

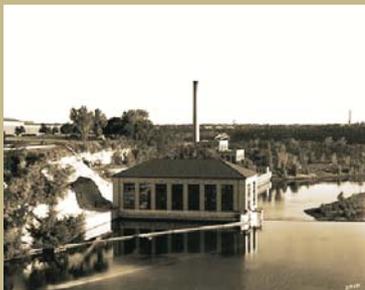
ENGINEERING THE MISSISSIPPI

New Dam Brings Access to Ocean to Minneapolis

Minneapolis Morning Tribune, July 4, 1917

LOCK AND DAM NO. 1

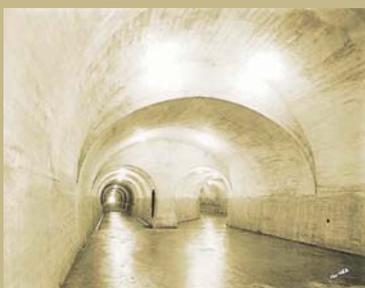
Lock and Dam No. 1, also known as the Ford Dam, was one of two lock and dam facilities planned between Minneapolis and St. Paul in the early 20th century. Built and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it is one of 29 lock and dams located between St. Louis and Minneapolis. In 1907, Lock and Dam No. 2, upriver just below the Lake Street bridge and known as Meeker Island Lock and Dam, was finished. In 1912, Lock and Dam No. 1 at Ford Parkway was also completed, but immediately proposed as a high-water hydroelectric dam with the resultant closing and demolition of Lock and Dam No. 2. Lock and Dam No. 1 was finished in 1917 as part of the 9-Foot Channel Project intended to create a navigable corridor above St. Paul. It included a hydropower facility that was rebuilt by the Ford Motor Company in 1924. The dam was expanded from one to two locks in 1932, with rehabilitation in 1978-1983.



Ford Hydroelectric Plant, 1936.



Lock and Dam No. 2, 1957. Hydroelectric plant is at right, Intercity Bridge in background.



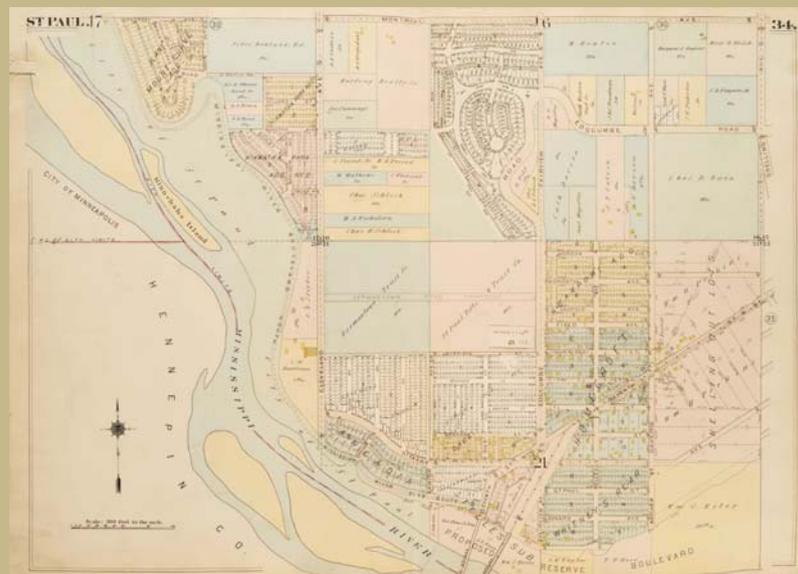
An extensive tunnel system underlying the Ford Plant, 1937.



The Ford Plant and Lock and Dam No. 1 in 1936, looking north. The Highland Park area north of the plant is shown at right. * You are here



1. Proposed plant and dam, river terminal and railroad bridge, 1924. 2. Ford Plant looking southwest and part of Highland Park, 1963.



In 1916, the Highland Park area south of Montreal Avenue was still farmland, but much of the land had been subdivided for future houses. One property that was already part of the new Mississippi River Boulevard was that of Cornelia and Henry A. Boardman. Henry was president of a St. Paul crockery firm. The Boardmans built a large country house surrounded by gardens overlooking the river. During Prohibition in the 1920s, it became part of the St. Paul gangster scene when the next owner converted it to the speakeasy known as the Hollyhock Inn.

RESERVE TOWNSHIP

The Highland Park neighborhood around the Ford Plant and Crosby Farm to the south was part of Reserve Township. After 1819, this land bordered by the Mississippi River was part of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation. For a time it was home to a small population of squatters, including Swiss and French Canadians from the Selkirk Colony at Pembina, on the Red River. They settled on the river bluff near present-day Ford Parkway. After the Treaty of 1837 they were forced off the land. William Finn, who arrived in 1848 from Ireland, was granted land because he had served in the Mexican war. Others claimed township land after it was opened to public sale. Street names such as Brimhall, Otto, and Davern honor farmers who settled in the 1850s. Their dairies and market gardens supplied St. Paul grocers and households. Although the township was annexed to St. Paul in 1887, historic maps and aerial photos show that some land remained under cultivation until well after the 1920s.

HIGHLAND PARK

Development of the Highland Park area followed Ford Motor Company plant construction. In 1923 streetcar tracks were laid on Cleveland Avenue to Ford Parkway, and down Ford Parkway to the river. The first land for a park at Hamline and Edgumbe Road (the future Highland Park) was acquired by the City of St. Paul in 1923. The Highland Park water reservoir was completed in 1929, and signaled the growth of the city across the former Reserve Township. Residential development was promoted by St. Paul real estate dealer Den E. Lane. In 1925 he developed "Lane's Highland Park," the first of many subdivisions platted for sale near the plant site. The Highland Village Shopping Center and Highland Village apartment complex at Cleveland Avenue and Ford Parkway both opened in 1939, and additional housing construction filled out the area in the 1950s.



Highland Park Water Tower, 1930.

Photos courtesy Minnesota Historical Society unless noted. Funded in part by Federal Highway Administration.

