Parks, Lakes, Trails and So Much More:
An Overview of the Histories of MPRB Properties

In 1883, the voters of Minneapolis approved by referendum an act of the state legislature to create a park board for the city. The Board of Park Commissioners had the independent authority to acquire and manage parks. In the years since, the park board has created a world-renowned municipal park system that includes 182 park properties, inside and outside city limits. From tiny triangles at street intersections to the sprawling Theodore Wirth Park with its incomparable gardens and two golf courses, the park board has acquired, managed and maintained open spaces and recreational facilities in every part of the city.

Minneapolis parks encompass the city's defining lakes and the river banks at the core of the city's development. Acquired by purchase and donation, the parks include features of astonishing beauty, historical significance and ecological wonder, all within a thriving urban setting. More than this, the parks are imbued with personal meaning—the playgrounds that live in the memories of generations of people, are the soul of our communities.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has compiled historical profiles of each of the park properties in the Minneapolis park system. Through the links provided below each park's individual story is outlined. Park properties are listed under their commonly used names.

Compiled and written by David C. Smith

Sources

Primary sources for all park histories are the Annual Reports and Proceedings of the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners 1883-1968 and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board 1969-2007. Additional sources are cited either within the text or as endnotes for some parks.

The term "park board" refers to the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners and to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board after the name of the board was officially changed in 1969.

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Adams Triangle

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Location: East 41st Street and Minnehaha Avenue

Size: 0.32 acres

Name: Adams Triangle was named in 1921 for Abraham S. Adams a park commissioner 1893-1905 and president of the park board 1903-1905.

Acquisition and Development

Adams Triangle was designated for purchase May 21, 1919. The purchase was completed in 1920 for $2,400. Another $1,800 was spent that year on improvements to the property, including grading and the installation of curbs and gutters—considerably less than the $2,600 the board had allocated for

improvements in September 1919. All costs were assessed against property in the surrounding neighborhood.

Alcott Triangle

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Location: St. Louis Avenue and West 29th Street.

Size: 0.26 acre

Name: The park was presumably named for the Alcott School next to the park. The two-room schoolhouse, built in 1921, was named for American author Louisa May Alcott.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was platted as a park in the West End Addition in 1887 along with West End Triangle nearby.

On June 10, 1927, the city council voted to turn over the triangle to the park board. The park board received notification of the action at its meeting of June 27. Two months later, however, the park board decided that the property "is apparently of no use as a park." The park board suggested to the city council that the school board might have some use for the land in conjunction with Alcott School and recommended that the council vest title in the property with the school board. A year later the school board asked the park board for title to the land, but the park board still didn't officially own the land.

Park board records do not indicate when the board officially accepted title to the land from the city.

Architect Triangle

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Location: Architect Avenue and 36th Avenue NE, north of Columbia Park

Size: 0.54 acres

Name: The property was named for its location on Architect Avenue.

Acquisition and Development

Architect Triangle was donated to the city when the land was platted February 15, 1906. The triangle was not officially designated as a park by the park board, however, until March 15, 1933. The action followed petitions the previous year by residents of the neighborhood to have the park board assume responsibility and maintenance of the property. A similar petition had been rejected in 1927. Improvements in 1933 were financed by $900 in city bonds.

Armatage Park

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Location: Penn Avenue South and West 56th Street

Size: 17.21 acres

Name: Armatage Park and Armatage School are named for Maude Armatage, who was a park commissioner from 1921 to 1951.

Maude D. Armatage

Armatage was the first woman elected to the park board—and was the only woman on the board for her entire length of service. Armatage was elected to the park board in 1921 in the first general election in which women had the right to vote. She was vice president of the board from 1924 to 1927. She chaired the Privileges and Entertainment Committee in her early years on the park board and when a combined Playground and Entertainment Committee was created in 1928 she chaired that committee until her retirement from the board in 1951.

One of Armatage's first special assignments as a park commissioner was the "artistic selection and arrangement of furnishings at The Chalet," as noted in the park board's 1923 annual report, The Chalet was the new golf clubhouse and shelter built at Glenwood (Wirth) Park. Armatage and her father, F. A. Dunsmoor, both contributed to the furnishings of the clubhouse.

Armatage was especially active in promoting cooperation between the school board and park board to avoid duplication of facilities and get the most out of spending by both boards. When the park board and school board were first considering cooperative development of facilities in the southernmost portion of the city after its annexation from Richfield in 1926, Armatage visited Detroit on behalf of the park board to view the results of cooperative efforts there. When the possibility of developing joint facilities was renewed after nearly two decades of depression and war, Armatage sponsored a joint resolution between the park board and school board in 1948 that led directly to cooperative development of Waite, Armatage, Kenny and Cleveland parks and schools.

Upon her retirement in 1951 at the age of 81, the park board passed a resolution honoring Armatage's service on the board, noting that "it is to her, more than to any other person, that the people of the City of Minneapolis owe a debt of gratitude for the promotion of the integrated school and park idea." The 1951 annual report also noted that she had "championed many activities and diversions for the recreation of youth which are commonplace in the recreation program of today."

Armatage lived near Lake Harriet in a nine-family community called the "Colony." According to research by Tom Balcom, nine families built homes on land given to them in 1893 by Charles Loring in the 4600 block of Fremont Avenue in the hope that initial development would lead to more families wanting to build homes in the area.

In addition to her work on the park board, Armatage was a local leader of Campfire Girls and was on the national board of directors of that organization.

Acquisition and Development

Nearly nineteen acres of land for Armatage Park were purchased September 1, 1948 for $7,500. The land was planned from the outset as a combined development of a park and school following a joint resolution by the park board and school board to develop new park and school complexes together. The primary objective of those joint developments was to provide a park that would double as a playground for the school and a school gym that could be used by the park board when school was not in session. It was the second park and school—Waite Park was the first—developed together by the two boards.

Joint development of the property had been considered as early as 1926, when that section of Minneapolis was annexed from Richfield. With the annexation, both the park board and school board faced the challenge of providing facilities for the newest section of the city. In 1927, land in the neighborhood had been proposed for development as a park, but property owners opposed the additional tax assessments that would have been needed to pay for the development. With the advent of the Great Depression, followed by Word War II, the project was delayed until the late 1940s. When the park and school were finally built in 1952, they were paid for by assessments on property in the neighborhood.

The purchase price of the property paled in comparison to the cost of developing the land for a park and athletic fields. Leveling and grading the property and preparing playing fields cost about $400,000. Because the western border of the park was significantly lower in elevation than Penn Avenue on the east, a lot of earth had to be moved to create level fields.

The original park improvements, completed in 1954, included regional athletic fields, a wading pool, a battery of tennis courts and a warming house and shelter. In 1955 the final touches were put on the park with the blacktopping of a parking lot and the installation of five sections of ten-tier bleachers for the athletic fields.

Armatage Park's shelter was enlarged in 1962-63 and replaced with a new recreation center in 1977. The baseball and softball fields at the park were rebuilt in 1979. Significant renovations to the park property began in 1997 with the addition of a new parking lot and a new gym attached to the school and recreation center. The new gym opened in 1999.

In 2000 Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funds were used to commission an eighteen foot-high bronze sculpture by artist Scott Wallace, called "Garden Party," which was placed in the park. Additional improvements to the playing fields and tennis courts were made in 2004 and a skate park was added. The skate park was one of four created in Minneapolis parks that year.

Audubon Park

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Location: Fillmore Street and 29th Avenue N.E.

Size: 5.71 acres

Name: The park was named in honor of John James Audubon, the American naturalist and ornithologist, at the time it was purchased in 1910.

Acquisition and Development

The first five acres for Audubon Park were purchased in 1910 for $5,400 and Pierce Street through the park was closed. The park was expanded slightly in 1912 with the addition of four-tenths of an acre at a cost of just over $1,000. In addition to the enlargement of the park, the park board drained a "small, shallow, stagnant pool" in the park, according to the 1912 annual report. In 1914, the park board closed Buchanan Street between the park and Thomas Lowry School as part of park superintendent Theodore Wirth's plans, presented in 1915 and again in 1918, to create a playground from the school extending into the park. It was the flattest section of one of the city's hilliest parks. In 1918, the park board also considered enlarging the park southward to 28th Avenue NE between Pierce and Buchanan, with the purchase of several adjoining lots. The plan was abandoned after neighborhood protests over the assessments on local property, during war time, that would have been needed to pay for it. Audubon was

included among the parks that were provided with a skating rink in 1918, some playground apparatus was provided to the park in 1921, and a playground instructor was assigned to the park in 1926.

In 1927 Wirth again proposed cooperation with Thomas Lowry School to expand park facilities, noting that the neighborhood badly needed a playground and there was space for a "standard-sized" playground between the park and school. Wirth also noted in his report of that year that the park had lost 75 percent of its oak trees to an oak borer infestation.

In the last annual report he wrote before he retired, Theodore Wirth again presented a plan for the improvement of Audubon Park in 1935. He included Audubon in a list of "Some Well-patronized but Insufficiently-equipped Playgrounds," noting especially the lack of proper shelter buildings and sanitary facilities. He also admitted that the only prospect for executing the plan he presented was with Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds. It did not happen.

For the next twenty years, park board annual reports made no mention of any plans for Audubon Park. Finally in 1955 and 1956 the board's annual reports again mention plans for developing Audubon and in 1957 improvements in the park were begun by filling low areas with 20,000 cubic yards of fill excavated from the construction site of nearby Northeast Junior High School. In 1958 additional filling and grading were done at Audubon to provide more gradual grades in the park, including a resurfacing of topsoil obtained from the construction site of the new Shingle Creek playground in north Minneapolis.

In 1959 Audubon got new playground equipment, a wading pool and ball fields. The work was financed by city bonds amounting to $107,000 and property assessments for the same amount. Construction was also begun on a shelter building that was completed in 1960, resulting in "a new modern playground" where the "formerly hilly terrain made its value as a playground somewhat limited," according to the 1960 annual report. When looking at the steep grades in the park today, it's hard to imagine the park when those slopes were steeper. The terrain of the park makes it one of the most interesting neighborhood parks in the city—and provides a great sledding hill.

The park that had waited so long for a shelter building was upgraded near the end of the 1970s recreation-center building boom in Minneapolis parks. The current recreation center was dedicated in 1979.

The most recent improvements to the park took place in 1997, when new playground equipment was added to the park in part through neighborhood commitment of Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds.

B. F. Nelson Park

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Location: Between Marshall Avenue and the Mississippi River from Nicollet Island to Boom Island Park.

Size: 11.99 acres

Name: The park site has always been referred to by the name of the man whose eponymous business operated on the site since the late 1800s. Benjamin F. Nelson built a thriving paper mill and roofing materials business on the site in the 1880s. Prior to that it had been the site of sawmills. Nelson was active in city affairs at the time. As a city alderman, he was an ex-officio park commissioner on the first park board in 1883. He was subsequently chosen by the park board to fill the term of Andrew Haugan,

one of the original twelve appointed commissioners who had resigned from the board. Nelson was one of three commissioners who selected Logan Park as the site of the first park in what was then called the East Division of the city. Nelson also served for many years on the school board. The company he founded now has its headquarters in Shakopee, Minnesota.

Acquisition and Development

The site was acquired in a purchase and trade with the Minnesota Department of Transportation in 1987.

The land had originally been included in the St. Anthony Historic District, but was excluded in 1973 when the land was acquired by the state for a planned I-335 freeway across northeast Minneapolis to connect I-35W to I-94 west of the river. The site would have held the east end of a freeway bridge across the river. The manufacturing buildings on the site were demolished at that time.

In 1987, however, as Boom Island Park to the north of the site and the West River Parkway across the river were being developed by the park board, the state contacted the park board with an offer to sell the B. F. Nelson land.

Plans for I-335 had been abandoned, so the state no longer needed the land. It had also learned that a proposed change in federal policy made it wise to sell the land quickly. When the land was acquired for a freeway, the federal government paid ninety percent of the $5 million cost, with the state paying the rest. Until 1987, the federal government had permitted states to sell land that was no longer needed for freeways without reimbursing the federal government for its share of the purchase price. But the state's transportation department said it had learned that the federal government was about to change its policy and require reimbursement for its investment. Before that change would take effect, MnDOT said it would sell the park board the B. F. Nelson site for the state's investment, which was only ten percent of the original cost.

But the state had other motives, too. It needed a bit more park land from The Parade for the construction of I-394 west from downtown. Moreover, it had not been successful in the remediation of some polluted industrial land it had promised to turn over to the park board as part of an agreement for taking of a portion of North Mississippi Park for freeway I-94 in 1974.

The state ultimately sold the B. F. Nelson site to the park board for a little more than $200,000, plus land at The Parade and the polluted land near North Mississippi Park.

A path, river overlook, and fishing dock were built in 1996, in part with funds from the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program through the St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization.

Environmental testing of the land as a "brownfield" was conducted in 2001. In part because of buried industrial waste from years as a manufacturing site, the master plan for the area is to leave it primarily as a greenspace between Boom Island Park and Nicollet Island.

In 2006, the park board received a grant of $775,000 from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization for initial design and development of the site.

The St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization is raising funds to refurbish and relocate the Pioneers Statue to the park from its present location at Pioneers Triangle across Marshall Avenue from the park.

The park is a part of Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park.

Barnes Place

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Location: Elwood and 8th Avenue North

Size: 0.60 acres

Name: Barnes Place was named for William A. Barnes, who along with Elwood S. Corser and C. P. Lovell, donated the property to the park board when they were platting the area for housing. The park board made a minor change in the name from Barnes Park to Barnes Place in 1890. Another account suggests that Barnes Place may have been named for Rev. Seth Barnes, a prominent Universalist minister in St. Anthony.

Acquisition and Development

Barnes Place was tendered to the park board as a donation by Elwood S. Corser, William A. Barnes and C. P. Lovell in June 1887 on the condition that it be graded and fenced during 1887. In July of that year the park board designated the land for acquisition and instructed the superintendent to improve the grounds once title was secured. At the same time the same group of men donated Lovell Square nearby. Corser had earlier donated property on the shore of Lake of the Isles for parks. Corser and Barnes were often hired by the park board as appraisers for land the board acquired by condemnation.

The 1889 annual report notes that Barnes Place was deeded to the park board in April of that year. It was listed in the inventory at that time as 1.33 acres, but in 1893, the size of Barnes Place was changed to 0.57 acres without any mention of disposition of land.

Barnes Place was originally designed by Horace Cleveland, the landscape architect who provided a blueprint for the entire park system in 1883 and designed most early individual parks. Barnes Place was the smallest park Cleveland designed in Minneapolis.

Initial improvements to the small park were made in 1889, including the closing of Thomas Place, which ran through the park.

Barton Triangle

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Location: Barton Avenue SE and Malcolm Avenue SE

Size: 0.02 acres

Name: The triangle is named for the street on which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

The city council requested on September 24, 1915 that the park board take over four triangles in the Prospect Park neighborhood of southeast Minneapolis, including Barton Triangle. The park board agreed to take control of the triangles October 11, 1915 and officially named them on November 17, 1915. The other three triangles accepted were Bedford, Clarence and Orlin.

The triangle was improved—graded, seeded, planted and curbed—in 1916.

Bassett's Creek Valley Park

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Location: The valley of Bassett's Creek from Theodore Wirth Park to Morgan Avenue North.

Size: 70.26 acres

Name: The park is named for the creek that meanders from Medicine Lake in Plymouth through Golden Valley, Theodore Wirth Park and Minneapolis to the Mississippi River. The creek was named for Joel Bassett, the first settler on the creek's banks, a member of the city council in 1872, and the first judge of probate in Hennepin County.

Acquisition and Development

The first land for the park along Bassett's Creek between Bryn Mawr Park and Theodore Wirth Park was acquired in 1930 when Arthur Fruen and the Glenwood-Inglewood Company donated 13.4 acres. Fruen was a city council member and ex-officio park commissioner at the time. In 1934 the park board purchased 43 acres to expand the park.

The land was almost acquired, however, many years earlier. When Bryn Mawr Park, part of the estate of John Oswald, one of the original park commissioners, was purchased from his heirs in 1911 the park board had considered acquiring the valley of Bassett's Creek all the way to Glenwood (Wirth) Park. At that time it was considered a possible parkway route from Loring Park through The Parade and Bryn Mawr to Glenwood Park. In the end the board acquired Bryn Mawr Park only as far west as Cedar Lake Road.

Interest in Bassett's Creek surfaced again in 1924 when park superintendent Theodore Wirth made a survey of the area. He wrote in the 1924 annual report that he believed the land should be owned by the park board and suggested that the "unsightly and unsanitary" land could be made attractive at "comparatively small expense." Opposition to the plan by residents of the area however dissuaded the park board from pursuing the issue.

Wirth noted again in 1929 that the idea of acquiring the creek had been revived and he submitted a plan for the development of the potential park in the 1929 annual report. The acquisition of the park gained impetus in June 1930 when the Fruen family and the Glenwood-Inglewood Company offered to donate more than 13 acres along the creek for the park. Deeds to that land were delivered to the park board in December 1930. Over the next three years, the park board and residents of the area debated how much and what land should be purchased to add to the donated land and how the cost would be assessed to property owners. Assessing property owners for anything during the Great Depression met with opposition. In February 1934 the park board designated 43 acres of land for purchase. The price was less than $14,000, which was assessed on property in the district. It was one of the park board's few land acquisitions from the beginning of the depression until after World War II.

Improvements to the land began almost immediately using labor from federal work relief programs. An old dump at Russell and 2nd Avenue North was raised about five feet and converted into a five-acre ball field. The creek bed was cleaned between Penn and 6th Avenues North and, where the banks of the creek were steep, stone walls were constructed. In addition a concrete dam was built near the Fruen Mill. The

land north of Glenwood Avenue and east of the creek, which had previously been a dump, was graded. Similar work continued in 1935, still with federal assistance, included the deepening of the creek. In 1936, four clay tennis courts were added to the park, two near Glenwood Avenue and two near Chestnut Avenue. Federally funded improvements continued in 1937, most notably the creation of two lagoons.

The park was enlarged in 1944 by more than three acres when the park board agreed to swap two acres of park for more than five acres of railroad land beside the park.

Following the initial improvements to the park with federal funding, very few improvements were made to the park for many years. The next time that Bassett's Creek featured in park plans was in the 1950s when the water flow in the creek was coveted to raise the water levels in the Chain of Lakes to the south. Unlike Minnehaha Creek, Bassett's Creek never seemed to run out of water, so it was considered the best source for more water in the lakes. In 1958 a pipeline and pump were constructed from Bassett's Creek to Brownie Lake. Water pumped into Brownie Lake flowed into Cedar Lake, Lake of Isles, and Lake Calhoun, and eventually reached Lake Harriet.

The new pumping station succeeded in raising the levels of those lakes more than four inches in 1958, but that wasn't enough. After examining several alternatives, including capturing water from air conditioners in downtown office buildings for pumping into the lakes, the park board built a pipeline to the Mississippi River to pump river water to the Bassett's Creek pumping station and from there to the lakes. That pump began operation in 1966 and continued periodically through the 1970s and 1980s.

Another ball field was constructed in the park near Thomas Avenue in 1968 when a swampy section of land was filled. An offer of free fill from a local contractor proved too attractive to pass up. Additional improvements to the park, including the addition of a "totlot" were completed in 1990.

The most recent changes in the park began in 1996 with the creation of a commuter biking trail through the park to connect to Bryn Mawr Park and the Cedar Lake Trail to downtown. The last connection of biking trails occurred in 2002 when the Luce Line Trail was connected through Wirth Park to the Bassett's Creek Trail.

Beard's Plaisance

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Location: Between Lake Harriet and Upton Avenue South from West 45th to West 46th Streets.

Size: The park is included in the 126.2 acres of land the park board owns around Lake Harriet.

Name: The park was named "The Beard Plaisance" for Henry Beard, one of three men who offered in 1884 to donate their land on the shores of Lake Harriet for a park. The park board also acquired the land for Linden Hills Boulevard from Beard. The picnic area was named in 1893 to honor Beard. "Plaisance" is a French term meaning "pleasure ground."

Acquisition and Development

Henry Beard was one of three men—the others were James Merritt and Charles Reeve—who approached the park board with an offer to donate land around Lake Harriet for a park in 1884. After a complicated legal battle, the land around Lake Harriet that Beard and the others had donated was declared to be the legal property of William King, whose farm had once encircled the lake. After he had reacquired rights to the land, King, who had been one of the staunchest advocates for parks in

Minneapolis, stood by the commitment of Beard and the others to donate the land. Beard was never implicated in the misappropriation of land from King.

In 1888 the park board reported that it had paid Beard about $8,000, including interest, for land acquired from him at Lake Harriet. It is unclear if that payment applied to Beard Plaisance or Linden Hills Boulevard, which was also acquired from Beard, or both.

The park board first approved improvements to the "Beard land" in 1889. The first picnic shelter at Beard Plaisance was built in 1904 and a stone walk was constructed along Upton Avenue west of the park. In 1907, superintendent of parks Theodore Wirth proposed building a peninsula into Lake Harriet at Beard Plaisance to improve the "regular and monotonous" shoreline of the lake. It was an ambitious plan that was never acted upon.

In 1912 Wirth recommended a plan to rebuild and rearrange the eight-year-old picnic shelter. In the meantime, a tennis court was apparently built at Beard Plaisance. Tennis courts were built and removed at many parks without reference in park board proceedings, especially in the early 1900s. Park board proceedings reveal that "additional" tennis courts were requested for Beard Plaisance in 1912 and again in 1915, at which time the board recommended more courts be added there as it was the only place around the lake where they could be added without considerable grading expense. Finally in 1916, the board ordered the construction of two new courts to complement the one already there. As with most tennis courts built at the time they were probably built without backstops and nets.

Toilets were also built at Beard Plaisance in that era. Although it is unclear when they were first built, the board considered in 1915 a request to remove them from the vicinity of the picnic shelter or build them into the hill beneath the shelter. Instead the park board voted to plant shrubbery around the toilets to make them less conspicuous. New toilets were approved for the park in 1921. A year later the park board responded favorably to a request by the Robert Fulton Community Club to provide a supervised playground for small children in the park.

The only recorded improvement to the park over the next few decades was the renovation of the shelter in the late 1930s by federal work relief crews.

Several improvements were made to the park in the 1970s. In 1974 new playground equipment for little children was installed and in 1979 the tennis courts were renovated and a parking lot was added next to the courts. At the same time the picnic shelter was re-roofed.

The current picnic shelter in the park was built in 2002.

Beltrami Park

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Location: Polk Avenue NE and Broadway NE

Size: 8.11 acres

Name: The park was called Maple Hill from 1908 to 1948. It was known as Maple Hill Cemetery prior to that and when the park board acquired the land it kept the name. In 1947, the park was renamed for Giacomo Constantino Beltrami an Italian explorer who is credited with being the first European to identify the source of the Mississippi River in Minnesota in 1823. The park was renamed at the request of the predominantly Italian-American residents in the neighborhood that surrounded the park. A bronze plaque honoring Beltrami, which still stands, was placed in the park in 1948. It was paid for by contributions from Minneapolis residents of Italian descent.

Acquisition and Development

The park was purchased for $8,000 in 1908. Under the financing terms, the city council had to approve the purchase, which it did. The city council contributed $5,000 for the initial improvement of the land as well.

Initial improvements consisted primarily of constructing a seven-foot high wire mesh fence around the cemetery to protect the Civil War-era stone monuments from vandalism. Some of the monuments and interred remains were moved to other cemeteries. (The fence remained until 1922 when area residents complained of the "unsightly" fence. The park board determined that it was too expensive to repair, so tore it down.)

The conversion of a cemetery to a park did not meet with universal approval. A monument still stands in Beltrami Park that honors the 46 soldiers of the "Grand Army of the Republic" who were buried there after the Civil War. The inscription on the undated tablet reads in part, "Although men's thoughtless actions have deprived them of their right to individually marked and cherished graves, the children of future ages will gather here to honor them." (The quartermaster at Fort Snelling requested permission in 1939 to remove the remains of Civil War veterans for re-interment at Fort Snelling.)

In the first plans for Maple Hill Park, presented in the 1908 superintendent's report, Theodore Wirth proposed a picnic ground for most of the park, with a small section—where no bodies had been buried—reserved for a school garden for the children of Pierce School across the street from the park. (Before cities began building urban parks in the mid-1800s, cemeteries were used as picnic grounds throughout the country.) Wirth also proposed a small shelter building that the 1909 annual report says was used as a warming house, indicating that Maple Hill was provided a skating rink. However, park board proceedings note that area residents petitioned for a skating rink in both 1911 and 1912 and that the park board finally granted those requests in 1913. The shelter was also for "lectures" and a tool room. Wirth noted in his 1909 report that the park was not much frequented and probably wouldn't be as long as it "retains the appearance of a cemetery."

After the construction of a fieldhouse with indoor plumbing at nearby Logan Park in 1912, two toilets were moved from Logan to Beltrami in 1914. A couple years later a small set of playground equipment was also installed in the park. To satisfy a petition from area residents, in 1918 Beltrami got more than toilets from nearby Logan Park: two of the free summer outdoor concerts scheduled for Logan were transferred to Beltrami.

Wirth presented a more detailed plan for the improvement of the park in 1921—including a more permanent shelter building—noting that "the growing activities of this field can hardly be denied the needed extension of facilities." In fact the neighborhood was denied, because Wirth presented the same plan again in 1935, indicating there had been little improvement of the park in intervening years. The 1935 plan was not acted upon either.

One of Beltrami's claims to fame was that the skating club at the park produced Minneapolis's first qualifier for a U. S. Winter Olympic team. Charles Leighton of the Maple Hill Club qualified to represent the U.S. in speed skating, but never got the chance at a medal. The 1940 winter games scheduled for Sapporo, Japan were cancelled because of World War II. By the mid-1940s Beltrami Park's skating rink was maintained without a warming house.

Although residents had petitioned for a tennis court as early as 1915 and were still doing so twenty years later, there is no record of when the tennis court that currently exists at Beltrami was installed. The enormous oak tree branch that stretches over the court, removing the lob from the arsenal of shots Beltrami tennis players could use, suggests it has existed at least since the first concrete wading pool was built in the park in 1953.

Beltrami finally got a more modern recreation center during the expansion of park recreation facilities in the 1970s. The current small shelter was dedicated in 1973.

Beltrami is one of the only places in Minneapolis for a game of bocce ball on specially constructed courts. Six bocce courts in the park, the most recent of which were added in 1990, continue to be used for games every Tuesday night in summer.

Trivia

In 1911 the park board joined residents of the Maple Hill area in opposing construction of a gas manufacturing plant across from the park.

Bethune Park

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Location: Humboldt Avenue North and 8th Avenue North.

Size: 12.32 acres

Name: The park was originally referred to as Grant Park after Grant School nearby, which was named for President Ulysses S. Grant. The park was officially renamed on June 7, 1972 to honor Mary McLeod Bethune, a teacher and civil rights activist. The name of the elementary school next to the park had already been changed from Grant to Bethune. Bethune was the founder and long-time president of Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida. She was a special advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on minority affairs in the 1930s and vice president of the NAACP in 1940. At the time the park was named for Bethune, the park board also designated the name "Phyllis Wheatley Community Center" for the recreation building in the park.

The original Grant School, which opened in 1889, was actually located at 12th and Girard a few blocks north of the present Bethune Park and school.

Acquisition and Development

The first mention of the park site is found in the 1962 annual report of the park board, which noted that $200,000 was earmarked for the park in the park board's 1966 capitol improvement plan if the Minneapolis housing authority had land available for park development at the site. Another $350,000 in capitol improvement funds was targeted for development of the site as a park in 1967 and 1968.

In 1965, the site for the park and a new elementary school was selected and preliminary plans for the site were developed in conjunction with the housing authority as part of major urban renewal project in the area. The next year, the park board received approval from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a grant for federal funds to help develop the site as a park-school-social agency complex. As part of planning for the joint use of the property by the park and school boards and a social service agency, the park board contracted with Phyllis Wheatley Neighborhood Services to operate programs at the planned facility.

In 1968 the deal to acquire the land from the housing authority was finalized and a joint-use agreement was signed with the school board for the recreation center attached to the school. The intent of the park board and the housing authority at the time was to trade land, with the park board acquiring land for Bethune Park and the housing authority getting the land that was then Sumner Field Park for housing development. The second step of that agreement was never completed, however, and the park board retained Sumner Park, too.

Development of the park and construction of the Grant Neighborhood Center, which was later named the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center, began in 1969.

In 1989 the park board spent more than $200,000 renovating the center and the park, including a new totlot for small children, which was dedicated in 1990.

Additional source:
Wittman, Albert D., *Writing in Progress: The Minneapolis Park and Recreation System, 1945-2000,* Unpublished manuscript

Bohanon Park

Table of Contents

Location: Bryant and 49th Avenues North

Size: 8.53 acres

Name: The park was the site of the city's workhouse and was called simply the Workhouse Site Playground from the time it was acquired in 1935 until it was officially named John C. Bohanon Park in 1946. Bohanon was an early settler in that region of Minneapolis.

Acquisition and Development

After the city closed the workhouse that had once occupied the site, the city council transferred the land to the park board in 1935. The donation followed years of discussions of what to do with the site. As early as 1926 the park board was involved in discussions with the City Planning Commission and the Department of Public Welfare over disposition of the site. The donation of land at the time was valued at $10,000. The original eight-plus acres of land were expanded with the addition of approximately ½ acre in 1957 when 50th Street between Bryant and Dupont avenues was vacated to connect the park to Jenny Lind School.

In 1936, the park board approved a request to place in the park the home in which Governor Floyd B. Olson was born—if it could be done at no expense to the board. Apparently it couldn't be, as the home was not moved there.

The park was originally graded and resurfaced as a Works Progress Administration project in 1940.

In the late 1940s, Bohannon was one of 15 playgrounds in the city where the summer schedule of afternoon recreation programs was adjusted to provide morning activities because of a large number of younger children in the neighborhood.

In 1951, at the request of the Jenny Lind School P. T. A., plans for the improvement of the Bohanon Field-Jenny Lind School Site were approved by the park board, the city planning commission and the school board.

The park was finally developed in 1956-1958 and integrated with the facilities of Jenny Lind School. New facilities included a wading pool, a hockey rink, floodlights and a shelter building. The improvements were funded by bonds and property assessments divided fifty-fifty between the neighborhood and the city as a whole.

The current Bohannon Park shelter was built in 1977.

Boom Island Park

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Location: From near Sibley Street NE to the Mississippi River between 6th Avenue NE and 8th Avenue NE.

Size: 22.5 acres

Name: The park gets its name from the island that it once was. The island was named for the booms that were used to separate logs floated down the Mississippi River to sawmills powered by St. Anthony Falls. Each log cut along the tributaries of the Mississippi River was "branded." Each lumber company put is own stamp on the end of its logs and they were separated using those stamps and directed to the proper saw mill by men working from Boom Island. The sawmills at the falls were eventually replaced by flour mills.

Acquisition and Development

The land that had ceased to be an island decades earlier due to a build up of silt and sawdust was purchased by the park board with funds from the state legislature through the Metropolitan Council in 1982. The land was purchased from a construction company for $2.6 million. The land had been targeted for acquisition in the 1978 plan for the development of the central riverfront as a park by the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board (RDCB), which was chaired by park commissioner Ole Olson. The RCDB considered plans to convert the land to an island once again, but decided against it due to the cost.

The first phase of the park was dedicated in 1987 shortly before the completion and dedication of James I. Rice Parkway across the river. The park was designed by Ted Wirth, grandson of former park superintendent Theodore Wirth. At the time Ted Wirth was a landscape architect based in Montana. The park was mostly completed in 1988.

The park featured a marina, boat dock, a landmark miniature lighthouse in the river, picnic shelters and a playground for small children. An old railroad bridge between Boom Island and Nicollet Island was converted into a bicycle and pedestrian bridge.

The acquisition and development of the park was seen at the time as an important spur to redevelopment of the Central Riverfront, along with Nicollet Island, Historic Main Street and Father Hennepin Bluffs on the east side of the river and James Rice Parkway and Mill Ruins Park on the west side.

In 1988 the paddle boat Anson Northrup began using the docks at Boom Island Park to board passengers for river cruises. That boat has since been replaced by the Mississippi Queen, which continues to offer cruise service from the park.

Boom Island Park is contiguous with B. F. Nelson Park to the south and is part of Central Riverfront Regional Park.

Bossen Field Park

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Location: 28th Avenue South and East 56th Street

Size: 36.5 acres

Name: When the park was first considered for purchase it was referred to as Airport Park, due to its proximity to the airport. When the land was acquired in 1947 it was immediately named for Christian A. Bossen, superintendent of parks 1935-1945.

Bossen, who was born in Denmark, came to Minneapolis from Hartford, Connecticut in 1906 with Theodore Wirth. He had already been Wirth's bookkeeper in the Hartford park system for several years. Bossen was given the title of Assistant Superintendent in 1907. Bossen succeeded Wirth as superintendent in 1935 and remained in the job until he reached the mandatory retirement age of 65 in 1945.

Bossen's name also appears in "Bossen's Lane" in the Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary beside Lake Harriet. Bossen recommended formally creating the bird sanctuary in his first year as superintendent (it had been referred to as a bird sanctuary as early as 1923 in park board reports). It was one of Bossen's favorite places in the park system and his ashes were scattered there upon his death in 1956.

Acquisition and Development

Bossen Field Park was tax-forfeited land that was transferred from the state to the park board, at no cost, in 1947. It was in a neighborhood targeted for a park since 1926, when Minneapolis annexed from Richfield a strip of land about a mile wide across the southern border of the city. The finances of the board didn't permit many acquisitions anywhere, and none in the annexed territory, through the Great Depression and World War II. The impetus for acquiring the land after the war was a study conducted by Liebert Weir, the national secretary of the National Recreation Association who identified several neighborhoods that were without parks, but needed them. The neighborhood around Bossen Field Park was one area that he targeted. The park was originally planned to be only ten acres, roughly the size of most other neighborhood parks, but with an opportunity to acquire more land for nothing, the park board

acquired sufficient land to construct multiple playing fields. From the time of its acquisition that was the plan for Bossen Field.

The challenge with the parcel of land, as with much of the land acquired by the park board, was that it was low, wet land that had to be filled to be useable. The park board obtained some fill from construction projects at the airport nearby, which the park board owned until it was turned over to the Metropolitan Airports Commission shortly before Bossen Field was acquired. But the airport didn't provide enough fill, so the park board created a public dump at the park as well, which collected 70,000 cubic yards of "material," according to the 1955 annual report. In 1954 the park board considered future use of the field, perhaps including a golf driving range or pitch-and-putt course. In the end plans for a regional athletic field and small playground won out. Most of the land wasn't brought up to grade by garbage and construction debris until 1955 when the south end of the park was graded. Baseball backstops and playground equipment were installed, and the fields were seeded initially in 1957. Lights were also installed for the fields. The initial plans for improvement were not completed until 1959, when a shelter building was constructed.

Playground equipment was updated at the park in 1967 and areas surrounding the ball fields were also landscaped then. Major park upgrades were made in 1989.

Bottineau Park

Table of Contents

Location: 2nd St. and 19th Avenue NE

Size: 7.18 acres

Name: Bottineau Park was named for Pierre Bottineau, one of the first settlers of St. Anthony, who owned a large portion of what is now northeast Minneapolis. According to a 1975 compilation of the names of park properties, Bottineau at one time had platted the land for a park. In 1933, the Polish Central Organization petitioned to change the name of the park to Pulaski Field, but that request was never approved. Kazimierz Pulaski was a Polish soldier who became a general in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War and is credited with establishing the first cavalry in the U. S. Army.

Acquisition and Development

The original 6.22 acres of Bottineau Park were purchased in 1915 for nearly $29,000. The first plans for Bottineau in the 1915 superintendent's report show that the park was to be devoted exclusively to recreation. In 1916, the park that had once been a vegetable field was improved to include one baseball field and one football field, to double as a skating rink in winter, six tennis courts, one outdoor gymnasium each for girls and boys and two drinking fountains. The park was also provided a temporary frame fieldhouse of "plain but neat appearance," according to Theodore Wirth's report of 1916. At that time Wirth also recommended a permanent fieldhouse and a wading pool. The park was given its first toilets in 1918 when the board transferred two toilets from Loring Park, which already had indoor toilets in the Loring Shelter.

While money to further improve Bottineau and other first ward parks was approved in 1917, the improvements were put off until 1929, when the park got a "much-needed" resurfacing and other improvements, which cost about $5,000, according to the 1929 annual report.

With the onset of the Great Depression, followed by World War II, few improvements were made to any parks. In 1938, park superintendent Christian Bossen presented a plan for a wading pool and a permanent shelter building at the park. Those plans were not executed until 1950, when the wading pool was built and an architect was hired to create new plans for a recreation building. A bandstand was also constructed in the park in 1950. Construction of a new recreation shelter in the park finally began in 1956, but it wasn't completed in time to serve as a warming house that winter, so a temporary shelter was put up for skaters.

Near the end of the park board's building boom of the 1970s, Bottineau Park received a new recreation center in 1977. That shelter burned down in 1999 and was replaced in 2001 by a domed fieldhouse unique among Minneapolis recreation centers.

A skatepark was added to Bottineau Park in 2005.

Trivia

Bottineau Park was the site of a memorial concert on August 8, 1923, to honor President Warren G. Harding whose funeral was held that day. All other parks, except Lake Harriet, where another memorial concert was held, were closed that day and park employees at all other parks were given the day off with pay. The park board also posted notices throughout the park system asking park visitors to show proper respect on that day of national mourning.

Brackett Field Park

Table of Contents

Location: 36th Avenue South and East 28th St.

Size 10.32 acres

Name: The park was referred to as the Short Line Playground for its proximity to the railroad tracks from the time it was designated for acquisition November 16, 1921 until it was formally named George A. Brackett Field on January 17, 1923.

George A. Brackett

George Brackett was one of the original park commissioners appointed in the legislation that created the park board in 1883. He was then elected to serve another three year term. Brackett was one of the most public-spirited of all early leaders of the city, serving as mayor, councilman and the city's first fire chief. He was among the handful of people who had pushed for years for the city to acquire parks and helped lead the campaign to gain approval of the park act during the referendum of 1883. Brackett was also a leader in founding several charities in Minneapolis. In 1885, the governor of Minnesota appointed Brackett to a five-member commission to acquire land for a state park at Minnehaha Falls. When the legislature did not have the money to buy the land around the falls for the park, Brackett secured temporary private financing to ensure the acquisition could be completed.

Acquisition and Development

Brackett Field, a portion of which was still unplatted at the time, was designated for acquisition November 16, 1921. Awards for condemning the land for the park amounted to nearly $35,000. The

entire cost of the acquisition and initial improvements, a combined cost of almost $92,000, was assessed against neighborhood property for payment over ten years.

Improvements to the playground park began almost immediately. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth had included in the 1921 annual report a proposed plan for the still unnamed field, noting that it was devoted to "concentrated gymnasiums and playground facilities." "Every foot of the twelve-acre ground," he wrote, "is taken advantage of in some useful manner." Brackett was one of the first neighborhood parks in the city designed from the start exclusively for active recreation with almost no landscaped open spaces. In his 1923 report, Wirth wrote that improvements at Brackett Field were completed faster than any other property in the history of the park board. A shelter for the park took a bit longer to build however. When bids to build a modest shelter at the park came in more than 30% higher than Wirth's estimate of $12,000 in May 1923, the park board rejected them all. It sought bids again that December and found one more to its liking. The first shelter was built in early 1924.

With the rapid growth in use of park recreation facilities in the 1930s, Brackett was first designated as a year-round recreation center in 1935. With the financial challenges at the end of the Depression and World War II, however, Brackett didn't remain a full-time, year-round facility for long. In 1958 Superintendent Doell reported once again that Brackett was one of three new year-round recreation centers.

In the early 1960s residents near Brackett Field began circulating petitions to support renovation of the park with assessments split 50-50 between the neighborhood and the city. With the success of the petition drive, Brackett was upgraded in 1963, including a renovated shelter and new playground equipment that featured a jungle gym and slide in the shape of a rocket. It was the ultimate in modern play equipment.

The Brackett recreation center was expanded in 1980 with a basement renovation, along with other site improvements. The recreation center was demolished in 1999 and replaced with a new building, designed by architect Milo Thompson, with the help of Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funds.

A skate park was built at Brackett Field in 2005, taking the place of two of the four park tennis courts. The two remaining courts were resurfaced. At that time the park also witnessed the return of the Brackett Rocket. The jungle gym and slide installed in the park in the 1960s, which had become a neighborhood icon, was converted into a park sculpture in the southwest corner of the park. When the park was renovated, innovative new playground equipment, designed in Denmark, was also installed.

Brownie Lake

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Location: West of Cedar Lake Parkway and south of I-394.

Size: 27.66 acres, including 9.59 acres of water

Name: The name of the lake predates the creation of the park board in 1883. An undated handwritten note on a park board document suggests that "Brownie" was the daughter of William McNair who owned much of the land around the lake. In a 1913 plan for the development of Glenwood (Wirth) Park, park superintendent Theodore Wirth labeled Brownie Lake "Hillside Harbor," but there is no record that the park board ever officially changed the name of the lake.

Acquisition and Development

Brownie Lake was acquired as a part of the 100-plus acre expansion of Glenwood (Wirth) Park and the acquisition of portions of the southern and western shores of Cedar Lake in April 1908.

The lake at one time had been considerably larger. It was reduced by a third when the railroad tracks were built beside the lake in 1867. Even when it was acquired by the park board, however, it was larger than it is now. When a navigable channel was opened between Brownie Lake and Cedar Lake in 1917, the lake level dropped ten feet according to Theodore Wirth, who was park superintendent at the time. (The water level in Cedar Lake had dropped five feet when it was connected by the Kenilworth Canal to Lake of the Isles in 1913.)

In 1927 Brownie Lake almost became better known when the park board approved a suggestion from the park superintendent and the city engineer that the name of Cedar Lake Road in Glenwood (Wirth) Park be changed to Brownie Lake Road, to distinguish it from Cedar Lake Parkway around the lake, if the city would agree to change the name of Cedar Lake Road from the park to Western (Glenwood) Avenue. The city apparently did not agree.

The park land west of Brownie Lake is the largest park area in Minneapolis ever to be sold. Thirty-two acres of Wirth Park west of the lake were sold for $200,000 to the Prudential Insurance Company in 1952 as a location for the company's regional office. The park board bowed to intense public pressure to sell the land. Prudential had made it clear that the site adjacent to the lake was the only site it would consider for its offices in the city. Ultimately the park board was convinced that the benefit to the Minneapolis economy was a greater good than keeping the land as a park. The board justified its action in part by asserting that with the growth of traffic on Highway 12 (now I-394) and the widening of that road, the land west of Brownie Lake had already been isolated from the rest of Wirth Park anyway.

In 1958 Brownie Lake became the connecting link between Basset's Creek and the Chain of Lakes as a plan was implemented to pump water from the creek to raise lake levels. Years of below-average rainfall had left lake levels at historic lows. At that time the water level in the channel connecting Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles was too shallow to navigate even in a canoe.

Bassett's Creek, which flows from Medicine Lake in Plymouth, had never suffered the low water levels associated with Minnehaha Creek, which made it the target of those seeking a source for water in the Chain of Lakes. At various times in the history of Minneapolis parks and as recently as the late 1930's the park board had used city water to raise lake levels, but the cost of doing that had become prohibitive. In much earlier times the idea of connecting Wirth Lake and Brownie Lake by a canal had been considered but abandoned when it was determined that the elevation of Wirth Lake was 37 feet lower than Brownie Lake, thus the need for a pump to get water from Bassett's Creek to Brownie Lake. The level of water in the lakes was important, because many recreational facilities—docks, bath house, and boat house—were permanent facilities that required relative proximity to water.

Initially the pumping station on Bassett's Creek raised lake levels, but not even that creek produced enough water to raise the levels of four lakes and keep them at an acceptable level. So in 1966 a pumping station was constructed on the Mississippi River to pump water from the river into Bassett's Creek and from there to Brownie Lake. Pumping from the river caused concern beginning in the 1970s, when the water quality in Minneapolis lakes first became an issue. Critics of pumping river water into the lakes noted that phosphate levels in the river were too high to be acceptable in the city's lakes. The pumping station on the river was dismantled in the 1990s.

Bryant Square Park

Table of Contents

Location: Bryant Avenue South and West 31st Street

Size: 3.66 acres

Name: The park was commonly referred to as 8th Ward Park until it was officially named for its location on Bryant Avenue in 1907. Bryant Avenue was presumably named for American poet and journalist William Cullen Bryant.

Acquisition and Development

The park was designated for purchase in late 1903. The purchase was completed in 1904 for a little more than $9,000. The board agreed to complete the purchase only after neighborhood improvement associations promised to fill the land themselves before asking the park board to make improvements. The problem was that the land for the park was very low land, as much as twenty feet below street level.

The neighborhood associations had a hard time filling the land even when it was used as a garbage dump for a time. Nearly four years later fill was still a problem. Theodore Wirth reported in early 1908 that the park still needed fill and that "until we know where to get it" improvements to the park were "impossible." Finally in 1912, after eight years of no success finding fill for the park, the park board spent nearly $6,000 to purchase fill to raise the level of the park so that it could be improved and used.

In 1913 trees were planted in the park, but money was not available for other improvements. Some playground equipment was added to the park in 1914 and the open field was used for football, baseball and a skating rink in winter. In his 1914 superintendent's report, Theodore Wirth provided a plan for the development of Bryant Square by which, he said, the sunken play-field could be made one of the "most compact and useful playgrounds" of the entire system. Wirth provided cost estimates for the improvements that he said could serve as a "standard for other playgrounds of a similar size."

While Wirth may have considered his plans for a recreation shelter and equipment "standard," the park board apparently did not, because Wirth urged seven years later that Bryant Square still needed a small shelter and suggested that it could be paid for with a small property assessment on the district.

Although nothing came of plans for development of the playground, the recreation instructor assigned to the park was being noticed. Alice Dietz was mentioned in the 1918 annual report for her work at the park. She would later become one of the leaders of the park board's greatly expanded recreation programs in the 1920s and 1930s.

In 1923, the park board authorized plans to build a recreation shelter and hired architect and former park commissioner Harry Wild Jones to create plans. The building was completed in 1925 at a cost of only $15,000. The building stood for 45 years until it was demolished in 1970 and replaced by a new recreation center.

In 2008 a small amphitheatre, the Bryant Square Park POPS (Public Outdoor Performance Space), was built into the hillside south of the park's recreation center.

Bryn Mawr Meadow Park

Table of Contents

Location: Morgan Avenue and Wayzata Boulevard

Size: 51.56 acres.

Name: The neighborhood and the park named Bryn Mawr take their names from John Oswald's farm that once occupied that region of the city. Bryn Mawr means "great hill" in Welsh. As early as the 1860s, Oswald grew tobacco on his farm and also produced fruit wines there, which led eventually to Oswald establishing the first wholesale wine and liquor business in Minneapolis. Oswald was a commissioner on the first park board created by the legislature in 1883. The name was officially adopted May 11, 1911.

Acquisition and Development

John Oswald's son-in-law and business partner, Theophil Basting, offered to sell part of Oswald's estate to the park board in 1910. Theodore Wirth's assessment of the property at the time was that it did not offer any "special advantage" except as part of a parkway to connect The Parade and Loring Park to Glenwood (Wirth) Park through Bassett's Creek Valley. Even then, Wirth reported in 1910 that compared with other needs in the park system it was of "little importance."

The 45 acres originally offered to the park board was appraised at $81,203 in late 1910, a sum the park board was not inclined to pay. For the 39 acres eventually acquired in early 1911, the park board paid only $32,000. The land left out of the purchase was the far western end that would have connected Bryn Mawr to Glenwood Park, which meant the park board bought the land without a connection to Glenwood—and therefore no Valley Drive. Perhaps the park board was convinced to acquire the land when Bastil and other residents said they would not ask for any improvements on the land. The cost of the purchase was assessed on property in the neighborhood

The first suggestions for improvement of the land, nonetheless, were made in 1915 when Wirth recommended converting the land into an equestrian center, complete with horse-riding park and polo grounds. The plan was never pursued despite being presented again by Wirth in 1924. At that time he recommended a neighborhood and city-wide assessment to pay for the development. The park board did approve a baseball field for Bryn Mawr, at a cost of $3,000, in 1922, but never approved the equestrian center.

Bryn Mawr was targeted for a neighborhood playground in a 1928 report produced by Wirth. A year later Wirth presented a plan to improve the 39 acres of "almost useless" land. The plan included the improvement of Bassett's Creek from Glenwood to Bryn Mawr.

Sixty acres of land along Bassett's Creek from Bryn Mawr to Glenwood (Wirth) Park was acquired in 1934 for $14,000. Included in that acquisition were about 14 acres donated by the Glenwood-Inglewood Company and Arthur Fruen, a city council member and ex-officio park commissioner 1929-1933. (See Bassett's Creek Valley Park.)

The first building constructed at Bryn Mawr was a combined toilet building and storage shed to serve the athletic fields in 1953. In addition about 7,000 yards of clay were removed from the playing field areas and replaced with a good grade of back fill.

A small part of Bryn Mawr was lost to freeway construction in 1966, but freeways ultimately resulted in the enlargement of the park. Seven athletic fields at The Parade were lost due to freeway expansion and the park board replaced some of that loss by expanding Bryn Mawr and building more playing fields there.

Important renovations were made to Bryn Mawr's playing fields in 1992.

Bryn Mawr was connected to the Luce Line bicycle trail in 2005, which connected paths from Wirth Park with the Cedar Lake Trail and links to downtown Minneapolis.

Caleb Dorr Circle

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Location: East end of Franklin Avenue Bridge

Size: 0.06 acres

Name: Unlike the other parcels of land acquired at the same time, Caleb Dorr Circle was the only tract that was given a name that was the least bit creative. While the other four parcels were simply named for the streets on which they were located— Bedford, Barton, Clarence and Orlin—this slightly larger piece of land was named for an early settler of Minneapolis and a pioneer lumberman. Caleb Dorr also had been elected alderman for area in the first St. Anthony city elections in 1855.

It was the only park property in Minneapolis called a "circle." All the other odd lots of park property at intersections were called triangles, except two "ovals"—Lakeside and Highland, neither of which still exist. The only remaining "oval" in the park system—Seven Oaks Oval near West River Parkway—was acquired in 1922.

Acquisition and Development

The city council requested on September 24, 1915 that the park board take over five parcels of land in southeast Minneapolis, including Caleb Dorr Circle. The park board agreed to take control of the land on October 11, 1915 and officially named the parcels on November 17, 1915. The other four parcels accepted were Bedford, Barton, Clarence and Orlin Triangles.

The circle was improved—graded, seeded, planted and curbed—in 1916 along with the four other small triangles in the Prospect Park neighborhood.

Cavell Park

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Location: Fillmore Street and 34th Avenue NE

Size: 3.63 acres

Name: The park was named for Edith Cavell School, which had previously occupied the site. Edith Cavell was an English nurse working in Belgium at the outbreak of World War I. When the German army occupied Belgium, she helped Allied soldiers escape to the Netherlands. She was executed by Germany in 1915 for her efforts and became a propaganda symbol to generate support for the war against Germany in England, the United States and other Allied countries.

Acquisition and Development

The Cavell School site was targeted for joint development by the school board and park board as early as 1948 following a joint resolution of cooperation between the two boards to provide park facilities in under-served sections of the city. However instead of developing the Cavell site, the two boards opted to work together to build a new school and park, Waite Park, four blocks east.

With the Waite Park development, the Cavell site dropped off the park board's radar until the Northeast Lions Club requested the park board's cooperation in developing a "cub" baseball field on the site. The park board approved an expenditure of $2,500 for the improvement and operation of that field and authorized the superintendent to work with the school board to obtain their approval.

The park board finally acquired the site from the school board in 1968, using funds from the federal government's Open Space Act and the Minnesota Conservation Department. The site was redeveloped as a park, with ball fields, playground equipment and a recreation shelter in 1977.

New courts and paths were installed at Cavell Park in 1999. At that time additional landscaping was also done in the park.

Cedar Avenue Field Park

Table of Contents

Location: Cedar Avenue and East 25th Street

Size: 1.89 acres

Name: The park was named for its location on Cedar Avenue.

Acquisition and Development

When the park board received petitions from residents in the summer of 1916 for a park in the area, it turned to man who had helped them in the past. The board wrote to David Stewart of St. Albans, Maine and asked if he'd be willing to donate the land for the park. It was a logical, if hopeful, request. In 1912, Stewart had donated six lots valued at $4,000 to complete the acquisition of Stewart Field Park. David Stewart had inherited the land from his brother, Levi Stewart, an early pioneer and large landowner in Minneapolis. David Stewart donated the land in memory of his brother and Stewart Field was subsequently named for his brother.

David Stewart once again responded favorably to a request from the park board and on October 20, 1916 he donated 1.89 acres of land for Cedar Avenue Field. At the time the park board placed a value on the donation of $10,000. When the park board received the donation, it approved discussions with the original petitioners for a park to see if they would be willing to be assessed for the cost of acquiring the southern half of the block to add to Stewart's gift. There is no record of further contact with those petitioners on the matter, so on December 2, 1916 the park board named the small park across 25th Street from the original South High School, Cedar Avenue Field.

In response to requests for improving the land in 1919, the park board authorized spending up to $1,000 to improve the empty ground for a small combination baseball and football field. The action came in response to two requests by the alderman for the district for improvements, as well as a request from the

coach at South High School for his teams to be able to use the field. The grading was delayed in hopes that the neighborhood would agree to pay for more extensive improvements.

The board's 1919 annual report presented a plan for the park, which included a playground for children, a small shelter and wading pool. The layout provided "room for such games as small children may play." The estimated cost of the plan was $30,000, which would have been assessed against property owners in the area, who were evidently unwilling to pay. The following year the field was graded for a ball field and a backstop and benches were installed, as well as a sandbox for children. Playground equipment was installed in 1921.

Cedar Avenue Field was upgraded in 1969 with the installation of playground equipment and creation of a hard-surfaced play area. The park was renovated again in 2003 with new playground equipment, a basketball court, and landscaping improvements.

Cedar Lake

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Location: Around and including Cedar Lake

Size: 288.1 acres, including 173.02 acres of water

Name: The lake was named long before the park board was created for the red cedar trees that once grew on its shores.

Acquisition and Development

No lake in the Minneapolis park system was considered for acquisition as a park for so long and took so long to acquire as Cedar Lake. Even before Lake of the Isles was acquired in 1886, the park board was considering proposals to acquire the western shores of Cedar Lake as a parkway that would loop from Central (Loring) Park to Prospect (Farview) Park in north Minneapolis. The appeal of the route, similar to the appeal of parkways around Lake Harriet and Lake of the Isles, was that landowners had offered to donate much of the land for that parkway.

The park board discussed the route with William McNair, the owner of much of the land along the route (and the law partner of early park commissioner and park board attorney Eugene Wilson), however some park commissioners thought the route was too far from the city to be of much use. Regardless of divided opinion on the acquisition, the issue was dropped when McNair died in 1885. When the park board had hired landscape architect Horace Cleveland to prepare a blueprint for the new park system in 1883, he did not mention Cedar Lake. Cleveland's focus was much more on acquiring the banks of the Mississippi River than on acquiring the shores of the distant lakes. It was Cleveland's idea of a system of parkways connecting features of natural interest, however, which kept alive the idea of a parkway around Cedar Lake.

When Cleveland's friend and former University of Minnesota president William Folwell urged the park board to plan carefully the expansion of the park system in 1891, he suggested a parkway around Cedar Lake to connect to Glenwood (Wirth) Park and then continue north to a large yet-to-be-acquired park in the northwest part of the city.

Cedar Lake came up at park board meetings several times in the 1890s, including an offer from McNair's heirs to donate land for a parkway in 1894 to connect Dean Parkway with Glenwood Park, but

no action was taken. As president of the park board William Folwell again recommended adding Cedar Lake to the park system in 1899. His advice was seconded by landscape architect Warren Manning who was hired to advise the board in 1899 after Cleveland had retired.

With the clamor for more parks nearly everywhere in the city, however, the park board didn't seriously consider acquiring Cedar Lake again until 1905. In that year's annual report park board president Fred Smith made note of petitions to acquire the west shore of Cedar Lake in the context of plans to enlarge Glenwood Park. Once again Cedar Lake was viewed principally as a scenic connection from north Minneapolis to the parkways around Lake of the Isles and Lake Harriet. (The west shore of Lake Calhoun wasn't yet a park either.) Another petition from citizens in 1905 asked for the linking of the lakes, including Cedar Lake, by a navigable channel.

Finally, at the same time it was designating land to enlarge Glenwood Park, the park board designated just enough land along the west shore of Cedar Lake to "secure shore rights" and build a parkway. The land acquired stretched 1¾ miles from the railroad bridge on the northwest shore of the lake to a point near Dean Parkway between Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles. The cost of most of the land was $1,200.

Later that summer the park board also accepted a donation from Anna Lewis of land between Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles to create a channel between the lakes. (Lewis was later paid $1,000 for that land when the park board couldn't complete the channel in time to comply with the conditions of her donation. The channel was scheduled for completion about the same time as a channel from Lake of the Isles to Lake Calhoun, but faulty engineering on the new bridge over the yet-to-be dug channel on the west side of Lake of the Isles caused that bridge to be rebuilt, thus delaying the connection.)

Park superintendent Theodore Wirth included a plan for Cedar Lake improvements in the 1909 annual report, primarily to show the proposed connection with Lake of the Isles. The map is also interesting because it shows the shore line of Cedar Lake before the water level dropped five feet after the connection with Lake of the Isles was made. A dotted line on the map shows where the water level was expected to be after the connection, creating considerable additional land for the parkway and making a peninsula of an island near the lake's western shore. The channel between the lakes was finally opened in 1913—after the dredges had completed their first round of dredging on Lake Calhoun—and the level of Cedar Lake dropped as expected.

Before the dredging on Cedar Lake began, the Women's Christian Association donated two-plus acres of meadow and wetland southwest of Cedar Lake for a park in 1912. That year Wirth also recommended that the park board acquire all the shores of Cedar Lake.

Despite inaction on that recommendation, the park board proceeded with the linking of Cedar Lake to Lake of the Isles in 1913 and began construction of the parkway south and west of the lake, partially on the additional land that was created by lowering the water level. It was only as Cedar Lake was linked to Lake of the Isles that park commissioner Wilbur Decker first recommended also linking Cedar Lake with Brownie Lake. Wirth expressed his support for that action in the 1915 annual report and suggested that the board pay the extra cost of constructing a more appealing concrete bridge for the railroad over that proposed channel, instead of the more utilitarian steel-girder bridge the railroad was willing to construct.

Dredges hired by the park board were busy at Cedar Lake from 1913 to 1916 deepening the lake, generating fill for the parkway and connecting to Brownie Lake, which was completed in 1917. Wirth

noted in the annual report for 1917 that dredging in Cedar lake had been much more difficult than expected due to the coarse gravel found on the lake bottom. With the improvements to the lake, board president Francis Gross called once again for the acquisition of the entire lake. “This beautiful lake,” he wrote, “its shores only partially parked, is now like a picture incompletely framed.”

Late in 1917 the board instructed Wirth to present a plan for acquiring the remainder of the lake and he presented that plan in the summer of 1918. The board voted to place the report on file, noting that the land should be acquired “at the proper time.” In 1921 Wirth presented a plan for the development of Cedar Lake that included athletic fields on the east shore and in the southwest meadow, and tennis courts in three locations west of the lake, including four on the new peninsula created when the lake was lowered. Despite repeated recommendations from Wirth over the next several years to proceed with that acquisition, the “proper time” didn’t arrive for almost forty years.

With the many other major acquisition and improvement projects under way in the early 1920s, it is not surprising that the board did not acquire the remaining shores of Cedar Lake, even though Wirth suggested in 1920 that the value of the land, particularly on the north side of the lake, “should not be very high.” What is more surprising is that the new Cedar Lake Boulevard along the western and southern shores did not connect to Dean Parkway. A gap of 750 feet existed in the park board’s ownership of land between the two parkways. A city street did connect the two parkways, but the park board didn’t control that one short stretch where it crossed the railroad tracks. In proposing a bridge over the railroad tracks to connect the parkways in 1921, Wirth called it “one of the worst railroad grade crossings in the city, and the most dangerous point of the Grand Rounds.”

At the same time, Wirth admitted that the improvements to Cedar Lake were not as high a priority as improving Kenwood Park because the same property would be assessed for both projects. Kenwood Park had been owned by the park board for 14 years with almost no improvements and Wirth’s plans for Kenwood Park had been gathering dust that whole time.

Cedar Lake Boulevard was improved in 1923, but there was still no grade crossing to Dean Parkway. It wasn’t until 1929 that the grade crossing was finally improved to make it less dangerous, but no bridge was built. The city and the railroad paid for the grade crossing improvements, but the work was done by park board crews. At that time, perhaps weary of his nearly annual recommendation that the north and east shores of the lake be added to the park system, Wirth recommended that the acquisition of that land should take place when the “Southwest Diagonal” was undertaken. The Southwest Diagonal was a proposed thoroughfare from what is now I-394 to the southwest that would have passed beside the railroad tracks near Cedar Lake. It was never built. With the coming of the Great Depression, followed by World War II, very little was done to maintain the park system, let alone expand it—or build new roads through the city.

In 1933 a land developer offered to donate a strip of land on the east shore of the lake for a parkway and the park board accepted the offer of a little more than an acre of land, which gave the park board its first small piece of the eastern shore of the lake. The donation was valued by the park board at $5,000.

Cedar Lake did not feature prominently in park board plans or proceedings during the 1930s and 1940s. Part of the southwest meadow was designated during the depression as a vegetable patch for the Minneapolis Direct Relief Committee. Another interesting mention of the lake was in 1934 when the Cedar Lake Ice Company sponsored the community sings in parks throughout the city. Because Cedar Lake was not wholly owned by the park board, ice was still harvested from the lake to be used

throughout the year in "ice boxes." Ice harvesting had been terminated on other lakes, especially Lake Calhoun, when the park board had acquired them.

The park board's "Postwar Progress" list of $11.7 million in proposed acquisitions and developments in 1945 did not include the acquisition of Cedar Lake. The list was generated as part of a city-wide effort to identify projects that could help stimulate the economy after the war and redress years of "deferred maintenance." The park board's focus was on acquiring and developing neighborhood recreation parks in parts of the city that had been neglected for decades, not on adding lake shore and parkways to its inventory. Few projects on the park board's list were funded by city bonds until the 1960s, even though the City Planning Commission recommended in 1950 that the east and north shores of Cedar Lake be acquired as a park.

That recommendation was followed in 1953 by the park board seeking and obtaining from the Minnesota legislature legal control of the waters of Cedar Lake, even though it didn't own the entire shore line.

In 1954 and 1955 the park board took additional steps to acquire all of the lake by adding nearly nine acres of land to its holdings on the east shore at a total cost of about $32,000. With the final five acres acquired in 1955, paid for with proceeds from the sale of land west of Brownie Lake to The Prudential Insurance Company in 1952, the board reported that it had completed the acquisition of the east shore. The land was purchased without comment in the park board's annual reports of 1954 and 1955 suggesting that the acquisitions had not been among the park board's highest priorities. In 1956 the park board initiated proceedings to acquire by condemnation additional land adjacent to the east shore, which resulted in nearly 19 acres being purchased in 1958 at a cost of about $13,000.

The park board added the last piece of Cedar Lake's shore in 1959 when it designated the north shore of the lake for acquisition from the railroad. The final piece of shoreline cost the park board approximately $15,000. For that sum, the park board added to its inventory of parks not only the nine acres of land purchased, but the 173 acres of the lake's surface.

With that act, the park board completed its acquisition of the all the major bodies of water in the city—river, lakes and streams—with the exception of the Mississippi River banks at and above St. Anthony falls. Seventy-six years after the park board was created in part to preserve for public use the shores of the city's lakes and the banks of its river it had succeeded in acquiring nearly all of the city's land that bordered water.

Fourteen acres were added to the park in 1968.

Cedar Lake Parkway was paved in 1977 and new lighting and paths were installed at the same time.

The most significant change on the land owned by the park board near the lake was when the park board initiated a project in 1995 to improve the water quality of the lake. A new storm water pond and wetland was created southwest of the lake in 1995-1996 to filter storm water runoff. Cedar Lake also received an alum treatment in 1996 in a further attempt to improve water quality.

Central Park

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Location: East 34th Street and 4th Avenue South

Size: 3.84 acres

Name: The park began as the gym of the former Central High School. Land was subsequently acquired around the gym, but by then its name was well-established. The park board officially named the property Central Park in June 1991. It was the second property in the city to have that name. From 1883 to 1890, today's Loring Park was named Central Park.

Acquisition and Development

The park board's involvement in the property began after Central High School closed in 1982. However the park board had acquired an option to develop a park on the site if the school were ever to close as a part of an exchange of land with the school board at Shingle Creek elementary school in 1957.

In 1987 the park board agreed to convert the gym of the former high school for park use. The gym had been built only 11 years earlier. The rest of the school, which was built in 1922, was demolished. For several years the park board had wanted to establish a park in the neighborhood, but the neighborhood was opposed to having homes razed for a park. The closing of the high school presented the park board with a way to offer recreation services in the neighborhood without removing houses. The gym was dedicated as a park facility in October 1988. A totlot playground was created outside the gym in 1989.

Eventually, however, the park board did purchase the land containing homes along 3rd Avenue South to create an outdoor park as well. The land was purchased from 1998 to 1999 using funds from city bonds, state grants, Neighborhood Revitalization Program and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. The park board installed a softball field, soccer field and tennis courts.

Chergosky Park

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Location: Seymour Avenue and Sharon Avenue in southeast Minneapolis.

Size: 0.38 acres

Name: The park was referred to in the neighborhood as Chergosky Park long before the park board acquired the land in 1992. Chergosky was the name of a grocer in the neighborhood. The park board continued using the name although it was never formally adopted.

Acquisition and Development

The acquisition and development of this small park and playground for children, a totlot, in southeast Minneapolis, separated by a sound wall from I-94, may have set a speed record. In response to requests from the neighborhood to take over and develop the land as a park in February 1992, the park board expressed its support in April for efforts to revitalize the park. In July of that year the park board applied to the state for acquisition of the land, which was originally acquired by the state for non-payment of taxes. In its application to the state for the land, the park board called it "vacant and unused" and "suitable for park purposes." The development of the small park was aided by a donation of $7,500 from the Weyerhauser Foundation in August and initial improvements to the park were completed by September.

What makes the speed of development especially noteworthy was that at the beginning of 1992, the City of Minneapolis, not the state, owned the land. The city had acquired the land from the state in 1942 to be

used exclusively for street purposes. At that time the land was on the state's list of property forfeited for failure to pay taxes. Due to that restriction, using the land for a park required that the city return the land to the state and the state then give it to the park board.

The park board has acquired significant properties over the years from the state's list of tax-forfeited properties, including parts of North Mississippi, Bossen, Northeast, Peavey and McRae parks.

Chowen Triangle

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Location: West 28th Street and Chowen Avenue

Size: 0.06 acres

Name: The triangle was named for Chowen Avenue on December 18, 1911.

Acquisition and Development

Chowen Triangle was purchased as a "two-fer." On October 2, 1911, Alfred Dean, who, along with his brothers had donated most of Dean Parkway and sold most of William Berry Park to the park board, offered to sell two triangles south of Cedar Lake. Both had been designated in the plat of West End Addition in 1887 as "park." The park board accepted the offer on November 6, 1911 and became the owners of Chowen Triangle and West End Triangle. The two-for-one price? Fifty bucks.

The triangle was curbed, graded and seeded, and a sidewalk was laid on one side of the triangle in 1915. Trees and shrubs were planted in 1916.

Chute Square

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Location: University Avenue and 1st Avenue SE

Size: 1.10 acres

Name: The park was named for Richard Chute in October of 1904. Chute was an early settler of St. Anthony who owned considerable land there and is credited with devising the street naming and house numbering systems of the city. His brother, Samuel Chute, was a commissioner on the first park board and developed the motto "Health and Beauty" for the park board. William Folwell reportedly suggested the motto to Chute. Samuel Chute also donated to the park board the Oak Lake Triangles, four parcels that totaled two acres in 1890. Some of the land purchased for Richard Chute Square was bought from the Chute brothers.

Acquisition and Development

The board first decided to purchase the park on November 2, 1903, but only after it asked representatives of property owners in the neighborhood to provide assurances that they were willing to pay assessments to cover the cost of the purchase. When those assurances were provided the board agreed to purchase the park for $18,775 to be paid over three years. Not only did residents of the neighborhood agree to pay assessments for the acquisition, but the East Side Improvement Association provided $1,000 to grade the lot and plant grass and trees.

The idea of locating the house of Ard Godfrey in the square was first proposed—and rejected—in 1905. But in October 1908 the park board changed its decision, over the objections of some members of the St. Anthony Commercial Club, and gave permission to move the house to the square.

The house, originally built in 1848, was moved by the Hennepin County Territorial Pioneers Association, which also refurbished the exterior of the house to make it "presentable." The association was given permission to improve the house and convert it into a public museum in 1914.

In 1941, Theodore Wirth, then park superintendent emeritus, proposed that the park board trade Richard Chute Square for a portion of the old Exposition Building site along the river that had then been acquired by the Coca Cola Company. The suggestion was never acted upon.

When the Hennepin County Historical Society proposed in 1955 to build a museum on the square, the board denied the request because there wasn't enough space.

The Godfrey House was extensively restored by the Woman's Club of Minneapolis in 1975 and was opened to public tours in 1979. A replica of the house's kitchen wing, which had collapsed in 1908, was opened in 1985.

Clarence Triangle

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Location: Clarence Avenue and Bedford Street SE

Size: 0.02 acres

Name: Named for the street on which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

The city council requested on September 24, 1915 that the park board take over four triangles in southeast Minneapolis, including Clarence Triangle. The park board agreed to take control of the triangles October 11, 1915 and officially named them on November 17, 1915. The other three triangles accepted were Bedford, Barton and Orlin.

The triangle was improved—graded, seeded, planted and curbed—in 1916.

Cleveland Park

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Location: Queen Avenue and 33rd Avenue North

Size: 1.4 acres

Name: The park was named for the Cleveland School, which was adjacent to the park at that time. The school was named for President Grover Cleveland. Until 1959 the park was referred to as the Cleveland School Site. Park board documents began calling the site Cleveland Park in 1959, without formal action to name the park.

Acquisition and Development

The first land for the park adjacent to Cleveland School, less than an acre, was acquired by the park board on November 16, 1949. The purchase followed long negotiations with property owners. The first parcel of land cost the park board $10,513.

Attempts to create a neighborhood park and playground in the vicinity had a long history. In December 1926, the park board had designated for acquisition as a park the block between 34th and 35th Avenues North from Russell to Sheridan Avenues North. Those proceedings were abandoned late the next year without explanation by the board. The neighborhood had been identified as one that needed a playground in the park board's 1938 annual report

After the first land for the park was purchased in 1949, the park board continued negotiations to acquire more, but failed to add to the park. The park board then proceeded with plans to develop the small plot it owned in conjunction with the school board in 1951. There the matter rested until eight years later.

Through most of 1959, the board tried again to purchase land to expand the small school playground. It finally reached agreement with the owners of adjacent land to purchase three more lots, just over ½-acre, for $13,500 in early 1960.

In the face of intense protests from neighborhood residents against acquiring and improving the land as a park—and assessing the costs on area landowners—the park board decided to proceed with the purchase and improvement of the park in early 1961. While park board proceedings record petitions with hundreds of signatures against the park, it received only two petitions in favor of the park—from the Cleveland School PTA and the Jordan Junior High School PTA. Those opinions ultimately prevailed after public hearings. In announcing its decision to proceed, the park board said that the park was "in the best interests of the community."

A "totlot" for smaller children was added to the park in 1973 and the shelter and wading pool were renovated in 1977. When the new Lucy Laney Craft School was built to replace Cleveland School in 1993, the park board renovated the park layout. One interesting addition to the park at that time was an eight-foot-high basketball hoop on a hard-surface court area, one of the only baskets in the city where most people could dunk a basketball.

The wading pool at the park was renovated in 2005.

Clifton Triangle

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Location: Clifton Avenue and Clifton Place

Size: 0.03 acres

Name: The name comes from the streets on which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

Clifton Triangle was transferred from city council to the park board August 16, 1889. The park board had been asked to take the triangle as a park by Thomas B. Walker and others on August 3. The park has

since been paved over for street use. Residents of the neighborhood petitioned for the triangle to become part of the street in 1994.

Clinton Field Park

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Location: Clinton Avenue and East 25th Street

Size: 1.47 acres

Name: The park was named for its location on Clinton Avenue on April 6, 1927, but could just as well have been named for Clinton Morrison who set in motion the events that led to the acquisition of this small park. Clinton was the son of Dorilus Morrison one of the first park commissioners in 1883. Clinton Morrison donated the house and estate of his father to the park board in 1911 specifically for use as a site for a new art museum. That land, Dorilus Morrison Park, two blocks west of Clinton Field, is now the site of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Acquisition and Development

Clinton Field is a park today because the park board agreed to demolish the grandest building it ever owned. When Clinton Morrison donated the home and estate of his father, Dorilus Morrison, to the park board in 1911 for the express purpose of becoming the site of an art museum, Dorilus Morrison's old friend William Washburn, whose estate was across the street from Morrison's, made his own donation to the park board. William Washburn and his wife sold to the park board the eight acres on which their home stood, but they threw in at no cost all the buildings on the property—a considerable donation given that their home, Fair Oaks, the grandest home in the city, was worth an estimated $400,000. Following the death of Mrs. Washburn in 1915, when the park board took possession of the property, named Washburn Fair Oaks Park, it soon demolished the barns and greenhouses on the estate. But Fair Oaks, the mansion, remained standing for several years although it was never maintained by the park board and fell into disrepair.

While the building deteriorated, the grounds around it became used as a playground by neighborhood children. Neither a dilapidated mansion nor children's ball games were appreciated by some in the neighborhood. The building deteriorated to the point that in 1923 Helen Law and others offered to give the park board $25,000 to buy a new playground in the neighborhood if it would demolish Fair Oaks. (Earlier in the year Law had asked the park board to ban baseball in the park and to build two tennis courts there instead.) The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, which operated the Institute of Arts, favored the demolition so that a suitable setting and approach to the Institute could be created.

The park board accepted the offer and began to consider sites for a new playground in the neighborhood. The old mansion was demolished in 1924, but the purchase of the new playground, Clinton Field, was not completed until 1926. Washburn Fair Oaks continued to be used as a playground in the interim.

The site chosen for the new playground was not the first considered. The park board's first option was the block between 27th and 28th Streets and Third Avenue and Stevens Avenue. When that didn't materialize, the park board settled on the southern two-fifths of the block on Clinton Avenue. Theodore Wirth in his superintendent's report for 1926 recognized that the small field "must be enlarged, in order to provide for the most necessary accommodations of a medium-sized field." His report included a plan to extend the park to the west or the north to make it large enough to accommodate a playing field and a

small shelter. Without that expansion, the neighborhood wouldn't have to worry about ball games on the new park because it was too small. The park was never enlarged.

Clinton Field is the only remnant of the plan to create a landscaped plaza and approach to the Institute of Arts in 1923. In the same 1923 annual report in which Wirth and Phelps Wyman proposed the plaza for the Institute of Arts, Wirth recommended that a small park in northeast Minneapolis, Sheridan Field, either be enlarged or abandoned because its "inadequate size" did not "justify the expenditures for operation." It was roughly the same size as the land eventually purchased for Clinton Field.

Clinton Field was provided with a skating rink and warming house in its first year as a park in 1926, but when neighbors petitioned for a "more commodious" warming house the next year, the petition was denied.

The next time the park board spent a dollar on the park was almost thirty years later. The park board included Clinton Field on a list of playgrounds that needed extensive improvements—$150,000 worth—in its post-WWII list of the city's playground needs, but few park board requests for bond funding were approved by the city council in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Finally in 1955 the western edge of the park was regraded for a playing field and an area was paved for a basketball and volleyball court. Playground equipment, a drinking fountain and picnic tables were also installed at a cost of less than $20,000.

New master plans for Clinton Field and Washburn Fair Oaks in 2000, appropriate given their linked histories, provided for a complete makeover of the park, including new playground equipment and hard-surfaced courts.

Columbia Park

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Location: Central Avenue NE and St. Anthony Parkway

Size: 181.78 acres, including 150 acres of Columbia Golf Course

Name: The park was named to celebrate Columbia Year, 1892, 400 years after Columbus's first voyage to the new world. The name also may have been derived from the Columbia Heights Addition north of the park. The name was adopted December 15, 1892.

Acquisition and Development

The first 144 acres of Columbia Park, including most of the 40-acre Sandy Lake, were acquired in December 1892 at a total cost of $208,000, which the park board assessed over ten years on property owners in the area. Area landowners had petitioned the park board to approve the acquisition, thus indicating their willingness to be assessed for it. The sellers of the land donated $20,000 for the immediate improvement of the land.

Even before the land was purchased, the board had approved creating a skating rink on Sandy Lake for the winter of 1892-93.

The acquisition was not without controversy. Park Commissioner William Folwell opposed the deal because he thought the price was too high. He called it "jobbery" by "wealthy capitalists." Other

commissioners thought it was in keeping with land values in the area. Park commissioner Albert Boardman wrote later that he thought the acquisition—at the peak of a land boom in the city—was a mistake at that price. One of the promoters of the acquisition was Portius C. Deming who would later serve on the park board for nearly 15 years in two stints, and would have part of St. Anthony Parkway, Deming Heights, named for him many years later.

Folwell opposed the deal even though he supported acquiring the land. A year earlier he had authored a report on the expansion of the park system in which he had encouraged residents of northeast Minneapolis to agitate for the acquisition of a park in northeast that could be the hub of a parkway from Camden Park west of the Mississippi and continuing south back to the Mississippi at the University of Minnesota. It was in that report that Folwell recommended a name for the system of parkways encircling the city: The Grand Rounds.

Folwell's objection to the price was partially assuaged when the Minneapolis Investment Company, which had sold the land to the park board, donated an additional eight acres of land for the park after Folwell objected to the price.

The park was expanded by 18 acres in 1893 at a cost of $26,600 and by another 13-plus acres in 1911 for about $14,000 more. The 1911 annual report referred to the land acquired as "a finely wooded tract lying immediately west of Central Avenue and north of Thirty-first Avenue Northeast."

The first development in Columbia Park came in 1894 when the Minneapolis Investment Company constructed a bandstand at its expense in the park.

Despite Folwell's opposition to the cost of the original land for the park, the acquisition of Columbia Park did serve as a prod for the development of the "Grand Rounds" he desired. The 1905 annual report of the park board noted that petitions to expand Glenwood (Wirth) Park and acquire the shores of Cedar Lake were both viewed in the context of the expanded parkway system. "This project contemplates at some future time," the report said, "the building of a boulevard northward from Keegan's (Wirth) Lake along the valley of Bassett's Creek and across the city by some convenient route to Columbia Park, thus completing the grand project of that master in landscape architecture—the late H.W.S. Cleveland—a boulevard encircling the entire city."

In 1911, the park board anticipated bond funding to help create a parkway from Camden (Webber) Park in north Minneapolis to Columbia Park. In the next two years, the land was acquired for St. Anthony Parkway from Columbia Park east to Stinson Boulevard. About 60 percent of that land was donated. Those acquisitions left only two missing links in the parkway system at the time, Camden to Columbia and Stinson Boulevard to the University of Minnesota. The former was acquired in the early 1920s, the latter is still "missing." (A new route for the only remaining missing link was created by the park board in 2008, although the board suggested at that time that it could take many years to acquire the land and develop the parkway.)

In 1930, Theodore Wirth presented a plan for the creation of athletic fields, a picnic shelter and a swimming pool at Columbia Park. In response to calls for swimming facilities east of the river, Wirth proposed a swimming pool for Columbia Park along Central Avenue. He recommended that instead of an outdoor pool, such as at Webber Park, extra money should be budgeted to make it an indoor pool. With the Great Depression taking hold, however, his plans were not acted on.

In 1940, the park board engaged in "an exchange of land to mutual advantage" at Columbia Park with the Soo Line railroad. While that exchange has been cited by some critics of the park board as an example of the board bowing to commercial interests, it was neither the first nor the last time that the park board accommodated business interests in exchange for what it considered fair value. The same year the park board leased a block of land between Loring Park and The Parade to a car dealership for $5,200 a year, citing the board's "straightened financial position."

An offer by the Northeast Lions Club to pay for a picnic shelter in the park in 1955 was accepted by the park board and along with the construction of the shelter in 1956, roads in the park were also upgraded. The park board began an experiment at the Columbia Park picnic shelter that soon was adopted at other park shelters: the metering of electricity. Picnic shelter users could buy electricity by the minute.

Recreation facilities in Columbia Park received a major upgrade in 1997 with new playground equipment, paths, volleyball and basketball courts and a soccer/rugby field. By that time, cross-country ski trails had also been laid out over the golf course.

Sandy Lake

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The original land of Columbia Park included most of a forty-acre lake called Sandy Lake. At the time it was acquired, Sandy Lake was described as a spring-fed lake. In 1894, Sandy Lake was officially renamed Lake Menomin, but the name appears to have been little used. In 1910, park superintendent Theodore Wirth noted that Sandy Lake was completely dry. He wrote then that the lake, the bed of which he calculated at 24 acres, "will never be a satisfactory sheet of water" except "possibly" during wet seasons. In 1914, Wirth repeated that the lake existed primarily because of storm-water run-off from the surrounding area. At that time the city was installing a storm sewer through the neighborhood to the Mississippi River and Wirth recommended that the city be asked to place the storm sewer at a level that would also drain the area of Sandy Lake. Park commissioners approved Wirth's recommendation. Other low land in the park had been drained in 1906.

In his 1926 annual report, park board president Burton Kingsley, recalled fishing and boating in Sandy Lake and suggested restoring the lake by sinking a deep well, which the board had recently done at Longfellow Glen near Minnehaha Falls to ensure a supply of water over the falls. The park board never took up the suggestion. One reason it didn't may have been that by then the old lake bed had been converted into a golf course.

A persistent myth in northeast Minneapolis is that Theodore Wirth filled Sandy Lake when he was dredging Lake of the Isles from 1907 to 1911. Although water levels in Sandy Lake are reported to have dropped considerably in that time—Wirth claimed it was completely dry in 1910—it is highly unlikely that thousands of yards of muck could have been transported by horse-drawn wagons across the entire city from Lake of the Isles to Sandy Lake.

The muck dredged at Isles was so hard to handle that the first contractor hired to dredge Lake of the Isles quit the job after a couple months in 1907. Even when the park board sued him, he wouldn't resume work and sacrificed his bond instead. The dredged material was so wet that a system of dikes had to be built on the shores of Lake of the Isles to keep the muck from oozing back into the lake before it dried. It would have been difficult, at the very least, to carry that liquid dirt across the city in wagons.

Moreover, considerable fill was used around Isles: building up the shores of the lake from two to eleven feet along the entire western and southern shores, filling in the lake where two islands once existed near

the south shore, building up bridge approaches for the linking of Isles with Calhoun and Cedar, and significantly enlarging the south island that remains. When Lake of the Isles was connected to Calhoun in 1911, the lagoon between them had to be dredged deeper than planned just to get enough fill to create the approaches for street and railroad bridges over the channel.

In addition, park land much closer to Lake of the Isles than Sandy Lake badly needed fill at the time. Among parks needing fill was Kenwood Park, just across the street from Lake of Isles, which was acquired in 1907 when Lake of the Isles dredging began. Eventually, in 1912, the board spent nearly $4,000 to buy fill for the low areas of Kenwood Park along Franklin Avenue. During the years Lake of the Isles was being dredged, the park board authorized a garbage dump at Bryant Square just to bring it up to grade so it could be improved, and in 1912 spent $6,000 on fill for that park. The Parade also badly needed fill and it was just over the hill from Lake of the Isles. Wirth had once proposed doubling the size of Spring Lake next to The Parade just to generate enough fill to make the low-lying land at The Parade useful. Jackson Square, lying between Lake of the Isles and Sandy Lake also needed fill. The difficulty of transporting oozing mud, and the needs of the park board for fill much closer to Lake of the Isles, make it unlikely at best that Lake of the Isles muck was used to fill Sandy Lake.

The final argument against that theory is that Wirth was a meticulous record-keeper and his reports make no mention of transporting thousands of yards of fill across the city. That Wirth did not devote much attention to Columbia Park relative to his work elsewhere in the city is clear, but it is doubtful that he filled Sandy Lake.

In 1933, Wirth reported that attempts to reestablish Sandy Lake would not be desirable because there was no source of water other than ground water and with no movement of water the lake would become stagnant and unsanitary. Moreover, in Wirth's opinion soil conditions were not good for the re-creation of a lake there. Wirth also explained that plans to further develop the area as a golf course and recreation field would be of great value to the neighborhood.

Columbia Golf Course

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Early in the history of Columbia Park, the park board wasn't sure what to do with the land. In 1898 it granted Patrick Ryan, perhaps the same Patrick Ryan who had served as a park commissioner 1890-1896, permission to cultivate the low land in the park. The following year the board gave some consideration to creating an arboretum at the park. Subsequent proposals for the park included making it into a "popular resort" (1905), a golf course (1910) and a large athletic field (1912).

The 1910 recommendation eventually was preferred. Following the popular development of a nine-hole golf course at Glenwood (Wirth) Park in 1916, the park board created a six-hole course with sand greens at Columbia in 1919. After only a year of operation, the park board realized that six holes was too short for a golf course and by 1920, expanded it to nine holes, still with sand greens however. It took only two more years to realize that 18 holes were needed and in 1922 the course was expanded again. The new course was so popular that golfers had to be turned away, which led the park board to build a golf club house, called a community center, in 1924. Revenues from golf were expected to pay for the building, which cost about $70,000 to build. Suggested names for the golf club house included "House of Seven Gables" and "Deming Hall," but the name eventually chosen in 1930 was "The Manor."

Golf continued to increase in popularity leading to the implementation of a registration system in 1927 to eliminate long waits for tee times. With the onset of the depression, however, golf's popularity took a big hit. Rounds played at Columbia dropped by 30% in 1934 as they did at other courses, except Armour

(Gross) Golf Course, which was the only course with an irrigation system to water the fairways. Even though the Columbia course was upgraded to grass greens in 1935, with the help of federal work relief funds, the course continued to operate at a loss for many years.

In the late 1960s, Columbia was upgraded from a length of 4600 yards to 6200 yards to keep it competitive. The locker rooms at Columbia were upgraded in 1987 and the club house was remodeled in 1990.

Columbia Golf Course was the first Minneapolis course to have a Golf Learning Center added in the 1990s.

Trivia

In 1900, 150 tons of hay were harvested from Columbia Park, Lake of the Isles, Lyndale Park and Minnehaha Parkway.

In 1923 the park board approved creating an auto tourist camp at Columbia Park, similar to the one developed at Minnehaha Park, but it was never developed.

Corcoran Park

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Location: 19th Avenue South and East 33rd Street

Size: 3.12 acres

Name: The park was named for Corcoran School, which had previously occupied the site. The school was named for William Wilson Corcoran, a banker, philanthropist and collector of American art, who founded the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.

Acquisition and Development

The land for Corcoran Park was acquired from the Minneapolis School Board in 1976 for $95,500. The park was one of three former school sites acquired by the park board in the mid-1970s. The park was in a neighborhood that had been designated in 1944 as one that needed more recreation facilities. The final four parcels of land needed for the park were condemned in 1977. Development of the property began in 1977 when a recreation shelter was built along with playgrounds, tennis courts and horseshoe pits. The new park was completed and dedicated in 1979.

