

The National Cyclopedia of American Biography

*L. Philip Sewoy*

I recall Camp Dan Beard. It was on the river, just in from Portwine Rd. and about half a mile north of Dundee Rd. When I was about 13, I was hiking up along the river with some other boys from Wheeling when we heard someone chopping. We went into the woods and saw a man cutting logs to build a cabin. He was from Oak Park, a Scoutmaster or executive, and he told us their troop was going to have a camp up there along the river.

It is a very clear memory. Camp Dan Beard was never a part of Wheeling Council. Our camp, for the Northwest Council, was Namacogan in Northern Wisconsin. Yet we were welcome to come over to Dan Beard and camp, though they couldn't always offer us the use of the cabins. We always felt we could use the camp, though it was not official for us.

At over-nights when I was Scoutmaster, we played a game we loved called "Capture the Lantern." In those days lanterns were common. At the bottom was a little tank of kerosene, and after you lighted the wick you put the glass chimney down to protect the flame from the breeze. Every wagon had one, and we used one when we had to go out to the toilet at night. We'd swing it, and it showed real grotesque shadows and it was quite an eerie thing.

At any rate, the game involved a huge field, with a lantern hidden at each end. Each of the two teams set out to capture the other's lantern and take it back to its own goal. There were a couple of guys who guarded the lantern, see, and the others went out into the field to intercept members of the other team. In the dark, you had to listen. If you got near an opponent and you tagged him and held him for a count of three, then he was your prisoner. You could take him back and if you captured all the other team, of course your lantern was safe. When the kids play it in the daytime, they call it "Capture the Flag," but this was in the dead of night, you know, and we played in a field we knew was infested with rattlesnakes but we never got bitten or even came across one.

Girl Scouting in Wheeling grew out of a Girl Reserves chapter which was lead by Lucile Schneider in the early Twenties. When she found that the Girl Scout organization gave more help and guidance than the Y.W.C.A., the Girl Reserves became the Bluebird Troop in 1925. The Girl Scouts had no suburban council, so the Bluebird Troop was under the Chicago Council. It was at the Council's Leadership Camp at Juniper Knoll that Lucile met Xenia Denoyer, of whom we will hear much more.

Under Lucile's guidance and helped by her sister Adeline, the Girl Scouts worked for the usual badges and particularly the star gazing badge. Astronomy was one of Lucile's many

hobbies, and she built her own planisphere, a device for locating the stars in the sky. The Bluebird Troop met at the new Wheeling School and later at the Community Presbyterian Church which became its sponsor. Mrs. Denoyer came on the scene in 1930. Girl Scouting over the years is reported by Dorothy Flentge who appears in a 1927 troop picture, Christine Dolgopol, whose Girl Scout career bridged a change in uniforms in the mid-Fifties, and Hope McGlothlin, a local writer who flew up from the Brownies in September, 1962.

Chris: Lucile Schneider was one of our Girl Scout leaders, along with Mrs. Denoyer. The Denoyers had property which is now part of Chelsea Cove. They had a big tract of land there, with a big cabin of log and stone.

Mrs. Denoyer's husband was a map maker, and they used to go around the world and collect stones along the way. They had a big fireplace made up of these gorgeous stones from all over. We used to go camping there twice a year, in the spring or early summer and in the fall. We would sleep in tents and in this big cabin and we learned all about trees. Mrs. Denoyer had a ginkgo biloba tree in the yard. We learned about birds and plants, too.



IN THE MID-TWENTIES Bluebird Troop Girl Scouts hiked down to Dam No. 2 at Foundry Rd. Standing are Florence Reeb, Leader Lucile Schneider, Jean Rhys and Edna Reeb; seated are Emma Hoffman, Mae Hoffman, Helen Radke and Edna Hoffman.



GIRL SCOUT TROOP 1, started by Lucile Schneider in the '20s.

This was Girl Scout Troop No. 1. We used to be in the Memorial Day parade every year. At that time the Memorial Day parade was really a big one down Milwaukee Ave. Barbara Forke and I, I remember, walked down carrying the American flag. This was real serious stuff to kids who were nine and ten years old.

We used to make all kinds of interesting things that Mrs. Denoyer would come up with for us. There was a corn and bacon dish--squaw corn.

I recall the first time I went to the camp. Remember, this was two miles from the heart of old Wheeling, out near what is now the Whippetree area. And here I was, probably ten years old, on my first camping experience. One evening we were taking our little nature walk and I saw my mother and father parked along the road, peeking to see that everything was ok.

Dorothy: That wasn't the first Girl Scout troop. What a gap! I'm seventy years old and Lucile was our Scout leader, too. We would start hiking down to Dam No. 2 in the morning, and it would take us almost all day. Then we stayed down there overnight. . . .

THE NAMES of many families of Old Wheeling appear on the Girl Scout program at right.

GIRL SCOUTS

Investiture  
and  
Tree Planting



WHEELING, ILLINOIS.

at

Denoyer's Cabinsite

Sunday

November 10, 1940

3:00 P.M.

