



THE WRJE ARCHIVES

KRUG PARK

Beauty, Memory & Murder

A historical feature by Dustin M. Williams

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FOREWORD

Why the WRJE Archives Exists

A city remembers through its people. A community remembers through its stories. History survives when someone chooses to preserve it.

The WRJE Archives was created to preserve the history of St. Joseph, Missouri—not only the dates and names found in reference books, but the places, decisions, celebrations and losses that shaped the community. Local history is often scattered among family albums, aging newspapers, museum files and webpages maintained by people who refused to let the past disappear. This series brings those fragments together in a form meant to be read, heard and carried forward.

Krug Park was chosen for the first volume because few places hold so much of St. Joseph at once. It is a landscape of waterfalls, stone walls and wooded roads; a civic gift that became a gathering place; a setting for childhood, courtship, music, animals, holidays and quiet walks. It is also a place where three acts of violence entered the public memory. A truthful history cannot ignore either side.

This article is therefore not a catalogue of crimes. It is the story of a park that existed before those events, endured after them, and belongs most fully to the generations who continue to use it. The victims are named because their lives mattered. The violence is described only to the extent necessary to understand the record. The park itself remains the central character.

“The purpose of preservation is not to trap a place in its darkest moment. It is to remember the whole of what happened there.”

— The WRJE Archives

Modern photographs in this edition were supplied by many sources, including Google Reviews, public postings, and Dustin M. Williams. The historic newspaper pages are reproduced from the uploaded scans as unretouched primary sources from the State Historical Society of Missouri. Where modern accounts conflict, the manuscript identifies the disagreement rather than pretending certainty.

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CHAPTER I

Where Time Stands Still

The water never stops.

It falls over limestone into the pond below, gathers itself in a dark green basin, and continues over a second ledge. In summer the trees close around it. Leaves catch the light. The city seems farther away than it is. A visitor who stands there long enough begins to hear the park in layers: water first, then birds, then distant voices, then the faint sound of a vehicle working its way along the winding drive.

Krug Park has always depended on that feeling—the sense that a person can enter from the city and, within minutes, be somewhere else. The park does not reveal itself from a single lawn. It unfolds through ravines, slopes, tunnels, terraces, overlooks and bends in the road. Its designers did not flatten the landscape into submission. They used the hills and stone to make discovery part of the experience.

That quality explains why the park has remained so deeply personal to St. Joseph. Families do not remember only “Krug Park.” They remember a particular wall where children balanced, a particular curve where holiday lights began, the first sight of the lagoon, a picnic table under a certain tree, the castle tunnel, the colonnade, or the sound of the waterfall on a hot day. The public park becomes a private geography.



The historic bowl and colonnade are revealed gradually by the park's steep terrain.

Yet landscapes accumulate more than happy memories. They also absorb events a community would rather undo. At Krug Park, beauty and tragedy do not cancel one another. They occupy the same ground. This history begins with the act of generosity that made the ground public, because no later event can be understood without first knowing what the Krug family intended St. Joseph to receive.

A note on the name

St. Joseph Memory Lane notes that Krug is properly pronounced “Kroog.” The pronunciation is a small piece of local inheritance—one of those details residents pass from one generation to the next, often without writing it down.

CHAPTER II

A Family's Gift



The park plaque records the Krug family gifts of 1890 and 1936 and identifies the resulting 162 acres.

The plaque at Krug Park compresses decades of civic history into a few lines. It records a 162-acre park created through gifts associated with Henry and Louisa Krug, William Krug, and Henry and Selma Krug Jr. in 1890 and 1936. The wording is plain, but the consequence was enormous: land that might have remained private became a common inheritance.

Henry Krug Sr. was born in Germany in 1822 and came to St. Joseph in 1859 with his brother William. The family's business interests included groceries, meat packing, banking and transportation. Henry Sr.'s north-end home, Pine Ridge, was built in 1870. Twenty years later, land adjoining the family property became the beginning of Krug Park.

The surviving sources do not agree on every acreage figure. St. Joseph Memory Lane describes an initial 20-acre gift followed by 142 acres in 1936. Friends of Krug Park describes later gifts totaling 138 acres, while other summaries cite still different early parcels. The on-site plaque is the clearest public statement of the overall result: 162 acres, with Krug family gifts in 1890 and 1936. Until the original deeds are examined together, this edition avoids claiming a precise parcel-by-parcel total.

What is not in dispute is the family's continuing role. Henry Krug Jr., born in St. Joseph in 1861, entered the family meat-packing business as a teenager and later served civic institutions including the public library and historical society. His wife, Selma Hegner Krug, had been raised in the Krug household after the death of her parents. Friends of Krug Park credits Henry Jr. and Selma with three donations that helped make Krug Park the city's largest park.

