

About Julius M. Kleiner

Julius M. Kleiner was a man who understood and appreciated freedom from the time a chance opportunity brought him to America. His arrival signified the beginning of nearly 60 years of service dedicated to farming and food production. This is the story of Julius M. Kleiner – immigrant, businessman, philanthropist, and father.

Born in 1892, Julius came to America from Russia in 1915. His journey to America came after an arduous trip on the Trans-Siberian Railroad with stops along the way in Manchuria and Japan. From Japan, he took a freighter across the Pacific Ocean and landed in Seattle. He worked in odd jobs digging graves and tending counters in a grocery store, eventually leaving Seattle for Spokane, where he worked in the creamery business, which would become a lifelong pursuit.

From Spokane, the business led him to Butte, Montana and eventually to Shanghai and Japan. Julius worked for Anker Henningsen's creamery business until AH's death in the 1920s. After that time, Julius purchased Mr. Henningsen's branch operation in Caldwell, Idaho and moved to the state that would become his new home.

Julius prospered in Idaho running the Caldwell creamery for several years. He sold the Caldwell creamery to purchase a creamery in Nampa in 1929. In addition to his successful creamery business, Julius also raised turkeys and spoke passionately about farming, including forming a cooperative to help address milk prices. In 1944, he purchased the property in Meridian from the Morrison Knudsen Company, who used it to store construction equipment and horses. Although he retired from the creamery business in 1952, he worked diligently to turn the land into a dairy farm, which it operated as until the 1970s. He continued to oversee farm operations until his death in 1972.



Julius was a lifelong supporter of the Boy Scouts, the Salvation Army, and a board member of the hospital in Nampa. The Kleiner Intensive Care Unit was donated in his memory.

In true spirit of the land and in tribute to his father, his son, Eugene, is honored to donate the farm to the people of Meridian for their enjoyment as a peaceful park, a place where the community can experience some of the same freedoms that his father held dear.

Park Facts



Acreage (approx.)
 Entire Park - 60
 North Pond - 3
 South Pond - 1.5
 Turf - 37



There are 62 fallen soldiers honored on the Rock of Honor Memorial monument to date.



November 11, 2011 - Rock of Honor Memorial Unveiling Ceremony

Total Numbers

Parking Spaces - 700
 Trees in Park - 1,300
 Pathway Mileage - 3.3
 Volunteer Service Hours Logged in the Park Construction - 2,381



April 30, 2010 - Rock of Honor Memorial Groundbreaking Ceremony

Construction by the Numbers

3,000 concrete blocks in the 416 feet of pond walls.
 13,700 tons asphalt.
 10,500 feet of lighting conduit.
 9,700 feet of water pipe.
 5,500 feet of sewer pipe.



3,000 feet of gravity irrigation pipe.
 103,000 square feet of concrete sidewalk.
 8,275 square feet of pervious concrete.
 169,246 square feet of liner in the north pond.
 95,634 square feet of liner in the south pond.
 Over 7,500 survey points calculated and staked.



Obelisks

Artist: J. Amber Conger

The three obelisks each stand roughly 50 feet tall, which are strategically placed as landmarks throughout the park. The project took approximately one year in design development and then underwent fabrication. One beam was incorporated into each art piece which was recycled from old railroad supports taken from the original farm.

Julius M. Kleiner (JMK) Statue

Artist/Sculptor: Thomas Jay Warren

Standing at 7 feet tall, the process of designing, sculpting, enlarging, molding, bronze casting, finishing, and installation took approximately 15 months.

Gene Kleiner, Elden Gray, and Jay Warren all gravitated to the same photo when deciding on the pose and the dress. JMK looked particularly dashing in that 1940s suit and fedora. Gene remembered him at the agricultural fair when the photo was taken and how happy he was on acquiring the prize cow that was also in the picture.

Jay explained, "I was struck by just how much Gene favored his father. I took some photos of Gene to help me with some details on the portrait that I couldn't get from the limited photos available of Julius. This was particularly helpful on sculpting the eyes."

Jay further expressed, "The great thing about bronze is that it lasts forever. It doesn't corrode like ferrous metals. So when all the buildings crumble and rust away, the bronze statue will still be there. That dashing Julius M. Kleiner from the '40s will be there for everyone in the future who visits the park for centuries to come."

November 3, 2010 - Senior Center Groundbreaking Ceremony



July 6, 2010 - Park Groundbreaking Ceremony



August 19, 2009 - Park Master Plan Unveiling Ceremony

Senior Center Building
 Size 13,800 square feet



May 25, 2012 - Senior Center Grand Opening



The \$25 million park was donated to the City of Meridian by Eugene Kleiner in honor of his father, Julius.

The street that borders the park on the south was officially approved to be "E. Elden Gray Street" on March 22, 2012 by the Ada County Street Naming Committee. It is named after Elden Gray, Kleiner Park Trustee and long-time family friend who has been involved with the JMK farm property since 1951.