A fire severely damaged the Corcoran Park recreation center in 1998, but it was brought back into service in three months.

Improvements were made to the park in 2000, when a new totlot was built. Volleyball standards were placed on the existing tennis court and the little-used horseshoe pits were removed. The following year Corcoran became one of the first five recreation centers in the city to have a computer lab installed.

Cottage Park

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Location: James and Ilion Avenues North

Size: 0.45 acres

Name: The name was taken from the park's location in the Cottage Park Addition of the city.

Acquisition and Development

Cottage Park was dedicated by Samuel C. Gale and others as a park in the plat of Forest Heights on July 31, 1883, along with Glen Gale, Irving Triangle and Oliver Triangle. The first mention in park board proceedings of what were called the "Forest Heights parks" is a request by Gale and others in May 1887 that certain park land in Forest Heights be drained. The park board responded in June 1887 by officially requesting the city council to turn over to the park board the four properties. (See Glen Gale Park for more information.)

A small addition to Cottage Park occurred in 1914 when the city council asked the park board to take control of an adjoining small triangle at the street intersection.

Currie Park

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Location: 15th Avenue South and South 5th Street

Size: 2.72 acres, plus 1.78 acres on which Coyle Community Center is located

Name: The park was named for Edward A. Currie in 1977. Currie was the director of the Pillsbury Settlement House that had existed next to the new park land for many years. For decades before that the park was referred to as Sixth Ward Playground, although in later years it was at times called Cedar Square West Neighborhood Park. The park board also holds title to the land adjacent to the park on which Pillsbury United Communities built Brian Coyle Community Center in 1993. The center was named for a city council member from the neighborhood who had served on the council from 1983 to 1991.

Acquisition and Development

The idea of a playground in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood is far older than the playground itself. In 1919 the park board considered purchasing two lots for playgrounds in the area, but the neighborhood was evenly divided for and against acquiring the land and charging the cost to area property owners through assessments. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth noted in the 1919 annual report that one reason for reluctance to establish playgrounds in the area was the projection that the area would decline in population and become more of a commercial and industrial neighborhood. The lack of agreement within the neighborhood on the location and method of paying for a park ended consideration of a playground for many years.

One of the next mentions of a playground for the Sixth Ward in park board proceedings was in May 1932 when Wirth recommended that the park board "renew" its lease, for $100 a year, on a portion of the land where Currie Park is now located, with an option to renew the lease for four years. Park board records do not indicate if that lease was ever renewed—or when it originated.

More requests for a playground at the site were received in 1937 and in 1939 the park board once again approved leasing the land, this time for only $1 a year. At that time the park board reported that the land

had previously been leased to the Pillsbury Settlement House. The challenge to the park board in adding another playground after years of depression and pinched pennies was not the cost of leasing the land but maintaining it and providing supervision. This was at a time when the only improvements in the park system were made with the help of federal work relief programs and even recreation supervisors were paid by federal programs. Writing in the annual report of 1939, park board president Francis Gross mentioned the Sixth Ward playground issue specifically. "Faced with justified demands," he wrote, "we have not been able to deny them so long as a temporary solution can be found, even if they make more acute our future financial problems." Gross worried that if federal work relief programs were ended the new playground would be "simply an unattended playlot." He went on to note that this was a departure from previous park board policy of only providing neighborhood parks if they could offer "adequate" facilities and service. The newly leased park and the method of supervising it was "not adequate," wrote Gross, but it would "serve a definite purpose in community life."

In the next year the park board equipped the park with a small skating rink, a softball field, a few swings, a sandbox, and a small tool and office building. All the work was done by federal work relief crews. The 1940 annual report noted that the new park was "well patronized."

The success of the new playground led the park board to purchase the 1.2-acre lot in 1941 in large measure thanks to a gift of $1,000 from Mary E. Howe. The site was acquired for a little more than half of her donation—$525. As cheap as it was, it was one of the few land purchases by the park board in the 1930s. Other than some additional grading and fencing for the park in 1946, the park board spent no additional money on improving the park.

The construction of freeways beside the park in the 1960s did not require land to be taken from the park, but those freeways effectively severed the park from neighborhoods to the west. Another major development in the 1960s, the expansion of the University of Minnesota on the west bank of the Mississippi River, served to further reduce the population of the neighborhood.

The next major development at the little park awaited the explosion of population in the area with the construction of Cedar Square, a high-rise apartment complex across the street from the park in the 1970s. In 1975, the Minneapolis housing authority sought the park board's help in expanding and improving what was then referred to as Cedar Square West Neighborhood Park and offered to use redevelopment funds to expand the park, which would be repaid when the park board had funds available. The housing authority gave the park board an additional 1.5 acres of land to expand the park in 1976 and together with the park board developed the park in 1979 under a joint powers agreement. Under that agreement a shelter was built in the park and playground and athletic facilities were improved.

In 1992 the park expanded again when Pillsbury United Communities, the social service agency that grew out of the Pillsbury Settlement House that had once existed next to the park land, built a community center adjacent to the park. The agency deeded the building and the land it occupied to the park board, but retained operating control of the facility. It named the center for Brian Coyle who had been a city council member from 1983 until his death in 1991.

The playground at the park was updated, along with other improvements, in 2003-2004.

Dean Parkway

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Location: SW corner of Lake of the Isles to NW corner of Lake Calhoun

Size: 13.02 acres

Name: Named for Joseph Dean, an early settler, whose children donated most of the land for the parkway.

Acquisition and Development

Park board records list the official date of the acquisition of Dean Parkway, which connects Lake of the Isles to Lake Calhoun, as July 6, 1892. But that date doesn't tell the whole story.

Joseph Dean, his son, Alfred Dean, and others had offered to donate land to the park board for a lake area parkway as early as October 1884. The original proposition was to donate land from Hennepin Avenue to Lake Calhoun and from Lake Calhoun to Lake of the Isles.

According to the 1892 annual report, the donation was accepted, in part, in 1887. (The annual report of 1886 already included Dean Parkway in the description of Lake of the Isles Boulevard and the 1887 annual report broke out the length of Dean Parkway—1.10 miles at the time—from the rest of the Lake of the Isles parkway.) The land connecting Calhoun and Isles and a 1200-foot strip of land along the north shore of Lake Calhoun was accepted from the Deans, but there were strings attached. The donors of the land asked that a road be opened along the entire length of the parkway by October 1, 1887. "That condition has never been complied with," the board reported in the 1892 annual report, "because of more urgent calls for the expenditure of park funds in other directions."

Attempts to resolve the issue were a bit messy from the start. In July 1889, Charles Loring, who had negotiated the original donation of the Dean's land, as well as the donation of most of the shore of Lake of the Isles, perhaps a bit embarrassed that terms he had negotiated had not been complied with by the board, called the board's attention to the matter of the delayed improvements. A month later park superintendent William Berry provided the board an estimate of the cost of building a 40-foot wide parkway: $3,530. It was money the park board wouldn't spend.

But there was another issue that complicated the affair: the track of the Chicago, Minneapolis and St. Paul Railroad crossed the land and a parkway would have to pass under those tracks, which had been built up over low-lying land. In late 1889, the park board began discussions with the railroad about building the drive under their track.

In 1890 and again in 1891, the heirs of Joseph Dean asked that the parkway be built as promised. The apparent patience of the Deans may have been rewarded along the way, however, by none other than Charles Loring. In November 1889, the park board had authorized Loring to negotiate with the owners of land lying between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet to acquire a parkway connecting those lakes. The owners of the largest piece of that land were the Deans. The park board's instructions to Loring in those negotiations were to buy the land at the best price he could, but not to exceed $55,000 for the parcel owned by the Deans.

When Loring returned to the park board in January 1890 with an agreement to purchase the Dean's land for what eventually became William Berry Park, he had agreed to pay them $77,000. The possibility that Loring had agreed to sweeten the deal for the Deans, perhaps as a reward for their patience over Dean Parkway, is suggested by the fact that the other parcel of land needed for William Berry Park was

purchased for $36,000 from the Ueland family—exactly the "not to exceed" price specified by the board in Loring's instructions.

The Dean's may have received some additional compensation for their patience with the board when they sold to the board in 1891 the two blocks of land connecting east Calhoun and east Isles, which they had at one time donated. The park board had abandoned that donation, where the channel connecting the lakes was eventually built, so it could be replatted to straighten a proposed parkway there. The purchase price for that land was $22,565, payable without interest over ten years. But in a deal that was always perhaps too complicated, the Deans agreed to pay back up to half that amount through assessments on their remaining property in the vicinity.

The park board's annual report in 1892 reported what seemed to be the happy conclusion of the acquisition of the Dean's land connecting the lakes on the east when it reported that the "missing link" of the southwestern parkway system had finally been acquired. The report continued that the land "will certainly be of inestimable value should the discussed project of connecting these lakes by a canal be consummated." This is the first mention in park board documents of the linking of Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun, which was eventually done in 1911.

The extent of Loring's involvement in the resolution of the Dean Parkway issue was clear when, after the board and the Deans reached agreement on building the parkway in 1892, the Deans informed the board that they had executed a warranty deed for the property for the park board and left it in the possession of Charles Loring who would deliver it to the park board after a carriage drive was constructed over the property. What makes that action remarkable is that at the time Loring was no longer a park commissioner.

The railroad bridge over Dean Parkway, which had held up construction for some time, was not completed until 1896. Bridges over and under railroad tracks were a significant cost in the creation of the park system. For instance, the land for Dean Parkway was mostly donated and the initial parkway construction cost roughly $3,500, but the one railroad bridge cost more than $5,200.

Park superintendent Theodore Wirth submitted a plan in 1910 to improve the parkway and recommended in 1913 that the plan be executed, in part because the railroad had built a new concrete bridge over the parkway and the dredge working in Lake Calhoun had deposited on the northwest shore of the lake considerable fill needed for the parkway. The road work, which would cost nearly $8,000, was begun in 1914, at which time more than 55,000 cubic yards of fill were used from the Calhoun dredging. The road and walks were completed to subgrade and finished the next year.

At the time park superintendent Theodore Wirth suggested that with the ground filled and leveled it could at some time become a playground. Wirth later referred to the improvements to Dean Parkway as an example of how swamps could be drained and impassable roads made among the best in the park system.

In 1951 the City Engineering Department completed a new arrangement of the intersection of Dean Parkway with Lake Street, complete with traffic signals, intended to alleviate traffic problems.

Dean Parkway was not finally paved until 1972. The most recent improvements to Dean Parkway, including repaving and traffic calming measures were completed in 1996.

Trivia

The 750 feet of road from Dean Parkway to Cedar Lake over the tracks of the then Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad did not become a part of the Grand Rounds until 1929. That year the city and the railroad paid for the park board to pave the short connecting strip and it was turned over to the park board as part of the parkway system. The connection had long been planned but never took place officially until then. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth had campaigned for the strip to be turned over to the park board as early as 1920. The park board had submitted a plan to the city planning commission in 1923 to make that connection as the park board was contemplating the acquisition of the east and north shores of Cedar Lake.

Dell Park

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Location: Thomas Avenue South from West 44th Street to West 45th Street

Size: 0.78 acres

Name: The park was named for its topography, a small dell approaching Lake Harriet.

Acquisition and Development

On June 17, 1907 the park board approved a petition of the Linden Hills Improvement Association that the park board accept and maintain the land as a park. A condition imposed by the park board was that the improvement association or interested property owners first "suitably curb and fill (the park) to grade with good soil."

In 1909, park superintendent Theodore Wirth presented a plan to the park board that would have changed the little park dramatically. As the park board was proceeding with plans to connect the chain of lakes with navigable canals—the first canal between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun opened in 1911—it requested from Wirth a plan to connect Lake Calhoun with Lake Harriet. Wirth suggested three alternatives. One was a canal south from Lake Calhoun along Washburn Avenue to 43rd Street, then east to Thomas Avenue and along Thomas to 45th Street where it would head east again to connect to Lake Harriet. The plan would have turned Dell Park into a waterway between the lakes. Although he presented the option, Wirth considered the route impractical and said he preferred a route through Lakewood Cemetery. A connection between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet was never pursued, in part because of the seven-foot drop in elevation between the lakes: any canal route would have required a lock and dam to be navigable making the cost prohibitive.

Deming Heights Park

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Location: 31st Avenue Northeast and Polk Avenue Northeast

Size: 10.65 acres

Name: The park is named for Portius Deming who was a park commissioner 1895-1899 and 1909-1919. He served as president of the board 1915-1917. Deming was among the group of northeast Minneapolis businessmen that organized the sale to the park board of the land for Columbia Park in 1892. The first land for Deming Heights Park was acquired in 1913 to be a part of St. Anthony Boulevard. Deming was

the one who had proposed the name St. Anthony Boulevard for the northeast Minneapolis parkway. It wasn't until 1923 that the board named the land Grandview Park to distinguish it from the rest of the parkway. The park was officially named Portius C. Deming Heights Park in 1930 and a plaque commemorating Deming's service to Minneapolis parks was placed in the park that summer.

Acquisition and Development

The first land for the park was acquired in 1913 along with the rest of the land for St. Anthony Boulevard from Columbia Park to East Hennepin Avenue. The land was desired because it was the highest point in the Minneapolis park system. At 963 feet above sea level it is ten feet higher in elevation than Sunset Hill on Memorial Parkway north of Wirth Park.

Writing in the 1914 annual report, park board president Thomas Voegeli commented on the "great natural beauty" of the land through which the new St. Anthony Boulevard would pass. Voegeli wrote that the view from the highest point in the city at yet-to-be-named Deming Heights Park, could "fill the hearts of Minneapolis citizens with patriotic pride."

The park board acquired several additional lots on the south edge of the park and the southwest corner to remove houses that impaired the view of the city from the park in 1916. In 1919 the park board acquired from the city council control of 31st Avenue Northeast from Polk Street to Johnson Street, which enabled the construction of the double-lane parkway between Taylor and Fillmore streets.

The parkway through the park and all the way south and east to East Hennepin Avenue was begun in 1921 and completed in 1924. The parkway from Central Avenue into Deming Heights Park required a steep 11 percent grade.

Since its acquisition the park has been treated as a section of St. Anthony Parkway and its acreage included with that of the parkway. With Columbia Park located just two short blocks to the east and Audubon Park two blocks south, the neighborhood already was considered to be well-provided with recreation amenities, so none were ever added to Deming Heights Park. The land was acquired for the view it provided and therefore little has been done in the way of park improvements since its acquisition.

Diamond Lake Park

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Location: Portland Avenue and Diamond Lake Road

Size: 73.04 acres, including 54.9 acres water)

Name: In a park board report on park names in 1975, it was reported that the name of the lake probably came from the Diamond Lake Terrace Addition surrounding it. But it seems more likely that the name of the addition was derived from the name of the lake.

Acquisition and Development

The first mention of Diamond Lake in park board documents is in the proceedings of the board meeting on December 19, 1923, when the park board received a proposal from Clarke's Diamond Lake Realty to donate land around Pearl Lake and a portion of the shores of Diamond Lake for park purposes. It is likely that the realty company hoped to boost the value of its other holding in the area by having parks developed. That donation of 16.4 acres from F. H. Clarke and others was accepted in 1925.

By 1927 the park board had grander plans for parks in the area. With the annexation of a portion of Richfield across southern Minneapolis in 1926 all of the lake was then within city limits, which meant that the park board could then assess property owners around the lake for acquisition and improvement costs. The 1927 annual report of the park board mentioned the intention to acquire an additional 116 acres around Pearl Lake and Diamond Lake. The report noted that all but 21 acres of the land the park board already owned and planned to acquire were swamp and lowland. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth's plan was to fill Pearl Lake and dredge Diamond Lake to create a beach on the north shore. Wirth compared the plan to what had been done at Lake Nokomis where a lake with well-defined shores was created from considerable swampy land.

Wirth's plans were revised when in 1930 he reported city plans to direct storm water runoff from the area into Diamond Lake. At that time his plan for the two lake areas was budgeted at $337,000. With the onset of the depression that money was not going to be available. Wirth noted his regret that the Diamond Lake plan had come to a standstill in 1931, especially in light of the success of similar lake-shaping efforts at Lake Nokomis

Still, in one of its largest depression-era acquisitions the board designated 80 acres of land around the two lakes for acquisition. The deal was consummated in 1936 when the park board purchased 72.32 acres around and including the lakes. The reason the park board proceeded with an acquisition when it had so little money was probably the price it paid for the land and water: $1,035. The board's 1936 annual report noted that the "time was not propitious" for additional land acquisitions in the area or for improvements to the land except what could be accomplished through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a federal depression-era work-relief program. The annual report continued that improvement work would be done when area property owners were willing to pay for it through assessments, but added that it was "questionable" whether the great majority of property owners there would agree to those assessments.

A year later the board noted no change in plans for the area but did comment that home building in the area had increased rapidly, which it said could be attributed to the stimulating effect of the initial improvements the park board had made at Pearl Lake. (Pearl Lake was not referred to as Pearl Park until the board built a recreation center at "Pearl Park" in 1968.)

In 1938 the board completed its ownership of the north shore of Diamond Lake with the purchase of four lots for $55 each. The board also reported that it was finalizing acquisition of the remaining southern shore of the lake by donation.

In the 1938 annual report park superintendent Christian Bossen presented ambitious plans for the development of the lake. He noted that the lake had once been a beautiful sheet of water a half-mile long but that with initial development in the area and the grading of streets, combined with deficient rainfall, the lake had almost dried up in the 1920s. He added that with the separation of sanitary and storm sewers by the city, the lake had been designated as a storm water reservoir. With the lake's future more certain the park board presented ambitious plans for development, which Bossen noted was in greater demand by the neighborhood since more housing development was taking place east of the lake.

The plan included making the lake smaller and deeper, an average depth of 17 feet, in order to generate the 890,000 yards of fill needed to develop the shore parks. The filling would have created a parking lot for 80 cars on the north end of the lake and another lot for 40 cars on the south end to provide access to

four tennis courts, baseball fields, playground and a toilet building that were planned there. The board debated constructing a park road along the west shore of the lake, but decided against it.

The last mention of park board plans to develop Diamond Lake appeared in the 1939 annual report, when Bossen reported that final plans for improvement would require three to four years of construction and that neither the city nor the federal government, through WPA, would commit to any financing longer than 12 months. Without that financing, Bossen concluded, there was no opportunity to begin the project.

Ironically, the abandonment of plans for Diamond Lake came the same year that the park board finally completed acquisition of the entire lake bed with the donation of 8.54 acres of land.

The park board wasn't done promoting the development of Diamond Lake, however. In its 1945 "post-war progress" list of projects that required funding, an $11 million shopping list, one of the largest single proposed expenditures, behind only paving Lake Harriet Boulevard, was improving the Diamond Lake and Pearl Lake properties. But in the post-war years the park board would get funding for very few projects on its wish list. Diamond Lake was destined to remain an unimproved wetland and lake. (Lake Harriet Boulevard wasn't paved either.)

The change in how those areas were viewed is suggested by a 1977 agreement by the park board that it would take responsibility for coordinating a joint effort by the city, county and state to restore Diamond Lake to its "desirable wildlife habitat condition" through the interception and removal of particulate matter flowing into the lake. A new wildlife habitat improvement plan was implemented in 1991.

Dickman Park

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Location: Main Street between 6th and 7th Avenue NE

Size: 2.11 acres

Name: When acquired, the park was logically called the Main Street Northeast Playground Site. The park was named in 1955 for Ralph E. Dickman, a youth worker in northeast Minneapolis, attorney and Hennepin County Commissioner.

Acquisition and Development

The initial 1.23 acres of land for the park were purchased by condemnation in 1949 for $8,500, following original authorization to spend up to $10,000 to acquire the property in 1948. Although the park was smaller than desired, it was located in a neighborhood described as under-served in a 1944 survey of park properties and the needs of the city.

The park was expanded in 1954 in an unusual deal. Pioneer Engineering Works acquired ten acres of land from the park board at Northeast Athletic Field in exchange for an acre of land it owned adjacent to Holmes Park and five parcels of land the company bought for the park board to expand Dickman Park. The original deal was for the Holmes land and $30,000 in cash, but the district court, which had to approve all land dispositions by the park board, ruled that the deal had to be for land only. So Pioneer bought the land at Dickman Park and turned it over to the park board.

Before the park was improved in 1955, an additional 0.39 acre was also purchased by condemnation.

In 1955, the park was filled and graded after the buildings on the land were moved. Initial plans were for a small athletic field, volleyball and basketball courts and a picnic area. In 1957 a wading pool was added to complete initial construction.

Skaters at Dickman Park were able to put on their skates in a warming house for the first time in the winter of 1958-1959. A recreation shelter for the park was completed in 1962.

Dickman Park facilities were renovated in 1991.

Dorilus Morrison Park

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Location: East 24th Street and Stevens Avenue

Size: 9.03 acres

Name: The park is named for Dorilus Morrison, one of the commissioners named in the Park Act of 1883, who once lived on the site of the park. The park is rarely referred to by its name; it is better known as the site of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Dorilus Morrison

Dorilus Morrison, like many of the city's early leaders, came to Minnesota from Maine. His first business, like that of many others immigrants from Maine, was cutting timber along the tributaries of the Mississippi and floating logs down the river to sawmills at Anoka and St. Anthony Falls. In addition to cutting timber, Morrison operated a lumberman's supply store in Minneapolis. Both Loren Fletcher and his later business partner, Charles Loring, found their first employment in Minneapolis at Morrison's store.

Morrison was known as one of the wealthiest Minnesotans at the time the park board was created and he had been elected mayor of the Minneapolis in 1867 and 1869. In his first inaugural address as mayor he advocated creating a park in Minneapolis, calling parks the "pride of cities east and west."

Morrison was a prominent supporter of parks for many years before the park board was created. He was among those who called a town meeting in 1865 to consider acquiring a park for the city. In 1871, he was one of the founders of Lakewood Cemetery, which was in effect a privately owned park. In 1872, Morrison, William King, George Brackett and Richard Mendenhall, purchased forty acres near the present Minneapolis Institute of Arts that had been offered to the city council for a park, but which the council had refused to purchase. The four men held the land and each invested $1,000 to improve it as a park, hoping that the council would eventually agree to acquire it as a public park. Without action from the council, however, the men eventually divided up the land. The others sold their pieces of it, but Morrison built his house, Villa Rosa, on a portion it. His cousin, another prominent Minneapolitan, William Washburn, built his mansion, Fair Oaks, across the street from Villa Rosa.

Acquisition and Development

In the winter of 1911, Clinton Morrison, Dorilus Morrison's son, approached the park board with an unusual offer: He would donate to the park board the home his father had built and the surrounding estate totaling more than eight acres. He had one condition, however: the land would be designated as

the site of an art museum, which would be built with funds raised privately by the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts.

Morrison even drew up legislation authorizing the park board to accept the donation. The legislation also provided for the collection of a tax levy on all property in Minneapolis that would pass through the park board for the operation and maintenance of the proposed museum. The legislature approved the measure, the park board accepted the land, the Society of Fine Arts raised more than half a million dollars to construct the museum, and to this day the park board collects and passes on to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts the tax levy approved in the legislation. In 1959 the Minnesota legislature extended the museum levy to cover all of Hennepin County instead of just the city of Minneapolis.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts opened in 1915 in what remains Dorilus Morrison Park.

The donation of land by Clinton Morrison led directly to two other park acquisitions: Washburn Fair Oaks Park and Clinton Park.

Additional Sources
Information on the ownership of the land in the 1870s is drawn from correspondence and legal documents in the George A. Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

East Phillips Park

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Location: Cedar Avenue South and East 24th Street

Size: 6.46 acres

Name: The name comes from the neighborhood in which the park is located. The name comes from the Phillips School in the neighborhood, which was named for abolitionist orator Wendell Phillips.

Acquisition and Development

The park was acquired from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) in 1977. The land was available after the MCDA decided not to develop the site for housing.

Development of the park began in 1978 with construction of playing fields, playgrounds and a wading pool, as well as general landscaping. A shelter was built in the park in 1979. Additional improvements continued into 1981 with the construction of tennis courts and additional paths.

At the time the land was acquired the Police Athletic Council used a concrete block building on the site. The park board leased that building to the American Indian Movement when it acquired the land. In 2006 the building was demolished due to structural deterioration.

In 1997, the basketball courts in the park were refurbished with a grant from the Minnesota Timberwolves.

In 2007, the state legislature approved funds for a new community center in the park. Plans for that center are being finalized.

East River Parkway

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Location: The east bank of the Mississippi River from Arlington Street SE on the University of Minnesota campus downriver to the Minneapolis boundary with St. Paul.

Size: 84.99 acres

Name: The name is descriptive. Originally the property was referred to informally as East River Bank Parkway, but was officially named St. Anthony Parkway in 1901. The name of the parkway was changed to East River Road in 1906. At the same time, the east and west river roads, Riverside Park and Minnehaha Park were all officially named parts of Mississippi Park. The current name was adopted in 1968 when most park roads were officially renamed as "parkways." In December 1894, upon the suggestion of William Folwell, the board approved naming the east river flats "Cheever's Landing," for the man who had operated a ferry on the site in the early days of the city. While the name was officially adopted, the area has always been referred to informally as the East River Flats Park.

Acquisition and Development

The banks of the Mississippi River below St. Anthony Falls, the only true gorge along the entire length of the Mississippi River, played a central role in the creation of the Minneapolis park system. Horace Cleveland, the Chicago-based landscape architect who later created the first general plan for Minneapolis parks, was an eloquent crusader for the preservation of the river banks from the early 1870s. At his urging, civic leaders from Minneapolis and St. Paul met to consider the prospect of acquiring and preserving the river banks as a park as early as 1872—eleven years before the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners was created by the state legislature and approved by Minneapolis voters.

Shortly after the city's voters gave their approval for a park board in April 1883, the new board hired Cleveland to create a general plan for the development of Minneapolis parks. In his "Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis," presented to the park board June 2, 1883, Cleveland devoted considerable attention and passion to creating a park on the river banks on both sides of the river. He wrote:

"The Mississippi River is not only the grand natural feature which gives character to your city and constitutes the main spring of prosperity, but it is the object of vital interest and center of attraction to intelligent visitors from every quarter of the globe, who associate such ideas of grandeur with its name as no human creation can excite. It is due therefore, to the sentiments of the civilized world, and equally in recognition of your own sense of the blessings it confers upon you, that it should be placed in a setting worthy of so priceless a jewel."

He went on to write that a boulevard along the banks of the river would be of "such picturesque character as no art could create and no other city can possess." As for how to develop the river banks into a park, Cleveland wrote, "No artist who has any appreciation of natural beauty would presume to do more than touch with reverent hands the features whose charms suggest their own development. No plan for such work could be made."

What he did propose was a park on the east river flats, opposite Riverside Park on the west bank, which the park board had already designated for acquisition and a bridge over the river linking the two parks.

Despite the best efforts of the park board, Cleveland's vision for the east river bank would not be realized for nearly a decade. The stumbling block was the cost of the land. Within weeks of Cleveland's "Suggestions" the park board surveyed and designated for acquisition the east river bank from the University of Minnesota downriver to the city boundary with St. Paul. After many revisions to the acquisition, and the initial purchase of some lots along the river, in early 1885 the park board rescinded its resolutions to acquire the river bank. The park board's appraisal of nearly every piece of land to be acquired was challenged by property owners in court. Owning the river bank was going to cost more than the park board could spend.

In 1887 the park board sold three of the river lots it had purchased and advertised for sale its remaining land on the river. Those lots became the only land that the park board has ever purchased twice. The first president of the park board, Charles Loring, wrote in the 1887 annual report that "while it is regretted that this parkway was abandoned, it is fortunate that by reason of increase in value the Board will lose no money by the undertaking." The lots were sold for $1,000 each.

The impetus for returning to the issue of acquiring the river banks was the election to the park board in 1888 of the former president of the University of Minnesota, William Folwell. Folwell had become a close friend of Horace Cleveland. From 1872 until 1886, when Cleveland moved from Chicago to Minneapolis, Cleveland stayed at Folwell's home near the University of Minnesota campus when he visited the city and the two men carried on a lively correspondence. Folwell's papers at the Minnesota History Center include nearly one hundred letters from Cleveland.

In his second year as a park commissioner, in 1890, Folwell proposed that the park board revisit its goals and objectives—and its vision for the future of the park system. The board appointed Folwell to lead a three-person committee to do that. The report they produced, presented in early 1891 and included in the 1890 annual report of the park board, refined Cleveland's "Suggestions" of eight years earlier and established the direction of the park board for decades.

As Folwell was preparing his report, he received a letter from Horace Cleveland (without telephones, people often wrote letters to each other even within the city) in October 1890. As always, Cleveland's focus was on the river banks. He encouraged Folwell to go down to the east river bank below the University with him—and showed his frustration that the river banks still hadn't been acquired by the park board. "If all your committee could go," Cleveland wrote, "it would do their souls good if they've got any. When you once take in the possibilities that are open it will drive you frantic to think of losing them. I will devote a day or any part of a day to the exploration of as much as you like and it will inspire you to make a report that will drown the sound of an eighteen pounder." Cleveland's reference to Civil War-era cannons was likely meant to call up the fighting spirit of Folwell, who had commanded a corps of Union Army engineers during the war.

Folwell's report was indeed loud and reverberates still through the park system. Among other proposals Folwell made, giving the credit "justly and gladly" to Cleveland, was a system of parkways connecting parks in all parts of the city, not just around the lakes in the southwest corner of the city. Folwell's system of parkways—they could be called the "Grand Rounds," he suggested— included parkways along both sides of the river.

And the park board acted. By the end of 1891 the park board expressed its intent to try once again to acquire the river banks on both sides of the river. Led by Folwell, the board appointed a committee to investigate acquiring the river banks, and in July 1892 the board approved once again the acquisition of

East River Bank Parkway from the University of Minnesota campus to St. Paul. The board also passed a resolution encouraging St. Paul to extend Summit Avenue along the east river bank to meet up with Minneapolis's new park.

By the end of 1892, the park board had the east river bank appraised and made offers to land owners there. Once again about half of the property owners appealed the appraisals. The District Court appointed a second team of appraisers, which raised the appraised value of the land to be taken from $70,000 to $115,000. Even with the increased cost, the park board confirmed the new awards in March 1893. The park board noted at the time that it was trying to negotiate a lower price for Meeker Island, which it believed should be included in the east bank acquisition. No further mention is made in park board proceedings of those negotiations or the island.

The cost was to be assessed on property owners in the area, but those assessments were also challenged. In March 1893, the park board reduced the assessments due to unusual circumstances. For one, the University of Minnesota, which owned much of the adjacent land on the northern section of the parkway, was exempt from assessments. Two, the parkway was unique in that there was taxable property on only one side of the park—the other side was water. The park board agreed to spread the assessments over a larger area of the city and to pay for part of the purchase with $20,000 in park bonds because in its view the parkway was "of benefit to the entire city."

One of the arguments used by Cleveland and others for acquiring the river banks and preventing development there was that an undeveloped river would provide a path of fresh air through the city; it would serve as the "lungs" of the city. In the 1893 annual report, park board president Charles Loring praised the acquisition, writing "cities as well as animals must have lungs."

To justify the acquisition Loring wrote: "When a person is ill the doctors say, 'Go to the country where you can get fresh air.' But alas! all cannot go to the country, and it is the duty of those who control the laying out of cities to furnish the means for supplying the God-given element to the poorest of people." By acquiring the lakes, creeks and "the great river" as parks, Loring wrote, we are "supplying the pure blood to our children, which will make them physically and morally strong."

Perhaps not everyone agreed, however, because in the summer of 1893 the park board approved Folwell's motion that the mayor be asked to prevent the dumping of offal and rubbish along the east river bank.

The park board ordered that work commence on the construction of the east bank boulevard from the university to Franklin Avenue in June 1894. Included in the improvements was the construction of a stone culvert to permit the stream that fed Bridal Veil Falls to pass under the parkway. Buildings on the river flats, which had been in place for many years, were removed in 1899 and the parkway along the bluff was finally completed.

When the east river bank was acquired the river was not as we know it today. It was wilder, rockier, narrower, and dotted with islands; it was not navigable by steam boats. That began to change, and the park board's river acquisition began to shrink, when in 1895 the park board granted flowage rights and deeds for portions of the east river park to the U.S. Government for the construction of the Meeker Island lock and dam. When construction of the dam began in 1898 the park board granted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permission to use part of the parkway for trackage and storage during construction.

Despite the imminent loss of land at the east river flats to the reservoir created by the dam, the park board commissioned landscape architect Warren Manning to develop a plan for the layout of the east river park in 1899. Manning noted in his report on the park system in 1899 that he had submitted plans, which were being executed, to create a large central playground for the city on the river flats with an exercise track, gymnasium, bath house and boat house. The park board allocated $3,000 for the improvement of the park and later that summer approved the construction of a stone walk along the parkway from Oak Street near the university to Franklin Avenue with the cost to be assessed on property in the area. The playground that Manning proposed was never built.

The park board's annual report of 1902 referred to the "charming lake" that would soon be created by government dams. The lake was indeed created by the construction first of the Meeker Island Dam near the downriver end of the land acquired for St. Anthony Parkway and later by the "high dam" farther downstream, but it was far from charming. Much of the raw sewage of the city flowed into the river and the reservoir became in reality a cesspool. In 1921 park superintendent Theodore Wirth called the smell of the river nearly unbearable. That result may have contributed to the lack of development of a park on the east side of the river. But apart from the East River Flats, or Cheever's Landing, the plan for the river banks was always to leave it as nature had made it. In 1910 and 1911 Wirth advocated the development of the flats into a playground, an arboretum that could be run by the University of Minnesota, or a baseball field. In 1912 the flats were graded for the creation of a baseball or football field, but neither was ever completed.

The development of the parkway, however, was a higher priority. The parkway along the bluff was completed to subgrade from Franklin Avenue to the St. Paul city limit in 1909 and improved in 1911. The parkway was not paved for the first time—it had always been an oiled dirt road—until 1957. At that time the parkway was also widened, the first curbs and gutters were installed south of Franklin Avenue, and a concrete sidewalk was poured.

The East River Flats were leased to the University of Minnesota for a parking lot in 1949 and the original ten-year lease was renewed until 1976. The flats were used as a concert venue in the late 1970s and permission was also granted to the university to use park land to access its Showboat.

Beginning in 1999 the park board developed a master plan for the river flats and the parkway below the University of Minnesota. In 2001, in cooperation with the university, the parkway adjacent to the university was redesigned with paths, a park entrance road, traffic calming measures and landscaping. That planning process has also led to the restoration of native vegetation and shoreline and bluff stabilization at the park.

In 2002 a new bike trail was built from Franklin Avenue to the St. Paul city line. The one mile section of trail completed the connection along the river to Summit Avenue and downtown St. Paul from the university.

Additional Sources
Information on the relationship of William Folwell and Horace Cleveland and their correspondence is from William Watts Folwell and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, and William Watts Folwell Papers, University of Minnesota Archives, Minneapolis.

Edgewater Park

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Location: The east bank of the Mississippi River south of Lowry Avenue.

Size: 2.13 acres

Name: The name comes from the park's location alongside the river, but also from the Edgewater Inn, which occupied the site for many years.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was purchased for about $300,000 in 1993 after the Edgewater Inn closed. The Edgewater Inn had been a well-known riverside supper club that had featured musical entertainment by the Edgewater Eight since the 1960s. The money to purchase the land was provided by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, which was created to allocate state proceeds from the Minnesota Lottery.

A master plan for the property was developed with neighborhood input in the late 1990s. The plan was partially funded by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. The park was developed as part of the Above the Falls Master Plan, which established the goal of acquiring and developing as parks portions of the Mississippi River banks upstream from St. Anthony Falls as land became available.

Most of the work to develop the park, including an overlook of the river, was completed in 2006 and the park was dedicated in April 2007.

Edward C. Solomon Park

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Location: Cedar Avenue and East 58th Street

Size: 45.16 acres, including 2.56 acres of water

Name: The park was named in August 2004 for Edward C. Solomon who was a park commissioner from 1996 until his death in 2002. Solomon served as president of the park board 2000-2001. Prior to his appointment to the park board to fill a vacancy (he subsequently was elected), Solomon was active for many years as a volunteer and football coach at McRae Park. He served as president of the McRae Park Athletic Council for 15 years.

Acquisition and Development

The park was acquired in a land swap and long-term lease in 2004. The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) wanted additional land adjacent to the airport that was owned by the park board. Instead of selling park land outright, the board swapped eight acres of its land for ownership of 12 acres of land owned by MAC and a long-term lease on another 28 acres of MAC land.

Although it is not included in total park acreage in the city, the park board still holds title to 600 acres of land on which the airport is located. The airport was acquired and developed by the park board beginning in the mid-1920s. The first runways and air terminals were built by the park board. (Prior to being developed as an airport, there was an Indianapolis-style race track on the property.) When the Metropolitan Airports Commission was created by the legislature in 1943, the park board turned over control of the airport to the new commission.

Solomon Park is a combination of fields, hills, wetlands and a small pond for which there are no development plans. One of the city's most interesting residents, a bald eagle, has built a nest in the park. The eagle often can be seen fishing in nearby Lake Nokomis.

Elliot Park

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Location: Elliot Avenue South and 8th Street.

Size: 6.44 acres

Name: The park and avenue were named for Dr. Jacob S. Elliot, who along with his wife donated the original land for Elliot Park in 1883. The Elliot's son, Wyman, served as a park commissioner 1899-1901.

Acquisition and Development

Dr. Elliot had once resided in Minneapolis but had moved to California by the time the park board was created in 1883. Upon learning of the new park authority, he offered to donate as a park the land that had once been his garden. The park board accepted his donation of 2.18 acres in July of that year.

The park was quickly expanded when the Homeopathic Hospital offered to sell an adjoining two blocks of land to the park board for $20,000. The park board accepted that offer in December 1883. In the summer of 1884 the park board vacated 9th Street through the park and asked Horace Cleveland to create plans for the park.

The original plan included a pond in the center of the park. A water pipe was installed to the center of the lake in 1889, which produced a fountain of water that reached fifty feet into the air. The pond served as a skating rink in the early years of the park.

Nearly three acres were added to the park in 1908-09 for about $34,000. Negotiations for the land to the east and south of the original park took more than a year to complete.

With the addition of the new land Superintendent Theodore Wirth presented two plans for the park in the 1909 annual report. In both plans the one-time pond was shown as a wading pool. The plans differed in that one would have developed the eastern part of the park as a playground and the other plan called for a sunken flower garden. Wirth's plans assumed the closing of 10th Avenue through the park, which had been approved by the board. However with improvement plans on hold, 10th Avenue was kept open by request of residents of the neighborhood.

Wirth's playground option for the park was selected by the board for implementation in 1912, but after less than a year of operation, the nearby hospitals complained about the noise of children playing, and the playground equipment was removed in early 1913.

Although Wirth's sunken garden was never created, even after the removal of the playground equipment, Elliot Park was planted with more flowers each year than most other parks. Elliot trailed only Loring Park, Minnehaha Park, Lake Harriet and the Armory Gardens in the number of flowers and bedding plants planted in 1919, with more than 4,000 plants.

As with most other parks, few improvements were made again until after World War II. In 1948, 10th Avenue was finally closed in preparation for a new playground, athletic field, tennis courts and wading pool, which were built in 1949. A shelter at the park was completed in 1950. The shelter was renovated in 1961.

In 1980, Elliot Park became the site of a unique project in Minneapolis parks. With the help of federal and state grants totaling nearly a million dollars, a new recreation center was built with the special needs of the handicapped in mind. Elliot Park had the first fully accessible recreation center in city parks.

The play areas in the park were updated in 1998, including a new basketball court, new pathways and landscaping. A skateboard park was added to the park in 2004.

Elmwood Triangle

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Location: Elmwood Place and Luverne Avenue

Size: 0.01 acres

Name: The property was named for Elmwood Place, the adjoining street.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle in the Tangletown neighborhood north of Minnehaha Creek was donated to the park board by Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Sawyer, August 14, 1898. It wasn't until November 25, 1911, however, that the board noted that the property had been overlooked and never named. The board at that time approved the name of Elmwood Triangle.

Elmwood Triangle and Gladstone Triangle (which became park property in 1918) represented the last contribution to Minneapolis parks by landscape architect Horace Cleveland—years after his death. Cleveland was the man who first proposed a system of interconnecting parkways around features of natural interest in the city, especially its lakes and river. That suggestion led eventually to today's "Grand Rounds." Cleveland also designed the first parks acquired by the park board.

But Cleveland's legacy also includes the street layout of Tangletown north of Minnehaha Creek between Lyndale and Nicollet. Cleveland hated the rectilinear street layouts in most cities and towns of the Midwest. He blamed it on the railroad companies that laid out the towns quickly and cheaply along their new track as they moved west. Cleveland thought streets should follow the natural contours of the land, a belief he put into practice in Tangletown when he was hired privately in the 1890s to develop a plan for that neighborhood. The odd angles at which streets intersect under his plan created triangles that are not suitable for buildings. Two of those unusual intersections created small parcels of land—Elmwood and Gladstone triangles—that were later given to the park board.

Farview Park

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Location: Lyndale Avenue North and 26th Avenue North

Size: 20.98 acres

Name: At the time it was acquired in 1883 the park was referred to as Third Ward Park after the political division in which it was located. After its acquisition, the park was named Prospect Park for its views, but in 1890 the name was changed to Farview Park. The name has caused confusion ever since, because many people think the name is Fairview with an extra "i" inserted. The view may have been "fair," too, but the name was chosen because one could see "far" from the hill in the center of the park.

Acquisition and Development

Farview Park was one of the first parks acquired by the Board of Park Commissioners when it was created in April 1883. At its second meeting, April 20, 1883, the new park board appointed committees to recommend land to be acquired for parks in various sections of the city. The committee for the "northerly" part of the city was chaired by ex-officio commissioner Henry Morse, who sat on the park board because he was the city council member who chaired the council's planning committee. Also on the committee to consider a park for the district were park commissioners Adin Austin and John Oswald. Oswald's farm, Bryn Mawr, occupied the land that is now the Bryn Mawr neighborhood.

The committee worked fast. On May 12, 1883, the committee recommended acquiring thirty acres of land for a Third Ward Park. The land was familiar to at least one commissioner; the committee noted that it was recommending acquiring land that had recently been sold by commissioner Dorilus Morrison to Henry Beard. (Henry Beard later was the first landowner to offer to donate a strip of his land around Lake Harriet for a parkway. The park board also acquired from Beard the land that became Linden Hills Boulevard and Beard Plaisance west of Lake Harriet.) The site of the park was chosen, the board reported in its 1883 annual report, because it was the highest land in the city, offering panoramic views of downtown and the "Mississippi River for miles."

The original proposal was to designate thirty acres of land that had been offered to the board for $75,000, but the board's final purchase of land was only about twenty acres. The final purchase included ten acres that at the time was the site of the city's small pox hospital, which the city council offered to the park board for $15,000. The total purchase price of the twenty-plus acres was $34,438, an amount that was assessed on property owners in the neighborhood, to be paid over ten years. Farview was the least expensive of the three parks the park board acquired in its first year, only one-third the per-acre cost of Logan Park and Central (Loring) Park. The neighborhoods around Logan and Loring parks were more densely populated, but the cost of the Farview land was also lower probably because the steep hill in the park made it less suitable for residential or commercial uses. Visionary landscape architect Horace Cleveland often said that some of the most desirable land for parks—hills, ravines and river banks—were often those parcels that were ill-suited to other uses. The price paid for Farview Park supported that claim.

Farview Park was originally intended to be the northern terminus of a parkway system envisioned by Horace Cleveland. Lyndale Avenue on the park's west edge was to be a parkway that ran from Farview Park to the city's southern boundary at 36th Street. The park board did designate Lyndale Avenue North as a parkway and maintained it as one until 1905. Cleveland suggested that the parkway would turn east at the southern edge of Farview Park on 26th Avenue North and cross the city to the far eastern boundary of Minneapolis at what became Stinson Boulevard. Although the "suggestion" by Cleveland of an east-west parkway across the north and northeast was eventually implemented in Camden and St. Anthony Boulevards farther north, the park board never pursued Cleveland's proposal for a parkway east from Farview.

Cleveland was also hired to create a plan for the original park, which he completed in late 1883. His original plan for what was then still called Third Ward Park (Cleveland's original drawing is owned by Hennepin History Museum) included a road to the top of the hill in the park. The hill provided an ideal location for sledding and the park board had a toboggan track built there in 1887.

In 1888 the park board commissioned an observation tower to be built on top of the hill. The observatory was completed in 1889. In that year, residents of the neighborhood also petitioned the park board to build a tennis court in the park. The first ice-skating rink was created at Farview Park in 1891. And when the park board installed its first toilets in parks in 1892, Farview was given two, complete with sewer connections.

Farview Park was the site of a celebrated event in park history in 1906 when newly hired park superintendent Theodore Wirth visited the park and instructed the park policeman on duty there to stop preventing children from sledding on the hill and, instead, assist them. It was an early step in opening Minneapolis parks to active recreation uses.

The first playground equipment was installed at Farview in 1906, a "Hartford" merry-go-round, the kind children push. The next year the board appropriated $1,000 for more playground equipment at the park, following the popularity of the merry-go-round and the success of playground equipment installed in 1906 at Logan and Riverside parks. Farview was one of five city parks at which Clifford Booth supervised the use of playground equipment in 1907, becoming the park board's first recreation supervisor and instructor. Also in 1907 the park board offered its first free outdoor music concerts at Farview. The first basketball hoops were installed at the park in 1908.

The hilly terrain of Farview Park made it difficult and expensive to improve as athletic fields, however. This was especially true when contrasted with North Commons, the second major park in north Minneapolis, which was acquired in 1907. North Commons, on flatter terrain, became a much more heavily used park for sports and active recreation.

As recreation in city parks became more popular, the park board built its first fieldhouse at Logan Park in 1912. Theodore Wirth recommended that one be built at Farview the next year, and in succeeding years he recommended that Farview get a fieldhouse, tennis courts and ball fields, so the park would be "as useful and popular as Logan," in Wirth's words.

Finally, in 1917 the park board graded playing fields and put up a shelter that could be used as a warming house for skaters in winter. (The shelter was actually moved from Marshall Terrace Park, where it was underused, in the opinion of the board.) The improvements were paid for out of a bond issue, but they were never completed. Theodore Wirth proposed in 1921 and again in 1925 that the improvements begun in 1917 be completed. An inexpensive bandstand was installed at Farview, as in most other parks, in 1919 to avoid the time and expense of moving the board's portable bandstand from park to park for free concerts.

In his 1927 superintendent's report, Wirth presented a plan for the improvement of Farview, which eliminated all roads in the park except for the drive to the top of the hill from 26th Avenue North. The roads in the park had already been closed earlier that year when the park board approved a request for that action from the PTA at nearby Hawthorne School.

Despite the lack of improvements for active recreation, Farview Park excelled in another activity: singing. Farview won the "community sing" trophy from 1924 to 1927 and again from 1935 to 1937.

The travelling trophy was awarded to the park that sang the best during summer music concerts. That string of three wins in a row "retired" the trophy, or allowed Farview to keep it. A new trophy was created for subsequent years for community sings, which ran in city parks from 1919 to the mid-1950s. By 1949, however, attendance at community sings had dwindled at Farview and Farview was replaced by Peavey Park on the roster of parks that participated in community sings.

In 1938, in the midst of depression, the park board again considered plans for substantial improvement of the park, including grading the park for athletic fields, but little money was available at the time. Finally in 1940, using WPA labor, four new tennis courts were built and the following year, once again with WPA labor, the board graded, resurfaced and sodded some areas of the park.

In 1953, a concrete wading pool was installed at Farview, but other than that and the installation of lights in the park in 1958 near the lookout tower, where teens often loitered, major improvements of Farview waited until 1959-1960 when the park was given a significant makeover at a cost of $260,000. Half the cost was financed by city bonds and half by assessments on neighborhood property. Improvements included grading fields, enlarging and resurfacing the tennis courts, replacing obsolete playground equipment, and constructing an "attractive shelter of unusual design," according to the 1960 annual report. Bond funds that were not used for the Farview redevelopment were transferred the following year, along with funds from other parks, to a fund to acquire Seward (Matthews) Park in south Minneapolis.

During the recreation center building boom of the mid-1970s Farview was once again redeveloped. In 1976, substantial work was done in the park and a new recreation center was built. The recreation center was expanded in 1992 with the addition of a gym.

Farview Park was one of the first Minneapolis parks to have a computer lab, when computers were installed in the recreation center in 2001.

Farwell Park

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Location: Sheridan Avenue North and Farwell Place

Size: 1.15 acres

Name: The park was named for Farwell Place, the origin of which is unknown. The park was named in the original 1889 plat and the name was never officially adopted or changed.

Acquisition and Development

Park board records indicate that the land was platted as a park in the Oak Park Supplement on June 4, 1889. However the first mention of the park in park board proceedings is in a request from the David C. Bell Investment Company on February 7, 1910 asking the board to formally accept the land as a park and to make modest improvements. The board approved initial improvements, grading and seeding the lot, on March 21, 1910.

In the board's annual report of 1910, superintendent Theodore Wirth included a plan for the improvement of Farwell Park in what he said "promises to become one of the finest residential districts of the northwest side," a neighborhood he referred to as "Home Wood."

The plan for improvements is unusual in that it was not prepared by Wirth, but by the landscape architects hired by D. C. Bell Investment Company. Wirth recommended that the plan be adopted by the board. Initial grading and seeding commenced in 1911, but was not finished until the following year. The improvements were paid for by the D. C. Bell Company, but the company was later reimbursed.

Playground equipment was first installed in the park in 1968 as part of an effort to provide more facilities for children in north Minneapolis.

The playground and plaza in the park were improved in 2001.

Father Hennepin Bluff Park

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Location: The east bank of the Mississippi River between 3rd Avenue Northeast and 6th Avenue Northeast.

Size: 8.02 acres, including the 0.06-acre Lucy Wilder Morris Park

Name: The park was named for Father Louis Hennepin, a Franciscan priest who was the first European to view St. Anthony Falls from the site of the park in 1680. Hennepin named the falls for his patron saint, St. Anthony of Padua. Hennepin was also the first European to make a record of viewing Niagara Falls.

A portion of the park is officially known as Phillip W. Pillsbury Park. The Pillsbury Company donated 2.4 acres of land to enlarge the park in 1981. The Pillsbury family, founders of the milling company, had been linked with Minneapolis parks from the earliest days of the park board. George Pillsbury was one of the Minneapolis businessmen who had been instrumental in pushing the Minneapolis Board of Trade to draft legislation for presentation to the state legislature to create the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners in 1883. His brother John Pillsbury, a former governor of Minnesota, was one of the first twelve park commissioners appointed by the legislation. It was John Pillsbury who proposed to the new park board that it hire landscape architect Horace Cleveland to create a plan for the fledgling park system. The result was Cleveland's "Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis," presented to the park board in June 1883. Cleveland's "suggestions" provided the blueprint for the development of the park system. Cleveland proposed a system of parkways that connected features of natural interest, especially the Mississippi River and the lakes. A later park commissioner, William Folwell, a close friend of Cleveland, proposed the name "Grand Rounds" for that system of parkways.

John Pillsbury's son, Alfred, also became a park commissioner and was president of the park board in the 1930s.

Acquisition and Development

The initial land for the park was acquired by the park board in 1977. It was the first park land to be acquired for what would become Central Riverfront Regional Park.

The land was acquired for about $800,000 with funds provided by the state legislature through the Metropolitan Council. The park had been included in the initial plan for the central riverfront created by the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board (RDCB), a joint effort of the park board, city council and the Minneapolis housing authority, chaired by park commissioner Ole Olson. The RDCB envisioned

the bluff left in its natural state with trails down to and along the river. The RDCB's plan also included Hennepin Island and the east channel of the river, but those parts of the plan have never been completely implemented. The plan for the area was intended to evoke images of Huck Finn. The bluff park was initially developed and opened in 1979.

In 1981 the park was augmented by a donation of 2.4 aces of land from the Pillsbury Company in honor of Phillip W. Pillsbury.

Another half-acre of land on the bluff, Lucy Wilder Morris Park, was officially added to the park when title to the land was turned over to the park board by the Hennepin County Historical Society in 1989. The park board had been maintaining Lucy Wilder Morris Park, however, since 1931 under an agreement with and funding from the Daughters of American Colonists.

The finishing touch to the park, which gave it its present appeal, was the agreement to convert the Stone Arch Bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle path in 1993. The bridge connects the eastern edge of the park with the west bank of the river and Mill Ruins Park.

Proposals to convert the east channel of the river between Father Hennepin Bluff Park and Hennepin Island into a whitewater park have been under consideration for years. The sticking point has always been the source of funding for that development.

First Bridge Park

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Location: Beneath and around the west end of Hennepin Avenue Bridge across the Mississippi River.

Name: The name for the park was chosen because it is the site of the first bridge across the Mississippi River—anywhere. The first suspension bridge on the site was built by Franklin Steele in 1855.

Acquisition and Development

The land for First Bridge Park was acquired in 1985 from the real estate subsidiary of Burlington Northern Railroad, which owned much of the land along the river downtown. The company donated 22 acres of riverfront to the city in part in return for changes in zoning that enabled the company to develop other land holdings in the area for commercial and residential purposes. A condition of the donation was that the park board construct a park and parkway along the river from Plymouth Avenue to Portland Avenue by 1987. That parkway was completed in 1987 and later named James I. Rice Parkway.

The impetus for the creation of First Bridge Park, which features the excavated footings of the three earliest bridges on the site, was the construction of a new Federal Reserve Bank on the site of the former railroad depot adjacent to James Rice Parkway. The park was completed in 2001.

Along with Mill Ruins Park, First Bridge Park represents an effort to preserve and illustrate the history of Minneapolis.

Folwell Park

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Location: Knox Avenue North and 36th Avenue North

Size: 26.98 acres

Name: The park was named for William Watts Folwell, park commissioner 1889-1907 and president of the park board 1895-1903. The name was officially adopted November 21, 1917. Before that the site was known as Highland Park. This was the second park that the park board considered naming after Folwell. The board had once considered naming what is now Marshall Terrace Park, Folwell Terrace, but chose instead to name it for the street that passed by that park.

William Watts Folwell

Folwell was an influential man in Minneapolis history from the time he came to Minneapolis in 1869 to be the first president of the University of Minnesota. As president of the park board during a time of economic depression in the 1890s, Folwell kept alive Horace Cleveland's vision of the park system as a series of interconnected parks of natural beauty. He also championed neighborhood parks interspersed throughout the city. In 1891, he proposed the name "Grand Rounds" for Minneapolis's parkways and the name stuck. He was also a proponent of playgrounds for children and playing fields in parks before those activities were widely considered appropriate in parks.

The annual reports he wrote for the park board while he was president are filled with inspiring exhortations for the park board and the public to retain a vision of what parks could become in the city. One example was from the annual report for 1900 when he wrote, "We owe it to our children and all future dwellers in Minneapolis to plan on a great and generous scale. If we fail to accomplish, let them know it was not for lack of ideas or ideals." Folwell was 92 when he attended the dedication of Folwell Park in 1925.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was designated for acquisition by the park board in December 1916. The park board purchased the land through condemnation proceedings and the awards to property owners were confirmed in August 1917. The total cost of the land was $35,160, which was assessed to property owners in the vicinity of the park.

The first plans for the park were published in the 1917 annual report. The plan showed the northern half of the park devoted to playgrounds, a wading pool and playing fields, with the southern half reserved for, in park superintendent Theodore Wirth's words, "general park effects," meaning woods and walking paths and lawns. In the center of the park, facing a park drive created from 37th Avenue North, was a fieldhouse. Along the west edge of the playing fields in the northern half, Wirth proposed a grandstand for spectators. Near the center of the southern half, Wirth proposed a bandstand. Wirth noted that the plan would provide one of the "most complete and attractive neighborhood parks in the country."

Wirth didn't create a detailed plan for the fieldhouse or estimates for any of the improvements. At the time, the cost of all improvements in neighborhood parks was assessed against property in the neighborhoods. If neighborhood property owners were not willing to pay, no improvements were made. (Property owners were already paying for the land through assessments.) Wirth wrote that he would provide detailed plans after the people of the neighborhood "voiced their wishes," which meant that he and the park board awaited feedback from property owners as to how much they were willing to pay for the facilities.

Apparently they were not willing to pay anything at all, because three years later in the annual report Wirth complained that the park needed development because, as it was, it had been of "no service to the people." He repeated again in 1921 that the investment in the land four years earlier "brings little return if not improved." A temporary ball field was created at the park in 1921.

It wasn't until November 1922 that residents of the area asked the board to improve the park. At that time the board instructed Wirth to revise his original plans to include a shelter and toilet building of "moderate cost." His new plan, submitted in January 1923, and included in the 1922 annual report, no longer included a grandstand, field house or a drive through the park, but was otherwise similar to his first plan in dividing the park into halves for active and passive recreation. The estimated cost of the improvements was $147,000.

Work on the field began with grading and filling in 1923 in time for a skating rink to be established that winter. The first playground equipment was also installed, a merry-go-round, which cost $328. Work was nearly completed in 1924, including the construction of a shelter building that also served as a warming house. The one-story building was built into the bank separating the higher southern half from the northern half of the park. The roof of the building formed a terrace from which the activities and games could be watched. The new park included ball fields, playgrounds, a wading pool, tennis courts and horseshoe courts. The finishing touches were put on the park in early 1925 and on July 4, 1925 the park was dedicated. William Folwell, then 92 years old, attended the ceremony.

Improvements to the park were completed in 1927 when a pergola and permanent bandstand were added to the southern half of the park. It was the first permanent bandstand built in a park other than the pavilions at Lake Harriet and Minnehaha Park. Liebert Weir, field secretary of the National Recreation Association, who conducted a survey of Minneapolis parks for the board in 1944, was not a fan of the park board's one effort to build a bandstand in a neighborhood park. The bandstand, he wrote, "violates almost every principle for sound projection and seating arrangements for performers." Weir continued wryly that it could not be "recommended as a model to other communities."

Regardless of Weir's opinion of the bandstand, the Folwell neighborhood embraced performances at the bandstand and was usually among the top-performing parks in the community sings that were popular in parks from 1919 into the 1950s.

Following World War II, Folwell Park was one of the first five parks (the others were Loring, Logan, Nicollet and Sibley) that offered year-round playground programming and were equipped with lights for outdoor games at night. Folwell also began an experimental program to provide recreation services to Jordan Junior High School. In the mid-1950s Folwell Park's skating rink was by far the most heavily used in the park system. One of the few improvements to the park from the time the bandstand was finished until 1970, was the remodeling of the wading pool in 1963.

The Folwell shelter stood until 1970 when it was replaced by a community center and gymnasium, and the park was completely rehabilitated. A new community center at Folwell was one of the park board's top priorities at the beginning of the park building boom in the 1970s. By then, the practice of assessing property owners for improvements to neighborhood parks had ended; the new center was paid for by city bonds.

From 1994 to 1998, a new playground was built, walkways and basketball courts were repaved, fields were regraded and the community center was remodeled.

Fort Snelling State Park

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Location: Upper Bluff of Fort Snelling State Park, Highway 55 and Highway 5

Size: 152.32 acres, including 49 acres of golf course

Name: The park is named for its location in Fort Snelling.

Acquisition and Development

The park board's site at Fort Snelling includes three separate facilities.

Fort Snelling Golf Course

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The Minneapolis park board's first presence at the park occurred in 1992 when the park board leased an existing 9-hole golf course from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The land covered by that seven-year lease totaled 50 acres. When the lease expired in 1999, the park board leased an additional 50 acres, extending the lease for the entire property for 30 years, and purchased 17 acres more for additional recreation facilities.

Neiman Sports Complex

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With the additional land leased in 1999, the park board had the space to develop the competition-quality athletic fields that had been recommended by a Select Committee on Youth Sports in 1997. The park board also considered developing state-of-the-art fields at Bryn Mawr Park, but the Fort Snelling site was selected instead.

In 2001 construction began on a complex of athletic fields that now includes three softball fields, two baseball fields and eight soccer fields, all of which have lights for play at night. The softball and baseball fields also have bleachers.

When construction began the park board chose to honor Leonard H. Nieman by naming the complex for him. Neiman was a park commissioner 1967-1978 and was a leader of the Southwest Activities Council (SWAC), which included Linden Hills Park and Pershing Park. He was a youth football coach and a played a central role in making SWAC one of the leading park activity councils in the city. As a park commissioner he was a passionate supporter of youth sports programs. Neiman's son, Scott, was also a park commissioner, 1982-2002, and served as president of the park board.

The playing fields opened for competition in 2003.

Fred Wells Tennis and Learning Center

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The third facility created at the site was developed by a private, non-profit organization on a portion of the 17 acres of land the park board purchased in 1999: a tennis complex with both indoor and outdoor courts. The center provides programs to encourage athletic and academic excellence. The center was developed with a gift of $5 million in 2000 from the Wells Family Fund.

It was not the Wells family's first involvement with Minneapolis parks. In 1927, the four children of Frederick and Mary Wells, who was the daughter of Frank Peavey, had donated to the park board the 3.4-acre site of Peavey's former home at Park Avenue and East 22nd Street. The gift stipulated that the park be named for Frank Peavey. Now considerably larger, Peavey Park extends north to Franklin Avenue. Frank Peavey was also a donor to the park system. In 1891 he donated the first fountain in a city park. The fountain he donated at the intersection of Kenwood Parkway and Lake of the Isles parkway remains there today.

Franklin Steele Square

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Location: Portland Avenue and East 16th Street.

Size: 1.57 acres

Name: The park was named to honor Franklin Steele, one of the first European settlers in the area and a civic activist. Steele built the first bridge over the Mississippi at Nicollet Island. He was also president of the first board of regents of the University of Minnesota

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was donated to the city in 1882, prior to creation of the park board, by the daughters of Franklin Steele: Mary C. Morris, Catherine B. Steele, Caroline H. Addison. A condition of the donation was that the city appoint Charles Loring to supervise improvements to the park, a condition that both the city council and Loring accepted. The ownership of the park was transferred to the park board by the city council April 27, 1883.

A fence around the park was constructed in 1883 and in 1884 trees and shrubs were planted and an asbestine sidewalk was laid around the park. New walks were laid, some redirected, in 1906.

In 1912 the park board approved a plan submitted a year earlier in the annual report to improve Franklin Steele Square, including creating space for a small children's playground along 17th Street.

In 1916 the school board requested use of the park as a playground for Madison School across the street, but the park board determined that such a use would violate the spirit of the conditions of the original donation of land and denied the request. The issue was revisited in 1948 when the park board approached the heirs of the donors and restrictions on the use of the park were removed so the park could be integrated with Madison School by the vacation of 16th Street. Plans included a wading pool, a children's play area, a small athletic field and picnic facilities.

In 1949 the plans were expanded to include basketball and volleyball courts and an unusual shelter. A portion of the building had removable walls that could be stored in summer to provide an open air shelter, yet provide protection to skaters as a warming house in winter. The building also featured state-of-the-art automatic heating controls and radiant heat, as well as what the 1949 annual report called "indestructible hardware fixtures." The building was designed to be "as automatic as possible in order to provide the minimum in maintenance."

Franklin Steele Square lost 0.14 acre in 1962 to freeway construction. The land lost was not as significant as the fact that freeways on two sides of the park isolated it from parts of the neighborhood it had once served.

A "totlot" playground for small children was added to the park in 1975 and upgraded in 1990, when the park was renovated. In 2006, the aging shelter was removed. New plans approved at that time for 2008 construction included new playground equipment and a splash pool.

Trivia

Despite their generosity in donating land for a park before the park board was created, the daughters of Franklin Steele put up a fight when the city and the state wanted more of their land for parks. The sisters owned land near Minnehaha Falls that was taken by the park board in condemnation proceedings in 1889 when Minnehaha Park was acquired. The daughters contested the condemnation awards in court, but lost their challenge and a portion of their land was incorporated into Minnehaha Park.

Fremont Triangle

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Location: Mount Curve and Fremont Avenue South

Size: 0.02 acres

Name: The property was named in 1925 for the street on which it is located. It was originally known and listed in park board inventory as "Mt. Curve Triangle." It retained that name until 1925, when a second, larger Mt. Curve Triangle, now known as Thomas Lowry Park at Mt. Curve and Douglas, was acquired. The park board changed the name of the smaller, older triangle to Fremont Triangle.

Acquisition

The small triangle was transferred from the city council to the park board in 1896.

Fuller Park

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Location: Harriet Avenue South and West 48th Street

Size: 2.13 acres

Name: The playground park was named for Margaret Fuller School built in 1896, which occupied the site until 1974. The name Fuller Park was officially adopted November 3, 1976. Fuller was an American writer and women's rights activist in the mid-1800s. She was the first female book reviewer, foreign correspondent and editor of the New York Tribune. Her book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century,* published in 1845, is considered the first major feminist book in the United States.

Acquisition and Development

The park was acquired in 1976 from the school board for $112,500 after Margaret Fuller School was closed in 1974. It was the culmination of more than six decades of agitation for a park on—or near—the site. The first petition to acquire a playground in the neighborhood was submitted to the park board in March, 1915. The petitioners volunteered to pay for the acquisition of the block to the east of the school, between Pleasant and Grand, through assessments on their property. More petitions followed in April and May, including one written by former park commissioner and noted architect Harry W. Jones, who

lived in the neighborhood, and another by the Washburn Park Improvement Association. The neighborhood was gaining population fast, as indicated by additions to Fuller School, first in 1909, and again in 1915.

Curiously, with a rapidly growing neighborhood solidly behind the effort to acquire the park, and even willing to pay for it, the park board voted in June of that year, after consultations with the school board, *not* to accept the offer and designate the property for acquisition. Even curiouser, the 1915 annual report by park superintendent Theodore Wirth included "Margaret Fuller Field" in a chart of new acquisitions. The report listed the new acquisition that wasn't at 2.31 acres.

Undeterred by an "almost," residents petitioned for a park again in June 1917, for the south half of the block on which the school was located and half of the block east of the school. This time the board agreed and on September 5, 1917, the board designated the requested land for a park to be paid for by assessments on benefited property. Despite some protests against the acquisition, which caused the board to defer action for a month, the park board directed Wirth to proceed with a survey and plans for the park.

Wirth introduced his plan for the property May 1, 1918. And what a plan it was: four tennis courts, a recreation shelter, a playground and an assembly stage with concrete steps on the hillside for seats, which Wirth called a "desirable feature for school recitations and musical and dramatic entertainments."

But there was a catch: Wirth's plan required the use of some land adjacent to the school owned by the school board. Because the park board couldn't legally assess the cost of improvements on land it didn't own, the plan required the school board to pay $5,200 of the total cost of $32,200 to execute the plan. The park board referred the plan to a joint committee to consider—and the plan was never mentioned again.

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The only subsequent reference to the plan was a succinct note in the 1920 report by the park board's attorney, James Shearer: "Margaret Fuller School Playground. Proceedings to acquire, abandoned."

It would be 55 years before the idea of a playground in the Fuller neighborhood was revived—and then only when the school was demolished. (One reason given for demolishing the school was that it didn't have adequate playground space!) With the closing of the school in 1974 and the park board aggressively trying to fill holes in its playground map, the park board was first in line to acquire the abandoned school site. (Keeping up the tradition of neighborhood petitions for a park on the site, the Fuller School PTA requested in November 1972 that the park board acquire the school property. By then the school had already been scheduled to close in 1974.) The site was paid for with funds the park board obtained from the state Department of Transportation in payment for park land taken for freeways.

In 1975, with the park board's acquisition of the school site certain to proceed, the park board began work to convert the site to a park. Walkways were laid, landscaping was begun and a recreation center was designed. Due to the park's topography and small size, the recreation center is one of the only two-story centers in Minneapolis parks. The park acquisition was completed in 1976 just in time for the dedication of the new recreation center. Nearly sixty years after the first plans were drawn for the playground, it was done. The park included the new recreation center, a wading pool and a children's playground.

The park was renovated and new playground equipment was installed in 1992. A new basketball court was built in the park in 2005.

The Gateway

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Location: Hennepin Avenue and 1st Street South

Size: 1.66 acres

Name: When the park was first envisaged in 1908 it was viewed as a "gateway" to Minneapolis because of its proximity to the train depots. The Gateway would have been one of the first things seen by arriving passengers as they moved from the train stations toward downtown. The name, which had arisen "spontaneously" according to park board proceedings, was officially adopted December 7, 1908. Suggestions were made later to change the name to "Gateway Park" or "Gateway Plaza."

Acquisition and Development

The present park called The Gateway was acquired from the city in 1962 as part of a deal between the city and park board to reconfigure the old gateway as a part of urban renewal. The good part is that the park board traded 1.52 acres of the old Gateway, which had been the site of the Minneapolis's first City Hall in 1883, for 1.66 acres of the new Gateway. The bad part of the deal was that in addition to the land swap, the city paid only $184,000 for land that the park board had acquired more than fifty years earlier for $635,000. An increase in land value in that part of downtown of less than 30% in fifty-plus years, suggested the need for urban renewal of the area. (To create enough available land to make the swap, the city vacated Nicollet Avenue and 2nd Street through what became the new park.)

The only constant between the old Gateway and the new was that the flag pole, which had been erected in the original park in 1917—a gift of the Daughters of the American Revolution—was moved to the new Gateway.

The acquisition of The Gateway in 1908 was one of the most controversial decisions of the park board up to that time—and one of its most expensive failures ever. Part of the objection was to the cost of the land. At more than $600,000, it was by far the most expensive acquisition by the park board until it began acquiring property on the Central Riverfront in the 1980s.

Heavyweights in civic affairs lined up on both sides of the issue. Among those opposed were Thomas B. Walker, the creator of the Walker Art Center; Charles Loring, the first president of the park board and known for more than twenty years then as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks;" and, William Folwell, former president of the University of Minnesota and the park board. Loring argued that the park would simply become a hangout for vagrants, and was philosophically opposed to the park board taking land from businesses (his wife owned some of the land, too). Folwell said the park was too small to be useful.

In favor of the acquisition were most business leaders, including Thomas Lowry, who had built the city's streetcar system. Lowry called the acquisition the most important issue the board had ever considered and hoped the "splendid enterprise" would go forward.

Park board president Jesse Northrup, who first proposed the idea, painted a picture in 1908 of why many thought the Gateway would be positive for the city, as it sat near the entrance to the train station: "Greeted by day with the sight of a beautiful park, and a glimpse of our leading business streets, at night by our three principal avenues brilliantly illuminated as they would be, the stranger visiting our city

would receive an impression never to be forgotten, and our own people returning to their homes would experience a new feeling of pleasure and pride that they lived in Minneapolis."

Park commissioner Edmund Phelps suggested that The Gateway would be the beginning of "redemption" of the neighborhood, which he noted was "not one of which the city is especially proud." The neighborhood around Bridge Square, between The Gateway and the Hennepin Bridge, was home to dozens of saloons, which were patronized by many mill workers, lumbermen between jobs, and others looking for work.

Park superintendent Theodore Wirth was strongly in the camp of proponents, confident that it would win over critics when it was done.

The park board first dedicated the land for park purposes on June 1, 1908. The debate raged the rest of the year, but the process of appraisals and assessments was completed and the park board took possession of most of the land in 1909. Because business tenants in many of the buildings acquired had longer-term leases, some quite lucrative for the park board, the board did not raze the buildings on the land until 1913. Instead, it calculated that the rents received would eventually pay for improvements to the site. The city formally deeded the old City Hall to the park board in 1912. When the park board did finally level the area, it took out 27 saloons in barely 1½ acres. The costs of buying the land, and improvements were assessed partly on the neighborhood and partly on property owners citywide.

Wirth's first plan for the area, published in the 1909 annual report, suggested a renaissance design for a public comfort station and information bureau. In 1914, park commissioner Phelps donated to the board, specifically for the park, a fountain that was the park's centerpiece. Often referred to as the "Turtle Fountain," it was relocated to Lyndale Park near the Rose Garden in 1964.

The Gateway was formally dedicated August 15, 1915 when the fountain was finally completed. The legend inscribed on the building that housed the toilets and information bureau read: "More than her gates, the city opens her heart to you."

Problems emerged immediately. With the park open for only four months, Theodore Wirth expressed his concern in his 1915 annual report. "The building is too small," he wrote, "for a place of prolonged rest for the army of unemployed that frequent this neighborhood. It was not intended as such, and for this purpose a larger building and grounds are required." Both Loring and Folwell's predictions were accurate. Wirth estimated that 8,000-9,000 people used the toilets every day. He immediately recommended a pier or park on city property on Nicollet Island to relieve the overcrowding at The Gateway.

The information bureau was not established in the park building until 1917. The board assumed the bureau would be self-sustaining through the sale of cigars, candy and newspapers. The same year the Daughters of the American Revolution contributed an ornamental flagstaff for the park. In 1919, the Minneapolis Library was given space in the building for a "deposit station." The park board provided space and furniture for the library "at the pleasure" of the board.

Contrary to the desires of The Gateway's promoters, it did not lead to renewal of that part of the city. But it did become a place to hang out. In 1921 the Bureau of Public Welfare began using the Gateway building to help the unemployed. It was apparently going where its clients were. The crowds at The Gateway were responsible for one of the major costs of operating the park: police deployments.

In 1923 the park board reported that 5% of the General Park Fund, for maintaining and operating all city parks, was spent at The Gateway, calling the expense "out of proportion" for that small part of the park system.

The hopes of the park board that The Gateway would be self-sustaining were dashed when the city began distributing free road maps at The Gateway in 1925, further cutting into revenues at the board's information bureau. When the Chamber of Commerce was given permission to open a tourist bureau at the site in 1927, Wirth suggested that the park board relinquish the entire space to that organization.

The Gateway largely disappeared from park board reports and publications for the next 25 years, perhaps out of embarrassment. In 1950, when the Chamber of Commerce closed its tourist bureau, the park board asked whether the park had outlived its usefulness and, to test public sentiment, solicited bids to raze the building. It deferred action at the request of the City Planning Commission, not because there was a public outcry. When the park board talked again of razing the building in 1952, a group of citizens brought suit to stop it. But with a court ruling in the board's favor, and the City Planning Commission not standing in the way, the building was leveled in 1953 and turned into open space and gardens—with a four foot fence around it. The fountain and flagpole remained.

That changed in 1960 when the city began condemnation proceedings to obtain the park for its neighborhood renewal efforts. Over the next two years the city and the park board negotiated a price for the land, and the eventual relocation of the park to the east.

The new park was built in 1963 after the removal of the Phelps Fountain, which was moved to Lyndale Park. A new fountain was installed in the newer Gateway in 1967.

At the same time the city acquired the old Gateway, it also acquired Pioneers Square, the park in front of the post office (see Pioneers Triangle), as part of its renewal efforts. Sadly, both of the park board's ventures into downtown were expensive failures.

The Gateway still exists as a small park, but it is barely noticeable, when it was once intended to be the centerpiece of a majestic entrance to the city. The fountain and the flagpole are still worth a visit, and green space anywhere in downtown is pure pleasure, but The Gateway is a far stretch from the glory once envisioned—and paid for.

Gladstone Triangle

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Location: Elmwood Avenue and Gladstone Avenue

Size: 0.06 acres

Name: The property was named for the street on which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

The city council transferred the triangle to the park board "for beautification and care" on September 18, 1918. The park board accepted and named the triangle on November 6, 1918.

(See Elmwood Triangle for more information on the layout of streets in this section of Tangletown—and the famous man in Minneapolis park history who was responsible for the curving streets.)

Glen Gale Park

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Location: Irving and 23rd Avenue North

Size: 1.42 acres

Name: The park was named for Samuel C. Gale, a prominent settler, scholar, attorney and realtor who donated the land to the park board. Gale was a long-time member of the school board and was a regent for the University of Minnesota.

Acquisition and Development

The park was donated to the city by being dedicated as parkland in the plat of Forest Heights on July 31, 1883. Other park properties dedicated in the plat were Cottage Park, Irving Triangle and Oliver Triangle. In 1887, the park board officially requested the city council to turn over the land for park purposes and park board expenditures for 1887 include $2.80 for the "Gale tract." The 1888 annual report includes "Gale" among other small parks in its inventory.

The Forest Heights "squares" were first included separately in the annual report inventory of 1890, which listed them as 4 acres total.

The board appropriated $2,000 for the initial improvement of Glen Gale in 1892, but that work was not done until 1894. City water was extended into the park in 1898.

The first improvements to the park were made in 1909 to plans included in the 1909 annual report. The center of the park, which Theodore Wirth noted was about a foot below the street grade, was used for a skating rink and playground.

A small addition was made to Glen Gale in 1914 when the city council asked the park board to take over a small street triangle adjacent to the park.

Glen Gale at one time was provided with a skating rink and warming house, but the warming house was removed at the request of area residents in 1925.

Petitions to create a baseball or softball field at Glen Gale were turned down in 1914 and again in 1932.

A tot lot built in Glen Gale in 1968 as part of an effort to provide more facilities for children in the neighborhood was renovated in 1987.

Gluek Park

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Location: 2000 Marshall Avenue Northeast

Size: 2.91 acres

Name: The park was officially named in 1995 for the Gluek Brewery and Gluek Mansion that once occupied the site. The Gluek Brewery was established in 1857.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was purchased by the park board in 1978, eight years after the Gluek Brewery was demolished. The land was purchased with money provided by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, which allocated money from proceeds of the Minnesota Lottery.

The first improvements to the park, including a playground, picnic area and river overlook, were completed in 1988. The park was closed in 2004 due to concerns over contaminated soil from long industrial use. Following remediation work by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency the park officially reopened in 2008.

Gross National Golf Course

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Location: 22nd Avenue NE and St. Anthony Parkway NE

Size: 149.82 acres

Name: The course was named for Francis A. Gross, a park commissioner for 32 years between 1910 and 1949 and president of the park board 1917-1919 and 1936-1948. He was so closely connected to the parks that he earned the nickname "Mr. Park Board." The park board voted to name the golf course for Gross on November 5, 1947 in what came as a complete surprise to Gross. Until then the course was called the Armour Golf Course after the meat-packing business Armour & Company, which owned the land. For a few months in 1925 the board renamed the course St. Anthony Golf Course, but reverted to the original name.

Francis A. Gross

Gross became involved in park issues in 1909, when as a banker in north Minneapolis he was one of the leading proponents of creating Webber Park (then Camden Park). His stance in favor of parks in that debate, which bitterly divided the neighborhood, was remembered by the park board the next year when Charles Johnson resigned his seat on the commission. The park board considered no other nominees and unanimously elected Gross, then 40 years old, to fill out the seven months remaining in Johnson's term. (Johnson resigned when he was hired to be the director of refectories for the park board, one of the few park commissioners to later work for the park board.)

That was the first of four times that Gross was elected by other commissioners to fill vacancies on the board due to resignations or, in the case of Harry Cramer's seat in 1926, death. Gross was also elected to four six-year terms as well, but he was always elected as an incumbent.

Gross had his greatest impact on park policy during his presidency of the board from 1936 to 1948. This was at a time when new recreation demands were placed on parks and when the role of parks in city life was changing. It was also a time of transition in park management as Gross's friend, Theodore Wirth, who had been park superintendent for thirty years, was required to retire due to civil service age rules and was replaced by Christian Bossen. To complicate matters further, it was also a time of economic depression, then war, when the park board had almost no resources to meet increasing demand and had to rely on federal and state work-relief programs, such as the Works Progress Administration, for both park maintenance and recreation supervision.

Throughout this period the annual reports written by Gross were thoughtful, insightful discussions of what parks could and should contribute to the life of a city, including an exploration of how the park board could work with other government agencies to address problems in society that parks and recreation alone could not.

During Gross's presidency of the board, it began to consider a more equitable distribution of park facilities, particularly playgrounds, throughout the city. The board also first began to question its policy of many years of acquiring new parks and playgrounds only if property owners in the areas agreed to pay for them through assessments on property. The policy had left gaps in the city where no parks and playgrounds existed, mostly in older and poorer neighborhoods.

"In spite of our professed principles of human justice, we still do not have equal opportunities in all quarters," Gross wrote in the 1944 annual report." The most satisfying argument for equal recreation opportunities for all remains the simple one of human justice." Gross wrote more in the 1944 report of the vision the park board needed as it looked to its tasks in a post-war America.

"Action taken without regard to the welfare of all people, no matter how apparently good it may seem to the interests of the parties taking the action, no longer meets the proper standard of responsibility. It follows that action taken by our Board in the interest of public recreation must be correlated with the general public interest. The frontiers of human welfare, understanding and happiness are today as close, as real and as of great a scope as ever were the physical frontiers that challenged past generations; the mastering of those frontiers calls for men of as great a stature, and individual initiative, as the giants of the past; but the enlarged responsibilities presume a different approach—an approach characterized by the charitable understanding of the problems, rights and welfare of other units of the human family of which we all are a part."

In addition to providing the philosophical rationale for the park board's work, Gross played a critical role in the rapid expansion of the park board's airport leading up to and during World War II. He was a member of the first Metropolitan Airports Commission, created in the mid-1940s, to which the park board transferred control of the Minneapolis Municipal Airport.

In 1948, at age 78, "Mr. Park Board" was defeated in his bid to be re-elected to the board.

Acquisition and Development

The story of the purchase of Gross Golf Course is one that tells of the Roaring 20's, the Great Depression, World War II and the spectacular increase in the popularity of golf.

The contract to acquire and develop the land for a golf course was approved by the park board March 5, 1924, but the terms of that contract, greatly revised in the park board's favor, were not complied with until 1947. At that time the city issued $320,000 in bonds to pay off the 23-year-old contract.

The story of Gross Golf Course really begins with stockyards. In 1912 the park board designated for acquisition land to widen Stinson Boulevard on the eastern border of the city. The owner of the land was Armour & Company, the Chicago-based meat-packing company. Armour owned about 800 acres of land west of the city that it had acquired as the possible site of a meat-packing plant near the New Brighton stock yards. At about that time, however, Armour had decided to build a new plant adjacent to the South St. Paul stockyards instead. The Armour plant in South St. Paul opened in 1919.

(George Brackett, one of the heroes in the story of Minneapolis parks, was once one of the principal investors in the New Brighton stock yards, but lost his share of the business in the Panic of 1893.)

Because of its decision to locate its new plant elsewhere, Armour was not only amenable to giving up some of its land for the widening of Stinson Parkway, but suggested that a parkway be built through its land west of the city limits. Armour not only donated the land for what is now part of St. Anthony Parkway, but paid for construction of the road across its property in 1913.

With the popularity of the first golf courses developed by the park board at Wirth Park (then Glenwood) in 1916, followed by a course at Columbia Park in 1919, Armour approached the park board in 1923 with a proposal to develop a golf course on the property it still owned west of St Anthony Parkway. The company offered very attractive terms: it would provide the land, and pay for the development of a golf course and a small club house. The company's investment, valued at $150,000 for land and another $60,000 in improvements, would be paid off by the park board over twenty years from the earnings of the golf course. Until it was paid off, the park board would pay Armour 4½ percent a year in interest on the outstanding amount it owed. The park board approved the terms of that contract in March 1924. In the park board's 1924 annual report both board president Burton Kingsley and park superintendent Theodore Wirth assured the public that the course was acquired and improved "without any charge whatsoever" to taxpayers.

The golf course opened in 1925. William D. Clark of Minneapolis helped design the course for the park board, as he had done at Wirth and Columbia, and would at Meadowbrook. It was the first golf course in Minneapolis that had grass greens and tees. The Wirth and Columbia courses had sand greens and clay tees. The fee for playing the new course was initially set at $1.00 for eighteen holes, more than double the forty cents charged at Wirth and Columbia. Later that summer the fee was reduced to fifty cents due to the "rough condition" of the still-young course. For the next few years fees were seventy-five cents.

All went well—for awhile. For the first three years earnings at the course were less than the interest owed on the contract. Wirth reassured the public in 1927 that "there need be no apprehension that the finance plan, under which the entire indebtedness is to be paid off, cannot be consummated." The next year a registration system was implemented at all city golf courses to eliminate long waits to get on the courses. From 1928 to 1931 earnings at the course enabled the park board to pay the accumulated annual interest and even make payments on the principal.

What Wirth could not have foreseen was that annual earnings at Gross would not reach 1927 levels again until 1950 and that earnings at the course would not even cover interest payments to Armour after 1931. With the coming of the Great Depression the number of golf rounds played dropped dramatically everywhere, and continued dropping even when the park board cut fees at Armour from 75 cents to 50 cents in 1932. Not only did the number of rounds drop, so did spending at the club house refectory.

In 1932 the park board couldn't even pay the interest on the Armour contract from proceeds at the course. So the next year, Armour and the park board took dramatic action. Armour made a generous offer: it would make up any deficits in operation of the course, ensuring that the park board's meager operating revenues would not have to go toward maintaining the golf course. The company also agreed to finance a new sprinkling system for the course at a cost of about $7,000 and add it to the amount owed by the park board. The sprinkling system, the only one on any park board golf course, and greener fairways led to a one-year bump in rounds played at the course, but play then resumed its tailspin.

In 1935 Wirth suggested that the board should decide if it could continue to maintain the course. It was in a bad location, with few golfers in the vicinity, and it was suffering from competition with St. Paul courses, he wrote. (The new golf course at the University of Minnesota, not far away, had opened in 1929.)

Again in 1936 and for the next eleven years Armour agreed to make up operating deficits at the course —but interest continued to accumulate on the original debt. Meanwhile the number of golf rounds played at park board courses had dropped in half from its peak in 1928—from more than 170,000 to less than 90,000. At the time the park board operated four courses; Meadowbrook had also opened, but Hiawatha had not yet been built.

In the late 1930s, the course operated at a loss and debt continued to mount. As the economy recovered in the early 1940s during Word War II, golf gained popularity even with so many citizens gone to war. There was hope that when the "boys" came home, golf would pick up. Wirth wrote in 1945 in his memoirs that it was not "unreasonable" to anticipate that the future would bring better things for the course.

Even with the return to peace, however, it became evident that the park board would not be able anytime soon to make good on its 1924 contract with Armour. By 1946 rounds played at the course had jumped to a record of 31,000, but still the course earned only a little more than $3,500, nearly $12,000 short of simply paying annual interest on the contract by that time. At the end of that year the board owed more than $365,000 under the original contract and its prospects for ever paying off the debt from golf course earnings were slim.

Finally in 1947, Armour must have recognized the impossibility of the situation and informed the park board that it was in default and that it had thirty days to make good on the contract. If it didn't, title to the land would revert to Armour. Armour already had a buyer for the land, the cemetery across St. Anthony Parkway from the golf course.

The park board took the news to the city council, which quickly approved the issuance of $320,000 in city bonds to buy the land from Armour. In its final act of goodwill toward the park board, Armour agreed to compute the interest it had been owed for 23 years without compounding. The bonds were issued and Armour was paid on October 25, 1947. Finally, after 23 years, the park board owned Gross Golf Course outright.

In the end the park board was right that taxpayers would not have to pay for a golf course. It just took much longer than the board thought it would in 1924. By agreement with the city council and board of estimate and taxation, the bonds issued in 1947 were retired by devoting ten cents (raised to 12 cents in 1964) from every round of golf played on all five Minneapolis golf courses to paying off the debt. The $390,000 needed to pay off the bonds and interest was finally reached in 1967.

The park board may have paid a high price indirectly, however, for the acquisition of Gross Golf Course in 1947. After 17 years of no acquisitions and few improvements to the park system, the board had compiled a lengthy list of "post-war progress" projects for which it needed bond funds. A small fraction of those projects were funded over the next twenty years. While taxpayers did not pay for the golf course directly, many other desirable park projects were not funded with bonds, because of the city debt issued to buy the course.