The trees, a memorial to the Wheeling Girl Scouts, are presented by Mr. Ernst Kruse, a Scout father.

Order of service

Assembly - at Cabin.

Scout Processional and Girl Scout Chant (Guests following).

Colors - led by Mrs. Denoyer

Flag raising by the Color Guard, and Pledge of Allegiance.

Song: America

Invocation: Rev. D.C. Morrison, Zion Presbyterian Church.

Presentation of Troop Flag - Miss Lucile Schneider

Pledge to Girl Scout Flag: " I pledge allegiance to the Girl Scout Flag and to the ideals which it represents; to our new Girl Scout Troop of Wheeling, and to the world-wide Sisterhood of Girl Scouts and Guides, with peace, security and joyous adventure for all."

Why We Are Here. - By the leader.

Song by Peggy Kruse - "Trees".

Poem - "Planting a Tree" by Mr. Denoyer.

Planting of Horse Chestnut and Linden Trees, Skokie (High School) Patrol.

Investiture of Scouts: Betsy Dickhoff, Ingrid Nielsen, Betty Okley, Lorraine Schmidt, Margaret Schmidt. Song: Follow The Gleam.

Planting of Norway and Schwedeler Maples by Maple Patrol (6th Grade)

Investiture of Scouts: Jeanette Beck, Helen Laye, Joan Nielsen.

Song: We Would Be True.

Planting of Weeping Willow and White Ash by Eagle Patrol (7th Grade)

Investiture of Scouts: Peggy Kruse, Mary Dittrich, Betty Frank, Barbara Haben, Alice Ortegell, Polly Person. Song: The Ash Grove.

Planting of Mountain Ash and Chinese Elm, Everlasting Patrol (8th Grade)

Investiture of Scouts: Betty June Graff, Elaine Hipp, Hazel Hipp, Selma Kraus, Shirley Wieder. Song: Onward Girl Scouts.

Planting of Pin Oak and Maidenhair trees by Mr. and Mrs. Denoyer and adult sponsors of Scouting.

Dedication of Cutleaf Weeping Birch, and awarding of Second Class Badge to Lois Hanselman, Skokie Patrol.

Prayer for the Growing and Song: "Live, Live, Live"

1. Live, live, live, our fields and woodlands need you.  
Live, live, live, our hopes and blessings speed you.  
Live, live, live, and may the fair gods lead you.
2. Love, love, love, the winds and storms that bend you.  
Love, love, love, and yield though they would rend you.  
Love, love, love, the sun and rains that tend you.  
Grow, grow, grow, till never tree shall shade you.  
Grow, grow, grow, till homage proud is paid you.  
Grow, grow, grow, and climb to Him who made you.

A Warm Welcome Indoors.

Retreat.

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Troop Committee: Chairman Mrs. Roy Person.

Mrs. John Nielsen

Mrs. Victor Haben.

Captain: Mrs. Philip Denoyer; Lieutenant: Miss Lucile Schneider.



GIRL SCOUTS ON PARADE are led by Diane Carey, Lorraine Tonn and Chris Dolgopol. They marched each year on Memorial Day.

Hope: The world of Xenia Denoyer was her huge farmhouse and the buildings surrounding it. Acres and acres of wooded land that seemed to belong to another time. But in reality her world was located along McHenry Rd., hidden behind trees which have been cut down to make room for a clean, modern looking subdivision. Mrs. Denoyer's world is no more, and people who live in that subdivision will never understand the magic and charm of that old, forgotten, maybe haunted farmhouse.

Mrs., Denoyer was a Girl Scout leader. That was the avocation she chose and loved. I first met Mrs. Denoyer when I "flew up" from being a Brownie Scout. It was much later that I learned she had been a friend of Juliette Low, who founded the American Girl Scout movement.

When we arrived at Mrs. Denoyer's farm we were led through a gigantic room with a ceiling two or three stories high, and then finally into a little room with a low ceiling, off to the side. There we stood, twelve little Girl Scouts all in a row, all thrilled with our new surroundings. There we "flew up." Having thus been initiated into the Girl Scouts, we began our meetings in the basement of the old Community Presbyterian Church,

now located at Chamber Park on Wolf Rd. It used to be on Dundee west of Milwaukee, across from Mark Drugs.

Once a week, week after week, we fifth graders would make the trek from Walt Whitman school to the church and sing songs, listen to stories, and learn all kinds of things from Mrs. Denoyer and her companion, Mrs. Congdon. But above all things most of us remember is camping.

Mrs. Denoyer's world was a gigantic Girl Scout camping ground. Just arriving there was a memorable experience. A winding road led up to it, with acres of trees on every side. There were farm buildings all around, and even an outhouse which gained a certain amount of infamy with the Girl Scouts because Mrs. Denoyer had named it "Timbuctu." Whenever we were in need, we had to ask permission "to go to Timbuctu."

Most impressive was a very strange little garden she had. It was well tended, and full of flowers that shaped and colored it to form a gigantic Girl Scout clover emblem. It wasn't just tended by a gardener. It was manicured!

