



Edition:Edina

DECEMBER 2020
Volume 7, Issue 13

CITY GOALS:



Strong Foundation



Reliable Service



Livable City



Better Together

Newly Renamed Yancey Park Honors Civic-Minded Pioneer Family

Yanceys Were Fruit Farmers, Leaders in Minnesota Grange

BY DAVID KATZ

It is not uncommon for a city to rename a public amenity in honor of a community founder, outstanding civic booster or valiant war veteran. In the newly named Yancey Park, the City of Edina has the somewhat rarer opportunity to do all three at once.

Beverly Claiborne (B.C.) and Ellen Maria Yancey (née Bruce) loom large throughout the early history of Edina.

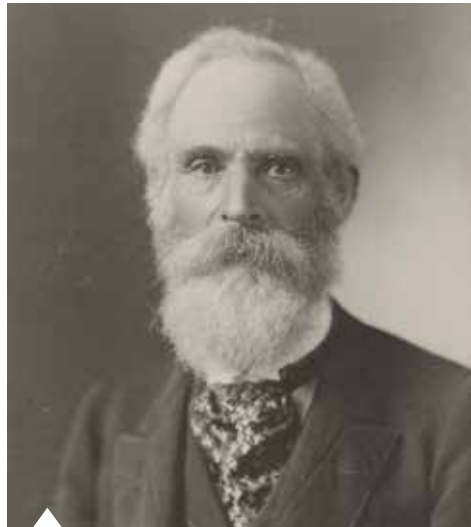
As any acolyte of local history can tell you, most of the community's early homesteaders came from Irish and Yankee stock. However, the Yanceys were among more than a dozen Black families to resettle in Edina (then part of western Richfield Township) in the years following the Civil War.

An Ohio native, B.C. Yancey fought for the Union as part of the 4th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment. His division participated in several pivotal campaigns.

Ellen Yancey's early life is difficult to reconstruct in any detail, but extant records offer tantalizing crumbs. Born in the District of Columbia around 1832, she purportedly perfected her cooking skills with a stint working at the White House. She married B.C. in 1870.

The couple ultimately settled on a 68-acre farm in today's Grandview Neighborhood.

In time, the Yanceys emerged as one of the community's more prosperous families. They specialized in fruit growing. One visitor, who gushed to a Black newspaper *The Appeal* about a summer 1891 sojourn to the Yancey farmstead, reported on a busy season where nearly 100 workers picked an impressive 2,400 quarts of produce each week!



Beverly Claiborne ("B.C.") Yancey



Ellen Maria Yancey

Photos courtesy of Edina Historical Society

Fittingly, given the family's agricultural prominence, B.C. and Ellen played bedrock roles within Minnesota Grange No. 398, the local chapter of a farming-based fraternal organization that proved the lifeblood of Edina through its formative decades. B.C. chipped in toward hall building costs, functioned as a construction foreman, and took on the role of Grange Secretary.

Family patriarch B.C. also served as Recorder for the watershed moment in 1888 when Edina residents gathered (at the Grange Hall, of course) to consider secession from Richfield Township. He cast his own ballot in favor of the move.

Like her husband, Ellen played an active role in the Grange, a movement known, then and now, for its strong egalitarian principles. A talented singer and instrumentalist, she was a natural choice for the role of Chaplain.

As the matriarch of a large family, Ellen also understandably took an active interest in Edina School District 17. Indeed, she

boasts another claim to fame: founder and inaugural president of Edina's first ever parent-teacher association.

Later in life, B.C. served as Justice of the Peace and Village Recorder for Edina. His fine oratory skills also secured him terms as "Lecturer" in 1893, 1895 and 1897. A statewide post, this made him the first Black person elected to an officer position in any State Grange.

B.C. died in 1905 at the age of 78. Ellen passed away 10 years later, at the age of 82. They are buried together at Oak Hill Cemetery in Minneapolis.

Their legacy would live on through their children, in whom this same strain of civic-mindedness clearly ran strong. B.C. and Ellen also live on in the diaries and letters of their contemporaries, who spoke highly of their work ethic, bonhomie and neighborliness.

Yancey Park, previously Garden Park, at 5520 Hansen Road, will be formally dedicated in early 2021.



Edina Police Strengthen Community with Social Work Partnership with Hennepin County

New Part-time Position is Shared with City of Richfield

BY KATY KOCH CAMPBELL

A sometimes elusive piece of police work is the connection of social services. Through a partnership with Hennepin County, Edina Police Department now has a part-time social worker to help bridge that gap and strengthen the community.

Social Worker Donna Nelson is employed by Hennepin County Human Services & Public Health Department and serves the cities of Edina and Richfield. She receives case referrals and since she started in



Donna Nelson
Submitted Photo

September has been handling about 20 cases per month in Edina, considered typical for a Police Department of Edina's size, said Lt. Tim Olson. These are largely mental health-related cases, not criminal related or matters involving adult or child protection services.

Nelson attends department briefings and follows up with referrals during normal business hours.

