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**COPY**

(5-1-2012)

NPS Form 10-900  
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested.

If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Tennev Park/Yahara River Parkway

other names/site number Tennev Park and the Yahara River Parkway

2. Location

street & number 1440 East Johnson Street-(Tennev Park) N/A not for publication  
501 South Thornton Avenue (Yahara River Parkway) N/A vicinity

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip code 53703

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide x locally. (   See continuation for additional comments.)

Alicia L. Gohl  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

8/5/99  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:      Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

entered in the National Register.      \_\_\_\_\_  
     See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the      \_\_\_\_\_  
    National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the      \_\_\_\_\_  
    National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National      \_\_\_\_\_  
    Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within the count)	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>13</u>	<u>6</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>16</u>	<u>9</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)      Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A      0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>LANDSCAPE: Park</u>	<u>LANDSCAPE: Park</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>Prairie School</u>	foundation <u>CONCRETE</u>
_____	walls <u>CONCRETE</u>
_____	<u>STONE</u>
	roof <u>ASPHALT</u>
	other <u>METAL</u>

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on continuation sheet(s).)

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Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway site crosses Madison's isthmus between 12 and 16 blocks east of the Capitol Square. This site includes both Tenney Park (1900-11) and the Yahara River Parkway (1903-06). The two parks are being nominated together because they form a visually-unified, continuous, recreational area. In addition, they were created by the same organization (the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association), designed by the same landscape architect (O. C. Simonds), and are contemporaneous. Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway together encompass 60.6 acres, with 2 sites (the parks themselves), 13 contributing structures, 1 contributing building, 5 noncontributing structures and 3 noncontributing buildings.

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is an irregular L-plan shaped area bounded on the north by Lake Mendota, and on the south by Yahara Place Park and Lake Monona. The eastern boundary runs along the Yahara River, approximately 50 feet east of the east bank. The western boundary runs along Marston Avenue to East Johnson Street, and then about 50 feet west of the west bank of the Yahara River.

## SETTING

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway lies approximately 1.75 miles east of the Capitol Square at the eastern edge of the area that was the Original Plat of Madison, surveyed in 1836. At the time Madison's earliest European-American settlers arrived, this stretch of the Yahara River meandered widely. Along its banks, and at the outlets to Lakes Monona and Mendota, there were marshlands, with a dense growth of swamp hardwoods including black and white ash, willows and cottonwoods.<sup>1</sup> The first development in the Tenney-

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<sup>1</sup>David V. Mollenhoff, Madison: A History of the Formative Years, (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1982), p. 11.

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Yahara area was undertaken by Leonard J. Farwell in 1849, before he became governor of Wisconsin. He built a dam on the Yahara River at the outlet of Lake Mendota, creating a source of water power.

In 1850-51, he constructed a five story flour mill, "Madison Mills," on the west bank of the Yahara. Farwell's mill provided a real boom to the economy, and operated for many years.<sup>2</sup> By the turn of the century, however, the dam was gone and the mill was in ruins.<sup>3</sup>

Tenney Park was developed between 1900 and 1911 (see discussion under Community Development and Planning). The Yahara River Parkway was constructed between 1903 and 1906 (see discussion under Community Development and Planning). When construction on Tenney Park began, it was at the eastern edge of the city. At that time, there was very little development east of the Yahara River. In fact, the only buildings on the east bank of the river were those of the Hausmann Brewing Company, which was located near the shore of Lake Mendota. On the west side of the Yahara River Parkway there was some industrial development between Williamson Street and East Mifflin Street, but very few buildings north of East Mifflin Street, or south of Williamson Street. The construction of Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway created very desirable residential neighborhoods north of East Washington Avenue and south of Williamson Street. Many homes were built in these areas between about 1905 and 1930, while industrial development continued in the corridor between East Washington Avenue and Williamson Street.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Reports of the Officers of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association: 1905, (hereafter, MPPDA Reports: 1905), photo, no page number.

<sup>4</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Madison, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1902, 1908 and 1959).

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vicinity of the Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway remains the same today.

**DESCRIPTION**

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is composed of two parks: Tenney Park (1900-11) and the Yahara River Parkway (1903-06). Together these two sites contain 16 contributing and 9 noncontributing resources.

Tenney Park

Developed in four sections between 1900 and 1911, Tenney Park (photo 1) was originally designed by noted Chicago landscape architect, Ossian Cole (O.C.) Simonds, and modified by prominent Cambridge (Massachusetts) landscape architect, John Nolen.<sup>5</sup> It is a fine and intact example of what is now often called the Prairie School of landscape architecture, which used native plants and local landscape features, arranged in a naturalistic and Picturesque manner.

Tenney Park contains 44.2 acres. Most of the park lies to the west of the Yahara River between Sherman Avenue and East Johnson Street.

The plan of this section is composed of a serpentine lagoon with a central, 10-acre island. Narrow paths, some gravel and some dirt, follow part way along the outline of the lagoon. Five footbridges cross the lagoon at various points. Trees and shrubs with a loose-leafed or loose-branched character give a natural, unplanned appearance. At the edges, plantings screen the park from the surrounding streets, and within the park, they create visual interest. Nolen's planting plan, which accompanied his modifica-

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<sup>5</sup>History of construction under Community Development and Planning.

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tion of the park, called for 96 varieties of trees and shrubs.<sup>6</sup> Less than one dozen were non-native. Of the exotic plants, only honeysuckle remains. Natives Nolen specified included hickory, oaks, viburnum, elderberry, ash, sumac, pines, willows and paper birch. Native trees and shrubs do remain, and the Madison Parks Division is following Nolen's plan for replanting, especially oaks, maples, lindens and elms. The current plantings are not as dense as they originally were on the island and along Marston Avenue. On the island, there was a "broad meadow," with 4-to-6-inch grasses and some flowers, creating a carpet effect. These plantings were reduced over time, and replaced with short grass, to accommodate athletic fields. The Madison Parks Division is currently trying to reestablish meadow grasses on the north half of the island and limit the athletic fields to the south half. Along Marston Avenue, plantings were reduced at the request of residents, who wished to look onto the park from their homes. These changes do not affect the integrity of the Simonds/Nolen design as the physical form remains, the plantings are in character, and the Parks Division is trying to reestablish plantings that were lost.

The built resources in Tenney Park are made up of one contributing building, six contributing structures, two noncontributing buildings and two noncontributing structures. The single contributing building is also the oldest resource in the park; it is the modest Prairie School style Restroom (photo 2). Located near the intersection of Sherman and Marston Avenues, the restroom was designed by prominent Milwaukee architect George B. Ferry, and built in 1909.<sup>7</sup> The small, one story hip-roofed concrete structure features battered corners and a prominent concrete belt course high on the walls with a series of windows above (boarded). Although

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<sup>6</sup>Plan dated June, 1908, on file, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>7</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1910, p. 24.

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the concrete has weathered such that the aggregate shows, giving the exterior finish the appearance of rough stucco, the restroom retains good integrity.

The Marston Avenue Bridge (photo 3) is the oldest footbridge. Built in 1912,<sup>8</sup> it is a reinforced concrete arch bridge with a smooth finish. The bridge's walls feature concrete work which emphasizes the arch shape, a heavy concrete handrail and recessed lettering reading: "Marston." Designed by City Engineer John Icke, it is a simple, utilitarian bridge with excellent integrity.

The A.G. Zimmerman Bridge (photo 4) is a reinforced concrete arch footbridge with a rock-faced random limestone ashlar veneer. It was built in 1929,<sup>9</sup> and named in honor of Judge Arthur Zimmerman, who helped finance its construction. A course of smooth-faced limestone outlines the arch. The Zimmerman Bridge is an excellent local example of a rustic bridge, with excellent integrity.

Two identical Concrete Pedestrian Bridges cross the lagoon to the island, one from the East Johnson Street side of the park, the other from the Thornton Avenue side. Both were built in 1930.<sup>10</sup>

Each is a simple arch bridge of smooth-faced concrete with metal handrails. The existing handrails replaced and reproduced the originals in 1959.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1913, pp. 25-26.

<sup>9</sup>Database, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>10</sup>Plans on file, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

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The Sherman Avenue Bridge (photo 5) carries two lanes of car traffic across the Yahara River. Built in 1934,<sup>12</sup> it is a steel reinforced concrete double arch bridge, connected to the Tenney Lock. The arches' spandrels are enriched with raised concrete panels. The balustrades are composed of square concrete piers and geometric metal grill work. There is a sidewalk with a concrete and steel handrail on either side of the bridge. An interesting local example of an aesthetically designed pre-1940 bridge, with very good integrity, the Sherman Avenue Bridge is one of nine bridges in the Tenney-Yahara district. However, the Sherman Avenue Bridge is unusual. The other bridges have classical, rustic, and/or utilitarian details. The Sherman Avenue Bridge combines classical elements with modernistic metal work.

The last contributing structure in Tenney Park is the Thornton Avenue Spillway, (photo 6) where water from the Yahara River enters the lagoon. An excellent local example of a Rustic Style stone bridge, with excellent integrity, the Thornton Avenue Spillway was built in 1936.<sup>13</sup> It is of reinforced concrete and has a small arch that is veneered with rock-faced random limestone ashlar. The arch has rock-faced stone voussoirs; the balustrades are wood, with square balusters.

There are five noncontributing resources in Tenney Park. Two are located in the main section of Tenney Park. These are the 1958 Park Shelter near the intersection of East Johnson Street and Thornton Avenue, and the 1970 Steel Pedestrian Bridge (photo 7), which crosses the lagoon near the Park Shelter.<sup>14</sup> Although too new

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<sup>12</sup>Database, Madison Engineering Department.

<sup>13</sup>Database, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>14</sup>Construction dates from database, Madison Parks Division.



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to be a contributing resource, the designs of the Modern Movement Park Shelter and the arched steel Pedestrian Bridge are in keeping with the contributing structures in the main section of Tenney Park, and do not impact the park's integrity. The other three noncontributing structures are in the Tenney Beach section, which lies north of Sherman Avenue. John Nolen transformed this section, always a swimming beach, from a rocky one to a sand beach in 1909.<sup>15</sup> In the west end is the 1979 Bath House.<sup>16</sup> The Tenney Lock, on the Yahara River, was built in 1959.<sup>17</sup> These structures are Modern in design, but are in keeping with the park's character and do not compromise its integrity. Toward the east end of Tenney Beach, jutting into Lake Monona just north of the Lock, is a breakwater. The circa 1982 breakwater, made from rubble, protects the Lock.

It is a noncontributing landscape feature. Another feature is the extensive use of rocks, or "rip-rap," loosely stacked along the lakeshore. The City of Madison has used this method to prevent the erosion of the lakeshore since at least the 1940s. Neither the breakwater nor the rip-rap affects the integrity of Tenney Park.

Yahara River Parkway

The Yahara River Parkway (photo 8) was designed by O.C. Simonds in 1903, and completed in 1906.<sup>18</sup> Like Tenney Park, it is a fine and intact example of the Prairie School of landscape architecture.

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<sup>15</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1911, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup>Construction date from database, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>History of construction under Community Development and Planning.

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The parkway includes 16.4 acres, composed of a strip approximately 50 feet wide along both banks of the Yahara River. Simonds plan, as drawn in 1906, shows a narrow, meandering path (perhaps dirt or gravel) along each bank, and irregular, natural-appearing plantings of trees and shrubs. Simonds' plant list was mostly made up of native species, including various types of maples, viburnum, lindens, dogwood, oaks and elms.<sup>19</sup> Currently, there are few paths, and the plantings are not quite as dense as is laid out in Simonds' plan, although they are mostly in the same locations. However, the plantings remain irregular and naturalistic, and include many of the native species Simonds listed. One feature which does detract from the naturalistic appearance of the Parkway is the use of rip-rap along the banks of the Yahara. Protection of the river banks from damage by passing motor boats was a concern within a season of the opening of the Parkway. The earliest solution was probably to place rocks along the river banks. The current materials were placed within the last ten years.<sup>20</sup>

There are seven contributing structures, one noncontributing building and three noncontributing structures in the Yahara River Parkway. All of the contributing resources on the Yahara River Parkway are bridges. The two Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Bridges (one of which is shown in photo 9) are the oldest on the parkway. One is located just south of East Main Street, the other, just north of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad bridge between East Johnson Street and East Washington Avenue. Built in 1900, they are identical (except that the northernmost bridge is double width) stock steel bridges designed by the King Bridge

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<sup>19</sup>Plan dated March 7, 1906, on file, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>20</sup>Mike Daley, Madison Engineering Department, interview February 11, 1994.

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Company of Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>21</sup> At the request of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA), the railroad raised both bridges in 1903.<sup>22</sup> Each is a standard through girder bridge with a 75 feet span. The walls are composed of a series of ten square steel panels, riveted together. The abutments are concrete block.

There are also two Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Bridges (one of which is shown in photo 10) on the parkway. One is located just north of Williamson Street, the other just north of East Washington Avenue. These are identical standard through girder steel bridges, built in 1904 and designed by the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company of Milwaukee.<sup>23</sup> Each has concrete abutments. The walls are made up of a series of rectangular steel panels, riveted together. The end panels are curved. The tracks of this line have been removed; both these bridges are now for pedestrians only. While all four railroad bridges are technically old enough to contribute to the parkway, they are stock steel bridges, designed with no consideration for aesthetics, and they visually detract from the parkway. Although the MPPDA was highly complimentary of the railroads' willingness to raise/build new bridges, the organization vigorously campaigned against the use of "ugly stock steel bridges," instead promoting "beautiful and utilitarian cement arch" bridges.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the four railroad bridges do not contribute to the design significance of the Parkway, but they do contribute to its historical significance.

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<sup>21</sup>Date and manufacturer on bridge plate.

<sup>22</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, p. 38.

<sup>23</sup>Date and manufacturer on bridge plate.

<sup>24</sup>This fight was carried on throughout the MPPDA's existence. See, for example, MPPDA Reports: 1904, pp. 35-39.

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The oldest of the automobile bridges on the Yahara River Parkway is the Williamson Street Bridge (photo 11). Built in 1904,<sup>25</sup> this steel reinforced concrete arch bridge is classical in style. The arch has a prominent keystone and was intended to look like it is built of smooth-faced stone. The arch and the balustrades are enriched with recessed panels. The Williamson Street Bridge is an excellent local example of a classically-detailed bridge, with excellent integrity. This bridge is the oldest on the parkway, and may be the oldest automobile bridge remaining in the city.

The East Johnson Street Bridge (photo 12) was built in 1925.<sup>26</sup> It is a reinforced concrete arch bridge with a rock-faced random ashlar limestone veneer. The East Johnson Street Bridge combines the rustic look of the rock-faced veneer with classical details, including smooth-faced stone voussoirs emphasizing the arch, and walls with a stone belt course and a series of square piers. It carries four lanes of automobile traffic. The East Johnson Street Bridge is a good local example of an aesthetically designed bridge, a good local example of a rustic/classical style bridge, and retains very good integrity.

The East Main Street Bridge (photo 13) appears identical to the Rutledge Street Bridge. Although it was built in 1926,<sup>27</sup> ten years after the Rutledge Street Bridge, it appears to have been built according to the same plan. The East Main Street Bridge is a classically-detailed concrete arch bridge, with raised concrete arch panels, and balustrades with paneled piers and turned

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<sup>25</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1905, pp. 28-31.

<sup>26</sup>Database, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>27</sup>Date inscribed on bridge.

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balusters. It is a two-lane automobile bridge. The East Main Street Bridge is an excellent local example of a classically detailed concrete arch bridge, an excellent local example of an aesthetically designed bridge, and has very good integrity.

There is one noncontributing building in the Yahara River Parkway: a Boat House just south of East Johnson Street. It is a pre-fabricated metal Trachte building, and was probably moved on site circa 1946.<sup>28</sup> The boat house was a part of a complex of boat storage buildings, the earliest of which dated from 1925 and was specifically designed for the Parkway. The complex would have been considered contributing to the historic significance of the Parkway, because it supported boating, one of the primary recreational uses of the Parkway. However, the surviving boat house is only a remnant of that group of boat houses, such that the boat storage function has been lost, and the one remaining building does not convey the historic association that the complex had.

There are three noncontributing structures in the Parkway. The Halle Steensland Bridge (photos 14 and 15) carries six lanes of automobile traffic over the Yahara on East Washington Avenue. Technically rebuilt in 1950, it was originally designed by Milwaukee architect George B. Ferry, and built in 1905.<sup>29</sup> The construction of the original bridge was financed by Norwegian Consul and Madison resident Halle Steensland. The Steensland Bridge is a reinforced concrete arch bridge with a rock-faced random ashlar limestone veneer, and is rustic in appearance, with some classical details. At either end of the bridge is a monumental polygonal pier; on the interior of the bridge, there is a stone

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<sup>28</sup>Bill Bauer, Madison Parks Division, Interview December 7, 1993.

<sup>29</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1905, pp. 28-31.