Once we were dropped off at the Denoyer camping grounds we were led into the same building where we "flew up." Only this time we remained in the big main room and finally were able to see it for what it was. There was a loft to one side with a wooden railing, more like a balcony than a second story. The main room was two stories high, except for where the loft was. Some of us were directed to the loft, while others took their places at chairs and tables on the lower floor.

There was a piano on the bottom floor and Mrs. Denoyer usually sat near it. And there were tables, many small tables. There were enough wooden tables to make a small school cafeteria. Mrs. Denoyer called us all to attention in the morning with reveille, and she was in the habit of playing taps on the trumpet at night--the way it would be done in the military. Whenever she



EARLY GIRL SCOUT LEADERS of Wheeling were Lucile Schneider (seated) and Xenia Denoyer.

wanted our attention she played reveille. And when she blasted on that trumpet, our attention she got!

And then there was the most striking feature of the room. "Girls, let me tell you about this fireplace."

The room was quiet. All eyes were on Mrs. Denoyer. "This is no ordinary fireplace. It represents all the trips Mr. Denoyer, our family and I have ever taken. This is a stone Mr. Denoyer picked up along the coast of Maine. And this one we picked up in Canada. Let me tell you all about it. . . ."

We would listen with attention as she spoke, perhaps for 15 minutes, about a particular stone and the place it came from. There was something about the way she told the stories, one having to do with an element of history and another with an adventure, that kept us listening. We were beginning to wish she had collected more stones so we could hear more stories, but it was time to move on to something else

Mrs. Denoyer then played for us on the piano. Her fingers seemed to take off the second they touched the keyboard. She could improvise, and she was able to transpose any song to any key, instantaneously. One of the girls who knew something of music would say, "The song is too high for our voices. Could you please transpose it to A flat?"

She would pretend not to notice that we were just asking her to show off, and would just go right ahead and transpose the song to the key of our choice.

And then she would have request hour. Most of the time she knew the song we were talking about, but if she didn't she would ask us to hum a few bars. Then she would play it perfectly, chords and all, without hesitation. This woman was a musical genius..

When Mrs. Denoyer played taps it was time to go to bed. Some of us put curlers in our hair and crawled into sleeping bags--bags made of several blankets folded over and fastened together with safety pins.

Next morning we all awoke to reveille and it was off to breakfast. We scurried down the stairs from the loft into the area near the tables, tables some said looked like they belonged in a medieval castle. We lined up cafeteria fashion, and breakfast was served. One thing that stands out in my mind is the heap of miniature size packages of Kellogg's variety pack cereals. Mrs. Denoyer was as adept at volume food service as she was at playing the piano and at being a good Girl Scout leader.

Mrs. Denoyer continued in scouting for many years, but I dropped out a little bit early. Each year she would take a vacation to Florida. Sometimes she would emerge after a couple of months, but toward the end of my years in scouting she would spend more and more time in Florida. If Mrs. Denoyer had been there with us all the time, I think I would still be a Scout today.

# Denoyer Cabin facing wrecking ball

By **CHERI BENTRUP**  
STAFF WRITER

To a passer-by, the log cabin may look to be of little significance, but to the Girl Scouts who fondly remember singing camp songs in front of the fireplace, the Denoyer Cabin is a part of their youth they don't want to see destroyed.

The cabin, located on Denoyer Trail just off of McHenry Road, was built in 1935 by longtime Girl Scout

leader Xenia Denoyer and became the Singing Grove Camp. The cabin served area Girl Scouts until Denoyer's death in 1976. Part of the original Denoyer property is now the site of the Chelsea Cove subdivision.

The cabin is now part of the 4.5-acre Denoyer Park, which the Wheeling Park District purchased in 1996. The district received a \$200,000 grant from the state to purchase the wooded property and had planned to renovate the cabin and use it for some park programs.

Now, though, park officials have decided to raze the building, saying renovations that could easily reach \$150,000 are cost-prohibitive. Parks Director Karop Bavougian said the cabin would have to be made handicapped-accessible if renovated, the rotted roof would have to be repaired and the poor structure needs reinforcement.



Joel Lerner/Pioneer Press

**Once a campsite for area Girl Scouts, the Denoyer Cabin on Denoyer Trail at Waverly Lane is slated for demolition by the Wheeling Park District. Park officials are looking to see if parts of the cabin, such as the footing, could be incorporated into future park plans.**

"The decision has been made to take it down," said Bavougian. "It just wasn't feasible for us to keep it. From a programmatic point of view, it won't work for us."

Bavougian has heard from Girl Scouts who used to camp at the cabin, and he's looking for ways to preserve a bit of the site's history. A gazebo to

be built in memory of Wheeling Rotary Club founder Bill Simpson may incorporate the footings of the cabin, he said.

"I don't know if we can do it or not, but those are the kinds of things we're throwing up in the air. I think that would be a nice acknowledgment to what was there," Bavougian said.

