

JAPANESE BRIDGE, BRADLEY PARK, PEORIA, ILL.



MUSSER JAPANESE GARDEN

3. Pre-WWII Public Japanese-style Gardens

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021
by Beth Cody

This paper is the third in a series of research papers written for the Muscatine Art Center in Summer 2021 by Beth Cody of Kalona, Iowa, through a grant from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs in conjunction with a planned project for restoring the circa-1930 Japanese-style garden on the Art Center grounds. That garden was built for Laura Musser McColm (1877-1964), whose heirs donated her Muscatine house to the City of Muscatine in 1965 for use as a museum.

This research is intended to place the construction of such a garden into context of the period from roughly 1890 until World War II: How did Japanese-style gardens become popular in the Midwestern United States during that period? What other Japanese-style public and private gardens were constructed during that time, particularly in the Midwest? How did Midwesterners regard such gardens, and how did their feelings change during WWII when the United States was at war with Japan? And what things might have prompted Laura Musser McColm to have such a garden constructed for her around 1930?

Paper 1: Introduction of Japanese-Style Gardens to the Midwest through World's Fairs, 1876-1934

Paper 2: Books, Magazine Articles and Iowa Newspaper Articles about Japanese Gardens, 1890-1935

Paper 3: Pre-WWII Public Japanese-style Gardens

Paper 4: Pre-WWII Private Japanese-style Gardens in the Midwest

Paper 5: Professor P.H. Elwood's 1929 Trip to Japan

Paper 6: Laura Musser McColm's Japanese-style Garden; Possible Designer-Builders

Paper 7: The Muscatine Garden Club

Paper 8: Changing Attitudes to Japan Before and During WWII; Surviving Pre-WWII Japanese-style Gardens in the Midwest

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Introduction: Early Public and Commercial Japanese-Style Gardens and Parks in America and the Midwest

Once the Japanese gardens created for the World's Fairs (discussed in the second paper in this series) had caught the imagination of Americans, it wasn't long until wealthy benefactors saw the potential for adding such gardens to local parks and botanical gardens. A number of commercial ventures such as resorts and amusement parks also constructed them for the enjoyment of their patrons.

This section will feature, in order of approximate date of construction, the most well-known public Japanese-style gardens in the United States – gardens most likely to have been visited by Midwestern tourists and travelers – as well as all public Japanese-style gardens constructed in the Midwestern states that I was able to find information about. (The Midwestern states consist of the twelve states officially defined by the Census Bureau as such: Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin).

1. Japanese Tea Garden at Golden Gate Park: San Francisco, California (1894)



Figure 1: A postcard view of the Japanese Tea Garden at Golden Gate Park, likely from the 1920s. (Ebay)

The Japanese Tea Garden is one of the earliest and certainly the most well-known Japanese-style garden constructed in the United States. The garden was designed and built for the Midwinter Exposition of 1894, held in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, by George Turner Marsh (1857-1932), who had lived in Japan for several years and owned one of the first Asian art galleries in the US.

After the Midwinter Fair concluded, Marsh sold the village to the City of San Francisco and oversaw the conversion of the Japanese village to a permanent Japanese Tea Garden with a much larger garden area. Additional structures were added following the close of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, and again in the 1950s. The garden still exists and remains a popular attraction in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

2. Japanese Tea Garden: Atlantic City, New Jersey (1896)

From 1896 to 1901, one of the earliest and most famous of Japanese-style gardens in America was open to the public in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Yumindo Kushibiki, World's Fair empresario, and his partner Saburo Arai created the garden at the resort town of Atlantic City, popular with Philadelphia residents for its beach access via the wooden Boardwalk, and for the numerous hotels, attractions and amusements all along the length of it.

Figure 2: Atlantic City
was a popular resort
town for Philadelphia
residents seeking beaches
and entertainment.
(Newspapers.com)



Kushibiki & Arai constructed a garden at least three acres in size on the sandy beach soil of Atlantic City. A system of cement-lined ponds wound through the center of the garden, crossed by a Japanese drum bridge, and both crane statues and real birds ornamented the water. A series of tea houses, a model Japanese home, a tea shop, a bazaar, and at least one greenhouse building which sold imported Japanese plants were constructed around the site.

The Weekly Democrat (Natchez, Mississippi) of August 25, 1897 had this charming piece by "A Sojourner":

Everyone goes to the Japanese tea garden... a most beautiful spot. A landscape gardener who knew his business planned the charming spot. Coming from the restless stir of the board walk, leaving the glare of electric lights behind me, I felt as if I had stepped into fairyland indeed. Only the silver moonlight showed us the way, and thus intensified the beauty of the place. (*continued*)

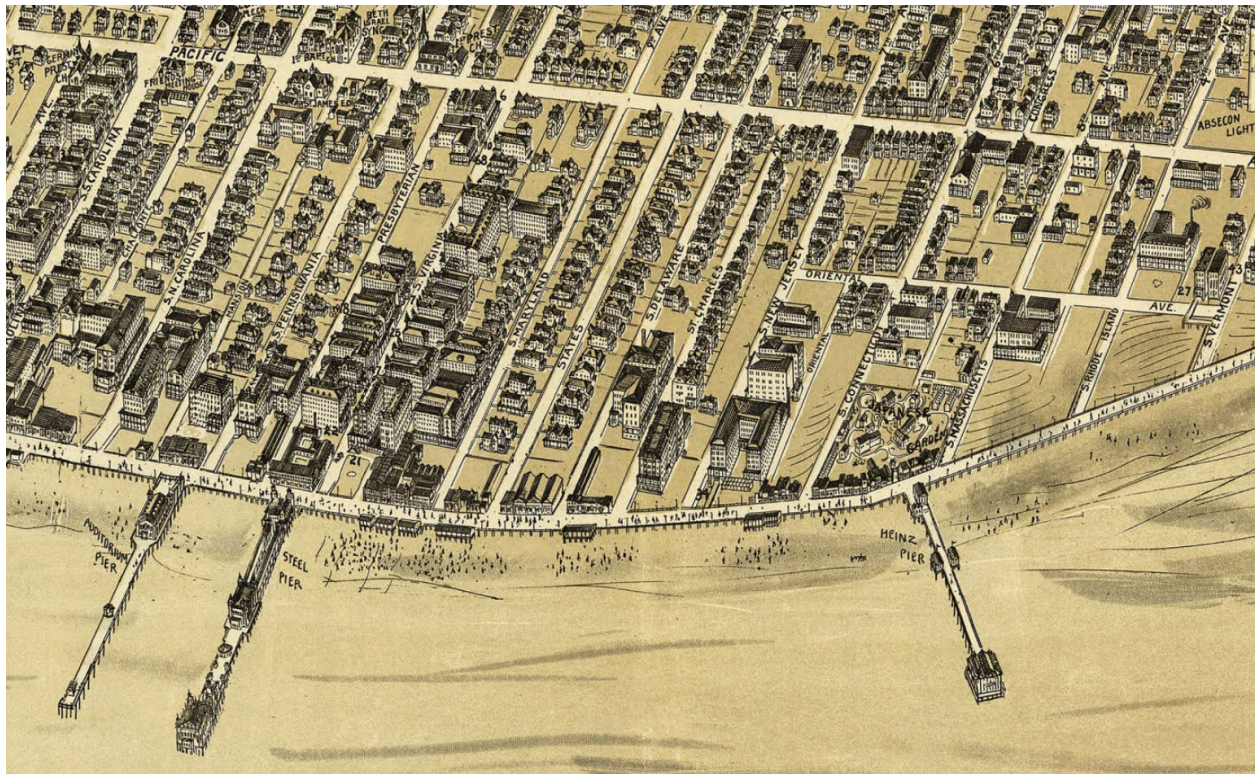


Figure 3: The Japanese Tea Garden was located in a prime spot along the Atlantic City Boardwalk, shown just above the pier on the right. (*Ted's Vintage Art.com*)