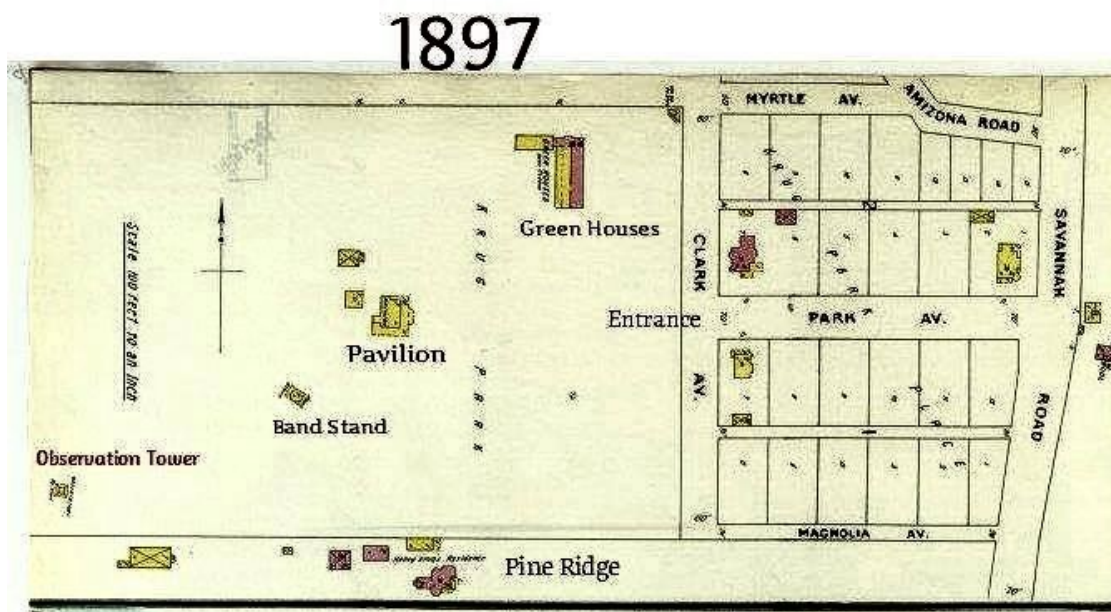
"The gift was not merely land. It was the promise that beauty could belong to

everyone.”

Rudolph Rau and the living design

Henry Krug Sr. brought Rudolph Rau to shape the early landscape. Rau’s work included formal flower beds, walking paths, a glass conservatory, animal exhibits and a lily pond. He later served for decades as St. Joseph’s superintendent of parks. In Rau’s hands, the park became both garden and theater: nature was framed, directed and revealed without losing the drama of the existing terrain.

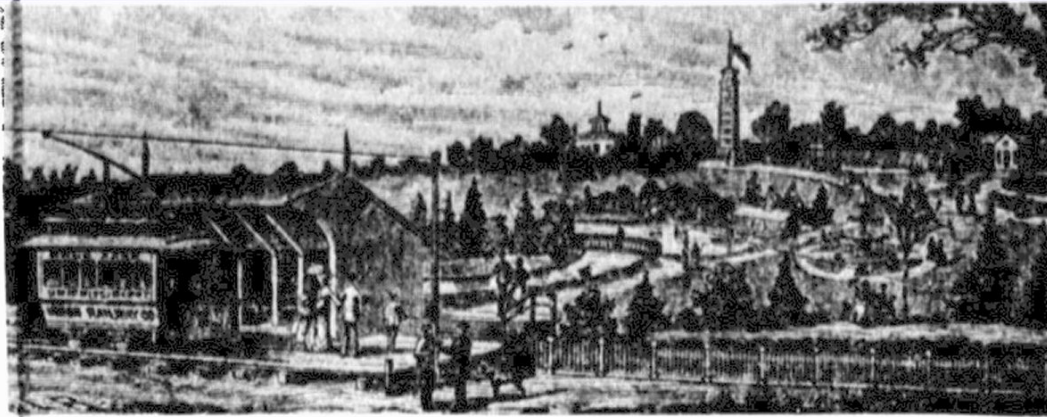
Krug Park officially opened to the public on May 6, 1902, according to St. Joseph Memory Lane. By then it was becoming more than a neighborhood green. It was a city destination—reachable by streetcar, designed for strolling, and filled with features that rewarded repeat visits.



A diagram labeled 1897 identifies the greenhouses, entrance, pavilion, bandstand, observation tower, and Pine Ridge. Source supplied in the edited manuscript; original attribution should be verified before publication.

19A; St. Joseph, Mo., News-Press, Sunday, Oct. 15, 1972

Krug Park as It Appeared in 1889



If you can remember when Krug Park looked like this, you aren't a spring chicken any more.

This, according to the caption for a picture in an old city directory, is how Krug Park looked in 1889, 83 years ago. At that time the park did not belong to the city but was owned by the then Elec-

tric Railway Company. An advertisement appearing with the illustration states: Krug Park — A picturesque piece of ground improved by the Union Railway for gratuitous public use, and crowned on its summit with a high tower, from which an enchanting view of the city and surrounding country is obtain-

ed." The advertisement stated the park could be reached by "cars which run past Union Depot and Market Square through lovely New Ulm Valley.

The tower is to be seen at the upper right and the old Krug home, still standing, is seen near the middle center. Also shown is an elaborate

fountain.

City records showed the park, then 20 acres in size, was given to the city on Feb. 26, 1890 by Henry Krug, Louisa Krug and William Krug. The Krugs were stockholders of the early electric streetcar line and evidently gave it to the city a year after the illustration was made.

A 1972 St. Joseph News-Press retrospective presented this view under the headline "Krug Park as It Appeared in 1889."

CHAPTER III

Building a World Inside the City

The early park offered St. Joseph a collection of experiences that would now be spread across several institutions. There were formal gardens, a conservatory, animals, music, water, overlooks and roads built to make the journey through the landscape part of the attraction.

The conservatory and gardens

The glass conservatory, built in 1898 according to St. Joseph Memory Lane, stood among the flower gardens and supplied plants for the elaborate outdoor displays. Friends of Krug Park notes that banana trees grew inside and that monkeys were housed there as part of the park's menagerie. Nearby, a lily pond and fan bridge created one of the park's most photographed scenes. Those structures are gone, but their outlines survive in postcards and family photographs.

