

WEST PARK

AREA	26.0 Acres.
BOUNDARIES	Miller Ave. on north Huron St. on south Chapin on east Seventh St. on west
FACILITIES	Shelter, Band Shell, Basketball, Tennis Courts, Softball, Baseball, Natural Ice Rink, Picnicking, Wading Pool, Playground Shuffleboard courts, Horseshoe courts.

In 1868 there is mention in Council minutes of a skating park on the west side of Ann Arbor on Miller Avenue, but the acquisition of land for West Park as we know it today began in 1908 when Council authorized the purchase of six acres of land for Westside Park (this is the Chapin Street frontage) 4½ acres from W. A. Boland for \$2244.75 (Note:- the Boland property was deeded to Magdelene Rhode, July 20, 1908, and recorded July 21, 1908 in Liber 170 of Deeds, page 315, Washtenaw County, Michigan): lots 1 and 2 Rhode Brothers Subdivision of Mrs. Magdelene Rhode for \$600; and a strip of land west of lots 1 and 2 for \$300 from George Bischoff. All this property was purchased on land contracts. The deeds we have from the above named people are as follows:-

Deed B-11 from John George Bischoff and Wife, recorded July 27, 1909, \$300.00.

Deed B-11 from John George Bischoff and Wife, recorded December 13, 1909, \$75.00.

Deed B-14 from John George Bischoff and Wife, recorded August 12, 1913, \$325.00.

Deed R-8 from Magdelene Rhode, recorded December 17, 1912, \$2,500.00.

Deed R-10 from Magdelene Rhode, recorded October 28, 1913 \$600.

Later Mr. M. J. Fritz acquired the McIntyre property and held it until the City could make arrangements to purchase it from him. This left the two major portions of the park separated by a two acre tract owned by Mr. Jacob Laubengayer. Efforts to purchase the Laubengayer land were not successful. The Laubengayer piece was crossed by an unused right-of-way for a defunct electric interurban line and then owned by the Detroit-Jackson and Chicago Railway Company. Permission was sought and received by the Park Board to use the right-of-way for a connecting corridor between the east and west portions of West Park. Several years later the Laubengayer parcel was purchased for \$2000.00. The right-of-way was purchased by the County Drain Commissioner for the West Park storm drain and deeded to the city. Other acquisitions of vacant land around the park were made from time to time until the area of the park totalled 26 acres.

It was around 1909 that this Park became known as West Park. The Board of Park Commissioners rules for West Park adopted in May 1910 indicate that there were at that time two ball diamonds in the Park. In the same year petitions were made to the Park Board for a tennis court and a basketball court--authorization was given for the construction of the tennis court. The Park also contained a toilet and store house.

In 1914 a fence was built on the east side of the tennis court and a well with pitcher pump installed.

In a transfer of land with Samuel Burchfield in 1915 (Deed B-16 dated April 14, 1915) approximately 160 feet was added behind the backstop of the ball diamond. At this time, the Park Board gave permission to the Board of Education to use some ground at West Park for a children's playground, the Board of Education to be responsible for the cost of the apparatus, but its erection and the supervision of the playground were to be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Parks. In the following year, S. C. Andres was awarded a contract in the amount of \$220.00 to construct toilets with water tap at West Park.

A further two acres of land was added to West Park between the east and west portion of the Park, when the City purchased the Laubengayer property for the sum of \$2,000.00

(Deed L-10) dated October 8, 1921). The next addition to West Park was the Marion Cooper property on North Seventh Street which was purchased for \$400.00 plus the 1923 sidewalk assessment of \$135.00 (Deed C-9 dated January 12, 1924). In 1924, a petition was received from close to 150 persons requesting that the grounds formerly occupied by the Mack School on Miller Avenue be acquired for park purposes, and added to West Park. This land was acquired by the Park Commissioners when they exchanged all that part of Hanover Square between Packard and East Madison Streets, and east of the W. S. Perry School site, with the Board of Education for the land on Miller Avenue, plus the sum of \$7,500.00 (Deed P-8 dated January 14, 1925).

The 8 x 14 foot pergola at West Park was erected at the end of 1925. The City then purchased for the sum of \$300.00 a parcel of land measuring 201.24 feet on the west line, 104.13 on the north, 133.96 feet on the east and 115.22 feet on the south from Mattie Huebner (Deed H-29 dated December 10, 1925).