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bench within each pier. Above two of the four benches, there is a bronze plaque reading: "This bridge presented to the City of Madison by Consul Halle Steensland in commemoration of his 50 years residency in the city, 1855-1905." Each bridge balustrade is enriched with a segmental pediment, and below, the bridge arch is highlighted with stone voussoirs. In 1950, the bridge was widened from 60 feet to 127 feet. At that time, the original design was reproduced, using the original stones.<sup>30</sup> Because the bridge was reconstructed in 1950, it is not yet 50 years old, and so is cannot be counted as contributing to the historic character of the Parkway. Once the Steensland Bridge is 50 years old, its status should be reassessed, because it is an integral part of the Parkway, and it reproduces the original Prairie School design, which was approved by O. C. Simonds, the landscape architect who designed the Parkway.<sup>31</sup>

The Jenifer Street Pedestrian Bridge (photo 16) was built 1993, and so is also a noncontributing structure. This concrete and laminated wood arch bridge is in keeping with the character of the contributing bridges, and does not affect the integrity of the Yahara River Parkway. The final noncontributing structure is the Rutledge Street Bridge. It was built in 1997, and replaces the previous 1916 bridge. The current bridge reproduces the appearance of the 1916 bridge, and so does not compromise the integrity of the Yahara River Parkway. The Rutledge Street Bridge is a classical

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<sup>30</sup>Journal of Historic Madison, Incorporated, 1980-81, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, p. 34.

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style reinforced concrete arch structure. The arch is enriched with raised concrete panels, and inscribed with the date of construction. The balustrades are composed of paneled concrete piers and turned balusters.

In conclusion, the integrity of the Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is excellent. The form of the original design of each park has been retained. The plantings are in character with that design, although somewhat less dense than originally. The bridges are almost all well-designed, in keeping with the natural, Prairie School design of both parks, and show good to excellent integrity.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Map Code</u>
Tenney Park	1900-11	No. 1
Restroom	1909	No. 2
Marston Bridge	1912	No. 3
A.G. Zimmerman Bridge	1929	No. 4
Concrete Pedestrian Bridge	1930	No. 5
new handrails	1959	
Concrete Pedestrian Bridge	1930	No. 6
new handrails	1959	
Sherman Avenue Bridge	1934	No. 7
Thornton Avenue Spillway	1936	No. 8
Yahara River Parkway	1903-06	No. 9
C&NW Bridge	1900	No. 10
raised	1903	
C&NW Bridge	1900	No. 11
raised	1903	
CM&StP Bridge	1904	No. 12
CM&StP Bridge	1904	No. 13
Williamson Street Bridge	1904	No. 14
East Johnson Street Bridge	1925	No. 16

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East Main Street Bridge	1926	No. 17
NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES		
Tenney Park		
Park Shelter	1958	No. 19
Locks	1959	No. 20
Steel Pedestrian Bridge	1970	No. 21
Bath house	1979	No. 22
Breakwater	1982	No. 25
Yahara River Parkway		
Halle Steensland Bridge	1905	No. 15
expanded	1950	
Rutledge Street Bridge	1997	No. 18
Boat House	c.1946	No. 23
Jenifer Street Pedestrian Bridge	1993	No. 24



Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the  
criteria qualifying the property for the  
National Register listing.)

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from  
instructions)

A Property is associated with events  
that have made a significant  
contribution to the broad patterns of  
our history.

Community Planning and  
Development

B Property is associated with the lives  
of persons significant in our past.

Landscape Architecture

C Property embodies the distinctive  
characteristics of a type, period, or  
method of construction or represents  
the work of a master, or possesses  
high artistic values, or represents a  
significant and distinguishable entity  
whose components lack individual  
distinction.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

D Property has yielded, or is likely to  
yield, information important in  
prehistory or history.

1900-1936

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person  
(Complete if Criterion B is  
marked above)

Criteria Considerations  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

N/A

A owned by a religious institution or  
used for religious purposes.

Cultural Affiliation

B removed from its original location.

N/A

C a birthplace or grave.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D a cemetery.

Architect/Builder

E a reconstructed building, object, or  
structure.

Simonds, Ossian Cole

F a commemorative property.

Nolen, John

G less than 50 years of age achieved  
significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

(Cite the sources used in preparing this form on continuation sheet(s).)

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway encompasses 61 acres including 2 sites (Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway), 13 contributing structures, 1 contributing building, 5 noncontributing structures and 3 noncontributing buildings. The two parks are being nominated together because they form a visually-unified, continuous, recreational area. In addition, they were created by the same organization (the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association), designed by the same landscape architect (O. C. Simonds), and are contemporaneous. The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is locally significant under both criterion A (Community Development and Planning), and under criterion C (Landscape Architecture). In Community Development, it is significant for its association with, and affect upon, the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA), an important voluntary organization that played an important role in changing the physical development and environmental character of Madison. In addition, the development of Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway triggered an era of incredible park philanthropy in Madison. Tenney Park itself was the first in-city park developed by the MPPDA. The Yahara River Parkway was the first river parkway in Madison, and the first park funded primarily with public subscriptions rather than large gifts from a few donors. In Landscape Architecture, both Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway are excellent, intact examples of Prairie School design. They are also significant as representative of the work of the founder of the Prairie School of landscape architecture, O.C. Simonds. The period of significance spans the ground-breaking on the first section of Tenney Park (1900) to the construction of the last contributing structure in the parks, the Thornton Avenue Spillway (1936).

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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The original plat for the Village of Madison was surveyed by John V. Suydam for James Duane Doty in 1836. Doty named the village in honor of the fourth President of the United States. Madison grew slowly during its first decade. It was incorporated as a village in 1846 with a population of 626. In 1848, Wisconsin became the 30th state and Madison the capitol city. The same year, the University of Wisconsin was founded. Tremendous growth followed, not only in government and at the University, but in the population in general. When Madison was chartered as a city in 1856, its population was 6,864. By this time, the city's character as a center for government and a college town was well established. Growth stalled during the Civil War, but afterwards, more settlers arrived. During the 1870s, excellent train service enabled Madison to become a regional commercial center, while not diminishing the importance of government and the University. In the 1880s and 1890s, Madison added another dimension, becoming a manufacturing center as well. At first, agricultural implements and machine tools were produced, by companies such as Fuller and Johnson and the Gisholt Machine Tool Company. In the early twentieth century, the French Battery Company (later known as Ray-o-Vac) and Oscar Mayer were established. To this day, Madison remains a government and university town with a thriving commercial and manufacturing sector.<sup>32</sup>

Tenney Park was developed between 1900 and 1911, while the Yahara River Parkway was constructed between 1903 and 1906 (see discussion under Community Development and Planning). When the construction of Tenney Park began, the Park was located at the eastern edge of the city. At that time, there was very little development east of the Yahara River. The only buildings on the east bank of the river were those of the Hausmann Brewing Company, which was located close to the shore of Lake Mendota. On the south side of Tenney Park and

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<sup>32</sup>Mollenhoff, excerpted from entire book.

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just west of the Yahara River parkway, there was some industrial development between Williamson Street and East Washington Avenue, but very few buildings in the area north of East Mifflin Street, or south of Williamson Street. The construction of Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway created very desirable residential neighborhoods north of East Mifflin Street and south of Williamson Street. Many homes were built in these areas between about 1905 and 1930, while industrial development continued in the corridor between East Mifflin Street and Williamson Street.<sup>33</sup>

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is locally significant under criterion A in Community Development and Planning for several reasons. First, these parks were developed by the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA), an important voluntary organization that changed the physical development and environmental character of Madison. Second, the creation of Tenney Park changed the character and purpose of the MPPDA, from a private group developing pleasure drives for the well-to-do, to a semi-public parks department responsible for urban parks as well as pleasure drives. Third, Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway triggered an era of incredible local park philanthropy, a time in which 10 percent of all the households in Madison voluntarily donated money to support public parks, and several wealthy men gave large gifts to create parks in their names (Vilas, Brittingham, Burrows). Fourth, Tenney Park itself was the first in-city park developed by the MPPDA, and the first to provide public access to lake frontage. Fifth, the Yahara River Parkway was the first river parkway in Madison, and the first park funded primarily with public subscriptions rather than large gifts from a few donors.

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<sup>33</sup>Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Madison.

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By the late nineteenth century, after years of haphazard expansion, many American cities were overcrowded, unsanitary, poorly laid out, and lacking in parks. Architects, landscape architects and the civic-minded began to look for ways to make the urban environment more humane. Since designing Central Park in New York City with Calvert Vaux in 1858, America's premier landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, had been promoting the design of cities, with particular attention to parks, as an answer to this problem.

In 1890, he was asked to make suggestions regarding the upcoming World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Olmsted seized the opportunity and urged the fair's organizers to create a layout that emphasized harmony, and unified buildings and grounds. Under the direction of Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, who was influenced by eastern architects (notably Richard Morris Hunt), it was resolved to design the fair's buildings in the classical style. Meanwhile, the layout of the fairgrounds was designed by Olmsted's assistant, Henry S. Codman, along with Burnham and John W. Root. The result was the "Great White City," composed of spacious boulevards with imposing classical buildings of uniform height and with white exterior finishes. The unity of the grounds was enhanced by placing utility lines underground, and through the use of painting, sculpture, and water elements, such as lagoons and fountains. This demonstration, and subsequent ones at later fairs, showed what a city could look like if it were planned according to aesthetic principles. All over the country, citizens were inspired, sparking the City Beautiful movement. City planning commissions were appointed, and classical buildings built to house museums, libraries, art galleries, courthouses and other public governmental and cultural institutions.<sup>34</sup> That the primary legacy of the World Columbian Exposition was the nationwide adoption of

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<sup>34</sup>Leland M. Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture, (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 213-14.

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classical style was a disappointment to Olmsted.<sup>35</sup> However, the Exposition did create new interest in public parks. In Madison, this movement was led by the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA).

#### The Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association

The MPPDA was the most influential voluntary organization in Madison's history. From its founding in 1894, until it dissolved in 1938, this organization transformed Madison from a city with one 3-1/2 acre public park, to one with a wealth of parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, beaches and open space. In fact, the MPPDA was instrumental in securing almost all the parks created in Madison during that organization's 44 years.<sup>36</sup> The MPPDA also set high aesthetic standards, hiring the most talented landscape architects of the era to design these public improvements, most notably Ossian Cole Simonds and John Nolen (see discussion under Landscape Architecture). The MPPDA's efforts changed the physical development and environmental character of Madison, and set a precedent for the support of parks as an integral part of the fabric of the city, which continues today.

The MPPDA got its start in 1892, when John M. Olin and some of his friends began purchasing lands for the development of pleasure (scenic) drives along Lake Mendota. Olin (1851-1924), an attorney who practiced in Madison for 33 years, also taught in the Law School at the University. He is best known for his work with the

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<sup>35</sup>Albert Fein, Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition, (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1972), p. 66.

<sup>36</sup>Katherine H. Rankin, unpublished report of the Intensive Survey of Historic Resources of Madison, 1995.

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MPPDA. The MPPDA was formally organized in 1894 with 26 members. Olin was chosen as president. He would prove a highly effective leader. The MPPDA initially focused on pleasure drives. The organization was very successful in its first five years, establishing over 17 miles of scenic roadways in the Madison area, much of it along Lake Mendota. Membership grew to 400 by 1899, and consisted primarily of Madison's leading business and professional men. They and their families were also the primary beneficiaries of the pleasure drives. The roadways were not accessible to the three-quarters of the population who could not afford to own or rent a horse. Although the MPPDA was highly regarded for what it had accomplished, it was criticized by some as elitist for this reason.<sup>37</sup>

In 1899, the focus of the MPPDA abruptly changed. Several property owners offered to sell 14 acres of land, situated along the west bank of the Yahara River at Lake Mendota, to the city as a park. The owners were asking \$1,500 for the parcel; it was easily worth \$8,000. The MPPDA Board of Directors immediately passed a resolution urging the city to buy and develop the land as a park. Before the city could respond, Daniel K. Tenney came forward with an offer which would change the purpose of the MPPDA, and ultimately, the history of Madison. Tenney was an ardent supporter of the MPPDA, and Madison's best-known conservative activist. He offered to buy the land for \$1,500 and give another \$2,500 for its development as a park. Tenney attached conditions to his gift which challenged both the MPPDA and the city to become involved in the support of in-city public parks. First, he specified that the MPPDA hold the land in trust for the city; second, that the MPPDA develop and maintain the park; and third, that another \$2,500 be raised for the development of the park from other sources.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Mollenhoff, pp. 232-34.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 324.

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This offer posed the question: what agency should be responsible for public parks in the city? Olin and the MPPDA Board of Directors sincerely believed that parks were necessary for the health and well-being of all citizens. Further, the city had only one park, the city block-size abandoned cemetery known as Orton Park, to serve a population of some 19,000 persons. The city could finance the development and maintenance of parks within city limits through property taxes. The pleasure drives, because they were mostly located outside the city, could not be supported with taxes.

The MPPDA must therefore support the pleasure drives with their own funds, which were all voluntary contributions. Supporting both would financially strap the MPPDA. Olin concluded that the acquisition, development and maintenance of parks in the city should be a municipal responsibility.<sup>39</sup>

However, a majority of the Common Council disagreed with Olin. This may have stemmed in part from the fact that the city was very near the limit of its statutory borrowing power as a result of recent expenditures to set up a water system and a sewage treatment system, as well as having on-going obligations for street maintenance and so on. The MPPDA accepted Tenney's gift and began raising the required \$2,500. The MPPDA also persuaded the Common Council to contribute \$1,500. The Common Council named the park after its primary benefactor, Daniel K. Tenney.<sup>40</sup> Olin hired Ossian Cole (O.C.) Simonds, a talented landscape architect from Chicago to design the park. It would be the first of many collaborations between Simonds and the MPPDA. Development of Tenney Park began in 1900 and was completed in 1911 (see discussion below).

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 326 and 475.



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Tenney Park itself is important in Community Development and Planning as the first Madison park with lake access for the public, and as the first in-city park given to the MPPDA.<sup>41</sup> However, the establishment of this park is much more significant, in several ways. First, it changed the relationship between the MPPDA and the city. Holding land in trust for the city changed the character of the MPPDA from private to quasi-public. At the moment the MPPDA took title to Tenney Park, it essentially became the Madison Parks Department.<sup>42</sup> This quasi-public function was formalized by a law (Chapter 55) passed by the Wisconsin Legislature in 1899. This law gave both the city and the MPPDA power to own, improve and maintain parklands.<sup>43</sup> Second, the creation of Tenney Park forced the city to take its first real step in accepting responsibility for the development and maintenance of city parks. Third, the establishment of Tenney Park marked an expansion in the focus of the MPPDA from pleasure drives outside the city to include in-city parks for the less affluent. This ended much of the criticism of the MPPDA as elitist, and broadened the organization's appeal to the public. Recognizing both an opportunity for growth, and an obligation to citizens of modest means, Olin reduced the annual membership fee from \$25 to \$5 in 1899. The response from the public was very favorable.<sup>44</sup>

Over the next few years, the MPPDA strongly encouraged city officials to develop more parks. The city ignored the MPPDA. Olin, frustrated with the city's inaction, undertook a bold

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 475.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 329.

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initiative. In January, 1903, Olin presented a plan to a group of Madison's most influential citizens at the home of Senator William F. Vilas. He called for widening (to 50 feet) and deepening the Yahara River between Lakes Mendota and Monona, creating a parkway on both sides, raising the railway bridges across the Yahara so that launches (small boats) could easily pass beneath them, and constructing a lock at the Mendota outlet.<sup>45</sup> The plan was lauded by the local press. Daniel K. Tenney objected to the plan, primarily on the grounds that wealthy launch owners would be the greatest beneficiaries. Tenney's objections were overridden by a coalition made up of park activists; property owners, who foresaw their real estate rising in value; town boosters; and the growing number of launch owners, most of whom were association members.<sup>46</sup>

Olin pursued the development of the Yahara River Parkway with characteristic vigor. He sent Senator Vilas to convince the presidents of the Chicago & Northwestern, and Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroads to raise their four railroad bridges across the Yahara. By the end of January, 1903, both presidents had agreed. In the event that the railroads reneged on their promise, Olin got the Wisconsin Legislature to adopt a bill that would force the railroads to cooperate. Olin also got the endorsement of Madison's Common Council for the project. By April, Olin announced that 482 persons had subscribed \$20,614.60 for the project--over \$5,000 more than the goal--and that nearly all the necessary land had been donated to the city for the project.<sup>47</sup> Work on the Yahara River Parkway was begun in June, 1903, and completed in 1906 (see discussion below).

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<sup>45</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1903, pp. 22-23.

<sup>46</sup>Mollenhoff, p. 329.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 329; and MPPDA Reports: 1903, p. 24.

