

CEDARCLIFF'S HISTORY

(with some Geography Flavor)

Preface

This is a short sketch of the background and shaping of today's Cedarcliff community.

The account is far from complete and balanced. Hopefully, it can provide a setting for detailed chronicles of our individual households. Perhaps it will stimulate us to compile a community album of photographs of the people and events. I soon realized that a fully illustrated story far exceeds the limits of this report. Nevertheless, I suspect that, collectively, we have a rich and interesting resource for such an album.

As Secretary of our corporation, I have greatly enjoyed this assignment from President Paul Clark. I am grateful to Betty Clarke, Dorothy Jackson, and Jane Borchert for reading the manuscript and correcting my faulty memory and to Scandia neighbors Harry Benshoof, Harriet Johnson, Marlin McCurdy, and Wally Srock for their insights and recollections. Errors and oversights that remain are my own.

John Borchert, April 1996

CEDARCLIFF'S HISTORY

THE GROUNDWORK

The face of the land tells an important part of Cedarcliff's history. The land was shaped mainly by outpouring glacial meltwater about 16 thousand years ago. The continental glaciers were rapidly melting from North America. And the property we occupy today was very close to the action (**Figure 1**).

- A Minneapolis
- B St. Paul
- C St. Croix Falls
- D Grantsburg
- E St. Cloud
- F CEDARCLIFF

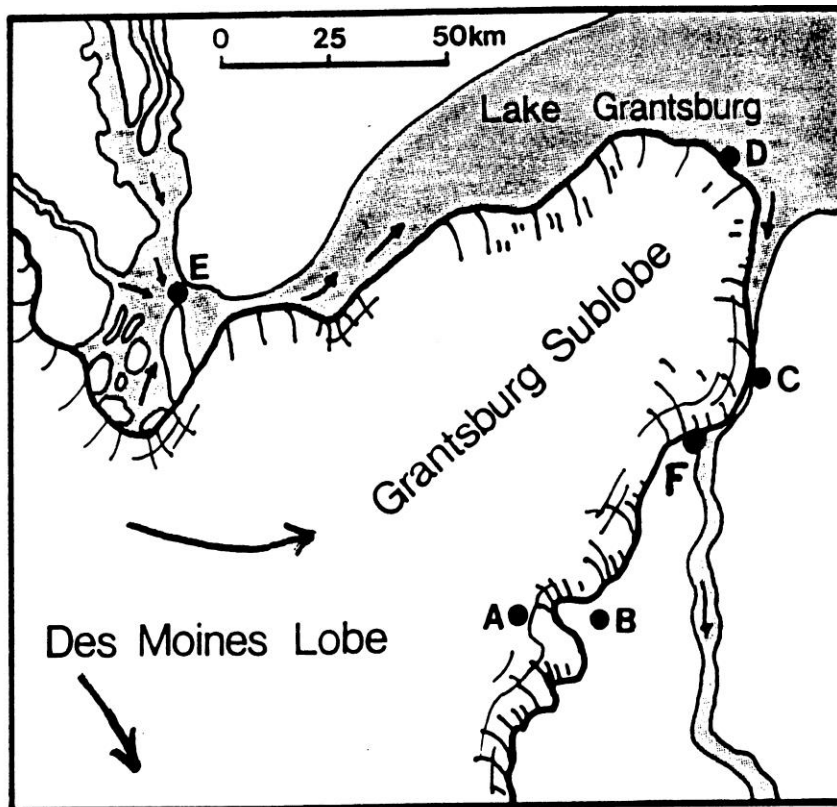
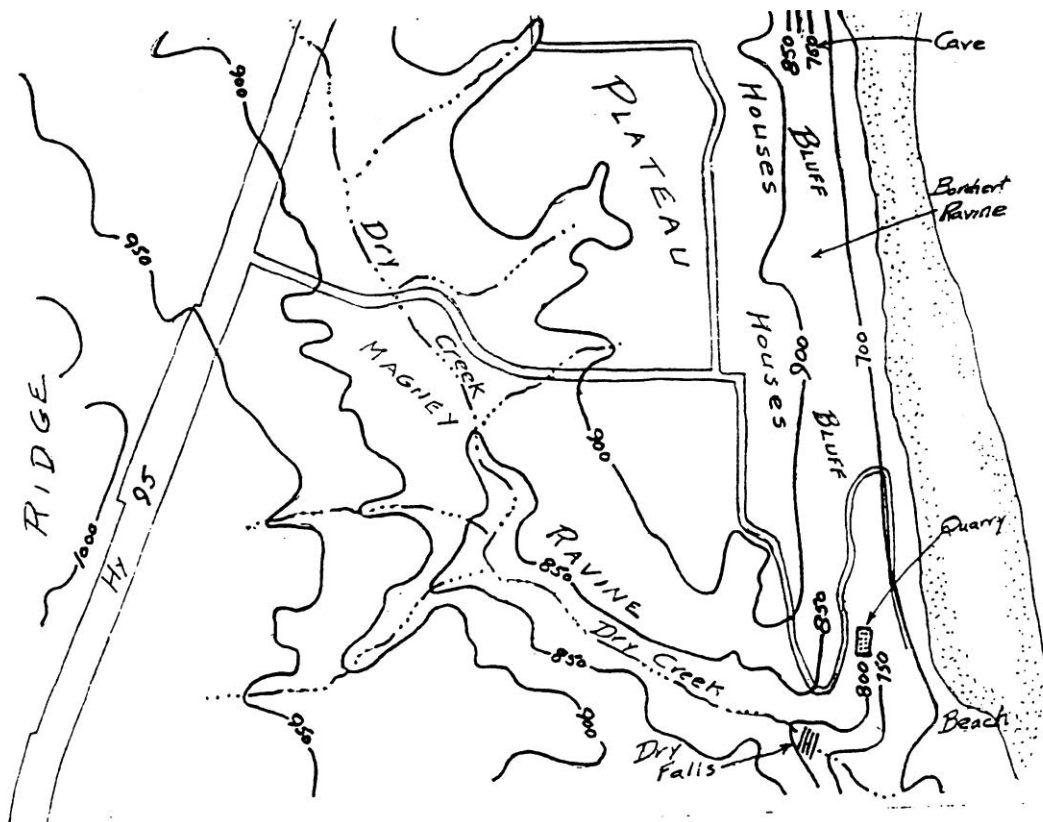


Figure 1. About 14,000 BC a sub-lobe of the continental glacier temporarily blocked the flow of meltwater and diverted a torrent down the St. Croix. Adapted from Ojakangas and Matsch, *Minnesota's Geology*, p. 107

The water from melting ice all across northern Minnesota rolled down the St. Croix valley at a peak flow probably a hundred times the volume of today's river. Imagine a stream below our houses bluff-to-bluff, forty feet deep, milky with glacial clay. It spread wide aprons of sand and gravel like the Osceola terrace, across the river from Cedarcliff; it scoured the deep gorge and carved bluffs like ours. Meanwhile, lesser torrents rushed from the lobe of ice that stood just north of Cedarcliff and ran southeastward in many shallow channels to the big river.

The major resulting features are shown on the map in **Figure 2**. Above all others, the **Bluff** is the feature that defines Cedarcliff. The Bluff inspired Gottlieb Renatus Magney's love of the area as a boy in neighboring Wisconsin in the 1880s and 90s, his return to it as the well-known architect of the Foshay Tower in

Figure 2. *The shape of the land at Cedarcliff. Contour lines show that the houses on the blufftop and plateau are more than 200 feet above the river and 50 to 150 feet above Dry Creek. Dry Falls, the Quarry, Borchert Ravine, and the Cave are breaks in the bluff.*



the 1930s, and his decision to open it to a few new settlers in the 1960s. It is the reason Dick and Betty Clarke, who bought the first lot, proposed to memorialize the area as "MAGNEY'S ESCARPMENT AND WOODLAND SHORE: CEDARCLIFF ON ST. CROIX".

Rising 220 feet above the river, our bluff is one of the the highest, steepest sections between Taylor's Falls and Point Douglas. One hundred feet below the bluff-top, the river cut its gorge through a layer of hard, gray dolomite rock 20 to 30 feet thick, to form a vertical **escarpment**. The dolomite formed the "Rock Ledge" that Magney identified on the original Cedarcliff plat map. All of us probably have that map in our files.

Three conspicuous breaks in the escarpment record three chapters in Cedarcliff history:

- The **Quarry**, below the Magney cottage. There in the 19th century neighborhood farmers cut and blasted the dolomite for the foundations of their barns and houses. A few of those stones form our memorial at the Cedarcliff gate. The Soo Line used the same rock to build the piers of the 1888 swing bridge.
- The **Borchert Ravine** . A softer, weaker section of the escarpment collapsed while the river was cutting the gorge. The result was a catastrophic landslide that accounts for the ravine and its smooth, triangular shape, as well as the huge cone of broken rock on the terrace below it. (No need to panic, though; another such landslide is unlikely before the next ice age!) The Borchert nature trail follows the bottom of the ravine, and the trail's stairway--engineering wonder of Cedarcliff--negotiates the break in the escarpment.
- The **Cave**, where ground water filtering along a big crack in the escarpment dissolved a large amount of the dolomite rock and poured it into the river. Besides the resulting big opening in the bluff, passages reach back several hundred feet. (Only bold, lithe grandchildren who have both expendable flashlights and steel-nerved elders can penetrate those passages.)

