of permanence, perhaps, the industry in the 1970s once again changed terminologies, this time from “mobile home” to “manufactured housing.” It was not until 2010, however, that the US census displaced the much older term “mobile home” with “manufactured housing,” finally severing the link with tents, automobiles, and train cars.<sup>22</sup>

By the mid-1960s, suburban housing had completely encircled Hilltop. 1953 aerial survey, left, 1964 aerial survey, right, with the trailer parks outlined in red. The Hilltop Drive-In Theater, from which the city took its name, is outlined in orange.





At the close of the millennium, Hilltop contained many single-wide models from the 1950s and 1960s, remnants of the golden age of postwar mobile-home living that had long since started to show their age. Painted in pastels, these postwar stalwarts had accumulated additions and alterations including porches, skirting (paneling masking the crawl space under a mobile home), and flowerboxes. In the spring of 1999, the city secured funding from the Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency to upgrade the aging housing stock. Given the low property value of aged units and the expense required to fix them, upgrading often meant replacement. Hilltop mayor Gerry Murphy clarified the impetus for the idea as a reaction against investors who purchase low-cost, substandard homes, put in minimal work, and sell them for a substantial profit. “This doesn’t help the community,” he explained, adding, “If we could buy it cheap enough, we could destroy it and leave the lot open for a new home.” Within a year, the mayor described the progress: “The city’s starting to look better, people are happier and more comfortable. That’s what you want to do for your citizens.” By 2002, the oldest home in Hilltop dated to 1956, though most were 15 to 20 years old. By the following year, 40 mobile homes that were more than 25 years old had been replaced. Only a handful of units from the 1950s and 1960s remain.<sup>23</sup>

Today, approximately 80 percent of Hilltop’s 750 residents live in manufactured housing. The homes, which number more than 250, are contained in four distinct parks that take up less than half of the city’s total acreage. As of 2014, three of the four park owners lived in the parks they owned—Hilltop Mobile Home Community, Sunnyside Mobile Home Park, and Trailer City Park. According



*Hilltop manufactured homes, 2014.*

to the Hilltop city clerk, “The parks exist as long as the owners want them to.” In recent years, the village has experienced a cultural and generational shift. Many old-timers with a vested interest in the parks accrued over long-term occupancy have died or moved away, while immigrant families have filled in the vacancies.<sup>24</sup>

**I**N 2011, nearly 1 in 16 Americans lived in more than seven million mobile home units. In Minnesota, however, manufactured housing is markedly less popular than the national average: in 2008, only 1 in 30 Minnesotans, representing roughly 68,000 households (an estimated 170,000 individuals), lived in manufactured housing, about half the national rate. As of 2009, about 850 parks were spread throughout the state. The parks house some of the most vulnerable low-wage earners, with especially large concentrations of young immigrant families, residents with disabilities, and older single women on a limited income.<sup>25</sup>

Facing increasing maintenance costs and unceasing development pressures, the future of mobile home parks—and indeed the people who live in them—is uncertain. Between 2000 and 2006, 17 parks closed in Minnesota. The Twin Cities metro-

politan area is especially prone; no new parks have opened in the region since 1991, while 12 have closed. Collins Mobile Home Park and Shady Lane Court in Bloomington were shuttered in 1994 and 2006, respectively, and replaced by a Wal-Mart and condominiums. Whispering Oaks in Oakdale closed in 2007 due to infrastructure issues, and, similarly, Woodlyn Court in Anoka was abandoned in 2008 because repairing the aged septic system proved too costly.<sup>26</sup>

These parks, and others like them, represent a largely unstudied past: a hidden history of millions of Americans, from leisurely travelers, to families starting households, to retirees. The mobile homes in Hilltop are as much a part of the state’s history as the stories of the people who live in them. While mobile homes have been accepted as a needed housing type, the next transition for the building type, arguably, is respect—including active protection. The opportunity is massive: currently, no mobile homes or mobile home parks exist on the National Register of Historic Places. With every passing year, more and more homes far outlive their life span, while others evolve into amalgamations of disparate parts. The convergence of permanence and flexibility has set mobile homes apart for nearly a century. ▣



## Notes

1. Robert Mills French and Jeffrey K. Hadden, "An Analysis of the Distribution and Characteristics of Mobile Homes in America," *Land Economics* 41, no. 2 (May 1965): 133.

2. Hannah Covington and Miguel Otárola, "After Lowry Grove Mobile Home Park Closes, Residents Face Daunting Unknowns" (Minneapolis) *Star Tribune*, Oct. 6, 2017; Hannah Covington, "Met Council Works to Preserve Mobile Home Parks with First-of-Its-Kind Grant," (Minneapolis) *Star Tribune*, Aug. 24, 2017; Hannah Covington, "In Startling Move, Lowry Grove May Reopen to RVs and Mobile Homes," (Minneapolis) *Star Tribune*, Oct. 14, 2017, <http://www.startribune.com/in-startling-move-lowry-grove-may-reopen-to-rvs-and-mobile-homes/450837813/>.

3. Allan D. Wallis, *Wheel Estate: The Rise and Decline of Mobile Homes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) (hereafter cited as Wallis, *Wheel Estate*), 38.

4. *Mobile Homes and the Mobile Homes Industry*, Consulting Services Corp., final report submitted to the legislature, Jan. 1967, Minnesota Legislature, Highway Interim Commissions Records, MNHS State Archives, 2; "West End Motor Cabins and Trailer Court," business card, MNHS Collections Online; Gail Olson, "Sale on Lowry Grove Closing Soon," *Northeast*, June 1, 2016; Wallis, *Wheel Estate*, 93.

