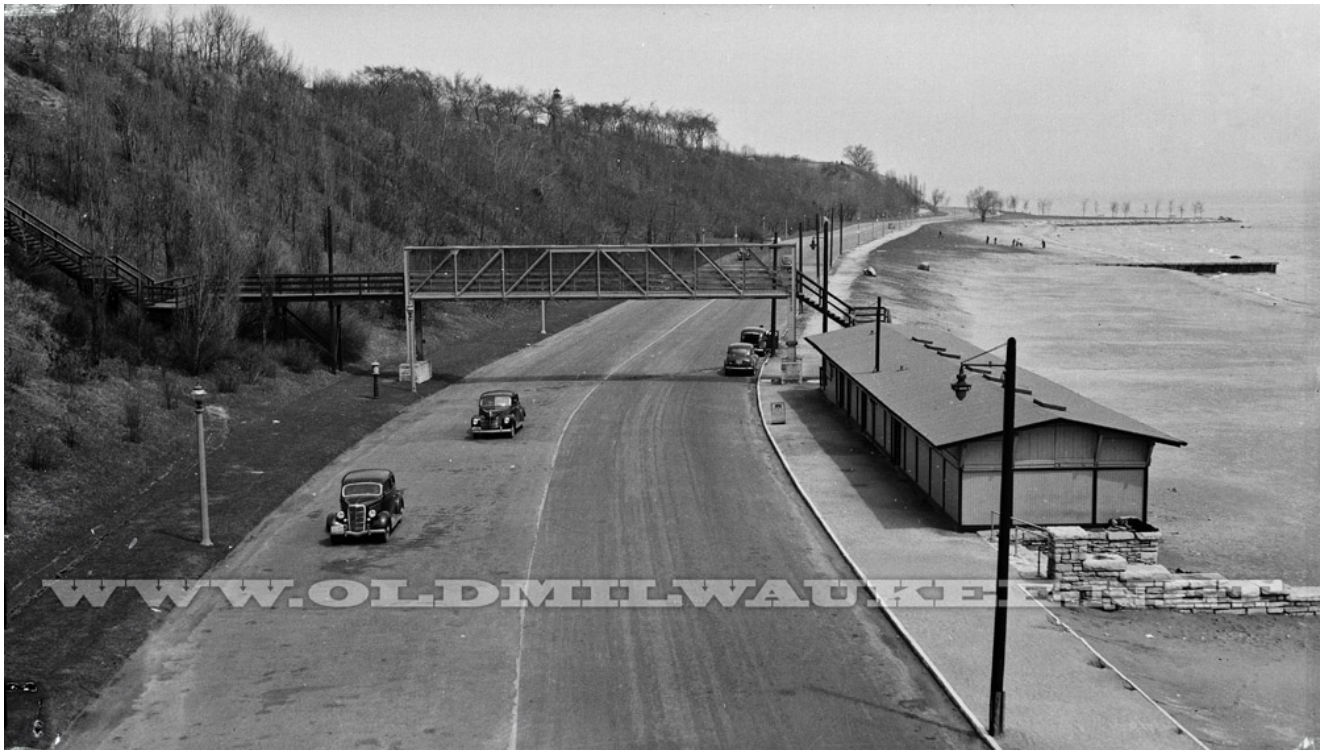


1941 Bradford Beach

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This 1941 photo looks north on Lincoln Memorial Drive at Bradford Beach. The final section of the Drive which connected to Kenwood Boulevard officially opened on September 28, 1929. One interesting side note of the Drive extension to Kenwood is that it displaced a popular free tourist camp on the bluff overlooking the lake at the east end of Kenwood that had operated in the 1920's. Car camping was a newfound past-time and several thousand people per year would stop and camp there.

Bradford Beach was given the name because it lay directly east of Bradford Avenue. Bradford Beach had been a popular swimming spot for many years prior and was usually accessed by walking down from the bluff or along the lake from further south. Prior to the opening of Lincoln Memorial Drive, Bradford Beach wasn't too easy to get to by car. The only road was a narrow dirt and sand road so most people walked there from McKinley Beach. Until 1921, McKinley was the preferred spot. It was closer to where most people lived. Polluted water pushed more people further north to the cleaner beach at the foot of Bradford Avenue. On really hot days, both beaches were crowded.

The building shown housed a refreshment stand and changing rooms. It was built in 1927 and lasted until the one that we all know was built in 1949. The current Bath House is an amazing mid-century building that is described as:

Shaped like a ship, this pavilion seems ideally suited to its location on a popular swimming beach. The city built the bathhouse to provide restroom, changing, and bathing facilities. Architects Grunwald and Behrens decked out the two-story, brick and concrete structure with maritime motifs. The upper story opens onto a ship-like promenade deck. The enclosed lower story resembles a ship's hull, perforated only by doors and glass-block ribbon windows. A curving prow forms the front of the pavilion, and a flagpole rises like a mast. A long, rail-enclosed sundeck trails off to the stern, its twisting staircase descending to the beach.

<https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI100425>