

LASHBROOK PARK

These twelve acres, incorporating the tall grass prairie and the Big Woods of Northfield's heritage and native flora and fauna, were purchased in 1991 with donations from the City of Northfield, St. Olaf College and Northfield residents, and funds from the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development in cooperation with the National Park Service and the United States Department of the Interior. J. Wesley and Kathiann Brown were the local leaders who generated the support that made this passive park possible.

The park honors the land's former owners, the Lashbrook family, for their care of the earth and their commitment to the community.

THE LASHBROOKS

In 1903 Ulysses and Della Lashbrook purchased the farm across the road from this park as well as twenty purebred Holsteins, eleven of which were under contract to provide milk to St. Olaf College. In 1916 Ulysses bought the land that became this park and raised hay there.

In 1915 their eldest son Alfred who attended Carleton College and received a Bachelor of Science degree in animal husbandry from the University of Minnesota married Edna Stake who graduated from the University's teacher education program with a major in home economics, and they began managing the farm. By 1916 Northfield was a center of the Holstein industry with 4000 cattle within 15 miles of the city.

In addition to their four children, Willard, Donald, Marion and Helen, Alfred and Edna employed St. Olaf students working for room and board and, after World War II, they took in displaced people from Europe as well. Raising corn, oats and alfalfa on this land, they developed a herd of nationally known purebred registered Holsteins. By 1950 Lashbrook Holsteins, descendants of the prize cow Lashbrook Pearl Ormsby and her son, sire Woodmaster Lashbrook Ormsby, had stocked herds in 23 states and three foreign countries, and by 2012 fifty per cent of the 362,000 registered purebred Holsteins carried Woodmaster's genetics.

Alfred served on the National Holstein Friesian Association Board of Directors from 1938-1946 as well as on the Boards of the Minnesota Dairy Herd Improvement Association and the Congregational Church. Edna was a leader in the Congregational Church, the Farm Bureau, 4-H Club nature and conservation projects; she received national recognition for her work with the Girl Scouts. In 1963 the Minnesota Holstein Breeders Association awarded Alfred and Edna an engraved silver tray, and in 2013 Alfred was inducted posthumously into the Rice County Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Northfield became known as the Holstein Capital of the Nation, and today calls itself "The City of Cows, Colleges, and Contentment."