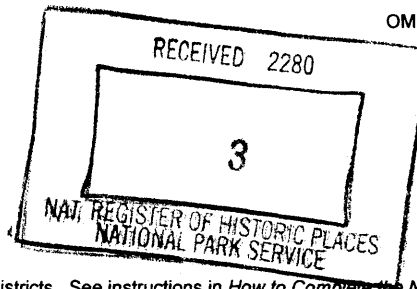


1183

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oldenburg, Henry C., House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 604 Chestnut Street

not for publication N/A

city or town Carlton

vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county Carlton code 017 zip code 55718

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Britta L. Bloomberg*

11/10/06

Signature of certifying official Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date  
Minnesota Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

*Edson H. Beall*

Date of Action

12-27-06

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structure
		objects
2		Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Classic Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/slate

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

CONSERVATION

**Period of Significance**

1894-1926

**Significant Dates**

1894

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Oldenburg, Henry Carl

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Newquist, Emil

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** 6 acres (approx.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1.	<u>1</u>   <u>5</u>	<u>5</u>   <u>4</u>   <u>4</u>   <u>5</u>   <u>7</u>   <u>0</u>	<u>5</u>   <u>1</u>   <u>6</u>   <u>7</u>   <u>7</u>   <u>0</u>   <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.	<u> </u>   <u> </u>	<u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>	<u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>
3.	<u> </u>   <u> </u>	<u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>	<u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4.	<u> </u>   <u> </u>	<u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>	<u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>   <u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>Carmen Tschofen</u>			
organization	<u> </u>	date	<u>August, 2006</u>	
street and number	<u>2667 Parkview Boulevard</u>	telephone	<u>763-522-5709</u>	
city or town	<u>Robbinsdale</u>	state	<u>MN</u>	zip code <u>55422</u>

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>Leslie and Helen Swanson</u>		
street & number	<u>604 Chestnut Street</u>	telephone	<u>218-384-4835</u>
city or town	<u>Carlton</u>	state	<u>MN</u> zip code <u>55718</u>
name	<u>Joel Swanson</u>		
street & number	<u>124 Parkwood Drive</u>	telephone	<u>218-384-4524</u>
city or town	<u>Wrenshall</u>	state	<u>MN</u> zip code <u>55797</u>

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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**National Register of Historic Places**

**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

Carlton County, Minnesota

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The Henry C. Oldenburg property encompasses approximately six acres on the eastern edge of the town of Carlton in northeastern Minnesota. The property is on the south side of Chestnut Street, which also serves as State Highway 210, the town's east-west thoroughfare. The city sidewalk on the south side of Chestnut terminates several yards east of the home's entrance drive, marking the edge of the town and hinting at the beginning – or resumption– of the wilderness. The grounds surrounding the home reflect the area's distinctive natural environment, with several rock outcroppings, towering white pines and areas of thick understory foliage. This rugged aspect is balanced by garden features that reflect elements of a more cultivated landscape, particularly on the east side of the Oldenburg house. The simple brick house is screened from public view by trees but is easily accessible from the street by a circular drive that leads through brick gateposts. The home is Classical Revival in style.

**HOUSE EXTERIOR**

The two and one-half story hipped-roof brick home faces north and measures 30 by 42 feet (not including porch spaces), with slightly asymmetrical window and door placement. Brick throughout is laid in running bond, with walls four bricks deep.

The home's most prominent feature is the ten-foot-deep, hipped-roof wooden porch, which wraps around the home from midpoints on the east and west sides, and entirely covers the north (primary) façade. To the west of the main entrance, which is centered on the north side, and through the extension around the west façade, the porch is open. It can be accessed from stairs leading to the home's main entrance, as well as by a set of three broad stairs on the southern end of the western portion. A porte cochere extends over a circular drive from the porch terminus on this side.

The porch east of the main entrance and wrapping to the east side is enclosed. The enclosure's large windows have broadly arched sashes (two facing north, three facing east, one facing south); each large window is framed by six-paned side windows and column-style pilasters.

The area below the level of the porch floor is screened with latticework infill.

Fluted Roman Doric columns set on simple wooden pedestals support the porte cochere and the porch roof. The pedestals have recessed panels and are visually linked by a wooden rail with simple balusters of vertical wooden slats along the porch edge. The rhythm of the open railing is continued through the enclosed portion of the porch, with evenly spaced vertical slats over wood panels. Paired columns define the main façade's porch entrance, which is accessed by a short wooden staircase and protected by a slightly protruding roofline. The home's main entrance door is aligned with this porch approach.

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**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

Carlton County, Minnesota

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

On the south side, a long, narrow, second-story sleeping porch extends over the centered rear entrance vestibule. The sleeping porch is supported on columns and pedestals similar to those in the front of the home, with extra height provided by concrete footings. The porch serves its purpose as a well-ventilated sleeping area with three six-pane windows on the longer east and west sides, and two windows facing south. Recessed panels in the knee walls below the windows echo those found in the column pedestals.

The entrance vestibule positioned underneath the sleeping porch provides a protected entrance to the rear of the home. The vestibule is accessible from a narrow open porch reached by a wooden stair. The vestibule has eight-pane windows on the east and west sides, with sidelights and column-like pilasters flanking the south-facing door.

Hipped-roof dormers penetrate the roofline on three sides of the home. The dormer to the north is slightly smaller, with two window openings; that to the south is higher and deeper, with three window openings. A dormer on the east side is larger, with five single-paned casement windows. A rectangular brick chimney with two simple rows of corbelling is located near the midpoint of the west roof quadrant.

Fenestration throughout the main body of the home is largely comprised of double hung sashes, with simple concrete sills and flat brick relieving arches. On the upper north façade, two double hung windows are centrally grouped under the dormer, and windows sheltered by the porch are located to the east and west of the main entrance. Two second-story windows are centrally grouped on the east facade, with the addition of a small bull's-eye window in the Classical Revival style, defined by a double circle of brick headers and located above the porch roofline, and a smaller double-hung window to the south on this upper wall. First-story east-side windows are aligned below the two south windows on this side. Windows are also similarly grouped and aligned in the upper and lower-level façade on the west side, with four in each story. On the south façade, double hung windows are located in the first and second stories to the east and west of the sleeping porch and vestibule.

A slightly protruding brick drip line marks the level of the floor joists above the basement. Foundation walls, constructed of irregular courses of local slate and fieldstone, are coated with cement plaster on the exterior and a plaster-based whitewash on the interior. Small windows at foundation level provide light and ventilation to the basement on all sides of the home. A natural stone outcropping, accommodated in the construction process, protrudes through the interior southwest corner of the basement wall.

## HOUSE INTERIOR

The home's interior spaces are simple, with wooden flooring and some modest original woodwork. A crystal chandelier, believed to be original to the home, hangs in the formal entrance foyer on the north side; the foyer is flanked by a broad, curved staircase on the east side and a room designated as a library

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## National Register of Historic Places

### Continuation Sheet

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

Carlton County, Minnesota

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

to the west. A living area stretches through the middle interior, with a kitchen and a dining room at the rear of the home. The second story is accessible via the main staircase, or via a twisting, narrow "servants'" staircase at the rear third of the home. Bedrooms are located on the second floor. Porcelain sinks and some fixtures original to the home are located in upstairs and downstairs bathrooms. A largely unfinished attic space is found at dormer level.

### GROUNDS

A combination of unusual geology and human intention has created a novel setting for the Oldenburg home. The home is screened from Chestnut Street on the north by a straight line of groomed cedar trees, stretching the length of the property's street frontage. The property is accessed from Chestnut by a driveway and pedestrian entrance marked by a trio of brick gateposts and ornamental iron gates. The drive leads south up a slight rise to a single-story garage, and circles to the east toward the home and under the west side porte cochere before returning to the gated exit. The brick of the garage matches that of the home, with modern double garage doors on the north (drive) side, and a central, three-sided window bay facing east.

East-west concrete walkways provide access from the drive to porches and entranceways on the north and south sides of the home. An unexplained, approximately foot-high concrete platform extends several feet into the yard from south side of the rear (south) walkway, aligned with the vestibule and sleeping porch. Simple foundation plantings are found on all sides of the home.

Open lawn, with scattered trees and bushes, surrounds the home on four sides, but forces of nature also become evident away from the protective porches and planned sidewalks. A large, stone outcropping serves as a central element in a garden space at the west end of the porte cochere. Towering second-growth white pines are particularly notable in the northeast corner of the property near the home. The broad lawn on the south side of the home opens onto five long, finger-like stone outcroppings that fan from east to west. The outcroppings are characteristic of this part of the St. Louis River valley, some more than twenty feet high and covered with moss, ferns, pines and other plant life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These outcroppings are part of the Thomson Formation, the geologic designation for the area's bedrock of slate, greywacke and siltstone, formed and folded under pressure about 1.7 billion years ago during the middle pre-Cambrian period and exposed through tectonic activity and erosion. "Natural History. Minnesota's Geology. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/snass/naturalhistory.html>. Accessed 5/6/06.

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**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

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In the small valleys between the stone outcroppings, groomed lawn and domesticated perennial plants can be found. Of these valley spaces, a grotto accessed by a walkway off the southeast corner of the home is a distinctive feature of the property.

Nestled between two of the stone outcroppings and running on an east-west line, the grotto is highlighted by the "Morning Glory Pool," a conical concrete basin approximately 32 feet in diameter and about 4.5 feet deep at the center. The pool is surrounded by a concrete walkway, with a pedestal for statuary centered on the western approach, and an oval, concrete patio on the east end of the grotto, flanked by tall, narrow cedar trees in a nod to formal garden design. As noted in the builder's mark in the concrete, Cloquet contractor E.E. Durkee laid the cement work around the pool in 1911. A large fountain in the center of the pool, constructed of a stone-studded bowl mounted on a tapered pedestal, was added sometime after 1914, as was a tooth-like natural slate edging surrounding the pool. Decorative rockwork is also evident on the property with low walls of slate slabs, constructed around the grotto at the base of the cliffs and along many portions of the property border.<sup>2</sup>

While the pool and its evocative name are the central focus of the grotto, the top of the rock cliff to the north is accessible by a small switch-backed footpath. A flagpole is mounted atop the outcropping, erected by current owners on the site of a previous weather vane, which was retrieved from where it toppled and is now mounted on a shorter pole at the bottom of the path.

The Oldenburg home seems to mark the edge of the wilderness in both its landscape and its platting, as to the west of the property are found the forty-foot lots and other homes typical of a settled turn-of-the-century village addition. The grounds are largely surrounded by forest to the south and east, where the property abuts Jay Cooke State Park. The southern boundary of the property is defined in part by an abandoned Northern Pacific rail line, now the Willard Munger State Trail.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> While initial review suggests that deliberate landscaping of this nature was relatively unusual in a small and somewhat rugged community such as Carlton, a lack of comparative studies, as well as little clear indication of Oldenburg's intentions, means that no conclusions as to the significance of the grounds and landscaping can be drawn at this time.

<sup>3</sup> This recreational trail follows the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad line, originally built as the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad, which began operating in 1870, and later part of the Northern Pacific Railway. The trail was established in 1988 after rail service needs diminished and tracks were abandoned. It was named after Minnesota state senator and environmentalist Willard Munger, who promoted rails-to-trails initiatives. The trail stretches for 63 miles between Hinckley and Duluth.



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**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

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**ALTERATIONS**

The house and grounds underwent a limited number of improvements during the Oldenburg family's occupancy. The wide porches surrounding the home were added in 1898. A gabled, one story wooden addition on the rear of the home was removed ca. 1901, with the rear third of the home rebuilt with two stories of matching brick, essentially enlarging the "box" of the home. The previously pyramid-shaped roof was extended in a flat line to accommodate the expanded portion. The dormer on the newer, south side is slightly larger. The interior spaces of kitchen and dining area correspond to the addition on the first floor, as do a bedroom and bathroom on the second floor. While these spaces have been altered by the current owners, anecdotal evidence suggests that the enlarged portion of the home housed a sizable kitchen in the current dining area.

While no information concerning the construction of the garage was found, the matching brickwork and references as early as 1915 to the Oldenburgs' "motoring" to Duluth strongly suggest this occurred during their occupancy.

The lack of building permits and fire insurance maps and the limited access to tax data for the eras in question only allow rough estimates for other alterations to the home. Anecdotal accounts often note that, following the property's sale to its second owners in 1931, the property was not maintained. Since 1968, the Oldenburg property has been under the meticulous stewardship of its third owners, ensuring the integrity of the home and its surroundings. "The Swansons are sure working on your old home here and they will have a beautiful yard when they get it cleaned up. [The second owners] let it run down and trees grew wild..." a Carlton neighbor wrote to Henry Oldenburg's daughter ca. 1969.<sup>4</sup> The current owners believe that the sleeping porch and the enclosure of the eastern end of the front porch occurred during Oldenburg's occupancy, citing the high level of craftsmanship displayed in these alterations.