The modest original clubhouse at Gross was remodeled in 1949 and enlarged in 1963 with the addition of a basement. The 1963 improvements and the relocation of four tees and the lengthening of fairways were done in preparation for hosting the 1964 National Amateur Public Links tournament at Gross.

In 1966 a couple acres of park land south of Gross Golf Course were taken by the state department of transportation for the construction of freeway I-35E. The park board was paid $291,000 for that land. The loss of that land did not have an impact on the golf course.

The golf course was put to a new use in the late 1970s with the creation of cross country ski trails. The twice-remodeled clubhouse at Gross was demolished in 1985 and replaced with a new $1 million dollar facility.

Despite lagging other city courses in rounds played for the first 60 years of its existence, in 1987 Gross set an all-time record for rounds played at any Minneapolis course at 62,000. It broke the record of 58,000 rounds played at Hiawatha in 1963. The golf rounds played at Gross, as at all other city park courses, have gradually declined since 2000, dropping from the mid-50,000s into the low-40,000s.

In 2004 Gross became the third city golf course to have a First Tee learning center, which provides additional practice spaces and another source of revenue from park board golf courses.

Hall Park

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Location: Aldrich Avenue North and 16th Avenue North

Size: 5.95 acres

Name: The park was named for Elizabeth Hall School adjacent to the park, which was built in 1960. Elizabeth Hall was a teacher who served as assistant superintendent for elementary education for Minneapolis schools 1911-1934. In 1979 the park board requested public input to rename the park. The city council passed a resolution to ask the board to name it for council member and former park commissioner Louis DeMars, but the neighborhood ultimately decided to keep the name of the school.

Acquisition and Development

The Hall neighborhood was identified in a 1938 study of the city's playground needs as one of five neighborhoods that had an "acute" need for a playground, but was unable to pay the costs of acquiring land and developing a park through property assessments. Studies in 1944 and 1965 repeated the recommendation for a playground in the neighborhood.

The park board took a tiny step toward a Hall Park in 1968 when it built a totlot at Hall School. In 1970 the board applied for federal funds to acquire five new parks in the city, but only three of those projects were approved. Three parks on the near southside received federal funding, but the Hall project did not.

The creation of more than a totlot in the area had to wait until the Minneapolis housing authority began a program of urban renewal in the neighborhood. In 1977, six acres of land adjoining the school were acquired from the housing authority for a park. Plans for a playground park, including a shelter, were approved shortly after and construction of the park began. Most park improvements were completed in 1979, but construction of the shelter stretched into 1980. The total cost of the shelter was $83,598.

The most recent improvements to the park were begun in 2003 and completed in 2004.

Harrison Park

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Location: James Avenue North and 4th Avenue North

Size: 6.90 acres

Name: The park was named for Harrison School adjacent to the park site. The school was named for William Henry Harrison, ninth president of the United States. The park board's first involvement on the property, in 1958, was developing a playground for the school—even before the land for a larger park was acquired. At that time, however, the property was already referred to as Harrison Park. The name was never formally adopted.

Acquisition and Development

The park was purchased by resolution of the park board on August 5, 1959. The board approved paying the federal government $97,100 for the land, although later park inventories never reflected that price and indicated that the land was acquired from the Minneapolis Housing Redevelopment Authority (MHRA). The land was acquired as a part of the MHRA's redevelopment of the Glenwood housing area. The park board had been reviewing the possibilities of playground development at the site with the MHRA since 1953.

In 1958, before the park was officially acquired, the park board approved creating a new playground on school property. The park board initially approved plans in 1959 to develop the park with funds to be obtained through assessments on property in the neighborhood. The MHRA informed the board that if assessments on property were levied for those improvements, the project would lose $80,000 in federal funds. The board then approved spending city bond funds for the entire cost of the improvements, which was $243,000. MHRA paid to have the new park land graded before it was turned over to the park board for development as a park.

The board used the bond funds in 1960 to construct a shelter with office space, develop ball fields and hard surface courts for tennis, basketball and volleyball, and install a wading pool and children's play areas. The shelter was built to a design similar to earlier shelters constructed at Franklin Steele Square and Peavey Field, which had removable exterior walls for conversion from winter to summer use.

In 1975, the park's tennis courts, walkways and walking paths were renovated. Additional improvements were made to the park in 1984 when the original shelter was renovated and fully enclosed.

From 1997-1999 a new secondary school and neighborhood center were built to replace the old school and recreation shelter. The new building housed a gym, a park board neighborhood center and the offices of the Harrison Neighborhood Association. The playground was updated and other improvements were made to the park in 2003-2004.

Hiawatha School Playground Park

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Location: East 43rd Street and 44th Avenue South

Size: 4.04 acres

Name: The park is exactly what it was named, a playground park for Hiawatha Elementary School.

Acquisition and Development

The park board acquired the land for a playground at Hiawatha School in 1931 when it swapped land with the school board. The park board gave up land it owned at Page School, near Minnehaha Parkway, and Hamilton School, near Glenwood-Camden (Memorial) Parkway, for the Hiawatha land. The park properties traded to the school board had an appraised value of just under $10,000. Officially, the park board listed Hiawatha School Playground in its inventory as a donation with a value of $15,525.

The playground was not developed beyond being graded for a skating rink until residents of the area petitioned for improvements in 1939. At that time plans were drawn up for the installation of a large skating rink, softball and baseball fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits and a small amount of playground equipment. The work was planned for the 1940 Works Progress Administration (WPA) program, a program created by the federal government to provide jobs during the depression. The area was regraded, the fields built and the entire area seeded or sodded. In general about 25% of the cost of WPA projects—the vast majority of park improvement projects during the 1930s and early 1940s—was paid by the park board, but park inventories attributed none of the money spent for these improvements to the park board.

It wasn't until 1963 that more extensive facilities were provided at the park. In that year a park shelter was built, the athletic fields were enlarged and lighted, a wading pool was built, and new playground equipment was installed.

The shelter was replaced by a neighborhood recreation center attached to the school in 1979.

In 2000 a state-of-the-art handicapped-accessible playground was developed in the park.

Hi-View Park

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Location: Main Street and Edge Place

Size: 3.86 acres

Name: The name derives from the topography: high ground that offers a view of the city. The spelling of the name was changed from Highview to Hi-View in 1955.

Acquisition and Development

Hi-View Park was acquired from the state in 1950. The state had acquired the property for non-payment of taxes. The original park was 3.74 acres, but was expanded by 0.12 acres in 1961 at a cost of $4,900. The park board acquired the land at a time when it was looking to fill gaps in playgrounds identified in a 1944 study of park facilities. While the neighborhood around Hi-View was not on the list of neighborhoods needing playgrounds, the park board seized the opportunity to obtain free land from the state, when it discovered the land was on the state's list of tax-forfeited properties. The undeveloped land had been used as a playing field by children in the neighborhood for years.

The first instances of the park board seeking land on state tax-forfeiture lists was in 1905 when it acquired several lots to expand Glenwood (Wirth) Park and in 1914, when it acquired Russell Triangle. With the acquisition of four lots to enlarge Peavey Park and the acquisition of Northeast Field partly from the state's tax forfeiture list in 1941, the park board began looking to the state as a source of cheap land.

In a matter of a few years after World War II, the park board acquired nearly all of Bossen and Perkins Hill parks and portions of McRae and Kenny from the state for no cost. The park board also eventually acquired part of North Mississippi Park from the state. By the late 1940s, the park board routinely scanned lists of land the state had acquired for non-payment of taxes and spotted the Hi-View land on such a list.

The park board began developing the land for a park in 1951, partly because it had some money left over from improvements at Bottineau Park. The initial improvements to the park—an athletic field, volleyball courts and children's play area—were completed in 1952.

In 1961, the park board expanded the park slightly, built a small shelter and rearranged the playground equipment. The next round of improvements to the park occurred in 1977, when a wading pool was added.

In 1989, the park was renovated with a new play area, or "totlot," and a new baseball field and backstop. The made-over park was dedicated in 1990.

Holmes Park

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Location: 2nd Avenue SE and 4th Street SE

Size: 4.36 acres

Name: The park is named for Holmes School which once adjoined the park to the east. A school still occupies that site but the new school is named Marcy Open School. Holmes School was named for poet Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Acquisition and Development

The first 1.7 acres of land for the park adjacent to Holmes School were purchased in 1953 for about $69,000. The land was acquired with a combination of city bonds, assessments on neighborhood property and proceeds from the sale of Elwell Field. Another acre of land was acquired for the site in 1953 and 1954 in a complex deal with Pioneer Engineering Works. Pioneer traded an acre of land to expand Holmes Park and five parcels of land it purchased for the park board to expand Dickman Park in exchange for ten acres of park board land at Northeast Athletic Field Park.

The park was purchased in part to provide a playground for the school and in part to replace Elwell Field which had been sold in 1952. Elwell Field at East Hennepin and 5th Avenue SE was purchased in 1939 from a manufacturing company but sold to another manufacturing company only twelve years later. At the time Elwell Field was sold the park board promised to replace it with a park closer to Holmes School.

The neighborhood had been seeking a playground for decades. The history of the parks in the neighborhood is tangled by the names of two elementary schools that had once existed in the neighborhood: Holmes School and Marcy School.

Today's Holmes Park was built to be the playground for Holmes School. However, Holmes School was torn down and replaced by a new school in 1992. The new school was named Marcy Open School. This was the third location for Marcy School in the neighborhood. To complicate matters, when the second Marcy School was closed, the park board acquired the site of that school for a park in 1979, which is named Marcy Park. So Holmes Park is adjacent to Marcy Open School, which used to be Holmes School, and Marcy Park is on the site of the former Marcy School. Perhaps all you need to know is that the neighborhood draws its name from both schools; it's called the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood. (See Marcy Park, too.) To confuse matters even more, the neighborhood has had two Elwell Fields as parks, too.

After the first Marcy School at 9th Avenue SE and 5th Street SE was closed in 1908 the park board initiated proceedings to acquire those grounds for a park. The park board's 1910 annual report even included an etching of what a new park would look like on the "Marcy School Block."

But that acquisition never was completed. The park board abandoned all proceedings for the acquisition in the summer of 1911 due to protests from landowners whose land was to be taken for the park (to make a larger park than just the former school grounds), and objections from other property owners in the neighborhood who were to be assessed the costs of acquiring and developing the park.

Again in 1924 efforts to secure a playground in the neighborhood led to preliminary plans being drawn up for a playground between University Avenue and 4th Street SE at 5th Avenue SE (a plan for the park was included in the park board's 1924 annual report), but money for the park was once again not available. Area residents thought the park board would purchase the land with bond funds or general funds, but that wasn't the park board's policy on neighborhood parks. The policy at the time was that the park board would acquire and develop neighborhood parks only if property owners agreed to pay the cost through assessments on their property. In 1926 the park board deferred action on acquiring the land until property owners in the area expressed their willingness to be assessed for the cost of acquiring and developing the park. They never did.

But in 1937 the neighborhood did manage to get 1900 signatures on a petition to establish a park in the neighborhood. That prompted the park board to try once again to provide a park in what was then a densely populated neighborhood. At the time the nearest playgrounds were Van Cleve Park to the east and Beltrami (then Maple Hill) Park to the north, both across railroad tracks from the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood.

The debate over placing a park in the neighborhood led to a serious consideration of how the park board could and should pay for parks in older, densely populated sections of the city that were underserved by parks. Since 1911, the park board had used what was called the Elwell Law, passed by the Minnesota legislature, to pay for neighborhood parks. Ironically, as it turned out, the law was named for a prominent state legislator from southeast Minneapolis. Under that law, property owners in the vicinity of a park were assessed the cost of acquiring (and later developing) the park. If area landowners agreed to pay those assessments, the park was acquired and developed. If they didn't, it wasn't. As a consequence, neighborhoods that were newer and wealthier got parks and older, poorer neighborhoods did not.

Wealthier landowners, or those in newer neighborhoods, who anticipated an appreciation in land values with the addition of a park, more often volunteered to pay assessments for a park. Landowners in poorer neighborhoods often couldn't afford assessments, and property owners in older, more developed sections of the city knew that the addition of a park would not necessarily lead to appreciation in property values.

The petitions for a park near Marcy School (the second Marcy School) prompted an eloquent consideration of the fairness of the Elwell Law in the park board's 1937 annual report. The report, written by park superintendent Christian Bossen, concluded that "where congestion is great and the need is great, then consideration must be given to a different method of financing than that of the Elwell Law." One reason the board cited for there being a great need in the neighborhood was that property in the area had been converted to apartment houses, which didn't have yards with play spaces for children.

At the time the board estimated that the cost of a new playground in the area would be more than $200,000, but that only $20,000-$25,000 could be raised through assessments on property. Bossen and park board president Francis Gross proposed a study of the neighborhood's needs, even beyond recreation, to determine a proper course for the park board. It was one of the park board's first explicit statements recognizing its role in city life beyond merely providing recreation spaces and equipment. The 1937 report, on the heels of the Great Depression, came at a time of great introspection by the park board as to its role in society.

One result of that discussion was the purchase in 1939 of a playground in the neighborhood, Elwell Field at East Hennepin Avenue and 5th Avenue SE, which was not financed with property assessments. It was the beginning of the end for the Elwell Law. Although the law continued to be used for park improvements for nearly thirty years, from that time more park projects were paid for with general park funds or city bonds, although few parks were acquired at all from the 1930s to the 1960s. The park board and the city council officially ended the practice of assessments for parks in 1968.

The Elwell Law had been initiated when Theodore Wirth was park superintendent. It was viewed by Wirth and his successors as a faster way to acquire and develop neighborhood parks than to wait for city bonds to be approved or for the park board to devote often-scarce general funds to developing what were considered "local" parks. Wirth was succeeded by three superintendents who had begun their service to Minneapolis parks under Wirth, and had grown up professionally with the Elwell Law as an accepted means of developing parks and, in fact, exported the concept to other cities. A Reader's Digest article in the early 1960s even trumpeted the success of the model.

But beginning in 1937, and confirmed by the report of an outside expert hired in 1944 to review the park system, it was becoming obvious that the Elwell Law had led to gaps in park service in the older, poorer central neighborhoods of the city. It wasn't until the succession of "Wirth Men" as park superintendents ended with the hiring of an outsider, Robert Ruhe, in 1966, that the Elwell method of financing parks was discontinued.

Elwell Field—purchased in 1939 without using Elwell funds—was nearly four acres and cost only $5,000 payable without interest over ten years. That park was sold, however, to a manufacturing company in 1951, with a promise to replace the park with one nearer Holmes School (today's Marcy Open School). Over the next three years the park board did acquire the block adjacent to Holmes School.

In addition to acquiring land for Holmes Park in 1952, the next year the park board also acquired a one-acre parcel of land for a second Elwell Field at 9th Avenue SE and 4th Street SE. It was the site of the old Trudeau School. The park board acquired the site from the school board by trading the 1.25 acres of land it owned adjacent to Sheridan School in northeast Minneapolis, which had always functioned as little more than a playground for that school. (Adding to the long story of difficulties in providing parks in the neighborhood, however, the second Elwell Field was taken by the state department of transportation in 1966 for the construction of I-35E. After a long battle with the state, the park board agreed to accept $125,000 for that land.)

As soon as the first land for Holmes Park was acquired in 1952, the park board removed homes from the land and proceeded to grade the block for playing fields, erect a small shelter in the park to serve primarily as a warming house for skating, and install blacktopping and hard-surface play areas. Perhaps the park board overdid the blacktopping, because in 1959 the Holmes School PTA requested that the blacktop be replaced with grass and a softball field. A softball field, complete with hooded backstop to keep balls from flying into houses across the street, was completed in 1959.

In 1983 the park board acquired an additional two acres of land for the park, bringing the total to about 4½ acres. The land was purchased from the school board for just under $200,000. Another $250,000 was spent to improve the expanded area.

The final boundaries of the park were established in 1991 when the school board and park board rearranged their ownership of the two blocks to accommodate the construction of Marcy Open School. At that time the last privately owned lot on the parcel of land was purchased by the school board and turned over to the park board as part of the deal.

Humboldt Triangle

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Location: 6th Avenue North and Elwood Avenue

Size: 0.31 acres

Name: The property was named for Humboldt Avenue, which runs alongside the park. The avenue was named for German scientist and author Freidrich von Humboldt. Prior to its acquisition in 1897 the parcel was referred to as Oak Park Triangle, a name that lasted until 1901 when the name of the park was officially changed to Humboldt Place. The property was, however, never referred to as Humboldt "Place" in park board records, only as Humboldt Triangle.

Acquisition and Development

William Folwell noted in his 1897 annual report as president of the park board that the board had purchased the triangle "upon motion of residents of the vicinity." Residents of the area had "in large number united" to sign a petition agreeing to be assessed for the cost of the purchase, about $1,500. Folwell also noted that the triangle had once been "urged upon the city for park purposes at a value more than three times that of the present acquirement."

After considerable debate, the park board approved drilling a well in the triangle in 1911. Other improvements were made in 1912.

The original acquisition was for 0.35 acres. The size of the triangle was reduced by 0.05 acres in 1939 when Olson Memorial Highway was widened. Park superintendent Christian Bossen noted that the widening of the highway at the time required moving the old well, which he claimed was heavily used by the neighborhood, at the highway department's expense.

Bossen wrote in the annual report of 1940 that the highway encroachment on the triangle was "in itself of small consequence." But he went on to note that future similar highway developments "might seriously interfere" with parks. He recommended at the time that the park board prepare to address what would become one of the most serious challenges to parks over the next thirty years. "A decision as to what is more important to the public welfare, the highway or the recreation area," Bossen wrote, "Is a question which will soon need definite determination."

Little Humboldt Triangle was therefore one of the first small skirmishes in what would become a war between the park board and the highway department over the taking of park land for highways.

It wasn't until 1966 that the park board took a determined stand against losing park land to other development, especially highways. That year the park board issued its "land policy," which read in part:

Those who seek park lands for their own particular ends must look elsewhere to satiate their land hunger. Minneapolis park lands should not be looked upon as land banks upon which others may draw to satisfy a lack of foresightedness in properly anticipating their land requirements. The park system is still expanding and acquisitions will and must go on.

Irving Triangle

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Location: Irving and 22nd Avenue North

Size: 0.09 acres

Name: The triangle took the name of Irving Avenue.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was donated to the park board when it was dedicated as a park in the plat of Forest Heights, July 31, 1883 along with Cottage Park, Glen Gale and Oliver Triangle. The triangle was officially accepted as a park in 1893.

Improvements were made to the triangle in 1909 according to a plan included in the 1909 annual report.

Jackson Square

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Location: 23rd Avenue and Jackson Street NE

Size: 2.60 acres

Name: The square is named for Jackson Street, which runs past the park. The street was named for President Andrew Jackson. Prior to acquisition the area was known as Long John Pond. It was referred to in early park records as Ninth Ward Park.

Acquisition and Development

A petition for the acquisition of the land was submitted by Portius Deming and others in 1905. Deming was not a park commissioner at the time, but had served on the board 1895-1899 and would return to the park board for another nine-plus years 1909-1919. The board paid $4,463 for the land in 1906.

The land was not developed immediately into a playground as demonstrated by park superintendent Theodore Wirth's request in May, 1907 for permission to erect a fence around the property to prevent residents from dumping garbage there.

Jackson Square and North Commons were among the board's top priorities in seeking bond funds for 1909, and in 1910 a small "fieldhouse," more accurately a warming shelter, was constructed there at a cost of about $12,500. However, because the land was not yet graded, no playground equipment was installed. A request for $800 in bond funds in 1911 was used to create playing fields and plant trees in the park.

In the 1917 annual report the park board stated that one of its goals in the future was to enlarge Jackson Square, especially to the west where the land was largely vacant. That enlargement never happened.

Eighteen years later enlargement of Jackson Square was again recommended by Wirth, who also presented plans to build a swimming pool at the park. Coming at the height of the Depression when the park board couldn't afford routine maintenance, let alone new construction, the suggestion once again was not acted on. In 1939, Superintendent Christian Bossen proposed a rearrangement of the park and noted that the old shelter was settling.

Finally, beginning in 1952, Jackson Square was rehabilitated. The land was filled to grade (requiring 17,000 yards of fill) and the old shelter was razed. Two hard surface play areas, one for a basketball/volleyball court and the other for a children's play area were created. A new shelter with a unique design was built in 1953. The new shelter featured overhead doors that could be pulled down to enclose the building in winter, when it was used as a warming house, but raised for open-air summer programs. A new wading pool was also built in Jackson Square in 1953.

A totlot was constructed at Jackson Square in 1974 and the tennis courts were also renovated.

The playground at Jackson Square was upgraded in 2004.

James I. Rice Parkway

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Location: Along the west bank of the Mississippi River from Plymouth Avenue to Portland Avenue, where the name of the parkway changes to West River Parkway.

Size: 26.36 acres

Name: The parkway was named in 1997 for James Rice, a state legislator from northeast Minneapolis from 1971 to 1996. Rice's long tenure in the state legislature made him a powerful force there. He was influential in securing state financing for "regional" parks, those that served more than the residents of one neighborhood or one city. He promoted the view that some Minneapolis parks were not just a city resource, but provided recreational and economic benefits to many people in the wider metropolitan area

and all of Minnesota. Rice worked with two other legislators from Minneapolis, John Sarna and Carl Kroening, especially to secure state participation in the development of the Central Riverfront Regional Park in Minneapolis.

Acquisition and Development

To create a park and parkway on the banks of the Mississippi River above St. Anthony Falls the park board relied on a time-tested tactic. Just like the land for the park board's first parkway beside water, Lake Harriet Parkway, the land for Rice Parkway was acquired at no cost. It was donated.

One of the first mentions of creating a park on the banks of the Mississippi River upstream from St. Anthony Falls was in 1911 when park board president Wilbur Decker recommended that "at some future time" it would be advisable to establish parkways north of downtown along the river.

The idea was picked up and developed by park superintendent Theodore Wirth in the park board's annual report in 1916 when he suggested that the river banks north of St. Anthony Falls could be made as attractive as the river banks downstream from the falls with plantings and "shore parks."

In the 1918 annual report and in a plan presented to the park board in January 1919, Wirth suggested the acquisition of both shores of the river throughout the city. If the land couldn't be acquired, he said, the park board should at least plant and landscape the river banks owned by the railroads. The park board directed Wirth to make a survey of the river banks from the falls to the northern city limits in 1922 so the board could determine what land should be acquired to prevent "encroachment" on the river by property owners and "to preserve such attractive features along the banks as remain."

Although the board followed up that survey by asking park board staff to submit a plan for acquiring all the river banks from Union Station to the mouth of Shingle Creek in 1923, the plan was not pursued.

It wasn't until nearly 50 years later that the park board turned its attention once again to the river banks beside and above St. Anthony Falls. City manager Tommy Thompson produced the first plan for the central riverfront in 1972 in a document entitled *Missisippi/Minneapolis.* That was followed by the creation of the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board (RDCB) in 1976, a board consisting of representatives from the park board, the city council and the city housing authority. The RCDB, chaired by park commissioner Ole Olson, produced a final report in 1978 that contained recommendations for the development of the central riverfront. Among the components of that development plan was a parkway along the west river bank.

As other components of that plan were being implemented, including the acquisition of land on Nicollet Island, Boom Island, Main Street in old St. Anthony, and Father Hennepin Bluffs on the east bank, the park board developed a plan for the west bank parkway from Plymouth Avenue to Riverside Park downstream from the falls. The final plan for that parkway was approved in 1984, but the challenge of the plan was how to acquire the land.

The answer came in the form of a donation. The Burlington Northern railroad owned most of the land along the river from below the falls at the Stone Arch Bridge to Plymouth Avenue. Its tracks over the Stone Arch Bridge into Union Station and then north had once carried up to 80 passenger trains a day, but with the demolition of the train station in 1978, that track, and the land surrounding it, was no longer needed for railroad purposes.

The real estate subsidiary of the railroad company, Glacier Park, was trying to develop the railroad land as commercial and residential property. It had one development planned, a new printing plant for the StarTribune newspaper, that required a change in zoning to be feasible. To get that change in zoning from the city and to enhance the value of its land for redevelopment, Glacier Park offered to donate to the city 22 acres of riverfront. The donation, valued at $11 million, was accepted in 1985.

The donation came with a condition, however, which was similar to the conditions attached to many land donations to the park board in its first century: a parkway had to be built along the river within two years. To meet that condition the park board borrowed more than $7 million from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency to build the road and create a park.

The park and parkway were dedicated in October, 1987 on the same day that the Minnesota Twins opened the World Series against the St. Louis Cardinals only blocks away at the Metrodome.

Earlier that summer Boom Island Park across the river had been dedicated. The creation of the parkway was a key factor in the development of residential real estate along the west bank of the river near downtown. It also provided a foothold on the west side of the river that eventually led to connecting Rice Parkway with West River Parkway.

The $7 million construction loan from the MCDA was originally intended to be paid back to the city through grants from the state legislature. However, state legislators James Rice, John Sarna and Carl Kroening sided with the park board in the position that the money for parkway construction had been repaid to the city many times in property taxes on the residential developments that followed the creation of the park. The loan was not repaid.

Later developments along James Rice Parkway, including Mill Ruins Park, First Bridge Park and the conversion of the Stone Arch Bridge into a pedestrian and bike path were made possible by the parkway. See separate entries on those facilities for more details.

Additional Sources
Minutes of the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board, 1976-1978
Interviews with Michael Schmidt and Brian Rice, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2007.
Albert Wittman, *Writing in Progress: The Minneapolis Park and Recreation System 1945-2000*, unpublished manuscript, 2000.

Jordan Park

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Location: Irving Avenue North and 29th Avenue North

Size: 3.63 acres

Name: The park was named for Jordan Junior High School which previously occupied the site. The school was named when it was constructed in 1922 for Charles M. Jordan, former superintendent of Minneapolis schools. Jordan's role in park history goes back to the late 1890s when he promoted the development of playgrounds and athletic fields in city parks. He worked with Charles Loring and William Folwell to encourage the development of the first playgrounds. He also urged the park board to develop The Parade as an athletic ground that could be used by school athletic teams from across the city.

Acquisition and Development

The neighborhood had been targeted since the late 1930s as one that was underserved by playgrounds and neighborhood parks. Given the park board's lack of funds during the Depression and World War II, however, little could be done to address the problem. Beginning in 1946 the park board and school board operated joint recreation programs between Folwell Park and Jordan Junior High School.

The acquisition of the first land for a park at Cleveland School, several blocks northwest of Jordan, in 1951 helped address the shortage of playing spaces in neighborhood. That acquisition had the active support of the Jordan Junior High PTA.

The land for Jordan Park was acquired by the park board in 1983 when a new Jordan Junior High School was built on the eastern portion of the school board's property. The land west of the school became Jordan Park. A small shelter and wading pool were built in 1984 and the creation of the park was completed in 1986 at a total cost of more than $500,000.

In 1997 the park board added a combination soccer and football field for use by the park and school.

In 2002 the park board began a series of community meetings to improve the park. Renovations of the park, including new play equipment, picnic area, more shade trees, regrading of the berms around the park, and improved lighting, were completed in 2007.

Keewaydin Field Park

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Location: Nokomis Avenue and East 52nd Street

Size: 4.05 acres

Name: The name comes from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*. Keewaydin was the "Northwest Wind, the Home Wind." Before the name was formally adopted on May 2, 1928, the park was known as Alexander Ramsey Playground, because it was adjacent to what was then Alexander Ramsey School.

Acquisition and Development

Keewaydin Field Park came into being as the result of votes by the school board and park board in 1927 to cooperate on the purchase and use of a new school and playground, which would generate a "substantial saving" to the city. The school would provide a gym and shelter while the park board would develop outdoor playground and recreation facilities. A plan for the development of the property was included in the 1927 annual report of the park board. The 1928 annual report called this the first instance of close cooperation between the two boards, although earlier efforts to develop Audubon and Stewart parks also involved collaboration between the two boards.

The 1928 report announced that acquisition of land east of the recently built school was nearly completed. The land was purchased through condemnation procedures at a total cost of just under $2,400. After the acquisition, Nokomis Avenue between the park and school was vacated.

Improvements began in late 1928 and continued into 1929 when 38,600 cubic yards of fill were used to create a level playing field. The park board noted in its 1929 report that the park had the best-equipped

shelter for skating and hockey rinks due to the "well-appointed" basement room provided by the new school. By the summer of 1930, the park board provided recreation instructors for the new park after playground equipment was installed and two tennis courts—with backstops— were built.

In 1930 and 1931 the park board continued to haul in fill in a fight to keep the land at a level grade. Because the park was built on a former swamp, fill kept settling. Finally in 1932, the fields were regraded and the tennis courts and a concrete wading pool were finished.

It wasn't until 1959 that the park had year-round recreation programming.

The park board redeveloped the park and built a recreation center there in 1971-1972. At that time the park board and school board considered making the recreation center part of the school, but ultimately decided to build a free-standing facility.

A new playground for small children was developed at the park in 2000.

Kenny Park

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Location: Humboldt Avenue South and West 57th Street between Kenny Elementary School and Susan B. Anthony Middle School

Size: 9.23 acres

Name: The park was named for Sister Elizabeth Kenny, renowned polio fighter and founder of the Sister Kenny Institute in Minneapolis. Polio was a dreaded disease in the late 1940s when the park was named and Kenny was a revered fighter of the devastating effects of the disease. In 1946 and 1949 polio scares practically emptied Minneapolis playgrounds of children; parents were afraid that their children would contract the disease if they played on public grounds or swam in city lakes.

Acquisition and Development

The land for Kenny Park was acquired in 1948. Half of it was purchased for $11,642 and the other half was acquired free from the state, which had acquired it for failure of the previous owners to pay taxes. (At around the same time the park board acquired Bossen Field and Perkins Hill parks and parts of McRae and Hi-View parks from the state's list of tax-forfeited property, a practice that had begun in 1941with partial acquisitions of Northeast Park and Peavey Park from the state.)

Kenny Park lies between Kenny Elementary School and Susan B. Anthony Middle School. Kenny School was developed about the same time as the park, but the middle school was built ten years after the park was acquired.

The first attempts to acquire the land for a park came in 1928, a year after Minneapolis annexed about a mile of northern Richfield from Fort Snelling to Edina. Shortly after the annexation, faced with the challenge of providing parks and schools for the newest parts of Minneapolis, the park board and school board worked together on planning shared facilities.

One of three sites the park board and the school board considered was the site of the Carl Schurz school, which at that time was at Girard and 57th. The other two sites were east of Mother Lake on land that is

now part of the airport, near what is now Bossen Field, and Nicollet and 58th, a few blocks west of Diamond Lake, near today's Windom School and Windom South Park.

Kenny Park was the one site among those that came nearest to being acquired. In 1929, park superintendent Theodore Wirth submitted plans for those sites and in 1931 the park board requested $75,000 in bond funds from the city to acquire five park sites in the former Richfield areas. The board at that time designated for acquisition the block between Emerson and Dupont and 57th and 58th streets, a block east of the present Kenny School. The park board abandoned those plans and the site in 1932 when property owners in the area objected to being assessed for that acquisition. The board acquiesced to neighborhood wishes, which were understandable given the economic hardships and uncertainty of the early years of the Great Depression.

The Carl Schurz School district was singled out again in a 1938 park board study of which neighborhoods in the city needed parks. It was put not in the category of neighborhoods that faced an acute need, but as an area that should get a playground in the future.

With the economic recovery and population growth following World War II, the board again looked to add parks in the southernmost city neighborhoods in conjunction with the school board. In 1948 the board acquired Kenny Park with plans to make it a children's playground that would serve Kenny School and a possible junior high school that the school board was considering building on the other end of the park. (Park commissioner Maude Armatage, for whom Armatage park and school were named, had been the driving force behind cooperation between the park board and the school board since the 1920s. For more on Armatage see "Armatage Park.")

When residents in the area petitioned to have the park developed in 1951, the park board prepared initial plans and estimates of cost to better judge the neighborhood's commitment to the improvements. Until the late 1960s, almost all neighborhood park improvements were made only if property owners in the neighborhood agreed to be assessed the cost of those improvements. That's one reason that newer and more affluent neighborhoods often had nicer parks. Property owners in the neighborhood agreed to the assessments in 1952, and in 1953 a start was made in grading the land for the park. Fill was hauled in to level the fields; some of it was excess material from Armatage Park several blocks to the west.

By 1955 the construction was largely completed, with playing fields, playground equipment and a park shelter. Only two tennis courts and a hard-surfaced play area remained to be done. In October, 1955 the new park was dedicated and named for Sister Kenny. Final grading of the site and sodding were completed in 1958 after Susan B. Anthony Junior High School was built west of the park.

It wasn't long, however, before plans were being made to enlarge the shelter and improve the play facilities. Due to funding problems, renovation plans were dropped in 1964, but picked up again in 1967, when the shelter was enlarged and general repairs were made.

The shelter was remodeled again in 1982. Extensive rehabilitation of the playing fields and playground took place in 1997.

Kenwood Park

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Location: Logan Avenue South and Mt. Curve Boulevard

Size: 32.94 acres

Name: The park was named for its location in the Kenwood district.

Acquisition and Development

The land for Kenwood Park was designated to be purchased on March 4, 1907. The acquisition came in response to a request from the Kenwood and Greenview Improvement Association that the board acquire the low land north of Lake of the Isles for a park. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent of parks, Theodore Wirth, the board acquired more than just the low lands. The land acquired extended up the hill north of the lake to Mt. Curve Boulevard. The purchase price of the land was nearly $162,000, with the entire amount assessed to property in the district around the park.

One reason for Wirth's recommendation was evident in the plan he published for the park in the 1907 annual report. The most important feature of that plan was a promenade at the upper end of the park that would overlook the lakes in the distance. Wirth called the view "simply superb" and said it would form "a very agreeable and fascinating surprise" to anyone coming up the Kenwood Parkway hill from the north. He said no recent acquisition was of greater value to the park system than Kenwood Park and that such scenery in the "very heart of a beautiful residential district is indeed a rare gift." Wirth wrote that the aim of his plan was to preserve all natural features of the park "which so well harmonize with the scenic lake below."

In addition to the concourse at the top of the park, which would project out into the park and be built of heavy masonry, Wirth's plan included basketball and croquet courts in the low land near the lake, tennis courts on the relatively flat ground just south of Douglas Avenue and roque courts north of Douglas below the proposed promenade and concourse.

Wirth presented his plan, he wrote, without expectation to have it carried out in the near future, but with the hope that it would be "in the main adopted and adhered to when improvements are possible." More than one hundred years later, the park remains largely as it was when Wirth created his first plan for the park. With the exception of tennis courts, a small playground and a small baseball field the "natural features" of the park have been preserved much as they were.

Five years after Wirth presented his plan, the park board paid more than $4,000 to haul in nearly 13,000 cubic yards of fill for the low land between Franklin and Douglas. Part of that fill near Douglas Avenue permitted the construction of tennis courts in 1913. At the time Wirth noted a "persistent" demand for improvement of the park and added that the "valuable tract" could not be left much longer in its "unimproved and very much torn up condition." Wirth would repeat his call for improvement to the park constantly in his annual reports for nearly two decades largely because the park was an eyesore in one of the "finest residential districts."

A bridle path through the park was created in 1914, but Wirth's call for a ball field in the park that year went unheeded. Part of the problem in developing the park was water: the city sewer line ran under the park and heavy rains popped manhole covers and flooded the low lands in the park. Even when the park board added four tennis courts near Franklin Avenue in 1916, Wirth wrote in the annual report that the priority should be to build a storm sewer to carry water out of the park into Lake of the Isles. The flooding problem might have been particularly nasty because in most of the city at the time sanitary and storm sewers were not separated.

Finally in 1919, with the assessments to purchase the land already paid off, the park board considered new plans and estimates to develop the park. That year the park board denied a request from the Kenwood School PTA for playgrounds and ballfields across Franklin Avenue from the school because they would be part of a new overall plan to improve the park that was being prepared. That plan went nowhere and Wirth revised his plan for the park again in 1921. That plan included a shelter building in the center of the park. Minor improvements were made in 1922 when the bridle path was repaired and in 1923 when the park board accepted $200 from the Kenwood PTA to level the park land across from the school so it could be used as a "recess playground."

In 1924 Wirth repeated his suggestion for improving the park and wrote once again that the "unserviceable condition" of the park was "more noticeable and offensive for being in a fine residential district." With the presentation of another plan for the park in the 1925 annual report, Wirth urged that if the people of the neighborhood didn't petition for the improvements, the board should improve the park on its own initiative. (A new wrinkle in Wirth's 1925 report indicated the success of the four golf courses the park board had built at that time. He suggested a small, circular or "clock" golf course along Franklin Avenue.)

One reason for the lack of improvements to the park over the years was revealed in the 1926 annual report, in which Wirth wrote that the residents of the area had been convinced finally that the plans for the park were conducive to the preservation, rather than the destruction, of the natural features of the property. Improvement of the park was ordered that year by the park board at an estimated cost of $117,000, but Wirth noted that, after conferring with residents, the plans were slightly modified. The next year he modified the plans again and his exasperation showed when he wrote that the changes were made to meet objections to the introduction of playground features and other accommodations in the park that were, in Wirth's words, "universally considered necessary and desirable" for a neighborhood park in a residential district.

Finally in 1928, Wirth's greatly reduced plan for the park, at a cost of $55,000 instead of the $117,000 of a few years earlier, was implemented. Property owners in the area were assessed the cost. Most of the cost was to build six new tennis courts and to grade and plant trees and shrubs in parts of the park. No recreation shelter and no ball fields were built. And Wirth's plan for a concourse at the top of the park, although included in every plan he produced for the park over the years, was apparently never seriously considered.

These were the last improvements to the park until 1960, when three tennis courts were replaced due to poor subsoil conditions, as the board's annual report put it.

The next park board investment in the park was in the early 1980s. When the school board decided to renovate and expand Kenwood School, the park board was invited to look at the project and decide if it wanted to add space to the plans for park activities. (In 1971 the park board and school board had agreed to develop two projects together. The park board agreed to build a gym attached to Burroughs School across from Lynnhurst Park, which the school could use in return for park use of a gym that the school board would build at Kenwood School. The school board shelved its part of the bargain for many years until it decided it needed more space at Kenwood School anyway.)

The park board recommended adding a multi-purpose room, a game room and arts and craft space, arranged in such a way that park programs would also have access to the gym. The catch was that adding park board space to the school plans required a slight redirection of Franklin Avenue in front of the school. After lengthy discussion, lawsuits and continuing opposition from some in the neighborhood,

the plans went forward and the park board finally had a building for activities at Kenwood Park, although not on park property. The center at Kenwood was the last, most-embattled project in more than a decade of park construction throughout the city

In 1996 a new playground was installed in the park across from the school and in 2006 the small ball field nearby was improved. In 2007 the tennis courts in the park were redeveloped through the efforts and fundraising of Save the Courts, a non-profit organization committed to upgrading tennis facilities in several city parks.

Kenwood Parkway

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Location: Hennepin Avenue to Lake of the Isles Parkway through Kenwood.

Size: 14.7 acres

Name: Kenwood Parkway was named for the Kenwood Addition though which it passes. The name was officially adopted December 27, 1890.

Acquisition and Development

The first land for the parkway was donated by the developers of the Kenwood Addition in 1886 on the condition that it be incorporated into the park system. The original offer was made in June 1886 by Baker Potter and Company and I. C. Seeley and Company and was immediately accepted by the park board on the condition that improvements could be made within certain dollar limits. By September superintendent William Berry was instructed to proceed with construction of the boulevard. Later that fall, plans for the boulevard were created by Horace Cleveland, the landscape architect who designed most of the early parks in Minneapolis.

The original Kenwood Boulevard extended north from Lake of the Isles only to about Mt. Curve and had a length of 0.68 miles. Charles Loring speculated in the 1886 annual report that the parkway would become a site for the finest residences in the city.

The extension of Kenwood Parkway from its original point north of Lake of the Isles to Central (Loring) Park was made possible in 1888 when the owners of adjacent property donated land to connect Kenwood Boulevard via Groveland, Fremont and Superior avenues to Lyndale Avenue across from Central Park. The donors of the land, including Thomas Lowry, also offered to pay for construction of the boulevard under the “direction and control” of the park board. (A similar offer of the same land the previous year had been refused by the park board, because a condition of the donation was that the park board immediately construct the roadway. The offer was accepted only after the donors of the land agreed to pay for the road and allow the park board to build it on its own schedule and terms.) Charles Loring, the president of the park board at the time, reported in the 1888 annual report that the park board had thus acquired another mile of parkway at no cost to the city.

With the completion of Kenwood Parkway, earlier plans to connect Central Park to Lake of the Isles via Mt. Curve and Douglas Avenue were abandoned. The extension of Kenwood Parkway occurred several years before The Parade and Spring Lake were acquired as parks.

In 1891, in response to a request from a property owner long the parkway to build a driveway, the board rejected the request noting that landowners had agreed at the time the parkway was acquired not to build

driveways, but that alleys should be established in the rear of residences "inasmuch as a number of driveways across the planting space would very much disfigure the same."

In 1891 Frank Peavey donated to the park board Peavey Fountain which still sits at the intersection of Kenwood Parkway and Lake of the Isles Parkway.

Kenwood Parkway soon came to be a popular route to the lakes from downtown. In 1895, during a national bicycle craze, the park board constructed a bike path separate from the carriage paths along Kenwood Parkway and around the lakes to Lake Harriet.

Few changes or improvements were made to Kenwood Parkway for many years, with the exception of adding some concrete sidewalks in 1921, but in 1923 park superintendent Theodore Wirth recommended rerouting Kenwood Parkway from Spring Lake to Douglas Avenue to eliminate the steep grade and what he termed "dangerous" curves. His plan would have shifted the parkway slightly north and west. The changes were never made and the parkway today still offers a steep climb up Kenwood Hill.

Neither was Kenwood Parkway paved. In 1924 Wirth noted that the paving of parkways had attracted positive attention and recommended Kenwood Parkway, among several others, that should be given priority for paving. Of the park board's 58 miles of parkways, more than 25 miles remained unpaved. Even though the park board had given permission for buses to run on Kenwood parkway in the 1920s and 1930s, the road was little improved. It wasn't until 1957 that Kenwood Parkway was paved for the first time from Mt. Curve to the lake, and the first curbs and gutters were installed.

The parkway was repaved beginning in 1991.

Trivia

The steep hill on Kenwood Parkway was considered by Theodore Wirth to be dangerous, but it was an adventure for others. In 1903, the Automobile Club requested permission to conduct a hill-climbing contest with their newfangled conveyances on the parkway. The request was made on behalf of the fledgling Automobile Club by Edmund J. Phelps who would later serve more than 18 years as a park commissioner—and who would have Phelps Field in south Minneapolis named for him. Perhaps because Phelps invited the commissioners to attend the competition—and then be given a drive around the parkways—the request was approved.

King's Highway

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Location: Dupont Avenue from West 36th Street to West 46th Street, and West 46th from Dupont Avenue to Lake Harriet Parkway.

Size: 17.88 acres, 1.46 miles long

Name: The parkway was named for William King, who donated most of the land for the parkway and whose farmhouse once sat near the parkway across from Lakewood Cemetery in today's Lyndale Farmstead Park. King's farm was named Lyndale Farm. (See Lyndale Park and Lyndale Farmstead Park for more information on the creation of the parks and on William King.) The name was officially adopted on May 15, 1893. Before then, the road was referred to informally as King's Lane.

Acquisition and Development

The land for King's Highway from 38th Street to 46th Street and from there to the lake was donated by William and Caroline King in 1891. The land was part of the King's Lyndale Farm and ran west of the farm house and barns. (See Lyndale Park.)

The first King's Lane was laid out later in 1891 and work on the lane continued into 1892. A plan for the planting of the boulevard spaces was created by Horace Cleveland.

The first section of King's Highway from 46th Street and Dupont Avenue to Lake Harriet was paved in 1908 at the petition of property owners, who were assessed the costs of all the improvements, except for curbing and planting the center boulevard. This section of road was one of the first experimental paving projects of the park board and park superintendent Theodore Wirth.

King's Highway was extended north to 36th Street in 1913. Extending the boulevard required the widening of what was then Dupont Avenue from sixty to one hundred feet. The land to accommodate the widened street was acquired from Lakewood Cemetery in 1912 for $450. The work to widen the boulevard was completed in 1916, at which time the park board officially asked the city council to turn over control of the northerly two blocks of King's Highway to the park board as a parkway.

A portion of King's Highway on the west side of Lyndale Farmstead was paved with a concrete base in 1916. The parkway has been completely repaved twice, both times following construction of new service facilities at Lyndale Farmstead, once in the early 1920s and again in the late 1980s.

Lake Calhoun

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Location: Around and including Lake Calhoun

Size: 518.86 acres, including 422.05 acres of water

Name and derivation: The lake was named for John Caldwell Calhoun, U.S. Senator, vice president of the United States, and Secretary of War under James Monroe. As Secretary of War, Calhoun ordered Colonel Leavenworth to establish a fort in the region, which became Fort Snelling.

Acquisition

One of the primary reasons the park board was created in 1883 was to create parks at Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. In 1880, three years before the park board was created by the state legislature and approved by the voters of Minneapolis, Charles Loring, who would come to be known as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks," lobbied successfully with a railroad company not to place its new track too near the north shore of Lake Calhoun. "The cordon of beautiful lakes encircling our city," he said at the time, "has long been a pride of the city and our people have for many years cherished a hope…that in the near future they would establish in the vicinity of the lakes…a grand system of parks with wide connecting boulevards extending around those lakes."

The importance of the lake to park plans was highlighted at the time the voters of Minneapolis were asked to make a decision on the creation of a park board. During the debate over the proposed "Park Act" in 1883 the Minneapolis city council passed a resolution that the city needed many things more than "spending money around Lake Calhoun."

Despite the council's objection to an independent park authority, Minneapolis voters approved the Park Act in April 1883. One of the new park board's first actions was to hire landscape architect Horace Cleveland to create a plan for the new park system. His plan, which proposed parkways to connect points of natural beauty, included a parkway all the way around Lake Harriet, then along the south and west shores of Lake Calhoun connecting to Lake Street, and running along the north shore of the lake. The only part of the Lake Calhoun shore *not* included in Cleveland's proposed system of parkways was the shoreline on the east side of the lake from Lake Street to Lakewood Cemetery.

Ironically, that eastern shore was the first land the park board acquired at Lake Calhoun. It wouldn't acquire the south and west shores for another 25 years. It wasn't that the new park commissioners, with Charles Loring as president, didn't try to follow Cleveland's plan; they did. In late 1883 the board designated the entire shore of Lake Harriet and the south and west shores of Lake Calhoun for acquisition—as well as a parkway on Lake Street from Lake Calhoun to the Mississippi River. But many of the park board's early plans were blocked by the high cost of the land it wanted.

The first land the park board purchased was for neighborhood parks—Loring, Farview, Logan and Riverside parks—and little money was left to buy lake shores and river banks. It bought some land on the east bank of the Mississippi River near the University of Minnesota campus, but couldn't afford to buy more and eventually sold some of those lots. The land it wanted around Lake Harriet was valued at nearly $300,000, way beyond its budget, and the board abandoned that acquisition until Henry Beard, James Merritt and Charles Reeve came forward with an offer to donate that land. (The courts later decided they didn't own the land, that William King did, but King honored their offer of the lake shore to the park system. See Lake Harriet for more of that story.) The park board also found the price tag for land for a parkway on Lake Street from Lake Calhoun to the river too high and abandoned that plan.

In the face of those failures, in 1885, the park board determined to buy a shorter stretch of the Lake Calhoun shore, the shortest connection from Lake of Isles to Lake Harriet. Lake of the Isles, largely a swamp, hadn't figured in early park planning at all, but following Charles Loring's success in getting most of Lake Harriet donated to the park system, he found that many landowners around Lake of the Isles were also willing to donate lakeshore for a parkway. With Lake Harriet and Lake of the Isles incorporated into the park system at little cost, the park board needed a way to connect those lake shore parkways by establishing a parkway around Lake Calhoun. The east shore was the logical way to connect them; it was the shortest route.

Even then it was a difficult acquisition, but in December 1885 the park board designated a strip of land along the lake for purchase by condemnation. The land was appraised at nearly $30,000, which Loring wrote was "in the opinion of the Board quite beyond the actual damages." Yet Loring and others considered the land essential to acquiring a parkway that would run from Loring Park to Lake of the Isles, then to Lake Harriet. Loring wrote in his diary of the effort to convince other park commissioners to spend the money. Loring wrote that he and fellow park commissioner, Eugene Wilson, took another commissioner, John Oswald, out on Lake Calhoun in a rowboat to show him the beauty of the lake and its vital connection to the other lakes. Oswald was won over and voted to pay the price for the first park land at Lake Calhoun. The cost of the acquisition was levied against property in the area.

The park board took another step toward acquiring Lake Calhoun in 1887. The park board reported then that it had secured a 1200-foot strip of the northwest shore of Lake Calhoun through a donation by Joseph Dean and others of land extending from the west side of Lake of the Isles to Lake Calhoun. Most of that land became Dean Parkway, but included part of the shore of Lake Calhoun. That donation was

not completed until 1892, when the park board finally complied with the terms of the donation by constructing Dean Parkway through that land.

Joseph Dean's heirs had made possible another important development at Lake Calhoun when, in 1891, they sold to the park board for $22,000 the land that connected the east sides of Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. This was at the time the "missing link" in the parkway system, the only gap in the Loring Park-to-Minnehaha Creek parkway around the lakes.

Despite owning only two stretches of shoreline at Lake Calhoun, the idea of acquiring the rest of the lake as a park didn't go away. Two of the great visionaries in Minneapolis park history continued to campaign for acquiring all of the lake. Charles Loring in 1893 and William Folwell in 1898 urged the park board to acquire the entire lakeshore. The completion of a parkway all the way around Lake Calhoun, Folwell wrote, "commends itself to everyone."

In 1907 the park board took another important step in securing title to the entire lake shore; it purchased most of the land between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. The purchase completed park board ownership of the north shore of Lake Calhoun. An additional benefit of the purchase was that it enabled the park board to get rid of the ice houses on the north shore of the lake, which were considered to be an eye sore. The ice houses were used to store ice cut from Lake Calhoun in winter for sale throughout the year.

The issue of acquiring the south and west shores of the lake remained open and many landowners along the shore offered to donate strips of shoreline to make possible a drive around the entire lake. In the 1907 annual report the board advocated the acquisition of the remaining shore of Lake Calhoun, in part, out of consideration for those land owners who already had offered to deed shore rights to the park board for a parkway. In 1907 and 1908 the park board accepted deeds from at least seven property owners on the south and west sides of the lake. In June of 1908 the park board designated for purchase the remaining land that had not been donated. The entire shore of the lake was finally acquired in 1908, and in its 1909 annual report the park board for the first time added the 461 acres of the lake to its inventory.

Curiously, in the inventories of park lands the park board published in its annual reports into the 1960s, the board never included the estimated value of the donations of land around Lake Calhoun—from Joseph Dean in 1887 to the Minikahda Club and others in 1908—as it did for other park properties. The total cash cost of acquiring Lake Calhoun over more than 20 years was just under $130,000, a pittance compared to the inestimable value of the lake to the people of the city over the years, but nearly double the price of any other lake acquired by the park board.

Development

Less than two years after acquiring Lake Calhoun's eastern shore and building a parkway along the area it referred to as Calhoun Terrace, the park board began making provisions for recreational use of the lake. In 1887 the park board provided recreation at the lake by creating a skating rink, a racetrack on the lake for horses, which was later moved to Lake of the Isles, and a toboggan slide. In the summer of 1887, the board also sold a concession to rent boats from park property on the east side of the lake.

Public demand led the park board to erect a temporary bath house on Lake Calhoun in 1890, the first recreation building of any kind operated by the park board. The first bath house was for men and boys only, but the next summer the park board added a separate bath house for women and girls. 1891 was

also the first year that the Minnesota Fish Commission stocked fish in city lakes and proposed maintaining the lakes as fish hatcheries.

The first electric lights were installed at the lake in 1892, at the same time they were installed at Minnehaha Park and in Interlachen (William Berry) Park between Lake Harriet and Lake Calhoun. (Electric lights had already been in use at Loring Park for several years.)

The bath house at Lake Calhoun was the first building the park board ever operated, even though it was removed from the beach in winter. It was also the site of the first recreation instruction on park property. In 1895 the board granted permission to Mabel Clark and Harry Feagles to give swimming lessons at the bathhouse. At the same time the park board approved the purchase of swimming suits—10 for women, 25 for men—for rental at the beach. The board also accepted the offer of Dr. Avery to teach bath house employees how to resuscitate drowning persons.

A new, but still portable, bath house was built on Lake Calhoun in 1901 to designs by architect and park commissioner Harry Jones. The cost of building the bath house was paid by the city council. (The council also paid for the construction of a bathhouse on the Mississippi River at Riverside Park.)

A Marriage of the Lakes

In July 1911 Lake Calhoun was "married" to Lake of the Isles with the opening of a channel between the lakes. The opening of the water connection between the lakes on July 11 was the focus of a week-long celebration in the city. The celebration featured canoe races, fireworks at Lake Harriet and a play about the city's history that ran for three nights at Loring Park to crowds of 25,000 each night. A cartoon in a Minneapolis newspaper depicted the event as a wedding of the lakes, and indeed water from both lakes were mixed in a "loving cup" and poured into the canal to symbolize the union of the lakes.

The event was the culmination of years of planning. The idea of connecting the lakes with a canal was at least twenty years old. From the time the park board first began negotiations with the Dean family to acquire the land between the eastern shores of the lakes in the 1880s, the possibility of linking the lakes had been mentioned. When the acquisition of that land was finalized, the park board's 1892 annual report celebrated the purchase not only for it being the last link in the parkway system from Loring Park to Minnehaha Creek, but for its possible use as a "desired water connection between the lakes."

When noted landscape architect Warren Manning was hired to review plans for the entire park system in 1899, he treated the connection of the two lakes as a given in his report. But it wasn't until 1905, in response to petitions from citizens to connect the lakes at a depth that boats could pass between them, that the board made its first commitment to proceed with the project.

Park superintendent Theodore Wirth, who was hired in 1906, presented the first plans for a Lake of the Isles-Lake Calhoun water connection in the 1907 annual report. As Wirth began improving the often-flooded parkway on the west side of Lake of the Isles in 1907, which eventually led to the reshaping of the lake and elimination of wetlands and swamp there, the board approved plans and cost estimates—about $100,000—to create the channel between the lakes. Wirth's original plan was eventually modified considerably, eliminating a harbor he had proposed between the lakes.

The plan to link the lakes was followed in 1908 by a detailed plan for the development of all the newly acquired land between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. That plan included separate roadways for Lake Street and a parkway next to the lake. Park board president Jesse Northrup noted that the parkway

was made possible due to the street railway company "cheerfully" moving its track further from the lake, at a cost of $25,000 to the company, to make space for a parkway. The street railway tracks had previously run along the edge of the water between Lake Street and the lake.

One of the great challenges—and expenses—of the water link between the lakes was building the bridges over the canal for railroads and streets. A design competition, with a first prize of $800, was held for those bridges, which drew entries from around the country.

Calhoun Beach House and North Shore Development

The park board had employed a dredging company from 1907 to 1911 to dredge and reshape Lake of the Isles, especially the western shore. In 1911 the dredges were moved across Lake of the Isles to dig the channel between the lakes and when that work was completed they moved into Lake Calhoun to work on the north and west shores. (The dredges would return to Lake of the Isles two years later to begin work on the Kenilworth Lagoon connecting Lake of the Isles to Cedar Lake.) The goal was to create a beach on the strip of land originally donated by the Deans in the northwest corner of the lake and to construct a firm road bed for a parkway along the west shore.

In 1910, the year before the channel between the lakes was completed, Theodore Wirth had presented plans for the development of much of the rest of the land around Lake Calhoun. It was a project he had opposed when he had arrived in Minneapolis four years earlier.

Wirth had initially taken the position in 1906 that a drive on the west shore of Lake Calhoun was "not very pressing," and "simply a repetition of what we already have several miles of—a shore drive." Wirth wrote that he thought it was better to improve existing parkways to reduce the cost of maintaining them, than to add parkways. Wirth also suggested that a better location for a West Calhoun parkway would be on the hill through the lawn in front of the Minikahda Club, should that club ever relocate. That drive, he wrote, would provide a view of the lake and the city of "such scenic beauty that it is almost a crime to pass it unnoticed."

With the acquisition of the west shore of the lake in 1908-1909, however, the creation of a parkway there became a given, partly because a condition for the donation of some of the shore was that a parkway be built. And it didn't appear that the Minikahda Club would be relocating anytime soon.

Wirth's 1910 plan proposed filling in the shore near Xerxes Avenue and the wetlands west of Xerxes to create a meadow. His plan for the northwest corner of the lake included a boat harbor dug into the lowlands. That plan was modified in 1911 and the area eventually was filled instead of dredged creating what is now used as a soccer field, the only playing field near the lake. (Contrary to popular belief, the park board never owned the land at the southwest corner of the West Calhoun Parkway and Lake Street intersection. In 1916 the park reported that the purchase of 93 acres there was pending, but the deal was never completed.)

With plans in hand for the northern and western shores of the lake, and the channel to Lake of the Isles completed, the park board began construction of a modern beach house, a changing room for swimmers, in 1911. The old temporary beach house on the northeast corner of the lake was divided into two sections; one was moved to Lake Nokomis and the other to Glenwood (Wirth) Lake. A boathouse was built on the old bath house location.

The new house on a new beach, which was created by dredging sand from the lake bottom, was completed in 1912 and was an immediate success. Demand for the use of the changing rooms at the beach house was so great that swimmers were limited to leaving their clothes in a changing room for only an hour, despite the capacity to accommodate 1,250 people. Soon, the park board replaced many of the larger changing rooms with lockers to accommodate more people. Lines of swimmers waiting to use changing rooms and lockers stretched for blocks on hot summer days.

The beach house was so popular that many people, Charles Loring and Theodore Wirth among them, advised the park board to acquire the land across Lake Street from the beach to prevent commercial development there. It was the only piece of land between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun that the park board didn't own. Unfortunately, the park board never did acquire that land, which would lead nearly 80 years later to a battle to prevent the development of high-rise residential buildings across the street from the lake. That fight eventually produced a new city ordinance limiting the height of buildings near the lakes.

The story of the early development of Lake Calhoun underscores the challenges of creating parks, especially in an urban setting, with streets and railroad tracks to contend with. The cost of development far exceeded the cost of the land—an experience repeated many times in the history of Minneapolis parks. The cash cost of acquiring Lake Calhoun, without the value of donated land, was less than $130,000. But the park board spent more than $300,000 developing only the northern shore to uses the public wanted, from canal to parkway to bathhouse. And that was before the park board incurred the continuing costs of operating and maintaining the land and facilities.

West and South Shore Development: Dry Land, Deep Water and No Swamps

As development of the north and west shore parkways and facilities were still being planned, the park board also focused on the southern shore of the lake. As part of the consideration of linking all the southwestern lakes, the park board also looked at creating a water connection between Lake Harriet and Lake Calhoun. In 1909, Wirth presented options for that connection. The challenge was that Lake Harriet was seven feet lower in elevation than Lake Calhoun. Any connection between those lakes would have required the construction of locks. One option Wirth presented was a canal that would have run south from Calhoun along what is now Washburn Avenue through Linden Hills, turning east at 43rd Street to roughly Thomas Avenue, then following Thomas through Dell Park to meet Lake Harriet at 45th Street. The best option for the canal, Wirth noted, was through Lakewood Cemetery. Wirth considered none of the plans very practical and they were never apparently given serious consideration.

But the plan for a canal through the wetlands south of Lake Calhoun perhaps did give an idea to the Lake Harriet Commercial Club. In 1909 the city council had refused a request from the group to fill the wetlands lying along what is now Washburn Avenue, so in 1910 the club asked the park board to acquire that land from Lake Calhoun to 43rd Street between Xerxes and Washburn avenues as a park. The park board declined, after having a survey done of the area, due to a shortage of funds.

But the issue came up again a few years later as the park board considered building permanent parkways around the south and west shores of Calhoun and improving Interlachen (William Berry) Park nearby.

In January 1916 the park board designated for acquisition 65 acres of land south of Lake Calhoun for a "lagoon"—also called "South Bay"—from Lake Calhoun to 42nd Street between Xerxes and Upton avenues. The proposed acquisition and development of "South Bay Drive" was one of the most contentious issues for the park board for many years. Over the objections of some commissioners, who

felt the cost of the project was too high and ignored other priorities, especially playgrounds, in other parts of the city, the park board stuck with its plans to add substantially to the size of Lake Calhoun by dredging a bay.

The sticking point finally was the cost of the project and how it would be paid for. The park board proposed to assess the cost to property owners: two-thirds to property in the area and one-third to property throughout the city. The total estimated cost of the lagoon and parkway around it was $242,000 out of a total of nearly $700,000 proposed for all the improvements recommended at Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles and William Berry Park.

The landowners in the vicinity filed a law suit challenging the park board's authority to assess their land for the cost of the improvements. Before the suit was determined in court, the park board annulled all previous proceedings on the project due to a rapid rise in estimated costs during the inflationary time following World War I. It wasn't until 1922 that the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled in favor of the park board and its authority to assess the costs of improvements on property owners. By then "South Bay" had become too expensive and the park board never reconsidered that part of the project.

However with the favorable court ruling the park board did begin the dredging and reshaping of the southern shore of the lake in 1923. In his 1923 annual report Wirth wrote that the weedy, shallow, unnavigable and unsanitary water on the southern shore of the lake had been eliminated. The area of water was reduced by ten acres, but all of it was then navigable, according to Wirth. The reason for the dredging was not just to eliminate swamp, however. Solid ground was needed to construct a permanent parkway and that ground was built up, as it had been at Lake of the Isles years before, with fill dredged from the lake.

The dredging and filling along the shore was not welcomed by all. Park board president William Bovey acknowledged complaints in the 1924 annual report, when he noted the natural beauty of swamp and shallow water, but claimed that from a standpoint of "sanitation and utility" the landscape had been improved. Of the wetlands that were filled, Bovey wrote that "such natural conditions cannot be maintained on park properties in residential districts." (The shores of Lake Calhoun were not the only land converted to drier conditions in the vicinity at the time. Also in 1923 a 3,600-foot pipeline was built from Linden Hills Park to Lake Calhoun to drain that land for park development.)

The next year, as work continued at Lake Calhoun, Wirth reported another 26 acres of land were claimed from water leaving "no shallow, weed-blocked, mosquito-breeding water areas." Water was dredged to a navigable depth or filled to create lawns, ball fields and parkway. The dredging and filling and road construction were completed in 1925.

The improvements included the addition of beaches on the south and east shores of the lake. These additional beaches addressed a growing concern by Wirth and the park board as more people acquired cars. As cars became more commonplace, people tended to drive to the lakes already in their swimming suits and therefore didn't need to use the beach house changing rooms—nor limit their swimming to the beach there. The problem was that the park board couldn't provide for the safety of swimmers everywhere on the lake. In 1921 Wirth proposed adding approved swimming places at other places on the lake in addition to the beach house. Where swimming was not authorized, Wirth suggested covering the shore with gravel and stones that would make walking and bathing in those areas nearly impossible. Adding a beach on the south side of the lake and another on the east side, ultimately addressed the issue in a more hospitable way.

Adding attractions to the designated beaches also may have helped reduce illicit swimming. In 1924 water toboggans were constructed on the beaches at both Lake Calhoun and Lake Nokomis. They were precursors to today's water parks. There is no record in park board proceedings of when or why the water toboggan slides—or the diving platforms—were taken down.

Maintenance, Management and New Amenities

Since 1925 few changes have been made to the basic shape of the lake and the road bed of the encircling parkway.

In 1930 a new shelter, toilet building and refreshment stand were built at the northeast corner of the lake near Lake Street and in 1940 the Works Progress Administration built shore protection walls along portions of the eastern shore.

Low water levels in the lakes in the 1950s, nearly two-and-a-half feet below normal, led to additional dredging of the channel between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun and eventually to dramatic measures to maintain water levels in the lakes.

In 1957 a pumping station was installed at Bassett's Creek to pump water from that creek through a pipeline to Brownie Lake to raise water levels in the Chain of Lakes. But water levels remained low and the channel to Lake Calhoun was too shallow even for canoes to pass through in the late 1950s.

The low water levels in the lake led to problems other than a reduction in canoeing. Weed growth accelerated with low water levels and in 1959 the park lakes, including Lake Calhoun, were treated with sodium arsenite to control weeds. Efforts to raise lake levels by pumping water from Bassett's Creek proved inadequate and in the 1960s a pipeline was built all the way to the Mississippi River to pump water into the lakes. The problem with that solution, however, was that the river water contained higher levels of phosphates than were considered healthy for the lakes. While pumping continued intermittently through the 1970s and 1980s, pumping from the river was not discontinued until the 1990s.

Attendance at the Lake Calhoun beach house continued to decline from its peak in the 1920s. Attendance dropped dramatically during the Great Depression and was further hurt in the 1940s by polio scares. The aging facility was renovated in 1955 to make the outdated dressing rooms more appealing. Even with renovation, however, the era of changing into swimming suits at the beach was near an end.

Automobile traffic around the Chain of Lakes became a major issue in 1970 when a landscape architect hired by the park board to address the use of the lakes recommended closing the lake parkways to car traffic—and also proposed creating islands in Lake Calhoun to add recreation space and visual appeal. The furor that followed put an end to discussions of changing the basic use of the lake and its encircling parkway, although subsequent changes were made to reduce traffic around the lakes. The parkway around Lake Calhoun was one of the only chain-of-lakes parkways that continued to carry two-way traffic.

The addition of recreation amenities on the lake shore has continued in more recent times. In 1979 two sand volleyball courts were built near the southwest shore of the lake and in 1985 a playground for small children was built on the east shore. A year later a walkway was created along the channel between Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles to divert pedestrian and bicycle traffic under Lake Street.

The quality of the water in the lakes became an increasing concern in the 1970s. The first study of lake water quality was conducted in 1973. A second study in 1991 led to the creation of the Chain of Lakes Clean Water Partnership in 1994. Central to the issue of water quality in the lakes was storm water runoff from the lakes' watershed. Exacerbating the problem was the removal seventy years earlier of the wetlands near the lake. In an effort to restore the filtering capacity of those wetlands, in 1998 the park board initiated a project to return the once-filled lawns southwest of Lake Calhoun to wetland. Similar projects were also undertaken at Cedar Lake and Lake Nokomis.

Trivia

Lake Calhoun was never connected by a channel to Lake Harriet because its surface is seven feet higher in elevation than Lake Harriet. Connecting the lakes would have required constructing locks between the lakes. The other lakes in the Chain of Lakes did not have as great a difference in elevation, although the waterline in Cedar Lake dropped five feet and Brownie Lake nearly ten feet when those lakes were connected to Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun. The drop in water level created a peninsula out of an earlier island on the west shore of Cedar Lake.

The first female park police officer was hired in 1915 specifically to help patrol the beach at Lake Calhoun and enforce appropriate conduct. Some Minneapolis citizens were offended by the too-revealing women's swimsuits at the beach, so the park board proposed an ordinance that would have required women's swimming suits to extend at least four inches *below* the knee. Theodore Wirth put an end to consideration of the ordinance when he asked if he was supposed to take a tape measure onto the beach. Instead the board hired its first policewoman to help maintain decorum at the beach.

Fishing docks were first installed at Lake Calhoun in 1966.

Additional Sources

Charles Loring Scrapbooks. Minnesota Historical Society. St. Paul.
Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System 1883-1944: Retrospective Glimpses into the History of the Board of Park Commissioners of Minneapolis, Minnesota and the City's Park, Parkway and Playground System,* Minneapolis, 1945.

Lake Harriet

Table of Contents

Location: Around and including Lake Harriet

Size: 470.07 acres, including Beard Plaisance, Lyndale Park and 343.75 acres of water

Name: Lake Harriet was named for Harriet Lovejoy, wife of Colonel Henry Leavenworth, who founded Fort Snelling in 1819.

Acquisition and Development

Lake Harriet was at the center of park plans from the time the park board was created in 1883. Less than two months after Minneapolis voters approved the legislation that created the park board for the city, the board voted to acquire a strip of land 200-feet wide encircling Lake Harriet. The only park plans that were given a higher priority by the first park board were the acquisition of a park for each section of the city: Farview Park in north Minneapolis, Logan Park in northeast, Loring Park in south Minneapolis, and Riverside Park along the Mississippi River downstream from St. Anthony Falls. Once the board had

set in motion the purchase of those lands—a politically shrewd move to distribute parks throughout the city—it turned its attention to the lakes.

Preservation of the city's lake shores and river banks had been a primary motive of Chicago-based landscape architect Horace Cleveland, who had campaigned for years for Minneapolis to establish parks. The desire to create a park around Lake Harriet was evident in the state legislature when it passed a bill in February 1883 to create the park board; the same day the legislature extended the boundaries of the city to include Lake Harriet. Lake Harriet was perceived to be the gem of the city's lakes, largely because of its well-established shoreline. Surrounded by hills, the lake had much less swampy shore line than other bodies of water in the city.

In the first overall plan created for Minneapolis parks in June 1883, Horace Cleveland's "Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways," commissioned by the park board, showed a parkway completely encircling Lake Harriet. In contrast, he proposed a parkway only along the west shore of Lake Calhoun. He didn't mention Lake of the Isles at all.

On June 2, 1883, the day Cleveland submitted his plan to the park board, the board voted to acquire all the land around Lake Harriet. It would take a couple years, and a generous donation, however, before the lake became park property. When the appraisers appointed by the park board to determine the value of the land around the lake came back with a total of nearly $300,000 the park board was disheartened. In the 1884 annual report park board president Charles Loring wrote, "the cost of the right of way (around the lake) rendered it impractical for the Board to acquire it, and it was abandoned."

Near the end of 1884, however, three property owners around the lake, Henry Beard, James Merritt and Charles Reeve, came to Loring with an offer to donate most of the Lake Harriet shore to the park board. The park board accepted the offer, which left only about a quarter-mile of shore on the south side of the lake to acquire by condemnation. But very little in the early days of the park board ended up being easy. In 1885 a court ruled that the land didn't belong to Beard and the others, that the rightful owner was William King.

This was the same William King who had been instrumental in creating and passing the legislation that had created the park board. (See Lyndale Park for more on King.) Years earlier he had offered to sell part of his farm encompassing Lake Harriet to the city as a park—an offer that was declined. With the title to the land returned to King (Beard and the others were not implicated in the expropriation of the land from King), King confirmed the donation of the other men. "Thus the board had become possessed, without cost," Loring wrote in the 1885 annual report, "as to the greater part of the land of the entire area of Lake Harriet." By late 1885, the park board began construction of Lake Harriet Parkway, which was completed in 1886.

With the acquisition of Lake Harriet, the park board, and Charles Loring in particular, began a campaign to convert the other nearby lakes in southwest Minneapolis into parks and to extend park property down Minnehaha Creek from Lake Harriet to Minnehaha Falls. Lake Harriet proved to be the anchor for the growth of the Minneapolis park system, and for the transformation of Minneapolis's identity into the City of Lakes. The acquisition of Lake Harriet largely by donation also established a precedent that was followed in the acquisition of Lake of the Isles, and much of Lake Calhoun and Minnehaha Creek.

Curiously, however, despite reporting at the time of the donation by Henry Beard of some of the land near the lake, in 1888 the park board paid Beard about $8,000 for some of his property. It is not clear if

that payment was for the land that became known as Beard Plaisance west of the lake, or for the land that became Linden Hills Parkway, all of which Beard had owned.

Upon finally wrapping up the deal with Beard, the park board held title to all the land around the lake. The registering of the deeds to all of the lake shore prompted Charles Loring to write in his diary on October 2, 1888, "I have spent much time during the past three years bringing about this result and today I feel fully repaid. I hope future generations will feel as happy over the possession of this park as I do today in feeling that I have been instrumental in getting it for them."

Lake Harriet became a popular boating and picnicking spot almost immediately, aided by the Minneapolis Street Railway Company. The company's track extended to Lake Harriet and to increase ridership the company built an entertainment pavilion in 1888 on private land adjacent to park property west of the lake where the company offered concerts. At that time the board leased a concession to rent boats on the lake, but in 1889 took over boat rentals itself.

The next year, 1890, park land in the Lake Harriet area expanded significantly with the donation by the Lakewood Cemetery Association and William King of Lyndale Park and the purchase of Interlachen (William Berry) Park between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet.

When the street railway's private pavilion burned down in 1891, the park board and the company agreed to build a new pavilion on the shore of the lake on park property. The railway company would pay for the pavilion, and provide entertainment, in exchange for a portion of the park board's boat rental income. Both sides benefitted from the arrangement: the park board provided entertainment on one of its premier properties and earned more in boat rentals if people came to the lake for concerts; the railway company increased its ridership by offering concerts. (The park board had more than 170 rowboats and three sailboats in its rental fleet at Lake Harriet in 1892. In 1894 the park board issued its first permits—for $2.00 a year—for people to keep their own boats at the lake, a practice that continues today for sailboats.) The new pagoda-style pavilion, designed by Minneapolis architect and park commissioner Harry Jones, opened in 1892.

The park board had a ten-year agreement with the street railway company to provide concerts at the pavilion and that contract was extended for five years in 1901. Unfortunately in 1903 the pavilion burned down. By this time, with more residential development near the lake, the street railway company didn't need the inducement of concerts to get people to ride the streetcars and the company contributed the $15,000 it received in an insurance settlement on the old pavilion to the park board to build its own pavilion. With another $15,000 loaned to the park board by an association of Minneapolis retailers, the park board built a new pavilion, also designed by Harry Jones, in 1904. The new pavilion extended out over the water and its roof provided an open-air concert venue.

Lake Harriet was known as much more than a boating and concert lake, however. During the bicycle craze of the 1890s, the park board built a bicycle path around the lake. The configuration of the paths around the lake in 1896 was almost identical to today: a walking path nearest the shore, then a bicycle path and finally the parkway, which of course at that time was built only for horses and carriages. Bicycles were so popular that when the park board built an enclosure for people to check their bikes at the lake while they boated, or attended concerts, the facility was built to hold 800 bicycles.

When Theodore Wirth was hired to be the new park superintendent in 1906, replacing William Berry, who had held the job for 20 years, one of his first major proposals was to redesign the lake. The shorelines of Lake Harriet, he wrote in the 1906 annual report, were "regular and monotonous." To

make the lake more interesting, he proposed building a peninsula into the lake near Beard Plaisance on the west shore and filling in the lake in front of the pavilion to put it on dry land and reduce maintenance costs. (The water into which the pavilion projected had to be kept free of ice in winter to prevent the ice from crushing the pilings on which it was built.)

Shortly after the publication of his plan, however, Wirth told the board in January 1907 that reshaping the Lake Harriet shore would be difficult. More difficult, he said, than the dredging he had proposed at Lake of the Isles to fill in the wetlands on the west side of that lake. Part of the plan for Lake of the Isles was also to open a channel to Lake Calhoun, which had been desired for many years. Wirth later also presented plans for a possible channel from Lake Calhoun to Lake Harriet, but those plans were never pursued, in part because the surface of Lake Harriet was seven feet lower in elevation than Lake Calhoun and a channel would have required locks to make it navigable. Thus the park board shifted its focus from Lake Harriet to Lake of the Isles and then Lake Calhoun.

Wirth never was satisfied with the pavilion at Lake Harriet, however. He proposed replacing the pavilion many times over the next two decades, even after the pavilion's pilings in the lake were replaced in 1912 and the pavilion was renovated and rearranged by Harry Jones in 1913. In 1912 the park board also built a waiting station at the platform for the street railway at 42nd Street. The waiting station was designed by Harry Jones to resemble a Swiss chalet.

Finally in 1923, the park board approved building a new pavilion at Lake Harriet, but with many other projects then in progress, construction of the new pavilion was delayed. A severe storm in 1925 forced the park board's hand. What some called a tornado leveled the old pavilion and two people died in the wreckage that summer. The next year a temporary bandstand was built to the east of the old pavilion, at a cost of $4,000, so the park board could continue to provide concerts at the lake. That temporary facility lasted 60 years, until it was replaced with the current bandstand and stage in 1986. Designed by Milo Thompson, the 1986 bandstand was the first oriented to provide the audience views of the lake while it listened. Costs had risen dramatically in the intervening years. The price tag for the new bandstand, a vast improvement over the one that had lasted so long, was $5.5 million.

During the Great Depression and Word War II few improvements were made to the park at Lake Harriet. The only work done was by federal work relief crews, most notably the construction of a shorewall on the northwest shore of the lake in 1939.

Street cars, such an important part of the lake's history as a park, were reintroduced to the Lake Harriet landscape when, in 1969, the park board approved a request by the Minnesota Transportation Museum to restore the rails and street car service at Lake Harriet. The street cars still operate from the site of the old street car station near the bandstand through William Berry Park.

Lake Harriet Parkway was given a permanent pavement, for the first time, in 1977.

Trivia

The first mention of a park hockey league was in 1914 when the board reported that the league played on a lighted rink on Lake Harriet. In that year the park board also questioned whether it was wise to continue to operate the toboggan slide it had built in 1912 from the west bank of the lake at Queen Avenue out onto the lake. Despite precautions, Wirth wrote, several injuries had been incurred at the slide resulting in lawsuits. Also in 1914 the park board replaced the bicycle path around the lake with a

bridle path. Several park commissioners were avid horsemen and the popularity of bicycling had declined dramatically.

For a few years in the early 1960's the park board's speed skating track, which had been operated for decades at Powderhorn Lake, was moved to Lake Harriet. In 1963 the United States Olympic speed skating trials were held at Lake Harriet, and local skaters Tom Gray and Marie Lawler were selected for the Olympic team. A few years later the track was moved to Lake Nokomis.

Additional Sources:
Charles Loring Scrapbooks, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Lake Hiawatha

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Location: Minnehaha Parkway and Longfellow Avenue South

Size: 241.08 acres, including 54.53 acres of water and 140 acres of golf course

Name: Lake Hiawatha was named for the hero of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha.* The park was officially named Hiawatha Park and the lake, Lake Hiawatha, on November 4, 1925. Previously the lake was referred to as Rice Lake for the wild rice that grew there. In some earlier accounts, particularly in the writing of Charles Loring, the lake was called Mud Lake.

Acquisition and Development

The park board's first interest in this lake was to get rid of it. In 1891 the park board was intent on ensuring the flow of water in Minnehaha Creek so there would be water over Minnehaha Falls during the 1892 Republican Party Convention to be held in the city. The consensus was that the best way to accomplish that goal was to divert Minnehaha Creek into Lake Nokomis (then known as Lake Amelia) and dam the outlet, using the lake as a reservoir.

Charles Loring, who was the first president of the park board from its creation in 1883 to 1890, wrote in early 1892 that landowners around what he called Mud Lake, but was more commonly referred to as Rice Lake, "would be glad to pay the expense of turning the creek directly into Lake Amelia as they wish to drain their property."

The park board did authorize park superintendent William Berry to build a dam at the outlet of Rice Lake to control the flow of water in the creek in 1892, but there is no record that the dam was built. (Damming a lake it didn't own likely would have generated some opposition.)

No action was taken at the time to ensure water in the creek, and with economic depression following the Panic of 1893, the park board would acquire very little property and make very few improvements to land it already owned for the next ten years. When interest increased in obtaining park property in the area in the first years of the 20th century, the focus was on Lake Amelia.

The park board finally completed the acquisition of the land around Lake Amelia in 1908 at a cost of $63,500. The park superintendent at that time, Theodore Wirth, later wrote in his history of the park system that Rice Lake could have been acquired at the same time as Lake Nokomis for an additional

$25,000. Objections to that purchase included the argument that the patch of swamp could be bought at any time.

In 1910, as plans were presented for a massive dredging and filling plan to reshape Lake Nokomis, Wirth recommended acquiring the land around Rice Lake, redirecting Minnehaha Creek into Lake Nokomis, and filling Rice Lake. A dry meadow, he wrote, would look better than the swampy lake.

Over the next few years, Wirth continued to urge the acquisition of Rice Lake. At that time, he thought all the land that was needed was enough to encompass the water to reduce its size. The board delayed acquisition of the lake because property owners in the area were already paying assessments for the conversion of Lake Amelia into a park—at that time the most expensive single project in the park board's history.

But another development in Minneapolis parks at that time began to change perceptions of how the land around Rice Lake could be used. In 1916 the park board opened its first golf course at Glenwood (Wirth) Park. The nine-hole course was an immediate success even though it had only sand greens. The course was such a success, and revenue-generator, for the park board that in 1919 the Glenwood course was expanded to eighteen holes and new six-hole course was built at Columbia Park. By 1920 it was evident that the park board needed more golf courses, especially one in the southern section of the city, because both existing courses were in north Minneapolis.

In the 1920 annual report, Wirth suggested that perhaps the only available and affordable land in south Minneapolis that would provide the minimum of 150 acres needed for a golf course was between Rice Lake and Cedar Avenue. The idea caught on. In the next year's report, board president William Bovey "strongly" advised the board to acquire the land around Rice Lake—but only what was "absolutely necessary" to provide a suitable golf course and playground. He repeated the advice the following year.

In 1922 the park board followed that advice and designated for acquisition not just Rice Lake, but the land to the west of the lake for a golf course, and the entire valley of Minnehaha Creek from the lake to Minnehaha Falls. While the final acquisition was much larger than contemplated years earlier, so was the price tag. With increasing development of southern Minneapolis, certainly aided by the creation of Lake Nokomis and the surrounding park, Rice Lake was no longer priced as just a swamp. The park board paid $550,000 for the lake, surrounding land and creek bed. Rice Lake had been acquired not to provide a reservoir for Minnehaha Falls, or to be filled in as meadow; it had been acquired in large part to become a golf course. The cost of the acquisition was assessed 100% against "benefited" property over five years, the steepest assessment in park board history not spread in part over property city-wide.

The method of financing the acquisition by local assessment essentially prevented development of the property until it was paid for. The park board didn't feel it could add an assessment for developing the property on top of the assessment to acquire it. Nonetheless, Wirth submitted his first plan for the property in 1924, which showed the basic layout of the golf course and a playground southeast of the lake. The plan also included a man-made island in the southwest corner of the lake.

In an effort to provide some use of the new parkland that the neighborhood was paying for, in December 1924 the park board responded favorably to petitions from the neighborhood and established the first skating rink on the lake.

Construction of the golf course and dredging of the lake began in 1929 after the assessments for acquiring the property had been paid. Wirth noted that he believed the optimal depth of the lake should

be 14 feet and that was approved by the board. His plan to create the island was abandoned, he reported in 1930, when dredging revealed a lack of sand deposits that were needed to build an island. The material dredged from the lake was used primarily to construct rolling terrain needed for a more interesting golf course —more "sporty" was Wirth's description. Dredging of the lake was completed in 1931 and work began in earnest on the golf course. With the completion of dredging, the beach on the east shore of the lake also opened in 1931.

The final touch to the new golf course was a clubhouse with the appearance of a "very cozy cottage," according to Wirth, which was constructed in 1932. The same year the golf clubhouse was built a shelter was also built in the northeast corner of the park to serve the playground. Playground equipment was installed in 1931-1932. The tennis courts along Minnehaha Parkway were also built in 1932.

The golf course was finally in playable condition and the first nine holes opened for play July 30, 1934. The charge for playing nine holes was set at $0.35. The full course opened the next summer. Almost immediately, the new course was the only profitable course operated by the park board. While waiting to build the Hiawatha course, the park board had also created two more golf courses, Armour (Gross) and Meadowbrook in the mid-1920s. Both courses enjoyed initial popularity, but with the coming of the Great Depression golf play everywhere dropped off dramatically. Throughout the 1930s, Hiawatha was the only profitable golf course.

The course was heavily used despite repairs several years where fill from dredging had settled and required new fill. In 1939, a federal work relief project added shore walls to prevent erosion at Lake Hiawatha, as had been done at most other city lakes. Park superintendent Christian Bossen explained that shores created by dredging were especially susceptible to erosion from wave action.

One of the only major changes to the layout of the park since it was created was the addition of a second ball field made by filling land north of the lake in 1968. In 1977 the original recreation center was demolished and replaced.

The park did not have full time recreation supervision until 1999, the same year that a Learning Center was added to the golf course northwest of the clubhouse and Tiger Woods made an appearance at the course for the Fairway Foundation and the Minnesota Minority Junior Golf Foundation.

A new accessible playground was built in the park in 2001.

Lake Nokomis

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Location: Cedar Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway

Size: 405.6 acres, including 210.26 acres of water

Name: The lake was named for the grandmother of Hiawatha in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha.* The lake was known as Lake Amelia from 1819 until it was renamed on December 5, 1910. The lake was originally named for the daughter of Captain George Gooding. The name change was proposed in 1909 by the Hiawatha Improvement Association, an organization of neighborhood residents.

Acquisition and Development

The change in the name of the lake in 1910 was appropriate. Naming the lake for a character in Longfellow's poem, which had made Minnehaha Falls known around the world, was fitting given that the lake's only role in early park thinking was as a reservoir to ensure an impressive flow over the famous falls.

One of the first mentions of the lake in park board proceedings was December 7, 1891, the day the board designated for acquisition the land for Minnehaha Boulevard from Lyndale Avenue to Minnehaha Falls, crossing Minnehaha Creek between Lake Amelia (Nokomis) and Rice Lake (Hiawatha). The board discussed at that time controlling the flow of the creek to ensure there would be water over Minnehaha Falls the next summer when the city would host the Republican Party's national convention. Getting the convention for Minneapolis was a huge coup for the city; it was the first national political convention held in the "west," and provided the city a chance to show off its heralded new park system.

In early 1892 Charles Loring, who had been the first president of the park board from 1883 to 1890, wrote that he hoped the board would secure Lake Amelia as a reservoir. "I have given the subject a great deal of thought the past two months," he wrote to William Folwell, "and I feel sure that storing water there is the only way we can secure a flow over the Minnehaha Falls…By holding the water in Lake Amelia and only permitting a flow of say eight hours a day I believe we could keep the falls in very respectable condition."

He went on to write that he thought the "parties interested in Mud Lake (also called Rice Lake, and later Lake Hiawatha) would be glad to pay the expense of turning the creek directly into Lake Amelia as they wish to drain their property."

Board action pertaining to the lake itself is a bit confusing from there. In March 1892 the board authorized superintendent of parks William Berry to deepen the channel from Lake Amelia to the creek. Under what authority it acted is unclear as the board owned neither the shore of Lake Nokomis, nor the creek bed east of the point the creek passed through the newly acquired property for Minnehaha Boulevard. At the same time, however, William Folwell urged the board to acquire the creek and its banks from that point east to the falls, and the board did approve a survey and plat of the creek to the east. The board didn't acquire the creek bed east of Lake Nokomis until 1923.

Despite the fact it didn't own the land, the board also approved the construction of a dam at the outlet of Minnehaha Creek from Rice Lake (Hiawatha) to control the flow of the creek. There is no record that the dam was ever built. The problem of maintaining a flow of water over the falls remained an issue. Charles Loring wrote in 1900 that when he had taken President Benjamin Harrison to see the falls Harrison remarked that "Minnehaha Falls would undoubtedly be very beautiful if there was water in the stream."

While concerns over keeping "water in the stream" continued to dominate thinking on Lake Amelia, Loring also noted in 1893 that park board control of the lake would prevent contamination of the lake by runoff from nearby barns and stables.

In 1894 the park board voted for the first time to examine the shores of Lake Amelia itself to determine the land needed for a parkway around the lake and to control the waters of the lake. In 1895 the board voted to acquire Lake Amelia, but took no further action to add the lake to the park system. The inaction was due primarily to the difficult financial circumstances of the board during the national economic depression following the Panic of 1893.