The gardens were not decoration added after the fact; they were part of the park's identity. Floral lettering, carefully arranged beds and formal walks announced that civic space could be tended with the same ambition as a private estate. For working families arriving by trolley, the park offered access to cultivated beauty without admission or ownership.



Historic postcard view of the Krug Park bandstand among the trees.

Streetcars, walks and the meaning of arrival

Streetcars were stopping near Krug Park by the late nineteenth century. The original park was primarily pedestrian. Visitors arrived together, entered through a formal gateway and moved at walking speed. That rhythm mattered. A park experienced on foot is encountered through detail—the edge of a flower bed, the change in grade, the reveal beyond a wall.

Automobiles eventually changed the pattern. Krug Park Drive was completed around 1928 and wound through two tunnels, one beneath the castle. The road made the hills accessible to more visitors while preserving the sense of passage from one scene to another. Even today, the drive behaves less like a straight route than a guided tour.

The castle, bowl and colonnade

The castle was constructed in 1921–1922. It was not a medieval fortress so much as a romantic landmark integrated into the road and hillside. Elsewhere, the long stone wall and columned structures gave the bowl a theatrical form. Friends of Krug Park explains that an area originally planned as an amphitheater and stage later became known as the Children’s Circus when playground equipment was installed; the semicircular stage was later used as a shallow wading pool.



The colonnade and stone wall remain among Krug Park’s strongest architectural statements.

Names and uses shifted, but the architecture endured. Children who knew the place as a playground grew into adults who returned for photographs, reunions and walks. Stone designed for one purpose acquired another. That is how a public landscape stays alive: not by remaining unchanged, but by remaining useful.

Animals, play and spectacle

For generations, the park’s animal displays were part of its appeal. Historic accounts describe monkeys, alligators and other exhibits; modern descriptions note native animal enclosures for buffalo, deer and longhorn cattle. The collection changed with public expectations and animal-care standards. What remained constant was the promise that a visit to Krug Park might reveal something not encountered on an ordinary city street.

Playgrounds changed as well. Old photographs show slides, gliders and crowded play areas that would be designed differently today. Their importance lies not only in the equipment but in the social life around it: children learning the park by running its slopes, adults visiting on benches, and families repeating rituals from one summer to the next.

CHAPTER IV

The Park St. Joseph Remembered



The bowl seen from the hillside, with the colonnade and red-brick structure beyond.

Public parks are built in plans and appropriations, but they live in repetition. A child visits once, then again. A couple chooses the same overlook. A family takes a photograph under the same columns every few years. The place becomes a clock measured in human lives.

Krug Park's attractions came and went. The conservatory deteriorated and was razed. The footbridge disappeared. The zoo changed. Roads were paved, guardrails installed and playgrounds replaced. Yet the park retained its grammar: stone, water, trees, elevation and procession. Even when a visitor cannot name the age of a wall, the design communicates age and intention.



The lagoon remains the park's broadest open view and one of its most familiar gathering places.

The lagoon is the park at its most expansive. The hills pull back, the sky opens, and water occupies the center. The fountain turns sunlight into mist. Ducks and geese move along the edge. It is an image of continuity, but continuity should not be mistaken for immunity. In 1913, violence reached the park's gateway in public view. In 1940, two young people were found dead in a car overlooking the bowl. In 2016, a teenager was killed on a remote trail. The landscape survived all three. The families did not emerge unchanged.

"A truthful history does not allow tragedy to possess the park—but it does not ask the park to forget."



A horse-drawn coach passes through Krug Park's early stone gateway.

CHAPTER V

July 1913: Madeline Rowbotham

On Sunday evening, July 13, 1913, twenty-one-year-old Madeline Rowbotham approached the gateway of Krug Park. She was a stenographer, a high-school graduate and the daughter of a widowed mother. The next morning, the St. Joseph Gazette placed her photograph on the front page beneath a label that reduced her to “Victim of Lover’s Rage.” The surviving article, however, contains enough detail to recover more of the person behind the headline.

The Gazette reported that Rowbotham had gone to the park with a man named Torbet H. Milby. Thomas F. Harris, a twenty-nine-year-old streetcar conductor with whom she had previously been engaged, had followed them. According to the article, Harris approached near the gateway shortly after 6:30 p.m. and asked to speak with her. Milby stepped away. Harris then attacked Rowbotham with a razor in view of park visitors and wounded himself afterward. Rowbotham died at the scene. Harris survived and was taken into custody at St. Joseph Hospital.

The newspaper framed the killing through Harris’s jealousy and his account of the broken engagement. That framing was typical of the period, but it risks assigning narrative importance to the killer’s grievance instead of the victim’s right to leave a relationship. Madeline Rowbotham’s decision to end an engagement was not an explanation for her death. It was an ordinary exercise of personal freedom met with lethal violence.

FROM THE ARCHIVES • July 14, 1913**“Mad With Jealousy He Slays Girl With Razor, Tries Suicide”**

The St. Joseph Gazette devoted a major portion of its front page to the killing. Its dramatic wording reflects the sensational style of the era. The scan is reproduced here as evidence of how the event was reported, not as an endorsement of its framing.

ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI, MONDAY, JULY 14, 1913.

VOL. 124. NO. 195.

ATE PLOT HUERTA HIS AIDES

Supporters of
ested in City of
harged With
nspracy

TO USE
S FOR DEED

Execute Plot as
ode Through
of Capital

July 13.—A plot to an-
t Huerta, Gen. Felix
Blanco, the war
strated today by the
puty and ten others,
militant. It is said
to use bombs at
moment when these
thing through the
re found on the sym-
then as supporters
sitting forth an out-
Several prisoners
in a building some-
hatched, they had
se of bombs.

