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## Omaha's Krug Park Roller Coaster Accident: Exploring the Diffusion of Communication in Newspapers and Among Omaha Residents

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Omaha's Krug Park Roller Coaster Accident:  
Exploring the Diffusion of Communication in  
Newspapers and Among Omaha Residents

A Thesis  
Presented to the School of Communication  
And the  
Faculty of the Graduate College  
In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Melissa L. Kucirek  
August 2004

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Communication degree, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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9/19/04

## Abstract

Kucirek, M.L. (2004) Omaha's 1930 krug park roller coaster accident: Exploring the diffusion of communication in newspapers and Omaha residents.

This thesis focused on the 1930 roller coaster accident at Krug Park. Applying the diffusion of communication theory, and an historical standard of press performance set forth by Martin & Nelson (1956), this study found that *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* coverage of the crash was balanced and thorough. Articles were compared to the City of Omaha amusement ride statutes.

The second portion of the study examined 96 newspaper articles mentioning Krug Park between December 15, 1930, and May 25, 2001, and discovered the majority did not refer to the accident. This thesis supports previous research on crisis or disaster story reporting. Many of the articles used story-telling or dramatic leads to engage readers.

Twenty-two interviews were conducted and subjects eluded to a variety of responses of how they had heard about the Krug Park roller coaster accident. Much of the information went beyond that of newspaper articles, and often gave much more graphic descriptions. Respondents shared memories of the park, including their favorite rides.

This study is limited by time lapse and respondents' living background. Potential research on Krug Park is suggested in the field of public relations tactics that park owners should have exercised.

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## Acknowledgements

While I went through many ups and downs with this thesis, the high points would not have been possible were it not for the assistance and guidance of several people. I would like to thank Professor Hugh Reilly, my thesis chairman, as well as Dr. Dave Ogden, and Dr. Bruce Garver, who both served on my committee. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Kristin Zagurski who took a chance in helping me track down *The Omaha World-Herald* clippings. Thank you to all of the friends I can't name because it fills another book in itself. And, finally, my parents, sister, and brother-in-law, thank you for believing in me and being there when I most needed you.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

It's a sunny winter day in Benson, Nebraska in 2004. Cars drive by Rachel K. Gallagher Park, splashing melted snow onto the gray, cracked sidewalks. This same land more than 70 years ago had a different buzz of traffic surrounding it. Back then Gallagher Park was Krug Park. Rumor has it that some trees survive from 1880 when it was called Tietz Park. If you listen carefully, you can still hear children's laughter and the splashing of water from the Olympic-sized pool. Perhaps dancers are jitterbugging in the ballroom, where it might be "Flapper Night." A group of boys from South Omaha have just stepped off the street car. Or maybe you can see other flashbacks from a history that many Omahans have not forgotten—the Swawnee River, the Whip, or the beautiful flower garden.

From 1903 to the mid 1950s, Omaha's Krug Park was a popular amusement park where people could watch a live-parachuting trapeze artist or a high diving horse, among other things (*The Benson Sun*, August 7, 1975, p. 7). Old photographs enable one today to make a nostalgic visit to a park celebrated for its picturesque landscapes and glamorous life in the 1920s.

Besides the shouts of joy and memorable fun, Krug Park's legacy also includes tears and tragedy. On Thursday evening, July 24, 1930, the Big Dipper roller coaster's train of four cars jumped off the track, sending all 23 passengers more than 30 feet to the ground. Some of them trapped under cars, others thrown from their safety belts. Omaha city officials determined, within 24 hours, that a faulty brake shoe, caused by a loose nut



on a wooden beam, triggered the accident. Four persons died and the rest were scarred both physically and mentally (*Omaha World-Herald*, April 22, 1967). Within days of the Krug Park roller coaster tragedy, Omaha Mayor Richard L. Metcalf called for the banishment of roller coasters from the city.

The mayor, a native of Upper Alton, Illinois, had a background as a newspaper reporter and a flare for real estate development. He'd also been a Democratic candidate for the United States Senate in April 1928 (Baldwin, *Who's who in Omaha: Biographical sketches of men and women of achievement*, 1928, pp. 132-133). He, like the rest of the city, was horrified and saddened by the deaths of Ruth Farrell, C.H. Stout, Anthony "Tony" Polityka, and Gladys Lundgren.

In 1932, just two years after the tragic roller coaster accident, Krug Park took another blow to its business when its grand ballroom burned to the ground. After World War II began, scrap metal from the rides supported the war effort. The park went through a series of management changes in the 1940s, and stood at the center of a land development debate in the late 1940s. Finally, the park closed its gates in the mid 1950s. By then, it had become an un-kept area that some called "unsightly" (Cartwright, 1954, *Benson, Nebraska: A Satellite Community*).

The Krug Park tragedy played out through newspapers, the radio, and especially in the homes and neighborhoods surrounding the Benson area. No television broadcasts interrupted to share the news, nor did school-aged children chat online about the four who died riding a roller coaster. The diffusion of communication as a result of the Krug Park roller coaster accident presents a unique study for social sciences. Because

newspapers were the dominant communication medium, it is worthwhile to examine the journalists' words, and how these articles judge by a historical set of standards. Omaha history benefits from this particular study because little has been explored on Krug Park. The purpose of this study is to explore this diffusion of communication.

The land where the "Big Dipper" roller coaster once stood is again a park in every sense of the word. Benson High School still stands to the east. Baseball fields, a children's jungle gym, a public pool, and rolling pastures are all that is left of the beer garden that began over 100 years ago.

Krug Park never fully recovered after the 1930 roller coaster accident. For this reason, a study is needed to examine this horrific event. Did the newspaper accounts influence patrons to stay clear from Krug Park? To what extent did both *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* reflect and condition public perception of this accident? Did 1930 reporters sensationalize or exaggerate the event?

No books have been written about the history of Krug Park, yet it is still mentioned in several Omaha books and newsprint articles ("When the Park was Flying High," "Ready to Swim," Omaha Times Remembered, 1999, pgs. 53, 72, "Krug Park Coaster," Omaha Times Remembered Volume III, 2002, p. 37) Its history is captured in newspaper articles.

*The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News*, for example, were the two of the Omaha daily newspapers in circulation in July and August 1930. Other papers included, *The Catholic Voice*, *Benson Times*, *Jewish Press*, and the *Douglas County Legionnaire* (<http://www.omahalib.neb.us>). Omaha, like much of the United States at that

time, had enjoyed a prosperous decade in the 1920s (Larsen and Cottrell, 1982, p. 152). Typical city, yes, in many respects, Omaha had been hit hard by the Great Depression. In this study, interview respondents reveal that extra money often went towards food or utilities, but funds for entertainment still managed to appear. Nor did tough times stop the community from buying newspapers—especially the “Extra!” editions.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis, but a brief history of the two daily newspapers revealed a strong competition to sell papers. Although earlier in their histories, this is more apparent, in 1930 their reporting showed many similarities. *The Omaha Bee News*' contribution to Omaha's history is critical, said Larsen and Cottrell (1982). They noted that the founding editor, Edward Rosewater, often used the paper as a soapbox for his Republican political stances. Rosewater "attacked thousands" of people in the pages of *The Omaha Bee News* (p. 98). Rosewater made no apologies for his opinions; however they differed from the norms of Omaha community leaders.

William Randolph Hearst, a well-known sensationalistic publisher, eventually purchased *The Omaha Bee News*, a combination of two previous newspapers. Larsen and Cottrell (1982) reported that one of *The Omaha Bee News* employees made a statement on behalf of Hearst, declaring that Omaha "typically personifies the heart, mind, and body of our country," a statement the business leaders of Omaha found quite positive (p. 194). *The Omaha Bee News* posted a circulation of 120,000 in 1930.

Hearst sold *The Omaha Bee News* in 1937 for \$750,000 to the *World-Herald* (Larsen and Cottrell, 1982, p. 194). *The Omaha World-Herald* can be traced to 1865, with the establishment of *The Omaha Herald*. Dr. George L. Miller, a physician, was its

founder. He served as editor of *The Omaha Herald* until 1888 (Christensen, W., 1936, 191). Gilbert Hitchcock started *The Omaha Daily World* in August 1885. "The young Hitchcock felt Omaha needed a non-partisan newspaper" (p. 5). Hitchcock, himself a Republican, sought to leave his political opinions out of *The Omaha World-Herald*, a combined newspaper first hitting the news stands on July 15, 1889. Hitchcock's intentions of leaving his political beliefs off the paper's pages lasted until it publicly supported Democrat William Jennings Bryan (p.5). The 1930 circulation for *The Omaha World-Herald* ranges is just over 120,000.

Chapter 2  
Frederick Krug

“That the brewing interest is one of the paramount importances in the country (look upon it as we may), is a fact that cannot be gainsaid.”

*-The History of Omaha and South Omaha,  
J. W. Savage, J. T. Bell, and C. W. Butterfield  
Page 558*

German-born Frederick Krug came to the United States in 1833, at the age of 19. He arrived in Omaha in 1855 (Otis and Erickson, 2000, p. 75). Four years later, Krug’s brewery became the first in the state of Nebraska. Building the facility at 1013 to 1015 Farnam Street took six weeks, with Krug himself playing a major role in the construction (Savage, Bell, and Butterfield, 1894, p. 506). Eager customers included the traveling Mormons (a surprising research finding that Mormons consumed alcohol). Along with his business partner, Rudolf Selzer, a former shoemaker, Krug’s brewery produced twelve to eighteen barrels weekly. Business increased, and in 1894, sole-proprietor Krug had expanded the size of the brewery, employed sixty workers, and produced 50,000 barrels of beer a year and earnings of \$1 million (Savage, Bell, and Butterfield, 1894, pp. 507, 558).

Before Krug’s arrival in Omaha, German immigrant Charles Tietz had purchased 160 acres of land in the present area of 52<sup>nd</sup> and Maple Streets. There he established Tietz Park, a popular dance hall and beer garden, where its heyday occurred during the 1880 and 1890s. While patrons could relax in the summer evening drinking ale, other groups like farm boys caused enough ruckuses to bolt the tables to the ground (Cartwright, 1988, p. 81).

After Tietz's first wife passed away some time during the 1890s, he married a much younger woman. His new wife enjoyed dancing and traveling. Tietz added a bowling alley to the park and set off for a tour of Germany with his new wife. Before leaving, he developed a mortgage plan with Krug whereby Krug Brewing Company financed the bowling alley and the Tietz trip to Germany. After Tietz died in 1903, his estate was unable pay off the mortgage, whereby Krug acquired the park.

A 1966 *Benson Sun* article identified W.W. Cole as Krug's co-owner in the Krug Park venture. Cole is credited with having organized and promoted much of the establishment's public entertainment including his famous "dog and pony" shows. The newspaper didn't clearly describe these events, but insinuated circus animals and parades afforded a fun-filled day for the entire family. Cole arranged for newspaper reporters to cover the park's domination in the nickel game market for children and adults alike. He even produced a small band of circus performers to ride on ponies along 16<sup>th</sup> and Harney Streets, in downtown Omaha (*Benson Sun*, December 1, 1966, p. 2).

During prohibition, Krug Brewery sold soft drinks. However, Krug Park closed its doors the years 1908 to 1913. "His park beer sales and some newspaper editorials suggested, his own German-birth created intense neighborhood opposition" (*The Omaha World-Herald*, July 24, 1985, p. 3).

Krug died on November 19, 1919, at the age of 86. He was Omaha's first traffic fatality, at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Leavenworth Streets (*Benson Sun*, December 1, 1966, p. 2). No resource stated the specifics of his death. His wife, the former Anna Wittig whom he

married in 1856, three daughters, and two sons survived him. His estate was estimated at more than \$500,000 (Otis and Erickson, 2000, p. 75).

### Chapter 3 Roller Coasters and Other Amusement Parks

*“Several people have made the comment that the 1920s were a time when riders were treated like guinea pigs and that safety was a facet of ride design that did not exist.”*  
-[www.ultimaterollercoaster.com](http://www.ultimaterollercoaster.com)

Though it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide statistical analysis of safety measures or a complete history of roller coasters, the thrill ride itself has held a place in American history for many years. Roller coasters of today are night and day in difference to Krug Park’s wooden “Big Dipper”, but still present safety issues for eager and brave riders. Dodge (2001) reported the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s 1999 findings of amusement ride injuries—10,400 patrons visited hospital emergency rooms (p. 43). Mulrine (2000) stated that 7,200 people went to E.R.’s because of ride-related injuries in 1999 (p. 59). Silver (1999) tallied the deaths of amusement riders to be six in 1999 (p. 56). Given the present day status of steel, high speeding coasters, how then did American amusement parks come to love the roller coaster?