Restoration and maintenance work since 1968 has included appropriate reconstruction of exterior porch columns and other support structures. Seventeen truckloads of cinders were cleared from the Morning Glory Pool. The concrete walks around the pool were replaced following their original form. An estimated 100 loads of brush were also cleared from the grounds.<sup>5</sup>

The large dormer on the east side was added in the late 1970s and is unobtrusive to the home's overall appearance. A discreetly set-back addition was made to the west end of the garage in 1986. Although the house's original roofing material was slate, it had been replaced with asphalt shingles prior to 1968 and the house was re-roofed with similar materials ca. 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Della Smith, Carlton, MN, to Margaret Oldenburg, undated, ca. 1969. Margaret Oldenburg papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

<sup>5</sup> "Swansons restored 'show place of Carlton.'" *Carlton County Vidette*, undated clipping.

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**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

Carlton County, Minnesota

County and State

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Oldenburg owned numerous parcels of land in Carlton and throughout the county in his lifetime. These included several lots on the north side of Chestnut Street across from the home, other parcels on the west end of town, and land in other townships. Because of these scattered holdings, popular public estimates of Oldenburg's original "estate" vary. About 1908, Oldenburg acquired two additional lots and the corresponding width of an outlot on the west side of the property currently associated with the home, adding 80 feet to his original 1894 purchase. The land associated with the home during Henry Oldenburg's occupancy and deeded to daughter Margaret Oldenburg in 1931 from her trust comprised a contiguous parcel of about 6 acres; this is the same parcel currently associated with the nominated property.

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**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

Carlton County, Minnesota

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Section 8 Page 1

The Henry C. Oldenburg house, located in the town of Carlton in Carlton County, Minnesota, is locally significant under Criterion B of the National Register of Historic Places under the Areas of Significance of Industry and Conservation due to its association with attorney Henry C. Oldenburg. The Oldenburg home relates to the broad statewide context Northern Minnesota Lumbering (1870-1930s). The period of significance for the home is 1894 to 1926.

Henry Carl Oldenburg is one of the earliest Minnesotans to embody the evolving term “conservationist” during the development of a formal forestry conservation and preservation movement in the United States. Oldenburg’s efforts, which were often an outgrowth of his duties as a legal advisor for the Weyerhaeuser lumber companies, reflected those of other successful conservationists of the era, particularly in his ability to bring together political and business factions in support of conservation efforts.

Oldenburg was a respected politician and gifted orator, achieving several positions of elected and voluntary community leadership. As an attorney, he served a variety of clients throughout his career, but was primarily employed as a legal advisor for the Weyerhaeuser lumber interests, particularly those in Cloquet. He served as a member of the Minnesota Forestry Board from 1911 to 1917, at a time when the use and management of state and national forests were matters of national concern, and assisted in the founding of the Cloquet Forestry Station, created specifically for scientific research into forest management. As the chair of the Jay Cooke State Park Commission, Oldenburg employed his mastery of local politics and business relationships, as well as his personal support of conservation efforts, to found the park and ensure its future.

Within these many spheres, Oldenburg notably influenced both the economic and environmental development of Carlton County and the surrounding area, swaying the processes and outcomes of many events significant to Carlton County history. In addition to his work to establish the state park, he is noted locally for his efforts in establishing the town of Carlton as the county seat and in coordinating the immediate and long-term recovery efforts following the 1918 Cloquet fire, as well as his early and enthusiastic embrace of outdoor recreation as a leisure activity.

Traditional biographical data serves as a basic framework for Henry Oldenburg’s life. He was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, on September 18, 1858, to Gerhardt and Margarethe Oldenburg, immigrants from Schleswig Holstein, Germany. Three brothers and two sisters survived to adulthood. One of Henry Oldenburg’s obituaries summarizes:

*After getting a common school education he left his home at about age seventeen. He worked his way through Ripon College at Ripon, Wis.... He attended law school at the University of Wisconsin, getting his degree in the early '80s. He came to Carlton county shortly after, and was admitted to the bar of the then Seventh Judicial district on Oct. 7,*

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**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

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*1884... He worked for a year down at Duluth and then he came to Carlton and started the practice of law. He was elected County attorney Nov. 2, 1886, and served two terms.<sup>1</sup>*

On June 28, 1888, Henry married Mary Elvira Lampson (born 1862) from Seymour, located just west of Green Bay, Wisconsin. A daughter, Margaret Elizabeth, was born on June 27, 1892, and a son, Carl Gerhardt, on May 7, 1894. Carl died suddenly in 1902, a victim of "croup." Henry lived a full and active life, dying unexpectedly in April 1926 (at the age of 68) in South Carolina, where he had traveled with Mary for (ironically) the sake of her health.

Beyond these dates, Henry Oldenburg's life and work reflect a transitional era, in which many different groups began to recognize that resources upon which many American fortunes had been built were not limitless. Oldenburg brought with him to this arena interests, education, and a political savvy that allowed him to operate with great success within the rapidly shifting circumstances at this time in history.

### **OLDENBURG'S ERA**

The era in which Henry Oldenburg came of age and began a career was characterized by a growing awareness of the wonders of America's wilderness. In the first decade after Oldenburg's birth, the first stereoscopic views of Yosemite were widely circulated, and in 1864, this land was granted to the state of California as a public park by a precedent-setting act of Congress. Influential individuals, ranging from naturalist Henry David Thoreau to landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, began expressing their views of human interaction with the natural world. Popular publications subscribed by the elite and upper-middle classes, which encompassed the Oldenburg family, provided a steady barrage of wilderness imagery and advocacy.

At the same time, people began to realize that the bounty offered by the wilderness was not limitless. Throughout the 1870s, legislation at the state and national level began to reflect a concern for fish and game conservation.

The limits of timber resources were slowly recognized as well. As America's forests were cut from coast to coast, John Muir, who had attended the University of Wisconsin in the 1850s, several years before

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<sup>1</sup> "Henry C. Oldenburg." *Carlton County Vidette*, April 22, 1926. An unidentified obituary clipping in the Henry C. Oldenburg files at the Minnesota Historical Society notes that Oldenburg "read law under LaFollette." This likely refers to Robert LaFollette, a Progressive Movement politician in Wisconsin who served as district attorney during Oldenburg's studies, and whose successful campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1884 corresponds to Oldenburg's departure from Wisconsin.

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**Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

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Oldenburg, began writing about the need for government protection of forests in 1876. By the 1880s, formal organizations that addressed natural resource concerns had begun to influence legislation and public opinion, ranging from the American Forestry Association to the Appalachian Mountain Club.<sup>2</sup>

Historians of the forestry conservation movement generally link these developments on the national scene to an awareness that developed as timber supplies were exhausted in the East. Lumbering moved from Maine, where supplies had been exhausted by the 1870s, across the northern United States, with Michigan leading the nation in timber production through 1890. As these supplies disappeared, attention turned westward to Minnesota, where logging had begun mid-century, but where even as late as 1890 the timber stands of northern and northeastern Minnesota were relatively untapped due to the remoteness of the area.<sup>3</sup>

By the time the lumber companies turned their attention to Carlton County in northeastern Minnesota, several locally significant events had already created the environment that would allow the full exploration and use of the area's natural resources: land cessions through treaties with Indian tribes; the county's connection to the trade center of St. Paul via a military road in 1855; the "discovery" of the area's immense white pines; and the initial arrival of significant railroad lines, including the Northern Pacific in 1870. While the transport of logs initially depended on the area's major rivers, the smaller rocky waterways that ran over and through the area's exposed bedrock – the geologic Canadian Shield – were not ideal. Access to the pineries by railroad was key to the area's development as timber near the rivers disappeared. Major rail transportation lines developed between northern Wisconsin, Minneapolis, Duluth, and the Red River Valley. In 1881, a settlement with name of Northern Pacific Junction was established at the hub of the three major railroad lines that crossed through Carlton County.

Northern Pacific Junction also saw traffic from several smaller lines, and by 1910, the town had tracks entering from five directions, carrying lumber and agricultural products across the country and to and from the shipping facilities at Duluth and Superior. Huge facilities were built in Northern Pacific Junction to accommodate the traffic. Historian Francis Carroll identifies the period from 1880 through 1910 as the time of most significant growth for Carlton County. While the population was just 286 in

<sup>2</sup> Library of Congress. *Documentary Chronology of Selected Events in the Development of the American Conservation Movement, 1847-1920*. American Memory Project, 2002.

<http://learning.loc.gov/ammem/amrvhtml/conshome.html> Accessed July 20, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Hidy, Ralph, Frank Ernest Hill, and Allan Nevins. *Timber and Men; The Weyerhaeuser Story*. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

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1870, by 1880 it was 1230. "For the next thirty years... [the county] expanded by from four to seven thousand people every ten years."<sup>4</sup>

This was the stage onto which the newly minted young lawyer, Henry Oldenburg, entered.

**OLDENBURG AS PUBLIC SERVANT 1885-1895**

When Oldenburg first arrived in Carlton County, he seemed destined for a career in law and politics, and indeed, his first decade in the county would be defined by these endeavors.

The first indication of Oldenburg's presence in the county is gleaned from Northern Pacific Junction village council minutes when, in September 1885, he and county attorney Henry Hawkins provided reports to the council on legal matters related to land ownership in the county, apparently representing opposite side of the issues. The rivalry between Oldenburg and Hawkins would be a theme in coming years.

By 1886, frequent references in village council minutes suggest that Oldenburg was the council's primary legal advisor. Oldenburg's initial reputation as an influential attorney and townsperson grew when he was hired by the village to draw up a petition to support changing the county seat from Thomson to Northern Pacific Junction. While the town of Thomson had served as the county seat since 1870, the shift in the rail transportation focus to Northern Pacific Junction brought the call for a shift in the county seat as well.

In 1886, county commissioners passed a resolution making Northern Pacific Junction the new county seat. Henry Hawkins consistently argued against this move. In the elections of November 1886, Oldenburg ousted Hawkins as Carlton county attorney. Oldenburg took office in 1887, while in the meantime Hawkins was successfully persuading the county commissioners to resume their meetings in Thomson. Oldenburg promptly filed a petition to prevent a new courthouse from being built in Thomson while the issue remained unresolved.

An account in the local newspaper, the *Carlton County Vidette*, noted:

*The fight was kept up in court and by elections for about five years. Henry Oldenburg of [N.P. Junction] and other lawyers fought the case hammer and tongs for [N. P. Junction], while H.H. Hawkins was the legal force for the Thomson faction."*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Carroll, Francis. *Crossroads in time: a history of Carlton County, Minnesota*. Cloquet, Minnesota: Carlton County Historical Society, 1987. p 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Carlton Country Vidette*, March 11, 1911.

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In 1888, Cloquet citizens joined the campaign for the role of county seat, with Hawkins as their legal advisor as well. Finally, in September of 1889, following a second petition on behalf of Northern Pacific Junction (supervised by Oldenburg), the county commissioners and the assistant state attorney general were present for a three-day debate among interested parties of Thomson, Carlton and Cloquet. The meeting led to a referendum the following month. A close township vote placed the seat in Northern Pacific Junction. To cement the vote, in the middle of the night Junction villagers (including, according to a 1911 recounting of the event, "proposed county officials, whose palms itched for the touch of salaries of the county officers..."<sup>6</sup>) took matters into their own hands by removing a safe containing county records from the County Auditor's office in Thomson and taking it to the Northern Pacific Junction village hall.<sup>7</sup>

By June 1890, the village council (apparently in conjunction with the county) authorized Oldenburg to seek plans and estimates for a Court House and Jail. The construction of this new building in Northern Pacific Junction represented the end of the county seat debate.<sup>8</sup>

With the county seat secure, Oldenburg declined to run again for county attorney, having served two terms, but instead was elected village council president in March 1891, running against county commissioner William Mayer. He soon supervised legal matters related to two village development campaigns. One was to rename Northern Pacific Junction, and the second was to consolidate the town with the village of Thomson, which was a mere mile down the road. While the consolidation proposal seems to have (not surprisingly, considering the rivalry) been dropped, in early March Oldenburg chaired a village meeting regarding the Northern Pacific Junction name, which the *Vidette* deemed "clumsy, unassuming, and inapplicable to our existing circumstances and future prospects,"<sup>9</sup> as well as "cumbersome, distasteful and harsh."<sup>10</sup>

The outcome of the discussion showed that Oldenburg was a man of impressive action and follow-through. Within two weeks, Oldenburg was in St. Paul, determining whether there was still time to enact a name change through legislative action. And in April, when the proposed change was to appear in a senate bill, the local paper reported:

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Carroll, p. 181.

<sup>8</sup> This building was razed in 1922.

<sup>9</sup> *Vidette*, March 7, 1891.

<sup>10</sup> *Vidette*, April 11, 1891.

