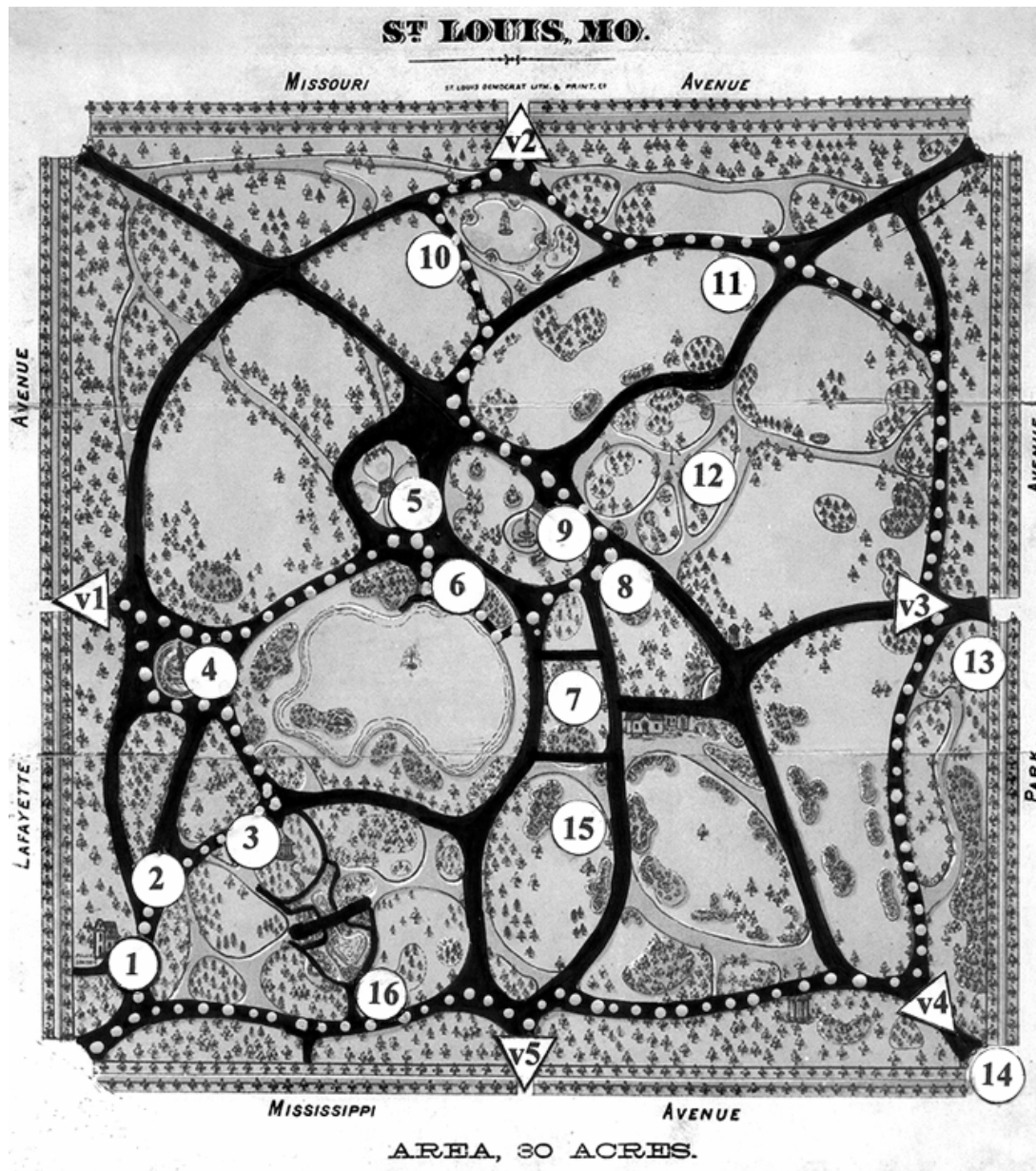


A WALKING TOUR OF LAFAYETTE PARK

By Carolyn Willmore



Lafayette Park was designed as a strolling park by Maximilian Kern, an early landscape architect who was Superintendent of Lafayette Park from 1864 until October 1869. Because Lafayette Park was considered a masterpiece of landscape design, Mr. Kern was asked to plan other St. Louis parks including Compton Heights Reservoir, Benton, Hyde and ultimately Forest Park.

The map used for this walking tour is reprinted from the Report of the Board of Improvement of Lafayette Park in 1874. It reflects Mr. Kern's master plan for the park, containing features like a bandstand that had not yet been erected. When you stroll around the park, look for vestiges of older walkways in the grass.

Please note that NORTH is not oriented at the top, but on the right side of the map. The black overlay attempts to show current pathways.

Photographs of original features are included to let you experience Lafayette Park at the turn of the twentieth century.

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1 The **PARK HOUSE** was built in 1867 for use as a police station. It was enlarged in 1870. Currently the building houses an office for the Lafayette Square Restoration Committee and a St. Louis Police substation.



Boehl & Koenig view 193: The Police Station, currently known as the Park House, courtesy of the Missouri Botanical Garden Archives

2 The **CIRCULAR HORSE WATERING TROUGH** became a planter in the later half of the 1800's.

3 The **ELIZABETH COOK PAVILION** is the third one built on this site. The original rustic "summer cottage" had a thatched roof. Although it survived the 1876 Cyclone, it was replaced with a pavilion similar to the current one, except the roof had red clay tiles.