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The Yahara River Parkway is important as the city's first river parkway and the first park built with citizen subscriptions, rather than with large gifts from a few donors (the only other is Warner Park, 1939). Of the 482 subscribers, nearly half (227) had contributed \$10 or less.<sup>48</sup> But the Yahara River Parkway has even greater significance because the project "primed the pump" for the golden era of park-oriented philanthropy in Madison. In 1904, William F. Vilas gave the MPPDA \$18,000 to create a park in honor of his son Henry, who had died at a young age. In 1905, Thomas E. Brittingham donated \$8,000 for a park in his own name. These contributions were just the beginning of large additional gifts from Vilas, Brittingham and Tenney. Other large gifts were received from George B. Burrows and A.H. Hollister.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps more impressive were the small annual gifts of hundreds of citizens of modest means. Between 1902 and 1909, an average of 765 Madisonians, about one household in ten, voluntarily contributed money in support of parks. About 60 percent of all pledges were just \$5. As a result of MPPDA efforts, by 1906 Madison had been changed from a city with only one three-and-a-half acre park and no public water frontage, to a city with 154 acres of park and 4.6 miles of public water frontage, more than most cities in the nation.<sup>50</sup>

This extraordinary success brought the MPPDA national and international acclaim between 1906 and 1910. The Christian Science Monitor and the New York Herald carried feature articles on the MPPDA. City officials from other states came to Madison to see the parks. Annual association reports were read by nationally

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<sup>48</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1903, p. 26.

<sup>49</sup>Mollenhoff, p. 332.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

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prominent architects, educators and civic leaders. The work of the MPPDA was hailed as far away as Europe and New Zealand.<sup>51</sup>

Despite Olin's success in raising funds from the private sector, he continued to believe that in-city parks were a municipal responsibility. Olin and the MPPDA continued to push the city to accept more financial responsibility. In 1905, he persuaded the Common Council to hire a park superintendent to oversee the day-to-day operation and development of the parks. The superintendent was selected by the MPPDA and worked under its direction, but the city paid his salary. Emil T. Mische, who had worked for Frederick Law Olmsted, was selected. Mische held the post from January 1, 1906 until March 1, 1908. Olin also secured the services of John Nolen.<sup>52</sup> By 1908, Nolen (1864-1937) was gaining a national reputation as a leader, along with Frederick Law Olmsted, in the new discipline, "city planning." City planners promoted the concept (later called the City Functional) that all the components of urban life should be integrated to make cities not just more beautiful, but more liveable as well. Nolen was under contract to the city part-time from 1908 until 1911. During that time, he redesigned Tenney Park (1908), and produced a thoughtful comprehensive plan of Madison (1910).<sup>53</sup> But Olin's greatest success in getting the city to shoulder financial responsibility for parks took place in 1909, when Olin finally convinced the Common Council to pass a one-half-mill park tax. This brought much more money for parks. Instituted in 1912, the park tax brought nearly \$50,000 a year between 1912 and 1920, as compared to an average of \$22,000 a year in annual contributions made to the MPPDA during its peak

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 337.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 338-341.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 342, 346-49.

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years of 1901-11. After adoption of the park tax, the MPPDA continued to oversee maintenance and development of city parks. Membership and contributions dropped precipitously after 1912, but because the MPPDA's financial responsibility was limited to maintaining the 23 mile pleasure drive system, the organization remained solvent.<sup>54</sup>

During the period 1912-1932, the MPPDA continued to improve existing parks and build playgrounds, golf courses and new parks. Improvements to existing parks included bridges, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, bath houses and boat houses. New parks created during this time included Olin Park (1912); Frank W. Hoyt Park (1924), Glenway Golf Course (1926), James R. Law Park (1927) and Nakoma Park (1931).<sup>55</sup> On May 8, 1931, the Common Council passed a charter ordinance (Section 3.03 of the General Ordinances of the City of Madison) creating a board of park commissioner to "govern, manage, control, improve and care for all public parks. . ."<sup>56</sup> On April 26, 1933, the newly appointed Board of Park Commissioners assumed their responsibilities. On July 12, 1937, the MPPDA transferred all the property that it had held in trust to the city by quit-claim deed. The MPPDA was dissolved at its final meeting, held July 11, 1938.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>55</sup>James G. Marshall, "For Pleasure and Play," Wisconsin State Journal, (hereafter, WSJ), centennial edition, 1939, p. 8.

<sup>56</sup>Marshall, "The Madison Park System: 1892-1937," Journal of Historic Madison, volume 5, 1979-80, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-16.

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It should be noted that there was a second private organization that also contributed to the development of Madison's parks. The Madison Parks Foundation, organized by Michael Olbrich in 1922, established Olbrich Park, Yahara Place Park, and acquired the first parcel of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum.<sup>58</sup> But, according to David Mollenhoff, the MPPDA is unparalleled in Madison history "for its persistence, commitment, foresight, selfless public service, and above all else, its achievements."<sup>59</sup> This is evident not only in the large amount of public open space created by the MPPDA but also in its concern for the aesthetics, always hiring the finest designers, such as O.C. Simonds and John Nolen. That the MPPDA was highly successful in establishing parks in Madison is in large part due the efforts of John Myers Olin. Olin served as president from 1894 until 1909, when ill health forced him to retire. Upon his death in 1924, the following tribute was paid him by Michael Olbrich:

In a community unmoved by any sense of park values, with only an abandoned cemetery of three and one-half acres, with neither a park board nor any park appropriation, Mr. Olin stirred the spirit of this city to such activity that in 18 years of leadership he had acquired in the name of this association in trust for the city over 269 acres of parkland . . .<sup>60</sup>

As a result of his work, John Olin is recognized as the "father of Madison's park system."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Rankin, no page numbers.

<sup>59</sup>Mollenhoff, p. 338.

<sup>60</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1925, pp. 7-12.

<sup>61</sup>Rankin; "Annual Report of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive

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### Tenney Park

Tenney Park itself is important in the area of Community Development and Planning as the first Madison park with lake access for the public, and as the first in-city park given to the MPPDA.<sup>62</sup> However, the establishment of this park is much more significant, in several ways (explained in detail above). First, it changed the relationship between the MPPDA and the city. Second, the creation of Tenney Park forced the city to take its first real step in accepting responsibility for the development and maintenance of city parks. Third, the establishment of Tenney Park marked an expansion in the focus of the MPPDA from only pleasure drives outside the city to include in-city parks for the less affluent.

Tenney Park was developed in four sections. In 1899, Daniel K. Tenney purchased 14 acres of marshland and lakeshore, primarily from Anna Thornton and her daughter, Mary. He donated the land to the MPPDA in trust for city as an in-city park for working people.

The Thorntons also donated some land, as did the Hausmann Brewing Company and the Willow Park Association (developers of the lake side of Sherman Avenue). Chicago landscape gardener O.C. Simonds designed this first section of Tenney Park in 1900.<sup>63</sup> Simonds' plan called for the construction of a serpentine lagoon with three islands of varying sizes, connecting with the Yahara River at the

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Association: 1925," pp. 7-8; "Business Associates and Lifelong Friends Mourn Passing of John M. Olin," "John M. Olin," and "Death Relieves Lawyer of Long, Painful Illness," WSJ, December 8, 1924; and Proceedings of the Wisconsin State Bar Association, vol. 15, pp. 17-18, 1925.

<sup>62</sup>Mollenhoff, p. 329.

<sup>63</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1902, p. 15.

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southeast end of the park, and running under Sherman Avenue to terminate in another small lagoon on the lakeshore.<sup>64</sup> The city built a pumping station in Lake Mendota to bring up sand from the lake bottom to provide part of the fill.<sup>65</sup> By April, 1903, construction on the first section of Tenney Park was complete, including plantings and foot bridges to the islands (designed by Simonds), at a total cost of \$15,158,30.<sup>66</sup> In 1903, the city purchased five lots in the Willow Park subdivision between Sherman Avenue and Lake Mendota for \$6,700. This was the second section of Tenney Park. It was developed that year, and added 250 feet of lakeshore to the park.<sup>67</sup> In 1905, the MPPDA purchased the third section of Tenney Park. Daniel K. Tenney donated \$5,000 toward the purchase of the 21 acres called Thornton Marsh, located on the west side of the park. Nearly all of the marsh property was owned by Anna and Mary Thornton. To finance the remainder of the \$8,500 purchase price and part of the development of the new section, the MPPDA earmarked 15 acres as an addition to the park and platted the rest as the Parkside Subdivision. This created Marston Avenue (named in honor of Tenney's wife), and the lots facing it.<sup>68</sup>

O.C. Simonds' design for the third section of Tenney Park called for a second lagoon, connecting to the existing lagoon in three places, and two islands.<sup>69</sup> The MPPDA sold the 20 lots it owned in

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<sup>64</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, fold out.

<sup>65</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1902, pp. 24-25.

<sup>66</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1903, pp. 15-16.

<sup>67</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, pp. 25-26.

<sup>68</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1905, pp. 19-23.

<sup>69</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, fold out dated March 7, 1906.



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the Parkside Subdivision for \$1,000 each in 1905 and 1906.<sup>70</sup> Construction on the third section of Tenney Park began in June, 1907.<sup>71</sup> In June, 1908, the city's newly hired consulting landscape architect, John Nolen, modified the design for Tenney Park. Nolen's plan called for filling in part of the lagoon to create one large, 10 acre island, and filling in the lagoon on the beach.<sup>72</sup> Nolen proposed this design to bring more visitors to the park. Tenney Park had been designed originally to be a passive, aesthetic experience, where the visitor would admire nature from the path or a boat, much as the pleasure drives presented views for the carriage passenger. This type of park did not appeal to the public; not many came.<sup>73</sup> Nolen's design gave Tenney Park large open spaces where people could gather and listen to a band concert, or play baseball. His design transformed the park's character from passive to active. After Nolen's design was completed in 1910, people thronged to the park.<sup>74</sup> In 1908, the city purchased the fourth and last section of Tenney Park. This consisted of seven lots of the Willow Park Subdivision, and added another 350 feet of lake shore to the park, for a total of 44.2 acres. In October, 1908, the city issued bonds to cover the purchase price of \$19,670.<sup>75</sup> Nolen prepared plans for a sand beach for children

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<sup>70</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, p. 25.

<sup>71</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1908, p. 18.

<sup>72</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1909, fold out.

<sup>73</sup>WSJ, November 6, 1907.

<sup>74</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1911, p. 51.

<sup>75</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1909, pp. 19-23.

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with a playground for this site.<sup>76</sup> The Prairie School style restroom near the corner of Sherman and Marston Avenues, designed by Milwaukee architect George B. Ferry, was built in 1909.<sup>77</sup> Tenney Park was essentially completed in 1911. The total cost of park up to April, 1912, was \$79,650.<sup>78</sup> In the fall of 1912, the Marston Avenue Bridge was built. It was designed by City Engineer John Icke as a reinforced concrete arch bridge with concrete finish. Daniel K. Tenney paid for the bridge, which cost \$3,321.<sup>79</sup> The first bath house (demolished) in Tenney Park was built in 1913. Also designed by Ferry, it was located on the site of the present lakefront parking lot.<sup>80</sup> Concerts were being held in the park by the summer of 1913, and were well attended.<sup>81</sup> Six tennis courts were built in 1915, and in the winter of 1915-16, the lagoons scraped and flooded for skating.<sup>82</sup> By 1920, baseball was being played on the island.<sup>83</sup>

The city has continued to improve Tenney Park. The stone-veneered A.G. Zimmerman Bridge, which crosses the lagoon at Sherman Avenue, was built in 1929. The Thornton Avenue Spillway, also stone

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<sup>76</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1911, p. 24.

<sup>77</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1910, p. 24.

<sup>78</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1912, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1913, pp. 25-26.

<sup>80</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1914, p. 12.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1915-16, p. 11.

<sup>83</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1920-21, p. 9.

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veneered, was constructed in 1936. The Sherman Avenue Bridge, a concrete arch bridge which crosses the Yahara River, was built in 1934. The two concrete foot bridges that cross the lagoon were originally built in 1930, and repaired in 1959. The park shelter was built in 1958. The present locks were erected in 1959. The breakwater was built ca.1982, and the steel arch foot bridge across the lagoon was erected in 1970. The present bath house was built in 1979.<sup>84</sup>

#### Yahara River Parkway

The Yahara River Parkway is important as the city's first river parkway and its first park built with citizen subscriptions, rather than with large gifts from a few donors (the only other is Warner Park, 1939). Of the 482 subscribers, nearly half (227) contributed \$10 or less.<sup>85</sup> But the Yahara River Parkway has even greater historic significance because the project "primed the pump" for the golden era of park-oriented philanthropy in Madison (see discussion above).

When construction on the Yahara River Parkway began in June, 1903, the river and its banks were marshy and had been frequently used for dumping dead horses, cats and dogs.<sup>86</sup> Many residents of Madison were eager to see the river transformed from a nuisance to an asset. In addition to the cash gifts cited above, 56 teamsters agreed to donate two loads of crushed stone (for fill) each.<sup>87</sup> The

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<sup>84</sup>Bill Bauer.

<sup>85</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1903, p. 26.

<sup>86</sup>WSJ, January 12, 1903.

<sup>87</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1903, p. 27.

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MPPDA also received gifts of land for the project, including nearly all of the eastern bank of the river. The largest parcel was a 100-foot-wide strip 1650-foot-long given by the Hausmann Brewing Company. Hausmann owned the only buildings on the east bank of the Yahara, at the Lake Mendota end. The property they gave ran from their complex south to the northernmost railroad bridge (Map No. 10).<sup>88</sup> A few parcels on the eastern bank of the Yahara were never acquired. Two parcels are still privately owned. Two others are public open spaces, but are not technically a part of the Parkway.

One of these is Burr Jones Field at 1818 East Washington Avenue, a playground donated by Jones in 1903.<sup>89</sup> The other is Yahara Place Park, which begins south of the Rutledge Street Bridge and runs along the shore of Lake Monona four blocks to Dunning Street. It was acquired for the city in three sections, between 1921 and 1931, through the efforts of the Madison Parks Foundation.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the ownership of the railroad rights-of-way have been retained by the railroads. On the banks of the Yahara, these properties are all still undeveloped, preserving the views and the feeling of the Parkway the full length of the river.

On the west bank of the river, there was a little-used thoroughfare in 1902, called Water Street, between Tenney Park and Williamson Street. The MPPDA proposed that this street be abandoned, and that a new street (Thornton Avenue, named in honor of Anna and Mary Thornton, benefactors of Tenney Park) be created about 50-feet back from river.<sup>91</sup> Many of the property owners along Water Street

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-30.

<sup>89</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, pp. 51-52.

<sup>90</sup>Madison Parks Division Park Inventory, p. 193.

<sup>91</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, p. 31.

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donated a 50-foot strip for the new street. The Fauerbach Brewing Company also donated its land on the west bank of the river south of Williamson Street. The remainder of the Parkway was purchased from property owners, although one lot was obtained through condemnation.<sup>92</sup> By 1904, the MPPDA had acquired most of the land that is now a part of the Parkway.

Two companies dredged and filled the Yahara: N.J. Johnson of Oconomowoc, and Clarke and Thomas of Madison.<sup>93</sup> This work was begun in June, 1903, and substantially completed by 1905, when the river was opened for use.<sup>94</sup> In 1903, the two bridges of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad were raised at a cost of \$30,300.<sup>95</sup> Both bridges had been constructed by the King Bridge Company of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1900.<sup>96</sup> The first lock at the Mendota outlet to the Yahara was built in 1903 at a cost of \$6,430. Designed by University of Wisconsin engineering professor W.D. Taylor, the lock was 12 feet wide and 60 feet long.<sup>97</sup> In the spring of 1904, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad removed its old bridges and built two new ones at a cost of \$16,500.<sup>98</sup> These bridges are identical, and were built by the Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Company

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-34.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.

<sup>94</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, p. 31.

<sup>95</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, p. 38.

<sup>96</sup>Inscribed on bridge plate.

<sup>97</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, p. 30.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

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of Milwaukee.<sup>99</sup> In 1904, the concrete arch Williamson Street bridge was constructed for \$6,042.<sup>100</sup> The Common Council had debated for a year over whether to put up a stock steel truss bridge, or to bow to the MPPDA's concern for aesthetics, and build a more expensive, but more attractive, concrete arch bridge at Williamson Street.<sup>101</sup>

Meanwhile, the old Williamson Street steel truss bridge was moved temporarily to East Johnson Street.<sup>102</sup> On November 29, 1904, Norwegian Consul Halle Steensland offered \$8,000 in commemoration of his 50 years in Madison for the construction of a bridge at East Washington Avenue. Noted Milwaukee architect George B. Ferry designed the steel reinforced concrete arched bridge, giving it a rock-faced limestone veneer.<sup>103</sup> When the lowest construction bid came in at \$10,000, Steensland immediately donated another \$2,000.

The Steensland Bridge was completed in 1905.<sup>104</sup> The Reports of the Officers of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association for 1906 includes a plan of Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway by O.C. Simonds dated March 7, 1906. This plan shows the property included in the Yahara River Parkway almost as it is today. The total cost for the acquisition and development of the Parkway, not including the Williamson Street or Steensland Bridges, was \$83,005.65 as of April, 1906. Of this amount, the city had contributed only \$4,266.14. The rest had been financed through

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<sup>99</sup>Inscription on bridge plate.

