# CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE DALLAS, TEXAS PARK SYSTEM, 1876-1976

by

HARRY JEBSEN, JR., PH.D.

ROBERT M. NEWTON, M.A.

PATRICIA R. HOGAN, M.S.

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
LUBBOCK, TEXAS

DEPARTMENT OF PARK ADMINISTRATION,
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
AND HORTICULTURE

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1976

BY DIRECTION OF THE
DALLAS PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

NOVEMBER 2, 1972

THIS HISTORY DEDICATED TO

L. B. and FLORENCE HOUSTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ..... ix

LIST OF MAPS ..... xi

STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS ..... xiii

PREFACE ..... xv

PREFACE TO THE FIRST PRINTING ..... xix

VOLUME I

1876-1930

by Robert M. Newton, M.A.

Chapter

1. DALLAS' CITY PARK: THE FIRST TEN YEARS ..... 3
2. THE FIRST SEASON OF EXPANSION ..... 33
3. THE RAVAGES OF RETRENCHMENT ..... 55
4. THE "OTHER" PARKS ..... 91
5. THE TIME WAS FAVORABLE ..... 97
6. A PARK FOR FUN AND PROFIT ..... 133
7. A BETTER IDEA ..... 173
8. THE CITY REFORMS--THE PARKS EXPAND ..... 207
9. GEORGE KESSLER AND THE FIRST PLAN ..... 255
10. LIKE A SHOOTING STAR ..... 291
11. DEPRESSION AND WAR ..... 333
12. THE TWENTIES: PARADISE GAINED, PARADISE LOST ..... 349
13. OF POLITICS AND PERSONNEL ..... 387

VOLUME II

1930-1976

by Patricia R. Hogan, M.S.


Chapter

1. THE POLITICAL SETTING 1931-1945 ..... 419

2. THE FORCE OF A DEPRESSION 1931-1935 ..... 433

3. A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 1935-1937 ..... 457

4. A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT 1937-1939 ..... 483

5. A TIME FOR THOUGHT 1939-1945 ..... 509

6. NEW DIRECTIONS FOR AFFLUENT DALLAS 1945 TO PRESENT ... 545

7. A DREAM COME TRUE--SAMUELL-GRAND PARK ..... 559

8. THE FIRST BUILDING BLOCK--ACQUISITION OF LAND ..... 573

   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks ..... 579
   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks Through Bond Programs ..... 584
   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks Through Condemnation ..... 603
   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks Through Land Trading ..... 606
   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks by Dedication ..... 608
   Providing Neighborhood Parks Through Leases ..... 610
   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks by Annexation ..... 612
   Acquisition of Neighborhood Parks by Donation ..... 613
   Acquisition of Special Use Park Lands ..... 615
   Acquisition of Golf Courses ..... 616
   Acquisition of Greenbelts ..... 617
   Acquisition of Lakes ..... 620

9. MORE THAN OPEN SPACE--DEVELOPMENT OF FACILITIES ..... 629

10. SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE: RECREATION PROGRAMS ..... 671

11. THE SIGN OF AFFLUENCE--A PLACE FOR AESTHETICS ..... 703

12. AN URBAN AGGLOMERATE EFFORT--FAIR PARK ..... 723

13. THE END OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS: ANOTHER BEGINNING ..... 745

VOLUME III

by Harry Jebsen, Jr., Ph.D.


Section

1. THE PEOPLE'S ESTATE: ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PARK SERVICE IN DALLAS, TEXAS ..... 763

2. LEADERSHIP IN DALLAS PARKS ..... 799

The Dallas Park and Recreation Board: An Historical Observation ..... 801

Ten Reasons for Success: Biographical Sketches of People Who Shaped the Course of Development ..... 809
- E. Beulah Cauley ..... 813
- Emil Fretz ..... 815
- Louis B. Houston ..... 819
- Ray Hubbard ..... 823
- Foster Jacoby ..... 827
- J. Erik Jonsson ..... 831
- Edwin Kiest ..... 837
- Dr. W. W. Samuell ..... 841
- Julius Schepps ..... 845
- R. L. Thornton, Sr. ..... 849

The Park and Recreation Board: A Statistical View ... 853
- The Park Board ..... 853
- Statistics of Board Membership, 1905 to 1973 .... 853
- Membership of the Park and Recreation Board 1905 to 1974 by Occupation ..... 854
- Park Board Members ..... 857
- Park Board Presidents ..... 864

3. PRO BONO PUBLICO: PRIDE AND PROFIT ..... 867

4. NO BOSS FOR DALLAS ..... 887

APPENDIX ..... 919
- Charter, City of Dallas, Texas ..... 921

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 925

INDEX ..... 941

LIST OF TABLES

VOLUME I

TABLE 1. Park Expenditures--Monthly Totals ..... 71

VOLUME II

TABLE 1. Dallas Parks and Recreational Areas--1940 Compared to Eight Other Cities ..... 521

TABLE 2. Parks Acquired and Parks Expanded Between 1931 and 1944 ..... 523

TABLE 3. Park Lands Purchased 1945-1974 (Bonds, Federal Funding, Condemnation) ..... 580

TABLE 4. Land Acquired Through Bond Programs ..... 585

TABLE 5. Distribution of Land Acquisition Money ..... 595

TABLE 6. Neighborhood Parks 1973 Federal Grant Programs--Acquisition and Development ..... 601

TABLE 7. Dallas Parks Dedicated ..... 609

TABLE 8. Land Acquired By Other City Departments and Organizations Now Used for Parks ..... 611

TABLE 9. Neighborhood Parks Acquired as Gifts 1945-1974 ..... 614

TABLE 10. Dallas Park and Recreation Department Activities ..... 693

TABLE 11. Federal Aid to Recreation Programs ..... 696

VOLUME III

TABLE 1. Population of Dallas, Texas 1880 Through 1970 ..... 768

TABLE 2. Park Property at Selected Dates ..... 778

TABLE 3. Bond Programs Which Included Park Development ..... 779

LIST OF MAPS

VOLUME I

MAP 1. City Park in Relation to Downtown Dallas in 1882 ..... 11

MAP 2. Dallas Park System in 1911 ..... 269

MAP 3. Proposed Park and Boulevard System ..... 271

VOLUME II

MAP 1. Samuell Park ..... 563

MAP 2. A Proposed System of Parks and Parkways 1944 ..... 577

MAP 3. Swimming Facilities ..... 639

MAP 4. Recreation Buildings ..... 647

MAP 5. Location of Supervised Playgrounds 1944 ..... 679

MAP 6. Fair Park Related to Downtown Dallas ..... 725

MAP 7. General Development Plan--Fair Park ..... 735

## STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

Project Director:

Elo J. Urbanovsky, Horn Professor and Chairman, Department of Park Administration, Landscape Architecture and Horticulture, Texas Tech University.

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Harry Jebsen, Jr., Assistant Professor, Department of History, Texas Tech University.

Research Associates:

Mr. Robert M. Newton, B.A. History, University of Texas at Arlington, M.A. History, Texas Tech University.

Ms. Patricia R. Hogan, B.B.A. Business Administration, Texas Tech University, M.S. Park Administration, Texas Tech University.

Consultants:

Dr. David M. Vigness, Chairman, Department of History, Texas Tech University.

Dr. James W. Kitchen, Professor, Department of Park Administration, Landscape Architecture and Horticulture, Texas Tech University.

Dr. James V. Reese, Associate Professor, Department of History, Texas Tech University.

Mr. L. B. Houston, Retired Director of Parks, Dallas Park and Recreation Department, Dallas, Texas.

Mrs. Jean Craft, Assistant Director of Parks, Dallas Park and Recreation Department, Dallas, Texas.

Mr. Grover Keeton, Director of Parks, Dallas Park and Recreation Department, Dallas, Texas.

Dr. William B. Dean, President, Dallas Park and Recreation Board, Dallas, Texas.

Funding and Facilities:

Funding by contract by the Dallas Park and Recreation Board, Dallas, Texas.

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

# PREFACE

When we received the grant to begin this project, I discussed its implications with a senior colleague. He asked which federal agency had funded the study. When I told him that the Park and Recreation Board of the City of Dallas had implemented and funded the project, he expressed delight that a municipal agency had recognized the value of such a study. Several other historians have expressed similar excitement that a local agency had realized the importance of a historical study.

Histories of urban park and recreation development tend to concentrate on exceptional people--such as Frederick Law Olmsted--or on issues--such as social services. Many books center on the philosophy of parks, methods of landscape technique, as well as means of planning park development. But when we undertook this study, no long range history of a park and recreation department within a metropolitan region existed.

Dallas, with over 800,000 people, now ranks as the nation's eighth largest city. Yet in 1876 when the city purchased its first park, it had a population of less than 10,000. Rapid growth and the city's relative youth allowed Dallas to develop a park system along with urban growth rather than after the city already had grown, matured, festered, and started to decay. Dallas' parks and its recreation system did not always appear as remedial measures intended to add some aestheticism to the declining beauty of the city. With park planning in force since 1911 when the city reached a population of 90,000, subsequent park

development has been managed with care and pride. And as a result, as each new subdivision, tract, or housing addition came into the city, parks and recreation facilities soon appeared. This was a result of the wisdom of many dedicated citizens who have given their time toward making Dallas a more functional and attractive city.

Centennials are often false celebrations which recognize only a century of existence. This is not true of this centennial study. In several ways, the era which marks the end of this study is a sharp transition and thus is a good breaking point for a historical study. Between 1972 and 1976, new leadership has emerged within Dallas as well as within the park department. City politics are no longer dominated by the Citizen's Charter Association as they have been throughout recent decades. Minorities, a more vocal and better educated populace, and a demand for a broader form of democracy have altered the shape of civic affairs in Dallas.

The retirement of Louis B. Houston from the directorship of the park department stands as the end of an era which dates back to the second world war. His retirement, as well as the retirement of several men who had served with him since he took over, signifies the passing of the torch over to a new generation of men led by Grover Keeton, the current Director of Parks. These individuals, thoroughly schooled within the department, bring collective experience and wisdom to face a new generation of problems.

The new leadership has to face a new set of circumstances. Dallas has been marked throughout the twentieth century by a solid prosperity.

Because of the discovery of oil in east Texas in the early 1930s, even the "Great Depression" did not seriously injure the dynamic economy of Dallas. And the city's economy has continued to expand into the 1970s. Economic growth brought constant new tax monies which provided ample support for park and recreation facilities. One only has to consider the vast aesthetic program of the 1960s when the planting of azaleas and other flowering seasonals reached boom proportions to see how prosperity has affected Dallas. Now, that has come to an abrupt end. Dallas is not bankrupt, but a conservative financial policy has recognized a decrease in tax receipts, and thus retrenchment of all expenditures not considered absolutely necessary has been dictated within city hall.

The successes and failures of the Dallas park system rest in the hands of the many citizens who have served on the Park and Recreation Board. This instrument of policy-making has brought to Dallas a soundly based, broadly construed park and recreation department. The many citizens who participated and gave much of their time and resources to develop parks are the real heroes of this study. Their stewardship of the people's estates has been good and faithful. The staff of this project who had to work with three recent park boards found each and every board member to be interested, cooperative, and sincerely committed to the Dallas Park and Recreation Department.

On behalf of the staff who researched, analyzed, and wrote this study, I report that we have learned much about the problems connected with the management of urban agencies. We hope that readers from

Dallas, throughout Texas, and within the United States benefit from our study. We certainly welcome their comments and criticisms.

Dr. Harry Jebsen, Jr.
Associate Professor of History
Director, Urban Studies
Texas Tech University

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST PRINTING

A park is a place where the individual can express himself in most socially acceptable manners. Whether finely-tuned track star or overweight jogger, accomplished golfer or neophyte hacker, champion swimmer or classy splasher, the individual's athletic prowess can be practiced. Picnickers, sitters, and sleepers can appreciate the breezes, swaying trees, and relative quiet. Whether seeking solitude or a throng, the typology in twentieth century urban parks allow one the Thoreaun pleasures of singular thought or to be alone as part of an anonymous crowd.

Parks became increasingly important urban functions as the size of a metropolitan region increased. In areas with low population density, people have participated in most of the above mentioned activities without the need of publicly owned land specifically held out of the private economic sector and set aside for the recreational use of all citizens. But as population density increased, citizens in metropolitan regions clamored for green, open spaces. Man's desire to see and be near grass, trees, and land amidst the concrete and metal of an industrialized society led cities to set aside, develop, and maintain parks. In the twentieth century, America, with its stress on systems and a bureaucratically organized lifestyle, grafted organized recreation to the maintenance of open space. Thus, parks and recreation go together naturally, although many cities operate them through separate agencies.

As the twentieth century American became more prosperous and

developed a higher standard of living, he acquired more "free time." He has highly cherished this time, and some have sought to maximize their own potential by using it constructively. To some this has meant continuing education, to others "moonlighting," while many have sought fulfillment in an activity, either indoor or outdoor, which provides both physical and emotional benefits. These people have depended increasingly on the public sector to provide space as well as the large, expensive physical equipment for such activities. While parks and recreation programs were seen at one time as a means of bringing middle class virtues to those less fortunate who live in New York's Five Points, Chicago's South Side, and Dallas' Cotton Mills District, today nearly all sectors of the class structure expect parks, recreation, and open space.

If only to obtain a sense of aesthetic satisfaction while cruising down Turtle Creek Boulevard, affluent Dallasites have come to expect at least beauty visible from the streets. Middle class Dallasites similarly appreciate the beauty but also participate frequently in the functional activities provided by the park department. Low income families need and use the park system with its contemporary child care, recreation, and social agencies which are now located in community centers of west, east, and south Dallas. Parks mean different things to different citizens, but all citizens, whether they use the facilities or not, expect neat, functional, and inexpensive parks. Meeting that requirement has not always been easy.

Dallas' initial public park, City Park, came into public hands in 1876 as a result of the private interests of a real estate developer and

a railroad executive. From one park in a city of about six thousand to the nineteen thousand plus acres in the current metropolis, park development has been filled with political hassles and has provided a very good barometer of Dallas' economic well-being. When the nation in general and Dallas in particular had a healthy economy, better parks were developed and improvements accomplished, but when recession and hard times struck, public expenditures for parks declined rapidly.

Dallas, however, has been fortunate to have had strong leadership in its parks. Thus, even in times when the economy became unhealthy, harm was not done to these public lands. In fact, Dallas' park system, in the long run, benefited from the Great Depression of the 1930s. That leadership has been honest, with one exception, and has operated on the concept since the beginning of a formal park board in 1905 that "parks are for the people." As the people's estate, the usage of them would be determined largely by public demand.

The writing of this study had many contributors beyond those named on the title page. Their aid has refined, smoothed out, and vastly improved the study at many stages along the way. Without their assistance, the authors would have been led down many thorny, fruitless paths in the study of Dallas parks. Mr. L. B. Houston, former Director of Parks and Recreation of the City of Dallas, provided valuable criticism and insight. Through his intimate knowledge of park development and Dallas civic affairs, he corrected fallacies of fact and stimulated accurate interpretation of events. Though the authors have not always agreed with his critique, his comments have been invaluable.

At a critical stage, Mr. Charles Doell, director emeritus of the Minneapolis Park Department and author of A Short History of Park and Recreation in the United States, read the manuscript and suggested ways of relating the study to larger events in the history of parks across the nation. Dr. James W. Kitchen of the Department of Park Administration, Landscape Architecture, and Horticulture at Texas Tech University and Dr. James V. Reese, Associate Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Professor of History at Texas Tech University, read portions of the manuscript and suggested improvements.

Throughout the research stage few scholars have had better cooperation than that provided by Mrs. Jean Craft, Assistant Director of the Park and Recreation Department in Dallas. Mrs. Craft, through her thorough knowledge of park department files, her own inimitable style, and her own desire to learn more about the park system, found documents, obtained interviews, and discovered sources which otherwise would have remained hidden. Despite her own enormous job, she managed to find time to assist us in the pursuit of accurate knowledge.

Dr. William B. Dean, President of the Dallas Park and Recreation Board, and Mr. Grover Keeton, Director of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department, gracefully cooperated and asked their staff to cooperate. Even when the research team was obviously "in the way" of the office crew, they were always helpful and kindly answered our many queries about obscure events which always occurred twenty years before their arrival on the scene.

Two additional people from Dallas provided extensive assistance. Mr. Arthur K. Hale, Secretary of the State Fair of Texas, graciously

provided us access to the files at his office, cheerfully provided a most valuable interview, and thoughtfully critiqued material on the State Fair and Fair Park. Miss E. Beulah Cauley, retired Secretary of the Park Board, compiled a "little book" for her own use. When she retired, her volume remained in the park office and became a key document and touchstone for this project.

Professor Elo J. Urbanovsky, Horn Professor and retiring Chairman of the Department of Park Administration, Landscape Architecture, and Horticulture, Texas Tech University, inspired the study and laid the foundation during the nascent stages of the project. The research team is indeed indebted to Professor Urbanovsky. Dr. David Vigness, Chairman of the Department of History, gracefully accepted Professor Jebsen's frequent voyages to Dallas and frequently discussed the project's implications with him.

Keeping tabs on three fast moving and often times disorganized researchers, a professor and two graduate students, was the responsibility of Mrs. Jeannette Shaver. Her work as our secretary, coordinator, and typist is gratefully acknowledged and deeply appreciated. Mr. Sylvan Dunn and Mr. David Murrah of the Southwest Collection of Texas Tech University provided necessary recording tapes and equipment and frequently suggested useful documents.

Last, but certainly not least, credit must go to the parks of Dallas themselves. Many lunch stops and "breaks" were spent in the various parks. These quickly turned into talk sessions which developed many of the basic concepts for the research and writing of these volumes. If one construes the function of parks and recreation as broadly as we

feel they must, then the parks of Dallas have done their jobs well.

The authors wish to take this opportunity to extend our grateful appreciation to the park boards, both immediate, past and present, of Dallas, Texas, for their financial aid and supportive interest in pursuing a history of the park system of Dallas. Their generous financial support provided the impetus for this study.

Because of all of this assistance, mistakes of fact and interpretation should not occur. But if they do, we assume responsibility for them.

Lubbock, Texas
October 1974

Professor Harry Jebsen, Jr.
Mr. Robert Newton
Ms. Patricia Hogan

# CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE DALLAS, TEXAS PARK SYSTEM, 1876-1976

VOLUME I

1876-1930

by

ROBERT M. NEWTON, M.A.

# CHAPTER 1

## DALLAS' CITY PARK: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

Dallas established its first city park as a pleasant resort for picnics, family outings, and group entertainments. No one expected the park to influence the explosion of growth experienced by the city after the railroads arrived. But City Park did even more. It became a catalyst for growth and its full effect on the south side of Dallas in the late nineteenth century has seldom been recognized. Although Dallas and its park system have both grown vastly since 1900, the importance and the economic impact of the first city park should not be underestimated.

Several factors prepared the way for the acquisition of that first city park. The concept of parks provided and maintained at public expense was relatively new to the southwest and opposition could have been expected. But rapid population growth, the need for expanded water facilities, private real estate interest, and local business concerns all contributed to a favorable atmosphere for park acquisition. Perhaps the most important factor, and the most difficult to define, was the attitude of the Dallas business community. Before the railroads arrived in 1872, Dallas businessmen had been far away from any natural center of trade, such as a confluence of mighty rivers or a seaport. They had been forced to offer something special to attract trade to their particular location. Thus, aggressiveness in trade, progressiveness in technique, and willingness to accept new ideas became common business traits among Dallas merchants. This pattern of behavior may have been

responsible for the lack of opposition in 1876 when the opportunity arose to create a city park and maintain it with public funds.

The establishment of the park seems to have occurred almost without promotion, as well as without opposition. There had been no local newspaper campaign for parks, nor had local citizens petitioned the city council for parks. The only evidence of any pressure group advocating a park is found in a letter, written thirteen years later, which indicates that the Commerce and Ervay Street Railroad Company wanted at its terminus an attractive park which would encourage the public to use the C. & E. line. Under these circumstances, opposition to the park could have been expected in the council since the privately owned railroad company would have been the primary beneficiary of the additional burden on the city treasury. Yet, the park came into existence without apparent controversy. Since Dallas civic affairs were completely dominated by local businessmen, it must be assumed that they approved, or at least did not oppose, the concept of public parks and the benefit they might bestow on private concerns.[1]

The city council acquired the land for the first park in three separate purchases over a nine year period. The acreage involved in those purchases was a natural location for a public park since at the time of purchase two public facilities already occupied the area. One was the city water supply and the other was the Pest House, a city subsidized cottage where people with contagious diseases stayed until they recovered. On November 7, 1876, J. J. Eakins offered to sell to the city the ten acres around the Pest House for six hundred dollars, retaining his ownership of the Pest House, valued at one hundred dollars, while

selling the ground on which it stood. Dr. C. E. Keller, an officer and stockholder in a Dallas streetcar line, offered to pay two hundred dollars of the price, making the city's cost to obtain a park only four hundred dollars. However, the special Committee on Park appointed to study the proposal discovered that the council simply could not come up with four hundred dollars in cash to buy the land, so the Committee negotiated a deal with Eakins whereby the city would exempt from taxes all property owned by Eakins within the city for a period of four years. Eakins' taxes amounted to about one hundred dollars per year. Thus the city gained its first park.[2]

A baffling version of this Eakins transaction by an early Dallas historian, Philip Lindsley, declared that Eakins "donated" the park with the provision that the city would make improvements proper for park usage within ten years or the land would revert to Eakins' ownership. Lindsley said that improvements were made in 1882 because the city was in danger of losing the land since they had not as yet improved it. There may have been some sort of understanding to that effect in the original offer, but the council nullified it by adopting the special Committee on Park's report which concluded that "improvements to be made on said land shall be left discretionary with the city."[3] Lindsley's confusion on the matter may have been caused by the deed since the instrument included a clause which required the city to use the land for park purposes for at least ten years and to pay a penalty of one thousand dollars to Eakins if at the end of the ten years the city should decide to use the land for some other purpose. But the document contained no forfeiture clause. Whatever the reason, Lindsley was clearly mistaken

about the requirements of the deed. He was equally mistaken about the reason for the improvements made in 1882. Petitions pressing for the beautification of the park, not fear of losing the property due to a deed restriction, apparently prompted the councilmen to act.[4]

Several things prompted Eakins' offer to the city. First, as is often the case, areas that later become parks are often used for that purpose by local residents for many years before the park designation is formally attached. Such was the case with the Eakins' property. Family outings and picnics in the Browder Springs area had been a local tradition for years. Since Eakins' land adjoined the Browder Springs property, perhaps his land often served a similar purpose. He could merely let the city assume the legal responsibility for an already established park.[5]

Second, Eakins may have been interested in disposing of the property. Two creeks which converged on the property occasionally flooded the park area following heavy rains, which was a problem not brought under control until the 1940s. If similiar flooding occurred prior to 1876, and it probably did, the property would have been submarginal in private ownership because of the limited usage to which it could have been put. Also, the proximity of the land to the machinery necessary to the water supply system at Browder Springs may have made the area undesirable for real estate development.

Third, considerable evidence indicates that Eakins was involved in a bit of shrewd land speculation. Eakins, a real estate developer, owned the land immediately to the east of the park and another sizable area a few blocks to the southwest. These two sections of land actually

lay outside the city limits in 1876, but the great influx of population which followed the advent of the railroad in 1872 caused the city to explode in every direction. No doubt Eakins realized that if he could channel some of that growth in the direction of his property, he would benefit greatly. Therefore, he attempted to make the southern edge of town, and thus his land, more attractive by persuading the city to create and improve a park in the area. The park would add to the beauty of the area at a time when Dallas was actually a rather ugly town. But more importantly, the Commerce and Ervay Street Railway Company, which was already extending its lines in the direction of the park, might be influenced to serve the area of Eakins' real estate. Service by such public transportation would enhance the value of his property even more.[6]

Indeed, a letter written in 1889 by Dr. C. E. Keller, who had contributed two hundred dollars to the purchase of the park, suggests that Eakins' primary motivation was profit seeking and not "civic mindedness." After Eakins died in 1887, there was a small movement to honor him for his "donation" to the city by changing the name of City Park to Eakins Park. Keller, who disapproved of the proposal, wrote to the city council in an attempt to correct the erroneous impression that Eakins had donated anything. The doctor wrote:

> Gentlemen: I notice in your City papers, a proposition to change the name of your "City Park" to "Eakin Park" claiming that the land was donated by Maj. Jno. J. Eakins to the city. To correct said error, I wish to state to your hon. body, that Maj. Eakins did not contribute one cent, but received every dollar he asked for said property. At the time I was building the Commerce and Ervay St. Railway and anxious to have a Park at its terminus, he proposed to sell me 10 acres for $800.00, but as I thought the City should own and control the property, requested him to make the offer to the City. He made the proposition to the City Council to sell the City 10 acres (the Park Grounds), for eight hundred dollars,

> deducting there from his City taxes of four hundred dollars. The City did not accept, but appointed Maj. Jett [chairman] of Com. on Finance, to offer Maj. Eakin the amount of his taxes $400.00 for the property, which he refused. Maj. Jett not being authorized to do more. I offered Maj. Eakin the $400.00 taxes and $200.00 in cash, as a donation to the City, which offer he accepted, and Maj. Jett reported to the Council accordingly. Then [I] placed in the hands of Mr. Jake Williams of your City $200.00 with the understanding that when Maj. Eakin and wife made a good deed of the property to the City, and approved by the City Council, that he turn over said money to Maj. Eakin, which he did. Further, the City furnished the lumber, and I had cut from the grounds, enough Cedar for post, and paid for all work of fencing, to Mr. Wm. Potter of your City, also had all the underbrush cleaned out on said grounds.
>
> Gentlemen, these are facts, which if necessary, Messers Jett, Williams and Potter will make oath to. My only object of this communication is to correct a false impression.[7]

Considering the evidence in this letter, it must be deduced that the railway company, represented by Dr. Keller, supplied the motivating force which gave Dallas its first park. J. J. Eakins only took advantage of an opportunity to sell some real estate. Apparently Eakins cared little who bought the land as long as he received his price.[8]

This aspect of the acquisition of City Park has been overlooked in all previous city historical sketches of the park. However, a myth concerning Dr. Keller's civic mindedness should not be developed to replace the myth which grew up around Eakins' role in the transaction. There were no heroes or even true philanthropists for the park system until the 1920s. Both men had special economic interests to represent, Eakins his real estate and Keller his railroad. The primary realignment of thought on this matter should be to recognize that the establishment of the park reveals only one more of the vast number of things in the city that were directly influenced by railroads. Not only did the arrival of the major lines affect the population and activity of the entire area, but also the internal street railway lines had their effect.

Nor was that effect always passive, merely following the patterns of urban growth established by real estate developers or commerce. Keller's letter suggests that he, or someone else on the railroad board of directors, initiated the search for a park property at the end of the line. The park ultimately established seems to have influenced rather strongly the expansion of the city by attracting the thrust of Dallas growth for more than a decade.

Among others, John Eakins profited handsomely from his transaction with the city, which leads to the assumption that he was a shrewd real estate speculator. Within two years, his property east of City Park became the Eakins Addition, one of Dallas' better upper-middle-class residential areas. Even before Eakins fully developed his first addition, the southern thrust of the city's growth reached his property southwest of the park and he began selling lots from his Santa Fe Addition. The profits provided a tangible reward for Eakins' foresight.

The city's growth, in which Eakins participated, placed a tremendous strain on the local water supply which resulted in the acquisition of the second of the three parcels of land that constituted the City Park. In 1881 the city purchased the privately owned Water Supply Company and all of its property including eight and one tenth acres of land around it. Although this water supply proved inadequate to meet the demand in less than six years, the land involved in the purchase served a more lasting purpose as an extension for the adjacent City Park. This extension nearly doubled the size of the park, but it also created a very odd shaped piece of property which was made even more irregular by the purchase of another adjacent lot.[9]

MAP I-1--CITY PARK IN RELATION TO
DOWNTOWN DALLAS IN 1882




SOURCE: Jones and Murphy, Map of Dallas and East Dallas, Texas, 1882.

This adjoining property, which constituted the third and final parcel of land for the park, was a three quarter acre lot purchased in 1885 from A. Brownlee for seventeen hundred dollars. The city paid for the land by means of a note payable twelve months after execution at eight percent interest. The transaction, begun in November of 1884, was delayed when Colonel John Stemmons told the council that the city had already bought the parcel of land involved. An investigation by the mayor and city attorney which lasted until March of 1885 found that Brownlee did indeed have a good title to the land. The note finally given to Brownlee bore ten percent interest instead of the eight percent mentioned in November 1884. Brownlee may have demanded the two percent hike because of the delay, for surely the city council would not have given him the additional two percent without a strong reason considering that the city treasury was experiencing serious financial difficulties.[10]

The difference in the cost of this last piece of land as compared to the rest of the park is astounding. The first ten acres had cost only six hundred dollars. The sixty-five thousand dollars paid for the city water works was not broken down into specified amounts for real estate, equipment, buildings, and such. But by June of 1882, the Ways and Means Committee of the city council listed the eighteen and one tenth acres in the City Park as valued at five thousand dollars.[11]

The final three quarters of an acre cost three times as much as the entire first ten acres. Even considering that the Eakins' property was submarginal real estate as compared to the Brownlee lot which was higher land with an eighty-six foot frontage on Pocahontas Street, it seems clear that land values in the area of City Park rose dramatically

in the nine years between 1876 and 1885. For the value of land in a contiguous area of only 18.85 acres to rise from a purchase price of $60 an acre in 1876, to an evaluation of $276 an acre in 1882, and then soar to a market value of $2266 an acre in 1885 is reflective of the boom that the south side of Dallas experienced.

The rising land values and increased activity in the area may have had some effect on the city council's decision to begin improving the park in 1882. Nothing had been done to the Eakins' property in the six years it had been owned by the city. But with the purchase of the Browder Springs water supply in 1881, the city had to assume responsibility for some maintenance in the area of the water works. In 1882 the aldermen decided that a brick wall around the springs needed to be extended and improved. Then on June 7, 1882, a group of fifty citizens requested that the council improve and beautify the park. At the same meeting and possibly in conjunction with the group, Hermann Kopp, a local contractor, presented a proposed plan and estimated costs for a number of park improvements. Although he was not awarded the contract, the special committee appointed to study the matter apparently incorporated most of his proposals in its report the next day. Bids were accepted and the firm of Sheffield and Jones was awarded the contract on June 14, 1882. The firm bid $1355 for the road work, bridging, and flower beds specified by the committee and included an additional $85 for an optional park fountain.[12]

The park improvements were further encouraged by a request from the Commerce and Ervay Railroad Company to extend their services to the vicinity of the park. The company also stated that if more improvements

were made on the park in 1883, or if there was traffic sufficient to warrant it, the railroad company would extend its line even inside the park ground if the city would permit them to do so. Apparently the street railroad company, which had been influential in getting the park established, had decided that the moment had arrived when service to the park could be profitable. The city had developed the park into a pleasing public attraction which might increase the numbers of their customers if they could service the park area, which had been the original strategy planned by the board of directors.[13]

Park improvements, once begun, continued. Small projects of assorted natures were awarded to various contractors through the following years. The work even extended into the streets around the park in 1885 when the Committee on Park was authorized to use the city street gang and wagons to put the road in front of City Park in a better condition.[14]

In December of 1884, as the city council prepared a budget for 1885, the Committee on Park submitted a request for an increase in the annual allotment for park improvements from the one thousand dollars allowed in 1884 to eighteen hundred dollars for the next year. The committee consisting of Ed. C. Smith (a future candidate for mayor), J. Rauch, and John Henry Brown (a Dallas historian and future mayor) reported that it deemed the additional amount necessary for two reasons. First, there was an increased public demand for added park improvements, and second, earthwork in progress on a new reservoir at Browder Springs was going to leave the park in such a condition that the committee felt something would have to be done. Apparently their desired improvements went beyond the means of their 1884 budget. Stating that they could not

"work to any advantage with a less amount," the Committee asked for a 180 percent increase in their portion of the new budget.[15] Obviously not convinced, the rest of the council defeated a motion to grant the budget hike and postponed indefinitely any further action on the matter.