The gazebo will serve as a resting place for bikers along the Wheeling/Buffalo Grove bike path being built as part of a cooperative effort between the two villages, both park districts and both towns' Rotary clubs. The site will continue to be called Denoyer Park, in honor of Denoyer and the years she hosted local Girl Scouts on her prop-

erty.

"I think that's only appropriate," Bavougian added.

The Park District hopes to begin its work on Denoyer Park next year. Bavougian went to Springfield on Friday to ask for a \$110,000 matching grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to develop Denoyer Park.

The grant, if awarded, would help the Park District pay for demolition of the cabin, removal of some trees, playground equipment, benches and landscaping. If the Park District doesn't receive the grant, Bavougian said, park officials will have to rethink their plans.

Local women involved in Girl Scouting may understand the Park District's dilemma, but they continue to search for a way to save the cabin.

"We have a soft spot in our hearts for it," said Peg Ball, a Buffalo Grove resident and treasurer of the Scouting Service Unit that covers Wheeling. "I'd like to see it saved, but I totally understand the expense."

Before the Park District purchased the property, the Girl Scouts had experts examine the cabin and determine what the cost would be to renovate it. Ball can't remember the figures, but she knows it wasn't something the scouting council could afford.

(Continued on page 14)

THE DENOYER FARM had a common boundary with the Crane Farm. The two also had in common millionaire owners who had others, either hired or renters, to do the actual farming. Philip Denoyer was a partner in the Denoyer-Geppert map company of Chicago. He shared with his wife, Xenia, an interest in Girl Scouting as related in Chapter One.

Virginia Haben was a neighbor whose daughter, Barbara, was in the Scout troop. Hope McGlothlin is dismayed on revisiting her old Girl Scout Camp.

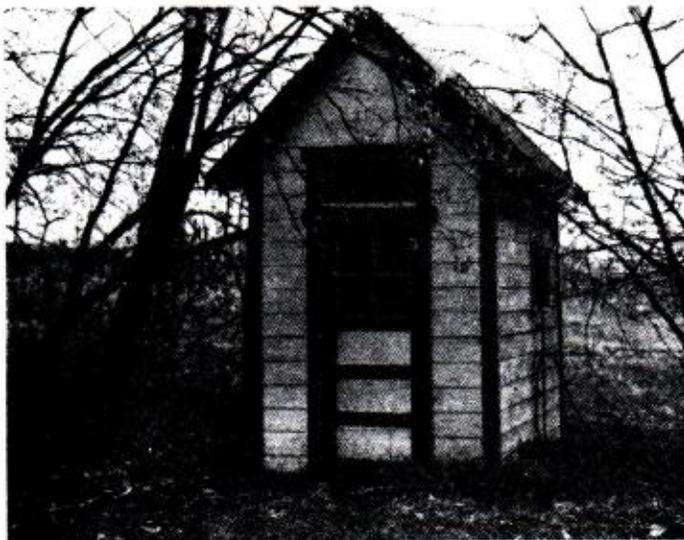
Virginia: Mrs. Denoyer had a beautiful house and then she had a little sort of cottage where the Girl Scouts came to camp overnight. The girls had a good time. My son couldn't get over it. He'd take Barbara's cot over and Mrs. Denoyer wore bloomers. He couldn't get over that.



DENOYER LOG CABIN was the local campsite for Wheeling Girl Scouts for many years. It had tables, chairs and a piano on the ground floor and a loft where the campers slept.



TREE CLIMBING wasn't in the Girl Scout handbook, but these girls filled a tree next to the Denoyer cabin and Lucile Schneider was there with her camera.