Dreams of a larger park system were kept alive through difficult times largely by William Folwell, who was president of the board during most of the 1890s. In the 1899 annual report Folwell wrote that incorporating Lake Calhoun, Cedar Lake and Lake Amelia in the "lake parkway system" were actions that "at all times should interest the board." Landscape architect Warren Manning added his voice in favor of the acquisition of Lake Amelia and Rice Lake as parks when he reviewed the park system for the park board in 1899.

With the completion of Minnehaha Boulevard to Minnehaha Falls in 1899, and a recovering economy, the board became more serious about adding Lake Nokomis to the park system, prompting a Minneapolis newspaper to report in a headline on August 19, 1900, "Park Board flirts with Lake Amelia."

That flirtation prompted several property owners to offer to donate land for a parkway around the lake in 1901. With those offers in hand the park board took the unusual step of discussing its plans to acquire the lake with the board of health to ensure there would be no objections. In late 1901, when the board discovered that after years of frugality and paying down the debt on its earlier land purchases with city bonds it had the capacity to issue more bonds for land acquisitions, it requested the issuance of bonds to purchase the west bank of the Mississippi River, the west shore of Lake Calhoun, and Lake Amelia.

The river banks were promptly purchased in early 1902 with new bond funds, but the lake shores proved a bigger challenge. For the next five years the board continued to express its desire to acquire the lake and some landowners continued to offer a strip of lake shore for a parkway.

When Theodore Wirth was hired in 1906 as the new superintendent of parks, he was not enthusiastic about acquiring another shore drive. "For scenery alone the lake is not needed," he wrote in the 1906 annual report. The acquisition would make sense, he added, if it were to be used as a reservoir for the falls, or if enough additional land were acquired to make a picnic and recreation ground around the lake.

It wasn't until the summer of 1907 that the board officially designated the land around the lake for acquisition and appointed appraisers to determine the value of the land. When landowners in the area agreed to have their land assessed for the cost of buying the land—we don't know what happened to the offers to donate land—the board agreed in July 1908 to pay $63,500 for 409 acres of property, including nearly 300 acres of water.

Little was done at first to develop the new property into a park, although a rudimentary bath house and some playground equipment were placed at the lake in 1909.

In the 1910 annual report Wirth presented his plan for the improvement of the lake. It was the most ambitious lake-shaping plan in the history of Minneapolis parks. Perhaps influenced by the success of reshaping the shores of Lake of the Isles by dredging and filling, Wirth proposed a radical alteration of the landscape around Lake Nokomis. He would reduce the water area of the lake from 300 acres to 200 acres and deepen the lake to an average depth of fifteen feet from its natural average depth of five to twelve feet. Wirth also proposed creating an island near the northwest shore of the lake to add visual interest. At the same time, Wirth recommended straightening Minnehaha Creek to reduce the amount of water needed to provide sufficient flow over Minnehaha Falls and diverting the creek into Lake Nokomis. He also recommended eventually filling Rice Lake (Hiawatha), noting that a dry meadow there would look better than that swampy lake. While Wirth's basic plan to reshape the lake was eventually implemented, plans for an island in the lake, the diversion of the creek, and the filling of Lake Hiawatha were all scrapped.

Wirth's first plan for the lake included a swimming beach on the east shore, which was later changed to the west shore so it was closer to the Cedar Avenue street car stop.

Wirth later recounted that the park board had considered acquiring Lake Hiawatha (then Rice Lake) at the same time it acquired Lake Nokomis, but the additional estimated cost of $25,000 caused the board to postpone that purchase, assuming it could acquire the additional swamp whenever it wanted. When the park board did buy Lake Hiawatha, fifteen years later, it paid more than $500,000 for what was still a swamp, but a much more attractive swamp with a park around Lake Nokomis nearby. In fairness, the half million dollars eventually paid for Lake Hiawatha, included more land to accommodate a golf course and the entire creek bed of Minnehaha Creek from Hiawatha to Minnehaha Park as well as the lake.

Even with Wirth's plan for the lake in hand, Lake Nokomis was well down on the board's list of priorities at the time. More pressing projects were connecting Lake Calhoun, Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake with canals, creating a parkway around Cedar Lake, building a parkway north and east from Wirth Park to Camden Park and then east across the river to Columbia Park, building a bath house at Lake Calhoun, adding playgrounds in "congested" parts of the city, and developing athletic fields at The Parade.

Although the park board did move half of the Lake Calhoun bath house to Lake Nokomis in 1911 when a new bath house was being built at Lake Calhoun (the other half of the old Calhoun bath house was moved to Wirth Lake), it also rented the pastureland it owned on the southwest corner of Lake Nokomis to a farmer for $25 for the summer of 1911.

It wasn't until 1914 that work began in earnest at Lake Nokomis when the first dredges set to work scooping muck form the lake bottom to deposit in the northwest corner of the park. The dredges worked nearly continuously for four years, completing the shaping of the lake in 1917. A total of 2.5 million cubic yards of earth were moved to reduce the water area from 300 acres to just over 200 acres and achieve an average depth of fifteen feet in the lake that remained.

When dredging was done the park board allowed the fill to settle for five years before it began grading the area. Even with that wait, the fill continued to settle over the years and additional grading work was done through federal work relief programs in the 1930s.

In the end the lake was on average somewhat deeper than planned because when the dredges found sand on the bottom of the lake, they dug deeper to collect that sand for the beach being created on the northwestern shore of the lake.

With the dredging completed, the park board proceeded with plans to build a new bath house at the Lake Nokomis beach. Construction of the bath house was begun in 1919 and finished in 1920. From the time it was built, Lake Nokomis surpassed Lake Calhoun as the most popular swimming beach on city lakes. In 1924 attendance at the Lake Nokomis bath house was nearly triple the attendance at the Lake Calhoun bath house.

The finishing touches were put on the park in 1924 when walkways were laid out and the filled land northwest of the lake was prepared to serve as baseball and football fields. The final addition was an enormous water-toboggan slide at the beach that must have been a marvel in its day.

The reshaping of Lake Nokomis was called by Wirth years later the biggest single piece of work ever undertaken by the park board. The lake that had once been envisaged as a reservoir for Minnehaha Falls was transformed into a navigable lake and a dry park at a cost of nearly $800,000. The land and lake had cost only $63,500 to purchase. Curiously, despite so much earth being moved to create a possible reservoir for Minnehaha Falls, Minnehaha Creek never was diverted into Lake Nokomis.

By the time the last improvements were made to Lake Nokomis, the park board had finally acquired Rice Lake and Minnehaha Creek to the falls. Instead of creating a reservoir of either lake, in 1924 Theodore Wirth proposed digging a deep well near Longfellow Garden and creating a lagoon there to store water for the falls.

In 1929 the park board began construction of a picnic shelter on the north shore and added a refectory to the west shore. Construction was completed in 1930, one of the park board's last construction projects approved before the Great Depression. Very few improvements were made to any city parks from then until after World War II, except for work done by various federal work relief agencies. Even the installation of new playground equipment during those years, such as at Lake Nokomis in 1936, was done under the federal programs. Another federal project was the installation of a shore wall on a portion of the east shore of the lake.

The last changes to the dimensions of the park around Lake Nokomis occurred in 1946 and 1947 when the park board sold a few lots, 0.8 acre, of land it owned east of the lake.

The quality of the water in the lake became a concern for the first time in 1945 when the Minneapolis health department closed an inlet to the lake from Mother Lake to the southwest. A garbage dump at that lake was polluting the water that flowed into Nokomis. The level of Lake Nokomis dropped about a foot for a year until the health department allowed the inlet to be reopened after the dump was shut down. Low water plagued all city lakes in the 1950s, which led to a weed problem. Lake Nokomis was one of seven city lakes treated with sodium arsenite to control weed growth in the late 1950s.

With a rapidly growing economy in the early 1960s, the park board began again to look at improvements to many city parks that had been neglected for decades. Lake Nokomis was among the park properties where projects were undertaken to address years of "deferred maintenance." Low areas in the park created by fill were refilled, the beach was rebuilt with more sand, and a shoreline wall built in the 1930s on the east shore was removed. The park board also initiated a study in 1963 to consider replacing the original bath house at the beach. The Lake Nokomis beach still led all city beaches in attendance.

In 1966 the bath house at the beach was declared unsafe and a smaller bath house was built to replace it in 1967. The next year a new playlot was installed next to the beach.

The next major construction project by the lake took place in 1977 as the park board neared the end of a major construction program that resulted in new recreation and community centers being built in more than 40 city parks. The park board had hoped to build a community center with a gym on the former site of Minnehaha School at East 51st Street and 35th Avenue South, but the neighborhood preferred to have the site used for housing and eventually a seven-story housing cooperative for senior citizens was built on the site.

Rebuffed in its efforts to acquire the old school site for a new recreation center, as had been done at four other school board properties, the park board opted to build the community center on the hillside

overlooking the lake's northeastern shore. The new community center was completed in 1977, making Lake Nokomis the only city lake park with a community center.

Concerns with water quality in all city lakes led to the first study of lake-water quality throughout the city in 1973. One of the problems identified with water quality was the elimination years earlier of the wetlands and marshes that had once existed on the shores of many city lakes. With increased development of surrounding property over the years—once a primary objective of park development—storm water runoff into the lakes became a concern. Not only were the watersheds of the lakes fully developed, but the marshes that had once filtered water into the lakes were long gone. In an effort to restore the capacity of surrounding land to filter storm water runoff, the park board looked to re-establish the wetlands and native grasses that once existed in places on lakeshores. That led to the creation of the Lake Nokomis wet prairie, eight acres of cattail marsh on the southwest bay of the lake in 1996. Similar wetland restoration projects were completed at Lake Calhoun and Cedar Lake.

Partly due to a desire to restore native vegetation to some parkland, as well as to cut maintenance costs on manicured lawns, a portion of the hillside northeast of the lake was turned into the Nokomis Naturescape Garden, following a 1999 Nokomis vegetation concept plan. The project was conducted in conjunction with the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association. The garden features native grasses and wildflowers

Most recently, improvements were made to the Nokomis Community Center in 2002 and improvements were made in the area of the beach house in 2006.

Trivia

Theodore Wirth recommended in 1913 that the park police add officers in the fall. The reasons? Hunting and football. Additional officers were needed to help control rowdy crowds attending football games at North Commons and Longfellow Field. And officers were needed to patrol Glenwood (Wirth) Park and Lake Nokomis to prevent hunting in those parks. Park police confiscated 30 guns from hunters on park property in 1913.

Before dredging began at Lake Nokomis, the park board tried to get the city of Richfield to agree to reroute Cedar Avenue to the west of the lake so a bridge wouldn't be needed over the water. At that time the boundary between Minneapolis and Richfield was at 54th Street and part of the lake was in Richfield. At first the Richfield city council agreed, but in 1914 decided Cedar Avenue should not be moved. That section of Richfield was annexed by Minneapolis in 1926.

Additional Sources

The correspondence from Charles Loring to William Folwell is from William Watts Folwell and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System 1883-1944: Retrospective Glimpses into the History of the Board of Park Commissioners of Minneapolis, Minnesota and the City's Park, Parkway and Playground System,* Minneapolis, 1945.

Lake of the Isles

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Location: The land around and including Lake of the Isles

Size: 208.36 acres, including Kenilworth and 118.14 acres of water

Name: The name of the lake, referring to the islands in the lake, was used from the earliest days of the settlement of Minneapolis. At one time the lake contained four islands. Two islands near the south shore of the lake were converted to land as the lake was developed.

Acquisition and Development

Lake of the Isles did not figure in plans for Minneapolis parks when the park board was created by the state legislature and approved by Minneapolis voters in 1883. The lake, surrounded by wetlands, was not mentioned in discussions leading up to those events. Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet, with much better-defined shorelines, and the Mississippi River gorge were considered to be the future gems of the park system.

When landscape architect Horace Cleveland delivered his famous "Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis" to the park board on June 2, 1883, which became the philosophical blueprint for Minneapolis park development, he proposed no developments at Lake of the Isles.

The first mention of Lake of the Isles in park board documents in any context was in October 1884 when Joseph Dean and others offered to donate to the park board a right of way from Hennepin Avenue to Lake Calhoun, part of the northwest shore of Lake Calhoun and land for a parkway, now Dean Parkway, from Lake Calhoun to Lake of the Isles.

The campaign to add Lake of the Isles to the park system was led by Charles Loring, the first president of the park board. Loring, for whom Loring Park is named, was referred to as early as 1886 as the "Father of the Parks." Loring had been the pivotal figure in securing the shores of Lake Harriet at almost no cost to the park board and he led the effort to replicate that success at Lake of the Isles. He was motivated in part by his desire to create a parkway from Central (Loring) Park out to Lake Harriet by a route other than Hennepin Avenue, which had at that time been designated as a parkway.

In January 1885 Loring wrote in his diary that he would not take his annual winter trip to warmer climes because he was needed in Minneapolis to secure Lake Harriet and Lake of the Isles for the park system. Loring's vision for a Lake of the Isles boulevard was that it would begin at Hennepin Avenue and Summit Avenue, and follow Summit until it cut southwest to Franklin Avenue, then continue along both sides of the lake to the south.

Even before the park board had designated the shores of the lake for acquisition as a park, Loring wrote in the 1885 annual report that property owners had already agreed to contribute the greater part of the land for the boulevard and that if the rest of the land could be acquired by donation "the Board will feel justified in undertaking its improvement." Loring had a vision for the land that many others did not. He wrote that improvements could include a "considerable tract of the marsh land on the north side of the Lake, which in time by dredging from the shallow parts of the lake and filling from surplus earth on the banks, may be converted in park areas." Loring's experience in supervising the dredging of the pond in Loring Park may have contributed to that vision.

With donations of most of the land arranged personally by Loring, on November 6, 1886 the park board officially designated the lands around Lake of the Isles as a park. With the exception of two tracts of land, the entire shore of the lake was donated, creating a parkway 3.6 miles long.

The finishing touch came in 1887 when the park board purchased the two islands in the lake for $35,000. The board took that action when it learned that the owner of the islands was contemplating building a bridge to the islands and selling lots on them. By that time the park board had already begun work on a parkway along the north end of the lake, which was marsh, and had begun grading the east shore of the lake for a parkway.

The first attempts to improve the shores of the lake came in 1889 when dredging began on the northern arm of the lake. Dredging continued there and on the east shore of the lake until 1893. The improvements to Lake of the Isles were not without controversy. While the dredging was underway in 1892, some commissioners proposed to reduce park board expenditures at Lake of the Isles in favor of improvements to other parks. Those proposals were very narrowly defeated.

Even as the work at Isles generated some opposition, ideas for a grander chain-of-lakes park were being proposed. In the park board's 1893 annual report, Loring suggested that all of Lake Calhoun should be acquired by the park board and the outlet from Lake of the Isles to Lake Calhoun "should be enlarged to permit the passage of boats." At that time the park board had very limited resources owing to a national economic depression and the idea was not pursued for many years. In 1905, however, the park board received petitions requesting a channel connecting the lakes.

Late in 1905, the park board took a step that would dramatically alter the landscape around Lake of the Isles. The park board hired a new superintendent to replace the retiring William Berry who had been superintendent since 1885. The new superintendent, Theodore Wirth, would promote the radical reshaping of Lake of the Isles. Only two months into his hiring Wirth made several proposals on which he requested immediate action by the park board. One of them seemed innocuous at the time, but was the first step in reshaping Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun, and created the foundation for turning two more swampy lakes, Lake Nokomis and Lake Hiawatha, into new lakes and parks. Wirth's suggestion in March 1906 was that he be authorized to remove some dangerous curves from the parkway on the west side of the lake. Once he began work on that parkway, he didn't stop until he had transformed 100 acres of water, 67 acres of swamp and 33 acres of dry land into 120 acres of water and 80 acres of dry land. Wirth also dredged the lake to an average depth of eight feet and significantly expanded the size of the southern island.

As Wirth began supervising the dredging of Lake of the Isles in 1907, a project that he admitted was much more difficult than he expected, the park board acquired more of the land between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun as well as Kenwood Park north of the lake. In his 1907 annual report Wirth reported on the success of the dredging efforts, mostly on the west and south shores of the lake, noting in particular that the efforts were raising real estate values near the lake. He urged that the dredging of the lake should be the park board's priority until the project was completed. In 1907 the park board also approved initial plans and estimates for the channel connecting Lake of the Isles with Lake Calhoun.

Plans were also in the works for a channel between Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake. In 1909 Anna Lewis donated the land between Cedar and Isles specifically for that connection. Problems with the bridge built to cross that proposed channel however delayed plans for the connection of those two lakes. Unable to complete the connection to meet a condition of Lewis's donation, the park board paid her $1,000 for the land.

In 1911 the first of the lake connections—to Lake Calhoun—was completed and led to a week-long civic celebration. In five years the park board had spent $152,000 on dredging, filling and constructing

parkways across the new fill at Lake of the Isles. That total did not include the costs of dredging the channel to Lake Calhoun and building the necessary bridges over the channel.

Once the problems with the bridge over the proposed Kenilworth Lagoon connecting to Cedar Lake were resolved, the dredges returned to Lake of the Isles to make the connection to Cedar Lake. That channel was completed in 1913. The opening of that channel caused the water level in Cedar Lake to drop five feet.

With the completion of the channel, work at Lake of the Isles was substantially done. The board's 1914 annual report boasted that what had once been a "miasmatic swamp" had become an attractive residential district. The total cost of the transformation had been about $400,000.

It was only a few years, however, before Wirth and the park board determined that significant new investments were needed at Lake of the Isles, especially to repair the parkways. The problem at Lake of the Isles, then and now, is that ground created by dredge fill is often unstable, subject to settling and erosion. Wirth wrote in 1916, that Lake of the Isles had been "sadly neglected" and suffered from "unsightly appearance."

Improvements to the parkway didn't get underway until 1923 when work began to pave and curb the parkway for the first time.

The problem of settling fill around the lake remained however. In 1928 Wirth recommended lowering the water level in all lakes by six inches because of shoreline problems at Lake of the Isles. That was finally done in 1935, despite problems of low water in the lakes in intervening years. To even maintain the lakes at the lowered level, however, the park board pumped city water into the lakes to keep them from being too low in the late 1930s. Writing of the problem years later, park superintendent Charles Doell speculated that the lake levels Wirth considered "normal" at the time of the dredging, were probably actually above historical norms. In 1950 the park board dredged the channel between Isles and Calhoun to make it deeper to keep it open to boats, but by the late 1950s not even canoes could pass through the channel.

During those low-water years many city lakes saw a great growth in aquatic plants, leading in 1959 to sodium arsenite treatments of the lakes, including Lake of the Isles. The problem of aquatic plants re-emerged in 1987 when the first Eurasian milfoil was identified in Lake of the Isles. By 1996 the invasive plant had spread to all other lakes in the chain of lakes, which has led to harvesting of the plant in several lakes under license from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

In the late 1960s another concern emerged about the city's lakes: water quality. One of the unanticipated results of eliminating wetlands around the lakes, and the full development of surrounding property, was a decrease in lake water quality. There were no wetlands to serve as natural filters for storm water runoff from surrounding land. Of course in Wirth's time the goal was to make sections of the city more appealing to attract development. Decades later, people realized one of the problems, for water quality at least, was too much development.

The combination of a concern for water quality along with unusually wet weather in the 1990s that flooded parts of the shore of Lake of the Isles prompted the park board to develop a master plan to stabilize the shore line, restore some wetlands and fill others created by high water. The master plan was completed in 1998 and some components of the plan are still being implemented. The total cost of

completing the master plan will exceed $10 million. Much of the funding for the improvements has come from the state legislature through the Metropolitan Council.

Trivia

In 1910 the park board accepted the offer of John Bradstreet, a park commissioner 1901-1907 and influential interior designer, to build a Japanese temple on one of the islands in Lake of the Isles. Bradstreet's work for many of Minneapolis's elite families had been strongly influenced by Japanese design. Plans for the project never materialized. Bradstreet died in a car accident in 1914.

The first park board ordinance to prevent canoe landings on the islands in Lake of the Isles was passed in 1919.

During the Great Depression, when nearly all maintenance work in the city's parks was done under federal work relief programs, a masonry shoreline retaining wall was built at Evergreen Point on the lake by the Works Progress Administration. The WPA also built shoreline retaining walls on sections of Lake Calhoun, Lake Harriet and Lake Nokomis. The wall at Lake of the Isles was replaced in 2003.

Additional Sources

Charles Doell Papers, Hennepin History Museum, Minneapolis
Theodore Wirth, *Minneapolis Park System 1883-1944: Retrospective Glimpses iton the History of the Board of Park Commissioners of Minneapolis, Minnesota and the City's Park, Parkway and Playground System,* Minneapolis, 1945.

Laurel Triangle

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Location: Laurel Avenue and Cedar Lake Road

Size: 0.01 acres

Name: The tiny park was named Laurel Triangle December 18, 191 for the street on which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

The park was purchased for unknown reasons and from an unknown owner on January 21, 1911 for $700. The resolution to purchase the small piece of land noted that out of the $700 appraised value of the land, the park board would first pay all sums due for taxes and assessments. It seems as though this was an ugly duckling of a triangle that no one apparently owned, wanted or cared for. Thus, it became a park.

It was included among most other small triangles which were given minor improvements in 1912, mostly planting grass.

Levin Park

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Location: Euclid Place and West 26th Street

Size: 0.3 acres

Name: The small park was originally named Euclid Triangle for the street on which it is located. The name was adopted December 23, 1907. The name was changed in 1988 to honor Joanne R. Levin who had organized the neighborhood to have the triangle improved. Joanne Levin died in 1987 at the age of 43.

Acquisition and Development

Residents of the area petitioned for the park board to acquire the land by condemnation or by the certificate plan, which provided for payment for the land over ten years. The board agreed to the purchase on April 1, 1907 if the petitioners would advance the money to pay for the park or arrange with the owner to accept certificates of payment. On July 1 of that year the park board agreed to pay M. M. Marcy and his wife $2,650 for the property and assessed property owners in the neighborhood for the full amount.

Curbs and gutters were installed around the park in 1909, and the next year, after the land had been filled to grade at the expense of residents in the area, the park was seeded and planted with shrubs and a large flower bed was created. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth noted that the grounds had been transformed "from an ugly-looking dumping place into a neat little park." The park was re-seeded with grass in 1911 causing park superintendent Theodore Wirth to write that "splendid results have been obtained" and that it was a "much appreciated betterment of that attractive residential district." That is the last mention of the park in board proceedings and annual reports for years.

The park was renovated in 1977, when a small playground for children, or totlot, was added to the park thanks to Joanne Levin and her efforts to organize community support for the improvements. Initial plans for the playground were drawn by an architect in the neighborhood recruited by Levin. She made her first presentation to the board in the spring of 1972. In 1974, the park board staff agreed that a playground for small children was needed in the vicinity, and the park board consequently amended its 1976 bond request to include funds for a playground in the triangle.

Linden Hills Park

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Location: Xerxes Avenue South and West 42nd Street

Size: 7.85 acres

Name: The park was named March 2, 1921 for the neighborhood, which features many linden trees. Before the name was adopted, it was referred to as Oliver Park after the subdivision in which it was located. The Linden Hills name had already been in use since the late 1800s. In 1912, the park board had chosen that name for Linden Hills Boulevard.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was officially designated for purchase on November 5, 1919. The land cost $32,549. The proposal for a park at the site was initially an addition to a much grander plan for a park in the vicinity. The grand plan did not survive, but the proposal to establish a play ground and athletic field did.

Land in the vicinity of the park was first mentioned in park board documents in the 1909 annual report when park superintendent Theodore Wirth outlined various options for connecting Lake Calhoun and

Lake Harriet. Plans were already made for the fairly straightforward connection of Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun, which would be completed in 1911. Many in the city were interested in establishing a connection from the other lakes to Lake Harriet too. One problem was that Lake Harriet was seven feet lower than Lake Calhoun, so locks would be needed to navigate between the lakes.

One possibility Wirth presented was to create a canal through the wetlands on the southwest corner of Lake Calhoun, going south between Xerxes and Washburn to 43rd, east along 43rd, then south again at Thomas through Dell Park to connect with Lake Harriet at about 45th Street. Wirth admitted that the plan would be difficult and expensive, and it was never pursued. But perhaps the possibility of doing something with the swamp encouraged the Lake Harriet Commercial Club to consider other options for the land. They went to the city council and asked that the swamp land be filled. Denied by the city council, area residents next went to the park board with a bold suggestion: create a lagoon off of Lake Calhoun by dredging the area between Upton and Xerxes from the lake to 43rd Street. The park board declined as well, claiming that no funds were available or "in sight" for the acquisition of the land and the expense of creating a parkway-rimmed lagoon.

But the park board changed its mind in 1914 and voted to build the lagoon. Wirth submitted plans and cost estimates for the project and some residents agreed to bear the hefty cost of the project: $450,000. The design of the project and its cost set off a battle that wasn't resolved in the courts for eight years. It was the most contentious issue for many years for the park board, at a time when most park board decisions were unanimous or close to it. Some commissioners opposed the plan because it committed more park resources to a section of the city that had for years commanded the majority of the park board's money and time.

In 1916, as area residents weighed in on the issue, both for and against, an organization called the Lake Harriet Taxpayers League wrote a letter to the board saying they would rather have an athletic field and playground than a lagoon for the neighborhood—and it would cost much less to acquire and build. Perhaps seeing a way to mollify the group and get their support for "South Bay," when the park board designated the land for the lagoon, it also designated the land adjacent to the proposed lagoon for what would eventually become Linden Hills Field.

In the midst of a court battle over whether the park board had the authority to assess the costs of South Bay, as well as parkways around the west shore of Lake Calhoun and through William Berry Park between Calhoun and Harriet, the park board annulled all previous resolutions for the acquisition and improvement of the lagoon in 1918. The primary reason, the board reported, was that spiraling costs near the end of World War I made it impossible to estimate the costs of such a development. When the board asked for new plans for the development of William Berry Park and Lake Calhoun in 1919, South Bay was not included.

The death of plans for South Bay, however, did not mark the end of requests for the playground. On August 6, 1919 the board designated the same land it had in 1916 for acquisition and improvement as a playing field. The designation of the land only had to be done one more time to make it official. In November of 1919, the park board once again approved the designation of the park, but this time left off a resolution to improve the land immediately, leaving that for "some future time."

The first plan for the development of Linden Hills Field, as the park was officially named in 1921, was published in the annual report of that year. It provided for athletic fields, playgrounds, gymnastic equipment for men and women, tennis courts and a fieldhouse. With the vacation of York Avenue

through the park in 1921 everything was ready for building a park. All that remained was to drain the land to make it useable.

In one of the most ambitious plans to create a neighborhood park anywhere in the city, park crews built a 3,600-foot pipeline from the park site to Lake Calhoun to drain the water. At the request of the city council, which chipped in three-quarters of the money for the drain, the park board also drained the surrounding neighborhood, a neighborhood that once was to be converted into lake. To this day a large drain sits in the center of the park's playing fields, but it is now connected to the city storm sewer.

The draining of the land was completed for construction of the park to begin in 1924. The only modification from the original plan published in 1921 was a change in the park building. Plans were scaled back from a field house to a much smaller shelter. The change was at the request of property owners in the area who were to be assessed 100% of the cost of the park's development. Wirth called the new shelter, which cost $14,000 to build, one of the most attractive in the city.

From 1930, when the finishing touches had been placed on the park, through the 1960s, the park board spent only a few thousand dollars on minor repairs and improvements to the park and shelter. However, the park, like most others in the city, benefited from federal programs to provide jobs. Federal work relief crews removed the concrete tennis courts in the park in 1938. With the construction of storm sewer drains in the neighborhood, the peat bed on which the courts had been built dried out, causing severe cracking of the concrete. A work relief crew removed the courts and about ten feet of peat and replaced it with sand and gravel. The courts were replaced in 1939 after the fill had settled. The board developed plans for renovation of the park, along with nearby Waveland Triangle in the mid-1960s, but those plans were not implemented.

It wasn't until 1972, as the park board was engaged in an ambitious building program in parks throughout the city, that Linden Hills Field got a new recreation center. The most recent improvements at the park were made in 1993.

Linden Hills Parkway

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Location: Russell Avenue, W. 40th Street to Lake Harriet

Size: 5.71 acres

Name: The land was referred to as Park Boulevard for about 25 years until it was officially named Linden Hills Boulevard, after the surrounding neighborhood, in 1912.

Acquisition and Development

From the first time that Linden Hills Boulevard was included as a separate item in the park board's inventory in 1914, it was described as having been donated by Henry Beard in 1888. However in 1888, the board paid $8,342 for "satisfaction of Beard contract" which included two years and three months worth of interest on an original amount of $7,200 that the park board owed. It is unclear what land is referred to in the "Beard contract." It could include portions of the Lake Harriet shore as well as Beard Plaisance or Linden Hills Boulevard. Beard was one of the original donors of the land around Lake Harriet for park purposes.

Park Boulevard was created to link Lake Calhoun to Lake Harriet. It was intended to be the primary connection between the two lakes until the block of land between the lakes, eventually named William Berry Park, was acquired in 1889.

The boulevard was originally graded and planted in 1889. In his description of the land in the 1889 annual report, Charles Loring describes it as the "high land west of the Motor track, overlooking the lake." The Motor track he referred to was the street railway track. The initial layout of the boulevard was a 40-foot-wide driveway flanked by 10-foot-wide walkways and 20-foot-wide planting spaces, which were covered with loam and seeded. Original improvements also included a 70-foot viaduct over the street railway tracks at Queen Avenue. The total cost of the improvements was nearly $7,000.

The street railway rebuilt the bridge in 1905 following extensive negotiations with the park board over who was responsible for the bridge. The park board refused to repair the bridge, because it believed the street railway was responsible.

The boulevard was improved significantly in 1912 at a cost of nearly $5,000 and with the improvements came pressure for a more suitable name. The board chose the name Linden Hills Boulevard.

The boulevard was paved for the first time in 1921.

Most recently, the entire length of the parkway was repaved in 1993.

Logan Park

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Location: Broadway Avenue and Monroe Street Northeast

Size: 10.04 acres

Name: Before it was officially named, the park was known simply as First Ward Park. B. F. Nelson proposed in 1883 to name the park for Henry Sibley, the first governor of Minnesota, but the park board did not take action on the suggestion.

In 1887, with a reorganization of the political wards of the city, the park became known as Ninth Ward Park. In May of that year the Dudley Chase Post of the Grand Army of the Republic (Civil War veterans) proposed naming the park Logan Park, for John A. Logan, major general of Union Army volunteers during the Civil War. But the park board instead chose to name the park for the late General Cadwallader C. Washburn in July, 1887.

Washburn was the primary force behind the Washburn Crosby Company, the predecessor company of General Mills, and an innovator in wheat milling that led to Minneapolis becoming the flour capital of the world. Cadwallader Washburn had donated considerable money for the establishment of an orphanage in south Minneapolis near Minnehaha Creek. Cadwallader Washburn was himself a resident of Wisconsin, and once governor of Wisconsin, whose business interests in Minneapolis were managed in part by his brother William D. Washburn. William was a Congressman from Minneapolis 1879-1885 and a close friend of park commissioners Charles Loring and George Brackett. After the park was named for his brother, William Washburn was elected to the U. S. Senate and served from 1889 to 1895.

During his senatorial term, in 1893, the park board decided that Logan Park was a better name after all. The name was changed at the insistence of northeast Minneapolis resident and park commissioner

Patrick Ryan. Ryan, a Democrat, had defeated Charles Loring for a park board seat in the election of 1890 and apparently didn't like having the park in his neighborhood named for someone in the family of a sitting Republican Senator.

John A. Logan had been much more than the major-general of Union Army Volunteers during the Civil War. Prior to the war Logan had represented Illinois in Congress as a Democrat, but after the war he was elected as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he was one of the managers in the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, and then twice to the U.S. Senate. He was also the Republican nominee for vice president in 1884. He is credited with the idea of celebrating Memorial Day. Logan died in 1886.

Curiously, or perhaps shrewdly, Ryan preferred naming the park for a man who had been elected from both political parties in Illinois instead of the brother of the incumbent Republican senator from Minnesota. Whether having his family's name removed from a Minneapolis park played a role, William Washburn was defeated in his senatorial re-election bid in 1894. Years later, Washburn High School was named for William D. Washburn. Washburn sold his eight-acre estate, now Washburn Fair Oaks Park, to the park board in 1911 for the appraised value of the land, which was $200,000. He threw in his mansion—one of the city's largest—stables and greenhouse, which were valued at an additional $400,000 at the time. The park board eventually demolished all of those buildings.

Acquisition and Development

Logan Park was one of the first three parks, along with Central (Loring) Park and Third Ward (Farview) Park, acquired by the park board after it was created in April 1883. The land was designated as a park May 12, 1883 upon the recommendation of a committee of B. F. Nelson, Samuel Chute and John S. Pillsbury who had been appointed to select a park in the "East Division" of the city. The decision to acquire First Ward Park was made even before landscape architect Horace Cleveland submitted his "Suggestions for a System of Parks and Parkways for the City of Minneapolis," which provided the general blueprint for development of Minneapolis parks.

In the 1883 annual report, Charles Loring reported that $34,232 had been set aside to purchase the property, but noted that some landowners had appealed the condemnation awards that had been determined by appraisers. The board assessed nearby property owners a total of $52,422 for the purchase and initial improvement of the park.

Horace Cleveland was commissioned to create a plan for the new park in 1883—for which he was paid $150. Although Cleveland was generally opposed to "ornamental decorations" in parks—he said it was like people buying expensive jewelry before they had nice clothes—preferring instead that money be spent on acquiring land, he did propose a fountain for First Ward Park. Cleveland likely proposed the fountain for First Ward Park because it was the only one of the original parks that did not have a special topographical appeal, neither hill nor lake nor river bank. Cleveland did not consider the fountain an urgent need, but thought it wise to account for the possibility of a fountain from the beginning. The fountain was not built until 1897 and was later converted into a wading pool.

Logan Park was the most developed of the land acquired for the first parks; it already contained several houses. In November 1883 the park board approved disposal or sale of the houses that already existed on the new park property.

In 1885, Logan Park became the first city park to have an ice-skating rink created on dry land. The only other skating rink in a park was on Johnson's Pond in Central (Loring) Park. When the park board installed its first playground equipment in city parks in 1906, Logan was on its way to becoming the center of recreation programming in the city, a position it would retain into the 1950s. Logan and Riverside parks were chosen to receive the first equipment through an appropriation of $2,500 recommended by new superintendent Theodore Wirth. Clifford Booth, the physical director at the Minneapolis YMCA, volunteered to provide instruction and supervision on the new apparatus. With the installation of playground equipment in three more parks the following year, and supervision and instruction at all five parks by Booth, city parks had their first recreation programming. It was the beginning of a dramatic change in city parks over the next decades from passive to active recreational use.

In 1908 Wirth first recommended the construction of park fieldhouses and playing fields using Chicago parks as a model. He recommended Logan Park for the first fieldhouse. It took the park board a few years to act on Wirth's suggestions, but in 1912 the board built a fieldhouse there. The total cost of the fieldhouse was $40,000, of which the library board paid $8,000 so it could use part of the building as a branch library. The building was intended to be a social center for the neighborhood, a goal aided by the donation of a piano in 1913 from a neighborhood organization. Wirth noted in his 1913 report that the building was heavily used in its first year. He wrote that the showers in the building were used by many men on their way home from work. With the fieldhouse, Logan Park offered the first year-round recreation activities in the park system. Despite the tremendous popularity and success of the Logan Park fieldhouse, it was the only one built by the park board until the 1950s.

By 1921, the board's annual report noted that the recreation program at Logan was run by Alice Dietz. Dietz would be a central figure in the development of recreation programming throughout the park system. The success of the recreation programs under Dietz led the board to convert the "social" room at the fieldhouse to a gymnasium for indoor games in 1922. It was the park board's first indoor athletic facility. By 1927 Dietz had three assistants but the Depression that followed soon after led to significant cuts in park spending. By 1933, she was the only park employee at Logan Park and she had no supplies or equipment to work with. Wirth noted in his report of 1933 that due to unemployment the park was "overrun" with people. With the advent of the WPA, a depression era program to provide employment, the park board received scores of recreation supervisors to work throughout the system. They were trained and managed by Alice Dietz.

At the end of World War II, after the WPA program ended, Logan was one of only four parks in Minneapolis that offered recreation programs other than from June 15 to August 15. In 1946, Logan was one of five parks designated as community centers with a district supervisor to manage recreation activities.

Following a successful experiment at Loring Park in 1960, Logan was one of nine parks in Minneapolis that began a seniors club in 1963. The clubs sponsored activities one morning or afternoon each week.

By 1970, the venerable fieldhouse at Logan Park had become obsolete. New recreation centers had been built elsewhere in the park system by then. As the park board was beginning a dramatic building phase that created or renovated recreation centers throughout the city, it authorized demolition of the old fieldhouse and construction of a new one. What was probably the most successful building in the history of Minneapolis parks was torn down after fifty-eight years of distinguished service. The new building was one of nine "community" centers built in the 1970s and early 1980s. The park board's designation

of a "community" center meant that it had a gymnasium intended to serve a larger community than its immediate neighborhood.

Logan Park got a major makeover in 1997.

Longfellow Field Park

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Location: 36th Avenue South and East 34th Street

Size: 8.13 acres

Name: The park is unofficially named for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, an American poet who wrote *The Song of Hiawatha* in 1854. The poem made Minnehaha Falls famous around the world, although Longfellow had never visited the falls. The current Longfellow Field was never officially named after it was acquired in 1918. The park has been called Longfellow Field since it was acquired because it replaced an earlier park by that name located about a mile closer to downtown on Minnehaha Avenue between East 26th and East 28th streets. The first Longfellow Field was sold by the park board in 1917.

Acquisition and Development

The park board has owned two different parks called Longfellow Field. The first was purchased for $7,000 in 1911. It was a little more than four acres. At the time, that land had already been used as a playing field and was considered to be ideally situated to accommodate a great many people. The board at the time considered the purchase terms to be very favorable. The park was adjacent to an elementary school, Longfellow School. At a cost of about $8,000 football and baseball fields, and tennis, volleyball and basketball courts were installed, as well as playground apparatus. In 1912 park superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote that it was one of the most active playfields in the city. Along with North Commons it was the site of many citywide football and baseball games, because the fields at The Parade were out of commission for two years as they were regraded and seeded.

Despite the park's popularity, and its accessibility by street car, it was sold in 1917. The Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Company, which was located east of the park, asked the park board in late 1917 to name its price for the land. A week later the park board said it wanted $35,000 for the land and within a month the deal was done. The park board explained that it made the deal because the area was no longer suitable for a park because of the growth of manufacturing businesses in the area. The board also cited the fact that the school board had closed Longfellow School next to the park. Moreover, the board said the park was going to require expenditures for improvements anyway. (That explanation may not have held weight if the park board had proceeded with plans to build a shelter and toilets at the park in 1916. Bids for the construction of the shelter, which an architect had been hired to design, came in at more than $10,000, twice what the park board had allocated. Consequently, all bids were rejected and the shelter wasn't built.)

As part of the resolution to sell the park, the board included its intention to find a "more suitable area" for a park and playground nearby in south Minneapolis. Less than two weeks after the sale of the first Longfellow Field was completed, the board designated land for a second Longfellow Field, the three blocks from 35th to 38th Avenues South between East 34th and East 35th Streets. The new park was in a thinly settled section of the city. Due to its location farther from downtown, and farther from streetcar lines, the new park never would replace the old Longfellow Field as a city-wide sports destination.

Appraisers were immediately appointed to determine the value of the new site for purchase by condemnation. When the appraisers made their report on February 6, 1918, park commissioners had second thoughts. The two blocks from 36th to 38th avenues had no buildings on them and were appraised at just over $16,000. The block to the west, however, between 35th and 36th, included three new houses. The appraisal for that block alone was more than $17,000. And there were appeals to the appraisals from property owners on both blocks.

Ultimately, the board chose to defer purchase of the westerly block, and reached agreement with the single owner of the two blocks where the park now stands to pay him $16,000 plus $758 he owed in back taxes and assessments on the land. The deal was approved by the board on May 1, 1918.

The 1918 annual report of the board includes park superintendent Theodore Wirth's initial plan for the park, which proposed a fieldhouse that formed the back of a grandstand overlooking a combined football and baseball field and track. The board appropriated $12,500 for grading the field that year, but Wirth noted that grading had begun too late in the year to provide a skating rink that winter. The next year Wirth reported that the grading was completed and that playground apparatus would be installed in the spring of 1920. He also noted that when the "district is more settled," the park board could build a modern fieldhouse there.

In December 1920 Wirth submitted a revised plan for a small wood-frame shelter in the park, which he admitted was not much more than a toilet building. He said it would serve the needs "for now" of what he called one of the most active playgrounds in the city. He thought the shelter would stimulate demand in the neighborhood for "more adequate accommodations" in the near future. The shelter, which was built in 1921, was designed and constructed so it could easily be moved to another park when a larger fieldhouse was built at Longfellow.

In 1929, Wirth submitted a new plan for the park. Gone were his visions of a fieldhouse. Instead he recommended a "standard" shelter to replace the wood building, which he called "entirely inadequate." Although Wirth's plan was revised in 1930, after input from the neighborhood, to include croquet and basketball courts and eliminate the running track, neither of the plans were ever implemented. The Great Depression put an end to those plans and the temporary shelter built in 1921 was not replaced until the 1960s.

Although the wood shelter at Longfellow was quite modest, it was one of few improvements in neighborhood parks in that era that wasn't paid for through property assessments. Because of the profit on the sale of the original Longfellow Field in 1917, the board bought the new land and paid for all improvements with those funds. The neighborhood around Longfellow Field is one of the only ones in the city that did not pay for its neighborhood park through property assessments.

That changed in 1961 when the park board approved spending $125,000 in bond funds and a $125,000 assessment on area property to renovate the field and replace the old wood shelter. By 1963 the whole park was rebuilt, with new playground equipment, new tennis courts, enlarged athletic areas, and a "modern" brick building.

The modern brick building at Longfellow was one of the first new recreation centers built in the 1960s, and was the showcase recreation building in the city before the building boom in recreation and community centers in parks in the 1970s. Even Longfellow Field participated in the citywide upgrade of recreation buildings when construction on a new community center with a gym was begun in 1975.

Longfellow was one of eight parks in the city that got a larger community center with a gym designed to serve more than just the surrounding neighborhood.

The most recent site renovations at Longfellow Field were begun in 1990.

Longfellow Gardens

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Location: Minnehaha Parkway from 39th Avenue South to Minnehaha Avenue.

Size: 13.46 acres

Name: The park is named for the zoo and gardens that once existed on the site, which were owned and operated by Robert "Fish" Jones. He named his attraction for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow whose poem *The Song of Hiawatha* made nearby Minnehaha Falls world famous.

Acquisition and Development

The park board acquired title to the land of Longfellow Garden in 1924, but it didn't take undisputed possession of the land until 1936. The terms of the acquisition by the park board had led to a dispute over ownership.

The story of the property and the dispute really goes back to the early 1890s, shortly after Minnehaha Falls was acquired by the park board in 1889. In the years after the acquisition, the park board accepted the donation of several animals that were put on display in pens in the lower glen east of the falls. Throughout the 1890s the park board accepted as gifts, or purchased for small sums, many animals for what became an unofficial zoo. In the words of William Folwell, who was president of the park board through most of the 1890s, the policy of operating a zoo had developed "silently." More pens were built, including a bear pit, and a wide variety of animals and birds were accepted for the zoo, including some, such as sea lions and an alligator, that were not native species. Many of the animals were housed in winter in the park board's barns at Lyndale Farmstead. The alligator spent its winters at Richard Mendenhall's greenhouse. By the late 1890s the zoo had grown to the point that Folwell speculated that more people went to Minnehaha Park to see the animals than the falls.

The issue of operating a zoo came to a head in 1906 when long-time park superintendent William Berry retired and was replaced by Theodore Wirth. Wirth was not a fan of animals in his parks or his warehouse in winter. He also expressed his sympathy for animals that were caged in too-small spaces. Fortunately for Wirth, a Minneapolis fish seller, Robert "Fish" Jones, who had collected a menagerie of animals at his shop on the site of the present basilica, had acquired land next to Minnehaha Park to house his animals and open a zoo. His collection was no longer welcome in his old neighborhood.

Jones agreed to take many of the park board's animals in 1907 and add them to his own. The park board gave all its animals to Jones except the deer, elk and bear which could live year round in the park—and did until 1923. One condition of the park board's deal with Jones was that he had to offer free admission to his zoo one day a week.

Jones created Longfellow Zoological Gardens where people could wander about his gardens accompanied by sea lions, ride a camel and attend lion-taming shows in an arena. To add to the attraction Jones built for himself a house on the property, a replica of Henry Longfellow's house in

Cambridge, Massachusetts. He even raised money to commission a statue of Longfellow that adorned his garden.

Despite complaints from neighbors about the sounds and smells of a zoo, the first mention of the park board's desire to get rid of the zoo came in Wirth's annual report of 1922. Noting the demands of the neighborhood for a playground, Wirth urged the board to acquire the property of the zoo, suggesting that the park board make an offer on the property and allow Jones to remain on the property for life. One reason for the lack of urgency in the proposal, according to Wirth, was the shortage of funds to create and maintain another playground. That could be done later. Wirth also suggested that the city needed a zoo and proposed finding another spot in the parks— perhaps the southwest portion of Glenwood (Wirth) Park—for a zoo if a private zoological society could be formed to raise funds to develop and maintain the zoo. Wirth believed that operating a zoo was beyond the means of the park board.

In 1924, a year after it disposed of the remaining animals in Minnehaha Park to create a new picnic ground, the park board voted to condemn the land of Longfellow Gardens. Appraisers were appointed—twice—to determine the value of Jones's land, but neither appraisal was satisfactory to both parties. A compromise was reached. Jones would donate his land to the park board, at a value of $75,000, which would make his land tax exempt. In return he would retain the right to occupy the property for ten years.

The same year Wirth proposed sinking a deep well in Longfellow Garden to generate water for a pleasing flow over Minnehaha Falls. The next year he took his proposal a step further, suggesting the creation of a 4.5-acre "lakelet" along Minnehaha Creek next to Longfellow Garden by damming the creek at Hiawatha Avenue. In the plan he presented for the project the land of Longfellow Garden is designated as "future playground." The deep well was dug and the creek was dammed in 1926. Wirth credited the reservoir with creating a "fairly good" supply of water to the falls.

In 1930 the great showman and entrepreneur Robert "Fish" Jones died and his property was inherited by his daughter. The park board's annual report of 1930 contained a photo of Jones wearing his signature top hat and Wirth suggested that the land be renamed R. F. Jones Park to honor him. Upon the expiration of the ten years Jones had rights to the property, his daughter contested his donation of the land. Although the courts denied her claims, it wasn't until more than a year later, in early 1936 that the park board actually took possession of the land.

Almost as soon as it did, it leased Jones's former home, Longfellow House, to the Minneapolis Library Board for use as a branch library. With a thirty year lease on the building, the library board opened the Longfellow Branch Library in 1937. The statue of Longfellow remained where it stood and a playground never was built on the land.

The land became the center of one of the great controversies in park history in the 1960s when the state proposed to build a freeway on Hiawatha Avenue from downtown to the airport. State plans called for an elevated freeway to cross over the creek, although a tunnel under the creek was also considered. The park board objected strenuously to the plan and hired its own consultants, who proposed instead that the freeway be built to loop around the western edge of Longfellow Garden. The problem with that plan, which generated heated opposition in the neighborhood, was that it would have required the condemnation of many more homes and businesses. The park board sued to stop the state's highway plan, but lost its case in both district court and the state supreme court. In 1968 the park board appealed its case to the United States Supreme Court, but before the case could be heard the Supreme Court ruled in a related case from Nashville that park land could not be taken for highways. That decision established a precedent and the state dropped its elevated freeway plan.

When plans were revived for a highway on Hiawatha Avenue in the 1990s, the highway department and the park board agreed on a modified tunnel plan for the road. The highway would pass above the creek to avoid disturbing the creek bed, but a land bridge would be created over the highway. The result is the present Longfellow Gardens, which was created over the highway tunnel in 2003. The steep slope created by the land bridge over the tunnel was seeded with native flowers and grasses.

The construction of the highway required, however, that the Longfellow House be moved. The library board had stopped using the house as a branch library when its lease expired in 1968. To accommodate the new highway, the house was moved east of Hiawatha Avenue and restored. It is now an information center for the Grand Rounds and is used as offices by the park board.

The statue of Longfellow, still in its original location, now stands worn and forlorn in the meadow between the garden and the creek.

Loring Park

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Location: Hennepin Avenue and Harmon Place

Size: 33.94 acres, including 7.08 acres of water

Name: The first name for the park was Central Park when it was purchased in 1883. For a little less than a month in 1885, the park was renamed Spring Grove Park, but park commissioners changed their minds and the name reverted to Central Park. In 1890, at the suggestion of William Folwell, the park was renamed in honor of the first president of the park board, Charles Loring. Loring objected, asking instead that the park be named Hennepin Park. The park board voted in favor of Folwell's suggestion.

Charles M. Loring

Charles Loring has been known since the 1880s as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks." He was appointed as a park commissioner in the legislation in February 1883 that created the park board and was elected by the other appointed commissioners to be the president of the new board. Loring was already well-known to park advocates in the city for his work planting trees and for his advocacy of creating parks. Since the early 1860s he had promoted park efforts and is credited with planting the first trees in Minneapolis west of the Mississippi River, which at the time was mostly prairie.

Loring had been a successful merchant running a dry goods store with his partner, Loren Fletcher, who became the speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives that passed the act that created the Board of Park Commissioners for Minneapolis. By the time the park board was created, Loring and Fletcher had sold their store and bought flour mills, as well as investing in railroads and other burgeoning businesses that were springing up in the city. Loring was also an investor in real estate in the city.

As a city council member in the early 1870s he had promoted planting trees, especially at the city's only park at the time, Murphy Square. When the daughters of Franklin Steele, one of the first settlers in the area, donated land for Franklin Steele Square to the city in 1882, a condition of their donation was that Loring supervise planting and improvements in the park, a condition to which he readily agreed.

Loring devoted considerable time to park matters during his presidency of the board from 1883 to 1890. He personally supervised the development of Central Park, as well as converting Hennepin Avenue into

a parkway. The acquisition by the park board of Lake Harriet, Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun for parks was largely Loring's doing. He convinced many landowners to donate their land around the lakes and persuaded other park commissioners to purchase the remaining parcels of land that weren't donated. He was the moving force behind the creation of the lake parks. The other commissioners had such confidence in Loring's leadership that when they met to elect officers after the first public election of park commissioners in 1884, they once again voted him president. When they realized they couldn't elect him president because he wasn't in town and hadn't yet taken the oath of office (he had been out of town during the election too and hadn't campaigned for the post), the board postponed electing a president until he returned a few weeks later. Then they elected him president.

Loring was an early proponent of establishing playgrounds for children in parks. He was the first to make the case, in 1893, that playgrounds were needed for children in the city. His passion for playgrounds likely played a role in his hiring Theodore Wirth as the new superintendent of parks in 1905, when Loring was once again a park commissioner. Loring chaired the special committee to hire a replacement for the retiring superintendent, William Berry, and he went to Hartford, Connecticut to interview Wirth. Wirth was hired, in part, because he shared Loring's commitment to establishing playgrounds.

Loring made several significant donations to the park board after his time as a park commissioner. In 1906 he donated the shelter and warming house beside the pond in Loring Park, which still stands. In 1916 he contributed the funds to build an artificial waterfall into what is now Wirth Lake in Wirth Park (then Glenwood Park). Finally, he contributed $50,000 for a permanent trust to plant and maintain the trees along Victory Memorial Drive that honored American soldiers killed in battle. Loring died in 1922, nearly 89 years old, and was interred at Lakewood Cemetery, a cemetery he helped create. His monument reads "Father of the Parks."

Acquisition and Development

Central Park was the first land purchased by the park board when it was created in April 1883. In the 1883 annual report, Loring described the appeal of the land for a park. "It embraces," he wrote, "Johnson's Lake, fed by unfailing springs of pure water, a surrounding area of level land, and on its north and east side an undulating declivity covered with a fine growth of native deciduous trees and carpeted with an emerald turf which have long designated it in the public estimation for a park."

Many years earlier Loring said he had considered building his home across from Johnson's Lake before it was a park, but decided that it was too far from the city. But by 1883 Loring noted that the park had become easily accessible by surrounding streets and could be reached by "horse cars and motor line."

That the land had been considered an ideal spot for a park was demonstrated by the park board's fast action in acquiring the land. The park board met for the first time on April 17, 1883 and only eleven days later it designated the land it wanted for Loring Park. The initial acquisition comprised about thirty acres at a cost of about $150,000. The park was expanded several times over the next few years, including extending the park to Willow Street on the east in 1890 and purchasing the lot on the southwest corner of the park along Hennepin Avenue in 1902. The total cost of acquiring the land in several stages amounted to nearly $350,000.

Loring and fellow commissioner and friend George Brackett were assigned by the park board to contract for the excavation of Johnson's Lake to remove the bog in the lake and fill the surrounding marsh. The

park board also vacated streets that ran through the newly acquired land and decided from the beginning that the park would be for pedestrians only.

Landscape architect Horace Cleveland was hired to create the initial plan for the park. His layout of the park was intended for rapid development and fast growth of trees and shrubs that were transplanted mostly from nearby woods. The success of Cleveland's design was noted in an influential magazine, *Garden and Forest*, in October 1888. "The rapidity with which the artist's idea has grown into an interesting picture," the magazine wrote in a feature article on Central Park, "is certainly unusual."

The first winter after the lake was expanded, 1884, the park board created a skating rink on the pond, the park board's first provision for active recreation in parks. The ice was cleared and planed by horse-drawn implements. The following year, electric lights were installed to illuminate the rink.

The excavation of the lake and other construction in the area interrupted the flow of springs into the lake, so in 1887 the park board sank an artesian well next to the lake to provide an uninterrupted flow of fresh water.

Central Park was the center of park activity from the beginning with not only ice skating, but a bandstand built in 1886 and tennis courts in 1887. (By 1911 Loring had two tennis courts, and that year the park board built a pipe-and-wire backstop for one of them.)

In 1889 the board placed ten row boats on the lake which were available to be rented, and also accepted a gift of a pelican for the lake. When the board first approached the state's game and fish commission about stocking the lake with fish, the commission reported in 1890 that the lake was so full of bullheads, it might have to dynamite the lake to get rid of them. Although there is no record of whether the bullheads were dynamited, the lake's environment for fishing must have changed over time, because in 1918 the Minneapolis Angling Club constructed a casting platform on the shores of the lake. Many years later, in 1943, the lake was stocked with pan fish to provide a dietary supplement to rationed food during World War II.

That Central Park was viewed as the hub of the park system was evident in the construction of parkways in the city. Initially, Hennepin Avenue was viewed as a parkway to connect Central Park to the parkway being built around Lake Harriet. Lyndale Avenue was selected as a parkway north to connect with Farview Park. With heavy traffic along Hennepin Avenue and the inability of the park board to purchase as wide a strip of land along Hennepin as it desired, an alternative route to the lakes was found in Kenwood Parkway. The parkway, which was built on land donated to the park board, created a new more parkway-like connection to Lake of the Isles and then to Lake Calhoun and on to Lake Harriet. This connection of Central Park to the lakes via Kenwood Parkway, which was Loring's idea, likely led to Loring's commitment to securing, mostly by donation, the entire shore of Lake of the Isles—and shifted park board attention for many years to developing the "chain of lakes" as a park. When Minnehaha Park was acquired in 1889, the goal expanded to connecting Central Park with the new park surrounding Minnehaha Falls, which led to the acquisition of the land along Minnehaha Creek from Lake Harriet east toward the Falls.

Minneapolis came close to losing Loring Park in 1895 when the park board voted to give the park to the state for the site of a new state capitol building in hopes of luring state government from St. Paul. Instead, the state chose the present site for the capitol in St. Paul. The only building in the park at the time was a shed used by park superintendent William Berry as his office. Although as early as 1887, at Loring's suggestion, the park board considered moving the original home of settler John Stevens, the

first permanent house built in Minneapolis, to Loring Park. Ultimately the board decided to place the house in Riverside Park. The Stevens House was eventually moved to Minnehaha Park, where it still stands. Loring Park has always been coveted by others for civic buildings. In 1909, a group of citizens including T. B. Walker petitioned the park board to build a library in the park. In 1923, Loring Park was considered as the site of a new municipal auditorium.

Loring's wish for playgrounds for children in parks was partially granted when the park board erected its first swings, teeter-totters and sand boxes in Loring Park in 1904. The first permanent recreation center in Minneapolis parks was erected in 1906, when Charles Loring donated a heated two-story building next to the lake to serve as a recreation center, kindergarten and warming house for skaters. Following Theodore Wirth's arrival as park superintendent in 1906, Loring Park was one of five parks in which the park board installed more elaborate playground and gymnastic equipment.

In early years Loring Park was also the center of floral displays in parks. Even after Wirth arrived and created the Rose Garden at Lyndale Park, and the Armory Gardens were planted across Hennepin and Lyndale avenues from Loring Park, Loring Park continued to have more flowers planted each year than any other park. In 1919, for example, the park board's horticulturist, Louis Boeglin, planted more than 19,000 flowers and bedding plants in the park.

Loring Park was the site of an Arbor Day celebration in 1916, called Loring Day, at which time an elm tree was planted in Charles Loring's honor. Many of the original elms planted in the park had been grown from seedlings by Loring at his Lake Minnetonka property.

Early in its history Loring Park also became the center for pitching horseshoes in the city and in 1921 the national horseshoe tournament was held there. Loring Park still has an active horseshoe league, the only one in the city. Shuffleboard was also once popular in the park. When four lighted shuffleboard courts were built in the park in 1939, they were so popular that reservations were necessary to use them in the evenings.

Loring Park has been the site of dramatic and musical performances since its earliest days. It was not only the site of the first bandstand in a park, but it was the site of theatrical performances since the early 1900s. When the city celebrated the linking of Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun in 1911, a historical play was offered at Loring Park that attracted an estimated 25,000 for each performance over three nights. In 1914, the park board approved a petition by a group of University of Minnesota students to perform Shakespeare in the park. Loring Park was also an important venue for the community singing competitions staged in various parks from 1919 to 1958. In fact, as the once hugely popular mass singing competitions dwindled in popularity, Loring was one of only three parks still participating at the end. Loring Park's viability for continuing musical performances was enhanced in 1951 with the construction of a new bandstand. Loring is still a venue for public performances, from concerts to movies.

Among Loring's many other notable firsts in park history, it was the first park to have a wading pool installed in 1940 to meet new state requirements that wading pools have continuously circulating water. In 1960, Loring Park was the first to provide programs specifically for senior citizens. The shelter donated by Charles Loring was renovated that year to provide space for the seniors programs. The initial success of those programs led to expanding the senior program to eight other parks in 1963.

Loring Park was also one of the first places where the park board experimented with leasing a private concession when in 1980 it leased space for Loring Picnic Place to sell sandwiches and refreshments.

(The park board had at one time sold the concession for food service at the Lake Harriet Pavilion, but that practice was ended by Theodore Wirth who believed the park board should provide all services in parks.) The Loring Picnic Place was the precursor of leases to private concessionaires at Lake Calhoun and Minnehaha Park in the early 2000s.

Loring Park today is slightly smaller than it once was. The first encroachment on Loring Park occurred in 1891 when Hennepin Avenue was widened resulting in 23 trees being transplanted to what is now Windom Park in northeast Minneapolis. In 1939, Loring Park lost more land when 15th Street was widened. But the largest loss of land at the park took place when I-94 was built in the 1960s, which required the further widening of Hennepin and Lyndale avenues on the west side of the park near the I-94 Lowry Hill Tunnel.

The two most prominent landmarks within the park were added nearly eighty years apart. The statue of Ole Bull, a Norwegian composer, was erected in the park in 1897. The Berger "Dandelion" Fountain, a gift from park commissioner Ben Berger, was erected in 1975.

Loring Park has undergone important renovations in the last thirty years. In 1977, the northern arm of Loring Lake was dredged, the footbridge over the neck of the lake was repaired and the original shelter was renovated. In 1979 the park board reiterated its approval for a pedestrian and bicycle bridge from Loring Park to The Parade over the freeway that had first been approved about 1970. The concept finally took shape nine years later when, with the development of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden on park property at the Parade, the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge was built to link the two parks. The bridge, a work of art in itself, was designed by Minneapolis designer Siah Armajani. The bridge was paid for by a gift from the family of Irene Hixon Whitney and state and federal funds.

Loring Park got a complete makeover beginning in 1998 through a combination of funds from the park board, the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Program and the non-profit Friends of Loring Park. The lake bottom was lined to prevent water loss, the Loring Shelter was expanded dramatically into an art center and the Loring Garden of the Seasons was developed, among other improvements.

125 years after it was purchased as the first acquisition by a newly created park board, Loring Park remains, a beautiful, vital and useful park for those who prefer either active or passive recreation. It is an oasis of vegetation and water in the heart of the city—testimony to the vision and wisdom of park planners who could not possibly have imagined the city that has built up around it.

Lovell Square

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Location: Irving and 10th Avenue North

Size: 1.29 acres

Name: The park was named for C. P. Lovell, who along with Elwood Corser and William Barnes donated the land for the park. The name Lovell Square was officially adopted in 1890.

Acquisition and Development

The land for Lovell Square was tendered to the park board by Corser, Barnes and Lovell in June 1887 and was designated as a park by the board in July of that year. Although the park is mentioned with other small parks in the 1888 annual report, it first shows up on its own in the park board inventory in

1889. The annual report of that year noted that Corser *et al* had deeded the park to the park board in April 1889. At that time the park was listed as 3.67 acres, but in the 1893 inventory the size of the park was reduced to 1.35 acres without any mention of land being disposed.

A request to dig a well in the park was approved in 1916 after earlier attempts to have a well placed there were denied.

Active recreation in the park was discouraged when the park board agreed with requests from neighbors who objected to "big, rough boys" playing football and baseball in the park and endangering small children. The board instructed the superintendent to post signs in 1917 prohibiting baseball and football games in the park.

A concrete tennis court was built at Lovell Square in 1938 by a federal work relief crew, one of 43 built around the city that year.

Lowry Park

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Location: Douglas Avenue South, Bryant Avenue South and Mt. Curve.

Size: 1.46 acres

Name: The park was originally named Douglas Triangle for the street on which it is located. The name was officially changed to Mt. Curve Triangles (plural), on November 4, 1925, when the previous Mt. Curve Triangle was renamed Fremont Triangle. The park was officially named in honor of Thomas Lowry in 1984.

Lowry is best known for developing the street railway system in Minneapolis. The Lowry Hill neighborhood, in which the park is located, was named because he owned most of the land and built his imposing mansion on the hill.

Lowry was a generous contributor to the park system. He donated to the park board about half of the land that is now The Parade, as well as some land at Lyndale Farmstead Park. He also contributed more than $20,000 in cash for the improvement of The Parade. Through his company, the Minneapolis Street Railway Company, Lowry was an important figure in the development of Lake Harriet. To attract riders on the railway line to the lake, the company built the first entertainment pavilion near the lake on private property in 1888. When that pavilion burned down, the company built a new pavilion on park property on the shore of the lake in 1891. In an agreement with the park board, the company paid for entertainment at the pavilion. When that pavilion also burned down in 1901, the company chose not to build a new pavilion but contributed the $15,000 insurance settlement on the destroyed pavilion so the park board could build its own pavilion at the same location. The company also relocated its track at its own expense, reported to have been $25,000, to create sufficient space for a parkway along the north shore of Lake Calhoun in 1910.

Lowry's company benefitted from a controversial park board decision in 1892 to allow the company to lay track down the center of Hennepin Avenue south from Loring Park, which was a parkway at the time. The decision prompted park board member and later park board president, William Folwell, to propose that the park board relinquish control of Hennepin Avenue as a parkway due to its "abandonment to the street railway." The park board returned control of Hennepin Avenue to the city in 1905.

Acquisition and Development

The first mention of the land in park board documents was in the summer of 1899 when Thomas Lowry and others petitioned the park board to improve and maintain the triangle as a park. The petition was denied because the park board didn't own the land.

The park board didn't acquire the land until a group of area residents, including A. C. Loring, son of the park board's first president Charles Loring, petitioned the park board to acquire it as a park in 1922. (The younger Loring was the CEO of Pillsbury.) The neighborhood that was to be assessed the cost of acquiring and improving the park was divided on whether it wanted to pay for the park. The park board's committee on designation and acquisition of grounds sent the proposal for the acquisition to the full board without recommendation, an unusual indication of at best tepid support for the project. In late 1923 the full board voted to purchase the land for the park for $76,000.

The annual report of 1922 includes a design created for the park by park commissioner and landscape architect Phelps Wyman. The plan for the park was distinctive not only for the pergola at the head of the park, but for the artificial cascade running through the park, from which the park got its informal name of "Seven Pools." It was also one of only two park designs published in annual reports that were not produced by park board staff. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth noted that Wyman prepared the plan at his invitation. The plan is also unique in that it was printed in color, one of very few color plates printed in annual reports before the 1990s.

Wyman's plan for the park was mostly executed in 1924, although the pergola was constructed in the spring of 1925. By then Wyman had resigned from the park board to become a landscape architect for the Milwaukee park commission. Wirth called the park one of the "most expensive undertakings" in the history of the park board at a total cost of more than $100,000 for acquisition and improvement, roughly $44,000 per acre. But Wirth also called the "gem" of a park one of the most attractive and satisfactory park improvements ever achieved. "The location of this small park at the entrance to one of the very finest residential districts of the city," Wirth wrote in the 1924 annual report, "furthermore justifies the expenditure." The total cost was assessed on area property owners over ten years.

The artificial cascade and seven pools were repaired in 1953. The park was given a makeover—new brick path, new benches and fresh landscaping—in 1997.

Luxton Park

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Location: Williams Avenue SE and St. Mary's Avenue SE

Size: 4.49 acres

Name: The name of the park was changed from "Prospect Field" to "George E. Luxton Park" on August 17, 1963. Throughout 1963 the board had received petitions to change the name of the park to honor Luxton. He died in late 1962 at the age of 82. George Luxton had been a reporter, columnist and photographer for Minneapolis newspapers for 60 years and had been president of the neighborhood improvement association in southeast Minneapolis. Moreover, as the board noted in its resolution to name the park for him, "his love of flowers brought him in contact with literally every gardening club and horticultural society in Minnesota." He was called an "enthusiastic supporter" of the board's efforts to beautify Minneapolis. In its 1953 annual report the board had included a photo of Luxton receiving a

scroll of appreciation from the park board for his interest in park floriculture. The scroll was presented to him during "George Luxton Day" at the park board's annual chrysanthemum show at Lyndale Farmstead Park.

Acquisition and Development

The 5.31 acres of land for Luxton Park, then called Prospect Field, was purchased in 1912 from Frank C. Nickels, R. J. Owens and others for $15,134. The purchase was in response to petition in April, 1912 from area residents for a playground in the southeast neighborhood, which, despite park developments throughout the city, had no play area closer than Van Cleve Park on the other side of the university. A petition in 1907 to acquire a playground adjacent to Motley School had been denied.

The petition in 1912 was approved immediately for the tract of vacant land. Condemnation proceedings were begun to take the land with the appointment of appraisers in May. Despite objections from Frank Nickels to the amounts awarded, the park board confirmed the appraisals. The board subsequently struck a deal with him for the bulk of the land for the park.

One reason for the prompt action on the petition to acquire the land was revealed in January 1913 when the Prospect Park Improvement Association thanked the board for the acquisition and promised that it wouldn't ask for improvements to the land until bonds could be issued for that purpose. In those days of rapid expansion of the park system and demands from every quarter of the city for park improvements, the board was more inclined to acquire park land if residents of the neighborhood weren't too insistent on spending scarce funds for immediate improvements.

Nonetheless, park superintendent Theodore Wirth proposed in his 1913 annual report an improvement plan for the park. The majority of the space was to be devoted to playing fields and playgrounds, including a fieldhouse. But a portion was set aside as a "picnic grove" with a "rustic shelter."

With the city council's agreement to rearrange some streets around the park in 1914, the way was cleared for improvements. In 1915 the upper field was completed, offering a "splendid" skating rink in Wirth's words in his 1915 annual report. He noted that a warming house had been provided. Playground equipment was also installed. Wirth wrote that an additional $23,000 was needed to build the fieldhouse, walks, steps and a wading pool. All the park board approved was a modest sum to build tennis courts in the park in 1917.

Four years later, a small recreation shelter was added to the park. Wirth noted at the time that it was small and would only meet the most pressing needs, but hoped that it would stimulate demand for more. Wirth wrote that the shelter, which cost about $6,000, was constructed to be easily moved to another field when a larger recreation center was built at Prospect Field.

What Wirth pictured as a temporary structure would remain in place for a long time—nearly fifty years. The board's post-World War II plans included improvements for Prospect Field, but city bond funding was hard to come by for any park projects in the decade after the war.

By 1957 it was obvious that proposed freeways in Minneapolis could have a significant impact on parks. A special study of the Prospect Field area was conducted by the park board's planning division in "consideration of the new expressway system," as the 1957 annual report phrased it. The phrase makes it clear that the board was already aware that a proposed freeway could have an impact on the park. And it did. In 1964 the state highway department claimed 1.3 acres of Prospect Field for the new I-94 freeway.

Once the boundaries of the park were certain, the board did proceed with complete renovation of the park in conjunction with the city's housing authority, which developed the Glendale housing project adjacent to the park. In 1969, a new recreation center was built at Luxton Park, finally replacing the old temporary shelter. The housing authority contributed money to build that center. The park was updated throughout, including construction of a wading pool. In 1976 the park board granted permission for the state highway department to build a noise-abatement wall between the park and I-94.

In 1990, the center was dramatically expanded with the addition of a gym and new playground equipment was installed.

Lyndale Farmstead Park

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Location: Bryant Avenue South and West 38th Street

Size: 17.23 acres

Name: The park was once the site of William S. King's "Lyndale Farm." It was, literally, the Lyndale farmstead. The name was never formally adopted. King derived the name of his farm from his father's first name, Lyndon. King's one-time farmhouse, the last vestige of the farm, still stood in 1920 on the last parcel of land acquired for the park at 39th and Bryant. It was once the headquarters of a 1,400-acre farm that encompassed almost all of Lake Harriet. (See Lake Harriet, Lyndale Park, and King's Highway for more on William King and his donations to the park board.)

Acquisition and Development

Park board records indicate that the first deed to any part of this property was purchased in 1896, however no record of that purchase is included in park board proceedings for that year, nor is it mentioned in annual reports of the park board then or after. It is possible that a portion of the property acquired for King's Highway or Lyndale Park (all donated in complicated transactions), was later attributed to the Lyndale Farmstead property.

The first mention of the farmstead in park board proceedings is a reference by park superintendent William Berry in October 1895 that all boats used on Lake Harriet had been stored in King's barn for the winter. The next mention is in June 1897, when the park board approved renting "one of the King barns on 38th Street" for storage purposes at a rent not to exceed $10 a month.

Finally, in January 1899, the park board received notice from the D. C. Bell Investment Company that it was holding a bank foreclosure sale on the property on which the King barn was located. The board instructed Chelsea Rockwood, the attorney for the board, to attend the sale and bid "such an amount as the president and Committee on Designation will approve." Rockwood subsequently reported that he had purchased three lots on which the barn stood for $700. In the summer of 1899, the park board instructed the superintendent to repair the barns and prepare the basement of the barn to winter the animals from the park board's Minnehaha Park zoo.

A few months later, on November 6, 1899, Rockwood reported that he had acquired, "pursuant to informal instruction from the Board," all but nine lots of the two blocks from King's Highway (Dupont Avenue) to Bryant Avenue between 38th and 39th for $6,000. It was the first of several developments on the property over the years that proceeded without formal action by the park board. Rockwood reported

that with the purchase the park board then owned both large barns on the property. In the 1899 annual report of the park board, William Folwell called the purchase a "judicious proceeding," as it gave the park board much needed storage space and a maintenance yard—roles that the property has played ever since. The next April, the park board purchased six of the remaining lots on that tract, for $350, and vacated Colfax Avenue through the property from 38th to 39th.

In March 1901, the board instructed the secretary to negotiate purchase of the three remaining lots on the two-block tract. It acquired those lots in an unusual transaction. That summer William King's widow, Caroline King, and his eldest son, Preston (who joined with a later park board president Jesse Northrup to form the seed company Northrup King), sued the park board for not complying with the terms of the donation by the King's of Lyndale Park and King's Highway a decade earlier. Folwell noted in his annual report, with a tone of disapproval, that the King's suit was not brought to gain compliance with the terms of the donation of land, but to get money. But there was likely more to it. The park board settled with the Kings by paying them $5,325. In return, Caroline King gave the park board title to the three remaining lots it needed on the tract. But Caroline King also got something more than cash. She regained from the park board title to the two lots on which her home, the old farm house, stood near Bryant Avenue and 39th Street.

Charles Loring, a close friend of King, once noted that King had died "near a poor man," because of his desire to give land to the park board. What Loring never said in his many tributes to King and his generosity was that when King and his wife had donated the land for Lyndale Park, Loring and his partner in real estate investments, Henry Brown, held about $50,000 in mortgages on King's land. Loring and Brown released those mortgages to the park board.

In 1894 Loring and Brown were given quit claim deeds by the park board to four lots south of Lake Harriet. Although it is not discussed in park board proceedings, it is reasonable to suppose that those lots, the value of which could not have approached $50,000 at the time, were deeded to Loring and Brown in return for their release of the mortgages they held on the land King had donated. In effect, Loring and Brown, not King, had donated a large portion of Lyndale Park. That view is supported by a letter William Folwell wrote to the park board many years later. In 1918 Folwell wrote that he had it on reliable authority (likely from Loring himself) that Loring had been the true donor of much of Lyndale Park. Folwell's claim is supported by the fact that Loring clipped from park board proceedings a brief description of Folwell's letter and pasted it in his scrapbook; it is the only clip from park board proceedings in those scrapbooks, which cover events of nearly 40 years. Loring and Brown had also acquired from King considerable land south of Lyndale Farm, which they developed for residential purposes.

The next episode in the history of Lyndale Farmstead is also shrouded in some mystery and off-the-record agreements. In the 1905 annual report, park board president Fred Smith suggested that the office of the superintendent of parks should be transferred from city hall to the grounds of the Lyndale barns. He went further. He recommended building a residence and office for the superintendent there and transforming the grounds into an "attractive park."

It is noteworthy that Smith's report for 1905 was written after the park board had hired Theodore Wirth to replace William Berry as superintendent of parks beginning in 1906. Wirth had been convinced to leave his job as superintendent of parks in Hartford, Connecticut by Charles Loring, who was acting as a special committee to find a replacement for Berry. Wirth later claimed that one condition he and Loring had agreed to verbally was that the Minneapolis park board would provide a house for Wirth—a perk that Wirth enjoyed in his Hartford job. The suggestion by Smith, who had also traveled to Hartford to

interview Wirth, that the board build a house for the new superintendent indicates that he may have been party to the verbal agreement between Wirth and Loring. But that agreement is not a part of the public record. That the subject was introduced so circumspectly suggests that the board anticipated such an agreement might be controversial.

In Wirth's first annual report as superintendent in 1906, he included a detailed plan, a "Suggestive Plan for the Enlargement and Improvement of the Lyndale Farmstead," which showed where the superintendent's house would be located facing Bryant Avenue between 39th and 40th. At that time, the park board did not own that land. Wirth's plan included a warehouse, greenhouses and nurseries, and a pond for waterfowl along King's Highway, in addition to the house. "That the proper place for the superintendent's residence would be within this administration plant is quite evident," Wirth wrote, "because this varied plant should be under his daily supervision, and because the principal administration work must be done from this point."

Wirth thought the park board's nursery in Lyndale Park, established on the recommendation of William Folwell in the late 1890s, was inadequate and urged that it be moved to Lyndale Farmstead. He needed a better nursery, and greenhouses, he wrote, because the city's parks at the time were "inferior in proper plantations."

Wirth advocated extending the park board's property south, not only to provide land for his house, but, he wrote, to connect the farmstead to Lyndale Park, which began only 200 feet southwest of 40th Street and King's Highway.

The shift of the nursery and the construction of greenhouses at Lyndale Farmstead were accomplished in 1906 and 1907, but there was still no house for Wirth. Wirth was also at least partially responsible for getting the animals out of the old King barns in winter. At Wirth's urging the park board closed most of its zoo at Minnehaha Park in 1907. The park board retained pens for the elk and deer, which did not need indoor winter homes. The rest of the animals were sold to Robert "Fish" Jones, who established a private zoo at Longfellow Gardens west of Minnehaha Falls. That zoo lasted into the 1930s, when the park board acquired the land from Jones. (See Longfellow Garden for more on Jones and his zoo.)

Then came the conflagration. On March 2, 1908, a fire consumed the larger of the old King barns at Lyndale Farmstead. Along with it went much of the park board's machinery and supplies. The need to construct a new warehouse perhaps provided the opportunity to expand the park, upgrade its facilities—and build a house for the superintendent.

On May 4, 1908, only two months after the fire, the park board reported that Charles Loring, who was no longer a park commissioner, had assisted in the acquisition, by donation, of land to expand the park to the south. Loring had convinced James J. Hill of railroad fame and Thomas Lowry, who built the city's streetcar system, to donate land from King's Highway to Bryant Avenue between 39th and 40th streets. Lowry and Hill asked in return that they be reimbursed for their expenses and the taxes they had already paid or still owed on the property, which came to a little more than $13,000. The donation expanded the park by more than eight acres. The donation also included most of the block south of 40th between Colfax and King's Highway. Curiously, the park board's annual report for 1908 didn't mention this significant new addition to park board holdings of nearly three square blocks of prime real estate. And the acquisition of the land was never listed by the park board as a donation, but as a purchase—and the money paid to Hill and Lowry was recouped by the park board through assessments on nearby property.

Why was this important acquisition never mentioned in park board reports? And why was Charles Loring involved? It could be that Loring was delivering on a verbal agreement he had made with Wirth to provide a house for him, and this was the location needed. The park board was going to have to construct new buildings on the property to replace the burned-down barns. Perhaps Loring saw this as an opportunity to get a house he had promised thrown in at the same time. Perhaps that is why he went to his friend Thomas Lowry to get him to donate the land. And perhaps the park board never mentioned the acquisition because commissioners knew that it would not be used for a park, but for a residence for the superintendent. Even park board proceedings noted that the land was acquired for "additional grounds for nursery and *other purposes."* (Italics added).

The park board had the land to build a house for Wirth, but the house still wasn't being built. Wirth reported in 1908 all the details of a new three-story warehouse and shop building constructed on the Lyndale Farmstead site. One side benefit of the new buildings, including greenhouses, was that in the fall of 1908 the park board held its first Chrysanthemum Show for the public at the Lyndale Farmstead greenhouse. Wirth reported that 6000 people attended the show. The mum show became a staple of the park board's autumn calendar, continuing through 1975, with interruptions for depression and war.

While the park board did maintain nursery facilities on the grounds for many years, the bulk of nursery operations were moved to Glenwood (Wirth) Park in 1910 after additional greenhouse space was added at Lyndale Farmstead.

But plans for a superintendent's house were moving forward. In December 1909, Theodore Wirth asked the board to "construct a house, according to the plans submitted, for the use of the Superintendent of Parks." The request was referred to a joint committee on finance and improvements, with power to act, which meant that the request would not have to come before the full board again. The "plans submitted" were apparently the designs for the house prepared by architects Long, Lamoreaux and Long.

In February 1910 the joint committee recommended a contract with a builder to construct a house for the superintendent to specifications developed by the architects. The contract was for $6,800. Park board proceedings noted that park board employees would lay the foundation for the building, and that heating, wiring, plumbing, tiling and hardware were to be provided under separate contracts or by park board workers. The total estimated cost of the building, the report said, would be within the estimate of the superintendent and the architect of $10,000.

The controversy that the park board seems to have been trying to avoid over building a house for the superintendent—and had put off building for four years—flared almost immediately. Two weeks after the park board approved the contract to build the house, the city comptroller informed the park board that he would not sign the contract because, in his opinion, the proposed expenditure of city funds "for the construction of a house for the Superintendent of Parks" was illegal. The park board stepped around the issue by proceeding without a contract with the builder and from then on changing the description of the project. Never again in park board proceedings, including itemized bills from some suppliers, was the building referred to as a residence. It was, from that time forward, called an "administration building." Most of the money paid to the contractor for the residence was lumped in with the same contractor's invoices for constructing the recreation shelters at North Commons and Jackson Square that year.

Once the residence was built, the park board relented a bit on how it described the building. The 1910 annual report of the park board includes a photo of the house captioned "Lyndale Farmstead—Administration Building." Park board President Wilbur Decker, however, made a bow to reality when

he described the building as “an administration plant and residence for the use of the Superintendent.” Decker commented that the building provided “a much needed addition to our equipment that will not only make for better service, but which will constitute a permanent asset of considerable value.” He cited the total cost of the building as $13,244.

In the superintendent’s segment of that annual report, Wirth pleaded the case for what he too called the “Administration Building.” Although he led his report on improvements on Lyndale Farmstead with the comment that “few changes have been made during the year,” and noted minor improvements to the warehouses and greenhouses, he finally got to the point. “The building serves as the residence of the Superintendent,” he wrote, “with an attached office and drafting room…This residence makes it possible for your Superintendent to keep in closest touch with the administration plant and the work directed from there with the least loss of time, while the facilities of the offices will enable him to do a large amount of clerical and engineering work before and after the routine work of the day. The constant interruptions unavoidably encountered at the general office at all times, make it almost impossible to do justice to the large amount of preparatory work which your Superintendent should attend to.”

As far as the park board was concerned, that was the end of it. The two “administration” rooms in the walk-out basement—in reality Wirth’s home office—were used to define the three-story home above them. The pretense of an administration building to justify a private residence in a park was exposed a bit the following year when Wirth requested permission to keep a cow, a pony and chickens on the property for the use of his family. The board granted that request.

The charade of an administration building was not continued when Wirth finally retired in 1935; he remained in the home for another ten years as superintendent emeritus until, in 1945, he moved to San Diego for health reasons. Wirth’s successor as superintendent, Christian Bossen, never lived in the house, and presumably made do with an office only at city hall, because he retired in the year that Wirth vacated the house.

With a house built for the superintendent and greenhouses completed in 1910, the campaign for more facilities at Lyndale Farmstead did not end. Over the next several years Wirth urged the board to build laundry facilities for washing the towels and rented swimsuits from the Lake Calhoun bath house and linens from the refectories at Lake Harriet and Minnehaha Falls, a “show house” for flowers, a second equipment shed, even a cottage for the shop foreman.

Wirth’s plan for the property in the 1913 annual report included all those things, and it showed an outline of the old King farmhouse, which was to be removed. It showed no recreation spaces, but in 1914, two tennis courts were installed at the corner of 38th and Bryant in what was the first effort to have the park property serve the immediate neighborhood—which had paid assessments for the acquisition of land for the residence. Sometime in the late 1910s the park board also created a small ball field near 39th and Colfax. That space was included on a list of park properties that were provided skating rinks in 1918.

In 1917, still without a laundry, Wirth encouraged the board to sell the land south of 40th Street between King’s Highway and Colfax to pay for better facilities at the Farmstead. He noted then that one of the old barns still on the property was the “worst kind of fire trap.” He was prescient.

In 1920, fire destroyed the old buildings that had survived the fire of 1908, which prompted Wirth to create a new plan for the property. It included detailed plans for new buildings, as well as other recommendations for improvement: fill the pond on King’s Highway (although it had been featured in

earlier Wirth plans for the property, he now called it a "land-locked swamp"), provide tennis courts and lawn games at Bryant and 38th, enlarge the ball field near 39th and Colfax, and finally, once again, remove the old King home.

Shortly after Wirth's 1920 plan was published, the owners of the old King farm house, no longer the King family, came forward with an offer to sell. The acquisition had been "given consideration for years," the board noted, but until that time the owners wouldn't sell. They finally did, and for $4,500 the last two lots of the park were purchased. The sellers were given six months to remove the old King house. There is no record in park board documents of whether the house was moved or demolished.

Apparently unsuccessful with his plea to sell the block of Lyndale Farmstead south of 40th to pay for a laundry, in 1921 Wirth encouraged the sale of those same lots to pay for building a new pavilion at Lake Harriet. (This time not over the water, he wrote.) He estimated that the sale of those lots would bring $35,000.

The first of those lots were sold in 1922, and despite a new plan that Wirth created for Lyndale Farmstead in 1924, which showed tennis courts on the southeast corner of 40th and King's Highway, the remainder of the block south of 40th was sold in 1925. In all about 1.2 acres of land were sold. (In 1924 neighborhood residents protested plans of one of the new property owners to build a duplex, but the park board claimed that it couldn't stipulate that only single-family homes could be built on the property it had sold or intended to sell.)

New buildings were constructed at Lyndale Farmstead in 1922 and the board approved filling the pond. In Wirth's eyes, however, the warehouses and shops still needed improving. In 1923 he provided plans for another new three-story building on the property at an estimated cost of $67,000. Along the way the park board was starting to catch flak from the neighborhood about the piles of machinery and supplies on the property. In response to a petition from neighbors across Bryant Avenue to have equipment removed from the land facing their property, the park board replied that the land had been acquired for the purposes of storage and maintenance and it would be used as that for "all time to come."

Protests about the appearance of the grounds did have an impact, however, because Wirth's 1924 plan showed a fenced enclosure of the warehouse yards, plus twelve tennis courts along 38th, the ball field enlarged to "full size," and a playground in the "wooded grounds" west of the superintendent's house.

In his annual reports Wirth kept up the pressure to add warehouse space to the farmstead and in 1929, the board dedicated bond funding to building a warehouse. The newest addition to the farmstead was completed in 1930.

As on most park property in the city, those were the last improvements made for many years. In 1952, park superintendent Charles Doell wrote that the park board needed more space and the renovation of structures that were built "before the department was mechanized."

Upon Theodore Wirth's departure from Minneapolis in 1945, ten years after his retirement, Doell succeeded Christian Bossen as superintendent of parks, and took up residence in the superintendent's house in the park. Upon Doell's retirement in 1959, the park board did not offer Doell's successor, Howard Moore, the opportunity to live in the house. Some park commissioners at the time considered a house for the superintendent an elitist perk and wanted to consider other uses for the property, including offices. In April 1961, however, after the residence had sat empty for two years, the park board recommended that occupancy of the residence be extended to Moore on the same terms as Wirth and

Doell, "recognizing the desirability," it said, of having the superintendent living near the central warehouse, shops and greenhouses. Although the board approved the resolution, park commissioner George Todd, the business manager of a labor union, requested that proceedings show he voted "No" on the resolution.

Succeeding superintendent's Robert Ruhe, Charles Spears and David Fisher lived in the house until 1997, when Fisher requested permission to live in a house of his own choosing, which the park board granted.

The modest play facilities that were created at Lyndale Farmstead—never the twelve tennis courts proposed by Wirth—were upgraded in 1977 when a recreation center was constructed near 39th and Colfax and the playground was rebuilt.

It took longer for the park board to upgrade its service facilities. In 1987 the park board built a completely new service center on the property, finally replacing the 1920s buildings. The state legislature, through the Metropolitan Council, financed about one-third of the $4.5 million cost.

The site is now the home not only to service facilities, but the environmental operations of the park board, a use that could not have been imagined when the property was first devoted to the maintenance of park board properties.

When David Fisher moved out of the superintendent's house in 1997, the park board rented the building to the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association for offices. In 2004, the park board took back the space for offices for its staff. In 2008, The Foundation for Minneapolis Parks began using the former residence for its offices.