Dry Creek and the adjoining wide **Magney Ravine**, though much more subtle, provide almost as much of Cedarcliff's character as the bluff does. The wide, shallow ravine narrows and deepens on the way from the northwest corner to the southeast corner of the property. The most striking drop is at the 50-foot-high **Dry Falls**, where the creek bed crosses the dolomite escarpment below the Magney cottage. Small tributary ravines push gently upward to the northeast across the gravel and sand **Plateau**, toward our houses on the bluff, and southwestward up the steeper and less sandy high, rock-cored **Ridge** under the Beatty and Charter farms.

Dry Creek was not always dry. About 14,000 B.C., meltwater pouring from the half-mile thick wall of ice standing only a few miles to the north scooped out the ravine and carved the deep gorge below the Dry Falls. During those times summer rain and melting snow eroded the smaller tributary ravines. Even now the main creek bed is not always dry. A vigorous stream runs one or two days most years, during the spring breakup. Then for a few fleeting hours the Dry Falls are as impressive as Minnehaha. And in a few of those hours, with luck, the morning sun lights the cataract from the right direction for a picture. It's a tough, slippery climb to reach a good vantage point; but it's worth the effort.

THE LEGACY OF SETTLEMENT AND VEGETATION COVER

Analyzing his dig in the Cave in the summer of 1956, state archaeologist Dr. Lloyd Wilford concluded that native Americans had used it as a campsite for centuries, but had no permanent settlement there. (Dick Clarke obtained a copy of Wilford's report, and Paul Clark distributed copies of it to all of us a few years ago. The Cave is on Paul and Gretchen Clark's land.) The U.S.-negotiated 1825 treaty line, meant to separate Ojibway from Dakota grounds, crossed the river at Cedar Bend, but occupation by either group was mainly in the form of skirmishing across the border zone.

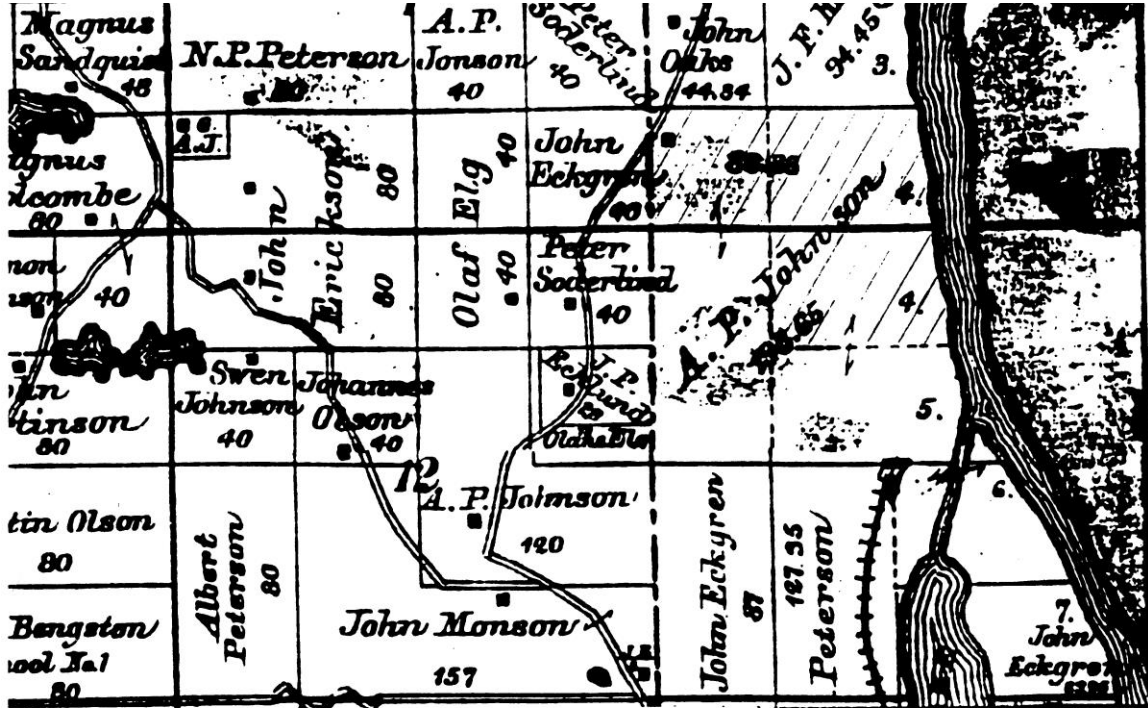
MAPS OF ROADS AND PROPERTY

Pioneer Anders Per Johnson

It remained for a Swedish immigrant, Anders Per Johnson and his wife, Martha, to be the first settlers on today's Cedarcliff property. Our abstracts of title show that they acquired the land by deed in 1865 although they had occupied it under contract a year earlier. Our property appears on the earliest available plat map, in 1887, as the northern and northeastern parcels of the larger tract bearing the name of A. P. Johnson (**Figure 3**). The Johnson house is on the map. It stood at the location of our memorial plaque and "park", just inside today's Cedarcliff gate,

The map shows some contrasts between then and now. Note that the Soo Line track terminated at the point above the big spring in Silver Creek valley, south of the Cedarcliff property. The railroad bridge was still under construction and would not be opened for another year. It would require a moveable span, of course. The bridge would have to be opened for river steamers regularly plying the St. Croix as far north as Taylor's Falls. In fact, the Stillwater Gazette reported in the summer of 1875 that one of them--the E. B. Knapp--had "struck a snag and gone to the bottom in three feet of water at Cedar Bend".

Figure 3. 1887 Plat Map of the northeastern part of New Scandia township. The part of A. P. (Anders Per) Johnson's land which is now the Cedarcliff property is cross-hatched.

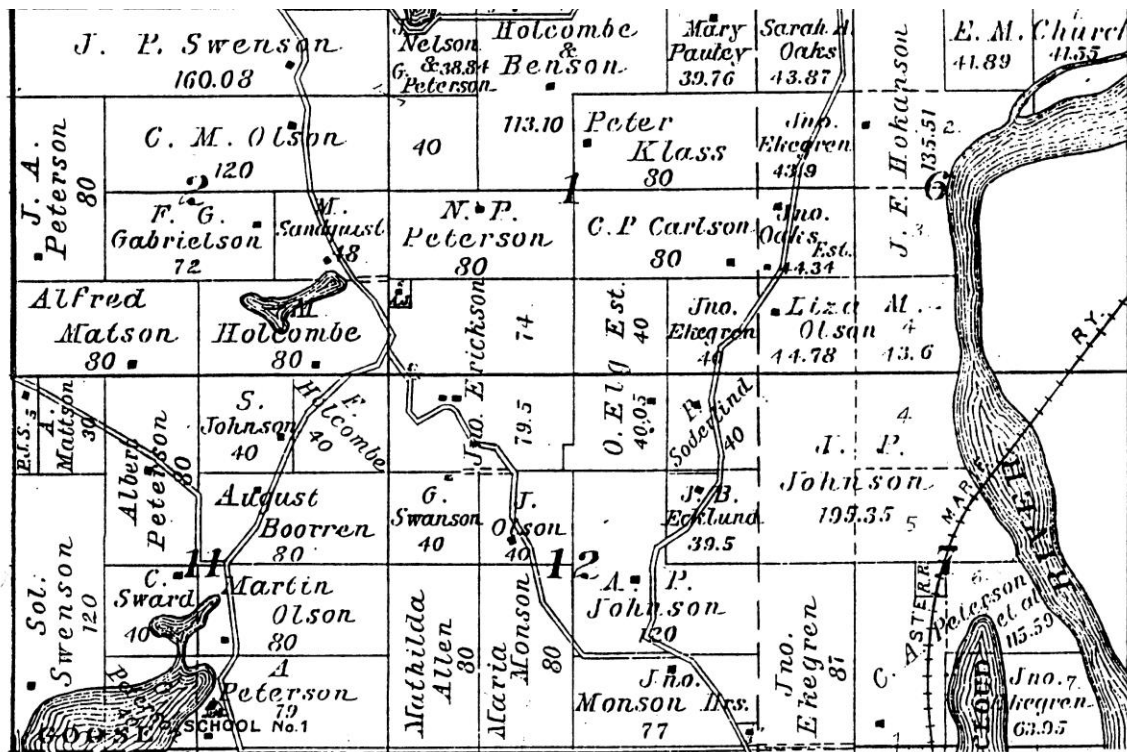


The road was different, too. A segment of the original military road to Lake Superior, it had a more winding alignment than today's Highway 95. It passed between the present Charter farm and Cedarcliff gate as it does now. But south of that point it turned southward and passed on the east side of what's now the Marzolf farmstead, then along the still-visible grade curving southwestward down into the upper ravine of Silver Creek, then southward up the south side of the ravine, passing the east side of the Harriet Johnson home, then back to the present alignment near the intersection with today's Pilar Drive. It was graded but not surfaced.

