



REFLECTIONS



FEMALE SKATING ATTIRE FROM DONALDSON'S [LEFT]. CLEARING ICE WITH HORSE-DRAWN EQUIPMENT, MINNEAPOLIS [BELOW]. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



Most women dressed in the latest skating fashions advertised by Donaldson's and Dayton's — Victorian dresses with fur-trimmed muffs and hats and, later, the shorter, more form-fitting flapper style of the Roaring '20s.

Having "the best ice in the United States" according to Olympic medalist speed skater Leo Friesinger, Minneapolis produced a large number of world-famous skaters in early 1900. And Lake Harriet was chosen as the site for the U.S. Olympic Trials in 1963 after the Powderhorn Park speed skating track was closed due to low water levels.

Park board employees had the difficult job maintaining the ice using shovels and scoops. Once the ice was thick enough to hold a team, horse-drawn shovels and scrapers were driven onto the lakes to do the clearing. Although a rink is no longer maintained at Lake Harriet, small patches of ice are still cleared by neighboring families who continue to enjoy the winter sport of skating on the lake.

A CITY ON SKATES

BY CATHY BUCHHOLZ

During his first Minneapolis winter, Charles M. Loring, later known as the "Father of Minneapolis Parks," enjoyed ice skating as a main form of entertainment. Upon his motion to the park board in 1884, three acres were cleared on the pond in what is now Loring Park, and the decision to

maintain additional rinks soon followed.

Skaters swarmed the Minneapolis lakes from dawn to dusk. Lake Harriet had crowds of up to 1,500 skaters. The lake was lit for night skating, and many couples enjoyed a glide around the small rink.