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*When the time arrives for its consideration, Mr. Oldenburg will be summoned to the scene of the action and take personal charge of the matter.*<sup>11</sup>

Successfully breaching legislative hurdles, under Oldenburg's leadership the village council passed a resolution to change the name of Northern Pacific Junction to Carlton (after early area settler Reuben B. Carlton) by the end of April 1891.<sup>12</sup> The local newspaper considered the new name "pleasant [and] euphonious."<sup>13</sup>

Oldenburg's closely-timed and related roles as legal advisor for both the county and the village are difficult to tease apart, but it seems that he continued to advise in both capacities, particularly after becoming village council president. (This would not be the only time that he served clients with potential conflicts of interest.) He also served as an independent practitioner of law, with offices in the center of town, discreet advertisements in the *Vidette* (which through 1891 noted an association with lawyer S.P. White of Duluth), and an apparent variety of other clients.

The limited number of people in the growing but still small Carlton County settlements led to some interesting bedfellows. For example, Oldenburg's successor as county attorney, A. Woodward, promptly demanded a salary increase following his election. Oldenburg's salary had been \$800 (\$16,326 in today's dollars); Woodward demanded \$1200. Oldenburg and his former village election opponent, William Mayer, a county commissioner, joined forces to "repel the attack on the county's cash box..."<sup>14</sup> The *Vidette* cheered the effort:

*The outline of Mr. Oldenburg's defense of the county contains so many important facts and figures of vital interest to our taxpayers, that we append it in full, hoping that those who are fortunate enough to obtain it by being subscribers to our paper, will lay it carefully aside for future reference.*<sup>15</sup>

Oldenburg's argument included detailed comparative statistics about population and other county attorneys' salaries, and concluded with the note that, if the judge were to rule in favor of an increased salary, he should also tell the county where the money would come from. Judge J.D. Ensign ruled in favor of the county. (And later newspaper accounts note many social engagements between the Ensign and Oldenburg families.) At the same time, the paper championed Oldenburg's version of a roads bill

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> *Village Minutes Ledger*, Village of Northern Pacific Junction. April 21, 1891.

<sup>13</sup> *Vidette*, April 11, 1891.

<sup>14</sup> *Vidette*, February 21, 1891.

<sup>15</sup> *Vidette*, date not legible, ca. late 1890.



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making its way through the legislature, deeming his terms more favorable to the county than the bill drawn up by the new county attorney, Woodward.<sup>16</sup>

Oldenburg's ability to provide legal structure for various causes was applied to the village council soon after his election. The newspaper reported:

*The rules introduced by President Oldenburg and adopted by our village council for the government of that body have already won popularity in the county. We understand they have been accepted by Cloquet and Barnum and that those two villages will hereafter transact business in accordance with Mr. Oldenburg's rules.*<sup>17</sup>

Other issues which Oldenburg supervised for the growing village of Carlton during his 1892-93 tenure as village council president included the discussion of street lighting, an ordinance to require men of the village to participate in fighting fires (the newspaper reported Oldenburg was "quite wrathful" about the low turnout at local fires) and plans for a new village hall. But the council devoted their greatest time and energy, as reflected in the meeting minutes, to the discussion of local roads and sidewalks: their construction, their repair and the lack thereof. It is, perhaps, not surprising that a man of Oldenburg's wide interests and abilities would decline to seek a second term as the village leader.

**HOME AND FAMILY 1894-1913**

At the same time that Oldenburg began working in a relatively expansive business and political arena, he was also fully engaged in family life and local events. 1894 in particular proved to be a whirlwind year for the Oldenburg family. In May, Oldenburg's son, Carl, was born, joining 2-year-old Margaret in the family, and the newspaper reported that Oldenburg brought cigars to court in celebration.<sup>18</sup> He sold part of the site of his law practice, which had been located on North Street, to druggist Leo Peters in April of 1894. While the family moved to their summer home on nearby Chub Lake, plans for a new

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that such blatant bias was the norm for newspapers of the era, which often reflected the political leanings of the publisher. Indeed, Oldenburg was an ardent and active Republican, a position supported by the *Carlton County Vidette*, and rivals such as Hawkins and Woodward were Democrats. It is fortunate that the publishers of the *Vidette*, which operated under various ownerships during Oldenburg's lifetime, took such an interest in Oldenburg, noting his activities in both laudatory and humorous tones. The newspaper serves as the major source of information about Oldenburg, as only a very slim file of his personal papers have been preserved, and as he is not survived by any direct descendents. To a lesser degree, similar information was also gathered from the *Cloquet Pine Knot*.

<sup>17</sup> *Vidette*, March 28, 1891.

<sup>18</sup> *Vidette*, May 1894.

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home on Chestnut Street, where Oldenburg had purchased land from Edward Baumann in Baumann's Addition to Carlton, were in the works. In March the *Vidette* reported:

*H. Oldenburg is contemplating the building of an elegant residence in Baumann's addition next summer. It will be of native slate and quartzite rock, using Thomson slate brick for trimmings and [he will] roof it with slate from Mr. Deiz's quarry up the river. Such a building would not only be a thing of beauty, but would show up some of Carlton county's resorses[ sic] up to great advantage.<sup>19</sup>*

In August, the newspaper profiled a promising young builder named Emil Newquist, and in September, reported that Newquist had been contracted to build Oldenburg's home, not surprising when he was presented in such glowing terms:

*Emil Newquist is one of our most energetic and prosperous young men and is a builder and contractor by trade. Mr. Newquist has had many years of experience in the building and planning of all kinds of frame dwellings and barn granaries of all kinds and is a man who pushes his work to complete satisfaction of his customers. Mr. Newquist has among other buildings just completed the dwelling of our townsman C.A. Nelson on North street which is a credit to our village. Mr. Newquist was formerly engaged in building and contracting in Duluth, Superior and Virginia. He is a gentleman of pleasant address and always will be found accommodating at all times to do business with. To those who intend building we can heartily recommend this gentleman for a trial.<sup>20</sup>*

By 1909, the *Vidette* offered another profile of Newquist, noting he was "Swedish-American" and born in 1873. He immigrated directly to Carlton at the age of 16, and built his fortune through real estate and his work as a contractor and builder. Like Oldenburg, he was a Republican, and later in life he served Carlton as a village trustee and as village president.<sup>21</sup>

By September, as Oldenburg's house progressed, a carload of white brick from the Kelly Brick and Tile Company at Wrenshall was parked on a local sidetrack. The paper coyly mentioned that the house would not only be "a thing of beauty...but... quite an ad as well."<sup>22</sup>

In January 1895, the Oldenburgs hosted a housewarming and New Year's Eve party that received extensive coverage in the local paper.

<sup>19</sup> *Vidette*, March 10, 1894.

<sup>20</sup> *Vidette*, August 25, 1894.

<sup>21</sup> *Vidette*, June 11, 1909.

<sup>22</sup> *Vidette*, September 29, 1894; *Cloquet Pine Knot*, September 8, 1894.

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*About 80 invited guests met at the handsome new residence of H. Oldenburg in the evening, and participated in a genuine old-fashioned house warming. After inspecting the house from basement to garret the guests were treated to a very fine programme...*

More than a dozen party guests performed, and H.H. Hawkins and his wife, apparently putting professional conflicts aside, offered a poem and a song in honor of the occasion.<sup>23</sup>

The party was one of many social events held in the Oldenburg home over the years. Other events ranged from a taffy pull in 1895 ("We never attended such a stuck up affair in our lives before," the *Cloquet Pine Knot* punned) to numerous outdoor parties and suppers that included backyard bonfires.<sup>24</sup>

The housewarming party did not mark a finished project. Oldenburg made steady improvements in the home and its surroundings. In the spring after moving into the home, Oldenburg began what would be extensive work on the grounds, altering the clear-cut landscape.

*H. Oldenburg has just completed a fine twisted wire fence around his new residence, also planted a fine row of shade trees, shrubs, etc., in and about his grounds which will add largely to the beauty as well as the value of the place.*<sup>25</sup>

(In typical Minnesota fashion, it snowed two days later.) Alex McLane was hired to paint in July, suggesting the interior spaces were reaching completion.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout his residence in the home, Oldenburg invested time, effort, and expense in maintaining the road in front of his home. These efforts were frequent and apparently frustrating, as one good rainfall would wipe out a day's grading work, leaving a muddy, rutted mess. The *Vidette* offered encouragement, lauding him for efforts to beautify this end of town and for setting such a fine civic example.

<sup>23</sup> *Pine Knot*, January 12, 1895.

<sup>24</sup> The social occasions in the home were often related to Mary Oldenburg's many civic and social engagements, and newspaper accounts suggest that she was a well-educated woman with diverse interests. Her family nickname, "Mate," was popular in New York in the 1840s (see: Connecticut State Library, <http://www.cslib.org/nickname.htm>) and indicates that she may have had connections to the East, possibly through college attendance, although her family was from Wisconsin. She was lauded by the *Vidette* for her victory in town spelling and literary bees, and later was deeply involved in the establishment of local and traveling libraries. She was deemed "a woman of exceptionally bright mentality and ability" in her obituary. (*Vidette*, February 20, 1930) She was also known for her early acquisition of a camera. Census records indicate that throughout their residence, young Scandinavian immigrants assisted Mary Oldenburg in her household duties.

<sup>25</sup> *Pine Knot*, May 18, 1895.

<sup>26</sup> *Pine Knot*, July 13, 1895.

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In the fall of 1895, Oldenburg planned to add what was to be a most unusual feature:  
*H. Oldenburg is making marked improvements about his premises on Chestnut street. One of the attractions will be a fountain spouting from a rock several feet high surrounded by beautiful ferns watered by the fountain's sprays.*<sup>27</sup>

It appears that the fountain was not added at this time, but Oldenburg did attend to other features, and in 1896, a brief mention was made that "Wm. Sheils has been dynamiting the rocks around H. Oldenburg's residence this week."<sup>28</sup> Furniture from Michigan arrived in May of 1897, and the porch, perhaps the most distinctive feature of the home, was added with little fanfare in the spring of 1898.<sup>29</sup> In June of 1901, the *Vidette* noted "enlargements and improvements" at the Oldenburg home. Photographs suggest that a one-story wooden gable attachment on the rear of the home was removed at this time, and a full two-story addition was seamlessly fused with the rest of the house. The roofline was extended and a dormer added on this side.

Oldenburg was still not done with his refinements. In July 1900, the *Vidette* announced: "H. Oldenburg has received a pair of marmosets this week, the initial collection for his zoological garden which he contemplates." In the spring of 1903, he added an electric water pump for "various uses about his premises." The purpose of the pump became clearer in June, when the paper mentioned that it supplied a newly added artificial pond.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that this was an act of consolation or distraction, as Oldenburg sponsored the drilling of a well in the local cemetery at the same time; son Carl had died in October of 1902 and was buried in the cemetery.

The pond seemed to be the last step in a spate of noted improvements to the home, and perhaps grief factored into this moratorium. In 1908, the home was pictured in a newspaper promotional supplement for the town of Carlton, but no mention was made of any Oldenburg family member. In 1911, E.E. Durkee, a Cloquet contractor and cement worker hired to lay sidewalks in town in that year, was employed to do concrete work related to the pond, leaving his signature on the concrete surrounding the pond.

<sup>27</sup> *Vidette*, October 5, 1895.

<sup>28</sup> "Twenty Years Ago." *Vidette*, September 8, 1916.

<sup>29</sup> *Vidette*, May 1897 and May 11, 1898.

<sup>30</sup> *Vidette*, March 21 and June 6, 1903. This pond is apparently the current "Morning Glory Pool." The origin of the pool's name could not be determined.

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In 1913, Henry Oldenburg and his wife, Mate, celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary with a large surprise party at their Carlton home. Not so surprisingly, this late June celebration was noted in particular because:

*...the porches and lawn were soon overflowing with a jolly crowd...[and the] evening was spent around the open fireplace in the yard.*

A young woman even appeared in Mrs. Oldenburg's wedding dress, "girlish and sweet, pass[ing] before the firelight in this gown of long ago..."<sup>31</sup>

**AT THE LAKE**

Oldenburg's careful attention to his distinctive home and grounds reflected a strong partiality for nature. This perception is supported by his acquisition of a second home outside Carlton. Beginning as early as 1892, the family moved to their "fine cottage and farm" on Chub Lake during a part of the summer.<sup>32</sup> Several other prominent local citizens from Carlton, Cloquet and Duluth who also owned homes on the lake would join them.