The most recent developments in the park included a new playground and general site improvements in 2002. The East Harriet neighborhood contributed neighborhood revitalization funds to the project, but the bulk of the cost was paid with city bonds.

Lyndale Park

Table of Contents

Location: King's Highway to Penn Avenue, Lakewood Cemetery to West 42nd Street

Size: 61 acres (included in acreage for Lake Harriet)

Name: The name was taken from the name of William King's farm, Lyndale Farm, which once surrounded Lake Harriet. King donated much of the land for Lyndale Park, as well as most of the land around Lake Harriet, to the park board. King named his farm after his father, Lyndon King, a preacher from upstate New York, where William King was raised. The name of the park was stipulated when the land was donated.

William S. King

William King and his wife, Caroline, donated considerable land for parks in Minneapolis. They donated the shores of Lake Harriet, Lyndale Park and King's Highway. (The park board also eventually purchased the site of King's farmhouse and barns, which became Lyndale Farmstead Park.) King was a powerful and eloquent proponent of creating parks in the city before the park board was created and he

served as a park commissioner on the first park board in 1883. Most important, he was the driving force behind the legislation that created the park board.

Long before the park board was established King worked to create parks in the city, including as founder and editor of one of Minneapolis's first newspapers. In 1869, when the city council refused to purchase as a park forty acres of land near what is today the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, King joined three others, including George Brackett and Dorilus Morrison, to purchase the land themselves and improve it as a park. They hoped that the city council would someday change its mind and designate the land for a park, which didn't happen. (For more on what happened to that land, see Dorilus Morrison Park and Washburn Fair Oaks Park.).

Two years later, King was one of the principal founders of Lakewood Cemetery near his farm. Soon after, he proposed to sell 250 acres of his 1,400-acre farm to the city as a park for $50,000. The land he offered would have surrounded Lake Harriet. The offer was reportedly met with derision by some, who told King to stop trying to unload his farm on the city for such an exorbitant sum and go back to Washington, D.C., where he lived part of the time while serving as postmaster of the United States Congress. He later represented Minnesota in the U. S. Congress from 1875 to 1877.

In 1883 King resurrected a dormant Board of Trade, which functioned as a chamber of commerce for Minneapolis. One of the first actions of the revitalized board, with King as its secretary, was to draft a bill—and convince the legislature to pass it—that created the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners. The legislation was approved by voters in a referendum on April 3, 1883. Charles Loring, the first president of the new park board, credited King with getting the bill through the legislature. At one point in the campaign to pass the "Park Act" referendum, Loring offered to step down from the list of the first twelve appointed commissioners if naming William King in his place would ensure the referendum's success.

After Minneapolis voters had approved the Park Act by referendum in April 1883, King told the Board of Trade, "The intelligence, the pride, the public spirit and the humanity of our people have at last been vindicated. That mean, wicked and cruel spirit of selfishness and greed which for so many years has obstructed and defeated every effort to endow our city with public parks, has, at length, been overcome by the uprising and better sentiment and nobler spirit of our citizens."

William King did serve as a park commissioner 1883-1887, however, even though he was not among the first twelve commissioners appointed by the legislation that created the park board. He was elected by other park commissioners to fill a vacancy when two of the appointed commissioners declined to serve. It was a fitting recognition of King's efforts to create parks in the city and demonstrated the high regard of other park commissioners for what Charles Loring called King's "magnetism."

Before his donation of land for Lyndale Park, King was the actual donor to the park board of most of Lake Harriet. The park board was stymied in its first efforts to acquire Lake Harriet by an appraisal of the land at almost $300,000, a daunting sum. But Henry Beard, James Merritt and Charles Reeve came forward with an offer to donate a strip of land around the lake for a parkway. Ownership of the land at that time was in dispute, however, and the courts determined that King was the rightful owner of most of Lake Harriet. When the courts decided the dispute in King's favor, in an act of what Loring called "characteristic generosity," King honored the offer of the other men to donate the land for a park.

The house and barns of King's Lyndale Farm were also eventually acquired by the park board and became Lyndale Farmstead Park. As part of his donation of land for Lyndale Park, King also donated

the land for what became King's Highway, which ran past his farm. King's Highway today extends from Dupont and 36th to Dupont and 46th streets and from there west to Lake Harriet. The original land donated by the Kings for the highway, however began at Dupont and 38th Street. The extension of the highway north to 36th was made possible by a purchase of a strip of land from Lakewood Cemetery.

In addition to Lyndale Farm, King had a home in the city on Nicollet Island, on the site of the present DeLaSalle High School.

Acquisition

The acquisition of Lyndale Park and King's Highway was a tangled affair. In May of 1890 Minneapolis newspapers trumpeted the generous donation by William and Caroline King of land that one paper said would become the "picnic ground par excellence" of the park system. The donation was of land to the north and northeast of Lake Harriet. It would take the park board more than a year, however, to accept the donation, because King's donation had strings attached.

King attached a few conditions to the donation that the park board was reluctant to accept. One condition was easily met. King stipulated that he would donate forty acres of land if Lakewood Cemetery would also donate thirty-five acres of its land just north of the lake. That was no problem. King had been one of the cemetery's founders in 1871 and the cemetery's board of trustees was still controlled by King's friends, such as Charles Loring and George Brackett, who had been so instrumental in the creation of Minneapolis parks. In a short time, the cemetery association delivered a deed for its land to the park board. The only condition of that deed was that the land be dedicated to park purposes and be known as Lyndale Park.

The other conditions proved more complicated. First King asked for improvement of the park, including construction of a road through it within one year of his donation. The park board, strapped for cash after its initial park acquisitions and improvements, couldn't promise that. King eventually relented on that condition and extended the time for improvements to five years, which removed one major hurdle to the acquisition.

The second condition was trickier. King asked that his remaining land in the area be exempted from assessments for park improvements until those assessments reached $100,000, the value King placed on the land he was donating.

Neither of the two conditions was unusual at the time, but the sum of money was. Many donations of land to the park board at the time had similar conditions attached. The donation of land for parks was motivated at times in those days by the likely appreciation of adjoining land when a park was created. Park-front property was highly desirable. In fact, that had always been one of the arguments for the creation of a park board: parks would pay for themselves in the increased valuation of other land nearby and therefore higher real estate tax collections. This proved true in the case of Lyndale Park even before King's donation was accepted. Newspapers reported that lots near the proposed park nearly tripled in value when the donation was first announced, and many lots that had been for sale in the vicinity were taken off the market in anticipation of further appreciation.

The other problem was that King didn't own outright all of the land he proposed to donate. Much of it was mortgaged. The primary mortgage holders were Charles Loring and his partner in real estate investments, Henry Brown. (For more on Henry Brown's contribution to Minneapolis parks, see Minnehaha Park.) They held about $50,000 in mortgages on the land.

Nearly a year after the original proposal of King to donate land had grabbed newspaper headlines, the board voted to accept the donation on King's terms. But that was not the end of the story. The final chapter would not be written for another ten years.

The issue of the mortgages held on the land by Loring and Brown was apparently not completely resolved at the time, because in 1893 park commissioner Patrick Ryan, who had defeated Charles Loring for a seat on the board in 1890, inquired into the status of that mortgage. The inquiry was referred to the park board's attorney. Loring had been elected to the park board once again in 1893 and was again the president of the board at that time. However at the end of 1893 Loring resigned his position on the park board, he said, to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest in a matter then before the board.

While that conflict of interest was never defined, action by the park board in early 1894 may explain it. While the issue of a release of Loring and Brown's mortgage on the King property was never mentioned again in park board proceedings, on May 7, 1894 the park board, without explanation, issued a quit claim deed to Loring and Brown for four lots the park board owned south of Lake Harriet. Reading between the lines, one could surmise that the four lots were deeded to Loring and Brown in exchange for a release of their mortgage on the land at Lyndale Park. It is highly unlikely that the property deeded to Loring and Brown had a value near the $50,000 mortgage they had held on King's property.

Twenty-four years later, William Folwell wrote a letter to the park board claiming that he had it on good authority, perhaps from his friend Charles Loring, that Loring had been the true donor of Lyndale Park to the city. A small clipping from park board proceedings that year, referencing Folwell's letter and its claim, was pasted by Loring in his scrapbook. That Loring considered the note of enough importance to save, one of the only clippings from park board proceedings in his scrapbooks, lends credence to Folwell's claim.

But even with the mysterious deeding of land to Loring and Brown in 1894, the final chapter of King's donation of Lyndale Park was not yet written.

In 1901, King's widow, Caroline, and his son, Preston, filed a claim against the park board for not complying with the condition that Lyndale Park be improved within five years of the donation. By that time the park board had acquired, in part through a foreclosure sale, most of the former Lyndale Farmstead, including the barns and other buildings. The park board settled the King's claim by paying them $5,325 and swapping title to some property at the farmstead. Caroline King reclaimed title to the land which the old farmhouse occupied, and gave the park board title to the three remaining lots it did not own from 37th to 39th between Bryant Avenue and King's Highway.

The claim and the settlement prompted William Folwell to write in the annual report of 1901, "The transaction is another testimony to the unwisdom of accepting titles with conditions, unless under exceptional circumstances." Not to challenge the counsel of William Folwell, who had a vision for Minneapolis parks that was matched by no one, but with the benefit of one hundred years of hindsight, the acquisition of Lyndale Park from the Kings and Lakewood Cemetery for such a small sum, would today qualify as exceptional circumstances that justified the aggravation at the time.

Development

From the time William King first proposed to donate the land for Lyndale Park and King's Highway, the property received intense interest. Park board proceedings of August 5, 1890 recorded that landscape

architect Horace Cleveland had submitted a letter on the use of the land. The contents of that letter are not known.

Charles Loring also weighed in with a forward-thinking opinion on the land in the annual report he wrote for 1893. “In no park,” he wrote, “have we a more suitable place for athletic sports and children’s playgrounds and none that will be more accessible.” He went on to recommend that a small area in the park be laid out for “the exclusive use of little children, where piles of sand, swings, seesaws and other proper appliances of amusement and exercise shall be furnished by the Board.”

Also in 1893 the board reserved a tract of land at Lyndale Park for a nursery and directed Superintendent William Berry to consult with nurserymen across the country about stocking it with trees and shrubs that could be used throughout the park system.

The actual development of the property took some time however, as the entire nation plunged into recession in 1893. The impact on the park board was dramatic. For years, the board had no money to spend for acquisitions or improvements. The park board had to borrow money just to maintain a few of the city’s parks and the maintenance of most parks was neglected completely.

The first improvements to Lyndale Park occurred in 1904 when the park board built a road over the lowlands between Lyndale Park and the pavilion at Lake Harriet, created a concourse at the top of the hill near King’s Highway overlooking the lake, and planted trees in the park. The work was done to a plan by landscape architect Warren Manning, with some changes suggested by Charles Loring.

Several prominent landscape architects, in addition to Horace Cleveland, were associated with Lyndale Park. In 1894 the sons and successors to the landscape architecture business of Frederick Law Olmsted were consulted about designing the new park. Olmsted was the famous designer of many parks in the United States, most notably Central Park in New York City, (By that time age and illness had incapacitated Horace Cleveland, who had designed most of the city’s first parks and still lived in Minneapolis at the time.) The park board had little money, however, and the Olmsteds never actually developed designs for the park. Five years later, the park board hired another well-known landscape architect, Warren Manning, to develop plans for the park, but those plans were not implemented. Manning also submitted a review of the entire park system, which was appended to the park board’s 1899 annual report. In 1904, with Minneapolis’s economy booming again, Manning was hired to revise his plans for Lyndale Park and the first improvements were made to the park.

The transformation of Lyndale Park, however, awaited the arrival of Theodore Wirth as park superintendent in 1906. At the end of his first year in Minneapolis, Wirth submitted in the 1906 annual report extensive recommendations for the improvement of Lake Harriet and Lyndale Park. (Wirth noted that Lyndale Park was really a part of Lake Harriet Park and one name should embrace the “entire territory.”) He made dramatic suggestions for changing the lakeshore of the lake, including adding a peninsula on the west side of the lake. As for Lyndale Park on the east shore, he said “not one single acre can at present be classed as being in serviceable condition,” Wirth had two ideas. First, the area from the pavilion east would be filled with material dredged from the lake to create playing fields surrounded by groves of trees. Second, the eastern and southern sections of the park would be devoted to “educational purposes on plant life.”

His first suggestion for Lyndale Park was never followed; his second was—with spectacular results. Wirth proposed two types of gardens for the area. First, a rose garden, which would, in addition to providing “beauty and pleasure,” provide “an instructive lesson on what roses to grow and how.” Above

the rose garden, he proposed "a garden of trees, shrubs, and wild and cultivated flowers of every description." The garden would be planted so that in every season something would be blooming and each plant would be properly labeled. Wirth wrote that "the educational service of the grounds towards home beautifying is inestimable."

It was the beginning of gardens that have been loved by generations of Minneapolis citizens. The first project to be initiated in 1907 was the rose garden. Wirth had created the first municipal rose garden in the United States in his previous position as superintendent of parks in Hartford, Connecticut. Under the direction of newly hired park florist Louis Boeglin, Wirth set out to replicate that success. (Boeglin eventually became the head of all horticulture in Minneapolis parks and remained in that position until 1940.) The rose garden was completed in 1908 and the next year Wirth called it a "great success."

A perennial flower garden was begun on land that had once been the nursery in 1909 after Wirth moved most of the nursery stock to Glenwood Park. The road from King's Highway to Lake Harriet was built in 1910.

Over the next few years, the gardens were gradually developed, but had not yet caught on with the public. In 1914 Wirth called the rose garden an inspiring scene, but lamented that it was "remarkable that only a small proportion of our population visits this ground, or even knows about it."

The public visibility of the gardens got a boost beginning in 1917 when the first playground pageant was performed on the hill above the rose garden overlooking the lake. The playground pageants included performances written specifically for the occasion and featured children in costumes from every park in the city. The first year the pageant drew a crowd of 15,000 and in later years the performance was extended to two evenings and played to crowds of 40,000. The pageant remained a popular annual event, with a hiatus during the Depression, until 1941. The pageants drew such large crowds that in 1930 the park board considered building an 18,000-seat amphitheater on the hillside at Lyndale Park to accommodate pageant crowds and host other outdoor concerts. With the onset of the Great Depression, however, funds for such a project never materialized.

In 1924, Louis Boeglin, the park board horticulturist, planted a large new garden of perennial and annual flowers on the northern edge of the park west from King's Highway. The garden was 1,000-feet long and from four- to twenty-feet wide and contained 10,000 plants. Wirth noted that the new planting attracted an unusual amount of attention and thousands of visitors. That year Louis Boeglin also proposed a rock garden planted with Alpine plants to the west of the new garden stretching toward the lake. With the creation of the perennial garden Lyndale Park replaced the Armory Garden at The Parade as the premier garden in the city. In fact Wirth proposed that with the decline in the Armory Garden and the need to replenish the soil there it would make sense to concentrate floriculture and plant collections at Lyndale, instead of renovating the Armory Garden. He went so far as to suggest that the Armory Garden might be better devoted to tennis courts.

Boeglin's idea for a rock garden at Lyndale Park took a few years to develop, but he finally implemented his plan in 1929. He brought in Oneonta dolomite rocks collected from the Mississippi River bluffs in Wisconsin for the garden and planted alpine plants around them. Unfortunately, the rock garden fell into disrepair in the 1940s after Boeglin retired from the park board and was eventually overgrown with trees. It was not rediscovered and resurrected as a Rock Garden until the 1980s and was later transformed into the Peace Garden.

The next important development at the park was its official designation as a bird sanctuary in 1936. The designation had been requested by the Minnesota Audubon Society. One of Christian Bossen's first acts as the new park superintendent in 1936, after Wirth retired, was to request the park board to designate the park as a bird sanctuary. The park board went him one better and designated all city parks as bird refuges. One of Bossen's favorite places in Minneapolis parks was the trail through the wetlands north of Lake Harriet. Upon his death in 1956 his ashes were scattered along the path that is now named Bossen Lane. The bird sanctuary was named in 1947 for Thomas Sadler Roberts, a retired doctor who had become a professor of ornithology at the University of Minnesota and director of the university's museum of natural history.

A fountain was installed in Lyndale Park in 1947 thanks to Frank Heffelfinger. Heffelfinger had seen the bronze and marble fountain in Florence, Italy, bought it and had it dismantled and shipped home to Minneapolis. He donated it to the park board and it was dedicated in Lyndale Park in 1947. Heffelfinger's donation came shortly after the addition of an official test rose garden for the All America Rose Selections in 1946. The patio around the fountain was installed in 1988.

A second fountain was installed in the park in 1963. The Phelps Fountain or "Turtle Fountain," had originally been a gift from long-time park commissioner Edmund Phelps in 1915 for The Gateway in downtown Minneapolis. When the Gateway neighborhood became the focus of urban renewal in the early 1960s and the city bought the original Gateway park from the park board, the fountain was moved to Lyndale Park. A new perennial garden was built around the newly installed fountain as part of a five-year expansion of the gardens in the park, and the old perennial border garden along the park's northern border was abandoned. The former perennial border garden was later converted to a perennial test garden maintained by the Men's Garden Club of Minneapolis.

The transformation of the Rock Garden into the Peace Garden had its roots in 1963, when the Japanese American Society donated cherry trees to be planted in Lyndale Park. At the time the Rock Garden itself was overgrown with trees. That changed in 1981 when a tornado blew through the park and knocked down many trees. In the process of clearing the toppled trees, the Rock Garden was rediscovered by park horticulturist Mary Lerman.

Lerman launched an effort that over the next 17 years re-established the rock garden and led to the creation of the Peace Garden. The transformation relied largely on donations from the public and a great deal of volunteer labor as well to implement a new design for the garden created by Betty Ann Addison. A wooden "peace bridge" was installed in the lower garden in 1985 flanked by stones donated from the post-atomic bomb wreckage of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. In 1988 a peace pole, a gift from Japan to Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser, was installed nearby. The pole is inscribed in four languages with the phrase "May peace prevail on earth."

In 2005 the "Spirit of Peace" sculpture by Caprice Glaser was added to the garden. The twelve-foot-tall bronze sculpture depicts the folding of an origami paper crane. In addition, the original peace bridge was replaced. Both improvements were accomplished primarily with donations.

Additional Sources

Letter from Charles Loring to George Brackett in George A. Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
Interview with Mary Maguire Lerman, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2007

Lynnhurst Field Park

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Location: Minnehaha Parkway and West 50th Street

Size: 8.11 acres

Name: A 1934 report on park names attributed the name to the Lynnhurst District in which the park is located. A report in 1975 speculated that that name was derived from the many linden trees in the area. It is as likely, however, that the name derived from Lyndale Farm, William King's farm that once included most of Lake Harriet. King named his farm for his father Lyndon King. The Lynnhurst Field name was adopted April 20, 1921 shortly after the park was acquired. During acquisition proceedings the land was referred to as Remington Park, after the legal name of the subdivision.

Acquisition and Development

The land for Lynnhurst Field was designated for purchase by the park board on February 16, 1921. The park board paid $24,800 for the land. The purchase concluded four years after the park board first decided to acquire land in the area for a park.

The park board had first designated land for the park in late 1917. At that time the park board envisioned a much larger park than it eventually acquired, extending one block further north (toward Lake Harriet) than the present park and another block west to Knox Avenue between 49th and 50th. The resolution to acquire the land also included a resolution to improve the land, creating playfields. After the first designation of the land, the matter fell from park board proceedings for nearly two years until, in November 1919, the park board again designated land for the park (the same day it designated land for what became Linden Hills Field), but this time without the block between Knox and James, and deferred improvement of the land. The board simply stated that it did not need the extra block to create the park. The park board's annual report of 1919 said it that was completing the acquisition of 19.1 acres for the park.

The acquisition proceeded smoothly until the appraisers appointed by the board made their report in late 1920. Owners of the property to be taken for the park appealed the award amounts in district court. The court then appointed three new appraisers and they couldn't agree on the value of the land, although they all appraised it at a higher value than had the appraisers appointed by the park board. Faced with paying more than it had planned for the land, the park board abandoned efforts to acquire the two blocks north of the present park. It decided that the nearly ten acres at the present location were "sufficient" for a playground for the neighborhood. The sums involved illustrate the demands on park board resources at the time. The land it chose not to acquire would have cost an additional $7,500—and today is likely worth millions.

The official acquisition date for Lynnhurst Field, February 16, 1921, is when the park board approved the acquisition of the smaller area. The park board vacated Irving Avenue through the park and asked park superintendent Theodore Wirth to prepare plans for the park.

In the 1921 annual report Wirth published a plan for Linden Hills Field and noted that the plan for Lynnhurst Field was an exact duplicate of Linden Hills in its appointments, which included a community building, outdoor gymnastic apparatus with separate spaces for men and women, play areas for children, athletic fields, tennis and volleyball courts and horseshoe pits. Wirth noted that "early

execution" of the plan for this "very fast growing district" was important because a park was needed as much as the school—Burroughs School—that had been built the year before across the street from the park near 50th and Humboldt. Wirth also wrote that a "sufficient" part of the grounds was devoted to plantings and lawns to give the field an attractive appearance.

As with many park plans generated in that time, the plan would eventually be modified. By 1925 the park had yet to be developed and in the 1925 annual report Wirth wrote that people in the neighborhood were "exceedingly anxious" to have the park improved and were circulating petitions among property owners to agree to be assessed for the costs of building the park. One of the problems was that, as was the case with so many other neighborhood parks, the property was "low, swampy land." Wirth's 1925 plan included a "larger proportion" of the ground for active service and a smaller part for "ornamentation" than in his original plan. Included in the plan were ten tennis courts.

Even with a new plan in hand, the park board didn't proceed with improvements until 1927, when it hired architects Downs and Eads to design a shelter for the park. The park was finally developed in 1928 into playing fields and playgrounds, with a shelter to serve as a warming house for skaters. The original development included only two tennis courts, but eight more were added along 49th street in 1930.

Lynnhurst Field was singled out for improvements on the park board's 1945 list of post-war projects—and it was one of the few projects on that list that was eventually funded. In 1948 those improvements began and the annual report of that year included an explanation of why they were necessary. The park had been built on peat that ranged in depth from six to thirty-seven feet. The peat had sunk over the years, which wreaked havoc on concrete slabs poured for tennis courts, as well as graded fields. The old courts were removed, the peat was excavated and the ground prepared for new courts. The old play areas were also enlarged and the wading pool, which had been built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s, was replaced. The makeover of the park was completed in 1949.

The first time that Lynnhurst offered full-time, year round programming at the recreation center was in 1958.

Noting an interest by community groups in improving the park, the park board reported in its 1963 annual report that plans had been drawn for remodeling the recreation center and outside facilities. But those plans were not implemented. Instead, by 1968 the park board had developed plans to re-develop the park dramatically in 1970 and 1971 with $450,000 in city bonds. The board reported at that time that the redevelopment of the park offered an "unusual opportunity" to blend the parkway and the outlet from Lake Harriet to Minnehaha Creek into a community park.

In 1970 the board took action to seize that opportunity. The board approved a plan that placed a new community center with a gymnasium south of West 50th Street on land leased from the school board adjacent to Burroughs School, and closed Minnehaha Parkway on the west side of the outlet from Lake Harriet to Minnehaha Creek from 49th to 50th to integrate the park with the overflow channel. In addition to building the community center across 50th from the main park, a toilet building and warming house were added on the park side of 50th and the old shelter was demolished.

The gym at Lynnhurst Park and Burroughs School was supposed to be step one of a two-step plan. The park board agreed to build the gym that could be used by Burroughs school and in return the school board would add a gym at Kenwood School for use by park programs. The second step didn't happen until more than ten years later, when the school board finally renovated and expanded Kenwood School in the early 1980s.

Following a fire in the school building, the old school was demolished, and a new Burroughs school was built further west on the school board's property in 2005. The school is no longer connected to the community center.

Most recently, the Lynnhurst playground equipment was replaced in 1996, and the community center was renovated.

Additional Source
Albert Wittman, *Writing in Progress: The Minneapolis Park and Recreation System 1945-2000,* unpublished manuscript, 2000.

Main Street

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Location: From Hennepin Avenue to Father Hennepin Bluff Park on the east bank of the river.

Size: 5.61 acres

Name: The name is descriptive. The street was the original Main Street of the town of St. Anthony.

Acquisition and Development

The street and the adjacent river bank were turned over to the park board by the city in 1979 at the same time that the park board acquired its first land on Nicollet Island. The acquisitions were part of a plan developed in 1977 for the central riverfront by the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board, a joint effort of the park board, the city council and the Minneapolis Community Development Agency. The historic street linked Father Hennepin Bluff Park downstream with the developments planned for Nicollet Island and Boom Island farther upstream.

Main Street was linked to Nicollet Island in 1987 when Hennepin County floated a span of the Broadway Avenue Bridge, which was being replaced, downriver to connect Merriam Street on Nicollet Island to Main Street.

The entrance to Water Power Park, which provides access to the edge of St. Anthony Falls, is located off Main Street.

The Mall

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Location: Hennepin Avenue to Calhoun Boulevard on 29th Street

Size: 4.91 acres; 0.32 mile drive

Name: The five-block boulevard from Hennepin Avenue to the lakes was known as Twenty-ninth Street Boulevard at the time of its acquisition in May, 1912 until it was officially named The Mall on December 17, 1912. The name was selected after the unusual action by the park board of requesting public input in choosing a name. Park board records indicate that the Lake Calhoun Improvement Association submitted recommendations and shortly after, the name "The Mall" was chosen. The recommendations of the improvement association are not recorded, but it is likely, given the request for input, that the name chosen was among those preferred by the neighborhood group.

Acquisition and Development

Less than a month after the huge public celebration of the opening of the channel that linked Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun in July 1911, the park board received a petition requesting the park board to create a parkway from Hennepin Avenue to the new channel along the south side of the railroad tracks. That the issue was already being widely discussed, at least in the neighborhood, is demonstrated by the fact that the board received petitions at the same time from people who opposed the new parkway.

Those who wanted the parkway, a group organized under the name of The Lake District Protective Association, presented the park board with a check for $460 in September to pay for the cost of appraisals of the land to be taken and the expense of assessing the costs to property owners in the vicinity. With that as an inducement, the board proceeded to determine the cost of acquiring the land and building a parkway.

A couple contemporary developments in the neighborhood seemed to motivate residents to request that parkway. At the west end was the symbol-of-progress channel that connected the lakes. But perhaps as importantly, at the east end was the sparkling new classical Walker Library on Hennepin Avenue, which was also completed in 1911.

The true motivation for the Lake District Protective Association, however, may have been that the strip of land beside the railroad tracks was coveted by some who proposed industrial developments there. To many people, industrial use of that land would have been incompatible with the symbols of progress and refinement that stood at either end of it.

On October 16, 1911 the park board designated the land for acquisition and estimated that the total cost of acquisition and development would be $123,349, with slightly more than $80,000 to buy the land. The understanding from the beginning was that the total amount would be assessed on benefited districts —or property in the surrounding neighborhood.

The park board proceeded to prepare detailed lists of how much what it would pay property owners and how much it would assess surrounding property for the costs and presented them in March 1912. A final round of community meetings was held to determine willingness to pay for the improvements and on April 1, 1912 a citizens group called the Committee of Six, composed equally of proponents and opponents to the plans for the mall, agreed to defer to the decision of the park board in the matter. The park board took little time to confirm the damage awards and assessments, doing so on May 6, 1912.

The land taken for the parkway included seven houses, which were sold and removed from the land before road construction began.

The double roadway that was built is noteworthy in park history because it was used to test a new method of pavement: a two-course pavement of concrete and an asphalt-concrete mix. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth imported two paving experts, one from Winnipeg and one from Chicago, to assist with the construction. Wirth sought permission to pay the additional expenses of hiring the experts only after they had been paid and returned home, but the board retroactively approved those payments. Wirth deemed the pavement result such a success that the method was then used on other parkways.

Wirth changed his opinion on the surfacing material, however, within a few years. He determined that the asphalt concrete mix was too expensive and not durable enough. It was already apparent to Wirth within a few years that The Mall pavement would have to be repaired. This was at a time when more than half of the parkways in the city were still not paved at all.

In 1921, when the repaving was authorized, Wirth complained in his annual report that restrictions were needed on vehicles and loads on parkways because pavements could not withstand the heavy traffic to which they were being subjected.

In 1914 when the parkway was completed and landscaped, Wirth reported that it had become a favorite route of "automobilists" driving to and from Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet.

The Mall was the site of another experiment in park engineering when in 1923 the Minneapolis General Electric Company installed test lighting consisting of 12-foot ornamental standards with 400 candle-power incandescent lights 100 feet apart along the parkway. Wirth noted in his memoirs that the cost of operation and maintenance of the lights on The Mall proved too costly for system-wide use.

In Wirth's reminiscences of his first twenty-five years as park superintendent, published in the 1930 annual report, he included before and after photos of The Mall. He selected several other locations for before and after photos too, but his inclusion of The Mall photos attaches, from the distance of eighty years, an odd importance to a park property that did not play a very large role in the life of the city or in his own formidable portfolio of accomplishments.

The Mall largely disappeared from public and park board attention until in 1962 the City Council requested an easement along The Mall for street and parking purposes. The park board approved the easement until a howl of protest from the neighborhood forced them to rescind their action before the City Council had time to formally accept it.

The only significant development on The Mall since it was constructed was the closing of the intersection with Hennepin Avenue when the old Walker Library was replaced with a new underground library at Hennepin and Lagoon in 1981. The library board asked to purchase a piece of The Mall for the new library, but the park board refused. It cited its land policy, developed in the 1960s at a time when roads and freeways were encroaching on park property, which rejected the sale of any useful park land for any reason.

Roads being roads, however, the park board did spend over $400,000 to repave the road and replace the lighting on The Mall in 1989. Now instead of providing a buffer between railroad tracks and apartment buildings, The Mall serves as a pleasant stretch of green alongside the bike trail that now occupies the former tracks.

Marcy Park

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Location: 11th Avenue and 7th Street SE

Size: 1.27 acres

Name: The park was named for Marcy School which once occupied the land. The present Marcy Open School is next to Holmes Park on 4th Street SE. It was built in 1992 on the site of the old Holmes School.

Marcy School was named for William A. Marcy a leader of the national Democratic Party before the Civil War. He was a senator from New York who later became Secretary of War and Secretary of State.

Acquisition and Development

It is appropriate that the neighborhood in southeast Minneapolis is named the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood with a hyphen. Both names come from elementary schools in the old southeastern section of what used to be St. Anthony, thus the "southeast" designation of the streets in the area.

The first Marcy school was built in 1878 at 9th Avenue SE and 5th Street SE, land that is now covered by Interstate Highway 35W. In 1890 Holmes School (named for Oliver Wendell Holmes) was built six blocks to the east of the first Marcy School.

The first Marcy School was replaced by a second Marcy School in 1908 at 11th Avenue SE and 7th Street SE two blocks north and east of the original school by that name. That is the location of the present Marcy Park.

What makes the names a bit confusing is that in 1992 a third Marcy School was built—on the site of the old Holmes School, which is next to Holmes Park. So Marcy Park is not next to Marcy School, Holmes Park is. Marcy Park replaced Marcy School and Marcy School replaced Homes School, but Holmes Park is still Holmes Park, just no longer next to Holmes School.

In 1976 the park board expressed its desire to acquire the Marcy School site for a park once the school closed. In 1979 the park board agreed to pay the school board the "fair market value" of the school site, $150,000. The old school grounds were promptly landscaped and outfitted with playground apparatus for smaller children. (See Holmes Park for more of the story of parks in the neighborhood.)

Marshall Terrace Park

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Location: Marshall Street and 27th Avenue Northeast

Size: 6.55 acres

Name: At the time of its acquisition in 1914 the park was known informally as Northeast Riverside Park. The park was officially named in 1915 for Marshall Street, which passes by the park. The street was named for former Minnesota governor William Marshall. One name considered by the board for the new park was Folwell Terrace, to honor William Folwell, first president of the University of Minnesota and president of the park board 1895-1903. William Marshall played an indirect role in the development of the Minneapolis park system by hiring Horace Cleveland to plan Marshall's development in the early 1870s of what became the St. Anthony Park neighborhood in St. Paul. Cleveland's work on that project, as well as other private contracts in the area, kept him active and visible in the region, prior to the creation of the Minneapolis park board in 1883 and the board's subsequent hiring of Cleveland to develop overall recommendations for the new park system.

Acquisition and Development

The land for Marshall Terrace was purchased in 1914 for about $15,500. Land for a park in the neighborhood had first been designated in 1913, at Marshall Street between 33rd and 37th Avenue Northeast, but due to protests from neighborhood residents the acquisition was abandoned. The board

noted that it was "impracticable" to acquire the land as designated. Instead the board chose to make a thorough canvass of the First Ward, including aldermen and citizens, to select a location for one or more parks that may be acquired and "make every effort to establish the parks to the satisfaction of the people of the First Ward." (The land originally designated for Northeast Riverside Park was in fact later acquired by the park board and became part of St. Anthony Parkway.)

In May 1914, the board designated new land for the northeast riverside park and approved its purchase. The description of the land was changed slightly in a new resolution to acquire the land in August 1914.

In the 1915 Annual Report, Superintendent Theodore Wirth presented two plans for the development of Marshall Terrace for playground purposes "for which the acquisition was primarily made." Both plans include a beach house on the river. Those plans were abandoned when the board found that the river's treacherous currents made swimming there inadvisable. While Wirth presented two detailed plans for use of the property he recommended simply grading the upper portion of the land for use as a baseball and football field. Further improvements, he wrote should be determined after "patronage of the ball fields indicated to what extent the grounds would be used." Wirth noted that the cost of either of his detailed plans was out of proportion to the size of the park. In recommending only modest improvements, Wirth wrote that a "much larger tract of river frontage land will be due that section of the city later on."

The board followed Wirth's recommendation of making only minor improvements. His suspicions about how much the park would be used proved to be well-founded. In 1917 the small shelter built at Marshall Terrace was moved to Farview Park because it wasn't being used. Wirth called Marshall Terrace "the only play field that has not come up to expectations for attendance and appreciation." He said the park was so little used that upkeep was not justified.

Wirth's view of the prospects for the park did not improve. In 1923 he noted that the power plant adjacent to the park made it unfit for a playfield and recommended that the board find another park site in the vicinity.

The park remained little improved until 1961 when the board constructed a small shelter in the park. In the 1960s some dredging of the river for the creation of the city's Upper Harbor created fill for the area between the park and the river. The 1968 annual report said that the filled area was seeded and planted, thus increasing the useable space of the park by nearly four acres.

A playground for small children was constructed in the park in 1973.

Marshall Terrace was renovated in 1991 and again in 2004 when the athletic fields were upgraded and a new volleyball court was built.

Martin Luther King Park

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Location: Nicollet Avenue and 40th Street

Size: 18.51 acres

Name: The park was named Dr. Martin Luther King Park on October 9, 1968 to honor the civil rights leader who was assassinated earlier that year. Until then the park was named Nicollet Field for the street that forms the park's western boundary.

Acquisition and Development

The land for what eventually became King Park was eyed for park development in the earliest days of the park board. The first petition to acquire land at Nicollet and 42nd for a park was received by the park board in 1889. It was the first request for a neighborhood park south of downtown that wasn't based on its proximity to water. At that time only Logan and Farview parks were not formed around or next to a body of water. All other properties—from Powderhorn Park with its lake, to Loring Park with its pond, and on to the Chain of Lakes, Minnehaha Creek and Minnehaha Falls, and Riverside Park on the Mississippi—were acquired for the scenic appeal of adjacent water. Preserving places of natural beauty was clearly the priority of the park board in its earliest years.

In 1889 the park board's acquisition priorities were still other water-based properties, from the east and west river banks downstream from St. Anthony Falls, to Lake Nokomis (Lake Amelia then), and Wirth Lake (then Keegan's Lake). Moreover, with the beginning of a deep economic recession in the early 1890s, the park board wouldn't have money to buy more land for the next ten years, although it would acquire Columbia Park, which included Sandy Lake, in 1892.

The first neighborhood parks acquired in south Minneapolis not adjacent to water were Bryant Square in 1904 and Stewart Park in 1911, much of which was donated. Both were much nearer downtown than King Park.

The park board first designated for acquisition the land that became King Park in 1915. (At the same time, the board designated land for Bottineau Park in northeast Minneapolis.) Just over 21 acres of land were purchased for a little more than $70,000 on March 15, 1916, at which time the new park was named Nicollet Field. The cost of the land was assessed to property in the neighborhood.

The purchase was not without controversy. Even though Bottineau Field in northeast Minneapolis was purchased about the same time, the Northside Improvement Association protested the acquisition of Nicollet Field, believing that the park board had already devoted too much of its resources over the years to acquiring parks in the southern half of the city.

A plan for the development of the field was included in the 1916 annual report. That plan included a field house, grandstand, huge wading pool, terrace seating for a baseball field, and twelve tennis courts on the north edge of the park.

Development of the land began gradually. In 1917, some of the houses on the property were sold, which paid for small improvements, including some grading, a tennis court and a skating rink. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth noted that the rink was well-attended that winter, in part because it was in a district "not previously accommodated" with a rink. One house in the park, on the corner of 42nd Street and Nicollet, was not sold, but "put in good condition" and rented to the man hired to be the park keeper.

The next spring a small temporary ball field was built near 40th Street and in 1919 the park board filled the low northern end of the park with nearly 15,000 cubic yards of fill. That fill enabled the park board to build a better baseball field, with a backstop and benches for players, for the summer of 1920. But the park still had not been developed according to Wirth's 1916 plan and a recreation center had not been built.

In late 1922 the park board received a petition from residents near the park for further improvements, asking the board to create a new plan for the park that included a shelter and toilet building of "moderate cost." Property owners in the neighborhood would have to pay the costs of park improvements through property assessments, and they apparently were unwilling to foot the bill for the more elaborate plans that Wirth had originally created.

Wirth's new plan for the park met with the approval of the neighborhood and the park board in early 1923, but the price tag was then still in excess of $200,000, the most expensive neighborhood park improvements up to that time in Minneapolis park history.

Part of the reason for the cost became apparent later that year when the park board approved draining the park of water and purchasing fill to bring the park up to grade. Like most property acquired for neighborhood parks, the land was low-lying and often flooded. In short, Wirth called it a swamp.

A shelter was built in 1924, but even then Wirth warned that additional grading and filling may be needed as the original fill settled. He also noted that at a cost of $25,000, the shelter built in the park was the most expensive ever in a Minneapolis park. The expense was due to difficulty building a foundation for the shelter on wet soil. Ultimately the shelter had to be built on piles to keep it stable. Although many features of the park Wirth had first envisaged, such as a field house and grandstand, were scrapped as too expensive, the park did get the huge wading—and fly-casting—pool that were in Wirth's first plan.

The first playground equipment was installed in the park in 1926.

Baseball was always popular at King Park, perhaps due to the park's proximity to the city's professional baseball stadium one mile north at Lake Street and Nicollet. During the height of the Great Depression, when the park board had almost no money to maintain parks, General Mills donated money to keep the baseball field at King Park in playable condition, an indication that the baseball field there was one of the most important in the city.

By the end of World War II, Nicollet Field Park was one of the premier recreation parks in the city. When the park board began its first year-round recreation programs in 1945, Nicollet Park was one of four city parks chosen for expanded programs, along with Logan Park in northeast, Loring Park near downtown, and North Commons in north Minneapolis. And the next year it was one of five parks to be equipped with lights for after-dark play on playing fields and playgrounds. The others were Logan, Loring, Folwell and Sibley.

A major addition to Nicollet Park occurred in 1950 when construction was being planned for a new 17,000-seat stadium at The Parade. The new stadium required the space occupied by the tennis center there, so the park board decided to move it to Nicollet Park where the twelve existing tennis courts were heavily used. The building that had housed the tennis center at The Parade was moved to King Park in the fall of 1950. The existing concrete courts were repaved with a bituminous material and bleachers were built around two courts to serve as "exhibition" courts. The new tennis center hosted the National Public Park Tennis Tournament in 1953 and again in 1961.

Throughout the 1950s, summer playground programs at Nicollet Park were among the most heavily-attended in the city's parks.

By the early 1960s, the popularity of Nicollet Park designated it for renovation and the addition of a new community center. The funding for those improvements came from an unusual source and at a steep price. In 1962 the Minnesota Department of Transportation paid the park board $372,000 for about 2.6 acres of Nicollet Park that were needed for the construction of I-35W.

At the request of the neighborhood, those funds were applied to the construction of a new recreation center at the park and the renovation of the city-wide tennis center. Both projects were completed in 1968 about the time that the name of the park was changed to honor Martin Luther King.

The recreation center, playing fields and playgrounds were all updated and a gym was added to the center in 1992. Most recently, the playing fields were upgraded and new tennis courts were constructed in 2002.

Matthews Park

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Location: East 24th Street and 27th Avenue South

Size: 10 acres

Name: The park was named for Charles E. Matthews on May 7, 1969. Matthews was a resident of the neighborhood who had been active in the community, in particular campaigning for the park. Until the park was officially named it was referred to as Seward Park after the elementary school adjacent to the park and the neighborhood in which it is located. The school was named for William Seward, a former United States Senator from New York, who became secretary of state in Abraham Lincoln's cabinet.

Acquisition and Development

Matthews Park was the second park to be created in the Seward neighborhood, although no one likely remembers the first. The first suggestion for a park in the neighborhood in park board documents came in the 1910 annual report of the park board's first recreation director, Clifford Booth. Among his recommendations for improving the park board's recreation program that year was the addition of a playground in the "southern section of the city between Powderhorn and Riverside playgrounds." It was the only new playground he recommended.

The park board followed Booth's recommendation in 1911 and acquired four acres of land at Minnehaha Avenue and East 28th Street for what was named Longfellow Field next to Longfellow School. Longfellow Field became one of the most popular athletic grounds in the city, especially for football games, in part due its proximity to the streetcar line. In 1917, however, Longfellow Field was sold to a manufacturing company and land for a new Longfellow Field, the one that still exists, was purchased a little over a mile to the south and east. The area of the city that Booth thought most needed a new playground no longer had one. The neighborhood would wait nearly fifty years to get another.

The campaign for another playground in the Seward neighborhood began in January 1958 when the PTA at Seward School requested a hearing by the park board on creating a playground to serve the school's area. Following a February 5 presentation by the Seward PTA, the park board adopted a resolution to include a request for funds for Seward Park in its 1959 bond program and directed park staff to make a joint study of the area with the school board. Despite more petitions from the neighborhood in the next two years bonds for the new park were not forthcoming.

Even in the absence of bond funding, on February 15, 1961, the park board designated for acquisition the two blocks from 24th to 25th streets between 27th and 29th avenues. The acquisition was part of a redevelopment plan for the neighborhood. In August and September of 1961 the first seven lots for the park were purchased using money left over from improvements at Farview, Audubon and Shingle Creek parks. Over the next two years several additional lots were purchased for the park using an unanticipated source of funds: money paid to the park board by the state department of transportation for park land it had taken for constructing freeways through the city. By the end of 1963 the park board had acquired a little less than three acres of land, one lot at a time, at a total cost of nearly $225,000. The cost was due in part to the fact that houses existed on most lots.

In 1963 the park board removed the houses on its new land, filled the basements, graded the land to prepare for a skating rink that winter, and erected a portable wood warming house. At the time the park board expressed its intention to acquire more land for the park as funds permitted.

While small acquisitions for the park continued over the next couple years, the bulk of the land to round out the park was acquired in 1967 with federal funds through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Open Space program. The park board paid the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority (MHRA) $121,800 for the remaining land for the park.

The development of Matthews Park followed a new model of combining a park, school and social agency at one location. The park board and school board had cooperated on several projects since the late 1940s, but the addition of a social agency to the mix was new in the 1960s. Both Bethune (Grant) Park and Seward Park were planned from the beginning as three-way partnerships. In 1966, the park board adopted a formal policy for its role in those partnerships, which was influenced by the new superintendent of parks, Robert Ruhe, who believed that recreation and leisure pursuits should be an integral part of neighborhood life. In the words of the board's policy statement the cooperation among agencies provided "the opportunity for a unified and collective approach to the services required in neighborhoods."

The social agency that partnered with the park board and school board at Matthews Park was Pillsbury Waite Neighborhood Services. It was one of the first park projects in the country that incorporated a social agency into initial planning for a park.

In 1968 construction began on a recreation center attached to what is now Seward Montessori School. The park and recreation center were completed and dedicated in 1969. The new park included a volleyball court, basketball court, tennis courts, playing fields and a wading pool. The park also included a unique feature in an otherwise flat section of the city, a man-made hill in the southwest corner of the park that separated the park from businesses to the southwest. The hill provides about the only place for winter sledding in the neighborhood.

The recreation center was renovated in 1993 and additional improvements to the playgrounds and playing fields were made over the next two years. In 2003, in a project partially funded with Neighborhood Revitalization Program money, photovoltaic panels were added to the roof of the recreation center to generate electricity and demonstrate solar power generation.

McRae Park

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Location: Chicago Avenue and East 46th Street

Size: 7.92 acres

Name: The park was named in 1955 for Alexander A. McRae, a banker who served as a park commissioner for 18 years and was the board's president 1919-1921. He died during his second stint on the park board in 1944 at age 74. Until the park was formally named, it was referred to by its location on Chicago and 46th.

Acquisition and Development

The land for McRae Park was obtained partly through purchase by condemnation at a cost of $24,250, and partly from the state of Minnesota for nothing. The state had acquired the land through tax-forfeiture. The acquisition was completed in 1947.

A 1944 study of the city's park needs recommended that two playground parks be added to this southern section of the city, but no sites were available, or affordable, at the time. In 1946, however, a neighborhood group, the Shenandoah Playground Association, asked the park board to consider a site at 46th and Elliot for a park. Several parcels of land were on the state's tax-forfeiture list. The park board asked the state to withhold those lots from its land sale and added to them by purchasing adjoining land.

(Land nearby had been offered as a park nearly six decades earlier. In 1888, the owner of the forty acres of land from 44th to 46th streets between Chicago and Portland had offered to sell the land to the park board for $1,800 an acre. The park board declined, saying that the property was "undesirable" for park purposes and the price "unreasonable.")

Plans to develop the park into a playground and athletic fields were completed in 1953, as were special assessment procedures to bill area property owners for the costs of developing the park.

Construction of the park was begun in late 1954 and completed in 1956. The new park had baseball, softball and football fields, a hard-surfaced area for basketball and volleyball, two tennis courts, a concrete wading pool, a small playground shelter and warming house, and playground equipment. The park was dedicated in 1955 as McRae Field. The final grading and sodding and installation of sidewalks and picnic tables were finished in 1956.

At the beginning of a cycle of major improvements to park facilities throughout the city in the 1970s, new playground equipment was installed at McRae in 1969. Seven years later, the original small park shelter was expanded into a recreation center.

A new play area for small children was added in 1996 and in 1998 a permanent hard-surfaced skating rink was constructed that permitted year-round skating, in winter on blades and summer on wheels.

McRae Park was the park in which Edward Solomon came to prominence in park affairs. Solomon was a frequent volunteer at the park, especially as a football coach. Solomon was appointed to fill a vacancy on the park board in 1996 following the death of long-time park commissioner Dale "Skip" Gilbert, and was elected to the board in 1997. He became board president in 2000. He died while in office in 2002. One of the newest parks in the city, southwest of Lake Nokomis, was named for Solomon in 2004.

Meadowbrook Golf Course

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Location: Excelsior Road and Meadowbrook Road in Hopkins

Size: 210 acres

Name: The course was named June 23, 1925 for its topography. Minnehaha Creek is the "brook" that runs through the course. Before it was formally named the course was referred to as the Southwest Golf Course.

Acquisition and Development

In the spring of 1924 the park board struck a deal with Armour & Company to build a golf course on Armour property adjacent to northeast Minneapolis, which eventually became Francis Gross Golf Course. That brought to three the total number of golf courses operated by the park board—Glenwood (Wirth) and Columbia were the others—all in north Minneapolis. While the park board purchased land around Lake Hiawatha in 1922 for a golf course in the southern half of the city, it was years away from being developed. Property owners near Lake Hiawatha were already paying assessments for the extensive work being done to develop Lake Nokomis and to acquire the Hiawatha property and Minnehaha Creek east to the falls. The park board couldn't assess those properties for money to develop the Lake Hiawatha property at the same time.

Still, southern Minneapolis needed a golf course in the opinion of the park board and park superintendent Theodore Wirth. Golf was increasing dramatically in popularity at the time. So according to Theodore Wirth's memoirs, written in 1945, he set out to find suitable land for a golf course anywhere in the vicinity of south Minneapolis. The land he found was 1½ miles west of Minneapolis on Excelsior Road.

Inspired by the financing arranged with Armour & Company for the acquisition and development of the northeastern golf course, the board struck a deal with the Atlas Realty Company to acquire the land west of Minneapolis. Atlas Realty agreed to sell the 210 acres for $80,000 and provide another $50,000 for building the golf course. They would be paid back over twenty years with proceeds from the golf course. If the park board failed to pay off the contract in twenty years, title to the land would simply revert to Atlas Realty. It was a deal that was almost too good to be true for the park board—and it was.

Burton Kingsley, park board president at the time, wrote in the 1924 annual report that the city was "literally obtaining golf courses without expense to the taxpayer." Wirth noted in his report that year that the creative contracts with Armour and Atlas Realty "prove that there are many different ways open to accomplish desirable and worthy objectives."

The only catch, initially, to the Southwest Golf Course project was that the park board had never before acquired land outside of the city limits that was not contiguous with park property. (Since 1885 the board had had the power to acquire land outside of city limits that was an extension of a park or parkway within the city limits—and had used that power in acquiring portions of Minnehaha Creek and Glenwood (Wirth) Park. Even in the case of the Armour land for a golf course, although it was outside city limits, the land was contiguous with St. Anthony Parkway.) To be sure the board had the legal authority to acquire the land for Meadowbrook Golf Course the park board instituted a test case in the courts. Essentially the board sued itself—and won. The courts decided that the park board had the power to acquire the land and use it for a golf course. The decision was upheld by the Minnesota Supreme Court in early 1925, and Wirth was given the go-ahead to commence building the golf course.

Like the new Armour course, Meadowbrook was built to designs by local architect William Clark and had grass tees and greens. The first two courses in the city, Glenwood and Columbia, still had sand greens and clay tees

The course was completed, including a small clubhouse, and opened for play in 1926. The first problem encountered at the golf course emerged in 1927 when parts of the course near a flooded Minnehaha Creek were too wet to be playable. To make them playable, nine holes of the course were closed for three seasons to dredge a twenty-acre lake from seventy acres of swamp. To pay for the dredging and filling, the park board borrowed another $90,000 from First Minneapolis Company, the successor to Atlas Realty, and put it on the tab.

Still, the course was popular enough that in 1930 the park board managed to pay the interest on the contract and in 1931, despite the Great Depression, the park board made payments on interest and principal with earnings from the course. That would be the last year for many that the park board would be able to pay down the principal it owed.

As the depression took hold, the number of golf rounds played on all city courses dropped dramatically. Even though the park board reduced fees to play Meadowbrook and Armour from seventy-five cents to fifty cents, Meadowbrook operated at a net loss. In 1933 the board announced that it was unable to make scheduled payments on the contracts for Armour and Meadowbrook. By the end of 1934, with its failure to make even interest payments for a few years, the board's debt on the property had grown from an original amount of $220,000 to $253,000.

To make matters worse, summers of drought had made the golf course less appealing. In order to compete with other golf courses in the area, Meadowbrook needed a sprinkling system for its fairways. Once again the successors to the Atlas Realty contract, Merchant's Bank Building Company, came to the rescue. The company not only put up the $40,000 for a new sprinkling system, but after that addition agreed to renegotiate the original contract, wiping out over $100,000 in park board debts. The new contract set the board's debt for the course at $180,000.

By the late 1930s and early 1940s, Meadowbrook operated at near breakeven most years and at that it was one of the most successful park board golf courses. It also charged the highest fees. In 1936 the park board instituted a season pass program for the golf courses, ranging in price from $24 for Meadowbrook to $16 for Columbia.

Still, the long-ago dream of acquiring a golf course with only revenues from the course had proved illusory. By the time the original twenty-year term of the contract was up in 1944, the park board had added another $53,000 in unpaid interest to the amount of the contract renegotiated ten years earlier. The Merchant's Bank Building Company informed the board in 1945 that it was going to take back the land for failure to make payments. The company already had a housing developer lined up to buy the land.

In a final act of generosity, the company agreed to sell the land—for which the park board still owed $237,000 under the terms of its revised contract—for a cash payment of $75,000, which was less than it had been offered by the developer. To cover the purchase price and needed improvements to the course, the city agreed to sell $87,500 in bonds. The bonds were to be repaid through operating profits on the course over the next twenty years. Ultimately, golfers did pay for the course through playing fees, and the course has since become an important source of revenue for the park board.

Clear park board title to the property was celebrated in 1947 when the National Public Links Golf Championship was played at the course.

In 1968 Meadowbrook became the first park board golf course to offer golf carts to players.

In 1979 the first non-golf improvements were made to property, including a canoe landing on Minnehaha Creek and a picnic area.

Mill Ruins Park

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Location: West River Parkway at Portland Avenue.

Name: The park was named for the ruins of the flour mills which occupy the site.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was acquired in 1985 as a part of the acquisition of the west river banks for West River Parkway. A company that manufactured concrete held a long-term lease on the land, which it acquired after the nearby lock was built in 1962 to lift boats to the upper harbor above St. Anthony Falls. After the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers filled the old tail races from the mills to construct the lock, it leased the land for 99 years to the company that used it as a storage site for sand and gravel. The park board purchased the lease and relocated the company's storage facilities upriver at a cost of $8 million. The funds were provided primarily by the state legislature though the Metropolitan Council as part of efforts begun in the 1970s to redevelop the riverfront and create a central riverfront park.

From early on in the efforts to redevelop the area and extend West River Parkway into downtown, the historical significance of the site was an important consideration. The site was excavated and its development planned under the direction of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board, created by the legislature in 1988, and the park board. The National Park Service contributed to the development of the park as part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, which had been established by the U. S. Congress in 1988.

The goal of the development of Mill Ruins Park was to give park visitors a glimpse into the history of the mills in the area, which had been so important to the history of the city and the region. The park was opened to the public in 2001.

In 2003 a 650-foot section of West River Parkway was converted to an oak plank road similar to the original plank road that spanned the canals which carried water back to the river after powering the mills.

The park was completed in 2005.

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Headquarters

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Location: 2117 West River Road

Size: 3.8 acres

Name: The name is descriptive.

Acquisition and Development

The building is the first office space that the park board has owned. Until the purchase of the former warehouse and office building for its headquarters the park board had always leased space.

The first park boards leased space in commercial buildings, including a building owned by the first president of the park board, Charles Loring, on Washington Avenue at 2nd Avenue South.

The park board later had offices in the basement of the County Court House until 1902 when it moved into the third floor of City Hall, where it remained until the 1960s. With the growth of city government in the 1960s there was less and less room for the park board. The board's annual report in 1962 noted that the park board had been under pressure for some time to move its offices out of City Hall.

In 1966 the park board was finally forced to move and it selected space in the Public Safety Building near city hall. That space, however, never was well-suited to the park board and in 1979 the board moved its offices to the Flour Exchange across from City Hall. In yet another move in the early 1990s, the park board and its staff moved once again, across the street to the Grain Exchange.

When the park board was informed of a steep increase in rent in 2002 for space that was ill-suited to the board's work anyway, the board began to look at alternatives to renting space. The answer was found in an office-warehouse building facing the Mississippi River upstream from Broadway Avenue. The building was purchased in 2002 and renovated for occupancy in 2003. The land and building were acquired for approximately $3.5 million. Subsequently the park board has acquired from the city the riverfront in front of the headquarters, as well as the river banks upstream to Orvin "Ole" Olson Park.

Minnehaha Creek West

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Location: The bed and banks of Minnehaha Creek from Humboldt Avenue South to Zenith Avenue South.

Size: 39 acres

Name: The name is descriptive. "West" refers to the section of the creek and its banks from Humboldt Avenue South to the western city limits at Zenith Avenue South.

Acquisition and Development

Minnehaha Creek had been desired by early park boards for the scenic connection it provided from Lake Harriet to Minnehaha Falls. Much of the land along the creek from Humboldt Avenue to the east was acquired beginning in the 1880s. The creek upstream, or west, from Humboldt Avenue, however, didn't hold much interest for the park board. The area was mostly open land. Lake Harriet was far enough from the city; the park board wouldn't have met with much enthusiasm for a park along the creek even farther from town.

It wasn't until 1919 that the first suggestion was made to acquire the creek to the west and then, unlike most other suggestions for new parks, the idea was introduced by a park commissioner, Phelps Wyman,

not residents of the area. Phelps Wyman was also a landscape architect who created the first designs for what is now Lowry Park.

In 1920 the park board approved the acquisition of the creek from Humboldt to Newton Avenue and later revised the plan to acquire the creek as far as Penn Avenue. From the time the acquisition was first presented, however, it met opposition. Two commissioners on the committee that recommended acquisition filed a minority report in which they disagreed with the acquisition citing the fact that park superintendent Theodore Wirth had said that section of the city already was already "amply provided" with parks. They also objected to claims that park board ownership of the creek would improve water flow in the creek or improve the "sanitary" conditions of the creek because the park board didn't control the creek upstream from Minneapolis city limits.

The debate over the acquisition would flare up for the next eight years. There was always considerable opposition from property owners in the area who would have to pay for the acquisition through assessments on their property. Resolutions to acquire the creek were passed, then abandoned, three times, including an attempt to purchase the creek all the way to the western city limit at Zenith Avenue in 1924.

An attempt to acquire the land in 1923 was abandoned when a number of property owners appealed the appraisals of their land by the park board and appraisers appointed by the district court doubled the awards.

With several failed attempts behind it, park board president Washington Yale wrote in the 1927 annual report, "Unless this creek bed is soon acquired, it will, in a few years' time, suffer the same fate of Bassett's Creek and become a very unattractive covered drain."

Finally in late 1928 the park board voted to acquire the land by condemnation. It took more than a year to complete the transactions, but in 1930 the park board finally owned the entire banks of Minnehaha Creek within the city limits, from the Mississippi River to the city's boundary with Edina. The 39 acres of creek and land were purchased for just over $100,000. The cost of the purchase and $65,000 for improvements were assessed on property in the neighborhood over ten years.

Wirth presented his initial plan for the improvement of the property in the 1928 annual report. Those plans were implemented in 1931. The entire length of the creek bed was graded to a gradual slope and the creek was redirected in places to conform better to the boundaries of the land the park board had acquired. Sidewalks were built along much of the creek that year. Tennis courts were built near 53rd and Morgan in 1932, along with a concrete and steel footbridge over the creek near the courts, and a softball field was built on the meadow south of the creek next to Penn Avenue South.

Because some homes were already located near the creek banks, and the banks of the creek are very steep in some places, a parkway along that section of the creek was never considered.

Minnehaha Park

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Location: Hiawatha Avenue and Minnehaha Parkway

Size: 167.24 acres

Name: The park was officially named Minnehaha State Park when it was purchased by Minneapolis for the state of Minnesota in 1889. In 1906 it was officially designated as a part of Mississippi Park, which included the parkways on both sides of the river and Riverside Park. The name Minnehaha comes from words in the Dakota language that mean waterfall. The popular translation of "laughing waters" comes from a felicitous but too literal Anglophone translation of "ha ha"

Acquisition and Development

Minnehaha Falls and the land surrounding it became one of the first state parks in the United States when it was purchased by the state of Minnesota in 1889. Only New York had created a state park at that time. But the state of Minnesota only paid for the park indirectly and never had a hand in maintaining it. The city of Minneapolis put up the money to buy it and managed it from the beginning.

The earliest plans of Minneapolis's Board of Park Commissioners, created by the Minnesota legislature and approved by Minneapolis voters in 1883, didn't address the falls because it was located far outside city limits at the time. Horace Cleveland in his blueprint for the city's parks in 1883 did not address specifically the development of the land around the falls, although he called it "exceedingly desirable." The first park board focused instead on developing four neighborhood parks, as well as parks and parkways around the lakes in southwest Minneapolis and the Mississippi River gorge below St. Anthony Falls.

In 1885 the Minnesota legislature passed a bill that authorized the creation of a park at Minnehaha Falls. The legislation was sponsored not by the park board, but by the Minneapolis Board of Trade, the same organization that had drafted the legislation to create the park board in 1883. The governor subsequently appointed a five-member commission to select and appraise the land to be purchased for the park. The commission was headed by the president of the Minneapolis park board, Charles Loring, and also included George Brackett, who was one of the first park commissioners in Minneapolis. The commission selected 123 acres around the falls and along Minnehaha Creek to the Mississippi River. The land was appraised at about $92,000. Property owners whose land was to be taken for the park, however, appealed the appraisals in court and the appeals were not determined in favor of the park commission in time for the 1887 biennial session of the state legislature to purchase the land.

When the legislature met again in 1889, it determined that the money to buy the land was not available and was about to abandon the acquisition until George Brackett took decisive action. With little time to act, Brackett drew up a promissory note for $100,000 and signed it himself. He then collected other signatures on the note from wealthy park supporters in Minneapolis. When he took the note to Henry Brown asking for his signature as well, Brown did better than sign the note. (Brown was a partner in real estate investments with Charles Loring, who was out of the city at the time on his annual winter vacation in Riverside, California.) Brown took $50,000 out of his own bank account, borrowed another $50,000 from his bank and handed Brackett a check for $100,000. The next day the check was delivered to the governor and deposited in the state treasury. The legislature then approved the purchase of the land for the park, with the understanding that the park would be operated and maintained by the Minneapolis park board. The city of Minneapolis later issued bonds to repay Henry Brown. Seven years later, during a serious economic depression, which must have had a serious impact on Brown's wealth, he asked the park board to reimburse him for several hundred dollars he had paid in interest on the money he put up before he was reimbursed. Brown acknowledged that he had no legal claim to be reimbursed, but believed that he had a moral claim. The park board rejected his claim, in part because it came so many years after the transaction.

The hidden hand in Brackett's bold action was likely Horace Cleveland's. The landscape architect, who had campaigned for many years for the city to protect its natural resources, and had created the first plan for the city's parks and parkways at the request of the first park board in 1883, delivered a speech in 1888 to the Fine Arts Society of Minneapolis in which he implored the city's elite to take action to preserve the banks of the Mississippi River and Minnehaha Falls. Cleveland's eloquent and passionate plea to preserve those "jewels"—his speech was printed and distributed as a small leather-bound pamphlet—likely made it easier for Brackett to persuade wealthy citizens to sign his promissory note.

Cleveland was very familiar with the lay of the land around the falls. In 1888 he had laid out the grounds of the Soldiers Home built on land donated by the city of Minneapolis on the bluff overlooking the confluence of Minnehaha Creek and the Mississippi River. The idea for the Soldier's Home, intended to care for the many maimed victims of the Civil War, has been attributed to Albert Ames, the mayor of Minneapolis at the time the park board was created in 1883. (Ames opposed the creation of the park board.)

The park board officially accepted title to the land from the state of Minnesota on June 15, 1889 and assessed the cost of acquiring the park—$92,283—on property owners in the vicinity of the falls. In the fall of that year the park board had the new park surveyed so that Horace Cleveland could work over the winter on plans for the layout of the park. (Cleveland submitted "letters" to the park board in 1891 and 1892 on improvements to the park, but there is no record that he ever submitted formal plans for the layout of the park.)

The next summer, 1890, the park board had tables and settees placed north of the falls. In addition the park board had "swings and hammocks suspended wherever practicable and lavatories constructed." Anticipating the popularity of the new park, the park board asked the street railway company to limit street-car fares to the falls to five cents, a request that was complied with.

In 1892 the park board built its first pavilion—"more properly a shelter," said the 1892 annual report—in the park near the falls and also installed electric lights in the park. One reason for dressing up the park that year was that the Republican Party National Convention was held in Minneapolis, the first major party convention held in the "west" and a matter of great pride in the city.

The increasing popularity of the park was evident in the small additions to the park. In 1893 the park board gave permission for a man to offer Shetland pony rides in the park and the park board began accepting gifts of animals for a zoo in the lower glen. Later that summer the park board denied a request to spend $50 a week to provide concerts at the Minnehaha pavilion because of the "inability of the street railway to accommodate traffic already going there on Sundays." The park board did, however, approve the construction of two pedestrian bridges "of a rustic nature" over the creek, one above the falls and the other below.

Improvements continued in 1894 with the construction of a parapet wall north of the falls to protect spectators and the "clearing of rubbish," including an old dam, from the glen below the falls.

Requests to illuminate the falls and to grant photograph privileges at the falls were denied by the park board. The issue of constructing a photograph stand next to the falls had drawn the ire of Horace Cleveland who had always taken the position that the falls and creek below it should be altered as little as possible from their natural state.

Cleveland wrote in a letter to park commissioner William Folwell, “I learn that the park commission are seriously thinking of a building at Minnehaha for the express purpose of taking photographs—on the site heretofore profaned by a shanty for that purpose. I cannot remain silent in view of this proposed vandalism which I am sure you cannot sanction—and which I am equally sure will forever be a stigma upon Minneapolis and elicit the anathema of every man of sense and taste who visits the place. If erected it will simply be pandering to the tastes of the army of boobies who think to boost themselves into notoriety by connecting their own stupid features with the representation of one of the most beautiful of God’s works.”

Meanwhile the informal zoo in the park continued to grow. An alligator tank was added in 1897 and a bear pit in 1899. In winter the non-native animals were housed in the park board warehouse at Lyndale Farmstead, except the alligator, which had its winter home in a local greenhouse. By 1901 park board president William Folwell commented that as many people were going to Minnehaha Park to see the animals as the famous falls.

To accommodate those crowds and provide “refreshments of a clean and wholesome nature at a reasonable cost,” a refectory was built near the falls in 1903 to a design by park commissioner and architect Harry W. Jones, who also designed two of the pavilions at Lake Harriet. Unfortunately the refectory burned down the following year, but it was replaced in 1905.

In the 1905 annual report board president Fred Smith wrote that the new pavilion, as well as changes in policing and the support of the city administration, have “done much to redeem Minnehaha from its unsavory reputation and make it a place where women and children can visit and enjoy their picnics without fear of molestation or insult.” The park board had also addressed “unsavory” influences at the park by purchasing in 1904 two blocks of land west of the park to Hiawatha Avenue for $6,800. The expansion removed many saloons and restaurants that existed along the streets there to serve visitors to the park.

The park began to undergo important changes in 1906 with the arrival of a new park superintendent, Theodore Wirth. One of Wirth’s first actions was to improve the entrance to the park at Minnehaha Avenue, making it more “dignified,” in his words, including the relocation of the pony rides. Wirth also convinced the park board to get rid of most of the animals kept in the park zoo. In 1907 most of the animals were given to Robert “Fish” Jones, who established a private zoo, Longfellow Gardens, adjacent to the park on its western edge. Jones later donated his property to the park board. The park board, however, kept its elk and deer pens in the lower glen, in part because those animals could survive year-round in their enclosures. Those animals remained in the park until 1923, when the park board removed them to expand the picnic grounds in the lower glen.

Wirth was also an active promoter of playgrounds in parks and in addition to establishing the park board’s first playgrounds at Logan Park and Riverside Park in 1906, the board installed some playground equipment near the refectory at Minnehaha Park, including a “Hartford” merry-go-round, the kind kids push.

One of Wirth’s other proposals for the park was not adopted by the board: Wirth expressed in the annual report of 1906 his belief that no additional parkways should be built in the near future by the park board, except for a half-mile drive down Minnehaha Glen to the Mississippi River. Although Wirth repeated the proposal on a couple occasions over the years—his 1919 annual report includes a map of where he would have placed the road—the park board never did build a parkway down what remains today one of the park system’s wildest, most charming escapes from the city. The charm of that wild stretch of creek

was diminished a bit in 1908 when a bridge was built over the gorge to the Soldier's Home. The design and construction of the bridge were approved by the park board.

The first "monument" was added to the park in 1896 when the home of John Stevens, the first permanent settlers' home built in the city of Minneapolis in 1849, was hauled by 10,000 school children pulling on enormous ropes from downtown to the park. In 1912, the park got its first statue when Jacob Fjelde's depiction of Hiawatha carrying Minnehaha across the creek was placed on an island above the falls. Three years later a statue of Gunnar Wennerberg, a Swedish poet, composer and scholar, was added to the park. Two additional monuments have since been added: a statue of John Stevens was moved to the park in 1935 when its original location at Stevens Circle downtown was taken over for traffic purposes; and, a mask of Chief Little Crow, the leader of the Dakota in the mid-1800s, was added to the park near the falls. In addition a fountain was installed in 1996 in the former parking lot and overlook east of the falls, which is encircled by verses cut in stone from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha.*

Two additional historic structures also are now located in the park. The quaint Princess Depot, built in 1875 before the park was a park, was given by the Milwaukee Road railroad to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1964. In 2001, the depot was renovated with the help of the Minnesota Transportation Museum and is now operated as free museum. The Longfellow House, once the home of Robert Jones at his Longfellow Gardens attraction across Hiawatha Avenue from the park, was acquired by the park board along with the land of the former zoo in 1936. Jones had donated his land to the park board in an agreement in 1924 that enabled him or his heirs to remain on the property for ten years. Legal appeals by Jones' heirs delayed park board control of the property until 1936. In 1938 the house was leased to the library board as a branch library, which operated until 1968. In 1994, with the construction of the "tuck and cover" tunnel for the Hiawatha Avenue highway, the house was moved a few hundred feet to its present location. It was renovated and now serves as an information center for the Grand Rounds National Scenic Byway and as offices for park board staff. The house was built in 1906 as a replica of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's home in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

A major change to the park occurred in 1921 when the park board established an auto tourist camp on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River near the Soldier's Home in what is now the Wabun picnic area. The camp was intended to appeal to the many tourists who were travelling the country in their new automobiles. Rental cabins were built at the camp a few years after it opened. The cabins were initially built and operated by a private contractor but later were purchased by the park board. The camp continued in operation until 1956. (Other auto tourist camps were proposed for Columbia Park and The Parade, near downtown, but were never approved.) Access to the tourist camp was enhanced and park use was increased in 1926 when the Ford Bridge was opened connecting south Minneapolis with St. Paul.

The same year the park board designated the park to be a center for winter sports activities and authorized the construction of a ski jump on the hill where the deer and elk pens had once been. The board also authorized the purchase of toboggans for rental on the hill.

Major improvements were made in the park from 1932 to 1940 by federal work relief crews. With the aid of federal money, stairs were built into the lower glen, as well as retaining walls along the banks of the creek and new bridges over it.

With the closing of the auto tourist camp the park board created a new picnic area in 1957 in the Wabun section of the park. The new picnic spot included a pavilion which featured metered electricity.

Picnickers could deposit coins to get power. It was an innovation first introduced at a picnic shelter built in Columbia Park. Remodeling of the 1905 refectory was also begun in 1957.

The park was expanded for the first time in decades in 1958 when the park board acquired 26 acres of land from the federal government that had been a part of Fort Snelling to the south of the park. The park board had lobbied Congress to donate most of Fort Snelling to the park board since the turn of the century. Early park boards had coveted the largely unused land of the fort to continue West River Parkway through Minnehaha Park all the way to the Minnesota River.

Four years later the park board acquired additional land on the bluff adjacent to the Wabun picnic area in a trade with the Minnesota highway department. The land was acquired in exchange for land the highway department needed at The Parade as it planned the construction of the first freeways in the city.

At that time the park board was more accommodating to relinquishing land for freeways. As the demand for park land for highways increased, however, the park board eventually fought those actions with bitter determination. The controversy between highways and parks came to a head over highway plans for Hiawatha Avenue (Highway 55) in the mid-1960s. The highway department planned a freeway from down town to the airport via that route. The plan was to build an elevated freeway between Minnehaha Park and Longfellow Gardens over Minnehaha Creek. The park board hired its own consultants who proposed a plan that would divert the freeway around the western edge of Longfellow Garden. That plan would have maintained the integrity of the parks better, but would have required the dislocation of more homes and businesses, which the state and the neighborhood fought strenuously. The park board challenged the highway plan all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Before the case could be heard by that court, however, it ruled in a similar case from Nashville, Tennessee in favor of the preservation of park land. That decision set a precedent that doomed the highway department's plan. Before a compromise could be reached federal money for building the highway was no longer available. The highway was eventually built in the late-1990s to a plan that put the highway through a tunnel over Minnehaha Creek covered by a "land bridge" between Minnehaha Park and Longfellow Garden. A new garden, named Longfellow Garden, was created on top of the land bridge.

With the plans for the highway moving forward, the park board also developed a master plan to renovate the park. In 1995, a new garden, the Pergola Garden, featuring native wildflowers and grasses, was created overlooking the falls from the south.

Over the next two years, the parking lot that once overlooked the falls from the east was removed to the edge of the park and traffic was no longer permitted up to the falls. The parking lot was replaced by a garden and the fountain with Longfellow's words inscribed. The durable old refectory was given a veranda and a bandshell was built east of the refectory.

In 2007 a new river overlook was built in the Wabun picnic area and a children's playground was added to the picnic area.

Minnehaha Parkway

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Location: The parkway begins at Lake Harriet Parkway on the south shore of the lake and follows an overflow channel along what once was Humboldt Avenue South to the creek south of West 50th Street. It then follows the creek west to Lake Nokomis. At Lake Nokomis the parkway and creek diverge. The parkway continues straight west along what would be East 48th Street to Minnehaha Park. From Lake

Nokomis the creek passes under the parkway to Lake Hiawatha. From Lake Hiawatha the creek meanders between East 46th Street and Minnehaha Parkway to Longfellow Garden and Minnehaha Park.

Size: 235 acres, 5.3 miles of parkway.

Name: The parkway is named for Minnehaha Creek.

Acquisition and Development

Park board records to not reveal the origin of the idea of a parkway along the valley of Minnehaha Creek. The first mention of a park along the creek is in the park board proceedings of October 8, 1887 when, after hearing from "interested parties," the park board resolved that when lands along Minnehaha Creek "are offered, they be accepted" between Lake Harriet and the Soldier's Home. (The Soldier's Home was then planned to be built at the mouth of Minnehaha Creek and the Mississippi River. Minnehaha Park and its famous falls was not yet a park. As part of the resolution, the park board expressed its intent to create a parkway beside the creek when it deemed best to do so.

In the annual report of 1887, board president Charles Loring reported that property owners along the creek had committed to securing by donation a parkway 200 feet wide from Lake Harriet to Minnehaha Falls. Loring was not only the president of the park board, but also president of a five-man commission appointed by the governor of Minnesota in 1885 to acquire the land around Minnehaha Falls as a state park.

Perhaps the idea of the parkway came from Henry and Eunice Butler and Josef and Louise Fogg, because in early 1889 they donated the first forty acres for the parkway on both sides of Minnehaha Creek from Humboldt Avenue South to Lyndale Avenue South. Prompted by the donation, the park board purchased 25 lots along Humboldt Avenue between the donated land and Lake Harriet to connect the creek with the lake. The purchased land cost $10,000 and almost the same amount was spent the following year to purchase by condemnation the remaining land for a parkway from the lake to the creek.

Under the conditions of the donation, the park board constructed a parkway on both sides of the creek to Lyndale Avenue in 1889. The board named the new parkway Minnehaha Boulevard but also named the northerly drive Butler Drive and the southerly drive Fogg Drive. In the annual report of that year, the park board reported that it had received "liberal offers" of more donated land along the creek from Lyndale Avenue to Cedar Avenue, which would provide another three miles of parkway. Loring noted in that report that the most feasible route from Cedar Avenue to Minnehaha Falls had not yet been selected, but that it was impossible, for reasons he did not specify, to continue a parkway along the creek over that route.

(In 1889 the city of Minneapolis also purchased the land around Minnehaha Falls on behalf of the state to make a state park of the falls. See Minnehaha Park for more on that purchase.)

In 1891 the park board designated the remaining land along the creek east of Lyndale Avenue and for the parkway east of Cedar Avenue. The acquisition of that land, much of it by donation, was completed in 1892. The total cost of acquiring the land from Lake Harriet to Minnehaha Falls was just over $35,000, with more than half of that amount spent on the land that connected Lake Harriet to the creek at Humboldt Avenue. The cost of the land—169 acres, which provided for a parkway of 5.3 miles—was assessed on property in the area that "benefitted" from the creation of the parkway.

In 1891 Loring praised the acquisition. He called the land along the creek a "longitudinal park" that was "more generally accessible to the people than the same area would be lying more compactly." In June, 1891 landscape architect Horace Cleveland, who had created the first blueprint for a "system" of parks in Minneapolis in 1883, was asked by the board to prepare a plan for the parkway from Lake Harriet to Lyndale Avenue and to recommend the best route for the parkway from Cedar Avenue to Minnehaha Falls. Any plans he created for those stretches of parkway, and a record of park board actions on them, have not survived. At that time the park board owned neither Lake Amelia (Nokomis) nor Rice Lake (Hiawatha).

Charles Loring later credited J. Arthur Ridgway, a park commissioner at the time and later the park board's secretary, for negotiating most of the purchases and donations of land along the creek and suggested that a segment of the parkway be named "Ridgway" in his honor. The board did not follow Loring's recommendation at the time, but nearly 60 years later, in 1952, the park board renamed the section of St. Anthony Parkway between Gross Golf Course and Stinson Boulevard "Ridgway Parkway" in his honor.

In 1893 the park board approved the construction of Minnehaha Parkway all the way to Minnehaha Falls and assessed the cost of building the parkway, more than $150,000, to property in the area. The parkway from Lake Nokomis to Minnehaha Falls was finally completed in 1899. Some property assessments for the construction of the parkway were reduced in 1900 after a crash in property values in the city following the Panic of 1893. The park board's attorney, Chelsea Rockwood, reported that year that if remaining assessments owed on the property were not reduced by two-thirds some of the property owners planned to abandon their property. Rockwood reported that the reduced assessments were as much as the park board could hope to receive given the great depreciation in land values since the assessments were made.

In 1897 in response to the bicycle craze of that era, the park board created a bicycle path along much of Minnehaha Creek, going so far as to shave down the steep hill on the parkway near Lyndale Avenue to make it less strenuous for bicyclists. (The bicycle craze of the 1890s ended within ten years. In 1907 park board president Jesse Northrup recommended that the board convert the under-used bicycle paths to bridle paths and walking paths. By then, automobiles were already using the parkways. In 1903 the park board approved a speed limit of 15 miles-per-hour for cars on parkways.)

In the late 1890s and early 1900s several additional parcels of land were acquired near the creek to straighten out the parkway and reduce maintenance costs. In 1897 the park board did not maintain ice-skating rinks in parks throughout the city following publication in Minneapolis newspapers of a plea from Charles Loring, who was not a park commissioner at the time, for children around the city to forego ice-skating for the winter so the park board could afford to buy some additional land it needed near the creek. The children of the city acquiesced to the request from the acknowledged "Father of Minneapolis Parks," but not happily, and the next winter, despite no improvement in the park board's precarious financial position, ice-skating rinks were once again maintained by the park board.

In 1910 park superintendent Theodore Wirth began a campaign to straighten and divert portions of Minnehaha Creek. He had two reasons: one, to reduce the amount of water needed in the creek to maintain a pleasing flow of water over Minnehaha Falls, and; two, to allow the widening of the parkway to accommodate increasing automobile traffic. The proposal must have met with objections because two years later in the annual report, Wirth tried to alleviate fears that straightening the creek would destroy its natural beauty. He repeated his call for widening the parkway in 1914, but still did not prevail.

The parkway was finally improved—and the creek bed rearranged—beginning in 1923. Over the course of four years, 1923-1926, Minnehaha Parkway was completely rebuilt at a cost of more than $1 million. It was the most expensive project in the first 70 years of park board history. It would not be surpassed in cost until the construction of Parade Stadium in 1951. Part of the cost was in the construction of six new bridges over the creek, including three that replaced old wooden bridges.

Wirth noted in his 1924 annual report that the work along the creek had been criticized as "detrimental, even destructive" to the natural beauty of the parkway, but he disagreed. The old parkway, he wrote, didn't show the most picturesque parts of the creek valley. The new parkway did and, he added, the new parkway would lead to more residential development in the area.

Meanwhile the eastern section of the creek itself, from Lake Hiawatha to Minnehaha Park was acquired in 1922 along with Lake Hiawatha. The cost of acquiring the creek bed was included in the $550,000 price tag for acquiring Lake Hiawatha and additional land for a golf course beside the lake. The entire amount was assessed over ten years on property in a large portion of south Minneapolis. The large assessment for the purchase of the land was one reason for the delay in developing Lake Hiawatha and Hiawatha Golf Course until 1931. The park board did not believe it could assess the cost of development on top of the cost of the land purchase. That region of the city was also already paying property assessments for the cost of developing the swamps around Lake Nokomis into a lake and park.

One of the few major changes to Minnehaha Parkway since it was reengineered in the 1920s was the construction of I-35W over the parkway in 1962. The parkway was closed most of that year for regrading and relocating a small bridge in preparation for the construction of the freeway. The same stretch of the parkway was closed again in 2008 when the freeway was widened.

Another significant change on the eastern end of the parkway near Minnehaha Park occurred in 2000 when a new highway was built along Hiawatha Avenue. The new highway was built over Minnehaha Creek to avoid disruption of the creek bed and then a land bridge was built over the highway to carry Minnehaha Parkway and provide space for a new Longfellow Garden. (See Longfellow Gardens for more on that development.)

Trivia

One the first expressions of concern for water quality in Minneapolis's lakes and streams came in 1902 when park commissioner and noted architect Harry Jones asked park superintendent William Berry to talk with the Minnesota Sugar Company about its discharge of water and refuse into Minnehaha Creek from its St. Louis Park plant.

In 1917, owing to unusually warm weather, the park board permitted—"for one year only"—swimming at places other than the designated beaches on city lakes—and in Minnehaha Creek.

Monroe Place Park

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Location: Monroe Avenue NE, 7th Street and 3rd Avenue NE

Size: 0.03 acres

Name: The small triangle is named for the street on which it is located. The name was formally adopted September 6, 1911. The street was named for President James Monroe.

Acquisition and Development

The city council transferred the property to the park board June 9, 1911 and the park board accepted the property on August 7 of that year. The action was taken at the request of the Logan Park Improvement Association.

Morris Park

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Location: 39th Avenue South and East 56th Street

Size: 3.87 acres

Name: The park was named for its location adjacent to Morris Elementary School.

Acquisition and Development

The park in the far southeast corner of the city west of the Mississippi River was purchased by condemnation May 8, 1956 for $67,196, but it appeared long before then in park board deliberations.

A potential Morris Park first appeared in the form of a protest from the Morris School PTA against a resolution by the park board to acquire three park sites in the portion of Minneapolis that was annexed from Richfield in 1926. One site the park board considered was at 59th Avenue and 27th Street, southwest of the present Bossen Field, land that is now owned by the airport. The Morris Park PTA wanted a park near the school.

After much debate over the location of a park in the vicinity, the issue was rendered moot by the park board's abandonment in 1931 of all efforts to acquire any parks in the newest section of the city that was annexed from Richfield. Property owners were not willing to be assessed for the acquisition or improvement of any of the proposed sites, perhaps understandable given the onset of the depression.

An internal park board survey of neighborhoods that needed playgrounds in 1938 identified the Morris Park neighborhood as one where a playground was recommended for future development. It was not placed in the two highest categories of "acute" need.

During the economic recovery of the 1950s, and after successful collaboration by the park board and school board in building parks and schools jointly at Waite Park and Armatage Park, the two boards considered another cooperative venture at Morris School in 1954.

The addition of a park to the school grounds got a green light in 1955 as a special assessment project, meaning that property owners in the neighborhood would be assessed the costs of acquiring and improving the land for a park.

The land was acquired in 1956 and work began on the park. The park acreage was augmented by 1.7 acres of land owned by the school board adjacent to the school. The land acquired was not vacant land, so homes had to be moved before construction could begin. A shelter was built at the park in 1957 similar to the design pioneered at Franklin Steele Square with garage-door like exterior walls that could

be raised in summer and lowered in winter to provide a warming house. In addition to the shelter, the park board installed ball fields, a hard-surfaced play area, a wading pool and playground equipment.

The park was renovated, and neighboring homes protected, when in 1963 the park board raised the fence between the baseball field and 56th street and installed a hooded backstop on the field. Park superintendent Howard Moore wrote at the time that the improvements were made because the field was small and that the park board "had trouble with balls hitting homes adjacent to the park."

Morris Park was the subject of political wrangling in 1979. The park board added an expansion of the Morris Park shelter, at a cost of $467,000, to its 1980 bond program request. The mayor vetoed the expenditure, but the park board voted unanimously to override the veto. Despite the assertion of its independence from the mayor, the park board did not get its way when the city council did not approve the bond request.

The park board did obtain city bond funds, as well as grants from the state, to renovate the park in 1985 and 1986. Finally in 1993 and 1994, the funds were provided for the expansion of the old portable-wall shelter at Morris Park into a small, modern recreation center.

The most recent additions to the park include one of six skate parks in city parks. It was installed in 2005. Morris School was closed in 2007. The school board is considering future use of the property, including sale of the property and building to a charter school.

Mueller Park

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Location: Colfax Avenue South and West 24th Street

Size: 1.85 acres

Name: The park was named for brothers Robert C. Mueller and Herbert L. Mueller on October 26, 1977. The park was named in the Mueller's honor at the request of neighborhood groups, including The Wedge neighborhood organization. Herbert Mueller had lived in the same house on Bryant Avenue South near the park since 1921. He and his brother Robert, who had been an editor at Field and Stream magazine, were the resident authorities on the natural history of the neighborhood. Robert helped to organize an elm watch, one of the first in the state, in 1970s, as the city prepared for the onslaught of Dutch Elm disease. The Muellers were among the few people who have had a Minneapolis park named for them while still living. The brothers later donated money to assist in the construction of the shelter at the entrance to the Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary at Lyndale Park. Until the park was officially named, it was referred to as Lowry Hill East Park after the neighborhood in which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

Mueller Park is in a densely-populated neighborhood that had been identified in 1944 as one that didn't have adequate park facilities. In 1970 the park board was attempting to address that long-standing problem, when the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created a "Parks in the Cities" program to encourage more urban parks. Minneapolis applied for grants under that program to acquire and develop Mueller Park along with Whittier and Willard parks. According to Al Wittman, the assistant superintendent for planning during this period of remarkable development of Minneapolis parks, Minneapolis was the only city that applied for funds under the federal program.

With the assistance of funds from HUD and from the National Park Service, the park board began to acquire this half-block playground park in 1973. The acquisition took some time to complete as the park board adopted a policy of trying to minimize dislocation of people who lived on the land targeted for the park. The park was provided playground equipment, a wading pool, a tennis court, horseshoe pits, and a small toilet building when it was developed in 1976. The park was officially opened on June 26, 1976.

The park was redesigned and upgraded with new playground equipment in 1997. The horseshoe pits were filled in and the tennis court was replaced with a basketball court. The park was supervised with staff from Whittier Park in the mid-1990s. Additional improvements were made to the park in 1998 with funds from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

Murphy Square

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Location: 7½ Street and 22nd Avenue South

Size: 3.15 acres

Name: The park was named for Edward Murphy who donated the land for a park when he platted Murphy's Addition in 1857. The name was officially changed from Murphy Park to Murphy Square in 1890.

Acquisition and Development

When Edward Murphy dedicated the land for a park in 1857, parks were in the news. That year New York City conducted a competition to design its vast Central Park, one of the most important developments in the creation of urban parks in the country's history. That event may have influenced Murphy's establishment of a park on land he was developing.