<sup>100</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1905, p. 27.

<sup>101</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1904, p. 37.

<sup>102</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1905, p. 31.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-31.

<sup>104</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, pp. 33-34.

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gifts to the MPPDA, and by the railroads.<sup>105</sup> Planting of the Parkway was begun in spring of 1906, and carried out according to plans by Simonds.<sup>106</sup>

Although the Yahara River Parkway was complete by 1906, the MPPDA and, later, the Madison Parks Division, continued to improve it.

Almost as soon as the Parkway opened, damage to the river banks by passing motor boats became a problem. The earliest solution was probably to line the banks with stone. Since at least the 1940s, rip-rap has been used.<sup>107</sup> In 1916, the Rutledge Street Bridge (replaced with a similar bridge in 1997), which was designed by City Engineer John Icke, was built at a cost of \$10,497.<sup>108</sup> The stone-veneered East Johnson Street Bridge replaced the old steel truss bridge in 1925.<sup>109</sup> The East Main Street Bridge was built in 1926 and is identical to the Rutledge Street Bridge.<sup>110</sup> A steel boat house designed and built by the Trachte Bros. Co. of Madison was constructed ca.1925 at 1801 East Johnson Street; there were two more, thought to be World War II surplus buildings moved on site circa 1946.<sup>111</sup> The 1925 and one of the ca.1940s boat houses were demolished in 1997. The Steensland Bridge was widened in 1950, and the original design of its walls reproduced using the original

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Daley.

<sup>108</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1917, p. 10.

<sup>109</sup>Database, Madison Parks Division.

<sup>110</sup>Date inscribed on bridge.

<sup>111</sup>Bauer.

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stones.<sup>112</sup> A pedestrian bridge was built across the river at Jenifer Street in 1993. The current Rutledge Street Bridge was erected in 1997.

#### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is significant at the local level in Landscape Architecture under criterion C. Both Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway are excellent, intact examples of Prairie School design. They are also significant as representative examples of the work of the founder of the Prairie School of landscape architecture, O.C. Simonds.

Nineteenth century American landscape architecture was dominated by the romantic, picturesque school of design, which sought to imitate and idealize nature, with undulating terrain, curving planting beds, and groves of trees which appeared to have sprung up on their own. A romantic landscape design provided an appropriate setting for picturesque architecture, but as the influence of the Ecole des Beaux Arts and its classically-inspired architecture took hold, a more formal, architectonic style of landscape design came into being. One of the earliest manifestations of this was Olmsted's design at Biltmore. In 1889, Richard Morris Hunt designed a French-inspired country mansion for George W. Vanderbilt. Olmsted designed the grounds to reflect the mansion itself, with its strong geometric form, in developing the immediate grounds as a rectilinear, formal series of spaces. This is regarded as the beginning of the Country Place Era, and is related to the City Beautiful movement in city planning. As classically-inspired architecture in public, commercial and residential buildings grew in popularity, landscape architecture naturally turned to well-structured spatial

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<sup>112</sup>Journal of Historic Madison, Incorporated, 5:2-17, 1979-80.



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order and simple geometry.<sup>113</sup> City Beautiful and Country Place design is characterized by clear spatial structure that is crisply geometric and often symmetrical; by a series of rectilinear spaces tied together with a long line of sight; spaces defined or implied with vertical planes using walls and steps; a layout that is formal, organized and simple; a meticulous attention to detail; and a short list of plant materials, usually compact in nature.<sup>114</sup> This type of design, which borrows from England, France and Italy, became very popular in the Eastern U.S. in the early twentieth century, and was imitated in the Midwest.<sup>115</sup>

Meanwhile, in Chicago, artists and designers, among them architects Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, were rejecting the resurgence of the classical and the dominance of Easterners, and turning to the prairies for inspiration. In landscape architecture, proponents of the Prairie School promoted restoring and recreating regional landscape features, using local rock materials and native plants in a naturalistic design. As Professor Wilhelm Miller of the University of Illinois, the most vocal proponent of the Prairie School in landscape architecture, exhorted: "study nature and make pictures full of local color."<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>Norman T. Newton, Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 345-52, 372-84 and 413-426.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., pp. 375, 427-28.

<sup>115</sup>Mara Gelbloom, "Ossian Simonds: Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening," The Prairie School Review, vol. XII, 1975, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup>Wilhelm Miller, "Successful American Gardens VII," Country Life in America, September 1, 1911, p. 38.

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Jens Jensen has received a great deal of recognition as the leading practitioner of the Prairie School of landscape architecture. His name is synonymous with the use of hawthorne, flowering dogwood and crabapples to suggest the horizontality of the natural Midwestern landscape. However, Ossian Cole Simonds (1855-1931) was the first to recreate a regional landscape, and the first to use native Midwestern species in a planting plan (including hawthorne, dogwood and crabapples), which he did as early as 1880.<sup>117</sup> "Thus, the ideas and techniques of the Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening were first expressed in Simonds' work and philosophy..."<sup>118</sup>

Simonds believed that local character should be preserved through the use of indigenous plants, and that they should be arranged for the convenience and safety of people, according to the principles of the Picturesque movement, rather than in the haphazard way they might appear in the wild. The principles of the Picturesque movement, as articulated by Frederick Law Olmsted (a great influence on Simonds), have been summed up as follows: avoid formal design except in very limited areas around buildings; keep open lawns and meadows in large central areas; provide circulation by means of organically curving and wide sweeping roads and paths; and place the principal road so that it will approximately circumscribe the whole area.<sup>119</sup> Simonds also drew inspiration from local topography, and gave his designs a sculptural quality and a sense of movement, through massing of plants, low, rolling hills and

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<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

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sinuous water elements.<sup>120</sup> Lagoons were used to symbolize the prairie rivers; meadows symbolized the prairie landscape.<sup>121</sup>

Simonds' designs for Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway exemplify both the Prairie School of landscape architecture, and Simonds' work. In 1900, when Simonds prepared his first plan for Tenney Park, the park was much smaller, encompassing 14 acres just west of the Yahara River. For this site, Simonds designed a serpentine lagoon (the "prairie river") with a series of islands, curving paths along the outer edge of the lagoon, and undulating planting beds with mostly native plants.<sup>122</sup> Thornton Avenue was constructed later; a curving road along the east edge of the park.

In 1906, Simonds prepared a plan for a major addition to Tenney Park (which brought the main section of the park to its current size). This built on the original, enlarging the lagoon and adding two more islands. Significantly, Simonds used the natural bed of the Yahara River (which had been abandoned when Leonard Farwell built his dam and flour mill around 1850) for part of the new lagoon. As part of the addition, Marston Avenue was created at the west end of the park. As of 1907, Tenney was a passive park, and underutilized. In June, 1908, John Nolen modified Simonds' design to create an active park. Nolen did this by filling in the lagoon between the five islands, to create one large 10 acre island. Most of this was called the "broad meadow," and was in keeping with the Prairie School of landscape architecture, as a symbol of the prairie landscape. It also conformed to Olmsted's Picturesque principle of "meadows in large central areas." Nolen's planting

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>122</sup>Shown on plan dated March 7, 1906, on file, Madison Parks Division.

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plan also emphasized native species. Of the 96 varieties he specified, less than one dozen were exotics.<sup>123</sup>

Tenney Park retains excellent integrity. The physical form of Simonds' plan, as modified by Nolen, has been retained, with the exception of a small wading pool on the island, filled in sometime after 1911. As design elements in the landscape, the noncontributing structures are all in keeping with the character of the park. The contributing structures in the park were likely a part of Simonds' vision; the earliest foot bridges in the park were arch bridges, at least one of which was concrete, and all were designed by Simonds.<sup>124</sup> Four of the park's bridges, Marston Avenue, A.G. Zimmerman, Sherman Avenue and Thornton Avenue Spillway are all good local examples of aesthetically designed pre-1940 bridges (of which there are 11 in Madison), as well as good examples of their various styles. In comparison with other early twentieth century park buildings, the simple Prairie School Restroom does not have the character of the Brittingham Boat House (1909), or the zoo buildings in Vilas Park, built in the same era.<sup>125</sup> The plantings, although less dense than the Simonds/Nolen plan called for, are still mostly native species arranged in a naturalistic manner. Although the broad meadow was lost to athletic fields (probably by 1920, when baseball was played there), the Madison Parks Division is in the process of recreating it on the north half of the island.

Simonds' plan for the Yahara River Parkway did not recreate Midwestern topography, but rather, modified the existing river for

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<sup>123</sup>Nolen's design and planting plan, dated June, 1908, on file in the Madison Parks Division.

<sup>124</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1903, p. 15; and MPPDA Reports: 1905, p. 9.

<sup>125</sup>Rankin, no page numbers.

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safe and convenient human use. As he did in Tenney Park, Simonds utilized curving narrow paths and irregular masses of mostly native species on the banks of the Yahara River. As design elements in the landscape, the contributing structures on the parkway, with the exception of the railroad bridges, are all arch bridges. Their designs are in keeping with Simonds' bridge designs for Tenney Park, also a Prairie School plan. At least one bridge, the Halle Steensland Bridge, was approved by Simonds.<sup>126</sup> All three contributing concrete arch bridges are good local examples of aesthetically designed pre-1940 bridges, and good examples of their various styles. The noncontributing Halle Steensland Bridge, Jenifer Street Pedestrian Bridge and Rutledge Street Bridge are also arch bridges. The four Railroad Bridges are aesthetically out of character with the parkway, although they do contribute to the parkway's history. The surviving Boat House, and the extensive use of rip-rap, also visually detract from the parkway, but none of these significantly affects the overall integrity of the Yahara River Parkway. Although there are few paths along the river, and the plantings are less dense, the parkway retains a high degree of integrity. The original physical form is intact, and the plantings and the bridges (with exceptions noted above) are in keeping with Simonds' design.<sup>127</sup>

According to National Register Bulletin 18, How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes, "Although a landscape need not retain all the characteristic features that it had during its period of significance, it must retain enough or have restored enough of the essential features to make its historic character clearly recognizable."<sup>128</sup> Further, Simonds expected his designs to

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<sup>126</sup>MPPDA Reports: 1906, p. 34.

<sup>127</sup>Plan dated March 7, 1906, on file, Madison Parks Department.

<sup>128</sup>J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, How to Evaluate

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change over time. "And what of the final result?...There never is any....[There] is continual growth."<sup>129</sup> Using these criteria, Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway are eligible for listing on the National Register, both individually and as a part of the Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway.

O.C. Simonds was born in Michigan, and graduated from the University of Michigan in civil engineering in 1878. While there, he studied architecture under William LeBaron Jenney. After Simonds graduated, he worked for Jenney in Chicago. In 1878, Bryan Lathrop, president of the Graceland Cemetery Association, hired Simonds, through Jenney's firm, to lay out an addition to the cemetery. Lathrop saw naturalistic landscape architecture as a fine art, and in his enthusiasm, interested Simonds in landscaping the cemetery. At first, Simonds continued to pursue a career in architecture as well, as part of the firm of Holabird, Simonds and Roche from 1880 to 1883. Before long, Simonds realized that his true calling was landscape architecture, or landscape gardening as he preferred to call it.<sup>130</sup> By 1880, Simonds was transplanting trees and shrubs from the wild to Graceland Cemetery.<sup>131</sup> Simonds was appointed superintendent of Graceland Cemetery in 1881, a post in which he served until 1898. His naturalistic designs for the cemetery attracted the attention of Chicago's wealthiest families, who hired him to design similar grounds for their estates. By

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and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes, National Register Bulletin 18, n.d., p. 6.

<sup>129</sup>O.C. Simonds, Landscape-Gardening, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920), p. 150.

<sup>130</sup>Gelbloom, p. 7.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

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1900, Simonds had a thriving consulting practice. In Madison, he had a long association with the MPPDA. His designs for the MPPDA include Vilas Park, Tenney Park, Brittingham Park and the Yahara River Parkway. In the Chicago area he designed the Nichols and Morton Arboretums, the original estates of Lake Forest, and several parks in Winnetka. Simonds also planned the grounds of the University of Maryland, and the University of Iowa (Ames). He was also a founder of the University of Michigan program in landscape architecture (1909), and the American Association of Landscape Architects (1899).

Norman T. Newton, noted landscape architectural historian, states that Graceland Cemetery, "one of the most remarkable park-like cemeteries of the Western world," is regarded as Simonds' masterpiece.<sup>132</sup> However, Simonds' designs have not been well studied, and it is difficult to determine where to rank Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway among them. They are certainly representative of his work.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway is significant under criterion A in Community Development and Planning, and under criterion C in Landscape Architecture. The site is significant in Community Development for several reasons. First, these parks were developed by the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association (MPPDA), an important voluntary organization that changed the physical development and environmental character of Madison. Second, the creation of Tenney Park changed the character and purpose of the MPPDA, from a private group developing pleasure drives for the well-to-do, to a semi-public parks department responsible for urban parks as well as pleasure drives. Third,

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<sup>132</sup>Newton, p. 391.

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Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway triggered an era of incredible park philanthropy, a time in which 10 percent of all the households in Madison voluntarily donated money to support public parks, and several wealthy men gave large gifts to create parks in their names (Vilas, Brittingham, Burrows). Fourth, Tenney Park itself was the first in-city park given to and developed by the MPPDA, and the first to provide public access to lake frontage. Fifth, the Yahara River Parkway was the first river parkway in Madison, and the first park funded with public subscriptions rather than large gifts from a few donors. In Landscape Architecture, both Tenney Park and the Yahara River Parkway are excellent, intact examples of Prairie School design. They are also significant as representative of the work of the founder of the Prairie School of landscape architecture, O.C. Simonds.



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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2 Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

Reports of the Officers of the Madison Park and Pleasure Drive  
Association. (MPPDA Reports) 1902 through 1929.

Sanborn Publishing Company. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Madison.  
Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1959.

Simonds, O.C. Landscape-Gardening. New York: The Macmillan  
Company, 1920.

Tishler, William, editor. American Landscape Architecture:  
Designers and Places. Washington, D.C.: National Trust for  
Historic Preservation, 1989.

Wisconsin State Journal. (WSJ) 1907, 1939.

Wyatt, Barbara. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Three  
volumes. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):  
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository:  
Madison Planning Department;  
SHSW#93-1724-DA

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 61 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/6 3/0/7/1/4/0 4/7/7/3/9/3/0 3 1/6 3/0/8/3/5/0 4/7/7/2/7/2/0  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 1/6 3/0/8/3/5/0 4/7/7/2/8/4/0 4 1/6 3/0/7/4/8/0 4/7/7/3/5/0/0  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

5 1/6 3/0/7/2/3/0 4/7/7/3/3/3/0 6 1/6 3/0/6/8/5/0 4/7/7/3/6/6/0  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Preservation Consultant  
organization Madison Trust for Historic Pres. date 4-01-1998  
street & number P. O. Box 296 telephone 608-233-5942  
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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(Rev. 8-86)  
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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

Section 10 Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The following properties in the City of Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin, are part of the Tenney-Yahara Parks Historic District:

Tenney Park: Section 12, Certified Survey Map No. 3601, recorded in Dane County Register of Deeds in Vol. 14, p. 239 of Certified Surveys; and part of the SE 1/4 commencing at the intersection with the W r-o-w line of Sherman Avenue and the E-W 1/4 line of said section, thence S 19 degrees 26 minutes W 521.3 ft to POB, thence N 52 degrees 47 minutes W to shoreline Lake Mendota, thence SW along S shoreline to NE line of Certified Survey Map No. 3601, thence SE along said NE line to NW r-o-w line of Sherman Avenue, thence NE along said r-o-w to POB; and part of the SE 1/4 beginning on the NW side of Johnson Street at intersection of NE line of Marston Avenue, thence NE on Johnson Street to SW bank of Yahara River, thence NW along said river to Lake Mendota, thence SW along lakeshore to NE line of Lot 40, Willow Park, thence SE along said lot line to Sherman Avenue, thence SW on said Avenue to NE line of Marston Avenue, thence SE along said Avenue to Johnson Street and POB; and part of Section 12 beginning at a point which S 89 degrees 31 minutes W 296.14 feet and S 19 degrees 04 minutes W 731.44 feet from NE corner of SE 1/4 of said section, thence S 19 degrees 04 minutes W 275.5 feet, thence S 39 degrees 34 minutes W 364.28 feet, thence N 53 degrees 02 minutes W 430.92 feet to POB, thence S 36 degrees 58 minutes W 100 feet to the bank of the Yahara River, thence N 46 degrees 40 minutes W 325 feet, thence N 35 degrees 51 minutes E 100 feet, thence southeasterly in a direct line 325 feet to POB; and Lots 41-52, Addition to Willow Park Subdivision.