The paper reported on numerous society-type events held in the Chub Lake neighborhood, and activities on the property reflected a fashionable interest in cultivating a "country estate." This was not only a national craze, but also an expression of a growing nature-appreciation movement. The newspaper noted that the farm itself was leased to a farmer and his family in the spring on 1894, but the credit accrued to Oldenburg, even reporting that Oldenburg purchased hens for "an expensive hennery." The tone of newspaper accounts suggest a bit of mockery at Oldenburg's farming endeavors, reporting in May 1894:

*H. Oldenburg, farmer, is making a fine showing on his land near Chub lake. If the seed stores do not give out he says he is bound to raise something in the line of vegetables, to astonish the natives at the next fair.*<sup>33</sup>

In all fairness the paper reported Oldenburg's (or perhaps his lessee's) results as well:

*Sept 8. A splendid sample of potatoes, cabbage, cucumbers and tomatoes from the farm of H. Oldenburg, of Chub lake, shows conclusively that good crops can be raised here even in dry seasons.*

<sup>31</sup> *Vidette*, July 4, 1913.

<sup>32</sup> *Vidette*, August 25, 1894. An initial review suggests that the Oldenburg's Chub Lake property was subdivided by the 1950s; most homes around the lake are modern, and more research would be required to determine the exact fate of the Oldenburg holdings and buildings in the area.

<sup>33</sup> *Vidette*, May 1894.

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Within a few years, Oldenburg attracted interest for his recreational activities at the lake, where he launched “a small but handsome sailboat at his Chub lake resort... The boat was built by Swan Malmquist.”<sup>34</sup> By 1900, Oldenburg’s vision had expanded.

*H. Oldenburg has purchased the large flat boat lying along side the road just this side of Cloquet and will have the boat taken to Chub lake where it will be enlarged and equipped for the convenience for those who go to the lake for a day’s or weeks pleasure. Cloquet parties started for the lake with the same boat last winter, but were compelled to abandon the work on account of the sudden thaw. William Sheils has the contract for moving the boat and will roll it to the lake on wheels. Mr. Oldenburg intends next summer to place an engine in the boat to propel it about the lake.*<sup>35</sup>

The boat, of course, required a “large boathouse,” built the following summer.<sup>36</sup> The Chub lake property continued to be the site of many social events throughout Oldenburg’s lifetime, including the following in 1913:

*The picnic held at the Henry Oldenburg residence and house boat on Chub Lake by children of the Lone Pine School south of Carlton was well attended. An interesting program was rendered. The chief amusement for the day was boat riding, peanut hunts, marshmallow roasts, and a bounteous lunch. The picnic was for the last day of school.*<sup>37</sup>

**OLDENBURG AND THE WEYERHAEUSERS 1895-1926**

By 1893, when Oldenburg stepped down as village council president, evidence suggests he had a burgeoning law practice. By this time he had taken on the S.S. Johnson Lumber Company and the C.N. Nelson Lumber Company of Cloquet as clients, providing him with a connection to all area lumber companies through the many mergers and acquisitions that took place, including initial acquisitions by the Weyerhaeuser companies. (The *Vidette* took Oldenburg to task in this time period for representing both the companies and later the county in related tax issues.<sup>38</sup>) In 1896, Rudolph Weyerhaeuser moved to Cloquet to oversee Weyerhaeuser operations in the area. By 1902, all three major Cloquet lumber companies belonged to Weyerhaeuser interests, and Rudolph “came to rely on the judgment and advice of a Carlton lawyer, Henry Oldenburg.”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Vidette*, June 25, 1898.

<sup>35</sup> *Vidette*, August 18, 1900.

<sup>36</sup> *Vidette*, August 10, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> “Down Memory Lane,” *Vidette*, May 26, 1965. Provided by Francis Carroll, email correspondence.

<sup>38</sup> *Vidette*, October 17, 1896. The *Vidette* also reported with great indignation in December on an ethnic slur Oldenburg made in a speech.

<sup>39</sup> Carroll, p. 148.

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A history of Weyerhaeuser operations notes: "The Weyerhaeuser influence became dominant in Cloquet. The group controlled four of the five mills and the boom companies. The situation was nevertheless somewhat confused..." due to the multiplicity of the holdings and mergers, with affiliates under the same ownership sometimes even competing with each other.<sup>40</sup> In spite of, or perhaps because of, the vastness of the Weyerhaeuser operations, Oldenburg's role, while difficult to document precisely, seems to have been significant. Oldenburg was to be a lifelong advisor and lobbyist for Weyerhaeuser operations and interests.

One of Oldenburg's earliest documented efforts on behalf of the Weyerhaeuser companies was opposition to a local dam. In 1895, Oldenburg appeared "in Washington" to argue against the "Altamonte Canal scheme." The scheme was a proposal to build an 80-foot high, 1900-foot long dam on the St. Louis river above Cloquet. The *Vidette* explained that local lumbering companies opposed the Altamonte because it would eliminate the monopoly they and the Knife River Boom Company held on the area lumbering. The paper reported:

*H. Oldenburg returned from Washington on Saturday last, with a flavor of lawmaking in his air and manner. He says the Altamonte is doomed. The other fellows say it is a sure thing. So there you are.*<sup>41</sup>

Oldenburg seems to have prevailed, perhaps because greater forces were at work. At the same time the Altamonte proposal was on the table, the *Vidette* detailed a proposal by the Minnesota Canal Company to build over 200 miles of canals and waterways along the St. Louis River and into Duluth. The Canal Company had been founded by Jay Cooke, who had financed the construction of the Minnesota Point canal into the Duluth Harbor in 1871.<sup>42</sup> The Canal Company's proposal promised the construction of a reservoir to provide a water supply for the area, increased flowage for driving logs, and power for manufacturing.<sup>43</sup>

These were two of several proposals offered over time to dam the St. Louis for transportation and power. The *Vidette* did not explicitly state that the Altamonte proposal and the Canal Company proposal were in direct opposition to each other, but both plans could not have been accommodated on the St. Louis. Oldenburg's opposition to the Altamonte meant that Jay Cooke, who held most of the land along the lower St. Louis River valley and in the Thomson area, could prevail. (Oldenburg would later

<sup>40</sup> Hidy, p. 120.

<sup>41</sup> *Vidette*, March 2, 1895 and February 2, 1895.

<sup>42</sup> Minor, David. "A Canal Chronology." Eagles Byte Historical Research, 1996.

<http://home.eznet.net/~dminor/Canals.html> July 15, 2006; and Pepper, Terry. "Minnesota Point Lighthouse - Duluth, Minnesota." *Seeing the Light*. December 26, 2004.

[http://www.terrypepper.com/Lights/superior/minn\\_point/minpoint.htm](http://www.terrypepper.com/Lights/superior/minn_point/minpoint.htm). Accessed on July 31, 2006.

<sup>43</sup> *Vidette*, April 20, 1895.

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represent Cooke's company on a tax matter.) Ultimately, Cooke sold land to the Great Northern Power Company, which realized the construction of a hydroelectric power dam and reservoir at Thomson during construction in 1905 through 1907. Cooke's St. Louis River Water Power Company, however, did retain "much of the river valley between Thomson and Fond du Lac."<sup>44</sup>

Oldenburg's professional activities from 1895 and onward seem to have fallen primarily under the general heading of Weyerhaeuser business, and an Oldenburg obituary states that he specialized in "corporation law." The local papers reported on regular comings and goings between Carlton, Duluth, St. Paul and Washington, D.C. Oldenburg also appeared before the Minnesota Supreme Court more than two dozen times. An initial review suggests that most of this work had to do with tax issues, land holdings and resource use, as railroads, lumber companies and other capitalists tried to secure various usage rights at the lowest possible cost.<sup>45</sup>

**Weyerhaeusers, Oldenburg and the Evolution of Conservation Policy**

While it is initially surprising to claim a conservationist perspective for someone who conducted legal maneuvers designed to allow full use of natural resources, this dichotomy was not unusual for the time period. The term "conservation" in this era should not be confused with ideas of environmental or wilderness preservation, except in the most utilitarian sense. The conservation movement of the era promoted the *management* of natural resources, not their protection. Ultimately, this management prevented the complete exploitation and exhaustion of the natural resources that would have occurred without such intervention. Weyerhaeuser lumbering in Carlton began just as these ideas were reaching a broader and influential audience. And the Weyerhaeusers, while running a profit-oriented lumbering company, are cited by some historians as leaders in forest conservation. In an exhaustive history of lumbering, it is noted that the Weyerhaeusers, along with their partners, received:

*...the rewards of shrewd and daring use of opportunities, sound management, and of cooperation between their companies. These had never abused their advantages, and while no boldly progressive measures marked their work in milling, labor relations, or*

<sup>44</sup> Carroll, Francis. M. *Carlton Chronicles*. Manuscript draft 2006. Carlton County Historical Society files. In 1885, Cooke began reacquiring area land he had lost in financial Panic of 1873. It is likely that the Weyerhaeusers and Cooke had a cooperative business relationship, as it was common for timber companies to sell their cut-over lands along rivers, which were tax liabilities, to power companies, who could use the denuded shores for water flowage. (Paddock, Joe. *Keeper of the Wild. The Life of Ernest Oberholzer*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001.)

<sup>45</sup> While a complete review of these cases is beyond the scope of this report, it should be noted that Oldenburg represented individuals and corporate interests, not necessarily directly under the Weyerhaeuser name. List of cases provided by Mary Rumsey, University of Minnesota Law Library Reference Department, email correspondence, April 27, 2006.



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*forestry, they had sown the seeds of cooperative marketing, and gained experience with cutover lands that would count in the future development of a constructive reforestation policy.*<sup>46</sup>

The reforestation policy was a key of the forest conservation movement. The movement was spearheaded by Gifford Pinchot, head of the United States Division of Forestry under Theodore Roosevelt beginning in 1898. It is notable that Oldenburg's activities for the Weyerhaeusers in Washington correspond with Gifford Pinchot's tenure, and their efforts likely overlapped in this era in which the dispensation and classification of timber lands, both private and public, were a primary focus. As a Weyerhaeuser representative, Oldenburg would have supported many of Pinchot's efforts to manage the nation's forest lands. Big timber companies generally understood that the regulation of forest practices would benefit them through the development of a sustainable crop as virgin timber grew scarce. Indeed, in 1905, at the invitation of Pinchot, Frederick E. Weyerhaeuser addressed the American Forest Congress about sustainable lumbering practices. A retrospective account by a Weyerhaeuser family member stated:

*In his enthusiasm, F.E. not only agreed to [speak], he also helped promote the event by encouraging other important timber owners to attend the event with him. Pinchot and F.E. believed that the discovery of mutual interests by the federal officials and the industry leaders would lead to a better understanding and opportunities for federal cooperation.*<sup>47</sup>

The development of forestry management practices on the national level led to the creation of the Minnesota State Forestry Board in 1911. Arguably an early conservation organization, the board was comprised largely of representatives from lumbering interests, including the Weyerhaeusers. From 1911 to 1917, Henry Oldenburg served as a board member as well. The board's first annual report urged "a more conservative utilization of our forests..." By 1912, reflecting the dual aspect of the era's "conservation," the mission of the Board was "to encourage the establishment of wood-working industries and to assist in bringing about the complete utilization of forest products."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Hidy, p. 188.

<sup>47</sup> Weyerhaeuser, George H. "The Three Impediments: Time, Fire and Taxes." In *Forest Policy for Private Forestry: Global and Regional Challenges*. Teeter, L.D. et al., eds. Forest Policy Center, Auburn University, 2001. [http://web6.duc.auburn.edu/academic/forestry\\_wildlife/forest\\_policy\\_ctr/](http://web6.duc.auburn.edu/academic/forestry_wildlife/forest_policy_ctr/). Accessed 20 July 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Minnesota Forestry Board. *Second Annual Report of the State Forester*. December 1, 1912. Agency History Record, Minnesota Historical Society.

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The Board also addressed a major concern of the timber companies – the prevention and suppression of forest fires (at government expense). Forestry Board minutes give very few hints of Oldenburg’s efforts on the board, except in this area. Meeting minutes from 1913 noted a planned inspection of forest regions.

*President Scott said he thought this was an excellent idea and the he for one would go into Lake and St. Louis counties. Messrs. Woods, Oldenburg and Williams also approved of the idea of such inspection. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Oldenburg expressed the need of more boats and of their being equipped with hose and pumps for fire fighting. Also the importance of building the cabins for the Rangers [whose duties included fire prevention] in a neat and comfortable manner as they are to be permanent. They should be of logs where practical, and he thought a person of skill should be employed to build these cabins. There should be a great many of them.<sup>49</sup>*

For decades, the fire prevention and suppression policies of the Minnesota Forestry Board created as many problems as they solved and contributed in part to the ferocity of the October 1918 Cloquet and Moose Lake fires in Carlton County. The lumber yards of Cloquet were especially vulnerable, and most – along with the town itself – were destroyed.

