

How they got their names

The lakes, creeks, and communities of this watershed have gone by many names through time, some of which we'll never know. See if you recognize any of the people or events below.

Lake Ann

The lake is named for Ann Judd, wife of local resident William Judd. In 1874 Franz Kerber purchased a 70 acre farm on Lake Ann. In the summer the family rented boats to vacationing city residents, but they had to compete with the cows for lake access²¹!



Cow competition on Lake Ann (CCHS)

Duck Lake & Round Lake

No definitive records exist for when the lakes were named, though they are named for their shapes. Art Miller does remember that "soldiers from Fort Snelling held maneuvers on the east shore of Round Lake in the early 1900s"¹⁸.



Roy & Keith Karasek fish Duck in 1966 (EPHS)

Lake Idlewild

The original spelling for this lake was "Idylwild", but was switched to the modern spelling in 1981²². Previously also called Lake Tobias.

Lake Lucy

Lake Lucy was named for Lucy Judd, daughter of Burrirt Judd who moved to the area in 1859²¹.

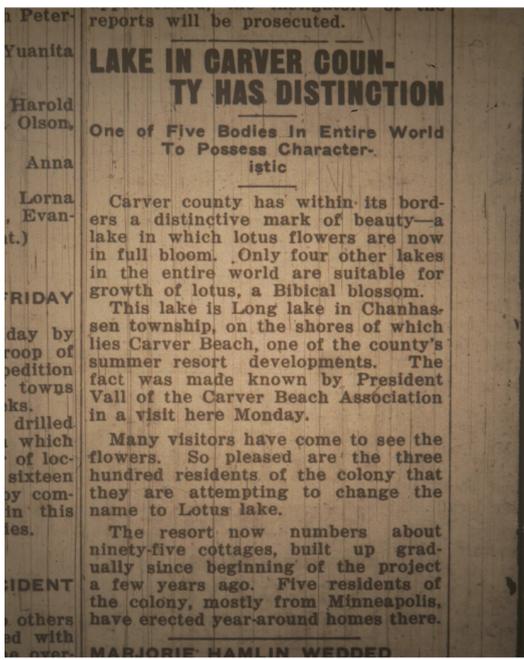
Neill Lake

After it was dug out in the mid 1940s, Neill Lake was named after Aaron Neill, who came up the river from Galena Illinois in 1850, and the family that lived there after him¹⁸.

Lotus Lake

There is evidence of human activity at Lotus Lake as early as 6000 BCE¹⁸, and the local Dakota were known to 'dig ginseng roots and gather lotus leaves at Carver beach'¹⁸. Originally called Long Lake by the settlers, it was renamed in the 1930s to reflect the American Lotus water lily that grows there²³.

A 1932 news paper article highlights the American Lotus water lily (it is now known that more than five water bodies have the American Lotus). (WVH, CCHS)



Jonas Staring (EPHS)



Staring Lake

Staring Lake was named for Jonas Staring, an Erie Canal Captain who built the first frame house in Eden Prairie in 1854. It was originally called Lake Caroline for his wife¹⁸. In the days before refrigeration, many families would cut blocks of ice from the lake for cold storage²⁰.

Lake Susan

There is evidence that humans lived near Lake Susan as early as 6000 BCE²¹. It was named after Susan Hazeltine, who was the first schoolteacher in Carver County and founded the first school in 1855²¹.

Red Rock Lake

Red Rock Lake is named for a red rock held sacred by the Mdewakantōj Dakota, who would visit it when in council, especially before and after battles with the Anishinaabe. The rock's current location is a mystery; some say that the Mdewakanton took it with them, some say it was sold to a museum out west, and some think it was moved somewhere else within the city and fogoten¹⁸.

Miller Spring

The Fredrick-Miller Spring is a natural spring of the Prairie Du Chien Aquifer. The spring was called "minnewaucan" or healing water by the local Mdewakantōjwan, and valued for its curative properties¹. The first settler to own the spring was John Heath in 1855, though in 1874 it belonged to Mary Williams. It was bought by the Fredricks in 1890, and later by the Miller family in the 1930s for public use. Art and Norman Miller sold the spring to the City of Eden Prairie in 1969 "with the stipulation that the spring would be preserved and maintained for future generations to enjoy"²



Fred and Art Miller (EPHS)

Hyland Lake

Hyland Lake is named for James Hyland, born in Ireland in 1810, who owned about 109 acres on the lake's eastern shore²⁴.

Purgatory Creek

One name the native Mdewakantōj had for Purgatory Creek was Iriquois*, after a warrior who lived on the stream in the mid 1700s²⁵. The European pioneers had 3 names for the creek based on where you lived. In the upper stretches, Anna Simmons Apgar reported in "Old Rail Fence Corners" that new settlers were disheartened by the swampy land around the stream and compared it to a kind of purgatory, and the name stuck. People from the Pioneer Trail area named it Mill Creek for the mill, and people from Hennepin called it Hennepin Creek¹⁸. In 2006, there were discussions about changing the name to something more flattering, but to this date the name Purgatory Creek remains²⁶.

Bloomington

The original name of Bloomington, "Icahtaka**", is not related to its modern name, but "in this context [meant] a place where a river touches or runs near a hill; a place where the prairie comes down to a river or lake"²⁵, both of which happened in Bloomington.

Chanhassen

"Chanhassen" is a romanized version of the Mdewakantōj name "Can-Ha-San Pa-Ha*" Which means "The Hills of the whitish Bark Trees" or "Sugar Maple Hills"²⁵. Chanhassen township was formed in 1854, the first in Carver County. Modern day Chanhassen was formed in 1967 when the small, rural township became a city, solidifying its borders, but losing some land to Victoria and Chaska²¹

Minnetonka

"Minnetonka" is from the "Mini'iatanka**", or "The Water They Speak of as Large"²⁵.



A picnic on Lake Riley (EPHS)

Mitchell Lake

Named for David Mitchell of Monaghan County North Ireland who bought the land in 1852. His log cabin served as the first Methodist church in the area. David Mitchell lived in town with his family and sold the land to Fred and John Miller in 1870¹⁸.



The Mitchell Family (EPHS)

Riley Creek

Riley Creek starts in Lake Lucy, and runs down through several district lakes towards the Minnesota River. The Mdewakantōj called it Wi-no-hin-ca-kte-pi*, after a Mdewakanton woman who was almost killed by the Anishinaabe, but recovered and went on to have a long life and a large family²⁵. Today, the name Riley Creek comes from the fact that it ran through the land owned by Patrick and Matthew O'Riley¹⁸.

*Just like Purgatory Creek had different names depending on who was talking about it, the Mdewakantōj had a variety of names for the lakes and creeks. The names listed here come from Paul Durand's research, but are by no means the only, or even the most accurate name.