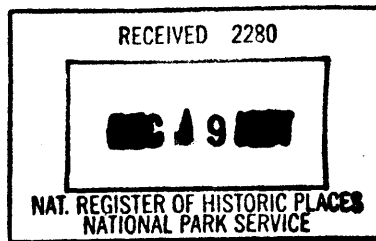


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1650

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 Thompson Summer House

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 3012 Shoreline Drive not for publication N/A

city or town Minnetonka Beach vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county Hennepin code 053 zip code 55361

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/4/97
Signature of certifying official/Title Ian R. Stewart Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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 of Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 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.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____

[Signature] Edson R. Beall Signature of the Keeper
1/15/98 Date of Action

Thompson Summer House
Name of Property

Hennepin, MN
County and State

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 previously listed resources in the count.)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____
		1	_____
			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	
0		N/A	

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Category: Domestic	Category: Domestic
Sub: Single Dwelling	Sub: Single Dwelling
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
OTHER vernacular	foundation <u>STONE, granite</u>
_____	walls <u>WOOD, weatherboard</u>
_____	roof <u>ASPHALT shingles</u>
_____	other _____

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

Thompson Summer House
Name of Property

Hennepin, MN
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 National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- 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.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

Social History

Period of Significance

1887-1947

Significant Dates

1887

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

Thompson Summer House
Name of Property

Hennepin, MN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.5 / less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Excelsior, Minn. 1958, revised, 1993

1 15 452680 4976130
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____

4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Lot 193, Minnetonka Beach, MN

Boundary Justification

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

The present boundaries of Lot 193, Minnetonka Beach, have not changed since the Thompson Summer House was constructed in 1887.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stacey B. Morris, Researcher, Writer Jackie Sluss, Supervising Historian

organization BRW, Inc. date May 1997

street & number 700 Third Street South telephone 612-370-0700

city or town Minneapolis state MN zip code 55415

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)

Property Owner

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

name Ms. Pat Tollefson

street & number 2113 West 155th Street telephone 612-892-1332

city or town Burnsville state MN zip code 55306

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.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Narrative Description of Buildings

Built in 1887 by Charles Telford and Kate Thompson, the Thompson Summer House is situated in the middle of a deep lot that slopes toward the shore of Lafayette Bay of Lake Minnetonka, in the city of Minnetonka Beach. The rear, north elevation is nestled into and protected by the slope of the lot. The cottage is situated about 125 feet above the average lake level and about 100 feet from the shore of Lake Minnetonka. The front of the house is oriented almost due south, toward the lake, and angles only slightly to the east. The yard is largely open and grassy with the exception of several very old maples and a row of tamaracks along the east lot line.

Primary entrance to the property at the time the house was built was from the rear, or north end, of the lot, where the main road through early Minnetonka beach was located. (Initial access to the area was from the railroad about a block north of the cottage.) Despite the construction of Hennepin County Road 15 along the lakeshore south of the Thompson Summer House, primary access is still from the north end of the lot. A carriage house originally stood toward the rear of the property, housing a single carriage and horse, but has since been demolished. A wood shed and an outdoor privy with a covered walkway to the house have also been demolished. A small storage building from the same period still remains on the rear of the property.

According to the present owner and Thompson family descendant, the Thompson Summer House was designed by an unidentified architect. The same architect designed a similar house on the lot immediately west of the Thompson property for Mrs. Kate (Harris)Thompson's brother and sister-in-law and their family. The Samuel A. Harris (President, Northwestern National Bank) house was demolished and replaced in the 1970s. The Thompson Summer House is vernacular in nature, yet stylishly finished with Queen Anne style windows, contrasting siding, a complex roofline, and a spacious porch. Doors to the outside on all elevations speak to its function as a summer house and to its relationship with the external environment.

The house itself is a 2 ½ story, L-shaped building with a single story porch that wraps around the house porch on the south (front), west and north sides. The complex massing rests on original stone piers and some more recently poured concrete. Exterior painting reproduces the original coloration: white walls with dark green trim. The first story elevations are constructed of board and battens while the second story is finished with clapboards. The roofline of the building is a mix of hip and gable with a gabled dormer window on the south slope of the hip. Two simple brick chimneys surmount the roof, one on the kitchen wing and the other in the central hip roof portion of the house. The roof is finished with asphalt-shingles.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

The wide screened porch affords a view of the lake, and when sitting, the road is not discernable. All of the porch extensions are under shed, rather than hipped roofs, adding to the casual cottage-like nature of the house. The solid lower interior and exterior walls of the porch are faced with wood clapboards. Plain square porch posts separate the expanses of screen and divide sections of siding. An interior bench rail at seating height lines the outer wall of the porch. A door under the west side of the porch allows entry to a crawlspace under the porch and under the southern portion of the house for maintenance and repairs. A smaller porch on the east elevation is of the same construction as the wrap-around porch, but the exterior walls are constructed of board and batten.

Window fenestration is comprised of single and paired twelve-over one light wood sash windows at the "front" of the house, and two-over-two light windows toward the "back" of the house. Window arrangement is asymmetrical. The most interesting arrangement of lights is the two-story bay window on the east elevation. It is comprised of a piano window flanked by two-over-two light windows at the first story and a pair of Queen Anne windows under a shed roof at the second story. The first floor arrangement surrounds the built-in buffet in the dining room.