*Despite the usual autumn fires and the smoke in the air, the fires of 1918 descended on the towns and farms of Carlton County without warning. The result was that within as little as twelve hour’s time the worst disaster in the history of the state had occurred...The property to be destroyed was estimated to be worth \$30,000,000, and that estimate was probably conservative.<sup>50</sup>*

Virtually the entire town was evacuated, with many townspeople fleeing to Carlton. The Oldenburgs housed up to 50 people in the Chestnut Street house during the fire’s aftermath. Mary Oldenburg wrote to Margaret about the comings and goings in the house:

*Yes, Father was home. He, Mr. Hornby and Alice and Mr. Weyerhaeuser all came up from St. Paul on that Saturday night’s limited. Yes, the town is full of refugees... You couldn’t have done a thing if you had been here. Ella [Osberg, the cook and maid] is a wonder and so nice about everything. We had 8 extra men to breakfast this morning and she didn’t even call me... [Then] a group of men from Duluth came along, on their way to Moose Lake and stopped for breakfast. It is that way all the time.... Mr. Nettleton of St.*

<sup>49</sup> Minnesota Forestry Board minutes, October 21, 1913. Agency History Record, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>50</sup> Carroll, p. 221. In today’s dollars, the destruction would be estimated at \$384,000,000.

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*Paul has just been here and had 3 cups of tea two sandwiches and a doughnut. I don't know how many may be here for supper. Ella and I call it the Quick Order Restaurant.<sup>51</sup>*

In addition, Henry Oldenburg took a decisive role in not only helping the victims, but also in setting the tone for the future of Cloquet and the lumber industry in Carlton County. Oldenburg's role as Weyerhaeuser confidante was most obvious in the aftermath of the fires. The newspaper reported on a Sunday afternoon meeting of county citizens immediately after the fires:

*H. Oldenburg of Carlton presided... and speaking from his connection with the lumber companies, stated that there was not the slightest doubt in his mind that the people of Cloquet would find in the manufacturers the fullest and most hardy co-operation. He said that he had been asked repeatedly what probable action the Northern Lumber company [a Weyerhaeuser affiliate] would take toward rebuilding their mills, and while he had no specific authority to speak for the company, he was free to state that the board of directors of the company had left the matter of rebuilding wholly to R.M. Weyerhaeuser. Mr. Weyerhaeuser has not given any definite opinion on this point, but it is pointed out that if the three mills now in the city cut their timber and turn their plants over to the Northern to saw up that company's standing pine, the life of Cloquet as a lumbering center will be prolonged considerably...After Mr. Oldenburg's talk, there were brief addresses by a number of citizens and the unanimous opinion was 'Rebuild at once and better than before.'<sup>52</sup>*

Rudolph Weyerhaeuser did indeed enact the plan laid out by Oldenburg, and it is not clear whose thoughts were first on this issue. In any case, by December, Oldenburg had negotiated an agreement among competing companies and drafted:

*... an agreement whereby for a period of time the mills would be operated jointly; they would cut the Northern's stumpage, and when the standing timber was exhausted the Northern would purchase the Cloquet Lumber Company's facilities. The Northern [would cut] its logs in the Johnson Wentworth mill... All this meant that the three big companies revived and the city of Cloquet remained a lumber town throughout the 1920s. Rudolph Weyerhaeuser later remarked that after the fires, he was "down and out and ready to give up."<sup>53</sup>*

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<sup>51</sup> Letter to Miss Margaret E. Oldenburg, Coleraine, Minn, from her mother, Mary (Mrs. Henry C.) Oldenburg. Postmarked October 16, 1918. Henry Oldenburg papers.

<sup>52</sup> *Pine Knot*, October 25, 1918. Also quoted in Carroll.

<sup>53</sup> Carroll, p. 254.

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Historian Francis Carroll credits Oldenburg and a limited number of other community leaders with reviving Cloquet's lumber industry after the fires. But the lumber company leadership knew that the revival of Cloquet, and the continued productivity of the Weyerhaeuser interests, could not rest on traditional lumbering alone. Virgin timber supplies were exhausted and other economic forces were at work.

The concept of reforestation, particularly with fast-growing species such as poplar, offered a new opportunity. The Weyerhaeusers took the lead in the area's initial steps toward the economic and philosophical transition from hardwood production to the lumber byproducts industry using second-growth timber and pulpwood. They supported research into such options and founded new companies. In 1919, Oldenburg was part of a small group that included Rudolph Weyerhaeuser and C.R. Musser that commenced the production of "Balsam-Wool" – one of the earliest composition wood products, also later related to "NuWood."<sup>54</sup> In 1921 the Weyerhaeusers founded the Wood Conversion Company on the site of the former Northern Lumber Company in Cloquet.

This move was completely innovative, and the company not only had to develop the products, but also create markets for them. Oldenburg became an authority in this new world, and in 1924 (in the stead of an absent F.K. Weyerhaeuser), he addressed the National Conference on Utilization of Forest Resources in Washington D.C. on the topic of "Utilization of Little-Used Species," providing a very clear statement on the changing nature of the wood industry and demonstrating a missionary zeal for supporting it. A transcription of the speech provides one of the few opportunities to experience Oldenburg's own words, again closely aligned with the "party line" of the Weyerhaeusers:

*Northern Minnesota has literally millions of acres that are better adapted to growing timber than to agriculture It grows... in great abundance... what with us has been termed "weed woods," the rapid growing aspen, birch, and jack-pine.... All of these species grow naturally and constantly, and if fires are kept out, and all of them profitably used and waste eliminated, the number and variety of our timber using industries could be multiplied many times and continue to serve humanity as long as the world endures... The Wood Conversion Company was primarily organized to utilize mill waste... utilizing everything but the whispering in the tree tops.... This work has restored Cloquet...<sup>55</sup>*

Oldenburg also quipped that he was uncertain as to why he was invited to speak at the conference, "as I have labored...in preparation for this fifteen minutes' talk, only forty years."

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>55</sup> Oldenburg, Henry. "Utilization of Little-Used Species." Address to the National Conference on Utilization of Forest Resources in Washington D.C., Nov. 19-20 1924. Oldenburg file, Minnesota Historical Society.

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Oldenburg's personal perspective on the use of natural resources seems to have been articulated in a 1908 memorial address for former lumber company owner and Oldenburg employer, Samuel S. Johnson, at the dedication of the new armory at Shattuck School in Faribault.

*The Indian is gone, largely because he failed to unfold his own powers by their use and exercise in the development of the natural resources all about him. He allowed the forest to go to decay, the land to remain untilled, the waters to run idly to the sea, and the great mineral deposits to continue their silent and hidden sleep of ages.*<sup>56</sup>

The attitude reflected by this quote was typical and largely uncontroversial during Oldenburg's time period. Even as the conservation concept became accepted in the early 20th century, Americans influenced by 19<sup>th</sup> century mores felt that people were entitled to fully exploit natural resources for the betterment of humankind.

Ultimately, Oldenburg's professional role, like that of Gifford Pinchot, may best be described as "the consummate organization man."<sup>57</sup> In 1915, Oldenburg began a lifelong role on the Board of Directors for the Northwest Paper Company. He sat on the Board of Directors of the Wood Conversion Company in the year before his death. He also traveled West with the Weyerhaeuser officials to examine mills and logging businesses, and a biography of Frederick King Weyerhaeuser states that Oldenburg was responsible for getting "several prominent politicians" to write letters of recommendation that would allow "F.K." to attend flight training during preparations for World War I.<sup>58</sup>

Oldenburg's obituaries suggest that his affiliation with the Weyerhaeusers was well known, and his work diverse. An obituary states:

*Mr. Oldenburg has been general counsel for the entire [Weyerhaeuser] interests, not only in legal matters, but many matters of general business policies. He was considered one of the most valuable men connected with the companies and was quite heavily interested with them and the Northwest Paper company and the many subsidiary industries of Cloquet.*<sup>59</sup>

Interestingly, Oldenburg's funeral notices note no Weyerhaeuser participation or attendance.

<sup>56</sup> "Memorial Address" for Samuel S. Johnson. May 30, 1908. Mimeograph mss., Oldenburg file, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>57</sup> Miller, Char. *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2001. p. 130.

<sup>58</sup> *Vidette*, April 21, 1916, and Twining, p. 42.

<sup>59</sup> *Vidette*, April 22, 1926.

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**OLDENBURG AS CONSERVATIONIST 1907-1926**

Oldenburg's professional duties called for him to assist in the full utilization of forest resources, which places him squarely under the rubric of "conservationists" whose policies supported the multiple and sustainable use of forest resources, both for industry and recreation. But another simultaneous movement was afoot during Oldenburg's lifetime, one that reflected the philosophies of naturalist John Muir (among others), who called for the *preservation* of wilderness, whereby humans were to leave no trace of their presence.

While the two movements were often at odds, and while preservation in its purest form came too late for many areas that had already seen the effects of human use, the *idea* of preservation was a major factor in the creation of state and national parks throughout the country. The Oldenburg family visited one of the early results of the wilderness preservation movement, Yellowstone (the world's first national park), in 1906, and had opportunities to visit many other sites of natural interest during travels throughout the United States and abroad.

Clearly, Oldenburg's attachment to and appreciation for the recreational opportunities of northern Minnesota's forests seemed to nudge him toward some reconciliation of these two perspectives.

Reflecting this inclination, Oldenburg strived to make outdoor recreational opportunities available to others by setting aside land. As early as 1891, under Oldenburg's tenure as village council president, the council noted the need to thank people involved with improving grounds that were to be used as a park. While brief references to local baseball games suggest that some space was indeed maintained for public recreation in the village, the existence of a "park" was not otherwise acknowledged until July of 1907, when the *Vidette* devoted a full-length column to the following dreamy suggestions:

*Comparatively few people know that the building of a mammoth dam across the St. Louis has transformed the large island up the river into numerous islands, all of which are perfect retreats for those who wish to spend a day or afternoon in solid comfort in one of the most picturesque spots in the northwest...would it not be well that the hand of man add a little to what we already have and clear up a park in some convenient corner on the banks of beautiful Lake Carlton? .... No village...is comfortably complete without a public romping ground...The sum of human health and happiness is greatly augmented by pleasure resorts, and to those persons confined throughout the week to desk and office slavery the proximity of a pleasure park is hailed as a blessing. Escape into the verdant freshness of a cool sylvan retreat means new strength and vigor to old and young. A spacious park affords a playground for children, an athletic field for all manner of sports and a recreation spot for the general public... A beautiful green park, stately trees, an aquarium and an aviary with a cockatoo or two, merry-go-rounds, pink lemonade and*

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*popcorn would make Carlton less dreary and desolate on warm Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. Green grass is as much enjoyed by the human race as by cows and sheep, even if we do not eat it with so much relish...*<sup>60</sup>

Ultimately, Henry Oldenburg received credit for the park idea, but with such poetic language, it is not unreasonable to surmise that the inspiration for the park may have come, at least in part, from the Oldenburg women, wife Mary and daughter Margaret. Women and women's clubs were significant activists in the development of both "cities beautiful" and in the wilderness preservation and parks movement throughout the United States, with efforts in Minnesota promoted by the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs as early as 1900. The Clubs' membership (also touted as the "Brainy Women of Minnesota") was comprised largely of well-educated upper and middle-class women, often wives of prominent state leaders, and Mary Oldenburg's activities with various clubs were often reported in the *Vidette*.<sup>61</sup>

No matter the inspiration, the argument presented in the paper was no argument at all, but actually the persuasive announcement of a done deal. A buried paragraph in the same article noted, without distinguishing between the St. Louis River Water Power Company and its successor, the Great Northern:

*We have it upon good authority that the Great Northern Water Power Company will meet this proposition... with a tract of lands to be used for park purposes...*

The good authority was undoubtedly Oldenburg, who had represented Cooke's St. Louis River Water Power Company in 1903 on a real estate tax issue.<sup>62</sup> He was the man who would know which lands were available. He was also an expert in transferring land ownership and resolving related tax burdens.

A surveyor arrived within a week. But it wasn't until six years later, in 1909, that the park was officially established as a ten-acre plot "north of the Catholic church." The newspaper noted:

*We should all feel very thankful to the St. Louis River Water Power Co. for their generosity in granting us the land and to Mr. Oldenburg in working so hard to secure it.*<sup>63</sup>

The village minutes honored Jay Cooke in particular, with a resolution stating:

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<sup>60</sup> *Vidette*, July 6, 1907.

<sup>61</sup> Brady, Tim. "The Real Story of the Chippewa National Forest." *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*. Nov.-Dec. 2004. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteer/novdec04/chippewanf.html>. Accessed 25 July 2006. Another major effort of the clubs was the creation of libraries, in which both Oldenburg women were active.

<sup>62</sup> *Vidette*, March 1903.

<sup>63</sup> *Vidette*, July 10, 1909.