This small budgetary matter is significant in the history of the park system because it was the first time a majority of the city council rejected any motion concerning park improvements. The council minutes, in their terse and formal language, gave no specific reasons to explain such action. However, several pressures affected the council's actions at that time. The purchase of the last three quarters of an acre remained unsettled in December of 1884. If the city already had good title to the real estate then an increase in the park budget would have been a simple matter of priorities. Did the city want eight hundred dollars worth of additional improvements or not? On the other hand, if A. Brownlee proved to have the proper title to the land, the city would be faced with a bill for seventeen hundred dollars plus ten percent interest, in addition to the eighteen hundred dollars the Committee on Park said it needed to make effective improvements. No doubt an expenditure of $3670 for the park in one year unsettled some aldermen. The city treasury was stumbling down the path of financial mismanagement which eventually caused a change to the more business-like commission form of city government. But in 1884 only the problems presented themselves, not the solutions, and the aldermen may have been wisely cautious in rejecting the committee's request.[16]

Also the spector of the spring municipal elections probably influenced some votes. The mayor and the aldermen had to face the voters in

April of 1885. Increasing the city budget may well have struck the councilmen as an imprudent political move so close to the elections. It is interesting to note that the man elected mayor in April was none other than John Henry Brown, one of the three members of the Committee on Park who had requested the enlarged park budget. However, Brown's stand on park finances probably had little effect on the election. The issue of independent candidacies as opposed to party nominations completely dominated the campaign.[17]

After the election, the new mayor slightly reorganized the council in a way which directly affected the park. When first acquired, a special Committee on Park had handled all matters pertaining to City Park. That committee had gained more or less regular status for park administration in the following years. But in May of 1885 the council transferred all park matters to the Committee on Municipal Affairs. The profit gained from the transfer is not readily apparent but the first actions of the new committee were quite bold. It struck out to solve some of the problems that had been plaguing City Park.[18]

Management was the first problem. The Eakins' property had been left unimproved after it was purchased, but following the designation of the land around the water works as an extension of the City Park in 1881, a Superintendent of Parks had been hired to care for the property. The old Committee on Park had signaled that something was wrong in February of 1885 when it asked that the council formally grant the committee full control of the park grounds except for the pumping station, and that the Superintendent of Parks be subordinated to the committee and be held responsible for several specific duties. The council complied with the

request. However, the reorganization of the council after the elections suggests that the management problems in the park had not been solved. The mayor instructed the new Committee on Municipal Affairs to review the park situation and formulate some operational rules. Though more than a year passed before any rules were submitted for approval, the committeemen made their review. They fired the incumbent Superintendent of Parks, B. H. Bodwell, and replaced him with G. H. Wedell. Since their action required council approval, they submitted a report on July 10, 1885, indicating that the change would be beneficial to the city, calling their action a "reform" of the workings at City Park. An attempt by the former Superintendent's friends on the council to table the report failed and the majority approved the action by a vote of nine to three. The reorganization in the committee may have been made by Mayor John Henry Brown to facilitate the removal of an undesirable city employee. Since the new mayor had previously been an alderman and a member of the Committee on Park, he certainly would have been aware of any such problems. At any rate, seven months later the council expressed pleasure with the manner in which the new park keeper was performing his duties and serving the public and raised his salary from forty dollars to sixty dollars per month.[19]

Wedell's duties can be discerned by examining a report from the Committee on Municipal Affairs during a controversy over the park payroll in 1886. The committee chairman, Sigmond Loeb, reported that under Wedell's supervision thousands of loads of Bermuda grass, gravel, and sand had been hauled in for planting, paving, and grading. Walks, drives, and bridges had been repaired, and three new bridges had been

built. Flowers had been tended, grass had been cut, one hundred and fifty trees had been planted, and a great many other smaller projects had been completed.[20]

The payroll controversy itself, besides providing a detailed accounting of park activities in 1886, had a long range effect on the management of the City Park. Indeed, the restrictive principles of operation that emerged as a result of the controversy were not completely removed until 1905 when the park board was commissioned.[21]

The controversy erupted on July 3, 1886, when a report submitted to the aldermen from the Committee on Municipal Affairs indicated that $369 was owed to the park laborers and several suppliers of materials. Alderman F. R. Rowley routinely moved that the amounts be paid, but Alderman Bookhout reacted so strongly that not even the formality of the city secretary's minutes could hide the councilman's indignation. He insisted that the payroll be referred back to the Committee on Municipal Affairs for a detailed explanation of what work had been done, how much had been paid for each project, and by whose authority the work had been done. He must have found it incredulous that such a large debt had accumulated without prior approval. The council agreed that the payroll should be explained and the committee report a week later gave the details of 1886 park activity described earlier. The committee chairman, Sigmond Loeb, admitted that the committee had "gone over the limit, to some extent," but reasoned that "taking into consideration that we are not building bridges every day," that the expenses should be back within acceptable limits in another month.[22] He closed the report with a plea to approve the payroll and "not further to hinder and delay the payment

of the poor laborers who have faithfully done their work."[23] Indeed, what could the council do but pay the amount? Whether the work was needed or was done with proper authority made little difference to the workers or the suppliers. So the city fathers ordered the accounts paid. But the committee did not miss the significance of the situation.

Only two weeks after the $369 payroll was ordered paid, the Committee on Municipal Affairs finally submitted for approval the long awaited rules for management and control of the park. The committee had been instructed to formulate the rules a year earlier when the responsibilities of the Committee on Park had been transferred to the Committee on Municipal Affairs, but after the park keeper was removed, the rules were forgotten. The sudden appearance of these rules following the payroll controversy seems to indicate that the management of City Park continued to be the focus of attention. The city ordinance book supports this suggestion since the rules adopted for park management were quite strict. Basically the Committee on Municipal Affairs could make improvements in the park, hire and fire employees, and make regulations concerning the use of the park by the public. But everything done by the committee was subject to approval by the entire council. No more than ten dollars could be spent for any purpose without prior consent. Other provisions of the new rules included the usual injunctions against the use of alcohol of any kind in the park and a provision that any violation of park regulations would be a misdemeanor, subject to a maximum fine of one hundred dollars. Permission to use the park for large group gatherings had to be obtained in writing from the mayor. From a financial standpoint, these first rules for park operation were quite

restrictive. The council kept a tight rein on the purse strings and only slightly loosened its direct control over the park regulations and day to day operations.[24]

Another incident about the same time also demonstrates the extent of the controversy over park operations. Chairman Loeb of the Municipal Affairs Committee asked for specific permission to repair a bridge, to complete a drive, and to open a gate on the north side of the park. All three items represented the sort of thing the committee had been doing from April through June without any reference to the council for approval, which had precipitated the payroll controversy. It appears that Loeb attempted to demonstrate by his actions that the committee would work within the council system to gain park improvements. However, Alderman Bookhout, still cautious due to the recent payroll incident, wanted the request referred to the Committee on Municipal Records for cost estimates. Loeb protested the delay, pointing out that he was not seeking new expenditures above the regular monthly allotment of four hundred dollars for the park. Besides, he declared, the costs would not exceed $250. But Bookhout, obviously irritated at the attempt to dispense with proper procedure--as the committee had succeeded in doing for the past three months--insisted that the costs should be estimated by the proper committee, signed by the committee members, recorded by the city secretary, and passed upon by the city council so that responsibility could be pinned down if there were cost overruns. At a meeting later in July, the council finally approved plans for the three items with costs totaling about $250, just as Loeb had suggested they would.[25]

It is unfortunate that the first suggestion of recreation

facilities for the City Park seems to have been a casualty of this controversy over the payroll. On July 24, 1886, the same day that the council finally approved the $250 expenditure for the park, a man named T. S. Jones offered to erect five swings in the park for the sum of one hundred dollars. But Bookhout managed to get the proposition tabled, thus effectively delaying for several years the advent of recreation facilities in the park.[26]

Bookhout continued his campaign for fiscal responsibility throughout the rest of the year. On November 27, 1886, the Committee on Municipal Affairs requested another $250 above the monthly allowance to move a fence and reroute a roadway in the park to give access to Gano Street. Bookhout moved that the cost to open the street be paid out of the monthly appropriation and that no additional money be granted. The council approved the amount anyway, but Bookhout's vigilance reveals that some friction was still present in the council.[27]

It is important to point out that Bookout did not oppose park improvements or wage a war of wills against his fellow councilmen. As chairman of the Committee on Finance and Revenue and as a member of the Committee on Municipal Records, he had ample opportunity to study the fiscal condition of the city. No doubt Bookhout was well aware of the dire necessity to hold expenses within certain limits. Although he appears often in the Dallas Morning News coverage of council meetings as uncooperative and irritable about money matters, he probably did a good job of fulfilling his committee responsibilities by insuring that cost estimates were thoroughly checked before being routinely approved.

While the city council waged its battles over appropriations and

procedures, the city continued to grow and so did the numbers of people who regularly used the park. This activity spurred more business in the area which led, in 1886, to a new proposition to the city council from the Commerce and Ervay Street Railroad Company.

This street railroad, which had extended its lines to serve the park in 1882, offered to exchange a triangular lot which the railroad owned adjacent to the park for a portion of the northwest corner of the park. The railroad's executives wanted a better location for their cars serving the park area. The park property had a thirty-six foot front on Ervay Street where the railroad lines ran which was ideal for a new passenger terminal. The improved public transportation service at the new location would promote more visitors to the park and enhance south-side business and land values even more. More development and growth meant more tax money.

W. C. Connors, who became mayor of Dallas less than a year later, probably was aware of these possibilities when he made the proposition to the city council in his capacity at that time as secretary of the Commerce and Ervay Street Railroad Company. So the exchange benefited everyone although the park itself ultimately lost land in the transaction since the triangular lot it gained from the railroad was later used to reroute Ervay Street.[28]

Although the controversy arose over this transaction concerning the paving of the streets around the new railroad terminal, as an overall result the swap stimulated the park area to further growth and improvement. Where there had been no roads at all in 1876, the new residents were complaining about the paving, gutters, and curbs in 1886.





City Park, 1910's

Where only a Pest House had stood ten years earlier a blooming park with graveled drives and bridges stood by 1886.[29]

The development of the park gave a real boost to the south side of Dallas. Activity at the park caused a street railroad line to improve its service in the area. Streets and bridges serving as access routes to the park were repaired, extended, and improved. The general improvement of the area at a time when new arrivals were swelling Dallas' population daily caused land values to rise sharply. The momentum of growth, once established, in a southerly direction continued for a decade. Thus, City Park, while lying untouched for the first six years of its existence, turned out to be a definite economic asset to the southern portion of the city. The jump from 2063 inhabitants in 1873 to 10,358 in 1880 had a great effect on the land values and services all over Dallas. And City Park played a positive role in channeling some of that growth and prosperity to the southern part of town.[30]

That City Park played any role at all is amazing when the priority level and importance attached to the park by the city fathers are considered. Dallas was not a densely populated town between 1876 and 1886. In the undeveloped condition of City Park in its first six years, little distinguished it from numerous other undeveloped tracts and vacant lots around the town except its public status. The fact that it lay dormant for those six years is a clear expression of the priority the city fathers assigned to the park. It seems probable that the improvements requested by the fifty citizens in 1882 were granted only because of the influence of a special interest group, the Commerce and Ervay Street Railroad, pursuing its own personal gain.

The relationship of the park to the street railroad during those early years probably overshadowed even the park's relationship to the city. Dr. Keller's efforts in assisting the city to secure the original Eakins tract were made in his capacity as an officer of the C. and E. Railway. Without his apparent influence in the negotiations with Eakins, the park might have never been acquired. The 1882 offer by the railroad to extend service to the park vicinity appears to have prompted the city to begin publicly financed improvements beyond mere maintenance necessary for the water supply. The exchange of property in 1886 between the park and railroad property suggests that the relationship continued as strong as ever.

This relationship is a clear example of the influence of special interest groups on civic affairs. Dr. Keller, as an officer of the railroad, attempted to get a park established at the terminus of its line in order to provide money-making excursion transportation to the park. Although excursion parks owned and operated by railroad companies were common and lucrative in that era of American history, if the C. and E. could get the city to furnish a park, the railroad could make money on excursions with little expense or risk to itself. It is naive to think that the railroad accomplished the City Park arrangement without political pressure or influence. The political power of traction companies in the "Gilded Age" is a well documented subject, and in Dallas that influence was further extended by the election of the corporate secretary of the Commerce and Ervay Railway, W. C. Connors, to the mayor's seat in 1887. It may be concluded that City Park was conceived by the street railway, born of political influence, suffered from lack of

attention by the city fathers, and finally became an attractive park through the renewed influence of the street railway.

The constant haggling in the council over expenditures in the park made this continuing influence from the railroads even more important. The restrictive ordinance passed in 1886 could have stifled development of any magnitude for several years had not the railroad been present to counter pressure.

Although City Park was a product of a special interest group, Dallasites learned a lesson from the side effects on the city and the personal fortunes of J. J. Eakins. While parks and open spaces require extensive outlays of money to acquire, maintain, and improve, the cost may well be repaid many times in the increased value of the surrounding land and stimulated business. Not only does the city gain from the taxes collected on the new property, but also the entire population benefits from the additional economic input. The events of the next twenty years demonstrates that numerous Dallas businessmen recognized the influence of City Park on the growth pattern of the city and its effect on the personal fortunes of surrounding property owners.

## NOTES

## DALLAS' CITY PARK: THE FIRST TEN YEARS

[1]Letter from C. E. Keller to the mayor and city council of Dallas, 8 April 1889, and spread upon the minutes. See Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 9, 15 April 1889, pp. 496-97.

[2]Ibid., vol. 2, 7 November 1876, p. 222; 21 November 1876, pp. 226-27; 6 December 1876, p. 235; and Sawnie R. Aldredge, Park and Playground System, Dallas, Texas, 1921-1923 (n.p., n.d.), p. 12.

[3]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 2, 21 November 1876, p. 227.

[4]Philip Lindsley, A History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity (2 vols; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), I, p. 59; Dallas County, Texas, County Deed Records, vol. 36, p. 190. A copy of this deed is included as Illustration #1. Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 3, 7 June 1882, p. 630.

[5]Lindsley, A History of Greater Dallas, I, p. 104.

[6]Dallas County, Texas, County Record Plats, vol. 42, p. 575 (filed 7 October 1878); vol. 61, p. 559 (filed 11 July 1883); vol. 69, p. 436 (filed 27 January 1885); vol. 70, p. 93 (filed 11 March 1885); F. E. Butterfield and C. M. Rundlett, Official Map of Dallas, Texas, 1875; Jones and Murphy, Map of the City of Dallas, Texas, 1882; and Murphy and Bolanz, Official Map of Dallas and East Dallas, Texas, 1887. Copies of all of these maps are on file in the City of Dallas, Texas, Public Works Department and are included as Illustrations #3-#5.

[7]Letter from C. E. Keller to the mayor and city council of Dallas, 8 April 1889, and spread upon the Minutes of the City Council in vol. 9, 15 April 1889, pp. 496-97.

[8]Ibid.; vol. 6, 11 May 1887, p. 524.

[9]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, p. 21; and Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 12.

[10]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 5, 18 November 1884, p. 6; 2 December 1884, p. 20; 16 December 1884, p. 22; 6 January 1885, p. 34; 3 March 1885, p. 80. Only two years later, the city treasury was completely broke and the mayor was instructed to seek a thirty-five thousand dollars loan in St. Louis. See Dallas, Texas, City Council Executive Session Minute Book, 13 August 1887.

[11]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 3, 7 June 1882, p. 629.

[12]Ibid., vol. 4, 14 June 1882, p. 1.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid., 18 June 1882, p. 21; vol. 5, 17 February 1885, p. 68.

[15]Ibid., 15 December 1884, p. 24.

[16]This figure is arrived at through the following addition:

| | |
|---|---|
| $1700 | real estate |
| 170 | interest per annum |
| 1800 | improvements |
| $3670 | Total |

[17]Weekly Herald (Dallas), 19 March 1885, p. 9.

[18]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 5, 11 May 1885, p. 164.

[19]Ibid., 17 February 1885, p. 65; 10 July 1885, p. 223; 2 February 1886, p. 407.

[20]Ibid., 10 July 1886, pp. 629-39.

[21]In 1905 the city established a Board of Park Commissioners to oversee the operations of the park system. The everyday affairs of the parks were too time consuming for the council itself, and the acquisition of the Fair Park at that time necessitated some type of governing body. Thus, the park board which still operates the park system was established. The only vestiges of real control which the city council retained over the board after this change was that the mayor appointed the board members, served on the board himself, and was traditionally elected the chairman of the board. Also, although the park board prepared its own budget, the city council allocated the funds to meet the budget, and thereby maintained some control over total expenditures.

[22]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 5, 10 July 1886, pp. 628-29.

[23]Ibid., p. 629.

[24]Dallas, Texas, Ordinance Book, vol. 4, pp. 184-186.

[25]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 6, 17 July 1886, pp. 3-4; 24 July 1886, p. 15; and Dallas Morning News, 18 July 1886, p. 4.

[26]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 6, 24 July 1886, p. 12.

[27]Ibid., 27 November 1886, p. 181.

[28]Ibid., vol. 5, 5 June 1886, p. 582-83; and Dallas Morning News, 6 April 1887, p. 4.

[29]Dallas Morning News, 18 July 1886, p. 4.

[30]U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Population, 1:343.

## CHAPTER 2

## THE FIRST SEASON OF EXPANSION

The rapid expansion experienced by Dallas in the decade 1876-1886 caused a great many changes in the appearance and life of the city. The explosion of growth begun by the advent of the railroads in 1872 resulted in the explosion of commercial enterprises and new housing developments. By 1880 Dallas possessed four railroad lines with connections through them to the major centers of commerce and industry in the north and east. By 1890 Dallas had become the second largest city in the state with a population of 38,067.[1]

With all this activity in the city, the citizens of Dallas became preoccupied with the affairs necessary to keep the streets, bridges, sewers, and water supply expanding at a pace to meet the growing demand. Although the subject of parks for public enjoyment kept appearing in various guises throughout the 1880s and 1890s, other matters, especially economic troubles, forced the city fathers to put parks behind the more pressing problems of expansion on the city's list of priorities. Consequently, throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, the development of City Park was limited and no permanent additions to the park system were made.

Several false starts were made toward creating a city wide system of parks. The first such occasion came in connection with the purchase of a location for a new pumping station for the city water supply system. The council bargained with M. V. Cole to purchase eight to ten acres of

his land which ran from the Missouri Pacific Railway right-of-way to the Trinity River with frontage on both Turtle Creek and the Trinity. The city paid fifteen hundred dollars and the contract contained an option for five to seven additional acres of adjacent property. In all about fifteen acres was involved in this purchase.[2] Apparently this was part of the land to which Mayor John Henry Brown was referring on April 19, 1886, when he read his annual letter to the council on the closing of the city's fiscal year. In summing up the accomplishments of the year, he congratulated the aldermen for the wise acquisition of "grounds for the new system of water works, for both general and suburban hospital purposes, for a work house, house of refuge for boys, for one or two parks and for any other similar object hereafter desired."[3] Mayor Brown did not specify the locations of the grounds he referred to, but it is doubtful that he was suggesting that so many institutions and services could occupy the space of only fifteen acres along Turtle Creek. But it is reasonable to expect that any grounds not actually used by the pumping station, which would not require much land, might have been used for park purposes. This exact situation already existed in City Park, and the low wooded area at Turtle Creek would have lent itself nicely to use as a park. Besides, the low damp ground in the area was subject to floods and would not have been a good location for a hospital, a boys' refuge, or a work house.

One year later in John Henry Brown's final address as mayor, he mentioned "48 acres of land, admirably situated on the North West side of town and unrivaled in adaption for Park and other purposes."[4] This land had been acquired during the year as an addition to the city's

water works property on Turtle Creek. The land did become the North Dallas Park for a few years, but its status as a park was primarily in name only. It was involved in a controversy in 1889 and finally was disposed of as a sacrifice to the financial difficulties of the city.[5]

Mayor Brown's aspirations for a park to serve the northwest quadrant of town were not permanently realized until 1914 and the M. V. Cole property was never used as a park. However, the land purchased in 1914 which became Reverchon Park was separated from the pumping station property only by the Missouri Pacific Railway tracks.[6]

The city almost acquired a large second park in May of 1886. That year the sporadically convened local fair was going to be held once again. However, in April of 1886, the directors of the fair enterprise hit a snag which split the organization. All preparations for the fair had gone smoothly until the final selection was made for the fair site. The decision was made between two locations, one southeast of the town owned by W. H. Gaston [7] on the Texas and Pacific tracks and one about three miles north of the city near the Houston and Texas Central Railroad owned by J. H. Cole. The directors of the Dallas State Fair and Exposition selected the eighty acre Gaston property and paid fourteen thousand dollars for the land. They reasoned that its accessibility to the city and to the railroad facilities made it superior to the Cole property. Besides, Gaston's land was worth almost double the purchase price.

But a group of merchants, mostly farm implement dealers, were so opposed to the Gaston property that they broke away to form a separate body known as the Texas State Fair and acquired the Cole property for a

fair site saying that the Gaston grounds were "totally unsuitable and inadequate for the purpose of making an exhibit of the goods we control."[8] Apparently there were several attempts to reunite the two factions, one of which almost gave Dallas a new park.[9]

On May 8, 1886, the city council met to consider a proposition from the two fairs. The fairs agreed to combine, with the Texas State Fair agreeing to pay to the Dallas State Fair and Exposition Association the sum of seventy-five hundred dollars with the understanding that the latter would then cancel its charter. The eighty acres bought by W. H. Gaston and sold to the Dallas State Fair and Exposition Association would then be donated to the city as a public park.[10] According to the terms of the donation, the city had to agree to spend five thousand dollars on the park before the end of the year and spend thirty-five hundred dollars annually for five consecutive years thereafter, all under the supervision of three specified commissioners.[11]

After a recess granted for councilmen to informally consider the matter, Alderman Sigmund Loeb moved that the city decline the offer. A second offer from the fairs was then presented which reduced the required annual expenditures, but it was also rejected by the council.[12]

The reason for the rejection of what appears to have been an excellent opportunity to gain a sizable park was apparently the fact that the eighty acres in question was outside the city limits in an unincorporated area between Dallas and the town of East Dallas, near a little community called New Caledonia. The councilmen feared that to improve the fair grounds as a park in that area would directly benefit the two smaller towns in such a way that it would work counter to encouraging them to

become part of Dallas. The aldermen seemed determined not to spend local tax money to benefit populations that were not on the Dallas tax rolls.[13]

Although not openly mentioned in the available records, the portion of the offer which required the city to spend a total of $22,500 on the park in the next six years probably created some opposition. About this same time the council was haggling over the expenditure of only a few hundred dollars on City Park. It seems doubtful that such guardians of municipal solvency as Alderman Bookhout would have consented to such an exorbitant agreement whether the property was in the city limits or not.

It is interesting to note that the council action on this matter was one of the factors which prevented the two fairs from settling their differences. The result was that in the fall of 1886 both associations held simultaneous and competing fairs, which resulted in expense to the city in at least two ways. First, ten men were added to the police force to patrol the city during the time of the fairs. Six more uniformed men were requested by the two fairs to patrol within the fair grounds themselves, although the council balked at this request refusing to appropriate money to patrol private property. Second, the council entered a two hundred dollar contract for sprinkling of specific streets to make travel to the fair over the predominantly dirt streets of the town more comfortable for visitors.[14]

The city began a new era in 1888 when the community of North Dallas was annexed. In addition to the territory and population gained by this action, the city became involved with a potentially important

piece of property--a new park. Although several important improvements were made on the property, it was not destined to become a permanent addition to the park system.

In June of 1888, the citizens of North Dallas requested that the Dallas City Council express the conditions under which they might be annexed. The council's response included statements about taxation and representation as well as a pledge to fence, improve, and open a street to the "North Side Park." Following a referendum election among the residents of the area, Dallas formally annexed the small community on August 4, 1888.[15]

This "North Side" or "North Dallas" park was apparently the property adjoining the city water works at Turtle Creek and also the same property that Mayor John Henry Brown had referred to in 1887 in his farewell address. The community of North Dallas had not been an incorporated village and therefore would not have owned any public property, but the community would have had an interest in the improvement of a park on Dallas property at the nearby city water works. The prosperity experienced by J. J. Eakins was obvious to any observer. No doubt there were developers in the North Dallas area anxious to imitate the Eakins success formula.[16]

Along with the new territory in North Dallas came the responsibility for improving the park according to the pledge given in June. However, no action was taken concerning this responsibility until almost a year later, although on January 5 of the next year, the council passed a resolution instructing the Committee on Municipal Affairs to use at least one thousand dollars for fencing and improvements in the new park.

But still, in spite of the direct instruction from the council, the Committee did not begin work in the park.[17]

The delays in the improvements for the North Dallas Park may have been caused by any one of several reasons--an overburdened committee, financial insecurity, lack of public pressure, or the presence of indigent "campers" on the property. Each of these suppositions could be argued from the evidence. But another reason that has little available supportive evidence seems logical and may have been the primary reason for the delays. In March the city was to receive petitions from two of its traction companies to be granted right-of-ways through the North Dallas Park property. It is likely that any rail company contemplating an expansion of its lines would have contacted at least some of the local authorities about their plans before submitting a formal, public petition to the city council asking for a specific right-of-way. Such behind-the-scenes operations would not have been recorded nor would any public relations announcement of such planning have been expected in 1889. At any rate, the two petitions were presented in March and no further attempts at improvement were made in the park until after both were formally denied in May.

The first petition, from the Dallas Park and Suburban Railway which operated in the northern sector of Dallas, asked that the city grant a right-of-way through the North Dallas Park. Since the corporate title of the railway suggests that the line was probably interested in carrying passengers on excursion trips to the park in a fashion similar to the Commerce and Ervay's service to City Park, the adverse recommendation on the request from the Committee on Railways may have been

unexpected. The committee may have felt that the city should not bisect the park property with a railroad, or private interests may have determined the matter.[18]

The second petition was presented only four days after the first as the North Dallas Circuit Railway Company petitioned for a right-of-way along one side of the North Dallas Park. This request was also denied but the apparent desirability of the property for a railroad right-of-way cast a shadow over the prospects that the land would ever be permanently improved as a park.[19]

Some amount of public pressure may have influenced the aldermen to deny the railroads' petitions. At least one group, headed by the development company of Blankenship and Blake, appealed to the council to carefully scrutinize all requests from railroads wanting right-of-way in the North Dallas area. The citizens argued that property in northern and eastern Dallas had become so valuable for residential purposes that the granting of right-of-ways through those areas would greatly damage the value of the land. The group did not want any railroads in the area and declared that the only way by which railroads could enter Dallas from the north or east was through the Turtle Creek waterworks or through the adjoining North Dallas Park. Although conceding that railroads might use that route, they asked that no new right-of-ways be granted.[20]

The action of this citizens' group was public, but if land in North Dallas was indeed as valuable as they suggested, there was probably a great deal of heavy behind-the-scenes pressure placed on the aldermen to deny the railroads' petitions. The increased real estate values in North Dallas seems to have been partially responsible for a

struggle that began in the summer of 1889 over the use of the land in the park area.

As the spring of 1889 began, the majority of the council moved to make some definite improvements in the North Dallas Park. In spite of the fact that a Mr. Keeler was the superintendent of parks, Alderman Sigmond Loeb suggested that another superintendent be hired with responsibility for just the North Dallas Park. Three men, including B. H. Bodwell, the man who had been dismissed as park superintendent in 1886, applied for the new position. The Committee on Municipal Affairs doubted the necessity of hiring an additional superintendent, but suggested that J. B. Buchanan would be a good choice, obviously steering the council away from the rehiring of its former employee, Bodwell. However, no action was taken on hiring a new superintendent and Mr. Keeler continued alone.[21]

Even with the apparent interest among some council members to get some action in the North Dallas Park, improvements in that area were slow in taking shape. Not until late in July were the indigent campers on the property ordered to leave. Then the council finally awarded a contract to have the long awaited fence built around the park. The council also approved a resolution to have park drives laid out and graded. However, before any work was begun, the council became involved in a series of issues involving the acquisition of new parks which temporarily delayed action of any sort.[22]

The situation which resulted in this new controversy was indirectly created by Mayor Connor. After the spring elections, the mayor had reorganized the council's standing committees to speed up the city's

business. The Committee on Municipal Affairs had apparently become overburdened and sluggish with all the various things that were being classified as "municipal affairs," so the mayor created two new committees to handle a part of the work load. A Committee on Sewers and Drains was established to handle that important detail in the growing city, and the responsibility for all the public property, including the parks, was given to another, separate committee, as it had been prior to 1886.[23]

The new Committee on Parks and Public Grounds assumed its responsibilities with an interest seldom displayed by the overburdened Committee on Municipal Affairs. The aldermen on the committee developed a philosophy concerning parks and their usage which placed Dallas in the vanguard of the City Beautiful Movement which was sweeping through the city halls of the nation. Dallas' affair with the City Beautiful concepts was brief, but it demonstrated that at least some Dallas citizens were aware of the broad-based national movement. Even though Dallas had not yet faced some of the problems of decaying and congested neighborhoods that had spawned the movement in other areas, the desire for a more attractive city was present. The committee expressed its position in a letter to the entire council on June 29, 1889:

> ...The demand for public parks and pleasure grounds grows with the increase of population and wealth in all cities.
>
> Parks located at convenient places in a City serve as breathing places for its people, here all classes can enjoy the beauties of nature; here the laborer, the mechanic, the merchant, the professional man, the ladies and children can forget the worry and vexation of the day.
>
> There is nothing about a City more inviting to the home-seeker than good public parks. Well kept parks are the evidences of the broad liberal views of a city's representatives and the culture and refinement of their people. The increase of population and the rapid development of the City of Dallas

> will warrant liberal appropriations in adoring [sic] and beautifying her public grounds.... Recognizing the facts that future generations get the largest share of the benefits from parks now being made, we think the policy adopted for Street improvement should be applied to the development of our parks, viz. issue bonds running 40 years, bearing 5% interest. By using the money obtained from sale of these bonds, the present generation could reap some of the benefits. Under the present policy of appropriating a few thousand dollars each year it will take several years to accomplish what should be done within the next two years. The interest on $100,000.00 in bonds at 5% would not amount to the sum which must be appropriated every year from the general fund.
>
> With a ready fund of one or two hundred thousand dollars the City could cheaply purchase several small squares located in different sections of the City, enlarge the present parks, improve them all and perhaps buy a (word omitted in records) suitable for a large driving park.
>
> The necessity for these small squares in different parts of the City is plain to the mind of every citizen. If Dallas grows as we and expect it to [sic], it would be wisdom to make these purchases now....[24]

The report from the new committee was adopted without controversy and the suggestions contained in it that the city move to make purchases of new park property resulted in a flurry of offers from various individuals to sell land to the city.

The first of these offers was made at the same meeting that the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds outlined their policy suggestions. The committee must have made some prior investigations or arrangements concerning this property since the petition from the owner, E. P. Cowen, was one of the first items on the agenda and the committee reports were not presented until after all petitions were read. Cowen's offer was for the sale of 250 acres for park purposes at two hundred dollars per acre. Cowen specified that the city would have to agree to spend at least five thousand dollars annually for ten years in improving the grounds which were located about three miles north of the courthouse.[25]

Other offers soon appeared. George T. Atkins offered to sell to the city a full city block. James Arbuckle offered to sell 170 acres known as the Dundee Park suburb which contained already established drives, springs, and ponds. This offer was repeated three days later by the Anglo-Texan Land and Loan Company. A smaller offer came from the Perry Brothers, a development company, and W. C. Howard and W. H. Gaston, land speculators, who collectively offered to sell the city a forty acre tract located southwest of the fair grounds for $72,500. The smallest offer was from Royal A. Ferris, acting as an agent to sell the "Pavilion," an amusement house on a small lot adjoining the City Park.[26]

The offers from Atkins and Arbuckle were not acted upon nor was the offer of forty acres from Howard, Gaston, and the Perrys. Since these offers contained time limitations, the failure to accept or reject effectively cancelled the offers. But the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds had suggested the purchase of a number of smaller parks throughout the city and it is possible that one or more of these tracts might have been accepted if the two offers that were accepted had not become so controversial.

On August 3, 1889, the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds recommended that the offer of 250 acres from E. P. Cowen be accepted under several conditions. First, the city would not be obligated to any specified amounts in annual improvements. Second, Cowen was to financially guarantee the paving of Maple Avenue from the city limits to the park. Third, Cowen had to guarantee the construction and maintenance of a street railroad from the city to the park. After imposing some time limits for the paving of Maple Avenue, the construction of the

railroad, and the fares it could charge, the council accepted the offer as recommended by the committee. The rather large expenses required of Cowen to have the privilege of selling his land to the city as a park seem to indicate that the council realized the considerable advantages that would accrue to the rest of Cowen's property in that area, and the council seemed determined to extract a just price for the benefit that would be bestowed.[27]

One week after recommending the acceptance of the Cowen purchase, the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds recommended another park purchase. Royal A. Ferris had offered the Pavilion property which fronted on Ervay Street for 322 feet and adjoined the City Park, priced at $17,500. The majority of the council approved the purchase although a minority which included the mayor strongly disapproved.[28]

The mayor's objections had begun with the approval of the Cowen purchase. He had suggested that if the council preferred the Cowen property for park purposes that it dispose of the fifty-two acre North Dallas Park which he believed would bring one thousand dollars an acre and possibly as much as thirty-five hundred dollars an acre. The mayor simply did not want the improvement of two parks in the same area forced upon the city. But the council did not heed his advice and did not authorize the sale of the North Dallas Park.[29]

At the next meeting Cowen pushed the council for some action, saying that he was ready to close the deal. The aldermen, in return, indicated their willingness to buy but without the obligation Cowen had placed on the property that it must be used for park purposes. Cowen finally agreed to remove his requirement but not before an extended

argument developed over the reasons for the city's purchasing the land. Some of the aldermen envisioned the property not as a park but as a water reservoir, others wanted a gravel pit to supply street repair needs. Alderman Samuel Klein argued against the entire purchase, favoring a number of small parks closer to the central city that could be reached by the poor who did not have transportation to go to a park three miles away. The deal was finally closed but the frayed tempers were only a prelude of things to come.[30]

The subsequent approval of the Pavilion purchase prompted the mayor to take action. First, the mayor's lieutenants moved into the fray. Alderman K. J. Kivlen[31] began the parlimentary battle to delay action on the purchase. He was joined by Samuel Klein[32] in an attempt to get the final approval reconsidered. When both of these men failed, the elderly and highly respected Sigmond Loeb[33] pressed the council to put the North Dallas Park up for sale. But he, too, was unsuccessful. The majority of the council seemed determined to expand the park department whether the city could afford it or not. When all other attempts to block the council's actions failed, the mayor used his ultimate weapon, the veto.[34]

Mayor Connor presented his veto message on August 14, 1889, and spelled out two major reasons for his disapproval of the Pavilion property:

> First. That the purchase of the property at the price is unwarranted as the piece of land is small and would add very little to the beauty or comfort of the Park.
>
> Second. The amount of $17,500 thus expended can in my opinion be used to a much greater advantage if appropriated in the purchase of suitable grounds in the Eastern portion of our City, which at present is wholly without Park or public ground facilities.[35]

Not confining himself to the Pavilion issue alone, the mayor commented on the purchase of the 250 acres from E. P. Cowen:

> In the purchase of the 250 acres of land North of the City I was led to believe that your hon. body would dispose of the grounds purchased for Water Works purposes, and apply the amount to the purchase, or improvement of the 250 acre tract, or use the amount for the purchase of a suitable location and the building of a large central Market. Now I look upon it as wholly and unfair to give the North side two large and attractive Parks almost in sight of each other and the expenditure of a large amount of public money to improve them, would be to the detriment, inconvenience & disadvantage of a very large & representative portion of our citizens. Let the Council decide which of the two peices [sic] of land on the North side is to be used for a Park and dispose of the other at the best price that can be obtained and the amount of the sale applied to other sections of the City.[36]

The mayor's own idea of what was needed by the city was attached as a conclusion to the veto message:

> It is my idea that the purchase of lands suitable [sic] located for a Market Square and the building of a large modern Market House with an Auditorium over the market to seat say 5000 people would be far more acceptable & reflect to a greater degree the sentiment and wishes of those who pay taxes, than at this time the further expenditure of the City funds for the purchase of parks grounds, which we are not able to improve. The City is not in distress for parks, but there is a growing want and demand for a Market Square and by building the large Auditorium over the market building will insure many of the large National & State Conventions which would be worth thousands of dollars annually to our City, to say nothing of the revenue arising from the rental of the market booths.[37]

The city did need a new central market and Connor was probably well aware that the city treasury was in desperate need of new sources of revenue instead of new expenditures.

