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## Historical sketch of the parks and playgrounds of Worcester

John Francis Roche

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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS OF  
WORCESTER.

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

BY

J. F. ROCHE.

CLARK UNIVERSITY.

June, 1910.

G. S. Hall.



The Historical Sketch of the Parks and Playgrounds of Worcester.

extensive public ground By J. F. Roche. longly upon us. It is un-

fortunate that in years go----- a land could have been pro-

cured at a low price, tracts of land were not purchased, which

would The beginning of Worcester's Park System can truly be said

to have been coincidental with founding and settling of the town.

The 1669 For in 1669, the Committee of Settlement, appointed by the Common,

1669. land Governor, recommended in their Report that "twenty acres

should be reserved near the center," of the town, "for a train-

ing field and to build a school house upon." The present Common

is part of this original training field, having been reduced to

Used for out its present dimensions soon after the incorporation of Baseball

up to 1867. the town. It has been used for a variety of purposes

in the history of the town and city, including base-ball games

up to 1867; but free, popular use has always been its distinguish-

ing characteristic. From the incorporation of Worcester as a

town, in 1722, up to the year 1854, when the "New Common" or

Elm Park was acquired, the Old Common was the sole bit of pub-

lic land dedicated to public use and owned by the town. It was

not until about 1850 that the need for more public breathing

space began to be felt and that the people generally began to

realize that some day in the not-distant future, the necessity

for more extensive public lands would become much more acute.

Mayor Chap- The Hon. Henry Chapin in his Inaugural Address, de-  
in's Inaugu-  
ral, 1850. delivered April 1, 1850, recognized this necessity in

these sound and prophetic words that would have no

anachronistic ring in the Inaugural of a present-day Mayor:



"The time will soon come," he says, "when the necessity for more extensive public grounds will press strongly upon us. It is unfortunate that in years gone by, when land could have been procured at a low price, tracts of land were not purchased, which would have been a most prolific source of health, comfort and

His ornament to the city. No form of benevolence would more sound advice! surely make the donor immortal than a gift of a tract of land for public purposes..... I know of nothing which would insure so valuable an income upon the outlay, as an investment of a reasonable sum in grounds, to be made public as the occasion should demand." No man will doubt that it would have been a most excellent investment, if Worcester had then bought land in all sections of the city to be developed as needed, instead of waiting until its population had increased from 17,000 in 1850 to 80,000 in 1888, when it was forced to negotiate a \$250,000 loan to complete its chain of parks, which would even now be very inadequate except for beneficence of private individuals. And yet how many politicians of the present day will learn this lesson taught them by the philosophy of the past fifty years and profit by it in their plans for the future? The politician who does so learn, is the one who has the germs of the statesman in him; the master hand who in his intense pouring over current affairs does not develop a myopia for next generations.

In 1853, the question of the purchase of what is now Elm Park came up before the City Government and passed the Board of Aldermen but was referred by the Common Council to the business



Mayor of the following year. The Hon. John S. C. Knowlton, in  
 Knowlton  
 1853 whose wisdom and sound judgment the people had the highest  
 confidence, in his record Inaugural Address in 1854, urged the  
 attention of the city government to the matter "at an early day".  
 Now, there were many objections to the purchase of such a piece  
 of land in those days, when the population was only 22,000 and  
 the site chosen was far from any populous or crowded district,  
 and when it furthermore was a dreary looking marsh and bog, at  
 once uninviting to the eye and inconvenient of access. In fact  
 one of the great objects that its supporters had in view was to  
 induce people not to cluster together in already overcrowded  
 districts but to get them to move away from the center of the  
 town and expand their settlements, especially towards the West  
 Side. But despite all objections, confidence in Mayor Knowlton  
 Elm Park carried the day and immediate action was taken on the matter.  
 Acquired! following his suggestion. Thus on March 15, 1854, the pre-  
 sent Elm Park, of about 27 acres then, was bought; and it was  
 Cost, formally conveyed to the city two (2) days later at a  
 \$11,257.50 cost of \$11,257.50. This purchase is memorable not on-  
 ly in a local way, as being the first addition to the public lands  
 of Worcester, but also entitles Worcester to the na-  
 the Pioneer tional distinction of being the first city in the Uni-  
 in the Park tional distinction of being the first city in the Uni-  
 Movement ted States to buy land for park purposes out of public  
 funds, New York following Worcester's example several years la-  
 ter in acquiring Central Park. The price was a first class bar-  
 gain and was paid without issuing a loan, although the total  
 amount of taxes available to the city that year were only \$131,600  
 and the expenditures of the rapidly growing city were very great.



Up to the year 1851 the Old Common had been looked after  
 Committees in a neglectful and desultory fashion. In that year,  
 from City Council. however, a Joint Standing Committee of the City Coun-  
 1851-1862 cil "On Shade Trees and Public Grounds" was appointed.  
 on Shade Trees and Public Grounds This Committee, although appointed newly every year and  
 often with changing personell, yet made at least a perfunctory  
 attempt to bring some sort of order and arrangement out of the  
 chaos of neglect into which things had fallen. Their mission  
 in regard to Shade Trees was deemed more important than their  
 functions in regard to Public Grounds and the purchase of the  
 "New Common" did not affect any change in this attitude. But  
 people did begin to see that <sup>the</sup> duties and functions of these Com-  
 mittees, however regarded, were outgrowing the capacity of  
 their changing and variable personell to fulfil. Therefore

State Act of 1862 authorizing Commissioners of Shade Trees and Public Grounds the State Legislature, on petition of the City Gov-  
 ernment, in an "Act Relating to Commissioners of  
 Shade Trees and Public Grounds in the City of  
 Worcester", approved Feb. 25, 1862, authorized the  
 City Council to elect in January of each year a Board of three  
 (3) Commissioners for a term of three (3) years, each, to "have  
 the sole care, superintendence and management of the public  
 grounds.....and of all the shade trees on the grounds or on the  
 public highways." This Board was also authorized and required  
 to "lay out said public grounds.....and to embellish them with  
 the planting of trees"; and also to "plant shade trees and  
 ornamental trees throughout the city and submit an annual re-  
 port." A referendum clause was attached to the Act  
 and the people accepted it, 254 to 197, but evinced

Accepted by People



little interest in it, as was to be expected with the gloom of a "great civil strife hanging over them.

First Commission 1863 Thus on January 26, 1863, the City Council elected the first three Commissioners under this act; and from this year up to May 1, 1885, when the Parks-Commission absorbed and succeeded them, this Board and their successors, only nine (9) men in all, had entire charge of all the public grounds and shade trees of this city.

For fully ten (10) years Shade Trees were given more attention than public grounds and for nearly ten more they were

Shade Trees given as much attention; and even at the present day receive more attention they are a big drain on the time and appropriation of the Park Commissioners.

In 1867, with the appointment of Obadiah B. Hadwen, our present system finds its first real human and individual ancestor to whom we can trace many of the "vestigial traces" that are found now everywhere in Worcester's entire park system and which every true citizen hopes will never be lost or obliterated. From his appointment in 1867 to his death in 1907, with the exception of 3 years (1871-1873), Mr. Hadwen served as a member of the Commission with true patriotic zeal.

Stephen Salisbury 1869-1886 In 1869, Stephen Salisbury, another public benefactor, was appointed and he served without interruption until his retirement in 1886.

Edward Winslow Lincoln! 1870-1896 And finally, in 1870, Edward Winslow Lincoln was appointed; probably the happiest moment in the whole history of Worcester's park system. For to Edward Winslow



Lincoln, more than to any one man, does Worcester owe nearly everything that its various parks can boast of so proudly. He likewise served continuously until his death in 1896.

On his appointment in 1870, Lincoln was made Chairman of the Commission and remained so until his death; he wrote the annual reports, often without consulting the other members; and dictated every policy of the Commission; planned and executed most all of the big improvements and brought out in forceful language all the needs and requirements of the parks before the city government.