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*And be it further resolved that in recognition of the splendid life and service of Jay Cooke and his great faith in this part of the country and its future and his love for its beautiful rugged scenery that said tract of land so long as the same is used for a park and playground be known and designated as the Jay Cooke Park and Playground...<sup>64</sup>*

The town quickly established a park commission, headed by Oldenburg, and donations were solicited for park fund, with the inducement-cum-threat that the names and amounts of each donor would be published. The park land was cleared through the efforts of local citizens, and the paper did make good on its threat, noting \$10.00 donations from prominent local citizens, and an additional donation of \$5.00 from either Mary or Margaret Oldenburg, the only woman noted in the effort.<sup>65</sup> While cockatoos and aquariums were not in evidence, the park was home to baseball games for many years afterward. This land later became the site of a ca. 1980 high school addition and other school outbuildings. A small public playground is still located on the far side of the parcel.

For those familiar with Minnesota state parks, it is obvious from the description that this “Jay Cooke Park” was not the state park of the same name. But it seems to have established a precedent for the Cooke interests, and for Oldenburg. Several other pieces were put into place, largely guided by Oldenburg’s efforts, which would lead to the state park.

One of those next steps was Oldenburg’s 1910 support for the revival of a “Commercial Club” in Carlton. The club was devoted to promoting the economic well being of the town through all manner of efforts. One of these efforts included the establishment of an “experimental forest farm,” which Oldenburg promoted through a letter in the *Vidette*. The farm would serve as a school and would test methods of the scientific forestry touted by Pinchot, experimenting with new types of lumber and fire prevention efforts. The idea that the forest industry would benefit from experimentation was, as noted above, an acknowledgement of the lumber industry’s changing climate, and suggests foresight and collaboration on the part of Oldenburg and the Weyerhaeusers. The Weyerhaeusers were major donors to the farm and even agreed to leave portions of their donated land uncut for the sake of experimentation. Land was deeded to the University of Minnesota and operates today as the university’s Cloquet Forestry Center.<sup>66</sup>

As Oldenburg knew, the forestry station would bring other benefits to Carlton. Oldenburg’s lobbying efforts not only encompassed the experimental station, but also local road connections from Carlton,

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<sup>64</sup> Carlton Village Council. Minutes, July 26, 1909.

<sup>65</sup> *Vidette*, November 6 and November 20, 1909.

<sup>66</sup> University of Minnesota. *History: Cloquet Forestry Center*. <http://www.cnr.umn.edu/cfc/>. Accessed 20 July 2006.



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with the local paper printing pledge coupons for contributions to the road construction. New roads offered new commerce opportunities – and greater access for tourists as well. And as part of a state government initiative, the experimental station presented opportunities for a wider pool of influential individuals to visit the area – individuals who began to take notice of the spectacular scenery along the St. Louis River east of Oldenburg’s home and the town of Carlton.

The Minnesota Forestry Board recognized the potential of recreation in forests and parks as early as 1912 and began promoting park development throughout the state. The Carlton area was already attracting numerous day-trippers from Duluth, as well as travelers headed for the North Shore of Minnesota, which was becoming increasingly more accessible by steamer, rudimentary wagon roads and the beginnings of a “highway” (although this was not completed until 1926). Travelers drove an ever-increasing number of automobiles from Thomson along a narrow road into the woods along the St. Louis River, parking along the bluff to picnic. The road into the area did not continue, nor was it wide enough to turn around, so picnickers would subsequently have to back out along the narrow, rocky and often muddy stretch, finally retracing their route through Thompson – and, most likely, along Chestnut street in front of Oldenburg’s home. Not surprisingly, then, more roads continued to be a theme for Oldenburg, and news articles reported that Commercial Club efforts began focusing on a “river highway” that traveled along the “dalles of the St. Louis” on its route between the Twin Cities and Duluth. The benefits to area tourism were touted. An initial concern was that of the cost to Carlton County, but the *Vidette* assured its readers “There are men and interests in Carlton county willing to donate a highway along this route, as we are informed.”<sup>67</sup> The idea of the highway received additional support from Leonidas Merritt, an influential Duluth mine owner, in a front-page letter to the local paper.

By 1915, the talk of highways and potential donors had solidified into something much larger along this route – the idea of a state park, to be named after Jay Cooke, whose heirs agreed to donate lands along the St. Louis. (While the established parks of Itasca and Interstate were considered “state parks,” no defined state park system existed at this time.) Again, the idea, when first publicized in the *Vidette*, seems to have been a “done deal,” with local senators and representatives, as well as prominent local citizens, appearing before the state legislative appropriations committee.<sup>68</sup> The degree to which this concept was truly new, or simply a further development of the early Jay Cooke Park negotiated by Oldenburg is unclear, but it is logical to surmise a connection, especially in light of Oldenburg’s involvement as the park plan kicked into high gear.

<sup>67</sup> *Vidette*, January 17, 1913.

<sup>68</sup> *Vidette*, March 19, 1915.

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Carlton County received a legislative appropriation, with \$15,000 to be used for land acquisition. The *Vidette*, however, noted that the citizens of Carlton County were not interested in acquiring additional lands during the first two years of the appropriation, preferring instead that improvements be made to the existing situation along the river.<sup>69</sup>

Cooke's St. Louis River Water Power Company ultimately transferred 2,350 acres, which were encumbered by back taxes, to the state. Unnamed local businessmen from Duluth, Carlton and Cloquet raised funds to cover this debt, and Oldenburg himself filed the deed for the park land when cleared of the back taxes in October of 1915. As the park developed, Weyerhaeusers' Northwest Paper Company donated picnic tables and brick fireplaces for the park.<sup>70</sup> Oldenburg was appointed to the five-man committee appointed by the Governor to purchase additional land for the park, which resulted in an additional 850 acres, and a gift from Alfred Merritt of Duluth of 40 acres.<sup>71</sup> Oldenburg was also chair of the subsequent Jay Cooke State Park Commission, which supervised all aspects of the park's maintenance and development for several years in the early 1920s.

It is in the development of the park that Oldenburg seemed to operate fully out of his own interests, rather than out of a desire to promote Weyerhaeuser business. The extent of Oldenburg's personal involvement with the park can be seen in his enthusiastic approach to providing tours to influential visitors throughout the park's developmental period, including numerous senators and even Governor Winfield Scott Hammond, who stayed at the Oldenburg home and was escorted on a six-mile hike along the river.<sup>72</sup> In 1916, the University of Minnesota regents arrived with the intention of visiting the forestry station, but...

*When H. Oldenburg and Senator Vibert learned that the party was in Duluth they were immediately fired with ambition to have them visit the State Park... Acting with their usual promptness they secured a number of automobiles and drove to Duluth to bring the party thru the county... The Board of Regents has no control over the state parks, but... they enjoyed the outing and may be depended upon to... lend their influences to [the park's] full development in the future.<sup>73</sup>*

<sup>69</sup> *Vidette*, April 30, 1915.

<sup>70</sup> "Jay Cooke State Park." Mimeographed mss., Parks Department files, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

<sup>71</sup> Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. *Park Info: Jay Cooke State Park*. 2006, [http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state\\_parks/jay\\_cooke/narrative.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/jay_cooke/narrative.html). Accessed 5 July 2006. Additional land for the park was purchased in 1945, resulting in a total of 8818 acres.

<sup>72</sup> "Governor visits Carlton." *Vidette*, October 21, 1915.

<sup>73</sup> *Vidette*, July 14, 1916. Senator Fred Vibert was the publisher of the Cloquet newspaper and was involved in other significant Minnesota conservation and preservation efforts.

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In December, local and state officials were guided through the area by Mrs. Oldenburg, who was pressed into service and gave the visitors “the best possible impression of Minnesota’s newly discovered big beauty spot” after her husband “was unexpectedly called east.”<sup>74</sup> During WWI, a parks report stated:

*...no one was in local charge of the park and funds were not made available. However, the park road and trails were well kept up thru the personal interest of Mr. Henry Oldenburg of Carlton.*<sup>75</sup>

The public’s measure of Oldenburg’s involvement in park development is perhaps best judged by a memorial in Jay Cooke State Park. The possibility of an Oldenburg monument seems to have been discussed within a few years after his death in 1926. A news article from 1929 noted that such a memorial would be placed ...

*...in all probability...in or at one of the main entrances to Jay Cooke park... with a bronze tablet...placed so it may be easily seen from some distance, and so become one of the points of attraction for those going to the park.*<sup>76</sup>

Ultimately, the monument was placed near the stunning St. Louis river overlook at the now-eponymous Oldenburg Point in the park, accessible off of “Oldenburg Parkway,” the road which wends through the park from Carlton to Fond du Lac. While plaques honoring others involved with the park’s development are placed at stations around a low brick retaining wall, Oldenburg is memorialized by a massive boulder placed upright on a natural stone base, set back in its own space on the approach to the overlook. An embedded bronze plaque notes the purpose of the monument:

*A tribute by the people of Carlton County to the memory of Henry Oldenburg 1858-1926 whose loyalty and love for this North Country made possible Jay Cooke Park.*

**OLDENBURG’S RECREATIONAL LEGACY**

An account of Henry Oldenburg cannot be complete without mention of a lighter aspect of his appreciation for northern Minnesota’s environment. As documented largely in jocular observations in the local newspaper, Oldenburg embraced what would eventually be known as “outdoor recreation” — that is, the pursuit of outdoor ventures as a leisure activity.

The first of these outdoor ventures reflects a national craze in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century – bicycling. By 1891, the newspaper noted that both Henry and Mary Oldenburg owned “safety bicycles.” This newfangled bicycle design, first introduced in 1885, represented a huge advancement over previous bicycle models,

<sup>74</sup> *Vidette*, December 8, 1916.

<sup>75</sup> Jay Cooke mss., DNR.

<sup>76</sup> *Vidette*, August 8, 1929.

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with two rubber tires of equal size and chain drive, much like contemporary models. The design made the bike safer than those with tires of unequal sizes, and allowed women to ride with their voluminous skirts without exposing their legs. One account of bicycle history notes that prior to widespread mass production of this design in 1893, these models cost about \$150 each, meaning a very high level of investment in this form of recreation on the part of the Oldenburgs.<sup>77</sup>

The novelty attracted regular mention in the local press as Oldenburg made good use of his investment, with a report that he planned to “flit” between his home on Chub Lake and town on his bicycle during the summer. In 1893, the paper noted that Oldenburg proposed “to carry his babe about with him on his bicycle this spring...”<sup>78</sup> And in 1895, Oldenburg had apparently infected others with his enthusiasm, with the *Cloquet Pine Knot* reporting:

*Messrs. Oldenburg, Chapin and Martin, Misses Scott, Paine and Martin were in Cloquet Monday on business and pleasure. All returned at the cool of the eve on their bicycles.*<sup>79</sup>

When bicycling was not an option in the winter, the Oldenburgs enjoyed cross-country skiing. While loggers and others used skis to access remote areas out of necessity in this era, the Oldenburgs used them for pleasure, resulting in this colorful 1898 outing:

*Wednesday morning Mr. and Mrs. Oldenburg, F. V. Weisenburg and H. B. Ayres boarded the Cloquet train with their ski's [sic] under their arms and a few lumps of sugar, a pinch of tea, a tin pail or two, some sandwiches, together with a few other distructable and indestructible [sic] articles hid away in their numerous pockets. Mrs. Oldenburg was armed with her Kodak in anticipation of getting a “shot” at some wild beast that might, in an inadvertent moment, attack them. After a short visit in Cloquet, they boarded their ski's [sic] and started down the St. Louis river for home. They also boarded with Chef Ayres for one meal, he getting up a very nice dinner*

<sup>77</sup> Hendrick, David. *The Possibility of Mobility*. University of Virginia: American Studies Program, 2002. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~UG02/hendrick/reaction.html>. Accessed 20 July 2006. In today's dollars, the bicycle would have cost \$2941. One of Oldenburg's obituaries noted that he was “unusually” successful “from a material point of view,” and the bicycles were not the only new gadgets Oldenburg acquired. According to the *Vidette* of February 21, 1891:

*Mr. Oldenburg has a new piece of office apparatus that eclipses anything visible in these parts. It is a latest improved caligraph, or typewriter, that will print twenty copies at one time and contains all the characters, fractions and abbreviations known to commercial orthography. A handsome folding desk in combined with the caligraph, and the whole cost is \$130.*

The family also had a car by 1915.

<sup>78</sup> *Vidette*, March 25, 1893.

<sup>79</sup> *Pine Knot*, August 17, 1895.

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*which was eaten on [a] little island with ice bound shore and great natural beauty... [T]hey arrived home late in the afternoon somewhat fatigued but radiant...<sup>80</sup>*

Skiing apparently remained a popular activity, as the *Vidette* reported sixteen years later that Oldenburg and a party of friends skied from Scanlon to Carlton, finishing their jaunt with dinner at the Oldenburg home. "They enjoyed the trip very much as the fresh fall of snow made it just right and the weather was fine."<sup>81</sup> And in 1900, Oldenburg constructed a toboggan slide "among the ledges at the rear of his residence."<sup>82</sup> Even ice skating was in Oldenburg's recreational purview, and the paper took notice when he fell through the ice while skating on Lake Carlton on Thanksgiving Day in 1907, resulting in "a narrow escape from drowning."