Murphy Park was a long ways from the center of the small towns of Minneapolis and St. Anthony at the time and the land served as little more than a cow pasture for twenty years. In 1873 Murphy attempted to get the city council to pay to improve the land. Trees were planted in the park, perhaps under the direction of Charles Loring, who is said to have planted the first trees in Minneapolis and was a city council member at the time. The city council approved an expenditure of $500 for the purpose, but the mayor refused to authorize reimbursement for Murphy after he had paid for the work.

The park was transferred from the city council to the new park board shortly after the park board was created in April 1883. The park board hired Horace Cleveland to create a plan for the park in late 1884.

Murphy Square was one of several parks immediately improved by Theodore Wirth when he was hired in 1906, including additional plantings and changes to the paths in the park. An artesian well was also dug at Murphy Park that year, but the city condemned as unfit the water produced by the well.

Murphy Square was one of the parks recommended as a playground in 1906, when the park board installed its first playground equipment and a merry-go-round was installed in 1907. A tennis court was built at Murphy Square in 1917 at a cost of $400, but was removed in 1919 with the explanation that there wasn't sufficient space for it.

Some residents of the neighborhood petitioned the park board to install a kittenball (softball) field in the park in 1922, but opposition from other property owners led the park board to reject the idea.

With the growth of Augsburg College, Murphy Square became, in essence, a central square for the college. The park board entered into serious negotiations with Augsburg College to sell the square to the college in 1957. When those negotiations were unsuccessful, the park board included Murphy Square on a list of properties it could part with, for housing purposes, in 1960. In 1975, the park board considered a land swap with Augsburg College that would have transferred the park to the college, but once again the city's oldest park remained a park.

Ultimately, only a small piece of Murphy Square was lost, and that was due to the construction of the I-94 freeway, which nipped off a bit of the park in the 1960s.

Newton Triangle

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Location: Hillside and Newton Avenue North

Size: 0.14 acres

Name: The property was named for Newton Avenue, which was named for physicist Isaac Newton.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was transferred to the park board from the city council September 30, 1892. The triangle was included in an appropriation for improvements to various triangles in 1909, but it is not clear what work was done under that appropriation.

The triangle was improved—graded, seeded, planted and curbed—in 1916. A total of less than $2,000 was spent to improve nine triangles.

Nicollet Island Park

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Location: The park is located on Nicollet Island in the Mississippi River.

Size: 26.83 acres

Name: The island was named for Joseph Nicollet, a French explorer and cartographer who mapped the region of the Upper Mississippi River in the 1830s. In the Minnesota vernacular, Nicollet rhymes with "chiclet." The name for the island existed before Minneapolis was created.

Acquisition and Development

Nicollet Island nearly became the first park land purchased in Minneapolis. In 1866 the Minnesota legislature approved the union of the two towns on either side of St. Anthony Falls, Minneapolis and St. Anthony. The act provided for the establishment of municipal buildings on the southern half of Nicollet Island and reserved the northern half of the island as a public park. The legislature mandated that voters of both towns had to approve the union for it to become official. Minneapolis voted first—and St. Anthony voters never got a chance to express their wishes, because Minneapolis voters defeated the measure by fewer than one hundred votes. The vote was long remembered not for the potential union of the towns, which was accomplished anyway in 1872, but for the voters' rejection of Nicollet Island as a

park. The sticking point at the time was the cost of acquiring the island for the city, which was put at $30,000-$40,000. The issue became a rallying cry for park proponents over the next 17 years until the Minneapolis park board was created by the legislature—and approved by Minneapolis voters—in 1883.

Curiously, after the park board was created, it seemed to have no interest in creating a park on the island. One of the only references to the island in park board proceedings in the first couple decades of the park board's existence was a request in 1894 from "the committee for the protection and improvement of Nicollet Island" for the park board to acquire the shores of the island. The request was referred by the park board to the city council. Whether the request may have generated some interest on the park board is not known, but the park board was in serious financial trouble at the time following the Panic of 1893 and it had no money for acquisitions.

In 1908, the park board did approve taking charge of a strip of land on the west side of the island, which was then owned by the city of Minneapolis and to spend up to $200 to improve the land. Later that year the park board established a committee to request Mrs. W. W. Eastman to donate a strip of land around the island for a park. No follow-up reports are recorded for either of those actions.

As part of its ambitious plan for the redevelopment of nearly the entire downtown area, the Minneapolis Civic Commission in 1910 proposed turning Nicollet Island into a park, but once again no action was taken on those plans.

In 1915 park superintendent Theodore Wirth proposed the creation of a pier or park on the west side of Nicollet Island primarily to relieve overcrowding at the new Gateway park near the west end of Hennepin Bridge.

Wirth followed that recommendation three years later in his annual report with a suggestion that the park board acquire all the river banks, including those on Nicollet Island and Boom Island, from downtown to the northern city limits. He speculated at the time that Nicollet Island would "surely be acquired by the city," and suggested that in the meantime the park board should lease or purchase the river banks on the island. Once again no action ensued and the issue of Nicollet Island largely disappeared from park board records for decades.

The idea of developing Nicollet Island as a park was introduced again in a 1960 park board report on its goals in anticipation of its hundredth birthday in 1983. In that report the park board estimated an expenditure of one million dollars to acquire land on Nicollet Island and near St. Anthony Falls for a park and historic site.

The issue re-emerged briefly in the park board's 1964 annual report when it was noted that the park board had met with a citizens committee on Nicollet Island to hear proposals for the development of a 48-acre historic site on the island. The report noted that the park board had resolved to work with other city agencies to find a solution to the use of Nicollet Island and that it "seemed practical" to embellish the island with replicas of historic structures.

The ground work for preservation of the area was laid in 1971 when the land around the falls was placed on the National Park Service's list of National Historic Districts. The impetus to develop the central riverfront, including Nicollet Island, came from a 1972 report entitled *Mississippi/Minneapolis* produced by city manager Tommy Thompson. In the wake of that report, which proposed redevelopment of the former industrial and railroad land of the riverfront, the park board, city council and the city housing authority created a Riverfront Development Coordinating Board (RDCB) in 1976 chaired by park

commissioner Ole Olson. The RCDB's primary objective was to create a development plan that could be submitted to the Metropolitan Council for funding through the state legislature. The RCDB produced a final report in 1978 that included specific recommendations for the development of a central riverfront park.

By that time the first park on Nicollet Island had already been created, by the city, as a part of the country's 200th birthday party. The city had designated land on the southern tip of the island, acquired in 1944 and reserved for use as a public harbor, as Bicentennial Park. Two years later, the city turned over the park to the park board and the park board owned its first three acres of land on the central riverfront.

That acquisition was consistent with RCDB plans, almost all of which have now been executed, from a parkway on the west side of the river to the development of the east river bank as a park from Boom Island downstream to Father Hennepin Bluffs.

The plan for the lower half of the island called for converting the Island Sash and Door Company building into a quality restaurant, transforming the Durkee-Atwood building into a regional arts center and keeping the amphitheater that had been created in Bicentennial Park. For the upper half of the island the RCDB recommended creating a historic village, with preserved houses, a community meeting house, and a plaza with an information center. One of the only elements of the RCDB plan that has not been followed was for the development of the upper half of Nicollet Island.

In 1979 the park board purchased more than eleven acres of private property on the island and in 1981 added more than five acres from the housing authority and acquired the Durkee-Atwood building and it's 3.6 acres of land. At that time the Durkee-Atwood acquisition was the most expensive in park board history at $6.1 million. The expense was due in part to the fact that the property was an active commercial property and the company had to be relocated. The park board later converted the building into the Nicollet Island Pavilion. The land was purchased with money provided by the Minnesota legislature through the Metropolitan Council. In 1986 the park board completed the long-negotiated purchase of the Island Sash and Door Building, which had already been converted into the Nicollet Island Inn and continues to operate under a lease from the park board.

The upper half of the island proved to be a more difficult deal due to conflicting views of how the land should be used. In 1983 the park board acquired title to four-plus acres of land from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency and leased the land back to MCDA. The MCDA then sold by lottery —for $1—99-year leases to individuals to maintain historic homes under very tight restrictions. The RCDB's original plan allowed for De La Salle High School to continue operating on roughly six acres of the island and for residential use of about six acres on Grove Street, which were developed into townhomes in 1983.

The old railroad bridge on the north end of the island that connected to Boom Island was converted into a pedestrian bridge and another bridge was added to the island. Hennepin County relocated a section of the Broadway Avenue Bridge, which was being replaced, to connect Merriam Street on the island to Historic Main Street on the east bank.

In 2008 the park board approved the construction of a small football stadium on park land adjacent to De La Salle High School. The stadium will be built by the high school to serve the school and northeast Minneapolis.

Normanna Triangle

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Location: Minnehaha Avenue and East 22nd Street

Size: 0.16 acres

Name: The name was suggested by William Folwell to honor the Norwegian ancestry of many residents of the neighborhood. The name was officially adopted December 27, 1893. It had previously been referred to as Minnehaha Avenue Triangle.

Acquisition and Development

The park board asked the city council to turn over the triangle to the park board on August 2, 1889. In May of 1890, the park board approved unspecified improvements for the triangle.

Normanna Triangle was involved in an interesting discussion over wells on park property. Residents of the area had requested a well in the triangle, and the request was approved in 1912. However, it must not have been installed because residents asked for a well again in 1914. On November 18, 1914 the Committee on Improvements reported in regard to that request that "since the Board is not permitted under the State Law to have drinking cups for the use of the patrons of the parks and the city water is now suitable for drinking purposes it seems unwise to continue the placing of wells where the city water is available."

Curiously, given that apparently sound logic, the park board responded favorably to another request for a well at Normanna Triangle the following year and in February 1916 went a step further, authorizing wells for not only Normanna Triangle, but also Bryant Square and Lovell Square.

North Commons Park

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Location: James Avenue North and 16th Avenue North

Size: 25.48 acres

Name: The park was named North Commons on September 16, 1907 at the suggestion of the North Side Commercial Club, because of its location in the city.

Acquisition and Development

The park was purchased in 1907 for $48,875 from L. P. Henry and others. The board's first resolution to acquire the land on June 3, 1907 included the purchase price. The fact that a price had already been arranged suggests the board had been actively involved in negotiating to buy the land before that date, although no record of formal decisions to that end exists prior to then.

There was a long history, however, of agitation to provide another park for the north side in addition to Farview Park. In 1889 the board had designated for acquisition a slightly smaller parcel four blocks to the west, an area called Todd's Pond, which later became the football field at the first North High School. At that time a large majority of landowners in the neighborhood objected to the purchase, or

more precisely they objected to paying for it by assessments on their property. The argument they used was that the proposed site was near Farview Park (then still Prospect Park). The board abandoned that acquisition in early 1890.

In the 1907 annual report, park superintendent Theodore Wirth provided a plan for the development of the new park, which included mostly landscaped areas, but did provide a place for gymnastic apparatus and a "sunken lawn" for games and a skating rink. Wirth noted that he anticipated "early demand" for improvements and that his plan would serve "young and old alike."

Playground equipment was installed at North Commons in 1908 following the board's highly successful introduction of playground apparatus in other parks in 1906 and 1907. It was one of the first five parks to receive basketball goals in 1908. It was also one of six parks, other than Lake Harriet, to be put on the summer schedule of free concerts that year.

The first major improvements to the property were scheduled for 1909 but they were put on hold due to what Wirth said was a shortage of laborers and horse teams available for hire.

In 1910 the park board began improvements to the park and built one of the park system's first three year-round "field houses" at North Commons. The building at North Commons was larger than those built at Jackson Square and Camden (Webber) Park, although Wirth noted that plans had to be modified to cut costs. It was essentially a warming house for skaters, in the unfinished half-basement, with toilets and one large open room on the first floor. The total cost of the shelter was just over $16,000.

The improvements also included more space for playing fields than Wirth had proposed in his first plan for the park. By 1911 North Commons had already become one of the parks most heavily used for sports. Football goalposts were installed at North Commons and there was such demand for playing space that, along with The Parade, North Commons was the only park in which permits were required to use the baseball and football fields.

In 1912 a wading pool, one of the city's first, was built in the park. (From the creation of one of the city's first wading pools at North Commons, the park has been foremost among city parks in swimming facilities, with later additions of a swimming pool and water park. The addition of swimming facilities there has been part of an effort to distribute water-based recreation facilities more equitably across the city. People in the southern half of the city had relatively easy access to natural water—lakes—for swimming.) The park also got its first tennis courts in 1912.

North Commons, and neighborhood parks in general, got the short end of the stick, however, in this period of extensive park development elsewhere in the city. In both 1909 and 1913, as major park-shaping work was being done around the lakes, work at North Commons was not completed due to a shortage of labor. The result was a park that was in Wirth's words in 1912, "to say the least, unsightly and unsatisfactory" in its "half finished and torn up condition."

By the end of 1914, most planned improvements had been made to North Commons—grading, filling, and the addition of more tennis and basketball courts—and Wirth noted that "on the whole North Commons makes a good appearance and is one of our most useful and most frequented parks."

At that time, more had been spent on the improvement of North Commons than any other neighborhood park in the city, other than Logan Park, where a much larger and more expensive ($40,000) fieldhouse had been built in 1912. The focus of the park board, however, remained on developing the system of

parkways and parks bordering the city's most prominent natural features, its lakes and the river. But even such less-substantial projects as the construction of The Mall between Hennepin Avenue and the Calhoun-Isles lagoon and the construction of King's Highway near Lake Harriet had consumed substantially more of the park board's resources

In 1915, Wirth proposed additional funds to complete a driveway through North Commons, a driveway that had not appeared in any earlier plans in annual reports. The east-west drive through the park was completed in 1916, along with installation of a backstop for the baseball field, and a bandstand. A fifth tennis court was added to the park in 1917, when Wirth noted that the south section of the park had finally been completed.

Along with these improvements came heavy use. By 1921, Wirth noted that the playing fields were possibly the most frequented in the whole park system. He recommended then that the small shelter be replaced with a larger fieldhouse, a suggestion he would make several times in the 1920s to no avail. The catch was that the fieldhouse would only be built if residents of the area agreed to pay for it with property assessments. This was at a time when almost all neighborhood park improvements throughout the city required the approval of local landowners to pay for it. In 1921 Wirth wrote that the district could afford a new building that would serve its needs.

The continued popularity of North Commons, and the lack of funds to improve it further, was indicated in 1924 when Wirth suggested that plans to improve the driveway through the park be abandoned and the park converted exclusively to pedestrian use. By 1928, attendance at playground activities at North Commons almost doubled that of any other park in the city. A huge participation in diamond ball, what later became known as softball, was noted at North Commons.

Through the difficult days of the Depression and World War II, the park board had little money to spend on improvements of any kind and the opportunity to build a new field house had passed. Although North Commons was one of only a few parks that offered year-round activities in the 1930s and 1940s, the park would await the coming of better times for improved recreation facilities—as was true of every other park in the city.

In 1955 and 1956, improvements were made at North Commons for the first time in more than thirty years. The playing fields were enlarged and regraded, play equipment was added and a new concrete wading pool was built. The shelter built in 1910—and outdated by 1921 in Wirth's opinion—was not replaced, but it was modernized and was designated as one of six district community centers in the park system. The park board's 1956 annual report claimed that attendance at the park tripled after its modernization.

The venerable old shelter was finally demolished and replaced with a new community center with a gymnasium in 1971, one of the first new centers constructed at the beginning of a building boom in Minneapolis parks in the 1970s. Two years later, an outdoor swimming pool was built at North Commons, making it the first—and still the only—Minneapolis park with both a gym and a swimming pool.

The swimming pool was closed in 1997 and reopened a year later as the North Commons Water Park—with gadgets, geysers, slides, and funbrellas!—another first in Minneapolis parks.

The community center underwent renovation in 1999 and that year the North Commons outdoor basketball courts were renovated with a gift from the Minnesota Timberwolves.

In 2000, the North Commons community center was one of the first five city park facilities to be outfitted with a computer lab. Most recently, the North Commons tennis courts were rehabbed in 2004.

North Mississippi Park

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Location: The west bank of the Mississippi River from the railroad tracks south of the Camden Bridge, about 41st Avenue North, to the city limits at 53rd Avenue North.

Size: 67.2 acres

Name: The name is descriptive of the park on the west bank of the Mississippi River in north Minneapolis.

Acquisition ad Development

This section of the Mississippi River received the attention of the park board long before land was acquired for a park. In 1891 in an influential report on the possible expansion of the Minneapolis park system, park commissioner William Folwell, former president of the University of Minnesota, proposed that the park board acquire the banks on both sides of the river upstream from the Camden pumping station to protect the city's water supply. While that was at the time beyond the means of the park board, it was one of the first suggestions for acquiring property along the river upstream from St. Anthony Falls and Nicollet Island. In fact that report preceded the acquisition of the river banks downstream from the falls.

When the park board began acquiring land rapidly in the early 1900s after years of limited resources, it acquired land near the site of North Mississippi Park. In 1908 the board purchased the land for Camden (Webber) Park along Shingle Creek a few hundred yards upstream from the creek's mouth at the Mississippi. Although Camden Park and its fresh-water swimming pool fed by Shingle Creek were very popular, the park lacked space for athletic fields.

In 1917 the park board voted to address that shortcoming by acquiring the land between Lyndale Avenue North and the river to enlarge the park. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth presented a plan for the enlargement of the park in September 1917 (reproduced in the 1917 annual report), which included the provision of baseball and football fields that Camden Park could not accommodate. Wirth noted that the former lumber yard would need a covering of clay soil to be useable. He also proposed a small shelter and a drive to the river with a small parking lot. Wirth presented a revised plan at half the cost that November, still providing primarily athletic fields for the expanded park. The revised plan must have met with neighborhood approval because two weeks later the Camden Commercial Club petitioned for the expansion of Camden Park to the river as far north as 50th Street and for proposed improvements to the new land and to the existing Camden Park.

However, about the same time the North Side Commercial Club asked the board to curtail all new acquisitions and improvements. As World War I dragged on into 1918 the park board canceled many plans for enlarging and improving parks, and the expansion of Camden Park was no exception. In March 1918, the board deferred action on the new park. Later that year the park board did give public notice that it planned to acquire one acre of land at 42nd and the river "at the proper time." The action was taken, at the request of many area civic groups, to forestall the creation of a coal yard on the site. The

board reported that "if conditions were normal" it would not hesitate to acquire the land, but under "present conditions" could only state its intent to acquire the land in the future.

That intent, manifested by several later attempts to acquire the land, persisted. The park board began proceedings again in 1919 and 1922 to acquire the land, but abandoned them. In 1929 Wirth finally proposed adding a ball field to Camden Park on land that was part of the Glenwood-Camden Parkway, and suggested that residents of the area were able and willing to be assessed the cost of the improvements.

Over the next decade the target of park board interest in the area was in improving the grounds of the city's old water pumping station, which was no longer used. By 1940 another problem had arisen. The land below the 42nd Avenue Bridge was occupied by "squatters and house trailers." The park board offered to improve the land if the city would clear the land of its temporary residents and appropriate money to maintain the park. The city council declined that offer.

Finally in 1944 the park board learned that the state might sell the tax delinquent land it had acquired from 48th to 49th on the river. The park board asked the state to inform the board of any land for sale so commissioners could determine if that land fit into the board's plans. (The park board acquired the land for Bossen Field and Hi-View Park free from the state under those terms.)

The city did request that the state withhold from sale all land along the river in 1946. The city wanted the land from 42nd Avenue to downtown for an upper harbor and the land north could be used as a park. In the 1946 annual report park superintendent Charles Doell reported that the park board was considering acquiring 98 acres of land along the river from 42nd to 51st Streets, 75 percent of which was owned by the state as tax-delinquent land. Doell noted that Liebert Weir in his 1944 study of the Minneapolis park system had recommended that the park board acquire the river banks along that section of the river. However, Doell noted that there were objections to the acquisition which prevented the park board from including the land in its requests for bond funding. Doell added that the state highway department had made preliminary plans to use part of the area for highway purposes. This would be the issue that would eventually determine the boundaries of today's North Mississippi Park.

In 1950 the park board initiated condemnation proceedings to acquire much of the land between 44th Street and 47th Street from Lyndale Avenue North to the river—twenty acres at a cost of $15,000 for acquisition and improvement—but once again ran into opposition. Part of that opposition was from the land owners who objected to the value at which their land was appraised. As a result, in 1952 the park board reduced the amount of land it had designated for the park and purchased only 5.2 acres of land for $8,800. That transaction was completed in 1954 and passed without comment in that year's annual report.

The next year the board acquired another 14.4 acres "by condemnation and donation for eventual development as a river shore park," as reported in the 1955 annual report. In fact very little of the land was acquired by condemnation; most of the land was deeded from the city to the park board. In 1959 another 11.7 acres were acquired along the river, mostly from the state when the city council determined that it didn't need all of the land it had reserved for a city harbor. Three acres of land along Shingle Creek between the river and Camden Park were also acquired at the time, although that acquisition wasn't at the time added to the park's total acreage. The total cost of the additional land was just over $8,000.

The first real development of the park didn't begin until 1966 when the park board installed a boat launch and parking lot on the river near the 42nd Avenue Bridge. But by then the state's plans for a new freeway through north Minneapolis were already well developed, and those plans included taking much of the land for a new I-94 freeway. In an intense battle to preserve park land from incursion by freeways, the board had made a stand at Minnehaha Park to prevent the construction of an elevated freeway on Hiawatha Avenue from the airport to downtown. Court decisions related to that case and new requirements for environmental impact assessment of new highway projects gave the park board considerable power in determining the location of the new freeway through north Minneapolis. The park board rejected the state's plan to take much of the park in 1968.

In 1974 Minneapolis mayor Al Hofstede brokered a compromise between the park board and the highway department that led to the present shape of the park. The highway department was given the land at the western edge of the park, leaving enough room for a riverside park, in return for land that would extend the park north along the river. The compromise led to a longer, narrower park, but a net gain in more than seven acres for the park, and preserved the river banks as open space.

State Senators Carl Kroening of north Minneapolis and Bill Luther of Brooklyn Center obtained funding from the state legislature in 1985 for the development of a regional park on the banks of the Mississippi River from North Mississippi Park into Brooklyn Center on the west bank and Anoka County on the east bank. Kroening was instrumental in acquiring state funding, administered through the Metropolitan Council, for Minneapolis parks. He was later honored by having the park's interpretive center named for him. The new park was to be developed jointly by the Minneapolis park board along with the Anoka County park board and Three Rivers Park District (Hennepin County).

The deal between the park board and the state led to the creation of another waterfall in Minneapolis parks. The new I-94 freeway passed over Shingle Creek between Webber Park and North Mississippi Park, so the state's plan was to run the creek through a culvert under the freeway. The park board instead developed a plan to drop the creek in one step in an artificial waterfall west of the freeway and create paths beside the creek under the freeway. That plan enabled the uninterrupted connection of pathways along Shingle Creek to the river trails and beyond.

From 1987 to 1989 the park board acquired the last 17 acres to extend the park to the north Minneapolis city limit at 53rd Avenue North. Part of the land that had once held a housing project along the river was acquired from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency for about $2.5 million and private land was purchased for nearly $2 million more.

A trail system through the park, connecting to Shingle Creek and commuter routes downtown was developed in 1997.

The unique legislation that created joint responsibility for the park led to a partnership in operating the park. When the Carl W. Kroening Interpretive Center was opened in the park in 2002, programming was provided by the Three Rivers Park District even though the center is in Minneapolis. Regional park funding also was responsible for the construction in the park of the largest picnic shelter in Minneapolis parks, a wading pool, rock waterfall and playground at the north end of the park.

Northeast Athletic Field Park

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Location: Fillmore Street NE and 13th Avenue NE

Size: 35.83 acres

Name: The name is descriptive, being located in northeast Minneapolis.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was acquired in 1941 for the purpose of providing athletic fields for northeast Minneapolis. In the 1941 annual report park superintendent Charles Doell wrote that there were few baseball or football fields in that part of the city, yet a number of organized teams originated from that "district."

The land was once a stone quarry that had been filled with debris. Most of the 37 acres of land acquired was above grade, a unique situation for the park board, which throughout its history was either given or purchased cheaply land that was swampy and wet. Part of the land was acquired from the city, but most of the park was acquired from the state at no cost. The land had been acquired by the state for non-payment of taxes. The total cost of the land for the park was later listed as $104.

Initial improvements to the land, mostly grading, loam surfacing and the installation of drains was begun in 1941 as a federal work relief program, but improvements were suspended in 1942.

Following World War II the city faced a serious shortage of housing and a village of quonset huts was built on a large portion of the property, mostly to house veterans returning from the war.

The first recreation facility provided at the park was a small playground on Buchanan Street that had been requested by the Quonset Hut Village Committee in 1947. Over the next three years the park board prepared the remaining open ground on Buchanan between 14th and 16th as a baseball field, built tennis courts and finally a toilet building in 1951. The quonset hut village was not closed until 1954.

In 1954 the size of the park shrank by ten acres due to the park board's efforts to expand two other parks in southeast Minneapolis. The board traded ten acres of Northeast Park to Pioneer Engineering Works for one acre of land to enlarge Holmes Park on 4th Street Southeast and portions of five lots to expand Dickman Park.

After the trade of land and the closing of the quonset hut village, the park board rearranged the park and vacated Buchanan Street from 14th to 16th streets—gaining another acre of useable park space in the process. By 1956 the park board had graded, surfaced and sodded the entire area and had installed lights on a new football field.

The next important change in the park resulted in the 1960s from the park board's continuing collaboration with the school board to develop properties together. The two boards had successfully developed joint projects at Waite Park, Armatage Park and Kenny Park in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Harrison Park in the late 1950s, and were working together in the 1960s on projects at what became Bethune Park and Matthews Park and others. In 1965 the park board sold nearly two acres of Northeast Park to the school board for the new Putnam School built next to the park in 1966. Instead of building a separate recreation center for the park, the park board built a multi-purpose recreation center attached to the school in 1969. (Putnam School was closed in 2006 and is presently for sale. Upon the school's closing the park board leased the gym at the school, a lease that expires in 2010.)

Another major addition to the park in 1968 consummated years of planning. A swimming pool was built in the park that year, providing the first park swimming facility east of the Mississippi River. A swimming facility had been considered for northeast Minneapolis in 1930 at Columbia Park, but with the Great Depression, followed by World War II, those plans were never developed. In his 1944 survey of Minneapolis parks for the park board, Liebert Weir strongly recommended that the park board provide a swimming facility east of the river. Weir, who was the national secretary of the National Recreation Association, was critical of many of the recreational facilities provided by the park board, but placed a strong emphasis on the need for swimming in the eastern parts of the city. The southwest had the lakes and north Minneapolis had the pool at Webber Park (a pool was built at North Commons in 1967, too), but the park board provided no accommodation for swimmers in northeast and southeast Minneapolis.

The pool was named for Henry Rosacker, a park commissioner from northeast Minneapolis 1951-1973. The park board considered a recommendation to name the whole park for Rosacker, but settled on his name just for the pool.

In 1979 the park board rebuilt the softball and baseball fields at the park and also opened a two-kilometer cross-country ski trail that winter.

In 1994 the park board began renovation of the play areas in the park with funding from the neighborhood through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and the school board.

In 1998 funding was obtained through city bonds to build a new swimming facility. By 2002 the new facility was completed not as just a swimming pool but as a water park. The new water park was named the Jim Lupient Water Park in honor of a northeast Minneapolis native who pledged to donate more than $1 million over several years to provide programming and swimming lessons at the park.

In 2009 the Grand Rounds Miniature Golf Course opened adjacent to the Jim Lupient Water Park.

Northeast Ice Arena

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Location: 1306 Central Avenue NE

Size: 1.82 acres

Name: The building was named for its location in northeast Minneapolis when it was acquired in 2006. It was originally called Edison Ice Arena for the Edison Youth Hockey Association, which built the arena to promote youth hockey in the Edison High School district.

Acquisition and Development

The facility was built by the Edison Youth Hockey Association (EYHA) to promote the development of players for the Edison High School hockey program. The arena was built for about $2.2 million in 1997. The City of Minneapolis provided the land for the building, EYHA raised about $800,000, another $400,000 in grants were secured, and the City of Minneapolis guaranteed a loan for slightly more than $1 million.

In 2004 the EYHA was in default on its payments on the loan primarily due to a decline in charitable gambling proceeds from pull tab operations. The EYHA and the City turned to the park board for a

possible solution. The park board was operating the Parade Ice Garden profitably and identified economies of scale in adding another ice arena that could be managed from the Parade arena. At the time demand for ice time was expected to increase due to the closing of the nearest ice arena in Columbia Heights. The useful life of the arena, before major repairs would be needed, was estimated to be another fifteen years.

Ultimately the park board purchased the facility for the amount outstanding on the EYHA loan guaranteed by the city, or about $750,000, one-third of the original cost of the facility.

Oak Crest Triangle

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Location: 27th Avenue NE and Arthur Street

Size: 0.01 acres

Name: The triangle was likely named for the Oak Hill Addition in northeast Minneapolis.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was donated to the park board December 29, 1919 by John and Beatrice Devaney and was named at that time.

Oliver Triangle

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Location: Oliver and 21st Avenue North

Size: 0.04 acres

Name: The triangle took the name of Oliver Avenue, which was named for Deacon Oliver, a pioneer who platted his claim to this section of north Minneapolis. Oliver's name is also associated in park history with "Oliver Park," the original name for Linden Hills Park when it was purchased in 1919. The name of Oliver Park was changed to Linden Hills in 1921.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was donated to the park board when it was dedicated as park land in the plat of Forest Heights, July 31, 1883 along with Cottage Park, Glen Gale and Irving Triangle. The park board requested control of the property from the city council in 1892.

Initial improvements to the triangle were made in 1895 and additional work was done in the park in 1909.

Orlin Triangle

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Location: Orlin Avenue SE and Melbourne Avenue

Size: 0.01 acres

Name: The triangle was named for the street on which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

The city's smallest "park"—only a few steps wide—was acquired September 24, 1915 when the city council requested that the park board take over four triangles in the Prospect Park neighborhood of southeast Minneapolis, including Orlin Triangle. The park board agreed to take control of the triangles October 11, 1915 and officially named them on November 17, 1915. The other three triangles accepted were Barton, Bedford and Clarence.

The triangle was improved—graded, seeded, planted and curbed—in 1916.

Orvin "Ole" Olson Park

Table of Contents

Location: West River Road North and 23rd Avenue North

Size: 3.47 acres

Name: The park was named Skyline Park from the time of its acquisition until it was renamed Orvin "Ole" Olson Park in 2006. Olson was a park commissioner from north Minneapolis 1974-1978. As chair of the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board while he was a park commissioner, Olson was instrumental in establishing policy and guidelines for the later development of the Central Riverfront parks in the 1980s. Olson's son, Jon, has served as a park commissioner since 2002 and was president of the board 2006-2007.

Acquisition and Development

The land was purchased in 2002 as part of the park board's long-term plan to acquire more land along the Mississippi River above the falls. It is included in the board's Above the Falls Master Plan, which targets the acquisition of riverfront property as it becomes available. The land was formerly the location of the Riverside Supper Club.

The park is a part of Upper Mississippi River Regional Park.

Painter Park

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Location: Lyndale Avenue South and West 33rd Street

Size: 2.95 acres

Name: The park board officially named the park Jonathan E. Painter Park on February 2, 1977. The park was referred to before that as Lyndale Park, or the old Lyndale School site. Jonathan Painter had been the first industrial arts teacher in the Minneapolis school system and had created the industrial arts curriculum in city schools.

Acquisition and Development

The old Lyndale School site was acquired in 1976, one of three former school sites the park board acquired about that time in south Minneapolis. The others were Fuller School and Corcoran School. As

with the other two sites, the park board paid for the land with money it had received from the state department of transportation for park land taken for freeways in the 1960s and 1970s. There was some debate over whether the park board needed another park only a few blocks away from Bryant Square, but the rare opportunity to acquire a block of open land in the heart of a residential neighborhood was too good to pass up.

The neighborhood had been targeted initially for a 7-10 acre site that combined a new school and new park at Grand Avenue South and West 34th Street, two blocks east of Painter Park, according to the park board's biennial report for 1966-1967. But ultimately the park board and school board developed their projects independently.

The site was redeveloped as a playground immediately after its acquisition, with playing fields, playgrounds, tennis courts and a recreation center built in 1976.

Playground and field improvements were completed in 2001, with final landscaping touches added in 2002.

The Parade

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Location: Hennepin Avenue to I-394 between Vineland Avenue and Wayzata Boulevard

Size: 45.77 acres, including 2.32 acres of water

Name: The name "The Parade" was adopted October 31, 1904. The name was apparently suggested by park commissioner John Bradstreet because the land was next to the National Guard Armory and was used as a parade ground by the guard. On the date the name was approved, Thomas Lowry, who donated a large portion of the land and whose home on Lowry Hill overlooked it, had noted his approval of the name. The name applied not only to new land donated and purchased for a larger park but also to the first land acquired at the site, which included Spring Lake. The original park had been known as Spring Lake Park from the time it was acquired in 1893. The name of the lake predates park board records. For a brief time in 1893 the board considered renaming the lake, Hiyata Lake, on the suggestion of William Folwell. He claimed the term was a Native American word that meant "back by the hill." The board voted to keep the name Spring Lake. Despite the board's refusal to change the name, however, park board records and inventories for the next several years listed the property as Hiyata Park. The name of Spring Lake was not changed when The Parade was named.

Acquisition and Development

Land for a park to the west of Central (Loring) Park was first proposed by Thomas Lowry in November 1885. Lowry would later be the primary figure in the acquisition of the park at the foot of the hill that was named for him, Lowry Hill. His mansion was on the top of the hill. Lowry was the owner of the Minneapolis Street Railway Company. He and his company would play an important role in the development of Minneapolis parks, in part through collaboration with the park board to provide a pavilion and entertainment at Lake Harriet to stimulate ridership on street cars to the lake.

A park board that was considering many other land acquisitions in its first years of operation did not act on Lowry's proposal at the time. But within a few years, as it shifted its focus to the Lake District in southwest Minneapolis, and land owners offered to donate and pay for the development of land, the park

board viewed the area more favorably. As was often the case with the park board in its early years it expanded the park system when it was offered free land.

The park board's first president, Charles Loring, had secured the donation of most of Lake Harriet in 1885 and thought he could do the same at Lake of the Isles. Loring was the driving force behind acquiring Lake of the Isles as a park that he envisioned would connect by a parkway along Mount Curve and Hennepin Avenue to Central (Loring) Park. In 1885 and 1886 he personally negotiated for the donation of the land around Isles and the connecting parkway. In 1886, he also secured a donation of land for Kenwood Parkway from Mount Curve to the west side of Lake of the Isles.

The proposed route for the connecting parkway changed in 1887, however, when a group of property owners led by Edward Twitchell, offered to donate land for a parkway, a strip 100 feet wide, connecting Central Park to Kenwood Parkway across the swampy land at the base of Lowry Hill, instead of along the top of the hill as Loring had imagined. The new parkway would climb the steep hill into Kenwood southwest of Spring Lake. That offer of land was originally rejected, with even Charles Loring voting against it. The following year, however, the offer was sweetened by area landowners, including Thomas Lowry. They would not only donate the land, but they would pay for building the parkway across it under the supervision of the superintendent of parks. The park board formally accepted that offer in July 1888.

The acquisition of the first land for what is now part of The Parade was decided—but not without some acrimony. At the same meeting that the board accepted the offer of the land and money for improvement, park commissioner Byron Sutherland demanded to know on whose authority park superintendent William Berry had already spent more than $4,000 on improvements to Kenwood Parkway. The park board meeting was promptly adjourned and board president Loring did not reconvene the board for more than four months. No explanation was ever provided in board proceedings for the expenditure on the new parkway.

The acquisition of more than a parkway through the land waited another five years. Petitions for the park board to acquire Spring Lake beside the new parkway were received by the board in 1891, but as with the earlier parkway, the board postponed action on those requests. Again it was the offer of free land and the money to develop it that prompted action.

Charles Loring wrote to William Folwell on July 14, 1892 (Loring was not a park commissioner at the time) that he and Thomas Lowry had finally gotten Joel Bassett to agree to sell his property on the northern shore of Spring Lake to the park board. Loring noted that Thomas Lowry had always said he would donate his property along the lake for a park if Bassett would do the same or sell it at a reasonable price. Loring wrote that he and Lowry had been "at work" on Bassett for three years to get a proposition, but "until yesterday" had failed. "Now," Loring wrote, "(Bassett) has agreed upon a price which is satisfactory to the other property owners who are to pay for it."

In early 1893 the park board formally agreed to buy ten acres of land around Spring Lake from Lowry, Bassett and others for $75,000. The attractive part of the offer, however, was that the same property owners agreed to pay for the property over ten years through assessments on their remaining land in the area. The net cost to the park board would be nothing. Once again Lowry also offered to donate the money—$10,000—to the convert the land into a park.

That was the last property acquired by the park board for the better part of a decade as the city and the country sank into economic depression following the Panic of 1893. When the park board resumed

acquiring land in 1902, the expansion of Spring Lake Park was a priority. Citing a need for more land "near the central part of the city," the park board acquired another 44.5 acres of land in 1904 that gave The Parade the basic shape we know today.

Once again it was donated land that was at the heart of the acquisition. More than half the land was donated, twenty acres by Lowry. Other donors were William Dunwoody, on whose remaining land Dunwoody Institute was later built across from the park, and Security Bank. The park board also purchased 21 acres at a total cost of nearly $110,000 and most of the cost was once again assessed on nearby property. The initial grading and seeding of the new park land, much of which was low ground, was paid for by another $11,000 donation from Lowry.

Lowry had initially given slightly more than 20 acres to the park board in the transaction, including a plot of land near the railroad tracks north of the park that he had agreed the park board could sell to create a maintenance fund. He later informed the board that he had made a mistake; he had already conveyed that land to the railroad in an earlier transaction and asked the park board to grant the deed for that land to the railroad. The park board complied with the request of one of its most generous benefactors. Over the next two years, perhaps to compensate for his error, Lowry made additional donations to the park board for the Parade, including an "entrance" to the park in the northeast corner, made in conjunction with the Church of the Immaculate Conception, and the land in the southeast corner of the park, which is now the Sculpture Garden across from the Walker Art Center. The park board had voted to acquire the latter parcel by condemnation to enlarge the park. When faced with the board's decision, Lowry donated the land with a condition that the park board could erect no buildings on it. The land occupied by the Armory on Lyndale Avenue was the only small parcel of the present Parade and Sculpture Garden that was not then owned by the park board. The 1.2 acres of land on which the Armory sat was finally given to the park board by the state in 1934 at the time the Armory was demolished.

From almost the time The Parade was expanded in 1904 it was coveted as a recreation park. In early 1905 the board received petitions from the YMCA and others to use The Parade as a baseball field. This was at a time when the park board maintained no athletic fields of any kind on park property and only a year earlier had installed the first few swings for children on park property at Loring Park. Parks were still generally viewed as places for quiet retreat and relaxation, not as places for active recreation, such as ball games, or even as playgrounds for children.

The request from the YMCA for a baseball field at The Parade came from Clifford Booth, the director of physical training at the YMCA. Two years later, in 1907, after the park board had installed gymnastic and playground equipment in two parks, Booth volunteered to provide instruction and supervision at the playgrounds, and the next year became the park board's first supervisor of recreation, a part-time job.

In the 1905 annual report, the park board recommended establishing a recreation park, its first, at The Parade. In 1905 the park board also gave approval to the city to build a highway along the northern edge of the park. That highway became Highway 12 and later I-394, which in the 1960s took nearly 21 acres of The Parade.

When the park board's new superintendent of parks, Theodore Wirth, made his first recommendations to the park board in March 1906 he announced that in his preliminary plans for the park he had set aside two blocks for a football field. Because the park board had no money to build the fields at the time, however, he recommended that the park board grant a request from the city engineer to use that land to store city supplies, a recommendation that the park board approved.

Petitions for the use of The Parade steadily grew. In 1906 the Northwest Interscholastic Athletic Association asked the park board to create athletic fields at the Parade for the city's high schools to use. Another request was for concerts to be provided at the park, and in June of 1906 the park board provided its first concert there.

In 1907 the park board reported that The Parade was already "one of the most useful and valuable parks"—and reported that Lowry, Dunwoody and others had contributed nearly $10,000 more for further improvements to the park. And requests for more facilities came in, including tennis courts and a cricket field.

In the spring of 1908 the superintendent of Minneapolis schools, Charles Jordan, who had joined Charles Loring and William Folwell a decade earlier in urging the creation of playgrounds in parks, formally asked the park board to provide baseball fields and tennis courts, along with locker rooms and showers, at The Parade. That summer five baseball fields were laid out at The Parade and there was such demand for the fields that new recreation supervisor Clifford Booth implemented a system of permits for using the fields. Two baseball leagues, the Commercial League and the Flour City League, began playing their games at The Parade.

When the football season came around, the city's high schools asked for permission for their football teams to practice and play at The Parade and the park board instructed Wirth to erect football goal posts on the field. In the 1908 annual report, Wirth "heartily recommended" approval of the requests from high schools to use the grounds for sports and presented his first plan for the layout of athletic facilities at The Parade. Included in his plan were baseball and football fields, with a grandstand for spectators, and basketball courts.

That summer two more baseball fields were added, still without fencing or backstops, bringing to seven the number of baseball fields. (The first backstops were not installed until 1911.) Booth reported that the fields were used every night that summer for practices and every Saturday for games. Athletic events were not permitted in parks on Sundays.

The park board also granted permission for the first privately sponsored entertainment at the park in 1909 when the board granted the Elks Club permission to hold a circus there as a fundraiser. (A few years later, however, it denied a request from Ringling Brothers to hold a for-profit circus on the grounds.) In 1910 the first citywide track meet was held at Parade, featuring competitors from seven park playgrounds and seven school playgrounds. The park board shifted one of its planned concerts that summer from the Lake Harriet pavilion to the Parade during the citywide athletic festival at the urging of Wirth who said the festival needed a "good band."

With the popularity of the fields at the Parade, Wirth presented a new plan for a grandstand at the fields in 1911, but added that the park board needed a donation from a public-spirited citizen to pay for it. As important as athletic uses of parks were becoming, the expense of providing accommodation for athletes was still not seen as a primary responsibility of the park board.

In addition to beginning the grading of the fields, the park board also built four tennis courts at the Parade in 1911—also without backstops. In an unusual agreement, which set a precedent that continued for decades, the board agreed to a contract with a private tennis club for maintenance and operation of the courts.

The grading and reseeding of the fields at Parade took them out of commission for three years. One of the problems, as in most parks in the city, was that the park was created on low, wet land. Before the fields could be constructed the land had to be filled and the fill had to settle before it could be graded, top-dressed and seeded. Theodore Wirth also noted that the fields could not be completed earlier due to a shortage of funds. (The low relative priority of athletic fields in the park system, despite persistent demand for them, is demonstrated by the fact that in 1911 the park board received authorization from the state legislature to sell $1 million in bonds for park improvements. With extensive lake dredging and parkway building planned or underway at that time, however, sufficient funds were still not available to complete the grading of the new fields, which meant that another full year passed before they were usable.) Without the fields at the Parade, North Commons and the first Longfellow Field (at Minnehaha and 28th) became the venues for football games in the city.

While the fields were under construction, the park board gave permission in 1912 for Woodrow Wilson to give a presidential campaign speech at The Parade.

Another attraction at The Parade began in 1913 when Theodore Wirth requested the use of the ground south of the Armory for an ornamental garden. Wirth wanted to create a show garden that year for the Society of American Florists and Ornamental Horticulturists, which was holding its national convention at the Armory. The "Convention Garden," with more than 20,000 plants, was such a hit with the florists and the public that it became the premier garden in the city along with the rose garden at Lake Harriet. In 1914 park board president Edmund Phelps recommended continuing the garden, but renaming it the "Armory Garden." The Armory Garden remained long after the Armory itself was torn down in 1934. The park board maintained the garden until 1967. Each year the central bed of the garden was used to spell out in flowers an important event in the city. In 1964, after *Look* magazine had paid tribute to the city, the flowers spelled out "All America City," the title the magazine had conferred.

The newly graded and planted Parade fields—seven for baseball and two for football—opened for play in 1914. The Parade immediately regained its status as the premier athletic ground in the city primarily due to its central location. But that central location also put The Parade at the center of many discussions of other city facilities. From the late 1910s into the 1930s many city leaders, including park commissioners, recommended The Parade as the site of a new auditorium and civic center. In 1919 Wirth even proposed creating an "auto tourist camp" at The Parade similar to the one the park board later operated at Minnehaha Park. In 1923 the park board approved use of the northern section of The Parade as a polo ground with barn and stables. This was after the park board had rejected Wirth's suggestion to turn Bryn Mawr into a park for equestrians, including polo players.

Still the park was without amenities other than playing areas. In 1923 park commissioner Maude Armatage suggested that the park board consider adding a "comfort station"—toilets—to the property. No action was taken on her suggestion. Despite the lack of amenities the popularity of the athletic fields continued. In 1926 a city-wide track and field competition was begun again, under the sponsorship of the Minneapolis Tribune. More than 2,000 people participated between the children's events during the day and adult contests at night. By 1932 participation had increased to nearly 3,000.

In 1930 Wirth advocated constructing an auditorium at the Parade and three years later he added a stadium to the list of facilities that he believed were needed there. With the onset of the depression and an extreme shortage of funds to develop or improve any park facilities, Wirth suggested that a facility at Parade, and lighting for the tennis courts, could be paid for by user fees. Even without action on buildings, the park board created five more baseball and softball fields in the park in 1931.

While plans for a stadium funded by the Public Works Administration fell through, in 1933 the park board added lights, a fence, and bleachers to hold 2,000 people at the best baseball field and authorized an admission charge of ten cents at some events to recoup costs. For the first time night baseball games were played at Parade. The policy of charging admission to events proved successful at the baseball field. Improvements were made to the field several times, including new fencing and bleachers over the next fifteen years. By 1946 the maximum allowable charge for admission had increased to fifty cents.

The tennis courts at the Parade got a new look in 1934 in preparation for hosting the National Public Parks Tennis Championship. The championship required clay courts, of which the city had none, so the park board's first clay courts were built at The Parade along with a tennis center building. At that time the park board had 175 tennis courts in parks throughout the city, but all of them had either concrete or limestone surfaces. The new courts provided a home court advantage to William Schommer and Charles Britzius of Minneapolis who won the men's doubles title. (The tennis center built for the event was operated by the park board until 1942, when management of the center and the courts were taken over by the Minneapolis Tennis Club. Despite hopes that the new clay courts would pay for themselves in user fees, the courts had operated at a slight deficit.) Tennis was so popular at the time that when the state donated to the park board the site of the Armory, which was razed in 1934, Wirth proposed converting half of that land into tennis courts too.

No further developments occurred at The Parade through World War II although the new park superintendent in 1936, Christian Bossen, repeated the call for a recreation center at the park. It wasn't until the park board began planning its post-war agenda that plans for a stadium at Parade gained momentum. Various branches of city government were encouraged to develop plans for "post-war progress" partly in hopes that government spending after the war could help prevent a return to depression. On the park board's list of post-war progress projects, totaling $11.7 million, was Parade Stadium at a projected cost of $1 million. It was one of the few projects on the park board's list that was funded by city bonds until the 1960s.

In 1949 and 1950 plans were developed and approved for a 17,000-seat football stadium, a 4,000-seat baseball stadium and parking for 600 cars. Construction plans were held up due to objections from homeowners in the Lowry Hill neighborhood, but construction finally began in 1950. Just after construction began however, the National Production Authority prohibited the construction of recreation and amusement projects in order to conserve materials for defense purposes as the nation went to war in Korea. Mayor Eric Hoyer and park superintendent Charles Doell went to Washington, D. C. to request an exemption from the ban because the stadium construction had already begun. They returned home with permission to finish the stadium—and to complete another park project that was already underway, the construction of Waite Park.

The new stadium opened in the fall of 1951. The biggest event at the stadium that fall was an NFL exhibition game between the Green Bay Packers and the San Francisco 49ers, which drew a standing-room crowd of 20,000. The annual NFL game, promoted as a fundraiser by the Catholic Welfare Association, helped make the new stadium profitable until the game was moved to Bloomington's new Metropolitan Stadium in 1956. The first NFL exhibition games demonstrated the appetite in the area for professional football, which eventually helped land an NFL franchise for the state in 1961.

From the time the stadium was built it became the home of Minneapolis high school football. The first year the stadium was the venue for eight football games, but the next year 47 were played there.

To make room for the new stadiums, the tennis center at The Parade was transferred to Nicollet (King) Park. Post-war plans for the development of The Parade originally had included an ice arena and an auditorium for basketball games, but those parts of the plan were put on hold for lack of funds. The basketball auditorium would never be built on the site, but more than 35 years later, an ice arena was be added to The Parade.

In its first years of operation, thanks in part to the annual NFL exhibition game, the new facilities at The Parade operated at a profit. In addition to regular football and baseball games, the park hosted the World Softball Championships in 1954 and again in 1958. After the loss of the NFL exhibition game in 1956, the park board replaced some lost revenue by leasing the stadium to a circus for a couple weeks in the summer of 1957. Over the next several years however, the stadium operated at a slight loss due to maintenance costs.

What made the park profitable again was not the stadium, but the parking lot. With the construction of the Guthrie Theater in 1963, the park board began to see substantial revenue from the stadium parking lot where many Guthrie patrons parked. The Guthrie also benefited from having the park outside its doors. Patrons not only parked in the park lot, but waited for performances to start by ambling through Kenwood Garden, the old Armory Garden.

By then, however, The Parade had begun a change that would dramatically alter the park and its setting. In 1962, the first parts of The Parade were lost to freeway construction, a development that would eventually shrink the park by a third and form stark boundaries on two sides of the park. Land to the east of Parade was taken for I-94 severing the park from Loring Park and later more land on the north side of the park was taken for I-394 placing a freeway a few feet from the edge of Spring Lake. In the end the park lost 21 acres and seven playing fields to highways. One benefit of the loss of land at The Parade to freeways was that the park board acquired from the state in exchange part of the Wabun picnic area on the Mississippi River bluffs near Minnehaha Falls.

By the mid-1960s another development was also being considered that would change the park. In 1966 the park board had its first discussions with representatives of the Guthrie Theater and Walker Art Center about using a portion of the park across Vineland Avenue from the arts complex for cultural purposes. A short time later the park board also approved in concept the construction of a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the new freeway to reconnect Loring Park to The Parade. It would take nearly two decades for those two developments to come together in the form of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden and the Irene Hixon Whitney Bridge. (See Sculpture Garden for more of that story.)

The Parade finally got an ice arena, the first for a Minneapolis park, about the time the Sculpture Garden was being completed in 1988. At that time the Minneapolis Auditorium, the venue for high school hockey games in Minneapolis, was razed for the construction of a new convention center. An ice arena at The Parade, initially proposed in 1950 when the stadium was constructed, was finally built in 1988, at a cost of $4 million, primarily to provide a practice and game venue for Minneapolis high school hockey teams. An additional performance space was added to the ice arena in 1997 prior to the 1998 World Figure Skating Championships that were held at Target Center.

Two years after the Ice Arena was built, a Parade Stadium that was well past its prime was demolished. In its place a new baseball field was constructed to replace a field lost to the expansion of the Sculpture Garden to the east.

In 2006 a new synthetic turf field was installed at The Parade for soccer and football. And in 2006 one rink in the Ice Arena was converted to indoor court turf for soccer and lacrosse.

Trivia

At the height of the Cold War, on April 20, 1960 the park board approved a request from Minneapolis Civil Defense to construct a demonstration atomic bomb fallout shelter at The Parade. An earlier decision to place the fallout shelter in Nicollet (King) Park was rescinded after objections from the community.

Park Avenue Triangle

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Location: Park Avenue and East 10th Street

Size: 0.03 acres

Name: The triangle was named on November 4, 1925 for the street on which it located.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was transferred to the park board from the city council. The council turned over the triangle to the park board April 8, 1925. An earlier request for the park board to designate the triangle as a park was denied in 1924.

Park Siding Park

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Location: Dean Court and West 28th Street

Size: 1.39 acres

Name: The park name, adopted November 4, 1925, was chosen because the property was adjacent to the railroad track just west of Dean Boulevard. From 1916, when the park board first leased the property, it was referred to as the Dean Boulevard Construction Yard or the Nelson Tract after the name of the company that sold the land to the park board.

Acquisition and Development

The original property of three acres was purchased June 4, 1919 from the Nelson Brothers Paving and Construction Company for $26,200, payable over ten years.

The property was acquired to provide a storage and work yard, primarily as a paving plant for parkway construction. The board first leased the space for that purpose in 1916, but park superintendent Theodore Wirth presented a drawing of the proposed location and arrangement of an “asphalt plant and storage yard” at that location in his 1915 annual report. At that time Wirth estimated that the pavement required for the entire system at the time was one million square yards, a volume that would be handled more economically with a modern plant. He noted that he already had a portable plant located on the Nelson Brothers’ land before the lease was negotiated. After only a year of operating under the lease, Wirth recommended in June, 1917 that the land be purchased.

The park board initially agreed to pay $32,000 for the property in 1918, but backed out of that deal and was sued by Nelson Brothers to enforce the agreement. The court determined that the agreement was not a valid contract and the Nelson Brothers and the park board compromised on a purchase price of $26,200.

Wirth wrote in his 1919 annual report that the location provided excellent railroad track facilities for off-loading supplies, and space for shops, storehouses and yards. Perhaps what he left out is most telling, and may have contributed to the board's reluctance to proceed with the acquisition at the original price: asphalt. Wirth's plans for an asphalt plant were obviated by his conclusion that an asphalt-concrete mix for parkways was less durable and more expensive than tar macadam. By 1920 it was obvious that the asphalt-concrete mix used on The Mall and King's Highway was already in need of repairs. Wirth also made the case in his 1920 report that "asphaltic concrete" was two to three times more expensive than tar macadam. His opinion had shifted dramatically from 1916, when he emphasized the need for an asphalt plant, to 1920 when he stated the standard pavement for the park system would be a tar macadam surface.

Wirth's plan when the board finally acquired the railroad siding was to lower the ground near the track by six feet and use the excavated gravel and sand in the Grand Rounds construction projects then in planning stages. He speculated that the value of that material would more than cover the cost of the acquisition. He further noted that the new machinery for grading, ditching and paving to be used in constructing the Glenwood-Camden Parkway, among others, had been received and was housed in an old building on the property.

This was at a time when extensive road-building had begun on the Glenwood-Camden Parkway, soon to be followed by either paving or construction at Linden Hills Boulevard, Stinson Boulevard, St. Anthony Parkway, Minnehaha Parkway and West Lake Calhoun Parkway.

For accounting purposes, improvements to the property were charged against the park construction fund, rather than the property itself, and are therefore difficult to track from park board reports. The board did contract with the railroad in 1923 to extend the storage tracks on the property.

Wirth wrote in 1926 that the value of the property to the park board was steadily increasing. The location of the yard was especially useful for additional road construction on Minnehaha Parkway and the west side of Lake Calhoun.

A small piece of the property was leased to a private citizen in 1933 and by the 1950's, with the exception of a playground for young children, the land was largely unused. The park board staff recommended in the 1950s that the property be sold. In 1971, a developer was interested in buying the property and, with the required permission from the District Court to sell the land, it was advertised for sale. The only bidder was the developer who purchased 1.3 acres of the property for $150,000.

A proposal to rename the park Woodcarvers Park, in 1977, in exchange for the donation of three 25-foot totem or heritage poles for the park was not accepted by the park board. The park was referred to informally by park staff as Woodcarvers Park anyway because of the woodcarving shop and school across the street from the park.

When the park board completely renovated the little park in 1997—which was by then nowhere near a working railroad track—it won a design award from the Committee on Urban Environment. The renovation was financed in part by Cedar-Isles-Dean neighborhood revitalization funds.

Today the tranquil little park, nestled on a dead-end street among modern townhouses, lies beside not a railroad track, but a bicycle and pedestrian path. No longer a place to unload railcars, it's an excellent place for a breather for cyclists who travel the path the trains once did. No hint remains of the muscular work of mixing asphalt and building roads.

Pearl Park

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Location: Portland Avenue South and East 52nd Street

Size: 29.33 acres

Name: The park was named for Pearl Lake, which once occupied the site. In its early years it was referred to as Pearl Lake. The "lake" was not dropped from the name until the park board built a shelter at the park in 1968.

Acquisition and Development

The first mention in park board proceedings of what became Pearl Park was an offer presented to the park board on December 19, 1923 from Clarke's Diamond Lake Realty to donate a tract of land "surrounding Pearl Lake and a portion of the shores of Diamond Lake" for park purposes. That donation, valued in park board inventory at $1,500, was accepted in 1925. About a third of that value was later attributed to Pearl Lake when the park board first listed Pearl Lake and Diamond Lake separately in its inventory in 1942, although the majority of that first donation was closer to Pearl Lake.

In the 1927 annual report, park superintendent Theodore Wirth described four projects "it is hoped may be completed this year." One of them was the acquisition of another 116 acres surrounding and including Pearl Lake and Diamond Lake. Wirth planned to dredge Diamond Lake and fill Pearl Lake.

In a revised plan in 1930, Wirth expected the southern end of Pearl park to be a landscaped grove of trees, perhaps a buffer between the beach he proposed for the north end of Diamond Lake and the athletic grounds he proposed for the northern section of Pearl Lake.

While the plans to dredge Diamond Lake never were executed, the plans to fill Pearl Lake proceeded fairly quickly. Pearl Lake was on its way to becoming a recreation park from the time the first skating rink was provided there in the winter of 1929-1930.

The Pearl Lake and Diamond Lake park holdings were increased dramatically in 1936 when the park board acquired another 72.32 acres—mostly water—for the modest price of $1,035. The acquisition included land to expand the planned recreation area at Pearl Lake. The park board conducted studies with the community on development of Pearl Lake as a community park and regional athletic field.

That year about 15,000 yards of fill were dumped and graded in the south end of the "swamp" to improve the skating area. Later, with the help of federal work-relief crews, the park board stripped a foot of peat off the bed of Pearl Lake and raised it two feet by using 60,000 yards of fill acquired from the airport, where federal crews were grading for new runways. (The park board owned the airport at the

time and was responsible for its development and operation until the 1940s.) Scoops dragged behind caterpillars pealed off the peat surface, which was stockpiled. After loam from the airport was used as fill, the peat was put back as a top coat.

The work by the federal work-relief crews at Pearl Lake continued in 1937, when 200 men and 75 trucks worked to fill another 500 feet of the former lake bed with fill from the airport. With filling completed, the crews built a skating rink, baseball, softball and football fields, two tennis courts, a volleyball court and horseshoe pits. A children's playground was also installed. A twelve-inch drain was also placed in the center of the park to drain excess water into Diamond Lake. Despite the drain, excess water at Pearl Park would remain a problem for decades.

The park board planned big improvements to the Pearl Lake-Diamond Lake complex after World War II, but was never able to get bond funding for the project. Even without further development, the park was heavily used. Estimates of attendance in 1955 made Pearl Park the second-most heavily used skating rink in the park system, behind only Folwell Park in north Minneapolis.

By the early 1960s, while Diamond Lake improvements had been forgotten, Pearl Lake was included in the board's plans for improvements. In 1962, the board reported that its capitol improvement program for 1965 included $600,000 for Pearl Lake, but added that the project "depends on receiving fill material." Pearl Lake, as most other parks in the system built on filled land, continued to settle and need more fill. In the meantime, the board authorized the superintendent to seek excess fill in 1963 from the construction of I-35W a few blocks to the west.

In the 1965 annual report the board reported that plans for the improvement of the park were completed. The new plans positioned the park recreation center at the south end of the park instead of in the center of the park as earlier plans had done. Work to execute those plans began in 1966, primarily grading and landscaping, and were continued the next year with work on the new recreation center, wading pool, ball fields and playgrounds, with lighting throughout the park.

The new recreation center was dedicated in December, 1968. The total cost of the renovation of Pearl Park was $522,000, half paid on assessments on neighborhood property and half by city bonds.

Pearl Park came close to being reduced in size in 1971, when the northern end of the park was included on a list of park properties that were unused and could be sold. Although one property on that list was sold, a portion of Park Siding Park, the board voted in 1972 that all parcels previously declared surplus would not be sold.

A park retrieved from a lake continued to have flooding problems, which caused the need to refill and regrade the fields in 1979. Not only had flooding problems persisted, but the original fill material from the airport included chunks of concrete that migrated to the surface over time.

The old shelter was renovated and a gym added in 1996 with a contribution of neighborhood funds through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. Ironically, given the park's wet history, the most recent expenditure at the park was the addition in 2006 of an in-ground irrigation system.

Peavey Field Park

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Location: Franklin Avenue and Park Avenue

Size: 7.08 acres

Name: The park was named for Frank H. Peavey whose grandchildren donated the first 3.44 acres of land for the park. The name was stipulated in the deed to the land given to the park board. Peavey was prominent in the grain trade in Minneapolis. Like Elliot Park, Washburn Fair Oaks Park and Dorilus Morrison Park, the park was once the site of the namesake's home.

Acquisition and Development

Land for the original 3.44-acre park was donated by the four children of Mrs. Mary D. Wells, the daughter of Frank Peavey, on November 4, 1927. The original park site was on East 22nd Street from Park Avenue to Columbus Avenue with 290 feet of frontage on prestigious Park Avenue. The board estimated the value of the donation at the time at $28,000.

The donation of the land came twenty years after Frederick Wells and others had petitioned the park board to acquire for park purposes the land directly north of the Peavey estate on Franklin Avenue between Park and Columbus. The park board approved the acquisition on the conditions that it could acquire the land at a satisfactory price and that area residents would agree to advance the money to buy the land and be repaid over ten years. Following that original commitment to acquire the land, the issue dropped out of park board proceedings.

It resurfaced in the 1925 annual report when it was noted that Mr. F. B. Wells, presumably Peavey's son-in-law, had offered to donate the former Peavey house and property at the corner of Park and 22nd for park purposes. Park Superintendent Theodore Wirth expressed reservations that the plan would work because of the cost of acquiring adjacent land and the cost of maintaining the buildings offered.

Once the donation was accepted from the Peavey grandchildren in 1927, the Peavey home was removed from the site. One small building was left, which provided the "beginning of a very fine neighborhood playground" according to the park board's 1927 annual report. From the time it was donated, park superintendent Theodore Wirth hoped that the land would form the "nucleus" of a small playground park and hoped additional land could be secured for the park. In fact, the park has more than doubled in size since 1927.

In 1941, the park board acquired four lots, one-half acre, adjacent to the original park from the state at no cost. The lots had been forfeited to the state for failure to pay taxes. The park was expanded more dramatically in 1947 when the park board purchased by condemnation 2.8 acres in 22 lots east to Chicago Avenue at a cost of $223,000. The parcel acquired was much smaller than the park board had intended when it sought bond funds in 1946 to expand the park by as much as eight acres. The park expanded slightly again in 1949, when the city turned over to the park board the fire station at the corner of Columbus and 22nd. The next addition to the park came in 1956 when the park was expanded by another .68 acre, in part through the vacation of Columbus Avenue through the park. The final addition to the park occurred in 1992 when the park board acquired two lots at the corner of Franklin and Chicago with funds from the National Park Service. The liquor store on the corner was demolished and the site was incorporated into the park.

While land was added to the original park donation, almost nothing was done to develop the land into a useful park for many years. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth submitted a plan for development of the park in 1928, noting that the grounds were "not very sightly" in their present condition and "serve no particular purpose."

In the lean years to come nothing would be done to improve the park. From 1935 to 1937 the park board did manage to grade the fields for a skating rink, surface the field with clay and loam, and plant some trees, but that was only accomplished through state and federal work-relief programs.

At the time the park board was planning to expand the park in the 1940s, park superintendent Charles Doell wrote that play spaces were "badly needed in this thickly-populated district of the city." It was one of the districts that had the least playground space. The nearest playground was Stewart Field Park five blocks to the southeast, another neighborhood park in which the park board had invested no development money. The problem faced by the neighborhood, as most older neighborhoods in the city, was that property values in already developed areas benefited less from park improvements than neighborhoods that were being newly developed. Therefore property owners were less likely to accept assessments on their property for park improvements. Newer or wealthier neighborhoods that could afford assessments, in other words pay for their own parks, got the attention of the park board. (The practice of assessing neighborhood property for park improvements ended in 1968 because of the inequities it had caused.)

The purchase of land to expand Peavey Park in 1947 was financed by city bonds, however, the first dime of its own money the park board spent on improving Peavey Park was $15 in 1949. That was the year that Peavey Park replaced Farview Park on the roster of eight parks that participated in community sings. Another $50 was spent on the park in 1950, until, in 1956, the park board secured $180,000, divided between bonds and neighborhood assessments, to improve the park.

From 1956 to 1958, the park was graded, ball fields were built, tennis courts and a wading pool were installed, and a small shelter was built. The shelter had garage-type self-storing doors that could be opened in the summer and closed in winter to serve as a warming house.

In 1971, the park board seriously considered a proposal to locate a new American Indian Center in the park, but ultimately decided that it wasn't appropriate to alter the park board's land policy to permit a privately owned building on park land. Instead the center was built on the site of a former school at Franklin and Bloomington, a few blocks east of Peavey Park, a site that the Urban American Indian Center Board ultimately preferred.

The 1958 shelter was demolished and replaced with a new, larger shelter attached to what was then Four Winds School (and is now Hope Academy) in the southeast corner of the park in 1992. At about the same time the buildings on the most recent addition to Peavey Park, two lots at the corner of Franklin and Chicago, were demolished and converted into a new entrance to the park with brightly colored mosaic tile benches. Neighborhood revitalization funds contributed to the renovation.

In one of the first steps toward implementing a Master Plan for the park, developed with the neighborhood in 2000, the tennis courts at the corner of Franklin and Portland were removed and the basketball courts rearranged and resurfaced.

Trivia

The name Frank Peavey appears another place in the Minneapolis park system. Frank Peavey donated a fountain to the parks, which he placed at the intersection of Kenwood Parkway and Lake of the Isles Parkway, in 1891. The Peavey Fountain was originally meant to serve as a watering place for horses. It was later designated as a memorial for horses that had died in World War I.

Penn Model Village Triangle

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Location: Oliver Avenue South and West 58th Street

Size: 0.16 acre

Name: The triangle was named for the residential development in which it is located.

Acquisition and Development

In 1946 Penn Model Village, Inc., a residential housing developer, proposed to donate as a park a triangle at the street intersection of Oliver and 58th Street. The park board agreed to accept the land as a park on the condition that it be curbed, graded and seeded with grass and that the developer contribute $60 a year for ten years for maintenance of the land. The board reported at the time that construction of the neighborhood and negotiations on the land continued.

The park board's attorney reported in the 1948 annual report that negotiations had been completed and the triangle acquired, but the deed was not finalized until November of 1950.

Perkins Hill Park

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Location: Third Street and 34th Avenue North

Size: 3.76 acres

Name: The park's name comes from the Perkins Hill Addition in which most of the park is located. The name has never been formally adopted.

Acquisition and Development

The five-and-a-half-acre park was acquired in 1948 for $276. All but two lots of the park were acquired from the state at no cost. The two additional lots were purchased. The state had obtained the property through tax forfeiture. Perkins Hill Park along with Bossen Field Park and parts of Peavey, Kenny and McRae parks were acquired in the late 1940s from the state's list of tax-forfeited property.

The neighborhood had been targeted for a playground by a 1944 study of the city's park needs. After acquiring the land, the park board promptly vacated 3rd Street through the park and graded the north end of the property for a ball field. The park was intended primarily as a playground for small children. Improvements were completed in 1949 with the installation of backstops for the ball fields and playground equipment and the seeding of the park.

Perkins Hill Park shrank in 1969 when 1.8 acres of the park were taken by the state highway department for the construction of I-94 through north Minneapolis. The state paid $74,000 for the land. Almost $40,000 of that money was put into a fund to improve the park and the remainder was put into a land account to purchase other land for parks in the city.

Plans to renovate the remaining acres of the park were approved in 1970 and commenced that year. The most recent improvements to the park were finished in 1990-1991.

Pershing Park

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Location: Abbot Avenue and West 48th Street

Size: 8.51 acres

Name: The park was named for General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing, commander of American forces in World War I. The name was requested by the Robert Fulton Community Club. The name was adopted December 5, 1922. In January 1923 the board received a note of thanks from General Pershing for naming the park in his honor. The board immediately approved a motion to have Pershing's letter framed and hung in the offices of the park board.

Acquisition and Development

The land for the park was designated for purchase on September 22, 1922. The action to purchase the land followed an inspection visit to the site by park commissioners in May of that year. The board completed appraisals of the land to be taken for the park and confirmed awards for the land, amounting to $27,200, in February of 1923. The entire amount was assessed on property in the vicinity of the park, to be paid over five years.

There appears to have been no intention to improve the land any time soon after its purchase. In his 1925 annual report, in which he presented a future plan for the park's development, park superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote that no pressure for improvement of the park "has been in evidence thus far, but may be expected in the near future." Wirth noted then that before the land could be developed as a park it had to be drained and filled. The park board had purchased another wet patch of land. The vast majority of neighborhood parks purchased were very wet, which is one reason they didn't often have houses on them and were affordable.

In 1929, Wirth's plan was revised due to cooperation with the school board, which planned to build a new high school, tentatively named Alexander Bell High School, on the land to the east of the park. Shelter facilities for the park were to be part of the school. However, the following year Wirth submitted another revision to his plan, which included a park shelter this time, because it had become apparent that the school building would not be erected for a number of years. (The school board's land adjacent to the park eventually became the track and football field for Southwest High School, which opened in 1940.)

In preparation for construction, the park board closed Beard Avenue through the park in January 1931. Construction began in late summer 1931 when the entire field—a peat swamp grown over with willow brush, Wirth called it—was cleaned and had six inches of clay and six inches of loam laid over the entire park. A field house was built on the west edge of the field, streets were curbed and walks were laid. The field was dedicated, appropriately for a park named for General Pershing, on Armistice Day, November 11, 1931.

The park had no sooner opened than the park board received one of its more unusual requests. A rifle club asked for use of the shelter's basement for target practice. The board denied the request saying that "no practical or feasible" arrangement could be made.

The balance of the grading for playing fields was completed in 1932 and six concrete tennis courts and a concrete wading pool were built, more than 2,000 square yards of walks were laid, lighting and sprinkling systems were installed, and playground equipment was erected. Property owners in the vicinity were once again assessed for the entire cost of the improvements.

That was how Pershing remained, with the exception of improvements made by federal work relief crews in the late 1930s, until 1954 when the building was remodeled and the wading pool and playground equipment were relocated. The remodeling permitted the basement of the recreation shelter to be used as a warming house, so the first floor rooms could be used for community activities in winter. The small kitchen was also remodeled.

With the improvements, Pershing was one of three parks added to the park board's roster of nine full-time, year-round recreation centers in 1958. In 1959, when three more parks were added to the full-time program, estimated attendance at Pershing was greater than at any other year-round park program in the city.

The park was renovated again in 1962 after a petition drive in the neighborhood to get property owners to agree to be assessed for more improvements.

The original recreation center was demolished in 1976 and the present center was completed in 1977.

In 2002 the athletic fields at Pershing were regraded and resurfaced and new playground equipment was installed. In 2008 the tennis courts (now only four) and basketball court were resurfaced, partially with funds raised by Save Our Courts, a non-profit organization originally created to upgrade the tennis courts at Kenwood Park.

Phelps Field Park

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Location: Chicago Avenue and East 39th Street

Size: 7.82 acres

Name: The park was named for longtime park commissioner Edmund J. Phelps in 1939. Prior to its official naming, the park was called Chicago Avenue Field. Phelps was a park commissioner from 1905 until he died in 1923, which made him the longest serving park commissioner in history at the time, surpassing William Folwell by several months. He was president of the park board in 1912 and 1913.

Phelps is remembered in Minneapolis parks not only for Phelps Field, but for Phelps Fountain, also known as the "turtle" fountain, that is now in Lyndale Park near the Rose Garden. The fountain was donated by Phelps to be the centerpiece of The Gateway near the Hennepin Avenue bridge downtown in 1915. The fountain was moved to Lyndale Park in 1964 when the original Gateway was relocated. Phelps had been one of the strongest proponents of building The Gateway.

He was also an avid horseman and, especially while president of the park board, promoted converting the park board's bicycle paths to bridle trails. When the bicycle craze of the 1890s ended, the bicycle paths around the lakes were little-used.

Phelps was a park commissioner during a time of rapid expansion of the park system and the beginning of the shift in emphasis on parks from tranquil open spaces to places for more active and athletic use.

Phelps was a strong supporter of park expansion and once, in defense of The Gateway acquisition, he said that "the park board has never acquired a park without opposition, whether from those who did not believe in parks, or those whose private interests were interfered with." In that context his comments in the 1913 annual report at the end of his tenure as president of the board are noteworthy. Commenting on the work of the committee that recommended new parks, he wrote, "With the acquisition of the small parcels recommended by Mr. Wirth, there seems to be little left for the Designation Committee to do in the future except to reflect upon its busy and useful record and occasionally respond to a call for a neighborhood triangle." At the time the park board owned about half of the properties and sixty percent of the park acreage it owns today.

Acquisition and Development

The park was designated for purchase November 1, 1916 and bonds in the amount of $24,700 were issued to buy the land on April 4, 1917. The purchase concluded a year of activism by residents in the vicinity of the park to have a playground. When residents first asked for a park at Chicago and 39th in the summer of 1916 they were told to present a petition from property owners offering to pay assessments on their property to pay for the park. A group of residents returned in November with not only an agreement to pay assessments, but with an offer not to ask the park board to maintain or improve the park for five years. They volunteered to make improvements in the interim at their own expense under the supervision of the park superintendent. With that promise, the park board immediately designated the land for acquisition and had the land surveyed.

With the pruchase and the assessment schedule completed in 1917, and Columbus Avenue through the park vacated, park superintendent Theodore Wirth included in his 1917 annual report a grand and detailed plan for developing the park and building a field house in what he called a "rapidly growing section of the city." The plan was to develop the space primarily for athletic use, on three levels or terraces, but it still included significant landscaped space for walks and trees, or "attractive park effects" as Wirth called them, as was still the custom at the time. Wirth even had a scale model created of his plan.

The most interesting aspect of the plan was Wirth's proposed two-story field house, which included one wing for a gymnasium (at that time an indoor play area not as large as today's basketball courts) and another for an assembly hall with seating for 300 people. The plan reflected the national "social center" movement of the time in parks around the country, and also drew on the enormous success of the park board's first field house built in 1912 at Logan Park. Wirth's explanation of his plan practically defined the social center movement. "It will be more than a playground and neighborhood park," he wrote, "it will be the meeting place at all times of the year for the people who are interested in the doings and welfare of their children, the development of the district in which they live, the advancement of the city as a whole, and, in fact, everything that tends toward the furthering of the community's progress and a neighborly spirit of good-fellowship."

Perhaps the plan was too grand, and too expensive for property owners to pay for, because despite requests for development and the offer to pay for them by some petitioners from the neighborhood, the development of the park was not mentioned again in annual reports for four years, except a brief mention in 1919. Wirth wrote then that his plan was on file and could be implemented whenever property owners in the area "express their willingness to assume the cost of the undertaking."

Finally in 1922, after a petition for toilets at the park had been denied for lack of funds, Wirth presented a modified plan for the park that met requests of the neighborhood to develop the park at a cost of

$75,000 to $80,000. Wirth wrote in his report then that he regretted that the high cost of his earlier plan, costs which he attributed to the topography of the land, made it prohibitive. (All four corners of the park were at different grades.) He said the new arrangement offered nearly the same athletic facilities as his original plan, but "from a park perspective, was not as attractive as the first proposed layout." Also missing was the "social center." Instead of the field house, he wrote, "an ordinary shelter is substituted." (Former park commissioner and architect Harry W. Jones was hired to create a design for the building.) The cost of Wirth's new plan was $90,100. It was approved by the park board in January 1923, and the cost was assessed 100% against property in the vicinity of the park.

Phelps was not the only park to be developed to scaled-back plans. In the 1917 annual report, Wirth presented an elaborate plan for Folwell Park along with his plan for Phelps. He proposed not only a field house for Folwell, but a grandstand for watching baseball and football games. Just as with Phelps, Wirth presented much-reduced plans for Folwell, Nicollet (King) and Linden Hills parks in the 1922 report. All developments at Phelps Field, as at every other park in the city at the time, were to be paid for by property assessments, and property owners would only approve the most basic and least expensive plans.

The improvements to Phelps Field Park were 85% completed, by Wirth's assessment, by the end of 1924, including the construction of a shelter. The contract for the shelter was awarded in October of that year and construction was completed in time for it to serve as a warming house for skaters that winter. A small remaining balance in the fund from assessments for the park was used in 1934 to construct a concrete wading pool and cement walks around it.

The next time the park board spent funds, this time city bond funds, to improve Phelps Field Park was in 1964, when the areas around the wading pool were refinished.

In 1969, at the beginning of an ambitious building program to update or replace park buildings, a new recreation center was built at Phelps. Once again the original plans for the recreation building at the park were scaled back, but this time for different reasons. In 1968 the park board had ended the policy of assessing property owners for park improvements, but that created new problems. With improvements at all parks being paid for by city bonds, the park board had to balance demands from around the city for those funds. In this instance, the board approved more expensive plans for larger recreation centers at Sibley and Nicollet (King) parks, east and west respectively from Phelps Field in south Minneapolis, which required a cutback in the amount that could be spent at Phelps.

Those reductions were made up a generation later when the park board added a gym to the building at Phelps and renovated the park in 1993-1994. The funds for the project came from many sources and led to a new operating agreement with the Boys and Girls Club. The McKnight Foundation and Minneapolis Foundation were major contributors to the project and surrounding neighborhoods contributed $750,000 in Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds. A half-million dollars of city bonds also helped finance the improvements. The Boys and Girls Club also contributed to the cost as a part of their agreement with the park board to operate programs from the new facility.

In 2000, further improvements were made to the park and the center.

Phillips Park Pool and Gym

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Location: 11th Avenue and East 24th Street

Size: 2.79 acres

Name: The facility was once part of Phillips Junior High School. The school, and subsequently the neighborhood, was named for Wendell Phillips, an abolitionist orator. Following the Civil War, Phillips turned his attention to fighting for Native American rights and women's suffrage.

Acquisition and Development

The park board acquired the pool and gym of Phillips Junior High School in 1987. The facility had been slated to be demolished with the rest of the school in 1982, but instead a deal was reached with the park board to take over the facility. The original school was constructed in 1926 at 12th Avenue South and East 23rd Street. The pool and gym had been built as an addition to the school in 1973.

The ownership of the facility was transferred from the school board to the park board at no cost, but $1.5 million was spent to renovate the facility making it the most expensive recreation facility in the park system. It was also the only indoor swimming pool owned by the park board. The renovation was groundbreaking in that for the first time, private, non-profit foundations contributed most of the money for a park project. The McKnight, Bush and Minneapolis foundations all contributed toward the renovation. Their contributions were augmented by city and federal grants.

The operation of the center followed a model developed at Bethune Park with the Phyllis Wheatley Center in 1968 where the building was leased to a social service agency. The primary tenant at the Phillips Pool and Gym was the Jack Cornelius Boys and Girls Club. In addition, the YMCA operated a daycare center in the building and Pillsbury United Communities conducted programs as well. (Pillsbury United Communities was also an original tenant in the recreation center built at Mathews Park in 1965. In the 1990s, Pillsbury United Communities constructed the Brian Coyle Community Center adjacent to Currie Park in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood and transferred title of the property to the park board, but retained control of the operation of the center.)

The last remaining tenant of the Phillips Pool and Gym, the Boys and Girls Club, withdrew from the facility in 2008. At that time the park board took control of the building and began conducting some activities at the gym under its Youthline program. The pool is no longer used. The future of the facility is yet to be determined.

Pioneers Triangle

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Location: Main Street NE and 5th Avenue NE

Size: 0.13 acre

Name: The triangle was named for the Pioneers statue, which was placed there in 1966.

Acquisition and Development

The land was purchased from the city in 1966 for $1 to serve as the new home of the Pioneers statue, which had previously been located in Pioneers Square in front of the main post office. The city bought the 2.5-acre Pioneers Square from the park board as a part of neighborhood redevelopment of the Gateway and post office area at that time.

In 1930 the city council requested the park board to purchase a block of land at Marquette Avenue and Second Street South to create a park in front of a proposed new central post office. The federal government planned to build a new post office and asked the city to provide an appropriate setting for the building. In the words of park board president Alfred Pillsbury, "it proved this was beyond the powers of the City Council." It became evident, Pillsbury continued, that if the new post office would be built, "it devolved to the park board to carry out this plan."

Over the next two years, with the city council passing resolutions asking the park board to speed up the acquisition, the park board considered how to pay for the property and the cost of making it into a park, estimated at nearly half-million dollars. The sticking point was how the costs would be assessed. The first proposal was that the costs would be assessed on property owners, 1/3 on the city as a whole and 2/3 on property in the "benefited district." That didn't seem just to park commissioners, who believed the benefited district would not enjoy all that much benefit from the new park. This was during the Great Depression when the park board, not to mention the citizens of the city, had very few resources, let alone the money to acquire and build a park it didn't want.

The land was not finally acquired until the city council agreed to contribute $320,000 in bonds if the remainder of the cost would be assessed against property owners in the area. That broke the impasse and the site was finally acquired in 1932.

As work progressed at the new park, including the removal of the dilapidated buildings on the block, the park board chose the name Pioneers Square for the park in May 1934. Before then the project was known as Post Office Square or simply Block 20. Other names proposed for the square included Lafayette Park and Roald Amundsen Square.

With the park nearing completion and money left over in the construction fund, the board authorized a committee to propose a suitable monument to be added to the park. Minneapolis sculptor John Daniels was commissioned to create a sculpture for the park at a cost not to exceed $20,000. During 1935 Daniels submitted several drawings of the statue. The proposed design showed a Native American looking to the east, suggesting the coming of white settlers, and three generations of settlers. But when the final design was approved, the Native American was gone.

The statue and the park were opened with a grand ceremony on November 13, 1936, the 103rd anniversary of the birth of Charles Loring, who had been known for more than 50 years as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks."

Like The Gateway a block away, Pioneers Square did not solve the problems of an aging neighborhood, even with a new post office, and both areas were condemned by the city and taken for redevelopment in the 1960s.

The problem of what to do with the statue was solved by the city selling Pioneers Triangle to the park board for a buck. The monument was moved to its new home in 1966.

Powderhorn Park

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Location: 15th Avenue South and East 34th Street

Size: 65.88 acres, including 11.54 acres of water

Name: The name was taken from the name of the lake in the park. The lake was named for its shape, which resembled an old powderhorn, a cow horn used to carry gunpowder. The name first appeared in an 1839 survey of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation. At that time the lake was larger than it is today. The lake level dropped considerably in the early 1900s, and the northern arm of the lake was filled in 1925. The name was never formally adopted, but was used from the first reference to the area in park board proceedings in 1883.

Acquisition and Development

Powderhorn Lake and its environs were among the first places considered for a park in Minneapolis. Only two months after the park board was created by the state legislature and approved by Minneapolis voters in April 1883, residents in the vicinity of the lake petitioned the park board to make it a park. But the park board at the time was starting from scratch and focused instead on creating parks nearer the center of the city, at Lake Harriet and along the Mississippi River. (The first parks acquired by the park board were Loring Park, Farview Park, Logan Park and Riverside Park.)

Instead of a park at Powderhorn Lake, the board's focus across south Minneapolis was on a parkway proposed by landscape architect Horace Cleveland that would have extended from the Mississippi River to Lake Calhoun along Lake Street. The park board quickly realized that the property along Lake Street was already too high-priced to acquire the entire street as a parkway and in 1884 shifted their attention four blocks further south to 34th Avenue. The advantage of that street for a parkway is that it would have incorporated Powderhorn Lake into a parkway that would have met up precisely with Summit Avenue on the St. Paul side of the river. (St. Paul developed Summit Avenue, to designs by Horace Cleveland, to meet up with Cleveland's revised plans for a parkway on 34th Avenue.) The parkway project across south Minneapolis was also abandoned in 1885 because the land even on 34th Avenue was too expensive. Property owners from the river to Bloomington Avenue had agreed to donate most of the land, but from Bloomington Avenue to Lake Calhoun the board met with little success in urging landowners to donate a right of way for a parkway.

During that time the park board continued to consider a park at Powderhorn Lake and in 1884 even accepted a donation of part of the land at the lake. But by the summer of 1885 the park board voted to abandon efforts to acquire Powderhorn Lake until property owners submitted a "more reasonable proposition."

Two years later, in 1887, the park board did designate the lake shore as a park but had to abandon the effort again in the face of what it considered high prices for the land. In the 1887 annual report park board president Charles Loring wrote with more than a hint of frustration, "An attempt was made to secure Powderhorn Lake and a small tract of land upon its shores, but some of the water proved so valuable in the opinion of a few of the owners thereof, as to cause the project to be abandoned, temporarily at least." Loring had by that time personally secured the donation of most of the shores of Lake Harriet and Lake of the Isles for the park board and was clearly disappointed by his lack of success in replicating those efforts at Powderhorn.

But the park board did not give up. In May 1889 the park board designated 38 acres around the lake as a park and began condemnation proceedings to have the land appraised. By the end of the year the acquisition was still pending because so many land owners had filed objections to the value that park board appraisers had placed on the land to be taken. Loring noted in the 1889 annual report that the acquisition had failed twice before and expressed his hope that this time it would succeed.

It did. In 1890 the acquisition of 38½ acres was completed at a cost of nearly $40,000. The total cost of the land was assessed on property in the area. The park board vacated the streets through the park and asked Horace Cleveland to prepare a plan for the layout of the park.

Almost as soon as the first land was acquired, residents in the area petitioned the park board to add 25 acres to the park on the west and south. Late in 1890, the park board solicited offers from the owners of the land to expand the park. Loring noted wryly that some of the landowners who had objected to being assessed for the original park were among the petitioners for the expansion of the park. Loring wrote that with the expansion the south-central portion of the city would have "a magnificent park."

Powderhorn Park was expanded in 1891 by nearly 20 acres, with only several individual lots still to be acquired to complete the park. Powderhorn Park was one of three large additions to the park system from 1889 to 1892 and all were created around small bodies of water. Glenwood (Wirth) Park around Birch Pond was acquired in 1889 and Columbia Park around Sandy Lake was acquired in 1892. (Sandy Lake ceased to exist in 1915 when the city installed storm sewers in northeast Minneapolis that drained storm water from the region into the Mississippi River.) A smaller acquisition, the ten acres that included Spring Lake, now a part of The Parade, was also completed in 1889.

With these acquisitions the park board continued its unstated policy of gaining control of the lakes and ponds within the city. In the first ten years of its existence the park board had acquired more than half the bodies of water in the city: Loring Pond, Lake Harriet, Lake of the Isles, part of Lake Calhoun, Powderhorn Lake, Sandy Lake, Birch Pond and Spring Lake. Still remaining to be acquired were the remainder of Lake Calhoun, Keegan's (Wirth) Lake, Cedar Lake, and the two swampy bodies of water southeast of the city, Lake Amelia (Nokomis) and Rice (Hiawatha) Lake. Most of those lakes were acquired in the first decade of the 20th Century. They may have been acquired sooner if not for the Panic of 1893, which led to a local and national economic depression. From 1893 to 1902 the park board acquired almost no land, and struggled to maintain the land it already owned.

