

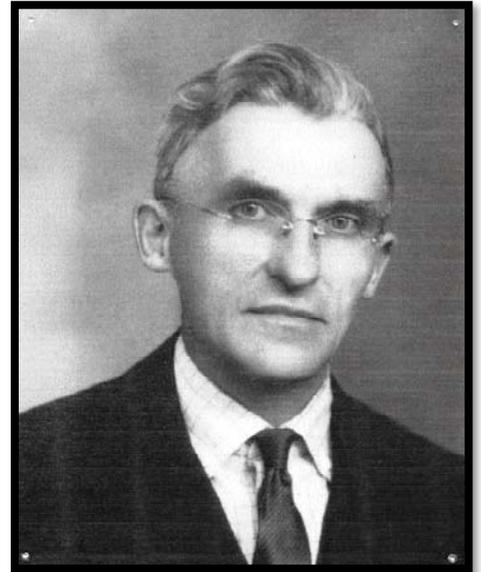
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# MEET THE COMMISSIONERS

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## John C. Flotow

John C. (Charles) Flotow was born in Rolofshagen, Germany on October 2, 1883. His parents came to Crystal Lake in 1893. He became a citizen through his father's naturalization in 1898. John was a laborer in the Terra Cotta plant from about 1900 to 1911. His uncle Theodore sold John his business in 1911. He was the owner of an ice cream and cigar store business at 105 Main Street for 23 years. After he gave up the store during the Depression in 1934, he concentrated on the insurance business which he had entered in 1922. He was a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church. He was the Nunda Village clerk in 1913 and served as city clerk of the combined villages from 1914 through 1929. He joined the Union Cemetery Association in 1915 and became secretary of the organization the same year and served for 42 years as secretary and superintendent of the grounds. He died at age 94 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on November 12, 1977. He served on the park district board from 1921 to 1929.



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## Dennis W. Kelley



Dennis W. Kelley was born in Chicago June 25, 1879. He entered the Chicago public school system as a teacher in 1898. He moved with his family to Crystal Lake about 1920, purchasing a home at Oriole Trail and Dole Avenue. He continued to teach in Chicago but got involved in the church, social, civic, and political life of Crystal Lake. He was a loyal worker in St. Thomas church, a member of the Knights of Columbus, a president of the Crystal Lake Community Club, and a member of the Crystal Lake Country Club. He was interested in sports, playing for the local team with his son attorney Walter F. Kelley, and was the leader in getting lights on the baseball field. He was also on the Depositor's Committee when the United State Bank went into receivership. He became involved in politics shortly before he left Crystal Lake. He was elected a Democratic precinct committeeman and in August 1934 was elected chairman of the McHenry County Democratic Central Committee. He was promoted from the assistant principal post at Lane Technical High School to principal of the Parental School in 1935 and had to leave Crystal Lake. Two years

later on June 22, 1937 he died of a heart attack. Dennis W. Kelley served on the Crystal Lake Park District board from 1921 to 1927.

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# MEET THE COMMISSIONERS (cont.)

## Frank W. Schramm

Frank W. Schramm was Crystal Lake's wholesale florist starting in 1915. His father, Franz Schramm, began the florist business bearing the family's name. Frank was born in Germany January 15, 1871. He came to Crystal Lake about 1914 and became widely known in the field of rose culture and won numerous awards in national competition with professional growers. He developed many new types of rose blossoms including the "Mayrene" named for his two daughters, May and Irene. He held Plant Patent No. 72 filed January 20, 1933 and granted July 25, 1933. Later he specialized in gardenias and camelias. He eventually owned 6 greenhouses for a floor space of 58,000 square feet. An average of 8 to 10,000 blossoms were shipped every day in season to all parts of the United States. He died at age 73 on May 15, 1944. He had moved to Elgin two months before his death. Frank W. Schramm served as park commissioner from 1921 to 1927.



## Paul F. Rosenthal



Paul F. Rosenthal was a Crystal Lake native, born September 26, 1885. He was educated in Crystal Lake schools and then Elgin Academy. He worked for his father's business from its beginning as bookkeeper but also shoveling and delivering coal or sweeping floors. He became chairman of the board of Rosenthal Lumber & Fuel, the company his father started in 1906. The business was first located where Depot Park is now, then on the northeast corner of Crystal Lake Avenue and Main Street, and then on the southwest corner of Crystal Lake Avenue and Main Street before the hardware store most native baby boomers remember was sold to the Edward Hines Co. in 1976. Rosenthal was active in community and county affairs. He was elected one of the first assistant township supervisors in the county and served 36 years in that capacity. That position put him on the County Board of Supervisors, which he served as chairman in 1935. He sponsored many sports activities but also was an active participant.

He was instrumental in organizing and popularizing baseball in the early 1900s, playing catcher for and managing the semi-pro Lakers. He assisted in organizing, and served as director of, the Crystal Lake Savings & Loan Association, served two terms as director of the Chicago Regional Planning Association, and helped organize and served on Crystal Lake's first volunteer fire department. He died at age 88 July 21, 1974. He served on the park district board from 1921 to 1929.

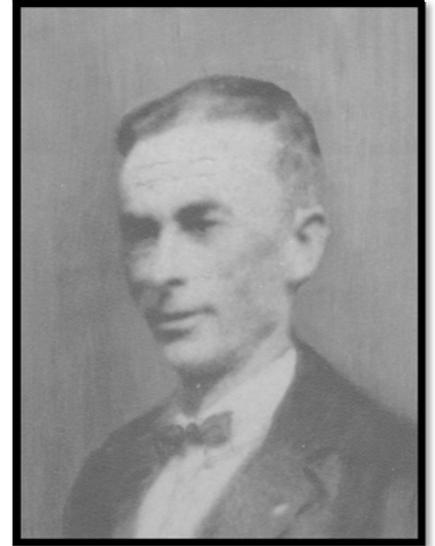
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# MEET THE COMMISSIONERS (cont.)

