


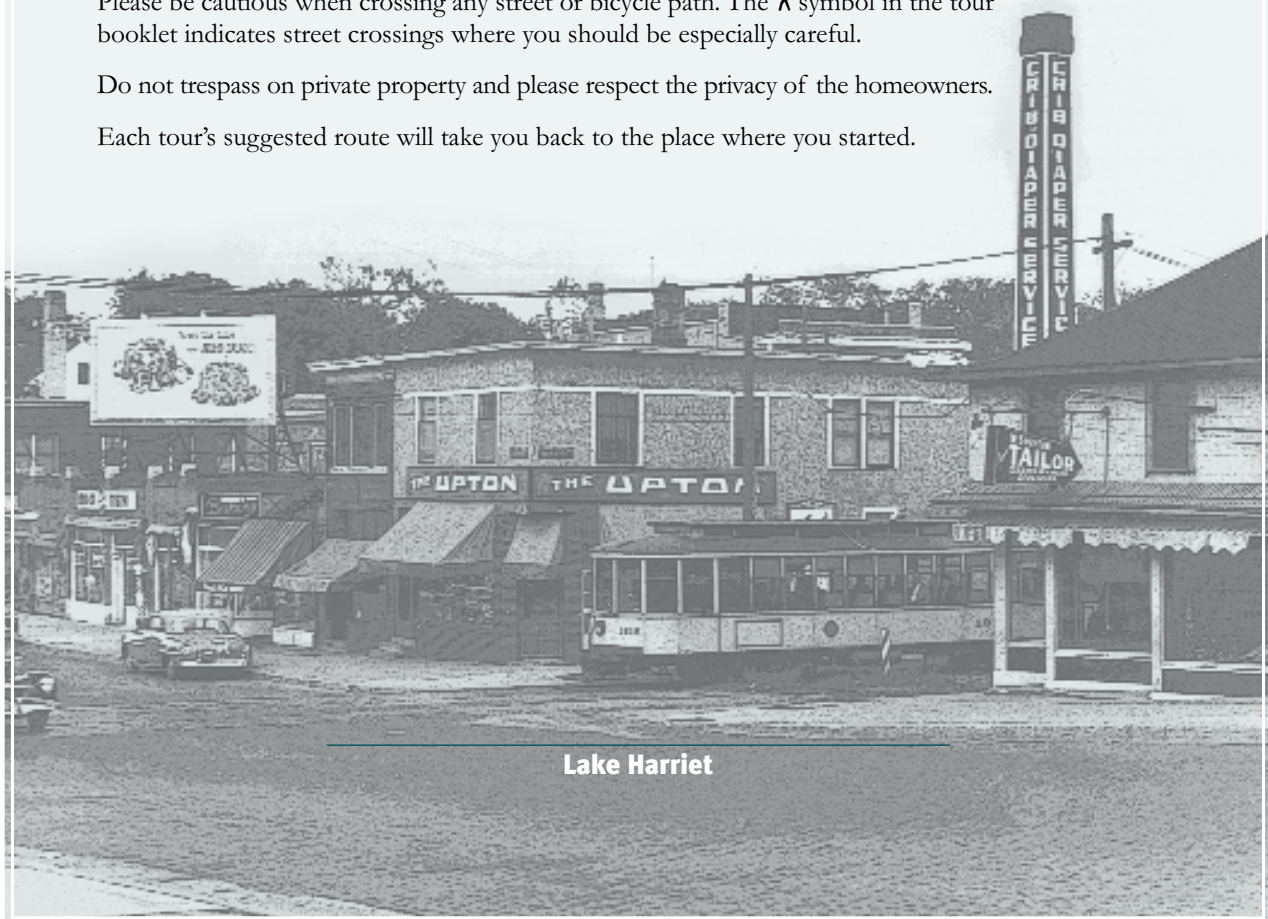
# Linden Hills Walking Tours

**S**troll the streets of Linden Hills and you will see historic locations, many that date from the nineteenth century, as well as buildings in a variety of architectural styles. As you walk along the shores of Lakes Calhoun and Harriet you will learn of the early activities that took place around these natural landmarks. On each tour you will get a glimpse of the pioneers who shaped the Lake Harriet District. The walking tours in this booklet highlight only a sample of the Linden Hills area's rich heritage. Many places, briefly mentioned here, are covered in greater detail in the book, *Down at the Lake: A Historical Portrait of Linden Hills and the Lake Harriet District* published by the Linden Hills History Study Group.

Please be cautious when crossing any street or bicycle path. The  symbol in the tour booklet indicates street crossings where you should be especially careful.

