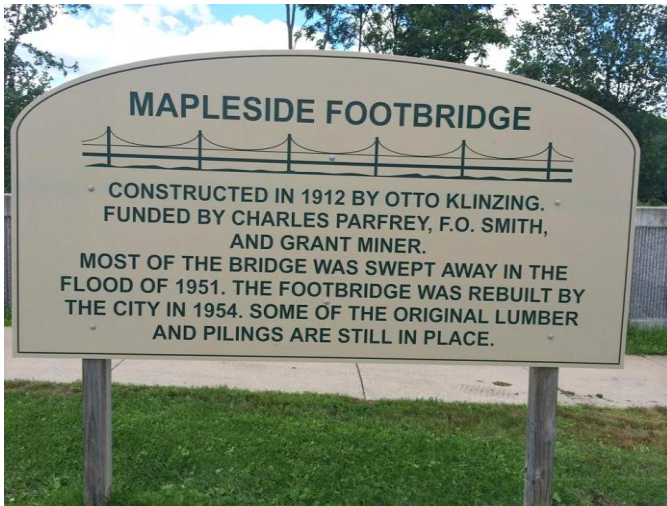




The Mapleside Footbridge and Parfrey's Mill.

The Mapleside Footbridge across the Pine River Mill Pond.

The founder of Richland Center, Ira Haseltine, built a dam across the Pine River to create a mill pond to generate power for his saw mill and a grist mill early in Richland Center's formative years. The grist mill was later sold to A.C. Parfrey and Haseltine left the city.



In the early years of Richland Center, little building was done on the west bank of the Pine River. As the city grew to include properties on the west bank of the river, a group of citizens in 1912 decided to connect east and west sides across the mill pond with a foot bridge. The group included Charles Parfrey, F.O. Smith and Grant Miner, Sr. All these men owned land on the west side. Charles Parfrey drew the plans Otto Klinzing and Grant Miner, Sr. built the bridge. During the first winter of work, the crew drove the pilings which were 15 feet long with a horse drawn pile driver.

In 1917 the bridge was given to the city which later came into dispute when the footbridge was destroyed in the big flood of 1951. In July of 1951, after a four inch rain pummeled the county, the city experienced a severe flood. The anchorages on both ends of the footbridge were ripped from their moorings and the bridge was swept away.

There was no money available to rebuild the footbridge since the county had only received \$500 in federal disaster funds. The city council voted not to rebuild it but the people on the west side demanded it be replaced. The city council, backed by legal advice, claimed the gift of the bridge to the city in 1917 was illegal as one of the owners sat on the council. There was such a stir created that Judge A.W. Kopp ordered the city to rebuild it. In the summer of 1952, the



Skating on the Mill Pond.

council on a 3 to 2 vote appealed the order to the state supreme court. The court ruled that the city must replace the bridge because it was a public way that required the same attention as any of the streets in the city. The bridge was replaced at a cost of \$19,200 and was reopened in 1954.

The mill pond, over the many years of its existence, was a popular area for recreation which included fishing, boating, and in the winter, ice skating. This changed when the dam across the Pine River was removed and the river returned to its original stream bed. The footbridge is well maintained and remains a unique remnant of Richland Center's past.



There are wildlife viewing areas and walking trails in the old mill pond area.

