



CIRCA 1908: Boaters take a turn around Island Park Lagoon. The identical scene, from the color snapshot, was taken by Ellen in 2008. Notably missing are the people.

now

Then and Now Island Park, Mayville, North Dakota

BY ELLEN NOTBOHM

GREAT-GRANDFATHER CHARLES LIVED his “coming of age” years in Mayville, North Dakota, near the turn of the 20th century. It’s easy to imagine the part a lovely, water-encircled park in the center of a community might have played in a young man’s life.

My first look at Island Park was this black-and-white postcard of gentlemen in Sunday best rowing parasol-shaded ladies around the lagoon. The park reverberated year round with concerts, political rallies, church services, picnics, and holiday gatherings. In winter, skating parties took to the ice by the light of roaring bonfires.

My second look at Island Park was up close and personal—I spent two perfect August evenings there. Island Park was still lush and beautiful, but on those two nights, it was deserted, save for a lone twilight runner cutting across the park.

ELLEN NOTBOHM is a three-time ForeWord Book of the Year finalist and frequent contributor to *Ancestry magazine*. Read all of her *Ancestry magazine* articles at <www.ellennotbohm.com>.

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