and

Yahara River Parkway: That part of the SE 1/4 of Section 12, SW 1/4 of Section 6, and NW 1/4 of Section 7 lying between Thornton Avenue and the Yahara River, NE of Blocks 221, 222, and 223, Original Plat

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 2 Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

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of Madison; and Original Plat, that part vacated in Block 240 lying E of Thornton Avenue and part of Block 275 as follows: beginning at a point 14.5 ft E of the E corner of Lot 28, thence W to Yahara River, thence N along River to N line Lot 1, thence E to a point 27 ft E of N corner Lot 1, thence SE to POB; and Original Plat, that part of the NW 1/4 of Section 7 lying between Thornton Avenue and the Yahara River NE of Blocks 227, 238, 239 and 240; and part of the N 1/2 of Section 7, T7N, R10E bounded by Riverside Drive, Rutledge Street, the Yahara River and Winnebago Street; and that part of the N 1/2 of Section 7, Range 10E bounded by Lake Monona, Thornton Avenue, Rutledge Street, the Yahara River and Lot 20, McCormick Replat; and all lands within 100 feet of the Yahara River on the following described parcel: Section 6, T7N, R10E, railroad lying between East Johnson Street and Thornton Avenue; and part of the SW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 Section 7, T7N, R10E, described as follows: all that portion of the Soo Line Railroad Company's abandoned railroad r-o-w lying southwesterly of southwesterly r-o-w line of Chicago and North Western Railroad r-o-w and lying northeasterly of the northeasterly bank of the Yahara River, and lying northwesterly of the northwesterly property line of City of Madison owned parcel 0710-063-1504-0, a strip of land 100 feet wide; and all lands within 100 feet of the Yahara River on the following described parcel: Farwell Addition beginning at the intersection of the northeasterly bank of the Yahara River and the Northwesterly line of East Washington Avenue, thence northeasterly along northwesterly line of East Washington Avenue to the southwesterly line of the Chicago and North Western Railroad r-o-w, thence northerly along said r-o-w to the southeasterly line of the former Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific Railroad r-o-w, thence southerly along last mentioned r-o-w to the northeasterly bank of the river, thence southeasterly along river to POB; and part of Farwell Addition beginning on SE line of Main Street, 8866 feet SW of First Street, thence SW on Main Street to Yahara River, thence SE along NE bank of said river to r-o-w of the Chicago and

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 3 Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

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North Western RR, thence northwesterly 281 feet to POB; and part of the land owned by Chicago and North Western RR in Blocks 274, 275, 276, 283, 285 and 287, Farwell Addition, described as follows: all lands between South Thornton Avenue and a line 65 feet m/1 NE of the Yahara River; and part of Lots 24 through 26, Farwell Addition, described as follows: commencing at W corner, Lot 7, Block 1, Monona Subdivision, thence northwesterly along the Yahara River bank to Chicago & North Western RR corridor, thence northeasterly along SE line of said corridor 50 feet, thence southeasterly, paralleling the Yahara River bank to POB; and that part of Lot 7, Block 1, Monona Subdivision not assessed to others beginning 294 feet SW from Merry Street to Yahara River, deeded to Madison Park and Pleasure Drive Association in 1903; and the S 50 feet m/1 of Lot 6, Block 1, Monona Subdivision; and a strip of land 50 feet in width off from the southerly end of Lot 5, Block 1, Monona Subdivision; and a strip of land 50 feet wide off from the southerly end of Lots 3 and 4, Block 1, Monona Subdivision; and part of Lot 2, Block 1, Monona Subdivision described as follows: beginning at a point on the westerly line of Lot 2, 40 feet from the bank of the Yahara River, running thence southwesterly along the westerly line of Lot 2 to said river, thence along the bank of said river to the westerly line of Lot 1, thence along said line 40 feet, thence northwesterly to POB; and part of Lot 1, Block 1, Monona Subdivision described as follows: beginning at a point on the westerly line of said Lot 1, 40 feet from the bank of the Yahara River, thence southwesterly along the westerly line of Lot 1 to said river, thence along the bank of said river to the westerly line of the former Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific RR, which is the easterly line of Lot 1, Block 1, thence along said line to a point opposite a point 3 feet southerly from the present abutments at the end of the bridge of said railway company, thence northwesterly to the POB; and part of Farwell Addition not platted lying in city limits Section 7, T7N, R10E, r-o-w in NE 1/4 of NW 1/4 of said section bounded by Winnebago Street, Thornton Avenue,

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Section 10 Page 4 Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

Wilson Street, and the easterly line of Lot 1, Block 1, Monona Subdivision; and Original Plat, that part of the N ½ of Section 7, T7N, R10E bounded by Rutledge Street, Thornton Avenue, Winnebago Street and Yahara River; and all lands within 50 feet of the Yahara River bank in the parcel described as follows: First Addition to Riverside Park, all of Block 2, Groveland, all of Blocks 12 and 13, Replat of Block 7 and Lots 1 through 4 of Block 8, Original Plat of Lake Park Subdivision and all of Block 3 used for park and all of Block 4, Kraft Replat, Lot 5, Block 8.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The verbal boundary description above includes all those resources historically associated with Tenney Park and/or the Yahara River Parkway.

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(Rev. 8-86)  
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Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 1 Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

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The enclosed photos were taken in 1993, but a field check of the site undertaken in 1999 found that the site is still essentially identical in appearance today.

Photo 1 of 16  
Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI  
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, December 1993  
Negative on file in State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of Tenney Park from E. Johnson Street and Marston Avenue,  
looking north-northeast.

The above is the same for the photos listed below, except as noted:

Photo 2 of 16  
Tenney Park Restroom, west and north facades.

Photo 3 of 16  
Tenney Park, Marston Avenue Bridge, view looking north.

Photo 4 of 16  
Tenney Park, A.G. Zimmerman Bridge, view looking east.

Photo 5 of 16  
Tenney Park, Sherman Avenue Bridge, view looking north.

Photo 6 of 16  
Tenney Park, Thornton Avenue Spillway, view looking east.

Photo 7 of 16  
Tenney Park, Steel Arch Bridge, view looking north.



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Section photos Page 2 Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, WI

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Photo 8 of 16  
Yahara River Parkway, view looking north from Rutledge Street  
Bridge.

Photo 9 of 16  
Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Bridge, just south of E. Johnson  
Street, view looking south.

Photo 10 of 16  
Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Bridge, just north of  
Williamson Street, view looking northeast.

Photo 11 of 16  
Williamson Street Bridge, view looking northeast.

Photo 12 of 16  
East Johnson Street Bridge, view looking northeast.

Photo 13 of 16  
East Main Street Bridge, view looking northeast.

Photo 14 of 16  
Halle Steensland Bridge, view looking northeast.

Photo 15 of 16  
Halle Steensland Bridge, view looking north.

Photo 16 of 16  
Jenifer Street Pedestrian Bridge, view looking east.



1 of 16



2 of 16

Tenney-Yalavaca Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

Photograph # 1 of 16

AHI# 0078138 TENNEY PARK

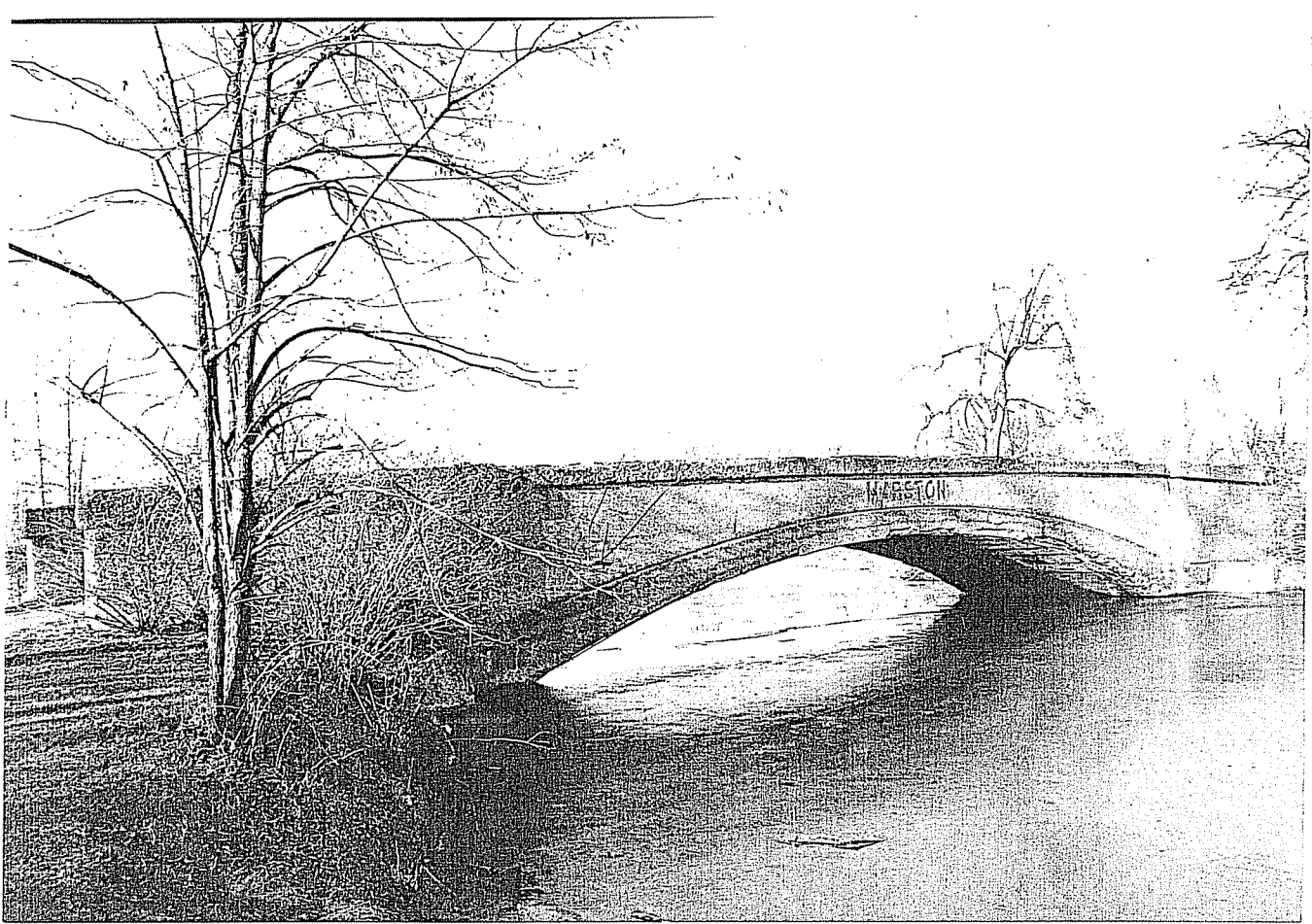
Tenney-Yalavaca Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

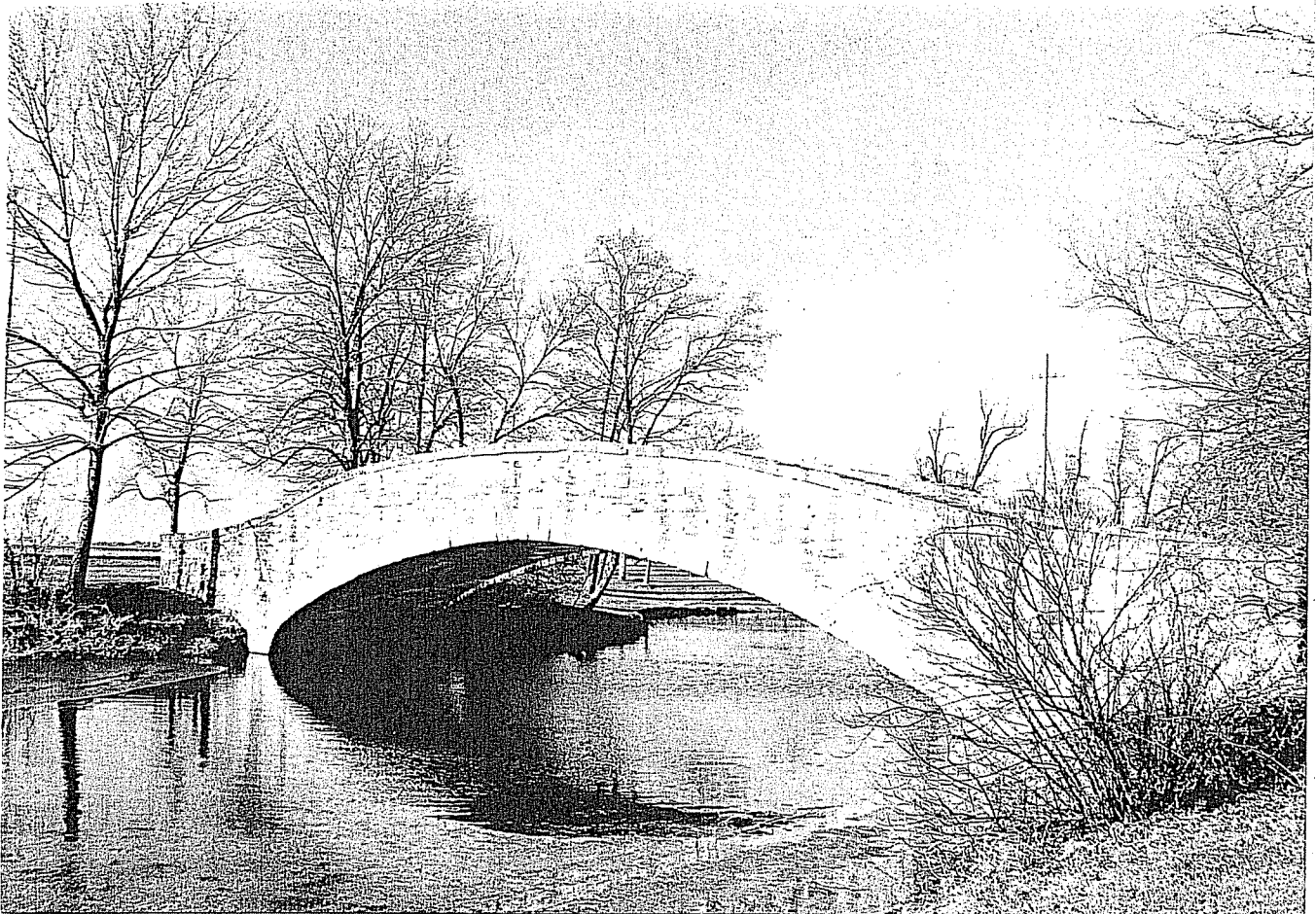
Photograph # 2 of 16

TENNEY PARK Restroom

AHI# 0143018



3 of 16



4 of 16

Tenney - Galara Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, VT (DANE CO)