Leaves Port
July 13.—The Niagara,
bark of the original
Harard Perry, in the
Erie Sept. 16, 1812,
right. The big will
tomorrow morning,
week of Perry's vic-
till be celebrated.

Mag-logged Post
July 13.—About
ord county farmers
tomorrow morning,
fifty to one hundred
and ten, to fight the
t that has done as
in this county, the

FFICER R DROWNS

ERS GO DOWN
SUPERIOR

s in Outer Harbor
s—Six Others
aved

July 13.—Grafton Morgan,
the White Star line
and Capt. Arthur
student of the sailors
surrender, with six men
eight hands by the
sine railroad, was
outer harbor late this
in the ship Albatross
there of the party on
a rescue.

occurred in the outer
the Graves and Rose
yent had been lying
the party decided to
open sea. They had
been a sudden squall
boat.

were saved during the
the ship until morning.
them.

1.25; SLAIN

ILLS NEIGHBOR
LEGED DEBT

issued for Years—
His Own Throat
ad Dies

From
July 11.—Ewan John-
d, late today shot and
Paroli, 41 years old,
ged Paroli owed one
\$1.15 for work on
ran to his own home
sat. He will die.

he was for years lived
near Ballina and was
two years ago one of
went to work on the
When Paroli paid the
claimed the farmer
Since that time the
he Paroli have been
as followed Paroli to
a cattle sick in the
he shot Paroli. The
he latter was talking

Aviation Flight
July 13.—The French avia-
t, made a flight from
today without a stop,
much capital at 4:10
spring and landed at
moon.

Victim of Lover's Rage and Slayer



MISS MADELINE ROWBOTHAM

EMULATE FIRE TEAM.
PINCHED AS SPEEDER

In his efforts to give an ex-
hibition of a fire-team making a
run, Peter Gail, 5106 King Hill
avenue, last night exceeded the
speed limit on Charlevoix ave-
nue with a team and wagon,
and was arrested by Patrolmen
Sullivan and Froese. He put
up a cash bond for his appear-
ance in police court.

WAS HOTTEST DAY

Mercury Registered 97 Here Yes-
terday—No Breeze to Re-
lieve Heat

Yesterday was the hottest day of
the year in St. Joseph, the mercury
climbing to 97. The heat was op-
pressive, too, there being only a fit-
ful, weak breeze, and the city sweated
all day long under the beating
rays of the sun. No precautions were
reported. Huge crowds went to the
parks, and many went picnicking.

TWO ARE SLAIN; HOUNDSON TRAIL

BODIES OF MAN AND WIFE
DISCOVERED IN FIELD

Authorities Believe That Pair
Were Shot From Ambush
Near Scene

The Associated Press.
Jackson, Mich., July 13.—The bod-
ies of C. D. Newell and his wife, a
middle aged couple, were found in a
field of the Hankin county farm at
dark last night. Gunshot wounds in
Newell's head and his wife's breast
decided the cause of death. Hair
had obliterated all traces of the slay-
ers and bloodhounds failed to pick
up a trail. The bodies were lying
fifty yards apart and it is con-
sidered that Newell, at least, was shot
from ambush. The authorities have
no clue to work on.

Is Held Without Bail
Chicago, July 13.—Paco Noum was
ordered held without bail when he
was arraigned before Judge Faba,
charged with the murder of Mrs.
Florence Woodruff. The preliminary
hearing was continued until July 16,
the day after the coroner's inquest.

DEFTY "13" HOOCH ON
THEIR WEDDING DAY
The number thirteen, held to
be an omen of ill luck by many,
did not interfere with the mar-
riage of Elsie E. Smith and Miss
Thelma Dyer, at 4:15 o'clock yes-
terday afternoon, July 13, 1913.
at the home of the bride's par-
ents, Mr. and Mrs. William
Dyer, 222 North Tenth street.
There were thirteen guests pre-
sent.



THOMAS F. HARRIS

FOUR DIE, SCORE HURT IN WRECK

Baltimore and Ohio Passenger
Train Crashes Into Inter-
urban Car

Cambridge, Ohio, July 13.—Four
persons were killed, a fifth probably
fatally injured and a score were
hurt tonight when a Baltimore &
Ohio passenger train, No. 16, the
Wheeling-Chicago express westbound,
crashed into a Cambridge & Reynolds
interurban street car at a crossing in
east Cambridge. The street car was
demolished.

T. J. BERRY DIES

WAS PROMINENT BUSINESS
MAN HERE

Had Lived in St. Joseph Nearly
All Life—Funeral to Be
This Afternoon

Thomas Johnson Berry, 60 years
old, and a prominent business man
of St. Joseph for twenty-five years,
died at 8 o'clock yesterday morning
at the home of his brother, G. D.
Berry, 2119 Frederick boulevard. He
had been suffering from dropsy for
the past ten years.

Berry was born in Texas in 1852,
and was brought to this city by his
parents when only 3 years old. He
never married. He rose steadily in
the business life of the city and was
part of the country, and was well
known in Kansas City.
He was traffic manager of the Elwood
Grain company and was ex-
ecutive, interested in the Berry Iron
and Steel company. He is survived
by three brothers, C. R. Berry, as-
sistant to the vice president of the
Great Western Railway company; G.
D. Berry, manager of the Berry Iron
and Steel company, and D. D. Berry,
ad of St. Joseph.
The funeral will be held at 4 o'clock
this afternoon from the home, 2119
Frederick boulevard. Rev. C. M.
Chilton will officiate. Burial will be
at Mount Zion cemetery.