Ownership Shifts to the Olsons

Liza and Bennett Olson acquired today's Cedarcliff tract from Anders Johnson in 1891. The tract appears in Liza's name on the 1901 plat map (**Figure 4**). Incidentally, with the imprecision characteristic of the times, Liza is consistently called "Lisa" in our abstract of title, alternately "Lisa" and "Liza" on the old plat maps, but finally "Liza" on her gravestone in Elim cemetery. Her

Figure 4. 1901 Plat Map of northeastern New Scandia. Liza Olson is shown as owner of two-thirds of the Cedarcliff property; the southeast parcel is still in Johnson's name.

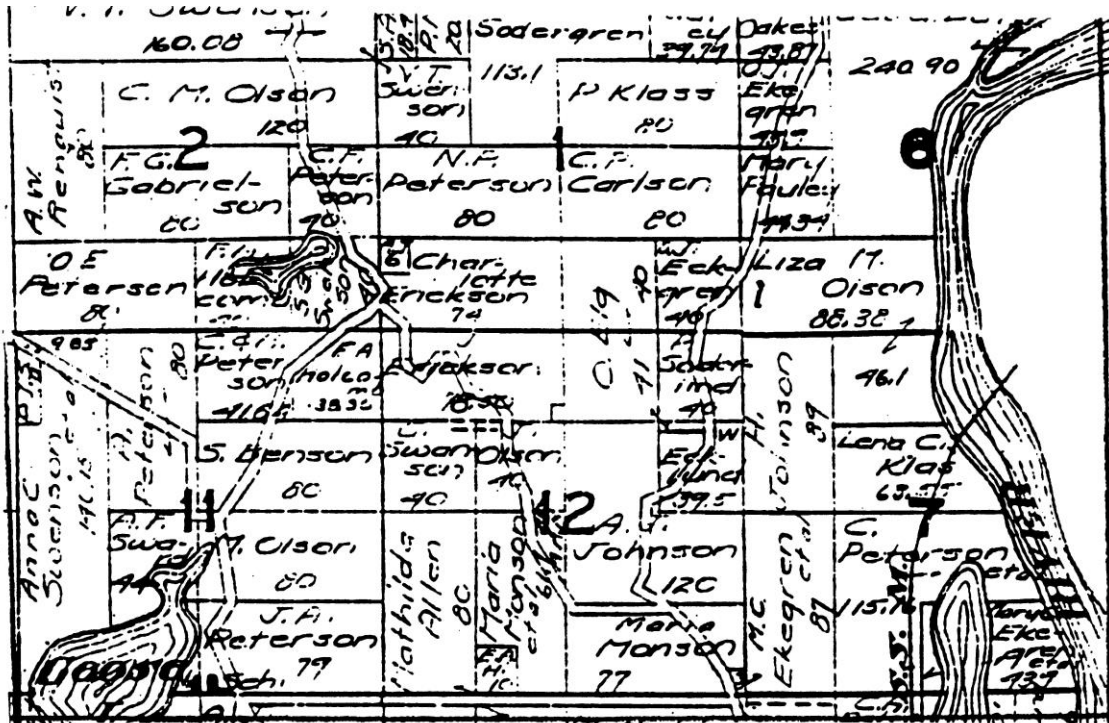


daughter, Alice, was born that same year and lived on the family farm until about 1929. Liza was Anders' daughter, and he continued to live in the place until he died in 1906. According to our abstract, in 1891 they had just paid off the \$269 mortgage on the place--a lot of money in those days. The mortgage obligation dated from 1886, and Olsons had assumed the debt when they bought from Johnson in 1891. The house, built by Johnson, appears on this map also, near the road on the west edge of the property. The road still followed the same alignment but had been graveled. Farmers used what is now our east-west lane to haul rock from the quarry through the Olson farmyard to the road.

The railroad bridge was now 14 years old and much busier than the river. Besides the time-freights and way-freights, ten passenger trains crossed daily--three each way between the Twin Cities and Duluth, two each way between the Twin Cities and Sault Ste. Marie. The Duluth trains carried parlor and sleeping cars, and the night train to the Soo carried a through sleeping car between Minneapolis and Montreal. Swan Stenlund, who later bought today's Charter farm across the highway from Cedarcliff, was the bridge tender. When a boat was due, he had to get up steam in the boiler on the central pier of the bridge and turn the swing span. He lived with his family in a small house at the base of the ravine at the Wisconsin end of the bridge. Today the bridge is stationary;

instead, the ravine swings when inspired Osceola high school kids party there on spring and summer nights.

Figure 5. 1916 Plat Map. Liza Olson is now shown as owner of the entire Cedarcliff tract.



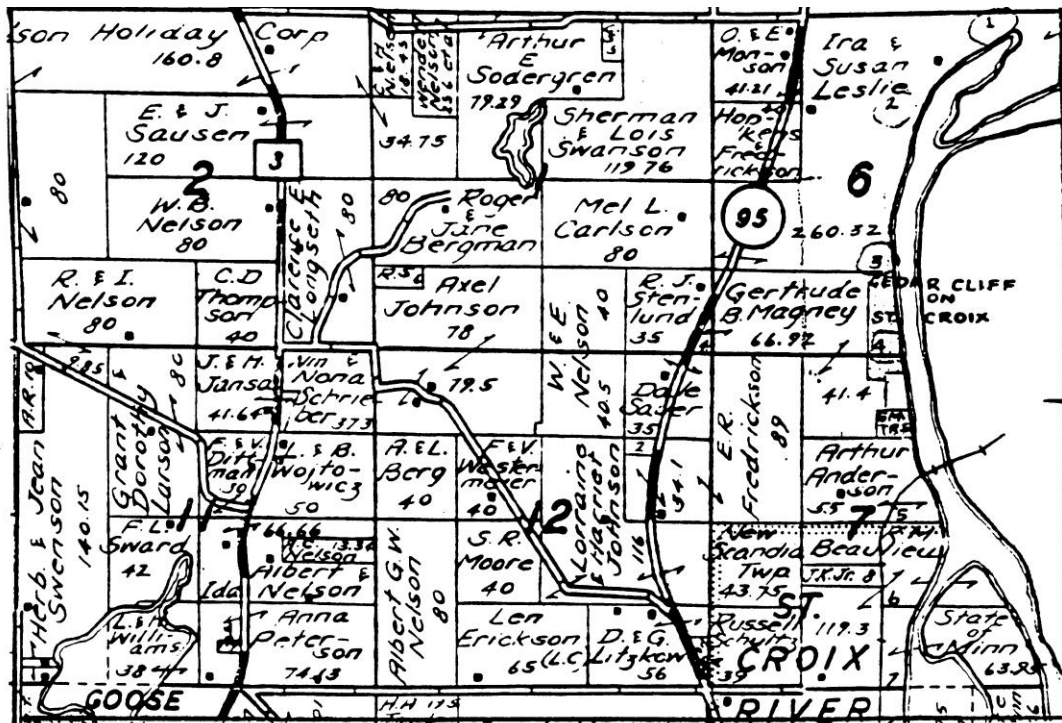
On the 1916 map in **Figure 5** the ownership names convey the ethnic and cultural flavor of the community. Of 376 parcels in New Scandia Township, 368 were owned by Swedes. In contrast, today, after 25 years of suburbanization, no more than half of the "433" phone numbers are Swedish names. The parcel sizes give you a feel for the economy. The average parcel was only 60 acres. Farms were small and the soil mediocre to poor. The Olson farm was worse than most. Nevertheless, at this time Lisa and Bennett had been eking out a living from crops and dairy cows for 25 years to raise a family of five children.

Cream was the main source of cash for all of these farm families. The milk wagon took milk cans from the farm to the creamery in Scandia (now the plastics plant north of the Scandia Farm and Home store), where the cream was made into butter. Another wagon hauled the crocks of butter to the Otisville depot (across the highway from present-day Crabtree's Kitchen), for shipment to the Twin Cities on the Soo Line.

Magney's Name Appears on the Map

The 1966 map (**Figure 6**) shows the former Olson farm now in Magney's name; and the Cedarcliff subdivision appears on the map for the first time. In the early post-World War II years highway 95 had been realigned to its present route and paved. Ira and Susan Leslie now owned the large tract to the north of Cedarcliff. It was still in cultivation. Our neighbor, Wally Srock, recalls that he and his dad farmed it, although they "avoided the big gullies at the southeast corner"--the deep ravine above the Cave, between the present Clark and Arnold Anderson houses. The gullied area looked like a bit of the Badlands of Dakota when Andersons acquired the property in the 1970s. The erosion must have dated from earlier decades of plowing too close to the bluff. Only Andersons' help from their soil-scientist son, Jeff, and the county Soil Conservation office transformed the area into its present smooth slopes and continuous vegetation cover.

Figure 6. 1964 Plat Map. Gertrude Magney is now shown as the owner of the Cedarcliff property. Note that the flow of the river has shifted to McCleod's Slough. Air photos show today's sandbar filling the former channel between 1938 and 1964.