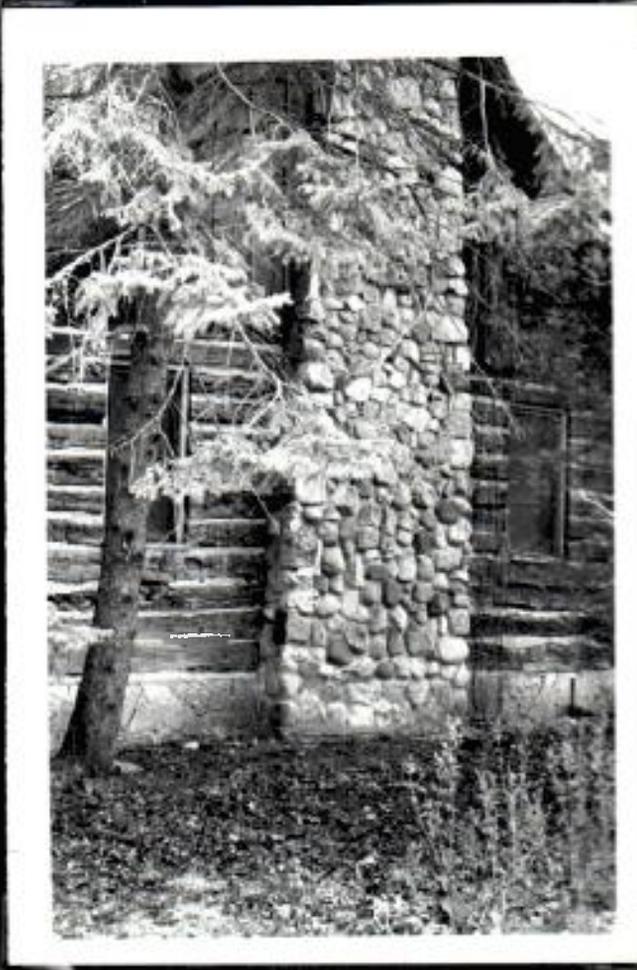


Hope: I had always wondered whatever became of Mrs. Denoyer. I was taking a drive down Old McHenry Rd. one day when I happened to notice that there was a subdivision in approximately the same place as the Denoyers' old farmhouse. I looked closer and saw a sign that said, "Denoyer Village." (It is now Chelsea Cove--Ed.)

All of a sudden I knew what had happened. Mrs. Denoyer was no more. In her place stood this commercial subdivision replete with basketball backboards over the garages, aluminum siding and whatever. I forgot my destination and decided that I was going into Denoyer Village to see if they had bulldozed the old farmhouse. It was abandoned. There were not as many buildings as I had remembered.

I felt a sort of melancholy at the prospect of this house that had pulsed with so much life and so much joy for little Girl Scouts, now reduced to a shambles. I turned my car around and watched as the abandoned farmhouse disappeared slowly into my rear view mirror.

TINY OUTHOUSE had a shelf along one wall with three basins hung above it, and a faucet to draw water. It was near "Timbuktu," the original two-hole privy. Together they made up the sanitary facilities of the Denoyer Girl Scout camp.









Arthur  
Barbara  
Emma Dunton  
Hazel Winne

Clarence Norton

Marie Norton

Bell Payne

Xenia Pinyoel

Philip Remover

Beverly S. Path

Merrell Payne Bilhorn

John Chester Bilhorn

Hattie Roloff

Alice Bilhorn Starv

Lois Hanselman Bilhorn

Hazel Winne (Tooky)

Beverly S. Path

Jean Hanselman

Grace Winne

Einar Egnorson

Aug. 16, '49

Chi Trib - 5/29/1999

## Fire destroys Denoyer Cabin in Wheeling

A Wheeling Park District log cabin that was to be bulldozed this summer burned to the ground early Monday morning.

Wheeling firefighters are investigating the pre-dawn fire at the Denoyer Cabin, which sat on a 4-acre park on Illinois Highway 83 in Wheeling.

Firefighters received the call around 3 a.m., said village Manager Craig Anderson.

"The cabin is a total loss," he said.

Owned by the Denoyer family and used by the Girl Scouts in the 1930s and '40s, the cabin had no historic value, said Park District Director Karop Bavougian.

The district acquired the cabin from the Denoyer estate in 1997 and intended to demolish it as part of a \$110,000 upgrade of the



Tribune photo by Jim Prisching

Workers try to save the stone chimney of the Denoyer Cabin, which was leveled by a fire early Monday. The cabin was set to be razed.

surrounding park. Bavougian said bringing the cabin up to code would have cost about \$150,000.

"We were going to try to keep

the fireplace and the foundations and incorporate them into a gazebo," he said.

Anika M. Scott

### WHEELING

## 3 men charged in log cabin blaze

Three Wheeling men were charged with criminal trespass and criminal damage to property in a fire early Monday that destroyed a Park District log cabin dating to the turn of the century.

Police said Joaquin Castillo, 23, Jesus Gabriel, 19, and Nestor Vega, 27, were charged Monday evening after allegedly admitting to police that they had illegally entered the Denoyer Cabin late Sunday and apparently touched

off the blaze with matches or a discarded cigarette.

Just before midnight Sunday, police said they received a call about noises in the area of the cabin, which is in a 4-acre park along Illinois Highway 83.

Officers arrived at the cabin to find the three men but made no arrests because there didn't immediately appear to be anything wrong, said Michael Hermes, Wheeling deputy police chief. The fire erupted a few hours later,

prompting police to re-question the men.

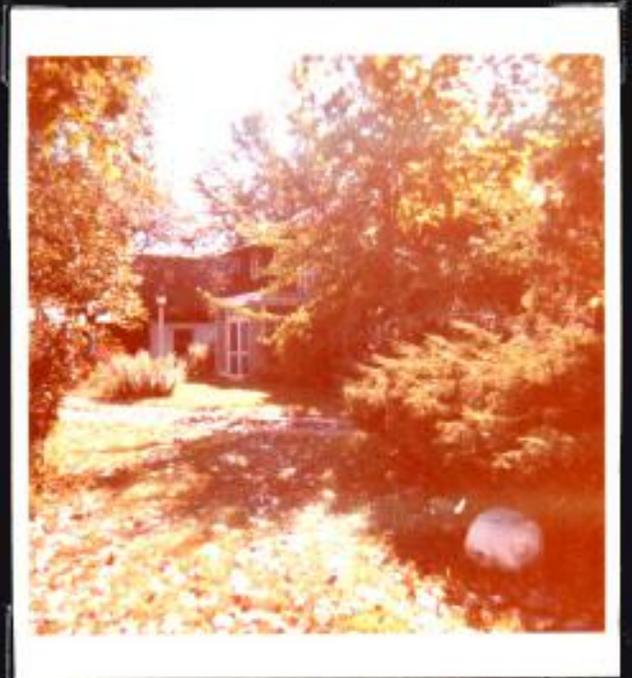
The cabin, once owned by the Denoyer family, was acquired by the Park District in 1997 and was scheduled to be demolished this summer as part of a \$110,000 upgrade of park grounds.