Shortly after the first acquisition at Powderhorn Lake, the park board established a skating rink on the lake in 1891, one of only five rinks maintained by the board. It was the beginning of one of the park board's most successful recreational facilities. In 1892 Horace Cleveland and his son Ralph, who had left his job as the manager of Lakewood Cemetery to assist his aging father, submitted their plan for Powderhorn Park, which was included in the park board's 1892 annual report. The most striking feature of their plan is that the lake at that time extended north to 32nd Street.

The northern arm of the lake no longer exists; nearly one block of the lake was filled in the mid-1920s after years of low water levels in the lake. Cleveland's plan for the park included the creation of an island near the southern shore and a bridge over the narrow neck of the lake at 33rd Street. The plan called for dredging the lake to improve the shoreline as had already been done at Loring Pond and the northern shore of Lake of the Isles. Upon completion of the first round of dredging at Lake of the Isles in 1894, the dredge was moved to Powderhorn Lake to begin work there.

In 1895 dredging of the lake deepened the water and reduced its size by nearly eight acres, including the creation of an island of more than half an acre. However with the economic depression and an extreme shortage of funds for the park board, the rusting dredge still sat in the lake in 1903, when the park board finally resumed its plans to improve the lake.

In the meantime, as the local economy began to improve, the park board purchased a half-block in the northwest corner of the park in 1899 at a cost of $1,800 according to the 1899 annual report. The reason

for the addition to the park is particularly interesting in light of concerns with water quality in city lakes that began nearly 100 years later; the park board reported that it had acquired the additional land because it "rendered it possible to control the wash on streets into the lake." It is one of the first mentions in park board documents of concern over storm water runoff into lakes.

The western section of the park was initially graded and walks were laid out in 1899. More than 100 trees and 1600 shrubs were also planted in the park that year. The planting plan was created by noted landscape architect Warren Manning (Horace Cleveland had retired). Manning recommended at the time that the park board construct a shelter for skaters at the lake. The first shelter was built in 1900 and enlarged in 1902.

With economic recovery, the park board dusted off Horace Cleveland's 11-year-old plan for the park in 1903 and approved its implementation. However the full development of the park awaited the arrival of a new superintendent of parks, Theodore Wirth, in 1906. After nearly a year on the job, Wirth recommended in the 1906 annual report that the shores of the lake be widened to create a walkway and that some of the open spaces be converted into a playground. Following the establishment of the park board's first playgrounds at Logan and Riverside parks early in 1906, Wirth recommended the creation of playgrounds at five more parks. Powderhorn Park was on his list.

The first playground with gymnastic apparatus was established at Powderhorn Park in 1907 along 10th Street between 32nd and 33rd. A toilet building was installed as well. The first supervisor of recreation in the park system, Clifford Booth, reported that the best-organized classes for instruction on the gymnastic apparatus installed in the parks that year were at Farview Park in the afternoons and Powderhorn Park in the evenings.

In the 1907 annual report Wirth provided a new detailed plan for the development of Powderhorn Park, which included a feature Cleveland had recommended years before, a bridge over the narrow neck of the lake at about 33rd Street. Wirth's plan also included a much wider lake north of the bridge.

Wirth recommended building a recreation building at the southeast corner of the lake, complete with a boat landing in front of it. The board approved the construction of the shelter in 1907 and it was completed in 1908 to designs by architect L. A. Lamoreaux at a cost of about $13,000. (Oddly the building did not include toilets, as it was apparently too far from the nearest city sewer line. A toilet addition to the recreation building was built in 1914.) Basketball hoops were also installed for the first time at Powderhorn that summer and Clifford Booth reported that Powderhorn had the highest attendance of any park playground. The heavy use of the playground on 10th Avenue generated complaints from neighbors about the noise, however, prompting Wirth to recommend that the playground be moved to the southeast corner of the park next to the new shelter. The playground was finally moved to the new location in 1911 and Booth called it a "model neighborhood playground." Booth also noted that two coasting courses for sledding had been established in the park. The first three tennis courts in the park were also built that year near 10th Avenue and 34th Street.

From 1907 to 1914, the park was expanded by about 6.5 acres through several transactions to its present boundaries on 35th Street. Land was also purchased along 10th Avenue at 32nd Street to complete that corner of the park.

Wirth noted in his 1911 report that the lake level had dropped two feet for unknown reasons. Perhaps it was the drop in the lake level that prompted Wirth to propose that the northern arm of the lake be filled. In the 1914 annual report Wirth wrote that he was "still of the opinion" that the lake should be reduced

in size. He repeated the call to fill the lake in 1915, suggesting that the created land would be suitable for an amphitheater or athletic field with a grandstand. He included in that report a new design for the park. Wirth repeated his call for a reshaping of the lake over the next few years without success, although he wrote that residents of the area had requested that his plan be implemented and had agreed to pay the cost through assessments on their property. To buttress his argument, Wirth wrote in 1921 that the level of the lake had dropped six feet in fifteen years.

Wirth finally got the go-ahead from the park board to reduce the size of the lake late in 1922, but his plan for a new athletic field and grandstand at the park was not approved. Dredging of the lake to generate the fill for the northern arm was begun in 1924 and completed in 1925. During the reshaping of the park eleven new tennis courts were added as well.

The smaller lake became home to an important attraction in winter, a speed skating track that hosted national skating championships and Olympic speed-skating trials in the 1930s. Attendance at the 1934 national speed skating championship was estimated conservatively at 50,000 for the two-day competition. Attendance at the Olympic trials the following year was reportedly hurt by sub-zero weather. The Olympic trials were held again at the track in 1947 and four of the nine skaters to win spots on the U.S. Olympic team were from Powderhorn Park. One of those four, Ken Bartholomew, won a silver medal at the 1948 Winter Olympics in St Moritz. The other Minneapolis skaters on the U.S. Olympic team were Arthur Seaman, Robert Fitzgerald and John Werket. (The speed skating track was moved to Lake Harriet in the early 1960s and later shifted to Lake Nokomis, but the popularity of speed skating waned in part due to a change in speed skating competition from pack skating to racing against the clock, the European style, on a larger track. The speed skating track was reopened at Powderhorn in 1990, but was shifted to Armatage Park in 1999 as an experiment. It has since been discontinued.)

Few changes were made to Powderhorn Park or any other park during the Great Depression and World War II. Some work was done in the park, including construction of a shore protection wall around part of the lake, in 1940 under a federal work relief program.

The first significant changes to the park waited until 1963 when the recreation building was renovated and became the first recreation center to have air-conditioning. That year the hockey rink was moved from the lake, but general skating was still done on the lake. The 1963 annual report of the park board noted that the lake had dropped another 3.5 feet to its lowest level in recorded history. City water was pumped into the lake to raise it ten feet. The low water level was thought to be temporary, perhaps caused by the digging of the trench for I-35W to the west of the park.

In 1966 the park board resurrected an idea from the distant past when it staged a new park pageant, "Song of Hiawatha," featuring children from parks across the city. Children's pageants had been popular late-summer entertainments at Lyndale Park in the 1920s and 1930s.

A new totlot for smaller children was installed in the park at 14th Avenue and 35th Street in 1968. The totlot was a prototype for nine others installed around the city later that year.

The old twice-renovated shelter beside the lake was replaced with a modern recreation center with a gym in 1971-72. That facility was remodeled in 1996-97. At that time a pump system was installed in another attempt to control the level of water in the lake. A new fishing dock was also installed in the lake. Another innovation at Powderhorn Park was introduced in 1995 when "Powderhorn Prairie" was created by seeding the east and north hillsides of the park with native grasses.

Powderhorn Park was one of the first five parks to have a computer lab installed in 2001.

As part of the effort to improve water quality in city lakes Powderhorn Lake was treated with alum in 2003, which resulted in the best trophic state index recorded at the lake since water quality monitoring began at the lake in 1992.

Trivia

In 1892 Powderhorn Park provided a test case for the park board's authority to vacate city streets through parks. The Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that the park board did have control over city streets running through parks, but not streets adjacent to parks. The ruling confirmed that the park board had sole authority to close streets through land it owned.

In 1911 the park board placed a limit on the number of minnows that anyone could take from Powderhorn Lake: 100 per day for personal use, but they could not be sold.

Reserve Block 40 Park

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Location: Drew Avenue South and West 24th Street

Size: 1.67 acres

Name: The park has always been referred to by its designation on plat maps in a neighborhood known as McNair Park. The park has never been officially named.

Acquisition and Development

The triangular block of land west of Cedar Lake was part of the land designated for acquisition on April 6, 1908 that included parts of the west shore of Cedar Lake and expanded Glenwood (Wirth) Park to include Brownie Lake. The land was almost immediately forgotten as it did not feature in park board plans for the development of either Cedar Lake or Brownie Lake. In a 1909 map showing the proposed development of Cedar Lake Parkway, the land was not indicated as park property. In later park inventories, the acquisition date was incorrectly listed as 1909.

One the few suggestions for the development of the park is shown on a 1921 map prepared by park superintendent Theodore Wirth of possible developments in the vicinity of Cedar Lake. On that plan Wirth recommended two tennis courts for the park. Other than that reference, the park is not mentioned in park documents until 1953.

The park board's 1953 annual report noted that the low land had been in the possession of the park board for many years. The park is mentioned in the 1953 report because in that year, with the development of the Basswood Addition to the south of the park, the area's new residents had petitioned to have the block improved as a park.

In response to those petitions, filling and rough grading of the park were done in 1953 and curbs were installed on two sides of the park. The western edge of the park was actually in St. Louis Park, and St Louis Park had not yet brought the street there up to grade, so curbing that side of the park was delayed.

Fill for the park was obtained from the Prudential Building site to the west of Brownie Lake. The land for the Prudential Building, which had once been a part of Wirth Park, had been sold to Prudential in 1952. A condition of the sale of that land was that the park board would construct an access road to the property between Brownie Lake and Highway 12. The construction of that road provided the opportunity and the material to fill the low land of Reserve Block 40. The cost of improvements was assessed to property in the neighborhood. The first playground equipment for the small park was authorized by the board in 1957 and installed in 1958.

The planning process for the most recent improvements to the park was begun in 2003 and the playground was replaced in 2004.

Ridgway Parkway

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Location: The parkway connects St. Anthony Parkway and Stinson Parkway east of Francis Gross Golf Course.

Size: 23.99 acres

Name: The parkway was named for James Arthur Ridgway in 1950. The parkway had originally been part of St. Anthony Boulevard when that segment of the parkway was constructed in 1934. The segment of the parkway was known as the St. Anthony Boulevard Diversion due to the unusual circumstances of its construction.

Ridgway was a park commissioner 1889-1897 and president of the board in 1894. He resigned his seat as a park commissioner in 1897 to assume the full-time position of secretary to the board, a job he held until his death in 1924.

Prior to working full time for the park board, Ridgway had been a real estate investor. His intimate knowledge of real estate values in the city proved valuable to the board as a commissioner and as its secretary. In the 1893 annual report park board president Charles Loring credited Ridgway with doing much of the work to acquire Minnehaha Creek as a park, most of it by donation. Later park superintendent Theodore Wirth cited Ridgway's critical role in acquiring the entire west bank of the Mississippi River from Franklin Avenue to Minnehaha Park, including the islands in the river, at a cost of only $42,000. The board's 1924 annual report contains a two-page memorial to Ridgway. His photo and a poem dedicated to him are at the front of that report.

In Loring's tribute to Ridgway in 1893, he suggested that a portion of Minnehaha Parkway be named for Ridgway. In fact, River Road West, now West River Parkway, was renamed Ridgway Road for 27 days in 1939, until residents along the road complained loudly. Calling it euphonious and unique, residents said they greatly preferred River Road West. The park board rescinded the change in name, commenting that it did not appropriately honor Ridgway if residents on the parkway were opposed to the name. Ridgway's name was finally given to the parkway in northeast Minneapolis 57 years after Loring first suggested that he deserved such an honor.

Acquisition and Development

The section of St. Anthony Parkway later named for Ridgway was initially built in 1933-1935. It was known at the time of its construction as the St. Anthony Boulevard Diversion because it was built to replace a section of St. Anthony Boulevard south from Armour (Gross) Golf Course to East Hennepin

Avenue that was sold less than ten years after it was constructed. The land for Ridgway Parkway was swapped for the original southern section of St. Anthony Boulevard and the company that swapped land with the park board—the park board gained 19 acres of land in the swap—also paid for the construction of the "diversion." (See St. Anthony Parkway for more.)

Few changes to the parkway have been made over the years. In 1960 and 1963 small parcels along the parkway were sold to Hillside Cemetery and Honeywell Inc., which own property north of the parkway. In 1967, however, the area of the park was reduced dramatically when the Minnesota Department of Transportation took 16.7 acres of the land south of the parkway for the construction of I-35W.

The parkway was repaved in 1978 at the end of a five year period during which most Grand Rounds parkways were reconstructed or paved.

In 1997 much of the land adjoining the parkway was converted to prairie grasses and native plants.

Riverside Park

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Location: Sixth Street and 26th Avenue South

Size: 27.68 acres

Name: The park was named in 1885 for its location near the Mississippi River. Until then the park was referred to as Sixth Ward Park

Acquisition and Development

Land for Riverside Park was among the first designated for a park by the park board shortly after its creation in April 1883. Wrangling over the exact shape and size of the park, and objections from property owners, pushed back the acquisition to 1884 when nearly 20 acres were acquired for a little less than $60,000. From the time the park was acquired, it was intended to be the northern anchor for a parkway that would extend downriver eventually to Minnehaha Creek and Fort Snelling.

A major expansion of the park occurred in 1911 when another 22.5 acres were added to the southern end of the park at a cost of about $50,000. The board decided to acquire the additional land adjacent to Riverside Park in part to extend its riverside holdings but also to forestall the operation of a dance hall adjacent to the park. When the park board learned of plans to build a dance hall next to the park, it acted to purchase and condemn the land for a larger park.

The original plan for Riverside Park was created by landscape Horace Cleveland, who had included the park in his 1883 "suggestions" for a system of parks and parkways for the city. Cleveland loved the river banks and even suggested that Riverside Park might be connected by a bridge to the east river flats, which he also thought should be acquired as a park. Cleveland commented on his original plan for the park that "the paths are few—the intention being that visitors should ramble at will in the woods and on the lawns." Cleveland's plans were implemented in the park in 1885.

While supervising improvement of the park that year, park board president Charles Loring took offense at some criticism of the work by other commissioners and promptly resigned from the park board. Other commissioners and newspapers around Minnesota urged Loring to reconsider, which he did. He returned to the park board after an absence of a couple months.

In 1890 a road was built from the upper portion of the park to a concourse about half way down the bluff and stairs were built from this concourse to the wooded tract along the river.

Riverside Park was viewed by the park board as one of the best places in the park system for active recreation. A toboggan slide was built on the steep slopes in the winter of 1887. In 1904, the park board approved the first installation of children's play equipment in any park—swings, teeter-totters and sandboxes—at Loring and Riverside parks for the spring of 1905. When the next year the park board decided to install more extensive playground and gymnastic apparatus in parks, it chose Riverside Park and Logan Park. The first toilet at Riverside Park was built in 1905. By 1908, when the first basketball goals were put in city parks, including a set at Riverside Park, Riverside had the largest playground attendance in the city.

The popularity of Riverside Park led park superintendent Theodore Wirth to propose an ambitious new plan for the park in 1913. The plan included an outdoor amphitheater and a combined football and baseball field. In the absence of further improvements at Riverside, Wirth submitted new plans for the park in 1916, which would have divided the park into four terraces and provided a grandstand for the athletic fields that overlooked the river, and a fieldhouse. The last traces of the old quarry that had occupied the site when it was acquired were removed in 1919, when the site was graded. Wirth advised that the grading would allow the installation of tennis courts on the north end of the park in 1920.

Wirth tried again in 1925 to persuade the board to improve the park further with plans for an outdoor concert theater overlooking the river. Wirth later surmised that his plans were never carried out because after the construction of the Ford Dam in 1917, the river became a reservoir that was in fact nearly a cesspool and gave off an unbearable odor. Much of the city's raw sewage flowed into the river until the 1930s.

Despite many grand plans for the park, the board finally gave Riverside a warming house in 1927 for its skating rink. In 1932 it added two tennis courts, a wading pool and new toilets.

During the 1930s, considerable work was done by the WPA around Riverside Park, including construction of the stone steps leading from the upper level of the park to the lower level. In 1933 a stone bathhouse was also built.

Riverside Park reached its current size in 1962, when less than two acres were taken for the construction of I-94, for which the highway department paid $275,000, and the park was regraded and rearranged to accommodate the freeway

The most recent improvements at Riverside Park were begun in 2000, when the upper level of the park was refurbished with new playground equipment, seating and picnic tables. The basketball court was replaced with the help of a $10,000 grant from the Minnesota Timberwolves. The soccer field was also upgraded, but soccer goals were not erected at the time, in part to keep the space open for multiple uses.

Riverside Park became one of the first parks in the city with space dedicated to dogs, when 1.28 acres of the park were fenced in and designated as an "off-leash recreation area" in 2001.

Rollins Triangle

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Location: Minnehaha Avenue and 33rd Street

Size: 0.01 acres

Name: The triangle was named for the Rollins Addition and was adopted November 18, 1931.

Acquisition and Development

The small triangle was taken over by the park board in 1929 at the request of the city council.

Russell Triangle

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Location: Russell Avenue North and McNair Avenue

Size: 0.03 acres

Name: The triangle is named for the street on which it is located. The street was named for Roswell P. Russell, a prominent pioneer who resided on this street and opened the first store in St. Anthony. The park was officially named on November 18, 1914.

The choice of name is interesting because this acquisition provided the park board an opportunity to name a park property after the man who gave his name to the other cross street, McNair Avenue. That it did not choose "McNair" is a bit surprising given that William McNair was a prominent attorney in the days the park board was created and was a close friend of Charles Loring and a law partner and brother-in-law of Eugene Wilson, both of whom were commissioners on the first park board. Loring once wrote that McNair had offered to donate most of the shore of Cedar Lake for park purposes, but the donation was rejected because the land was so far from the city. McNair was also one of the first to propose that the park board establish a north-south parkway along the city's western border and at one time offered to donate much of the land for that parkway, which years later was acquired and became Victory Memorial Drive. It is reasonable to speculate that if McNair had not died in 1885, when the park board was focusing its attention and energies closer to town and on lakes Harriet, Calhoun and Isles, the park board would have eventually arranged for McNair's donation of those valuable properties.

Acquisition and Development

The small triangle is first mentioned in park board proceedings on May 6, 1914 when the park board authorized the board's secretary to attend a tax sale and purchase the lot or "have (it) purchased by another in the interest of the board." Two weeks later, on May 20, 1914, William S. Nott and wife presented a quit clam deed for the property to the board and the board voted to accept it. There is no indication in park board records if the Notts were the original owners of the land or if they purchased the land "in the interest of the board."

The process of acquisition is of note because it is the first instance of the park board acquiring land for a new park from a sale of land that had been taken by the state for failure to pay taxes. In 1905 the board had acquired a few lots to expand Glenwood (Wirth) Park at a tax sale and in 1910 the board had instructed the secretary to attend a tax sale to protect the board's interest and acquire land if desirable. After the Great Depression and World War II, the board would acquire several important properties at little or no cost from the state's tax-forfeiture list, including Bossen Field, Hi-View Park, and parts of Kenny, McRae, Northeast, Peavey and North Mississippi parks.

Initial improvements to Russell Triangle were completed in 1916.

Rustic Lodge Triangle

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Location: Rustic Lodge and Wentworth Avenue

Size: 0.09 acres

Name: The name comes from the curving Rustic Lodge Avenue in the Washburn Park neighborhood. The name has never been formally adopted by the park board.

Acquisition and Development

Residents of the neighborhood asked the park board to accept the triangle as a park on April 1, 1912, agreeing that the neighborhood association would maintain the property. Two weeks later the Committee on Designation and Acquisition of Grounds reported that the property had been designated as a park in the plat of Washburn Park on December 15, 1886 and recommended that it be accepted as a public park, which the park board approved. An interesting coincidence: the request for the park board to accept the property as a park was signed by, among others, James Leck, whose construction company was at that time building the Logan Park fieldhouse.

In 1914 the small triangle was graded and planted creating “a harmonious part of that fine residential district,” according to the 1914 annual report.

Sculpture Garden

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Location: Between I-94 and Groveland Avenue from Vineland Place to Superior Avenue.

Size: 11 acres, included in 48.09 acres of The Parade

Name: The name is descriptive.

Acquisition and Development

The garden is on land that was acquired as part of The Parade. The first land acquired for that park in 1893 surrounded Spring Lake on the west end of the park. Most of the land for The Parade was acquired in 1904. About half of it was purchased and the remainder donated by Thomas Lowry and others. Lowry also donated additional land to the park board in 1906 including the portion that is now the entrance to the Sculpture Garden. Lowry also contributed about $20,000 for the improvement of the park, which sat below his mansion on Lowry Hill. The final addition to the park came in 1935 when the state donated the land that had once been occupied by the National Guard Armory.

Since 1913 the land near the intersection of Vineland Place and Lyndale Avenue has been used for a public garden by the park board. As it was adjacent to the Armory, it was informally named the Armory Garden. The park board continued planting the garden every year, even after the demolition of the Armory in 1934, but the name was changed to Kenwood Garden.

The Walker Art Center was built across the street from The Parade in 1927 and in 1963 the Guthrie Theater was built adjacent to the museum. Kenwood Garden became a meeting place for theater-goers who parked their cars in the parking lot at Parade Stadium (built in 1951). The rest of The Parade was devoted to athletic fields and tennis courts.

The first discussion of using part of The Parade as a cultural space occurred in 1966 when the Walker and the Guthrie asked the park board to participate in a study of how the space could be used to augment the cultural offerings of those two institutions. Although that study led to no specific actions, discussions continued periodically through the 1960s and 1970s, even after the park board discontinued planting the Kenwood Garden in 1967. Construction of the I-94 freeway in the mid-1960s had severed the connection between The Parade and Loring Park to the east.

The park board collaborated with the Walker in the 1970s on temporary exhibits of sculpture on the site of the old garden. In the mid-1970s the park board proposed locating a fountain donated by park commissioner Ben Berger on the site, but the Walker opposed the idea because it was not an original work of art. The fountain was a copy of one Berger had seen in Melbourne, Australia. The "dandelion" fountain was installed instead in Loring Park in 1975.

The park board had also approved the construction of a foot bridge over the freeway from Loring Park to The Parade in the early 1970s, but no action was taken to move that project forward. This was at a time of the greatest building boom ever in Minneapolis parks when modern recreation centers were built in most neighborhood parks and several additional park sites were acquired in the inner city both north and south of downtown. A footbridge or the development of a cultural space was not a top priority of the park board at the time.

By the time David Fisher became park superintendent in 1981, however, the landscape had changed. Fisher had become the third superintendent in three years and the recreation building boom was over. With the economy in bad shape and a tax-payer revolt gaining steam, the park board faced limited resources to pursue any projects at all. The primary focus of the park board at the time was on developing the central riverfront, which would be accomplished primarily with funds from the state. The park board was also coming to terms with a very critical report issued in 1977 of what was considered its overwhelming emphasis on sports in its recreation program.

Against this backdrop, Fisher received a call on his second day on the job as park superintendent from a man he had never met, Martin Friedman, who was the director of the Walker Art Center. Friedman proposed a lunch meeting to discuss possible collaboration between the park board and the Walker. What Friedman had in mind was the open grass field across from the museum.

Friedman had the solution for the park board's lack of funds to develop the property at a time that Fisher had characterized the park board's financial position as "grim." The Walker had a prodigious ability to raise funds privately from arts patrons and foundations. So the idea of a sculpture garden was born.

The project came to life when Friedman secured a grant of $2.3 million from the McKnight Foundation to develop the project. Other contributors were soon lined up not only to develop the land, but to acquire sculpture to fill it. Frederick Weisman contributed a million dollars for the centerpiece of the garden, which has become a Minneapolis icon, *Spoonbridge and Cherry*, created by the husband-and-wife team of Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen. Sage and John Cowles contributed another million dollars for the construction of a glass conservatory on the western edge of the garden (which also served as a cold-weather walkway from the Parade Stadium parking lot to the Guthrie and the Walker) and is the

home of the soaring *Standing Glass Fish* by Frank Gehry. Kenneth and Judy Dayton donated a million dollars for the purchase of sculptures. The Regis Corporation, Dayton Hudson Foundation, Bush Foundation and Kresge Foundation each contributed more than a quarter-million dollars for additional development. In addition the family of Irene Hixon Whitney contributed $800,000 for the design and construction of a pedestrian bridge, designed by Siah Armajani, which finally linked Loring Park to the new sculpture garden.

The Sculpture Garden, designed by architect Edward Larrabee Barnes—who had also designed the new Walker Art Center in 1971—opened in 1988 to terrific reviews and popular approval. Such was the success of the garden that it was expanded to eleven acres in the early 1990s with the removal of another athletic field. The new addition to the north of the original garden, which made the Sculpture Garden the largest of its kind in the country, was funded primarily by a gift in honor of Alene Grossman.

Additional Source
Interview with David Fisher, former superintendent of parks, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, 2007.

Seven Oaks Oval

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Location: 47th Avenue South and East 34th Street

Size: 2.25 acres

Name: The oval was named for the neighborhood as it appeared on plat maps: Seven Oaks River Lots. The name was designated at the same time the board officially accepted the property as a park on June 7, 1922.

Acquisition and Development

The property was dedicated as a park in the plat of Seven Oaks River Lots, July 10, 1913. The board first considered accepting the property February 15, 1922 and after an inspection tour of the property in May, designated the land as a park June 7, 1922.

The acquisition is not mentioned in the 1922 annual report, overshadowed as it was by acquisitions of neighborhood parks such as Sibley, Brackett and Pershing, the expansions of Victory Memorial and St. Anthony parkways and Glenwood Park, and the possible purchases of Lake Hiawatha, and Minnehaha Creek both east of Lake Hiawatha and west of Humboldt Avenue.

Park superintendent Theodore Wirth proposed a plan in 1928 for the topographical oddity—he called it a “deep oval basin” with “fine trees.” The plan called for filling the lowest parts of the basin to a suitable grade and constructing walks through it. Wirth also proposed that two sites in the park be prepared as campfire places, his map says “council sites,” for the Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls. That part of the plan likely appealed to park commissioner Maude Armatage who was a leader of the Camp Fire Girls and served on the national organization’s board of directors, but the plan was not implemented.

In Wirth’s comprehensive inventory of parks in his 1932 report, Seven Oaks Oval is lumped with 49 “Other Small Triangles”—even though it is not a triangle and is more than 30 times larger than most of the other properties thrown into that category. Seven Oaks was likely included in that category because, like all but two others, it had cost nothing to acquire, and no money had been spent on its improvement.

Of the 58 triangles, circles, ovals and other tiny parks listed in that 1932 inventory, only 36 survive. Most of the lost park properties were taken by the city or state for traffic purposes.

Trivia

Seven Oaks Oval is one of only two surviving park properties that is named for a shape that doesn't have angles. The other is Caleb Dorr Circle near East River Parkway. At one time the park board owned several properties called "circles" or "ovals," but all the others disappeared, most of them paved over for streets and highways.

Sheridan Memorial Park

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Location: The east bank of the Mississippi River at Water Street north of the Broadway Bridge.

Size: 5.8 acres

Name: The park is named for the Sheridan neighborhood in which it is located and also reflects the goal of creating a veterans memorial on the site. The property was referred to as Water Street Park, after the street on which it is located, until it was renamed in 2007. The Sheridan neighborhood got its name from the Sheridan School at Broadway and University. The first school on the site, built in 1896, was named for Phillip H. Sheridan, a General in the Union Army during the Civil War and later the Commanding General of the U. S. Army.

Acquisition and Development

Sheridan Memorial Park is the second Minneapolis park named Sheridan. The first was at University Avenue Northeast and 12th Avenue Northeast adjacent to Sheridan School, a half-mile east of the present park.

The park board purchased the 1.25 acres of land for the original Sheridan Field in 1912 for about $7,000. It was a half-block of land across 12th Avenue Northeast from Sheridan School. At the same time the school board purchased additional land on the block and the park board requested that the city council vacate 12th Avenue between the school and new park/playground.

While the new playground was provided with a backstop for a baseball field and a warming house for ice-skating, few other improvements were made to the park. In the early 1920s park superintendent Theodore Wirth urged the park board to either expand the playground or abandon it. He believed the site was too small. It was "inadequate," he wrote, to provide for the "large attendance (it) constantly attracts." In the 1924 annual report Wirth presented a plan for the enlargement and development of the park, but that was the last mention of the possibility of expanding the playground.

A new, much larger Sheridan School was built on the site in 1932, and the following year the park board granted the school board permission to use the park as a playground for the school, provided that all maintenance and improvements would be the responsibility of the school board.

But it wasn't until 1953 that the park board officially abandoned the site. In a land swap with the school board, the park board gave up the under-sized Sheridan Park, which was used solely as a school playground, for the site of the former Trudeau School at 9th Avenue Southeast and 4th Street Southeast.

The park at the Trudeau site was named Elwell Field. It was the second park with that name, the other had been sold to a manufacturing company in 1952 and replaced by Holmes Park. The second Elwell Field was eventually condemned by the state highway department for the construction of the I-35W freeway. The park board was paid $125,000 for the condemned land.

Today's Sheridan Memorial Park is on the site of the former Grain Belt Brewery. The first lot for the park was purchased in 1986 and a second parcel was purchased in 1995 with funds from the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, which was created to allocate proceeds from the Minnesota Lottery. The foundry that once existed on the site was demolished in 1997.

A plan for the development of the park was approved in 2007, but two additions of land since then have expanded the area that park planners have to work with. In 2007 Virginia Puzak donated to the park board more than four acres of land to expand the park to the north along the river and in 2009 the park board was given two lots on the southern edge of the park by Dr. Frank Galka. A land swap with the City of Minneapolis also added two acres to the park. The land was included in a swap of land between the park board and the city near Shingle Creek. The park will eventually include a reflecting pool and flagpole honoring U.S. veterans, a peace garden, a picnic area and an overlook on the river. A project to stabilize the river bank at the park was initiated in 2008 with funding from the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization. Improvements to the park will be made as funding becomes available.

Shingle Creek Park and Creekview Park

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Location: The bed and banks of Shingle Creek from Webber Park to the north city limits.

Size: 74.99 acres, including 7.36 acres of Creekview Park

Name: The name of the park is taken from the creek. The creek's name came from the shingle mills that once operated on its banks near the Mississippi River.

Acquisition and Development

The first petition from citizens for a park along Shingle Creek came to the park board in 1905, but that petition was targeted at land that later became Camden (Webber) Park. With the acquisition and development of Camden Park on the creek in 1908, there was little demand for more parks in the neighborhood for many years.

In 1930 the park board received a petition from residents of the area for plans and estimates for the acquisition and development of Shingle Creek from Webber Park to the city limits. The park board extended the concept, asking park superintendent Theodore Wirth to prepare plans for Shingle Creek from Webber Park to its source at Twin Lakes in Robbinsdale in November of that year. The instructions perhaps were confusing because the creek does not flow from or through Twin Lakes, but originates in Eagle Lake in Maple Grove. Nonetheless in early 1931 Wirth presented the requested plans and estimates—and that was the last heard of Shingle Creek for another fifteen years. In a discussion of a proposed Hennepin County park authority, however, Wirth did produce a map in the 1930 annual report that showed the possible park developments in northwest Minneapolis and the northwest suburbs. He marked Shingle Creek on that map as a proposed acquisition within the city of Minneapolis and recommended a parkway along the entire length of the stream to Eagle Lake.

The park board received no more requests for a park along Shingle Creek and the park board did not address the issue again either. Perhaps the demand for a park in the area was reduced when in 1935 the park board obtained from the city the site of the former city workhouse and converted it into Bohannon Park, which is only a few blocks from the creek.

The impetus to acquire Shingle Creek as a park eventually came not from the park board or residents of the neighborhood, but from the city sewer department and city council. Following World War II Minneapolis experienced a severe shortage of housing and one area of the city that had yet to be developed for housing was the area of northwest Minneapolis surrounding Shingle Creek. The area hadn't been developed because it was low, swampy land. The solution, in the eyes of city officials, was to lower the bed of Shingle Creek to drain the entire region and make it dry enough for housing construction. The only branch of city government that could do it was the park board.

Although the acquisition and development of Shingle Creek was not on the park board's extensive "Postwar Progress" agenda, the park board went along with the city's request to acquire the land for storm-water drainage purposes. The city issued bonds for $270,000 to fund the project, more than would be approved for all but a few park projects over the next fifteen years. Bonds were, in general, not approved for projects which the park board considered to be far more pressing than acquiring Shingle Creek.

The park board first designated for acquisition about seventy acres of land in a 300-foot-wide strip along two miles of the creek in 1946. The park board's annual report of 1947 announced that the acquisition of the land had been started but not completed. Finally in 1948 the park board concluded transactions to acquire slightly more than 55 acres for the park with a few more acres added the following year. The total cost of the land was slightly more than $200,000.

The park board's reticence to acquire the park in view of more urgent needs may have been responsible for the slow development of the creek as a park. Tentative plans for the park were not introduced until 1951 at which time park superintendent Charles Doell noted again that the principal objective of the project was drainage and that provisions for a park were incidental.

It took another seven years before work on the creek began. With another $280,000 in bonds, augmented by a $150,000 assessment on property in the area, the park board initiated the process of lowering the creek and grading the land around it. The board focused on the area between 50th and 52nd avenues north where it had developed plans for a playground in a joint project with the school board. Joint school and park developments had proven successful in the late 1940s and early 1950s at Waite Park, Armatage Park and Kenny Park and the two boards pursued a similar strategy at Shingle Creek.

The creek bed was relocated, lowered and widened, and ball fields, a wading pool and tennis courts were built at what was later named Creekview Park along the creek. Construction of a recreation shelter was begun in 1958 and completed in 1959 near the site where the school board built Floyd B. Olson Junior High School a couple years later. The initial work at the creek lowered the creek bed by five feet. The lowering of the creek bed also required the relocation of the creek through Weber Park, which required moving some playground equipment, filling the old channel and slight enlarging the lagoon.

Work on the creek did not resume in earnest until 1962. In the annual report of that year the park board expressed its goal over the next five years: to produce an area along Shingle Creek "similar to Minnehaha Creek."

In 1977, during a construction boom in Minneapolis parks, the park board completed a new recreation center at Creekview Park attached to Olson Junior High (now a middle school) which allowed both park and school use of facilities in both buildings. The name of the Creekview Recreation Center was formally adopted in late 1976 to replace the unwieldy informal name of Shingle Creek/Bohannon Recreation Center. To ensure that there were no objections to the name, the park board sent notices home with students at Olson Junior High informing people of the proposed name change. When no objections were raised, the name was adopted.

In 1979 a pedestrian and bike pathway along the creek was financed by a state grant and city bonds, and that winter the park board developed a cross-country ski trail along the creek. A renovation of the playground at Creekview was funded in 1980. Further improvements were made to the trails along the creek in 1993 and in 1996 a "Children's Forest" of 150 trees was planted on the south side of creek.

In 1998 an arson fire damaged the Creekview Recreation Center, but it was reopened in 1999.

Extensive improvements were made to the playground at Creekview from 2005 to 2007. A skate park was built, a baseball field was upgraded with by a grant from the Minnesota Twins, new playground equipment was installed, and a computer lab was created in the recreation center.

Shoreview Triangles

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Location: Shoreview Avenue at 54th Street, 54½ Street and 55th Street

Size: 0.57 acres

Name: The triangles are named for the avenue east of Lake Nokomis on which they are located.

Acquisition and Development

The triangles were acquired in 2006.

Sibley Field Park

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Location: Longfellow Avenue South and East 40th Street

Size: 7.96 acres

Name: The park was named for General Henry Hastings Sibley, the first Regional Governor of Minnesota, who was inaugurated in 1858. The name was approved January 17, 1923. The park board must not have been satisfied that Governor Sibley had been sufficiently honored when it had named Sibley Triangle for him only three years earlier. Prior to being named for Sibley, the park was referred to as Cedar Avenue Heights Park. One group of residents had requested that the park be named for Miles Standish.

Acquisition and Development

Sibley Field was designated for purchase by the park board November 16, 1921, the same day another as-yet-unnamed park, which became Bracket Field, was designated for purchase. The purchase was completed in 1922 at a total cost of $23,441 for nearly eight acres of land.

The first petitions for a park in the vicinity were received by the park board in September 1921 and acquisition of the park proceeded quickly. The park board decided to purchase the land in November, and in the 1921 annual report, the first plan for the park was published. At that time the park was listed as nine acres and a year later as nearly ten acres, but the final acquisition was recalculated as somewhat less.

The purchase of the land was completed in 1922 after resolving some objections to the amounts the park board was willing to pay for the land. The cost was assessed to property owners in the neighborhood. The initial plans for improvement were estimated to cost $75,000 for a "modern, up-to-date neighborhood park and play field." Architect Clarence Brown was hired to design a field house for the park.

The park board faced two challenges in developing the land. One, the amount allocated to development of the park was only $38,000, barely half of the original estimate. This followed a pattern in the development of nearly every neighborhood park at the time: initial plans were scaled way down in order to get property owners in the neighborhood to agree to pay for them through assessments on their property. The second challenge was the topography of the park. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote in his 1923 annual report that the "formerly unsightly low land" was brought to "attractive and serviceable" grades by using a steam shovel and horse teams to move 68,000 cubic yards of sandy soil. The project was complicated, and more expensive than estimated, because all four corners of the park were at different grades.

Development of the park began in 1923, concurrent with development of Chicago Avenue (Phelps) and Nicollet (King) parks in south Minneapolis, Linden Hills in southwest, and Sumner and Folwell in north Minneapolis. The basic grading was done by early July and the park board authorized Wirth to move the grading equipment from Sibley Park to Folwell Park.

By 1924 the playground was installed and a recreation shelter was completed in time to serve as a warming house for skating that winter. Wirth noted that the tennis courts and walks remained to be done, but would be completed for the 1925 playground season. The park was not quite completed by then, as is evident from Wirth's report in 1926. At that time he wrote that Sibley Field was practically the only project in recent years where the costs of improvement were underestimated, mostly because so much earth had to be moved to create a level area for playing fields. Wirth wrote he still needed another $6,000 to complete the work, including $3,000 to install lights in the park.

Following World War II the park board greatly expanded recreation programming in parks and in 1946 chose Sibley as one of only five parks in the city to offer year-round programs. (The others were Folwell, Nicollet (King), Loring and Logan. Folwell and Sibley were the two most recent additions to that list. A sixth year-round community center was not added until 1956 when programming at North Commons was expanded.)

Sibley Field Park was also one of nine parks at which senior citizen clubs were started in 1963, after the success of an experimental program at Loring Park in1960. The club met for four hours one day a week.

Other than some landscaping at the park through federal work-relief programs in the 1930s, the first improvement at Sibley Field after its construction was a remodeled wading pool in 1963. But by 1967, the park board was planning a complete renovation of the park and a new recreation center. The board included $450,000 in its bond program for Sibley Field's renovation for 1969.

In 1969 the park board awarded contracts for a new $172,000 recreation center at the park. The center, and additional renovations to the playing fields and playgrounds, were completed in 1971.

The most recent improvements to the park were made in 1994.

Sibley Triangle

Table of Contents

Location: Washington Street NE and 5th Avenue NE

Size: 0.01 acres

Name: The triangle was named for General Henry Hastings Sibley, the first Regional Governor of Minnesota, inaugurated in 1858. The name was approved January 7, 1920 when the property was accepted from the city council.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was transferred from the city council to the park board, January 7, 1920.

Smith Triangle

Table of Contents

Location: Hennepin and 24th Street

Size: 0.26 acres

Name: The park was named for the donors of the land, C. A. Smith and his wife.

Acquisition and Development

The official date on which the Smiths donated the land is listed in park board records as December 29, 1899. They offered the land to the park board on December 20, 1899 and their offer was officially accepted on January 8, 1900 on certain conditions dealing with where the road and walks through the property would be located.

The Smith's offer was not the first time the land had been proposed as a park. When Hennepin Avenue was being acquired as a parkway in 1884 (it was not abandoned until 1905), the owners of the land had proposed to create a park at the same location, but the park board voted against the acquisition at the time for unknown reasons.

At the request of the Smiths, the triangle was graded and seeded in 1901. Curbs and gutters were not put in until 1909.

Little else was done with the triangle until 1967, when the state highway department took Virginia Triangle at the intersection of Hennepin, Lyndale and Groveland avenues to make room for reconfigured streets and freeway ramps for new interstate freeway I-94. Virginia Triangle was where a statue of Thomas Lowry had stood since 1915.

The Lowry statue and monument were designed and executed by sculptor Karl Bitter. The monument is engraved with these words: "Be this community strong and enduring—it will do homage to the men who guided its youth."

In the dedication of the monument in 1915, Rev. Dr. Marion Shutter delivered an address in which he said, "How grandly has the sculptor done his work! This heroic figure needs no emblazoned name to identify the original. It seems almost as if Karl Bitter had stood by the door of that little Greek temple at Lakewood (Lakewood cemetery where Lowry was interred), and had said: 'Thomas Lowry, come forth!'"

With the loss of Virginia Triangle, the park board decided to relocate the Thomas Lowry statue and monument to Smith Triangle. The cost of relocating the statue was paid by the state highway department.

St. Anthony Park

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Location: Jefferson Street and 3rd Avenue Northeast

Size: 5.59 acres

Name: The park was named for the former town on the east bank of the Mississippi River, which took its name from St. Anthony Falls. St. Anthony merged with Minneapolis in 1872. The falls were named by Father Louis Hennepin, a French explorer, for his patron saint, St. Anthony of Padua. Hennepin was the first European to view the falls in 1680.

Acquisition and Development

The park was acquired in 1973 from the Minneapolis housing authority. The land for a playground and a new school, Webster School, had been set aside as part of a housing redevelopment project in 1964. The site was developed primarily as a playground, for use by the school and the neighborhood, in 1974. The only structure at the park is a toilet building, which was constructed when the park was developed. Work in the park was completed with seeding and sodding in 1977.

The most unusual feature of the park, in a flat section of the city, is an artificial sledding hill built on the south end of the park. Recreation facilities were never developed at the park, in part, because it is only two long blocks south of Logan Park.

St. Anthony Parkway

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Location: From the Mississippi River at the Camden Bridge at 37th Avenue Northeast, south along the east bank of the river to 33rd Avenue Northeast, then east through Columbia Park. The parkway continues out of Columbia Park at 32nd Avenue Northeast, through Deming Heights Park and east on 31st

Avenue Northeast, then southeast through northeast Minneapolis and St. Anthony to Francis Gross Golf Course east of the city limits.

Size: 36.48 acres (Does not include Deming Heights Park or Columbia Park)

Name: The parkway is named for the town that was the original settlement on the east side of St Anthony Falls. The falls and town were named for St. Anthony of Padua, the patron saint of Father Louis Hennepin who was the first European to view the falls. The parkway was officially named December 3, 1913, upon the suggestion of park commissioner Portius Deming. This was not the first parkway in the city to be named St. Anthony: from 1901 to 1906, East River Parkway was officially named St. Anthony Parkway.

Acquisition and Development

The idea of parkway across northeast Minneapolis was first proposed by Horace Cleveland in 1883. Cleveland was a landscape architect from Chicago (he later moved to Minneapolis) who had been an eloquent advocate of a park system in Minneapolis, especially to preserve the banks of the Mississippi River gorge as a park. After the Minneapolis park board was created by the state legislature and approved by Minneapolis voters in 1883, the first park board asked Cleveland to create a plan for parks in the city.

Cleveland's plan, presented to the park board in June 1883, was for a "system" of parks connected by parkways that encircled the city. His proposal for the parkway was to connect the south end of Prospect (Farview) Park in a straight line east to a "driving park" on the east river bank, then along what is now 18th Avenue Northeast to the eastern city limit, where Stinson Boulevard is now, then south to the University of Minnesota and a parkway along the Mississippi River.

Other than a donation by James Stinson and others of a ¾-mile stretch of land for what became Stinson Parkway, however, the park board focused on developing four neighborhood parks (Logan, Loring, Farview and Riverside) and parks around the lakes in the south and west of the city.

Cleveland's plan for an encircling parkway system was revived by his friend and park commissioner William Folwell in 1891 when he wrote a report on the future expansion of the park system. Giving credit for the idea "gladly" to Cleveland, Folwell recommended a system of parkways that would connect the southern lakes to large parks in the northwest and northeast sections of the city. Folwell proposed calling those parkways the "Grand Rounds."

Folwell's connect-the-dots system of parkways between parks began to take shape when Columbia Park in northeast Minneapolis was purchased in 1892. Following nearly a decade of very few park acquisitions due to a depressed economy, the park board expanded Glenwood (Wirth) Park in 1907 and purchased Camden (Webber) Park in far north Minneapolis in 1908. The park board then had connection points for the Grand Rounds and in 1909 developed the first plans for a Glenwood-Camden (Memorial) Parkway across north Minneapolis.

Even before Memorial Parkway was constructed, the park board began acquiring land for a parkway across northeast Minneapolis too. In 1912 the park board designated land for a parkway from Columbia Park to Stinson Boulevard. The planned layout of the parkway was altered by an offer from Armour & Company of free land for a parkway, and the money to build it, through a plot of land the company owned east of the Minneapolis city limits. Armour had considered building a packing plant there, near

the New Brighton Stock Yards, but had opted instead to build its packing plant near the stock yards in South St. Paul. (In 1924 the company offered the land east of the parkway, on very attractive terms, for the construction of a golf course, which became Armour (Gross) Golf Course.)

When the park board was considering extending and widening Stinson Boulevard in 1912, it asked Armour for land to do that. The company proposed instead creating a parkway across the high ground it owned east of Stinson Boulevard. Two other companies, Gale-Akeley Estates and Oakland Heights Company, agreed to donate the land to extend the parkway south from the Armour land to East Hennepin Avenue. As always, the plans for park acquisition and expansion were dictated by offers of free land. Theodore Wirth wrote in the 1913 annual report that the donated land offered a far superior parkway than Stinson Boulevard. In that report Wirth provided a sketch of the proposed parkway route.

In 1913 the park board acquired the 30 acres of donated land and purchased another 17 acres for $44,300 from the Armour land at the eastern city limit to Columbia Park. Included in that purchase was most of the land for what is now Deming Heights Park. The next year the park board purchased about 12 acres of land from the eastern end of the Camden Bridge south along the river to 33rd Avenue Northeast for about $15,000. The park board had originally designated that land for a neighborhood park for northeast Minneapolis, but when residents of the area protested the acquisition the park board abandoned it and purchased land farther south along the river for a park—which became Marshall Terrace Park. However later that year as plans for St. Anthony Boulevard were being developed the park board designated that land once again for acquisition, but this time for a parkway, not a recreation park.

Writing in the 1914 annual report, park board president Thomas Voegeli commented on the "great natural beauty" of the land through which the new St. Anthony Boulevard would pass. Voegeli wrote that the view of the city from the highest point in the city at yet-to-be-named Deming Heights Park, could "fill the hearts of Minneapolis citizens with patriotic pride."

In 1916 the first plans for the entire parkway, from the Camden Bridge to East Hennepin, a length of 5.1 miles, were presented by park superintendent Theodore Wirth. From Stinson Boulevard west, the parkway remains true to Wirth's original plan.

Work on the western section of the parkway commenced in 1918 and gained momentum in 1921 when Memorial Parkway was finished and work crews were shifted across the river. Meanwhile the park board had acquired control from the city council of nearly 18 acres of land encompassing 33rd Avenue Northeast from near the river to Columbia Park, and 31st Avenue Northeast from Polk Street to Johnson Street in 1919.

In 1923 the park board chose to name the land acquired along the parkway at 31st and Fillmore, the highest elevation in the park system, Grandview Park. That park was renamed in 1930 to honor Portius Deming, a former park commissioner and president of the park board from northeast Minneapolis.

The entire length of the parkway was completed in 1924 and northeast and southeast Minneapolis neighborhood organizations sponsored a celebration of the opening of the parkway in September. Of the total cost of nearly $800,000 to build the parkway, Armour & Company paid about $130,000 to build the road through their property east of the city. The remaining cost was divided among city bonds, assessments on property in the area of the parkway and assessments spread over the entire city.

In 1929 the park board purchased several lots to improve the intersection of the parkway and Central Avenue east of Columbia Park at a cost of about $13,000.

It took only a few years for the new St. Anthony Boulevard to become one of the more controversial projects in park board history. The donors of the land for the parkway south of Armour (Gross) Golf Course to East Hennepin Avenue, Oakland Heights Company and Northwest Terminal Company, which had also donated land for the expansion of Stinson Boulevard and financed those improvements, proposed that the parkway be relocated. The companies owned land on both sides of the parkway and wanted to access the gravel deposits on their land. They couldn't get at the gravel, at least not all of it, with a parkway running through the land. The companies proposed to swap land with the park board, taking back the land they had originally donated for the parkway and giving the park board a strip of land straight west from Armour Golf Course to Stinson Boulevard just south of New Brighton Boulevard. It really wasn't a bad deal for the park board: the park board would gain 19 acres in the swap —and the companies offered to pay the full cost of constructing the St. Anthony Parkway "diversion."

The park board's annual report in 1931 noted that an agreement to complete the diversion "without expense to taxpayers" met with "great relief" on the board. The project generated considerable opposition on the board and from the public, but Theodore Wirth reported in the 1932 annual report that he thought the diversion "will be a great improvement to the Grand Rounds." He wrote that the new road would be a better "scenic parkway" and was a good deal financially. The "diversion" of St Anthony Parkway was completed in 1935. The section of parkway was named Ridgway Parkway in 1950 to honor James Arthur Ridgway who had been a park commissioner and secretary to the board 1897-1924. (See Ridgway Parkway.)

Few significant changes have been made to St Anthony Parkway since its initial construction. In 1939 the state highway department paid for grade separation of the parkway at University Avenue. As population growth extended outside of the city limits, in 1947 the park board approved the creation of five street intersections across the parkway in the Village of St. Anthony. In 1951 the park board took the unusual step of selling a lot at the intersection of the parkway and Central Avenue to the Leonard Falldin Post of the American Legion for $1,200 so the post could construct a new hall.

The parkway and pedestrian and bicycle paths beside them were repaved in several stages from 1972 to 1977.

The most recent improvements to the parkway came in 1998 when the parkway from the Camden Bridge to Marshall was rehabilitated.

St. Louis Triangle

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Location: St. Louis Avenue and Chowen Avenue South

Size: 0.05 acres

Name: The park was officially named November 18, 1931 for the intersecting street, St. Louis Avenue. The triangle was given a name "for the purposes of identification and filing plats."

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was transferred from the city council to the park board May 19, 1927.

Stevens Square Park

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Location: Stevens Avenue and 18th Street

Size: 2.51 acres

Name: The park was named for Col. John Stevens on January 18, 1908. It was also the name of the street on which the park is located, which was named for Stevens, too. Stevens was an early settler in St. Anthony in 1849. He built the first wood frame house on the west bank of the Mississippi River, just above St. Anthony Falls, in what was to become Minneapolis. That house was later acquired by the park board and is now located in Minnehaha Park.

Charles Loring first suggested acquiring the Stevens House and placing it in Riverside Park in 1887. At one time the park board considered placing the house in Loring Park instead, but then returned to the original plan. The house was relocated in 1896 to Minnehaha Park in a most unusual display of civic participation. The house was pulled by an estimated 10,000 school children, tugging on huge ropes in relay fashion.

A statue of Stevens has also adorned Minneapolis parks since 1911. It was commissioned by Stevens' daughter, Katharine Stevens Winston, and donated to the city. The park board accepted the statue, with the approval of the Municipal Art Commission, for placement in Stevens Circle. Stevens Circle was then known as Portland Avenue Triangle at Portland and 6th Avenue South. In the resolution accepting the statue, park commissioner Portius Deming said that it portrayed a man who "rocked the cradle of Minneapolis in its infancy," and a man who was "loved for his generous character, gentle personality and unblemished life." The statue was created by sculptors Jacob Fjelde (who also created the statue of Hiawatha and Minnehaha above Minnehaha Falls) and John Gelert. When the Municipal Art Commission approved the statue for placement on public land in late 1910 it did so with the suggestion that "in better keeping with the natural dignity of the figure the hat be removed or else held in the hand" and that the statue be given "a suitable architectural background or setting rather than to stand as an isolated figure." Neither suggestion was followed.

Stevens Triangle was turned over to the city council for traffic purposes in 1935 and the statue of Stevens was relocated to Minnehaha Park. It now stands near the entrance to the Stevens House in the park.

Acquisition and Development

Stevens Square was purchased December 31, 1907 from R. J. Hill for $41,820 at the request of David P. Jones and others. Jones had finished a term as mayor of Minneapolis, and ex-officio member of the park board, earlier that year and would later be elected to the park board. Stevens Square was the smallest of three parks purchased that year, but the most expensive per acre. The other two parks purchased in 1907 were North Commons and Kenwood Park. The petition for the park included an expression of willingness by property owners in the vicinity to be assessed for the cost of the park, and they were assessed.

Stevens Square received little attention from the park board until 1910, other than having two park board-sponsored concerts in the square in 1909. The park board denied several requests for improvement to the park in 1910, it said, because of an understanding at the time of acquisition that no

expenditures of a considerable amount would be made at the park for some time. The board did, however, direct park superintendent Theodore Wirth to provide a plan for improvement of the square in the 1910 annual report and "to more carefully maintain said Square during the present year than in the past."

In the 1910 report Wirth provided a plan for the park, but noted that the elaborate walks, plantings and floral beds suggested by the park's location in "a fine residential district" was not possible without "radical changes in topography," which would do away with a "fine grove of oaks, more or less covering the park." Instead, Wirth's plan kept those trees, but placed a drinking fountain and child's play area at the center of the park, with a tennis court on the north end, and two flower beds.

Improvements began in 1911 with the installation of a tennis court (it didn't get a backstop until 1915) and the ground was sodded with turf taken from the new Dorilus Morrison Park where the Minneapolis Institute of Art was to be built. That wasn't enough for residents apparently, because in 1915 Wirth reported again that the neighborhood wanted more improvements. He argued again that topography and trees in the park didn't permit that. A well and drinking fountain were finally installed in 1916.

The tennis court must not have been a big hit because in 1919, at the "urgent request" of residents it was replaced with a softball field. (At that time what became softball was called "indoor baseball" because it required less space than baseball and, therefore, could be played indoors, though it rarely was. The game also became known as "kittenball.") Wirth noted at the time that the square was extensively used for public meetings and social activities.

The neighborhood and the park had changed dramatically by 1923. Wirth noted in his report that year that the neighborhood had become a densely populated apartment district and that the native oaks on the land were almost all gone and the remainder would die too "due to the increasing unnatural conditions under which they are forced to live." His new plan for improvement of the park included grading it down to one foot above the sidewalk. On the south end of the square he recommended a "field house." In the center of the park he recommended a softball field and volleyball court, in addition to a children's playground. The playing fields, Wirth said, were proposed in part to replace play spaces lost at Washburn Fair Oaks to the southeast, which was being converted to a passive-use approach to the art institute. He planned to use the entire square as a skating rink in winter. In summer, the open porch of the fieldhouse would be a stage for concerts.

Wirth repeated his call for a fieldhouse in the square the following year and lamented that the park in its "present condition is far from giving the service which it could render were it improved." He suggested that the district could afford the "small assessment" that was needed to pay for the improvements. But protests in the community against the improvements—mostly the assessments—apparently dissuaded the park board from pursuing them. In 1927, the park board "filed" Wirth's plans, meaning they were effectively abandoned.

Wirth pitched the idea of improving the square again in 1929, when he presented plans "for the utilization of this almost useless block of land." He presented two plans, both of which included a recreation shelter. The first would have kept the softball field, by then called "diamond ball," and added an outdoor gym, gymnastic equipment, and a volleyball court. He added that "none of the above facilities are sufficient for the existing demands." The second plan, in addition to a shelter would have provided tennis courts that covered most of the square. Wirth said there was no question but that the courts would be very popular. He suggested that the courts could be self-sustaining through a nominal

charge for the use of nets. At that time almost no tennis courts in the city were provided with nets; players had to bring their own.

Wirth concluded that it was a poor investment to maintain such a valuable piece of land in "almost unserviceable and so unsightly condition." Still no action was taken by the park board. So, in 1930, Wirth presented a composite plan with fewer tennis courts, no athletic field, but with the addition of a wading pool. This time the park board approved the plans and even hired architect and former park commissioner Harry W. Jones to design the shelter. The plan would cost $57,000 and was to be assessed on neighborhood property. That didn't fly.

In the face of opposition to the assessments, the park board abandoned the plans by unanimous vote late in 1931. Noting that the neighborhood was mostly apartment buildings, the board declared that "it seems inopportune at this time to add to the cost of the operation of these properties by levying special assessments." The country was in the grip of the Great Depression.

Wirth had the last word on the "Stevens Square problem" in his report of 1931. While admitting that the cost of improvements had to be paid by property owners, he said that when the matter came up again the apartment dwellers in the area "should be invited as indirect taxpayers to present their side of the question." The need for improvements to get "full utilization" of the land, he wrote, was "glaringly evident."

Stevens Square and Peavey Field to the southeast were strong arguments against the property assessment method of buying and developing parks, which had been used as a way to pay for parks since the earliest days of the park board. Property owners in older and poorer neighborhoods rarely agreed to the property assessments needed to acquire or improve parks. Property owners in newer sections of the city were more willing to absorb those costs because it usually led to an increase in property values. That didn't work in older sections of the city.

The park board came to that same conclusion in the late 1930's, but the policy wasn't scrapped until 1968. Not coincidentally, the next addition to Stevens Square came in 1968, when a "totlot," a playground for small children, was built.

Major improvements were made to the square from 1991 to 1994. During that time a new playground was installed, a formal seating area with a pergola was built—the area doubled as a performing space for neighborhood events—and a half-court basketball court was created.

Stewart Field Park

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Location: 26th Street and 10th Avenue South

Size: 6.27 acres

Name: The park was named for Levi Stewart an early Minneapolis pioneer and brother of David D. Stewart of St. Albans, Maine who donated part of the land for the park. Levi Stewart was an early settler in the region and owned considerable land in the vicinity of the park. David Stewart, who inherited the land from his brother, also donated the land for Cedar Avenue Field. Before the park was named for Stewart it was called Seventh Ward Playground.

Acquisition and Development

The account of the acquisition of the park in park board proceedings is one of the more unusual stories of park acquisition. The first mention of the land to be acquired was in the minutes of the meeting of November 6, 1911, when the committee responsible for selecting land to be acquired reported that it had been in negotiations for the land for some time and had secured an option to purchase twelve lots for $5,000 and reported that another unplatted parcel of land could be purchased for $6,500. The committee continued that it "had reason to believe" that another six lots would be donated if the rest were acquired at that time. The board immediately authorized payments for the two parcels and, indeed, the remaining six lots were donated by David Stewart. (The official date listed in park board records for the acquisition of the first parcel of land for the park, September 1, 1911, was likely the date the committee signed an option to purchase the twelve lots it mentioned.)

What was odd about the acquisition was that it was not preceded by petitions for a park from residents of the area, as had occurred with nearly every other park purchased—and many plots of land that were not purchased. Instead it came after the board had advertised that it was seeking land for parks in certain areas of southeast, northeast, north and south Minneapolis.

The legislature had approved $50,000 in bonds to be issued by the city in 1911 for playgrounds. The board had decided to spend $45,000 of that sum to acquire land for playgrounds, and held $5,000 in reserve to begin improvements of the new parks. The board was aware of playground deficiencies in many parts of the city, particularly in older neighborhoods. But it was precisely in those neighborhoods that were already mostly developed that it was hardest to find land to buy. So the park board advertised to buy park land in part to find out how far the $45,000 would go. In the end, those funds were used to buy Stewart Field, Sumner Field in north Minneapolis, and the first Longfellow Field also in south Minneapolis. (The Longfellow Field acquired at this time was not the one that exists today. The first park by that name, at 28th Street and Minnehaha Avenue, was sold in 1917. It was replaced with land farther south for a second Longfellow Field.) It's possible that the land for Stewart Field came to the attention of the park board through the "land wanted" advertisements, which would explain the lack of demand in advance of the park's purchase.

As with nearly all the land the park board acquired for neighborhood parks at the time, the 3.6 acres of land for Stewart Field needed to be filled to bring it up to street grade. The park board said it needed 9,000 cubic yards of fill to bring the park up to proper elevation so that it would drain. The fill was obtained free through the efforts of alderman and ex-officio park commissioner Maurice McInerny in 1912.

With the land brought up to grade, park superintendent Theodore Wirth presented a plan for the park in the 1912 annual report. It was to be a typical recreation park of the time with ball fields that could be flooded for skating in winter, playgrounds and tennis courts. Wirth also proposed a shelter on 26th Street that was larger than existed in many parks. Still, he proposed a combination gymnasium and meeting room in order to save money and noted that larger social gatherings could be accommodated at Greeley School immediately east of the park. Wirth estimated that it would cost $19,000 to develop the park according to his plan.

Stewart Field received more fill in 1913, but not much else. It wasn't until 1915 that the filled fields were finally graded for ball fields and a skating rink. Wirth noted in his report of that year that the skating rink was a full two acres and much appreciated by the neighborhood. A portable warming house was provided in the absence of the permanent field house Wirth had planned. Wirth also noted that

Stewart Field was one of the larger playgrounds and really needed that fieldhouse. He estimated that the cost of "fullest development" of the park by then had risen to $30,000.

Another change had taken place along with the rising cost of developing the park. Shortly after the park was acquired, using city bonds to pay for it, the park board had adopted a policy that all neighborhood parks would be acquired and improved only if property owners in the neighborhood would agree to assessments on their property over a period of ten years to pay for the park. It was a policy that lasted into the 1960s and led to most neighborhood park developments taking place in the city's newer or wealthier neighborhoods.

Still with no fieldhouse in sight, the park did get ball fields with backstops in 1916 and trees were planted along the streets surrounding the park.

Three years later, residents in the vicinity of the park petitioned the park board for a shelter, toilets and a drinking fountain in the park, but the park board refused the request without explanation.

In 1921, Wirth presented a new plan for Stewart Field and recommended that it be developed as soon as possible. He suggested that the park board should also acquire the southern half of the block behind Greeley School and close 11th Avenue between the school and park to expand the park and make it more useful to the school. Wirth noted that there were only five houses on the twelve lots behind the school, which he coveted for the park. By closing 11th Avenue it would make the gym in Greeley School more accessible for use by the park board and reduce the need for a fieldhouse in the park. In his new plan, Wirth proposed only a smaller shelter with toilets in the center of the park. Wirth added that in his opinion the neighborhood could afford the assessments required to pay for the improvements.

But nearly thirty more years would pass before any of Wirth's suggestions were acted on. Other than landscaping improvements in the 1930s by state work relief crews, no improvements were made to the park. The park board had plans drawn in 1938 to improve the park, but like so many plans before they were tucked away without action.

Finally in 1948, one of Wirth's ideas was acted on: the park board acquired the property south of Greeley School for $106,000 to enlarge the park. However, despite committing funds to expand the park, the board took no action to improve it.

Stewart Field remained much as it had been in the 1910s until 1956 when the board pursued plans to improve the park and split the cost between the neighborhood and the city. In 1957, the board vacated 11th Avenue between the park and school, razed the homes on the land it had bought nine years earlier and renovated the park. Playing fields were rearranged, tennis courts were built, a hard-surfaced play area and wading pool were added, new playground equipment installed, and, finally, a small shelter was built. Park improvements were completed in 1958, forty-seven years after the initial land was acquired.

Major changes were made to the park in 1970s, when the school board built Hans Christian Andersen School just south of the park. The school board needed a bit of park land for the school, because it didn't want to expand the school southward and have to take out more homes. The park board finally agreed to a plan that encroached only a bit onto park property, but also gained agreement from the school board that the park board could attach a recreation center to the school to take advantage of school facilities. That center was built in 1976-1977 at a time when park facilities were upgraded again.

The park was given a dramatic new face in 1999 when the old shelter was demolished and new play areas and a modern wading pool were built. The renovations were paid for by a combination of Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds and other city, state and federal funds. At that time the park board and school board also agreed to a small land swap, with the park board getting the northeast corner of the park from the school board and the school board acquiring the western edge of the park for a school parking lot. That agreement was formally completed in 2008.

The most recent improvement to the park came in 2005 when the Minnesota Twins Community Fund, along with Toro and Land O'Lakes companies, financed the creation of the prettiest neighborhood baseball field in the city. The field was named to honor the Twins long-time stadium announcer Bob Casey.

Stinson Parkway

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Location: East Hennepin Avenue to St. Anthony Parkway

Size: 12.15 acres

Name: The parkway was named for James Stinson who, with others, offered to donate the first land for the parkway in 1884. Originally named Stinson Boulevard in 1891, the name was changed to Stinson Parkway in 1968.

Acquisition and Development

Stinson Boulevard is better known for what it does not do than for what it does: it does not connect across southeast Minneapolis to East River Parkway and therefore has been known for decades as the northern terminus of the "Missing Link" in the Grand Rounds system of parkways. Yet Stinson Parkway played a pivotal role in the development of the Grand Rounds parkway system.

In 1884, just a year after the park board was created by an act of the state legislature and approved by Minneapolis voters, James Stinson and others offered to donate a three-quarter-mile strip of land 85-feet wide to the park board for a parkway in northeast Minneapolis along the city's eastern boundary at the time from Division Street (East Hennepin Avenue) to just north of Broadway Avenue Northeast. The only condition of the donation was that a parkway be constructed on the land within five years at a cost not to exceed $5,000. The land was along a route proposed for a parkway by Horace Cleveland, the landscape architect hired by the first park board to provide a blueprint for park development in the city. Cleveland proposed a "system" of parks connected by parkways that would encircle the city.

With the focus of the park board at the time on acquiring more picturesque land around lakes and the river, the flat stretch of unremarkable land far from the city center to the northeast didn't get much attention from the park board, not even in 1889 when the five-year term for developing the land was about to expire. Finally, in 1892, the park board authorized park superintendent William Berry to begin construction of the parkway to nowhere. The parkway was graded, graveled and planted that summer at a cost of $2,500 but further work on the boulevard was not recommended by the board until a route was found to connect it to Moulton (Windom) Park and Second Ward (Van Cleve) Park

The greatest value of Stinson Boulevard to the Minneapolis park system was not in the use or beauty of the parkway itself, but in its symbolic value. As the only piece of designated parkway in northeast Minneapolis it was always a targeted point for a system of parkways that encircled the city. In that,

James Stinson may have been more responsible for the creation of the Grand Rounds parkways than anyone except Horace Cleveland and William Folwell. Folwell was a park commissioner and board president who kept alive Cleveland's notion of interconnecting parkways and proposed the name of "Grand Rounds" for those parkways in 1891.

Typical of the use to which Stinson Boulevard was put—even before the parkway was built—was demonstrated in Folwell's report on park expansion in 1891. Giving credit "gladly" to Cleveland for the idea, Folwell urged the park board not to limit the development of parkways to the southwestern part of the city near the lakes and Minnehaha Creek, but extend them "to encircle practically all quarters." Folwell proposed that the Grand Rounds would extend around Cedar Lake and north to a large northwestern park, then cross the city to a large park on the city's northeastern flank, *"down Stinson Boulevard"* (emphasis added), then to the University of Minnesota and through it to connect with the river parkways. The existence of a Stinson Boulevard, even though it was still not developed, was essential to those plans. And Folwell's vision for the park system was cited for decades by the park board as the eventual goal for the park system. Without that target of an existing parkway on the eastern boundary of the city, the Grand Rounds might not have been created.

Many years before Folwell's report, the park board had seen the value of Stinson Parkway primarily for what it connected with. (Shortly after the first offer of land was made to the park board, the board's response was to accept the donation only if additional land could be secured from the proposed parkway to the Mississippi River at a cost of less than $20,000. That condition was later dropped.) Before the park board commenced building the parkway in 1892, and even before it finally acquired the land for East River Parkway, the board discussed again the extension of Stinson Parkway to the University of Minnesota and the river. Various routes were proposed—18th and 15th Avenue Southeast were suggested—and in 1893 the park board "invited" property owners along the route to extend offers to sell or donate land. However, with the Panic of 1893 and the ensuing economic depression, the park board was able to acquire very little park land over the next decade.

With the initial effort to extend Stinson Parkway unsuccessful, the park board largely ignored the property once again. In the spring of 1902 a prominent resident of southeast Minneapolis, J. T. Elwell, asked the board to plant trees and grass along Stinson Parkway. Perhaps recognizing the futility of his request, he returned to the park board two weeks later and asked permission to plant trees along the boulevard at his own expense. Permission was granted. Perhaps prodded into action by the presence of new trees, the park board voted in 1903 to install sidewalks along the parkway. And by 1908 the park board had finished curbing the parkway and constructing sidewalks along it. With the new curbs and sidewalks, the park board plowed, graded and seeded the "weedy, unimproved ground" along the boulevard.

The prospects for the boulevard increased in 1912 when the park board selected land to build a parkway from Columbia Park to Stinson Parkway. The northern section of the Grand Rounds, in which Stinson Parkway had played such an important role, would finally be built.

But other developments were in the works that would doom Stinson Parkway, and perhaps the connection to the river. In 1914 the Minneapolis Industries Association and the Civic and Commerce Association asked the park board to vacate Stinson Parkway due to the prospects for developing an industrial and commercial center in that section of the city. Those organizations evidently didn't think a parkway that banned vehicles with heavy loads would be conducive to such a development. Those requests foreshadowed the fate of Stinson Parkway nearly fifty years later.

The park board not only declined to vacate the parkway, but proceeded with plans to extend the parkway and pave it in 1916. Once again industrial leaders objected, asking the park board to delay paving Stinson until roads already being paved by the Minneapolis Industries Association "become unequal to the demands of the traffic" in that area. But the area was developing, as evidenced by the permission the park board granted to the Minneapolis Street Railway Company to lay tracks for a streetcar down the center of the boulevard from East Hennepin to Broadway in 1919.

In 1920 plans were made and executed to extend and improve Stinson Boulevard, this time at the request of a business in the area. The Northwestern Terminal Company petitioned the park board to pave and improve Stinson Boulevard from East Hennepin Avenue to New Brighton Boulevard. To facilitate the development the company offered to purchase the bonds necessary to finance the improvements, advance the money to get the improvements started, and organize the donation to the park board of the land needed to extend the parkway. The result was the addition of six acres of land, all donated, to extend the parkway in 1920. The improvements to the parkway were completed in 1922, at a cost of $131,000, giving the park board a 200-foot wide parkway from East Hennepin Avenue to New Brighton Boulevard.

With the completion of St. Anthony Boulevard in 1924, the park board had good reason to extend Stinson Boulevard north to meet it and in 1925 the board resolved to acquire the land for that extension. Meanwhile, Wirth was continuing to press the park board to extend Stinson Boulevard south, straight down 18th Avenue and Oak Street, past Memorial Stadium, to East River Road. (The catch in Wirth's plan was the cost of building the 2000-foot viaduct he proposed over the railroad tracks south of East Hennepin.)

The additional 14 acres of land to extend Stinson Parkway north to meet St. Anthony Boulevard were acquired in 1927 at a cost of $35,000—the only land ever purchased for Stinson Parkway. Wirth wrote that it was "gratifying" to be able to acquire the land before it had been improved, which would have made it too expensive. In 1929 the park board authorized an expenditure of nearly $290,000 to build the last stretch of Stinson Parkway, and approved assessing one-third of that sum to property throughout the city and two-thirds to property in the vicinity of the parkway.

But developments on the new stretch of St. Anthony Boulevard, east of Stinson, from Armour (Gross) Golf Course south to East Hennepin would delay the construction of Stinson Parkway for several years. That section of St. Anthony Boulevard was later abandoned and a new St. Anthony Boulevard Diversion (now Ridgway Parkway) was built directly west from Armour (Gross) Golf Course to join Stinson Boulevard just south of its intersection with New Brighton Boulevard. The "diversion" was not completed until 1934.

During the time the "diversion" was being sorted out and built, the park board repeatedly delayed building the last remaining stretch of Stinson Parkway. Finally in 1936 the park board voted to abandon its 1929 plans to finance the extension of Stinson Parkway to the north. Those plans were formally abandoned because the parkway had already been built by other means.

With the construction of the St. Anthony Boulevard Diversion underway in 1933, the park board may have been prepared under normal circumstances to proceed with the extension of Stinson Parkway north. But those were not normal times; the city and nation were in the grip of the Great Depression and assessing property for any park improvements was no longer feasible. But another path to the improvement of Stinson Parkway had opened. From 1933 to 1937 federal work relief crews from several federal agencies constructed Stinson Parkway north to meet St. Anthony Parkway. When the park board

abandoned its plans to improve Stinson Parkway in 1936, it had already been done, at far less cost to the city, through federal programs. The paving of the newly created parkway was completed by federal work relief crews in 1940.

With the completion of Stinson Parkway to St. Anthony Parkway, the Armour Company, which had originally donated the land for St. Anthony Parkway east of the city limits, donated another small parcel of land at the intersection of the two parkways so that intersection could be improved.

The next major development on Stinson Parkway occurred in 1962. At that time, the board recognized that much of Stinson Parkway had become an industrial thoroughfare. In an action reminiscent of the 1905 decision to abandon as parkways Hennepin Avenue from Loring Park to Lakewood Cemetery and Lyndale Avenue North to Farview Park, the board voted to turn over part of Stinson Boulevard to the city of Minneapolis. The portion of the parkway that was abandoned as park land, from New Brighton Boulevard (Highway 8) south to East Hennepin Avenue, included the first stretch of Stinson Boulevard donated to the park board in 1885. One reason cited by the board for relinquishing the land was a "functional change from park to industrial traffic." The other reason provided in justifying the board's decision on April 4, 1962 was that the parkway had been meant to be a part of the Grand Rounds, but that it had never been linked to the southern portion of the Grand Rounds at the Mississippi River, despite efforts for decades to do so.

The remaining parkway, north from New Brighton Boulevard, was given its first permanent pavement in 1973 and was repaved in 1994.

In 2008, the park board initiated a new plan to acquire what it had failed to acquire in more than 100 years—the "missing link" in the Grand Rounds from northeast Minneapolis to the Mississippi River. The new plan, likely to take years to complete, does not include Stinson Parkway. Instead the suggested new route would begin at St. Anthony Parkway and bypass Stinson Parkway completely. The parkway that kept alive the vision of a completed Grand Rounds for so long is not planned to be a part of the eventual solution.

Stone Arch Bridge

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Location: The bridge crosses the Mississippi River downstream from St. Anthony Falls.

Name: The name is descriptive of the structure and has been used since the bridge was built in 1883.

Acquisition and Development

The bridge is owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, but the deck of the bridge is maintained by the park board.

The bridge was built in 1883 by James J. Hill's Great Northern Railroad. It carried two tracks into downtown Minneapolis and at its peak brought 80 passenger trains a day into Union Station.

The bridge was completed only five months after Minneapolis voters approved an act by the Minnesota legislature to create the Minneapolis Board of Park Commissioners, the original name of what today is the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. The bridge, however, played an important role in the creation of the park board.

The Minneapolis Board of Trade, an organization that functioned like a chamber of commerce for the city, was convened in January 1883 after a couple years of inactivity specifically to coordinate an effort to convince Hill's railroad to participate in a Union Station in downtown Minneapolis. The bridge was under construction at the time. Shortly after the Board of Trade was reconvened, however, its members turned their attention to creating a park board for the city. The Board of Trade drafted the legislation to create a park board and, under the leadership of William King, convinced the legislature to pass the bill. Opponents of the measure attached a provision to the legislation that required approval by Minneapolis voters before it could take effect. King also headed the campaign to get voters to vote "Yes" on the Park Act, which they did in April 1883.

A member of the executive committee of the Board of Trade was Loren Fletcher, who was also, conveniently, speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives that passed the park legislation. Fletcher was also the business partner of Charles Loring, a leading proponent of parks in Minneapolis, who became the first president of the park board and became known in the early years of the park board as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks."

With the demise of the railroads as passenger carriers in the 1970s, Burlington Northern no longer needed a bridge into the city. In 1980 the railroad offered to sell the bridge to the city for $1, but concerns over the cost of maintenance of the structure caused the city to reject the offer.

In 1989, however, the railroad found a taker for the bridge: Hennepin County. County commissioners saw the potential value of the bridge for a future light-rail transit system. The county bought the bridge for $1,001.

The ownership of the bridge transferred to the state in 1993. Minneapolis legislators James Rice and John Sarna insisted that the state take control of the bridge when the state assumed control of light-rail development in the city. Rice and Sarna were influential proponents of park developments along the central riverfront. With the help of a $2 million federal grant for the reuse of historic transportation structures, the state and the park board worked out an agreement to convert the bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle path which would link Father Hennepin Bluff Park on the east bank of the river with West River Parkway. Informational displays on the history of the bridge, the river and St. Anthony Falls were developed by the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board.

Sumner Field Park

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Location: Bryant Avenue North and 8th Avenue North

Size: 4.77 acres

Name: The park was named for Sumner Place, a street that once went through the park. The street was named for Charles Sumner, a United States Senator from Massachusetts and ardent opponent of slavery. The park was officially named December 18, 1911. A bit of trivia: Horace Cleveland, the pioneer landscape architect who campaigned for years for Minneapolis to preserve its lake shores and river banks as parks, proposed in 1883 the creation of a system of interconnected parks in the city, and designed the layout of many of the city's first parks, participated as a young man in a book club organized by his brother in Boston. Another member of the "Five of Clubs" was Charles Sumner, before he was a senator.

Acquisition and Development

The first three acres of the park were purchased, mostly by condemnation, in 1911. In the summer of that year the park board received a petition from the Associated Jewish Charities for a park in what was called the "Jewish district" of the neighborhood. The park board reported that it had had difficulty finding a suitable location in the area that was not already built up and could be purchased with "available means." It reported that a location had been found in the area between 8th and 11th and Dupont and Bryant that was centrally located and "will serve the purpose" if it could be had at a "sufficiently low price."

Unable to reach purchase agreements with all the property owners, the board assigned appraisers to establish the value of the desired lots for condemnation. After hearing objections to the appraisals, the park board proceeded to purchase the land anyway, including five lots owned by Syracuse University, in December 1911 for $16,000. The original purchase was three acres of land that included the north half of the block between 8th and 9th, the whole block from 9th to 10th and part of the block north of 10th. The land for the park was unusual among neighborhood parks in the city in that it had no street boundaries on the north or south.

Park superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote in his 1911 annual report that the park would need about 4,000 cubic yards of fill to raise it above the grade of the sewer. In his next annual report Wirth included a plan for the park, including an "ordinary" field house, outdoor gymnastic areas, a playground, a football/baseball field that would double as a skating rink, and courts for volleyball, basketball and tennis. His estimate for executing his plan was $15,500.

In 1912, the park board began filling the land and created a skating rink for the winter.
It continued filling the land the next year and created a larger rink. Wirth also noted in his 1913 report that the graded field was already being used for baseball.

The park board continued to improve the park gradually, adding tennis courts in 1914 and playground equipment and fencing in 1915. By then Wirth noted that the park was "intensively used," one of the "busiest fields in system." He added that toilets were "absolutely necessary" and that the park was not large enough and should be expanded south to 8th Street.

The park board was trying to expand the park a bit at a time. One lot was purchased for $300 for the park in 1914, but the demand for more land persisted. The Federation of North Side Improvement clubs urged expansion and improvement of the park in 1915, and that request was endorsed by the Camden Improvement Association. In response to those requests the park board noted that it was unanimous that the park was "deserving" of expansion, but "the present financial situation makes it impossible." By the end of 1915, the board found the money to buy an additional 0.6 acre of land on the south end of the park for another $3,375.

Those new lots were promptly filled and additional improvements were made—a drinking fountain was installed and trees were planted—but Wirth once again noted that the patronage of the field "makes the necessity of enlargement apparent."

In his 1917 report, Wirth submitted a new plan for the park, noting that attendance at the park in proportion to its size was greater than for any other playground in the city. His plan was for a park stretching all the way from 8th to 11th streets. (Others had urged the park board to expand the park west all the way to Lyndale.) Wirth's plans provided for a field house in the center of the park. He wrote that while his plan was for only a field house, a larger "social center" should be built. The main floor of the

proposed field house was at the grade of the northern end of the park and the basement was on a grade with the southern end, where he had proposed a playing field, which would double as a skating rink, and a grandstand for spectators. The basement of the field house would provide a warming house for skaters.

Wirth did not attach estimates for his plan, suggesting instead that when the people of the district decided what accommodations were desired in the field house, he would provide estimates. The "desires of the people" were critical to what type of building would be erected, because the only way it would be built at all was if property owners in the area agreed to assessments on their property to pay for it.

They didn't, despite earlier indications by some that they were willing to. In 1917, the park board appointed appraisers to value the additional land needed and develop estimates for development. In May 1918, however, the park board abandoned plans to enlarge and develop the park due to many objections to the appraisal of the land and the assessments. Plans for the development of several parks, Audubon, Bottineau and others, were abandoned at about the same time as people opposed expenditures on parks, and assessments, as the nation was embroiled in the Great War. The only new development at the park was the provision of toilets in 1919.

During the economic recovery after World War I, the park board looked again to expand Sumner Field. In 1921, it designated another 0.8 acre of land to extend the park south to 8th Street at a cost of $36,000, bringing the park to a total size of 4.44 acres. In the 1922 annual report the park board said it would improve the land as soon as the houses on the new land were removed.

While improvements to other parks in the city—Folwell, Sibley, Phelps, Linden Hills and Nicollet—were scheduled for improvement in 1923 by assessing local property, the improvements at Sumner were to be paid for with some money from bonds and from selling the houses on the land purchased the year before. The estimated cost of the improvements was a little more than $11,000. The plan provided for a small central shelter, playing fields to the south—minus the grandstand—and playgrounds and wading pool to the north. Showing the steady increase in the cost of land since the first lots were acquired, even as the cost of proposed improvements dropped, the board purchased just twenty-five feet of another lot for the park at a cost of $3,000.

Wirth proposed again in 1924 that the park be extended north to 11th Street and that a shelter be built. In 1926 the playing fields and banks were once again graded and built up with "good soil," as Wirth wrote, and in 1928 the park board authorized the construction of a shelter, which was never built.

Most of the proposed improvements to parks that were not completed before 1929 wouldn't happen for many years. With the onset of the Great Depression, few parks were improved in any way without the help of federal money through work-relief programs. Nonetheless, Sumner was one of the few parks improved in the early 1930s, when the southwest corner of the field was regraded so a hockey rink could be built in 1931, and a wading pool was built and the gravel tennis courts were paved with concrete in 1932. In 1934 the playing fields were rearranged and enlarged as part of federal and state work-relief programs.

In 1933 the PTA and welfare organizations of north Minneapolis were given permission by the park board to hire, and pay for, playground instructors at Sumner, under the direction of the park board.

That is one of the last mentions of Sumner Field Park, in its original configuration, in park board documents. The park board's annual report in 1937 noted that the board had been in negotiations for the relocation of Sumner Field to make way for a federal housing project in the area, but said negotiations

were at an impasse. Two years later, the board's report noted that contracts for the Sumner housing project at 6th and Lyndale were let without incorporating the park board's suggestions. The park board's position was that there should have been a land swap, so the housing project would have included park land and the park would have been relocated a couple blocks south.

In 1962, the park board suggested reorganizing Sumner Field into just a playlot for children, under a plan with the Minneapolis Housing Redevelopment Authority to build a major new park facility to the west adjacent to Grant Elementary School. That project did proceed and eventually became Bethune Park in 1968. As part of that development, the park board was to give up Sumner Field to the housing authority in exchange for the Bethune Park land, and in fact approved a 40-year lease for what was then referred to as Sumner-Olson Field to the housing authority in 1975. But that second step in the trade never was finalized. The park board retained ownership of Sumner Field Park.

Svea Triangle

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Location: Riverside Avenue and 26th Avenue South

Size: 0.08 acres

Name: The triangle was reportedly named December 27, 1893 to honor Swedish immigrants who had settled in the neighborhood. The property was at one time referred to as Riverside Avenue Triangle.

Acquisition: The first mention of the triangle is in the minutes of the park board's meeting of May 3, 1890 when the board received a request that it improve the triangle. The request was referred to the committee on improvements. On June 27, 1890 the city council voted to turn over the triangle to the park board and the next day, following an inspection tour of parks, the board directed park superintendent William Berry to grade and improve the triangle.

A special park policeman was appointed for the triangle in 1906.

Curbing and sidewalks were added to the triangle in 1908 and the triangle was included in an appropriation for further improvements in 1909. That is the last mention of Svea Triangle in park board minutes.

Theodore Wirth Park

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Location: Between France Avenue and Xerxes Avenue from I-394 to Golden Valley Road. The northern two-thirds of the park are outside Minneapolis city limits in Golden Valley.

Size: 740.29 acres, including 82.99 acres of water and 280 acres of golf courses.

Name: The park was named Theodore Wirth Park on September 7, 1938. When the first 64 acres were acquired for the park in 1889 it was named Saratoga Park. The name was changed to Glenwood Park on December 27, 1890. When the park was expanded to include Keegan's Lake in 1909, the board designated the name Glenwood Park for the new grounds and officially changed the name of the lake to Glenwood Lake. The park, parkway and lake were all renamed for Wirth in 1938.

Theodore Wirth

Theodore Wirth was superintendent of Minneapolis parks from 1906 until 1935. Wirth immigrated to the United States from Switzerland at the age of 25 in 1888. After a series of jobs working for park systems and private estates, primarily as a gardener, he was hired to be the superintendent of parks in Hartford, Connecticut. Among his accomplishments in ten years as the head of Hartford parks, the oldest public park system in the country, was the creation of the first public rose garden in the U.S., a project he replicated in Minneapolis at Lyndale Park. While in Hartford, Wirth assumed the role of landscape architect for the parks, experience he put to use in shaping the parks of the rapidly growing park system in Minneapolis.

The man primarily responsible for Wirth's hire by the Minneapolis park board in late 1905 was Charles Loring. Loring likely came to know Wirth, or at least know about him, through an early national park organization, the American Park and Outdoor Art Association, which was founded in the late 1890s in part through the efforts of the Minneapolis park board. (Loring was an early president of the organization, although he was not a Minneapolis park commissioner at the time.)

Wirth came to Minneapolis as the city's park system was on the verge of rapid expansion after years of neglect due to economic depression. He also took over management of the park system as the need and demand for recreational facilities in parks was increasing. He, like Loring, was an advocate of playgrounds for children in parks and took the lead in creating the first playgrounds in Minneapolis parks shortly after he took the job.

Wirth is best known, however, for reshaping the city's lakeshores and building its parkways. Wirth took a dim view of swampy land and shallow water, calling them "unsightly and unsanitary." Through dredging and filling, massive projects, Wirth redefined the shorelines of nearly every city lake except Lake Harriet—and even there he proposed substantial redefinition of the lake shore by building a peninsula into the lake to add visual appeal. During his tenure, Minneapolis's lakes and shores were converted to clear water and dry land—and some of the lakes were connected by navigable channels.

Wirth also managed the initial construction or improvement of most of today's Grand Rounds parkways. In addition, the park board's five golf courses were created under his supervision. He also supervised the creation and development of the Minneapolis airport into a world class facility. The airport was acquired and developed by the park board until it was turned over to the Metropolitan Airport Commission in the mid-1940s.

Wirth never lost his passion for gardening. He created the Rose Garden at Lyndale Park and the Armory or Kenwood Garden where the Sculpture Garden now stands. In addition, the park board planted up to 200,000 flowers and bedding plants some years in parks during his years as superintendent.