MAD WITH JEALOUSY HE SLAYS GIRL WITH RAZOR, TRIES SUICIDE

Thomas F. Harris, Street Car Conductor,
Slashes Throat of Sweetheart, Miss Made-
line Rowbotham, as She Steps
Through Gateway at Krug
Park With Another Man

SLAYER WILL LIVE DESPITE HIMSELF

At Hospital, After Simple Confession: "I've
Killed Her," He Attempts to Tear Wounds
Open—Victim Was Stenographer, and Had
Graduated From High School—They Were
Engaged, and She Broke It Off Because He
Had Tuberculosis, He Declares

Crazed by jealousy because she had been keeping company
with other men, Thomas F. Harris, a street car conductor, last
night wielded a razor with fatal effect upon the throat of Miss Made-
line Rowbotham, a stenographer, and then turned the weapon upon
himself, inflicting wounds which, while serious, will probably not
prove fatal.

Harris, who is 29 years old, lives at 2415 North Seventh street.
His victim, 21 years old, lived with her widowed mother, Mrs. Min-
nie Rowbotham, at 1008 Dewey avenue. They had been engaged to
be married; he says, but the girl had recently broken the engage-
ment because, it is said, she had been informed that Harris was
afflicted with tuberculosis.

The crime took place in the gateways of Krug park shortly
after 6:30 o'clock, and in the view of hundreds of persons, few of
whom, however, knew that a tragedy was being enacted in their
midst until after it was all over.

Harris is under custody of Patrolman J. N. Osborn at St.
Joseph hospital. He will be formally charged with murder today.
Although his throat was slashed deeply with the razor and jabbed
with a pocket knife, attending physicians believe he will recover.
Last night late, when realization of what he had done came to him,
Harris made repeated efforts to tear open his throat and it finally
became necessary to place restraining straps upon him.

WHAT THE SLAYER SAYS

"I've killed Madeline, and I loved
her. She loved me, too, but
people kept hurting her and they
kept making me get off the wed-
ding. And then I found out she was
going with other men and I made
them see her with another man. So
I got mad and I killed her. I
wish I could die, too. I
suppose they will hang me for this,
but I don't care."—From a state-
ment made by Thomas F. Harris at
the hospital.

DESTITUTE AMERICANS ARE FLEEING MEXICO

Arriving in the United States of
Almost Every Boat, Re-
port Says

By The Associated Press.
Washington, July 13.—Destitute
Americans are arriving in the United
States on every boat from Mexico.

Many of them face financial ruin
in a series of revolutions which has
paralyzed commercial and industrial
enterprises and they are leaving the
southern republic with reluctance.

STRIKE DECLARED

Brotherhoods of Trainmen and
Conductors Ratify Vote
to Walk Out

By The Associated Press.
New York, July 13.—The commit-
tee of 1,000 representing the mem-
bers of the Brotherhood of Railway
Trainmen and the Brotherhood of
Railway Conductors employed by the
western railroads today ratified the
strike vote recently taken by both
organizations. The date when the
strike is to begin was not deter-
mined.

They Had Kept Company
According to relatives of the dead
girl, Harris and Miss Rowbotham had
been keeping company for some time.
A week ago yesterday a friend from
St. Joseph called upon Miss Row-
botham and she had accompanied
him to the Union depot. Harris met
her as she was leaving and accom-
panied her home. She later told him
that she had frankly told him
that she could never marry him, and
requested that he do not ask her
again. She said that she had tried to
make it easy for him, because he
seemed so badly upset by her de-
cision.

Yesterday afternoon Miss Row-
botham went to Krug park with
Torbet H. Milby, 2502 Parkon street,
a book keeper for the Central Coke
and Coal company. They were ac-
companied by Cecil Logan, 221 North
"Och" street, and Miss Ida Wyatt,
1018 Prospect avenue. It was when
they started to leave the park that
the tragedy occurred.

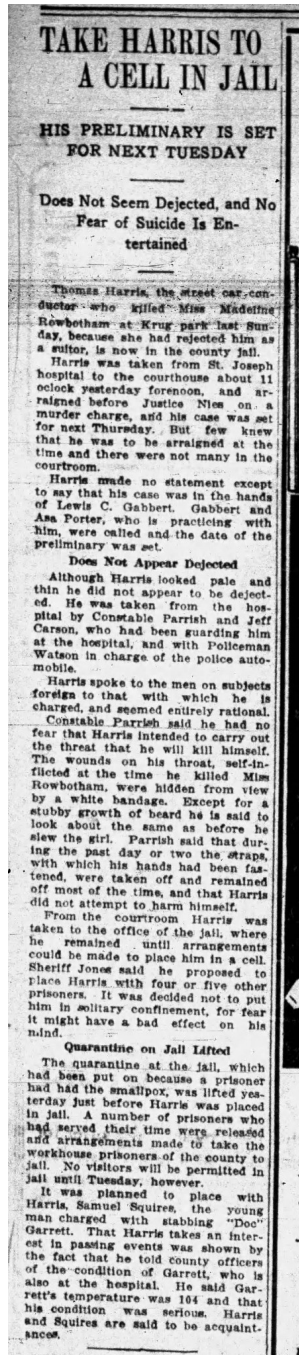
Had Followed Her to Park
Harris had followed the quartet to
the park. He had worked during the
day on the Missouri street line and
at the end of his run had gone to his
home and changed clothes. At Miss
Rowbotham's residence he learned
where she had gone and boarded a
Union line car to follow her. On the
run to the park he talked with the
motorman, who said afterwards that
Harris had not seemed excited and
had talked rationally. When the car
stopped at the park, Harris remained
on the front platform until it started
to leave and that he left it. It was
standing beside the pillars of the
gateway when Miss Rowbotham and
her escort appeared.