Fire Chief Keith MacIsaac said that while a definitive cause for the fire has yet to be determined, careless use of smoking materials is likely.

Eric Ferkenhoff











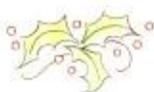












A warm and friendly word of cheer

for Christmas and the coming year—

L. Philip and Annia B.  
Denoyer

1935



"Away down in Egypt Land—"



Wishing you a  
Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year

Philip

and

Annia B. Denoyer

'34



Front Side Denoyer Mansion  
(MAIN HOUSE)



Back - Denoyer Mansion



Gravel drive behind house from cabin  
to outer buildings.



Planting Trefoil Garden  
80th Anniversary  
MARCH 1992

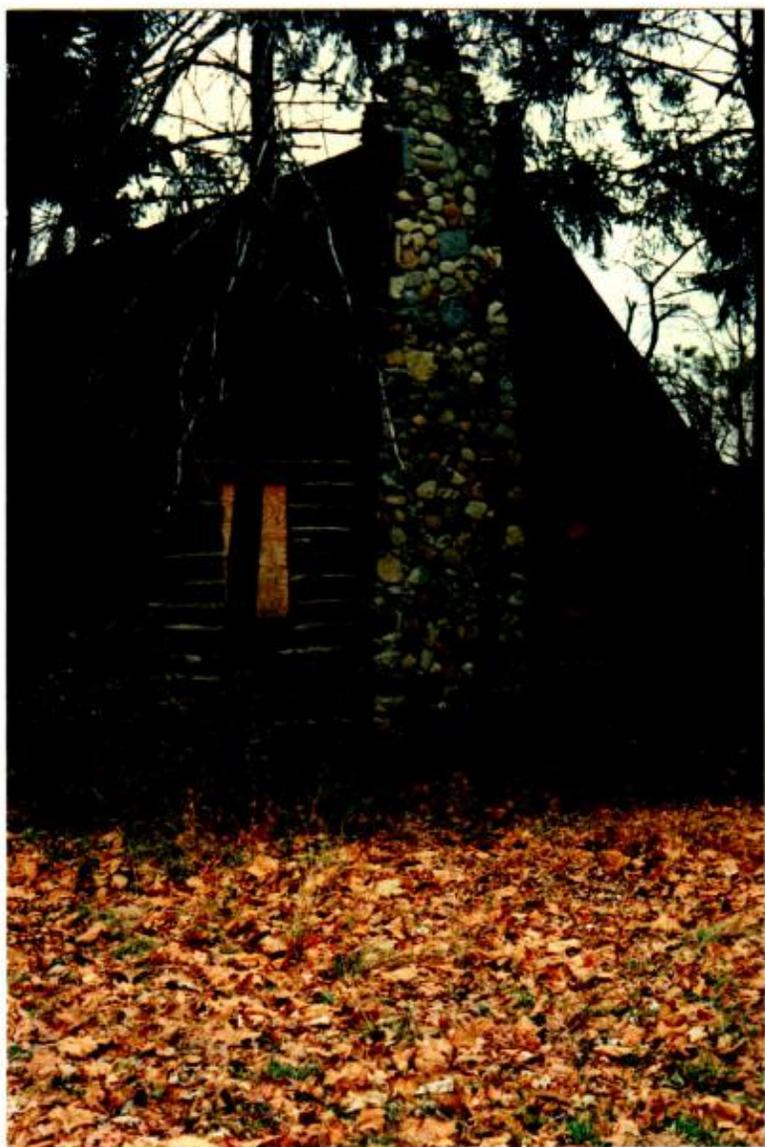




Planting (con.)

All Wheeling Troops participated  
in planting & burying a time capsule.