The mayor's veto was sustained by an eleven to six vote. However, the veto had eliminated only one of the things to which the mayor was opposed--the Pavilion purchase. Action on the other problem--the disposition of North Dallas Park--was deferred by the council to the next

meeting. By that time the mayor obviously had his supporters organized for a concerted effort to gain approval for the rest of his program which included the sale of North Dallas Park and the building of a central market.

On August 21, Sigmond Loeb introduced a resolution to sell the North Dallas Park and use the money to purchase a site and erect a building for a central market as the mayor wanted. The ensuing discussion became a heated and protracted argument. Alderman George C. Cole, who ran against Connor in the next mayor's race, climaxed the debate by demanding to know why the mayor and his friends wanted to sell the North Dallas Park "on the eve of the improvement and increase in value" of that property.[38] He suggested that he could expose some embarrassing facts about the real estate speculations of some of the councilmen, intimating that the mayor might be involved. The matter was promptly referred to the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds and the argument was cut short. With that action the issue of selling North Dallas Park disappeared and did not reappear until the middle of the next decade.[39]

However, the problems surrounding the Cowen purchase continued to cause heated arguments. The land title offered to the city by E. P. Cowen had several defects which had to be cleared before it could be accepted. The discussions about the validity of the title became so violent that one council meeting required the assistance of two policemen to restrain the aldermanic outbursts. Finally, on September 11, the council authorized the mayor to accept the title.[40]

Although technical problems concerning the form of payment for the land continued to plague the new park property, the issues surrounding

the land were soon pushed aside by the problems of city finances. But the mass of energy expended by the council in arguments over the purchase of the Cowen and Pavilion properties seemed to dissipate the enthusiasm of the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds. The committee, apparently stunned by the controversies that developed when it assumed an aggressive attitude, settled into a quiet and respectable notch in the background of civic affairs. Operating well within the reduced budget afforded by the "hard times" that afflicted the city government beginning late in 1889, the committee seemed to forget its previous philosophy about the need for parks and open spaces and passively accepted the fact that in time of financial distress, parks in Dallas were a luxury the city was unwilling to support. Only the original City Park was improved during the next three years.

During the period from 1886 to the spring of 1890, Dallas had taken several faltering steps to establish a park system. Each time the city obtained a new tract of land for its expanding water supply system, the possibility of using some of the land for a park was mentioned. The city used the promise of park improvements as one of the inducements to get a suburb to accept annexation. Suggestions were frequently made to establish small parks or squares throughout the town, and in 1889 there was an outright attempt to gain sizable additions to the park system. Only the sudden collapse of the city treasury brought the attempts to a definite halt.

This outline of the events of 1886 to 1890 assumes some meaning when considered in context of the times. Dallas was trying hard to emerge from its frontier background and become a sophisticated trading

center. St. Louis seemed to be the specific model most officials wanted to imitate. Such imitation would have naturally involved the physical characteristics of the city which included extensive parks and boulevards. The early philosophy of the City Beautiful Movement, which inspired St. Louis, briefly infected Dallasites who traveled to that city to investigate their park system. From their travels came the excited bustle of park acquisition in 1889. Had not the recession that climaxed in the Crash of 1893 closed the door on such "unnecessary" expenditures, Dallas might have begun the permanent expansion of its park system more than fifteen years earlier than it did in fact.

But the financial realities of the early 1890s had a benevolent effect on the old City Park. As the only uncontroversial piece of property in the park system, it could be improved without criticism. As the recession grew into a depression, the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds concentrated on the one park whose status was certain.

## NOTES

### THE FIRST SEASON OF EXPANSION

[1]U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890: Population, vol. 1.

[2]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 5, 3 November 1886, p. 315.

[3]Ibid., 19 April 1886, p. 507.

[4]Ibid., vol. 6, 18 April 1887, p. 461.

[5]Those difficulties began in August of 1887. The city treasury was totally broke and the city still held a number of bonds that it could not sell. An emergency loan of thirty-five thousand dollars from a St. Louis firm enabled the city to weather the crisis. However, for the next several years, the city treasury was badly mismanaged and other loans had to be obtained. Councilmen also engaged in the questionable practice of frequently shifting money from one fund to another to meet immediate demands. The national financial crash of 1893 was a severe blow to Dallas and the local newspaper often mentioned the "hard times." Ibid., vol. 7, 6 August 1887, p. 65; and Dallas, Texas, City Council Executive Session Minute Book, 13 August 1887.

[6]The Pumping Station itself still stands, a relic from the nineteenth century. Then it stood near the edge of town where Turtle Creek met the Trinity, but today it stands amidst the maze of traffic where the Dallas North Tollway meets Stemmons Freeway.

[7]Gaston, a local banker, president of the 1872 Fair Association, and a member of the 1886 fair board of directors, had bought the eighty acres from Sawnie Robinson, Mr. Thivinet, and Mr. Browder in order that he might in return offer it to the fair association. Gaston sold the property to the fair for fourteen thousand dollars, taking a two thousand dollar loss on his purchase price of sixteen thousand dollars. Furthermore, he accepted fair association stock in payment for the fourteen thousand dollars, all of which he donated to the fair in later years. Sidney Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," manuscript history of the State Fair of Texas 1886-1910, written about 1910, located in the Executive Offices, State Fair of Texas, Fair Park, Dallas, Texas, p. 17.

[8]Dallas Morning News, 18 April 1886. Although the implement dealers couched their criticism of the Gaston property in terms of bad soil types on the property, the consolidation settlement between the two fairs on January 10, 1887, seems to suggest that the real dispute was over the fourteen thousand dollar cost of the Gaston property as opposed to only six thousand dollars for the Cole grounds.

[9]Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," pp. 17, 20-21; and William K. Sewell, "Dallas' Early Fairs" (M.A. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1953), pp. 74-78.

[10]Since both fair associations had, by this time, acquired grounds, one major obstacle to consolidation was the disposal of one or the other of the pieces of property. Apparently the implement dealers, while unwilling to invest in the more expensive Gaston property for a fair site, were willing to contribute seventy-five hundred dollars to give the city a park.

[11]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 5, 8 May 1886, pp. 539-41.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Dallas Morning News, 9 May 1886, column 2, p. 12.

[14]However, beginning the next year the procedure of appropriating money to hire additional uniformed men to patrol the fair grounds became an accepted and annual practice. Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 6, 26 September 1886; 2 October 1886, pp. 112-13; 16 October 1886, p. 136; 23 October 1886, p. 139; vol. 7, 8 October 1887, p. 190.

[15]Ibid., vol. 8, 16 June 1888, pp. 243-44; 21 July 1888, p. 356; vol. 8, 4 August 1888, pp. 407-8, 416-17.

[16]The documentation to associate the water works property and the North Dallas Park is very elusive and confusing, but this conclusion was reached after carefully comparing every mention of the two properties found in the City Council Minutes, the Dallas Morning News, and local histories between 1886 and 1893. Unless this interpretation is accepted, the citizens of Dallas seem to display a confusing tendency to label every city-owned lot north of City Hall as the "North Dallas Park." Also, acquisition and disposition of the city's park properties in this period becomes very confused and impossible to document unless this assumption is made.

[17]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 9, 5 January 1889, p. 219; 9 February 1889, p. 329.

[18]Ibid., 16 March 1889, p. 406; 11 May 1889, p. 593; and Dallas Morning News, 12 May 1889, p. 4.

[19]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 9, 15 May 1889, p. 610.

[20]Dallas Morning News, 28 April 1889, p. 4.

[21]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 9, 6 April 1889, p. 472; 20 April 1889, p. 514; 27 April 1889, p. 530; 1 May 1889, p. 545; and Dallas Morning News, 28 April 1889, p. 4; 2 May 1889, p. 8.

[22]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 10 July 1889, p. 215; 13 July 1889, p. 231; 24 July 1889, pp. 285, 288-89.

[23]Ibid., vol. 9, 4 May 1889, p. 561.

[24]Ibid., vol. 10, 10 July 1889, pp. 205-6; and Dallas Morning News, 11 July 1889, p. 5.

[25]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 10 July 1889, p. 193; and Dallas Morning News, 11 July 1889, p. 5.

[26]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 20 July 1889, p. 256; 24 July 1889, pp. 274-75; 3 August 1889, pp. 332, 333; and Dallas Morning News, 25 July 1889, p. 8; 4 August 1889, p. 4.

[27]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 3 August 1889, p. 347; and Dallas Morning News, 4 August 1889, p. 4.

[28]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 10 August 1889, p. 373.

[29]Ibid., 3 August 1889, p. 347; and Dallas Morning News, 4 August 1889, p. 4.

[30]Dallas Morning News, 7 August 1889, p. 8.

[31]K. J. Kivlen was a new alderman at this point but was later to become chairman of the important Committee on Finance and Revenue.

[32]Samuel Klein was the chairman of the important Committee on Finance and Revenue at this time, and in actual influence over city affairs, he was probably second to the mayor in power.

[33]Sigmond Loeb was a German immigrant who had been on the council for several years. He was highly respected throughout the city and was an influential alderman.

[34]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 10 August 1889, pp. 373-74, 378.

[35]Ibid., 14 August 1889, pp. 380-81.

[36]Ibid., p. 381.

[37]Ibid., p. 382.

[38]Dallas Morning News, 22 August 1889, p. 5.

[39]Ibid.; and Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 21 August 1889, pp. 426-28.

[40]Dallas Morning News, 1 September 1889, p. 4; 8 September 1889, p. 4; 11 September 1889, p. 8; 22 September 1889, p. 4; and Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 10 September 1889, pp. 514-17; 14 September 1889, p. 532; 21 September 1889, p. 541.

## CHAPTER 3

## THE RAVAGES OF RETRENCHMENT

Improvements at City Park had not stopped during the years that the city council had flirted with the creation of new parks. The controversies that erupted when new park land was acquired made City Park the only piece of park property where improvements could be made without encountering heavy opposition. This lack of controversy demonstrated the established position of the old park in the minds of the citizens. Even when the economic situation in the city treasury became desperate, no suggestion was ever recorded that the city dispose of its original park to ease its financial burden. Even in the depths of the depression in the early 1890s, the council still saw fit to continue improvements in City Park.

The embellishment of City Park neither followed a constant plan nor established a pattern, but it continued steadily, even if sporadically, throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, although some of the work only affected the park indirectly. Gano Street, opened on the southeast side of the park, visually established the physical limits of the park in that direction. Some repair work was done on the Browder Springs Pump House which had apparently been allowed to deteriorate considerably after the Turtle Creek pumping station had become the primary water supply plant. Also, a fence was built around the park to keep wandering cattle and other stock from entering the park area. Although the Dallas population continued to grow, the practice of keeping

livestock within the city limits remained common. Stray milk cows and scavenging pigs were a familiar sight and caused occasional damage to the beauty of the park. An attempt was even made to expand the park through the purchase of the privately owned property on the northwest side of the park, but efforts to negotiate with the owners failed.[1]

One improvement in City Park became particularly noteworthy because it signaled the dawning of a new era in urban services for not only the park, but Dallas as a whole. In mid-summer of 1886, a group of citizens with property adjacent to City Park requested that the park be lighted with either gas or the new electric lights which had been developed in the 1870s. The petition had been referred to the Committee on Gas Lights but no action was taken. Then in March of 1887 the Texas Electric Light and Manufacturing Company made a proposition to light the City Park with their electric arc lights. This time the council acted. In the summer of 1887, a contract was signed with the company to erect five lights, each of at least two thousand candle power, in the City Park. The cost to the city was to be fifteen dollars per light per month, seventy-five dollars per month in all. Again the street car companies influenced development in the park. The city was encouraged to install the lights by the Dallas Consolidated Street Railway Company which agreed to contribute about one hundred dollars to the cost of installing the lights.[2]

The reasons for lighting the park remain unexplained, but probably the people living around the park felt that they would be safer with lights in the area. Dallasites in the 1880s walked or rode the street car almost everywhere they went, unless they owned a horse and

carriage. Since the Commerce and Ervay Street Railway had a terminal on the southwest side of the park, many people undoubtedly walked through the park day and night going between their homes and the streetcar station. The fact that the streetcar company was willing to bear some of the lighting expense seems to suggest that passenger convenience and citizen safety played a major role in the decision to light the park.

The convenience and safety of the city as a whole played a definite role in a dramatic change in the appearance of the park proposed by the Committee on Municipal Affairs in the summer of 1888. The committee suggested that the low-lying sand or gravel pit in the northwest corner of the park be converted into a water reservoir. The small lake would be an attractive addition to the park, but more importantly, it would serve as an auxiliary water supply to back up the faltering main reservoir at Turtle Creek which was often too low to meet emergency demands. In addition, the equipment at Turtle Creek frequently broke down. Since either circumstance would have been disastrous in case of a major fire, the council got a cost estimate from the city engineer which indicated that about four thousand dollars would be needed to make the required excavation. The council must not have been impressed with the immediacy of the need for an alternative water supply since no action was taken. A new council reopened the matter in 1889 when the water level was even more critical and the reservoir was excavated later that year.[3]

As the aldermen procrastinated on the creation of a reservoir in the City Park, other changes in the park's appearance and use were taking place. The park began to shift slowly from its early passive state as an attractive piece of landscaped countryside available for

public admiration, to its second stage of development as an active park with several attractions to draw the citizens to the park for relaxation, amusement, and some restricted amounts of recreation.

This shift in usage followed roughly the same general trend in the nation in relation to park usage. Many of the concepts of Frederick Law Olmsted, the creator of New York's Central Park, did not apply to Dallas. The north Texas town was not densely populated, tightly congested, or badly in need of breathing spaces. Dallas still had many vacant lots and other open spaces within its limits, and the countryside was within walking distance for almost everyone. Dallas, however, was rapidly becoming an ugly city due to the architectural confusion produced by the lack of building restrictions in an age which had not heard of zoning laws. Thus, the City Beautiful Movement, a by-product of Olmsted's teachings, struck a responsive chord in the Queen City, as Dallas citizens frequently called their city. City Beautiful activists expended much of their efforts on the creation of parks and boulevards, and the Dallas City Council had, as previously mentioned, encountered the movement in 1889.

The style of parks during this era was relatively formal and intended more for aesthetics than for recreation, although separate parks or parts of larger parks were often designated as "playgrounds." "City Beautiful" parks were often used to complement various civic buildings such as city halls, rail terminals, or auditoriums, and were often quite formal in their planning and classical in design. This style of park usage reached its peak of popularity and development in the lavishly ornate, neoclassical setting of Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893.

As with most movements that approach an extreme, a reaction against it often develops. Such was the case with the "Columbian" style parks. The reaction developed against the over-regimentation of nature, the profuse decorations, the classical statues, and the elaborate fountains. These things were considered an unnatural imposition upon nature. This antithesis had indirect relation to the "back-to-nature" movements in many cities at the turn of the century, but this reaction was mainly concerned with the augmentation of the terrain to show off the best features of the natural setting, as opposed to rearranging the terrain to conform to a designer's plan. Dallas became directly involved in the antithesis demands for more natural parks in 1911 when George Kessler, one of the leaders in this style of park design, was commissioned to make a plan for the city. But City Park had been influenced by the two movements long before Kessler arrived.[4]

Dallas' ability to make a choice between the two styles of parks may have been somewhat limited by circumstances. "Columbian" style parks were expensive to establish and maintain, besides they would have been rather out of place in a city where cattle drives had only recently passed through the streets of the town. The personal tastes of the local residents may have ruled out the more elaborate park designs because as one historian wrote, "The prevailing American, German, and French elements in the population had formed an industrious blend of races with a strongly practical and utilitarian point of view, concerned with 'the useful rather than the ornamental.'"[5] The city may have followed the path of least resistance in making City Park a "natural" park but there was some conscious effort to imitate the parks of St. Louis

which were generally of the "natural" type.[6]

City Park in 1888 remained a naturally rolling area on either side of Mill Creek. In this attractive setting, the city council had developed several graveled drives and bridges, planted some flower beds, and improved the quantity and quality of grass. The park was primarily used as a resort for picnics, pleasure drives, and strolls, but little more.

The year 1888 marked the beginning of a gradual shift in park usage which was to greatly influence later park development. In the next several years, a number of policies were developed and purchases were made which ultimately changed the park from an aesthetically oriented driving park to an active park which eventually included extensive recreational facilities.

The slow change in orientation began with an offer in the spring of 1888 from a man in Colorado City, Texas, to sell the city two deer and two mountain lions. The four animals, purchased for sixty dollars, were placed in pens in City Park as an embryonic zoo. They were the first of a succession of animals which lived in the park and caused frequent maintenance problems.[7]

The next evidence of the usage shift came almost a year later when the park finally got its first recreational equipment--two sets of swings. The Committee on Municipal Affairs purchased American Patent swings for twenty dollars each. This purchase was the first such play equipment, but, more importantly, it opened the door for other such recreational devices and established a pattern of using the park as a playground.[8]

While the park was being opened for increased recreation, its

gates were being shut on at least three types of uses which the council determined would not be harmonious with the best public interest. First, an attempt was made in 1887 to designate a portion of the City Park as the site for one of three proposed new hose stations for the fire department. Use of the park grounds for this purpose would have saved the city the expense of acquiring another site in the area, but it would have established an unfortunate pattern of requisitioning park property for other uses whenever convenient. But Alderman F. R. Rowley convinced the council that park grounds were set aside for specific purposes and could not be used for other purposes. This policy was instituted at a critical moment because the park properties for at least the next twenty years were so limited in number and acreage that they scarcely could afford to have other civic institutions share the grounds.[9]

Second, when the Dallas Artillery Company asked permission in March of 1888 to camp in City Park and conduct drills there, the request was denied because new grass had been recently planted and military drilling would damage the sod. This ban on military drilling or training in the parks held until the first world war when the annual state fair was canceled and Fair Park was completely turned over to the U. S. Army as an aviation training base. In the second world war, a camp at White Rock Lake Park, built during the depression for use by the Civilian Conservation Corps, became, first, an Air Corps "boot camp," and later, a prisoner-of-war camp for Germans captured from the Afrika Corps. However, military drilling for public performance was always quite common in City Park, and later in other parks, during various festivities held on the grounds.[10]

Third, the council dealt negatively with the question of privately owned enterprises operating within the park grounds. Two organizations petitioned the council for permission to operate bath houses in the park using the water from the artesian well in the park. Both petitioners were turned down but for slightly different reasons. Although the Committee on Municipal Affairs delivered both rejections at the same meeting, the Monta Beach petition to establish a bath house in the basement of the park pavilion was denied because the company wanted to operate its facilities without paying the city any rent. This response from the Committee on Municipal Affairs seemed to suggest that if the terms had been right, the committee might have approved the petition. But the response to the Dallas Artesian Bathe Company was more directly to the point. The committee refused to grant the company the five years of exclusive control over the artesian well in the park and refused to allow them to erect a privately owned building in the park. At that point the committee placed on record its opposition to allowing private enterprise to operate in the park. This aversion to money-making in the parks persisted until 1904 when the city assumed control of the fair grounds and had to deal with concessionaires involved with the operation of the annual event.[11]

While these park activities were being considered, a major crisis approached the city government which directly affected the parks and their development. In the winter of 1889-1890, the city treasury collapsed and the aldermen spent most of the next three years trying to cope with the situation with varying degrees of success.

Several factors contributed to the disintegration of the city's

financial foundation. First, Dallas had a long tradition of non-partisan, independent city elections. The occasional attempts by the Democratic Party to field candidates for mayor or alderman were nearly always beaten in campaigns where the dominant issue was the desirability of participation by political parties in local government. This tradition kept Dallas free from the potential evils of political machines and bosses, but it also had an undesirable side effect. Few independent citizens could afford to contribute the considerable amount of time required to serve as a councilman. Consequently, less than half of the men who served as Dallas aldermen held office for more than one term. Only about ten percent served more than two terms. Due to several changes in the city charter, many of those terms were only one year in length. As a result, city management suffered from a severe lack of experience, especially in the area of large corporate financing such as was necessary to operate a city like Dallas, even in 1890. Mistakes were made again and again. Since the aldermen actually ran the government, without professional expertise, the result was an inefficient government which gradually eroded the foundations of the treasury.[12]

The various departments of the city government were poorly administered. The water department became notorious because its records were so inaccurate. Many people who received water service never paid for it and the department made only feeble attempts to collect from them. The council even convicted one water superintendent of stealing collected water rents. Sewer taxes also went uncollected. When the treasury went bankrupt, citizens owed the city several hundred thousand dollars in back taxes of various types. Even some of the aldermen had never paid

their city taxes. Thus the expense of expanding the city services to keep up with the increased population rapidly overcame the ability of a treasury whose revenues were inefficiently collected.[13]

Third, although little evidence exists, outside of the water department, to prove that individual corruption was present in Dallas city government in 1890, the works of Lincoln Steffens, a turn-of-the-century journalist, suggest that most city governments at that time had a certain amount of corruption. Bribes, inflated prices for government purchases, and graft were the most common forms of corruption. As suggested in Chapter two of this treatise, some city officials may have been making personal gains on real estate speculation through manipulation of city property. Some strong circumstantial evidence suggests that gambling and prostitution were "protected" in Dallas until almost the turn of the century. If corruption appeared in these areas, it is possible, even probable considering the political morality and ethics of the Gilded Age, that corruption developed in such areas as the awarding of public contracts or the purchase of city supplies at an inflated price. Continued payment of inflated prices for such items could contribute to the gradual collapse of a city treasury.[14]

Fourth, the national economy labored through "hard times" as the nation approached the end of a business cycle. The 1880s had seen an over-expansion of the railroads and even investment in railroad properties and industrial combinations. Decades of waste, mismanagement, and folly had placed many of the railroads and financial institutions in such a shaky condition that they were unable to weather adversity. When the railroads' condition was aggravated by other problems--depressed

prices in agriculture beginning in 1876 which reduced the purchasing power of a substantial section of the population, withdrawal of foreign investments and loss of markets as a result of a depression already afflicting Europe, and mismanagement of the American currency system--the nation's economy became increasingly unhealthy. Especially hard hit were southern and western agricultural areas. Beginning in 1890, the federal reserve of gold began to dwindle and cautious financiers started hoarding gold. Shortly after Grover Cleveland began his second term as president in 1893, the reserves dropped to a point that fear swept through the leading financial institutions of the nation. Industrialists began to cut pay rolls, merchants began to cancel purchases, and brokers started to dump stocks. As the fear spread to the people, banks had to close to escape runs. In the resulting panic and financial crash, over eight thousand business firms across the nation collapsed and unemployment rose to about twenty percent of the labor force. Agricultural prices, already low, tumbled to new depths.[15]

Since the Dallas economy in the 1890s was still heavily dependent upon agricultural activities,[16] the symptoms of economic illness began to show themselves as early as 1887 when agricultural prices began to fall. By 1889 the local newspapers spoke frequently of the "hard times" and the difficulty of obtaining loans. As problems beset the railroads, Dallas' vital tie to the northern and eastern markets, the local problems became more intense. By the end of 1893, several city banks had failed or been absorbed by stronger institutions. In general, every facet of Dallas' growth was slowed by the depression and the Census of 1900 showed that the city had fallen from second to third place among

Texas cities, behind San Antonio and Houston.[17]

Ever since the railroads had arrived in 1872, Dallas had grown at an intense rate. The mayor/council form of city government and the rather inept city fathers had managed to carry the city through the period of growth because their fiscal bumbling was always buoyed along by the sheer strength of the local economy. But as the eighties drew to a close, and the economy began to recede, the problems of civic financing became more obvious. The experiences of the ensuing depression prepared the city mentally for a complete overhaul of the governing structure early in the next century.

Several hints of the approaching financial problems had been seen in late 1889, but the first official recognition that a crisis was nearing came in the form of a report in January 1890 from the city auditor, F. R. Rowley. He announced that three of the city's accounts were overdrawn, and that $5260.90 had been spent on the authorized construction of a city crematory (for disposal of garbage and other wastes) although no appropriation had ever been passed to pay for the facility. One month later, Rowley reported that more than half of all the city's accounts were overdrawn. The condition continued to get worse but no serious action was taken to find a solution. Apparently, the aldermen felt that the budget for the new fiscal year, which began April 22, could be juggled to overcome the problems. In his address to the council on April 21, 1890, Mayor Connor voiced no concern about the crisis and dismissed the problems, even the delinquent taxes, with reasonable explanations. He either failed completely to recognize the seriousness of the situation or else he was attempting to gloss over the

inefficiencies of his administration saying that "...there are a number of fault finders in every community who indulge in criticizing their public officials...."[18] He made a noticeable play for popular support by passing over the huge sums of delinquent taxes, indicating that there had been some confusion over tax liabilities under the new city charter. His primary recommendation for city finances was also designed to be popular. He recommended that the city greatly extend its bonded indebtedness, rather than raise taxes, to meet its budget.[19]

However, by May the realities of the situation began to show. The Committee on Finance and Revenue had to get authorization to negotiate an immediate loan to meet city expenses for the next thirty days. The entire council meeting on May 29, 1890, was devoted to issuing bonds, authorizing loans, levying new taxes, and setting new salary limitations for city employees.[20]

Still, some of the aldermen were not altogether willing to put aside political motives and forget the approaching spring 1891 elections. In the face of bankruptcy, but near election time, some councilmen were still talking of lowering taxes. Samuel Klein, the chairman of the Committee on Finance and Revenue, tried to make his fellow councilmen recognize their responsibilities in September 1890 in a message to the council:

> ....since the City Council has, by indicating an intention to lower taxation and diminish the public revenues, made it imperative to retrench expenditures and reform your policy of internal improvements, it owes to the public the resciding [sic] and abandoning of all contemplated improvements that can be dispensed with.[21]

He proceeded to enumerate several projects which could be eliminated to save the city almost $130,000. But such cutting measures would, no

doubt, have angered the major contractors and suppliers and cost some councilmen support. At any rate Klein's report was ruled out of order and a parliamentary battle was waged throughout the rest of the meeting with Klein being frustrated at every turn. Yet, he was eventually vindicated as even the most reluctant city fathers had to follow his advice.[22]

But Alderman Klein was unable to forestall the collapse of the city finances for which he was responsible. He offered many valid suggestions to the council on the matter, but too many of them were ignored. He did not run for reelection in May of 1891, probably because he was weary of trying to hold down the staggering debt the city was accumulating. His last several reports to the council seem to reflect a defeated man saying, "I told you so":

> ...repeatedly did we protest against the lavish and incautious expenditures of money without effect and we now are compelled to notify you that we have been requested to issue no more warrants on our Treasurer till our over drafts are at least reduced. We are now overdrawn on every available fund....[23]

The city was overdrawn to a total of $83,916.29 and one month later the figure had risen to $93,000. Klein stressed repeatedly that unpaid taxes totaling in excess of $130,000 were owed to the city and collection of them would greatly relieve the treasury's condition.[24]

The new Finance and Revenue chairman, William J. Keller, did not meet with much more success than did Klein, but the council did seem more willing to cut expenses in the face of obvious ruin if they failed to do so. Nevertheless, Keller faced numerous battles during his term of office.

One such battle was waged over the 1891 budget in which

appropriations for many departments were cut in half. All departments were forced to reduce their numbers of employees and numerous projects were eliminated. Even the city council reduced it wages and limited the number of meetings it could hold.

As the year progressed, the city took increasingly stringent measures to reduce expenses. New projects, such as street paving or sewer construction, were severely limited or completely eliminated. Each department voluntarily cut back its own expenses. Then, the Committee on Finance and Revenue requested that more employees be classified as unnecessary and be discharged. Finally, the salaries of all remaining city employees, from the city attorney to park assistants, were reduced.

The poor condition of the city treasury affected every phase of city government. Since parks were considered basically a luxury item in the city's expenses, the park department felt the financial pressure as early as 1890 and the development of the entire park system was affected. Improvements in the controversial North Dallas Park were halted indefinitely. A new park donated to the city, free of encumbrances, by the North Dallas Improvement Company, was never improved. Several citizens in the eastern section of town petitioned the council to provide their area with a park. Their petition was politely received, referred to a committee, and forgotten. An attempt was even made to completely eliminate all appropriations for parks and public grounds in the 1890 budget, although three hundred dollars per month was allowed finally.[25]

A part of the new budget ordinance required all committees to submit monthly reports to the council on all planned expenditures, so although three hundred dollars per month was budgeted for parks and

public grounds, every dollar had to be approved before it could actually be spent. This inconvenience has provided an excellent opportunity for a researcher to obtain concrete figures on expenses in an era for which records have been lost or destroyed.

The monthly expenditures displayed in Table 1 reveal a number of things about the park operations. The budgeted figure of three hundred dollars per month was exceeded only twice in three and one-half years and the amount overspent those two months was easily covered by the excess in other months. The exceptionally large expenditure in November of 1890 was for work done at the city crematory, which fell under the public grounds jurisdiction of the park committee. Only $315 of the $515 appropriated was for park purposes. Other months present a pattern of conscientious frugality. The steady decline in expenditures in 1891 reflects the lowering of wages for the park superintendent, William Keeler, and his assistants and Keeler's eventual discharge on June 10, 1891.

The dismissal of Keeler must have been a painful thing for the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds. Keeler was the third superintendent in the park history and the committee had gone on record in May of 1889 saying that he was doing a good job. But his salary, ninety dollars per month, was the most expensive regular item on each month's appropriation. His salary had been reduced to seventy-five dollars per month in January of 1891, and he may have been either unwilling or unable to accept a further wage cut. On June 20, 1891, his employment terminated and the position was not refilled until the spring of the next year.

TABLE I-1[a]

PARK EXPENDITURES--MONTHLY TOTALS

| 1890 | | 1891 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | January | $285.00 |
| | | February | 225.00 |
| | | March | 275.00 |
| | | April | 225.00 |
| | | May | (no appropriation recorded) |
| | | June | 205.00 |
| July | $231.00 | July | 173.00 |
| August | 236.00 | August | 150.00 |
| September | 365.00 | September | 135.00 |
| October | 200.00 | October | 200.00 |
| November | 515.00 | November | 53.50 |
| December | 250.00 | December | 200.00 |

| 1892 | | 1893 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| January | $500.00 (single appropriation for both months) | January | $461.00 (single appropriation for all three month) |
| February | | February | |
| March | 223.50 | March | |
| April | 281.00 | April | 233.25 |
| May | 235.75 | May | 170.75 |
| June | 266.50 | June | 266.50 |
| July | 266.20 | July | 228.50 |
| August | 231.50 | August | 230.00 |
| September | 280.50 (but only 265.50 approved) | September | 187.00 |
| October | 183.50 | October | 188.25 |
| November | 190.00 | November | 213.50 |
| December | 167.00 | December | (no appropriations recorded) |

TABLE I-1[a]--Continued

| 1894 | |
|---|---|
| January | $188.50 |
| February | 202.50 |
| March | 194.50 |
| April | 145.00 |
| May | (no appropriation recorded except a special appropriation of $ 20.00) |
| June | 203.50 |
| July | 183.00 |
| (Monthly reports ended) | |

Park budget for 1894-95 set at $1894.75 total expenditures

SOURCE: Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 13-vol. 21, 12 July 1890-3 July 1894.

[a]All figures for this table are based upon information found in the monthly appropriations for the department through the period 1890-1894.

Keeler fared better than the majority of the city employees, mostly manual laborers, who lost their jobs in the retrenchment. Some of Keeler's friends petitioned to the city council and he received an appointment as policeman at City Park. The willingness of the council to "make" a place for this man would seem to indicate the respect they had for his previous efforts.[26]

The position of park superintendent was not actually refilled for several years, but the duties of the superintendent were assumed by a new "park keeper" who was hired in March of 1892. Perhaps the new job

title reflects only a bookkeeper's fancy in labeling appropriations. But the consistent use of the title "superintendent" before Keeler was discharged, and the consistent use of "keeper" after March 1892 seem to suggest a downgrading of the park supervisor's status in direct relation to the new, lowered salary of only sixty dollars per month for the position. This further salary cut was a part of a continuing effort throughout the city government to cut costs.