Figure 4: A large, lighted torii gate advertised the Japanese Tea Garden along the Boardwalk with its towering presence. (*Japanese Tea Garden Atlantic City booklet, Columbia University Avery Library*)



Figure 5: Visitors and Tea Garden staff pose atop the precarious drum bridge that spanned one of the ponds in the Japanese Tea Garden. The sandy soil of Atlantic City can clearly be seen in this photograph. (*Columbia University*)



Figure 6: An artificial hill and waterfall were constructed in the Tea Garden. The wooden structure in the background held a large antique bronze bell that visitors were allowed to ring. (*Columbia University*)

(continued) We went over a Jap(anese) bridge. I am glad we don't build them that way.... We had to put our feet upon it sideways and cling to the railing. Going up was bad enough, but coming down was much worse.

However, we got over; I won't say how, and went through a real Jap(anese) hothouse, full of tea plants, and splendid palms, as well as rare and attractive flowers. The residence, a pretty four-roomed cottage, with paper walls, was very interesting....

It was all very interesting, and so was the large store, which we next visited, for in it were all sorts of exquisite things done with the fine and grotesque taste of the Japanese. I was struck with their politeness, and the quiet, leisurely way in which they seem to think and act. I really believe that of all the charming features of Atlantic City none are superior to this Japanese tea garden.

The Japanese Tea Garden lasted for only five years, before closing at the end of the summer season in 1901. The garden was likely not terribly profitable, and skyrocketing prices in the resort town led the investors to sell the land at six times what they had paid for it.

Many of the garden materials were sold to a Matthias Homer of Pennsylvania, who had them reassembled on his home lot – leaving in Atlantic City only the memories of the thousands of people who visited the magical Japanese Tea Garden during five warm, turn-of-the-century summers along the Boardwalk.

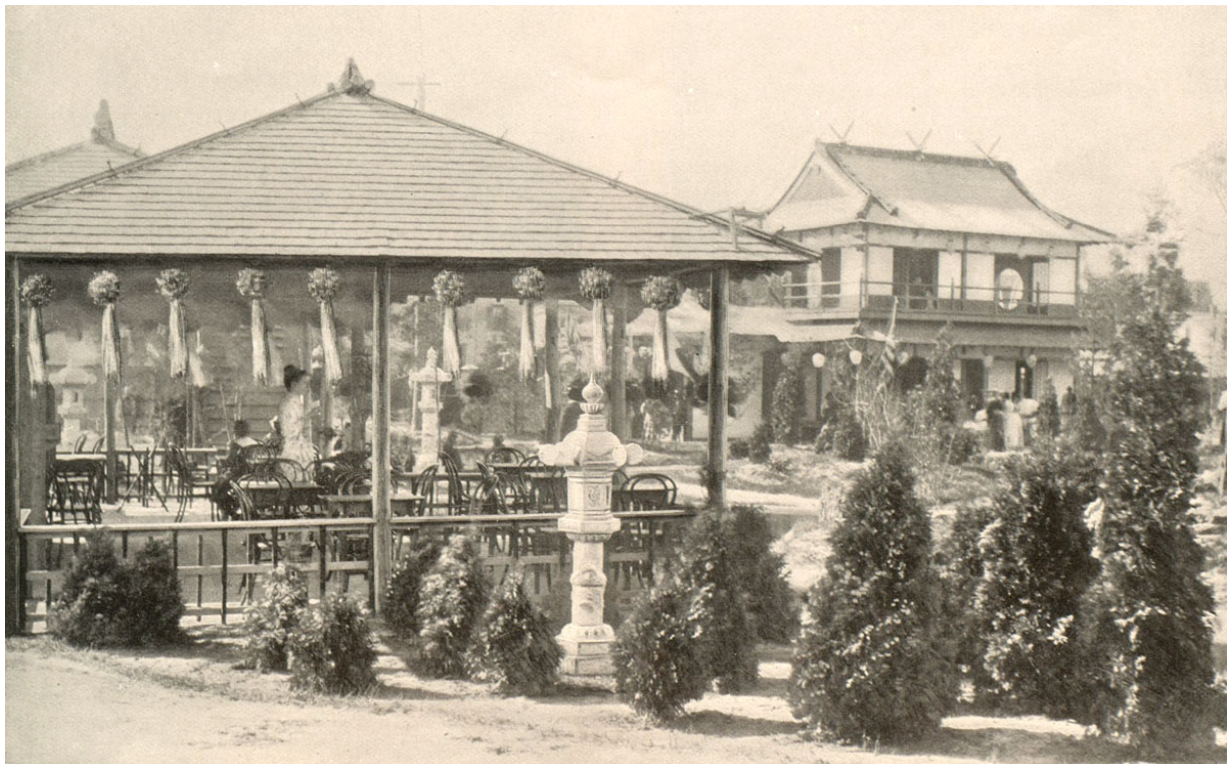


Figure 7: A tea house overhanging the pond was a lovely spot in which to rest and cool off on a hot summer's day. (*Columbia University*)

3. Como Park: St. Paul, Minnesota (1905)

During the 1904 World's Fair, Dr. Rudolph Schiffman of St. Paul, Minnesota was so impressed by the Japanese Imperial Garden there that he decided St. Paul needed a Japanese-style garden too.

Dr. Rudolph Schiffman (1845-1926) had been born in St. Louis and attended medical school there, and after serving as an army surgeon in the Civil War, he moved to St. Paul to begin his medical practice, specializing in lung disorders such as asthma. He became wealthy from his patented asthma medication, "Dr. R. Schiffman's Asthmador," which he manufactured in St. Paul.

He used his wealth to have a Japanese-style garden constructed along a shore of Cozy Lake in St. Paul as a gift to the people of St. Paul, and convinced the Imperial Japanese Fair Commission to donate the Japanese trees and plants from their St. Louis World's fair garden to the City of St. Paul.

(Schiffman's was a parting gift – the following year he moved to Pasadena, California, where he built a mansion around which he made magnificent gardens filled with rare tropical plants.)

The July 10, 1904 issue of *The St. Paul Globe* had this first story about his plans:

JAPANESE GARDEN FOR PARK AT COMO Dr. Schiffmann Engages Jap Landscape Artist for the Work

Dr. Rudolph Schiffmann has engaged the services of H. Sako, a professional Japanese gardener, to lay out and plant a real Japanese garden in Como park. The garden will be located on the shore of Cozy lake, and the expense will be borne entirely by Dr. Schiffmann. Sako will have full charge of the work.



Figure 8: A colorized postcard view of the Como Park Japanese Gardens in St. Paul, Minnesota, taken around 1910. (Ebay)

The H. Sako mentioned in the article was mentioned in a story that ran in other newspapers as working on the “Fair Japan” concession garden, and may have been a skilled Japanese carpenter as well as a gardener.