3/2/92



The Denoyer Log Cabin

11-20-96  
CK



Living + surrounding





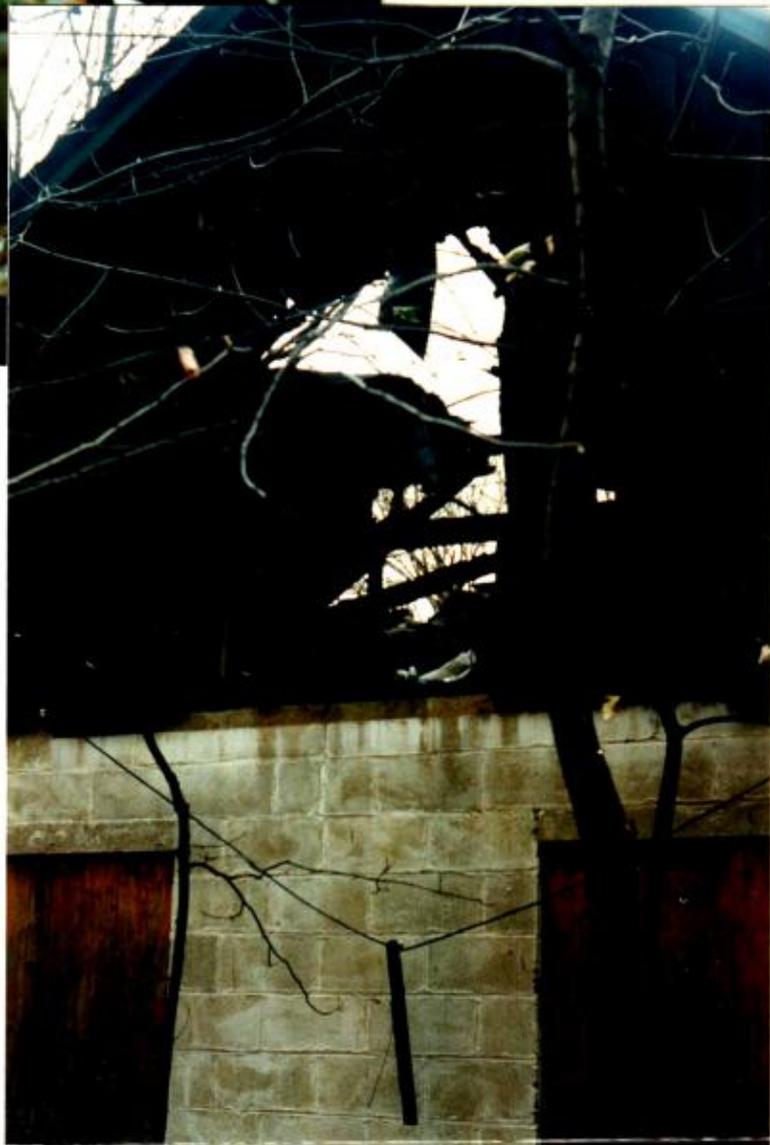
Front door  
of main house  
The door has  
the "DANGER"  
name placed above  
a birdhouse

Entry stairs  
to Main House





Out Buildings

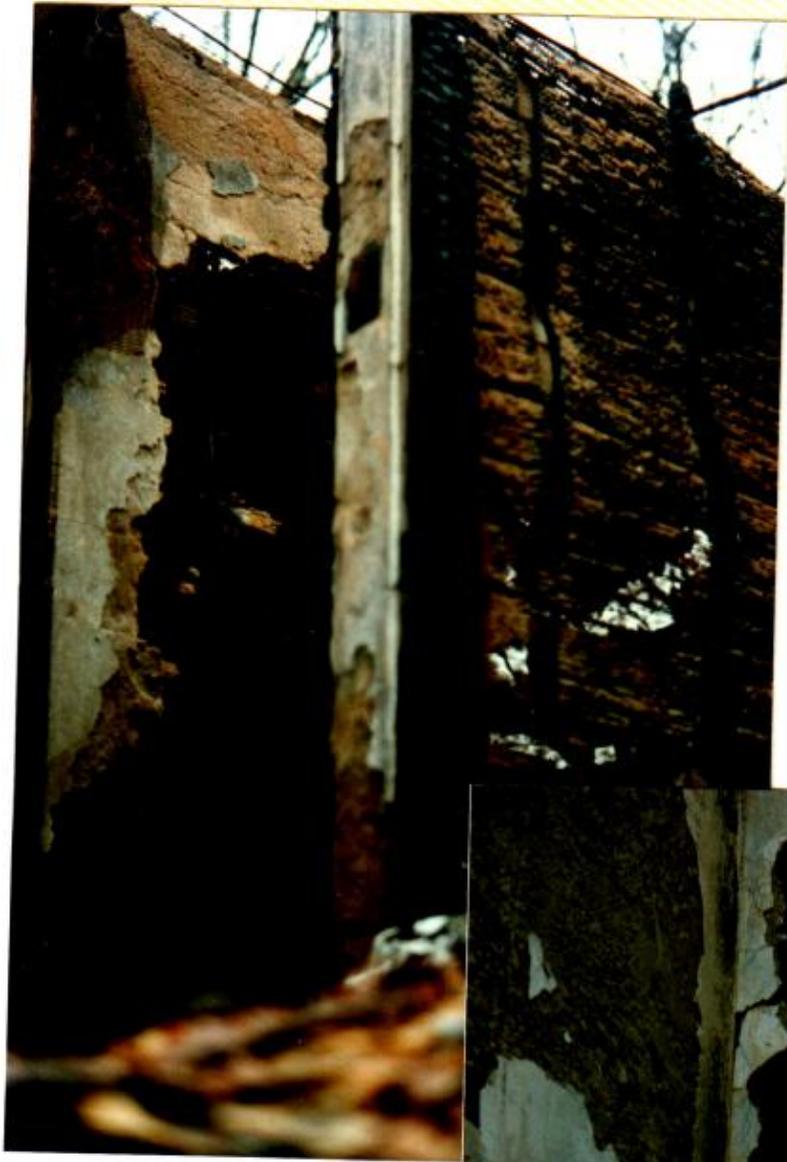


Shed



Main House





walls in  
main house

up staircase  
of main  
house





Tractor and miscellaneous  
pieces of machinery  
The seat had McCormick written on it



Photography  
Victoria?