The new park keeper, R. T. Baker, assumed his duties in March of 1892 and apparently did a good job of operating within the limits of his budget. He, like Keeler, had the direct supervision of assistants, manual laborers, numbering from one to four, depending on the needs of the season. Keeler's assistants had been paid fifty dollars per month, but Baker's helpers were downgraded to the status of day labor and earned between $1.50 and $1.75 per day. The variation was usually attributed to the immediate condition of the city treasury as reflected in the monthly appropriations for each department.

Some of the monthly requests from the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds were itemized and gave a glimpse of the daily work done in the park. Almost every month seemed to have some small construction project underway, like a new park bridge, a new drain pipe, or new benches, which required the services of a carpenter and a painter and the materials they must use. Food for the park animals had to be purchased and the itemizations indicated that to the original two deer and two mountain lions had been added at least two eagles, two bears, and some rabbits. During the summer, the keeper's horse was hired (Keeler received fifteen dollars per month, Baker only twelve dollars) to pull

a mower, and during the winter pots were bought for plants in the conservatory.[27]

The amounts appropriated for parks were small, and the work done with that money allowed little more than simple maintenance of previously funded improvements, nevertheless, City Park was improved during this period of "hard times." But most of the more obvious improvements were funded through channels other than the parks department. The Committee on Streets and Bridges provided sidewalks on two sides of the park, and widened and paved the main entrance into the park. The same committee also funded some earthwork done to improve the appearance of the lake in the park. A well in the park was provided through money for the Water Commissioners, as was a fence around the park reservoir. Funding and supervision of an extensive cleaning of the reservoir was done through the Superintendent of Water Works.[28]

When funds could not be obtained through another department for desired improvements, or even required maintenance, and the amount needed was beyond the scope of the monthly appropriations, the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds often resorted to requests for special appropriations. Usually, these requests involved less than one hundred dollars, but as time went on this method was used more and more often. Therefore, the monthly requests became primarily a funding source for the labor payroll and maintenance supplies, while special appropriations were sought for actual improvements or additions to the park facilities.

Some of the activities funded through such special appropriations were for projects like the filling of a stagnant pond in City Park which was a health menace (two hundred dollars), the sprinkling of the park

grass (twenty-five dollars per month), bridge repairs (ten, three hundred, and forty-five dollars), grading, widening and repair of bridge approaches (sixty-three and seventy-six dollars). Other smaller items also received special appropriations: repair to the park fountain (ten dollars) and new seats for the park benches and swings (thirty-one dollars).[29]

One of the improvements obtained by this method seems to have been fairly expensive, especially considering the conservatism of the council on most such appropriations. A "closet" (toilet) was erected in City Park in August of 1893. Even considering that the facility might have had running water and sewer connections, the total bill of $185 charged to the city seems rather high for 1893, especially since labor charges for the construction constituted only $48.25.[30]

The park conservatory seems to have been an item for which the council spent a lot of money over a period of several years, before a permanent structure was built. The council first authorized the conservatory, a hot house for protection of plants in the winter months, in 1889, although it was not built until September of 1890 when four hundred dollars was spent in the construction. Then two months later a special committee of three councilmen arranged to have the structure moved to a more suitable location. In September, the city built yet another greenhouse in the park at a cost of $172.89. But less than a month later this new structure was moved and fifty dollars appropriated for rebuilding the old hot house.[31]

This indecisive pattern of building, tearing down and moving began an important service provided by City Park. The greenhouses were finally

rebuilt permanently and became the central greenhouse facility for the entire park system, providing protection for delicate plants during the winter, space for propagation of plants, and ornamental plants for all the parks. This important function of City Park lasted until the 1960s and made the park, not only the oldest park and one of the best equipped, but also possibly the most vital park in the system.

Another of these improvements obtained by special appropriation was the bear cage. The available records failed to note when or how the city obtained its two bears, but it must have been in January of 1891 because the park committee's request for appropriations for that month included fifty dollars for a cage for bears. This was the earliest mention of the new animals' presence in the park. Then in June of that year, the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds asked the council to have the city engineer draw plans and get estimates for constructing appropriate cages, or pits, since no safe place was available to keep the animals. The older members of the city's menagerie, the deer, eagles, and mountain lions had not been as difficult to house. Fenced pens and large bird cages sufficed. But more elaborate facilities were required for the bears.[32]

However, it was obvious that not everyone on the council was infatuated with the idea of having a miniature zoo in City Park for which the city would have to provide cages, food, and caretakers, and be responsible for the safety of both the animals and the visitors. When the city engineer presented his plans and estimate for a "bear house" in the park, the council voted to have the Committee on Parks and Public Grounds sell the bears as soon as possible. This action prompted a

petition from a citizens group requesting that Dallas turn over all of its birds and animals to the City of Oak Cliff. Apparently desiring some monetary exchange for the menagerie, the council demurred and merely filed the petition.[33]

After some investigation, the committee learned two things. First, no one was willing to pay an acceptable price for the bears, and second, that the citizens of Dallas wanted the bears maintained in the park whether the aldermen did or not. The committeemen apparently met a storm of protest when they tried to sell the animals. So, the council reversed itself, built the necessary cages, and continued to squabble over the expense.[34]

Meanwhile, the city's financial condition had continued to disintegrate. Mayor Connor appointed a Special Committee on Retrenchment to find more ways to cut expenses. Early in 1892, the salaries of all city employees were cut by ten percent and higher paid officials were cut by as much as twenty percent. The city cut salaries an additional ten percent in the fall of 1892 and only several large loans allowed the city government to continue necessary operations. In general, the City of Dallas reduced its functions to an absolute minimum.[35]

The council meetings in 1892 and 1894 became less involved and complicated. The reduction in city funds had forced the city to cease much of its expansion. With the numerous projects slowed, or eliminated, the necessity of thrice weekly meetings declined as did the potential for controversy.

City fathers had passed through two elections since the crisis had first appeared. Few members of the 1890 council still served as aldermen

in 1893. The newer aldermen, apparently a more cautious lot or at least more cognizant of the economic realities of the national depression, kept their expenditures at a minimum, avoided controversy, and appeared more willing to live within their civic income. But the necessity for strict economy continued at least until 1896. As late as October 1895, the council continued a debate over further manpower reductions. But the various departments had been cut to an absolute minimum in 1893, so the council had to consider the effect on governmental efficiency that would result from any further manpower cuts. Since the park department was already operating at an absolute minimum, it was not subjected to further cuts. But in 1894 and 1895, the number of special appropriations approved for park improvements had been slashed and improvements made in the park by other departments were almost eliminated. The other departments could not afford benevolency in the parks because they, too, were operating at minimum levels.[36]

The few maintenance activities that continued in the park were supervised by a new committee created as a result of the realignment of responsibilities following the 1893 reduction of the number of aldermen from twenty-four to only twelve as a part of the retrenchment policy.[37] The Committee on Parks and Public Grounds became the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings, reflecting the committee's newly assigned responsibility for such buildings as City Hall. But the activities overseen by this group seldom involved more than mere maintenance of the existing bridges, drives, lawns, and animals. Only sixty-seven dollars in special appropriations was allowed in 1894 and only twenty-five dollars in 1895.[38]

A Special Committee to Investigate the Financial Condition of the City in December of 1896 presented as a recommendation a second attempt to dispose of the animals located in the City Park as an economy move. Since this move would eliminate much of the required maintenance in the park, the committee also suggested that the park force be cut to only the park keeper. There was no opposition to this move, and apparently some but not all of the animals were sold. As late as January of 1897, the park keeper was still tending to at least two wolves, although an exact enumeration of park animals is now impossible to determine.[39]

While all the primary concern was on the reduction of city expenditures, the council passed a new ordinance governing park usage. It strongly reflected the conservative tendency of the city council and may be viewed as an attempt to limit the use of the park in such a way that maintenance problems resulting from normal public use would be kept at a minimum. The ordinance certainly tended to be a step away from the earlier attempts to make the parks into playgrounds with recreational equipment.

The new regulation prescribed the use of the parks for a number of specific activities. Section one prohibited the playing of any form of ball or cricket, or the throwing of anything from stones to missiles in the Dallas parks. Section two prohibited anyone to "lie upon, or sit upon, or stand upon, or go upon the grass, lawn, or turf" of any of the parks, unless directed to do so by the city authorities (the park keepers had to "go upon the grass" to maintain it). Also, the breaking or defacing of any park equipment (bridges, fountains, and such) or the breaking or cutting of any plants, trees, or shrubs was unlawful.

Section three prohibited the use of threatening, abusive, insulting or indecent language in the parks, as well as obscene, lewd, or indecent acts. Section four prohibited prostitutes or their customers from entering the parks. Section five prohibited commercial vehicles from entering the parks, and section six made violation of any of the preceding prohibitions a misdemeanor.

Significant in its omission from the ordinance was any prohibition of alcoholic beverages, especially since the city was rather strict about not allowing taverns or other such places where beer and other drinks were sold even to exist across the street from the park. But since the ordinance virtually limited the park to use for pleasure drives in private vehicles or strolls only upon the graveled drives, perhaps the use of beverages of any sort was not anticipated. After all, section two if literally enforced precluded such activities as picnics. It must be assumed that the swings in the park were located in an area where children did not have to "go upon the grass" to use them.[40]

Another ordinance further defined park usage in May of 1897. A speed limit of five miles per hour (or an ordinary trot on a horse) became a maximum for all vehicles in the park. No vehicles of any type could drive upon the walkways. Climbing park trees and fences was absolutely forbidden, as was entering the fenced enclosure around the Confederate Monument. Violation of any of these offenses constituted a misdemeanor.[41]

These combined ordinances seem to have relegated the parks to the position of mere ornamental plots of ground to be used for public

viewing. Certainly, the ordinance did not create an atmosphere in which the parks would be used by people for outdoor pleasure and recreation. Children, no doubt, found City Park an unbearably straightlaced place to play, with their frolic strictly limited to the streets and the swings, while a simple game of chase or hide-and-seek across the acres of lovely green grass was punishable by a fine as high as one hundred dollars. Adults without the economic means to afford a fashionable buggy may have felt intimidated by the apparent effort to limit the grounds to use as a driving park, generally a pleasure affordable only by the financially better off. The ordinance seems to have been tailor-made to meet the specificiations of the Eakins Addition which joined the park on the east, since the addition had become one of Dallas' better upper-middle class to upper class neighborhoods.[42] The restrictive clauses in the regulation could have been calculated to keep out, or at least discourage, part of the commonalty that used the park and probably spilled over into the nearby neighborhoods. This rather aristocratic concept of park usage seems somewhat out of place in Dallas. But the earlier prosperity which had allowed the city to afford such frivolities as park swings had been replaced by more difficult times in which a more conservative leadership assumed control.

Almost as though it were epitomizing this conservative concept of park usage, the Daughters of the Confederacy donated to the park an impressive monument in 1896--the first of its kind anywhere in Dallas and the first real addition to the park accouterments since 1890 when the city finances collapsed. The Daughters, organized in 1894, had among their objectives the erection of a fitting monument to their fallen

heroes. Gradually, they gathered funds from various benefits for the seven thousand dollar project which an artist from San Antonio, Frank Tiesch, had been commissioned to create. Built in five units, the memorial included statues of Jefferson Davis, General Albert Sidney Johnson, Brigadier General Stonewall Jackson, and General Robert E. Lee. A figure of a confederate soldier surmounted the central unit while the bust of General W. T. Cabell, a Dallas native and war hero, appeared on the base.[43]

The laying of the cornerstone for the Confederate Monument, June 25, 1896, served as a climax to an era of park development. The excited expansion of the late 1880s had been quashed by the depression of the 1890s. But the activities of 1896, for which the cornerstone laying was the biggest event, indicated that the city began to feel a faint revitalization of its economic condition. The depression remained but the worst had passed. The depression had stagnated the development of the park system and essentially reduced its assets to one attractive driving park. It seems fitting that the era should have been climaxed by the erection of a truly impressive and visually pleasing cluster of statuary. The memorial appropriately harmonized with the concept of the park's usage.

The depression of the 1890s had had a dramatic effect on Dallas. It was the first depression to deeply affect Dallas. The self-reliant frontier village hardly paid attention to the crash of 1857. The Reconstruction Era, which was so difficult for other cities, had been a period of steady growth.[44] The Crash of 1876 which devastated Fort Worth had proven to be a blessed event for Dallas.[45] Troubles in 1879

hardly phased the town. But after a half century of growth and prosperity, the depression which began about 1890 and lasted for six years wreaked havoc in personal fortunes and mutilated the city treasury. The city had barely felt hard times and did not know how to cope with them. The council first tried to gain loans and sell bonds to maintain its level of civic standing, but finally it was forced to economize.

One of the city departments most affected by the retrenchment of expenditures was the park department, if one park, several unimproved plots of ground, a couple of hired hands, and a handful of rag-tag animals can properly be called a department. The council boldly expanded its program in 1889 which might have made the city a jewel box of attractive parks, playgrounds, and boulevards. But the sun set on the first day of park expansion almost before it began and the night lasted for more than six years. It was unfortunate but undoubtedly to be expected that when Dallas was faced with its first civic crisis of any magnitude, it chose to sacrifice beauty, open spaces, and recreational facilities in order to lighten the burden on the civic finances. It seems that all the speeches made about the need for parks as places for children to frolic in peace and safety and as places for common men to rejoice in God's nature were only superficial rhetoric. When the economy got rough, philosophy was discarded as concern for the children's play and the laborers' relaxation proved too expensive to be practical.

Although the city's response to the depression stunted the growth of Dallas' parks for almost a decade, the council's decision to forego park development should not be criticized in the light of hindsight from a late twentieth century social conscience or in terms of the progress

made during the crippling depression of the 1930s.[46] In 1890 the city faced a major financial crisis and had to weather the storm without the assistance of federal funds or work programs. The city survived and did so without discarding its one developed park although it seemed a constant drain on the treasury. In return for its expenses in the park, the city received only increased property values in the park area and the appreciation of citizens who used the park.

The simple maintenance and meager improvement of the City Park during the depression represented a major breakthrough in Dallas' concept of city services. The city was not a congested metropolis with slums and ghettos in desperate need of breathing spaces. Parks in Dallas in the 1890s would have been beneficial but they remained a luxury. Dallas provided water, sewerage, streets, public lighting, education, and fire and police protection. But all these things undisputably fell under the context of public safety and welfare. The city could not exist in its complex interrelationship of specialized activities unless someone provided these necessary services, and years of social evolution had deposited these functions at the doors of American city halls.

Dallas, during the depression, almost imperceptably enlarged its definition of public welfare to include functions which gave spiritual refreshment, relaxation, and amusement. Providing pleasurable experiences for the citizens became a city service in the form of an attractive park for driving and strolling, a miniature zoo, and a meager amount of playground facilities. But once the city assumed this function, it continued to enlarge the concept. The evolution of most later additions to

the Dallas park repertoire of activities--band concerts, plays, free movies, dances, sports programs, and recreation centers--must be ultimately traced back to the depression of the 1890s when Dallas maintained the City Park and its menagerie in spite of economic adversity. Although the park was relegated to an inferior position in the city priorities during the depression, civic leaders assumed the provision of a park and its aesthetic qualities as an accepted urban function and that function remains intact.

## NOTES

### THE RAVAGES OF RETRENCHMENT

[1]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 6, 16 August 1886, p. 50; 18 September 1886, p. 93; 8 November 1886, p. 156; 23 May 1887, p. 576; 4 June 1887, p. 603.

[2]The streetcar company agreed to pay five dollars per month for each light for four months. Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 6, 24 July 1886, p. 12; 26 March 1887, p. 393; 11 June 1887, pp. 619-20.

[3]Ibid., vol. 8, 21 July 1888, p. 364; 4 August 1888, p. 404; vol. 10, 10 July 1889, p. 213; 17 July 1889, p. 247; 25 September 1889, p. 564; and Dallas Morning News, 11 July 1889, p. 5; 18 July 1889, p. 8.

[4]For information on the City Beautiful and reactions to it, read William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1964); Mel Scott, American City Planning Since 1890 (Berkeley: University of California, 1969); Peter Schmitt, Back To Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America (New York: Oxford University, 1969).

[5]"Dallas Guide and History" (Unpublished manuscript written by the Texas Writers Project for the Work Projects Administration, located in Dallas Public Library, work suspended on project in 1940), p. 131.

[6]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 10, 10 July 1889, p. 205.

[7]Ibid., vol. 7, 17 March 1888, p. 554; and Dallas Morning News, 18 March 1888, p. 4.

[8]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 9, 9 February 1889, p. 314; 23 February 1889, p. 355.

[9]Dallas Morning News, 6 January 1887, p. 8. However, when the park properties became more extensive in later years, the parks became the sites for such institutions as fire stations, museums, aquariums, branch libraries, etc. As Louis B. Houston, director of the Dallas Park Department in 1939-1972, explains, such institutions "often make good neighbors." See video-taped interview with Harland Bartholomew and L. B. Houston, 1972, in the Living Lecture Series, Department of Park Administration, Landscape Architecture, and Horticulture, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[10]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 7, 17 March 1888, p. 553; Dallas Morning News, 18 March 1888, p. 4; and L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[11]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 8, 21 July 1888, p. 347; 26 July 1888, p. 366; 28 July 1888, pp. 387-88.

[12]John Hughes Cochran, Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress (Dallas: A. S. Mathis Service Publishing Co., 1928), pp. 217-41; and Philip Lindsley, A History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity (2 vols.; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), I, p. 213.

[13]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 18, 22 October 1892, pp. 454-55.

[14]Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities (New York: Sagamore Press, Inc., 1957), pp. 1-18; see this thesis, Chapter 2, pp. ; and "Dallas Guide and History," pp. 116, 120, 143, 151.

[15]Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 741; Harold Underwood Faulkner, American Economic History (8th ed.; New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 519; Otto C. Lightner, The History of Business Depressions (New York: Burt Franklin, 1922, reprint 1970), pp. 181-82, 186-94; W. Jett Lauck, The Causes of the Panic of 1893 (New York: Haughton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), Chapter I, II, VII, and VIII; and Frank P. Weberg, "The Background of the Panic of 1893" (Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1929), passim.

[16]Dallas had developed a large agriculturally based industry producing such items as saddles, harnesses, wagons, and carriages. By 1893 Dallas' Daily Times Herald declared that the city was the second largest distribution point for farm machinery in the world with annual sales of over ten million dollars. The Merchants Cotton Association, organized in 1892, did much to make Dallas a dominant cotton exchange for the Southwest. See "Dallas Guide and History," pp. 140, 153, 233.

[17]Ibid., pp. 154-55, 159.

[18]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 12, 21 April 1890, p. 204.

[19]Ibid., vol. 11, 4 January 1890, p. 303; 8 February 1890, p. 479; vol. 12, 21 April 1890, pp. 204-12.

[20]Ibid., 20 May 1890, p. 357; 29 May 1890, pp. 391-406.

[21]Ibid., vol. 13, 20 September 1890, p. 471; and Dallas Morning News, 21 September 1890, p. 16.

[22]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 13, 20 September 1890, pp. 471-73; and Dallas Morning News, 21 September 1890, p. 16.

[23]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 15, 15 April 1891, p. 116.

[24]Ibid., 18 April 1891, pp. 138-39; 16 May 1891, p. 296. The city treasury was able to operate at a deficit because the city treasurer was, and still is today, an officer of one of the local banks. The banks periodically bid for the privilege of having the city funds deposited in their hands, and part of the contract arranged between the bank and the city always includes a provision that if the city should overdraw any of its accounts, the bank will cover the overdraft out of bank funds and will charge the city a specified interest rate on the amount loaned to the city account.

[25]Ibid., vol. 11, 15 February 1890, p. 507; vol. 12, 3 July 1890, p. 605; vol. 13, 12 July 1890, p. 35.

[26]Ibid., vol. 9, 1 May 1899, p. 545; vol. 15, 17 June 1891, p. 21; 6 July 1891, p. 557.

[27]Ibid., vol. 12, 31 May 1890, p. 408; 4 June 1890, p. 442; vol. 13, 12 July 1890, p. 57; 13 August 1890, pp. 243-44; 10 September 1890, p. 396; vol. 14, 29 October 1890, p. 17; 5 November 1890, p. 46; 26 December 1890, p. 255; 3 January 1891, p. 313; 25 February 1891, p. 566; vol. 15, 21 March 1891, p. 22; 20 April 1891, p. 159; 9 May 1891, p. 254; 13 May 1891, p. 277; 10 June 1891, p. 415; vol. 16, 25 July 1891, pp. 15-16; 22 August 1891, p. 126; 9 September 1891, p. 188; 14 November 1891, pp. 405-6; 5 December 1891, p. 488.

[28]Ibid., vol. 13, 5 July 1890, p. 16; 15 July 1890, pp. 74-75; 9 August 1890, p. 215; 19 August 1890, p. 282; 10 September 1890, p. 404; 11 October 1890, p. 560; vol. 14, 5 November 1890, pp. 54, 53; 3 December 1890, p. 144; vol. 15, 13 May 1891, p. 278; 24 June 1891, p. 499; vol. 16, 29 December 1891, pp. 581-82; vol. 17, 5 March 1892, p. 230; 22 June 1892, pp. 619-20.

[29]Ibid., vol. 18, 18 July 1892, p. 105; 11 August 1892, pp. 190-91, 204-5; 5 September 1892, p. 296; vol. 19, 2 February 1893, p. 91; 14 March 1893, p. 194; 11 April 1893, p. 267; 27 April 1893, p. 319; 16 May 1893, p. 378; 11 July 1893, p. 572; 18 July 1893, p. 587.

[30]Ibid., 18 July 1893, p. 588; vol. 20, 22 August 1893, p. 33; 29 August 1893, p. 46; 5 September 1893, p. 53.

[31]Ibid., vol. 11, 30 October 1889, p. 38; 2 November 1889, p. 51; vol. 13, 10 September 1890, p. 396, vol. 14; 5 November 1890, p. 53; vol. 18, 8 September 1892, pp. 302-3; 26 September 1892, pp. 374-75; 22 October 1892, p. 459; and Dallas Morning News, 6 November 1890, p. 3.

[32]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 14, 3 January 1891, p. 313; vol. 15, 27 June 1891, p. 521.

[33]Ibid., vol. 16, 25 July 1891, p. 8; 1 August 1891, p. 35.

[34]Ibid., vol. 16, 22 August 1891, p. 127; 9 September 1891, p. 193; 14 November 1891, pp. 405-6; 16 December 1891, p. 528; 29 December 1891, p. 590.

[35]Ibid., vol. 17, 27 January 1892, p. 69; vol. 18, 18 October 1892, pp. 432-35.

[36]Ibid., taken generally from vols. 19, 20, 21, and 22. Specifically see vol. 22, 22 October 1895, pp. 457-63.

[37]The Committee on Retrenchment considered the larger number of aldermen unnecessary to governmental efficiency and saw the per diem salary they received for each meeting they attended as an unnecessary drain on the city treasury.

[38]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 19, 18 April 1893, p. 299; vol. 21, 18 September 1894, p. 394; 9 October 1894, p. 435; 16 October 1894, p. 457; vol. 22, 10 January 1895, p. 15.

[39]Ibid., 10 January 1895, p. 15; 31 December 1895, pp. 545-54; vol. 23, 22 September 1896, p. 266; 8 December 1896, p. 320.

[40]Dallas, Texas, City Ordinance Book, vol. 8, pp. 76-77 (approved on 15 September 1894).

[41]Ibid., vol. 9, p. 317 (approved on 28 May 1897).

[42]Joseph B. Rucker, Jr., former executive director of the State Fair Association, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[43]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see sections on "City Park" and "Confederate Monument Builders"; Dallas Morning News, 26 June 1896, pp. 4, 5; and Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 23, 2 June 1896, pp. 162-63. The monument was moved to Pioneer Park in 1961.

[44]Many natives of older southern states, and especially border states, left their homes during Reconstruction to escape the unpleasant atmosphere of occupation and to escape feared economic reprisals from those who had supported the Yankee cause. Many of these southerners resettled in the Dallas area and helped Dallas maintain an expanding economy despite the Reconstruction conditions. See Cochran, Dallas County, pp. 87-88, 133.

[45]The Crash of 1873 occurred shortly after the T. & P. Railway had completed its tracks through Dallas on its way to Fort Worth and points further west. After the crash destroyed T. & P.'s financial status, all construction was halted. Dallas became the major distribution point at "the end of the line." Fort Worth, which had boomed in anticipation of the railroad, became a virtual ghost town in which a Dallas resident reported he had seen a panther stalking the deserted streets. Fort Worth's few residents, in defiance, began to call their town Panther City (thus originated the nickname frequently seen in Fort Worth even today). Fort Worth boomed again when the T. & P. recovered and pushed further west in 1876. But the depression had established Dallas as the dominant trading center of the northwest Texas, and its dominance has never been seriously challenged since. See "Dallas Guide and History," pp. 121-22, 228, 289; and John S. Spratt, The Road to Spindletop: Economic Change in Texas (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1955), p. 9.

[46]Patricia R. Hogan, "The Step Into a Modern World: The History of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department 1931 to Present" (M. S. thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974), Chapter 2.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE "OTHER" PARKS

While the depression of the 1890s ravaged Dallas's city treasury, the development of the park system marked time, except for some slight improvements at City Park. But it should not be assumed that the people of Dallas were at a total loss for pleasure grounds and recreational facilities. There were at least four privately owned parks in the city and two publicly owned parks besides City Park.

The largest and most elaborate park in the city was the privately owned fair grounds, site of the annual Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition. The landscaped grounds, laid off with drives and walks, held several large buildings including an auditorium. Although not always open to the public, other activities frequently used the grounds. A spring festival complete with flower shows was held each year as well as the lucrative spring horse races. Conventions of various types occasionally rented the buildings.

The fair itself, held each fall, represented an economic venture staged by local city boosters in an attempt to attract trade to Dallas. The event served as a medium to advertise local industries, accommodations, services, and institutions to the thousands of visitors from all over Texas who were attracted to the gala affair. But, in spite of the economic rationale for the fair, the grounds used by the fair association did provide an attractive privately owned park for the city. The number and variety of events which Dallasites attended on the property

necessarily place the fair grounds as one of Dallas' primary parks in the 1890s.

Another privately owned park was the Shady View Park. This park was apparently a subsidiary holding of one of the local street car companies with relations to the local banks.[1] Shady View must have been attractive as local citizens extensively used it for outings, picnics, and parties. May Day festivities, Fourth of July celebrations, and German Octoberfests were often held in the park where the attractions included a menagerie of animals. One of the factors which may have contributed to the popularity of the park was that beer could be purchased on the premises. No such privilege was available in City Park where the council rather strictly kept saloons from even opening across the street from the park. But beer flowed freely at Shady View, particularly when the German population of Dallas assembled for activities.[2]

The Negro population of Dallas was generally barred from using City Park, so a privately owned park came into existence for their use. No legal barrier segregated the races in Dallas and no ordinance of the period ever mentioned separation of the races, but local society generally accepted segregation as a rule of order. Little mention is made of Colored Folks Park in the local newspapers, but a license was granted in 1890 for the sale of beer in the park.[3]

Owners of several other plots of ground labeled their real estate as "parks" for short periods of time, although none of them ever approached the level of development found in Shady View Park. These other "parks" can be classified generally as businesses which probably were not successful financial ventures.

The City of Dallas, itself, owned several plots of ground for park purposes as explained in Chapters two and three.[4] But none of the acreage was ever developed as a park except for some fencing, brush cutting, and preparatory efforts at laying off drives in North Dallas Park. Nevertheless, the city owned these grounds and designated them as parks. Even though left in a natural wooded state, complete with weeds and underbrush, the Turtle Creek bottoms in the North Dallas Park area served as a rustic setting for many a family outing, although no attempt was ever made to record this activity. Other undeveloped land may have served a similar capacity. Certainly the pastimes of children did not require formal gardens and manicured lawns, but rather simple open spaces to roam.

The city improved one of the public grounds and referred to it as a park, although it was not a park in the same sense as City Park. The city hospital which had been built in the early '90s had several acres surrounding it which the council had ordered plowed up for garden purposes to serve the needs of the hospital. The council first applied the title of Hospital Park in reference to the grounds in January of 1894 when the city participated in a federally subsidized seed procurement program. Later in the spring of that year, the city fathers appropriated over two hundred dollars for grading and graveling of drives and other ornamentation in the hospital area. Some additional work was done the following spring as well. But the park was not really intended to be a playground or a driving park, rather its purpose was to make the hospital a more pleasant facility. The maintenance of the grounds complemented the hospital building, it did not provide a place for outdoor recreation.[5]

The parks committee also maintained other small areas which could not really be termed parks. At four locations in the city, the council maintained for about a year ornamental fountains used for watering horses and other street uses. They were dismantled after a year of use because they proved to be of too light construction to be practical. But for a year the fountains served much in the same fashion as European plaza fountains. A lawn in the nature of a park also surrounded the County Court House, which was maintained by the county.[6]

In addition to all of the public and private parks and grounds, many open, undeveloped lots remained scattered through the city. Undoubtedly these lots served as sandlots for baseball games and other children's play. Also, the presence of open spaces in the city, which was congested only in the heart of downtown, prevented people from getting the feeling of being overcrowded. This fact may have been responsible for the lack of any concerted citizens' movement to gain parks in the city. Parks simply were not a requirement for Dallasites to be able to enjoy fresh air and open spaces.

In addition, the life style of Americans, including Dallasites, in the 1890s did not depend heavily upon various forms of amusement and recreation as does life in the late twentieth century. Leisure time was of a limited quantity in an era when six day work weeks still dominated labor practices, and working schedules often reached twelve hours a day. Necessary household chores usually filled a worker's free hours. Taboos against sports and other amusements on Sunday still strongly influenced the religiously conservative community. Besides, as Joe B. Rucker has suggested, people simply did not seem to be driven by a desire for

recreation in earlier times in Dallas as much as at the present.[7]

The problems of transportation also limited the pursuit of pleasure at parks in the nineteenth century. Public transportation serviced most of the parks, public or private, but unless one had easy access to the street car lines, it may have been inconvenient to go to the parks. Since the majority of people depended on public transportation for their mobility, many potential park users may have been eliminated by the lack of convenient facilities.

But the most important element of the low demand for park facilities in Dallas may have been the fact that people were not accustomed to seeking recreation in public parks. Until the establishment of such a pattern, the people "didn't know what they were missing," so to speak.

Whatever the reasons for the relatively low level of demand for additional parks, it does seem evident, although the City of Dallas provided only one improved park, that private parks, quasi-parks, and numerous open spaces seemed to fill the void in a fashion that was acceptable to a less sophisticated generation which did not require extensive parks with elaborate recreation and amusement facilities.

## NOTES

### THE "OTHER" PARKS

[1]W. H. Gaston, the City Treasurer, who was an officer in one of the local banks, was also apparently one of the directors of the private park's activities. In 1894 he donated to the City Park, all of the animals in the Shady Park menagerie.

[2]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 13, 16 August 1890, p. 255; 21 August 1890, p. 287; vol. 21, 4 May 1894, p. 54; vol. 22, 30 April 1895, p. 235.

[3]Ibid., vol. 12, 26 June 1890, p. 553; and C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 102-4.

[4]See this volume, Chapter 2, generally, and Chapter 3, p. 69.

[5]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 20, 16 January 1894, p. 310; vol. 20, 24 January 1894, p. 337; 30 January 1894, p.357; vol. 21, 24 April 1894, pp. 15, 18; 15 May 1894, p. 98; 22 May 1894, p. 122.

[6]Ibid., vol. 9, 4 March 1889, p. 381; vol. 10, 4 June 1889, p. 102; 17 July 1889, p. 254; 10 August 1889, p. 377; 17 August 1889, p. 412; vol. 12, 15 March 1890, p. 29.

[7]Joseph B. Rucker, Jr, former executive director of the State Fair Association, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Rucker has served the State Fair for twenty-three years in various capacities including general manager and executive producer.

# CHAPTER 5

## THE TIME WAS FAVORABLE

The economic conditions of the Dallas city treasury improved in 1896 after more than six years of "hard times" and outright depression. Slowly and undramatically, the functions of city government expanded. Necessary services such as streets, sewers, bridges, and water were the first departments to experience the reviving flow of money. Aldermen still closely scrutinized and limited new projects, but they were no longer automatically rejected.