The many windows visible on all elevations of the Thompson Summer House provide considerable light and air to the house interior. The interior is largely unchanged from the time of construction and its material integrity is key to the significance of the property as a summer home. The interior of the first floor contains a large living room, formal dining room, small bathroom (formerly the game storage room), and the kitchen. Behind the kitchen (north) is the laundry room, and behind that, dug into the hill, is the storm cellar. Between the kitchen and the dining room is a back entry hall that connects to the small side porch and a back stairway to the maid's bedroom above the kitchen. In the kitchen is a small, cast-iron, stove which supplements the heat from the dining room's oil stove.

Interior finishes including the exposed board and batten exterior walls at the first floor and in the second story hallway, give the house its cottage quality. Stained and varnished beadboard ceilings throughout the remainder of the main floor as well as horizontal tongue and groove walls over a vertically nailed wainscot (all pine) create a cozy atmosphere. The living room contains a large, soft red brick corner fireplace with an overmantel of beadboard and bric-a-brac/book shelves. The fireplace adjoins the open stairway with simple square balusters to the second floor. A spooled screen visually separates the stairwell hall from the living room proper. Together, the screen, the stairway, and the corner fireplace comprise the focal point of the house. Narrow oak flooring is covered with worn oriental style rugs. The adjoining dining room is similarly finished with the built-in buffet in the bay

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

window as the visual focus. Both the dining room and the living room have doors to the main front porch. The kitchen is painted white (it is likely that it was always painted) and the walls are unfinished with the exposed exterior board and battens and the interior studs and girts. Although the sink and electric stove are modern, built-in cupboards and the original four panel door with black porcelain knob have been retained.

Alterations to the historic fabric of the main floor are few and include the modern sink in the kitchen and the conversion of the game storage room into a small bathroom in the 1950s.

The second story of the house contains six bedrooms. Only five are presumed part of the original plans for the house. Three interconnected bedrooms, across the front of the house, were intended for the Thompson family and their guests. A very small single bedroom at the end of the hall opposite the master bedroom is finished entirely in beadboard and has a curved ceiling. The rear bedroom, intended for the maid, is located at the top of the kitchen stairs. The sixth bedroom is a ca 1930s addition to the north side of the house. The hall is finished with the original beadboard ceilings and board and batten walls. The front three bedrooms however, have been finished with composition board panels framed in small wood strips. Both the walls and ceilings are finished this way and appear to be a later (ca. 1930s?) renovation.

The master bedroom, located at the head of the main staircase, occupies the southeast corner of the house, and has a dressing room to the north. A pair of windows with a window seat under them face east, and a single window faces Lake Minnetonka to the south. A wainscot or dado of grass cloth finishes the walls of the master bedroom. The master bedroom is connected to the center two bedrooms both by the main hallway, and through interconnecting doors in shared bedroom walls. Each of these two smaller bedrooms has one of the centrally-located pair of south-facing windows. These interconnected rooms were most likely planned as children's bedrooms. Each bedroom has white-painted wood furniture, some of it original, including wash-stands, dressers, chests of drawers, night stands, and vanities. A sixth bedroom was added above the back porch by the 1930s, at the same time reconstruction of the second-floor bathroom was carried out.

The maid's room, at the rear of the house, was altered by the construction of the wheelchair access ramp on the north façade of the house, the result of Mrs. G. Thompson's virtually incapacitating stroke. The easternmost windows on the north elevation were removed and replaced with a door and access ramp in the 1930s. The ramp runs from the high north end of the lot, over the cellar and laundry room to the second story, which because of the way the house is nearly banked, is nearly at the same level.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 4 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Both the interior and exterior of the Thompson Summer House is extremely well-preserved, and contributes to its significance under Criterion C, as representative of the type of seasonal home built around Lake Minnetonka during the late 1800s.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 1 Thompson Summer House
Hennepin County, Minnesota

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Thompson Summer House is significant under Criterion A and Criterion C. Under Criterion A, the House reflects the broad patterns under National Register areas of significance, Entertainment and Recreation and Social History, as well as two inter-related Minnesota historic contexts: *Minnesota Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions 1870-1945* and *Urban Centers 1870-1940*. The *Tourism and Recreation* context encompasses the development of tourism, tourist facilities and recreational developments in Minnesota. Within the larger context of *Tourism and Recreation*, this nomination explores the rise of Lake Minnetonka as a one of the premier resort and recreational areas in the state for upper- and middle-class tourists and for upper- and middle-class residents of the Twin Cities. The community of Lafayette Beach, in which the house is located, developed around the largest tourist facility on Lake Minnetonka (the Hotel Lafayette) and was made up primarily of the seasonal migration of prominent, upper middle-class Twin Cities families.

The *Urban Centers* context encompasses the development of economic and transportation systems that resulted in the state's urban centers of population, commerce and culture. The elite Twin Cities group that built summer cottages in Minnetonka Beach, and elsewhere on Lake Minnetonka, represent the wealth generated by the great economic boom of the 1880s which transformed Minneapolis into a regional center of trade over the ensuing two decades. The residents of many of the early homes in Minnetonka Beach appear to have been upper and upper middle class businessmen and legal professionals, all of whom made their fortunes (however modest) during the formative years of Minneapolis' regional economy. They socialized in prominent social circles that included memberships in the Minneapolis Club, the Minnesota Club, and the University Club, all located in the city, and the nearby Lafayette Club, located on Crystal Bay northeast of the Thompson House. Several held government offices in addition to their other ventures.