Although land holdings had been shuffled among family members and some newcomers, the 1966 map still did not show much subdivision of the original claims. In the northeastern six sections of the township the number of parcels had only increased from 72 to 74 in the 79 years since 1887. But a new era was beginning.

Mr. Magney actually acquired title to the property through a foreclosure sale in April 1931. From our abstract records, it appears that the price was \$489. That foreclosure had been ordered by the Scandia State Bank, which in turn was closed and liquidated by the Minnesota banking commissioner in 1933. Remember, this is the same land we own today; and the owners lived in a house on it--just as we do. In fact, Mrs. Olson had lived on it forty years and raised five children in her small house. She lived eighteen of those years as a widow, after Bennett died in an accident in 1910. Her parents lived on it 25 years before that and also raised five children. As you can see from the following table, the net monetary savings for those two generations amounted to minus \$4000!

Two Generations of Financial Struggle

Table 1 shows the loans, repayments, and debt accumulation over the years from 1880 until the liquidation. Debt on the property grew from \$500 in 1880 to \$4060, and it was settled in 1931 for 12 cents on the dollar. Some of the mortgage loans were not legally recorded until the eve of the bank's failure, years after they were made. It appears that the bank was in effect using some of the savings of more fortunate members of the Scandia community to help the less fortunate. Only the lawyer in Stillwater made a profit. It's a fascinating vignette of the multitude of cases that make up the history of marginal American farms and small rural banks in the hard times of the 1920s and 1930s.

Table 1. *Loans and legal fee, repayments, and unpaid balance on mortgages on the Olson farm, 1880-1931.*

Year	Event	\$ Loaned	\$ Repaid	\$ Balance
1880	Mortgage issued	500		-500
1882	Mortgage satisfied		500	0
1886	Mortgage issued	269		-269
1891	Deed to Liza Olson			
1901	Mortgage satisfied		269	0
1901	Mortgage issued	300		-300
1908	Mortgage satisfied		300	0
1908	Mortgage issued	500		-500
1910	Mortgage issued	100		-600
1912	Mortgage issued	400		-1000
1915	Mortgage issued	1300		-2300
1918	Mortgage satisfied		1300	-1000
1918	Mortgage issued	1875		-2875
1921	Mortgage issued	2700		-5575
1921	Mortgage satisfied		1875	-3700
1923	Mortgage issued	360		-4060
1928	Liza dies			
1931	Property declared vacant			
1931	Bank begins foreclosure			
1931	Billing for legal expenses	59		-4119
1931	Sale to G. R. Magney		489	-3630

Data from entries in the Abstract of Title for Lot 4, Cedarcliff on St. Croix.

FOREST, FIELD, AND PASTURE

Before European-American settlement, this area, like all of eastern and northern Minnesota, was forested. Francis Marschner's famous map, compiled from the original federal land survey notes, summarizes what the surveyors recorded in the early 1800s. Along the river they noted elm, ash, basswood, maple, aspen, hackberry, with white pine and arborvitae; on the uplands bur-, white-, and red oak, elm, basswood, ash, butternut, aspen, birch, wild cherry, hickory, and scattered white pine.

The First Air Photos: 1938

On the first aerial survey photos in 1938, the land that makes up our individual lots was still mostly wooded (**Figure 7**). Tree cover extended from the river westward beyond the Bluff-top. Woodland also covered the rough land along the Magney Ravine south of the main east-west lane. On the river bluffs maple, oak, beech, basswood, elm, and ash dominated the lower slopes; white and red oak, maple, beech, and butternut above. Pin oak, ironwood, butternut, box elder, cottonwood, and juniper marked the transition to open field at the upper edge of the woodland. Also scattered along the bluffs were clusters of aspen, birch (including river birch), arbor vitae (from which Cedarcliff takes its name), and remnants of white pine which had survived lumbering in the 1850s and 1860s. The woodlands in the Magney Ravine were mainly oak and maple, with scattered birch and surviving white pine,

All the rest of the property had been cleared laboriously in the 1870s and 1880s under the ownership of Anders Johnson. The cleared land south of the road probably never had any use other than pasture. That was also probably true of the land which sloped steeply from the Olson farmyard to Dry Creek. But from the bottom of the ravine eastward across the Plateau to the top of the Bluff the land must have been in cultivation from the time it was cleared until Magney acquired it in the 1930s. It was planted in clover in the summer of 1938; and it's clear from the aerial photo taken in July that the clover was being mowed for hay at that time. Russell Stenlund recalls that it was used for crops in 1923, when the Swan Stenlund family moved to what is now the Charter farm, across Highway 95 from the Cedarcliff gate. The Stenlunds raised oats and potatoes on it in 1935, and only the severe drought kept them from doing so in other years of the 1930s.

Magney had demolished the Olson farmstead buildings by 1938. That was not a major task. Russell Stenlund describes the house from his memories. Small, unpainted, poorly maintained. A living room across the front (west side), a bedroom and kitchen in the rear, and a loft. A tarpaper shed and a small granary stood off to the southeast. The shed probably replaced the barn which burned in the early 1920s. Our neighbor, Harriet Johnson, recalls that it "wasn't much of a

eastward along the south side of the lane. Neighboring farmers used all of the remaining cleared land, both north and south of the lane, for pasture.

Cultivation had ceased, with only the brief interruption of a sizeable "victory garden" at the southeast edge of the pasture area. Mrs. Magney had tended it early in World War II. She lived in their cottage for more than a year while Mr. Magney coordinated the construction of the giant Kodiak Island naval base off Alaska.

Meanwhile, during the early and mid-1960s, by the axe and saw of a laborer Magney had hired from Osceola, the edge of the woodland had been pushed from the top of the Bluff downward and eastward to the stone cliff. The clear-cut bluff inevitably and quickly attracted the attention of conservation-minded passing canoeists. Along with the contemporaneous construction of the NSP power plant down-river at Oak Park Heights, it became a "cause celebre" in the promotion of St Croix river preservation and bi-state legislative creation of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission. Yet it's clear that Magney's larger concern was with the sensitive development of the tract. He viewed his interests as preservationist. His feelings were not unique. The 75-year old St. Croix River Association has never been able to decide consistently whether it's an environmental organization or a property-owners' association and to resolve the occasional internal inconsistencies between those two roles.

In any case, the 1966 map shows that the eastern margin of the pasture and the new clearing had now been platted to create the spectacular view lots of Cedarcliff. The modern era had begun.

Return Toward the Wild

A map prepared in 1995 lets us compare the 1964 cover with today's (**Figure 9**). The property owners prepared the map when they placed the unplatted part of Cedarcliff under a conservation easement to the Minnesota Land Trust, to show the current status of the vegetation cover for Land Trust records.

South of the lane the woods had widened more than 200 feet southward and advanced a thousand feet eastward. Woodland and savanna had surrounded two small remnants of pasture--one southeast of the well house and the other west of the Jackson-Rumreich-Mondale properties. North of the lane, woodland and savanna had covered more than half the former 80 acres of pasture. The invading trees were mostly box elder and cherry; there were also groves of white pine surviving and spreading from early plantations by Tom Clarke's boy scout troop. The main surviving pasture was on the sandy upland west of the Clark-Stenborg-Borchert-Speer properties. All of the remaining pasture on both sides of the lane was broken by patches of shrub and scattered

The "prairie" in the Prairie-Juniper areas was covered with a remarkably rich, dynamic mixture of hundreds of species of grasses and forbs. Succulent grasses carpeted the silted bottoms of the ravine and lower tributaries. In contrast, on some gravel swells on the Plateau, sparse, coarse, drought tolerant species made a micro-landscape resembling western South Dakota .

The march from pasture to woodland was farthest advanced in the open areas south of the lane, where there had been only sporadic grazing (a small herd of Holsteins owned by Mr. Holsteen) from the 1930s to the early 1970s. North of the lane the Clarkes and Hauges had pastured horses through much of the 1970s. In an effort to aerate the soil, Hauge had disked today's "Prairie-Juniper" area as recently as the late 1970s. It is that section which still has the richest grassland flora and can be most practically preserved as "prairie".