"I'd like to speak with you a min-
ute," Harris said. "You know I am
fond of Madeline, but I am
jealous of her."
He turned to Milby and apparently in
the heat of humor, added, "You know
I am fond of Madeline, but I am
jealous of her."

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He turned to Milby and apparently in
the heat of humor, added, "You know
I am fond of Madeline, but I am
jealous of her."

From hospital to jail

A follow-up clipping dated July 20 reported that Harris had been moved from the hospital to the Buchanan County jail, arraigned before a justice of the peace on a murder charge, and scheduled for a preliminary hearing. The article's fascination with his demeanor and condition again centered the accused. Read today, the most important fact is simpler: within a week, the public story had moved from the park to the courthouse, while Rowbotham's family was left with an absence no proceeding could repair.



Unretouched follow-up clipping, dated July 20, 1913, documenting Harris's transfer from hospital to jail and the beginning of court proceedings.

A contemporary Buchanan County history later recorded that Harris was serving a life sentence for the crime. Later historical summaries state that he was paroled in 1942 after twenty-nine years. Those details belong to the legal

record, but they are not the final measure of the event. The more durable fact is that Madeline Rowbotham entered the park on an ordinary Sunday and was denied the future that should have followed.

Editorial note

Some modern summaries list Rowbotham as nineteen. The July 14, 1913 Gazette page identifies her as twenty-one. This edition follows the contemporaneous newspaper while noting that age discrepancies should be checked against a birth or death record before a print book is declared final.

CHAPTER VI

January 1940: Jane Miller and Alfred Dick

Before dawn on Friday, January 26, 1940, patrol officers found two bodies in the back seat of a car parked just off the drive above Krug Park Bowl. The newspaper called them a “young St. Joseph couple” and described the car as positioned at the uppermost point overlooking the park. Cold had fixed the scene in place. Investigators believed the pair had been dead for hours.

The clipping identifies Jane Miller as twenty-one, a stenographer employed by her uncle’s electric company, and Alfred L. Dick as twenty-two, an attendant at a filling station near Ashland Avenue and Karnes Road. It describes them as engaged. The coroner ruled the deaths murder-suicide: Miller had been shot multiple times, and Dick had been shot once. Police found the weapon and a penciled note attributed to Dick.

The headline is among the most brutal in the WRJE collection: “Bullet Torn Bodies Found Frozen in Car.” It was designed to stop a reader. Eighty-six years later, it still does. But a headline built around the condition of two bodies cannot tell us who those young people were in daily life, what music they knew, what plans Miller had made, or what her family faced when police arrived with the news.

FROM THE ARCHIVES • January 26, 1940

“Bullet Torn Bodies Found Frozen in Car”

The clipping records names, ages, occupations, location, investigative observations and the coroner’s conclusion. The publication title is not visible in the surviving crop and should be confirmed from the full newspaper issue before final print attribution.

BULLET TORN BODIES FOUND FROZEN IN CAR

**'I Did It for Revenge,'
Says Note Left
by Slayer**

Bullet torn, frozen bodies of a young St. Joseph couple, found early today by police in Krug Park, evidenced the end of a stormy romance of a pretty brunet stenographer and her filling station fiancé.

Coroner B. W. Tadlock said it was murder and suicide.

The girl was Miss Jane Miller, twenty-one years old, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. N. B. Miller, 3003 Ashland avenue. She was employed by Harry C. Korn, her uncle, at his electric company.

The young man was Alfred L. Dick, twenty-two, attendant at a Diamond D-X filling station on Ashland avenue near Karnes road and the son of Mr. and Mrs. Adolf Dick, route No. 1, Cosby, Mo.

Found by Police.

Their bodies were found by Patrolmen H. C. McCullough and Charles T. Cobb, slumped in the back seat of the youth's car, parked just off the drive overlooking Krug Park Bowl from the uppermost point.

Powder burns on Jane's left hand showed she had fought when the .38-caliber revolver was thrust against her by Dick. She had been shot twice, one bullet ripping through her left cheek and lodging in the head. Another bullet penetrated her chest and emerged just below the left shoulder blade.

Dick was shot through the right temple, the bullet emerging on the left side of his head.

A fourth cartridge had misfired, police said, after inspecting the death-dealing weapon.

The body of Miss Miller was slumped over in the center of the seat, while Dick had fallen over her body, his head resting in a corner of the seat.

Dead for Hours.

They had been dead for hours, in the opinion of Coroner Tadlock, and their bodies were frozen stiff in their grotesque positions of death.

"I killed her for revenge," read one paragraph of a penciled note found in Dick's trousers, giving the coroner and police their only clue to the motive.

"I did this because if I lived my folks were in for a lot of worry," the note read. "I could not stand it."

"I killed her to get revenge."

"Don't bury me in the same cemetery with her—PLEASE."

"ALFRED."

The couple had been missing since 5 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, the coroner learned, and

Concluded on Page Two.

Unretouched St. Joseph newspaper clipping dated Friday, January 26, 1940.

The danger of the note becoming the story

The 1940 report quoted the note found in Dick's clothing and presented it as the motive. Such documents can help establish intent, but they also allow the person who committed the violence to dictate the language remembered afterward. The surviving account supports a clearer modern description: Jane Miller was killed by her fiancé, who then killed himself. His claim of love or revenge does not lessen his responsibility and should not become the emotional center of her story.