On January 23, 1926 the City purchased a triangular parcel of land from Edward and Louise Schlanderer for the sum of \$150.00 (Deed S-20 dated January 23, 1926). This land was obtained to complete the Seventh Street entrance to West Park. An additional piece of land was purchased from the Schlanderers on June 3, 1927 for \$350.00 (Deed S-24 dated June 3, 1927). West Park was further enlarged by the purchase of the Lillian Golz property on north Seventh Street in 1926 for \$1200.00 (Deed G-19 dated August 12, 1926). In 1927 the Board of Park Commissioners obtained authorization from the City Council to deed to the Board of Education that portion of West Park described as "all that parcel of land lying north of the Rettich, Seybold, Rhode and Daskam properties, east of the Laubengayer land, south of the top of the high bank on the South side of the stream flowing through West Park and west of Harry H. Atwell's subdivision." The Board of Education agreed to replace two tennis courts on a new site to be selected by the Board of Park Commissioners.

In consideration of the above deeding the City obtained

several parcels of land on the north of West Park, as follows:-

1. Deed B-25 dated May 24, 1927 parcel from William G. and Clara A. Behnke for \$100.
2. Deed F-6 dated May 7, 1927 parcel from John and Carrie Finkbeiner for \$1,500.
3. Deed G-21 dated May 24, 1927 parcel from Herman E. and Elizabeth Graf for \$60.
4. Deed H-33 dated June 2, 1927 for parcel from Paul Haines for \$150.
5. Deed L-16 dated June 13, 1927 for parcel from William B. and Caroline H. Libolt for \$65.
6. Deed P-11 dated March 31, 1927 exchange of land between City and James R. and Marie Palmer.
7. Deed W-28 dated May 24, 1927 for parcel from James G. and Luella Winsor for \$75.

An additional piece of property at 510 North Seventh Street was authorized to be purchased from Mary Smalley (nee Archer) for \$2,000 (Deed S-27 dated November 1, 1927).

The next parcel of land was obtained from Clayton Deake for \$2,000 (Deed D-12 dated May 25, 1928).

The Board of Park Commissioners in 1929 decided to build a new shelter at West Park on the same site occupied by the old one, and in 1933 summer projects carried out by relief labor were the construction of an artificial lake at West Park, which was paved with cobble stones and the interstices of which were flushed with soft concrete to make a combination wading pool and skating rink.

In 1935 the Board of Education deeded to the City of Ann Arbor (Deed P-17 dated February 26, 1936) that portion of West Park which the Board of Park Commissioners had previously deeded to the Board of Education in 1927.

Plans for the Band Shell in West Park were approved in 1937 and the project received Presidential approval on April 22,

1937, with a Federal allotment of \$8,411. The landscaping of the Band Shell/Theatre and the rebuilding of the baseball bleachers was a W.P.A. project in 1938.

By 1941, West Park contained five tennis courts, the first being built in 1910, two more in 1914 and the next two in 1928. They were constructed of good clay, stabilized with calcium chloride.

The Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor constructed two wading pools for the Parks Department in 1944, one of these was in Burns Park and the other in West Park.

The City obtained an additional piece of property adjacent to West Park with the acquisition of the Mohrlock property (Deed M-63 dated September 22, 1958) for the sum of \$14,500 (Resolution R-8-152 dated August 18, 1958). In 1958 also, by Resolution R-3-58 Council approved the selection of an architect for the West Park shelter. Council further stated that the building was to be sufficiently large so as to serve as a park building and a polling place. Robert Metcalf was appointed the architect his fees not to exceed \$2,400. The contract for the construction of the shelter in the amount of \$36,017 was awarded to Niethammer and McDowell, and the shelter was dedicated July 22, 1959

In 1962, the Parks Department effected an equal exchange of land at 810 W. Huron with First of Ann Arbor Incorporated when they constructed Lurie Terrace. The Corporation erected a retaining wall and cyclone fence on the north line of its property.

On March 2, 1964 (Resolution R-69-3-64) City Council authorized an exchange of two parcels of City owned land containing 4,857 square feet for two parcels of land of equal size owned by L. Dell Henry, to enable him to enlarge the parking space for his office-apartment building.

On October 10, 1966 the zoning of a section of West Park was changed from R2A - two family dwelling district to PL - public land district.

In 1967, in recognition of National Painting and Decorating Week, the Washtenaw County Chapter of the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America painted the West Park Bandshell at no cost to the City.

West Park today affords a pleasant and almost rural setting for Miller Manor, the Public Housing apartment complex for Senior Citizens which overlooks the Park.

Summer recreational facilities in the Park include baseball, tennis, basketball, picnicking, concerts etc. in the band shell, and in winter the main activities in the park are sledding on the hill and skating on the natural ice-rink which the Parks Department establishes there each year.

Of special interest in the Park is a marker which reads:-

This Stone Placed
February 12, 1929
by the
Ann Arbor Council
Boys Scouts of America
and
Marks an old Indian Trail
Plainly visible at that date

The Park contains a sandbox, shuffleboards, tetherball, parallel bars, wading pool, slide and outdoor cookers.