Do not trespass on private property and please respect the privacy of the homeowners.

Each tour's suggested route will take you back to the place where you started.



Lake Harriet

Lake Harriet

Tour length: 2¾ miles

Start the tour at the East Lake Harriet Parkway side of the rose garden in Lyndale Park, located between Forty-second Street West and Roseway Road.

The Lake Harriet tour takes you through the Lyndale Park Municipal Rose Garden, the Peace Garden, and the Roberts Bird Sanctuary. Continuing on this tour you will see the bandstand, the site of the 1835 Lake Harriet Mission School, and Beard's Plaisance.

Lyndale Park, bounded by Lake Harriet, Lakewood Cemetery, King's Highway and West Forty-second Street, was largely the result of two gifts. In 1890 Lakewood Cemetery Association donated thirty-five acres of swamp and woodland to the Park Board. That same year Colonel William King also gave thirty-five acres, with the stipulation that the park be named after his father, Reverend Lyndon King. In 1907 Park Superintendent Theodore Wirth outlined a proposal for development of Lyndale Park. He proposed that the low-lying meadow be filled in, allowing the newly created land to be used for outdoor games and picnics. He also proposed a formal rose garden that would be beautiful as well as instructive, demonstrating which roses could grow in this climate and how to cultivate them. Work on the one-and-a-half-acre garden started in late 1907. The planting of approximately 250 varieties of roses began in the spring of 1908, giving Minneapolis the second municipal rose garden in the country.<sup>1</sup> Many years later Wirth's son Conrad, as Director of the National Park Service, supervised the design and development of the Rose Garden at the White House during the administration of John F. Kennedy.

Frank T. Heffelfinger donated to the Park Board an Italian bronze and marble fountain from Villa Montalto near Florence, Italy. This fountain, decorated with scenes from Greco-Roman mythology, was given to the Park Board in 1944 and is located at the far end of the rose garden.

Beyond the rose garden to the east is the perennial/annual garden that was a 1963 addition to Lyndale Park. The Louis M. Cohen family donated the sundial and dedicated it in 1993. Beyond the sundial and between the perennial-annual flower beds grows the largest river birch in the city of Minneapolis. The Edmund J. Phelps Fountain, with its bronze turtles, was relocated to the park in 1963. The 1915 fountain was originally located in Gateway Park in downtown Minneapolis.

Lyndale Park has long been a popular venue for weddings and also for theater. From 1918 until just after World War II, the Park Board sponsored an annual summer theater production for Minneapolis youth in Lyndale Park. Many Linden Hills children participated. The first production featured a Mother Goose Pageant with seven hundred costumed children who performed for ten thousand spectators seated on the hillsides. You can still see theater on a smaller scale in Lyndale Park during the summer months.



▲ Lake Harriet rose garden

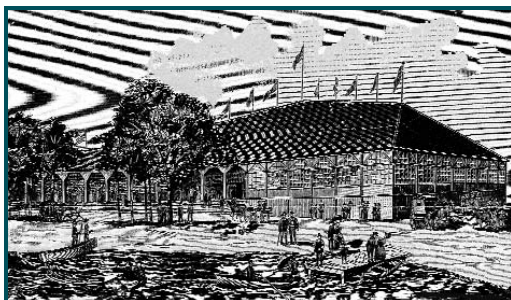


▲ Phelps Fountain in its original Gateway Park location in downtown Minneapolis, ca. 1915

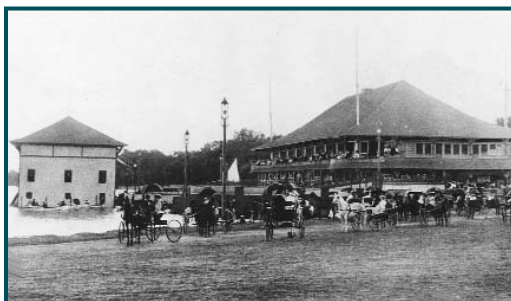


◀ Pageant at the rose garden, ca. 1925

### Lake Harriet



▲ The first grand pavilion at Lake Harriet, built by the Minneapolis Street Railway Co. in 1888. It served as a Motor Line station and featured a 1,500 seat auditorium. After only three years, it was destroyed by fire.



▲ The two-story pagoda-style pavilion designed by architect Harry Wild Jones was erected in 1891. Musicians played on a floating bandstand.