Under Criterion C, the Thompson Summer House is significant in the National Register area of significance, architecture, as the type of summer home constructed in seasonal lake communities by the urban elite during the late 1800s. The Thompson Summer House construction of frame and finish without winter insulation, basement, or an enclosed foundation, and its open porches and multiple doors distinguish the building as a seasonal residence. Its substantial size reflects the social class who summered in Minnetonka Beach. Consistently used as a summer home since its construction in 1887, it is one of the oldest extant summer residences on one of Minnesota's largest and most popular lakes. The village of Minnetonka Beach contains only a small number of homes from the same era, a few with good exterior material integrity, but only the Thompson Summer

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 2 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

House has not been remodeled for year-round occupation and retains this level of interior integrity (M. Regner, personal communication via telephone, 9 April 1997). Most older homes in Minnetonka Beach, on Lake Minnetonka in general, and on White Bear Lake (the other most prominent tourist lake prior to the turn of the century in the immediate vicinity of the Twin Cities) have been either demolished and replaced or have poor material integrity due to extensive remodeling (M.J. Levine, personal communication via telephone, 21 March 1997; M. Regner, pers. comm.). The Thompson Summer House, in contrast, has excellent material integrity as a turn-of-the-century seasonal residence.

The period of significance for the Thompson Summer House begins with its construction in 1887 and continues through 1947. These dates reflect the full range of physical components presently found on the property, the period of use by the Thompson family as a seasonal residence, and the Thompson's participation in the summer social life of the community, including membership in the nearby Lafayette Club. Thompson descendants continue to commute from homes in the Twin Cities to the summer respite.

Historical Context for the Thompson Summer Cottage

Lake Resorts in Minnesota

Minnesota's lakes became a tourist attraction from the time St. Paul and Minneapolis were first settled. By the early 1850s, the start of the major influx of European-American settlers and businessmen, White Bear Lake near St. Paul already had a hotel on its shore. Life on White Bear Lake was soon described as the epitome of "Camp life, with all the accessories of rowing, sailing, fishing, hunting, and out-door life generally..." (Ogden 1878). As the resorts on the lakeshore became more important, the description of White Bear lake changed: it was noted as being "the oldest summer resort in the State, and, consequently, is far advanced in many of the conveniences required by fashionable people who do not care to indulge in the wild and sometimes inconvenient modes of life found at our less developed watering places" (Rand, McNally & Co. 1883:30).

By the late 1860s and 1870s, Minneapolis' Lake of the Isles, Cedar Lake, and Lakes Calhoun and Harriet were all tourist attractions, with elegant resort hotels nearby (Lanegran and Sandeen 1979). Lake Minnetonka, frequently cited as the most glamorous of Minnesota's lakes, with the most elegant assortment of hotels and resorts adorning its shores, became accessible by rail from the Twin Cities in 1867, a development that triggered a dramatic increase in the number of tourists or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

seasonal visitors coming to see the lake whose natural charms had been lauded since the 1850s. Other water-oriented resorts in the state in the mid- and late-1880s included Lake Elmo, the Dalles of the St. Croix, the Dalles of the St. Louis, Lake Superior (i.e., Duluth), St. Croix Lake, Frontenac and Albert Lea (Meir 1993; Ogden 1878; Rand, McNally & Co. 1883:15, 18).

The booming tourist and resort industry around Minnesota's lakes came about at least in part because of health concerns. Before the Civil War, plantation owners and their families would flee the heat, humidity, and disease of Southern summers, escaping to Minnesota's more salubrious climate and many lakeside resorts. Although their presence became less noticeable after the war's end, some Southern families continued to spend their summers in Minnesota (Jones 1957).

Doctors also contributed to the industry. Before the Civil War, East Coast doctors would "...recommend a sojourn in Italy, the south of France, or at one of the popular resorts in the West Indies...[or, beginning in the 1840s,] Florida" for their patients suffering from tuberculosis (consumption) (Clapesattle 1957: 216-217). With the onset of the Civil War, Florida became virtually inaccessible and travel to and within the state dangerous. Minnesota's many lakeside resorts remained accessible from the East Coast and quickly became the primary alternative to a stay in Florida. By the time the Civil War ended and Florida stabilized during the Reconstruction period, Minnesota was firmly established as the southern state's primary rival for the patronage of consumptive patients (and their doctors) (Clapesattle 1957:217). One of the earliest results of this rivalry between the two states was a booming tourist and health resort industry (Clapesattle 1957:220).