The park was a location, not a cause. Its overlook provided privacy and distance from the street, but the violence arose from a human decision. That distinction matters. Places associated with tragedy are sometimes treated as haunted, cursed or complicit. Doing so turns responsibility into atmosphere. Krug Park did not kill Jane Miller. Alfred Dick did.

The city continued to use the bowl below. Children played. Cars passed the overlook. Snow melted. The ordinary life of the park resumed because public spaces must continue, even when memory has been permanently altered.

CHAPTER VII

October 2016: Kaytlin Root

On October 16, 2016, joggers found the body of seventeen-year-old Kaytlin Root in a remote area of the Krug Park trails. Unlike the earlier cases, this tragedy unfolded in the age of mobile phones, social media, surveillance video and continuous digital records. Those technologies became central to the investigation.

Contemporary reporting said Root had been lured into meeting eighteen-year-old Sebastian Dowell and a second person and had been urged not to tell anyone whom she was meeting. Probable-cause documents described the group driving before arriving at Krug Park and walking into a secluded area. Root was rendered unconscious and killed. The details are disturbing; repeating every one of them would add pain without adding understanding.

Investigators recovered parts of Root's damaged phone. According to reporting from the sentencing hearing, detectives reconstructed Facebook Messenger communications and found a photograph that placed Dowell at a convenience store shortly before the killing. Surveillance video and the recovered digital evidence helped identify Dowell and Amanda Bennett.

Both defendants pleaded guilty to second-degree murder. In May 2017, Circuit Judge Daniel Kellogg sentenced Dowell to life in prison. Reporting from the hearing quoted the judge calling it the only appropriate sentence and Root's mother, Jamie Jaramillo, describing the permanent difference between visiting a child in prison and losing a child forever. Bennett was also sentenced to life after her guilty plea.

“They get to go to prison and see their child. They didn’t lose a child.”

— Jamie Jaramillo, quoted by *Missourinet*, May 5, 2017

That statement cuts through the language of investigation and sentencing. A criminal case names defendants, statutes, evidence and punishment. A family experiences birthdays that do not happen, messages that never arrive and milestones frozen at seventeen. Any historical account that turns the case into a tale of ritual, mystery or shock risks repeating the same imbalance found in the 1913 and 1940 headlines: the offender's story expands while the victim's life becomes a preface.

Correcting the modern record

Online summaries conflict about the degree of conviction. Contemporary reports from 2016 and 2017 state that Dowell and Bennett were charged with and pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, then received life sentences with future parole eligibility. This edition follows those reports. A final book edition should add certified docket sheets or judgments from Buchanan County for the permanent source file.

Kaytlin Root's story belongs in the history of Krug Park because the crime occurred there and because the community responded there. But she should not be reduced to a marker on a “murder map.” She was a person before she became a case. The responsible use of the site is remembrance—not tourism built from violence.

CHAPTER VIII

Holiday Park and a New Century



Holiday lights transform Krug Park's historic stone tunnel into one of St. Joseph's most familiar Christmas scenes.

When the park becomes Holiday Park

Every autumn, as daylight begins to disappear earlier over the limestone hills, Krug Park undergoes another transformation. Parks employees string lights through the trees, illuminated figures return to the roadside, and the castle and tunnels become part of a Christmas landscape recognized by generations of St. Joseph families.

The tradition began in 1981, when members of the East Hills Optimists Club approached the city's Parks and Recreation director with an idea for a lighted drive through Krug Park. Their early plan envisioned an illuminated entrance, decorations along the park road, a house for Santa and a donation booth whose proceeds could be used to improve the display from year to year.

The name came from the children of St. Joseph. In a contest conducted through local elementary schools, first-grader Steven Haywood submitted the winning entry: "Holiday Park." What began as a community proposal became one of the city's most durable seasonal traditions.

Today, parks maintenance employees generally begin decorating in mid-October and continue until Thanksgiving. A lighting ceremony traditionally opens the display after Thanksgiving, and the park remains illuminated through the Christmas season. The exact schedule changes by year, but the ritual remains familiar: families enter the park after dark and follow the winding roadway through lighted tunnels, figures, animals and scenes assembled across the hills.

Holiday Park is more than a display placed inside Krug Park. It depends upon the park's architecture and terrain. Stone arches hold ribbons of light. Curves in the roadway delay the next scene until the final moment. Trees and ravines create darkness between displays, allowing each illuminated figure to emerge as a discovery. The same landscape design that made Krug Park memorable by daylight gives the Christmas drive its sense of movement and surprise.

For many St. Joseph residents, the annual drive has become part of the family calendar. Parents who first saw the displays from a back seat now return with children and grandchildren of their own. In that repetition, Holiday Park has become a form of living history—rebuilt each year, altered slowly through donations and new displays, yet anchored to a place the community already knows by heart.

Restoring the crown jewel

That living tradition now shares the park with its most extensive modern restoration. St. Joseph voters approved a half-cent parks sales tax in 2021, creating the principal funding source for a multiyear effort to preserve Krug Park's historic structures while preparing them for contemporary public use.

The city's published parks-project list assigns approximately \$12.795 million to the full set of Krug Park improvements. A September 2025 city release described the active two-year renovation project as an \$11.75 million undertaking. The two figures appear to represent different scopes or accounting stages: the broader parks-sales-tax allocation and the construction project then underway.