However, a month later, *The St. Paul Globe* of August 19, 1904 had an extensive article about the planned park, in which the aid of the official imperial garden architect, Yukio Itchikawa, had been secured. Mr. Sako probably still had a role in building the garden, even if Mr. Itchikawa’s name was the prominent one:

EXPERT TO PLAN JAPANESE GARDEN Mikado's Landscape Architect Here and Praises the Como Site

Dr. Rudolph Schiffmann’s plan to transform a portion of Como park into a reproduction of the imperial Japanese gardens at Tokyo was supported yesterday arrival in St. Paul of Yukio Itchikawa, landscape gardener connected with the imperial household at Tokyo, and at present one of the Japanese commissioners to the world's fair at St. Louis.

Mr. Itchikawa was the guest yesterday of Dr. Schiffmann and accompanied him to Como, where the proposed location of the Japanese gardens was inspected. The Japanese landscape architect said last night at the Merchants hotel the site selected is an ideal one, and that plans can be drawn which will produce possibly the finest gardens in the United States.

Itchikawa will remain at St. Louis until November and will prepare plans for the gardens which will conform in general detail to the gardens now surrounding the Japanese pavilion at St. Louis, which are considered marvels of landscape art. These gardens are in a measure patterned after the gardens about the imperial palace at Tokyo.

Yukio Itchikawa speaks very little English and was accompanied to St. Paul by Usaburo Otsuka, another Jap officially connected with the fair. Mr. Otsuka speaks English readily and explained the object of the architect's coming to St. Paul.

Motive Is Philanthropic: “This is not a business matter with my friend,” he said. “He is an official of the Japanese government and his coming to St. Paul was accomplished through the Missouri Botanical society. If Dr. Schiffmann's plan was for his personal benefit, Mr. Itchikawa would hesitate before undertaking to assist in preparing a general plan for the gardens, but we have assurances that Dr. Schiffmann is a high-standing citizen of St. Paul and proposes to reproduce the Japanese gardens at Como park as a free gift to the people of his home city. The gardens will be a pleasure to the people of St. Paul, a source of education to students and a lasting advertisement of Japan and her people, whose love for the beautiful is deeply implanted, and possibly excels that of any other nation. We have viewed the proposed site of the gardens. No more appropriate place could be found than Como park.

“But Mr. Itchikawa wishes it known that this is no common business. He does not come to St. Paul to engage in this work for Dr. Schiffmann as an ordinary landscape artist. It is because he wishes to assist in promoting something that will be of benefit to the people and that will at the same time give his beloved Japan a good advertisement.”

The part of the park selected for the reproduction of the Japanese gardens is the north shore of Cozy lake. The site was originally selected by Dr. Schiffmann, J. A. Wheelock of the park board, and Supt. Nussbaumer of the park system.

The gardens will have a frontage on the lake of about 300 feet, with several stone landings. There will be a beautiful little cascade bounding over rocks, and a tiny bridge will span the stream. A Japanese summer house will be sheltered by trees and shrubbery in the park, and Japanese ferns will be grown between the rocks of the stream. Dr. Schiffmann has the promise of many of the trees and shrubs in the gardens at the Japanese pavilion at St. Louis when the exhibition closes. *Two car loads of stone from Texas to be used in forming the banks of the stream will be brought to St. Paul from St. Louis.*

Visitors See Grounds "We walked about fifteen miles through Como park yesterday," Dr. Schiffmann said last night, "so that the Japanese gentleman might learn what kind of trees and shrubs will survive Minnesota winters."

Dr. Schiffman was asked as to the approximate cost of the proposed improvement.

"It will cost just what money is required to install such gardens," he said, "I have told our Japanese friends to go ahead and prepare plans and the gardens will be installed in accordance with those plans. I have not investigated very minutely the element of the cost of the gardens." Inasmuch as quite a large proportion of the total trees, plants and shrubs now in the Japanese gardens at St. Louis are to be brought to St. Paul and the exposition does not close until December, it is not expected that work of installing the new park gardens will be commenced until April.



Figure 9: A view of the pathway above the Japanese-style garden at Como Park, around 1910. The pathway is clearly lined with the porous limestone rocks mentioned in the article of December 10, 1904. (*Minnesota Historical Society*)

By October, Dr. Schiffmann's plans were coming along. *The St. Paul Globe* ran another short piece on October 13, 1904 about the planned garden:

TO ADD JAP GARDEN Expensive Foliage From Japan to Beautify Como Park

The plants, trees and flowers for the Japanese garden to be added to Como park by Dr. Rudolph Schiffmann have been purchased by Supt. Nussbaumer, being taken from the Japanese garden at the world's fair in St. Louis.

The garden will be placed on a knoll near Cozy lake, and it is expected that it will be made one of the most attractive spots to be found in this section of the country. It will certainly be expensive, as some of the small trees—small, although hundreds of years old—cost \$100 each. It is admitted by Mr. Nussbaumer that they do not have the appearance of having any such value. Everything else for the garden costs in proportion.

The trees and plants will be shipped to St. Paul and kept in the greenhouse at Como park during the winter, being planted early next spring. After that some of the trees can be left out during the winter, but quite a proportion of the plants must be carefully preserved in the greenhouse during cold weather. Supt. Nussbaumer expects to make the garden an inviting spot that will be copied throughout the country.

By December 10, 1904, *The St. Paul Globe* ran a story about the arrival of the Japanese plants that were given to the city by the Imperial Japanese Fair Commission – incurring the anger of the residents of the City of St. Louis, who had expected that they would be left in their city. The Park Board also formally thanked Supt. Nussbaumer, Dr. Schiffmann, the Imperial Commission and Mr. Itchikawa:

JAPANESE GARDEN REACHES ST. PAUL Park Board Makes Public Resolutions Thanking Dr. Schiffmann for Gift to Como

Dr. Rudolph Schiffmann's collection of Japanese trees, plants, shrubs and flowers gathered at the St. Louis exposition to be planted in Como park, arrived in St. Paul yesterday morning in care of two Japanese gardeners. The cars were quickly unloaded and the precious freight hurried to Como park, where it will be stored until spring permits the transplanting.

The Japanese garden at the exposition was one of the features that attracted universal attention and when it became known that it was to be taken to St. Paul the anger of the residents of St. Louis was as keen as it was futile. They had expected that the delicate trees, shrubs and flowers would remain there after the fair, and expressed disappointment when they learned that they were to be deprived of them.

When the Japanese garden is completed on the shores of Cozy lake in Como park it will be unique in the United States. Yukio Itchikawa, the imperial landscape gardener in the employ of the Mikado, has designed the garden landscape and the entrances which will be models of Japanese art. When completed Dr. Schiffmann is certain that the Como garden will be far superior to the one which attracted so much attention at St. Louis.

Rare and Ancient Trees: The vegetation will be typical of Japan, including some rare dwarf trees, some of them nearly 400 years old. There will be maples, evergreens, wistaria, cherries, iris,



Figure 10: Another postcard view of the waterfall, lantern and paths in the Como Park Japanese Garden. The contorted shapes of the evergreen trees can be seen clinging to the side of the hill. (Ebay)

different varieties of bamboo, Japanese black pine, pomegranates, birches, catalpa, larix, azaleas and many other varieties. These will be arranged about the pond in accordance with the Japanese idea of landscape gardening. The beauty of the garden will be further enhanced by the presence of three stone lanterns and bronze cranes.

Porous limestone rock will be brought from the southern part of the state to bank the pond and Japanese flowers will be trained along the shore line. A pagoda or house will be erected in the spring and surrounded with all the floricultural features of the mikado's land. In addition a cascade twenty- two feet high will be constructed and a miniature Niagara will murmur unceasingly.