Railroads also did their best to promote Minnesota's attractions, particularly as health resorts. At least Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake were accessible by rail from the Twin Cities by the late 1860s, which only enhanced their popularity (Blegen 1975:462). As early as 1874, a railroad production extolled Lake Minnetonka's sailing, rowing, fishing, and "the hotels", and described several other Minnesota attractions among its jewels of the Northwest (Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad 1874). In 1878, another railroad-sponsored pamphlet described Lake Minnetonka's "...cool, bracing, invigorating atmosphere, rich in ozone and oxygen, equaled nowhere else in the world..." and was equally enthusiastic about several other Minnesota resort areas (Ogden 1878). The railroads even went so far as to sponsor a special edition of the *National Health Journal* specifically to promote Lake Minnetonka (*National Health Journal* 1899).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Lake Minnetonka — Tourist Resorts

During the period of initial contact between Minnesota's Native American inhabitants and European-American explorers, Lake Minnetonka was occupied by the Dakota, who exploited the abundant natural resources of the area. It is possible that the lake was first seen by European-Americans during the early 1820s, or perhaps even earlier (Jones 1957:27-36), but the first firm evidence of white exploration of the Lake Minnetonka area dates to 1851. Newspaper accounts from the Twin Cities and across the country rhapsodized about the beauty of the lake, drawing tourists and squatters from all over the nation (Jones 1957:21-22). Even before the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux was ratified by the United States Congress in 1852, squatters were claiming land around the lake (Jones 1957:60). After the official government land survey in 1855, the land around the lake was quickly claimed by many farmers, millers, and other settlers.

Although most of the original claims were intended for farming, the Lake Minnetonka area became a popular resort destination. Upper-class Southern families intent on escaping the humid summers of the Lower Mississippi Valley arrived at the lake they had seen described in newspapers, seeking cooler, healthier climates. Upper- and middle-class visitors believing time at the lake would improve their poor health arrived, seeking facilities at which to recuperate or rest. And Twin Cities residents looking for a summer home or summer day's escape arrived.

By 1867, J. J. Hill's St. Paul and Pacific Railroad connected the Twin Cities with the village of Wayzata, at the northeast end of the lake, leading to the construction between 1867 and 1879 of no fewer than 12 tourist hotels around the shores of the lake (Lanegran and Sandeen 1979:25). The earliest hotels were only a premonition of the considerably larger, more lavish ones that were to come. One 1878 publication, sponsored by a railroad company, noted that "The lake is a constant pleasant surprise to the visitor, and when the time comes, as it will in the near future, when fine hotels and pavilions are built at the leading points along and around this vast body of water, they will be thronged with the elite and fashion [*sic*] drawn hither from many States" (Ogden 1878). As noted above, the railroad companies also proved invaluable in promoting Lake Minnetonka as a health resort, a tradition they pursued at least through the end of the nineteenth century (*National Health Journal* 1899). By 1881, Lake Minnetonka resort life, as depicted in the *American Traveller's Journal* (1881), included considerable numbers of parties with fishing as a minor sideline for some visitors; the rounds of parties and gatherings appears from these gossipy pages to have been the primary attraction to the area.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 5 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Lake Minnetonka — Seasonal Residents

The booming tourist industry corresponded with increasing development of lakeshore properties for private, seasonal use, typically by upper-class Twin Cities residents or seasonal residents from other locales. Some of the earliest seasonal residents included prominent Twin Cities families, such as the Christians, Pillsburys, Phelps, Boveys, and Ramseys (Jones 1957:240, 252). Other powerful Twin Cities businessmen, such as W.D. Washburn and J.J. Hill, were involved in building hotels and steamboats catering to the summer visitors.

As the lake became more accessible, first by one rail line in 1867, then by streetcar line in 1881 (improved in 1906), then finally by automobile, the lake became more popular with people of more modest means. The tradition of 'summering' continued, as noted at the end of the nineteenth century: "summer outings are now more generally indulged in by the American people, than those of winter, for the reason that the former are less expensive, and the numerous resorts of this character are much more accessible" (*National Health Journal* 1899). Summer days at Lake Minnetonka became so popular that the railroad companies had at least six trains a day moving between the Twin Cities and the lake (Lanegran and Sandeen 1979:26). The rail passengers would transfer at the lakeside communities of Wayzata or Excelsior to steamboats for transportation to their final destination or a location close to it; in the summer of 1883 alone, "...the thirteen steamers on the lake carried over ninety thousand excursionists" (Mowry 1976[1884]). Widening and dredging of the narrow channel between the northern and southern portions of the lake was accomplished in 1873; however, because of the delay in access to the southern reaches of Lake Minnetonka, those shores were never as heavily developed or visited as the northern ones.

The ever-increasing numbers of hotels and boarding houses meant that by the mid-1880s, some hotels, including J.J. Hill's Hotel Lafayette, were struggling to survive (Jones 1957). Both Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake had amusement parks built in the 1880s, both of which were eventually taken over by railroad companies. The depression of 1893 signaled the beginning of the end for the large hotels and the tourist trade, and may have been a motive for the railroads' sponsorship of the *National Health Journal's* special edition regarding Lake Minnetonka. The decline in tourism continued through World War I, although the amusement parks remained popular. In spite of this decline, the numbers of people seeking private property on the shores of the lakes increased, particularly after the rise of the automobile. "As automobiles allowed more Minnesotans to spend time at the lake...property that had been used for only a few weeks each summer saw intensive use on weekends throughout the year. ... Lake Minnetonka and White Bear Lake were surrounded in the first decades of the century by

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 6 Thompson Summer House
Hennepin County, Minnesota

cottages owned by city residents who used railroads and streetcars to reach their weekend retreats; as automobile use increased and road networks improved after World War II, however, these lakefront tracts held elaborate year-round residences for people who commuted to Twin Cities jobs" (Baerwald 1989:46-47). The extreme rise in Lake Minnetonka real estate values in the last twenty years have enticed higher income buyers into the area who can buy expensive lakeshore lots, remove existing older cottages, and build modern homes. Even the earliest of Lake Minnetonka's and other lakes' private, seasonal retreats, belonging to the prominent families mentioned above, were frequently converted for four-season use or were replaced with some of the large mansions that can be seen today.