For twenty years after its purchase Elm Park practically remained unchanged in its undeveloped condition. It was used for circuses and other exhibitions, and also at times, like the Common, it was used for an occasional ball game. The country was groaning too heavily under the sorrows and burdens of the Civil War to wish to devote money for its improvement. But Gov. Levi Lincoln, at his death in 1868, left \$1000 for its improvement and when soon after Edward W. Lincoln assumed charge of it, a definite and systematic plan for its drainage and general improvement was inaugurated and reached its consummation long before the great Reaper had summoned Lincoln to the Elysian Fields. Although never intended by nature to be a playground, as we understand it today, yet in the early seventies the construction of the park was started and as Lincoln says in his Report for 1877, "The use of the <sup>pools</sup> ~~park~~ for the exhilarating and healthy exercise of skating was a chief object of the Commission in their



Skating Pool and Care of Ice 1877  
 construction". Here then for the first time the playground feature of our park system receives its first official stress; to which Lincoln further adds: "Interruption by sleet or snowstorm was a disappointment to which the Commission, reverting to their own youth, could not bear to see the children subjected. Actual experiment has proved that water can be thrown over the whole surface of the Diamond Pool in a brief space of time, with a consumption of little material". So that Worcester thus officially for the first time in 1877 provides artificial skating facilities for its children. The water surface at that time was probably about 3 acres, including the Diamond Pool and the North Pool; and from that year, Lincoln kept the ice in as good condition as possible. His words on this subject in his 1879 Report have a special interest for their similarity in certain respects and dissimilarity in others of conditions following Christmas Day this <sup>(1909)</sup> year. "The day after Christmas", he says, "was bitter cold, but the Chairman of the Commission was not thereby prevented from attempting to clear

Identification of Parks vs. Playgrounds  
 the ice of the snow that fell during the night previous." Ever since this time up to 1908, the playgrounds of Worcester have always been inseparably connected with the parks and naturally always will be. Topographically, at least, this is the ideal arrangement.

Lincoln, and of course that means the "Parks-Commission", landscape-gardener and horticulturalist that he was, was always a great friend of children and favored always everything that furnished them with innocent opportunities to vent their surplus energy, and as early as 1873, the following words publicly



Lincoln a revealed his attitude towards playgrounds: "The city great advo-  
 cator of might wisely purchase an acre or two in different sec-  
 Playgrounds  
 even in 1873 tions of its territory, for the express purpose of al-  
 lowing and inciting that portion of our population which inclines  
 to and requires athletic exercises out doors, to gratify its  
 tastes and needs without annoyance. It is hard for boys or men  
 And later to be compelled to walk two or three miles to a play-  
 also  
 in ground, whence, after hearty exertion, they must tra-  
 1882 verse the same distance on the way home." The **tenor**  
 of this utterance is distributed through all his Reports and  
 Worcester's children were indeed fortunate to have him at the  
 helm of the ship that guided discovery and development of the  
 entire park system. And he also well read the heart of the  
 majority of adults, when he said in 1882, "The Commission  
 know that no expenditure would be more cheerfully sanctioned,  
 by those who have to pay the large moiety of the taxes, than  
 that which would make prompt provision for convenient and suit-  
 able playgrounds." Time has frequently proven that Lincoln  
 rightly stated the true feelings of the vast majority of the  
 taxpayers of Worcester.

Massachusetts On April 13, 1882, the Massachusetts "Park Act"  
 Park Act  
 1882 was approved, entitled "An Act authorizing Cities  
 and Town to lay out Public Parks within their limits." This  
 Unanimous Act was submitted to the voters of Worcester on No-  
 Acceptance  
 by Voters vember 4, 1884; and they accepted it by a practically  
 1884 unanimous vote (Yes 5094, No 181), thus bringing into  
 existence the present Park Commissioners, whose status dates  
 Precursor back to and depends upon this act. This unanimous  
 of Park  
 System!



acceptance was an excellent indication of the temper of the people in regard to the acquirement of new parks and playgrounds and was a characteristic precursory symptom of the acute state this temper was soon to reach.

Lake Park of 110 acres  
Presented to City, 1884

Just at this time, Mr. Horace H. Bigelow and the Hon. Edward L. Davis had perfected arrangements between themselves and presented to the city as their combined

gift the magnificent tract of 110 acres upon the westerly shores of Lake Quinsigamond, now known as Lake Park. Curiously enough, and paradoxically as it may seem, the psychological effects of this gift were to accentuate and bring to a crisis popular feel-

Its effects/ ings in regard to the acquirement of a thorough and comprehensive system of parks. This was due to the inaccessibility of Lake Park at that time, and to its focusing the people's interests upon the subject of parks; so that they felt more keenly their practical need and began to demand the immediate acquirement of accessible tracts of land. It will thus be seen

Very timely! that no gift could have been more timely; and Mr. Davis' supplementary gift of \$5000 for the development of Lake Park was also a very helpful factor.

Under the "Park Act" of 1882, and by a special act of the Legislature April 14, 1885, the Commission succeeds Commission of Shade Trees and Public Grounds was formally merged on May 1, 1885 into the Parks-Commission; and all the duties and responsibilities of the old Board, as stated in the Statute of 1862, were transferred to the newly-created Commission and still remain vested in them.

All possibilities of conflict were avoided by appointing



Lincoln the Chairman of the new Board, as he had been of the old; and by also appointing the other two members of the former

5 Board to equal positions on the new Board. But five members!

members were necessary for the new Board and the two new men appointed were to be of great importance to the welfare

Edward of the city. These men were the Hon. Edward L. Davis  
L. Davis

and J. Evarts Greene. Mr. Davis remained identified

with the Board for 16 years, until 1900, while Mr. Greene, al-

J. Evarts though resigning for business reasons within two years  
Greene

after his appointment, nevertheless rendered within

that time (and afterwards often in many indirect ways) such personal and vital services that he left his indelible imprint upon the entire plan of the whole park system.

Following the acquisition of Lake Park, popular petitions began to pour into the City Council for the acquisition of other

Special Com- parks in all sections of the city, so that finally in  
mittee to 1885 that elective body referred the whole matter of-  
look up sites for Parks.

ficially to the Parks-Commission, as all selection of

sites must initiate and rest with the latter body. The Parks-Commission then appointed a sub-committee, consisting of Edward L. Davis and J. Evarts Green, to plan a comprehensive system of parks for the entire city, "for all the needs of the present

A thorough and sys- and future, so far as they can be foreseen, and in  
tematic area and distribution for convenient access and use by  
study

all the people, unsurpassed, if equalled, by those of any city of like or even considerably larger population in this country." The complete system probably first assumed definite concrete form in the mind of Mr. Davis, but his colleague,



Mr. Greene, as an editor of a daily newspaper, helped greatly to shape popular opinion on the subject, and his early training as an engineer and surveyor furnished him with that grasp of the possibilities or impossibilities of a tract of land that only the trained eye can hope to discern. For sixteen months he

Special Report on Sites Sept. 26, 1886 carefully studied the situation and conferred with the other members of the Commission; and finally on September 26, 1886, the Parks-Commission made a formal

report to the City Council, accompanied by maps, plans, surveys, etc., in which they recommended the purchase of six (6) different sites in different sections of the city. The aggregate area of these sites was about 175 acres and their assessed valuation about \$150,000.

Probably no city in the country had proportionately made such a complete and thoroughly comprehensive attempt to provide its entire area equally with parks and playgrounds up to this time. But popular feeling demanded them here and the people refused to tolerate procrastination; and as a result, within three or four years, every one of these sites (or their alternatives, in some cases better than the original) had passed into the possession of the city "to be held forever as public parks and playgrounds".

The sites recommended, in the order named, were as follows:

The Sites Recommended (1) East Park, including Chandler Hill; (2) Two different sites in Crompton Park district: one on Gold Street, the other near present Crompton Park; (3) University Park, 8 1/2 acres; (4) Newton Hill; (5) Institute Park; (6) land, about 17 acres, near present North Park.



Two  
Playgrounds

The sites in the East and Crompton Park section were the first two recommended; as they were "well-adapted for playgrounds" and were the most immediately and urgently needed. In a lesser degree, this Report also praised University Park and Newton Hill for their playground facilities.