The world’s first coasters are believed to be derived from St. Petersburg, Russia’s “Ice Slides” The slides were several city-blocks in length and raced riders along at 50-miles-per-hour (Pescovitz, “Inventing the Scream Machine,” <http://www.brittanica.com>). Russia’s rides influenced France’s “Les Montagnes Russes a Belleville” and “Promenades Aeriennes” (Sawdy, <http://www.ultimaterollercoaster.com>) Judging from photographs, riders sat on toboggan-like contraptions and rolled along hills.

Americans got their first taste of a coaster circa 1830 with Pennsylvania’s “Mauch Chunk Switchback Railway” (Pescovitz, 2004). “The barney or booster car pushed cars



up the 664 feet (vertical) of Mt. Pisgah along 2,322 feet of track” (Cartmell, p. 37). Some historians consider the “Mauch Chunk Switchback Railway” America’s first railroad. Only two recorded accidents occurred in the “Mauch Chunk” history (Cartmell, p. 40).

“The Roaring Twenties,” a term often used to describe the “Jazz Age” and an outlandish America during the 1920s, saw a substantial growth in the amusement park industry, and even more so in the development of roller coasters. Cartmell (1987) claimed the 1920s to be the “Golden Age” of roller coasters (p. 137). Though inventors before him and following him contributed to this progression, Thomas Miller is considered the “Thomas Edison” of roller coasters because of the hundreds of patents he developed towards safety and construction (Cartmell, 1987 p. 124), (Pescovitz, <http://www.brittanica.com> ), and (Sawdy, <http://www.ultimaterollercoaster.com>). “Master Miller,” as he was often called, designed three coasters in the state of Nebraska: Lincoln’s Capital Beach, Omaha’s Lakeview Park, and Omaha’s Krug Park. Miller is also believed to have designed the 1929 coaster at Norfolk, Nebraska’s King’s Park (Cartmell, 1987, pp. 125, 126, 165).

Another designer with Nebraska ties was Henry Traver. Traver created some of the most dangerous and thrilling roller coasters of the 1920s. One such ride, the Cyclone of Palisades Park in Fort Lee, New Jersey, ran only six years. According to Pescovitz (2004), crowds watched the ride, but didn’t participate after one passenger fell out of the car and died on the second night. Cartmell (1987) said Traver’s rides would not be built today because of safety reasons and indicated this as another anecdote to the “reckless spirit of the 1920s” (p. 153).

Born in Gardner, Illinois, Traver's family moved to Davenport, Nebraska, where he graduated from high school. He later worked as a mechanical engineer for the 1898 Trans-Mississippi International Exposition in Omaha (Cartmell, p. 154, 156).

Like many of America's entertainment parks, Krug Park stood at the end of a streetcar line. Middleton (1971) reports the marriage between a streetcar line and an "electric park" is believed to be Iowa & Illinois Railway's stretch linking Clinton and Davenport, Iowa. Starting in 1910, the railway hoped to attract farmers to use its services and be entertained at the same time (Middleton, pp. 32, 33). Thavenet (1960) noted the foresight of trolley owners in developing Lake Manawa into an amusement park. Near Council Bluffs, Iowa, Lake Manawa featured swimming, yachting, dancing, and a roller coaster for patrons. All this included in the cost of round trip trolley ride—a mere \$0.25 (Thavenet, p. 53).

Unlike Krug Park, many electric amusement parks owners also ran the streetcar lines in the early 1900s. Trendy patrons rode the streetcar back from an amusement park on a summer evening (Cartmell, pp. 60, 63). In an August 20, 1937, an article from the *North Omaha Booster* newspaper, page one, reported "April 1891 Marks First Tram Service." Benson's namesake, Erastus Benson, partnered Chicago's W.H. Carey to control the Halycon Heights addition. Benson owned the line connecting his town and Omaha.

"In 1904, the car line was from Benson to South Omaha. With the passing of years, Benson now has a street car service equal to all other parts of the city of Omaha." Mutz (1935) provided a history of the Benson community, including its recreational facilities. In addition to Tietz Park and Krug Park, she briefly mentions Military Park. An

amusement park, she said, located on the outskirts of Benson. Military Park opened in 1888, but closed in 1902. The park closed because “a brawl had occurred in which a man was murdered” (p. 26). I found no other mention of Military Park in my research.

### Omaha’s Peony Park

Another popular Omaha amusement park was Peony Park, named after the beautiful peonies in Carl Rosenfield’s large garden. In 1919 Joe Malec, Sr., built a gas station across (what is now Cass Street; north of West Dodge Road) from Rosenfield’s garden. He attracted so many visitors to his gas station that he soon added a restaurant, the Peony Inn. This eatery later evolved into a beer garden and the Royal Terrace ballroom. Malec unveiled a swimming pool in 1926. During the 1930s and 1940s, the era of “Big Bands” drew a national following to Peony Park. Among them, the most notable, the Lawrence Welk Band, actually called the Royal Terrace ballroom its home base.

The Royal Grove, an outdoor entertainment facility, opened within Peony Park in 1935. The park began treating patrons to amusement rides in 1958; the Galaxy roller coaster began running in 1972. The Galaxy is estimated to have cost close to \$2 million (Jennings, Omaha’s Peony Park, 2001).

In October 1992, five young riders suffered minor injuries at the Peony Park roller coaster. Citing brake failure, the park shut down the ride immediately following the accident. *The Omaha World-Herald* reported in its evening edition that the cars bumped into the next ride’s vehicles. No passengers were thrown from the cars, and no mechanical problems were found. A representative from Peony Park told the newspaper that all of Peony’s rides were tested on a daily basis (*The Omaha World-Herald*, October

23, 1992, am and pm editions, Chris Burbach authored evening edition). No articles reporting on this event even mentioned the 1930 Krug Park roller coaster accident, nor did The Omaha World-Herald make reference to Omaha's roller coaster ban (a move lifted in the 1950s; see Appendix V).

Peony Park closed its doors in 1995 surrounded by controversy. Whereas the city of Omaha wanted the park's land to be used for commercial real estate development, some citizens thought otherwise. As in the case of Krug Park, the Gallagher Foundation stepped in to save the 26-acres of Peony Park's land for recreational use. Nonetheless, the \$100,000 pledge proved to be insufficient (Thomas, F., October 14, 1994, "Peony Group Gets \$100,000 for Fund Drive, *The Omaha World-Herald*).

## Chapter 4

### Review of Previous Literature

Many scholars have examined the influence of a community on a newspaper. Burt (1996) analyzed ten daily Wisconsin newspapers in the years 1911-1916, focusing on the women's suffrage movement. She found partial evidence that the social, ethnic, and economic character of a newspaper's community influenced coverage. Similarly, Loew (1997/1998) analyzed the 1909 Chippewa Hearings, a series of four investigations by the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Loew found evidence revealing six-Wisconsin area newspapers mirrored the racist communities' attitude toward the Indians (p. 150). Startt and Sloan (1989) wrote that the media have consistently played a key role in reflecting the public's interests and views. They said news media could often influence the community (Startt and Sloan, p. 16).

Previous scholars have also looked at a newspaper's influence on a community. The media can tell audiences "what to think about" and "how to think about it" simply by focusing on issues, said Kim, Scheufele, and Shannahan (2002, p. 21). Dearing and Rogers (1996) defined this focusing as "agenda setting" (p. 2). Burt (1996) found the editor of *The Wisconsin State Journal*, Richard Lloyd James, to be a staunch supporter of women's rights. Thus she said, the editorials and coverage often reflected James' views or agenda (Burt, 1996, p. 625). Editor Horace Greeley's influence on *The New York Tribune*, the topic of Borchard's (2003) case study, led state trial members in the John Brown case to link Greeley with the abolitionist (p. 15). Lawrence (1996) recognized that journalists, following a crisis, could in their use of these events influence change in the

community. She studied six years' worth of *The Los Angeles Times* coverage of the Rodney King beatings and found that journalists purposely engaged in writing to perpetuate change (p. 452). They did this by consistently putting related stories on cover pages or editorials. Lundman (2003) performed a qualitative study on homicide coverage in newspapers and determined that journalists do use race and gender typifications to control their decisions about whether to cover a murder, how much space is dedicated to the case, and what page the story or stories will be put on to gain readership (pgs. 381, 383).

Crisis reporting, scholars have found, can differ in accuracy and reporting. Perse (2001) wrote that after a crisis, officials with the answers to most reporters' questions are often unavailable for comment, making the first step in crisis reporting a struggle in accuracy (p. 69). Lasorsa (2003) indicated journalists expect to encounter misunderstandings and false information during a crisis (p. 19). He looked at Web sites posting rumors following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and compared the reports to six print newspapers (*The Chicago Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*). Lasorsa also compared the Web sites to *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines (p. 12). Fico and Drager (2001) performed a qualitative and quantitative analysis in determining news stories about a "conflict" leave a reader with a 25% chance of reading a fair and balanced article (p. 8). They said the longer a story lasted in the newspapers (circulations between 50,000 and 100,000), the more unbalanced the story (pp. 6, 8). Loew (1997/1998) noted a discrepancy of accurate reporting when none of the six Wisconsin newspapers recorded a

“dramatic” trial event—when committee members refused to listen to the Chippewa Indians' testimony—nor did any accounts use Indian sources (p. 152). Startt and Sloan (1989) said that evaluation of past material is more credible when the intended audience is smaller, and less credible the larger the audience (p. 135).

Do journalists utilize certain tools to draw readers into a tragic story? Kitch (2002) explained that media attempts to “console” and return to order creates a sense of drama following a tragedy. Journalists do this, she said, through thematic story telling (p. 305). Newsmagazines' coverage of John F. Kennedy Jr.'s death presented this dramatic dedication through photographs, graphics, and page layout design (Kitch, 2002, p. 299). Trisnadi (2002) looked at the journalistic creation of drama. Trisnadi examined both American and British newspapers following the September 11 terrorist attacks. Journalists used analogies, nostalgia, and shared experiences to report their articles (p. 298). Author Alcira Kreimer (1979) believed that audiences can only relate to disasters or tragedies in the news, through “individual human terms” (p. 24). This is not to say that people enjoy seeing others suffer, but that readers are further drawn into an article by reading about someone who might like themselves in so many other ways. How would they react in the situation? Or they might have a sibling that went through a similar situation, and therefore they feel empathy towards the person they read about in the newspaper. It creates drama and reality at the same time. In August 2003, Jamieson, et al., interviewed reporters and analyzed the content of *The New York Times* articles describing suicide. Jamieson, et al., learned from these interviews that journalists were more likely to report on a story if it could be put within a "compelling" narrative, which

included the victim's photograph, personal background, and any "salient" trend that would most interest the reader (p. 1653). This idea of salience, as Rogers (2000) described, is "the level of which an individual believes the news to be important" (p. 562). Details in shooting reports or other news reports of violence are important. Campbell (2000) noted that readers search for wide-ranging aspects of the "characters" involved in newspaper accounts. He emphasized the latitude that journalists take when providing specifics so readers can learn more about newsworthy individuals (p. 691).

How would have newspapers, like *The Omaha World-Herald* or *The Omaha Bee News*, reported a disaster in 1930? In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalists emphasized dramatic stories such as "sex, crime, and disaster news" (Baran, 2001, p. 508). Campbell (2001) wrote about this sensational journalism, or "yellow journalism," and defines it as consisting of "frequent use of multi-column headlines, sometimes stretching across the front page... a variety of topics reported on the front page, including news of politics, war, international diplomacy, sports, and society, the generous and imaginative use of illustrations, including photographs and other graphic representations such as locator maps" (pgs. 7-8).

More recently, scholarly journals have published entire editions devoted to a national event, the terrorism attacks on September 11, 2001, and its impact, or how the nation learned of it ("Media Studies of September 11," *Newspaper Research Journal*, 2003). This tragic news trend is certainly a product of modern events and like previous research studies, the diffusion of communication theory serves as a theoretical base.