Village of Minnetonka Beach

The first settler in what would become the village of Minnetonka Beach claimed much of the eastern end of the forested peninsula almost as soon as the official land survey of the Lake Minnetonka area was completed in 1855. Other claimants of land at the eastern end of the point followed quickly (MBCA 1976). The western end of the peninsula, including its base on the mainland, was in Section 16, designated by law in Minnesota Territory for school purposes. This land was not officially opened for settlement until 1872, and was not platted until 1883 (Richards 1957:59-60). The village of Minnetonka Beach was not incorporated until 1894 (MBCA 1976).

By 1874, most of the forested land comprising the future Minnetonka Beach had been purchased (Richards 1957), apparently for farming. Just five years later, Hennepin County conducted the first survey for a road through what would become the village of Minnetonka Beach. The survey may have been prompted by the earliest residential construction in the vicinity; by 1880, the first summer cottages had already appeared, although at least one could be used during the winter as well (Richards 1957). However, a bridge and road connecting the peninsula to the mainland via the northeastern point of land would not be constructed until 1886 and 1887.

At about the same time the first cottages were being built, Twin Cities tycoon J.J. Hill, working with the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company, began construction of what would be Lake Minnetonka's largest, most glamorous, and best-promoted establishment, the Hotel Lafayette. Accessible both by steamboat and by rail, the hotel's 300 rooms could accommodate over a thousand guests (Mowry 1976[1884]; Richards 1957), many of them "mint-julep drinking planters from the south and...English lords" (Edgerton 1957). The hotel, completed in 1882, was the site of a meeting celebrating the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 7 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

completion of the trans-continental railway, hosted Presidents Arthur once and Ulysses S. Grant twice (Jones 1957). Unfortunately, the hotel, built at the peak of the tourist industry on the lake, had to compete with a large number of like establishments and never achieved the level of profitability hoped for by its backers. It burned dramatically in 1897 and was replaced in 1900 by a building housing the Lafayette Club. That building also burned in 1922, and was in turn replaced in 1924 with the current, fire-proof Lafayette Club building (Jones 1957; MBCA 1976; Soukup 1994:69).

In 1883, the land owned by Hill and the railroad company around the Hotel Lafayette comprised much of the western end of the peninsula. Under the trusteeship of Adolphus H. Bode, much of the land was divided into the 193 individual lakefront lots of what would become the Minnetonka Beach community. The actual beach in front of each lot, typically 60 to 100 feet wide, was held to be common property. At the first auction, individual lots brought prices of between \$300 and \$800. In 1883, these were considered relatively although not prohibitively high prices: "We...did not look for sales at as high prices as they brought...and that lots should sell at so much higher prices than at points which are accessible at all times in the year, is a good omen for future values" (Richards 1957:88, quoting an issue of *The Weekly* from 1883). Not all of the lots were put up for sale at the first auction, and not all of those which were available were purchased. One writer later noted, "All the vacant property in the vicinity is owned or controlled by the village and is only sold to desirable parties" (Ellis 1906).

All of these "desirable parties" appeared to have met a set of strictures set forth in the deed of sale for the Thompson Summer House land. The deed specified that the lot should be used solely for residential purposes, that no liquor sales should take place on the lot, and that no "immoral, unlawful or disreputable place of resort" should be established on the lot (copy of 1886 deed of sale submitted by owner). The deed also contained requirements for the construction and maintenance of a bath house, boat and wharf.

Among the earliest "desirable parties" who formed the nucleus of the growing village of Minnetonka Beach were, in alphabetical order (information from Richards 1957 and from Hudson 1908):

C.H. Benton, Minneapolis City Attorney from 1882-1883;

Maj. G.A. Camp, one of the earliest Minneapolis pioneers, arriving in 1851, and a prominent businessman
in the lumber industry;

W.D. Cornish, a judge in St. Paul;

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 8 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

W.H. Dunwoody, a prominent Minneapolis milling industry businessman who started the Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis, still active today, and who also owned a hobby farm on Lake Minnetonka;
J.J. Hill, Northern Pacific Railway magnate, who built the Hotel Lafayette and bought four lots
C.S. Hulbert, a prominent local businessman who also served for five consecutive two-year terms (1898-1908) as Minneapolis City Treasurer;
W.W. Huntington, a Hennepin County Treasurer and one of the earliest residents in the village;
Dr. A.S. Hutchinson, who in 1877 started a homeopathic medical practice in Minneapolis;
C.S. Langdon, who with four other bachelors built a house for their "Dakota Club", the house to go to the last of the group to wed, and who later became vice president of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank in Minneapolis;
J.W. Lawrence, one of the earliest residents of Minneapolis (arrived between 1855 and 1860) and a prominent Minneapolis lawyer who served as Hennepin County Attorney from 1875-1879;
C.E. Otis, a judge in Minneapolis;
E.J. Phelps, a prominent businessman with interests in furniture, banking, grain and elevators, who served on the Minneapolis Parks Board (1908) and on the Board of Trade (1879-1898) and who happened to be in two of the same social clubs as C.T. Thompson, builder of the Thompson Summer House;
Col. G.C. Ripley, a former Union Army officer and another prominent Minneapolis lawyer; and
A.B. Taylor, one of the charter members of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce and later its Vice President.

