

## **Burnet Woods Walking Tour**

A. *This 1.5-mile walk begins at the Burnet Woods sign at the southeast corner of Brookline Drive and Jefferson Avenue, across the street from the Clifton Branch Library. The park is named in honor of Judge Jacob Burnet, a Cincinnati pioneer who became a U.S. Senator and the “father of the Ohio constitution.” Burnet’s small farm made up a portion of the original park property.*

B. *Proceed 200 yards east on the Jefferson Avenue sidewalk and turn right onto the asphalt path leading through a wooded portion of the park. Over half of the 90-acre Burnet Woods is forested, thus providing a haven for woodland species whose habitat has been replaced by Cincinnati’s buildings, lawns, and paved surfaces.*

C. *When you reach the end of the path on Brookline Drive, proceed down the sidewalk to the posts closing the road and then cross to the stone wall holding the “WPA 1940” sign. During the nation’s Great Depression, the U.S. government’s Works Progress Administration (WPA) employed out-of-work men to build many of the park’s structures, including the stone wall, concrete slide, and picnic shelter in the valley below. The valley was formed by Bates Run, a stream that today flows in an underground pipe through Burnet Woods and Clifton.*

D. *Continue along Brookline Drive to the Trailside Nature Center. This 1939 structure, with its horizontal design, rounded corners, and fieldstone construction, reflects the strong influence of Frank Lloyd Wright and his organic approach to architecture. The building houses a planetarium, nature museum, and a meeting room for nature education and community activities.*

E. *From the Nature Center, cross Brookline Drive to the plaza, walk past the shuttered concession stand and the fishing regulations sign to the bottom of a set of stone steps leading upslope. Among U.S. cities, the number of public stair steps in hilly Cincinnati is only exceeded by the total in San Francisco.*

F. *While standing at the bottom of the stone stairway, observe how the plaza acts as a dam to form Burnet Woods Lake. Walk across the plaza/dam and onto the Brookline Drive Bridge to view the spillway of the lake, the largest waterbody in Cincinnati’s park system. This lake, created a year after the 1874 opening of the park, is stocked annually with fathead minnows, hybrid bluegill, channel catfish, and largemouth bass.*

G. *From the Brookline Drive Bridge, follow the Drive past a second set of posts and across an intersection to continue along the sidewalk on the west side of the Drive. The forested valley that parallels the sidewalk provides seeds, insects, and other woodland prey for a large variety of nesting, migrant, and winter birds. The Audubon Society includes Burnet Woods in an international system of Important Bird Areas.*

H. *Continue up the sidewalk past the forest to a mowed meadow that serves as a fairway for the Burnet Woods Disc Golf Course. Continue walking uphill until you pass a grove of introduced pine trees on your right. These pines, like spruces, firs, hemlocks, yews, and white cedars, are not native to Cincinnati. The only local evergreen species is the juniper or red cedar, a few of which are planted in a small stand on the opposite side of the Drive.*

I. *Cross Brookline Drive and climb past the junipers to the granite H. H. Richardson Memorial.* An informative plaque on this monument details the history of 1972 structure. On the other side of the monument, a recently-installed grove of trees with red, orange, and yellow fall foliage are planted in the shape of a comet, with a round head and a long trailing tail dropping downslope toward Martin Luther King Boulevard.

J. *From the monument, return downhill past the junipers, cross the Drive, and continue up the sidewalk. Twenty yards beyond the first tee of the disc golf course, leave the sidewalk to walk west past the disc golf basket surrounded by large oak trees.* Oaks are common throughout Burnet Woods, especially on well-drained upland areas.

K. *Continue west across the lawn to the small ridge paralleling Clifton Avenue and then turn right to walk north along the ridge to the star-shaped Lone Star Pavilion.* The two cannons at this 1974 shelter are replicas of the Twin Sisters, a pair of guns given to Sam Houston by his friends in Cincinnati for use in the battle for Texas independence.

L. *Proceed north over the lawn to the picnic shelter/comfort station that is constructed of limestone blocks holding 450-million-year-old marine fossils.* These building stones likely were supplied by a local quarry, since Ordovician-era limestone forms the bedrock underlying Cincinnati.

M. *From the picnic shelter, proceed on the sidewalk passing through a playground and then through a small stand of beech trees with initials carved into their smooth gray trunks.* The beech, a plentiful species in the region, was largely responsible for the great number of hogs raised in the vicinity of early-nineteenth-century Cincinnati, then nicknamed Porkopolis. The forest-pastured hogs feasted on fallen beechnuts and thereby produced a sweet-tasting pork that was internationally famous.

N. *Continue down the length of the parking lot, bear left at the street, and follow the asphalt path leading to the bandstand.* Completed around 1911, this gazebo-style music pavilion is the oldest building in the park. Summer concerts are supported by the Burnet Woods Music Fund established by William Groesbeck in 1875 .

O. *From the bottom of the stair steps leading up into the bandstand, walk west over the lawn and across the street to proceed down a set of stone steps. A few feet from the end of the steps, cross the street and follow the asphalt pathway through a woods containing large beech trees. The path descends to Clifton Avenue.*

P. *Turn right and follow the Clifton Avenue sidewalk to the plaza at the intersection of Clifton and Ludlow Avenues.* The 2002 Matthew O'Brien Diggs III Plaza holds Matt Kotlarczyk's fountain sculpture, "The Muse of Clifton," an eight-and-a-half-foot-tall statue of a woman that incorporates building facades and flowers in its design.

Q. *Complete this tour by walking 400 yards up the Ludlow Avenue sidewalk to the starting point.*