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## Benno Raue

Benno "Ben" Raue was born in Landeshut, Germany on April 16, 1866. He learned the jewelry trade in his native country and when he came to Crystal Lake in the fall of 1893, he opened his jewelry business in the Freye hardware store at 80 N. Williams Street. He operated his own store at 69 N. Williams until his retirement in 1956. His children, especially his daughter Lucille, operated that store after his retirement until 1994. The family legacy stands at 26 N. Williams in the Raue Center for the Arts. "Raue Hardware" can still be seen at 69 N. Williams, at the Flag Store. Raue served as mayor of Crystal Lake from 1923-1927, all years he was also serving on the park district board. The first paving of Crystal lake streets began under his tenure as mayor. He also served 30 years on the school district board and as president of Home State Bank for some years. Raue was a member of the Nunda Lodge No. 169 of the Masons and belonged to the Modern Woodmen of America, for whose drill team he was the drillmaster. They did drill formations with sharp and shiny axes. Raue managed the Phoenix Orchestra in its heyday when they played for many parties in town. He also loved horses and owned show horses. Raue was one of the prominent citizens who appealed to the public to vote for the formation of the park district in an editorial in the Nov. 10, 1921 *Herald* as the cheapest way to keep a portion of the lake frontage and a park in Walkup's Woods. He died at age 94 March 20, 1961. He served the park district from 1921 to 1929.



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*The five commissioners met November 22 and took their oaths of office. Under law, the park board had to elect a president from its members and a secretary and treasurer from outside its members. Under law, commissioners served 2, 4, and 6-year terms and lots were drawn to determine who got which terms. Rosenthal drew the 2-year term, Kelley and Schramm the 4-year terms, and Raue and Flotow the 6-year terms. At the first regular meeting of the park board December 1, 1921, Rosenthal was elected president, H.H. McCollum secretary, and W. H. Wilbur treasurer.*

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## Harry H. McCollum

Harry Hayes McCollum was born December 26, 1876 in Nunda Township, the son of the first white child born in McHenry County, Aury Washington McCollum. After elementary schooling, McCollum worked at various occupations and then became a railway telegrapher, working in Nunda and Woodstock. In 1894, Harry and his brothers, Emerson, Earl and Frank, brought electricity to Crystal Lake-Nunda, a frame building at Main and Sherman housing the first generator. This was the Union Light & Power Co. In 1910, Union Light & Power merged with the Public Service Co. McCollum's WWI draft registration card, dated September 12, 1918, reported his residence as Grant Street, Crystal Lake and his occupation as chief clerk for the Public Service Co.

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# MEET THE COMMISSIONERS (cont.)

## *Harry H. McCollum (continued)*

In 1920, Harry and Walter McCollum decided to devote their entire time to the electrical business, opening up a shop, carrying electrical appliances and fixtures and doing installation and repair work. In 1922, the electric sign telling the world Crystal Lake was a good place to live was erected under the direction of Harry McCollum. In 1925, Harry was sole proprietor of The Electric Shop, doing electrical work in private homes and public buildings, including the electrical work in the new Country Club, of which he was a member. Harry held many official city positions and served as an officer of several organizations. He was the village clerk in 1909, Master of the Masonic Lodge in 1914, 1916 and 1917, financial secretary of the Commercial Club in 1918, and special assess-



ment collector of the city 1921 through 1926, in addition to his service on the park district board from 1921 to 1931. In 1929, he was also named to the newly created park superintendent position in addition to his duties as board secretary, which added \$150 to his annual salary of \$250 as secretary. But at the regular monthly park district board meeting of October 1931, Harry McCollum's September 26 resignation was accepted. An audit had recently shown a shortage of about \$1400 in the secretary's accounts, and the checks were found deposited in the secretary's personal accounts. Harry made the shortage good. About 1940, Harry moved to Downers Grove and died December 6, 1953. He is buried in Crystal Lake's Union Cemetery.

## **Walter H. Wilbur**

Walter Hoy Wilbur was born July 25, 1876 in Rockford, Iowa. Wilbur attended the schools of Rockford, Iowa and after high school went to college in Arizona. He then entered the financial field and from the age of 20 was connected with banks. In 1915, he married Kate Griswold Irish in Chicago. They belonged to the Crystal Lake Congregational Church. Also in 1915, when the Citizens State Bank of Crystal Lake was purchased by his uncle Fremont Hoy and was re-organized, Wilbur became its cashier. The following year, he became vice president of the United State Bank of Crystal Lake. In Jan. 1919, he was elected its president. Wilbur was elected chairman of the Red Cross and was on the county advisory board of the Salvation Army in 1920, was involved in the organization of the United Milk Producers, was a notary public, and was a member of the Insurance Agency of Crystal Lake. The United State Bank operated in downtown Crystal Lake from 1915 or 1916 until 1931. The closing of the bank was made necessary because of a quiet run of withdrawals for over a year, which resulted from rumors regarding financial difficulties of the bank president, Walter Hoy Wilbur. Two judgments against him for about \$25,000 had been entered in the circuit court in Woodstock. Shortly after the bank shut down, May 28, 1931, Wilbur declared bankruptcy. Wilbur resigned his post at the park district in May as well. His property was sold at auction in Dec. 1931. The "palatial" home at 1 W. Paddock St. went for \$7600. It appears from the *Herald* that the Wilburs stayed in Crystal Lake through 1939 at least. Walter Hoy Wilbur died June 28, 1963 in Casa Grande, AZ. No mention of his time in Crystal Lake is found in his obituary.