City Park, which through the depression had been tolerated almost like a financial orphan, experienced some small tokens of this revitalization as early as 1896. For the first time since retrenchment began, the council responded favorably to a request from the park keeper for additional help in the spring to plant flowers and prepare for the summer. Safety fences around the water-filled gravel pit and a replacement for a worn out bridge across the park lake were finally erected although the hazardous conditions had existed for several years. The artesian well was repaired and yet another greenhouse was built in the park. Then in the spring of 1897, the city finally did some minimal landscaping around the Confederate Monument as they had promised the Daughters of the Confederacy they would do. These necessary improvements, except for the greenhouse, were basically maintenance problems which had been caused, in one way or another, by depression-born retrenchment. Nevertheless, backlogged maintenance had to be accomplished

before the park could push ahead.[1]

The signal that a new era of park development had dawned came in mid-summer of 1897. Alderman W. H. Lincecum, a former chairman of the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee, presented a resolution that voiced City Beautiful philosophy which had not been heard in City Hall since 1889. He said that since "Public Parks are essential to the Health and comfort of the citizens [and to] the beauty and general appearance [of] metropolitan cities, and...[since] the City of Dallas is very deficient in that respect..." that the city should investigate the possibility of improving its park system.[2] Specifically, he suggested that some seventy acres of city owned land lying between the new hospital and the Turtle Creek Pumping Station be improved as a park. About forty-eight acres of this land was the old North Dallas Park while the acres around the hospital had acquired the formal title of Hospital Park. He wanted the city to use jail inmates as laborers for the improvements to keep the costs down. The council approved the idea and five aldermen, the three members of the park committee plus Lincecum and Munger, as well as the mayor, formed a special committee to study the matter.[3]

Another alderman who was also not on the park committee in 1897 chided the council later in the summer into approving a plan whereby local florists could use park land for growing flowers since beauty would be added to the park at no expense to the city. Alderman Wolfson made this suggestion on the basis that "the council has never shown a disposition to appropriate" the money necessary for the park staff to propagate and protect through the winter the plants in the park.[4]

Shortly thereafter, the council approved a structure vaguely resembling an oriental pagoda to protect the artesian well in the park and erected it the following summer for two hundred dollars. Then in early fall, yet another greenhouse was approved for the City Park. While these items were simple enough, they represented a change in attitude from that seen only a few months earlier. Whether the spring elections had changed the dominant philosophy on the council is difficult to say, but the pagoda was a physical addition to the park and the five hundred dollars allowed for greenhouse construction represented the largest park appropriation since 1890.[5]

However, the council hardly threw open the floodgate for extensive park improvements. The Public Grounds and Buildings Committee, in 1898, proposed a fairly extensive landscaping project for City Park which included the planting of about two hundred trees, the grading of drives, and the leveling of lawns. But the Committee on Finance and Records balked at the five hundred dollars required for the project and the council refused to appropriate the money, although a more modest proposal was later approved.[6]

The 1898-1899 city budget allowed small amounts for park expenditures. The finance committee had budgeted less than two hundred dollars per month. Since only labor and maintenance were provided for by the total allocation of twenty-one hundred dollars for twelve months, any improvements in park facilities had to be handled through special appropriations. However, the supplementary budget submitted in December of 1898 reflected a hike in wages for the park superintendent whose salary had reached a low of fifty-four dollars per month during the depression.

The council boosted his earnings to $61.50 per month--the first hike in park wages since before the depression.[7]

Mayor Bryan T. Barry added his voice to the increasing clamor for park improvements by making the most venturesome suggestion heard concerning parks since the abortive attempt to expand the park system in 1889. Barry suggested that the city dispose of two of its city lots, the old hospital grounds and a smaller lot on Commerce Street, by exchanging them for other lots suitable for small parks. Since the lots served no purpose as city property, the mayor considered the acquisition of additional parks, especially small ones in the residential neighborhoods, of great importance. Barry revealed a great deal about the city finances in his closing statement. He said that he considered that moment a favorable time to secure the new parks. The city had emerged from the depression; it could once again afford to expand its park system.[8]

Certainly the city needed more public parks, not that population density was becoming a problem or that open spaces were becoming rare, but the limited acreage of City Park simply could not hope to fulfill the needs of forty-two thousand people. It was, perhaps, fortunate that during the depression-ridden 1890s Dallas' population increased by only forty-six hundred. If the growth rate had continued at the rate experienced before the depression, the city would have faced the genuine problem of trying to provide basic services like sewers and water supplies, without even considering the public need for park space.[9]

The decision to begin anew on park development signified that a new period of park development had begun. This turn of events can

probably be attributed simply to a turnover in city and park personnel. Bryan T. Barry had become mayor in 1894, replacing W. C. Connor. Barry expressed his sentiments on parks in his suggestions for gaining small neighborhood parks. John H. Traylor became mayor in 1898 and also went on record as strongly in favor of an expanded park system.

But one of the most important personnel changes in park history occurred in 1896. R. T. Baker resigned as park superintendent and W. R. Tietze was hired to replace him. Tietze was destined to serve in that capacity for the next thirty-seven years and to oversee a massive expansion of the park system. According to Tietze, the "entire park system" which he took over "contained...one ramshackle building about 10 x 25 feet, in the nature of a greenhouse, about 12 geraniums, a banana bed and a small number of hedgeplants and tools valued at about $14."[10] Obviously, the improvements wrought in the park during twenty years of existence had not impressed the professional floriculturist.

Tietze took charge of the park and began propagating plants to beautify the grounds. To do this, he arranged to have the old pump house located in the park converted into a more permanent greenhouse than the park had had. By 1900, Tietze had so expanded his operations that a full time florist was hired to oversee the plant care. That man was Ed Bilger who also began a long and productive career with the park system and who later held the positions of Park Florist and City Park Foreman.[11]

The supervision by W. R. Tietze brought numerous physical changes in the park but some interested alderman also influenced park development. Alderman Lincecum and Wolfson were both quite instrumental in

advancing the park system in the late '90s although neither held a seat on the park committee. It was Wolfson who started one of the things most frequently remembered by old-timers--the park concerts.

Although band music in the parks, in the grand style of John Philip Sousa, had long been a familiar sound in American parks, and bandstands were almost a necessity for many older park systems, the practice of providing such entertainment in the Dallas park had never been suggested. Bands cost money and a regular series of weekly concerts could get quite expensive. For some reason no one had ever suggested that bands perform regularly, and the depression had certainly wiped out the city's ability to hire such performers. Therefore, except for an occasional German band or local minstrels freely performing at a park festival or holiday celebration, bands had never been a part of the Dallas park scene. As the city pulled out of the economic doldrums, Alderman Wolfson decided the parks were long overdue for this type of summer amusement.

Wolfson couched his suggestions in terms which further extended the concept of parks as a city service functioning for the health and welfare of the citizens. In his resolution, he stated that City Park "should be made a pleasure resort for the many families who are unable to visit the far off summer resorts [and] for this purpose it is necessary that something more be furnished than the exhilirating [sic] ozone & etc."[12]

The "something" that Wolfson had in mind was band concerts. He had couched his suggestion in terms of helping the poor, and even the not-so-poor, but no argument appears to have been made either for or

against the propriety of the city assuming that it was a proper civic duty to provide entertainment or amusement, because the citizens were unable to afford to go elsewhere for their resorts. There were no political scientists on the council to analyze the future consequences of such an assumption of responsibility. The city fathers simply decided that concerts would be nice things to have in the park and proceeded to provide them.[13]

The Wolfson resolution provided for an appropriation of twenty dollars per month, which, it was expected, would be augmented by subscriptions from private citizens and local merchants. The bi-weekly concerts finally started only after considerable delay apparently due to an inability to secure sufficient subscriptions. The twenty dollars per month was eventually paid to a citizens committee from the Commercial Club which arranged for the music and obtained the subscriptions to complement the city subsidy.[14]

The concerts, an instant success although they lasted only through September 1898, must have been the highlight of the week on the rather languid local scene. So popular were the Sunday and Thursday night events that the Dallas Morning News estimated that over thirty-five hundred people attended the concert on September 9 alone. The bands employed generally consisted of about twenty to twenty-five members who performed from a bandstand in the northern section of the park. Their musical selections included military marches, overtures, waltzes, and popular airs.[15]

Audiences at these concerts sat on seats arranged around the bandstand although the News complained that there were not enough of them

provided because many of the people, especially some of the ladies, had to stand, while most of the children apparently sat on the grass. The class of people attracted to the concerts seems significant because they were described as being of the "better" class--prominent businessmen, their families, and other members of the more exclusive circles in Dallas society. This pattern of attendance might have been expected because Dallasites, especially those who had achieved some degree of financial success in the growing city, seemed to enjoy imitating what they saw or read about northern and European cities. The intense fascination in Dallas with the activities of the European royalty and Yankee aristocrats seem to suggest that the Dallasites eagerly grasped for sophistication. Dallas matrons chicly attended the concerts and promenaded their finery along the graveled walks of the parks, as reported by one News reporter, just like eastern ladies. Dallas men, often little removed from their rough frontier beginnings, may have hoped to gain a touch of culture at these events. The deportment of the audiences at these concerts seems to suggest that the people were, almost self-consciously, trying to act in a dignified manner. The News reported, seemingly amazed but proud, that the audience had behaved very well, with no boisterous cheers, whistles, or shouting as was normal for Dallas audiences, responding to the music only with dignified and appropriate applause.[16]

The next year, Alderman Wolfson did not wait until mid-summer to begin talking about concerts. In April of 1899, he proposed that the council give prior approval to a five hundred dollar allocation in the new city budget for park concerts. This figure divided by the three

summer months during which the concerts were to be held, represented a nine hundred percent increase over the 1898 figure of only twenty dollars per month. Some understandable opposition developed in the Finance and Records Committee where a figure more in line with Mayor Traylor's suggestion of twenty dollars per week, to be augmented by contributions from interested individuals, was adopted. But even the mayor's suggestion was a four hundred percent increase over the previous year.[17]

This addition of free band concerts was just one more facet of the new era that had begun for the parks when the depression cycle had run its course. The free entertainment brought large crowds to the City Park on a regular basis. No doubt, many of the visitors experienced the pleasures of a city park for the first time. But whether the people were newcomers or old friends of the park, the concept of going to a park for enjoyment, entertainment, or recreation was gradually being drilled into their minds, not that any great opposition developed to counter the movement.

On a broader scale, the Dallasites may have been in step with a national sentiment which seemed to be demanding more from life than ceaseless hard work, and demanding more in the way of services from their cities than merely sewers, transit systems, and water supplies. "Americans needed something more soul-satisfying," and the thing that benefited the most from this national craving seemed to be the City Beautiful Movement, grown to full bloom by the late '90s.[18] Dallasites may have been reacting like the rest of America to the bleakness of their drab experiences of the early '90s. The Dallas citizens were ready for city parks and the concerts started in 1898 only heightened

their growing demand.

Yet, there was nothing revolutionary or truly novel about the trend of the times. A sense of responsibility for the public welfare had been growing for several decades, nurtured by interrelated movements for pure water, disease control, and effective sewerage systems. Parks represented only an extension of the welfare concept because they were intended, according to Frederick Law Olmsted, to give the urban dweller the equivalent of a day in the country. The park movement, especially, prepared the middle and upper class Americans for the reform efforts that periodically swept through the cities. One of the goals of many of the reformers was to relieve the congestion of slum and immigrant neighborhoods by providing them with parks and playgrounds and thus aiding the welfare of the residents.[19]

In Dallas, the move to expand the park system suggested by Mayor Bryan T. Barry in 1897 had not produced concrete results. No appropriate land exchanges were forthcoming, although several offers had been made. The new mayor who took office in 1899, John W. Traylor, moved to push park expansion by making a specific recommendation concerning the land swaps proposed by his predecessor. He wanted the city to accept two blocks of land, totaling five acres, in exchange for a 100' x 100' lot owned by the city. The two lots adjoined the Catholic cemetery and Traylor argued that the blending of park and cemetery would be beneficial to both properties. He viewed the two lots as the most eligible pieces of ground for park purposes in the northwest portion of the city. But the northwest section already had more than its share of parks, at least undeveloped ones, because North Dallas Park and Hospital Park were

both in the area. Thus, Traylor's suggestion, although well intentioned, was not pursued.[20]

In fact, it appears that a schism developed in the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee which must have stymied all genuine development of either park facilities or park philosophy for about three years. Alderman A. P. Black chaired the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee. He had served as chairman in the previous term and had been a member of the committee since 1897. The committee had been noticeably inactive during the revitalization of activities in the park, with most of the resolutions concerning park activities coming from two aldermen not on the committee, Lincecum[21] and Wolfson, and from the two mayors during the period, Barry and Traylor. Mayor Traylor apparently attempted to instill some life into the park committee by appointing both Wolfson and Lincecum to the committee in April of 1899. Although Black was retained as the committee chairman, the two new members might have dominated the three-man committee. But the battle lines seem to have already been established. Although Black chaired the committee, Wolfson and the mayor, individually, not the park committee, proposed the second season of concerts.

The conflict broke into the open in July of 1899 when an obvious difference of opinion about park usage had to be settled by the entire council. Permission to use the park for various group activities, like festivals or entertainments, was generally granted by the committee, with all such requests which came directly to the city council referred to the committee for action. But on July 25, Wolfson presented a resolution to the council recommending that the Women's Relief Corps be

granted permission to present an entertainment, apparently a bazaar with a few skits, to raise money for the group, on the lawn in City Park. The aldermen granted permission without much ado, but such a request should have been routinely handled by the committee. The division within the committee was blatantly obvious at the council meeting immediately following the women's entertainment. Chairman Black presented a resolution to ban from the park any further "Ice Cream or other festivals...where anything is offered for sale."[22] Lincecum attempted to get the resolution tabled but failed. It is evident that the council realized the friction within the committee because a suggestion was made to appoint a special committee to resolve the matter, although it was not appointed. Alderman Beilhorz, another former park committee member, attempted to get a compromise by reserving only one corner for festivals and such, but he failed. After considerable parliamentary arguing, a compromise of sorts was finally passed. Black's original motion to ban the festivals prevailed, but three groups who had already been given permission to hold festivals were allowed to go ahead with their plans. But Beihorz, Lincecum, and Wolfson all voted against the compromise.[23]

This little battle hardly shook the foundations of the city government, and the Dallas Morning News dismissed the entire argument as having been a "lengthy discussion." But for the park system the issue was vital, and Lincecum, Wolfson, and Beilhorz obviously realized the stakes over which they were squabbling. Two totally opposing concepts of park usage struggled for dominance. Alderman Black represented the conservative point of view which had gained control of the park operations

during the depression. He saw city parks as attractive places to see and admire while driving or strolling through them; whereas, Lincecum and Wolfson saw parks as "people places" where citizens could gather, play, and be entertained, as well as admire the scenery. Reduced to basics, the issue was whether Dallas parks would be active or passive; would people merely go to the parks to see them, or would they be drawn to them by the activities and facilities there.

Lincecum and Wolfson lost the battle and saw the parks return to a passive status. Even the popular band concerts were apparently not held in 1900 or 1901, although the privately owned Oak Cliff Park, in the still unannexed suburb, seems to have filled the void in summer entertainment with free concerts and vaudeville shows. But the setback for Dallas was only temporary because the sentiments of the general public favored more active parks. Dallasites had to wait a few more years for park expansion, but the momentum of public pressure increased, thanks to the brief efforts of Lincecum and Wolfson.[24]

Meanwhile, however, the conflict apparently halted all cooperation within the committee. Only twice in the next nine months did the committee even appear in the minutes of the city council, once to ask for a pedestal to be erected for a statue of the "Goddess of Liberty" which had been donated to City Park and then a second time to request that a new pump be purchased for the park well.[25]

When elections were held in the spring of 1900, the political makeup of the council seems to have become more conservative. Neither Wolfson nor Lincecum returned, although Black retained his seat. A former Dallas sheriff who was elected mayor, Ben E. Cabell, appointed an

entirely new Public Grounds and Buildings Committee. Of the three members, only one, J. F. Callahan,[26] had served on the council before, and he was not appointed chairman of the committee. Of the two freshman aldermen, J. Pat Homan and C. A. Gill,[27] the latter joined with Callahan to provide some stability to the parks committee for the next five years. But in 1900, with a committee so fraught with inexperience, and a generally conservative council, the stage was set for a term of inactivity in the parks.

It should be understood that the inactivity covered all areas of city government, not just the parks. The entire council had reduced its level of involvement. In the closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening years of the twentieth, the councils seemed willing to continue the status quo, with the major event of the period being the annexation of the town of Oak Cliff to Dallas. No extensive building programs were begun, like in the late 1880s, and few controversies were actually solved. The aldermen simply argued the issues and constantly postponed any final decision, or waited for further reports from legal or technical advisors. In spite of their sluggish pace of transacting business, the council made a habit of taking a month long recess during the summer, a practice which would have been unthinkable in the days of Mayor Connor's administration when two and three action packed meetings each week were absolute necessities. Some of the lack of genuine accomplishment may have been a result of a lack of commitment or dedication by the aldermen, but much of it resulted from an inability to agree on courses of action and a failure to face up to some of the problems. The city fathers seemed constantly at each other's throats, bickering over

whose ward was receiving an unjustified amount of street or sewer improvements and actually exchanging physical blows on several occasions.

This period of official procrastination and retarded activity generated heavy criticism against the council from some segments of the public, especially those industrial and institutional leaders who wanted the council to take definite steps to make Dallas a great commercial center. The Dallas Morning News derided the council's productiveness saying:

> Six days ago the council met and worried along for two mortal hours with the business before it in much the same manner as a savage cat plays with a mouse. Tonight these same aldermen will meet again to transact in the same old style such business as may come before them. Many of those who find employment at City Hall are becoming disgusted....[28]

The editor of the News further complained that the council was holding too many executive sessions and wanted to know why the city's business could not be conducted in public view.[29]

It became evident that there were no local political leaders strong enough to determine what the role of the city government would be in the development of the community. Increasingly, municipal policy was formulated outside of City Hall and urged upon the city councils by various civic organizations which formed to combat specific problems in areas where the council failed to meet its responsibilities. In 1899 for instance, George B. Dealey, the publisher of the Dallas Morning News, formed the Cleaner Dallas League to tackle problems of street maintenance and garbage collection. In 1902 the Civic Improvement League, a branch of the American League for Civic Improvement, was formed by many of the people from the Cleaner Dallas League, including Dealey, to gain even further improvements from the city. The Commercial Club was another

such civic group. Although involved in many projects, it specifically attempted to help the parks through its efforts at arranging music for the park concerts. In 1902 the Commercial Club inaugurated an unsuccessful drive for new parks. But this method of handling city policy and activities caused widespread dissatisfaction with the local government. Actually, the city followed the typical pattern of a city on the path to reform. The formation of such civic improvement organizations usually preceded a major change because such groups formed when business elements became frustrated with the conduct of the government. Composed of businessmen, these groups deplored the lack of business efficiency in city government. As early as 1901, a straw vote tested popular support for a change to a commission form of government. The success of the new commission structure in Galveston in 1903[30] eventually gave Dealey and the city businessmen their basis upon which to build a successful campaign to bring the commission to Dallas in 1907.[31]

In the meantime, however, the park system languished in inactivity. In light of the past business load of some park committees, the inactivity was almost shocking. But then, Black's victory over Lincecum and Wolfson had eliminated virtually all park events and the superintendent, W. R. Tietze, was fully capable of conducting the day to day activities without the city fathers. The extent of the lack of involvement was seen in a report by the committee at the beginning of the fiscal year in 1901, one full year after Cabell appointed the inexperienced committee. The committee reported:

> Gentlemen: Your Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds desire to submit a short report of its doings, or non doings for this fiscal year just closing. As to what the Committee

> has done we can have but little to say, as there has been but one single matter during the year requiring our attention, and that is as yet unacted upon. But while we have little to do, we have made some observations and desire to make some suggestions on the subjects belonging to this Committee.[32]

After a year of inactivity, the committeemen had apparently gained enough knowledge of its subject matter that they wanted to make some suggestions. Their comments further reinforce the impression of a pattern of inactivity and status quo:

> [City Park] has never had the attention it deserved and while the most of our Cities deal with these in the most liberal and sometimes lavish manner, Dallas has refused to give the small pittance asked for this Park, treating it as somthing [sic] unnecessary or a mere luxury.... Our little Park is the pride and pleasure of our citizens, and should be kept in that condition commensurate with that interest.[33]

Their recommendations included three things: first, the employment of two full time laborers to assist Tietze, in addition to the seasonal labor hired; second, the regraveling of all the walks and drives in the park which were described as worn out; and third, the placing of two to five additional electric lights in the park "to prevent disorder and protect the reputation of the park."[34] These suggestions were needed improvements, but they all stayed safely within the confines of the status quo. No suggestion was made to increase park activities, facilities, or services, and no mention was made of increasing the number of parks. Their recommendations were generally adopted in the following months.

The mayor's address, made on the same day, at least recognized the need for additional parks, although he demurred, conservatively, that the city could not afford to buy new grounds at that moment. But he reiterated the suggestion of Mayors Barry and Traylor that the Hospital

Park and what was left of North Dallas Park (part of it had been granted as a right-of-way for the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway, the Katy Lines) could be cleaned up and provided as a park at little expense. However, his recommendation suffered the same fate that Barry's and Traylor's had suffered. It was ignored, perhaps as merely an expected piece of rhetoric in the mayor's annual address. Cabell may not have intended for it to be any more than just that. He never pushed the council to pursue the matter.[35]

In his annual address for the next year, 1902, Mayor Cabell apparently found other matters more pressing than parks. The lengthy message contained only two sentences in relation to the park system. The brevity of his remarks on parks may have indicated his opinion of the priority that should be given to them. His comments state "...that while the City cannot now for want of funds purchase additional parks, much might be added to the pleasure and comfort of our people by a more liberal care of what we have."[36]

Evidently, Cabell's suggestions were again ignored because in the following summer a citizens' group petitioned the council to make some general improvements in the park. Also, the Commercial Club failed to secure donations of sufficient size to augment the council's conservative allocation for a renewed program of park concerts. Even the use of a program bulletin in which local merchants could purchase advertising space failed to produce the funds needed to underwrite the musicians.[37]

This situation prompted a civic minded local retailer to offer his services to the city. The firm of A. Harris and Company[38] informed the council that, with the council's permission, the company was going

to offer, free to the public, four Sunday afternoon concerts beginning on August 3, 1902. The bill from the musicians was to be paid completely by the company. All bulletins and advertising of any kind were banned from the concerts, possibly to prevent other merchants who had been unwilling to contribute to the support of the concerts from reaping a windfall of cheap advertising. Although the Harris firm may have been quite sincere in its civic service, as suggested by its own request that it be included in the advertising ban, the company did receive considerable advertising benefit from the event. The Sunday evening concerts received publicity in the local papers each Sunday as a part of a full page advertisement for the A. Harris and Company store. The page included information on "sale" and "special" items which generally surrounded a bold type invitation for Dallas citizens to attend the complementary concerts in the park. Two local bands provided the music for the four concerts. The Hella Temple (Masonic Shriners) Concert Band presented the first two programs, while Carrico's Military Band gave the latter two.[39]

Meanwhile, Aldermen Callahan and Gill ended the more than two years of inactivity by the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings. Having served for four years and two years, respectively, on the council, the men had had ample time to study the needs of the city. They proposed the placement of a power driven pump, costing about $125, over the artesian well in City Park to speed up the flow of water from the ground. The water, which smelled "like rotten eggs," had a taste which was unpleasant at first but which "grows on one like the taste of whiskey."[40] Apparently, a great many Dallasites who did not have running

water in their homes regularly used the well as their water supply, carrying home buckets of the water. But the water flowed from the well so slowly that the women and children who usually performed the daily task of fetching the water often had to wait in line for thirty or forty minutes as the well refilled. The proposition to place the motorized pump on the well passed and this service provided in the park was greatly improved.[41]

It is ironical to note that the two men who instigated this improved park service had presided over park activities during the reign of status quo. They had acceded to the concept of the park as basically a driving park. Yet, they proposed a motorized pump to aid those people who had to rely on the park well as a water supply. In Dallas in 1902, such people would have represented the lower economic classes of citizens. The apparent conflict of class uses of the park may have represented a basic change of attitude in the park committee. Callahan's and Gill's experience on the council in other duties may have softened their attitude about maintaining the park as a passive driving park. Or, their willingness to help the poor of Dallas may have reflected their lack of commitment to the passive concept of parks and indicated that during the years of inactivity, the committee had been genuinely doing nothing, rather than maintaining a passive park through inactivity designed to stifle development. Or, the action may have been one of the earliest official recognitions of the fact that the nature of the areas surrounding the park was changing. The Eakin's Addition, which had been such a fine neighborhood, was nearly thirty years old and beginning to decline.[42] The Santa Fe Railroad had laid its lines only

about seven blocks away from the park on the southeast and southwest sides. The neighborhood that had grown up around the rail lines became known as the Cotton Mills Addition because of the large mills in the areas where many of the residents worked. The Cotton Mills neighborhood became one of Dallas' most economically depressed areas for many years and housing there lacked such conveniences as running water and toilets until the second world war when the community disappeared as industry took over the area. The problem of obtaining unpolluted water always presented a major problem for the Cotton Mill residents, and the pump placed on the well at City Park in 1902 provided one of their water sources.[43]

In addition to the changing neighborhood around City Park, the entire city underwent a change in the thrust of its development. Ever since J. J. Eakins had begun to channel the flow of Dallas' growth to the south where he owned property, the city had continued to expand primarily in that direction and then to the northeast of the park area. But about the turn of the century, a northward trend in the growth of the city began to develop. The shift left behind an aging South Dallas with its developing Cotton Mills slum. The fashionable residents moved away from the park into the Swiss Avenue area or Munger Place, and finally into the new suburb of Highland Park. Oak Cliff developed all through the era as an independent and fashionable suburb and was formally annexed to Dallas in 1903.[44]

This shift in growth patterns may have affected the development of City Park in subtle ways. The upper economic classes controlled the city council and may not have been anxious to embellish a park which was

rapidly being surrounded by lower class neighborhoods. This may have been especially true of the conservative councils which controlled the city from 1896 to 1904. The eventual shift in City Park usage to a recreational type park was facilitated by the fact that an aristocratic-type driving park was simply incongruous with the needs of the changing neighborhood.

This growth of the city in a new direction and the decline of the older areas near City Park can be linked to a movement to gain new parks for Dallas. In the spring of 1902, the Commercial Club, a civic organization composed of many business and professional men, initiated a drive to obtain additional parks and parkways in the city. This was a typical example of the way city policy was formulated outside of city hall and urged upon the council in the waning years of the mayor/council form of government in Dallas. Alderman G. H. Irish[45] presented the concept to the city council. The plan proposed that a two man special committee from the council, the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee, the mayor, and the city engineer, all join with a three man committee from the Commercial Club, composed of a realtor, an architect, and a civil engineer, to investigate various possibilities of expanding the park facilities. This involvement of almost half of the city council in a park expansion program must indicate that a dramatic change of attitude had occurred on the council with regard to parks. The changed nature of City Park's surroundings and the shift in growth patterns for the city probably influenced their thinking.[46]

It is interesting to note that two of the members of the Special Park Committee, representing the Commercial Club, were W. O. Connor and

Emil Fretz. Both men were named to the first Board of Park Commissioners in 1905.

Less than a month after formation, the Special Park Committee recommended the acceptance of a proposition from C. H. Alexander, a local landowner and developer. Alexander offered to donate to the city fifteen to seventeen acres in East Dallas for park purposes. The city would be given an option to buy an additional four to six acres at six hundred dollars per acre. In return, the city would be required to improve and maintain the land as a park with walks and water hydrants specifically required. In addition, a one hundred foot wide "speedway," or grand avenue of sorts, one half mile long on the south line of the land was to be constructed and maintained by the city. All construction had to be commenced within one year and finished in two.[47]

Alexander's proposition was a generous offer to the city but not entirely philanthropic. He, like J. J. Eakins, wanted the city to make improvements in the area of some of his real estate holdings in order that the value of his land would rise. Specifically, Alexander wanted the city to open a street, the "speedway," from the edge of the city, along the south side of the park in an easterly direction through another tract of land owned by him. The "speedway" would make his suburban style development more accessible and the park would enhance the beauty of the area. He, of course, had to donate fifteen to seventeen acres to the city in order to gain the improvements, but if Eakins' success was any precedent, the investment would be well rewarded. Unlike Eakins, Alexander clearly explained his aims to the city in the proposition.

The council voted to accept Alexander's proposition but conditioned both the proposition and the acceptance on the approval by the Dallas voters of a special tax to pay for the improvements on the land. Thus, Alderman Irish presented a resolution that an election be held on August 5, 1902, on the issue of levying a special tax for three years of one tenth of one percent on the assessed value of all taxable property, real and personal, in the city. The revenue was to be used to improve the new park. The council approved the resolution but later changed the date to August 26, 1902, to coincide with a special bond election being held that day. Then on August 11, the Building Trades Council of Dallas and Vicinity made a public statement supporting the Commercial Club and favoring additional parks for the city.[48]

A handful of citizens approved the tax with the tally showing 399 for and 227 against the proposition. But the election was apparently a moot question because the city, for some reason, never levied the tax and never finalized the transaction with Alexander.[49]

The next year, Irish again introduced exactly the same proposition for an election to approve a three year ad valorem tax for park expansion. The date of the election was set for August 17, 1903. But when the ballots were examined, the tax had been defeated by the narrow margin of 478 to 434. Only 912 citizens had cast their votes out of a population of over 43,000. The News bemoaned the apathy of Dallas citizens and attributed the defeat to apathy, not to any anti-park movement, because there was none.[50]

Throughout the time that the move was underway to acquire the new park offered by Alexander, activities had continued at City Park. The

local firemen and their ladies auxiliary added a second monument to the park in 1903. A fireman named John Clark had been fatally injured in a fire on Peak Street on June 24, 1902.[51] In his memory, many citizens of Dallas had contributed to a fund to erect a memorial statue. Dedicated Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 1903, a statue of a fireman in full uniform surmounted the impressive shaft. On the shaft itself was space for the names of the future firemen who died while on duty.[52]

The small zoo that had resided in the park was still there, attracting children and requiring maintenance. But the city refused to enlarge its collection of animals in 1903 or at least seemed inclined to be more selective in its acquisitions. The council declined to buy an eagle offered by a man named Joe Chadd.[53]

The parks committee established a new salary scale for park employees in May of 1903. Superintendent Tietze's salary increased to eighty-five dollars per month, plus fifteen dollars per month for the horse and wagon he furnished for park work. The full time laborers received fifty dollars per month, and the two seasonal laborers were given $1.50 per day. This salary schedule approached the old wage levels before the depression of the 1890s had wiped out city finances.[54]

An attempt was also made to change the name of City Park. Alderman Charles F. Morgan proposed that the park's name be changed to Eakins Park in honor of J. J. Eakins, the property's original owner. Morgan described Eakins as "...a Dallas Pioneer with prophetic ken..." who was "...the only citizen of Dallas willing to bequeath to prosperity for the public weal a portion of that which had been allotted him...."[55] He further lauded Eakins' "...generosity, philanthropy, and love for his

City...." The council discreetly referred the resolution to the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee for study where it died a natural death. Apparently, Morgan had forgotten that a similar suggestion had been made following Eakins' death in 1887. The aldermen at that time had not been naive about Eakins' generosity and the letter from Dr. C. E. Keller had later completely discredited Eakins' philanthropy.[56] The park committee in 1902 either remembered the actual circumstances and the profits Eakins made after his sale of the Mill Creek bottoms to the city as a park, or it simply preferred the name City Park over Eakins Park. At any rate, the suggestion was never reported out of the committee. All subsequent attempts to rename City Park after its original owner have met similar fates.[57]

The old park area around the Turtle Creek Pumping Station once known as North Dallas Park before being dismembered by the railroad again entered the public consciousness because of the need for a better city water supply. Alderman Gill, the chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners, convinced the city to drill a test well at the pumping station to see if a sufficient flow could be established to supplement the water supply from the city's reservoirs. The well produced water, but the quantity produced did not encourage the drilling of additional wells. Nevertheless, Alderman Gill was honored in a small way, and perhaps lightly twitted for his persistent advocation of artesian wells, when the council voted to officially name the well after him. But the well, although useless for water supply purposes, proved valuable for other uses. A flow of mineral water developed which had a medicinal quality as a laxative. As a public demand for the water grew, the city

fathers found it necessary to pipe the well's flow to the grounds of Parkland Hospital,[58] the old Hospital Park, and provide several faucets where the mineral water could be obtained free of charge to anyone who wanted it. But the renown of the well water continued to grow and the flow was eventually piped from the hospital to Reverchon Park in 1924 where fountains were installed in a landscaped setting. Later, the Works Progress Administration (W. P. A.) rearranged the fountains and piped the water to new outlets on Oak Lawn Avenue in front of the Dal-Hi Stadium (later renamed P. C. Cobb Stadium). Thus, the Gill Well served the public from its location in the city's parks.[59]

Beginning in 1904, the attention of the council and the city turned to matters concerning the acquisition of the state fair grounds, but activities in the City Park continued at their regular slow pace. In April of 1904, the Sunday Schools of Dallas held a mass meeting in the park, complete with speakers and a parade. Also, a few improvements were made on the grounds. The park committee finally purchased a horse drawn lawn mower to replace the one provided by the superintendent. But no major additions like the Fireman's Monument appeared in 1904.[60]

In fact, City Park went into an eclipse for about fifteen years. During that period, the old park experienced few changes--a new greenhouse was built and the zoo was moved out--but the basic concept of usage for the park remained the same. This is not to say that City Park was abandoned. Quite to the contrary, the park continued to be a very popular resort used extensively by Dallasites. But the park's basic usage patterns established in the late 1890s did not change.

City Park's eclipse simply reflected the expansion of the park

system. The new Board of Park Commissioners concentrated all its energies on learning how to operate the parks and supervising the expansion program. City Park was well established and needed little attention.

But while the new parks established by the park board all included playgrounds and recreation equipment, City Park lagged behind, still mired in a nineteenth century concept of park usage. Not until 1917 did the park board develop Dallas' original park by placing four tennis courts in the park and then in 1920 by installing a wading pool for children.[61]

After existing for twenty-eight years as the only improved, city owned park in Dallas, City Park finally gained a sister park in 1904. This new park, the state fair grounds, unlike the several other so-called parks owned by the city, entered public ownership with a full complement of facilities and improvements. Almost immediately, the size, capabilities, and problems of Fair Park overshadowed the older resort.