But perhaps Oldenburg's greatest recreational legacy was the result of activities he undertook with his daughter, Margaret, who embraced her family's adventurousness.

It is clear that Margaret had a privileged upbringing that included extensive family travels (including the 1893 World's Fair and the West Indies in 1913) and socializing in a wide circle of influential acquaintances. Margaret Oldenburg's childhood, while undoubtedly affected by the death of her brother Carl when she was nine, also seems to have had ideal moments. Her neighbor reminisced in a letter ca. 1968:

*I would have liked to go up in the attic [of your house], before it was sold. We had so many nice days up there as children – I remember the Ping Pong table so well. Still have a cup and saucer from one of your parties.<sup>83</sup>*

A small file of Margaret Oldenburg's papers held by the University of Minnesota contains a few photos captioned in Margaret's handwriting, one noting that she had 27 dolls. Another shows a rock ledge near the St. Louis River, with the notation to a friend suggesting she had frequently clambered about: "We had 5 such rock ledges in our yard — so you needn't worry about me on rocks."<sup>84</sup>

One of the greatest influences on Margaret was a canoe trip into the northern boundary waters with her father and another Carlton father-daughter team in 1911 after her high school graduation. The area had begun attracting attention through the writings of Minnesota conservationist Ernest Oberholzer, who had

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<sup>80</sup> *Pine Knot*, February 19, 1898.

<sup>81</sup> *Vidette*, March 6, 1914.

<sup>82</sup> *Vidette*, Feb. 21, 1900.

<sup>83</sup> Della Sheils Smith to Margaret Oldenburg, undated letter. Margaret Oldenburg papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

<sup>84</sup> Margaret Oldenburg papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

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created one of the first written descriptions of canoe routes in this area in 1909. The newspaper reported on the Oldenburg's "Novel Trip":

*Henry Oldenburg and daughter, Miss Margaret and William Sheils and daughter, Miss Della, left on Tuesday for an extended outing. They will go by rail to International Falls, and from there they will embark on a 200-mile trip up into Canada, making the trip with canoes the entire way. They are expected to be gone about ten days.*

The trip ended in Rainy Lake (where Oberholzer would soon take up residence), and a photograph from the trip shows a grinning Margaret perched on rock outcropping along a lake shore. Margaret and her father took annual trips for the next several years. On one route in 1913, the Oldenburgs left Cloquet for Tower, going to Warroad by canoe, whereby "the entire route to be made on water is about 250 miles."<sup>85</sup> A trip in 1915 required travel by boat from Duluth to Grand Marais, a twenty-five mile "hike with canoes and baggage to the Rainy river" (presumably on the Grand Portage), where they paddled to Port Arthur and return home by steamer.

*The trip is an interesting one, in which the pleasures of the outing are mixed plentifully with lots of hard work and an element of danger that adds spice and zest to the trip.*<sup>86</sup>

Margaret completed studies at Vassar in 1915 and returned to Minnesota, teaching in several northern Minnesota mining towns, as well as in Jordan and Northfield, through 1928. In 1929 she earned a B.S. in Library Science from the University of Minnesota, and worked for the next decade as an archivist at the University. After her father died in 1926, several properties in Carlton County were held for her in a trust until 1930, when her mother died. In 1939, at age 47, Margaret's Oldenburg adventurousness and early outdoor influences came to the fore, apparently bolstered by economic means and a recent reading of *Vagabond Voyaging* by Laurence Allen Nixon. She left her job at the University and rented a home in Grand Marais. As Margaret set up in her cabin, she noted:

*I stopp[ed] in a grocery store for soap to use in getting settled. The owner remembered my father and me from our canoe trip days, and figuratively gave me the key to the town...*

After the first year, Margaret spent little time in Grand Marais, as she began traveling extensively in the Arctic, gathering specimens for the University's botany department.<sup>87</sup>

Her photographs and "annual reports" from this era show that she was a serious self-taught botanist and adventurous traveler, with exhaustive Latin lists of collected plants, and ethnographic-style photos and commentary on her interaction with Arctic residents. In 1948, she was one of three people in a plane reported missing in the Arctic Circle, to be discovered a day later by another pilot. Margaret also

<sup>85</sup> *Vidette*, August 22, 1913.

<sup>86</sup> *Vidette*, August 13, 1915.

<sup>87</sup> Margaret Oldenburg papers, University of Minnesota Archives.

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traveled to Europe, South America, the Canary Islands, Thailand, Mauritius, China and Japan. She eventually moved to an apartment in St. Paul, where she died in 1972 at the age of 80. Undoubtedly considered an unusual woman in her era and by the citizens of Carlton County, an obituary writer for the Cloquet newspaper, while extolling her "full and colorful life," also felt compelled to note that she never married and that:

*[Her brother's death] was a severe blow to her father, and during Margaret's growing-up days her father more or less made her into the son he had lost.<sup>88</sup>*

**THE END OF THE OLDENBURG ERA**

In the final decade of his life, Henry Oldenburg continued to be fully engaged in his employment and with the fortunes of Carlton. He became a director of the First National Bank of Carlton and was a popular speaker at innumerable fairs, graduations and other ceremonies. He founded the Carlton County bar association, and he continually pressed for town improvements, ranging from a water works to beautification efforts. In 1923, Henry and Mary traveled to England and France. Oldenburg also became deeply involved in compiling a history of the area, and was elected president of the local "Old Settlers Association."

Henry Oldenburg died in his sleep while on a trip with his wife in Charleston, South Carolina. His body was brought to the home on Chestnut Street "by special funeral car" and hundreds were reported to have visited as he lay in state, the room overflowing with flowers. Flags were flown at half-mast in Carlton. His funeral was held in two churches simultaneously, the Carlton Presbyterian Church and the Carlton Swedish Lutheran Church, both filled to capacity, with Presbyterian, Lutheran and Episcopalian clergy officiating.

Upon his death, a memorial statement in honor of Oldenburg was published in the *Vidette*, offered by the St. Louis County Historical Society, with which he had been deeply involved. The writer offered a biographical account that clearly reflects how Oldenburg viewed the natural world as a conservationist of his era:

*He was lover of the outdoors and, though not a nimrod, enjoyed the woods, the forests, the lakes and streams with a friendly zest altogether unusual. He sometimes went, with a few intimate friends, for a short vacation in the forests to visit with nature and to observe, rather than kill, the birds, the animals and the fish. That was his way. But he had no fault to find with those whose ideas of woodcraft differed from his own. This departed friend*

<sup>88</sup> *Pine Knot*, September 7, 1972.

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*thought the world was big enough for all sorts of people, no matter how divergent their thoughts and conduct.*<sup>89</sup>

Margaret Oldenburg sold her childhood home to Alfred and Rosina Lee in 1931, a year after the death of her mother. Alfred Lee served as county sheriff and in various municipal positions, and owned a substantial lumber yard in Carlton. During this time period the home and grounds did not receive the detailed attention they had under the Oldenburgs' ownership. The property was restored and has been maintained with painstaking effort and attention to historic detail by the property's third and current owners, Leslie and Helen Swanson, who purchased the property in 1968. In a letter to Margaret Oldenburg, Della Sheils Smith noted after the 1968 sale of the home: "The folks who purchased your old home are very fine folks and will do a lot to fixing (sic) the place up and keeping it nice..."<sup>90</sup>

The significance of Henry Oldenburg's contributions to Carlton County history lies in the multiplicity of his endeavors, and the quality with which he fulfilled his commitments. His activities created a complex web of relationships and accomplishments, and examination of his life reveals a man of extraordinary energy and engagement.

Today the Henry C. Oldenburg home stands as an excellent representation of Henry Oldenburg's status as a community leader and conservationist, and this notable property continues to reflect his appreciation for the unique beauty of northeastern Minnesota.

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<sup>89</sup> *Vidette*, November 11, 1926. From the files of the Carlton County Historical Society.

<sup>90</sup> Letter from Della Sheils Smith to Margaret Oldenburg, ca. 1970. Margaret Oldenburg papers.



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**Verbal Boundary Description**

All of Block Five (5); Lots Eight (8), Nine (9), and Ten (10) in block Six (6) and that portion of vacated North Sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) Street lying between Lot Ten (10) in block Six (6) and Lot One (1) in block Five (5); Outlot "C" and East 142 feet of Outlot "B" all in Baumann's Addition to N.P. Junction, now Village of Carlton, according to the recorded plat thereof, and so much of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter (NE 1/4 of NE 1/4 of NW 1/4) of Section Seven (7), Township Forty-Eight (48) North, of Range Sixteen (16) West of the 4<sup>th</sup> P.M. as lies north of the right-of-way of the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad, now Northern Pacific Railroad, as now constructed through and across said section.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes that parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

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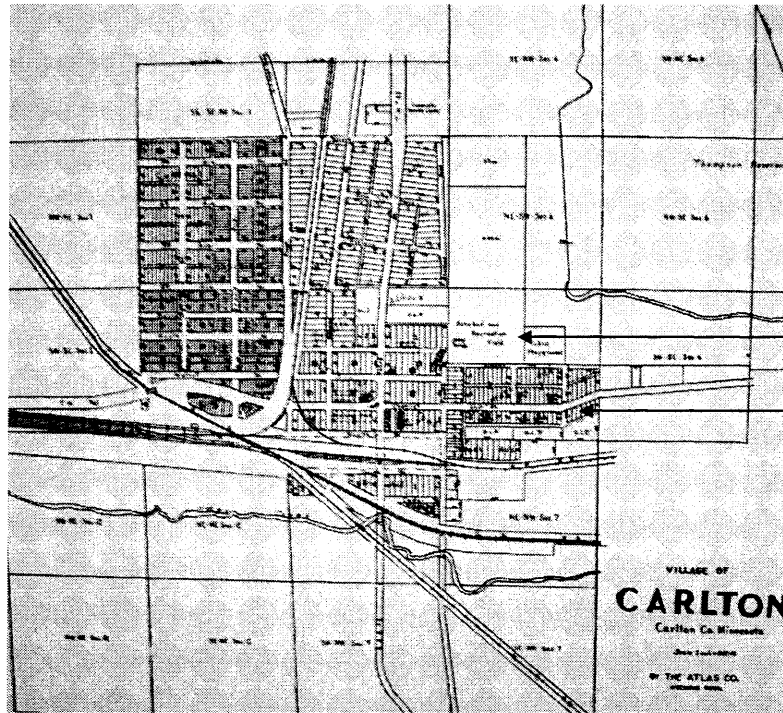
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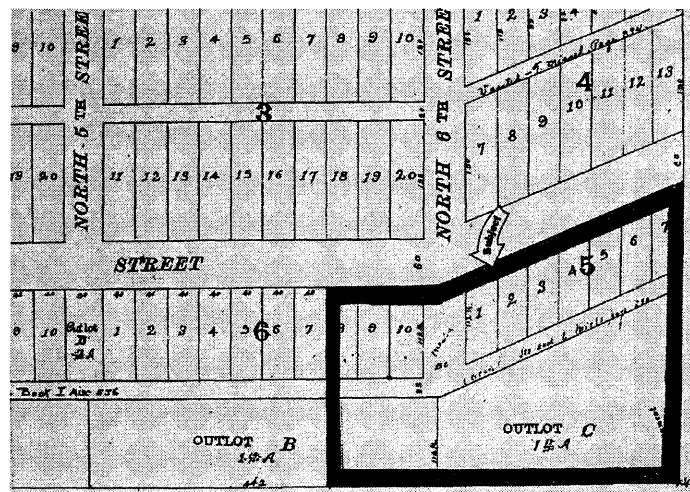
Right: "Village of  
Carlton. Carlton  
Co. Minnesota."  
From: *The Official  
Atlas of Carlton  
County, 1959*. The  
Atlas Company,  
Wyoming,  
Minnesota.



First "Jay Cooke Park"

Oldenburg home

Right: Plat map showing general  
boundaries of Oldenburg property.  
Does not include 2.5-acre parcel  
adjacent to and south of Outlot C.  
From: "Baumann's Addition to  
N.P. Junction, Carlton County,  
Minn." 1888. Henry Oldenburg  
notarized the plat registration. The  
alleyway through the property was  
vacated in 1909, and the end of  
North 6<sup>th</sup> Street approximately at  
the time of the original 1894  
purchase.