The information available on these few early landowners suggests that the Minnetonka Beach community as a whole was comprised primarily of very successful businessmen and legal professionals, all probably members of the upper and upper middle-class Minneapolis and St. Paul society. Their financial success in the urban Twin Cities environment provided the means for their weekend or summer escapes to Lake Minnetonka. Their choice of locale was almost certainly influenced by the earlier choice of the most prominent Minnesota families, the Christians, Pillsburys, Phelps, Boveys, and Ramseys, all of whom also had Lake Minnetonka retreats. Some of the early seasonal residents continued to commute to their jobs in the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Twin Cities; railroad timetables indicate that Minneapolis was only about an hour from the village by the rail line that passed in front of the Hotel Lafayette (Onan and Onan 1964; Soukup 1994).

The village remained primarily seasonal for many years. In 1898, the village was described as “not inhabited” between the beginning of November and the middle of April in a legal proceeding (Soukup 1994:17, quoting one of the village’s attorney’s communications). In 1902, one summer resident submitted a petition that a primary school be established in the village: he “...was not concerned about any students who might be living in the village during the entire school year, rather he wanted to provide a place ‘in order that those having children might go to the lake much earlier and leave much later than they would otherwise be able to do, without sending the children into the city schools’” (Soukup 1994:13, quoting the petition). The village hall was used for school purposes until the 1920s, when Minnetonka Beach ended its independent schools.

Despite the continuing presence of seasonal residents, the pattern of habitation and use of Minnetonka Beach began gradually to shift. By 1906, one writer noted that “the village of Minnetonka Beach is managed and controlled by citizens whose place of business is Minneapolis, but who reside nearly the year round here” (Ellis 1906).

This observation may have captured the first expression of the use-pattern visible today. The few cottages visible on early maps (see Richards 1957) expanded by 1894 to about 82 cottages, and by 1908 to a total of 136 homes, primarily on waterfront lots (Soukup 1994; Woodman 1908). Some of these may already have been converted for four-season use or for year-round dwelling. By 1957, the number of houses had increased to 159 (Richards 1957:15). By 1976, 195 residences are listed in a directory of Minnetonka Beach (MBCA 1976). Only 11 of the 195 (about six percent) are identified as summer only; the remaining 184 houses listed are either recent or were remodeled for year-round use. Interestingly, the summer residences were concentrated toward the eastern tip of the point on which Minnetonka Beach lies, toward the area where the first cottages on the peninsula were built. By 1997, according to an expert on Minnetonka Beach and its homes, almost all of the 225 houses in Minnetonka Beach are either of recent vintage or are older structures remodeled for four-season use. The last conversion was approximately two years ago, during the village’s centennial celebration. The only un-converted house extant in the village of Minnetonka Beach is the Thompson Summer House (M. Regner, personal communication via telephone, 9 April 1997).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 10 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

The Thompsons

The original occupants of the Thompson Summer House were Charles Telford Thompson, his wife Kate Harris, and their family. Thompson, a young Ohio-born attorney, moved to Minneapolis in 1878 and promptly formed a partnership with another lawyer, A.M. Keith. Over the course of their 36-year association, the partnership grew into the legal firm of Keith, Evans, Thompson & Fairchild. As a lawyer, Thompson was described in obituaries as “distinguished” and “prominent”, and one of the funeral addresses described his high ethical standards (Torrance 1914). Thompson served on the board of trustees of Macalester College in St. Paul for 14 years, earning much praise for his skill in helping the young college navigate several years of financial difficulty (Wallace 1914). Thompson was also a prominent member of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, writing a history of the church to celebrate Westminster’s 50th anniversary celebration and serving both church and community in a wide variety of capacities (Torrance 1914). He attended the 1899 Pan Presbyterian Council meeting in Washington, D.C., and was invited to a White House reception honoring the council (copy of invitation submitted by owner).