Lake Harriet  
Yacht Club,  
ca. 1950 ►

The entrance to the rock garden and the Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary is just west of Roseway Road. The rock garden, officially named the Peace Garden, occupies the somewhat hilly ground north of the rose garden. From 1929 to 1930, approximately 350 tons of porous, weather-beaten, lichen-covered dolomite rock were brought there from Diamond Bluff on the Wisconsin side of the St. Croix River. The garden was planted with ferns, perennials, and evergreens. The original landscape was designed in an old style sometimes referred to as “the Devil’s Lapful,” in which randomly placed rocks created nooks that unfortunately allowed weeds to become established.

Rock gardens, so popular in the 1920s, eventually fell out of fashion. By 1947 the Lyndale Park Rock Garden was abandoned and became overgrown. Interest was renewed when the remains of the old rock garden were partially uncovered after a tornado in June 1981. Reconstruction began in 1983. In 1985 the Peace Bridge was constructed in the center of the garden. The granite stones located on the southeast side of the bridge are from the Motoyasu Bridge in Hiroshima, which was destroyed by the atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. Nagasaki, sister city to St. Paul, donated a peace stone that is located at the north end of the footbridge. The rock garden was officially named the Peace Garden in 1998.

To the west is the Roberts Bird Sanctuary visitor’s shelter, which offers a map of and a gateway into the bird sanctuary. Follow one of the paths westward to view the wetlands and ponds.

The path that leads to the turnstile near Lake Harriet Parkway is named Bossen Lane. In 1936 Christian Bossen, the third superintendent of the Minneapolis Park System, recommended the establishment of the Lyndale Park Bird Sanctuary. The area was re-named the Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary on June 4, 1947. Roberts, a physician and author of *The Birds of Minnesota*, was nationally recognized as an outstanding ornithologist.

This wetland was isolated from Lake Harriet when the shore drive was built in 1886. Tamarack bogs were once typical along the shorelines of Minneapolis lakes. Windstorms in 1925 and 1979 and a 1981 tornado destroyed the tamaracks and most of the elms that had replaced them. Today efforts are ongoing to control invasive plant species including buckthorn and purple loosestrife and to restore native tamaracks.<sup>2</sup>

As you walk through the woods on Bossen Lane you will cross over a small stream that flows from Lake Calhoun through Lakewood Cemetery to Lake Harriet.

✚ **Exit the bird sanctuary at the turnstile and walk across the parkway** to the 1986 bandstand and 1990 refectory. Both buildings were designed by Milo Thompson and inspired by Harry W. Jones’s 1891 shingle-style pagoda pavilion at Lake Harriet. The Lake Harriet Yacht Club storage building, built in 1999 in the same style, is located near the boat launch east of the bandshell. Boats have sailed Lake Harriet since at least the 1860s, but the Yacht Club didn’t organize and begin formal competition until 1943. Regattas are conducted on weekend mornings in season. You may have heard the starter gun.

Across the bicycle path from the bandstand and refectory, you will see the historic men’s and women’s toilet buildings. These were also designed by Harry Wild Jones and built in 1892 and they are the last original reminders of the pagoda pavilion. The larger building is the women’s restroom. It includes a circular room with benches for seating and a



## Lake Harriet

fireplace. Both buildings have been designated local landmarks by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. The men's restroom has been converted to a storage building.

Nearby is the hand pump, which for generations has been a popular source of good drinking water. The water comes from a local aquifer. Between the men's toilet building and the pump is the pedestrian underpass for the old Como-Harriet streetcar. Passengers from Minneapolis disembarked on the west side of the tracks and then used the 1900 pedestrian underpass to reach the lake.

The approximate location of the Lake Harriet Mission School, founded by Reverend J. D. Stevens and Gideon and Samuel Pond in 1835, is indicated by a bronze marker behind the pump near the reconstructed streetcar station. This school served the children of the Dakota settlement of Eatonville. Across the parking lot near the walking path is a stone pedestal with a plaque explaining the geology of the Lake District.

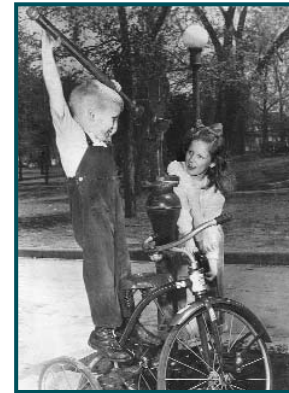
Lake Harriet is one of the most visited recreation destinations in the Twin Cities, but its popularity today pales in comparison to what it was a hundred years ago. From 1888 to 1925, a series of grand pavilions attracted crowds of people to the lake for concerts and other musical entertainment. Over the years, restaurants and bathhouse facilities were found inside the pavilions. A pony ride track, ostriches, and taffy pulling machines entertained children. Boating was so popular that hundreds of rental boats lined the west shore extending to Forty-fourth Street and the lanes were packed with bicycle riders. Illustrations of the past Lake Harriet pavilions and a map of where they stood can be seen at the kiosk near the entrance to the parking lot.