No two referrals are the same. If the police are called to the same address multiple times by someone experiencing paranoia, officers might refer the case to Nelson to determine if there is need for care services. If someone is trying to get help for a senior family member who is refusing services, Nelson might be called in to assist. Or the family might not be aware of the extent of their relative's challenges or what resources are available to help, Olson explained.

It's important to note that when a case is assigned to the social worker, health care individual privacy laws kick into place so the Police Department doesn't receive followup information on what services are being provided to that person; Hennepin County takes it from there. The social worker assesses strengths and identifies needs of the individual with the goal of creating "a more positive outcome for the individual and the community," said Cynthia Arkema-O'Harra, Program Manager for Hennepin County's Criminal Justice Behavioral Health Initiatives and Chemical Health.

The adult behavioral needs assessed are medical, mental health, substance abuse, and also housing and food needs that might be met by public assistance. It may be a "livability crime" that put the person in contact with police: stealing food or needing a place to sleep, for example, O'Harra said. Individuals may talk with social workers when they have refused the help of police.

The desired outcomes are very hopeful.

"Restoring the individual to health will reduce recidivism, police calls can go down and overall, this establishes a healthy and safe community," O'Harra said.

Hennepin County has social workers embedded with local police departments in other shared partnership contracts, including Plymouth with Maple Grove and Hopkins with St. Louis Park. One also serves Bloomington.

For more information, contact O'Harra, 612-879-3588 or cynthia.arkema-oharra@hennepin.us.

BY THE NUMBERS

Building Inspections on Track for Record-Breaking Year

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Edina's Building Inspections Division is on course for a record-breaking year. Building Inspections administers the 2020 Minnesota Building Code to ensure the safety and integrity of the building structures in Edina. Here are the numbers for the first 10 months of 2020. 🌱



18,780

Building inspections, up 1,172 over 2019



5

New apartment/condo buildings under construction, which will bring 422 new housing units to the community

1,821

Roof permits, many due to the hailstorms in August. That compares to 314 in 2019.

21

Solar-powered system permits – up nearly 60 percent!

15

Staff members to process, review and inspect permits.

– COMPILED BY DAWN WILLS

What's the Value of Water? A Lot – For Very Little Cost

Gallon of Milk Costs Roughly the Same as 1,000 Gallons of Water

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

When Edina residents turn on the tap to fill a glass or take a shower, they don't think, "Is the water clean?" or "How much does it cost?"

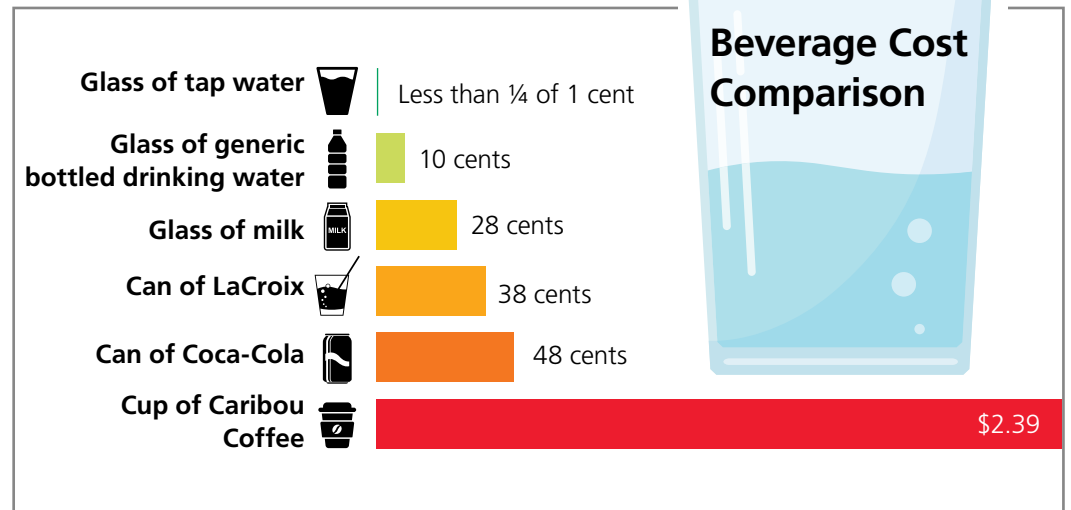
It's given less thought than when someone opens a can of pop or picks up a latte.

Of course, if pop came out of your tap instead of water, your quarterly bill would be about 1,500 times higher. So might your dentist bill.

Water is a bargain in comparison to just about anything else we purchase. It is on-demand to homes and costs roughly \$2.50 per 1,000 gallons in Edina for usage. Utility bills also include other set fees, such as for the meter. The usage charges and fees pay for water treatment, testing and all the pipes to get it to your home's system, along with maintenance and replacement of all the equipment and pipes.

"The entire utility infrastructure is essentially paid for by user rates," said Public Works Coordinator Dave Goergen.

A 2020 study from Ehlers Public Finance Advisors found Edina's water fees



remain in line with other surrounding communities.

The average Edina home uses about 13,800 gallons of water in a winter quarter, according to the Public Works Department. If you combine residential and commercial use, it's 112 gallons per day for each person living or working in Edina. That's below the national average of 176 gallons, according to the Value of Water Campaign.