5. *Mobile Homes and the Mobile Homes Industry*, 2. Later, mobile home parks (not camps) would be reborn as seasonal housing for active retirees in warm-weather climates.

6. *Mobile Homes and the Mobile Homes Industry*, 2.

7. "West End Motor Cabins and Trailer Court," business card; Olson, "Sale on Lowry Grove Closing Soon."

8. Wallis, *Wheel Estate*, 93. The use of trailers as a federal stopgap measure continued up until fairly recently. In preparing for and responding to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the Federal Emergency Management Administration purchased 144,000 trailers for \$2.7 billion. Perhaps due to the speed of construction and lack of time-consuming oversight, many of the trailers were found to have toxic levels of formaldehyde. Now, the agency has fewer than 2,000 trailers on hand as a last resort, preferring instead to pay for rent and quick fixes. See "FEMA Plans to Sell Hurricane Trailers," *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 8, 2007, and Emily Schmall and Frank Bajak, "FEMA Sees Trailers Only as Last Resort after Harvey, Irma," *Business Insider*, Sept. 10, 2017, 9.

9. Patricia L. Dooley, "Gopher Ordinance Works: Condemnation, Construction, and Community Response," *Minnesota History* 49, no. 6 (Summer 1985): 225.

10. Hubert H. Humphrey, "A Message by the Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey to the City Council Concerning the Need for Development of an Emergency Housing Program by the City Council," Dec. 28, 1945, 3. Many baby boomers spent

the first few years of their lives in trailers before suburban development could keep pace with demand. In this way, the millions of retirees now moving seasonally to their homes in warmer climates have made a full circle—from trailers in their infancy to manufactured housing in their twilight years.

11. Humphrey, "A Message . . . to the City Council"; Olson, "Sale on Lowry Grove Closing Soon."

12. Keith W. Olson, "World War II Veterans at the University of Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Winter 1969–70): 86; Stamford Lehmberg and Ann M. Pflaum, *The University of Minnesota, 1945–2000* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 7, 8.

13. Wallis, *Wheel Estate*, 93, 94, 96.

14. Frederick H. Bair Jr., "Mobile Homes: A New Challenge," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 32, no. 2, Housing Part 1: Perspectives and Problems (Spring 1967): 288; Allan D. Wallis, "House Trailers: Innovation and Accommodation in Vernacular Housing," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 3 (1989): 38.

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16. Weber, "Incorporation Vote Set"; Willis Woyke, "Hilltop 'Capital' of Columbia Heights," *Northeast*, July 25, 1984.

17. Jim Klobuchar, "Tiny Hilltop," *Minneapolis Star*, June 26, 1967, 11; "Hilltop Village Approved in Tuesday Election," *Anoka Union*, May 4, 1956. At the time, Minnesota required just 100 votes in favor to incorporate into a separate municipality.

18. Dick Conklin, "Hilltop, 5 Years Old in May, Still Fighting for Its Life," *Minneapolis Star*, Mar. 2, 1961, 9.

19. Bair, "Mobile Homes: A New Challenge," 303; Lee Irby, "Taking out the Trailer Trash: The Battle Over Mobile Homes in St. Petersburg, Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* (Fall 2000): 187.

20. Bair, "Mobile Homes: A New Challenge," iii, 3, 9, 290, 303; 1961 Minnesota Statutes 273.13 and 168.12.

21. Bair, "Mobile Homes: A New Challenge," iii, 3, 9.

22. Gerald Ford, "Notes for Speech before the Mobile Home Manufacturers Association," Mar. 22, 1973, box D34, folder "Mobile Home Manufacturers Assn., Mar. 22, 1973," Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech file, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

23. Gail Olson, "City of Hilltop's Taking a Close Look at Some of Its Older Housing," *Northeast*, Feb. 9, 1999; Gail Olson, "Hilltop's Renewing Its Housing Stock, One Mobile Home at a Time," *Northeast*, Feb. 8, 2000; John Fraser Hart, Michelle Rhodes, and John T. Morgan, *The Unknown World of the Mobile Home* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 90.

24. Interview with Ruth J. Nelson, Hilltop city clerk, May 13, 2014.

25. Table C-01-AO, 2011 American Housing Survey, US Census; tables DP04 and SO201, 2012 American Community Survey, US Census; Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 2013), 150; Kim Skobba and Leigh Rosenberg, *Manufactured Housing in Minnesota*, Minnesota Housing Partnership report, May 2008, 5, 13; "Complete List of Manufactured Home Parks in Minnesota," All Parks Alliance for Change, <http://allparksallianceforchange.org/?q=reports/list>. According to the American Housing Survey table C-01-AO, there were 7190,000 occupied mobile homes in the United States in 2011. One in every 10 new homes in 2009 was manufactured. The estimate of Minnesotans living in manufactured housing uses the national average of 2.73 for manufactured home household size.

26. Daren Nyquist, *The Risk of Manufactured Home Park Closings: An Analysis and Recommendations of Effective Park Closing Ordinances*, All Parks Alliance for Change report, Feb. 2007, 2; Hannah Covington and Miguel Otárola, "As Mobile Home Parks Close, Attention Turns to How to Protect Them," (Minneapolis) *Star Tribune*, July 17, 2017; Freya Thamman and Jonathan Stanley, *Manufactured Home Park Equity Grant Report*, Metropolitan Council, June 2016, 5.

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Photos p. 314–15 and 322 (top), Anoka County Historical Society; p. 316, 318, 319, and 320, MNHS Collections; p. 317, Library of Congress; p. 321 and 322 (bottom), Borchard Map Library, University of Minnesota, [www.lib.umn.edu/apps/mnapo/](http://www.lib.umn.edu/apps/mnapo/), highlights by author; p. 323, courtesy of author.





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