First  
Action by  
City Council.

The first action taken by the City Council on this Report was to formally petition the State for the cession of the Shrewsbury Street portion of East Park to the city. This section comprises only about 10 acres, but is by far the most important part of the Park, as it is devoted exclusively to playground uses.

First  
Provision  
by City  
Council  
Dec. 30,  
1886

The first express provision was made on December 30, 1886, by the City Council, at its last meeting for the year: when it authorized the purchase of University Park for the supposedly sufficient sum of \$13,350. Although this sum was to prove entirely inadequate, yet the appropriation of this money saves the City Council of this year from the reproach of having utterly failed to do anything for their constituents.

East Park  
10 acres  
1887

The following year, however, (1887), was to be prolific of of far more important results in park history. On July 16, the State Legislature granted the request of the previous year and ceded to the city the use of the playground section of East Park; four days later Stephen Salisbury

Institute  
Park  
1887

offered Institute Park to the city and his offer was gratefully accepted; and the first 8 1/2 acres of

University  
\$21,000

University Park, or the eastern section, was bought for \$21,000. Negotiations were also started for the



1888 purchase of the other sites; and during the new year  
 Newton Hill  
 \$50,000 Newton Hill of 60 acres was bought for about \$50,000.

Fairmont Sq. a purchase which Lincoln had tirelessly advocated for  
 Gift 20 years; Fairmont Square was presented to the city;  
 Crompton  
 Park and Crompton Park (12.72 acres of it) was purchased  
 \$45,000. for \$45,000, by far the most important playground  
 \$15,000.

Worcester ever had or will have. The purchase of North Park  
 North (39.42 acres) this same year practically completed  
 Park the chain of parks, intended to surround the city,  
 \$28,000.

within about two years after the Special Report was submitted.

This was the glorious year in Worcester's park history, the ex-  
 penditures of our \$120,000 being warranted in this year  
 "Park Loan" alone, to meet which, on July 1, 1888, the city nego-  
 \$200,000. tiated a \$200,000 Park Loan, previously authorized by the City  
 Council on May 7, 1888. This is a fifty year loan, bearing  
 interest at four per cent. The City Council of this year and  
 the Hon. Samuel Winslow are entitled to high esteem for the  
 generous co-operation thus given to the efforts of the Park  
 Commissioners; especially during this trying year when over

First \$115,000 had to be paid to the First Parish in liqui-  
 Parish dation of their claims to the City Hall portion of the  
 Claims! Common.  
 The gift of Dodge Park, 12.72 acres, was

In 1889 and 1890, after two years of tedious discussion and  
 negotiation, the 5 1/2 additional acres of University Park were  
 acquired at a cost of over \$53,000. The previous City Council  
 had authorized the purchase of practically the entire remaining

Addition to square for \$75,000; but exorbitant owners prevented  
 University Park, 5 1/2 this being realized. Lincoln always objected to  
 acres, \$53,000!



any addition to this park and this \$53,000 might easily have been better invested elsewhere. The concluding argument in its acquirement was the founding of Clark University opposite the last acquired section.

Chandler Hill. 1889. Negotiations for the purchase of Chandler Hill Hill, 1889, \$45,000. were finished in 1889, resulting in the purchase of it "Park Loan" by the City for \$45,000. The purchase money was raised \$50,000. by a \$50,000 addition to the "Park Loan" of the previous year, thus bringing the total Funded Park Loan to \$250,000 as had been the intention of the previous year.

Dodge Park Gift, 1890. The gift of Dodge Park of 13 acres to the city in 1890 was the crowning act in the six years of popular agitation and demands that were aroused to activity by the acceptance of the "Park Act" and gift of Lake Park in 1884; that came to a crisis in 1886 in the Special Report on Available Sites, and that remained at an unhysterical pitch of sane interest for several years until the last link in the chain had been secured by the purchase of North Park, and the East Park link riveted for all time by the purchase of Chandler Hill; after which people settled back in satisfaction and content, having admirably provided for their own generation and reasonably also for the next. The gift of Dodge Park, in a section whose needs were

No need of playgrounds in Worcester up to 1900 too remote in time to demand immediate municipal provision, further increased the general feeling of security and rendered Worcester absolutely immune, for 10 years at least, from inoculation by the modern playground germ.



Summary!

1884-

1890

In these 6 years, 1884-1890, ten (10) additional new parks were opened to the public with a total area

of over 225 acres and at a cost of over \$250,000. More money was spent in the purchase of University Park alone than had been spent by the Commissioners of Shade Trees and Public Grounds in its entire existence (1863-1895). No city in the country at that time had a better planned or more far-reaching park system. Worcester also has been one of the very earliest pioneers in the playground movement, as East and Crompton Parks and their subsequent development clearly shows. Both of these tracts were bought primarily for playgrounds, in the true modern sense of the word, and developed with that end chiefly in view. They were then and are still in the most crowded wards of the city, and for years afterwards, even almost to the present day, amply satisfied the pressing needs of their respective localities. So that when five or ten years later, the playground movement began to sweep over the country, radiating from Boston, Worcester,

No Need of  
Playgrounds  
in  
Worcester  
until  
1900

who had always copied many of the good features of the parks of the former in a modified and quiet way consistent with different conditions here, felt no immediate need of localizing a branch of the movement;

so it swept harmlessly over our city to Chicago, by way of New York, Pittsburg, etc., sending out occasional spur tracks to cities along the route where the needs were more urgent and where the congested portions cried out, as it were, to Heaven for relief. No such crowded and unrelieved conditions existed in Worcester at any time in its history; its beautiful suburbs and the large open areas within the city, either pro-



vided municipally or at any rate available for all different sections, precluded any such possibility for a long time. So that until about 1900, no section of the city felt any special need of additional parks or even playgrounds. Therefore, the

Parks  
Developed!  
1890-1900

ten years between 1890 and 1900 were rightly spent in the development of the newly acquired park system and

the present condition of these parks is a glowing tribute to those who planned and executed them. Large ponds were construct-

(Ponds)

ed at some of the parks, both for ornamental purposes

and also for the use of skaters; the playground sections were graded and put in condition for athletic games; and in general the entire system was made so attractive and cozy that children and adults used them very extensively and found them entirely adequate.

The Massachusetts Playground Act of 1893, "Authorizing

Mass.  
Playground  
Act  
1893

Cities and Towns to establish and maintain public playgrounds", had no direct or immediate effect

upon Worcester, whose crowded sections were already

well provided for by the park-playgrounds.

On December 15, 1896, Edward Winslow Lincoln died after

Death of  
Lincoln  
1896

26 years of tireless and priceless services as Chairman of the "Parks-Commission"; and it is no disparage-

ment of the others members of the Commission to say that he was the backbone of the Commission. In his very first report (1870)

He was the  
Absolute  
Czar  
of the  
Park  
System!

he had publicly fathered the idea of a system of Park Ways to surround the city, several parts of which are now complete and several other parts of which will be completed probably within a decade.