Perhaps most significant was that as the park system tripled in acreage while he was superintendent, he created the professional organization to manage the parks. In his first two years as superintendent, the park board agreed to his requests to hire a full-time bookkeeper, engineer, forester, florist, horticulturist and recreation director. When Wirth was finally required to retire in 1935 due to civil service age rules, he was succeeded as superintendent by Christian Bossen, who had been Wirth's bookkeeper in Hartford, and came with him to Minneapolis in 1906 at Wirth's insistence.

After his retirement Wirth remained involved in Minneapolis parks as superintendent emeritus and continued to live in the superintendent's house at Lyndale Farmstead until 1945 when he moved to San Diego for health reasons. Three years after he retired, Minneapolis's largest park was named for him—

but it wasn't the first time naming a park for him had been suggested. The dynamic and indefatigable Wirth had made such an impression on the city after only four years on the job that in 1909 when park commissioner Edmund Phelps suggested new names for Glenwood Park, one possibility he mentioned was "Wirthfield Park." Twenty-five years later Wirth's full name was given to the park.

Acquisition and Development

The park board voted to acquire the first 64 acres of what became Wirth Park in 1889, although the transaction was not completed until the following year. The park was named Saratoga Park after a nearby spring of that name. In the 1889 annual report park board president Charles Loring described the new park, the southeast corner of the present Wirth Park, in glowing terms. He wrote, "(It's) ample size, beautiful scenery and proximity to a large residence portion of the city will cause Saratoga Park to be recognized as one of our most desirable acquisitions." Loring also noted that the land "abounds in springs" and contained a "beautiful sheet of water" of about six acres, Birch Pond.

The acquisition came after four years of discussion of acquiring land in the region to serve as a parkway from the southwestern lakes into the northern neighborhoods of the city along the city's western boundary. The board had held discussions in 1885 with William McNair who owned much of the land west of Cedar Lake and into north Minneapolis and was willing to donate land for a park and parkway along that route. But McNair's death later that year and the board's opinion that the land was too far from the city to be of much use, ended those discussions. The possibility of acquiring land along the western border of the city for a parkway, and the realization that the best route would require some land in Golden Valley, even led the park board to seek authority from the state legislature in 1885 to acquire land outside the city limits for an extension of parks and parkways, a power that the legislature granted and was used years later to expand the park into Golden Valley.

The issue of a park in the area was raised again in the summer of 1888 when residents near the Glenwood and Inglewood springs petitioned for a park. Loring wrote in the annual report of 1888 that the petitions came too late in the year for action at that time. But the next summer the board did act on many requests for a park in the area and in August 1889 voted to acquire the land and to assess the $100,000 cost over ten years on "benefitted" property in the area.

In 1890 the first parkway was laid out through the park and the park was fenced with ribbon wire at a cost of $2,600. The new park was officially named Glenwood Park. The idea of a parkway connecting Glenwood Park to the lakes and eventually to a large park in northwest Minneapolis was revived by a special committee of the park board chaired by William Folwell in 1891. Folwell suggested that this system of connecting parkways could be called the Grand Rounds. Folwell gave the credit for the idea, "justly and gladly," he said, to Horace Cleveland the landscape architect who had first proposed in 1883 that parks and features of natural interest in the city be connected by a system of parkways.

Over the next ten years, while president of the park board, Folwell would also champion the creation of a great "scenic" park, a large area of open, undeveloped land. Folwell's hope for that wild and wooded park was realized when Glenwood (Wirth) Park was dramatically expanded in 1908.

Few improvements were made to the park in the first years after it was acquired, although in early 1893, the park board granted the State Fish Commission the right to use Birch Pond as a fish hatchery for 25 years. The year before, in response to a request from the park board, the commission had stocked fish in Lake Harriet, Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles. In its assessment of fishing in city lakes the commission had noted that Birch Pond was good for bass and perch fishing.

In 1893 the park board's interest in improving the park was evident in its decision to negotiate with Horace Cleveland to create a plan for the park. Unfortunately by that time Cleveland's age and ill health prevented him from working. Without Cleveland's input the park board resolved later that year to begin improvements to the park, including the construction of "pools and channels" to carry the flowing water in the north end of the park. The reference was not to Bassett's Creek but to springs within the park, as Bassett's Creek flowed several blocks to the north of the original park.

By 1905, with the recovery of the Minneapolis economy and a decade of frugal management of the park system, significant demand arose for the expansion of Glenwood Park. One of the targets of that expansion was Keegan's (Wirth) Lake north of the park. The goal was not only to make a park around the lake but to close down "resorts" of questionable character on the lake shore. The 1905 annual report reported the petitions for the expansion of the park in two contexts: one, to acquire a "great scenic park" and board president Fred Smith wrote that there was no better location for such a park; and, two, as a link in a parkway that encircled the city. "This project contemplates at some future time," Smith wrote, "the building of a boulevard northward from Keegan's Lake along the valley of Bassett's Creek and across the city by some convenient route to Columbia Park, thus completing the grand project of that master in landscape architecture — the late HWS Cleveland—a boulevard encircling the entire city."

The park board took no action to expand the park that year with the exception of adding a few lots to the park acquired at a tax sale. It was the first time the park board acquired land that had been seized by the state for failure to pay taxes, a method used to acquire several parks more than thirty years later in the wake of another major economic depression.

When Theodore Wirth was hired as the new park superintendent in 1906, one of the only additions he thought was necessary to the park system was the expansion of Glenwood Park. However he favored expanding the park not north toward Keegan's Lake, but to the south and east over "useless land" that was "made to order for parks."

One of his few recommendations for improving the park was to locate a flock of sheep in the park. There is "nothing prettier in landscape effect than a flock of sheep grazing on a meadow or hillside," he wrote in the 1906 annual report. Wirth proposed sheep in the park several more times over the years, including a plan of where to put sheep barns in 1913, arguing that sheep would pay for themselves by mowing, fertilizing and providing wool and mutton that could be sold. Finally in 1921 he got the go-ahead from the park board to bring sheep into the park. A fire had destroyed many trees in the park that summer and Wirth argued that sheep grazing in the park would keep tall weeds down, thereby reducing the risk of more fires. The experiment lasted only a few months because the sheep grazed in parts of the park where they weren't welcome. Other than his suggestion of sheep, Wirth recommended no extensive improvements to the park in 1906, suggesting instead that the board should "preserve nature's own work as it exists today."

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

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As demand for the expansion of Glenwood Park grew, a new development gave the park one of its signature features, a unique wildflower garden that is cherished still. In early 1907 Eloise Butler, John Greer and others petitioned the park board for space in Glenwood Park to establish a botanical garden. The park board granted the request and set aside three acres of bog, meadow and hillside for the Wild Botanical Garden, the first public wildflower garden in the United States. The board also allocated a

modest sum for paths and fencing of the area and on April 27, 1907 announced that the garden had opened.

The person who took charge of the garden as a volunteer was a retired botany teacher, Eloise Butler, who for years had taken her students to the park for botany lessons. Butler tended the garden for four years as a volunteer until in 1911 the Minneapolis Womans Club petitioned the park board to appoint a full-time curator for the garden. The club offered to pay half a year's salary for a curator. When that wasn't enough to get the park board to act, the club increased the offer to a full year's salary if the park board would retain the position and pay the salary after that. The park board agreed. The person the Womans Club recommended to be the curator was Eloise Butler.

Eloise Butler created such a magnificent wild garden—collecting, protecting, preserving and cataloguing wild plants and offering free botany classes—that the park board named the garden in her honor in 1929. In 1933, at the age of 85, she died on her way to work. Her ashes were spread in her garden and the park board held a memorial service and planted a pin oak tree in the garden in her honor, noting that "Every plant in her garden was her living child, upon whom she bestowed her devotion and care."

Butler was succeeded by her assistant, Martha Crone, who remained in charge of the garden until 1959. Upon Crone's retirement, she was succeeded by Ken Avery. The shelter in the garden is named for Crone and the terrace is named for Avery.

An important addition to the park occurred in 1944, when Clinton O'Dell, a successful Minneapolis businessman—he created the Burma Shave rhymes seen along highways — and former botany student of Eloise Butler, contributed $3,000 to expand the garden to include ground for upland or prairie varieties of plants, rather than the primarily woodland plants that Butler's original garden could accommodate. O'Dell also helped form in 1951 The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, which has contributed time and money for the maintenance and improvement of the garden ever since.

The Great Scenic Park

In 1908 the park board rectified the criticism that it had created a "park system without a park" by setting in motion the expansion of Glenwood Park by nearly nine fold. By 1909 the park was enlarged to 560 acres, with nearly two-thirds of the park lying outside Minneapolis boundaries in Golden Valley. Minneapolis finally had its scenic park that it proudly compared in size with New York's Central Park. The new park included Keegan's Lake, Brownie Lake and a stretch of Bassett's Creek. The addition of nearly 500 acres had cost the park board less than $200,000 largely because the land was considered to be unsuitable for farming due to its topography. About three-quarters of the cost was assessed on property in the area and the remainder was paid for by city bonds. In a bit of bookkeeping sleight-of-hand the city bond funds were applied only to the purchase of land within the city limits of Minneapolis at the request of the city council.

The expansion of Glenwood Park was viewed as one of the park board's greatest achievements. Park Commissioner Edmund Phelps commented that it may be the "most important park in the system" noting that it was half as far from downtown as Lake Harriet and one-third as far as Minnehaha Park. With the acquisition of the park, which was two miles long and half-mile wide, park board president Jesse Northrup wrote in the 1908 annual report, "The future, so far as it seems prudent to now anticipate it, is secure."

Even before the expansion of the park, everyone had ideas on how the land should be developed. In 1907 Northrup was the first to suggest that a large park could be home to a golf course, which many cities already operated, he said. He also suggested the park could be used for horse riding. Both suggestions were later implemented.

As soon as the lands were acquired Wirth announced that the park board's nursery would be moved from Lyndale Farmstead to Glenwood Park in 1909. An old farm house that had been acquired with the land beside Keegan's Lake became the residence of park horticulturist Louis Boeglin who lived there until his retirement in 1940. Boeglin's successor, Greg Lucking, then lived in the former farm house until he retired in 1966.

Permission was also granted in the summer of 1909 to use part of the new park for a camp for crippled and tubercular children. (Charles Webber, who donated the pool and field house at Camden Park and later had that park named for him, donated money in 1910 to erect a windmill at the camp site, to draw water from a deep well for the children.) In December 1909, the park board asked Wirth to prepare plans for a parkway from the expanded Glenwood Park to the new Camden (Webber) Park farther north, which was also acquired in 1909.

In 1910 Wirth began construction of a parkway through the new park using a gang of forty Hungarian railroad workers. In 1909 several park improvements at North Commons and the East River Parkway had to be delayed a year due to a shortage of horse teams and labor for hire. To build a new parkway, however, Wirth imported labor. As the parkway was being constructed the park board designated land to be acquired for the Glenwood-Camden (Memorial) Parkway.

Amidst this flurry of activity, the park board and Wirth proposed in 1910 that the park be expanded by another 200-300 acres to the north and west to Twin Lake. The next year the park board did purchase another 25 acres for the park.

The work at Glenwood wasn't the only major project of the park board at the time either. Dredging at Lake of the Isles was wrapping up and the dredges were moved to dig the channel that would link Lake Calhoun and Lake of the Isles. Work on Lake Calhoun in 1911 included groundbreaking for a new bathhouse on the north shore. The old temporary bathhouse at Lake Calhoun was split in two and one half went to Lake Nokomis and the other to Glenwood (Wirth) Lake.

Improvements and suggestions for the park continued. In 1912 bridle paths were built across the park and Wirth recommended that land be set aside for a zoo and sheep barns. In 1913 Eloise Butler recommended that a children's museum be established in the park. "An early implanted knowledge and love of birds, flowers, insects, minerals and nature in general," she wrote in her annual report, "are the most potent factors in nullifying degrading influences, in awakening and broadening the mind and giving joy to life." Commissioner Edmund Phelps championed bridle paths and a golf course and his push for golf was seconded by Wirth, who suggested a 12-hole course and argued that it was "erroneous" to consider golf a game only for the rich.

Golf at Glenwood

A golf course at Glenwood was finally constructed in 1916, nine years after it had first been suggested in a park board report. The first course was only nine holes and featured clay tees and sand greens. An instructor was hired for the first summer and the popularity of the course exceeded expectations. Although Wirth recommended a charge of 25 cents to play the course, the board voted to make play free

that year. More than 12,000 rounds were played the first season and an estimated 1,000 more rounds were played during an unseasonably warm November after the course had officially closed for the year. The course was created in what must still be record time: the park board approved creating the course at the end of April—Wirth estimated it could be done for $500—and it was opened for play in June. By that time the Glenwood-Camden Parkway had been completed north to Lowry Avenue.

The next season more than 50,000 rounds of golf were played on the course, prompting Wirth to call for a second golf course. Two years later, in 1919, the Glenwood course was extended to 18 holes and a second course of only six holes was opened at Columbia Park That year Wirth also proposed for the first time that the golf course needed a suitable club house instead of the two temporary shelters that had been constructed. The club house was built three years later in two stages, a second story was added in 1923. Wirth, who was a native of Switzerland, recommended the Swiss Chalet architecture for the club house. Ever the gardener, and a man who was meticulous about the appearance of the parks, Wirth persuaded the board in 1923 to ban the use of spiked shoes on the golf courses. It is not known when that decision was reversed.

Wirth wrote in the 1924 annual report that hundreds of golfers had been turned away from the Glenwood course and the expanded Columbia course. The inability of the two courses to accommodate all the golfers who wanted to play led that year to contracts to acquire Armour (Gross) Golf Course and Meadowbrook Golf Course. With the increased demand for golf and the higher standards set by the two new courses, Wirth suggested in 1925 that the greens at Glenwood be upgraded from sand to grass and that an irrigation system be installed on the fairways. The price tag of $25,000 he attached to those proposals must have been too much for the park board, however, because the greens weren't converted to grass until 1935. By that time, during the Great Depression, the use of the golf courses had dropped dramatically. The improvements to the Glenwood course—as almost all park improvement projects in the 1930s—were done as federal work relief projects.

Despite hopes that golf course fees would pay not only for the maintenance of the golf course, but other improvements in the park, the Wirth golf course (renamed along with the rest of the park in 1938) operated at a loss through the 1950s. As golf's popularity picked up again in the early 1960s, the park board added a par three course to Wirth Park in 1962 and hired a golf course architect to redesign the back nine of the larger course in 1968. At the same time the Columbia course was lengthened from 4,600 yards to 6,200 yards. The Chalet at Wirth Park was updated extensively in 1998 and in 2004 bronze statues of Theodore Wirth surrounded by playing children were installed between the parkway and the club house. The statues were a gift form the Minneapolis Parks Legacy Society.

Expanded Use—and Acreage

With nearly one-quarter of the park turned over to golf, the demand and need for more space at Glenwood continued. In 1917 another 93 acres were added to the park.

As the park was being enlarged it was also being improved. In 1916 Charles Loring offered to build an artificial waterfall into the hill beside Wirth Lake. The Loring Cascade was constructed of artificial boulders set into the hillside and the water running down the falls was pumped from the lake. The forty-foot waterfall, which Wirth said appeared to be "nature's own creation," was completed in 1917. Its waters plunged into a new lake as well. As the park board had done with most of the other city lakes, it dredged Wirth Lake to deepen it and better define its shore line. Part of the objective of dredging was to create a sand beach on the east shore of the lake across from the Loring Cascade. When no sand deposits

were found on the lake bottom, the sand for the beach had to be hauled in. Not far from the lake a boulder with an inset plaque was installed to mark the location of the 45th parallel.

In 1919 a new bath house was constructed on the beach. In the same year Wirth first suggested that Bassett's Creek in the park should also be dredged to improve its flow and appearance, an idea he repeated and refined in 1926. (The creek was finally dredged and shaped into pools in 1933 as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project. CCC projects were not allowed in cities, but because that part of Bassett's Creek was not in Minneapolis, but Golden Valley, it qualified. Theodore Wirth's son, Conrad, who later became director of the National Park Service, was one of the CCC administrators responsible for the project.)

With the clearing of additional land at the park for the golf course, skiing also increased in popularity. Although a ski jump in the park had been featured in photographs in the annual report as early as 1911, in 1921 Wirth recommended the construction of a new "ski slide" in advance of the 1922 National Ski Tournament held at the park. In 1924 the park hosted the trials for the U.S. Winter Olympic ski team. The success of that event led Wirth to comment in the 1924 annual report, "The prospects are that the Olympic winter sports games will be held in Minneapolis in 1928 or 1932."

Throughout the 1920s the park board contemplated several additions to Glenwood Park especially to the north and west to Twin Lake and Sweeney Lake, land that Wirth said had little residential value. The park board also considered expanding the park to the southwest, an area that Wirth felt was an ideal spot for a zoo. The park board still maintained deer, elk and bear pens at Minnehaha Park in the early 1920s, remnants of the 1890s zoo at that park, but Wirth believed that portion of the lower glen was needed as a picnic ground. In 1927 the park board did acquire nearly twenty acres north of Glenwood Park, the first land acquired for Valley View Park. That acquisition in Golden Valley was, in Wirth's words, "a beckoning finger" to Sweeney Lake and Twin Lake. They were "two jewels," Wirth said, which must be acquired before their natural beauty was spoiled.

A new picnic ground and shelter were added to the park in 1930 near the lake and the park board also paid 40 percent of the cost of a new Plymouth Avenue bridge into the park over the railroad tracks.

Few improvements were made in the park for the next two decades through depression and World War II. In 1948 the park board authorized the purchase of 160 acres to the west of the park but the following year abandoned nearly eighty acres of that acquisition because Glenwood Hills Hospital wanted the land for expansion. (When the hospital closed in the 1990s, the land was sold for a residential development, which now borders the park on the west.) The park board did acquire the remaining 87 acres of its original planned acquisition in 1952. Another two-and-a-half acres were added to the park in 1956.

The park also lost a considerable chunk of land from the park in the 1950s. After considerable agonizing, and great reluctance, the park board sold thirty-two acres of the park on the west side of Brownie Lake to The Prudential Insurance Company in 1952. The company had stated its desire to build its regional headquarters in Minneapolis, only if it could build at that location. Citing the benefits to the Minneapolis economy and the jobs that would be gained, the park board agreed to sell the land for $200,000. The park board offered the additional explanation that with the growth of traffic on Highway 12 and the widening of the highway, the land beside Brownie Lake had already in effect been cut off from the remainder of the park.

The size and shape of the park have remained substantially the same since the 1950s with the exception of some loss of land for the widening of I-394 and Highway 55 through the park in the 1960s.

In the 1950s the hills of the golf course were converted into a more formal downhill ski area and in 1955 the park board granted a concession to operate two tow ropes for skiers. In the 1970s the park's slopes gradually gave way to cross-country instead of downhill skiing. By the end of the 1970s the park had nearly four miles of cross country ski trails and in 1979 they were lighted for the first time. Those trails have since been extended to nearly twelve kilometers. The same year the nearly sixty-year-old ski jump was condemned as unsafe and, despite efforts by local ski jump enthusiasts to save the venerable jump, it was demolished.

The appetite for snow sports witnessed another shift in the early 2000s, when the park board installed its first snowboard park, complete with rails and jumps.

The 1970s witnessed a rising awareness of environmental issues, which had an impact on Wirth Park. In 1959 the park board treated many city lakes, including Wirth Lake, with sodium arsenite to control weed growth that was caused in part by low water levels in the lakes. By the 1970s, however, the greater concern with lakes was with the quality of the water. Considerable work was down at Wirth Lake in 1977 to restore water quality.

In 1981 another new attraction was created at the park, the J. D. Rivers Garden. The garden was created to help teach young people about growing food crops, but evolved into a broader program of gardening and environmental education under the new name of the J. D. Rivers Outdoor Discovery Center.

In the 1980s the park board also began efforts to restore the unique five-acre Quaking Bog in the park and to eradicate invasive species of plants that had taken hold in Wirth Park as well as many other parks. Extensive efforts to control those species were targeted especially at the bog and the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden.

The most recent additions to the park were made to accommodate cyclists. In 2002 the Luce Line bicycle trail was constructed through Wirth Park, Bassett's Creek Valley Park and Bryn Mawr Park to connect with the Cedar Lake Trail to downtown Minneapolis. Trails were made for off-road cyclists in 2004. A demonstration project, since officially sanctioned, was begun then with the creation of a four-mile off-road trail through the hilly section of the park west of the golf course.

Todd Park

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Location: Portland Avenue and East 56th Street

Size: 13.31 acres

Name: The park was named for George Todd, a park commissioner from 1957 to 1963. The park board broke from accepted practice and named the park for a living person. Todd was ill with cancer at the time the park was named for him. He died a few months later. Before it was named for Todd, the park was commonly referred to as East Diamond Lake Park.

Acquisition and Development

The park was dedicated in the plat of the area, which was filed June 16, 1938, but it was not officially accepted by the park board until March 17, 1948.

A lengthy discussion of Pearl Lake and Diamond Lake in the 1938 annual report notes the dedication of the land as park and refers to it as the "east swamp," thirteen acres of land that was twelve feet below the grade of the streets surrounding it. The report also referred to failed efforts by the park board in 1931 to acquire the land east of Diamond Lake. In the plan presented for the entire Pearl Lake-Diamond Lake area in 1938, park superintendent Christian Bossen wrote that the plan was to fill the swamp, but due to "poor foundation conditions," no permanent structures could be built there. Instead it would be a play area.

Park superintendent Charles Doell didn't mince words in his 1948 annual report when he described what was to become Todd Park. He noted the board's acquisition of "13.24 acres of swamp."

His lack of enthusiasm for the property may have been justified given that the park board already owned the wetland and lake across Portland Avenue, Diamond Lake, and still more wetland north of that, Pearl Park, which was still referred to in park documents of the time as Pearl Lake. Doell probably figured he already had enough swamp to manage—the park board had been attempting to fill Pearl Lake since 1937—and he had little money to do anything with any of it. The park board had included improvements for Diamond Lake and Pearl Lake as a priority on the "Post-war Progress" estimate it had submitted to the city for bond funding after World War II. Doell and park commissioners didn't know it when Todd Park was acquired in 1948, but they may have already had an inkling, that even their high priority improvement plans would not be funded until the 1960s, long after Doell had retired.

Still in 1958, the park board began doing what it could. Using fill generated by street widening in the area, it managed to fill the half-block along Chicago Avenue between 56th and 57th streets. It wasn't until 1963 that the park board received city bond funding, $75,000, to finish improvements at Todd Park. Those improvements consisted only of creating playing fields. A major investment in recreation facilities and a recreation center was still planned for nearby Pearl Park at that time.

The most recent renovation to the playing fields at Todd Park occurred in 1991.

Tower Hill Park

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Location: University Avenue and Clarence Avenue SE

Size: 4.54 acres

Name: The park was formally named St. Anthony Heights by the park board on January 18, 1908. The Committee on Designation and Acquisition of Grounds had recommended on December 23, 1907 that the park be named Tower Hill, but the full board rejected that name. However, acquiescing to a petition from residents of the area, the park board renamed the park Tower Hill on April 19, 1909.

The name refers to a private tower once located on the hill, not the "Witch's Hat" tower. Anyone who wanted a spectacular view of the city from the tower could climb the steps of the old tower for fifteen cents. It was demolished before the park board acquired the land. The "Witch's Hat" water tower was not built until 1913, seven years after the park was acquired and four years after the park was officially re-named. The water tower was not built by the park board, but by the city water department.

Acquisition and Development

Tower Hill was acquired as a park following a petition in late 1905 from residents of the neighborhood. On May 7, 1906 the park board accepted a proposition from the unnamed owner of the property to sell it for $19,500 payable over ten years. The full amount of the purchase price was assessed on property in the neighborhood. The financing terms were approved by the board on May 21, 1906.

In his first annual report as superintendent of parks in 1906, Theodore Wirth noted that the park needed little work. However in 1907, a tennis court was built in the southwest corner of the park, the park's only level ground.

In his 1908 report, Wirth submitted a plan for the improvement of the park, but noted that the park "will never call for very heavy expenditure for improvements." His plan included walks to the summit, where he suggested that an observation tower 50-60 feet in height could be built.

The following year Wirth noted that the "steep, abrupt and unsightly gravel banks" along University and Malcolm avenues had been graded to "graceful slopes." Along with those improvements Tower Hill was added to the park concert schedule for two concerts, which became annual events in the park.

A second tennis court was added to the park in 1912, and backstops were built for both courts. Tennis balls must have rolled forever down the surrounding streets until those backstops were built. Most early tennis courts in the park system were built without backstops. Most were also not provided with nets; players had to bring their own.

Wirth suggested in the 1910 annual report that if a water tower were to be built on Tower Hill, it should be planned to serve as an observatory, too. His reference to a water tower suggests that it was already being discussed at that time.

Three years later, the city council requested permission to build a water tower in the park, one of the highest pieces of ground in the city, and it was completed in 1914 with what Wirth called "a very roomy observation platform" that provided a "magnificent view."

When the water tower, now called the "Witch's Hat" for its conical roof, opened in 1914, the city council requested that the park board provide a caretaker for the park so the tower could be open to the public. The park board complied, employing a caretaker at the park five days a week.

After the construction of the tower, Wirth's prediction that Tower Hill would never require "heavy expenditure" proved true. In the next sixty-five years, the park board spent less than $1,000 on improvements for the park, although some improvements—laying walks, building retaining walls, and resurfacing tennis courts—were done by federal work-relief crews in the 1930s. The park gained 0.17 acres in 1950 when Malcolm Street was closed.

In 1979, Tower Hill got a bit of attention from the park board when it corrected erosion problems on the steep slopes of the park. More extensive improvements were made to Tower Hill Park in 1995, which resulted in the park winning an award from the Committee on Urban Environment.

The most recent addition to Tower Hill park was the installation of a prairie garden by the park board in 2000, with an agreement that it would be maintained by the Prospect Park Garden Club.

Owing to its steep terrain, Tower Hill is one of the few parks in the city that has remained primarily for passive recreation use, rather than being converted to more active uses. Nearby Luxton Park, a few blocks down the hill, which was acquired in 1912, became the playground for the neighborhood.

The tower in the park is now opened one day a year during the Pratt neighborhood picnic.

Valley View Park

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Location: From Theodore Wirth Parkway south of 26th Avenue North southwest through Golden Valley to near Theodore Wirth Park at Golden Valley Road.

Size: 17.50 acres

Name: The name is descriptive. It has never been officially adopted.

Acquisition and Development

Using bond funds the park board purchased the initial 15.4 acres for the park, which lies wholly within Golden Valley, for about $15,000 in 1927. Park board president Washington Yale wrote in that year's annual report that the 400-foot-wide strip of land was like a beckoning finger to Sweeney Lake, "which must soon be acquired before (its) natural beauty is destroyed." Superintendent of parks, Theodore Wirth, noted that the acquisition consummated two years of negotiation and "assured for all time to come" the attractive view over open country from Sunset Hill on Memorial Parkway.

The following year the park board purchased another 6.8 acres at the western edge of the park for roughly $6,000 to establish a connection with Glenwood (Wirth) Park. Bolleana poplars were planted to mark the park's boundaries.

Van Cleve Park

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Location: Como Avenue and 15th Avenue SE

Size: 8.67 acres

Name: The name was adopted on May 15, 1893 to honor Charlotte Ouisconsin Van Cleve and her husband, Major General Horatio P. Van Cleve. Charlotte Van Cleve was known as "Infant Pioneer" having resided with her parents at Camp Coldwater, the predecessor to Fort Snelling, in 1819. Before the name was officially adopted, the park was referred to as Second Ward Park.

Acquisition and Development

In response to repeated petitions from the residents of southeast Minneapolis, the park board selected nine acres in southeast Minneapolis to purchase for a park on March 1, 1890 at a cost of slightly more than $75,000. (Although the 1890 annual report of the park board lists Van Cleve at nine acres, all subsequent inventories of park property list it at 6.97 acres.) The land selected was one of three sites in the neighborhood the park board was considering.

Van Cleve Park was one of several important park acquisitions in 1890, which included Powderhorn Park, William Berry Park (then Interlachen), Lyndale Park and the expansion of Minnehaha Parkway, as well as the enlargement of Loring Park.

The first plan for the new park was created by Horace Cleveland in the spring of 1890. Cleveland's design was remarkable in that it included land designated for a playground for children — a first for Minneapolis parks. The notion was sufficiently ahead of its time that the park board did not approve the creation of the playground, opting for a pond in its place.

The pond of about 1½ acres was created immediately in the southwest corner of the park and the material excavated from the pond was used to grade the remainder of the park. Brook Avenue, which ran through the park before it was purchased was vacated by the park board. The park was fenced, walks were laid and a double row of elm trees were planted around the park.

The following year the newly created lake was drained and it was lined with "puddled clay." The 1891 annual report includes a drawing of the new park. With the creation of a lake in the park, it was promptly used for a skating rink in the winter of 1892.

Suffering the effects of the Panic of 1893, the park board made few improvements to Van Cleve, or any other park, in the ensuing years. With the return of better financial times, however, Van Cleve and other parks were once again improved. In 1904 the board approved a clay tennis court for Van Cleve and the next year authorized a warming house for skaters and two "toilet rooms." (The toilets were moved from Van Cleve to Lake Calhoun in 1911 after a permanent warming house with toilets was built at Van Cleve in 1910.)

Following the successful introduction of playground equipment in 1906 at Riverside and Logan parks, Van Cleve was one of three more parks to get playground apparatus in 1907. After new park superintendent Theodore Wirth arrived in 1906, he recommended in his first annual report that Van Cleve should be a priority because it was on the trolley line between Minneapolis and St. Paul and it was densely populated. Wirth called Van Cleve "half playground, half show park." Wirth also recommended that the pond be given a sand bottom so it could serve as a wading pool. Van Cleve Park was added to the park concert schedule for the first time in 1907.

Although playground attendance at Van Cleve lagged behind attendance at other parks, Van Cleve was one of three parks, North Commons and Jackson Square were the others, to get a year-round field house in 1910. These were actually little more than upgraded warming houses for skaters. In 1911 Wirth submitted a plan for changes in the paths of Van Cleve. His plan shows that only a small section of the park was set aside for playground use and there was no provision for playing fields of any kind.

This was a time when parks were still intended primarily for passive use—where people could rest, relax and escape the city amid natural beauty—not for active exercise or sports. Wirth noted in his commentary on the plan that Van Cleve was "one of the neighborhood parks where playground activity and attractive park scenery can be maintained in close proximity without interfering with each other." Despite Wirth's expectations for Van Cleve as a well-patronized park, it had the lowest attendance at playground activities of any city park. The lack of playing fields may have contributed to that. Van Cleve was the only park playground that did not have a summer-ending playground festival in 1912.

Two tennis courts were built in the park in 1916 and in 1917 Wirth recommended that the small lake be given a concrete bed to make it more attractive and sanitary. In 1919 the park was improved (a plan is in

the 1919 annual report), including, finally, a tar macadam bottom for the pond. The playgrounds were also rearranged and enlarged, and a ball field and volleyball court were added. Wirth noted that the improvements "greatly enhanced the appearance and usefulness of the park." The same report indicated that Van Cleve was among the leading parks in the number of flowers planted, one of the last indications that there was still an effort being made to balance the benefits of a "playground" with what Wirth had called a "show park."

Perhaps due to the addition of playing fields, by the early 1920s Van Cleve joined North Commons as the most heavily patronized of all city playgrounds. Of particular note, Van Cleve was one of a few playgrounds at which girls outnumbered boys in attendance at playground activities and games in the 1920s.

In 1935, in his last annual report before he retired, Theodore Wirth included plans for addressing a shortage of swimming facilities in the eastern part of the city. He proposed expanding Van Cleve Park to the west to include a swimming pool on the south edge of the park. (He also proposed expanding Jackson Square and adding a swimming pool there.) But in the middle of the Depression and a world war soon to follow, those plans were never implemented. Wirth's 1935 plan for the addition of a swimming pool would have also eliminated the man-made pond.

Improvements at Van Cleve were included in the park board's post-war progress plans in 1945 and those proposed improvements, scaled back considerably, were carried out in 1948-1949. The old wading pool was eliminated and a new concrete wading pool was built. Two concrete tennis courts and a paved play area were added and athletic fields for softball, baseball and football were installed. Floodlights were also installed for the playing fields. The total cost of improvements was about $60,000.

Other than updating field lighting in 1961, the next major improvements at Van Cleve were in 1970 when a new community center with a gymnasium was built and the other park facilities were also renovated. In preparation for the improvements, Van Cleve was expanded by nearly two acres to the southwest of the original park.

In 1999 the Van Cleve community center was closed for a major remodeling, which was completed in 2000.

Victory Memorial Parkway

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Location: Theodore Wirth Parkway to 45th Avenue North then east to Lyndale Avenue North

Size: 75.23 acres

Name: The parkway was originally named Glenwood-Camden Parkway when the land was acquired for the parkway in 1911, referring to its route from Glenwood Park to Camden Park. (Before the name was adopted it was referred to informally as North Side Parkway.) It was officially named Victory Memorial Drive in 1919 and included all of Memorial Parkway, and what is now Theodore Wirth Parkway and Cedar Lake Parkway. Although still commonly referred to as Victory Memorial Parkway, the name was changed to Memorial Parkway in 1968 and applies only to the parkway from Lowry Avenue to Webber (Camden) Park.

Acquisition and Development

The idea of a parkway encircling the city, today's Grand Rounds, is nearly as old as the park board itself. When landscape architect Horace Cleveland submitted to the first park board his formal "suggestions" for a system of parks and parkways in 1883 he envisioned parkways connecting major parks in each section of the city. His original vision for a system of parkways was largely achieved decades later, although most of those parkways ended up being further from the center of city than Cleveland would have liked.

The first suggestions for a parkway in northwest Minneapolis came in 1884 when commissioners proposed a parkway around the western shore of Cedar Lake and from there through north Minneapolis to Farview Park. Some commissioners thought this was a more scenic and certainly less expensive route for a parkway into north Minneapolis than a direct route form Loring Park to Farview Park along Lyndale Avenue North. The western route had the advantage that the owner of considerable land west of Cedar Lake and in north Minneapolis, William McNair, had offered to donate land for a parkway.

Recognizing that the best route for that parkway would actually pass outside of Minneapolis city limits into what is now Golden Valley, the park board even went so far as to introduce a bill to the state legislature in 1885 that would give the park board the power to acquire land outside the city limits. The legislature granted that power to the park board.

In the summer of 1885, the park board arranged a meeting with McNair, a close friend of several of the first park commissioners, to acquire a strip of land 150-feet wide for the parkway. Charles Loring, the president of the park board then, wrote in 1890 that ultimately the board rejected McNair's offer of free land because the route around Cedar Lake was too far from the city. McNair died in the fall of 1885 and the matter was not pursued. (Many years later the park board had discussions with McNair's heirs about acquiring that land once again, but other than the purchase of some of McNair's land along Cedar Lake, nothing came of the those discussions.)

The idea of a parkway around the city was revived by park commissioner William Folwell in 1891, after the acquisition of the first sixty acres of Saratoga Park, which would eventually be renamed Glenwood Park, then Theodore Wirth Park. In a special report to the board on park expansion, Folwell urged the board not to limit parkway development to the southwestern part of the city around the lakes. Giving the credit for the idea to his friend Horace Cleveland, Folwell proposed a parkway around Cedar Lake, through the new Saratoga Park to a large northwestern park, then across the city to another large park in northeast Minneapolis, continuing down Stinson Boulevard to the Mississippi River at the University of Minnesota, and then along the river to Minnehaha Park. Folwell suggested the parkways could be called the "Grand Rounds."

The idea—and the name—struck a chord, but before the park board could build the connecting parkways, it needed the anchoring parks. And those would take many years to acquire. Keeping the idea of a northwestern parkway alive, Folwell wrote in 1901 that "but for the sudden deaths of two public-spirited citizens, the Hon. W.W. McNair and the Hon. Eugene M. Wilson, the grand rounds would long since have been extended from Calhoun to Glenwood Park and thence along the west boundary of the city to the north line."

The idea of the northwestern parkway came up again in 1909, after the board had expanded Glenwood (Wirth) Park from its original sixty-six acres to more than eight hundred acres and also acquired Camden (Webber) Park in north Minneapolis. The park board had acquired Columbia Park in northeast Minneapolis less than two years after Folwell's proposal. With parks to connect, the desire to build parkways between them took on new urgency.

At the end of 1909, the park board asked park superintendent Theodore Wirth to prepare plans for a parkway from Glenwood Park to Camden Park. The following year, July 21, 1910, the park board designated land for the parkway, on the condition that residents of the area would not request improvements on the land for some years, except for opening a road from 19th Avenue North (Golden Valley Road) into Glenwood (Wirth) Park. With only that stretch of road completed residents of north Minneapolis would have a parkway connection to the lakes in south Minneapolis and Minnehaha Park beyond. The only controversy surrounding the location of the new parkway, which was through open farmland, was whether the east-west section should follow 43rd Avenue or 45th Avenue. The preference expressed by the Camden Park Commercial Club for 45th Avenue seemed to resolve the issue for the board.

A total of 170 acres were acquired for the parkway at a cost of nearly $170,000. The parkway on the western city limit was 333-feet wide and the east-west section on 45th Avenue was 200 feet wide. The cost of the land for the parkway, along with land for the expansion of Glenwood Park and the purchase of the west shore of Cedar Lake, a total of $350,000, was paid for partly (30%) with bonds and the remainder with assessments on property deemed to be benefited by the new parkway.

Construction of the parkway, in keeping with promises that it would take some time, began in 1913 when the parkway was built from 16th Avenue North to 19th. The next stage of the parkway from 19th to Lowry Avenue was begun in 1916, but due to spending constraints during World War I wasn't completed and opened to traffic until 1920. Park superintendent Theodore Wirth called the parkway "one of the most impressive parts of the Grand Rounds system." In the 1916 annual report, Wirth presented plans for completing the parkway north of Lowry Avenue, then east to Camden (Webber) Park. Noting that "the country traversed is rather uninteresting," Wirth proposed a straight parkway on the west side of the land, leaving space on the east side of the parkway for playgrounds and athletic fields.

Wirth altered his plans for the parkway in 1919 when former park board president Charles Loring made a generous offer to the park board. (Loring had already donated to the park board the recreation shelter in Loring Park and had paid for the construction of an artificial waterfall flowing into Wirth Lake.) Loring had long desired to create a memorial to American soldiers. In 1908 he had commissioned a young Minneapolis architect, William Purcell, to design a memorial arch dedicated to soldiers. Where he hoped to place the arch is not known. But in the wake of World War I, Loring proposed another kind of monument; he would plant memorial trees to soldiers along the city's parkways. Wirth had a better idea. He thought the planned Camden-Glenwood Parkway was the ideal place to plant rows of stately elm trees as a memorial. Loring liked the idea and agreed to pay for the trees and deposit $50,000 for their perpetual care. The result was a memorial drive, with the parkway centered on the strip of land, instead of off to one side.

The board accepted Loring's offer, named the new parkway Victory Memorial Drive, and Wirth set out to find the perfect tree. He found a type of elm, called the Moline elm, in nurseries in Chicago and New York, and brought them to the park board's nursery at Glenwood (Wirth) Park in 1919, so they would be well-established for replanting along the parkway when it was finished.

With memorial trees ready to be planted, and an additional 5.3 acres of land acquired for a monument at the northwest corner of the parkway, the final three miles of the Victory Memorial Drive were completed in 1921. On June 11, 1921 the new parkway, and its news trees, were dedicated in a grand

ceremony. Loring, then age 87, was not healthy enough to attend, but drove over the new parkway the day before with his old friend William Folwell.

Later that year both General John Pershing and Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the French commander of Allied forces during World War I, visited the parkway and expressed their admiration for the living memorial. The name of each soldier from Hennepin County who had died in war was placed on a wooden cross in front of a tree. Unfortunately the special elms selected for the drive weren't hardy enough for Minnesota's winters and were replaced in 1925.

The wooden crosses were replaced as well in 1928, on the tenth anniversary of the end of World War I, when bronze crosses and stars, each inscribed with the name of a soldier, were installed.

The original wooden flag pole installed as a monument where the northbound parkway turns east at 45th Avenue was replaced by a bronze flag pole and ornamental base in 1923 by the American Legion of Hennepin County. A statue of Abraham Lincoln, a replica of St. Gaudens' famous sculpture, was installed at the intersection in 1930.

Other than taking out the original bridle paths that were built along the parkway, the parkway remains much as it was when it was constructed. The only other change is that many of the majestic elms in two rows beside the parkway succumbed to Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s and after. Now a less uniform growth of a variety of trees covers the parkway with shade.

In November 1959, the park board received a scare when consultants hired by the Hennepin County Board recommended that the county take over the parkway for the purpose of creating a county highway. The park board registered its opposition to the proposal in early 1960, as did the Veterans of Foreign Wars, who opposed the "desecration" of memorials to soldiers.

While the conversion of Memorial Parkway into a freeway appears not to have been seriously considered, two years later the board still included Victory Memorial Drive among parks and parkways that could be reduced or lost to freeways. During the 1960s and after when freeways were built across the city, the park board did lose two parks (Wilson Park and Elwell Park) and parts of several more to freeways. But all of those losses were for interstate freeways, not county highways.

Victory Park

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Location: Upton Avenue North and 44th Avenue North

Size: 2.35 acres

Name: The park was named for the Victory neighborhood in which it is located. The neighborhood took its name from Victory Memorial Parkway, the name given to the parkway from Columbia (Wirth) Park to Camden (Webber) Park when it was dedicated in 1921. Victory Memorial Parkway was named in the aftermath of World War I after Charles Loring, the first president of the park board and known as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks," donated the money to plant and care for a row of elm trees along each side of the parkway. Each elm was dedicated to a fallen American soldier from Hennepin County. Appropriately, Victory Park is adjacent to an elementary school named for Loring. The first Charles Loring School was built on the site in 1924, but was replaced by a brick building in 1928.

Development and Acquisition

Victory Park is one of the only Minneapolis parks that was developed before it was acquired. The first reference to the park in park board proceedings was in April 1974 when the park board noted that it had approved a verbal report from representatives of the Victory neighborhood, presumably concerning development of a playground next to the school. By 1976 the park board had approved a design program for the park and a year later approved schematic plans for a park, including a recreation shelter, at a cost of $177,000. The board also authorized a payment to the school board of roughly $46,000. Exactly what that payment covered is not clear. In addition to playground equipment, the park was provided with a wading pool and a basketball court.

Despite the construction of the park and shelter adjacent to Loring School, the park board and school board did not sign a lease agreement for the property until 1980.

The park was significantly upgraded in 1998 with the cost divided between city bonds and Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds designated by the neighborhood. At that time the neighborhood requested the removal of the basketball court in the park, as it was viewed as incompatible with the park's design primarily to appeal to young children.

Waite Park

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Location: Ulysses Avenue North and 33rd Avenue North

Size: 8.88 acres

Name: The park was named in 1949 for Edward Foote Waite, a Hennepin County juvenile court judge. Previously the land was referred to as the Cary-Cavell site, referring to the Edith Cavell School nearby. The 1949 annual report of the park board called Waite an "elder statesman" with a long and distinguished career "singularly marked by outstanding contributions to the understanding and guidance of youth."

Acquisition and Development

In 1944 a survey of park and playground needs identified the rapidly growing northeast corner of the city as one that needed more park amenities. The nearest parks were Columbia Park to the west and Audubon Park to the southwest.

The solution to that shortage was found in cooperation between the park board and school board in the first joint development of a park and school from the ground up. The park board's 1946 annual report noted that because the school board expected to establish a school at Ulysses and 34th Street Northeast, the park board had acquired land adjacent to the school site for a park. The $11,400 paid for the 8.3 acres at Waite Park came from $400,000 in bond funding from the city in 1946. (The majority of those funds were used to acquire Shingle Creek, which the city asked the park board to acquire so it could lower the bed of Shingle Creek and drain the surrounding area for housing development.)

The park board purchased the land by condemnation as part of the 14-acre site for the school and park in 1947. At a community-wide meeting in 1949 at Columbia Manor, the 300-plus attendees unanimously approved paying property assessments totaling $147,900 for the acquisition and development of the property.

Construction of the park began in 1949, but hit a snag shortly after when the nation entered the Korean War. In 1950 the National Production Authority prohibited construction of recreation and amusement projects in order to save material for the war effort. The ban included park construction. Park superintendent Charles Doell and Mayor Eric Hoyer rushed off to Washington to meet with federal officials to gain an exemption for Waite Park. The project they were most concerned about was the new Parade Stadium that was also under construction at the time. They returned home with exemptions for both projects because they had been started before the order was issued.

Waite School opened in September 1950, at which time most of the work on the park was completed, with the exception of building a small shelter and installing playground equipment. A $35,050 contract was awarded late in 1950 for the shelter building.

By the time Waite School opened, the park and school boards were cooperating on their second joint project at what became Armatage Park and Armatage School in south Minneapolis. The 1951 annual report of the park board noted that Waite School and Armatage School were the only two schools in the city named for living persons: Edward F. Waite and Maude D. Armatage.

The park board completed construction of the park in 1953 with the addition of hard-surfaced play areas and the seeding and sodding of lawns.

Attendance at Waite Park grew through the 1950s and early 1960s and in 1963 the park board for the first time began to offer after-school recreation programs at the park in addition to the traditional summer programs. Supervision and instruction were provided by University of Minnesota recreation students, as was done at six other neighborhood parks.

In 1977 the park board approved construction of a new 6,000-square-foot recreation center attached to the school and approved a lease agreement with the school board for joint use of the new space. Construction was completed in 1979.

Washburn Fair Oaks Park

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Location: Stevens Avenue and East 22nd Street

Size: 7.56 acres

Name: The park was named for the William Washburn family's estate "Fair Oaks" that once occupied the land. William Washburn was a representative in Congress from Minneapolis and then a United States Senator 1889-1895. He was the brother of Cadwallader Washburn, who founded the Washburn-Crosby Company, the largest milling company in the world at one time and the predecessor of General Mills. Washburn was an advocate of creating parks in Minneapolis when the park board was created in 1883. He donated some of the land for Minnehaha Parkway and is remembered today in Minneapolis because Washburn High School is named for him.

Acquisition and Development

Washburn Fair Oaks was one of the first sites considered for a city park long before the park board was created. In 1869 Richard Mendenhall offered to sell forty acres in the vicinity to the city to create a park. The city council declined that offer and eventually two of the city's wealthiest men, Dorilus Morrison and William Washburn, built homes there.

In 1911, Morrison's son, Clinton, offered to donate his family's estate, eight acres south of East 24th Street between Stevens and Third avenues, to the park board for the express purpose of creating an art museum. The park board accepted that offer and the former Morrison estate, Dorilus Morrison Park, now holds the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

The donation of the Morrison estate to the park board generated interest in the Washburn property just to the north. And later in 1911 William Washburn made an offer to the park board that it accepted. He would sell his land to the park board for the appraised price of the land alone—not counting the value of the buildings on the land. It was a generous offer considering that Washburn's enormous mansion, the largest in the city, the barns, stables and greenhouses were valued at about $400,000 by themselves. (The property even included a small lake fed by an artificial water supply.)

So the park board purchased Washburn's land in 1911 for about $250,000 on the condition that Washburn and his wife would retain possession of their home until they died. The land passed to the park board upon the death of Mrs. Washburn in 1915.

The stables and greenhouses were demolished soon after the park board acquired the land, but Fair Oaks, the mansion, stood for another nine years. The park board never knew what to do with the enormous home and it fell into disrepair. It was used as a meeting place by civic groups during World War I and after, especially the Women's Welfare League. The park board even considered at one time making the huge home its headquarters.

In 1916, park superintendent Theodore Wirth wrote that he believed the grounds could be developed "to become useful as a small children's playground, without destroying, to any appreciable extent, the present attractive features of the park." The next year, in the 1917 annual report, Wirth provided a drawing for how an outdoor amphitheater with a seating capacity of 1,100 people could be laid out in the park. Wirth noted that the park had been used already for several "small plays" by children and included a photo of one such production in his annual report. (Judging by the photo, the "small plays" were likely forerunners of the later playground pageants staged at Lyndale Park.) But none of these suggestions were pursued.

While the mansion deteriorated, the grounds around it became an informal playground for neighborhood children. However, neither a dilapidated mansion nor children's ball games were appreciated in the neighborhood. The building deteriorated to the point that in 1923 Helen Law and others offered to give the park board $25,000 to buy a new playground in the neighborhood if it would demolish Fair Oaks. (Earlier in the year Law had asked the park board to ban baseball in the park and to build two tennis courts there instead.) The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, the operators of the Institute of Arts, favored the demolition so that a suitable setting and approach to the Institute could be created.

The park board accepted the offer and Fair Oaks was demolished in 1924 in the hope that the entire park could be transformed into a beautiful landscaped plaza in front of the Institute of Arts. Park commissioner Phelps Wyman, a landscape architect, and Theodore Wirth collaborated on the design of a plaza for Washburn Fair Oaks Park, which was published in the park board's 1923 annual report, but never built. Wirth proposed in 1926 that the plaza should be the start of an esplanade that would extend from the Institute of Arts to the Minneapolis Auditorium a mile to the north.

The beautiful approach to the Institute of Arts that both the fine arts society and the park board wanted instead of the mansion or the playground, never was developed. Washburn Fair Oaks has remained

instead a beautiful open green space in the center of the city. Land to replace Washburn Fair Oaks as a playground was not purchased until 1926 and it was much too small to serve as a full-service playground.

(See Clinton Field Park for more on the creation of a playground for the neighborhood.)

In 1931, the Daughters of the American Revolution erected a statue of George Washington in the park across from the entrance to the Institute of Arts.

Washington Triangle

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Location: Washington Street and 8th Avenue NE

Size: 0.14 acres

Name: The property was named in January 1899 for Washington Street.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was transferred to the park board from the city council August 10, 1894. Park commissioner Patrick Ryan asked that the triangle be designated for park purposes in May of 1893, along with a triangle at Washington St. and 6th Avenue. The Committee on Designation of Grounds recommended that the park board await petitions from residents of the area expressing their willingness to be assessed for the value of the property before proceeding. That action apparently never materialized, but the city council nonetheless conveyed the parcel to the park board the following year without any recorded further action by the park board.

The triangle had been condemned by the city and a deed conveyed to the city by Samuel Chute and his wife in 1886.

A triangle a couple blocks south at Washington and 5th Avenue was accepted by the park board from the city council in 1920 and named Sibley Triangle.

Water Power Park

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Location: The park is located on the northern tip of Hennepin Island adjacent to St. Anthony Falls.

Name and derivation: The park is named for its location on and adjacent to the walkways of the Xcel Energy electricity-generating plant powered by the east channel of the Mississippi River at St. Anthony Falls.

Development

The park was developed by Xcel in conjunction with the park board. Xcel owns the land but operation and some maintenance are performed by the park board. Interpretive information on the river and the power plant was developed by the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Board. The park opened in June 2007. The park is only open from March to October.

Waveland Triangle

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Location: Chowen Avenue South and Glendale Terrace

Size: 2.15 acres

Name: The name comes from the Waveland Park Addition, in which the triangle was located.

Acquisition and Development

The original 1.2 acres of land were dedicated as a park in the plat of Waveland Park Addition on November 12, 1885.

Petitions from the Lake Harriet Commercial Club and individuals in 1917 led to the board officially designating the land as a park and assuming control of the land that year.
No improvements were made to the land at that time however.

The impetus for improvement appears to have been the offer of the Street Railway Company to sell two lots between its tracks and 43½ Street south of the triangle. The 1921 annual report of the board includes Theodore Wirth's plan for moving 43½ Street slightly south and incorporating the former street and the two new lots into the park. Wirth's plan provided for two tennis courts in the center of the triangle. Wirth noted that the Street Railway Company was "favorable to the proposed changes," which led Wirth to speculate that a "satisfactory arrangement for the acquisition of the land and consummation of the plan can be made."

The acquisition of the lots, which brought the total acreage of the triangle to 1.87 acres, was completed in 1923 at a cost of just over $3,000 and another $21,000-plus was spent on improving the new park, including the installation of tennis courts. The entire amount for acquisition and improvement was assessed against property in the neighborhood.

Webber Park

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Location: Washington Avenue, Lyndale Avenue North and 44th Avenue North

Size: 19.88 acres, including 1.82 acres of water

Name: The park was named for Charles C. Webber in 1939. Until then, from the time of its acquisition in 1908, the park was named Camden Park after the neighborhood in which it is located. The neighborhood was likely named after Camden, New Jersey. Charles and Mary Harris Webber donated money to build the swimming pool and community center at Camden Park in 1909. The pool was named the John Deere Webber Memorial Baths to honor the Webber's son, who had died at the age of 9. The Webbers also paid to renovate the facility in 1927. Charles Webber was the grandson of John Deere, who founded the tractor and farm implement company of that name. Webber ran the Minneapolis branch of the John Deere Company, one of five branch offices of the company, and became vice president of the company.

Acquisition and Development

The first mention of a park in the Camden neighborhood was in 1891, when William Folwell recommended acquiring land on both sides of the Mississippi River upstream from Camden because that was where the city's water supply was taken from the river. Folwell's goal was to protect the water supply from pollution. With a shortage of funds throughout the 1890s and few park acquisitions, the park board awaited better times before it would acquire a park in the area.

The first land designated for a "Camden Place Park" was in May 1905 when the park board selected land along Crystal Lake Road for a park at a cost of $34,500. The acquisition was abandoned later that year in the face of protests from property owners in the area.

The issue of a park in the area came up again in July 1908, when the park board designated land for a new Camden Park. (At the same meeting the board designated Lake Amelia (Nokomis) as a park.) The land was to be acquired by condemnation. In October of that year, the board initially approved awards of $52,000 for the 21.5 acres of land it was taking and officially named the park. However those awards weren't finally confirmed by the board until early 1909 due to many objections to the amounts awarded for the land. The cost of acquiring the park was assessed on "benefited property," or land in the vicinity of the park.

The neighborhood was bitterly and evenly divided over establishing a park in the neighborhood and having local property owners pay for it. Many petitions on both sides of the issue were presented to the park board. Two business leaders in the community, druggist Thomas Voegli and banker Francis Gross, were among those who favored the park, and both later became influential park commissioners.

Although the park board did not finally confirm all awards for the land until early 1909, park superintendent Theodore Wirth reported in his 1908 annual report that he had already built a dam across Shingle Creek in the park to provide a pond and skating rink for the 1908-1909 season. There is no record in park board proceedings that the board had approved such action.

In April 1909, Charles and Mary Harris Webber offered to construct a recreation building in the park at their expense, which was to include an outdoor swimming pool fed by the water of the creek. Their proposal, complete with a design for the building by architects Long, Lamoreaux and Long, included an offer to build a second floor onto the building only if the Library Board would use it as a branch library. The Webbers asked that the building be named in honor of their son, John Deere Webber, who had died at the age of nine.

The Webbers' offer included two stipulations: one, that the park board construct an outdoor gymnasium (playground) for boys and girls and, two, that a permanent dam be built a across Shingle Creek to provide water for the pool.

The new playgrounds were constructed early in 1909 and were included in the playground program supervised by Clifford Booth that summer. The recreation building, dam and pool were completed in time for the pool to open for the summer of 1910. From its opening, the pool offered separate hours for boys and girls swimming. The library board had agreed to operate a branch library from the building, so the second story was built.

The acquisition of Camden Park not only added a large park to north Minneapolis; it was also a critical step in the development of the "Grand Rounds." In his 1891 report to the park board on expansion of the park system, William Folwell had urged the expansion of Saratoga (Wirth) Park and the acquisition of

large parks in the northwest and northeast sections of the city, which would all be connected by a parkway. Folwell proposed the name of "Grand Rounds" for that parkway. Columbia Park had been acquired in 1892, shortly after Folwell's recommendation, to provide the northeastern park to anchor the Grand Rounds. And Saratoga (Wirth) Park had been expanded greatly in 1907. The last piece to the Grand Rounds puzzle was Camden Park.

True to Folwell's vision for the Grand Rounds—for which he gave the credit to landscape architect Horace Cleveland—shortly after Camden (Webber) Park was acquired in 1909 the park board asked park superintendent Theodore Wirth to prepare plans for a parkway from Glenwood Park to Camden Park. One hundred seventy acres of land for that parkway (see Memorial Parkway) were selected by the park board in the summer of 1910, and acquired the following year. Construction of the parkway was not completed until 1921, at which time plans had also been drawn to build the parkway from Camden Park to Columbia Park across the river.

The pool at Camden Park was an instant hit particularly with children, who were the primary users of the fresh water pool. At the end of its first summer of operation a water carnival was held at the pool and pond in which 500 boys participated. An evening men's carnival drew a crowd of 5,000. The next summer the Camden Park Carnival featured canoe races and log-rolling on the pond as well as swimming and diving contests at the pool. The outdoor gymnasiums were also in heavy use and they hosted a city-wide gymnastics meet in the summer of 1911.

The one thing missing from Camden Park was space for ball fields. In 1917 Theodore Wirth proposed the acquisition of land north of Camden Park and also an extension of the park east to the Mississippi River. (Many years later some of the land along the river was acquired for North Mississippi Park.) Some of that land was designated for a park in 1917 and again in 1919 and 1922, but all those efforts were abandoned.

In 1918, as plans were being developed for St. Anthony Parkway from Camden to Columbia, Wirth drew a plan for an ornamental concourse that he called Camden Center which would have provided an attractive "entrance to the city" at the intersections of Washington and Lyndale Avenues and the parkway where it headed across the Camden Bridge. It was one of many park plans that would have greatly improved the city if it had been implemented.

By the mid-1920s the damming of Shingle Creek had led to a build-up of deposits in the lake formed by the dam and dredging was required to improve the flow of the creek. In 1927, Charles and Mary Webber made another significant contribution to renovate the park and the pool. The increasingly polluted water of Shingle Creek was no longer considered an acceptable source of water for the pool, so city water was used and an appropriate building was constructed to house circulation, filtration and chlorination systems. A picnic shelter was also built north of the pool and the combination field house and library.

With those improvements, attendance at the pool soared. In the summer of 1927 more people used the John Deere Webber pool than any of the bath houses on city lakes, although the park board calculated that the practice of using lake beaches without using the bath houses was prevalent. Most of the swimmers at Camden were children, who never had to pay an admission fee to use the pool or the changing rooms. Official attendance figures for the Camden pool in 1934 showed that about 1,500 children under the age of 14 used the pool every summer day.

In 1932 the first city-wide swimming competition was held at the pool, which may have added to the pool's popularity.

In the 1940s, two significant additions of property extended park holdings on both sides of Webber Park, which had been renamed in 1939 to honor the contributions of Charles and Mary Webber. In the early 1940s, the park board finally acquired land east of Webber Park along the Mississippi River, the first land of what became North Mississippi Park and in 1946 the park board acquired the valley of Shingle Creek north of Webber Park to the city limit. The latter acquisition was at the request of the city council, which wanted the park board to acquire the bed of Shingle Creek and lower the creek to drain surrounding land so that it would be dry enough for housing development.

With the subsequent growth of housing north of the park, the library on the second floor of the field house saw increasing demand. In 1953 the library took over the entire building. The library board paid for remodeling the first floor of the field house for library use and for conversion of the existing picnic shelter in the park into a warming house for skaters on the pond.

Other than some improvements to the creek and playgrounds in the 1930s with federal work relief funds and crews, the park remained essentially as it had been following the 1927 renovation until 1959. As part of the efforts to lower Shingle Creek to drain land north of Weber Park for housing development, the creek through the park was relocated. Playground equipment was moved for a new channel, the old channel was filled and the lagoon was enlarged. Renovations to the park and playground were completed in 1962 and 1963, including an eight-foot wall along the west bank of the creek where the banks had eroded. The cost of the renovation was assessed on property in the area.

In the 1970s, in the middle of a building boom in Minneapolis parks that saw the construction of a new recreation center in most neighborhood parks, the park board decided to relocate the pool and build a new recreation center. Construction of the new pool and recreation center west of the creek were completed in 1979. At about the same time, a new waterfall was added to the city at Shingle Creek just east of the park. As part of the settlement for the state highway department to take part of North Mississippi Park for I-94, the bed of Shingle Creek was lowered to go under the new freeway, which required lowering the creek bed. A man-made waterfall was built to do that.

The most recent improvements were made to the park in 2003-2004. As part of its efforts to improve water quality in all city lakes, the park board implemented plans to create a 16-foot native wetland buffer around Webber Pond.

Wenonah Triangle

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Location: Hiawatha and 49th Avenue South

Size: 0.15 acres

Name: The property was named for the mother of Hiawatha in Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*. The name was adopted November 21, 1917.

Acquisition and Development

The triangle was originally dedicated as a park in the plat of the George Lincoln Addition on December 18, 1890. The park board formally accepted the land as a park in December 1917.

West End Triangle

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Location: West 28th Street and Cedar Lake Road

Size: 0.26 acres

Name: The triangle was named for West End Addition, the platted development in which it was located, on December 18, 1911.

Acquisition and Development

The park board bought West End Triangle for a song—and got Chowen Triangle too.

On October 2, 1911, Alfred Dean, whose family had donated most of Dean Parkway and sold most of William Berry Park to the park board, offered to sell two triangles for parks. Both had been designated in the plat of West End Addition as "park." The park board accepted November 6, 1911 and became the owners of West End Triangle and Chowen Triangle, south of Cedar Lake. The cost for not one, but two triangles? Fifty bucks. Chowen Triangle, at just 0.06 acres, was much the smaller of the two parcels of land.

The park board accepted the deed and paid the $50 despite Dean stipulating that the land was for "park purposes and for no other purposes whatsoever." The park board had had some negative experiences with conditions imposed by owners donating land in the past, but perhaps in light of the price it was paying, allowed an exception in this case.

West River Parkway

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Location: Downstream along the west bank of the Mississippi River from Portland Avenue to Minnehaha Park.

Size: 205.13 acres

Name: The first official name for the riverside land was West Riverside Park, which was adopted in 1904. William Folwell had proposed naming it Michael Accault Park. Folwell noted that Accault was the leader of the French exploring party that included Father Louis Hennepin as a "subordinate" member in 1679. Hennepin is credited with being the first European to view St. Anthony Falls, which he named after his patron saint, Saint Anthony of Padua. The park board chose a more descriptive name and Accault's name has been forgotten. In 1906, when the parkway was given its first permanent pavement, it was renamed River Road West.

The name was officially changed in 1939—for 27 days—to Ridgway Road to honor James Arthur Ridgway, who had been a park commissioner in the 1890s and then secretary to the board for 27 years. However residents along the river-bluff parkway objected to the change in name and the park board rescinded the change. The name was changed to West River Parkway in 1968, when several park roadways were officially renamed as "parkways." In the 1940s residents of south Minneapolis campaigned to rename the parkway for Leif Ericson, the Norwegian sailor and explorer. That campaign followed an attempt by some, including the mayor of Minneapolis, in the 1930s to rename Glenwood Park for Ericson. The park board chose to rename that park for Theodore Wirth instead.

On July 3, 1918 the park board officially named the reservoir created by the new "high dam," later called the Ford Dam. The official park board name for the river through the Minneapolis River gorge is "DeSoto Harbor."

Acquisition and Development

The banks of the Mississippi River gorge downstream from St. Anthony Falls figured prominently in the creation of the Minneapolis park system. From the early 1870s landscape architect Horace Cleveland was a leading proponent of preserving the river banks as a park. Cleveland's views had a strong influence on park advocates in the young city and when the park board was created in 1883, he was asked to create a plan for the new park system. (See East River Parkway for more on Cleveland and his thoughts on preserving the river banks.)

Despite the importance Cleveland placed on preserving the "jewel" of the city, the first park board focused its attention more on creating neighborhood parks and acquiring the shores of Lake Harriet and Lake of the Isles. The park board made an attempt to acquire the east bank of the river as a park in 1883, it had both banks of the river surveyed, but the attempt failed due to the high cost of the land.

Cleveland's original plan for a system of parkways connecting the city's parks was revived in 1891 by park commissioner William Folwell, the former president of the University of Minnesota and a friend of Cleveland. At that time Folwell suggested a system of parkways that could be called the "Grand Rounds" that would encircle the city and follow the river bluffs on both sides of the river.

In 1893 the park board finally completed the purchase of the east bank of the river, which prompted the first president of the park board, Charles Loring, to advise other commissioners that their "duty will not be done until you have secured the west bank of the river."

William Folwell continued his campaign to add the west river bank to the park system throughout the 1890s after he had become president of the board. Typical of his comments in that era were his words to other commissioners in the 1898 annual report. "The west river bank," he wrote, "is so eminently adapted by situation, contour and natural vegetation that its loss to the city would be a calamity."

The problem at the time was that due to an economic depression in the 1890s the park board had no money to buy land, even though land values had plummeted. As the local and national economies began to recover, the desire to acquire the land took on new urgency. "To see the chance of acquiring these properties at low figures slipping away makes me sick," Folwell wrote in 1899. In 1901 Folwell said it would be "a disgrace and almost a crime" not to acquire the river banks for a park.

Later that year, with an improving economy, which meant higher revenues from property taxes, and a reduction in the park board's debt, the park board found that it was able to issue new bonds to finance land purchases. With the capacity to issue up to $70,000 in new bonds in 1902, the park board negotiated the purchase of the west bank of the river from Franklin Avenue near Riverside Park to Minnehaha Park, including the islands in the river, for the modest sum of $42,846. The park board did not acquire the strip of river bank between Franklin Avenue and Riverside Park, saying that it was "better left for future acquisition after the lime quarries were worked out."

In 1903 the park board took over the eastern segment of Riverside Avenue that then ran along the river bluff in order to create a parkway there. (That's why today's Riverside Avenue isn't located at the side

of the river at all.) The next year the park board constructed the first segment of the parkway from Lake Street to Minnehaha Park.

When the park board hired a new superintendent of parks, Theodore Wirth, in 1906 one of his top priorities was to improve the parkway. He reported in his first annual report in 1906 that the "most important improvement" in the park system that year was the construction of a permanent roadway on the west river road, which he believed would reduce future maintenance costs.

The first hint of what the parkway would eventually become was provided in Wirth's 1909 annual report in which he included a map of his proposed extension of the park and parkway from Franklin Avenue to 20th Avenue, including the west river flats. He recommended that the "unsanitary settlement" on the flats, known as Bohemian Flats, be replaced by a marine park. The area did eventually become the city's harbor, nothing close to a park though, thanks to another development that would have an impact on the riverside park: the creation of the "high dam," or Ford Dam, downstream.

The construction of the Meeker Island Lock and Dam in 1902 cost the park board some land below Riverside Park, as well as on the east bank flats, but the high dam took much more. The park board had sent representatives to hearings on the construction of the dam as early as 1909 and in 1910 suggested to the Army Corps of Engineers, which was responsible for the construction of the dam, that the park board should receive half the electricity generated by the dam in return for the "flowage rights" over land that the park board owned. The U.S. government did not agree to that condition. In 1916 the park board transferred to the federal government more than 27 acres of land along the river, including the islands it owned, that would soon be submerged in the reservoir the dam would create. The park board gave a charity the rights to cut down the timber on the islands in the river before they were submerged, noting that neither the park board nor the Corps of Engineers wanted a stand of dead timber in the middle of the new reservoir.

Shortly after the reservoir was created, however, everyone realized that it was not the "charming lake" once envisioned by its creators. Sewage from most of the city flowed into the reservoir above the dam emitting odors that were "almost unbearable" in Theodore Wirth's words in 1921 when he proposed improvements to Riverside Park. It is not surprising that the park board committed no money to making the improvements Wirth proposed, which included an amphitheater overlooking the cesspool. An intercepting sewer was finally constructed in the mid-1930s that carried Minneapolis's sewage to a treatment plant south of St. Paul.

Not coincidentally, the park board extended the parkway along the river north from Franklin Avenue to 3rd Street in 1938 by acquiring 8.5 acres of land from the city and federal governments. A less offensive river offered a more attractive parkway location and the park board found a source of funds for the development: the federal government. The parkway extension was financed largely through federal work relief programs; WPA crews constructed the road. It was the largest and most ambitious of all depression-era park construction projects under federal work relief programs.

At roughly the same time, the federal government took action that eventually opened the way for West River Parkway to extend north into downtown. In 1937 the government approved extending the nine-foot-deep navigation channel in the Mississippi River to the northern limits of Minneapolis above St. Anthony Falls and in the 1940s the city made plans to create an upper harbor. The only way that deeper channel and the harbor could be of any use was to build a lock around the falls. With the coming of World War II, however, that project would be delayed for a quarter century.

Before the lock was built, West River Parkway was improved in 1954 by creating a grade separation at Franklin Avenue. The parkway was constructed under the Franklin Avenue Bridge to relieve what was called one of the worst traffic bottlenecks in the city. That project was the only major park project approved by the city for bond funding that year.

The new lock to lift shipping traffic to the upper river was finally completed in 1963. In the course of building the lock at the falls, the Army Corps of Engineers had to remove a support column from the Stone Arch Bridge. The loss of the column required a steel-girder reinforcement to the bridge. In the process of building the lock the old tail races from mills along the river were also filled and the open space created by the fill was leased to a concrete company for storage of sand.

One of the first mentions of the area near the falls in park board documents was in a 1960 report on possible park acquisitions in anticipation of the park board's 100th anniversary in 1983. The park board estimated an expenditure of $1 million to acquire land on Nicollet Island and the river banks near St. Anthony Falls for a park and historical site.

The future development of West River Parkway was aided when in 1967 the city established an Upper Harbor on land acquired from the state. The new upper harbor would eventually open up the land that had been used as harbor on the west river banks at Bohemian Flats.

In 1972 a report created by Minneapolis city manager Tommy Thompson, *Mississippi/Minneapolis*, provided the first comprehensive assessment of what the city could do to develop the central riverfront, an area that was being abandoned by the mills and railroads. Partly as a result of that report the park board, the city and the city housing authority, created the Riverfront Development Coordinating Board (RCDB) in 1976, which was chaired by park commissioner Ole Olson. In the next two years the RCDB produced a blueprint for riverfront development that has largely been followed. Included in RCDB plans was a parkway along the west bank of the river through the central riverfront. (The RCDB plan, which was to be funded in large part by the legislature through the newly created Metropolitan Council, also addressed Nicollet Island and the east river bank from Boom Island to Father Hennepin Bluffs.)

Over the next few years, as land acquisitions began on Nicollet Island and Main Street on the east bank, the park board was the lead agency in developing a plan for a parkway on the west bank that would connect West River Parkway through the central riverfront to Plymouth Avenue upstream from downtown.

How to acquire the land for the parkway was the big hurdle until the real estate subsidiary of the Burlington Northern Railroad offered to donate unused railroad land for a river parkway from Portland Avenue to Plymouth Avenue. That parkway, James Rice Parkway, was completed in 1987.

With the new parkway north from downtown the park board was left with the difficult task of acquiring the land to join West River Parkway and Rice Parkway through the former industrial land downstream from Portland Avenue. Most of that land was acquired in the 1990s in three complicated transactions. Nine acres of land near the lock around St. Anthony Falls was acquired from the concrete company that held a long-term lease on the land. Another ten-acre parcel of land was acquired from First Bank (now US Bank) in a transaction related to the redevelopment of the Cedar-Riverside area. A permanent easement across the final segment of land to connect the parkways was acquired from Minnegasco, which had once operated a plant to convert coal to gas on the site.

As the land was being acquired for the final stretches of a parkway that would connect Minnehaha Park to north Minneapolis along the river, the park board in 1988 constructed an underpass for the parkway beneath the Lake Street Bridge.

With the land to extend West River Parkway to the central riverfront acquired in stages, the parkway was also constructed in stages. In 1990 the redesigned segment of the parkway from Washington Avenue to 4th Street was completed. Over the next 8 years, the parkway was built in three stages from Portland Avenue south to 4th Street. The final segment was completed in 1998 accompanied by a celebration of the "Golden Spike," in transcontinental railroad terms, which united the northern and southern sections of the parkway.

(For park developments along West River Parkway and Rice Parkway in the central riverfront area, see Mill Ruins Park, First Bridge Park and Stone Arch Bridge.)

An important development along West River Parkway occurred in 1996 when a remnant prairie was established at East 36th Street and the parkway.

A popular attraction on the west river bank is the Winchell Trail. The first segment of the trail from near Lake Street to 44th Street was constructed in 1914 and extended to Franklin Avenue in 1915. The trail was officially named in 1916 for Newton Horace Winchell, an eminent geologist from the University of Minnesota, who had identified the geologic forces that had created the Mississippi River gorge, the city's lakes and Minnehaha Falls.

Trivia

When the I-35 freeway bridge over the Mississippi River collapsed in 2007 the pieces of the bridge were retrieved from the river and assembled and studied on park land on the west river flats.

Whittier Park

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Location: Grand Avenue and West 25th Street

Name: The park was named for the Whittier neighborhood school, which was named for poet John Greenleaf Whitter.

Size: 3.64 acres

Acquisition and Development

Whittier Park is another of Minneapolis's parks that was developed decades after it was first proposed. In 1939 the park board issued an internal report on neighborhoods in the city that lacked recreation facilities. While the Whittier neighborhood was not at the top of the list of "acute" needs, it was included in a second category of neighborhoods that should be provided with a park when possible. Of course, with the advent of World War II, no parks were acquired or developed for many years.

A park for the neighborhood returned to the park board's agenda in 1955, when neighborhood groups petitioned for a playground in the vicinity of Whittier School. For the next 18 years, the debate over a playground in the area raged in the neighborhood and the park board. One of the key issues was that the neighborhood had no open space; homes would have to be demolished to create a park. The sticking

points were the dislocation of families and the cost of buying land that was already completely developed. (Many plots of land that had been acquired for playgrounds in earlier years were not covered with houses, often because they were low land that was undesirable for housing.)

In 1959 the park board actually allocated bond funds for the first time to begin buying land for the park, but continued opposition to the location of the park caused the park board to delay its plans repeatedly. The Whittier project was finally abandoned in 1963 and the bond funds reserved for the park were returned to the city. But the fight for a park in the neighborhood continued.

The park was not finally approved until 1973 when the park board seized the opportunity of obtaining federal funds from a new "Parks in the Cities" program to pay about half the cost of acquiring land. (The same program helped the park board purchase land for Willard Park and Mueller Park.)

The park board began construction of the Whittier Park recreation center and the adjoining playground, wading pool and athletic fields in 1975. In 1989 the recreation center was named for Roger Imme, a grocer who had operated a store across the street from the park. He had been shot and killed in his store during a robbery.

The most recent renovation of park facilities occurred in 1995.

Willard Park

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Location: Queen Avenue North and 17th Avenue North

Size: 1.16 acres

Name: The park was named for Willard School which was adjacent to the park. The school, built in 1910, was named for Frances Willard, an American author, educator and reformer. Willard was most famous for her fights to prohibit the sale of liquor, as the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and to obtain for women the right to vote. She was also at one time the dean of women at Northwestern University. The name of the park was formally adopted by the park board on July 2, 1975.

Acquisition and Development

The park board's first involvement with the property was in 1968 when the board installed a "totlot," a playground for small children, on school property. It was one of ten totlots installed that year in neighborhoods in near-north and south-central Minneapolis.

In 1970 the park board applied for matching grants from a "Parks in the Cities" program from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to acquire the half-block of land north of Willard School for development as a park. The grant was approved, (along with similar grants for Whittier Park and Mueller Park) and the land was acquired in 1973. Additional funding was obtained from a National Park Service program for urban parks.

Final approval for the land acquisition was obtained in 1974 and financing was approved by the city council and Board of Estimate and Taxation for improvements to the land. The cost of the improvements, including play equipment, a wading pool and a toilet building, was split by a joint powers agreement between the park board and school board. The facilities would be used as a recess

playground for the school. The park board's share of the cost was about $140,000. Park construction began in 1975 and the final landscaping was completed in 1977.

In 2002 the entire park was renovated, the toilet building was remodeled and a new splash pool was installed.

William Berry Park

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Location: Southeast of Lake Calhoun from 38th Street to 40th Street.

Size: 29.23 acres

Name: The park is named for William Morse Berry who was the first superintendent of Minneapolis parks. Berry came to Minneapolis in 1884 from Chicago where he had been a park engineer responsible for implementing the park designs of Horace Cleveland in Chicago parks. Cleveland, the visionary landscape architect who provided the first plans for a Minneapolis park system in 1883, and designed many of the city's early parks, recommended Berry to the park board and also convinced him to take the job. Berry was a native of Maine, like so many of the others who helped create Minneapolis parks, including Charles Loring, George Brackett, Dorilus Morrison and Eloise Butler. Berry remained superintendent of parks until 1906 when he retired and was replaced by Theodore Wirth. Berry managed the growth of Minneapolis parks from practically nothing into a celebrated park system. Berry was described by Charles Loring, the first president of the Minneapolis park board, as "one of Nature's noblemen." In the 1900 annual report William Folwell attributed general public approval of the park system "largely to the efficiency and skill" of Berry.

In the annual report of 1905, Berry's last, he wrote eloquently of his pride in the park system he had helped shape.

"You, gentlemen of the Park Board, are serving the city without financial compensation, yet you have your reward in the satisfaction that your work has exerted an important bearing on the material greatness of Minneapolis, as well as in the enjoyment and uplifting of its people, and which will extend to generations unborn; and while as a salaried officer of this Board, I have received remuneration for my labor, yet, I assure you that I have found, and ever shall feel, that by far the greater and more satisfactory part of my compensation has been in the pleasure I have taken in the reflection that I, too, have had a share in the work."

The park was first named Interlachen Park in 1890, but was changed to Interlaken Park for a few months in 1893, until the board decided it liked the old spelling better. It kept that name until 1916, when it was renamed to honor Berry's long service to the city.

The parkway through the park was officially named Shady Lane in 1890. The name of the parkway was not officially changed to William Berry Parkway until 1968.

Acquisition and Development

In November of 1887 the park board appointed a special committee, with board president Charles Loring as the chair, to "consider the advisability" of acquiring land between Lake of the Isles and Lake Calhoun, and between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. By that time the park board had acquired by donation almost all the shores of Lake of the Isles and Lake Harriet and had purchased the eastern shore

of Lake Calhoun. It had also already acquired land for a boulevard, Linden Hills Parkway, which almost connected Harriet and Calhoun. The special committee was also asked to determine the terms upon which that land could be acquired.

The next summer, the board received a proposal from those who owned land between Calhoun and Harriet to donate land for a parkway "running southerly" from Lake Calhoun. The conditions of their donation must not have been acceptable to the board, because no action was taken on the proposal. Nearly a year later in March 1989, many of the same landowners, led by the Ueland and Dean families, offered again to donate land for a parkway from Calhoun to Harriet under certain conditions. In the early days of the park board, the conditions for land donations usually involved a time period for constructing a parkway or improving the land in some way, and often also exempted the donors from paying assessments on their property for the costs of those improvements. The demand for immediate improvement to the donated land was often the sticking point, because the board often didn't have the money to spend on improvements. Various offers to donate land for parks throughout the city were turned down because of the board's lack of funds for improvements and maintenance.

In April 1889 the board directed Superintendent Berry to determine the most feasible route for a parkway connecting the lakes and asked the board's attorney "to make the best possible bargain for such right of way." Another special committee was assigned later that summer to consult with land owners to ascertain a price for the land desired. By the fall of 1889, the board directed president Charles Loring to negotiate a price for 24 acres of land and recommended paying the Deans $55,000 and the Uelands $36,000. Loring returned to the board on January 4, 1890 with a deal. For a total of $113,000, payable over ten years without interest, the board acquired the land and assessed the total amount on property in the area. The new park was named Interlachen.

That summer the park board authorized spending $300 to construct a parkway, named Shady Lane, between the lakes. The 1890 annual report of the park board claimed that with the new road it was possible to drive on parkways from Loring Park, out Kenwood Parkway, along all three lakes, and then along Minnehaha Creek all the way to Lyndale Avenue.

The next significant improvement to the park came in 1899 when the park board built a bridge over the street railway tracks between the lakes at a total cost of $11,000 for bridge construction and grading.

The property was then largely ignored for several years except for a brief notice in park proceedings in 1903 that the superintendent should attempt to keep people from dumping rubbish on the property. In Theodore Wirth's first report as superintendent of parks in 1906, he proposed filling the low ground in the park. This followed the connecting of Shady Lane to Queen Avenue South earlier that year.

The land was partially filled in 1908. Sidewalks were laid along the parkway and trees were planted. Wirth noted in his 1909 report that the pin oaks planted in 1908 were doing so well that he was planting more of them. The first lights were installed along the parkway in 1914, the same year that a bridle path was created through the park.

In 1916 there were press reports that the board was considering building an aquarium at William Berry Park, but official park board proceedings do not mention that project.

William Berry Park was involved in one of the great controversies on the board in the late 1910s, when the park board approved plans to improve the parkway through William Berry Park, create a "south bay"

on Lake Calhoun all the way to 42nd Street, and extend Lake Calhoun Parkway around the southern and western shores of the lake.

Area residents objected to the price tag for the improvements, estimated at nearly $700,000, two-thirds of which was to be assessed on area property over twenty years, and filed suit to stop the plan. Residents challenged the board's legal authority to assess their property for the improvements. Although in 1922 the courts upheld the park board's power to assess property owners for improvements, the park board had scaled back its development plans by then, eliminating the extension of Lake Calhoun to the south. In 1923, the park board improved the road through William Berry Park as it began the project of developing the southern and western shores of Lake Calhoun.

One of the park's distinguishing characteristics, its archery range, was established in 1940. Other than that there have been no changes in the basic use of the land.

In 1969-1970 the park board approved the first plans of the Minnesota Transportation Museum to run vintage street cars on the long-unused Como-Harriet street railway track through the park, and in 1977 gave permission to the museum to extend track through the park to Richfield Road along the west edge of Lakewood Cemetery.

William Berry Parkway was almost improved in the summer of 1977 when the park board learned that it could get a $700,000 federal grant for the project. But to get the money construction had to begin within 90 days. A Citizens Parkway Committee was assembled to make rapid decisions to take advantage of the funds available. Designs were presented and approved for the new parkway within the allotted time, but the mayor vetoed the project due to neighborhood concerns over the realignment of the road approaching the Lake Harriet pavilion. The park board voted to override the mayor's veto, but the federal agency that was to provide the funds bowed to public pressure and did not make the grant. Instead the money was used to improve cross-street intersections on Memorial Parkway.

The parkway was eventually paved in 1980. The parkway was ultimately realigned as it approached Lake Harriet, when it was redirected around the new pavilion built at the lake in 1986.

Windom Park

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Location: Johnson Street and 25th Avenue Northeast

Size: 8.21 acres

Name: The park was originally referred to as the Moulton Tract for the family that sold the land to the park board. The park was officially named Windom Park in 1893 for William Windom, a lawyer from Winona, Minnesota. Windom had served in both the United States House of Representatives and Senate from Minnesota from 1859 to 1881, when he was appointed Secretary of the Treasury by President Garfield. When Garfield died eight months after Windom's appointment, Windom resigned his position and successfully stood for election to his own vacant seat in the Senate. He lost a campaign to be re-elected to the Senate in 1883 and moved to New York City. He was appointed Secretary of the Treasury again in 1889 by President Benjamin Harrison and served in that capacity until his death in 1891. Windom was a friend and business associate of Charles Loring.

When the Committee on Nomenclature was asked by the board in 1891 to report a name for the Moulton tract it was instructed to "consider" naming it "Lookout" or "Logan." The "Logan" name was eventually chosen for what was then Washburn Park.

Acquisition and Development

The first mention of what became Windom Park was a request from the Northeast Improvement Association on October 1, 1887 that the park board purchase the Moulton Tract. The committee appointed to investigate the matter reported back within a couple weeks that, while it believed the land to be a valuable addition to the park system, the asking price was too high. Within days, however, the park board approved the acquisition of 8.63 acres for Windom Park for $25,000 in November, 1887. Part of the appeal of the land was that it had been used as a nursery, so it already contained many trees.

Small improvements to the park were made in 1888, but in 1889 the board granted permission to J. McCarty to care for the park in exchange for the hay and fruit raised on the land. It wasn't until 1891 that the park board devoted more attention to the park, when Horace Cleveland was hired to create a design for the park, which the board approved in May of that year.

Other than the installation of two toilets in Windom Park in 1909, few improvements were made to the park. It was, however, included in the free concert schedule beginning in 1908. In 1912, park board proceedings include a resolution to repair the tennis courts at Windom, but there is no record of when those courts were installed. Another resolution in 1914 asks for backstops to be added for those tennis courts. At nearly the same time, residents petitioned for the addition of some playground equipment for children, which the board approved when funds were available. The children's playground was not added until 1917.

In the park board's 1921 annual report, on the heels of the board turning down petitions for both more tennis courts and a skating rink for the park, superintendent Theodore Wirth included a plan for the improvement of the park. Wirth's report noted that "there is no good reason why the eight acre tract cannot be made use of for a fully equipped playground for that district." But Wirth also noted why the park had not been adapted to more active recreational use up until then. "The topographical formation of the grounds," he wrote, "is such as to involve radical changes in order to adjust them to such intended use." In other words, the park was located on a steep hill. He recommended using the east and south portions of the park for active use while preserving the northern and western sections of the park in their "present natural attractive condition."

At the time, Windom Park, like many other city parks, had carriage drives running through it. With his plans for Windom Park not approved, Wirth recommended in 1924 that his earlier plans be abandoned, but that the park be converted to only pedestrian use.

Windom Park was the site of considerable landscaping work during the Depression by federal work-relief crews, and owing to the persistence of neighborhood petitioners, a warming house for the small skating rink at the park was built in 1939.

Windom Park was the winner of the community sing competition among city parks in 1942, 1943 and 1951. The success of the park in the singing competition likely played a role in the construction of a bandstand in the park in 1951. By the time community singing was nearing an end in the mid-1950s, Windom was one of only three parks still participating.

Windom Park was finally upgraded for more active use in 1963. The eastern half of the park was regraded to provide lighted athletic fields, and a two-story field house and wading pool were constructed. In addition, one of the old tennis courts was converted into a basketball and volleyball court.

A "totlot," a playground for smaller children, was added to the park in 1975.

In 1991, Windom Park facilities were upgraded when construction was begun on a new recreation center as an addition to Pillsbury School south of the existing park. The two-story shelter built in the 1960s still sits at the center of the park, but is unused except for the toilets.

Windom South Park

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Location: Wentworth Avenue and West 58th Street

Name: The park was named for the adjacent Windom School. Another Windom Park already existed in northeast Minneapolis—it had been named in 1893 for William Windom, former U. S. Senator from Minnesota and former Secretary of the Treasury—which is why the "south" was added to the name.

Size: 1.23 acres, plus space in the school building

Acquisition and Development

A park had been proposed for the area in 1928 shortly after that section of the city had been annexed by Minneapolis from Richfield. But the idea for a park at 58th and Nicollet, two blocks east of the present park, was abandoned in 1931, at the height of the Great Depression. Property owners in the area were unwilling to have their property assessed for the cost of a park. Four other proposed park areas were abandoned at the same time in the annexed area from Fort Snelling to Edina across south Minneapolis. Of the areas considered for parks at that time, Windom South was the last to get a park. Bossen, Armatage, Kenny and Morris parks were all acquired and developed as parks, in that order, in the 1940s and 1950s.

The initial creation of a park at the school site occurred in 1986 when the park board leased land from the school board to create a playground for small children. The original playlot was created in 1988.

In 1997 the park board participated with the school board in remodeling the elementary school, then Windom Open School, with the addition of a gym, media center and park recreation center. By their cooperation both the school board and park board were able to upgrade their facilities and programs without duplicating facilities and costs. The new joint-use facilities were completed in 1999 at what is now a Spanish language immersion school.

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