photograph # 3 of 16

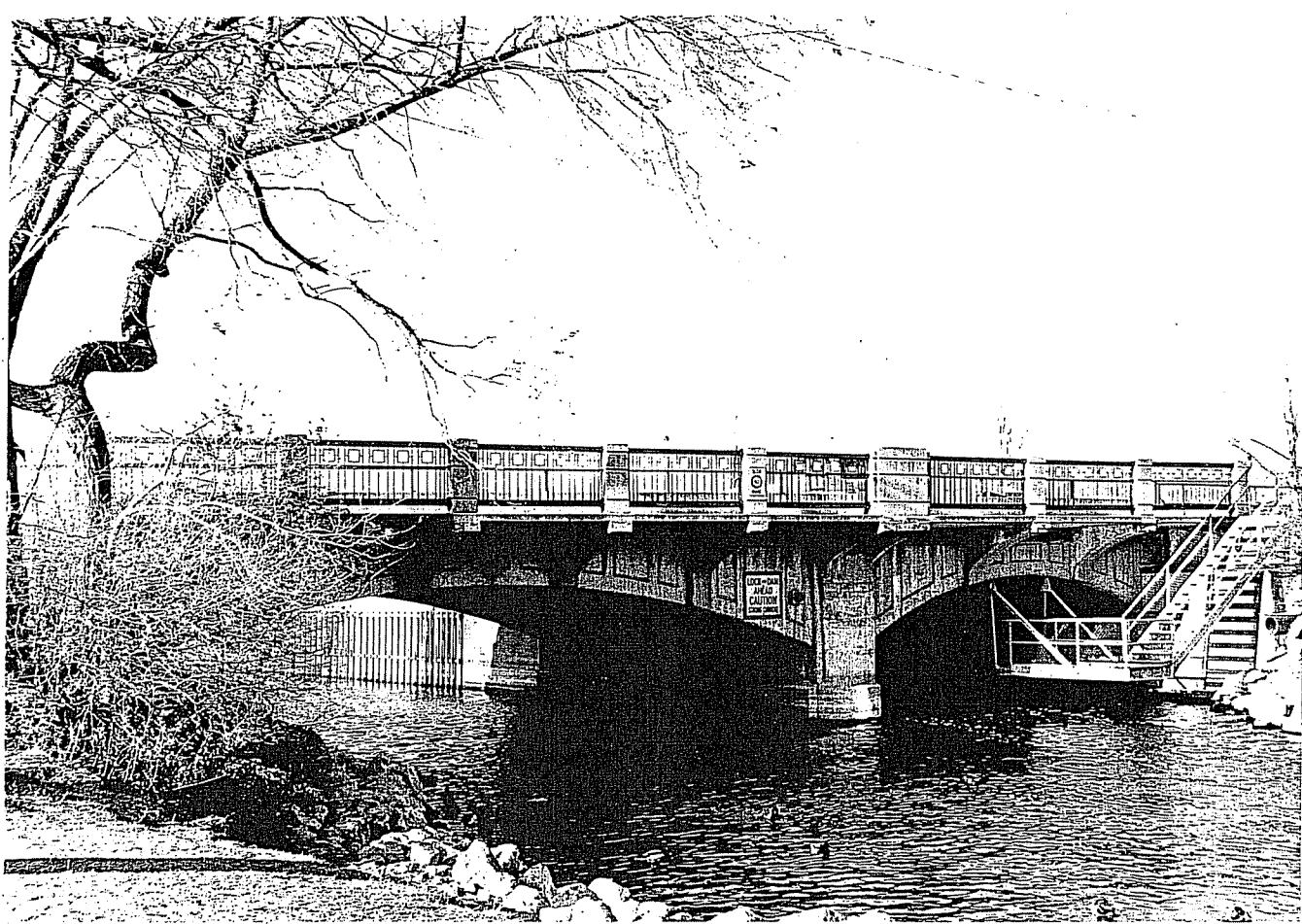
AHI# 0143178 MARSTON ST. FOOTBRIDGE

Tenney - Galara Parks  
Historic Site

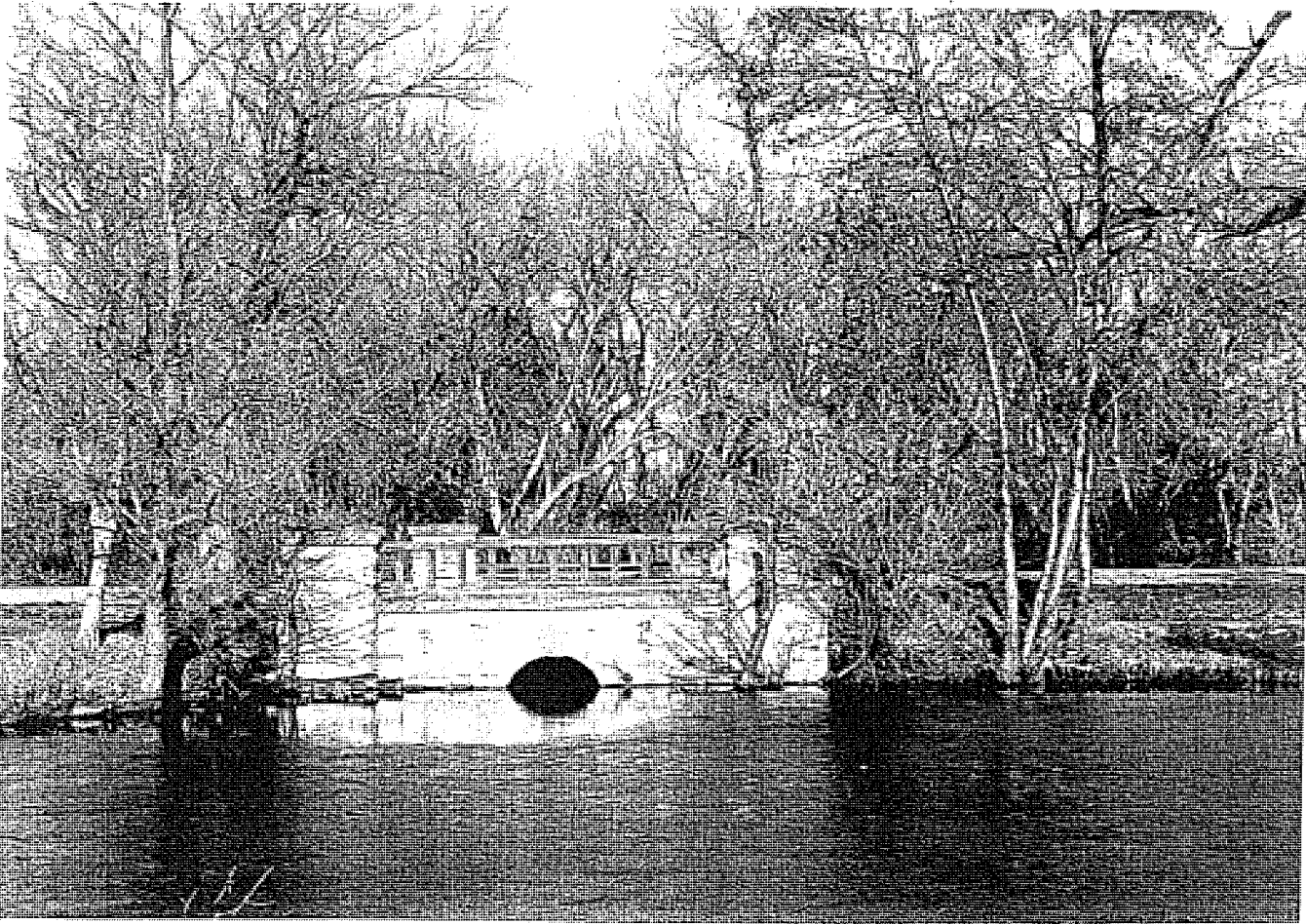
Madison, VT (DANE CO)

photograph # 4 of 16

AHI# 0143179 A.G. ZIMMERMAN FOOTBRIDGE



5 of 16



6 of 16

Tenney-Yalovara Parks

Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

photograph # 5 of 16

AHI # 0112595

STERMAN AVE BRIDGE

Tenney-Yalovara Parks

Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

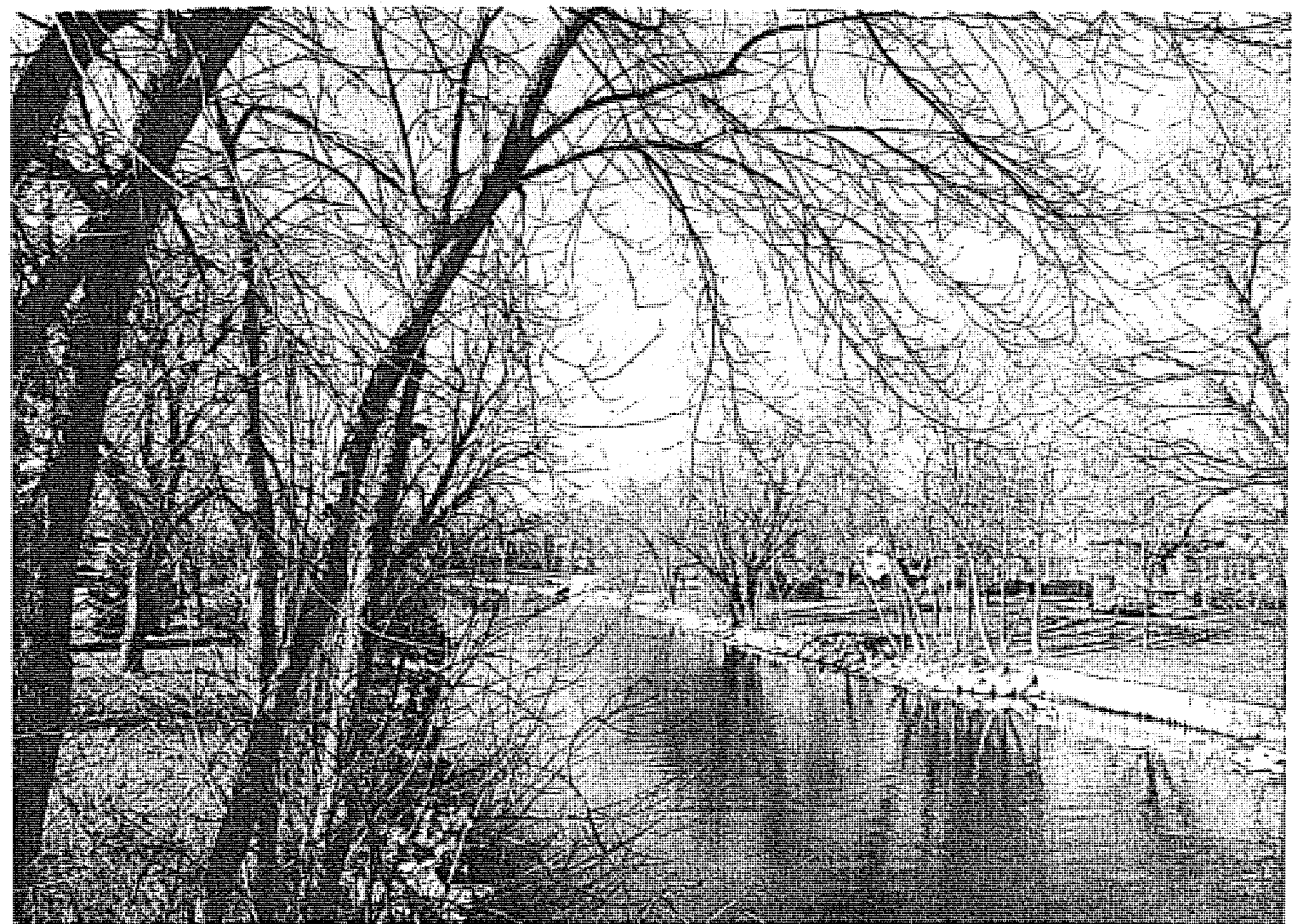
photograph # 6 of 16

AHI # 0143019

TORNTON AVE SPILLWAY



7 of 16



8 of 16



Tennay - Galara Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, WI (DAVE CO)

photo # 7 of 15

AHI# 0143020

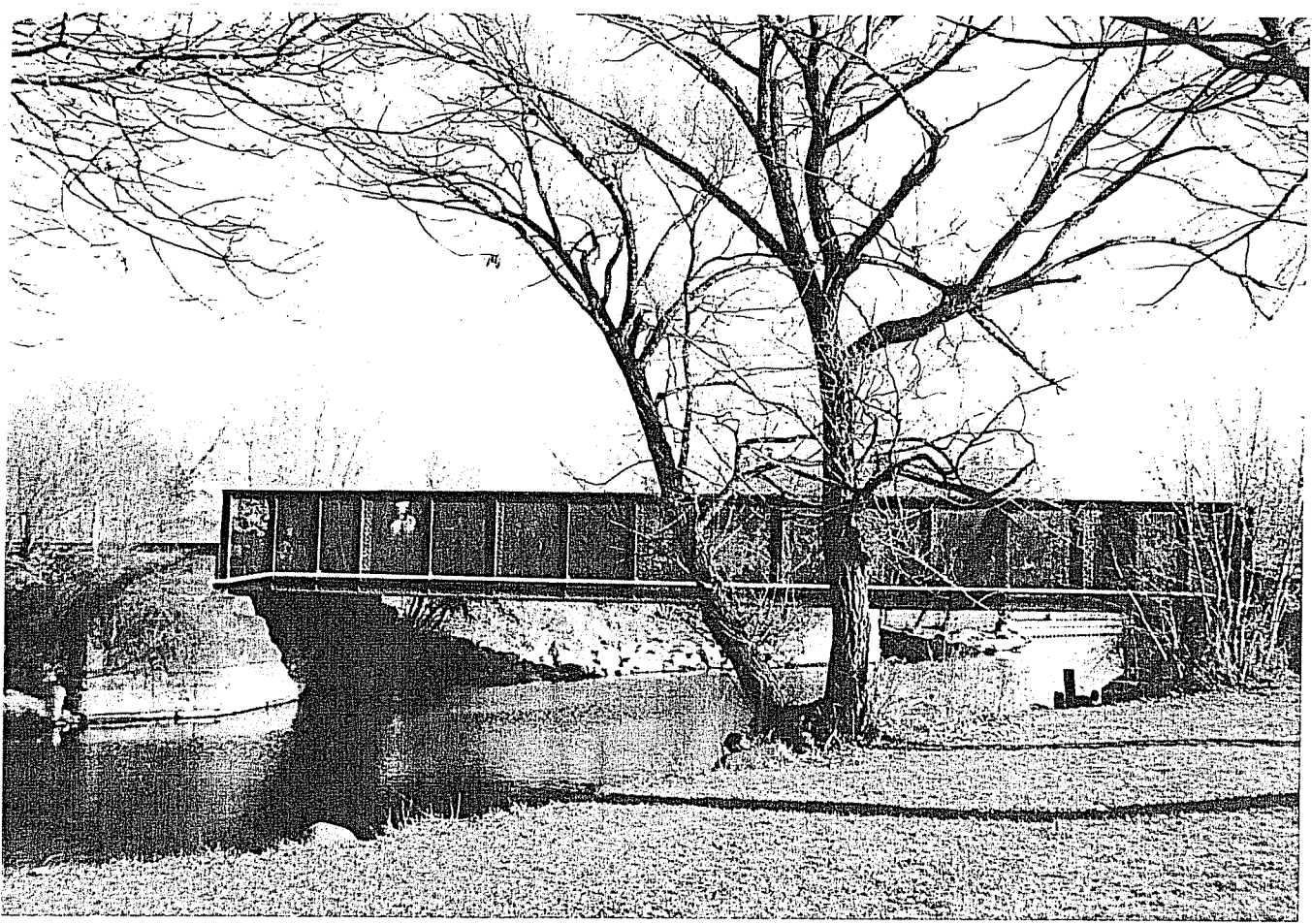
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Tennay - Galara Parks  
Historic Site

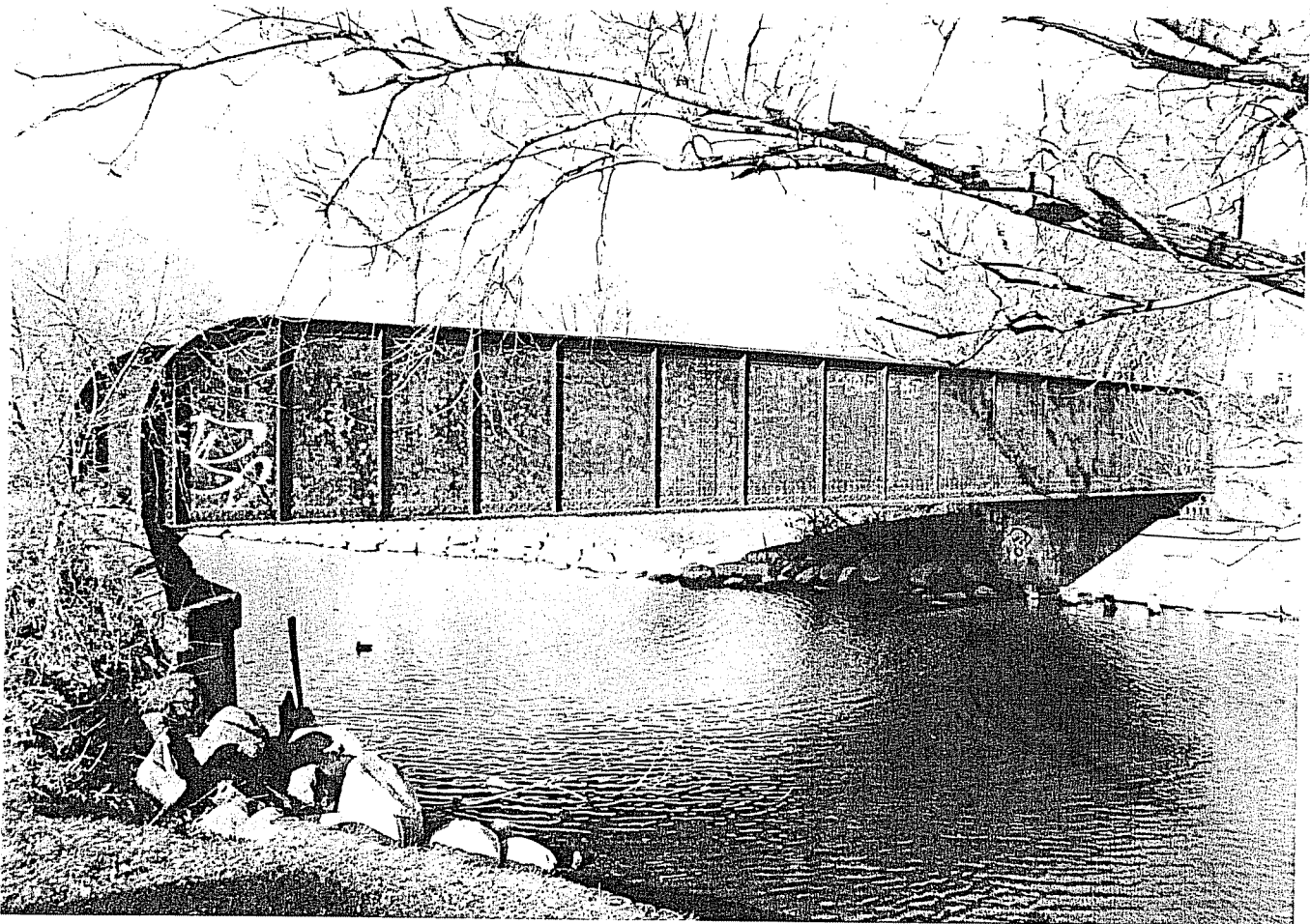
Madison, WI (DAVE CO)