It seems singularly appropriate that the last remaining sum of



the original Park Loan of 1888 should have been finally appropriated by the City Council, at his request, during his last year of service for the special development of certain parks: and also that he should have finished the Fountain at University Park, which had been his special "hobby" for years and is probably the only example in his long service where a large sum of money was spent purely and solely for ornamental purposes: furthermore, just at this time, Elm Park, which for twenty years had been the most widely visited of the parks, was being superseded in popularity by Institute Park; and certainly Lincoln never loved anything as he loved Elm Park; and it was a kind fate that saved him from seeing its displacement from service in popular favor. No sounder or more sensible advocate of

Lover of Children reasonable playgrounds could have been found than Lincoln, nor could any greater lover of and truer sympathizer with children be found than he was: in about every report he was strongly advocating giving them free scope for their innocent activities; and, great landscape decorator and great ornamentalist and beautifier that he was, yet he fully appreciated the limits to which this should be carried. For way back in 1884, in his most remarkable peroration contained

His prophetic and characteristic Peroration in 1884 in the Annual Report for that year, he wisely says in defense of a possible and needed South Worcester playgrounds, "A monotony of gardens or parks can become as tiresome and pall upon the taste as soon as anything else that lacks variety." This peroration

is such a remarkable prophetic vision and strikes us today, twenty-five years later, as showing such a remarkable paral-



lism with facts as time has already or will perhaps fully realize them; and is such a fine example of Lincoln's characteristic literary style, that it deserves quotation in full:

"The visions of the Seer--son of Levi--like the Sibylline Books, increase in value as their realization, or time, diminishes their number. He has beheld in the dim distance, the

He foresees the development of Lake Park Water-Park of Worcester, which is not by any means a Park by the water, being the Lake itself! no longer drawn down at the sweet will of manufacturers, who have learned that a motive power is valueless in proportion as it ceases to be certain; no longer obstructed by a solid causeway, which has yielded place to a succession of arches over which travel finds no impediment, and through which the pleasure, or racing boats gain easy transit. He look further and sees the procession of vehicles and pedestrians, by the North-Lake West shore of Quinsigamond, as they wind around Wigwam Avenue and pass along the broad avenue to which stolid lunacy does not oppose a barrier, or priggish exclusiveness--its first cousin--offer futile objections. The hillsides are dotted with pleasant cottages,--the smiling homes of a population no more content to ferment and seethe in the dust and grime of Pine Meadow, but willing, even anxious, to secure the blessings of pure air and cheerful surroundings for their children, if too late for themselves. Lake Park has been cleared up and developed: its countless possibilities realized, so that happy parties are in constant enjoyment of its native beauties. Wide views from lofty acclivities, lovely vistas through forest openings, sparkling streams and chance



waterfalls, with white crisp towns in the blue haze upon yonder hills! while beneath our feet lies here, there, and miles re-  
 Lake Quinsigamond, the fair lake--the like to whose liquid mirror  
 men cross broad oceans to see, entitling them Katrine,  
 Lemam or whatsoever name may offer as a synonym for our aborig-  
 inal Quinsigamond. Off towards the West, over the South Ledge  
 and through Quinsigamond Village around the foot of Mt. St. James,  
 Avenue from the wide avenue so often advised and commended, is at  
 Cambridge to length opened for traffic and travel; and the throngs  
 Millbury Sts. that are now visible upon it direct their steps to the  
 new Play-Ground, secured for the southern section of the city  
 by the Parks-Commission, to witness the sports of the youthful  
 athletes. Supplying facilities for exercise in the open air,  
 South which are heartily enjoyed and thoroughly appreciated,  
 Worcester the wonder augments that the people were content to  
 Playground wait the tardy boon with so much patience. Not so extensive a  
 tract as might be wished, it is as large as could be secured in  
 a manufacturing center without an absolute arrest of business  
 enterprise. It is occupied and used for a Playground, as it was  
 meant to be; for a monotony of gardens or parks can become as  
 tiresome and pall upon the taste as soon as anything else that  
 lacks variety.

And now, getting around by Park Avenue, the Seer looks down  
 from Newton Hill,--at last securely in municipal owner-  
 ship--upon the old territory of the Agricultural So-  
 ciety, covered with substantial residences instead of empty  
 cattle-sheds. It has ceased to be a deserted waste for three-



fourths of the year, not even ministering to the uses for which it was first acquired, and for which its rise in value long since rendered it inappropriate. But reduced to settlement, its taxable returns furnish a perceptible and welcome entry in the civic

Change of income, while the revenue from its sale has enabled the Society to procure a more suitable location elsewhere. And with it have fled its attendant nuisances,

the fungus growth of a populous city,--a continuous offense to the neighborhood, until they are either expelled from the system or sloughed off.

Continuing on along Park Avenue, and following West Boylston Street to where the irons of two railways intersect it, the gaze of the Seer is arrested by the newer and permanent location of

the Agricultural Society. Faith Avenue reaches over connecting Lincoln with West Boylston

Street, surmounting the ridge by an easy grade and uniting two contiguous portions of the city that were too long sundered.

Accessible by broad roads or smooth railways; with an ample area for every use that exacts a level surface; and with an unfailing supply of water; was it not a wise measure of policy to remove thither when the price set upon land was reasonable?

And the Seer progresses eastward, over Faith Avenue, and, coming down Lincoln Street, invades Paine Woods. To his

inquiry what may be the meaning of this festive picnic of grown people, with prattling children, all happy as larks, the reply from a dozen eager tongues is, that the city came at last to perceive that all work and no play



Paine's  
Woods  
or  
Green Hill

makes Jack a dull boy; that it is not all of life to live; that the municipal body, if it builds over its territory closely, must provide occasional openings to Sun and Air; and that, if the men of old dedicated the Common and Elm Park to popular use and enjoyment, their successors of this day and generation but bury their talent in a napkin who do not provide in abundant, aye lavish measure, for wants that become more importunate and inexorable as population becomes crowded to the point of oppression--almost suffocation.

Car  
Lines

And as The Seer closes his eyes wearied by their protracted insight, his ears are saluted with the clatter and rumble of cars upon the street railway, as they descend from Burncoat to Barber's Crossing and pass swiftly along their route through Grove Street; by the Rural Cemetery and the Wire Mill, to the heart of the City.

Ideal  
of all  
Park  
Commission-  
ers!

"Finis coronat opus!" May the good work be accelerated!

This quotation will give a fine idea of the far-sightedness of Lincoln and how time has proved that his visions into the future were decidedly practical. He was beyond all doubt the ideal man for the position and Worcester was remarkably fortunate in having him as the absolute monarch of her park system for the most *critical* quarter of a century that she can ever pass through in park or playground matters.

And with the new playground era sending out its first prophetic forerunners about this time of Lincoln's death, it was as if in the order of nature that Lincoln, who had really terminated the park epoch, after having raised it to its highest effi-



ciency, should give way to those who only had to completely develop the nucleus he had left, in order to bring the new playground era to its highest perfection.

After his death a great change naturally took place in the reorganization of the Commission; their methods and distribution

Reorganiza- of power and authority changed radically, but all the  
tion of  
Commission changes were merely of "internal administration" and  
after his death the general policy in regard to the parks was not ma-  
terially changed; for Lincoln's plans were too wise and far-  
reaching to be dropped without sacrificing the best ultimate in-  
terests of the system.

The Annual Report fell from sixty pages to twelve: and has ever since lacked the thoroughness and exhaustiveness of Lincoln's Reports as well as their verbosity.

Beginning in 1897, the playground features of Worcester's parks began to be rapidly developed and more strongly emphasized.

First In the fall of this year, excavations for a Wading or  
Wading Skating Pool were started at the Crompton Playground  
or Skating and finished in time for the winter season. The sev-  
Pool eral ball diamonds at East Park were equipped with  
1897 backstops, seats, etc., and the grading of the Lake Park play-  
field was nearly finished and it was also made especially at-  
tractive for picnics by the construction of additional rude  
tables, seats, etc., placed about the park. The next year, 1898,  
was also a very important one for the Park Commissioners and there-  
fore for the city in general. The new City Hall was dedicated and  
New it was surely a decidedly tardy and imperative recog-  
City Hall nition of their labors and the demands upon them when a  
1898



room in the new municipal building was provided for their exclusive use. Up to this time, incredible as it may seem, the Park Commissioners had had "no headquarters, no office, no articles of furniture, no teams or no horses" and now for the first time "their books, records, plans, maps, papers, etc., were gathered together in one place."

City Forester 1898      A City Forester was appointed by them this year, the first permanent official position ever created by them or existing in their department. How they had managed to systematically maintain or develop the park system and tend to its infinite number of details, including the arduous care of the protection and planting of the 10,000 shade trees around the city, is impossible to understand unless we know the actual facts that explain it; namely that each Commissioner<sup>er</sup> was a direct, personal supervisor and gave practically the best part of his time to personal supervision of not only important matters but even of those thousand and one small details that less conscientious and patriotic men than have graced the office of Park Commissioners, would easily have neglected or shirked, especially since by Legislative enactment no Park Commissioner<sup>er</sup> can receive one cent in remuneration for his efforts. Lincoln especially during his tenure of office had probably done more and better work than any three paid supervisors could or would have done. The appointment of this official relieved the Park Commissioners personally of a heavy burden, but of course increased the expenditures slightly.