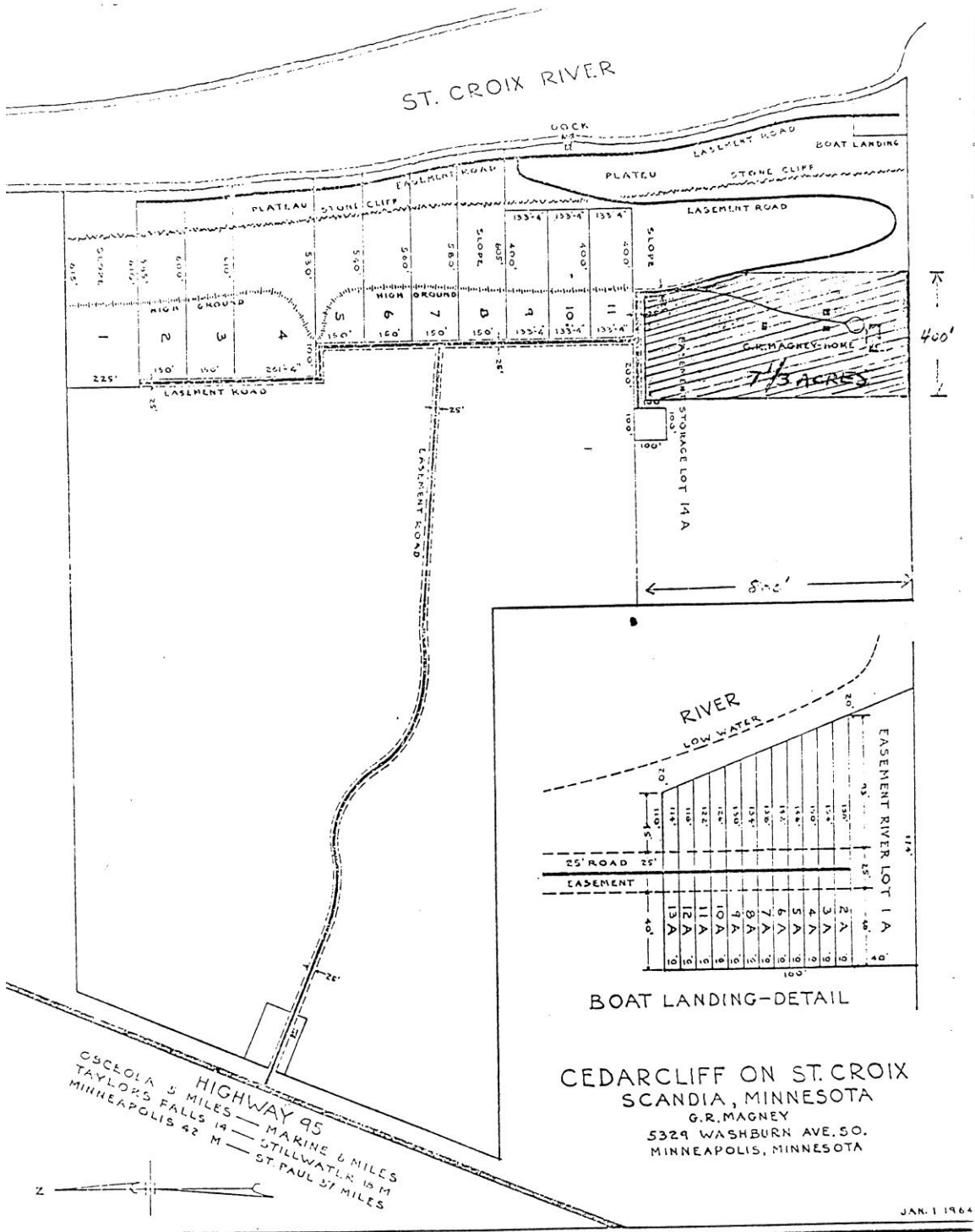
In the 60 years after Magney ended cultivation, the vegetation changes have been a dramatic part of the story of Cedarcliff. Our own sporadic plantings and cuttings have modified the edges, but we can't match the solar energy or do much to order the random, evolving natural system. We have watched the landscape unfold from year to year with increasing awe and respect.

TRANSITION

The blueprints of the plat of Cedarcliff were dated September 1964 (**Figure 10**). The pattern included the building lots, road easements, unplatted land, small outlots at the river landing, and the large lot that accommodated Magneys' house. Several interior lots were later platted across the road from Lots 8 through 11, but they were withdrawn by 1970. Betty Clarke recalls that the lots in the initial plat were larger than those shown in the September 1964 plat. When those did not sell, he thought the problem was their size and created today's pattern. The lots in the final plat were (and are) rather narrow by today's standards in exurbia. Magney clearly mis-read the powerful attraction of the bluff, as well as the surge of long-distance commuting which was already under way in the 1960s.

The basic outline of today's Cedarcliff was in place. Magney later wrote, "I am anxious to see the development of this area into something fine and really worth while. I have put a great deal of time, effort, and money into the project. I am hoping to sell all of the lots within the next few years." He had erected the ornamental white fence and gate which still stand at the entrance. A sign announced the availability of lots. The forerunner of today's road enabled visitors to drive over essentially today's route from the gate to the Magney cottage.

Figure 10. Original G. R. Magney plat of Cedarcliff, dated January 1964



THE YEARS OF DISCOVERY

The Clarkes Pioneer

Among the first passers-by to come in and engage the Magneys were Betty and Dick Clarke, who lived in the Kenwood district of Minneapolis. Betty Clarke recalls that the first actual buyer was Frederick Atkinson, of the Minneapolis flour milling family. But he died shortly thereafter and disappeared from Cedarcliff's annals. Magneys sold Lot 1 to Clarkes in 1965. After camping on their lot in the summers of 1965 and 1966, they built the first house in the new subdivision--the present Clark home--in the fall and winter of 1966-67.

During the next two years Dick and Mr. Magney conferred about the future of the place. Magney spoke of eventually deeding the unplatted land to Gustavus Adolphus College in memory of his father, who was one of the first students there. Yet, Dick later recalled that "Mr. Magney mentioned on several occasions [in the winter of 1964-65] that he planned to turn the unplatted pasturelands over to the lot owners at the appropriate time". In response to an inquiry in 1966, Dick's attorney suggested that, "If Mr. Magney wants the owners of the platted land to have title in common to the pasture land, the simplest way to do that would be to have that part of the property owned by a corporation in which each of the property owners would have an equal undivided interest." The observation was prophetic. After a decade of tumbling events and community evolution, the Cedarcliff property owners did indeed incorporate and purchase the unplatted land.

Rising Value, Rising Taxes

In other notes, Dick Clarke also recalled that Magney became very concerned about a sharp rise in real estate taxes and "felt he was going to have trouble unloading the remaining lots". Dick "kept trying to counsel him that taxes were going up everywhere and that actually taxes based on market value and uniformly administered throughout the county and state would be a good thing". In fact, property taxes on the ten unsold lots jumped from \$529 payable in 1966 to \$1389 payable in 1967. Magney apparently succeeded in getting the taxes on the unbuilt lots stabilized. On Lot 4, for example, the tax had risen from \$85 in 1966 to \$248 in 1967, but then rose very slowly to \$266 in 1968 and \$276 in 1969.

But the stability was short-lived. Lot 4 sold to the Borcherts in late 1969, and the next year the tax bill was \$385--up 40 percent. Lot sales in a rising market were simply pushing assessed valuations upward. Meanwhile, taxes on the unplatted property (virtually the same area as our present-day common land) were \$583 in 1966 but rose to \$1043 in 1969. The tax bill on the same land by 1992 had risen to \$1678 then leapt to \$6030 in 1993. though it fell to \$1677 in 1994, when, for the first time ever, development of the land was permanently

prohibited. **Table 2** compares the Assessor's Estimated Market Values for the unplatted property in Magney's time with the same values for our time. In retrospect, both Clarke's observations and Magney's concerns were prescient.

Table 2. *Estimated market value of today's Cedarcliff "Common Land" before and after the suburban invasion (1964 vs 1993), before and after Cedarcliff subdivision (1964 vs 1966), before and after 20 years of freeway access to the Cities (1966-1993), and before and after easement of development rights to the Minnesota Land Trust (1993 vs 1994).*

	1964	1966	1993	1994
Assessor's Estimated Market Value	\$14,812	\$26,500	\$225,700	\$53,700

The Second Wave

In the summer of 1967 Eleanor and Don Hovelsrud, both professionals with the St. Paul School system, were intrigued by the white gate and drove into Cedarcliff. Mr. and Mrs. Magney greeted them and invited them into the cottage for coffee. Eleanor recalls a cordial, open discussion of the Magneys' affection and hopes for the property and a clear indication that a substantial Norwegian Lutheran couple like the Hovelsruds would be welcome to consider buying a lot. The Hovelsruds had recently sold a house they had built on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi at Frontenac; and this looked like more than a replacement for that property. They quickly became the owners of Lot 6. The same year Magney deeded Lot 9 to Tom Glewwe, a young nephew of Mr. Magney, and his wife, Joanne.

In the summer of 1968, Golden Valley resident Brad Finch happened to spot the property from the highway and contemplated it further on several subsequent trips. He eventually visited Mr. Magney in Minneapolis in February 1969. Magney described the property, reviewed his hopes for it as a kind of memorial to himself and Mrs. Magney, his desire that the unplatted pasture and woodland remain permanently undeveloped, and his desire to carefully select potential settlers there. His deed restrictions, which all of us have in our files, reflected those desires.

At that time, Mr. Magney's health was failing. Brad eventually acquired Lot 5, which had previously been optioned to Wayne Olson. Olson was Minnesota Commissioner of Conservation (now DNR) when C. R. Magney State Park was dedicated on the North Shore of Lake Superior. C. R. Magney was G. R.'s brother. Dick Clarke understood that C.R.'s gift of land on the North Shore had helped to inspire G. R.'s preservation goals for Cedarcliff. Mrs. Magney later

told me the same thing when she agreed in the mid-1970s to sell the cottage-Dry Falls-lower Magney Ravine land to the National Park Service at modest price. She went on to say she was doing it because "Goof would approve". (Her heiress-sister, Mrs. Koors, carried out those wishes.)

