
 * * * **Ravinia** * * *

The Improvement society meeting Monday night was given up to a discussion of the annexation question. Mr. Coe spoke of the disadvantage of being on the outskirts of a city and the higher taxes that would have to be paid without compensating benefits. He presented his side of the case in a convincing manner. Mr. Hill took the affirmative. President Boerner gave the following, which was supposed to be a clipping from the SHERIDAN ROAD NEWS-LETTER of April 10, 1949.

"The sale of a piece of land at the corner of the Sheridan drive and the Midway, a street called in olden times, Roger Williams avenue, to his lordship the Count of Salisbury, at the price of \$5,000 a front foot, places the last piece of land down there into the hands of the lord. They used to call the place Ravinia on account of the many ravines at that time running through the territory. Fifty years ago acres sold in Ravinia for less than \$500. The place was occupied by a lot of easy-going, sleepy people, who thought that sunshine and fresh air in the forest were worth more than money. A number of Chicago capitalists, attracted by the low price, bought all the land they could and in order to then raise the price proposed to annex to Highland Park, they wanted the Park people to help them make money. For their end they needed the signatures of a majority of the voters of Ravinia. To obtain them they soon found people who could be hired for the job. A number of men invaded the place, equipped with paper and pen and a bottle of ink and a larger bottle that contained something that looked like—gingerale. The agents were very successful, some people signed because they would show their ability to write, others signed because they were promised lower taxes.

Ravinia was annexed, small property owners of Highland Park lost their holdings, being unable to stand the assessments. Streets were paved, cement sidewalks laid. But in the meantime a great change had taken

place in the world of trade and industry. The great middle class, the small trader and manufacturer had disappeared, they had been devoured by the great fishes, the trusts and department stores. The working men had changed into plebeians. They had lost their right to vote, not taking care of that franchise. They had sold out for a mess of beans. Ravinia, with all modern improvements, had no inhabitants. The place was becoming a wilderness, worse than after the panic of 1873. Then it happened that the city of Chicago needed a dumping place for tin cans and other refuse that filled its streets and alleys. Refuse matter was carted out to fill up the ravines. Ravinia was made into a sort of Coney Island affair. At that time Roger Williams avenue became the midway. Where now are the streets of Cairo used to be Brother Moody's property. The beauty show is on the lot where the church used to stand, the school house is occupied by the cannibal islanders. The bluffs overlooking the lake are adorned with the statues of Russell Sage, Yerkes and other Knights of the Golden Calf.

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