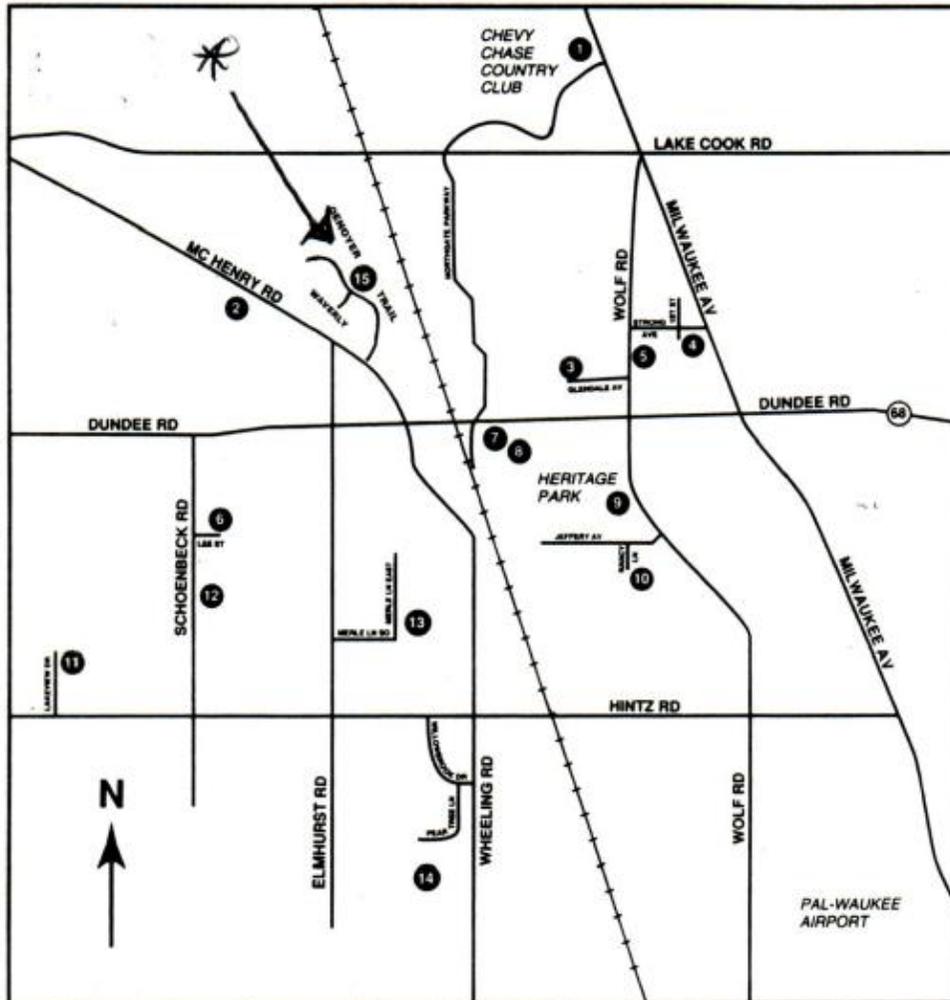
? garage





Bathtub in  
the yard

# THE PARKS OF WHEELING



- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. <b>Chevy Chase Country Club and Golf Course</b><br>1000 N. Milwaukee Avenue | 6. <b>Husky Park</b><br>Lee Street                          | 11. <b>Malibu Park</b><br>Lakeview Drive       |
| 2. <b>Childerley Park</b><br>506 McHenry Road                                  | 7. <b>Community Recreation Center</b><br>333 W. Dundee Road | 12. <b>Horizon Park</b><br>378 Schoenbeck Road |
| 3. <b>Northside Park</b><br>220 Glendale Avenue                                | 8. <b>Aquatic Center</b><br>327 W. Dundee Road              | 13. <b>Twain Gym</b><br>505 E. Merle           |
| 4. <b>Village Pavilion Senior Center</b><br>199 First Street                   | 9. <b>Heritage Park</b><br>222 S. Wolf Road                 | 14. <b>Pleasant Run Park</b><br>Pear Tree Lane |
| 5. <b>Chamber Park</b><br>251 N. Wolf Road                                     | 10. <b>Meadowbrook Tot Lot</b><br>Nancy Lane                | * 15. <b>Denoyer Park</b><br>Waverly Lane      |

Park hours are 6 AM-10 PM or as posted

acquired October 1996