

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT
COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY
BUREAU OF PARKS
Board of County Commissioners

1932

February 21, 1933.

Board of County Commissioners,
Honorable Charles C. McGovern, Chairman.

Gentlemen:

I respectfully submit herewith report of the Department of Parks covering the period from January 1st to December 31, 1932.

Not having assumed the Directorship of the Department of Parks until the first day of October, I have had to rely upon such records as were available and such information as I was enabled to glean from park employees as to what was done prior to that time.

In all planning it is the continued effort of the Department to favor keeping the Parks primitive and natural in all respects and also in their architectural language in order that the natural environment of the landscape may be mirrored in picturesqueness of design.

Even in the most utilitarian buildings, there must always be a certain measure of choice in the selection of materials or forms. It is the sum of such expressions, partly of conscious preference, partly of traditional usage, partly of natural conditions and practical necessity which constitutes the artistic character of construction.

At present there exists in the Parks, examples of early American, or what is otherwise referred to as Pennsylvania Farm House Colonial Architecture, which is being preserved and furthermore should be an integral part of the architectural scheme of the landscape for future consideration.

One of the principal problems, since the Parks were taken over by the County, is the question of an adequate and suitable supply of water at North Park. What has been accomplished to date in the drilling of wells has failed to solve the problem and while efforts have been made to chemically treat the water used on the Golf Greens, I am doubtful as to any satisfactory result being obtained by the use of chemicals. It will probably be found, as a final solution of this vexing problem, that we will have to either impound the waters of Pine Creek and build a water treating plant which is feasible but expensive or obtain water from the City of Pittsburgh which also involves a large expenditure. In addition to the fact that the supply of water secured from these wells is unsuitable, even for vegetation, we are confronted with the problem of furnishing drinking water for the patrons of North Park.

Another pressing problem is an adequate system of park driveways, with contributing roads to the various groves and recreational centers. A plan for such development was designed and submitted to your Board in the early part of December, last.

Another problem which I consider of vital interest in order to provide for the comfort and convenience of the people is a series of shelter houses and ovens throughout both Parks.

Other subjects which have had our attention and which demand our continued efforts are the following:

A careful survey has been made of the condition of all growing plants, trees, shrubbery, etc., and an intelligent, effective method of eradicating all infection has been adopted by authority of your Board; which will, it is hoped, preserve to posterity the shrubbery and trees among which there are a number of magnificent specimens in both Parks.

In order to facilitate communication between the various divisions as well as to improve police supervision in the Parks and to keep in close touch and contact with the various projects which are under way from time to time, and for the convenience of the people visiting the Parks, an intra-park telephone system was recommended to your Board and this also has been authorized.

The wholly unsuitable and inadequate facilities of the present office building in South Park, which is a converted old farm house, renders it necessary, as soon as funds are available, to provide a suitable building in a location adapted to serve the best interests and convenience of the Department. This subject was presented to your Board previous to the close of the year 1932, and plans were authorized to be drawn.

In order to insure a proper patrol and policing of the Park areas, it is necessary that the Park Police be within call any hour of the day or night, and to promote this system of police supervision, there was submitted to your Board a request to be authorized to build a number of cabins at strategic points throughout both Parks, which I trust will be favorably acted upon early in 1933.

Service buildings suitable for the housing and proper care of material, supplies, etc., instead of having same scattered through the Parks in various old barns and other buildings, was brought to the attention of your Board in November last, when suitable plans for such buildings were authorized to be drawn and they are now being prepared.

One of the most essential features of any park is a greenhouse, suitable for the propagating of shrubbery and other plants necessary for the landscaping and beautifying of park driveways and public highways. With this in view, plans were submitted and approved by your Board, previous to the close of 1932. The contract, however, had not been let on January 1, 1933. The construction of this building will result in a great saving to both the Departments of Parks and Highways in the purchase of shrubbery.

Another problem which has remained unsettled since the Parks were first opened is that of transportation to and from the Parks. In

view of the fact that there are no street car lines approaching either park from the city, the people are dependent upon the Pittsburgh Motor Coach Company and The Harmony Short Line for such service. The rates fixed by these companies render it almost prohibitive for a family in poor circumstances to visit the Parks.