The Park Commissioners then finished and enlarged the Crompton Park wading pool and constructed a similar one at East Park



East Park Wading Pool and also one at University 1898 and kept them both also in good condition for skating during the winter months. A wading pool was also constructed at University Park; the larger pond there having been already used for skating for several years.

A few "swings and teeters" were also constructed at Crompton Park, Worcester's first step in this direction, as an experiment; and of course the experiment was an instant and great success. The ball diamonds here and elsewhere were also kept in most excellent condition. No

complaint of any sort was heard and "there was a disposition in the various parks and playgrounds to use and enjoy everything in a reasonable manner". Municipal band

concerts, of course, during the summer months have always been given at the different parks practically since their acquirement. The city has no municipal band but the City Council for years has always appropriated each summer a certain sum for that purpose.

The next year, 1899, "swings" and "teeters" were also introduced at East Park and were in continual use the entire season, and a few more were added at Crompton Park.

The cost of all the apparatus was very slight, being confined to lumber and carpentry. One of the Lake Park diamonds was completed, graded and finished, and the demand for it was so great that it was found necessary to assign dates to the different clubs who sought to use it. This great demand for baseball facilities encouraged the Commissioners to complete another diamond there for the next season.



Supt. of  
Parks  
Appointed  
by  
Commission-  
ers  
1899

In this same year the office of Superintendent of Parks was created, the first time in the history of the parks, when a paid official was in a way responsible for the care and condition of the system. The appointment of this official was absolutely necessary for the unification of the park system and it was economy alone

(Resigned  
March  
1910)

that prevented the Commissioners from creating such an office years before. It is a characteristic trait of the permanency of organization and unpolitical stability of everything relating to the

He still  
holds  
office

Park Commissioners that the present incumbent of the position is the same man that has honorably and efficiently filled the position since its creation. (Retired March, 1910)

The year 1900 was marked by the retirement of Edward L.

Edward  
L. Davis  
retires  
1900

Davis, whose business and personal interests unfortunately required his undivided attention. For 16 years he had been a most honorable and efficient member of the

Commission.

Boynton Park, in an adjoining town, had been accepted by

Boynton  
Park  
Rejected!

the City Council in 1898 as a gift to the city; and in

1900 they formally asked the Park Commissioners to take it up under their jurisdiction, which the latter politely declined, chiefly because of its unsuitable location, great inaccessibility and the apparent complete lack of need for it; and furthermore, as an additional burden of expense, it would but detract a certain amount of needed income from the other parks.

About this year, the need of additional small playgrounds or



Petitions for Playgrounds 1900 parks began to be felt in a few sections of the city, especially in the Quinsigamond district, and soon petitions began to pour into the City Council from three or four sections of the city and engaged their attention during the year 1901. The Park Commissioners have complete power in the selection and approval of all sites for parks and playgrounds; so they assumed the responsibility of recommending the purchase of several sites in the several different sections which needed them.

Hadwen Park Recommended in 1901 and presented in 1902 In regard to one of the sites recommended, in the southern central portion of the city, the Park Commissioners expressed the opinion "that they did not know of a tract of land within the limits of Worcester which possesses such natural advantages for a park. Its purchase would mean that Worcester would obtain a park practically ready-made." The purchase of this site of about 50 acres was, however, to prove unnecessary; as the next year it was most opportunely presented to the city by Obadiah B. Hadwen, the senior member of the Commission.

N. S. Reservation The care of the north-western shores of Lake Quinsigamond were also transferred this year (1902) to the Park Commission by the city. In this same year, the Report of the Supt. of Parks appears officially for the first time; and amongst other things he reports that over 80,000 people enjoyed the skating provided by the Park Commissioners this year, three-

Skating in 1902 for 80,000 by Park Commission fourths of whom used the ice on Elm Park; while University, Crompton and East parks received the remainder. Scrapers, snow-plows and sprays were used as usual.



and ice-planers were also used that year for the first time. It must be remembered, in estimating Worcester's position in playground matters, that none of these four ponds are natural but have all been constructed with the view of their utility being especially prominent. It should also be remembered, as stated before, that the Elm Park Ponds have been practically kept in good shape in winter since their construction; and this has likewise been the case with East and Crompton skating ponds; and to a lesser degree also of the larger pool at University Park.

In 1903, the Park Commission again strongly urged the acquiring of a new playground at Quinsigamond; and stated concisely as well the present conditions and needs of Worcester, when they said

"Small playgrounds in the thickly-settled portions of our city and means to improve our present park system are what our people demand." During three years the Commission was striving to do its best with its by no means over-adequate appropriation. Additional ball-grounds, pieces of simple apparatus, picnic facilities, etc., were provided not in one grand and showy outburst but in a quiet and effective way; and when the time came to demand more playground areas, they did so in a conservative and unhysterical fashion that precluded their being styled "reformers" or "faddists"; and that caused the City Council, slowly perhaps, but in every case surely, to finally buy every site they recommended.

This sound and systematic method of action has always characterized the Park Commission: they never thrust abortively upon

the public a hysterically-worded or clarion-heralded plan to redeem every man, woman and child from all the



evils of the world and hasten on the millennium and ~~ensnare~~ <sup>ensnare</sup> it in Worcester before the rest of the world has felt its presence; but they have accomplished results that will bear favorable comparison with any city in the country, if proper allowances are made for differences in size, needs, opportunities, etc.

Following the Park Commissioners' ~~record~~ recommendation.

the City Council on June 11, 1904 voted an appropriation of

Greenwood Park \$15,000 for a purchase of a playground at Quinsigamond.  
 Playground  
 1904 This money was for the purchase of an already definitely

selected site; and its owners then demanded an exorbitant price for their land, which the Commissioners refused to consider. But with excellent judgment they secured a much larger site of 11 acres for a much smaller sum, namely \$12,000; and purchased it with the authority of the City Council and were given

Cost \$13,400 the remaining \$3,000 for its development. Even the opponents of this newsite now admit the wisdom of its

choice. Grant Square was also presented to the city this year.

Grant Square "Outdoor gymnasium", in a modest way, consisting of ladders, slides, horizontal bars, flying rings and

tilting ladders, were established at Crompton Park; and "served their purpose very satisfactorily", despite the fact that there were no regular attendants in charge. The Supt. reports that "it fulfilled its mission in keeping the children off the street and

Distribution of simple apparatus and ball-diamonds found them something to do". There were also a first-class ball-diamonds in the parks by this year; while little pieces of playground equipment, like swingers,

teeters, circle-rings, etc., were distributed fairly well through the system. It is this wise distribution of playground apparatus,



so dear to children, instead of its concentration under physical directors, that has obscured all that Worcester is doing for its children.

The year  
1905 a  
memorable  
one!

The following year, 1905, was perhaps the most important and certainly one of the most memorable in the history of our park system.

First, it was preeminently marked by the purchase of Green Hill Park, with its magnificent 500 acres of both wild and beautifully developed land; it is a difficult question at present to say whether the acquirement of this park should be classed as a pur-

Green Hill  
Park  
purchased.  
500 acres  
for  
\$54,900

chase or a gift; posterity will surely say that nominal price of \$54,900 was merely exacted as a pledge of good faith from the city and that ~~the right of~~ what was given as a free gift by the Green heirs totally outweighed the

paltry sum paid for it, and that as time goes on, and its use and enjoyment shall increase by ever-rapid bounds, that the small sum paid to the Green heirs shall grow less and less appreciable until finally it shall have faded into the dim past of obscurity and oblivion, forgotten in grateful appreciation of its half-a-million yearly visitors. Even as early as 1908, its 250,000 visitors proved that its acquirement was the greatest single event in the history of our park system and this constant use must have already paid Worcester rich dividends in the increased health of the people. In size alone, it more than doubled the area of Worcester's parks; and perhaps, in time, we may say also, their efficiency.