Harriet was the first Minneapolis lake to be encircled by a roadway. This was completed in 1886 after some of the steeper banks had been graded down and additional fill had been dredged from the lake bottom. Lake Harriet Parkway was the only lake parkway not to receive durable paving in the 1920s. Until the 1970s the road's surface was oiled dirt that was periodically plowed up and flattened. A fatal pedestrian-bike collision in 1972 hastened the Park Board's decision to separate the walking and biking paths.<sup>3</sup>

Lake Harriet has a surface area of 335 acres and is the second largest lake in Minneapolis. Its average depth of twenty-nine feet (eighty-two feet maximum) protects fish from winterkill. The Minneapolis Park System in 1890 began regular restocking of city lakes with fish that included black bass, sunfish, crappies, and pike. In the 1970s the state Department of Natural Resources reduced the number of northern pike in Lake Harriet and now stocks it with walleye and muskellunge. Largemouth bass and various pan fish continue to thrive.

**👉 Follow the pedestrian path along the lakeshore until you reach the stairway at Forty-fifth Street. Go up the stairway and carefully cross the bike path and Lake Harriet Parkway.**

Above the public tennis court is the picnic pavilion designed by Harry Wild Jones and built in 1904. The Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission designated this as a local landmark. This park, also known as Beard's Plaisance, was named after Henry Beach Beard who in 1888 donated it and Linden Hills Boulevard to the Park Board. Beard's Plaisance includes a sliding hill that has long been popular with neighborhood children. *Plaisance* is a French word meaning "pleasure grounds."



◀ The water pump at Lake Harriet, 1948



▲ After the pagoda pavilion fell victim to fire, the Minneapolis Park Board had the classic-style pavilion with rooftop seating built in 1904



◀ Beard's Plaisance picnic pavilion on the west shore of Lake Harriet, ca. 1930

Lake Harriet



▲ Looking north on Thomas Ave., Dell Park on the right, ca. 1930

4419  
Thomas Ave.,  
long-time  
home to  
Broadway  
actress and  
Linden Hills  
historian,  
Beatrice  
Morosco,  
demolished  
in 1998 ▶



4416  
Thomas Ave.,  
ca. 1915 ▶



2628  
W. 44th St.,  
demolished in  
2000 ▶



🚶 Follow Forty-fifth Street to Thomas Avenue.

Forty-fifth Street formerly continued to Upton as part of the Minneapolis street grid. That steep section of pavement offered treacherous winter driving. It also once accommodated a toboggan run to the lake, one of three that existed at various times and places in Linden Hills. The Forty-fifth Street link to Upton Avenue was abandoned by 1940.

**2612 West Forty-fifth Street.**

This house was built in 1904. The Joseph V. Vanderbilt family members lived here from 1912 to 1998. Architect J. V. Vanderbilt designed many landmark Minneapolis buildings, including Linden Hills Library and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church.

The grassy median that separates the two sides of Thomas Avenue is officially known as Dell Park. It is one of the smallest parks in Minneapolis. Around Dell Park you will find an eclectic variety of housing, ranging from the early to late twentieth century.

**4416 Thomas Avenue.**

This is the oldest house on this block of Thomas Avenue, built in 1902 for owner Clara Gerrish.

**When you reach Forty-fourth Street, turn right toward the lake.**

**2620 West Forty-fourth Street.**

This dwelling was built in 1900 for owner DeForest A. Simmons, an agent for flour millers. Writer Brenda Ueland lived her last thirty years here and the house was often a subject of her writing. She once described a romantic fantasy of spying whales on Lake Harriet from her many-windowed room on the second floor.<sup>4</sup>

🚶 Follow Forty-fourth Street back to the lake. Take the steps down to Lake Harriet Parkway and continue to the pedestrian path, which will take you back to the rose garden. If you choose to go to the right and complete the circle around the lake to the rose garden, add one mile to the tour length.

1. Mary Maguire Lerman, "Lyndale Park Rose Garden: 80 Years of Roses," *Minnesota Horticulturist*, 116, no. 6, (June/July 1988): 10-11.
2. *A Walk through the Thomas Sadler Roberts Bird Sanctuary* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; Draft, 2001).
3. From an unpublished manuscript by Albert D. Wittmann, *The Minneapolis Park System, 1945-2000*.
4. Brenda Ueland, *Strength To Your Sword Arm: Selected Writings* (Duluth: Holy Cow! Press, 1993).