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Anecdotal Survey of Dump Sites in Waterloo, IA

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ANECDOTAL SURVEY
OF
DUMP SITES IN WATERLOO

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There are many abandoned dump sites in the city of Waterloo. Most are very old and have been covered up for many years. However, covering them up does not make them go away. This report tries to identify the location of these abandoned dump sites. This is not a complete list, because there are probably many sites which are completely unknown (and difficult to trace). This report was compiled as a project to satisfy an internship project requirement for the Black Hawk County Health Department. This is also being done for the City of Waterloo to meet a goal of the City of Waterloo's Leap to the Future, Year 2000: Strategic Development Plan. The research for this report was done by interviews with city and county officials, interviews with older residents who have lived here many years, the Grout Museum, and a class project done for the Environmental Geology class at UNI during the spring of 1992.

During our interviews with various people we had to assume what they told us was true. We tried to verify these dumps by having at least two people mention them, or by coming across them in other research. But if only one person mentioned it, we still mapped it. We never conducted any testing of any areas to determine if there was actually a dump present.

As a general rule we found most of the dumps located along the Cedar River or one of its tributaries. The major dump is the old Waterloo City Landfill which starts at about 11th Street on the west side of the river and runs along the river to the

Mitchell sandpits and the Old Mill Race. This was an old wetland area with many low areas, which made it perfect for dumping. The landfill was closed in 1975 and the new landfill is located on Washburn Road.

Another major fill area is the John Deere Component Works between Westfield Avenue and the Cedar River. Black Hawk Creek intersects this area. In the past, this creek was straightened. The fill area on either side is river dredge as well as foundry sand. Other materials may also be dumped in here. In our research we found a map from the Waterloo Courier dated January 17, 1965, which shows this area as landfill.

The other major fill area along the Cedar River occurs across the river from John Deere in Exchange and Cedar River Parks. This includes Municipal Stadium. The boundaries for this are very hard to determine. They stretch from along the river to up north at Center Street. The east and west boundaries are Mullan and Broadway. The southern boundary is unclear though.

An important source we used for our report was the Environmental Geology class project at the University of Northern Iowa from the spring of 1992. This project was done to assess the geologic setting of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls area. One of the goals of this project was to locate possible hazardous waste sites. This class project listed many dump sites and gave us a good start for this report.

A second important source of information was interviews with local people. The people we interviewed were:

Bob Bamsey: Engineer for Rust Environmental and Intrastructure
Bruce Bottorff: Works for Zeidlers, and is the former Solid Waste Commissioner

Lloyd Hambley: Retired Superintendent for the City of Waterloo

Argall Jackson: Health Officer for Black Hawk County

Leonard Katoski: Former Director of Parks Service for Waterloo, and is also President of the Cedar Valley Historical Society

Bill Lemke: Waterloo City Councilman and longtime resident

Michael Magee: Acting Sanitation Foreman

Jon McNamee: Health Officer for Black Hawk County

John Meyer: Director of Public Works for Waterloo

Jan Taylor: Director of library at the Grout Museum

Gary Wilcox: Solid Waste Administrator for Black Hawk County

A third source of information for us was the Grout Museum. At the Grout Museum, Jan Taylor showed us the location of old aerial photographs and maps. Looking at the aerial photographs was interesting but did not provide us with any new information. The aerial photos were from the 1950's. Looking at these it was very difficult to determine any new dumps. The photos are taken so high up and everything looks very small. The old maps were not much help either, because nowhere on the maps did it say "dump" or anything close to this. Dumps are not specifically mentioned. However, this is where we found the Waterloo Courier map from 1965 by looking in the old files.

We tried to do an index search for the Waterloo Courier but the Courier is only indexed back to 1974. So looking through any issues before this date would be very tough to do.

Today it is illegal to just dump trash in any area. A hundred years ago this practice was common. Any low area, especially along the river, was a good place to dump. It is interesting to note that city garbage collection did not begin until April 19, 1943, as evidenced by the old Waterloo Courier article. So before this, people were responsible for getting rid of their own trash.

In addition to the defined dumps, there are other possible hazards. When talking to Bill Lemke, he noted that Waterloo used to have many coal yards to support the industry of the area. These coal yards may have leached material into the soil. When the coal was burned, cinders were left, and these cinders were routinely spread on roads, especially alleys. As it rained these cinders turned into an acid and leached into the ground, causing some water mains to break. These coal yards would not be considered a "dump" but they are worth noting.

Hopefully this report condenses some of the knowledge about these old dumps into one package. It is likely that not all dumps will be located in the future. Some dumps will remain hidden forever.

SITE LOCATIONS OF DUMPS

1. 1965 Independence
2. Corner of Glenwood and Vinton
3. 300 feet southwest of the intersection of Sycamore and Elm Streets
4. Between Dunham and Indiana Streets along the Cedar River
5. Northeast corner of the junction of Highway 63 and Ridgeway Avenue
6. Between Broadway Street and Mullan Avenue and bounded to the North by Center Street
7. Exchange and Cedar River Parks and Municipal stadium
8. South end of Scott Street, between Downing Avenue and Huntington Road
9. The Old Mill Race
10. Starting south of the West 11th Street bridge on the west side of the Cedar River and moving southeast along the river past Henderson Street. This includes Roof Park and the area west to LaPorte Road.
11. 10th and Washington
12. 2nd and Cedar-adjacent to the Cedar River(cleaned up)
13. 700 Falls Avenue
14. John Deere Component Works-Confluence of the Cedar River and Black Hawk Creek
15. 1750 Broadway
16. 300 Ansborough

17. Independence-North of Bishop
18. Behind the Cattle Congress
19. North Hackett and Greenwood in Sherwood Park
20. Starting at Fletcher and Reber Avenues moving northeast along Highway 63 up to West Wellington
21. North Hackett and Shirey Way
22. Wagner and Highway 57
23. Kent Feeds on Airline
24. Corner of Mobile and Newell
25. South of West Louise and Fairview
26. North of 800 Dearborn

WATERLOO COURIER

APRIL 12, 1943

City Garbage Trucks Start Next Monday

Collection of garbage by city-operated trucks will start next Monday, April 19, Carl Fagerlund, general street department foreman, reported Monday.

The city's four trucks, specially built for hauling of table wastes and household refuse, will operate until about Oct. 1, he said.

"This year, however," he said, "we don't plan on picking up tin cans with the garbage, because citizens here are supposed to prepare their tin cans for salvage, and we'll make a collection of flattened cans on the last Tuesday of each month."

The city will haul bottles and other articles which cannot be salvaged by the householder, Fagerlund said.

Jan 17 1965