All the flowers that have made Japan famous as a beauty-spot will be laid out about the garden, which will be about three acres in extent and will add immeasurably to the beauty of Como park.

An appropriate coincidence was the making public yesterday by the park board of resolutions thanking Dr. Schiffmann for his donation to the city....

...Resolved, That the board of park commissioners desire to make formal record on behalf of the city and people of St. Paul of their grateful appreciation of the generous public spirit of Dr. Rudolph Schiffmann, to whom they already owe the gift of the beautiful spray fountain in Como park called by his name, in also embellishing it with the unique and charming attraction of a Japanese tea garden; and, furthermore,

Resolved, That the said board of park commissioners of St. Paul desire hereby to make their grateful acknowledgments to the imperial Japanese commission at the Louisiana exposition for

their precious gift to the park board of the city of St. Paul of a splendid collection of rare and beautiful Japanese dwarf plants, for the ornamentation of the said Japanese tea garden in Como park, and especially to Mr. Y. Itchikawa for his kind assistance in procuring that donation.

The Como Park Japanese Garden was enjoyed by the residents of St. Paul and visitors for only around a decade. Unfortunately, there were water level issues with Cozy Lake and Lake Como. The Japanese-style garden area was certainly gone by 1923, when four of the garden's stone lanterns were found on the bottom of a drained section of Lake Como. Cozy Lake dried up after the leaky northern section of Lake Como was dammed in 1925, and a golf course was built on the site, according to "Como Park History Tour" by Sharon Shinomiya (2009).

However, the Charlotte Partridge Ordway Japanese Garden was added to Como Park in 1979, a gift of Mrs. John Ordway and of the people of Nagasaki, Japan, St. Paul's sister city. That garden underwent renovation in 1990, and again 2013.

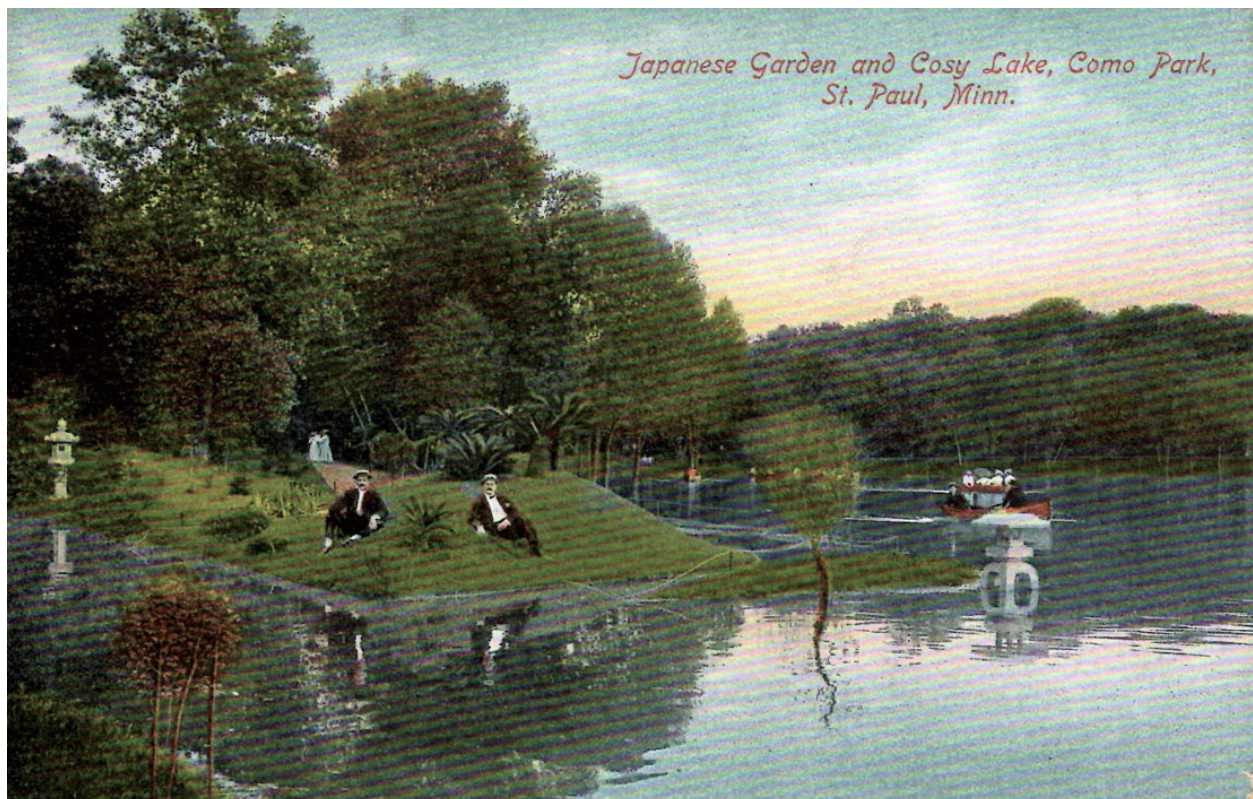


Figure 11: This postcard view of the Japanese Garden in Como Park already demonstrates the water level issues with the site, being clearly flooded. (Ebay)

4. Laura Bradley Park: Peoria, Illinois (c.1915)



Figure 12: The Japanese-style garden at Laura Bradley Park in Peoria, Illinois. (*Ebay*)

The Japanese Gardens in Peoria's Laura Bradley Park were constructed around 1915, according to the 1916 Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Pleasure Driveway and Park District.

The major structures were designed and built by T.R. Otsuka, around a cement wading pool. Otsuka built a tea house pavilion; a wooden umbrella shelter seat similar to those in early photos of the Japanese-style gardens at French Lick Springs Hotel in Indiana and Stan Hywet in Akron, Ohio; and at least four cement lanterns. He laid out the walks and placed rocks along those walks and leading down to the artificial lake, and planted evergreen trees and shrubs throughout the garden.

A large arched Japanese-style bridge was added in 1922, designed by Frederick John Klein, a Peoria architect, according to Peoriaparks.org. It's unknown whether the wooden Japanese-style Torii gate-style arches at either end of the bridge (see image on following page) were Klein's design or Otsuka's.

The original tea house was destroyed by vandals in the 1980s and was replaced by a similar structure, and the bridge and Torii gates still exist in restored condition.

JAPANESE BRIDGE, BRADLEY PARK, PEORIA, ILL.



Figure 14: The Japanese-style bridge, added in 1922, is visible behind the wooden umbrella shelter seat. Large Torii-style gates were placed at either end of the bridge. (*Ebay*)



WADING POOL AND JAPANESE GARDEN, LAURA BRADLEY PARK, PEORIA, ILL.

Figure 13: The back of the tea house pavilion overlooking the wading pool. Concrete steps with cheek walls lead down a rock-strewn bank to the wading pool. (*Illinois Digital Archive*)

5. Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn New York (1915)

The 52-acre Brooklyn Botanic Garden was founded in 1910 in Mount Prospect Park, and the three-acre Japanese Hill-and-Pond garden was constructed in 1914 and 1915, a gift of benefactor Alfred Tredway White at a cost of \$13,000. It was the first Japanese-style garden built in an American botanic garden, and entrance was free of charge.