An accurate and dependable survey of both parks with respect to oil, gas and coal rights, with special reference to development along these lines and the effect of such development on surface conditions in both Parks, was started but has not yet been completed. Care must be exercised in locating the various recreation fields and other improvements in the Parks, as well as any contemplated lakes, reservoirs or other major improvements, which might be affected by the shallow depth at which mining operations have been carried on.

In order to prevent vandalism and to put a stop to the marring of buildings and the theft of material, as well as the breaking of branches of trees for the bloom or fruit, etc., a set of rules and regulations were prepared and presented to your Board for your approval.

The above matters, in a general way, reflect my views with respect to most of the immediate problems and needs of the Department. I shall not offer here a financial statement of the Park Funds, as this is covered elsewhere in the Controller's report, and since this report is not for general distribution, your Board being familiar with the condition of the Park Department finances, same is omitted.

The most gratifying feature that has impressed me, and which I am sure will be pleasing to your Board, is the ever growing popularity of the Parks as a recreational and outing center for the people of the entire County. Aside from the large increase in the number of picnics held in the Parks, under formal permit issued by the Department, a very great impetus, I am informed, was noted in the recreational and sporting events, which took place in the two Parks during 1932.

During the year 1927, one hundred fifteen permits were issued for picnics in both Parks; in 1928 three hundred ninety-six permits were issued; in 1929 six hundred seventeen permits were issued; in 1930 eight hundred six permits were issued; in 1931 twelve hundred ninety-nine permits were issued. Whereas, during the year of 1932 seventeen hundred twenty-six permits were issued. This is certainly a most gratifying evidence of the popularity of the Parks and impresses me with the absolute necessity of providing additional groves, shelters, ovens and tables to meet the requirements of the people.

The creation by your Honorable Board of a division of Recreation, with competent and experienced men in charge of same, has resulted in drawing to the Parks all the various divisions of sports and recreation, in which the rank and file of the people either participate or are interested. The report covering this division, which will follow, I am sure you will find interesting.

In conclusion, I respectfully submit report covering addition to

Park area; income derived from golf courses and swimming pool and a more detailed report covering recreational activities in both Parks:

During the year 1932, the only property taken over was that of John W. Glenn, consisting of .59 acres, located on the Brownsville Road adjacent to No. 2 Green in South Park.

The revenue derived by the Department during the past year from the Golf Courses and Swimming Pool follows:

Golf Courses—1945 Senior Permits at \$10.00.....	\$19,450.00
Golf Courses— 47 Junior Permits at \$5.00.....	235.00
Golf Courses— 91 Lockers at \$5.00	455.00
Golf Courses—23738 Daily Green Fees at \$1.00.....	23,738.00
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	\$43,878.00

Swimming Pool—210,862 Admissions at \$0.10	21,086.20
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The above shows a total revenue of \$64,964.20 derived by the Department from the only two sources of revenue in the Parks. The cost of maintenance and operation was about \$25,000.00 in excess of the revenue.

According to the reports of North and South Parks, 61,163 rounds of golf were played at South Park and a total of 49,656 at North Park or a grand total of 101,819.

The receipts from the two golf courses fell off approximately \$4,000.00 during the season of 1932 as compared with 1931. This is doubtless accounted for to some extent by the condition of the times and to the fact that many players who paid the daily green fees in 1931, which on an average during the season amounted to considerably in excess of the annual fees of \$10.00, took out annual permits for the season of 1932. Both courses, however, experienced a successful season. Winter rules prevailed at North Park and Summer rules at South Park. For the first time, tournaments were held at each park to decide championships. At South Park, a women's championship and a two ball mixed foursome at both parks. Also championships for men at both parks. The staging of these tournaments had a stimulating effect on the County Park golfers and helped to develop a more friendly and fraternal feeling.

The necessity of maintaining the golf courses in both North and South Parks is imperative particularly in view of the fact that 110,819 rounds of golf were played on the two courses during the past season. Much work is still to be done along the line of developing a satisfactory turf. The season of 1932 opened the latter part of April and I am informed, much of the maintenance work, including seeding, clearing, drains and bunkers, fertilizing and top soiling was not performed until the courses were opened for play. Naturally the best results were not obtained under these conditions as the work was interrupted from time to time by players using the courses. The tees at North Park

were all overhauled; the clay areas being dug up, mixed with sand and leveled off. A new tee was constructed at No. 14 fairway in order to increase the length of the fairway, which should be ready for play during the 1933 season. Much difficulty was encountered at North Park owing to the water being unsuitable for developing the fairways and greens. A further difficulty encountered during the season of 1932 was the severe drought which was one of the worst encountered for many years. In order to offset this, water mains were tapped at various places in order to irrigate the fairways. The water situation, referred to in another part of this report, is a serious problem with respect particularly to the maintenance and development of the golf courses in North Park. With exception of the water problem at North Park, practically the same conditions prevailed at the South Park course.