The next most important event was the death of William A. Richardson on Augst 12 of this year; and his bequest of the income of his fortune of over a quarter million of dollars to the



William A. Richardson development of Worcester's park system: The principal must remain intact and thus the fund becomes perpetual. Income ~~from~~ <sup>The interest</sup> It became available in 1908 and <sup>amounted</sup> to about \$5000; \$250,000 this year <sup>(1910)</sup> it is expected that nearly \$10,000 will be received from this source, due to judicious investment.

This year also the Park Commission condescended to take Boynton Park, with its 110 suburban acres, under their jurisdiction; and, like playgrounds, they have since honored it with a special account in their financial report.

Petitions again for Playgrounds! (1905) city also reached the city government this year. Two of them petitions have since been granted by the purchase (in 1909) of the Vernon Hill and Beaver Brook Playgrounds, while the purchase of Greenwood park partially answered and the Vernon Hill purchase completely answered the third petition. The fourth petition, from the South Worcester district, has not yet been recommended by the Park Commissioners.

The Lincoln Memorial Gateway at Elm Park was also erected this year; while a small, but important addition was made at Greenwood Park, enlarging the playfield. Furthermore over \$5000 was spent this year on the development of this park, which was of course bought primarily for playground purposes. Most of the playground facilities were ready for the summer vacation.

This same year saw the death of Stephen Salisbury, former member of the Commission and donor of Institute Park. After his gift of Institute Park, he had spent over \$50,000 on its develop-



Death  
of  
Stephen  
Salisbury

ment, especially during its early years of municipal possession, when the city needed money for its other parks.

Summary  
of  
1905

Thus at the beginning of this year the total area of Worcester's parks was 457.74 acres: at the close of it, the total acreage was 1072.13 acres, an increase of 614.4 acres or 134%. Here again it will be seen that Worcester made great strides in providing for the future welfare of her citizens and in providing beautiful areas of "God's green sward" where children or adults may revel to their hearts' content; but again received scant recognition from the great shouters of the playground movement, because she didn't at once proceed to attack overbearing and destructive supervision to those who usually know pretty well how to look out for themselves. When Worcester does take up supervision of play, she will take it up in a natural and sound way.

12 "Dia-  
monds"  
in 1905

The development of the playground and other features of the parks was still going on steadily; the number of "diamonds" had been increased to twelve (12), swings, slides, and other simple pieces of apparatus were being added quietly and unostentatiously and picnic parties have always been very well provided for.

Death of  
James  
Draper  
1907

Early in 1907, James Draper, a member of the Board for twenty years and who had penned its reports practically since Lincoln's death in 1896, passed away.

It is a remarkable fact that while he was a recognized authority on trees, flowers, gardens, etc., yet Lake, East and Crompton Parks were his special charges and their early and excellent



playground development is due primarily and chiefly to him. Of  
 Another course his services as a creator of landscape effects  
 great advocate and decorative arrangements were used extensively for  
 of playgrounds all the parks; but it is very fortunate for Worcester

that his character was so rounded that the playground side of  
 park development appealed to him intensely.

Within 8 months after Draper's death, occurred also in this

Obadiah same year the death of Obadiah B. Hadwen, who had  
 B. Hadwen died in served as a Commissioner for 37 years. From his ap-  
 1907 pointment in 1867, he served continuously, with the

exception of 3 years from 1870-1873, up to his death. He was

a prominent horticulturalist and his services as Commissioner

had proved invaluable. His gift of Hadwen Park and the fatherly

Last of care he exercised upon it were only a small portion of  
 Great the manifold services that characterized his civic life.

Triumvirate of His death removed the last of the great Triumvirate of

Lincoln, Hadwen and Draper, who served respectively

twenty-six (26), twenty-one (21) and thirty-seven (37) years as  
 Commissioners. Worcester's debt to those men cannot be estimated,  
 nor can we imagine what our Park System would have been without  
 them. Nothing but the Great Reaper alone ever succeeded in di-  
 minishing their intensely solicitous interest in the development  
 of the park system of our city and no names will be more grate-  
 fully remembered by posterity.

In this year, (1907), for reasons of economy, the office of  
 City Forester was absorbed in that of Supt. of Parks! another  
 example of how loath the Board is to create salaried officials.  
 Public hearings were given this year to the petition for play-



Hearings grounds for Vernon Hill, Greendale and the West Side:  
 in 1907  
 on and the Park Commissioners recommend officially that  
 Playground  
 Petitions these petitions be granted.

They also, in their report for this year, recommend that the  
 "Small city provide "small areas for children's playgrounds in dif-  
 ferent portions of the city, either by rental of vacant  
 supervision" lots or a more general use of school yards during vaca-  
 tion, with supervision for a portion of the time by competent kin-  
 dergarten instructors."

It was conservatively estimated this year that over 240,000  
 people used the playgrounds at Crompton Park during the year 1907:

240,000 and the Superintendent recommended that a competent  
 used person should be employed, especially during the  
 Crompton Playground school vacation, to direct the play of the children. He  
 in 1907 expressed the opinion that "it would improve their moral, in-  
 tellectual and physical welfare."

At the annual City Election, in December 1908, the voters  
 "Mass. accepted the "Massachusetts Playground Act" by a vote  
 Playground  
 Act" ac- of about three to one (14,570-4,849). In brief, this  
 cepted Dec. Act requires all cities that accept it, to "provide  
 8, 1908, and maintain, after July 1, 1910, at least one pub-  
 14,570 Yes  
 4,849 No

lic playground conveniently located and of suitable size and  
 equipment, for the recreation and physical education of the  
 minors of said city". Previously, on the 26th day of October  
 of the same year, the City Council had appropriated \$36,000 for  
 the purchase of the Beaver Brook Playground of about 14 1/2

Beaver acres. This piece of land is swampy and used as a  
 Brook  
 Playground dump, and some opposition existed to its acquirement:  
 1908



chiefly on account of the present unsightly condition and unhealthy nature of the land. The playground and other features

Crompton Park Congested! of Crompton Park were taxed to their utmost this year, and were proving completely inadequate for the dis-

trict which this park draws upon. The Wading Pool was enlarged to twice its former size; yet still it was used to its greatest capacity. The Supt. reports as follows "Other playgrounds are needed in this <sup>section within</sup> one half-mile of Crompton Park to relieve the over-crowded condition. There are days when instead of relieving congestion the park itself becomes congested."

An important innovation was introduced this year at Greenwood Park. An additional ball-diamond was constructed for smaller boys and it was so graded as to allow it to be flooded for skating, thus affording a much larger surface for skating than the small wading pool, and yet at the same time allowing the latter to be reserved for polo games. Skating this year was made possible from Dec. 20 to Feb. 15 at Elm, Green Hill, North, University, East, Crompton and Greenwood Parks by removing the snow with horses and large scrapers. Ice planers were also used during the day and the water sprinkled over the surfaces after

Skating in 7 Parks 108,000 people and Greenwood Parks by removing the snow with horses and large scrapers. Ice planers were also used during the day and the water sprinkled over the surfaces after

9 p.m., and about 108,000 people enjoyed the sport thus provided.

Mayor James Logan's First Inaugural On Jan. 6, 1908, the present mayor, James Logan, delivered his first inaugural address and devoted an unusually long space to the discussion of the park and playground question and for the last three years he has been the strongest and soundest advocate and worker for playgrounds in Worcester, an extremely fortunate thing for this city and Worcester



has made rapid advances since his first inauguration and promises <sup>to</sup> this year, even further follow along the same enlightened policy. His attitude towards parks is shown by his words: "Parks can and will be used by the weary and weary laden, many of whom will never own more of mother earth than the spare, two by six feet where they will finally sleep their last sleep;" and of playgrounds he says, "We cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of establishing playgrounds. The child grows and develops through activity and a child needs a playground as a flower needs light and air." And he goes on to say that even if taxation is slightly increased, "there are some things larger even than dollars"; and he summarizes the situation when he says "Worcester is well provided for in most directions with parks, but there is a great need of playgrounds."