The designer of the garden was Takeo Shiota (1881-1943). Shiota designed the three-acre site around an existing 1.5-acre pond, and constructed steep hills, a waterfall and an artificial island. He placed carefully chosen rocks around the pond, planted Japanese maples, flowering trees and conifers throughout the garden, and included wooden bridges, stone lanterns, a viewing pavilion, a torii gate and a Shinto shrine in his design. The garden is an example of both the classic Japanese hill-and-pond style and the larger stroll-garden style in which landscape features are revealed along winding paths.

The garden was tremendously popular from its opening in 1915 through the 1930s, including among many tourists and visitors to New York City: A 1924 article in the *Brooklyn Chat* stated that the “the Japanese Garden and Rock Garden (are) known throughout the country; and widely and favorably in most foreign countries.”



FIG. 3. View, April 28, 1921, in the Japanese Garden, a gift of Mr. Alfred T. White in 1915. Showing new faggot fence and new wooden lantern.

Figure 15: This 1921 photo shows part of the Japanese-style garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. (*Brooklyn Botanic Garden Record*, 1922, *Biodiversity Heritage Library*)

6. Interlaken Park: Fairmount, Minnesota (c. 1916)

Interlaken Park was a resort in Fairmount, Minnesota (just north of the Iowa border), established in 1915 by Frank E. Wade (1862-1919), a wealthy industrialist and entrepreneur. The resort hotel was built on three lakes and enjoyed a peak of popularity during the 1920s, when residents of surrounding states, particularly southern Minnesota and northern Iowa, enjoyed the hotel, bandstand and dance pavilion, golf course and zoo. A Japanese-style garden designed by Wade himself was his pride and joy, according to the Martin County Historical Society.



Figure 16: A 1919 advertisement listed the attractions of Interlaken Park. (*Star Tribune, Minneapolis, May 4, 1919*)



Figure 17: A postcard image of the Japanese-style garden at Interlaken Park in Fairmount, Minnesota, likely taken during the 1920s. (Pinterest)



Figure 18: A later colorized postcard image of Japanese-style garden at Interlaken Park, perhaps from the late 1920s. (*author's collection*)



Figure 19: Another view of the Interlaken Park Japanese-style garden, showing the bridges, lanterns and an umbrella-shaped shelter. (*author's collection*)

7. Ritz-Carlton Rooftop Garden: New York City (1918)

Constructed in 1918, the Japanese-style gardens on the rooftop of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York City represented literally the height of sophistication during the late 'teens and 1920s, where society ladies enjoyed lunch and held society auctions to benefit charities.

THE GARDENS OF THE RITZ- CARLTON NEW YORK

OPEN ON OR ABOUT JUNE 1ST 1918

ALBERT KELLER
GENERAL MANAGER





The JAPANESE GARDENS

DESIGNED by Japanese artisans of highest skill, this exquisitely beautiful out-of-doors restaurant surrounds you at luncheon or tea with all the picturesqueness and subtle charm of Nippon. Cool, novel, refreshingly different.

The ROOF GARDEN

AN open-air dining place in which the fullest expectations of the elite are realized. Incomparable in brilliance of setting, service, music and cuisine, peerless in the tone of its clientele, it stands as the ultimate achievement of fashionable New York's summer season.



Figure 20: An announcement of the opening of the Ritz-Carlton roof gardens, 1918.
(Clickamericana.com)

A brochure published in 1919, “The Ritz-Carlton Hotel of New York,” had this description of the garden, accompanied by a lovely Arts & Crafts-style woodcut depiction of the garden:

From the right side of the Dining Room, the guest passes into the Japanese Garden for luncheon or tea. The garden is laid out in the form of the letter A, the two legs and the top forming long loggias set with small tables, and connected by a central passage.

Between the loggias is the garden itself, at one end of which is a great pagoda, and seated in front of it is Buddha smiling serenely. The loggias are latticed in bamboo with bamboo screens shading the tables, and in every possible manner, proper native colors and tones are adhered to.

Through the center of the garden, a little stream gushes from the mouth of a grotesque mask on the base of the pedestal upon which Buddha is seated, and the banks of the stream are thick with tiny Japanese villages, quite perfect in every detail. There are dwarf pines and firs interspersed with laurel and lilac.

On one of the banks, there is a picturesque pavilion, which is reached by a typical little bridge from the farther side of the stream. The loggias, or verandahs, are illuminated with Japanese

lanterns in the evening, and at the farther end of the garden, three great lights lend a softening effect to the whole scene, leading up to the terraced lights of the pagoda at the other end.

A little way down the stream a great stone god Soliloquises over this miniature paradise of Oriental beauty.



THE JAPANESE TEA GARDEN
WITH ITS TINY VILLAGES AND
STREAMS, HAS ALL THE COLOR
AND PICTURESQUENESS OF
AN ORIENTAL GARDEN



Figure 21: The beautiful Arts & Crafts woodcut print of the Japanese garde at the Ritz-carlton Hotel. (“*The Ritz-Carlton Hotel of New York*” 1919, Hathitrust)



*Within a hotel of classic Adam design is hidden a charming Japanese garden.
The Ritz Hotel in New York City*

Figure 22: (*Arts & Decoration*, July 1924)

8. French Lick Springs Hotel: French Lick, Indiana (c. 1920)

The French Lick Springs Hotel is a resort hotel that was established in 1845, a health spa offering the miracle waters of the natural spring, named Pluto Water, in the area. (The French Lick name was from the natural mineral salts that wild animals licked, along with the original French residents of the area.) The hotel was greatly expanded in the early 1900s, and added the newly popular sport of golf to the recreational offerings of the resort. During the 1920s, it was a center of illegal gambling, and attracted politicians, celebrities, sports figures and gangsters – as well as middle-class vacationers.

Around 1920, the hotel added a fashionable Japanese-style garden behind the main building, almost certainly designed by Chicago landscape architect T.R. Otsuka. The Japanese-style garden included a rock-edged pond with a waterfall, a bridge and water lilies. An umbrella-shaped shelter (recognizable in design from other Otsuka gardens) and at least four Japanese lanterns were included, and stepping stone paths led around and through the garden. The area was a popular attraction for decades, and was renovated in modern times.