photo # 8 of 16

AHI# 0078139



9 of 16



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Tenney-Yalava Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

photo # 9 of 16

AHI# 0143021

C + NW RAILROAD BRIDGE

YALAVA RIVER PKWY

Tenney-Yalava Parks  
Historic Site

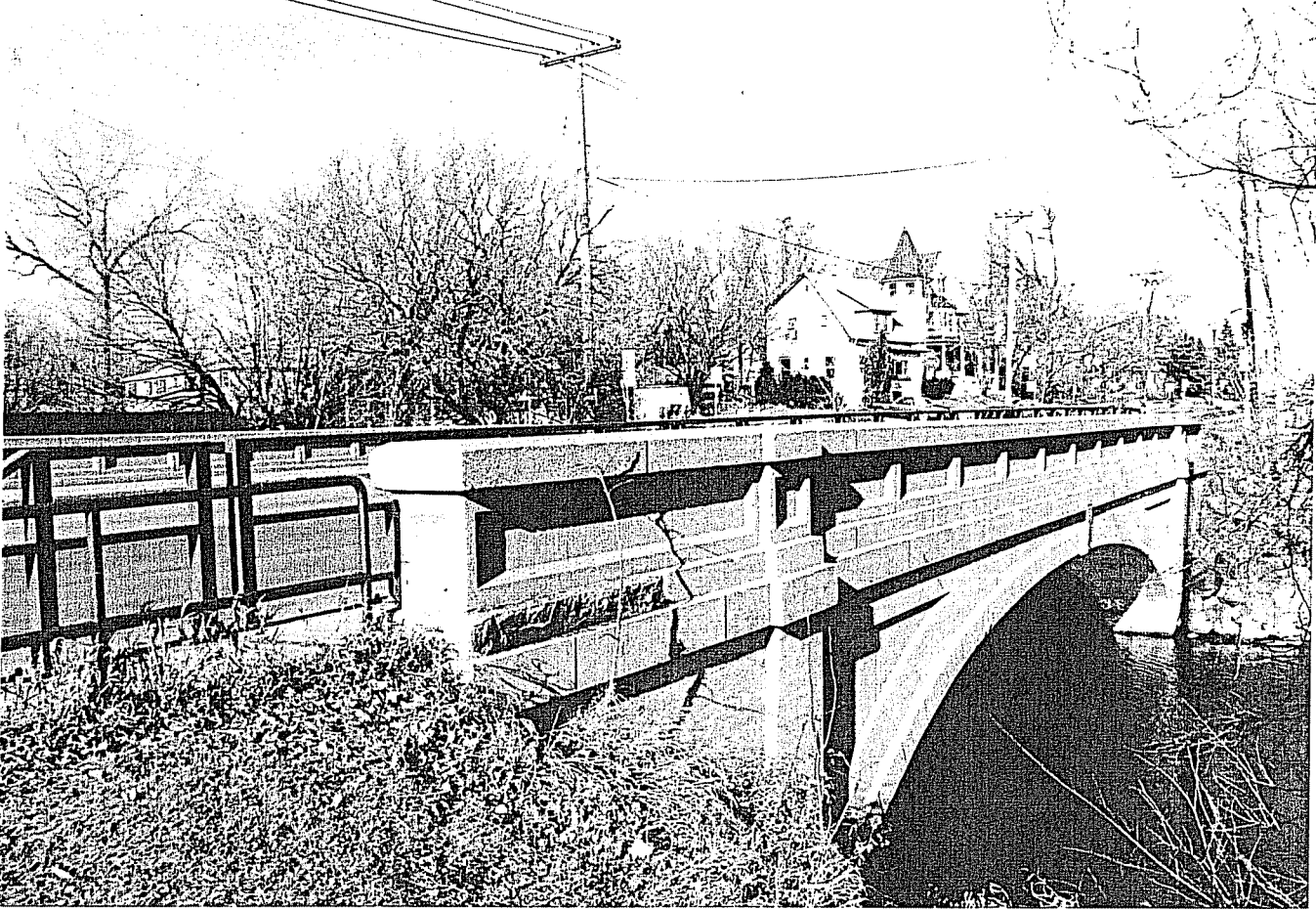
Madison, WI (DANE CO)

photo # 10 of 16

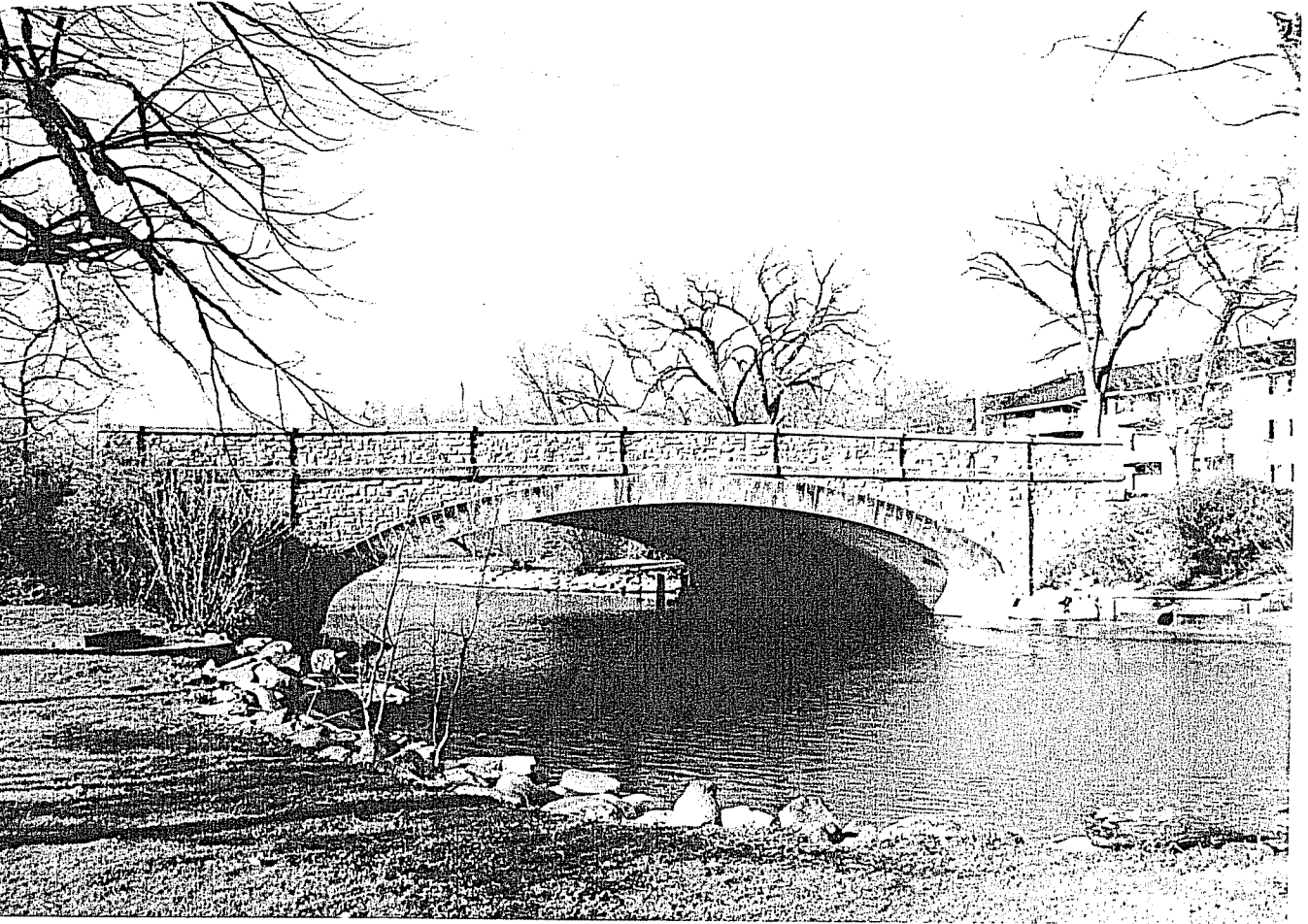
AHI# 0143078

C, W + S + P RAILROAD BRIDGE

YALAVA RIVER PKWY.



11 of 16



12 of 16

Tennet-Yalaca Parks

Historic Site

Madison, WI (DAVE CO)

photo # 11 of 16

AHI # 0143098

Tennet-Yalaca Parks

Historic Site

Madison, WI (DAVE CO)

photo # 12 of 16

AHI # 0143118

E. JOHNSON ST. BRIDGE



13 of 16



14 of 16

Tenney Galawa Parks

~~Historic Site~~

Madison, WI (DAVE CO)

~~photo #~~ 13 of 16

AH1# 0143138

E. MAIN ST. BRIDGE

Tenney Galawa Parks

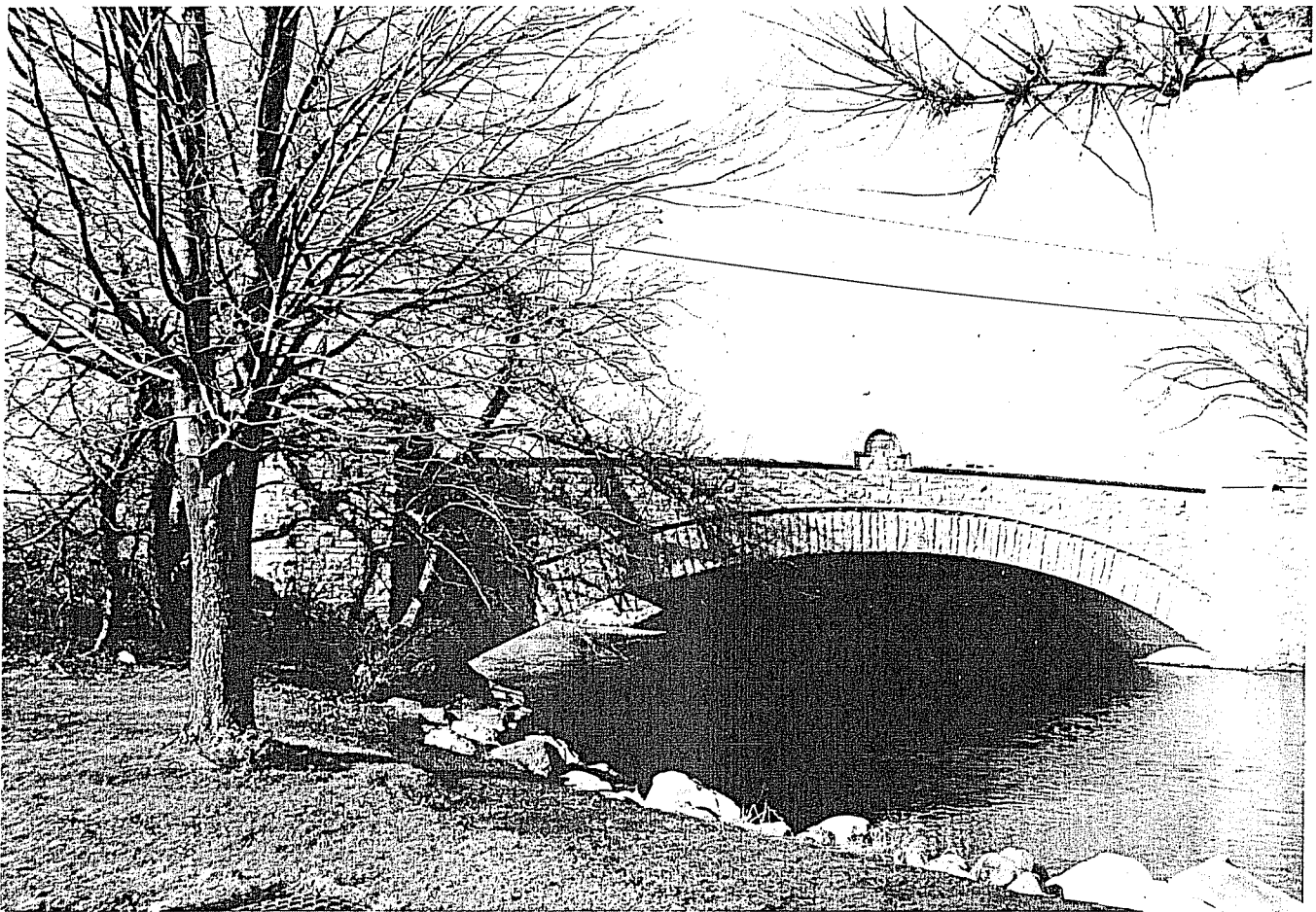
~~Historic Site~~

Madison, WI (DAVE CO)

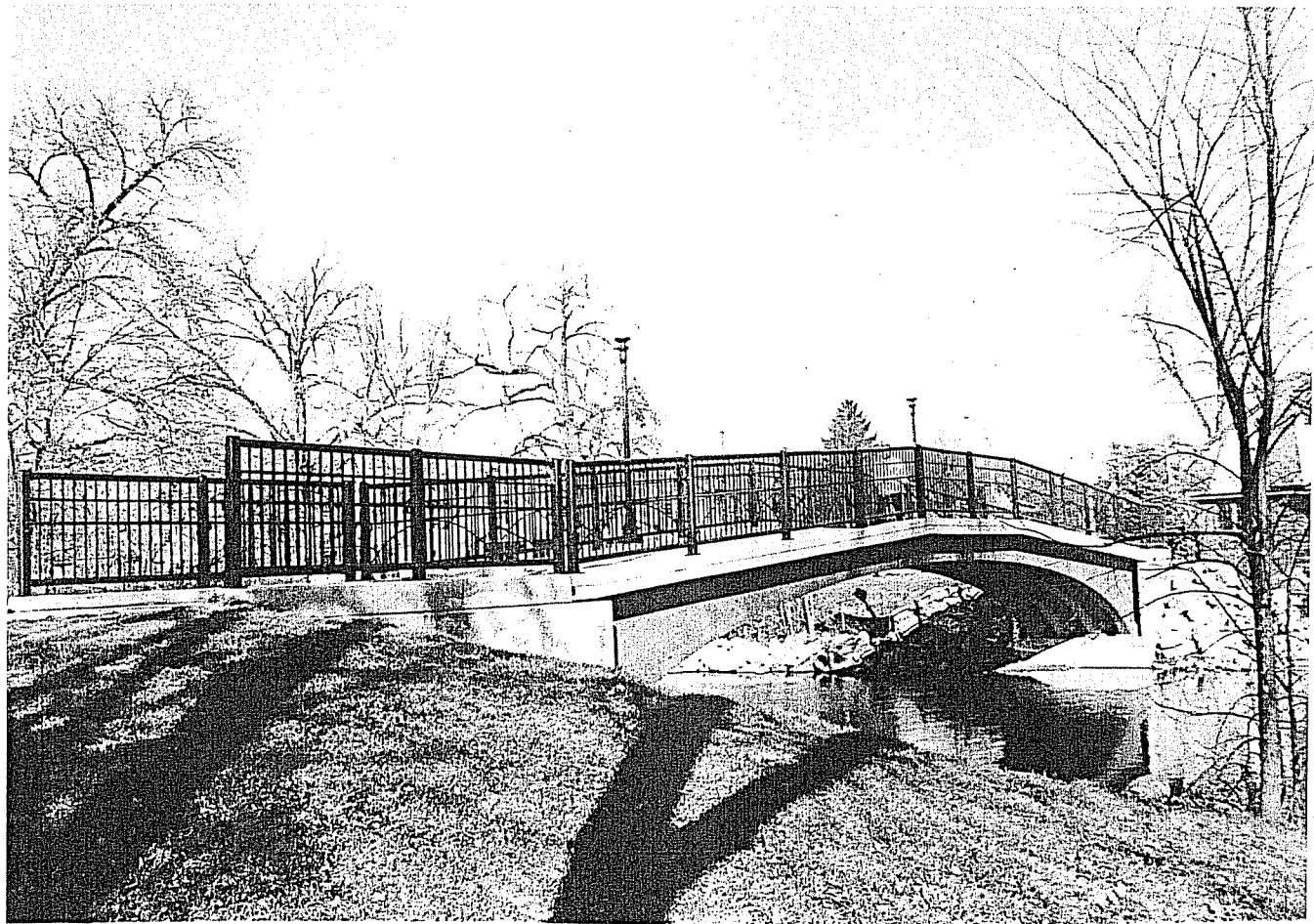
~~photo #~~ 14 of 16

AH1# 0143140

HALLE STEENSLAND BRIDGE



15 of 16



16 of 16



Tenney-Yakara Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

photo # 15 of 16

AHI# 0143140

HALLE STEENSLAND BRIDGE  
E. WASHINGTON AVE OVER YAKARA RIVER

Tenney-Yakara Parks  
Historic Site

Madison, WI (DANE CO)

photo # 16 of 16

AHI# 0143158

JENNIFER SE. PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Tenney Park/Yahara River Parkway  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**Property Owner**

