



Tragically, Michael Fritz met a sudden death in October 1930 when struck by a car while walking across West Washington. Following his wishes, his heirs donated a plot of land on Pauline Blvd. to the city for use as a public park, stipulating that a park shelter be built there using materials from razing Michael Fritz's homestead. Ornamental trees and shrubbery were to be taken from the homestead and used in landscaping public parks. Development of parks for Ann Arbor was a keen interest of Michael Fritz.

***Swapping Land with Public Schools*** The story of West Park's connection with public schools seems to have begun with the park board in 1915 giving permission to the Ann Arbor school board to use some ground at West Park for a children's playground. The School Board was to be responsible for the cost of the apparatus, but its erection and the supervision of the playground was the responsibility of the Superintendent of Parks.

Then in 1924 the city received a petition from Herman A. Ottmar and 146 others requesting the grounds formerly occupied by the old Mack/3<sup>rd</sup> Ward School on the south side of Miller Avenue be added to West Park. This led in January 1925 to a swap of land with Ann Arbor Public Schools. West Park gained land on top of the north bluff that had served as grounds for the old Mack/3<sup>rd</sup> Ward School. The land fronted on Miller Avenue, so West Park also gained access from the north. The Pergola was later erected there.

The old Mack/3<sup>rd</sup> Ward School opened in 1866 as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward School. In 1901 it was renamed Mack, or Christian Mack, after a longtime school board member, Christian Mack. By the end of World War I, the old Mack/3<sup>rd</sup> Ward School was overcrowded to the point of overflowing –according to Grace Shackman (local historian) classes sprawled over into the cloakrooms and even a nearby chapel. During the 1920s the superintendent of Ann Arbor public schools implemented a systematic update of Ann Arbor's school buildings. A new Mack School at Miller and Seventh was one of four new schools (the others being Angell, Burns Park, and Jones [Community High School]). After the new Mack School opened in September 1922, the old Mack School was torn down. It was the grounds of the torn down school that Ann Arbor Public Schools offered to the city for West Park, as a swap to obtain a girl's playground for another school in Ann Arbor's school system – Perry School.

First built in 1903, Perry School was named after W. S. Perry, a former Ann Arbor schools superintendent. Adjoining Hanover Square on the south side of Packard, Perry School served boys and girls in what was a growing neighborhood just south of downtown. Co-rec playgrounds apparently were not a part of the school scene in those days, and while boys seem to have had a playground, girls did not.

In 1907 the park board granted Perry School use of that part of Hanover Square adjacent to the school for a playground for the girls of the school. Across Packard, was the rest of Hanover Square. Apparently the interurban railroad ran along Packard, also cutting diagonally through Hanover Square. In January 1925 the city deeded the part of Hanover Square used by Perry School to the public schools board, in exchange for the old Mack/3<sup>rd</sup> Ward School grounds to be added to West Park. The remaining part of Hanover Square, now more a triangle than a rectangle, was around that time equipped with play equipment, and it too was mostly a children's playground until 1968.

But swaps of land between West Park and the public schools board did not end with the 1925 exchange. Swaps occurred in both 1927 and 1936 --and the same land was swapped back and forth. In the 1927 swap West Park lost a southeast portion of the park but gained several parcels of land to the north. For the school system the swap gave Bach School a children's playground in what had been the southeast portion of West Park. Apparently two tennis courts were displaced by the swap and the school board agreed to replace them at a new site in West Park. By 1936 the public schools board apparently was less interested in that playground for Bach School and more interested in acquiring land elsewhere in the park system that could assist in the building of Slauson School. In the 1936 swap that deeded park land elsewhere to the public schools board West Park recouped its lost land. In addition, West Park gained a narrow strip of land adjacent to an alley running from West Huron Street to West Park, thus widening an access. West Park seems to have fared quite well overall in these swaps.