Boehl & Koenig view 190: Summer House above Grotto, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Archives

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- 4 This bronze casting of **GEORGE WASHINGTON** is one of six copies made by William Hubbard. The original marble statue stands in the Virginia State Capital. The French sculptor Jean Antoine Houdon created a life-sized sculpture and worked from a plaster mask of Washington's face for accuracy. Placed in the park in 1869, the statue was recently restored by the St. Louis Ambassadors.



Boehl & Koenig view 194: Washington Statue, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Archives

- v1 Looking **SOUTH** to Lafayette Avenue, you will see fine examples of Victorian Second Empire townhouses.

- 5 The 1876 **MUSIC PAVILION** was destroyed by the tornado of 1896. A second bandstand was built on the surviving base, but was demolished in 1951. Only the original base remains.



Boehl & Koenig's view 191: Musician's Stand, courtesy of Missouri botanical Garden Archives

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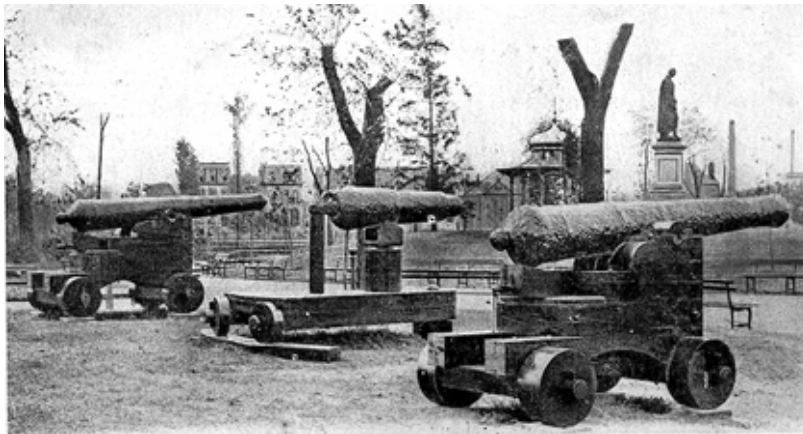
6 Victorians rode around the **MAIN LAKE** in swan boats. The current swan house and fountain are reproductions of the Victorian originals.



Benecke view of main lake with swan house and swan boat, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden archives

7 The **COMFORT STATION** was built in 1908 near the site where the Superintendent's cottage stood.

8 **CANNONS** from the British warship Acteon, which sank attacking Charleston, S.C. in 1776, were placed in the park in 1897, the year after the Cyclone.



Postcard of cannons showing tornado damaged trees and rebuilt bandstand, courtesy of Roy Peterson.

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9 The **THOMAS HART BENTON** statue by Harriet Hosmer was dedicated in 1868. It was the first public monument in the state of Missouri.



Boehl & Koenig view 194: Benton Statue, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Archives

10 A garden grows amidst **BLOSSOM ROCK** that once defined the edge of a lake containing three fountains and a waterfall.



Postcard of the west lake with buildings along Missouri Avenue in the background, courtesy of Felicia Foland

v2 Looking **WEST** to Missouri Avenue, you will see an Italianate mansion next door to what was originally a Presbyterian church. Further south, two German Baroque mansions flank Whittemore Place.

11 This **STONE URN** was pictured in stereoscopic views of Lafayette Park dating to the late 1800's

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12 In 1858, the **ATHLETIC FIELD** was a parade ground with a very tall flagpole. Col. Thorton Grimsley used the parade grounds to train his Volunteer Militia.

V3 Looking **NORTH** on Park Avenue, you'll see wonderful examples of Victorian mansions with mansard style roofs



A 1930's slide of the iron fence, chronicles the now lost bottom portion of the fence, courtesy of Billie Jean Portas.

13 The **IRON FENCE** was built in 1869. Portions of the original **RIP RAP DRAINS** can be seen along the Park and Missouri Avenue fence.

V4 Looking **NORTHEAST** at Park Avenue, you will see the commercial center of Lafayette Square.

14 The stately iron and stone **GATES** were erected in 1869. A competition was held to design the fence and gates, and Francis Tunica won the competition.

V5 Looking **EAST** across Mississippi Avenue, you will see Second Empire townhouses, a flounder house at 1512, and Victorian houses with crested bays further north.

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15 The **PLAYGROUND** features turtle and frog sculptures by Robert Cassilly.



Boehl & Koenig view 189: Rustic Bridge from the west side, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden Archives.

16 When the **ROCKERY** was built in 1866, two rustic bridges spanned the lake. The Cyclone of 1896 destroyed them. They were replaced with two ornate **IRON BRIDGES**. One iron bridge is all that remains, stripped of its scroll work and metal urns.

The 1874 map is reproduced courtesy of the Special Collections Department of the St. Louis Public Library. Photos are reproduced from stereoscopic view cards in the Missouri Botanical Garden Archives, post cards and old photos of Lafayette Square residents. Special thanks to Andy Colligan, Felicia Foland, Roy Peterson, and Billie Jean Portas.