West 8, the landscape architecture firm that delivered the park master plan in December 2023, developed its recommendations through community feedback, historical study and an effort to protect the character of the century-old landscape. Construction led by E.L. Crawford Construction began in the summer of 2025.

At the castle, the work includes restoration of the exterior brick and rock walls and reconstruction of the interior. New restrooms, concessions and dressing rooms are intended to return the building to useful service for performances, weddings, picnics and other gatherings. Plans also call for an accessible route and accommodations that allow more visitors to reach and use the historic complex.

The Krug Bowl amphitheater is receiving a replacement stage and support building. The Children's Circus is being restored, including masonry work, re-grouting and the careful cleaning of limestone darkened by decades of dirt and weather. Picnic shelters, playgrounds, restrooms, stone walls, the upper parking-area retaining wall and the upper tunnel are also included in the city's broader project list.

Much of the most important work will eventually disappear beneath the finished landscape. Crews are installing or replacing sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water and electrical infrastructure across the site. The upgraded electrical system is intended to support community events, future seasonal festivals and additional Holiday Park lighting. During construction, the lagoon fountain and waterfall have at times remained out of service because electrical power was shut down for safety.

The restoration also reaches beyond buildings. Selective clearing is reopening historic views between the lagoon and the Bowl, while crews remove invasive honeysuckle and wintercreeper from the oak-hickory forest. The stated goal is not to remake Krug Park into something unrecognizable, but to reveal and strengthen the qualities that made it distinctive in the first place.

Construction inevitably brings temporary closures, unfinished surfaces and interruptions to familiar routines. The castle closed for major work in September 2025, and access to other areas has changed as phases advance. City officials nevertheless kept Holiday Park in operation during construction, preserving the seasonal tradition while the larger restoration continued around it.

The city's September 2025 schedule placed completion of the overall renovation in the fall of 2027, with earlier phases coming into service before then. If the work succeeds, visitors will not encounter a newly invented Krug Park. They will encounter an old park made safer, more accessible and better equipped to serve another century.

"Preservation is not freezing a place in time. It is giving the next generation a place worth remembering."

CHAPTER IX

What the Park Keeps



Water continues over the limestone ledges at Krug Park.

The water now carries the knowledge of a family's gift, a landscape architect's gardens, streetcars arriving at a formal gate, glasshouse plants, monkeys, bridges, tunnels, playgrounds, holiday lights and three families confronted by violence.

None of those stories erases the others. That is the difficult grace of an old public place. It can hold celebration without denying grief. It can preserve beauty without pretending innocence. It can outlive the worst thing that happened there without declaring that the worst thing did not matter.

The park's legacy is not murder. Its legacy is public life. Generations have used these acres because the Krug family placed land into the care of the city and because generations after them maintained, altered, argued over and returned to it. The stonework survives because somebody repaired it. The lagoon remains because somebody tended it. Holiday Park glows because volunteers build the displays again. Preservation is not a single gift made in 1890 or 1936; it is a repeated decision.

Krug Park's next chapter is no longer merely being planned; it is under construction. The work must continue to balance history, access, ecology, recreation and the expectations of a new generation. Its best future will not attempt to recreate every vanished feature exactly. It will protect what made the place distinctive: the drama of the terrain, the rhythm of discovery, the marriage of constructed stone and living landscape, and the conviction that civic beauty should be available to all.

Walk the road. Stand beneath the columns. Look across the lagoon. Listen beside the waterfall. The park does not speak in dates, but the dates are there. History has not vanished. It has become part of the ground beneath the path.

“Life moves forward. History remains. And the water never stops.”



Historic postcard view of the grotto and stone stairway at Krug Park.

REFERENCE

Historic Timeline

Date	Event
1890	Krug family land is given for the creation of a public park.
1898	The glass conservatory is built among the formal gardens.
May 6, 1902	Krug Park officially opens to the public.
1900s–1910s	Streetcars bring visitors to gardens, walks, animal exhibits and the conservatory.
July 13, 1913	Madeline Rowbotham is killed near the park gateway; Thomas F. Harris survives a self-inflicted wound and is prosecuted.
1921–1922	The castle is constructed.
c. 1928	Krug Park Drive is completed through two tunnels.
1936	Further Krug family gifts expand the park; the on-site plaque records the park at 162 acres.
January 26, 1940	Jane Miller and Alfred Dick are found dead in a car overlooking the bowl; authorities rule murder-suicide.
Late 20th century	The conservatory and several early features disappear; the stone landscape, lagoon and drives remain.
October 16, 2016	Kaytlin Root is found killed in a remote trail area. Digital evidence leads investigators to Sebastian Dowell and Amanda Bennett.
2017	Dowell and Bennett plead guilty to second-degree murder and receive life sentences.
Today	Krug Park remains a major public landscape and the setting of Holiday Park each winter.
1981	East Hills Optimists propose a Christmas drive-through display; local first-grader Steven Haywood supplies the winning name, “Holiday Park.”
2021	St. Joseph voters approve the half-cent parks sales tax that becomes the principal funding source for major Krug Park improvements.
December 2023	West 8 delivers the Krug Park master plan following historical study and community engagement.
Summer 2025	Major renovation work begins at the castle, Krug Bowl, Children’s Circus and supporting park infrastructure.
Fall 2027	City schedule calls for completion of the overall Krug Park renovation project.

DOCUMENTATION

Sources and Editorial Notes

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Acknowledgment

This first volume recognizes the individuals and organizations that have preserved photographs, clippings, memories and park history across generations. Their work made it possible to reconstruct a fuller account of Krug Park. Future editions should credit each contributed image at the item level and preserve original file names and provenance wherever known.

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