Diffusion is defined as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (Rogers, 1995, p. 5). Diffusion consists of four main components: the innovation itself, the outlets through which it is communicated, the length of time involved, and the environment in which diffusion takes place. In other words, what is being communicated, how is it being communicated—through people, media, how long does it take to communicate, and what type of setting—a small community, a large national, news event? Diffusion of a news event, therefore, gives meaning to a mass media event and includes studies of the “complex” mass media process of transmitting news (Rogers, 2000, p. 562). The level to which an individual believes the news to be important is called "salience." Salience leads a person to sharing the information with another person or looking for more information on the event (Rogers, 2000, p. 566).

In 1940, a team of researchers selected Erie County, Ohio, for a study on why the citizens voted the way they did in the 1940 United States presidential election. “The People's Choice” showed, among other things, that a "two-step flow of communication" had occurred with "opinion leaders" within the community having influenced the votes of their neighbors, families, or friends (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995, pp. 72-74, pp.89-90). This concept of "opinion leaders" had been a major deviation from the magic-bullet theory, or the idea that because the audience's actions are not likely to be influenced by social ties media messages can therefore influence all audience members the same ways (Lowery and DeFleur, 1995, p. 14).

Whereas many researchers have focused on a variety of topics ranging from hard news events to soft news feature stories, the majority of studies cite Miller (1945) as a diffusion of a news event milestone (Deutschmann and Danielson, 1960; Basil and Brown, 1994). It is a milestone because Miller pioneered diffusion research in not only the political realm, but its results. After studying the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Miller's research set the stage for more works to be looked at from a similar scope. Miller found that most people found out about the death of FDR from interpersonal communication and were drawn to the media to learn more information. Banta (1964) took a similar route, surveying a random sampling of respondents in a Midwestern state after President John F. Kennedy's assassination. Greenberg (1964) examined the news reports of the leader's death, determining that the broadcast media played a back-up role to person-to-person communication. Persons confirmed what they had been told by neighbors or friends by turning to the media (pp. 227-228). Greenberg (1964) also noted the uniqueness of his study; because of the news impact, "only the physically isolate could avoid hearing of the assassination on the day it occurred" (p. 232).

This political reporting trend, or the technique of studying politically-centered events, continued throughout the next two decades with, to name a few, in-depth looks at President Eisenhower's notification that despite a stroke he would run again for the presidency (Danielson, 1956), to Lyndon B. Johnson's 1968 announcement he would not seek the presidency another term (Allen & Colfax, 1968), and the failed assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan's life (Gantz, 1983). Gantz (1983) supported the

findings that were in concert with interpersonal communication as the primary source of information (p.326).

These works all represent stories that exhibit dramatic effects through media, or a high amount of news value. “The importance of an event might be defined as the number of persons whose lives the event affects in a decisive manner. The news value of the report of the event might be defined as the number of persons that feel involved in the event (and, indirectly, in the event itself) (Rosengren, 1973, p. 84). With such a variety of exploration, the results consistently showed that news value plays a critical role in communication.

Not all news events have influenced a mass audience in such dramatic form, but still hold value to this particular field of research. Focusing on a local news event, Gantz, Krendl, and Robertson (1986) brought new life to news diffusion research by examining the diffusion and follow-up process of a fire at an Indiana University fraternity house. The authors supported the premise that individuals are proactive after hearing of an event that is “salient to their lives” (p. 287). Previously, Medalia and Larsen (1958) specifically looked at Seattle’s windshields dilemma in which broken windshields were turning up all over Seattle and no one could explain why. Bogart (1950) studied the spread of news when a hometown girl became the feature story in a larger-market newspaper.

Traditionally, news diffusion studies have gathered data immediately following the event or soon thereafter (Funkhouser & McCombs, 1971, p. 107). Fathi (1973) interviewed via telephone a sample of 250 Canadian sociology students just less than 24 hours after the last bulletin announcing the marriage of a Canadian prime minister. Allen

and Colfax (1968) surveyed 79 persons, 19 hours following LBJ's announcement. Banta (1964) and Miller (1945) also conducted surveys within 24 hours of an event's conclusion. In general these studies revealed a close relationship between where a person was when they heard the news and the amount of time had passed before they were interviewed. For example, someone working at an office would be more likely to know about an event than a housewife working on laundry. In addition, respondents were more likely to recall pertinent, abundant information on the event.

Several studies have relied upon methods carried out more than 24 hours after the event. Gantz' (1983) study conducted 309 interviews two and three days following the Reagan assassination attempt (p. 59). Ostlund (1973-1974) completed 108 interviews four days following George McGovern's decision to drop Thomas Eagleton from the presidential race following the press' disclosure of Eagleton's mental illness history (p. 604). This is the same time period for surveillance by Gantz, Krendl, and Robertson (1986, p. 284). The longest, 11 days after the event, studied 391 participants (Basil & Brown, 1994, p. 311). Likewise, Steinfatt (1973) investigated the reactions of respondents following politician George Wallace's shooting. He acknowledged a "decay of memory" over time from respondents, and found that 79% of the total sampling (114 persons) heard of the event from interpersonal communication (p. 404).

General surveys of news diffusion research have produced both criticism and reflective importance on the field's emergence and decline. During the 1950's, researchers relied heavily on "fire engine" studies, a methodology that rushes its interviews and surveys following an event, while decade's later studies were modified to

have questions pre-planned and respondents pre-chosen (DeFleur, 1987, p. 113). Either method presents challenges. “The researcher must choose between alternatives of getting ready after the event and suffering all the ills of a hasty, ‘crash’ project, or getting ready before and suffering the ills of having his design, interviewer morale and patience molder while he awaits the event” (Deutschmann & Danielson, 1960, p. 346). Rogers (2000) argued that this preparation proved consequential in later developed diffusion studies because of its methodology and detailed outline, or “paradigm” (p. 563). “Once a paradigm is established in any research field, it typically attracts a number of scholars” (Rogers, 2000, p. 565), further advancing the topic. “Negative diffusion” relates to respondents forgetting about the news event, a consideration in studies with a gap between the event and data collection. “This is clearly contrary to the findings of previous studies of information diffusion, but is consistent with common sense” (Funkhouser & McComb, 1971, p. 107).

Time of day, nature of the story, and other factors do not significantly alter recollections. Interpersonal contact plays a more active role (Hill & Bonjean, 1964, p. 336). Subjects conveyed relationships with other individuals as having a primary cause of knowing details. Conflicting with this idea is Rosengren (1973), who notes age, gender, education level, interest, and base knowledge as important components. Subjects tended to remember the events or news items that most interested them, or that they had some prior exposure to any portion of the story. Furthermore, the type of media has never been uniformly studied in each of the communities’ sampled (Fine, 1975, p. 752). Gantz

(1983) concluded that location played a role in respondents' knowledge; he found a 50% rate of interpersonal communication as the source of information (pp. 61, 63).

In general, previous publications have reiterated the importance of the media within society. With television becoming the most "informative," "trusted," and most "relied upon" source, the print medium fell as the first source or primary agent of information amongst respondents (Gantz, Krendl & Robertson, 1986, p. 286). Gantz (1983) also found a high number of respondents (62 percent), who first became aware of the Reagan assassination attempt from television (p. 61). The more that heard of the news from television, the fewer respondents had heard of the event from radio (Rosengren, 1973, p. 90). Hill and Bonjean (1964) studied seven hard news events, ranging from Kennedy's assassination, Roosevelt's death, Alaskan Statehood, to Eisenhower's decision to seek a second term. Findings put television and interpersonal relationships well beyond radio and print as information sources. The largest percentage (87 percent) stated personal relationships as source of news of Roosevelt's death, with Kennedy's assassination also ranking high (57.1 percent) in personal contact. The highest percentages of television as a source were in the launching of Explorer (41 percent) and Eisenhower's stroke (38 percent) (Hill & Bonjean, 1964, p. 339). Rogers and Seidel (2002) interviewed New Mexico respondents 10 days following the September 11 terrorist attacks. Their results indicated strong emotional responses. Respondents heard of the event mostly through television, and those findings supported previous work by Mayer, et.al., suggesting news is diffused more widespread on a weekday (p. 212).

Rogers and Seidel (2002) concluded that people who learned of the terrorist attacks from interpersonal communication channels then sought out more information from mass media, such as the Internet or television (p. 214). This gained information can then be applied toward an individual's status as an opinion leader. Basil and Brown (1994) said that after the Magic Johnson AIDS announcement, he found that persons determined the importance of the event, and spread the information to others (p. 313). In other words, a basketball fan might emphasize the news and bring it up in conversation at the office water cooler. Someone not as interested in basketball, or sports in general, might not think to bring it up in conversation. He reiterated the importance of mass media, but more so, the idea of salience. "The present findings validate the significance of individuals in the diffusion of news. Specifically, the process of news diffusion appears to hinge on whether a story is personally relevant to people" (p. 316).

Researchers have also shown a great deal of attention in analyzing news stories and how they are diffused to the public. Two similar studies by Loew (1997/1998) and Burt (1996) looked at Wisconsin newspapers in determining how separate events would have been perceived by readers. Both researchers used content analysis to search for imbalances in coverage or sensationalism. After looking through six newspapers within proximity to the 1909 Chippewa Indian hearings, Loew did find unfavorable coverage of the Indians, which included no Indian quotations or remarks (Loew, 1997/1998, p. 152). The Wisconsin newspaper coverage of the woman's suffrage movement, 1911-1909, led Burt to believe there was a general misrepresentation of the facts. Burt partially supported

the hypothesis that social, ethnic, and economic character of the community in which a newspaper was published would influence coverage (1996, pp. 622-623).

A more recent qualitative research study, also a content analysis, of September 11 terrorist attacks looked at newspapers, magazines, and websites. Lasorsa (2003) searched the Internet for any folklore, legend, or rumor related to 9/11 terrorist attacks. Following this, he examined *The Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today*, along with *Time* and *Newsweek* newsmagazines to determine if these rumors had made it onto the publications' pages (Lasorsa, 2003, p. 12). He found little follow-through by the news outlets to take these claims seriously (p. 14). "This study indicates that journalists can expect to be faced with both misunderstandings and lies in a crisis...it indicates the danger of relying on a single source for a story, even if the source appears to have no reason to lie" (Lasorsa, 2003, p. 19).

To more closely analyze press performance from a historical lens Martin and Nelson (1956) constructed a historical standard for press analysis. They defined four categories to judge newspaper accounts: accuracy, balance, judgment, and foresight (p. 463). More specifically these standards attempt to grade and dissect how a newspaper article stands the test of time. Martin & Nelson (1956) place emphasis on whether an article holds too many opinions of the author or publisher, does the story coincide with factual information, is the article clear or open for reader confusion, and finally, does the article predict an event's outcome? (463-464). Accuracy refers to the preciseness of the article and the journalists' skills in researching and rightly reporting the event. The



standard, balance, is judged by the sources used, or were both sides presented in an unbiased way? Balance also questions, did the journalist exhaust all avenues in reporting the event? Judgment is a standard from which a researcher must decipher if the news article is a logically written piece that encompasses the event. Furthermore, it asks the question on whether or not it leaves the reader wanting for more information? Foresight asks the questions such as did the event turn out the way the article had insinuated? Did the story set the stage for future reporting of the event?

## Chapter 5

### Purpose of the Study

While previous literature on diffusion of news events has examined the rate of how information travels and source of news for respondents, there is a gap in studies that actually look at details of the event. Rogers (2000) challenged future research to not only look at how individuals learn of an event, but what details they specifically remember, or if any behaviors were exhibited following the event (pp. 568, 569). Deppa, Russell, Hayes, & Flocke (1994) described the process of examining communication during a disaster as advantageous to learning more about the media's place in society (p. 321).