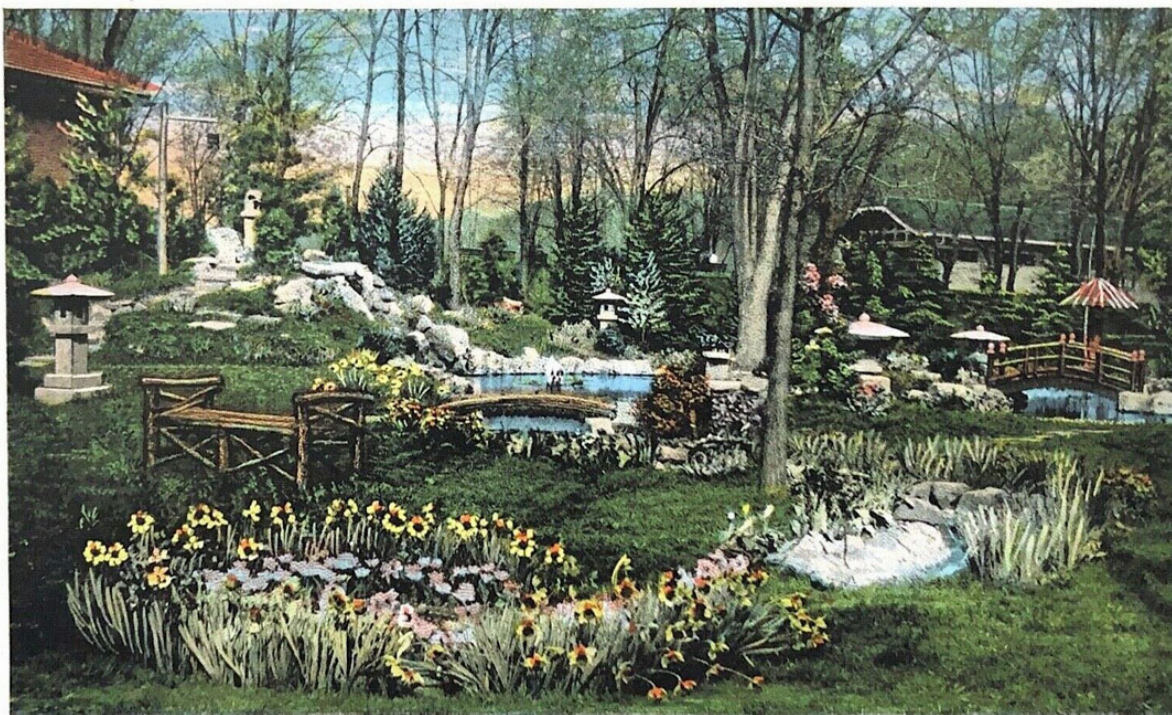


Figure 23: The hotel at French Lick Springs, Indiana. The hotel's formal Italian-style garden is visible at top right, and the Japanese-style garden was located between it and the right section of the main building. (*Suburbanturmoil.com*)

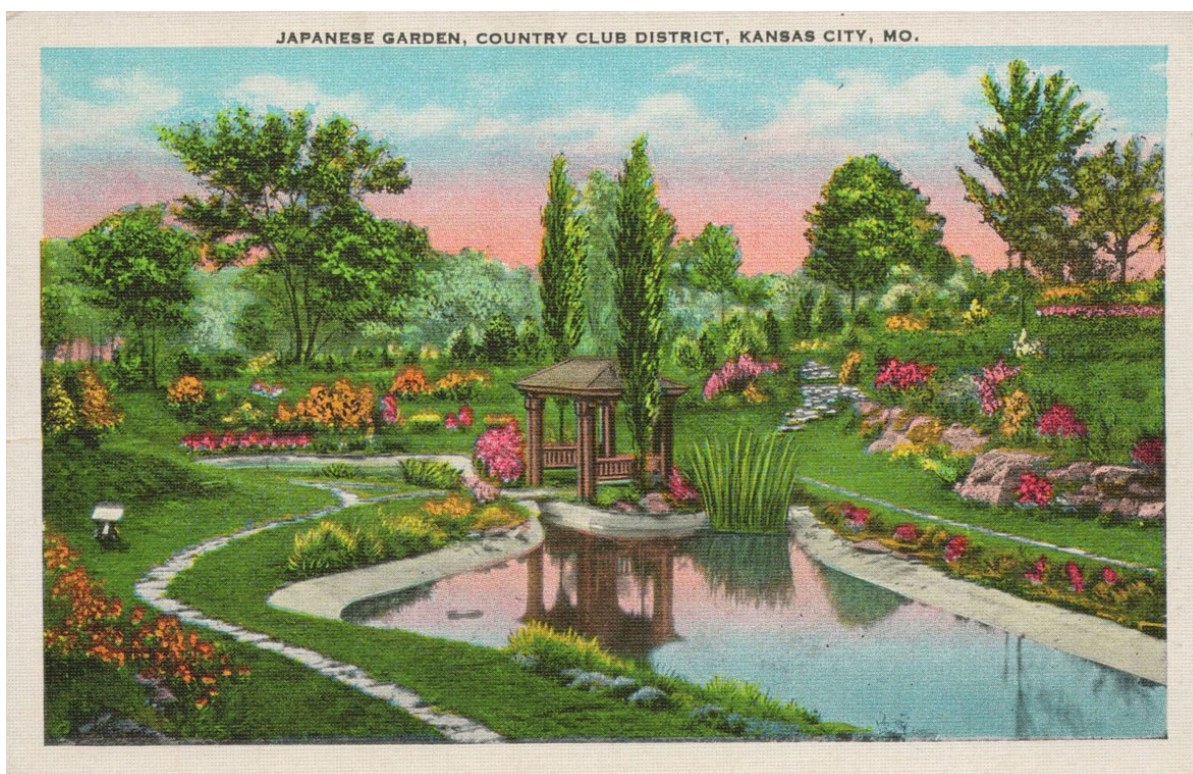


Figure 24:





The Japanese Garden, French Lick Springs Hotel, French Lick, Indiana. "The Home of Pluto"



JAPANESE GARDEN, COUNTRY CLUB DISTRICT, KANSAS CITY, MO.

9. Mission Hills Sunken Garden, Kansas City, Missouri (1925)

Kansas City property developer J.C. Nichols had a small sunken garden constructed in a quarry left over after the land moving construction done to develop the property lots in the area of Mission Hills in Kansas City. The garden, visible from an intersection of two of the larger winding roads through Mission Hills, was a semi-public one that Nichols included photos of in his advertisements for lots.

Color postcard photos that were printed in large numbers for years identified the sunken garden as a Japanese garden, likely due to the vaguely Japanese-style pergola that straddled the intersection of the two cement-lined ponds. Paths led around the ponds, rock garden areas were constructed on the slopes of the sunken garden, and flower beds were planted around the edges.

The area was a popular scenic stop for locals and tourists during the 1920s through the 1950s, but eventually fell into disrepair. Now a public micro-park, the sunken garden was restored in 2019 with a new pond and paths.



Figure 25: The semi-Japanese sunken garden in the Mission Hills area of Kansas City, from a 1920s postcard published by property developer J.C. Nichols. (*Ebay*)

10. University of Missouri Campus, Columbia, Missouri (1920s)

The University of Missouri campus had a small Japanese-style garden and pond created near a natural spring. The garden, created in the 1920s, had a small island on which a Torii gate rested, and an arched wooden bridge, which students of the period referred to as the “kissing bridge,” according to the Mizzou Botanic Garden website. The garden is now named the Wildlife Pond.



Figure 26: An early photo of the Japanese-style garden on the University of Missouri campus. (*Mizzou Botanic Garden*)



Figure 27: The small Japanese-style garden area on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, Missouri, likely published in the 1920s. (*Ebay*)