Charles Telford Thompson and his wife Kate traveled widely carrying letters of introduction from William H. Taft, then Secretary of War, to be used during the Thompsons’ 1907 visit to Cuba and Puerto Rico (copy submitted by owner). A brief narrative of Thompson’s visits to “the Old World” was recently produced (Thompson 1994). Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were also among the leading members of Twin Cities society and members of several Twin Cities social clubs. Thompson and many of his neighbors from Minnetonka Beach were involved in organizing a dinner at the Minneapolis Club honoring Taft and his “Flag in the Orient” (copy of dinner program submitted by owner). Mrs. Kate Thompson was one of the leading members of the Minneapolis chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (*Minneapolis Journal* 1902). The Thompsons were also members of the Lafayette Club in Minnetonka Beach, indicating their social status in the community (Onan and Onan 1964)

After Thompson’s unexpected death from ptomaine poisoning in 1914 (*Minneapolis Tribune* 1914), his widow continued to spend summers at the cottage for another 24 years. Her physical disabilities following a stroke in the 1930s resulted in some structural modifications to the house.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 11 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

After Mrs. Charles (Kate) Thompson died in 1938, her three sons inherited the house; one son, Telford K. Thompson, soon bought out the other two. Telford Thompson was a veteran of both World Wars and a 1914 conflict in Mexico, became heavily involved in motorized transportation and eventually became president of a truck trailer firm in St. Paul (*Minneapolis Star* 1951). He and his wife, Gladys Thompson, and family members spent summers in the Thompson Summer Cottage and maintained the family membership in the Lafayette Club (*Minneapolis Star* 1951); after Telford Thompson's death in 1951, the remainder of the family continued to summer at the cottage through the death of Mrs. Gladys Thompson in 1990, at which time the current owner, grand-daughter of the original builders, inherited the cottage.

Summary

The Thompson Summer House is significant as the embodiment of the patterns of leisure and recreation of upper class Minneapolitans before the turn of the 19th Century. Proximity to the city and accessibility by rail and later auto, made it possible for Minneapolis businessmen to commute each day between their businesses and the summer community of Minnetonka Beach. Social ties were maintained by club life at both ends of the commute and businessmen who could not make it back to the summer home in the evening, could be coddled at the club as if at home. Minnetonka Beach, comprised of 84 cottages in 1894 and 136 in 1908, provided a community of neighbors and friends, many of them friends and acquaintances from the city. The spaciousness of the cottage allowed for extended networks of friends and family to spend time at the lake.

The trend toward year-round occupation through the last century and resulting renovations leaves the Thompson Summer House an outstanding example of the architectural type of late 19th century seasonal cottages at Minnetonka Beach. The level of material integrity of the 110 year old Thompson House is very high, both on the exterior and the interior, and is evocative of a lifestyle rarely imitated in the present. Another group of fourteen summer cottages built between 1907 and 1915 on Crane Island in Lake Minnetonka is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Crane Island Historic District. This group of cottages is distinct from the Minnetonka Beach summer community in terms of age, size and the socioeconomic class of the builders. The Crane Island cottages date to a later period, are more modest, and were built by an association on communally owned land. Yet they represent the same lifestyle. Both represent a pattern of leisure based on enjoyment of the lake and a relaxed way of life afforded by the values and economics of the times.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Bibliography

American Traveller's Journal

1881 August issue. New York. In collection of the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Baerwald, T.J.

1989 Forces at Work on the Landscape. In *Minnesota in a Century of Change: The State and Its People Since 1900*, ed. C. E. Clark, Jr. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul. Pages 19-53.

Blegen, T.C.

1975 *Minnesota: A History of the State*. Second edition. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London.

Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad

1874 *Summer Resorts and Watering Places of the Northwest*. Published by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad.

Clapesattle, H.

1957 When Minnesota was Florida's Rival. *Minnesota History* 35:214-221.

Edgerton, J.

1957 Forward to *The Early Background of Minnetonka Beach*, by B. Richards. Hennepin County Historical Society, Minneapolis.

Ellis, S.E.

1906 *Picturesque Lake Minnetonka*. S.E. Ellis, Minneapolis.

Hudson, H.B.

1908 *A Half Century of Minneapolis*. Hudson Publishing, Minneapolis.

Jones, T.

1957 *Once Upon a Lake*. Ross and Haines, Minneapolis.

Lanegran, D.A. and E.R. Sandeen

1979 *The Lake District of Minneapolis: A History of the Calhoun-Isles Community*. Living Historical Museum, St. Paul.

Levine, M.J.

Personal Communication, staff, Village of Minnetonka Beach, City Hall

Meir, P.

1993 *Too Hot, Went to Lake*. Neighbors Publishing, Minneapolis.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 2 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Minneapolis Journal

1902 D. A. R. Conference. December 18. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Minneapolis Star

1951 Obituary notice for Telford K. Thompson. 4 September. Page 22. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Minneapolis Tribune

1914 Obituary for Charles T. Thompson. 4 November. Page 14. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Minnetonka Beach Civic Association

1976 *Minnetonka Beach Village Directory*. Special Bicentennial Edition.

Mowry, H.W.

1976[1884] *Guide and Directory of Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota*. Republished in the 1976 Bicentennial Edition of the Minnetonka Beach Directory, published by the Minnetonka Beach Civic Association.

National Health Journal

1899 Special Illustrated Minnetonka Edition. Volume 8, number 12.

Ogden, D.H.

1878 *The Summer Resorts of Minnesota*. Culver, Page, Hoyne and Co., Chicago.

Onan, B. and B. Onan

1964 *Handbook of Lake Minnetonka*. Reprint of 1901 handbook with same title. Byron & Willard, Minneapolis.

Rand, McNally & Co.

1883 *Where to Recuperate During Summer Days*. Rand, McNally & Co., Chicago.

Regner, M.

Personal Communication, staff, Village of Minnetonka Beach, City Hall

Richards, B.