This was the happy attitude of one of Worcester's broadest-minded and most enlightened mayors; and when during his first two years of office, he directed the activities of the city in acquiring four (4) new playgrounds at a cost of about \$86,000, the people showed their overwhelming appreciation of him and his honesty by

He is  
the  
greatest  
friend  
of the  
playgrounds  
in  
Worcester

electing him to a third term by the largest vote ever given a mayor in the history of this city. His majority clearly showed that people of all parties voted for him.

During 1908, his first term, provision was made for the Beaver Brook Playground, as has been stated above, but it was not until 1909 that it came into possession of the city. The vote on the playground act showed clearly the attitude of the people of Worcester, as well as all over Massachusetts, towards



playgrounds; and the City Council therefore on July 14, 1909. one week after a special message on the subject had been submitted by

Vernon Hill, Greendale and Tatnuck Playgrounds purchased in 1909--  
 Mayor Logan, authorized a loan of \$50,000, for the purchase of Vernon Hill, Greendale and Tatnuck Playgrounds, all of which were securely in the possession of the City of Worcester before the end of that year.

Cost \$50,000  
 The purchase of the Tatnuck playground, with its scarcely two acres of extent, is a far more important step in Worcester's forward advancement than would appear on the surface. In the first place, it is the first time in the his-

Tatnuck Playground features!  
 tory of the city that it has ever bought a distinctly small and isolated piece of land for purely park or

playground purposes; it has on several occasions bought small additions of contiguous land to enlarge or more clearly define the boundaries of previously obtained large parks; but the purchase of the first 8 1/2 acres of University Park had hitherto been the smallest purchase of a separate parcel of land; and that purchase had been regarded as so incomplete that within three years 6 more acres had been added to it, at the highest price ever paid for any land in the history of the park system of our city. In fact the idea of purchasing small tracts of

Worcester never buys or hires small tracts of land  
 land, "of an acre or two", for playgrounds, is the one "up-to-date" playground idea which has never made the slightest progress in Worcester; and the three other

new playgrounds, averaging about 15 acres each, show that even now, when Worcester does establish a playground, she certainly makes one that shall be roomy enough for everybody. Of course the reason is that small playgrounds and supervision always go



hand-in-hand, and as Worcester doesn't take kindly to supervision, she likewise has not seriously considered her chief "raison d'etre", the small playground.

And the purchase of the Tatnuck playground is by no means a concession to supervision. For it is situated in the outskirts of the city. But the real noteworthy feature of the Tatnuck

Tatnuck playground is that it adjoins the new Tatnuck School and Schoolhouse. House, and will be thus available for the use of the pupils of this building. In fact this purchase of the playground along with the school-house was practically planned at the same time; and yet full space was reserved for the schoolyard proper. This linking of school and playground is one of the ideal conditions that the playground movement has brought strongly before the public eye; and as time goes on, people of Worcester will awaken to a fuller realization of what a fine step forward the Tatnuck playground, as well as the Tatnuck school, has been in the progress of our city.

North Shore Reser.	5.25	City	417.43	124,000
(South Park)	2.15	\$ 8,500.00	412.61	127,000
Grant Square	1.55	Gift	421.16	127,000
Greenwood Park	12.65	\$18,400.00		
Green Hill "	500.00	\$64,000.00		
Hogston "	113.03	Gift	1045.31	138,000
Beaver Brook Pl. 32'	15	\$26,000.	1061.31	143,000
Vernon Hill Pl. 30'	16	\$38,000.		
Greendale "	25	\$14,000		
Tatnuck "	2	\$ 4,500.	1094.31	145,000



Year	Park	Area	Cost	Total Park Area	Population
1722	Common	7.75	-----	7.75	400
1854	Elm Park	28.	\$11,257.50	35.75	22,000.
1884	Lake "	110.	Gift	145.75	66,000
1887	University Park	8.50	\$21,000.00		
"	East "	10.00	State		
"	Institute "	18.18	Gift	182.43	75,000
1888	Newton Hill	60.	\$50,000.00		
"	Fairmont Square	.92	Gift		
"	Crompton Park	12.72	\$45,000.00		
"	North "	39.43	\$28,000.00	295.50	78,000
1889(1890) <u>A</u>	(University Park)	5.50	\$53,000.00		
1889	Chandler Hill	45.	\$45,000.00	346.00	82,000
1890	Dodge Park	13.	Gift	359.	85,000
1897	<u>A</u> (Crompton Park)	2.53	\$22,500.00	361.53	106,000
1902	Hadwen Park	50.	Gift		
"	North Shore Reser.	5.95	City	417.48	124,000
1903	<u>A</u> (North Park)	2.13	\$ 8,500.00	419.61	127,000
1904	Grant Square	1.55	Gift	421.16	127,000
1905	Greenwood Park	12.65	\$13,400.00		
"	Green Hill "	500.00	\$54,900.00		
"	Boynton "	113.00	Gift	1046.81	128,000
1908	Beaver Brook Pl. Gr.	15.	\$36,000.	1061.81	143,000
1909	Vernon Hill Pl. Gr.	16.	\$32,000.		
"	Greendale " "	15	\$14,000.		
"	Tatnuck " "	2.	\$ 4,500.	1094.81	145,000



## Gifts of Land or Money to Park System.

Total Area of All Parks and Playgrounds	1120 acres
" " (excluding Boynton Park)	1007 acres

1884	Lake Park	Horace E. Sigalov and Edward L. Davis	110.00
------	-----------	---------------------------------------	--------

1887	Total Cost of Land	State	\$440,000
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1887	Improvement and Maintenance (1863-1909)	Stephen Salisbury	\$442,000
			<u>\$882,000</u>

1890	Wairmont Square	David A. Henningsen	1.00
------	-----------------	---------------------	------

1890	Dodge Park	Thomas H. Dodge	13.00
------	------------	-----------------	-------

1902	Net Municipal Expenditures on Parks and Play-grounds	Obadiah B. Madison	\$882,000
------	--	--------------------	-----------

1908	Private Money Contributions	Butters	\$ 56,000
------	-----------------------------	---------	-----------

1908	Richardson Fund (1908, 1909)	Charles D. Boynton	\$ 15,000
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			\$953,000
--	--	--	-----------

	Appropriations <del>and</del> Richardson Fund for 1910		<u>50,000</u>
--	--	--	---------------

	Grand Total, 1863-1910 (inclusive)		\$1,003,000
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1863	Levi Lincoln	\$1000.00	for the Park
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1884	(Total Funded Park and Playground Loans		\$400,800)
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1887-1903	Stephen Salisbury	\$10,000	for the Park
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1908	Expenditures on Shade Trees, 1863-1909		\$ 80,000
	(not included above in Expenditures)		



## Gifts of Land or Money to Park System.

Annual Appropriations by the City Council from 1888-1910

## I. Land

			Area
1884	Lake Park	Horace H. Bigelow and Edward L. Davis	110.00
1887	East Park	State	10.00
1887	Institute Park	Stephen Salisbury	18.18
1888	Fairmont Square	David S. Messenger	.92
1890	Dodge Park	Thomas H. Dodge	13.00
1902	Hadwen Park	Obadiah B. Hadwen	50.00
1905	Grant Square	Abutters	.90
1905 (1898)	Boynton Park	Charles D. Boynton	<u>113.00</u>
			Total 316.00 acres

## II. Money

1868	Levi Lincoln	\$1000.00 for Elm Park
1884	Edward L. Davis	\$5000.00 for Lake Park
1887-1905	Stephen Salisbury	\$50,000. upon Institute Park
1905	William A. Richardson	\$250,000 (Income) upon Entire System
1905	Green Heirs	\$50,000. as part payment of Green Hill Park



## Annual Appropriations by the City Councils from 1863-1910

1863	\$500.00	1889	\$10,810.
1864	500.	1890	10,000.
1865	500.	1891	10,000.
1866	500.	1892	10,000.
1867	500.	1893	10,100.
1868	600.	1894	10,000.
1869	1000.	1895	10,500.
1870	1000.	1896	16,000.
1871	5000.	1897	20,000.
1872	3000.	1898	22,000.
1873	4000.	1900	22,000.
1874	5000.	1901	22,000.
1875	4000.	1902	23,000.
1876	3000.	1903	23,000.
1877	3000.	1904	24,000.
1878	4000.	1905	24,000.
1879	5000.	1906	35,000.
1880	5000.	1907	33,000. + Revenue + 2,399.79
1881	5500.	1908	30,000. + 7,112.41
1882	6000.	1909	30,000. + 10,000.00
1883	6500.	1910	30,000. + 10,000. for Playgrounds
1884	7000.		+ 10,000. Richardson Fund.
1885	7000.		
1886	8000.	Total Appropriations by City Council for Maintenance and Improvement, 1863-1909:	
1887	8000.	(Shade Trees)	\$522,000. 80,000.
1888	10000.	1863-1909 ..... \$442,000	
Total sum expended upon maintenance and im- provement of parks and playgrounds.			