Several of the Finch's friends and neighbors in Golden Valley responded to his enthusiastic encouragement to look at the Cedarcliff lots in early 1969. Tryg and Em Hauge and Jane and John Borchert bought Lots 7 and 4, respectively, after viewing the spectacular panorama under a gray, ragged, low overcast in a cold, wind-whipped early-June drizzle. Gerry and Evey Nordley bought Lot 3 a short time later. Hauge's Minneapolis friends, Mr. and Mrs. Carleton Leadholm, then bought Lot 8; and another Golden Valley couple, Don and Sandra Stenzel, acquired Lot 10. The Leadholms were unable to follow through and sold their lot to Tom and Dorothy Jackson from south Minneapolis. Thus the Finch-triggered Golden Valley wave, along with the Jacksons, resulted in a near sell-out by the spring of 1970. Only lots 2 and 11 had not been taken. Furthermore, Clarkes had built; Glewwes were living in a trailer on their lot while he gradually and fitfully built a house with his own hands; Hagues and Borcherts were signing construction contracts and about to break ground.

ORGANIZATION

Meanwhile, Mr. Magney's health deteriorated rapidly, and he passed away in August of 1969. Scandia attorney Wendell Johnson helped Mrs. Magney with the technicalities of the property transfers. She spent considerable time in the cottage in the summers of 1970 and 1971 and was a friendly member of the new neighborhood. But it was obvious that the collection of new owners had to take responsibility for maintaining the roads, plowing the snow, and (more or less) monitoring compliance with the deed restrictions.

So the owners assembled on the evening of June 11, 1970, at the home of Em and Tryg Hauge in Golden Valley for an organizational meeting. Don Hovelsrud and John Borchert were appointed to draft a set of by-laws. The group met again in August at Jane and John Borchert's home in Golden Valley to review the by-laws. The Hagues and Borcherts were engrossed in building their houses in that summer and autumn and, in winter, coping with life in their new Cedarcliff homes in raw, treeless, wind-swept, muddy, then snowy, wilderness. They were also adapting to a long commuting trip on partly-built I-35 and circuitous connecting roads. Nevertheless, the group eventually got together again at the Finchs' home to ratify the final revision of the by-laws, form the Cedarcliff Property Owners Association, and elect officers. The rest of the story is in the years of subsequent minutes.

COMMUNITY

MEMORIES

The minutes and treasurer's reports and other documents in the files of the organization record the business of the Cedarcliff community. But so many things happened that are only memories.

Pioneering on the Tundra

Perhaps because I'm writing this in the aftermath of a March blizzard, the first thing that comes to mind is our experience with winter snow. I doubt that winter and early spring storms were generally any more frequent or severe in the 1970s than those at other times in Cedarcliff history. But their impact was a lot different than it is now. There were no trees to the northwest of us. Not only were our lots and the pasture between our lots and the highway wide open, but the fields beyond the highway, north of the Carlson-Benshoof farm, extended without interruption to the western horizon. And today's dense pine forest on Arne and Rusk Anderson's property was only tiny seedlings.

There seemed to be no obstruction between here and Fargo. Blowing snow eddied at the edge of the high grass on the windward sides of the roads and driveways then drifted two or three feet deep in the path of our vehicles. It whipped across the treeless fronts of our lots, funnelled around the houses, and, by spring, had drifted six to twelve feet deep on the upper part of the bluff. When the spring melt began, those drifts were like glaciers, inching down the treeless upper bluff as they began to melt.

In a desperate effort to ease the drift problem, we bought a lot of snow fence. Several of us had short lengths to protect our driveways, but the Association bought about 900 feet of it to place parallel to the north-south lane from the Hovelsrud-Finch (now Speer) lots to the Clarke (now Clark) lot. For perhaps 5 years putting up the snow fence in late October and rolling it up in April were back-breaking but rollicking community rituals for husbands and wives alike.

Evey Nordley finally persuaded us to buy a few hundred honeysuckle bushes and try to grow an ornamental, permanent snow barrier. The planting was another back-breaking, rollicking community project, followed up by weeks of rigorous irrigation and nurturing assignments for Dorothy Jackson, Jane Borchert, Evey, and Betty Clarke. You can see a few of the bushes still living, marginally. Mostly we proved to ourselves once more that the Plateau is underlain by some of the worst soil in Minnesota. Meanwhile, we had made an arrangement with the township to use its newly-acquired grader on our road

when the snow was too deep for the Jeep to handle. King Boreas backed down somewhat, too--at least temporarily. And the snowfence era ended.

The Need for Mobility

It was vital to keep the road cleared, because every household had at least one commuter. Dr. Hauge practiced at North Memorial hospital in Robbinsdale. Tom Jackson worked in sales at International Harvester in the Midway, and Dorothy taught in Bloomington. Dick Clarke had to get to his job as an executive at the Bemis Company in Minneapolis. Gerry Nordley's manufacturing business was in the north suburbs. And I had to get to the University. Betty Clarke ran the board of Childrens Hospital. Evey Nordley ran theater and library activities in the city, county, and state. Jane Borchert was a mainstay of the St. Croix Valley and Metropolitan Leagues of Women Voters and the University Women's Club. And Clarke's daughter, Janet, had to make her way to Forest Lake High School.

There were no front-wheel drives. It's not commonly realized today how much that innovation has changed our winter lives. I have many memories of us jointly or individually pushing, heaving, and shoveling to move a car with its rear wheel spinning in deep snow., and only forcing the heavier front end deeper into the drift. Perhaps the greatest Cedarcliff institution in those early winters was Dick Clarke's red 4-wheel-drive Jeep (there was the World War II model, followed by a later model in the 80s). It carried an attached blade in winter; and Dick, Gerry Nordley, and I took turns plowing the road and driveways. I think we all enjoyed it, except perhaps when even the Jeep couldn't make it. Then, instead of pulling someone from a drift or clearing the road, we merely survived to get the vehicle back into Clarke's garage. There was also the Magney Jeep--a yellow, tired World-War II veteran--and an accompanying yellow trailer. Mrs. Magney let us take that rig from its garage in the well house for occasional use. For example, it hauled black dirt and rocks for the Borchert flower garden, and, later, rock and gravel for the fountain.

Gophers, Gardens, and Stables

The flower gardens evoke another memory--the sandy soil around the houses. The basement excavations scraped the top of a 60-foot layer of pure sand that overlies the stone cliff. So blading and back-filling left a new house sitting in a clean sand desert. Each house had its flower gardens. But the need for top dirt was really too great. Sand burr was everywhere in those early years. Meanwhile, wherever we planted grass, the pocket gophers immediately buried it under their mounds. One had to admire them--the average creature digs 3000 feet of tunnel in a season. Yet we could not resist the urge to trap and destroy

them; though that was not easy. I believe there is still a bounty for the front feet of a pocket gopher.

The best soil in the neighborhood was on the low ground north of the small woods at the west end of the Anderson-Clark drive. By the early 1970s that area had been temporarily colonized by Cedarcliff property owners through purchases of part of the Leslie land. Clarkes had acquired a long, narrow strip bordering Cedarcliff on the north, extending from the river westward to Highway 95. The present Anderson-Clark drive marks the north boundary of that strip. They eventually sold the western part of the strip to Pat and Jim Passeri, who built a home there; that property now belongs to our new neighbors, Kathy and Randy Ferrin. Tryg Hauge then bought another strip of land from Mrs. Leslie, extending from present-day Quentin Avenue westward to the highway, north of the Clark strip. Tryg put most of his land into hay but plowed about a quarter-acre for a community vegetable garden. The project ran through several summers, with Em Hauge and Dorothy Jackson the leaders among other participants.

Tryg Hauge did the plowing because he had bought a tractor, along with accessories. The tractor served to farm his hayfield as well as many purposes connected with maintenance of the pasture and the horses. Both Hagues and Clarkes owned horses. In fact, Hauge bred Arabians for a few years. At one time there were eight horses and a pony. They built the stables which stand at the west end of the Paul Clark property and the show ring now moldering in the small ravine below the northwest corner of the Plateau. Clarke's daughter, Janet, was a skillful and enthusiastic equestrienne; Tryg was a member of the Minneapolis Zurah Shrine parade horsemen. Betty Clarke and their sons, Steve and Tom, also rode. Dick most enjoyed hitching a horse to his sulky in the summer and his sleigh in winter.

Em Hauge and Evey Nordley also rode horseback on the roads on the upland, down to the river, and along the river to the Beach and the Cave--taking care to minimize the deposition of horse droppings on the beach and trails! (Magney's "fire lane" from the lower hairpin turn in the river road to the Cave, cleared in the early 1960s, was still open in the 1970s. It is marked today by a footpath, along the river, which connects the river road, the lower end of the Borchert ravine trail, and the approach to the Cave.)

Dr. Hauge had forsaken his boyhood home in rural western Minnesota to go to the University. After wartime military service, he went on to practice medicine in Minneapolis and never returned to Clarkfield to live. He imported his tractor and machinery from Clarkfield and evidently held fond memories of the farming country. I recall his saying to me from up on his tractor shortly after he bought it, "John, it took a long time, but I finally made it!"