1957 *The Early Background of Minnetonka Beach*. Hennepin County Historical Society, Minneapolis.

Sluss, J.

1991 *Crane Island - Statement of Significance for Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*. Prepared for Thomas R. Zahn and Associates for the Crane Island Association.

Soukup, J.

1994 *A New Village on the Lake: Minnetonka Beach 1894-1994*. Independence Press, Lakeville, MN.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 3 Thompson Summer House
 Hennepin County, Minnesota

Thompson, C.T.

- 1994 *A Brief Journal of My Visit to the Old World.* Edited by W. J. Williamson. Copy of manuscript available in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Tollefson, P.T.

- 1994 Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. On file with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul.

Torrance, E.

- 1914 A Personal Tribute. In *Memorial Program* for Charles Telford Thompson. December 15. Macalester College, St. Paul.

Wallace, J.

- 1914 Relations to the College. In *Memorial Program* for Charles Telford Thompson. December 15. Macalester College, St. Paul.

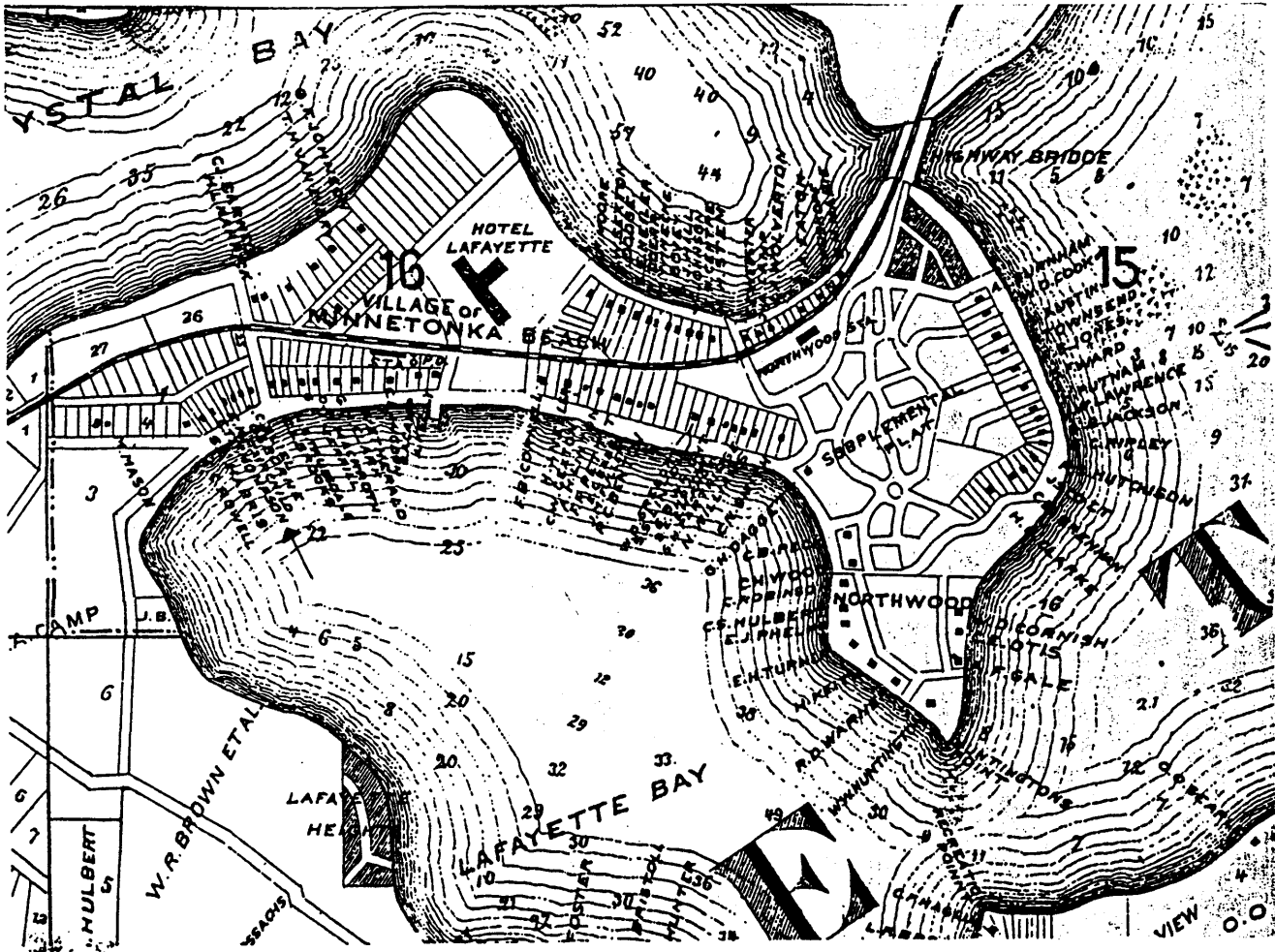
Woodman, P.M.

- 1908 *Woodman's Minnetonka Map-Directory 1908.* Woodman Publishing, Minneapolis.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1 Thompson Summer House
Hennepin County, Minnesota



George W. Cooley, C. E., Map of 1896 as appears in B. Richard's *The Early Background of Minnetonka Beach*.