Inside the home, 17 percent of your water is for showering, 27 percent for the toilet, 22 percent for the washing machine and 15 percent goes down sink drains from washing hands, rinsing dishes and other

tasks, according to the Value of Water Campaign. The rest is for various uses or is lost to leaks.

Do the math and everything from brushing your teeth to doing laundry costs the average person in Edina 28 cents a day for water. You can have about 20 days of water for all your needs for the cost of a Turtle Mocha at Caribou Coffee. While the second one might be tastier, water is essential to survive – and to make that mocha.

Read about Edina's drinking water quality at EdinaMN.gov/WaterReports or for more information, contact Goergen at 952-826-0312 or dgoergen@EdinaMN.gov.



Stay Informed About the City's Response to COVID-19

Stay Healthy

Wash your hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds; cover your coughs and sneezes; wear a mask when in public; practice social distancing; get tested and stay home if you are sick.

Stay Informed

To get reliable and updated information about COVID-19, refer to the Minnesota Department of Health, CDC or your health provider.

Challenge the Stigma

Sharing facts and accurate information about COVID-19 helps challenge rumors and stereotypes that have been negatively associated with racial and cultural groups or people wearing facemasks. There have been incidents of discrimination, bias and hate reported around the world during the pandemic.

If you believe you are a victim of a hate crime because of fear around COVID-19, contact the Edina Police Department, 952-826-1610. If you feel you have experienced discrimination within the City's services, facilities or institution, contact Race & Equity Coordinator Heidi Lee, 952-826-1622.



Edina COVID-19 Resource Hotline
952-826-0370



Resources for businesses, residents and seniors can be found at **BetterTogetherEdina.org**



EdinaMN.gov/coronavirus



Sign up for City Extra emails at **EdinaMN.gov/CityExtra**



Sign up for text notifications by texting EDINA to **57838**

ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON
CAR-RT-WS

Training Facility to Add Tactical Building Thanks to State Bonding Bill

Construction Begins in Spring on New \$1 Million Indoor Structure



The South Metro Public Safety Training Facility will add a new \$1 million tactical training structure in the existing dog training area, left of the fire tower. File Photo

BY DAN REISIG

Public safety personnel in Edina and surrounding cities will soon have access to better training and facilities, thanks to the recent bonding bill passed by the Minnesota State Legislature.

Among the many infrastructure improvements included in the \$1.87 billion bill, a total of \$1 million was approved for the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility (SMPSTF). Located in the southwest corner of the city at 7525 Braemar Blvd., the SMPSTF provides high-quality, cost-effective training and development for public safety organizations through shared resources.


The SMPSTF is jointly owned by the cities of Edina, Eden Prairie and Bloomington along with the Metropolitan Airports

Commission. Beyond those jurisdictions, other agencies at the federal, state and local levels benefit from its offerings. In addition to specialized training for law enforcement and public safety, members of the general public can use the gun range as well as take firearms safety classes.

As part of the bond funding, the SMPSTF will erect a new tactical training building on the site of the current K-9 training park. The large, pole barn-style building will have movable walls, catwalks and stairwells on one side, while the other side will be dedicated to open space for vehicles to pull in and conduct training. The long-sought project will allow for public safety personnel to conduct training year-round in all weather conditions.

"This new facility is going to give law enforcement an opportunity to do reality-based training exercises that they can't currently do in our main building," said SMPSTF Executive Director Debra Fields. "They can set up a variety of training exercises to prepare them for situations they may face in their daily work."

Construction will begin in spring 2021 with completion slated for later in the year. Fields hopes that training inside the new facility will be underway by winter. There will be no operational impact on the current SMPSTF, though the displaced K-9 training area will be relocated in the future.

For more information about the SMPSTF, visit policeandfire.training. 

Jackson, Pierce Elected to City Council


Voters Give Hovland Another Term as Mayor

Carolyn Jackson and James Pierce will join the Edina City Council in January.

Jackson and Pierce were the top vote-getters in the election for two seats on the City Council. Mayor Jim Hovland ran unopposed and was re-elected to another four-year term. All three will take the oath of office at the Council's first meeting of 2021 on Jan. 5.

Other candidates for City Council were Josh Ahlberg, Rhonda Bland, Ukasha Dakane, Parinaz Kassemi and Janet Kitui. Incumbents Mary Brindle and Mike Fischer did not seek reelection.

Edina saw higher voter turnout than ever before, with about 90 percent of registered voters – 40,250 residents – casting ballots. Of them, 75 percent voted early in the General Election.

The City Council will next meet 7 p.m. Dec. 1, 6 p.m. Dec. 7 and 7 p.m. Dec. 15. The Dec. 7 meeting will consist of public hearings for proposed 2021 street reconstruction projects. Outgoing Council Members Brindle and Fischer will be honored for their work at the City Council's Dec. 15 work session. 

City of Edina Goals

-  **Strong Foundation:** Maintain physical assets and infrastructure.
-  **Reliable Service:** Maintain service levels that best meet the needs of the community.
-  **Livable City:** Plan for connected and sustainable development.
-  **Better Together:** Foster an inclusive and engaged community.