But perhaps it was time for the spotlight to shift. City Park had been the city's one jewel-box for nearly three decades. Other parks, public and private, had come and gone. Attempts to expand the park system had blossomed and faded. Park philosophy had ranged the scale of nineteenth century concepts. But still City Park remained, embellished but alone. Dallas' population had increased to more than four times what it was when the park was bought in 1876, but no corresponding growth in the number of parks had taken place. The city had two major campaigns to gain new parks but they failed from a practical standpoint, although several tracts were added to the city's properties

and labeled as parks.

By 1904, Dallas had reached a population in excess of forty-three thousand. The growth patterns had switched and the city really needed new parks. The circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the fair grounds provided the incentive necessary to overcome taxpayers' opposition to a tax hike which had defeated earlier attempts to expand the park system.

## NOTES

### THE TIME WAS FAVORABLE

[1]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 28, 3 March 1896, p. 62; 17 March 1896, p. 74; 21 April 1896, p. 108; 28 July 1896, p. 210; 8 September 1896, p. 257; 7 May 1897, pp. 443-44; 16 September 1897, p. 564; 28 September 1897, p. 577.

[2]Ibid., 18 July 1897, p. 511.

[3]Ibid., pp. 511-12.

[4]Ibid., 27 July 1897, p. 522.

[5]Ibid., 10 August 1897, p. 528; 16 September 1897, p. 564; 28 September 1897, p. 577; vol. 24, 24 May 1898, p. 153; 14 June 1898, pp. 177-78.

[6]Ibid., 21 November 1898, p. 401; 5 December 1898, p. 431.

[7]Ibid., 24 May 1898, p. 143; 19 December 1898, pp. 463, 465.

[8]Ibid., vol. 23, 9 November 1897, pp. 593-94; 23 November 1897, pp. 616-17.

[9]U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890: Population, 1:331; and U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population, 1:379.

[10]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "City Park."

[11]Ibid.; and Sawnie R. Aldredge, Park and Playground System, Dallas, Texas, 1921-1923 (n.p., n.d.), p. 12.

[12]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 24, 26 July 1898, p. 246; and Dallas Morning News, 27 July 1898, p. 8.

[13]This assumption of responsibility later led to the provision of such summer entertainment in the parks as free movies, free plays, dances, and the myriad of amusement facilities provided by the modern recreation centers, support for the symphony, a fine arts museum, a music hall, etc.

[14]Dallas Morning News, 10 August 1898, p. 8; 24 August 1898, p. 8; and Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 24, 26 July 1898, p. 246. The Commercial Club was a local civic organization much concerned with building Dallas' trade and making it a more important city.

[15]Dallas Morning News, 8 September 1898, p. 8; 9 September 1898, p. 8.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 25, 25 April 1899, p. 67; 27 April 1899, p. 75.

[18]Mel Scott, American City Planning Since 1890 (Berkeley: University of California, 1969), p. 45.

[19]Ibid., p. 11.

[20]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 25, 17 April 1899, pp. 75-76.

[21]Although not on the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee at that time, Lincecum had been the chairman of the committee in 1895.

[22]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 25, 31 July 1899, p. 219; and Dallas Morning News, 1 August 1899, p. 5.

[23]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 25, 25 July 1899, p. 203; 31 July 1899, p. 219.

[24]Dallas Morning News, 4 August 1901, p. 28; 18 August 1901, p. 24.

[25]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 25, 23 January 1900; 13 March 1900, p. 475.

[26]J. F. Callahan began in 1898 an eight year period of service as alderman, the only man in Dallas history to hold that office for so long in consecutive terms under the mayor/council system of government.

[27]C. A. Gill became the chairman of the council's Board of Water Commissioners in addition to his duties as a member of the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings. As such, his efforts led to the establishment of the well-known "Gill Well" discussed later in this chapter.

[28]Dallas Morning News, 26 July 1898, p. 8.

[29]Ibid., 1 September 1898, p. 8.

[30]In 1900, Galveston, Texas, was nearly destroyed by a hurricane which wiped out all civic services. The city council proved totally unable to cope with the emergency because of political infighting. The state legislature took over the city government and appointed, on a temporary basis, five commissioners, each with control over a specific area of city activities, to operate the city. The commission system worked so well that no serious suggestion was made to return to the old mayor/council system.

[31]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas ( Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), p. 8-9; Robert M. Newton, "No Boss for Dallas," Journal of the West, forthcoming issue; and James Weinstein, "Organized Business and the City Commission and Manager Movements," Journal of Southern History 28 (May 1962): 166-82.

[32]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 27, 13 May 1901, p. 97.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., p. 98.

[35]Ibid., p. 65.

[36]Ibid., 1 May 1902, p. 533.

[37]Ibid., 12 June 1902, p. 627; vol. 28, 1 July 1902, p. 52.

[38]A. Harris and Company was a local retail clothing store, and widely known in the Dallas area as one of the finer stores. The firm consolidated in the 1905s with the Sanger Brothers department store and is today represented in the department store chain of "Sanger-Harris."

[39]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 28, 28 July 1902, p. 90; and Dallas Morning News, 29 July 1902, p. 10; 3 August 1902, p. 21; 10 August 1902, p. 21; 17 August 1902, p. 21; 24 August 1902, p. 21.

[40]Dallas Morning News, 9 September 1898, p. 8.

[41]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 28, 25 August 1902, p. 149.

[42]The Eakins Addition eventually became a part of Dallas' "red light district" during the 1920s and '30s. Mrs. Joseph Rucker, niece of Dr. W. W. Samuell and volunteer at the Museum of Fine Arts, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[43]Dr. J. W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Dr. Bass was the head of the Department of Public Health in Dallas, 1927 (officially 1931) to 1965; and Lynn Schmid, former Dallas parks recreation leader, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[44]Clyde Watts, Dallas engineer of surveys and records, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Watts has been a City of Dallas employee and involved with city surveys since 1924. He has been the engineer of surveys and records in the Department of Public Works since 1958.

[45]G. H. Irish was prominent in the park movement until the first Board of Park Commissioners (the park board) was appointed in 1905, although he never served as a member of the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings.

[46]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 27, 26 May 1902, pp. 575-76, 585.

[47]The land involved was in the general vicinity of Garrett Park and St. Matthew's Episcopal Cathedral. Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 28, 23 June 1902, pp. 12-14.

[48]Ibid., 1 July 1902, pp. 46-48; 14 July 1902, pp. 71-73; 11 August 1902, p. 125; and Dallas Morning News, 26 August 1902, p. 12.

[49]Dallas Morning News, 27 August 1902, p. 3.

[50]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 29, 17 July 1903, p. 197; 29 July 1903, p. 219; 8 September 1903, pp. 270-71; and Dallas Morning News, 18 August 1903, p. 12.

[51]John Clark, fifty-five years old at death, had been a member of the fire department off and on for seven years and was very popular among the firemen. He was holding a water nozzle on the fire when a mass of flame apparently engulfed him. Refusing to retreat, he apparently suffered from burns and smoke inhalation and died about six hours later. He was the first city fireman to die in the line of duty. Dallas Morning News, 26 June 1902, p. 9.

[52]The monument originally had the names of all firemen who died while in service in the department, no matter what the cause of death, natural or otherwise. But more recently, only the names of those who died in line of duty were engraved on the shaft. The monument was moved to Fair Park in 1923 and relocated again during construction for the 1936 Texas Centennial. Today the monument stands at the south end of the Cotton Bowl. See Cauley, "Notes," section on "Fountains and Monuments"; and Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 28, 22 December 1902, pp. 372-73; vol. 29, 25 May 1903, p. 127; 23 November 1903, p. 375; 30 November 1903, p. 377.

[53]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 28, 9 March 1903, p. 536.

[54]Ibid., vol. 29, 27 May 1903, p. 139.

[55]Ibid., vol. 28, 13 October 1902, pp. 226-27.

[56]See this volume, Chapter 1, pp. 7-8 .

[57]However, the name of City Park was changed in 1936 to Sullivan Park in memory of Dan F. Sullivan, a former city commissioner and the father of Jim Dan Sullivan, at that time the president of the park board. The name was changed back to City Park in 1941. Cauley, "Notes," see section on "City Park." Some sources have suggested that the name was changed in 1936, along with the names of several other parks to create confusion to cover the illegal embezzlement and misuse of federal funds. This activity resulted in the scandals which racked the park board in 1939. Elgin Crull, former Dallas city manager, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Crull was the Dallas City Manager from 1952-1966 and was assistant city manager, 1939-1952. Before becoming assistant city manager, he was a reporter for the Dallas Journal (the evening branch of the Dallas Morning News) and was assigned to cover the 1939 park scandals. Also see Patricia R. Hogan, "The Step Into a Modern World: The History of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department 1931 to Present" (M.S. thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974), Chapter 4.

[58]This old Parkland Hospital was later sold to the Dallas Scottish Rite Bodies and is operated in 1974 as the Dallas Scottish Rite Children's Hospital.

[59]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 29, 10 August 1903, p. 241; 12 November 1903, pp. 356-57; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Reverchon Park"; and L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Mr. Houston was director of the park and recreation department in Dallas, 1939-1972.

[60]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 29, 11 April 1904, p. 534; vol. 30, 9 May 1904, p. 17; 8 August 1904, p. 185; 22 November 1904, p. 347.

[61]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "City Park."

# CHAPTER 6

## A PARK FOR FUN AND PROFIT

After consisting of only one park for twenty-eight years, the long awaited and much needed expansion of the Dallas park system finally began in a permanent way in 1904. But the City of Dallas did not choose a promising piece of real estate, appropriately situated, and develop on it a new park and new facilities. Rather, the city acquired all of the real property and much of the personal property belonging to the Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition, a private institution which held annual fairs in Dallas. The fair association had a history which spanned four and a half decades and had played a vastly important role in the development of Dallas. The association had been using the property acquired by the city since 1886 and had developed a well equipped exposition park, complete with exhibition halls, auditorium, ball fields, drives, walks, and picnic facilities.

The addition of Fair Park to the city park system immediately overwhelmed City Park because of the more extensive capabilities of the fair grounds, which continued to dominate Dallas park activities through the 1930s. Since the fair has had such an effect on the park system, the background of the fair and its importance to the city should be surveyed. Recognition of the fair's value to Dallas will help to explain why, after the city voters defeated a park tax in 1903, that they overwhelmingly approved an identical tax with an additional bond issue attached in 1904.

The institution of a fair anywhere in America basically served as a function of city boosterism. Real estate speculators, local merchants, and proud citizens--all of whom can be classified as city boosters--held as one of their basic tenets that by promoting their city, they showed not only community spirit but also good business sense. "Everybody seemed to profit from growing populations and expanding, prospering communities."[1] Thus, whatever local citizens could do to attract people to settle in their community, or at least come to their town to trade, benefited everyone in the town.

One of the boosterism techniques, the institution of a local fair, became popular in the United States for several reasons. Fairs provided social interaction, entertainment, and a place for frontier men and women to show off their skill at handicrafts. But, equally important, the event gave farmers and ranchers a time and place to gather in large numbers to buy and sell their cattle, to exchange ideas, to learn new agricultural techniques, and to see in operation and place orders for new patented farm machinery.

To the townspeople who sponsored a fair, the opportunities proved even greater. First, the fair goers had to be housed and fed. The visitors' money flowed freely in the local hotels, boarding houses, restaurants, and livery stables. The overflow from these public facilities found lodgings in private homes. Even those who camped out near the fair grounds could be expected to leave at least some of their money in the general stores, saloons, and gambling halls of the town. Since trips to town were infrequent, the visit often served as an opportunity to stock up on all types of supplies. Everyone from the furniture dealer

to the druggist could be expected to profit from a successful fair.

Second, the town gained an intermediate range benefit from a fair. Since the fairgoers were mostly farmers, manufacturers of farm implements usually took advantage of the chance to advertise and display their machinery, teach the techniques and advantages of using the new tools, and then take purchase orders. If the volume of sales proved sufficient, a branch office might even be opened in the town. This action would benefit the entire community because it would assure the farmers' occasional return to the implement dealership, and the probable parting of the farmers and their money both there and elsewhere in the town.

Third, the publicity received by the town during the fair promised a long range benefit to the aspiring urban center. Area settlers became familiar with the stores and agricultural facilities of the town, possibly to return at some future date when they needed other specific services. More distant farms and towns read about the fair in their newspapers where the town's opportunities, hospitality, and greatness were often described in glowing terms. The effect of such publicity cannot be fully measured, but it certainly must have had some long range tangible impact on the local economy.

With so many benefits to be gained from a fair, several north Texas towns, each vying for economic supremacy over the area, began to hold small fairs. In 1858 three area towns--Marshall, Sherman, and Waxahachie--each held competing fairs. Dallas merchants, fearing that they might be outclassed in the economic game of one-up-manship, counter-attacked in 1859 with a fair of their own.[2]

That first fair was a tremendous success. About two thousand people packed the little village of Dallas for the event. The Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association which had presented the fair, broke even from a financial standpoint which was considered a measure of the success since the promoters apparently expected to lose money in the Association in order to make money in their private businesses through the crowds attracted by the event.[3]

The fair gave a particular boost to the farm implement business in Dallas and had a lasting effect by establishing the town as a center for farm implement manufacture and distribution. Apparently several dealers exhibited new farm equipment at the fair and a fairly large number of the implements were sold or ordered. Dallas' economic growth gained much from this early association of the fair with the implement companies, and businessmen in town benefited from the economic exchange between the farmers and the dealers.[4]

With the first fair such a success, a second fair followed shortly. The 1860 fair attracted a five day total of 10,700 people, a figure far beyond the expectations of even the most optimistic boosters. Although the benefits from the fair were great, national events disrupted the continuance of the fairs. The Civil War forced the population to concentrate its efforts on activities other than local boosterism.[5]

During the Reconstruction era, a number of Dallas boosters again determined to use the institution of a fair to promote their city. The Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association had intended for the fair to continue as an annual event and in 1868, the association presented its third fair. Held for four days in late October, it

experienced only mild success because cold, rainy weather reduced the attendance to a disappointing level in comparison with the earlier fairs. The 1869 fair experienced a similar fate. Because of the large expenditures made on grounds improvements, the Dallas County Agricultural and Mechanical Association accepted temporary defeat and ceased its sponsorship of the fair.[6]

The exact reasons for the failure of this second generation of fairs have been obscured with the passage of time, but factors other than bad weather may have riddled the city boosters' aspirations. Texas still labored under the control of a Reconstruction government, and despite the population boom of over fifty percent in the decade, many people had not recovered from the financial ravages of the war.

Although the second generation of fairs failed, a third generation soon followed. On November 28, 1870, the North Texas Agricultural, Mechanical and Blood Stock Association[7] incorporated and announced that it would hold an annual fair beginning in October of 1871. The preparations fell through for that event, but in 1872 the association managed to present a moderately successful fair. The next year, 1873, despite elaborate improvements and preparations, the second fair also fell short of genuine success. The association decided first not to hold a fair in 1874, then reconsidered and announced a date for the exposition but later canceled it anyway.

There are several plausible reasons for the failure of this third generation of fairs. First, it appears that the association had financial difficulties almost from its incorporation. After investing in new grounds and the improvements necessary to hold a fair, and then making

sizable additions to the fair grounds the second year, the modest success of the fairs was equivalent to failure. The directors of the association announced that certificates of stock would be issued at fifty dollars per share with the new purchasers standing in the same basis as the original stockholders. But doubts about the fair's prospects must have frightened away faint-hearted investors. New subscribers did not materialize and the association cancelled the event, as indicated.

Second, the hard times resulting from the national "panic of 1873" may have provided another reason for the failure of these two fairs. Money was scarce for several years after the financial crash, and although Dallas itself benefited from the "panic," the rest of north Texas felt the economic blow. This factor may have reduced the willingness of the city boosters to invest in a fair when a sizable response from the area outside of Dallas would be doubtful at best.

Third, Dallasites may have expended their "fair" energies and resources on the "Great Democratic Barbecue" held October 30, 1874, which entertained Governor Richard Coke, the six Democratic Congressional candidates, and a huge throng of well wishers. The date of the barbecue may have been too close to the traditional fair season to expect a large crowd to assemble again so soon.[8]

A fourth possible explanation for the failure of the third generation fairs may have been that Dallas did not really need the fairs at that time to boost the city. The economic stimulus that could be gained from such a gathering may have seemed trivial in comparison with what was happening in Dallas as a result of another phase of city boosterism that had finally blossomed in complete success after nearly two decades

of effort. The railroads had arrived in Dallas in 1872 and the city had boomed. But the railroad construction halted in 1873 as financial panic seized the nation. For three years Dallas served as the "end of the tracks" for the Texas and Pacific Railway. The line had just coincidently reached Dallas before the crash stopped its planned construction to El Paso. The effect on Dallas became enormous as the population doubled in a year and numerous retail stores and wholesale warehouses opened for business, while at the same time the rest of north Texas, especially Fort Worth, floundered in economic distress.

The activities and excitement of the years of expanding growth after the railroad reached Dallas demanded the attention and energies of the residents merely to keep up with the flood of expansion. When the nation recovered from the 1873 crash, two decades of development, uninterrupted by war, began for Texas, which at that time stood about where the nation had stood a hundred years earlier with about ninety-five percent of its population agrarian and three-fifths of its land still a wilderness ready for exploitation.[9]

This growth benefited Dallas but deprived her of the advantageous position as the "end of the tracks" town for the Texas and Pacific Railway. When the railroad recovered from the depression, it pushed further west, reaching Fort Worth in 1876. Again, Dallas needed some booster tactic to maintain the momentum gained as a result of three years of dominance over the area. The local merchants revived the institution of a fair as a means to continue growth.

The new association which formed to produce the fair reflected the economic intent of the group. Whereas the old association had emphasized

farmer participation as well as agricultural and mechanical activities, the new Fair Association drew its membership primarily from the ranks of merchants, hotel men, restaurant owners, livery men, bar-room proprietors, and professionals. The Herald explained that the "promotion of the industrial interests" would be the fair's main object.[10] The association obtained the old Blood Stock Association's fairgrounds and began work for a spectacular presentation.[11]

The new sponsors introduced many innovations in the production of the 1876 fair. The publicity increased to cover the entire state and even out of state. The promoters especially "drummed" Saint Louis and Kansas City because the Dallas event had been purposely scheduled to follow the fairs in those cities so that major attractions would find it convenient to appear in Dallas as well. But the most important innovation proved to be the introduction of horse racing at the fair. The fair directors constructed an excellent race track in the expectation that the races would attract thousands of additional visitors and their money. The drive to insure financial success also manifested itself in the addition of billiards halls and barrooms in the grandstand. Whereas the Herald had pointedly described the earlier fairs as examples of proper decorum, the 1876 fair promised more excitement in the name of financial security.

The boosters' efforts produced a smashing success with an estimated thirty thousand people entering the grounds during the six days. The city proved that it could produce a grand show, and Dallas became more prominent within Texas and the Plains states. As the Herald put it, the fair's "wonderful success but demonstrates the effect of united action

among a people and the ease with which Dallas may maintain her supremacy over all North Texas."[12]

By the time that an equally successful fair was held in 1877, Dallasites recognized the tangible benefits from their fairs. Among others, several northern businessmen, attracted by booster propaganda, visited Dallas to investigate potential capital investment opportunities.

Surprisingly the association did not continue its efforts. In fact, no more fairs appeared on the local scene until 1886. Why this happened immediately after the two most successful productions yet held is hard to explain. Perhaps the enthusiasm among the fair backers was cyclical in nature. Each generation of fairs had lasted only two years. However, a more basic reason probably influenced the situation. Economically, the city and state grew at a staggering pace between 1877 and 1886. "It is possible that the merchants, bankers, implements dealers and others of Dallas ... felt no compelling reason for a fair--and had no time for it."[13] Dallas boomed even without a fair.

Interest in another exposition enterprise did not appear until 1886. Although Fort Worth boosters had considered for several years hosting a fair to begin in 1887, this does not seem to have been the stimulus for the new move. The real reason seems to have sprung from the "desire of the merchants to impress all Texas with the greatness of Dallas as a market," which is a polite way of saying that Dallas merchants wanted to convince everyone of their economic domination over the area and that outside manufacturers and distributors would waste their time going elsewhere with their goods.[14] Actually, the move to reinstitute the fair revealed that some economic problems had developed.

Although north Texas continued to prosper, agricultural prices had declined steadily since the peak years of consumption during the Civil War. In addition, technological advances in farming began to eliminate small scale operators in favor of larger, more efficient farms managed by fewer people. Nationally, these pressures produced such organizations as the Grangers and the Farmers' Alliance, the latter of which had gained significant strength in Texas by 1886. In Dallas where the economic vitality depended heavily on the well-being of north Texas agriculture, the boosters turned once again to a fair association as a means to support their income levels as the normal commerce with the farmers decreased.[15]

Before the 1886 fair could be held, a feud developed among the sponsors over the selection of a site for the fair. The majority of the merchants favored purchasing real estate near the old fair grounds, but the implement dealers opposed the site saying that the soil was a "black-waxy" type and unsuitable for demonstration of their farm equipment. As a result of the feud, two separate fair associations formed and held two competing and simultaneous fairs in the fall of 1886. The Texas State Fair, the implement dealers creation, opened October 25, 1886, and closed on the 30th. The Dallas State Fair and Exposition opened October 26 and continued until November 6th.[16]

Amazingly, both fairs were successful. But rather than tempt fate another year, the two associations consolidated in 1887 and became the Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition, using the land that caused the fracture the year before as the fair grounds.[17] This united association and its corporate successors have presented an annual fair every year

since 1887, except during the two world wars when the military used Fair Park for a training base, and then in 1936 and 1937 when the park served as the site for the Texas Centennial Exposition and the Pan-American Exposition.

The eighty acre plot used throughout these years as a fairgrounds lay southeast of the city limits near the property used by previous generations of fairs. In 1886 the fair had only about thirteen thousand dollars in paid up capital stock with which to purchase any property, and this figure fell short of the stated price for the eighty acres. So Captain W. H. Gaston volunteered to purchase the land and deed it to the association, taking its stock as payment. He bought the land from its three separate owners, Sawnie Robinson, Mr. Thivinet, and Mr. Browder, paying them sixteen thousand dollars in cash. In turn he sold the grounds to the association for fourteen thousand dollars, letting the two thousand dollar difference be his donation to the fair. He received 140 shares of fair stock in payment for the fourteen thousand dollars, all of which he eventually returned to the fair in donations through the years.[18]

Once the grounds were acquired, they had to be improved in a way fitting for a major area fair. The development completed by the 1887 fair evoked amazement from visitors who described it as being "almost a miracle how a bald hog-wallow prairie could be changed in a few months to a beautiful park, laid off in drives and side-walks and covered with every building necessary for a first class fair."[19]

The reunited fair association decided in 1887 that the eighty acres limited the expansion of the fair, so the stockholders extended

the grounds in three purchases. The association purchased 12-1/3 acres for $7,980 from a development company, and W. H. Gaston sold the fair 10-3/4 acres for $3,540, as well as an additional 14-2/5 acres for $25,100.

Although it might be suspected that Gaston tried to make a vast profit by selling to the association land which the fair itself had made more valuable, further investigation seems to prove that Gaston was truly benevolent to the fair. The terms provided for the $25,100 to be paid in five years with an annual interest rate of eight percent. However, the association made no payment until six years later when less than two thousand dollars was paid. Gaston donated all the accrued interest to the fair and cut the principal to twenty thousand dollars. Further changes in the agreement were made in 1894 and 1898 which reduced the fair's obligation in a similar manner. Then in 1900, Gaston accepted a payment of six thousand dollars as a "compromise-in-full" and destroyed the note. This compromise represented a total loss of $29,232.32 for Gaston in principal and accumulated interest on the original note and its subsequent changes. It seems evident that W. H. Gaston ranks as one Dallas booster who put his personal fortune on the line to promote the entire city. It seems probable that Gaston's banking interest indirectly benefited from his heavy contributions to the fair enterprise. And that is exactly the manner in which city boosterism worked.[20]

The Texas State Fair and Dallas Exposition presented for the city an annual continuation of the original boosters event. But as the fair grew larger, the cost of financing such an endeavor grew correspondingly. Some years the fair succeeded grandly, some years it broke even, and

some years it lost money. In 1892 the exposition experienced serious difficulties. Accumulated debts of more than sixty-six thousand dollars had been incurred and the fair's corporate president, J. E. Schneider, had to run the entire presentation that year on his individual credit. But the financial problems forced the association to delay payment on the interest on its bonds, owned by the Holland Trust Company. When the fair defaulted, the company demanded that the bonds be paid off. The fair was saved from total collapse by the sale of a second mortgage on the bonds to Royal A. Ferris, who in turn sold them to the fair association and cancelled his mortgage. Then the Security Mortgage Trust Company of Dallas bought the bonds owned by Holland and later sold them to Manchester Trust Company of England.

In the process of this financial shuffling, the fair association reorganized, gained a new charter, and transferred ownership to a new corporate body, consisting of basically the same stockholders and officers as before. This new association gradually managed to pay off the complete debt of the old fair association and, in addition, made numerous improvements in the facilities.[21]

But although the exposition made a successful showing each year and attracted untold hundreds of thousands dollars to the Dallas area, the stockholders realized that the fair was gradually losing ground. Fair historian, Sidney Smith, indicated that by 1898, every member of the fair's board of directors knew that in only a matter of time the Manchester Trust Company would close them out. The association could not hope to pay the rate of interest on the bonds owned by the English company and, at the same time, pay off the bonds themselves.[22]

The directors' fears proved correct when, in 1899 at the close of that year's fair, the Manchester Trust Company made a demand for the payment in full of the seventy-two thousand dollars in bonds it owned, as well as the thirty thousand dollars in accrued interest. The association could not comply and the trust company brought suit. Since the company had full legal right to the demands it made, the court advertised the property for sale and the fair seem doomed. But again, a wealthy Dallasite, J. B. Wilson, saved the fair by purchasing all the bonds owned by the English company. A new fair corporation began in April 1900 under the name of the Texas State Fair. J. B. Wilson bought the property of the old fair association and sold it to the Texas State Fair for $106,000.[23]

The Texas State Fair seemed to have every chance for success and did, in fact, present six successful fairs. But four catastrophes struck the fair and the association again found itself in dire circumstances. First, in 1900, a set of bleachers full of spectators fell during a fireworks demonstration. Although the highest seat was less than four feet off the ground, within sixty days personal damage suits totaled $150,000. Some of the claimants proved fraudulent, but the association finally paid out more than $10,000 in damages. Second, in 1902, a portion of the Implement Building collapsed during remodeling work preparing it for use as an auditorium. Fifteen carpenters suffered injuries and one man died. Damage suits resulting from this incident totaled $60,000 and were finally compromised in 1904 as a part of the settlement when the fair property transferred to the city. Third, in July of 1902, fire completely destroyed the main Exposition Building




Texas State Fair, 1903

along with several small exhibit buildings, seriously handicapping the fall presentation. Fourth, the 1903 Texas Legislature passed a bill which outlawed horse race gambling anywhere in the state, thus eliminating the fair's main source of income.[24]

When the fair directors held preliminary meetings in 1903, much doubt existed as to whether the fair could continue at all. The potential expenses of damage suits still pending and the unreplaced buildings lost in the fire seemed overwhelming in the face of drastically reduced revenues as a result of losing the races. Only after long study did the directors decide to attempt another fair despite the difficulties.

The 1903 Texas State Fair fulfilled the stockholders' worst dreams. Fair receipts fell from the 1902 level of $89,916 to only $50,807 in 1903. Of course, without the expense of the race track, the cost of operating the fair decreased, but the new profit level proved to be less than one third that of the previous year and was hardly sufficient to begin rebuilding the needed exhibition halls.[25]

At the close of the fair in 1903, an important moment in the history of the fair occurred. The stockholders who owned the fair and all its property were offered $125,000 in cash for the real property of the association. The potential purchasers wanted to develop the real estate as a suburban addition to the city of Dallas (the grounds were still outside of the city limits in 1903). At first the stockholders favorably received this offer because they had struggled for eighteen years to present fairs, pay off their indebtedness, and build up the city. It seemed doubtful that they could go on in face of the accumulating law suits, the absence of an exposition hall, and no races. After much

debate, the stockholders rejected the offer, but the action prompted the association to reevaluate its position, worth, condition, and possible future.[26]

Operating on a very dubious financial foundation, the fair struggled from year to year to meet its self-ordained obligation. No one seemed to doubt the value of the fair or the contribution that it made to the city as a whole, but only a relatively few Dallas merchants and businessmen seemed willing to buy the stock to fund the event. A decision had to be made as to whether the fair's contribution to the city warranted further effort by the association and whether the fair could continue to be operated solely by private investments. It seemed evident that some of the financial burden involved would have to be relieved, but since the state constitution prohibited direct public aid to local fairs, some other method had to be found.

Sidney Smith, the corporate secretary of the fair, apparently discovered and suggested that other method. As an avid student of the workings of fairs throughout North America, he had traveled widely to see them and study their operations. The plan he devised admittedly resembled closely the system that had been in successful operation for twenty years in Toronto, Canada.[27] The system involved a city-owned park that was leased annually to a private corporation which conducted a fair in the park. The directors of the fair corporation were favorably impressed with the idea and devised a complete step-by-step plan by which the system could be implemented in Dallas.

That plan had five basic steps which were: first, the purchase of the fair grounds by the City of Dallas; second, the reorganization of

the fair corporation; third, the making of a contract between the fair corporation and the city for the perpetuation of the fair; fourth, the promotion of the plan among Dallas citizens to such an extent that they would approve the taxes necessary to put the plan into operation; fifth, the sale of sufficient fair stock, conditioned on the above plan's approval by the voters, that the fair corporation could be a viable party in concluding a contract with the city.[28]

Although Sidney Smith originated the plan, the directors selected another man to champion the proposal to the general public. Because of his many years of service to the fair, Smith's name looms over the history of the fair like a civic giant, but he was in reality only a very capable and dedicated corporate secretary to the fair. The association needed a prominent public figure to present the plan to the city council and to promote the concept among the local citizens. In order to speak with authority, such a man needed to be a highly successful businessman and civic leader. For this crucial role as the "frontman" for the proposition, the fair directors chose E. M. Reardon, and thus Smith's concept to save the fair became known as the "Reardon Plan for the Reorganization and Perpetuation of the Great Texas State Fair." Reardon had been socially and financially prominent in Dallas since the middle 1880s as an executive in the American Exchange Bank. As a stockholder in the fair association, he had served as the treasurer for the corporation in 1886-87 and 1889-93. He also must have been an articulate speaker and a respected and personable gentleman to have been selected to head such a campaign.[29]

After working out the details of the plan, on February 8, 1904,

Reardon presented to the City of Dallas, on behalf of the directors of the Texas State Fair, the following offer:

> WHEREAS, the undersigned Directors of the Texas State Fair, a Corporation duly chartered under the laws of the State of Texas, having become convinced after a trial of two years that a successful Fair and Exposition cannot be maintained without the necessary exposition and music hall buildings; and,
>
> WHEREAS, at a meeting of the Stockholders of said Corporation, it was deemed unwise to replace these buildings with borrowed capital and it was decided that no further effort on their part would be made to continue the Fair without them; and,
>
> WHEREAS, the affairs of the Corporation, including grounds, buildings and all improvements thereon, belonging to said Corporation, were by resolution turned over to the undersigned Directors, with full authority to donate same to the City of Dallas, if by so doing the Fair could be perpetuated and a modern fire-proof building erected on said grounds, suitable for exposition and auditorium purposes, to cost not less than $75,000.00. And that in the event this arrangement could not be carried into effect, then the undersigned Directors were instructed to sell said property, pay off all indebtedness and divide the remainder among the Stockholders of the Corporation; and,
>
> WHEREAS, We, the undersigned Directors, now have an offer of $125,000.00 in cash for the above described property, the acceptance of which, while it will leave an equity of $45,000.00 to the Stockholders, after paying up all indebtedness, will forever discontinue this Fair as far as the City of Dallas at least is concerned; and,
>
> WHEREAS, we are not willing to accept this offer, only as a last resort;
>
> NOW, THEREFORE, We, the undersigned Directors of the Texas State Fair, by virtue of the authority vested in us by the Stockholders of said Corporation, do hereby offer for sale to the City of Dallas, the property known as the Texas State Fair Grounds, containing 117 acres of land, more or less, together with all improvements thereon, belonging to said Corporation, free from all debt and encumbrances whatever, for the sum of $125,000.00 to be paid for as follows, namely: $80,000.00 to be paid to the Stockholders of the Texas State Fair upon their compliance with the above offer, and the surrender of the above described property, covered by good title and free from all debt and encumbrances, and the remainder namely, $45,000.00 to be left in the hands of the Treasurer of the City of Dallas and to be paid out by him under arrangements to be made between the City of Dallas and the Stockholders of the Texas State Fair, for the erection at once on the Fair Grounds of a modern fire-proof building suitable for exposition and auditorium purposes

and to cost not less than $75,000.00 when completed and equipped for the purposes above mentioned. Provided, however, that said grounds and buildings shall be used for park and Fair purposes and that the City will permit for a nominal cost, the exclusive use of said grounds and buildings for a period of 30 days in the Fall of each year for the purpose of holding annual Fairs and Expositions, and 30 days in the Spring of each year for Spring Races.

We further agree on the park of the Stockholders of the Texas State Fair, that in the event the City accepts the above offer, we will join the Citizens of Dallas in the reorganization and perpetuation of a Fair Association for the purpose of conducting annually on these grounds first-class Fairs and Expositions.

In testimony whereof, witness our hands and seals this the 25th day of January, 1904.

TEXAS STATE FAIR,
By W. H. Gaston, President.
Sidney Smith, Secty.[30]

Basically, the association offered the entire property of the fair to the city as a park for the sum of $125,000 provided the city would agree to use $45,000 of the purchase price to help build a new auditorium and exhibit hall and allow the fair association exclusive use of the grounds for sixty days each year.