Based on previous literature calling for the expansion of news diffusion study, as well as the importance of Krug Park to the Omaha-Benson community, a closer-look at the tragic 1930 roller coaster accident is needed. Finally, for the historical record and to further examine the communication associated with the Krug Park accident, this study seeks to examine the following research questions:

**RQ1: How did persons hear about the 1930 Krug Park roller coaster accident?**

**RQ2: What do individuals remember about the Krug Park roller coaster accident?**

**R3: With what do individuals associate Krug Park?**

**RQ4: Using historical standard for the press, do the newspaper accounts of the 1930 roller coaster accident at Krug Park, meet the standards, set forth by Martin and Nelson (1956)?**

## Chapter 6 Methodology

The first step in this study began with my search of *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* articles. While mention of Krug Park exists prior to 1930 in both newspapers, the first section of this thesis focuses on coverage seven days following the roller coaster accident on Thursday, July 24, 1930.

These articles were evaluated into categories by newspapers. The first category, *The Omaha World-Herald*, had both morning and evening editions. The second category, *The Omaha Bee News*, I looked only at the evening editions. Using Martin and Nelson's (1956) historical standard of the American press, the articles from the morning and evening sections of the *Omaha World-Herald*, and the evening section of *The Omaha Bee News* were analyzed separately considering accuracy, balance, judgment, and foresight. I purposely noted the articles for use of yellow-journalism because of the era of journalism. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, journalists emphasized dramatic stories such as “sex, crime, and disaster news” (Baran, 2001, p. 508). Campbell (2001) wrote about this sensational journalism, or “yellow journalism,” and said it consisted of “frequent use of multi-column headlines, sometimes stretching across the front page...a variety of topics reported on the front page, including news of politics, war, international diplomacy, sports, and society, the generous and imaginative use of illustrations, including photographs and other graphic representations such as locator maps” (pgs. 7-8).

I also compared the articles to government documents, such as Omaha City Council minutes, Omaha Chamber of Commerce minutes, and Nebraska State Statutes to investigate factual information.

I gathered the second section of data are from *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Benson Sun* from December 15, 1930 to May 25, 2003; I noted the number of articles mentioning "Krug Park," and the number of articles that referred back to the roller coaster accident in the story. I chose these newspapers because of availability and they contained the most references to "Krug Park" or about the community of Benson.

I gathered the third section of data from personal or email interviews conducted with area residents. This process began with inquiry letters sent to Benson-area businesses, libraries, nursing homes, and senior care centers. I chose places because they might have served as a meeting ground for large groups of people or individuals that might have lived or been around Omaha or the Benson community at the time of the accident. Following the letters, I made telephone calls to confirm the receipt of these letters and see if there was any interest in interviews. Next, I booked appointments with interested parties for interviews in person or by telephone. A list of these parties can be found in Appendix IIA and Appendix IIB.

Four weeks after the first wave of letters, I mailed more letters to the same categories of potential respondents. One afterward, I made phone calls, and left several messages asking if the potential respondents had information on "Krug Park." Again, meeting times were arranged with these respondents to ask about their recollections of Krug Park, what they knew of the roller coaster accident, and how they heard about the roller coaster accident.

I frequently mentioned the study to co-workers, family members, and friends in the event they would discuss it in turn within their social groups. Finally, I conducted a

search on “<http://www.google.com>” with hopes that it would elicit potential respondents. I did this by using the keyword search of "Krug Park" to see what websites or other new information appeared on the screen or facilitated new leads.

Following the completed interviews, I flagged the responses according to the means by which individuals discovered or learned of the Krug Park roller coaster accident, how these individual responses compare to newspaper articles or government documents, and finally what other associations my respondents made involving Krug Park.

## Chapter 7.

### Results

The seven-day coverage of the roller coaster accident yielded a total of 27 articles. The first issue to be addressed is yellow journalism and sensationalism. While both newspapers named the four dead, C.H. Stout, Ruth Ferrell, Gladys Lundgren, and Tony Politika, many similarities and differences were found in the seven day window.

An example of a narrative, descriptive lead was found in *The Omaha Bee News* July 25, 1930, front page.

“All morning she busied herself about the housework getting ready for the vacation visit of the Lundgreens, old time friends of Des Moines. Happy plans for picnic suppers and little trips about the city occupied her mind.”

Another example of a dramatic lead: *The Omaha Bee News*, July 25, 1930, p. 1.

“With horror and hysteria graven into his face, Walter Bazis, 17, one of the surviving injured of the Krug Park disaster, stammered out in a quaking voice at University hospital Thursday night, an account of the fatal plunge.”

*The Omaha World-Herald's* evening edition, July 25, 1930, introduced readers to a two-column wide photo of Leona and Mary Brundy, who escaped the crash unscathed.

“The horror experienced by passengers of the ill-omened roller coaster train at Krug Park last night as they felt themselves carried over the side of the trestle and then dumped to a 35-foot fall, was told in a series of interviews today.”

*The Omaha World-Herald* continued to personalize the event with the story of Mrs. A.L. Lundgren (referred to as Gladys Lundgreen or Gladys Lundgren in *The Omaha Bee News*), who came from a family of three children, two of whom had died at young

ages. *The Omaha Bee News* did not continue its use of descriptive leads throughout the seven day study period. Rather, these types of lead writing ended Saturday, July 26, 1930. The following is an example of a writer's attempt to draw the reader in through narrative—it also reflects yellow journalistic style. It mainly does this through the words “carnival of death” and “thanking the fate that kept them from death.” The writer or writers assumes the thoughts of the coaster survivors.

“Victims of a pleasure ride that was turned into a carnival of death and injury when a four-car roller coaster plunged 30 feet to the ground at Krug Park Thursday were in white sheeted hospital beds Friday thanking the fate that kept them from death.”

Page twelve of *The Omaha Bee News* Saturday edition was the most blatant example of yellow journalism. The sub-heading “Concession Men Briskly Bark Wares” followed by “Park Lightly Wears Mourning for 4 Dead: Curious Ones Keep Turnstiles Clicking” suggests the article's author or authors are upset that business went on as usual at the park. The dramatic lead, “With the shrieks of 23 roller coaster victims not long silent, Krug Park crowds Friday night sought to forget the fatal tragedy by plunging into greater fun-making,” and continues in tone with the sub-heading “Ride Employee Hides His Face.”

*The Omaha World-Herald* declined to utilize dramatic, engaging leads as suggested by Kitch (2002). As days passed, the coverage in both papers dwindled from many column-wide photographs and in-depth reporting, to short, one-column mentions.

Using the historical standard of the press, as outlined by Martin & Nelson (1956), *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* have several areas of disagreement. Accuracy will be the first standard discussed.

Spelling of names is certainly inconsistent in both newspapers. *The Omaha World-Herald* in its July 25, 1930, evening edition spells “Brudy” under the photo caption, but within the story, spells it differently—“Brüdny.” Furthermore, *The Omaha Bee News* refers to victim Gladys Lundgren with this spelling, while *The Omaha World Herald* refers to her as Lundgreen. “Polityka” and “Politica” are switched throughout both newspapers as well, referring to roller coaster victims Tony and Mary.

Both *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* ambiguously included information on Fred Ingersoll, the former Krug Park manager who killed himself and for whom the front roller coaster car had been named. Why did both newspapers include this information? It may in part due to yellow journalistic style. This information adds drama to the overall story. In addition, the first day coverage from both newspapers conflict in the time of the accident and length of the coaster drop. *The Omaha Bee News* claimed the accident occurred at 7:30 p.m.; *The Omaha World-Herald* noted a 7:40 p.m. crash time. Unfortunately, no police records or government documents exist to dispute these times, but later newspaper articles and texts put the accident at “about 7:30 p.m.” (Benson, *Nebraska: From buffalo pasture to city*, 1988, p. 83) or “about 7:40 p.m.” (*The Omaha World-Herald*, December 7, 1977). Both papers reported 23 passengers and four cars involved in the accident.

The Martin and Nelson (1956) historical standard, prediction, can be measured by preceding newspaper articles and Omaha’s municipal codes. First day coverage of the accident, in both *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News*, reported Mayor Metcalfe’s plan to ban roller coasters in the city of Omaha. Contrasting to this, *The*



*Omaha World-Herald's* Friday, July 25, 1930 evening edition included a quote from a Krug Park official:

“We are going to repair the coaster and open it again within a few days,” said Jefferson Sampson, manager. “The rest of the park and all other devices will operate as usual tonight.”

*The Omaha World-Herald's* July 26, 1930, morning edition reported:

“The first result of the tragedy, apparently, will be an order forever banning roller coasters from Omaha. The move was favored by all city commissioners” (p. 1).

In the Saturday, July 26, 1930, *Omaha World-Herald*, an editorial speculated that “With this horror vividly in their minds Omahans will probably feel for many years that they can get along with amusement a little less exciting and dangerous than the giant, breath-taking dips of the roller coaster.”

Years later, *The Omaha World-Herald* reported that City Clerk Emmett Hannon received numerous protest letters against the Krug Park roller coaster construction plan (*The Omaha World-Herald*, May 14, 1957, p. 9). Moreover in 1939, Benson residents were still against an operating Krug Park roller coaster:

“Benson residents flocked into District Judge Rine’s Court Thursday to testify against Krug park’s attempt to get a legal permit to build a roller coaster. The park seeks to mandamus the city to issue such a construction permit. Robert Walstrom... testified before the fatal accident on the park coaster in 1930 killing four persons, “screams and yells of the people on the park coaster were most annoying” (*The Omaha World Herald*, am, February 24, 1939, p. 12).

Appearing years prior, and on the same day as the 1930 *Omaha World-Herald* editorial, *The Omaha Bee News* editorial took a different tone:

“Omaha, the same as any other modern city needs amusement such as Krug Park...shocked city commissioners say that they will vote to abolish roller coasters. All right, but there are other amusement devices just as dangerous if they are not properly constructed and cared for.”

To illustrate prediction, a 1936 interview by a Works Progress Administration (WPA) official, revealed Krug Park had twelve adult rides and four rides for children. Louis Slusky, then president of Krug Park Amusement Company, said the park was taking all necessary safety precautions and had trained medical staff on duty:

“A physician and nurse are at the Park hospital every minute, day and night, and (sic) have every convenience necessary for taking care of accidents which might occur. Krug Park is open for inspection (spelling error) at all times and you are invited to visit the park.”

Incidentally, the WPA interview has no mention of the 1930 roller coaster accident.

The standard, selection, shows a balanced representation by both newspapers. The first few days of coverage featured articles with quotations from Krug Park officials and city officials or accident victims. As time passed, the articles showed less attention to what Krug Park officials said, and paid more focus to city officials or victim testimonials.

“Two of the 12 persons injured when a four-car train plunged from the Krug park roller coaster Thursday night still were in critical condition Saturday night. Physicians held little hope for the recovery of Helen Czaja...” (The Omaha Bee News, p. 12A, July 27, 1930).

*The Omaha World-Herald's* July 30 and July 31<sup>st</sup> coverage was nearly identical in length and exhibited no representation by Krug Park management or employees.

“Two new Krug park roller coaster accident suits for damages were filed Tuesday when Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wehner, 3814 T Street, asked 20 and 25 thousand dollars respectively. They are represented by E.S. Brumbaugh (*The Omaha World-Herald*, July 30, 1930, p. 8).

“Suit for 10 thousand dollars against the Krug Park Amusement Company and others has been filed in district court by Anton Bazis, 5333 North Thirty-third Street, for injuries sustained by his son Walter, 14, hurt in the roller coaster crash of July 24” (*The Omaha World-Herald*, July 31, 1930, p. 23).

All the articles studied in the seven-day period were significant to the event. Both newspapers provided the reader with information as to what happened, what authorities were doing about the accident, a status report on the victims, and were focused on the accident itself. One minor exception to this might be the previously-mentioned addition of Fred Ingersoll. Again, it *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* failed to tell readers the importance of including Ingersoll’s suicide in stories.

Finally, applying Martin & Nelson’s (1956) standard of judgment, it is difficult to know exactly if all of the event’s facts were met due to lack of police or medical records. Both *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* went to great lengths in making the reader aware of the tragedy that had occurred through the accident victims’ quotations.

## Chapter 8

## December 1930 to May 25, 2001 News Articles

I found a total of 96 articles mentioning “Krug Park” between the dates of December 15, 1930, and May 25, 2003. Of these 96 articles, 19 mentioned the roller coaster accident. These citations ranged from those describing “tragic” aspects of the accident, to articles describing a school project involving an interview of one of the crash survivors, to those articles that merely mentioned that Krug had a roller coaster, to those articles describing the accident.