Board of Park Commissioners  
 Commissioners of Shade Trees and Public Grounds 1863-1885

Term, 3 years.

Edward Wiglow Lincoln	(1864-1885)	22 years (total 27 years)
Edward Earle	1863-1865	3 years
James B. Blake	1863-1864	2 years
Henry Prentice	1863-1866	4 years
George Jacques	1865-1870	6 years
David S. Messenger	1866-1868	3 years
Obadiah B. Hadwen	1867-1870; 1874-1885.	16 years
Stephen Salisbury	1869-1885	17 years
Edward L. Lincoln	1870-1885	16 years
Ossian L. Hatch	1871-1873	3 years

Thus for 16 successive years (1870-1885) Lincoln and Salisbury constituted two of the members; and for 12 successive years (1874-1885) Hadwen, Lincoln and Salisbury were the sole members of the Board. These same three men formed the nucleus of the new Parks-Commission which succeeded it, but Salisbury retired after one year's service, while Lincoln and Hadwen continued to remain identified with the new Board, until death separated them from it. Thus from 1874-to 1896, or for 22 years, Lincoln and Hadwen were continuous members of the two Boards. So that only nine (9) men in all were members of the Board in its twenty-two (22) years of existence.



## Board of Park Commissioners

Term: 5 years

1884-1910

Edward Winslow Lincoln	(1884-1896)	11 years (total 27 years)
Obadiah B. Hadwen	(1884-1907)	21 years (total 37 years)
Edward L. Davis	1884-1900	16 years
Stephen Salisbury	1884-1886	1 year (total 18 years)
J. Evarts Greene	1884-1886	2 years
James Draper	1886-1907	21 years
Martin Green	1886-1890	4 years
William H. Sawyer	1890-1896	6 years
Calvin L. Hartshorn	1896-1897	1 year
William Hart	1897-1905	8 years
Benjamin W. Childs	1900-1908	8 years

Present	Edwin P. Curtis	1896-19	14 years
Board	Rufus B. Fowler	1905-19	5 years
	Peter Baker	1907-19	3 years
	Sven E. Hanson	1907-19	3 years
	Henry H. Thayer	1909-19	1 year

Thus in the 26 years of its existence, only 16 men have been members of the Board; and leaving out two men who served only one year each, only 14 men have graced this Commission, which includes the five members of the present Board, one of whom has been in office less than a year; and two others less than three years.



Legal Status of Park Commissions.

The Massachusetts "Public Parks Act", entitled "An Act under which Cities and Towns may lay out Public Parks", "Park Act" approved by the General Court on April 12, 1882, became operative in Worcester on its acceptance by the voters of this city on Nov. 4, 1884: this act is still the chief legal ground for the existence of the Park Commission, defining their powers, duties, etc; and in substance its provisions are as follows:

(1) The Park Commission shall consist of a Board of five "competent members", appointed each for a term of five years, the term of only one member expiring during any single year.

Each Commissioner is appointed by the Mayor, "with the approval of the City Council": the appointment being made before the first Monday in May of each year, when the newly-appointed member assumes his office.

No member of the "City Council, no clerk or treasurer" is eligible for appointment.

Any member may be removed by a "concurrent vote of two-thirds of the whole of each branch of the City Council."

(2) Vacancies are filled for the residue of the unexpired term in the same manner as the regular appointments. Commissioners shall serve without compensation.

(3) The chief powers of the Park Commissioners are "to locate public parks within the limits of the city", and "for that purpose to take in fee by purchase, gift, devise, or otherwise" all such lands as "they may deem desirable; to lay out and improve such parks; to make rules for their use and government; to affix



Chief  
Powers

penalties for breaches of these rules, such penalties not to exceed \$20 for one offense and to be imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction; to appoint all necessary officers, clerks, etc., including "a police force to act in such parks"; to define the duties and fix the compensation of all such officers.

Two-thirds  
Vote  
of City  
Council  
required  
for new  
parks.

No land can be taken or any other thing involving an expenditure of money be done, until an appropriation sufficient for the purpose has been granted "by a vote of two-thirds of each branch of the City Council."

(4) Accurate description of new lands must be filed within 60 days after its acquirement and recorded in the Registry of Deeds.

(5) This Board shall estimate and determine all damages sustained by taking of land or through its other official acts; the usual right of appeal to the Courts being reserved to the damaged parties.

(6) Fee of all park lands is vested in the city, which may receive and hold in trust any gift, grant, bequest, etc., made for park purposes.

Assessments  
for  
Betterments

(7) This Board also has the power to assess for betterments upon real estate that abuts upon park land or park ways.

(8) City may "raise, appropriate and expend" proper sums of money for the purchase and improvement of parks.

(9) City may issue "from time to time" Public Park Loans, which shall be funded.

(10) All lands taken or held under this act "shall be



forever kept open and maintained as a public parks"; no building covering more than 600 sq. feet can stand in such parks; and no street or railway shall be laid over such parks, without approval of the Park Commissioners.

(11) Military evolutions, exercises, etc. shall not be held in these parks, without consent of the Park Commissioners.

(12) An annual report of receipts, expenditures, doings, etc. must be submitted to the City Council.

By an act of the General Court, approved April 14, 1885, entitled "An Act relating to the Public Parks and Shade Trees in the City of Worcester", the Park Commission was granted all the powers and duties of the old "Commission of Shade Trees and Public Grounds," which then ceased to exist.

This act also gave the Board the power to appoint a Secretary or Chairman from their own number, constituted a "major portion" of the Board a quorum for the transaction of business and provided that the Annual Report shall be submitted in March to the City Council.

On March 19, 1888, the General Court approved an "Act author-

"Park  
Loans"  
authorized  
1888

izing the City of Worcester to borrow money for the purposes of Public Parks", under which the City Council may "from time to time" authorize loans, not to exceed \$250,000. "for purchasing or taking, constructing and improving" public Parks.

Total Paid Park Loans



On April 19, 1893, the General Court approved "An Act to authorize Cities and Towns to establish and maintain Public Playgrounds". The important feature, distinguishing this Act from the "Park Act" of 1882 is that by its evident provision, only a majority vote of the City Council is required for the purchase or annual rental of land for playgrounds, while a park appropriation requires a two-thirds vote.

It also provides that the jurisdiction over these playgrounds shall be vested in the Park Commission.

The main features of the Massachusetts Playground Act of 1908, accepted by the Worcester voters on Dec. 8, 1908, are that the city shall after July 1, 1910, provide and maintain at least one public playground, conveniently located and of suitable size and equipment, for the recreation and physical education of the minors of this city, for every 20,000 of its population. Under its provision, cities may also appoint and determine the compensation of a qualified supervisor of each playground, "who shall direct the sports and exercises thereon".

#### Funded Park Loan (including "Playgrounds")

Amount	Issued	Interest	Due	Duration (years)
\$200,000	1888	4%	1938	50
50,000	1889	4%	1938	50
8,500	1903	3 1/2%	1932	30
56,300	1905	3 1/2%	1915	10
( 36,000	1909	3 1/2%	1919	10
( 50,000	1909	3 1/2%	1919	10
<hr/>				
\$400,800.	Total Funded Park Loan			







