

A Civic Club's Legacy

By: Bill Sauers

The residents of the Town of Greece enjoy a variety of parks within the Town. Their features and size are certainly diverse, from the 577 acre Greece Canal Park to the 4 acre Henpeck Park.

But their history and names are just as varied. Most parks names are either derived from their location such as Braddock Bay Park or from a prominent Greece native such as Carter, Badgerow, or Basil Marella Parks. But one park, first developed for recreation in 1934, is named after a Hilton doctor.



It all began in 1924 When **Dr. Sherwood Sawyer** and his wife purchased a parcel of land near the intersection of Latta Road and Long Pond Road from William Hogan. Dr. Sawyer had purchased and developed other properties in the Parma area, so we can assume he planned on developing this land at some time in the future. But with the onslaught of the depression, the town did not develop quite as fast as the doctor had assumed.

Meanwhile Boy Scout Troop 14 at Barnard School needed a sponsor. It seems the troop had been sponsored by a series of different groups since forming in 1926 but by 1935 they were in need of a permanent responsible sponsor. A group of concerned citizens stepped forward with a proposed program for the troop that would eventually benefit the entire Town of Greece.

In early 1935 a group of Greece men from the Dewey/Stone area formed a committee to sponsor the troop, calling themselves the **Barnard Civic Club** and civic minded they were. Their first order of business was to find a suitable camp site for the boys. They found the property owned by Dr. Sawyer perfect for their purpose and the doctor offered the property to the club for \$400.00.

Mrs. Antoinette Grabowski of Stone Rd gave the scout treasurer \$2.00 for the express purpose of starting the camp site fund. The remainder of the fund was raised by public subscription. \$1.00 Certificates were sold with the inscription "Invest in Youth of Today for Better Manhood of Tomorrow".

The Civic Club purchased the property, and scouts planted trees donated from the State, built a cabin, and for many years camped on this site. They called their special place "Camp Sawyer".

As the years passed, private camps run by individual scout troops became less common and their camp site fell into disuse. A Scout camp operated and maintained by the Scout Council had opened nearby in Webster and other opportunities opened up with the availability of cheap transportation.

In 1958 the site was offered to the Town of Greece as long as it was used for public recreation. It took a decade but in 1970 it officially opened as a town park.

Dr. Sawyer died in 1944, the Barnard Civic Club eventually folded, and Troop 14 lasted until 1979, but the legacy of that Boy Scout troop, the civic-minded group, and the Hilton doctor lives on in a pleasant picnic ground and park behind the YMCA known today as Sawyer Park.