11. Terrace Park: Sioux Falls, South Dakota (1928)

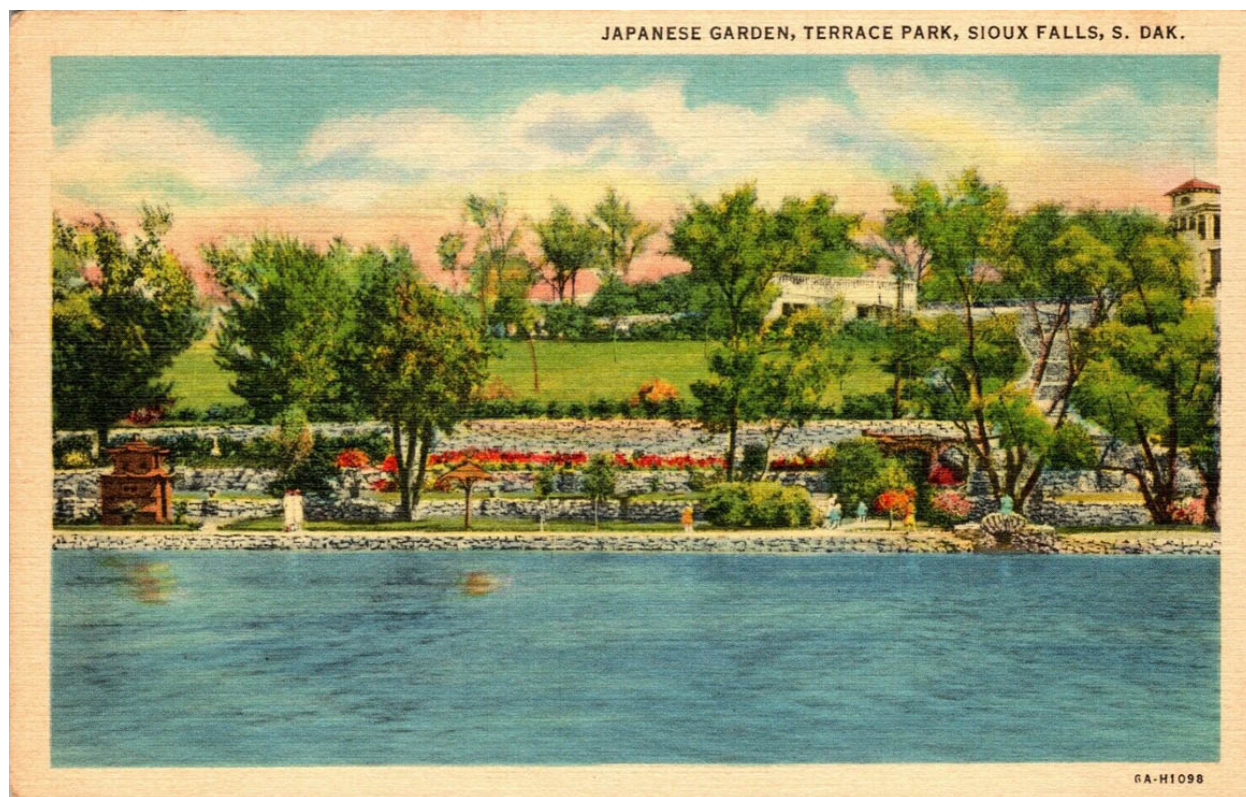


Figure 28: A late-1930s postcard view across Covell Lake in Sioux Falls, showing the terraced levels of the park, on which stood the features of the Japanese-style garden created by Joe Maddox from 1928 to 1936. (Ebay)

The Japanese-style garden in Sioux Falls' Terrace Park was the work of park caretaker Joe F. Maddox (1888-1979). Appointed caretaker in 1918, Maddox had bigger ambitions and completed a correspondence program through the American School of Landscape Architecture and Landscaping in 1925, in which he learned about Japanese gardens. His education allowed him to see possibilities in the park he maintained, and he thought the east bank of the lake would make a beautiful setting for such a garden. He learned of a Japanese-style garden in Faribault, Minnesota (yet to be identified), and visited it for ideas.

He and his men began construction of the garden in Fall 1928, and on July 7, 1929, the *Argus-Leader* ran a long article about Maddox's improvements:

Joe P. Maddox, park supervisor, is turning a portion of the rough bank of Covell lake into a little Japanese garden that would delight the heart of the emperor himself. From the miniature temple that awaits the coming of a little stone Buddha, to the miniature sacred mountain that is always a part of every Japanese garden, the garden is typically Japanese. Willow lanterns hang from the big willow trees, a tiny falls finds its way through the mountain's rocks and down into

the little pool at the south end of the garden; a bridge of woven willow branches invites visitors to look down into the miniature rapids below the falls....

For the past four years,... Mr. Maddox has planned for this garden, but not until last fall was he able to begin the work. During the winter red lanterns, reed furniture and a tall temple were built of willow branches, by the park supervisor and his men....

The little stone temple, which attracts the attention at once, is built on the second terrace. Before it, at a little distance, the tall torii stands, for only by passing under the torii may one enter a Japanese temple. Willow lanterns hang from the willow torii....

A baby spruce grows near the stone gully in the mountain down which the falls tumbles, and over the rocks and walls and around the trees grow all manner of flowers and shrubs.... Where cherry trees bloom in Japan, plum trees bloom in in Local Park Sioux Falls and the Terrace park garden has its share of them. There is a charm about this part of Terrace park....



Figure 29: "The Terrace park Japanese garden boasts of all the things which go to make up a real garden of Japan. The pictures show: 1. A view of the willow bridge which spans the falls above the little pool; 2. The torii and the miniature stone temple showing two of the three stone walls; 3. Looking down at the garden from the north end; 4. A view of the garden from the south end, showing the pool, the willow furniture and the stone temple." (*Argus-Leader*, July 7, 1929)



Figure 30: Two photographs of the Terrace Park Japanese-style garden, taken around 1940, showing (top) the torii gate, goldfish pond, and hanging lantern, and (bottom) an arched stone bridge. (Siouxland Heritage Museum, via *"Terrace Park and Japanese Gardens"* NPS report)



Figure 31: A postcard published in the 1940s, by which time the garden had been renamed the Chinese Gardens, or in other postcards, the Oriental Gardens. Several thatched features, including a thatched lantern and two thatched umbrella shelters, had been constructed by this time. (*Ebay*)

Maddox and his men continued to add features to the Japanese-style garden in Terrace Park, and additional work was done during the Great Depression by 120 men employed by the Civil Works Administration to build additional terraces and stone walls. The garden won a More Beautiful America award from *Better Homes & Gardens* in 1934.

Joe Maddox resigned from his position after eighteen years of service, in 1936, and opened a nursery business in Sioux Falls.

After the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor and America's declaration of war against Japan, incidents of vandalism such as throwing stone ornaments in the lake were committed in the Terrace Park Japanese Garden, despite renaming it the Chinese or Oriental Gardens (see above postcard). The gardens deteriorated, even after a 1963 effort to repair some features and replant some beds. In 1973, the *Argus-Leader* published an interview with Maddox, then in his eighties, telling of his desire for the gardens he built to be restored for the people of Sioux Falls.

In 1986, a local organization named Shoto-Teien (Whispering Pines) was formed to restore the Terrace Park Japanese Gardens.

12. Swinney Park: Fort Wayne, Indiana (Early 1930s)

The Japanese garden in Swinney Park was designed by Adolph Jaenicke (1860-1948), Superintendent of Parks in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Jaenicke, born in Germany where he studied landscape gardening and horticulture (according to The Cultural Landscape Foundation), came to the United States in 1893 to work with the W. Atlee Burpee Seed Company, and served as foreman at the Missouri Botanical Gardens from 1912. He accepted the position as Superintendent in Fort Wayne in 1917 and remained in that position for the rest of his career, transforming Fort Wayne by adding 35 new parks, and is credited with planting 24,000 trees in the city.

Jaenicke transformed a slaughterhouse cesspool in Fort Wayne's Swinney Park into the beautiful Japanese Gardens shown in these three postcard views in the early 1930s. The garden area was admired by all, and was the site of local garden club visits during the 1930s.

The Japanese Garden was renamed the Jaenicke Garden in 1941.