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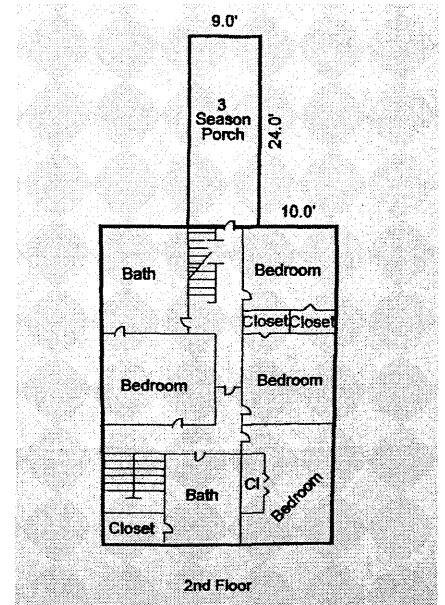
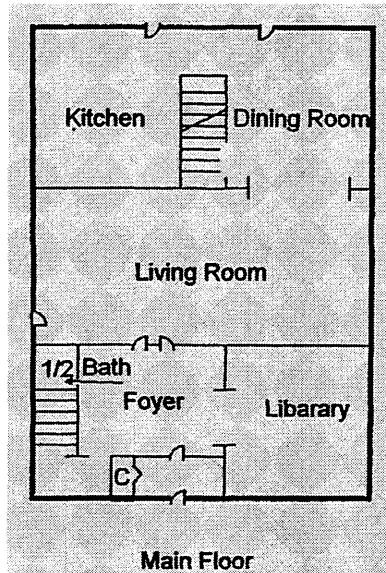
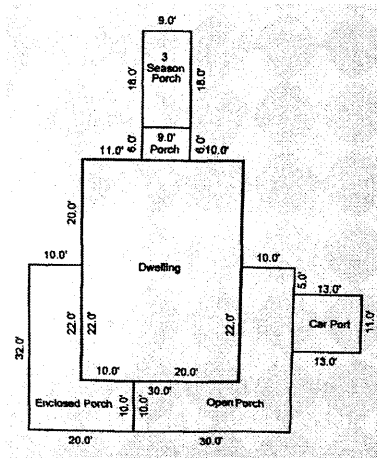
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Below: Measured drawing and current floor plans of the Oldenburg home. (*Illustrations courtesy of Twin Ports Appraisals, Duluth, Minnesota.*)



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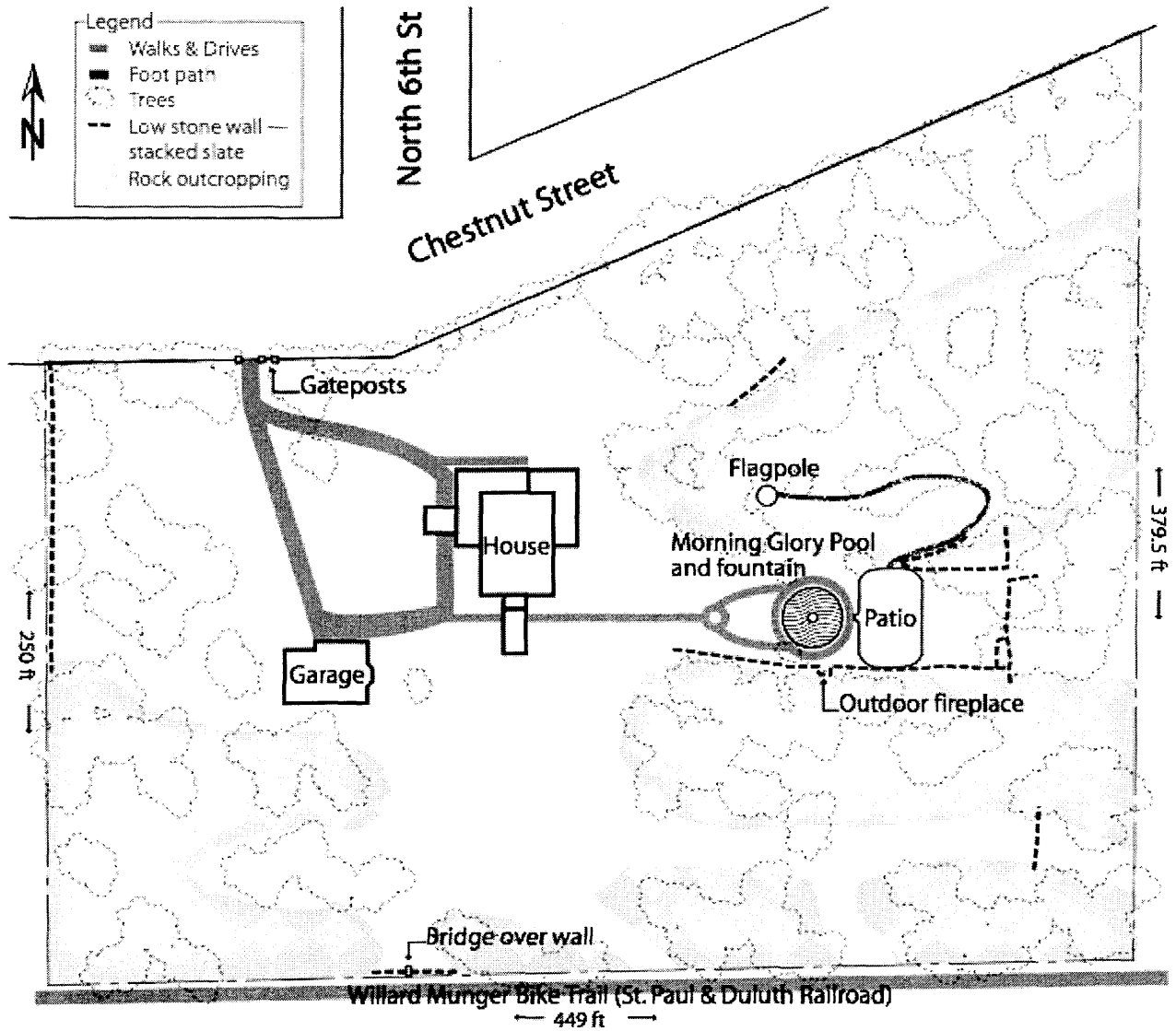
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Oldenburg house and grounds, not including 2.5-acre southeast parcel (across bike trail). Not to scale.



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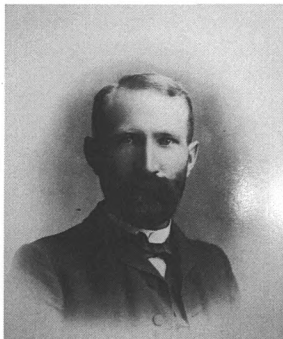
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Left: A young Henry Oldenburg (ca. 1890).  
*(Photo courtesy of the Carlton County  
Historical Society.)*

Below: These photographs depict the Oldenburg home (and possibly Henry Oldenburg) sometime between the home's completion in January 1895, and the addition of a three-sided porch in the spring of 1898. In June 1901, the gabled one-story addition at the rear of the home was removed and a full two-story extension was added, altering the roofline and allowing for the addition of a rear dormer. Note the virtually clear-cut surroundings, and the muddy condition of Chestnut Street (looking east) in the photo at right. *(Photos courtesy of Leslie and Helen Swanson.)*



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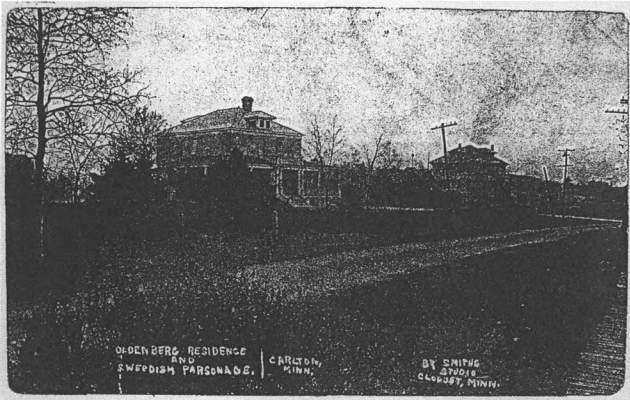
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Oldenburg home facing east. (Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.)



Oldenburg home facing west. (Courtesy of the Carlton County Historical Society.)

Smith's Studio of Cloquet took these photos between 1908, when Swedish Parsonage in the lower picture was constructed, and about 1915. The 1901 construction at the rear of the house is evident in both photos.



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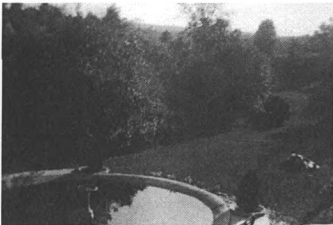
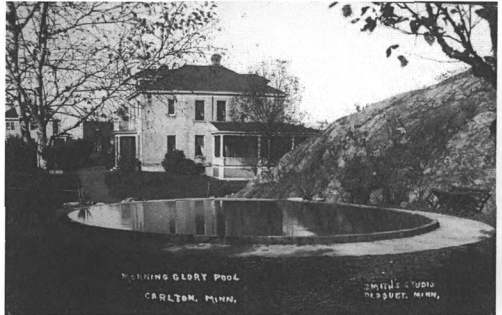
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Right: This illustration by Smith's Studio is on a postcard with a 1914 postmark. Although the *Vidette* reported the Oldenburg was planning a fountain as early as 1895, it also mentions a new "artificial pond" supplied by an electric pump in 1903. Contractor E.E. Durkee signed the pool's cement surround in 1911. (Courtesy of the Carlton County Historical Society.)



Left: This undated photograph, facing southwest, depicts the Morning Glory Pool's evolution, with the addition of a small fountain. (Courtesy of Leslie and Helen Swanson.)

Right: This photograph was taken before 1968, and shows relatively mature trees and the addition of a statue centered on the approach to the Morning Glory Pool. (Courtesy of Leslie and Helen Swanson.)



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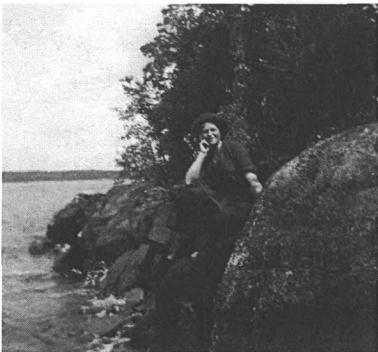
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Above: Margaret, Carl, “Grandmother Oldenburg” (Henry’s mother, Margarethe Oldenburg), and one of Margaret’s 27 dolls sat for this picture, ca. 1899. Margaret noted on the back: “The stockings and my doll were the prides of my life just then – hence the pose!”

Above: Margaret poses with her “dressiest” doll (“black lace over yellow and hat to match...”), ca. 1900, probably in the Oldenburg yard; note the stone outcropping in the background and the rustic stickwork bench. *(Photos above from the Margaret Oldenburg papers, courtesy of the University of Minnesota Archives.)*



Above: Margaret on her first canoe trip with her father, 1911. *(Courtesy of the University of Minnesota Archives.)*

Left: This graduation photo of Margaret Oldenburg has a handwritten note dating it to 1921, but was most likely taken in 1915 upon her graduation from Vassar College. *(Courtesy of the Carlton County Historical Society.)*

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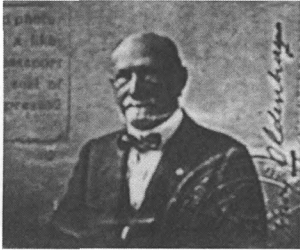
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Above: Passport photos from 1922 depict Henry and Margaret Oldenburg at ages 65 and 61, respectively. (Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.)



Left: A monument commemorating Henry Oldenburg's contribution to the creation of Jay Cooke State Park stands on at Oldenburg Point, a park overlook with sweeping vistas of the St. Louis River Valley. The inset tablet reads: *A tribute by the people of Carlton County to the memory of Henry Oldenburg 1858 -1926 whose loyalty and love for this North Country made possible Jay Cooke Park.*

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Index to Photographs

All photos depict resources in the Henry C. Oldenburg House nomination, Carlton, Carlton County, Minnesota. Carmen Tschofen photographed the resources in May 2006. The negatives are in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Boulevard West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102.

Entry, gateposts, driveway and garage  
Looking south  
Photo #1 (014981-2)

North (principal) and west façades of the house  
Looking southeast  
Photo #2 (014981-5)

North (principal) and partial east facades of house  
Looking southwest  
Photo #3 (014981-7)

South façade of the house  
Looking north  
Photo #4 (014981-10)

North and west façades of the garage  
Looking east, northeast  
Photo #5 (014981-13)

Raised limestone slab between sleeping porch columns  
Looking north  
Photo #6 (014981-23)

Approach to Morning Glory Pool  
Looking east  
Photo #7 (014981-17)

Morning Glory Pool  
Looking north  
Photo #8 (014981-18)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Oldenburg, Henry C., House

Name of property

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Morning Glory Pool inscription and stonework

Looking west

Photo #9 (014981-20)

Morning Glory Pool, terrace and clearing

Looking west

Photo #10 (014981-19)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of property  
Oldenburg, Henry C., House

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Oldenburg house and grounds, not including 2.5-acre southeast parcel (across bike trail). Not to scale.