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Madison Real Estate Department  
street & number 210 Martin Luther King Blvd telephone (608)266-4711  
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53709

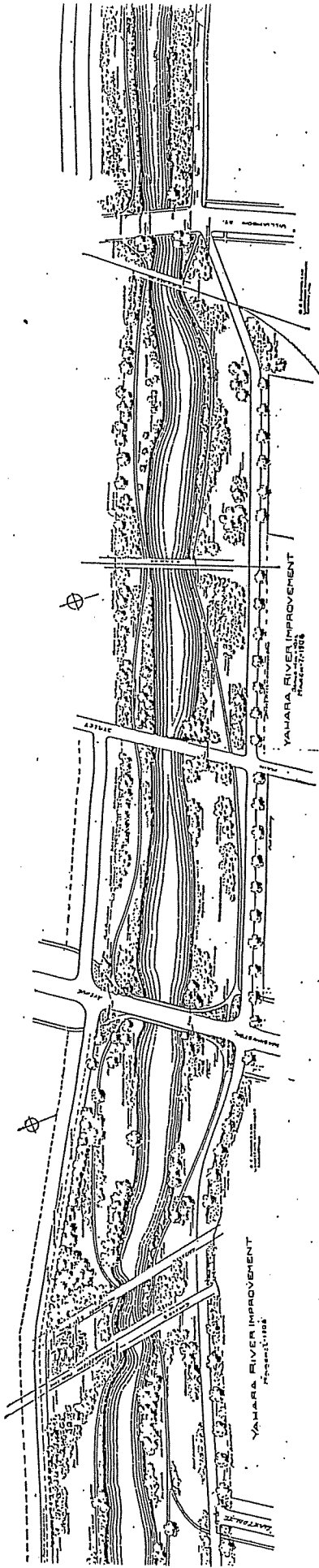
C&NW Railroad Bridges owner:

name Chicago and Northwestern Railroad  
street & number 1 North Western Center  
165 N. Canal Street  
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60606-1551

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

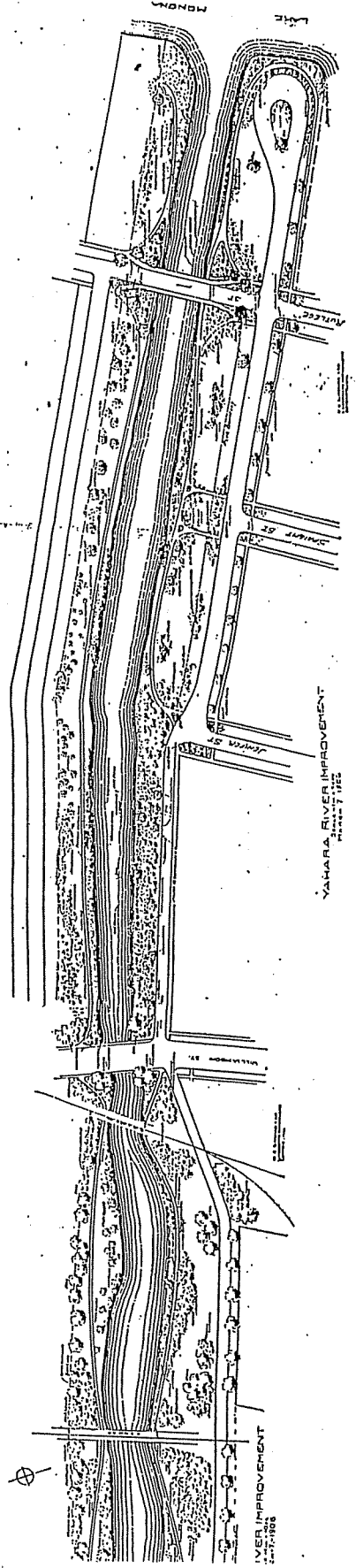
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

TENNEY PARK YAHARA RIVER PARKWAY  
MADISON, DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN  
no scale



YAHARA F  
1906

TENNEY PARK AND YAHARA PARKWAY

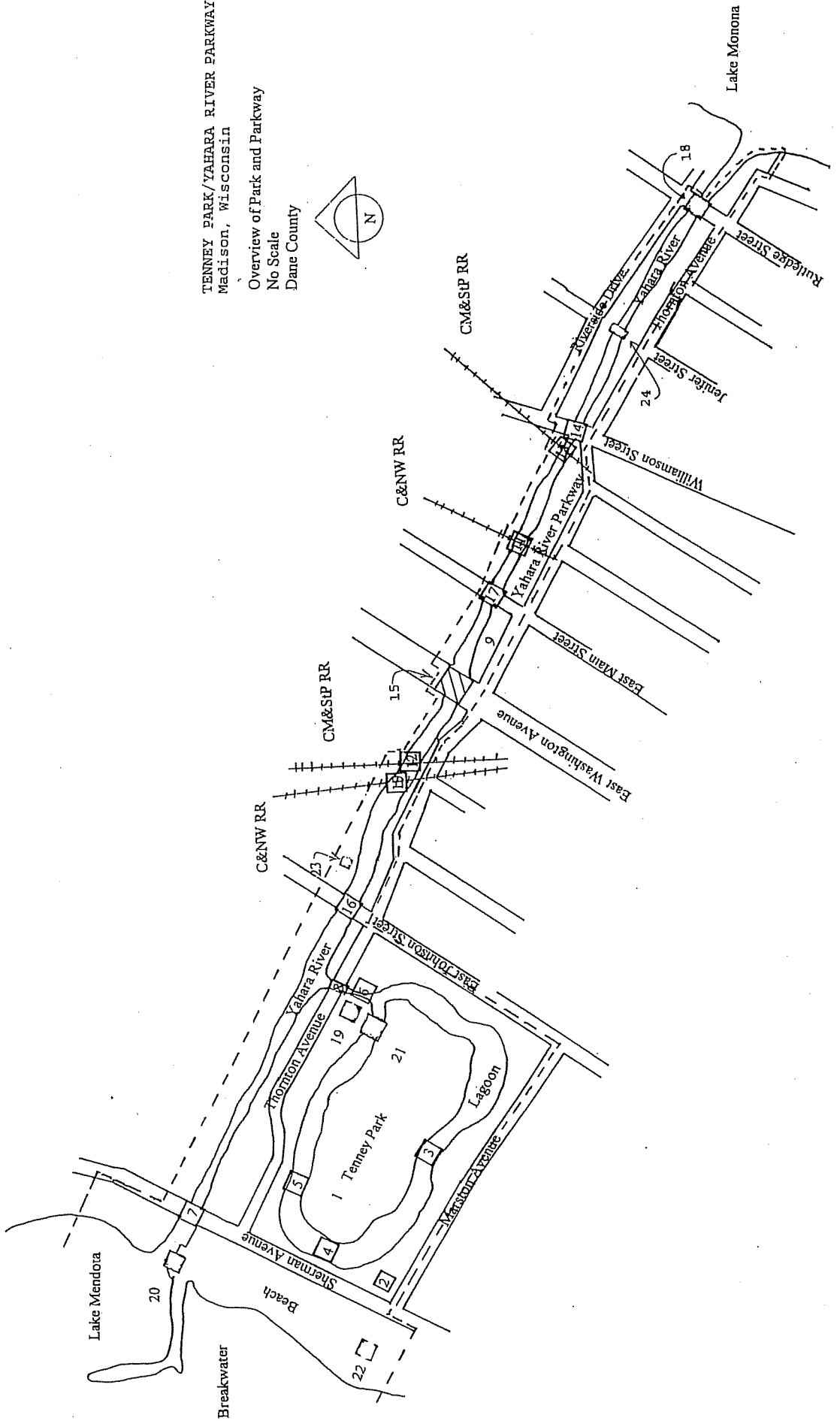
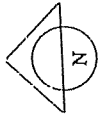


O.C. Smith  
1906

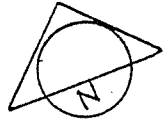
C

TENNEY PARK/YAHARA RIVER PARKWAY  
Madison, Wisconsin

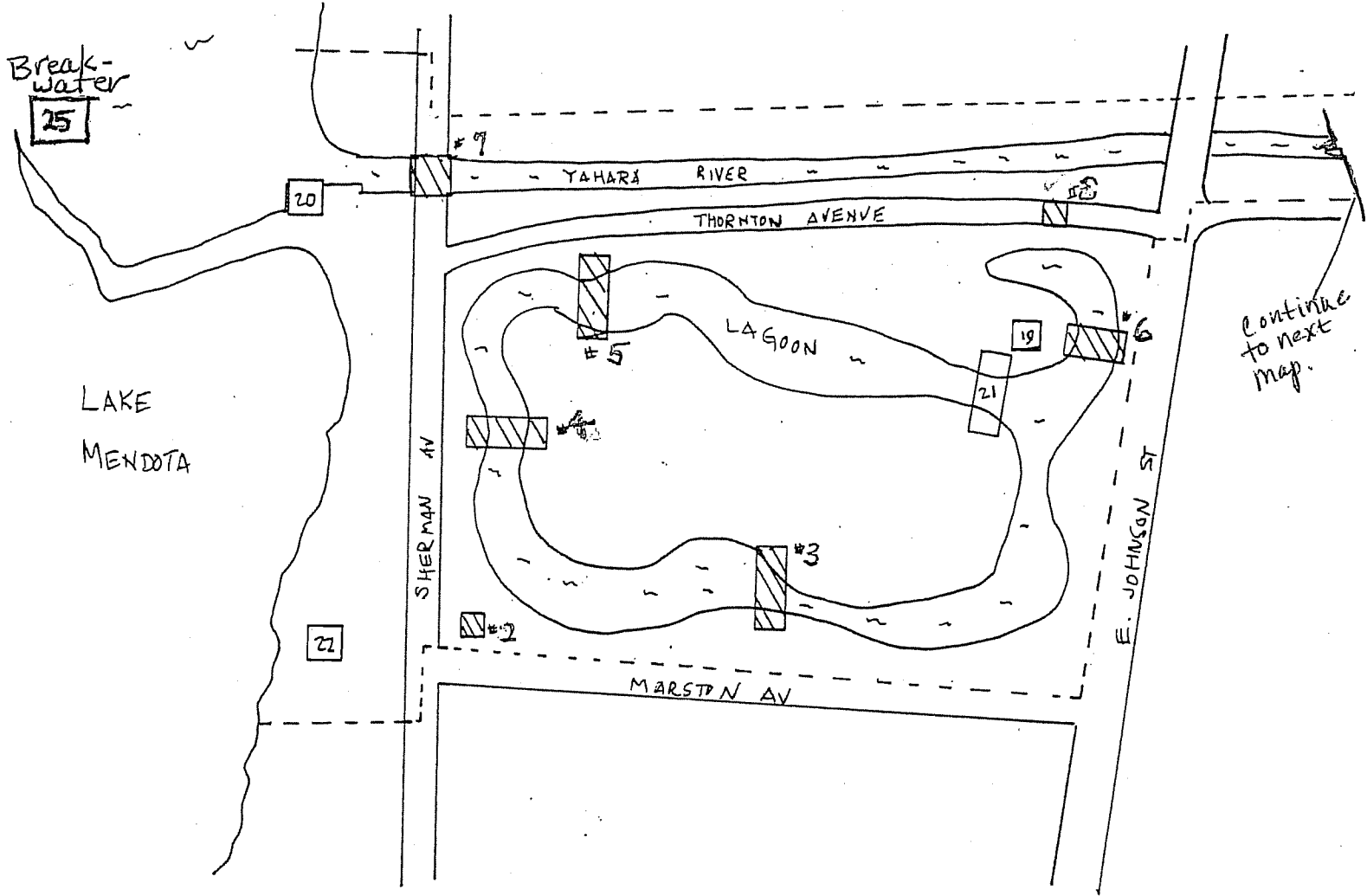
Overview of Park and Parkway  
No Scale  
Dane County



MAP 1  
TenneyPark/Yahara River Parkway  
Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin  
No scale



- - - Park Boundary
- ▨ Contributing
- Noncontributing

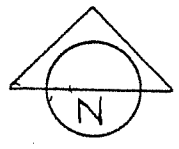


TENNEY PARK  
No. 1

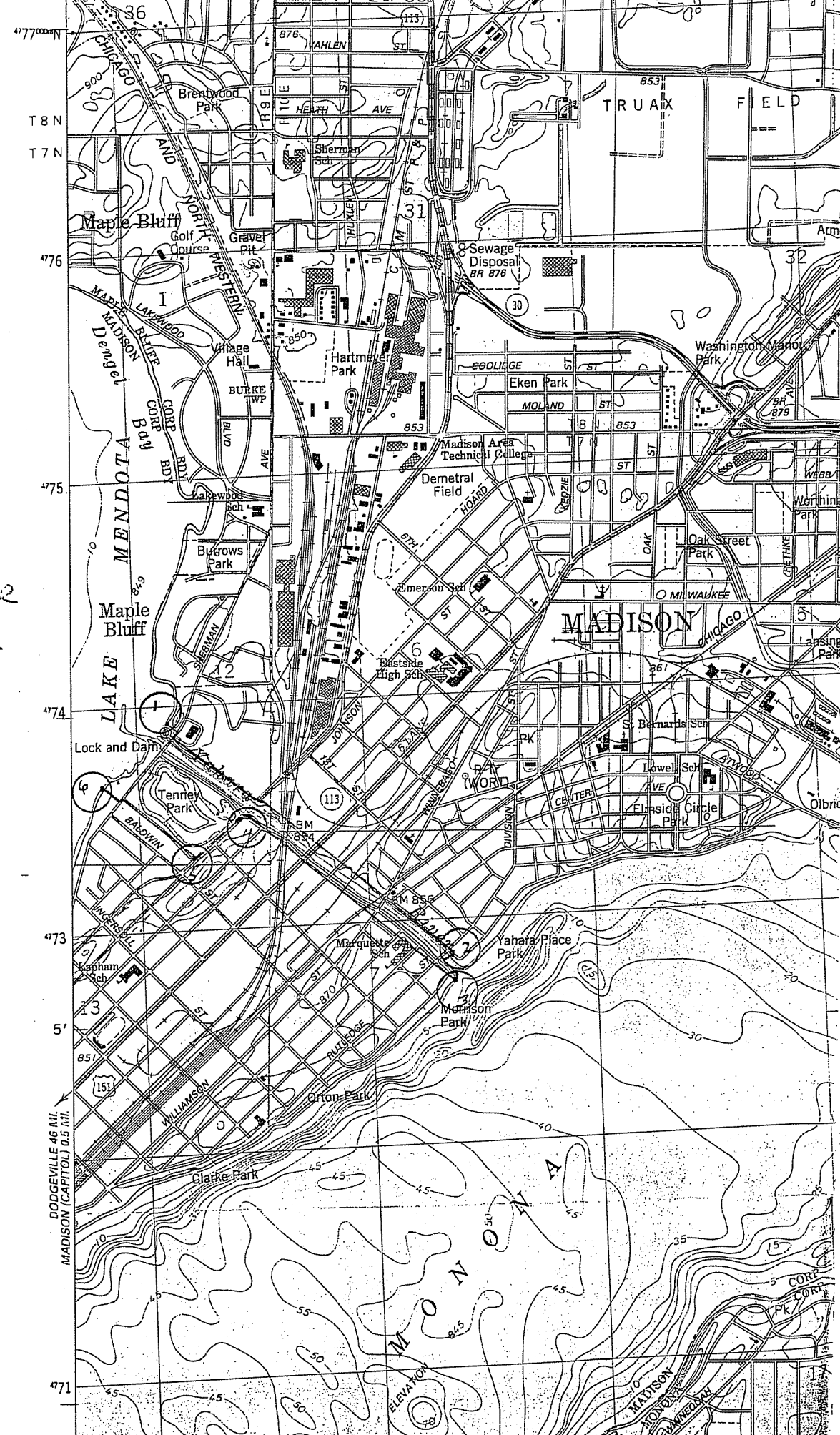


MAP 2  
 TenneyPark/Yahara River Parkway  
 Madison, Dane County, Wisconsin  
 No Scale

- Park Boundary
- ▨ Contributing
- Noncontributing



89°22'30" 1080000E WAUNAKEE 8 MI. '09  
43°07'30"



TENNEY PARK - YAHARA RIVER  
MADISON, DANE CO, WI  
UTM REFERENCE:

- 1. 16/307140/4773920
- 2. 16/308350/4772840
- 3. 16/308250/4772720
- 4. 16/307480/4773500
- 5. 16/307250/4773350
- 6. 16/306850/4773660

QUAD: MADISON EAST