Figure 32: In this view of the Japanese Garden at Swinney Park taken in the 1930s, an arched bridge over a waterfall can be seen, and steps lead up a hill to a spraying fountain. A large Mount Fuji replica was built at the back of the area. (*Ebay*)



Figure 33: Two more views of the Swinney Park Japanese Garden, in which a Japanese-style tea house shelter can be seen, as well as the smoke emanating from Mount Fuji, in a special effects feature. (*Ebay*)



13. RCA Building Garden of Nations: New York City (1935)

The 66-story RCA Building in Rockefeller Center, built in 1933, was improved with an ambitious three-quarter-acre “Garden of the Nations” rooftop area on a much lower section of the building (around 12 stories tall) in 1935. The rooftop was divided into a rock garden, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Japanese-style garden areas, and a 'modern' garden area in the center.



Figure 34: The entrance gate to the Japanese-style area in the Garden of the Nations on the RCA Building rooftop, around 1935. (*Museum of the City of New York*)



Figure 35: Inside the Japanese-style garden area on the RCA Building rooftop, around 1935. The tea house and gate at right is only a façade near the edge of the rooftop. (*Museum of the City of New York*)

14. Jackson Park: Chicago, Illinois (1935)

Following the 1933-34 World's Fair in Chicago, the plants, lanterns and rocks from the Japanese Pavilion area at the fair were moved to Wooded Island.

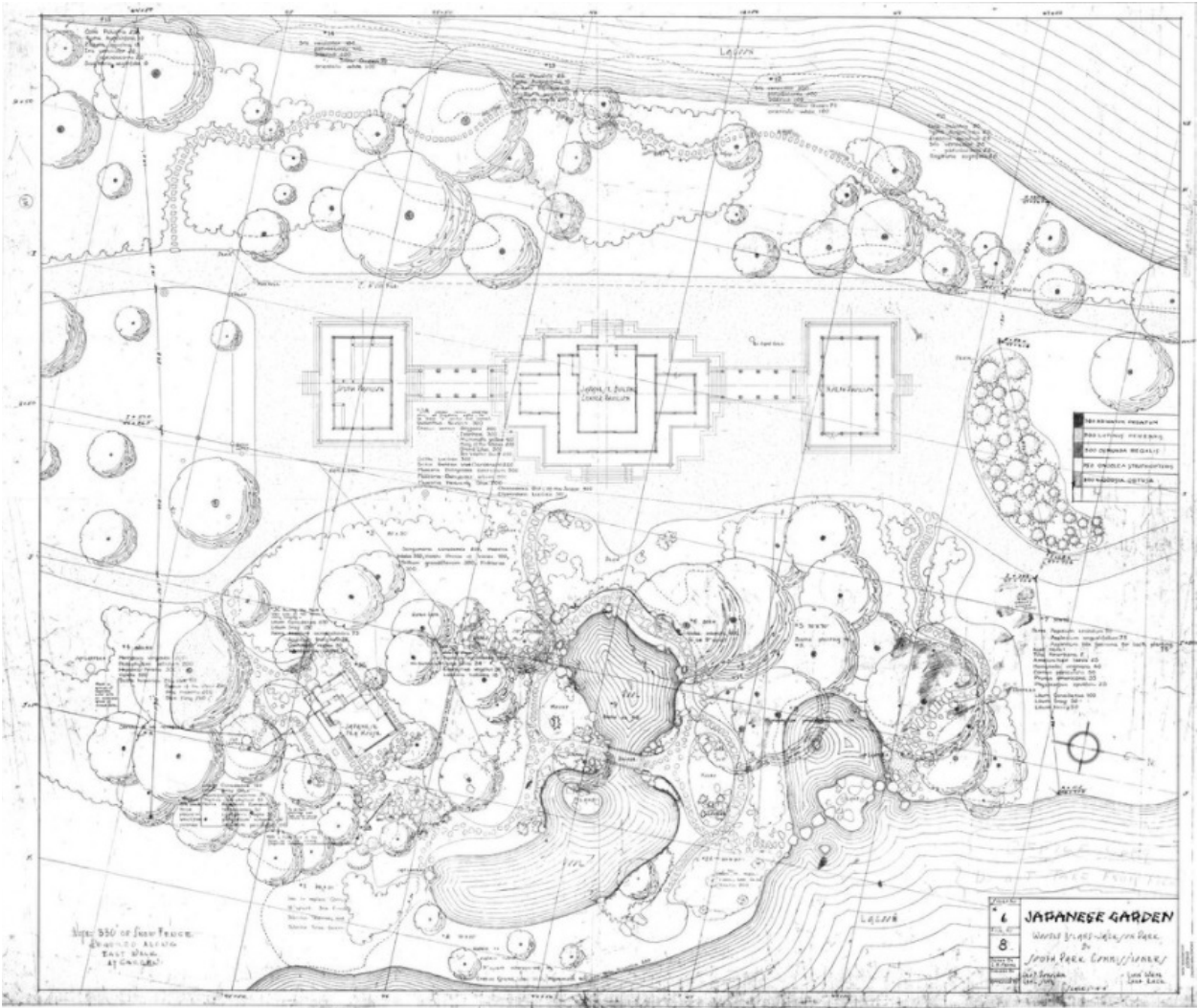
That was the site of the *Ho-o-den*, the architecturally influential Japanese World's Fair pavilion that had been built there for the 1893 World's Fair. The *Ho-o-den* had remained there in place after that 1893 event, as a gift from the Japanese government to the City of Chicago.

However, the pavilion buildings had suffered from vandalism and neglect during the forty years they stood there, and were in danger of being demolished. According to a 2018 Historic Properties Identification Report:

When Chicago Tribune reporter James O'Donnell Bennett learned that the Ho-o-den might be razed, he went and met with SPC General Superintendent George Donoghue. In this discussion, Donoghue agreed that, "Sentimentally and artistically, this Japanese Group is irreplaceable." He applied for and received federal relief funds to restore the building, expand the site's very modest Japanese Garden, and add a Japanese Tea café.



Figure 36: A circa-1910 postcard view of the three connected buildings at the Wooded island site where they had been built nearly twenty years before.



Japanese carpenters were brought in to refurbish the *Ho-o-den*, and a small tea house building from the 1934 Fair was added so that the site could be used as a tea house.

A pond garden was planned to enhance the beauty of the site. According to Robert Karr's 2013 article, "The Garden of the Phoenix" in the *NAJGA Journal*, Chicago Park District architect E.V. Buchsbaum and landscape architect Robert E. Moore, Jr. drew garden plans loosely based on plans devised by George K. Shimoda (1866-1931) after the 1893 World's Fair, plans that had not been carried out. It's also possible that T.R. Otsuka, who designed the 1933 World's Fair Japanese garden, may have helped with the rockwork and plant placement.

The 2018 report also added:

Shoji Osato, who had run a Japanese Tea House at the 1933-34 A Century of Progress in Burnham Park was given permission to move the small, modest building to Jackson Park as part of the project. He became the concessionaire for the new Jackson Park Tea Café.... Along with that building, plant materials from the Japanese Garden at A Century of Progress were incorporated into Jackson Park's new Japanese Garden, as was a large Ksuga lantern, which sits just outside of the garden's south gate today. A smaller version of this Ksuga lantern, which can be found inside of the garden, is also believed to date to the 1930s.

Osato was interned during WWII, and two fires in 1946, perhaps arson, destroyed the *Ho-o-den* and teahouse. The gardens were abandoned. However, a new garden was built on the site in 1980.



Figure 38: A colorized slide photo of the lush, new Japanese-style garden built around the newly refurbished *Ho-o-den* pavilion on Wooded Island, Chicago, taken around 1936.

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