Community Celebrations

Many different vehicles appeared in the July Fourth celebrations. Dick Clarke was the organizer. There were horseback riders, including Tryg in his Zurah Shrine regalia, Dick in his ten-gallon hat, and Janet in her western gear. The other kids joined in with wagons and cars decorated as floats. I recall Brad Finch bringing his bass horn to the first celebration, and a "guest" team of sky-divers landing in the pasture at two others. Dick always gave me the assignment of a ceremonial reading of the Declaration of Independence, and the affair culminated in a communal picnic. Mrs. Magney joined us for the first one; and many grandparents, relatives and guests were there. You can sense a bit of the spirit of those occasions from the accompanying flier, proclaiming the 1974 affair, and verse on the occasion of the American national bicentennial in 1976 (pages 24-A and 24-B).

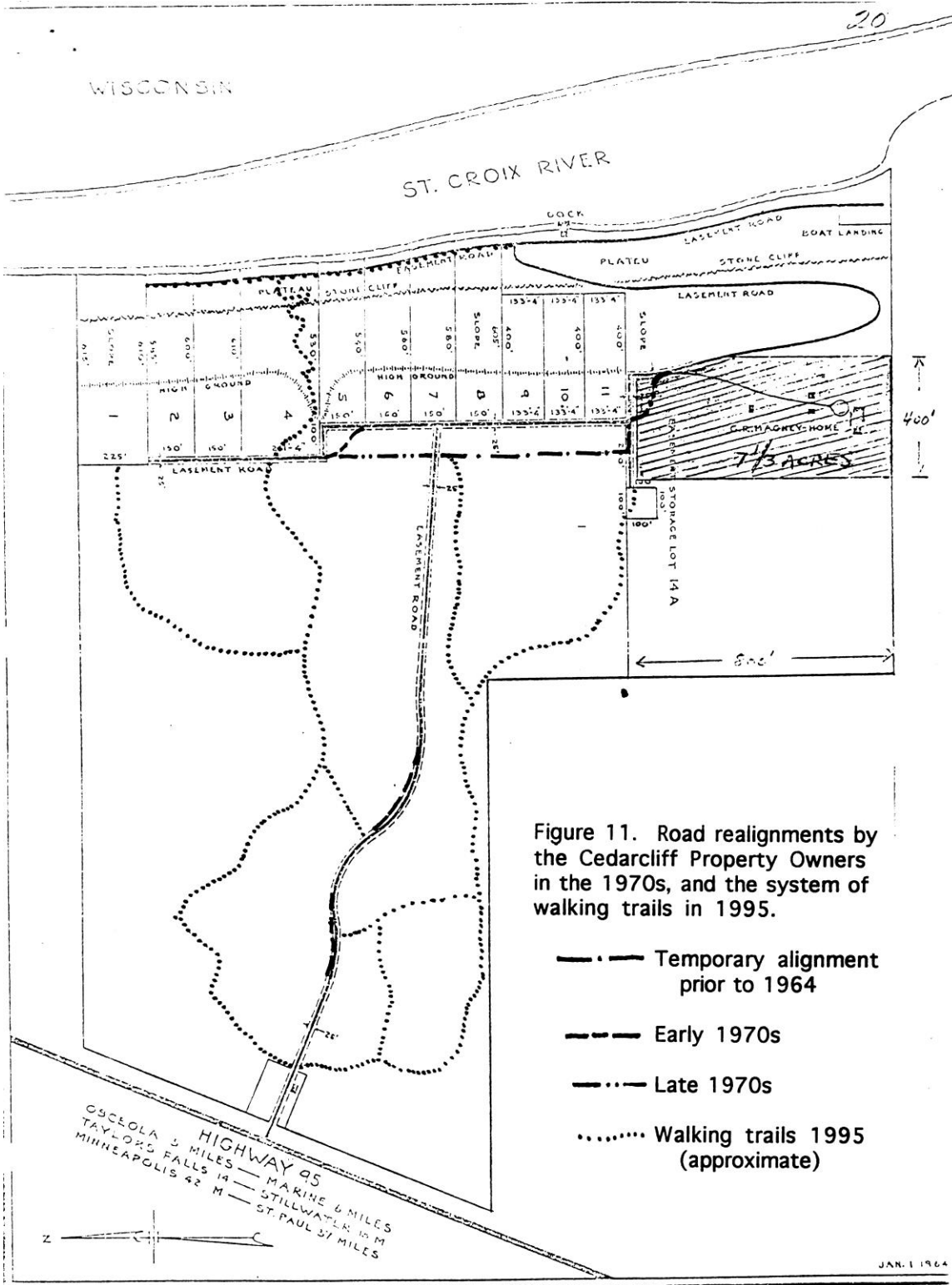
The July Fourth celebrations were only the high points. There were Labor Day events, impromptu "dedications" and picnics, a few attempts at Christmas caroling, and the holiday gift exchanges, highlighted by Dorothy Jackson's peanut brittle, Lallie Brohaugh's indescribably rich chocolate-coated toffee, Arne Anderson's jars of honey, and Jane Borchert's jars of wild grape and choke-cherry jelly.

Road Projects

There have been a few changes in the road alignments (**Figure 11**). Perhaps the one that rouses the most curiosity is the still-visible, long-abandoned road grade that projects straight south from the point where today's north-south lane ends at the main east-west road, west of the Leider-LeClaire driveway. Some time after 1938, Magney moved the road to his cottage into that location. But he moved the road back into its present location when he platted the Cedarcliff lots in 1964. The sequence is apparent from a comparison of the 1938 and 1964 aerial photos; but his motives will probably remain a mystery.

The original Magney roads had a few problems. The first plat map shows a sharp jog in the road between Lots 4 and 5, at the head of the Borchert Ravine. The turn was too sharp for even the early township snow plow; so we decided to make a more gentle "S" curve and swing the road from the southwest corner of Lot 4 southeastward toward the center of Lot 5. That created a triangular "no man's land" (at that time still part of Mrs. Magney's unplatted land) in which the Borcherts then planted a small grove of Norway pine seedlings. In the late 1970s, when Finch acquired Lot 6 from the Hovelsruds, the Association agreed to re-route the road again. At that time it was laid out to project its present straight line from the Clark property southward. The Association then donated to

Finch (for \$1) the land needed to extend Lots 5 and 6 westward to the new road alignment, and the triangular pine grove became part of Lot 4.



The "S" curve in the north-south road was actually part of a much larger road project in the summer of 1971. Magney had not designed the main road in from the highway for safe winter use; it was too narrow and steep. Brad Finch easily persuaded his father--a retired Iowa highway engineer--to design a new, wider grade, with gentler slopes and turns and enlarged culvert capacity for Dry Creek. At the same time, we widened and re-graded the north-south road and replaced the right-angle turns into the Magney cottage with an "S". It was the first big capital improvement in the history of Cedarcliff. In the late '70s we also paved the road down the bluff to end once-and-for-all the incurable washout problem there. And I recall working with Tom Clarke to add and grade crushed rock to overcome the increasingly intruding buried boulders and tree roots on the road to the navy yard. Those projects bring additional vivid memories, but the story is in the minutes.

The Trails Evolve

The story of the trails, however, is not in the minutes. I believe Dick Clarke initiated those, too, with some help from neighbor Arne Anderson. Like Paul Clark and Tom Rumreich today, Dick really enjoyed bumping over the gopher mounds and cutting a swath with his riding mower. And he was forever conceiving projects to improve Cedarcliff. All of us did quite a lot of cross-country skiing during the winters of the '70s. After the horses were confined to a 10-acre plot in the northwest corner of the Plateau, Dick mowed several trails which would be easy to groom for skiing in the emerging Prairie-Juniper area. Once in place, they were mowed in summer by Dick and Gerry Nordley for strolling among the increasing array of wild flowers. The Borchert extended family had already built the trail system down the bluff (with some later maintenance help from Tom Clark), open to all Cedarcliff residents and guests. In the late 70s John added two branches to the Clarke system in the Prairie-Juniper area and the path through the black locust grove, south of the main road.

But the big thrust came in the mid-1980s, when Jacksons' son-in-law, Cliff Schleuter, was living with them. Cliff was an ardent cross-country skier. He not only brought the whole network of paths in the pasture and the locust grove up to a new standard but also cut long, new paths linking the locust grove with the storage area to the southeast and the well house, to the west. By the time Cliff left, our present-day system of community nature trails was essentially in place. But what to do then? We can all be thankful that, before gophers, brush, and sumac could reclaim the whole system, Tom Rumreich and Paul Clark appeared on the scene to rescue Cliff's investment and enhance it.