“Krug Park, which opened 99 years ago, was named for German-born Omaha brewer Fred Krug, who owned the property. On July 24, 1930, a roller coaster there climbed with 23 people aboard –then left the track, crashed through a guard rail and fell 35 feet.

Four people were killed and more than 20 were injured. William Butkus, 83, whose best friend and seatmate, Tony Polityka, was killed, still lives in Omaha.”

The above excerpt from *The Omaha World-Herald* (January 19, 1937) is typical for articles focused on Krug Park. It mentions briefly the history of the park, and then goes into the date of the roller coaster crash. Following this, articles typically moved into personifying the event, detailing the number of persons who died. Those articles that mentioned the roller coaster accident, either referred to it as the beginning of the end of Krug Park, or else described Krug Park’s struggle to survive after the July 1930 crash.

“The park was popular for three decades. But the Big Dipper—and ultimately, the park, too—came to an end July 24, 1930. The lead car of the roller coaster left the tracks, killing four and injuring 17 (*The Omaha World-Herald*, March 30, 1987).”

Much of *The Omaha World-Herald's* coverage of Krug Park during the 1950s focused on the conflict between the city council, Benson residents, and Metcalfe Realty during the late 1930s. Articles often were feature stories on the city of Benson or Omaha. Later, editorials to coincide with the Peony Park closing, and letters to *The Omaha World-Herald's* "Action Editor" mention Krug Park fondly and an important establishment in the history of Omaha.

Consistent themes evident in all of these feature stories were the street car line in front of the park, the dancing, the well-kept gardens, and the fun the patrons had had in Krug Park during their younger years. Articles also made reference to the 1932 ballroom fire at the park. Just one of the articles mentioned a baseball connection.

## Chapter 9 Personal Interviews

*“I practically lived at the park. I went there five nights a week...  
When I sit here and tell you about this, so many things come to my mind that I was so  
thrilled about as a little girl.”  
-Female respondent*

Of the 22 interviews I conducted, Florence Assisted Living provided the most respondents. Maple Crest Condo and Maple Crest Condo referrals followed.

Transcriptions of each interview may be found in Appendix IA through Appendix IV.

When I asked where respondents grew up, most of the answers were “Benson,” or “Omaha.” Some specifically said “North Omaha.” One person said Illinois, one person said they had grown up in Ashland, Nebraska, but later moved to Omaha.

**Question one: What can you tell me about Krug Park?** Ten respondents immediately referred to the roller coaster accident, or just “the accident” at the start of the interview. Of these ten respondents, five connected the roller coaster accident to the “beginning of the end” of the park or “downfall.” One respondent insinuated that years before the mayor of Omaha had given free passes to grade school kids for good grades, but that after the accident he stopped this practice. These ten respondents tended to trail off from the original question, as almost as if they were flipping through a picture book of memories of everything they did.

“We sat out on the front porch and heard the screams. I can remember they had the big round barrel that would spin when you walked in it. They had these crazy mirrors that made you look thin or fat, kind of like it is now (laughs). It was a real fun place, nothing momentous, just a lot of fun until the crash. Then it went down hill....”

Other respondents were able to recall what they were doing that day, or where they were—in town that day, on the front porch, “we lived by there and we heard the screams,” and “I was in study hall.” I discovered that the respondents were likely to mention more than the address of the park, and instead answer with a special memory. The beautiful gardens, one said. Another respondent remembered riding the street car to Krug Park. One respondent recalled hiding in the back of the roller coaster seat (not on the day of the accident). Another respondent, whom I had contacted through email because he is a current amusement park owner in the Omaha area, vividly remembered receiving a letter from a woman when he opened his park. The woman enclosed a ride ticket from Krug Park.

“She told me that she was holding that ticket, for the merry-go-round the night of accident. When the roller coaster crashed, her mother and her left the park. Her mom told her that she could never go there (Krug Park) again.”

“The Whip,” “The Caterpillar,” and “The Swawnee River” were consistently mentioned as an enjoyment with that special someone. Female respondents frequently mentioned “The Swawnee River” as time-well spent with their special sweetie.

“They had rowboats that go in and out of dark places, all the kids who were dating did that.”

Swimming at the Olympic-sized pool, dancing and roller-skating at the grand ballroom, were also typical female responses. One respondent remembered spending most of her days there during the summer (all day!).

“They had marathon dancing. Do you know what marathon dancing is? They’d be in couples. They would dance until they just hang on each other. It would go on for days.”

**Question two: what do you know about the roller coaster accident?** After reading through question two responses, I found it easier to categorize these answers. The first category of respondents saw the accident as a great shock, or associated the roller coaster accident negatively towards roller coasters in general. They disliked roller coasters prior to hearing or knowing about the Krug Park accident, and following their awareness, the news exacerbated this fear even more. Parents forbade them to ever ride again!

“My mother was there when it happened, and she’s been dead for nearly 20 years. She used to talk about it often because it made such an impression on there. She had a friend who died during the accident, and I believe she herself had been on the roller coaster just before it happened. She never forbade me going to an amusement park because of it, but she never went again.”

One male respondent also recalled his mother being there the night of the accident.

“She had rode the roller coaster a few times and decided to try a different ride. When she was ready to go again on the roller coaster, the accident occurred. She told me later to never ride on roller coasters.”

The second category I developed is made of responses from respondents who attempted to report specific outcomes or injuries. Their responses were more graphic and delivered with uncertainty. One respondent guessed the number of dead from the accident to be twelve. Another respondent thought only one person had died.



One male respondent insinuated that the crash not only killed roller coaster occupants, but by-standers on the ground. The following are other similar responses:

“I remember when it crashed. It was at the highest point and it just came crashing down. People were hurt, I can’t remember if anyone was killed. “

“It was a great shock. And it was that one car, with the riders, and fell off the track as it was going up. It wasn’t too far up, but anyway, one young man was killed.”

Respondents who provided more graphic accounts or recollections mentioned the screams they heard (they lived close to the park), or watching from a store as ambulances and emergency vehicles suffocated the area. This respondent also recalled a convertible transporting an injured rider on the back of the car.

“My mother was there. She said there were arms and legs flying all over.”

“Oh it was horrible, people were hanging by their hair.”

Eight respondents were unable to provide any details or information on question two. Of these respondents, three had associated Krug Park (in question one) with unique answers. These included baseball and the Storz Brewery company picnic. The third respondent, a local Omaha history professor, had not lived in Omaha his entire life, and only knew about the roller coaster accident from reading newspaper clippings (*The Omaha Bee News* and *The Omaha World-Herald*).

Only one respondent, a female, provided first-hand information from a victim’s point of view. Both her aunt and uncle (Marie and Robert Wehner) were hospitalized July 24, 1930. Her aunt had been wearing the same dress, the respondent said, as another female passenger. That other passenger died as a result of the roller coaster accident. The

respondent didn't know the name of the woman who died. The respondent answered that victims were transported to hospitals throughout Omaha. "And I can remember walking there every single night to go see her," the respondent said about her hospitalized aunt.

**Question three: did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?** Only one respondent answered that she read "all about it" in the Omaha newspapers. She then elaborated on the street-corner newsboys shouting "EXTRA! EXTRA!" to sell papers. "They'd run up and down the street. That was pretty exciting," the respondent said. A married couple, and another female respondent also recalled the "EXTRA!" edition that resulted from the Krug Park roller coaster accident. "They sold them all over. Anybody want to buy an extra!" the respondent recalled.

Only one respondent answered with some uncertainty that she heard about the roller coaster accident from a radio broadcast. One respondent said she had been vacationing in Illinois with her family and remembered reading about it in an Illinois newspaper. Neither of these respondents elaborated onto more details in their answers.

The Omaha historian answered yes to this question; he repeatedly reads the newspapers as a teaching tool for the college course he teaches.

The female respondent whose aunt and uncle were in the roller coaster accident said she did not read the newspapers, and instead heard of the events and details from family members.

**Question four: is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?** Fourteen respondents were unable to answer this question because they had previously answered all that they knew, or were limited in

interview time. The remaining respondents answered the question on different levels.

Two respondents specifically talked about the roller coaster accident.

“Now I’ve heard this that on the northwest corner there’s a new playground. One of the humps or burrows from the coaster is still there. There’s some trees from the original park too.”

The other respondent remembered her parents talking about the accident when it happened. Like other respondents, she associated this question with both the Benson community and the fun times she had at the park as a child. Respondents mentioned walking in the park with a boyfriend, the many rides, and dancing in the ballroom.

Four respondents mentioned the cost of entertainment “back then.”

“Save up for Saturday night. They had some nice bands there, not the big band names like Peony Park. The Shermont building too. Aksarben too. You couldn’t buy booze at that time, you’d take your bottles and put it under the tables. They had compartments under the tables. We weren’t hard drinkers, it was just the thing to do,” one of these respondents said.

Money was rough, even for the nickel and dime rides, they said. “It was a better time back then. It was just a night you’ll always remember. I will remember the screams.”

Only one respondent discussed Krug Park’s later years, and its trouble with the Omaha City Council to remain a recreational environment.

“The neighbors were quite upset. They had an attachment for that particular spot and they couldn’t see that for condominiums,” she said.

One respondent, who instead of answering my set of questions, asked to just share her memories, yielded the most information about the accident and Krug Park in general. Whereas her storytelling switched often from one event to another, the enthusiasm and

sincerity were quite evident. She spoke of the funhouses, “they had air things that blew up lady’s skirts. Like Marilyn Monroe.” She smiled as she recalled the grocer’s picnics where she won small prizes. No other respondent spoke of the horses that dove from a platform into a pool of water.

“These beautiful girls would jump with the horses,” she said.

She summed up what many respondents felt, but couldn’t quite express.

“I practically lived at the park. I went there five nights a week... When I sit here and tell you about this, so many things come to my mind that I was so thrilled about as a little girl.”

## Chapter 10 Discussion

Whereas *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* both took advantage of the newsworthiness of the accident, the eight-column wide headlines and numerous photos of accident victims (often lying in hospital beds) constitutes yellow journalism. But, both papers managed to balance reporting of the Krug Park roller coaster accident.

Regarding the standards set forth by Martin & Nelson (1956), *The Omaha World-Herald* accurately predicted it would take a long time for the Omaha community to forget the tragedy. What *The Omaha Bee News* lacked in as far as Mayor Metcalfe's responses, *The Omaha World-Herald* provided adequately, but minimally.

Both newspapers strongly attempted to write engaging feature stories that pulled at the heartstrings of its readers. Stories of accident survivors were bountiful, but articles on those who had died were small in comparison. As in previous literature, the stories personalized the tragic event and created a dramatic story. Readers were drawn in to Ruth Ferrell, the 14-year old victim, and sympathized not only with her, but also with her family. I also noticed, though I did not spend a great deal attention to it in this study, a large amount of often graphic photos. Many of the victims were shown in hospital beds—bandaged around bruised eyes. I can conclude that *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Omaha Bee News* were like other newspapers at the time—they were out to sell papers. Judging by the respondents who recalled the “EXTRA! EXTRA!”

newspaper boys, newspapers were important to the Benson community.

Furthermore, I think that many respondents might not have specifically referred to newspapers as the source of where they heard about the Krug Park roller coaster accident, *The Omaha Bee News* and *The Omaha World-Herald* would have certainly been a resource for them.

The second portion of my data yielded a great number of articles mentioning Krug Park, but surprisingly, not all mentioned the roller coaster accident. The city council dispute over the Krug Park land seemed to have overshadowed the tragedy and history of the Benson land. The articles that did mention the roller coaster accident often went beyond telling just a portion of its history, but went back to the start of the Benson community itself.

These reports also frequently mentioned the streetcar line. This suggests a relationship with the interview respondents, who also frequently mentioned the trolley. What this might also reveal is that much of the Omaha-Benson community flocked to Krug Park because of its location. Krug Park was a popular place. Even though persons might not have lived close to the park, a streetcar ride may have afforded an opportunity to discuss the park with a seat neighbor. I think the retrospectives and mentions of Krug Park will continue in *The Omaha World-Herald*, especially as the community ages and celebrates events such as its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a city. I predict the stories will be similar in scope to what has already been said in previous newspaper articles. In the coming years, the Internet will also be a source of information on Krug Park. While the newspaper articles

can be archived or downloaded from sites, users could also download a video of an interview, for example. Future studies might also look at the diffusion of an Internet site focused specifically on Krug Park or develop an Internet site to enhance the communication and provide a new forum for people to talk about the park and share memories.