The council responded by unanimously approving the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DALLAS: that the written Proposition signed by the Texas State Fair... be and the same is hereby accepted, subject, however, to the following express conditions, a failure in any one of which shall annul and destroy this acceptance: - -

(1) That the Qualified voters who are tax payers of the City of Dallas shall by a sufficient vote legally authorize the levy of a special and additional annual tax of 1/10 of 1% for a period of four years and for the purpose of acquiring the necessary funds on the part of the City of Dallas to consummate the proposed purchase; the proposition for the levy of the tax to be submitted at the time of the next General City Election. That the purchase price shall be paid as funds shall be derived from the collection of said tax if same shall be voted.

(2) That the said Texas State Fair make to the City of Dallas good and perfect title to the property to be sold, free

> of all encumbrances within thirty days after the City of Dallas shall announce its intention to proceed with the purchase.
>
> (3) That a new corporation shall before the sale is consummated be organized and in existence for the purpose of conducting an annual State Fair on the grounds to be purchased, which shall have Thirty Thousand Dollars in cash additional to any other sum mentioned in the written Proposition referred to, to be devoted entirely to the purpose of contributing to the construction of a modern fire-proof building suitable for exposition and auditorium purposes, and which shall have been deposited in the hands of the Treasurer of the City of Dallas to be paid out by him in the same manner mentioned in the said written Proposition for the Forty-five Thousand Dollars therein referred to.
>
> (4) That all buildings and improvements of every character which are to become fixed to the land with whatever funds added or constructed shall be the property of the City of Dallas unconditionally, and the grounds and all buildings and improvements connected therewith shall be under the sole control and authority of the City of Dallas for the purpose of a public park for the City of Dallas, except for a period of thirty days in the Fall of each year and thirty days in the Spring of each year when under an arrangement the terms of which shall be agreed upon prior to the consummation of the purchase by and between the City of Dallas and the corporation to be organized before referred to, the City of Dallas shall permit said corporation to have the exclusive use of the grounds and buildings during the said periods for the respective purposes only of holding an annual Fair and Exposition in the Fall and annual Races in the Spring.
>
> (5) That the Texas State Fair and the Directors thereof signing the written proposition therein referred to shall within ten days from the passage of this Resolution file with the City Secretary their written acceptance of the conditions above expressed.[31]

Basically, the city agreed to accept the offer if the voters would approve the necessary taxes and bond issue to finance the deal. But the council required the fair to contribute thirty thousand dollars to the construction of the new auditorium.

The tax issue appeared as the snag on which the entire fair and park could stumble. The voters had apathetically voted down a tax for park expansion in 1903, and no assurance could be made that a majority

of Dallasites would approve a similar tax in 1904. Furthermore, the citizens had to be convinced that they would lose long range benefits if the annual fair ceased.

The council set a date for the voters to render their decision on the fair park acquisition by voting for or against a special ad valorem tax of one tenth of one percent of the assessed value of all taxable property, real and personal, in the city. The tax would be collected for four years beginning in 1904 and expire after collection in 1907.

After about six weeks of work by the Fair Park supporters to gain support for the tax, the polling day, April 5, 1904, arrived. Though voter turnout proved to be heavier than expected, the voting was still light. When all ballots were counted, the Fair Park tax had been overwhelmingly approved by a vote of 2,531 to 415![32]

The legal documents, contracts, titles, and ordinances necessary for the transfer of so large a piece of property to the city required the rest of the spring and summer to complete. On August 8, the council passed an ordinance levying the tax approved in April and deposited the seventy-five thousand dollars to be applied toward a new Fair Park auditorium with the American National Bank.[33] The fair grounds were formally annexed into the city limits in October and plans were begun for the building of the new auditorium. The city legal officers cleared up several minor problems concerning the title to the land between April and October and negotiated the legal contract. Finally, on October 11, Mayor Bryan T. Barry announced that he had completed and closed all transactions between the Texas State Fair and the city. Fair Park

belonged to the City of Dallas.[34]

The contract signed by Mayor Barry was a lengthy document, but basically the provisions were as follows:

(1) The City of Dallas agreed that for a period of twenty years it would surrender the Fair Park to the newly chartered and reorganized fair association for the purpose of presenting an annual fall fair and spring races. The State Fair's control of the grounds would last for thirty days for each event.

(2) The State Fair of Texas, as the new association was titled, agreed to present the annual fair and races and vowed to maintain high degrees of excellence at both. The association also agreed to obey the laws against racing and the selling of beer on Sunday.

(3) The State Fair was allowed to charge admission to the park during the periods it controlled the grounds, but the city could exclude from admission any class of people it considered "objectionable" (This was intended to permit the city to keep prostitutes, pick pockets, and such out of the grounds. This provision was not construed to exclude Negroes from the grounds.).

(4) The State Fair could make whatever use of the buildings and grounds was deemed necessary for the fair, but any permanent changes in the buildings had to be approved by the city.

(5) The city agreed to furnish a fully equipped fire station on the fair grounds each year during the association's possession of the grounds.

(6) The city agreed to insure the new auditorium and the fair agreed to insure all other buildings on the grounds.

(7) The city reserved the right to be kept informed on the financial affairs of the State Fair, and an annual investigation was authorized.

(8) The city insisted that no officer or director of the State Fair, except the corporate secretary, was ever to be paid any compensation for his efforts, and the list of fair cash prizes had to be approved by the city.

(9) The city had to approve permanent physical additions to fair facilities.

(10) The fair assumed liability for any personal injuries occurring during its possession of the grounds, or which could be traced to negligence on the part of the fair association.

(11) The city agreed to maintain the Fair Park as an attractive public park during the ten months it controlled the grounds.

(12) Both parties agreed to build an auditorium on the fair grounds with construction beginning no later than January 1905.

(13) All profits made by the fair association were to be used to improve the grounds, to add to a working capital to aid in future large additions, to increase the prizes offered, or to gain more expensive or more numerous attractions. At no time were the profits ever to be paid to the stockholders as dividends. The only return allowed the stockholders under the contract was the right to free admission to the grounds during the fair.

(14) The city agreed to provide policemen to patrol the grounds during the annual fair.

(15) All improvements in Fair Park were to become the property of the city unless they were placed there by the State Fair's funds, in which case the improvements would be allowed to remain on the grounds for the use of the fair association.

(16) All references in the contract to the spring races were to be held not binding if the directors of the State Fair decided that the races could not be conducted profitably due to the state laws prohibiting gambling.

(17) If the fair failed to hold a fair any year, it forfeited all rights under the contract.[35]

Through the ensuing years, several of the provisions of this contract have been altered in various ways, but the parties altered two of the sections before six months had passed. The agreement that the State Fair would pay the insurance premiums on all the buildings on the grounds except the new auditorium had to be overlooked. The fair association simply could not make the payments, which totaled $1,134.40, so the city assumed the obligation. Also, the State Fair gained use of the grounds for seventy-five days, instead of thirty days as the contract specified, in order that the directors could have more time to make necessary preparations. However, the council required the association to keep the park open to the public during the additional forty-five days.[36]

The provisions of this contract began the formal association of the private corporation of the State Fair of Texas with the municipal corporation of the City of Dallas. That association has been a generally happy and successful venture with each party giving to the union assets

it could not possess without the other. The municipal ownership of the grounds relieved a heavy burden from the fair association. Only after that burden was lifted could the State Fair operate from a position of true financial stability. The stipulation in the contract that the profits be used in improving the fair, instead of divided among the stockholders, insured a high caliber fair, eliminating the possibility that "corners" would be "cut" to economize and insure higher profits. Also, this provision insured that the fair would be run as a privately owned civic institution operated for boosterism purposes. Since the stockholders could never gain monetary reimbursement on their investment, the men who would buy such stock had to be truly civic minded rather than profit hungry.

The benefits bestowed on the citizens of Dallas in the acquisition of Fair Park and the execution of the contract were fourfold. First, the city gained a sizable, fully equipped park for use by the public ten months of the year. Second, the public was guaranteed the continuance of an annual event which brought to town popular shows, bands, and entertainments. Third, the fair provided an opportunity for numerous Dallasites to gain temporary employment. Preparations for the event required the skills of many carpenters, artisans, and common laborers. Also many native Dallasites operated the amusement facilities, souvenir stands, restaurants, and other concessions throughout the park. Fourth, millions of dollars flowed into Dallas hotels, cafes, clubs, stores, and transportation from out of town visitors who attended the fairs. This money, in turn, provided additional jobs for Dallas residents and added immeasurably to the local economy. The stability provided for the fair

by its combination of municipal and private corporations gave added attractiveness to the jobs generated by the fair.

Despite all the theoretical benefits to be gained from the union of public and private interest in the State Fair of Texas, the first fair held by the new corporation did not promise greatness. The law against race-horse betting limited the attractions, and construction on the new Exposition Building (auditorium) lagged behind schedule. But the directors decided not to invoke the privilege given to them by a minor clause in the contract which allowed them to skip the presentation of a fair in 1904 while they struggled to get reorganized and on their feet financially. However, they did reduce the regular fair to merely a carnival and eliminated many of the events normally seen at the fair. As a result, fair receipts dropped to less than thirty thousand dollars, or about a third of normal receipts, and less than a quarter of receipts in the peak years of 1899 and 1900.[37]

By the fall of 1905, however, the fair's prospects for success had improved dramatically. The law against race-horse betting had been repealed and the directors went "all-out" to present an excellent series of races. The revenue from the betting alone almost equalled the 1904 total for the entire fair. The 1905 fair became the most successful one ever held and broke all prior records for fair attendance and receipts.[38]

With the completion of the Exposition Building in 1905, the fair expanded its exhibits in almost every field. But the final cost of the building reached about ninety thousand dollars, or fifteen thousand dollars more than the total amount agreed upon by the city and the fair in their contract. But the fair stockholders absorbed these, reflecting

their pleasure in the $52,771 net profit earned by the 1905 fair.[39]

This profit, which according to the contract with the city, had to be applied to improvements on the grounds or for expenses to bring better attractions to the fair, prompted the fair directors to take an action which had long range effects on the entire city. The board of directors for the 1906 fair which took office after the business of the 1905 fair was closed felt that it should expend some of the profit in improving the fair grounds, not just in building new structures to house exhibits. Sewers, streets, walks, and general landscape needed attention and the board of directors voted to hire a competent engineer to handle the technical aspects of the sewers and streets and a nationally reputed landscape architect to handle the aesthetics and planning for the beauty and efficiency of the grounds. The landscape architect employed for the job was George Kessler of St. Louis, Missouri, who had built his reputation in the parks of Kansas City and St. Louis.

Kessler came to Dallas and examined Fair Park in detail. His report basically approved of the location of all the buildings and streets but strongly urged the erection of an administration building for the fair. He also made a number of specific suggestions relating to landscaping and decorating the park. His work for the State Fair introduced him and his abilities to Dallas and to the new Board of Park Commissioners who again employed Kessler in 1911 to make a plan for the entire park system. That plan turned out to be nearly a comprehensive city plan and various aspects of that program remain prominent in Dallas today.[40]

Also in 1906, the park board decided to expand Fair Park by

purchasing the entire frontage along Pennsylvania Avenue. The owner of this property had determined to develop the ground as residential lots with each house's backyard opening onto Fair Park. The State Fair and the park board found this prospect undesirable, but absolutely no public funds were available to purchase the additional land. So the members of the newly organized park board and the directors of the State Fair gave their personal notes in payment for the property and simply took the chance that they might be reimbursed eventually by the city, although their fears were short lived as the city soon assumed the debt.[41]

Receipts from the 1906 and 1907 fairs soared past all previous records. Every department of the fair expanded. Prospects for vastly expanded facilities seemed assured by the profits that were piling up each year. But in 1908 a reincarnation of an earlier problem began to loom on the horizon.

The opponents of horse race betting had almost destroyed the fair in 1903 when their lobbyists had succeeded in illegalizing the practice in Texas. The "Anti-Race Bill" was repealed in 1905, but by 1908 the opponents of gambling again clamored at the doors of the Texas Legislature. Indeed, even the fair directors disliked the system of gambling as it operated in Texas. There had been serious complaints of fraud against bookmakers and pool sellers, and the fair directors had determined to abolish the system in spite of the fact that they received about forty thousand dollars annually from the "bookies." Two of the directors, M. M. Phinney and former mayor Ben Cabell, traveled around the country attempting to find a more acceptable and respected system of gambling on horse races. In Kentucky, they discovered the



State Fair Race Track

"pari-mutuel" system and recommended its adoption for the Texas fair. But legal complications arose. The state law required race track operators to sell books to any reputable bookmaker. Thus while "pari-mutuel" betting could be used, it would have to co-exist with bookmakers who, by law, could not be excluded. The directors postponed adoption of the "pari-mutuel" system until they could lobby in the legislature to change the law in order to eliminate the undesirable bookmakers.

But when the next session of the legislature convened, the directors learned that a bill had been introduced to outlaw all gambling on all horse racing in the state. To the director's dismay, the leaders of a number of Dallas churches, supported by their state-wide denominational organizations, openly pressured the legislators to pass the anti-gambling law. The local ministers branded the Dallas fair as "a sink hole of iniquity" and called the directors "aiders and abettors of the gambling hell."[42]

To counter the religious groups, the fair's supporters presented an alternative measure known as the "Breeders' Bill" which would have eliminated "bookies" and instituted the more acceptable pari-mutuel system. But the bookmakers themselves thwarted this effort. The bookmakers threatened to align with the churchmen and outlaw all gambling if any attempt was made to eliminate them from the racing scene. Finally the two ends of the spectrum collapsed upon the middle as the unholy alliance of bookies and preachers was solemnized. The Legislature outlawed gambling.

The State Fair lost its biggest money maker, horse race gambling, but it gained some small revenge on the bookies before they moved to

other states. The bookmakers had planned to reap a windfall of gambling profits in the ninety days before the bill took effect by promoting races at the fair grounds as Texans' last chances to bet on the horses. But the park board and the State Fair directors refused to be a party to the scheme even though both the fair and the city would have profited.

This elimination of gambling at the races again threatened the State Fair's financial stability. But the directors decided to use the money normally spent on the races to make the fair spectacular in other departments. The 1909 State Fair was a grand success in spite of the "Anti-Race Bill." Even though the net profit for the fair fell about thirty-two thousand dollars short of what it had been the year before, this represented real success, because the directors had fully expected to lose money that year.[43]

The fair directors permanently settled another religious type problem in 1909. There had always been some opposition to the fair's operations on Sunday. But three of the stockholders, representing certain religious sentiments, suggested that the fair be closed down each of the three Sundays that fell during the event. The discussion that followed established a permanent policy on the matter. Estimates indicated that the fair would lose about forty-five thousand dollars if it closed its gates on the Sundays. Furthermore, the stockholders pointed out that the Sunday visitors tended to be wage earners, especially out-of-town laborers, who could not afford to take off during the week to attend, and who used the special weekend excursion rates given by the railroads to get to the fair. To close the fair on Sundays would be, in effect, to bar these working class people from the pleasure of

the fair, so the Sunday closing suggestion was permanently discarded.[44]

The physical facilities at Fair Park developed rapidly after about 1907, but these subjects, although relevant to the fair, must be considered in their context as related to the overall activities of the Dallas Park Board. The State Fair of Texas has a colorful history all its own, which is in need of definitive writing. For the purpose of this study, however, only those matters after 1904 that directly involved the Dallas Park Board will be considered further.

The acquisition of the Fair Park was one of the most pivotal events in the early history of the Dallas park system. Not only did it guarantee that the fair would survive and continue to bestow on the city its benefits, but the action finally brought much needed expansion to the system. The city now had two well developed, publicly controlled parks, one basically passive, the other definitely active. The ball diamonds and playgrounds of the new Fair Park affected the attitudes of Dallas citizens in such a way that a new era of park philosophy emerged in which recreational considerations became the primary thrust of park usage.

## NOTES

### A PARK FOR FUN AND PROFIT

[1]Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965, paperback by Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 117, 254.

[2]William Kenneth Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs" (M.A. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1953), p. 2. This contradicts John H. Cochran, Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress (Dallas: A. S. Mathis Service Publishing Co., 1928), p. 128. He says that Dallas was the first and only county to have a fair before the Civil War.

[3]Dallas Times Herald, 2 November 1859; and Phillip Lindsley, A History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity (2 vols.; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), I, p. 62.

[4]Dallas Times Herald, 2 November 1859.

[5]Ibid., 7 November 1860.

[6]Ibid., 24 October 1868; and Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs," pp. 33-38.

[7]Examination of records from the District Court and the Deed Record Book in Dallas seem to indicate that this new association was merely a reorganization of the old group, with a legal settlement of obligations. Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs," p. 38fn.

[8]Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[9]John S. Spratt, The Road to Spindletop: Economic Change in Texas (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1955), p. viii.

[10]Dallas Times Herald, 16 September 1876.

[11]Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs," pp. 45-48.

[12]Dallas Times Herald, 4 November 1876; and Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs," pp. 49-60.

[13]Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs," p. 69.

[14]Dallas Morning News, 13 October 1929, magazine section, "Historical Dallas," p. 22.

[15]Rupert N. Richardson, Texas: The Lone Star State, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), p. 263.

[16]Lindsley, A History of Greater Dallas, I, p. 149; J. T. Trezevant, A History of the State Fair of Texas, 1886-1904 (n.p., n.d.), p. 3; and Sewell, "Dallas's Early Fairs," pp. 75-87.

[17]The settlement tends to suggest that the dispute was actually a conflict over real estate investment, rather than over soil types. The Texas State Fair grounds was subdivided, becoming the suburban addition of Fairland.

[18]Sidney Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," manuscript history of the State Fair of Texas 1886-1910, written about 1910, located in the Executive Offices, State Fair of Texas, Fair Park, Dallas, Texas, p. 17. It appears that the eighty acres acquired by Gaston for the fair may have been only part of a larger real estate transaction because he later sold additional acreage adjoining the fair grounds to the fair association to expand the grounds.

[19]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[20]Ibid., pp. 22-23, 53-A. In addition, numerous other donations were made by Gaston, including six thousand dollars in cash in 1889. Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," p. 27.

[21]Ibid., pp. 32-43.

[22]Ibid., p. 43.

[23]Ibid., pp. 48-52.

[24]Ibid., pp. 52-53, 59-61.

[25]Ibid., pp. 58, 62-63.

[26]Ibid.; and Trezevant, A History of the State Fair of Texas, p. 21.

[27]Toronto, Canada, was believed by contemporaries of that time to have the best fair in North America. Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," p. 67; and Trezevant, A History of the State Fair of Texas, p. 2.

[28]Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," pp. 64-70.

[29]Ibid., pp. 16, 22, 28, 30, 64, 491; and Trezevant, A History of the State Fair of Texas, pp. 3-5, 8-9.

[30]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 29, 8 February 1904, pp. 451-52.

[31]Ibid., pp. 452-53.

[32]Ibid., 8 April 1904, p. 523. Although the total of less than three thousand people who voted on the issue seems extremely small in comparison to the Dallas population of about forty-three thousand in 1904, it must be remembered that women were still not allowed to vote in 1904, thus halving the electorate. Many of the sixteen thousand to seventeen thousand (roughly approximated) males over twenty-one years of age were further eliminated from participation at the polls by voter registration requirements such as the poll tax. The three thousand voters who turned out could have represented as much as twenty-five percent of the eligible voters in town.

[33]W. H. Gaston's own bank, the Gaston National Bank, had actually won the privilege to have the amount deposited in his bank through competitive bidding. But Gaston apparently withdrew his bid after he won to avoid public criticism since he was the president of the Texas State Fair Association and a former city treasurer. His close association with the formulation of the contract between the city and the fair could have brought criticism if his bank had been given the seventy-five thousand dollar deposit.

[34]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 30, 8 August 1904, p. 187; 12 September 1904, p. 237; vol. 30, 5 October 1904, p. 262; 11 October 1904, pp. 265-73, 285.

[35]Ibid., pp. 265-73; and Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," pp. 84-91.

[36]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 30, 10 January 1905, p. 420; 14 February 1905, p. 474.

[37]Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," pp. 73, 91.

[38]Ibid., pp. 93-94.

[39]Ibid.; and Trezevant, A History of the State Fair of Texas, p. 22.

[40]Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," pp. 96-97. Such familiar items on a Dallas map as Turtle Creek Boulevard and Loop 12 are results of Kessler's work. For discussion of Kessler's plans for the entire park system, see Chapter nine of this thesis.

[41]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1903 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "Fair Park."

[42]Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," p. 118.

[43]Ibid., pp. 113-14, 117-19, 125-A.

[44]Ibid., p. 117.

# CHAPTER 7

## A BETTER IDEA

After the City of Dallas acquired Fair Park, the city council suddenly discovered that its new possession bestowed a great blessing, but that it also became an incredible bother. The park provided salutary benefits to the city, but the administration of it consumed an inordinate amount of council time with the many mundane and trivial issues of park maintenance and use. Matters concerning Fair Park swamped the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings, and although the committeemen handled what matters they could, council rules instituted when Dallas was much smaller required that much of the business be approved by the entire council. After less than a year of operation under the old committee system, the city fathers found a better way to handle the park system and established a board of park commissioners.

The change of park management patterns came about because of absolute necessity. Indeed, the old city council had always jealously guarded its prerogatives, especially when disbursements were involved. But the realities of time and complexity of administration had forced the aldermen to cease their collective attention to details in the water department in 1881. The committeemen who supervised the water supply system became water "commissioners" with increased personal responsibility for knowledge about the water works, distribution facilities, sewer services, and fire protection. That responsibility included certain privileges to allocate funds with only periodic and summary reference to

the entire council. A similar system gradually developed around the police department. Therefore, when Fair Park activities threatened to mire the council in a bog of minutiae, the city fathers simply modified a system with which they were experienced to handle the situation.

To understand the council's quandary, an examination of some of the matters they considered before establishing the park board is illuminating. The build up of administrative matters concerning parks did not immediately engulf the council. After the mayor signed the contract with the State Fair of Texas, the fair association took control of the grounds for their annual presentation, although it was only a carnival that year due to limited funds. Thus, the city did not feel the weight of the added responsibilities until after the fair closed and the grounds returned to the city's control. But beginning on November 1, 1904, the aldermen discovered some unexpected aspects of their new property.

On that day, two organizations petitioned the city council for use of facilities at Fair Park. First, the Dallas Base Ball Club asked permission to use the fair ground's ball park during the next baseball season. After reference to the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee, the council approved a contract which charged the club $350 for the season's use of the ball field. Second, the Dallas Matinee and Driving Club applied for use of the race track on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1904, to present "a racing entertainment." The club wanted to charge admission and, after paying the expenses of the exhibitions, donate the income to the city for improvements at the track and fair grounds. The council promptly approved the request and later granted further privileges to the organization.[1]

More informal handling was necessary when an unnamed group advertised its football games to be held at the fair grounds but failed to seek permission from the council far enough in advance to avoid calling a special meeting for that purpose alone. A practical minded Mayor Barry granted unofficial permission, deposited their twenty-five dollar rental fee with the city treasurer, and informed the council of the fact nearly two weeks later at its next regular meeting.[2]

Maintenance problems also cropped up when the fair closed. The aldermen granted Superintendent Tietze use of the prisoners in the local jail to clean up the park, to repaint some buildings, and to complete the drive at the race track. In other areas, maintenance required the relocation of the Fair Park fire station and the opening of a new gate.[3]

The council also moved to protect the interests of the State Fair of Texas since it had become a partner, of sorts, in the fair presentation. The aldermen passed an ordinance prohibiting all circuses and circus-related parades in the city during the period of the fair to eliminate competition. The city did not wish to jeopardize the full success of the fair's operations.[4]

Then on December 27, 1904, the Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings staggered the council with a time consuming report that contained ten separate items of business relating to Fair Park maintenance and administration. But the report only portended things to come, for as the new year opened, Fair Park-related matters occupied an even larger portion of council time. Various groups petitioned to use the facilities for purposes ranging from races and football games to choir concerts. Potential lessees sought privileges for a skating rink, a

toboggan slide amusement, and other rights. Maintenance activities increased, and since the old rules for park operations required all expenditures of more than ten dollars to be approved, practically everything had to go before the council. Some of the items considered included new lights, new equipment, new sewer accommodations, and new personnel. In other matters, a theater director named C. W. Stater negotiated a contract to present daily shows preceded by free concerts in the old auditorium during the summer. Although not the first theatrical performances at the fair grounds, this extended series of summer entertainments laid the groundwork for regular summer theater in the park. Meanwhile, preparations for the new auditorium and exposition hall required in the city's contract with the fair corporation continued and actual construction apparently began in late January of 1905.[5]

All of the matters mentioned so far dealt with activities at Fair Park, but items concerning City Park continued to come before the council as always. Regular maintenance continued in the older park and various groups gained permission to use the park for large gatherings.

As a result of all this activity concerning the two city parks, it became obvious that a more efficient method of handling park matters had to be developed. The council/committee system probably could have handled several parks of the old City Park type before the structure became overburdened. But the administration of Fair Park presented a very different situation. The committee, itself, could perform its duties admirably, but the entire system became undesirable because it was slow, did not delegate enough authority to the committee, and consumed too much of the city council's time in day to day park supervision. Another

system had to be found which would eliminate these inconveniences.

The solution came in the form of an amendment to the Dallas City Charter of 1899. Several amendments were to be considered in 1905, among them a new concept for administering the city's parks. The proposal suggested a separate park department, presided over by a board of five commissioners appointed by the mayor and funded by the city council as a part of its over-all budget. This commission would have direct control over the actual expenditures of monies allocated to the department.

This decentralization of city authorities would free the aldermen from the details of park administration and allow them to concentrate on other matters. It also promised a board of five men interested in the parks who could devote their time and energy to the improvement of facilities. Besides, the separate board could speed up the cumbersome process of granting park usage to various groups.

The concept of commissioning citizens to handle specific duties, like park administration, had some precedent in Dallas in the water and police departments. But the move to divorce the board from aldermanic membership apparently derived from the new commission form of government instituted in Galveston in 1903. In that widely imitated system, each of the five city commissioners had a specific department to oversee and did not become much involved in the other commissioners' departments. Exactly who proposed that this system be instituted in Dallas to handle the park system cannot be ascertained, but the suggestion was made and included in the amendments approved by the Texas Legislature in 1905.

After the approval of the charter amendments, Mayor Bryan T. Barry

appointed a special committee of three aldermen to study the scope, intent, and meaning of the new charter provision creating the board of park commissioners. Since the new board obviously changed many former procedures in park administration, several ordinances and rules needed changing to provide the new board with effective authority to conduct the business of the parks. The committee did not formally report to the council and its findings are now impossible to determine, but the study must have been completed within about two weeks because the mayor moved to appoint the members of the commission before the end of the month.[6]

Although the report itself does not exist, some of the things contained in it can be assumed by examining the charter provisions themselves and by studying the operations of the first board. The park board, provided for by Section 62-a of the amended 1899 City Charter, consisted of four commissioners appointed by the mayor for two year terms and confirmed by the entire council, with the mayor serving as president of the board. The council funded the board through an annual appropriation, but the board had actual control over the expenditures. The commissioners could employ and dismiss laborers and supervisors as necessary, enter into contracts, and exercise the power of eminent domain.[7]

On May 23, 1905, Mayor Barry announced the names of his candidates for the park commission to the council for confirmation. The list included M. N. Baker, W. O. Connor, Emil Fretz, and J. J. Eckford. One week later, the four were confirmed with only one dissenting vote on the entire council, that belonging to the chairman of the Committee on Public

Grounds and Buildings, J. E. Flanders. Why he objected to the slate of commissioners is not known but may have reflected some personal chagrin. In spite of his position as chairman of the committee which had controlled the parks for years, he had not been placed on the special study committee. Furthermore, he had been strangely absent from all council discussions about the parks since January 1905 when he had been defeated by T. L. Lawhon in a small dispute over the location of the new Fair Park auditorium.[8]

The new park commissioners composed a civic minded group who had each demonstrated previous interest in park activities. As a private investment broker, M. N. Baker had previously served on the city council. Although never appointed to the park committee, he had supported park measures throughout his tenure. W. O. Connor, the president of Hartwick-Connor Machinery Company, had also served as a city alderman. His interest in the parks, like Baker's, had been demonstrated in his activism for parks despite the fact that he, too, never gained a seat on the park committee. As a member of the Commercial Club, the civic group which favored more parks, he had represented that group on the Special Park Committee in 1902. Emil Fretz was a Swiss immigrant who had moved to Dallas as a young man and gradually developed into a successful businessman. Starting as the owner of a bath house, he had moved up the ladder of success and social prestige to become the head of a barber supply firm and to have considerable real estate investments. As a member of the Commercial Club, he also served on the Special Park Committee with W. O. Connor. His appointment to the board in 1905 began a long career of public service for Fretz. He served on the board for

twenty-two years, longer than any other man--except Ray Hubbard who presided for twenty-eight years in the post World War II era--and literally devoted his retirement years to park board work. J. J. Eckford represented the interests of the State Fair of Texas. He had owned stock in the fair for many years and became a member of the fair's board of directors in 1909 and 1910. He was an attorney and became a judge after resigning from the park board in 1908. No doubt his legal abilities proved to be valuable assets to the newly established board. Bryan T. Barry, also an attorney, constituted the fifth member of the board and served as mayor. He remained in that office for only one more year, but he had always favored park expansion throughout his three terms as mayor, although he had failed to muster the majority opinion of the council to support such expansion.[9]

These men formed a fairly well balanced group to conduct the business of the city's parks. Of the five members, there were two attorneys, two real estate investors, and three local businessmen. Three of the five, including the mayor, had previous experience with the internal operations of the city government and understood the legal aspects of public financing and governmental contracts. At least three of the men participated in civic groups and had support from those elements. In general, the five commissioners possessed collectively and individually the talents and experience necessary to establish a new board and set precedents for administration.

The park board held its first meeting on Wednesday, May 31, 1905, in the mayor's office. Since the meeting served as a type of convocation for the commissioners to take their oath of office, they discussed

only matters of an organizational nature. Following the mayor's explanation of the role and duties of the members, the board elected its first slate of officers. Bryan T. Barry formally became president of the board, although his selection was a foregone conclusion, since, by virtue of his position as mayor, he was ex-officio chairman of the board anyway.[10] M. N. Baker was elected vice-president and Lawrence Miller was selected as the first secretary of the park board, athough he resigned in August and James J. Fanning replaced him. That same month, the board elected Emil Fretz second vice-president so that the park business could continue when both the mayor and Baker were out of town, which apparently happened with enough frequency to warrant the arrangement.[11]

In subsequent meetings, the board adopted an informal pattern to conduct its business, thus setting a precedent for form and style that lasted for many years. The minutes of those meetings, however, proved to be terse and legalistic, in keeping with the accepted style for records of governmental bodies. Generally, the mayor convened the meetings in his office in City Hall, although occasionally the commissioners met at Fair Park, or later in other parks, to personally inspect the subject matter they discussed. The meetings seldom lasted long and never became colorful like the city council sessions where occasional fist fights broke out. The agenda seldom contained more than two or three items for the first several years of operation.

The commissioners themselves seemed to conduct the business of the city's park system as though they were five friends engaged in a common interest. This contrasted sharply to the previous operations of the

Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings where adversary relations and political power struggles had often obscured the best interests of the city. But it is not surprising that the commissioners worked well together. They were all basically political appointees of one man and all represented the same middle-upper to upper class social strata. Considering their prior civic activities, it is very likely that they all knew each other long before coming together on the park board.

The board transacted its first real business at its second meeting and after that the pace of activity grew steadily as the group warmed to its task. Among the first month's deliberations were decisions to rent the Fair Park race track to the Dallas Matinee Driving Club for a July 4th race meet and consideration of proposals from several individuals to construct amusement park type entertainments on the fair grounds. Most of the board's time was spent handling requests for use of Fair Park, considering contracts for Fair Park concessionaires, and ordering maintenance for Fair Park. City Park seldom appeared on the agenda.[12]

Activities of the park board rapidly became more complex, covering a wide range of subjects. It would be a worthless and nearly futile effort to trace every contract for every improvement made in the Dallas parks, and identify the piece of sidewalk, sewer pipe, or light pole erected as a result of each contract. Likewise, the numbers of groups granted use of the parks, especially Fair Park, rapidly became so numerous that many meaningless pages could be filled with descriptions of their activities. While such information might be occasionally interesting and important, the vast majority of such material can be

classified as historical trivia. For the purposes of this study, it is much more important that general trends of usage, maintenance, and administration be considered with explanations of specific situations used to illustrate or amplify assertions about the general trends.

As the park board moved through the items on its agenda during those first few years, the commissioners began to make policy statements about park usage and maintenance. Sometimes these clearly stated policies unwittingly laid down precedents for the board. At still other times, the board vacillated widely in the handling of similar matters.