The attendance at the Swimming Pool in South Park during the 93 days of the Swimming Season of 1932 was 272,228 of which 61,366 were children admitted free. A number of major swimming, diving and other events were held at the pool which was attended by representative swimmers, and divers throughout the county, including two entries who were enrolled as members of the U. S. Olympics Swimming Team.

Perhaps the greatest stimulus to recreational activities in the parks was evidenced by the large increase in the number of tennis players, particularly in South Park. The courts in this park were, I am informed, in continuous activity during the 1932 season. The additional fourteen courts which are under construction and which will be ready for the 1933 season will, I believe, meet an urgent demand. Additional courts are being constructed also in North Park. The number of players at South Park is estimated at 29,214; whereas, at North Park with unimproved grass courts, approximately 10,000 players participated in this sport.

South Park was the mecca of thousands of soccer football fans during the past year. The center of activity was the regulation championship field at Edgebrook Grove, although some school games were played at Locust Grove and Silent Brook Fields. These activities resulted in the organization of the South Park Scholastic Soccer League, composed of ten teams from graded schools. Also the organization of the South Park Junior League which played a series of fifteen games. The better soccer teams of the West Penn Football Association played at Edgebrook. Important contests in the National Challenge Cup Competition, National Amateur Cup Competition and West Penn Cup were staged. For the first time, North Park was the scene of a number of Soccer and Rugby games. The Allegheny Valley League playing Soccer and the Glenshaw team playing Rugby. Additional facilities are needed at both Parks to take care of the football situation, in view of the fact that 212 football games were played during the 1932 season with an attendance of over 150,000 people.

Lack of properly developed fields prevented any organized baseball play during 1932. Considerably over 1500 games of mushball were

played, however, in connection with the hundreds of regularly scheduled picnics at both Parks. This game requiring such small space to play, has gained tremendous popularity as evidenced by the Championship Elimination Contest under the auspices of the Greater Pittsburgh Baseball Commission in which nearly 100 organized teams competed. Proper regulation championship baseball fields are a necessary adjunct to both parks.

Three regulation courts for Volley Ball were in constant use during the season at South Park. A six team league was organized under the name of the South Park Volley Ball League which played throughout the summer. In addition to the Allegheny Mountain Association Championships of the Amateur Athletic Union, fifteen teams were entered in the championships.

Although equipped to take care of all lovers of tobogganning and ice skating in both Parks, the weather was not favorable and only 17 days were provided County Park patrons, to the number of 73,000, to take part in these popular winter sports, which are entirely free.

As each picnic grove is equipped with horseshoe pitching courts, this pastime was very popular. Tournaments were held to decide the championship of each park and also the championship of both parks.

Over five thousand boys from the grade schools participated in an Annual Marble Tournament, which decided the boy to take part in the National Tournament. The school champions met in the finals at Edgebrook Field on May 4th.

Two free Hallowe'en dances were sponsored, one at each Park on Hallowe'en night. The South Park affair was held at the Spreading Oak pavilion and at North Park at Parish Hill Hall. First class orchestras were provided and both affairs were extremely successful. Although a rainy night, the pavilions were not large enough to accommodate the dancers. Over twelve hundred persons attended the two affairs.

A summary of attendance at North and South Parks, under various groups, based on the best information available, might be stated as follows:

Organizations and individual groups attending both Parks,	161,820
under formal permit	370,000
Sunday and holiday attendance.....	110,819
Golf attendance at both parks during the season.....	272,228
Attendance at swimming pool, South Park.....	39,214
Participants in tennis, both parks.....	153,409
Football players and spectators at games.....	41,680
Baseball players and spectators, both parks.....	4,200
Volley ball players and spectators.....	73,000
Winter sports attendance	

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

Horseshoe contests	15,800
Marble contests	5,000
Attendance at Hallowe'en dances, both parks.....	11,220
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	1,258,390

Respectfully submitted,

A. M. MARION,
Director, Department of Parks.