Not surprisingly, the personal interviews with 22 respondents elicited the most in-depth information on not only the events that transpired on July 24, 1930, but on the rich Krug Park history told from those who enjoyed it the most. I found the respondents who provided the most information, were also asked the least amount of questions. Future studies such as mine might have a set of questions going into the interview, but simply ask respondents “to tell them about what they know” or “what it was like back then.” The respondents I interviewed seemed to be hesitant to be tape-recorded and didn’t seem interested in a formal interview.

As in previously diffusion of recollections of an event studies published, this research followed the event. However, because of the large amount of time that had elapsed, it is hard to tell the source of how respondents heard of the roller coaster accident. This study suggests that of the respondents interviewed, the majority heard of it first-hand, followed by interpersonal communication. Of the persons who were there that evening, or had a relative involved, it is assumed their memory is accurate because of first-hand experience or witnessing.

Because such a long time between the event and the study has passed, it should also be advocated that what respondents said is not accurate. Jeffres,

(1997) said individuals have “flashbulb memories” from critical events where they often fill in certain gaps of memory to follow a script of what they think is true (pp.60-61.) My research concurs with this notion, no more so than with the respondent who answered she was in study hall during the accident. This clearly cannot be the truth.

I also suspect that because of the death and injury involved in the event, and the proximity to Benson, the Krug Park tragedy would not be something easy to forget. Due to the age of the respondents, and the illogical aspects of some responses, some answers should be discounted. Some of the more graphic details of what the interviewees knew about the event also suggest rumor and gossip. Neither *The Omaha Bee News* nor *The Omaha World-Herald* reported this information in their coverage. The respondents who heard of the event, at a young age, often received the message from their parents—who might have been given false or sensational information from an overzealous neighbor. The parents, then, being the opinion leaders of the family, were believed by the respondents. I believe that these memories of “people hanging by their hair” might also be an “old-wives” tale, possibly to scare their children from riding a roller coaster. Or, this gossip is the truth—and too graphic for the community newspaper. I think further research and more interviews are needed to really decide if this particular anecdote is the actual occurrence of July 24, 1930.

Previous literature has also discussed that the time of day and location of an event holds precedence in communication diffusion. Again, many of the



interviewees discussed how close they lived to the park. Because the accident occurred on a summer evening, it could be hypothesized that if it had occurred during the day, not as many people would have flocked to see the accident. Also, Benson, according to the respondents had a close-knit community feel to it. One respondent while discussing the cost of living back then, remembered her father offering coal to a neighbor during a cold winter month. I really don't think time of day had such a big impact on this particular event. In a review of previous literature, many diffusion studies looked at events that occurred during a time when the media included television and radio. These two forms of communication have the ability to interrupt someone's day with breaking news. Newspapers are less timely. I suspect the inter-personal relationships and proximity of respondents to the actual event played the biggest role, regardless of time of day. I think this also explains why many didn't remember how many had died, or how the track fell off the track—they remembered the community's reaction, or they remembered a relative being there the night of the accident. What does this mean? I think it means, again, people read the newspaper because they want to read about people. Many respondents didn't read the newspapers because they knew the people involved or like one respondent, she loved the park and wanted to know everything about the accident.

This study confirms that many Omahans believed that the 1930 roller coaster accident tarnished Krug Park forever, but yet the park remained open until the mid-1950s. Whereas newspaper accounts dismissed the stories that came with the park in the

1940s, the respondents from this study have not forgotten the enjoyable times they spent at Krug Park. For instance, one respondent remembers having practically lived at the park, while others have mentioned the dancing and the big bands that played in the ballroom. These stories are seldom featured in the newspaper articles from the 1940s and 1950s. I think that respondents did not mention the Omaha City Council's property dispute because it would have been something in which their parents were more interested. The kids were focused preoccupied with having fun at Krug Park! The kids might have heard about Krug Park or its roller coaster accident at home, at the supper table, but over the years they remember better times at the park.

Future research on Krug Park should focus on the public relations tactics that should have been employed by park officials. No newspaper reported a formal apology and articles after the accident presented no direct quotation from any of Krug Park's employees or managers. Amusement park owners can also learn a lesson or two from my research study. It is imperative for such authorities to communicate quickly to the public exactly what they are doing to remedy the hazards or other shortcomings revealed immediately and often after an accident.

Present-day public relations practitioners are trained in providing an emergency contingency plan to deal not only with the public but also with the media. Preparations are made to be report all evidence honestly, immediately, and to provide regular status reports on the remedies being applied. It is possible that if Krug Park officials were to have quickly apologized or to have been more vocal with the news media, they might have comforted all concerned citizens. While

many respondents called the accident the “beginning of the end” for Krug Park, the derailling of the roller coaster did not put an end to the park’s operations. The lackluster years of the 1940s and early 1950s were financially draining, but unfortunately for the management, visitors could not forget the July 24, 1930, tragedy.

Future diffusion studies exploring a historical event should acknowledge any time-lapse issues, and also embrace storytelling by individuals who were present at the time or who had heard immediately thereafter the event. This study is also limited to that sector of Omaha close to Krug Park, specifically the Benson area. But, one must remember that Omaha’s network of streetcar lines, as noted earlier in the chapter on amusement parks, included those to South and Central Omaha. I believe there is some connection between the streetcar line and Krug Park for many people outside of the Benson area. Finally, a quantitative approach of the Krug Park roller coaster accident newspaper coverage could be expanded to include a statistical relationship between the page a story on which a story was printed, and the number of respondents who recalled reading about Krug Park. In other words, did *The Omaha World-Herald* place Krug Park on its media agenda to persuade readers to adopt any particular opinion regarding this park?

As teachers often ask, what did you learn from this experience? I learned that newspapers tell only a portion of any story. Krug Park is more than a historical phenomenon. It still lives in memories of riding the streetcar with a brother or taking a ride on the lazy Swawnee River. It’s also a place where some ladies met their husbands.

To those who still remember hearing about the roller coaster crash, their conversations and memories still evoke strong feelings for their beloved Krug Park. Some respondents read about it in the newspapers, and more witnessed the chaos after hearing the screeching fire engine sirens. In doing my interviews, I was impressed by the fact that so many remembered so clearly and were so willing to share their memories of Krug Park. In the year 2004, these interviewees and many other Omahans have not forgotten the brevity of the accident. Many citizens, like the twenty-two respondents I interviewed, have their own stories to tell about Krug Park.

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## Appendix IA

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male      **Age:** 82

**Type of Interview:** Telephone      **Source:** Mr. C's restaurant

**Date of Interview:** March 2, 2004      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

I can't tell you anything about the roller coaster accident, but I can tell you that all I remember about Krug Park was that when my brother and I would ride the street car there, my dad used to follow behind in his car to make sure we got there.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IB

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male

**Age:** late 60s

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Family friend used to work with him in Benson

**Date of Interview:** January 15, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**\*Respondent only wanted to answer a short question due to time constraints.**

**Where did you grow up?**

Benson

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

No response.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

My mom told me, she's no longer alive, that she was there the night of the accident. She had rode the coaster a few times and decided to try a different ride. When she was ready to go again on the roller coaster, the accident occurred. She told me, later, to never ride on roller coasters.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IC

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male

**Age:** 93

**Type of Interview:** face-to-face

**Source:** Florence Assisted Living

**Date of Interview:** March 14, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

I used to lie in bed at night and watch the roller coaster. And the swimming pool, oh yes, and the dances. When you came in the front gate all of those beautiful picture shows. We came to town the day they had the roller coaster accident. Yep, that's what killed the park.....that was the penny arcade, those picture shows.

We used to hide in the backseat of the roller coaster. I grew up in an orphanage up there. They had that island out in front on 60<sup>th</sup> and Maple. They had that island out in front, they had the streetcar. On the southwest corner, they had a big golf course. I believe it was also a beer garden. My cousin was a caddy, a crapshooter! Benson was a town in itself back then.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix ID

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 47

**Type of Interview:** Email

**Source:** respondent hosts a website on graveyards of Omaha

**Date of Interview:** March 1, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

No response.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

I would be glad to talk about it, but I can only tell you what was on the webpage. My mother was there when it happened, and she's been dead for nearly 20 years. She used to talk about it often, because it made such an impression on her. She had a friend who died during the accident, and I believe she herself had been on the roller coaster just before it happened. She never forbade me going to an amusement park because of it, but she never went again. I've got motion sickness, so I never went on roller coasters anyway.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IE

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female      **Age:** 85

**Type of Interview:** face-to-face      **Source:** Florence Senior Activity Center

**Date of Interview:** March 8, 2004      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in North Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

When we were in high school, we used to go out swimming a lot and there we of course rode “The Whip” and the “Caterpillar.” “The Whip” I loved it. It almost broke your neck! They had a merry-go-round, but we were too old for that. We also had to go into that, I can’t remember what it’s called, it was a lake....oh yes, the Swawnee river. When the dance hall was there, we’d always go into the dances. I even danced there all the time when I finished high school.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

I had been on that once. It must have been a few months before that terrible accident. It landed right on the sidewalk. Right there by the street, 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. They said that thing that pulled it up, broke and just pulled it right down. I don’t think they ever ran it again after that.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No, I think I heard about it on the radio.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

The streetcar stopped right in front of Krug Park. It came up Military Avenue, went out to Benson and turned around. I didn’t go on the rides so much after the accident. When you start dating and dancing you’d rather go dancing. Save up for Saturday night! They had some nice bands there, not the big name bands like Peony Park. The Shermont building too. Aksarben too. You couldn’t buy booze at that time, you’d take your bottles and put it

under the tables. They had compartments under the tables. We weren't hard drinkers, it was just the thing to do.

## Appendix IF

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female      **Age:** 77

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Sister from Maple Crest Condos referred

**Date of Interview:** February 1, 2004      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Benson

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

We sat out on the front porch and heard the screams....I can remember they had this big round barrel that would spin when you walked in it. They had these crazy mirrors that made you look thin or fat, kind like it is now (laughs). It was a real fun place, nothing momentous, just a lot of fun until the crash. Then it went down hill. But we always had a great time there.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.



## Appendix IG

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 81

**Type of Interview:** face-to-face

**Source:** Florence Assisted Living

**Date of Interview:** March 14, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in North Omaha. I graduated from North High School.

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

It was on 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. We used to go to some dances there. All the rides and everything were fun things for young people to do, not that I did very many of them because we couldn't afford it.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

I was on the roller coaster once and that was enough. I didn't like the up and down! I know there was an accident there. I was too young I guess I didn't know how many people died. Something like 12 sticks in my mind but I'm not sure.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IH

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male

**Age:** 50

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Website (amusement park)

**Date of Interview:** March 6, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

Many people mail me items, having to do with Peony Park. But, one day, I had a lady mail me a ticket from Krug Park. She told me that she was holding that ticket, for the merry-go-round, the night of the accident. When the roller coaster crashed, her mother and her left the park. Her mom told her she could never go there again. It seemed like she was in her 80s.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

I thought that there were people on the ground that were when the car crashed. There's a couple of tombstones of the Krug family in north Omaha, behind the projects. I can't remember the name of the cemetery. The reason I know that the Krug family is buried there is because I know my children had to do a report for school on it once. Mr. Malec had mentioned Krug Park to me several times. Everyone who's older, or in my age group will mention it once in awhile, but nobody that is younger.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

Have you visited the site? Now I've heard this that on the northwest corner there's a new playground. One of the humps or burrows from the coaster is still there. There's some trees there from the original park too.

## Appendix II

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male                      **Age:** 88

**Type of Interview:** face-to-face

**Source:** Florence Assisted Living (was in room when wife interviewed)

**Date of Interview:** March 14, 2004                      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

I lived in Ashland for seven years and then came to Omaha.

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

I played baseball all the time there. That's the best sport of all.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

Nothing, I don't remember it.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix II

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male      **Age:** no response  
**Type of Interview:** Telephone      **Source:** Lisa's Radial Café referral  
**Date of Interview:** February 15, 2004      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Wisconsin, but our family moved to Omaha when I was five.