Sharing the Natural Attractions

Dorothy Jackson's emplacement of many bluebird houses further enhanced the landscape along the trails. The bluebird population has gradually responded, too. (Wouldn't it be a joy if the meadow larks returned!) Of course, the truly "wild" birds will always hold center stage--notably the great blue herons, trumpeter swans, bald eagles, turkey vultures, and pileated woodpecker. Betty Clarke's plantation of black-eyed susans, and Gertrude Magney's pasqueflowers, bluebells, and abundant scatterings of dame rockets added to the show. Who can forget the wonderful heavy scent along the south side of the main road when the locust and dame rockets were in full blossom? Greatest of all are the wildflower "gardens" between the stone cliff and the river--the trillium, anemone, bellwort, hepatica, wild ginger, violets, Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, lily-of-the-valley, and on and on. Jane's list overwhelms me, but Dorothy Jackson's is probably the most complete.

The Beach and adjoining boat storage lots were another wonderful gathering place from the very beginning of the Cedarcliff colony. Clarkes, Hauges, and Nordleys owned the pontoon boats. Clarkes kept a floating dock tied to the bank at their outlot; but Tryg Hauge and Nordley tried to use Magney's monumental reinforced concrete boathouse, incline, and floating dock for the first couple of years. When that proved too cumbersome, they moved the floating dock to a place beside Clarke's. Meanwhile, Jacksons, Borcherts, and later the Andersons stored canoes on the outlots and watched helplessly while beavers removed trees they had used to tie the craft. Thus the Cedarcliff "navy yard" was born.

Cooperative mowing of the navy yard parking lot and cleaning up refuse from occasional, rare wayward canoe campers naturally evolved. The group effort extended to the Beach, where debris had to be chain-sawed and raked after each flood. We all used the beach a great deal in the early years. When a group of kids splash around, the water tends to be a bit murky next to shore. But once you cross a narrow, waist-deep channel, you can just lean forward into the current of clean water and walk all the way to Cedar Bend on beautifully clean, shallow sand bottom. I recall that "walking to Wisconsin" on their dads' shoulders was always a treat for our small grandchildren.

Another all-time attraction has been the wild berries and wild grapes. The prime berry patch has to be the one along the trail and property line south of the well-house. For buckets of luscious blackberries, Cedarcliff residents, children, and grandchildren have torn skin and cloth in that bramble tangle. And the evidence is that at least one bear has risked his snout for the same reward. Wild grapes and choke cherries are treasures for those of us who figure out how to get them from their high places. Of course, to earn any of this fruit, you have to harvest it before the birds do.

The Beach, the trails, and the cross-country skiing were great attractions for family and friends of all ages. They began to come in all seasons, immediately after our homes were built, not only from the Cities but from many corners of the country and the world. I wish we had a collective guest book. Cedarcliff is not public in the usual use of the term. Yet it is not private in the usual sense, either. Through the hospitality and good fortune of its residents, "Magney's Escarpment and Woodland Shore" has enabled hundreds of people to enjoy the amenities of the river and the valley.

But Cedarcliff has also worked for long-term preservation. Our association was among the first property owners to support the St. Croix Wild and Scenic River act and the acquisition program of the National Park Service. Then Senator Walter Mondale (now neighbor Fritz and Honorable Ambassador to Japan) visited Cedarcliff on the day the Mondale-Nelson Bill became law in October 1972. Future generations will surely be even more pleased than we have been by the permanent protection of the gorge and its water quality. Cedarcliff's relation to the Riverway is a large story which I intend to collate as "Part Two" of our community history.

Much more recently Cedarcliff has provided both direct grants and guarantees to the Standing Cedars Land Conservancy project on the Wisconsin bluffs of the St. Croix. Perhaps our biggest step was permanently granting the development rights on our common land to the Minnesota Land Trust. The record of that project is in the minutes, too; and the long-term benefits to Cedarcliff and the wider community are yet to unfold.

Replacement Begins

Memories of the more recent arrivals and those who have departed Cedarcliff crowd in, too. When Gus Brohaugh, an octegenarian retired Minnesota highway engineer, and his wife, Lallie, bought the Glewwe house in 1974, we had the first change of the guard. Meanwhile, Minneapolis attorney Jim Wittenberg and Allie built their family's week-end and summer home at the south end of Cedarcliff in the early 1970s. The Wittenbergs were exceptionally active citizens of the city, and their energy overflowed to Cedarcliff--for activities ranging from painting the gate to doing the legal work for the Association's incorporation in the mid-70s. (In the 1990s Jim and Allie built a spectacular "Cedarcliff South" in the foothills above Tucson, Arizona.)

The Hauge house has turned over the most often. Attorney Mark Reinhardt and Jean bought it in 1980 and joined the Association deliberations. Their frequent big-time gambling excursions to Las Vegas, Macao, and Monte Carlo added a temporary infusion of exotic jet-age culture. Practicing psychologist Pat Cronin replaced Reinhardts. The Cedarcliff property not only

suited his love of the outdoors but also gave him an optimal residential location between his string of clinics in Wayzata, Minneapolis, Stillwater, and Eau Claire (he called it his "trap line").

A New Era

A new era began in the mid- to-late 1980s. In part it was triggered by the passing of Gus Brohaugh and Dick Clarke. For the first time, we found ourselves moved to create memorials for long-time residents who completed their lives as residents and citizens of the community. The old Johnson-Olson farmstead area, which all of us--beginning with Magney-- had dutifully kept cleared and mowed, became a "memorial park". Dorothy Jackson saw to it that a flowering crabapple tree was planted, and dwarf iris from the former farmyard were assembled and trans-planted in memory of Gus. We assembled dolomite stones and mounted the "Cedarcliff Property" plaque in memory of Dick. Appropriately, the iris had been planted originally either by Gertrude Magney or, perhaps, by Liza Olson! The old foundation stones that support the plaque were sledged from the quarry probably by Anders Per Johnson. And among those present for the dedication of the monument on a cold early-December Sunday in 1988 was Liza's daughter, Alice Olson McCurdy. Alice was born on that same spot in 1901 and lived in the house until after her widowed mother died there on a bitter cold March day in 1928. Incidentally, Alice, Liza, and husband Bennett are interred in Elim cemetery. But not Anders and his wife, Martha. (In fact, surprisingly few of the settlers whose names are on the 1887 plat map are buried there. Where are their graves?)

Around the state and country there's much discussion these days about the great potential value of "cluster development". Without exactly planning to do so, we have created a cluster development--eight dwellings on about 16 acres, with about 80 acres of adjacent land in common ownership.

In those discussions, citizens inevitably raise the question: Who will be responsible for the common land? We have answered that question. We can say from experience not only who does the work and pays the bills and how the decisions are made, but also what's implied in terms of community cohesion, work, and reward.

Indeed, the Cedarcliff experience has been a microcosm of the origin, development, and maintenance experiences of successful communities of all sizes.

* * * * *

Two examples from the early July 4th celebrations -

- The 1974 flier was originally reproduced in red, white, and blue. It combined Invitation and Exhortation.
- The 1976 verse suggests there was also Oration.

SATURDAY - JULY 5 - 5:00 PM

ANNUAL CEDARCLIFF PARADE

GRAND MARSHAL - ZURAH SHRINE HORSEMAN

BAND MUSIC - QUEENS - CLOWNS

HORSE DRAWN AND MOTORIZED VEHICLES

CLEVER FLOATS AND MARCHING UNITS

* * * * *

THOSE PARTICIPATING IN PARADE SHOULD BE
AT THE HORSE BARN AREA BY 4:30 PM

SKY DIVING DEMONSTRATION

FAMILY PICNIC AT THE CLARKES.

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN HOT DOGS,
BUNS, AND SWEETS TO SHARE.

CHIPS, PICKLES, AND BEVERAGES WILL BE PROVIDED.

LOOKING TO THE CEDARCLIFF BICENTENNIAL IN 2166

The first question today, Man,
Is when Cedarcliff's centuries began.
When Goof Magney cleared the bluff and opened the view?
Or when the spark shone in Clarkes eyes, passing in silent canoe?

Perhaps the Property Owners Association
Gave legitimate birth to the Cedarcliff Nation.

Struggling inch by rhetorical inch.
With the Franklin-like guidance of Bradford Finch,
It fashioned by-laws and constitution
To stem the tide of Man and Pollution.

On second thought, it's rather trivial Whether the small, bold, far-
sighted, convivial Band that founded this colony above the shore
Actually did it in Seventy or Sixty-four.

Two centuries hence such quibbles will be
Cause for saintly smiles or devilish levity
In the heavenly leisure or hellish boredom of eternity.

We'll haunt the two hundredth meeting of the Association To hear it debate
the future of Hauge's barn--Preservation? Or conversion to apartments? Or
Automation?

But the most exciting information
Will be the fate of Cedarcliff in the American nation
After two more centuries of peace, freedom, war, and inflation.

Will a few Cedarcliff geniuses rocket to work to pay the taxes, While everyone else
stays home and relaxes? Or will the inhabitants--workers all—crowd a train on the Soo
In a 1906 day coach brought back from Peru?

Will the National Park Service enfold in its rustic caress This relic urban strip in
the wilderness? Or will these stand as a few large, ancient wooden homes In a
planned sea of bio-degradable geodomes?

Or perhaps this pristine river will continue to rise
Til muddy water hides the skies and denies
Our bold band the chance in 2166 to descend
From its wandering ark to the submerged bluff at Cedar Bend.

- -JRB for the Cedarcliff Historical Society July 4, 1976