

# RICHARD SIMPSON PARK

## THE REAL POWER OF LAKE ARLINGTON



Three entries set sail in the Arlington Yacht Club Regatta at Lake Arlington, June 25, 1973.

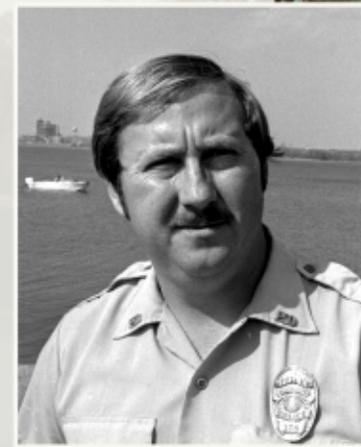
**R**ichard Simpson Park stands as a monument to the longtime relationship of power and water at Lake Arlington.

In 1907, Lake Arlington was called Lake Erie. Visitors to the small lake would typically rent boats during the day and attend dances and music shows at the dance hall at night. Additionally, Lake Erie served as the cooling water for a power plant built by Northern Texas Traction Company. This first power plant was the largest plant in the area and the first outdoor steam electric generating station of its type in the industry.

By the mid 1950's, the need for a larger body of water in Arlington lead city officials to propose the construction of a man made lake and spillway. The proposal passed and in 1957 Lake Erie was enlarged to 2,250 surface acres and renamed Lake Arlington.

The new larger lake was an instant success and water activity greatly increased. In 1966, the Arlington Yacht Club made the lake its home port. Since then, the club has been helping people learn about how the power of wind moves boats across the water.

But perhaps the best example of power at Lake Arlington is that of the park's namesake, Richard Simpson. In the late 1970s and 1980s Simpson was a forceful presence at Lake Arlington. A native and lifetime resident of the city, Simpson served as Lake Officer for 13 years with Arlington's Special Tactical Unit. While his job required him to enforce boating safety, his tireless devotion to make Lake Arlington safe was evident by the three lifesaving awards he received during his tenure.

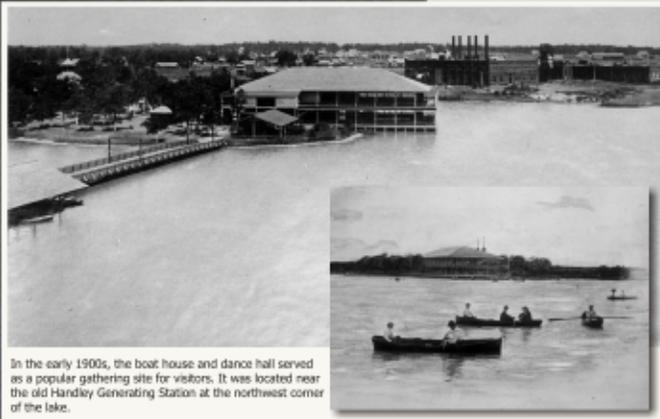


Richard Simpson,  
Lake Officer - Arlington Special Tactical Unit

Simpson was a lover of the water and lived at the lake house with his wife and two daughters while serving as Lake Officer. Tragically, Simpson died of a heart attack while on a hunting trip in Montana on October 23, 1990. He was 44 years old.

Today, Simpson's legacy lives on at Lake Arlington as it continues to provide a safe environment for visitors of all ages. It is owned and operated by the city of Arlington and serves as a municipal and industrial water supply, as well as a recreational area for lake enthusiasts.

References:  
Photo of Mr. Richard Simpson courtesy of the City of Arlington  
Other photos provided by Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection,  
Special Collections, The University of Texas at Arlington Library, Arlington, Texas



In the early 1900s, the boat house and dance hall served as a popular gathering site for visitors. It was located near the old Handley Generating Station at the northwest corner of the lake.