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

I teach a History of Omaha class in which we talk about infamous days of disaster. The roller coaster crash at Krug Park is certainly, I consider that high in that category. It was the downfall of the park. The roller coaster was torn down. By 1937 it was the end of the park. There are very few things written on Krug Park. It was considered like the tornado, like infamous days of Omaha. I've been to St. Mary's cemetery in Omaha to see the Krug family gravesites. They aren't buried too far from two of the accident victims. Two of the accident victims are buried in Des Moines.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

Just what has been in the newspapers.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

I have the original Omaha Bee News clippings from the day of the accident that I show my class.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IK

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female      **Age:** 80

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Benson Public Library received email from respondent's relative

**Date of Interview:** March 8, 2004      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

My aunt and uncle were on the roller coaster when it crashed there.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

All I knew was my aunt and uncle were on it when it crashed. It was horrible. She was at Immanuel Hospital...I can't tell you how many times...at first they pronounced her dead because there were two women. One died and my aunt didn't. They had the same dress on. And I can remember walking there every single night to go see her. And they took the people to every hospital in Omaha. My uncle was at the old, Lord Lester, or you're too young to know about that. And my aunt was at Immanuel.

**[What were your aunt and uncle's names?]** Marie and Robert Wehner, they've both passed away. They both died in their 90s.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No, we just knew about it from family.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IL

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female      **Age:** 90

**Type of Interview:** Telephone      **Source:** Maple Crest Condo referral

**Date of Interview:** February 7, 2004      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** Y

**Where did you grow up?**

Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

I remember I was in study hall at Benson High school about when the roller coaster crashed. I don't remember that I looked out or anything, the roller coaster it was right there. I could have.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

Oh, how much time do you have....oh, I remember that the streetcar turned around there. We would walk through the park there with boyfriends. They had a dance hall.

## Appendix IM

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 84

**Type of Interview:** Face-to-face

**Source:** Maple Crest Condos

**Date of Interview:** January 30, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?**

I was born in Illinois, but grew up in Omaha.

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

No response.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

I was vacationing in Illinois the summer of the accident. I was 10 years old . It must have been important because I remember reading the Illinois newspaper's account of the accident.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

Not any of Omaha's.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IN

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female                      **Age:** 67

**Type of Interview:** Face-to-face

**Source:** Florence Assisted Living Cafeteria

**Date of Interview:** March 13, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

No response.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

My mother was there. She said there were arms and legs flying all over.

Oh, she was married in 1931. She graduated from North High in 1926....she said they used to go there all the time. The swimming pool was there for years. I remember driving down there with my mom.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.



## Appendix IO

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 87

**Type of Interview:** Face to face

**Source:** Employee of Maple Crest

**Date of Interview:** January 30, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** No

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha, Nebraska

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?** .

Respondent doesn't recall roller coaster accident but does recall having a great time at Krug Park. She remembers going to the park after the roller coaster accident, to swim and dance. She took the streetcar to the park.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?** No response.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?** No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?** No response.

## Appendix IP

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female                      **Age:** 86

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Referred to by Union Pacific employee

**Date of Interview:** March 31, 2004                      **Tape Recorded (Y/N):** No

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

We lived about five blocks from Krug Park. What else would you like to know?

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?** I remember when it crashed. It was at the highest point and it just came crashing down. People were hurt. I can't remember if anyone was killed. It must have happened in the late 1920s or 1930s. They never replaced it. They extended some of the swimming pool to where the roller coaster was. It's like I told my son, everyone should keep a diary.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?** We heard about it because we lived so close and we all started running up there to see. I remember the EXTRA! EXTRA!, boys. They sold them all over. "Anybody want to buy an extra!"

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?** Krug Park, it was a real nice park. They had all kinds of rides, like merry-go-rounds, game like throwing balls. They had a real nice swimming pool, concession places where you could eat. Let's see...the roller coaster was by 52<sup>nd</sup> Street right along 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. We used to go up to Krug when rides were a nickel and a dime a family. Money was rough then and things aren't like they are now. What gets me is the cost of jeans today.

## Appendix IQ

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 46

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Employee of Lutheran Homes

**Date of Interview:** March 5, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** No

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

If my information is correct, two years ago while I was at another facility, I was talking with the residents and we got on the subject of the brewery companies here in Omaha. One of the gentleman said that Storz Brewery company had hosted an employee picnic at Krug Park at that time they had a roller coaster there. I didn't know if the coaster had been there just for this picnic, or had always been there. He said that the families of the employees were invited. It (the picnic) occurred near Monroe Middle School. But, all I know is that he said, that it was Storz Brewing Company hosting the event the day of the roller coaster accident. It was a bad accident that occurred and many lost their lives.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No response.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IR

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female**Age:** 80**Type of Interview:** Telephone**Source:** Maple Crest Condos**Date of Interview:** January 25, 2004**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N**Where did you grow up?**

We lived at 3123 N. 60<sup>th</sup> Street. We lived about six or seven blocks straight west of Krug Park. Krug Park was a fun place to go. You didn't go out a lot because you didn't have the money. I was not 6 until September when the accident happened.

**What can you tell me about the roller coaster accident?**

The family was sitting on the front porch. We knew it was something pretty bad because we could hear the screaming and the fire trucks. The City Councilman used to give us free passes before the roller coaster accident, but not after. It was sad.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

No, I don't remember.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

That was probably the only other time I remember except for I remember one time we went to the swimming pool. We were up at the swimming pool and the prettiest young girl was waiting for her friend. Her friend never showed and I always wondered what happened to her. It was a better time back then. It was just a night you'll always remember. I will remember the screams.

---

**Separate Interview with same respondent, joined by her husband.****Type of Interview:** Face-to-Face**Age of Male:** 83**Date of Interview:** January 30, 2004**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** N

They both freely offered their recollections. The male respondent said he remembered the park being a vital economic part of Benson. It was a huge loss, he said when the park went down. He also remembers the newspaper boys yelling on the corners "EXTRA! EXTRA!" after the accident. She remembered this too. She also remembered her father making less than \$75 a month, and what little money they had they helped the neighbors in the wintertime to buy coal. She said that after the councilman didn't give the free passes, it was still too costly for her and her sisters to go.

## Appendix IS

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 85

**Type of Interview:** Face-to-face

**Source:** Maple Crest Condos

**Date of Interview:** January 30, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):**No

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha (Benson neighborhood)

**Respondent did not want to be interviewed, just wanted to share memories.**

I was born in 1919, in a hospital which was very unusual for that time. It was called Lord Lister Hospital. I was born in Omaha. I practically lived at the park. I went there five nights a week. You always had to take the streetcar. We had a grocery store on 1920 Military, so about two blocks from the park. The reason it was vivid in my mind is I heard the ambulances. Everyone went outside the store. I can vividly remember this, someone had a convertible and one of the injured was on the back of the car. They were going to Methodist Hospital, on 36<sup>th</sup> and Cuming Street. Today it's Salvation Army. We saw them going right by. My mom, dad, and I, and the customers stood and watched. I was scared of it before anything happened. I tell you, I never got on it.

I read the newspapers of course. I read all of them. This always thrilled me, we didn't have television news. They would put out extras, either men or boys would yell "EXTRA! EXTRA!" They'd run up and down the streets. That was pretty exciting.

We went every place on the streetcar. On Sundays, we didn't have a car, so we'd take a picnic lunch and walk to Krug Park and swim. They had a lovely swimming pool. We'd stay until about 8 o'clock. We'd be there all afternoon and all evening. After we'd eat our lunch, then we'd go up and watch the dancers. We loved to watch them. They had marathon dancing. Do you know what marathon dancing is? They'd be in couples. They would dance until they'd just hang on each other. It would go on for days. The marathon was really something. We'd watch the couples. It's crazy. I spent so much time there. When the dance hall quit, I'd go up on Sundays, Saturdays, Tuesdays, and sometimes Friday night to roller skate. Oh, that was fun, I loved to skate.

The funhouses, that was scary too. They had these slides that were as tall as the roof. As you walked in the funhouse they had air things that blew up lady's skirts. Like Marilyn Monroe. Swawnee River, did you hear about that? They had rowboats that go in and out of dark places, all the kids who were dating did that. They had a tumblebug, little round cars that swing all around. Also, something like bumper cars. They had photo places where you could take goofy, goofy picture. They had some good orchestras there for dancing. I loved Swawnee river and the funhouses.

The swimming pool had sand around it. They tore down most everything, and still had

the skating and dancing. The streetcar stopped right in front of Krug Park. I also loved the grocer's picnic. My father was a grocer so we always got free tickets to the grocer's picnic. They gave wonderful prizes. We always went to the grocer's picnic. Did you know about the diving horses? These beautiful girls would get on them and jump with the horses. When I sit here and tell you about this so many things come to my mind that I was so thrilled as a little girl. They had a lot of different games, where you could throw a ring and win prizes.

## Appendix IT

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Male

**Age:** 89

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** Maple Crest Condo referral

**Date of Interview:** January 26, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** No

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha, South Omaha.

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

Used to have school picnics out there for all the kids. We went there, that's about all I remember.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

I remember reading about it. I was never too happy to ride them things (laughs). It was a wooden structure and I didn't like that. That's about all I can remember about that place.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

Yes, but I don't remember much about them.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

No response.

## Appendix IU

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female

**Age:** 87

**Type of Interview:** Telephone

**Source:** relative of work colleague

**Date of Interview:** January 28, 2004

**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** Y

**Where did you grow up?** Omaha

**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

Lots of fun. They had, uh, we lived within a mile and could walk up there. And the whole family could go. It was a big treat and uh, the mayor at that time, Mayor Dahlman, his gift that he would give to the school kids every year was a card or a ticket. So everybody got free rides so we'd pack up a picnic basket and the neighborhood kids would get together and spend a day. It was all free. I remember, but of course I wasn't very old, in grade school. But, when that accident happened that all stopped. But, I don't remember what year that was.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

Well, that it was a great shock because it was very popular. And it was that one car, with the riders, and fell off the track as it was going up. It wasn't too far up, but anyway, one young man was killed. And that stopped it. No more.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

I don't. No. I remember the dance hall, and my sister, she had boyfriends--I didn't. They went there. When we went up there, I would dance with everybody. The dance hall stayed.

The reason we continued to go so often later is because we lived so close.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

Well, after they closed everything down, then the dance hall was the last to stay open. They had the swimming pool, that was popular. I can remember taking my son, when he was a baby, he was born in 1935, so it was still open then. But, uh, the dance hall was the last thing that stayed open and that had a fire. And, then, everything closed and whoever owned it was going to sell it and build condominiums. The neighbors were quite upset. They had an attachment for that particular spot and they couldn't see that for condominiums. So, Mrs. Hitchcock bought it and donated it to the city and it is still there. But, the swimming pool is not where it originally was. It was originally was south of that.



## Appendix IV

**Respondent (Male or Female):** Female**Age:** 79**Type of Interview:** Face-to-Face**Source:** Florence Assisted Living**Date of Interview:** March 13, 2004**Tape Recorded (Y/N):** No**Where did you grow up?** Benson**What can you tell me about Krug Park?**

I lived there when the roller coaster broke. I didn't see it, my folks were all home and everything. People were killed. People were hanging by their hair. After that they never had it (the roller coaster). Everybody was scared to death. They had a fun palace you could go in. I suppose I was maybe going into my teens and it was a real popular place. It was a real famous park.

**What do you know about the roller coaster accident?**

Oh, it was horrible. People were hanging by their hair.

**Did you read any of the Omaha newspaper accounts at the time, or recall seeing any?**

I do remember "Extra!" papers. I grew up in Benson, 3501 N. 59<sup>th</sup> Street. I went to St. Bernard's school and church. Oh, I liked Benson. You could get a ton of candy for a nickel. Other than of course, the theatre, it was so cheap at the time. I think a loaf of bread was \$0.15. I went to Cathedral High School. I loved, loved Cathedral High School. I did love Cathedral. All of my kids went to Cathedral.

**Is there anything else you would like to say about Krug Park or the roller coaster accident?**

Oh, I remember that Krug Park thing. I remember my folks talking about it. After that, they closed the whole thing down, it went aside. We had a lot of fun there. It was really nice.

## Appendix IIA

Letters were sent to the following area businesses or groups:

American Legion Post 112 (Benson)  
Benson Baptist Church  
Benson High School  
Bob Beck's Barbery  
Florence Home Health Center  
Holy Name Alumni Office  
Joe's Cafe  
Maple-Crest Care Center  
Mister C's Steakhouse  
Nebraska Children's Home Society  
Omaha Catholic Archdiocese  
Omaha Public Library (Benson Branch)  
Omaha Public Library (Charles B. Washington Branch)  
Omaha Public Library (W. Dale Clark Branch)  
Rose Blumkin Jewish Home  
St. Joseph Villa Nursing Center  
The Lutheran Home Omaha  
The Radial Café  
The Trackside Lounge  
The United States Postal Office (Benson Branch)  
Union Pacific Railroad Pharmacy Division  
Wurgler Photo

## Appendix IIB

Telephone inquiries were made to the following businesses or organizations:

Benson Shoe Repair  
Florence Home Senior Living and Rehabilitation  
Florence Multipurpose Senior Center  
Holy Name Bingo Social Hall  
Immanuel Village  
Omaha Country Club  
St. Bernard School  
St. Philip Neri School

## Appendix IIC

## Sample Letter to Nursing Homes, Senior Centers

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Melissa Kucirek. I'm writing to you today as a graduate student at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. As part of my requirements for completing my master's degree, I am in the process of writing a thesis. The topic of my thesis is why I'm asking for your assistance.

In July 1930, a tragedy at the Krug amusement park roller coaster killed four and injured dozens more. Krug Park, located on what is now Benson's Gallagher Park, didn't close its doors until many years later. I would like to ask if you have any resident, employee, or know of anyone else who remembers the roller coaster accident, or heard it from another source. My thesis is looking at how the news of this event was communicated through media and word-of-mouth.

I appreciate your time in reading this letter. If you do know of an individual who might fit my above questions, and would be interested in an interview, I would like to speak with them. They will not be identified by their full-name. This is purely for academic purposes.

Again, thank you for your time. I will contact you by telephone to confirm you received this letter.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Kucirek  
UNO Master of Arts in Communication Candidate  
Cell phone: 402.677.0930  
Email: mismelis9@hotmail.com

## Appendix IID

Sample Flier (sent to libraries)

UNO GRADUATE STUDENT SEEKS HELP!

Do you or someone you know  
recall the 1930 roller coaster accident at Omaha's Krug Park?

If so, Melissa would like to interview you for her thesis!

Please stop by the front desk to leave  
your name and contact information.  
Melissa will contact you!

## Appendix IIIA

Newspaper	Date	Headline
OWH	12/15/1930	Mass Trial of 21 Damage Suits in Park Deaths
OWH	4/7/1932	Krug Park is Sold; Plan Improvement S.M.. Fox President of New Firm; To Build Stadium
OWH	7/17/1932	Kane's Band at Krug Park
OWH	7/24/1932	City Council Upholds Krug Park Boxing Ban Employees Argue with Commissioners
OWH	6/12/1935	Foreclosure Against Krug Park Sought
OWH	2/18/1937	Asks Supreme Court Ruling in Park Case
OWH	5/14/1937	Roller Coaster is Held Legal
OWH	2/24/1939	Benson Residents Hit Krug Coaster; Screams Annoying
OWH	2/25/1939	Park Coaster Plea Denied: Judge Rules City's Ban is Legal
OWH	9/29/1940	Club Favors Residences: Benson Commercial Restates Stand
OWH	12/1/1940	Krug Park Lawsuit is Ousted: Barrier Had Blocked Development Action Will be Appealed
OWH	12/11/1940	Club Tables Krug Offer: Benson Wants Further Study of Park
OWH	6/4/1945	Planners Ask Play Space in Krug Park Principle at Benson High School Adds Voice to Proposal
OWH	9/18/1945	Krug Park Clash Hot in Council: Metcalfe Takes Poll on Condemnation Says He will Build (Author: James Keogh)
OWH	9/27/1945	Krug Spot Cleanup Promised: Mayor Will Remove "Weed Patch" if Purchase Is Made (Author: James Keogh)
OWH	10/1/1945	Krug Use Matter of Foresight: City Planner Morton Says Blindness to Future is a Shame
OWH	10/21/1945	Mayor Urges Park Funds: Asks Gifts to Help Buy Krug Tract
OWH	10/23/1945	Krug Use Plan Unsettled: Council Votes Down Mayor's Plea to

OWH	10/24/1945	Krug Park Loan Still 'Out' Commissioners Balk Mayor's Proposal to Borrow City Cash
OWH	11/1/1945	Suit is Filed on Krug Park: Claims Mayor Had No Solicitation Right
OWH	11/2/1945	Suit Halts Work on Krug Park: Leeman Says Action Unfortunate \$6,000 Allowed for Clean-up
OWH	11/21/1945	Suit Delays Cleanup
OWH	4/26/1947	Work Delayed on Krug Park: Firm Will Become Party to Suit
OWH	9/19/1947	Park Status Still Obscure: Future of Krug Tract May Be Set Soon
OWH	10/6/1947	Krug Park Fight 'Has Just Begun' Seig Says 3 Moves Open as City Wins Round One Victory Leeman Tells Krug Purchases: Ex-Mayor Testifies in Housing Suit
OWH	2/12/1949	
OWH	3/11/1949	Krug Park and City Council: Judge Allows Time for Rule on Play Area: If No Decision is Reached in 45 Days Concern May Re-buy Property
OWH	3/17/1949	Krug Park Agreement is Proposed: Metcalfe Would Give Part for Recreation and Return \$30,000
OWH	3/20/1949	Protection is Aim of New Krug Suit
OWH	3/22/1949	Krug Park Discussed
OWH	3/23/1949	Council Gets Offer to Build Krug as Park: Pentzien is Willing to Assume Cost: Dare by Metcalfe Accepted
OWH	3/24/1949	Council, Park Group to Talk of Krug Fuss Discussion of Metcalfe Compromise Bring Warm Public Session
OWH	3/25/1949	Park Group Doesn't Want Just a Hole: If Metcalfe Fills Ravine, Picture May Change-Kirkland
OWH	3/30/1949	Council Okays Compromise on Krug Park: Rosenblatt Hopes Two Factions Make Effort to End Litigation
OWH	3/30/1949	Krug Dispute Seems Headed for High Court: Heinisch Hints Action as Council Approves Division of Tract

OWH	4/10/1949	Plan Revealed for Krug Park: Metcalfe Would Build Four Apartments
OWH	1/11/1950	4 on Council Admit 'Error': Voted Wrong on Krug Last Spring
OWH	2/28/1950	Nothing Done on Krug Park: City Council Splits 3-3 Over Resolution
OWH	3/17/1950	McClintok Gets Krug Go-Ahead
Benson Sun	8/25/1957	Krug Park Closing Ended Colorful Era
OWH	8/12/1962	Krug Park Gradually Lost Glitter After '30 Roller Coaster Tragedy  (Author: Al Frisbie)
Benson Sun	5/6/1965	Omaha: A Century in Photos: 1919 Publicity Stunt Cool Work for Duo
Benson Sun	7/14/1966	Survivors Tell of 1930 Big Dipper Crash
Benson Sun	12/1/1966	Krug Park Was the Scene of Newsboys' Picnic (Author: Sandra Lyster)
Benson Sun	12/29/1966	Krug Owner Cole Once Cornered Nickels
OWH	4/22/1967	Krug Park Coaster Mishap Killed 4
Benson Sun	8/7/1975	Krug Park, The Flickers, Withering Heights
OWH	12/7/1977	Krug Park as it was During Its Ups and Downs (Author: James Ivey)
OWH	7/22/1985	89-year-old Dentist Wasn't Ready to Quit-Schroeder's Steady Hands Retire  (Author: Robert McMorris)
OWH	7/24/1985	Rachel K. Gallagher Park: Formerly Home to Beer Garden, Amusement Rides
OWH	9/2/1985	First Grader's Mom Knows Plenty About Labor Day (Author: Robert McMorris)
OWH	9/6/1985	Secretary Spent Summers Riding High-Diving Horses (Author: Robert McMorris)
OWH	3/30/1987	Benson's Buffalo Long Gone, but Community a Healthy 100 Years Old  (Author: James Ivey)
OWH	2/1/1998	In 1910, Omaha Learned of the Mystery of Flight (Author: Robert McMorris)
OWH	10/1/1988	Krug Brewing An Omaha 1st, Tapped in 1859 (Action Editor)
OWH	10/18/1988	Reader Recalls Joy, Tragedy in Krug Park (Action Editor)
OWH	1/5/1989	39 National Legion Champions Recall a Golden Time (Author: Stu Popisil)
OWH	1/19/1990	Ballet Omaha Will Bring Life to Ballroom of Big Band Days (Author: Kyle Macmillan)
OWH	7/24/1990	The Topic Again is On Finnegan (Author: Robert McMorris)
OWH	2/3/1991	Where is the Krug Park Merry-go-Round? Omaha's Carousel Caper
OWH	3/8/1991	Public Pulse



OWH	6/6/1991	Beer Can Contains A Bit of City History (Action Editor)
OWH	7/23/1991	Krug Park
OWH	12/20/1992	History Omaha's Past, Present Mingle on Historian's 1993 Calendar
		Oh Wow' Stories (Author: Gerald Wade)
OWH	4/2/1994	Public Concern Rescued Park (Author: Michael Kelly)
OWH	4/6/1994	Public Pulse
OWH	1/19/1997	Park Ride Crash Survivor William Butkus, 89, Dies
OWH	9/19/1997	Turf Wars: An Almost Offhand Comment by the New Chancellor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha has Rekindled a Feud Between the University and Its Neighbors That Many Hoped Was Finally at Rest (Author: Chris Burbach)
OWH	9/23/2001	Student-Collected Stories of Omahan's Are Set to Air Project Omaha
		(Author Angie Brunkow)
OWH	5/25/2003	Fond Memories of Life at an Orphanage (Author: David Harding)

Appendix IV

237

GENERAL ORDINANCE No. 1122

That certain... of Ordinance No. 1121, known as Ordinance...

That certain... of Ordinance No. 1121, known as Ordinance...

That certain... of Ordinance No. 1121, known as Ordinance...

That certain... of Ordinance No. 1121, known as Ordinance...

Dated: June 7, 1909.

RICHARD L. METCALLE,  
Mayor and President of City Council.

C. C. L.

Attest: James H. Taylor,  
City Clerk.

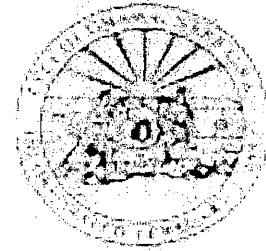
I, JAMES H. TAYLOR, City Clerk of the City of Omaha, do hereby certify that...

*[Signature]*  
CITY CLERK.

*[Signature]*  
*[Signature]*

Appendix V

City of Omaha, Nebraska



Executive Director  
City Clerk

1919 Flagler - 1920, 1921  
1922-1923  
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2018-2019  
2020-2021  
2022-2023  
2024-2025

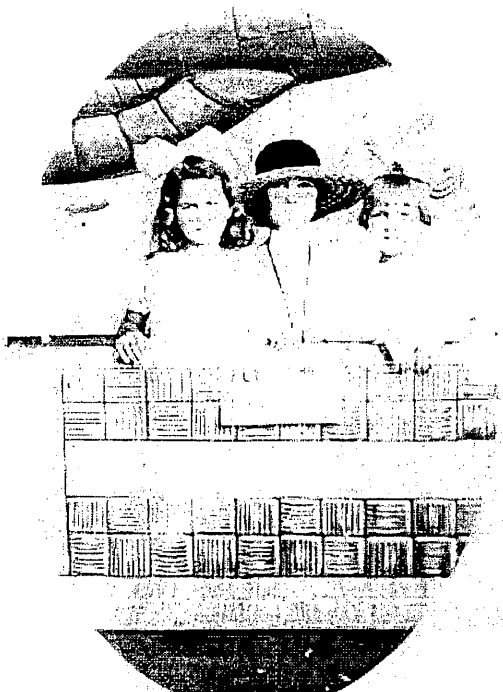
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## Appendix VI



Left: A family friend donated this Krug Park postcard.

Below: A respondent donated this photo.  
Behind the two girls is the Swawnee River.