Among the first policies developed by the board, the group decided to actively work to attract state and national conventions to Dallas. Usually, civic and booster groups assumed the role of "drummer" for local convention facilities. But the Dallas Park Board had the unique position of owning a large park complete with auditorium, exhibit halls, race tracks, and amusement facilities including "midway rides" and a small zoo. With benefits to be gained by the entire city from the money left by conventioneers in local hotels, restaurants, clubs, and businesses, and with the facilities at Fair Park occasionally standing vacant, the park board found it convenient to join forces with the city boosters to invite various groups to use Fair Park. The same sort of role had been played by the directors of the fair association before 1904 and the State Fair of Texas facilities were apparently already well known throughout the Southwest. Thus the commissioners merely carried on an activity already established by the fair directors. The board regularly invited the state Democratic and Republican party conventions to use the grounds. Occasional invitations also went to the national

party hierarchy. The State Baptist Convention, the Baptist Missionary Association of Texas, and the State Convention of County Clerks, Tax Collectors, and Sheriffs were examples of other conclaves which used the park's facilities.[13]

The attitude of the board toward leasing the Fair Park facilities for conventions, even actively seeking some of the major gatherings, may have had impressive long range effects on the city as a whole. The convention business became an important Dallas industry, and by 1938 some local sources claimed that only Chicago surpassed Dallas in the number of conventions.[14]

In addition to offering Fair Park for conventions, the board generally made a habit of reserving certain facilities for specific local groups on holidays. Labor Day, for instance, became the special domain of the local labor organizations and whatever facilities they desired were always granted. The 19th of June, or Juneteenth, was always reserved for the exclusive use of the Negro community in its celebrations. The 4th of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas usually saw races presented by one or the other of Dallas' two racing clubs. The 4th of July also included a public fireworks show for which the park board generally paid the bill.

The board tended to bend their own rules occasionally to help civic groups. The groups were required to sign a rental contract to use the facilities, like the auditorium, if they planned to charge an admission fee to those attending their meeting or entertainment. The rental charges usually constituted a percentage of the gross receipts with a certain amount guaranteed to the city. But several of these civic groups

failed to draw large enough crowds to cover their expenses. As long as the sponsors were a civic group, the board seemed willing to forego their legal rights, although groups other than civic clubs did not fare so well. The 1906 entertainment presented by the 150,000 Club[15] serves as a case in point. The club rented the auditorium for one hundred dollars to present a Musical Festival, but the event failed financially. Foregoing the rental fee, the park board agreed to settle for merely a cleaning fee for the building and the wages paid the security guards furnished for the concert.[16]

But the commissioners sought more than just good management. They actively instituted policies to help preserve the aesthetic qualities of the parks, especially Fair Park. Apparently, the fair grounds had developed the beginnings of the ugliness that plagued most urban areas at that time. As electricity replaced gas as the method of lighting, and telephone communications became common, an ugly web of power lines, punctuated with transformers and creosote poles, had spread across the open spaces of the park. Although many years passed before downtown Dallas eliminated the offensive network of wires, the park commissioners dealt with the matter decisively in 1906. Emil Fretz proposed, and the board approved, a resolution ordering all electric, telegraph, and telephone lines be placed underground and all poles removed within thirty days. Thereafter, a firm policy stated that all such utility lines had to be laid underground in Fair Park.[17]

Urban blight of another nature received attention at the same meeting. As with any commercial venture, advertising had become a major concern of the entertainment committees for the State Fair, as well as

the racing clubs and ball clubs. Consequently, signs, posters, and billboards abounded throughout the fair grounds, plastered on buildings, nailed to trees, and hung on fences. The park board realized that some of the advertising was necessary but moved to limit some of the proliferation. The commissioners directed the Fair Park custodian to remove all signs and advertisements in the park except those about current or continuing attractions. The board established its policy, saying that such signs were to be allowed only when the State Fair of Texas actually possessed the park. To make this policy easier to enforce, the board instructed the fair association not to paint their signs on fences, walls, and such, but rather to put them all on removable frames. The ramifications of this edict affected several unexpected parties, such as the miniature railway which sold advertising space on the sides of its cars and along its route. Although fence-space advertising around the ball field apparently remained, the general attitude of the board stated that as public places, commercialism should not be allowed to intrude into the parks.[18]

One policy followed by the board constituted so basic an issue that no actual statement of it ever emanated from the group, but their actions made it obvious. The board attempted to provide the public with the best amusements available with reputable concessions. Numerous contracts gave individuals or companies the right to build "midway rides," set up concession stands, or operate small scale cafes in Fair Park.

However, not every type of entertainment gained the nod from the park commissioners and they did not hesitate to refuse those they

disapproved. Vaudeville shows, in particular, seemed taboo. That particular form of variety show was often looked upon at that time as a rather low class of entertainment, but the board's objections may have been based on things other than personal taste. Many of the vaudeville shows that were refused toured as "come-on" attractions for salesmen huckstering dubious medicines and health devices. The board may have been protecting the public from genuine evils. In other situations, exhibits that simply did not meet the standards of good taste were not allowed no matter how popular they might have been or how much the board could have gained in their percentage of the admission revenue. Typical of this type of screening by the board, the gentlemen refused in 1907 to allow J. W. Whitten to exhibit a "petrified human body."[19]

The reasons for denying some other exhibits, however, reflected legal ramifications rather than personal tastes. Various machine companies displayed their merchandise on the fair grounds and used the fair as an advertising medium. The long standing relationship with the farm implement dealers serves as a good example. But some industries saw a potential opportunity to take advantage of the "exhibit" concept. For instance, the Air Blast Gin Company, which manufactured ginning equipment, requested space to erect a gin to display their machinery, just as the implement dealers had been doing for decades. But, because of the bulk of the machinery, the gin was to be installed permanently with the company having the right to "display" it year round. The board, however, recognized the traps in this request and others like it. The company wanted free real estate on which to build a complete gin which could operate on a commercial basis under the technical guise of

"displaying the merchandise." This sort of activity in the public parks violated the city charter and the board guarded against such privilege seekers.[20]

Some uses of the city facilities, although not illegal, seemed unwise for the parks. For instance, in 1906 the foreman at Fair Park, W. Wilson, lived in a small building actually on the fair grounds. The board apparently decided that "live-in" caretakers were not a good idea. The city water department used a similar arrangement for caretakers at the water reservoirs at Turtle Creek and Bachman Branch, even furnishing the houses as part of the compensation for the job. Exactly why the commissioners ruled the caretakers to be undesirable is not clear, but they ordered Wilson to vacate the park.[21]

The board was equally unclear in its handling of another matter. Small traveling circuses, common at that time, apparently sought winter quarters wherever they happened to be when the weather turned cold. In 1906 two circus troupes requested permission to spend the winter in Fair Park. The first, Carl Hagenbeck's Circus Menagerie and Trained Animal Show, asked for the privilege in late September. The board's reply suggested that some arrangement might be worked out if the commissioners gained a favorable impression of the outfit when it arrived in town. But in delivering its decision on the matter, the board denied the privilege on legal grounds, saying that the occupancy of the buildings during the fall and winter could interfere with the making of improvements according to the contract that existed between the fair and the city. This decision seemed to settle the question of occupancy of the grounds by such groups, but the response to a similar request one month later

suggests that the board had not been impressed with the Hagenbeck Circus and had merely sought a way to politely refuse the use of the fairgrounds for winter quarters.[22]

In November, the 150,000 Club more or less sponsored the request of the Von-Amburg Circus Company for winter quarters. The park board considered and discussed the proposition as though they had not recently issued a firm sounding policy statement on the matter to the Hagenbeck Circus. The Von-Amburg Circus finally received a negative reply because the building which the circus wanted to use was already scheduled for a poultry show in January, thus confusing any definition of policy.[23]

During this early period of board activity, several problems developed that gave the commissioners occasional headaches. Perhaps the most irritating, but least important of the problems, became the use of streets in Fair Park to exercise the racing horses, which apparently caused at least some danger to the park patrons. The board simply prohibited this practice. But other problems required more complex solutions.[24]

One such problem developed in February of 1906, when the board accepted an offer to convert the old machinery building at the fair into a skating rink operated by a lessee firm composed of three men named Hill, Cameron, and Burns. Almost from the start, forebodings of future problems began to appear. The lessees so annoyed the board by constantly throwing trash and debris in front of their building that the commissioners threatened prosecution if the practice did not stop. In November the firm informed the board that it had not succeeded financially. Attendance had, apparently, never reached profitable levels. The board

granted the rink operators a reduction in the percentage of their revenue owed to the city, but even this did not seem to help. By January of 1907, the board tired of coddling the firm and insisted that the rink owners pay the percentage of their revenue legally owed to the city. One of the owners, Henry Hill, told the board that he would have to close the rink if the city demanded immediate payment. But the commissioners' patience had come to an end and they gave Hill less than one week to pay up or be closed down by the park custodian. Hill appealed this action, pleading that his expenses had only recently been reduced by the purchase of an organ to replace the band and that he might be able to pay if given time. A compromise resulted whereby Hill paid everything owed the city up to January 20, 1907, and received thirty days free rent. After that the finances at the rink improved, but the city's problems with the firm got worse. In March the park custodian notified the board that "sleeping apartments" had been constructed in the rink building and that the night policeman at Fair Park had observed men and women entering the rooms after the rink had closed. In spite of the delicate Victorian phrasing of the park board minutes, it was clear that the owners of the rink had been operating a house of prostitution, and the commissioners moved to cancel their contract. However, since the contract expired on May 31, 1907, the board resolved merely to refuse a renewal of the contract, and thus avoided legal action necessary to dissolve the contract. No new firm gained permission to reopen the skating rink. The park board apparently felt that the operation of the rink was tainted, no matter who ran it. But the problems with Hill, Cameron, and Burns continued. They were slow to vacate the building; then they were

slow to return the building to its original condition; then when they completed the work of removing the rink floor, they left the original floor in a damaged state and legal action had to be threatened to achieve cooperation from the trio. Not until well into the fall of 1907, did the board finally settle all matters involving the skating rink.[25]

The circumstances surrounding the discovery of the immoral activities at the skating rink suggest that the board may have heard rumors of the clandestine apartments and had been observing the rink operations in an attempt to gather concrete evidence. Although no intimation ever appeared in the board records to suggest that the Fair Park custodian or his two park policemen had been involved in a "protection racket," it is interesting to note that the board fired all three men in December of 1906. Their replacements were the ones who uncovered the illicit activity in March of 1907.

The situation surrounding the firing of these three men constituted the board's first personnel problem of major proportions. J. W. Anderson had been serving as the custodian at Fair Park ever since the property had been acquired by the city, and he may have been employed by the fair association before that. The first indication that some type of problem had developed came in the spring of 1906 when one of the board members investigated the custodian's expense accounts. Then in July, Anderson received instructions to stop doctoring diseased horses on the fairgrounds and to cease breeding mares unless he erected a building to keep the activity out of public view. Apparently Anderson had been running a small veterinary and stud service on the grounds, although details were omitted. In September, the two policemen who

patroled Fair Park were brought before the board for an informal briefing concerning their duties. Again, on November 2, the board informally discussed the services of the park police. Although the board minutes omitted any details, it must be assumed that in these informal discussions, the commissioners expressed displeasure with the performance of duties by the two policemen and the custodian, because the next day all three received notice that their employment would end on December 1. Although no direct charges were made against any of the men, the board specifically stated that it desired "an entire change in the management" as well as decreased expenses.[26] The latter reason was probably only an excuse, because the board replaced the two policemen immediately and employed several additional watchmen the following spring. Also, the new day policeman, W. O. Winfry, began submitting reports as the custodian and officially became the supervisor of the other watchmen, all of whom did maintenance as well. The desired change in management may have reflected an increasing suspicion that Anderson and his cronies were, at the most, receiving bribes and protecting the prostitution at the skating rink, or at the least, they were either ignoring the illegal activity or so derelict in their duties that they were unaware of its existence. In addition, the board seemed anxious to be rid of Anderson and his particular brand of custodianship which had included such objectionable practices as using city property and city facilities to operate a veterinary and stud service, as well as running barnyard stock belonging to himself and friends on the grounds. The tone of instructions to the board secretary concerning the termination of the trio's employment certainly reflected that the action was not entirely amiable because the

board, apparently expecting a lack of cooperation, specified that final paychecks be withheld until all city property was accounted for, with deductions from their salaries for any missing items. In December, the new custodian reported that Anderson still had three hogs roaming the fair grounds.[27]

The dismissal of these men cannot be linked "beyond the shadow of a doubt" to the prostitution at the skating rink. It is possible that they had no connection whatsoever with the illegal activity. Nevertheless, the apparent laxity and rule-bending by the custodian and his subordinates may have created an atmosphere in which the proprietors of the skating rink felt they could successfully operate their illicit organization. The privileges taken by Anderson, as well as his apparently inept administration of the park and his dereliction of some duties, probably contributed to his dismissal. Certainly, the firing of the custodian and the two policemen followed shortly by the discovery of the prostitution does seem more than mere coincidence.

At the same time, it must be understood that problems with the park policemen constantly haunted the board during the first three and one-half years of its administration. Perhaps the difficulties should have been expected under the circumstances which the forerunners of the modern park police force operated. Actually, the park policemen represented more than just guards or peace officers. The custodians for each of the two parks became the chief of police for their parks and supervised all the other policemen which varied from one night watchman at City Park to about thirty or forty during the fair season at Fair Park.

The regular policemen--those who were employed year-round, not just at fair time--worked at various odd jobs around the parks much like maintenance men, although a separate day-labor force did most of the heavy work.

But the caliber of men who filled these park police positions fell far short of professionalism because of some problems inherent in the system. First, the salaries for park policemen had always been considerably less than those of regular city policemen, whose salaries were also far from impressive. Consequently, the park system undoubtedly got less dependable men who were unable to find more remunerative employment. Although watchmen had been used in City Park as far back as the 1880s, the actual designation of these men as policemen should only date from May 4, 1906, when the park board finally raised their salaries to par with the regular city policemen. At that same time, the board issued police badges for the first time, required the policemen to wear a uniform (purchased at their own expense), and ordered them to carry a club.[28]

Second, the policemen performed their duties in virtually whatever fashion they chose. They answered to no one except the park board itself with only administrative supervision from the custodian who had no powers to hire, fire, discipline, or reward his subordinates. They all left the parks for meals, and apparently for other purposes too, during their duty hours. Due to the nature of their jobs, especially those on night duty, no way existed to insure punctuality or specific performance of their duties. Only during the fair season when a number of additional officers were employed would a semblance of peer pressure to perform have developed.

Whether the park policemen were, in fact, of lower quality than the regular police is a matter of opinion that could be answered only by contemporaries of that time, but some of the problems they caused are well documented. Some of the men seemed prone to violence and had occasionally given the old city council park committee headaches. Such problems persisted. One of the park policemen, Frank Smith, developed a strong dislike for two men who operated a cold drink stand at Fair Park. In early June of 1907, Smith assaulted, without provocation, George Levine and a week later physically attacked his brother, L. Levine. The policeman must have been completely at fault in the matter because Custodian Anderson testified against him in the park board hearing in the matter. Smith received only a stern reprimand, but the impropriety of his actions had clearly impressed some of the commissioners. Before the end of the month, Emil Fretz suggested that expenses at Fair Park be reduced by eliminating one police position. The board conveniently designated Smith as the man to be dropped, thus dealing briskly with its troublemaker.[29]

By April 1907, the commission established a set of rules for park policemen which cast light on some of the problems the board was having. Among the most frequent problems, the men left the parks for extended periods. The rules stated that:

> No park policeman shall be permitted under any circumstances to leave the park grounds during the hours they are assigned to duty except for meals, and they shall be allowed one hour for meals.[30]

A uniform dress code presented yet another problem:

> All policemen will be required to furnish themselves with and wear while on duty a uniform suit of blue and also a black helmet hat upon which shall be displayed his number, and there

> shall be displayed upon the outside of the uniform a park police badge, which must not be removed while on duty.[31]

This last phrase may have reflected an attempt to force the policemen to perform their peace-keeping duties in the face of occasional personal danger despite their lack of training and professionalism. After the experiences with Custodian Anderson, the board included an injunction against the conduct of additional forms of endeavor on duty. Perhaps remembering Smith's pugnaciousness, the board inserted a declaration that all park police should "conduct themselves in a gentlemanly and courteous manner towards all patrons of the Park."[32] Furthermore, the officers had to make regular written reports to the board. The rules specified that violation of this code of conduct could result in dismissal from the force. Nevertheless, the problems persisted, necessitating the institution of punch-clocks for the policemen and several more personnel changes following complaints of "conduct unbecoming an officer." Finally in late 1907, the personnel in the park police force seemed to stablize and problems concerning the policemen at least became less serious than personal assaults and misconduct.[33]

Actually, the use of the title "policeman" for these guards and watchmen glorified their role. They operated under strictly limited jurisdiction within the parks and under regulations concerning park usage. As a prime example of their limited powers, John T. Lynch did not arrest the prostitutes in the skating rink when he discovered their presence, but rather waited until the next day and reported their activities to the park commissioners. The board then took action which still did not include police power, but rather legal aspects of the rink's

contract. The park police did have the authority to arrest offenders, but that power was rarely used, and then only on occasions of assault and battery or attempted theft. But this quasi-police force served the needs of the parks at that point in their development. The need for a more professional and elaborate police force did not develop for several decades.

Throughout this period of difficulties, the responsibilities handled by Superintendent Tietze expanded greatly. Tietze had been hired to supervise the operations of only one park and had managed to conduct his duties with a minimum of intervention from the city council committee. After the acquisition of Fair Park and the establishment of the park board, his role had increased somewhat, but the new park commissioners had tended at first to look into every matter personally as they explored the facets of their responsibilities. But, as they learned about park operations, they increasingly delegated purely administrative and personnel control to Tietze and reserved for themselves mainly policy control, formal creation of contracts, and overall supervision. In many cases, the board merely approved concepts for an action and stated that actual implementation of the action was left to the discretion of the superintendent. In other instances, the commissioners instructed Tietze to make purchases of some items, like trees, in whatever quantity he felt necessary with no limits on his judgement, or simply at the best price he could obtain. His salary steadily increased to coincide with his responsibilities and he even went on several trips at city expense to conduct park business, acquire certain materials, or simply to tour northern and eastern parks to gain ideas for further improvements in the Dallas parks.

The confidence placed in Tietze was well deserved. He was a devoted park employee who seemed to have found his calling in life in the Dallas parks. Born in 1859 at New Braunfels, Texas, of German immigrant parents, he grew up in San Antonio. At age sixteen, he went to Saint Louis and gained employment for two years under the respected botanist and philanthropist Henry Shaw. His training at the famous Shaw's Gardens enabled him to establish himself as a floraculturist. After nine years, he relocated in Dallas in 1892 and engaged in business until 1899. In the meantime, he accepted the position as park superintendent beginning in 1896. The addition of Tietze to the park staff was a tremendous advance for the parks. His education at Shaw's Gardens represented the equivalent in his day of an artist who had studied in Europe. The prestige which he added to the department from a standpoint of professionalism gave the park operations an improved status within the city government.[34]

The board itself did not remain totally stable in membership during these early years. First, the presidency of the board changed three times in as many years since the presiding officer was the city mayor. Bryan T. Barry had been the mayor when the board was established, but his term of office expired less than a year later and he did not run again. Curtis P. Smith, an attorney, succeeded Barry, but his term of office lasted only one year because the city government changed to the new city commission form. As president of the board he appears to have fulfilled the formal requirements of his position but little more. He never took the special interest in park activities exhibited by Mayor Barry who often toured the parks and made personal suggestions or took

immediate action on certain problems he discovered, using his powers as both mayor and president of the board to get things done. Mayor Smith, however, appeared only once in the board minutes during his entire year in office, and that one occasion was to voice opposition to the firing of Fair Park policeman, Frank Smith.[35]

When the city installed the new commission form of government in June of 1907, a third mayor joined the board since C. P. Smith was defeated in his bid to head the new system. The new mayor, Stephen J. Hay, had been selected by a non-partisan Citizens Association[36] as the best candidate for the office, and he captured victory as the entire Citizens Association slate was elected. Mayor Hay was the secretary-treasurer of the Texas Paper Company and had considerable experience in corporate financing. The Citizens Association selected him because he represented the sort of successful businessman they felt would get the new commission established on a firm foundation of business principles and moral ethics. His exact role on the park board was not clearly demonstrated in the minute book, but the quality of his leadership may possibly be seen in the fact that the numerous problems which had plagued Smith's year in office all seemed to disappear when Hay assumed the office. In addition, the park system made massive strides throughout the four years of Hay's administration.[37]

Besides the changes in the president's chair, several changes occurred in board membership. W. O. Connor resigned his seat after the first year and the council appointed Ben Irelson to fill the position. No stranger to the city government or to the park system, Irelson had served three terms on the old city council and one year as a member of

the Public Grounds and Buildings Committee in the fiscal year 1901-1902. As a member of the Special Park Committee in 1902, he had represented the Commercial Club (as had Emil Fretz and W. O. Connor). In private life, he was a successful businessman and owner of "Benjamin Irelson Gents Furnishings," a men's retail clothing store. He demonstrated much interest in the park activities and worked hard at the position during his two years on the board before he resigned in 1908.[38]

That year another member of the board also resigned in order to take a more active role in another facet of park activity. J. J. Eckford had been a stockholder in the State Fair of Texas for several years, but in 1908 he left the park board to devote more time to the fair operations. His activities as a stockholder gained him a seat in 1908 on the executive committee of the board of directors of the state fair and he served in that capacity for several years.[39]

Mayor Hay filled the vacancies by appointing Murrell L. Buckner and Edgar L. Pike. Buckner, a railroad executive, began a four year association with the board; while Pike, a jeweler, began an eleven year service on the park board, a record surpassed only by Fretz and Baker until in the 1960s when extended terms of service again became common. But the appointment of the men coincided with the beginning of a new era in park development.[40]

The opening years of the park board's operations had been marked by a steady progress in the area of administrative understanding, but no further progress had been made in property acquisition. As the city adopted the new city commission form of government in 1907, the park system still consisted of only two parks, plus a few assorted plots of

ground, such as the hospital grounds and a couple of decorated triangles at irregular street intersections. The two parks, City Park and Fair Park, although controlled by the same body of administrators were vastly different in appearance and function.

City Park was basically an aesthetic park with little activity on its grounds. The children gained the privilege of playing in the Mill Creek bottoms in 1907, a vast improvement over previous injunctions against "going upon the grass," but the park facilities still did not include playground or recreation facilities beyond the swings installed in 1889. Prohibitions still existed against ball playing and consumption of any type of alcohol on the grounds. The rag-tag menagerie still resided in the park although reduced in size. No concessions of any sort were ever allowed in the park.[41]

Fair Park, on the other hand, was an extremely active park with amusements of all types including "midway" rides, cafes, shooting galleries, race track, auditorium, and exhibit halls. Several baseball diamonds and a football field attested to the fact that recreation had a definite place in the park. Liquor, beer, and wine all flowed from the concession stands at the fair and the liquor franchises awarded each year to the highest bidder were among the most profitable enterprises in the park.

In general, the popularity and success of Fair Park under city control seemed dependent upon the fact that the park board operated the two parks in totally different fashions. City Park provided a public service with no admission or fee ever allowed for anything conducted in the park. But Fair Park, even in public ownership, remained almost

rampant with free enterprise. Concessions and franchises went to the petitioner who would pay the most to the board for the privilege. The auditorium and other facilities were available for a fee. The board also usually insisted on receiving a percentage of all admission charges as well. This dichotomy of concepts did not reflect a confused philosophy of park usage--both parks operated for the public benefit in a manner best fitting the facilities available on each property. But a vast difference existed in what each park could offer because of the individual backgrounds of each park. In addition, Fair Park required a great deal of money to maintain its facilities, and the board saw no reason why the park should not help to support itself through revenues from some of its attractions.

But this dichotomy, perhaps, only reflected the beginning of a much broader change in park philosophy and usage. The mere existence of the fairgrounds as a city owned park seemed to nullify much of the earlier objections to recreation in the parks. Baseball and football became major activities at Fair Park and the question soon arose, "Why not also at the other parks?" Although City Park never had a ball diamond (the rolling terrain and creek bottom were not good for a playing field), the question of recreation and playground facilities in the parks never again became controversial. Ball fields, swings, and gym sets became commonplace in all parks acquired after 1907. In fact, the concept of a purely aesthetic driving park, such as City Park had been, seemed to be a part of a bygone era.

The first period of park board activity closed with a well established, organized, and functioning system. The commissioners had learned

the operations of the parks, and how they worked in relation to the rest of the city structure. Although the membership of the board changed several times, two of the men, Fretz and Baker, gave continuity and stability to the group. But changes soon occurred in the form of city government which would eventually alter the slow course of park development. Indeed, the successful operation of the Board of Park Commissioners may have had a direct influence on the extensive changes in the larger city administration. Government, or administration of a part of the government like the park system, by a board of commissioners was relatively new to Dallasites and their observations of the park board during its first years may have encouraged some to try the new governmental form on a broader basis.

## NOTES

### A BETTER IDEA

[1]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 30, 1 November 1904, pp. 319, 322; 22 November 1904, p. 338; 13 December 1904, pp. 372-73; 29 December 1904, pp. 414-15.

[2]Ibid., 22 November 1904, p. 339.

[3]Ibid., pp. 339, 347; 13 December 1904, p. 371.

[4]Ibid., 6 September 1904, p. 214; 12 September 1904, p. 234.

[5]Ibid., 27 December 1904, pp. 400-1; 18 January 1905, p. 440; 14 February 1905, pp. 474-75; 21 February 1905, pp. 483, 485; 28 February 1905, p. 499; 14 March 1905, pp. 511-12, 518; 28 March 1905, pp. 521, 533; 11 April 1905, pp. 542, 546; 25 April 1905, pp. 562-63, 567; 9 May 1905, pp. 588, 590, 595.

[6]Ibid., 1 May 1905, pp. 578-79; 9 May 1905, p. 583.

[7]Dallas, Texas, City Charter of 1899 as amended in 1905, Section 62-a.

[8]Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 30, 23 May 1905, p. 603; 30 May 1905, p. 619.

[9]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "Former Park Board Members - Occupations" and "Park Board - Personnel"; Sidney Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," manuscript history of the State Fair of Texas 1886-1910, written about 1910, located in the Executive Offices, State Fair of Texas, Fair Park, Dallas, Texas, pp. 115, 126; and Emil Fretz, III, grandson of Emil Fretz, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[10]The practice of having the mayor preside over the park board continued until the city charter was changed in 1932 to the city manager form of government. At that time the fifth board member also became an appointee of the city council and the board members selected all of their own officers.

[11]Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 1, 31 May 1905, p. 43; 9 August 1905, p. 60; 19 August 1905, p. 62.

[12]Ibid., 7 June 1905, p. 44; 29 June 1905, p. 47; 7 July 1905, pp. 49-51; 17 July 1905, p. 53.

[13]Ibid., 11 September 1905, p. 64; 2 May 1906, p. 105; 25 May 1906, p. 127; 6 July 1906, p. 167; 7 August 1906, p. 185.

[14]"Dallas Guide and History " (Unpublished manuscript written by the Texas Writers Project for the Work Projects Administration, located in Dallas Public Library, work suspended on project in 1940), pp. 190, 200.

[15]The 150,000 Club was a city booster club formed in 1905 whose objective was to promote the city in such a way that the population would reach 150,000 by 1915. See "Dallas Guide and History," pp. 164-65.

[16]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 1, 2 May 1906, p. 105; 8 May 1906, p. 117; 15 May 1906, p. 121.

[17]Ibid., 5 June 1906, p. 135.

[18]Ibid.; 9 April 1906, p. 97.

[19]Ibid., 9 December 1906, p. 233; 19 April 1907, p. 273.

[20]Ibid., 25 May 1906, pp. 125-26.

[21]Ibid., 4 May 1906, p. 11.

[22]Ibid., 24 September 1906, p. 209; 17 October 1906, p. 211.

[23]Ibid., 16 November 1906, p. 225; 19 November 1906, p. 227.

[24]Ibid., 27 November 1906, p. 231.

[25]Ibid., 22 February 1906, p. 87; 27 June 1906, p. 157; 12 November 1906, p. 221; 21 January 1907, p. 247; 23 January 1907, p. 251; 27 March 1907, p. 269; 27 May 1907, p. 281; 31 May 1907, p. 283; 3 June 1907, p. 285; 13 August 1907, p. 319; 19 August 1907, p. 321; 23 August 1907, p. 327.

[26]Ibid., 3 November 1906, p. 219.

[27]Ibid., 30 July 1906, p. 179; 7 September 1906, p. 201; 2 November 1906, p. 217; 3 November 1906, p. 219; 27 November 1906, p. 231; 13 December 1906, p. 237.

[28]Ibid., 4 May 1906, p. 113.

[29]Ibid., 13 June 1906, p. 139; 20 June 1906, pp. 155-56; 30 June 1906, p. 161.

[30]Ibid., 19 April 1907, p. 273.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., 19 April 1907, p. 273; 2 August 1907, p. 313; 22 August 1907, p. 323; 29 August 1907, p. 329; 10 December 1907, p. 353; vol. 2, 9 June 1908, p. 63; 26 June 1908, p. 73.

[34]L. B. Hill, editor, A History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity (2 vols,; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1909), II, pp. 425-26.

[35]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board - Personnel."

[36]This association was a forerunner of the Citizens Charter Association which has been an important force in Dallas city politics most of this century. For more about this election see Chapter 8 of this thesis.

[37]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board - Personnel."

[38]Ibid.; John Hughes Cochran, Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress (Dallas: A. S. Mathis Service Publishing Co., 1928), pp. 226-241; and Dallas, Minutes of the City Council, vol. 27, 16 May 1901, p. 118.

[39]Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," pp. 107, 109, 115, 120.

[40]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board - Personnel."

[41]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 1, 11 March 1907, p. 263.

# CHAPTER 8

## THE CITY REFORMS--THE PARKS EXPAND

A major turning point in Dallas' history occurred in 1907 and that event affected every phase of city government and life. The city discarded the mayor/council system of local governance and a five member commission assumed control of civic administration. This change placed Dallas in the forefront of the national municipal reform movement. It also proved to be of great benefit to the developing park system.

Although approved by Dallas voters in 1906 and formally instituted in 1907, the beginnings of the commission system in Dallas can be found existent in the city government as early as the 1870s. Supervision of the city administration had rapidly grown beyond the ability of the entire body of councilmen to deliberate on each issue in every facet of the civic operations. When the railroads arrived in Dallas, the population increased from 2,920 in 1870 to more than 7,000 at the end of 1873, reached 10,358 by the census of 1880, and mushroomed to 38,067 in 1890. As this population growth occurred, city government became increasingly complex and time consuming. The council, seeking to streamline its proceedings, had originally divided itself into committees, each responsible for studying a specialized area and making recommendations to the entire council. The committees thus operated as fact gathering bodies, but they lacked decision making powers and their recommendations were not binding on the council. However, as city affairs became even more complex, the aldermen occasionally delegated

some specific authority to committees, but still subjected it to review by the council.[1]

As added responsibilities pressured municipal government, city fathers found an alternative method to supervise Dallas' most pressing and consistently time consuming problems. The water department became a city service in 1881 (prior to that it had been operated by a private corporation) under the control of a board of water commissioners responsible for the water supply distribution, revenues, and quality. In addition, the commissioners supervised sewer facilities and fire protection during the earlier years of the department. The council elected the board members from among its own membership and the commissioners served much like a glorified council committee except that in a number of areas they could act legally on their own authority without the approval of the council. Still, the water department fell under the ultimate budgetary control of the complete body of aldermen who also could establish general policy and could instruct the department to do specific things. The limited commission system proved to be an improvement over the earlier pure committee system because the myriads of details concerning that department could be handled by the separate board, thus freeing the council from such time consuming tedium.

A second board of commissioners was established to operate another of Dallas' pressing problem areas--police protection. In the early years, the council and mayor handled this city service by employing and commissioning untrained men to protect the city. As a national trend developed toward professional police departments, Dallas instituted a board of police commissioners to supervise the department more properly.

These commissioners were also elected by the councilmen from among their own members.

It was, perhaps, to be expected that when the newly acquired Fair Park consumed an inordinate amount of council time, the council would react by establishing another board of commissioners. But the park board differed considerably from the first two commissions and reflected a developing national reform movement.

Reform in municipal government had been a theme voiced in the large eastern and northern cities for many years, but many of the problems that had given such people as Jane Addams their raison d'etre were not common to the reform movement in Dallas. Theories about democracy or human values never played an important role in the shaping of city government in America. Pragmatism ruled the day, especially in Dallas. Gross examples of corruption had never riddled Dallas' city government, and no political boss ever managed to gain any real control over even part of the municipal corporation.[2]

But Dallas presented a prime example of poorly managed fiscal policy and inefficient administration. The depression of the early 1890s had demonstrated the inability of the council to cope with severe problems in any positive manner and the pattern of local government had been altered in the later 1890s by practice rather than law. Civic groups, ranging from the Chamber of Commerce to the Cleaner Dallas League, began to actively formulate policy for the city and then urge those policies upon the city council through influential citizens. These civic groups genuinely had the best interests of Dallas at heart as they each conceived their own version of an ideal city. But it became obvious that

the mayor/council form of government simply had not responded to the demands for a better, more efficient city. The political stagnation of the aldermanic system barely kept abreast of providing the most basic services to the growing city. The desires of the civic groups for council actions to provide a more attractive, efficient, and prosperous city simply went beyond the ability of the existing political structure. Therefore, a group of civic leaders determined to change the system.[3]

The discontent voiced by these groups resulted primarily from a problem which went to the very basis of the city government. The old mayor/council system had served well in a less complicated setting, but as the city had grown, the size and complexity of the municipal government grew at a corresponding rate. In an attempt to meet the new demands, the system had been altered in a helter-skelter patchwork fashion through frequent amendments to the city charter, in spite of the fact that completely new city charters had been approved for the city three times within only ten years (in 1889, 1897, and 1899). This over burdened system would have been confusing for professional city politicians such as emerged in many other cities, but the problems in Dallas were compounded by the fact that no one served on the council long enough to gain expertise in the intricacies of the government and those few who did serve on the council long enough to gain some experience never mustered sufficient support to utilize their experience. The mayor/council system, operating as it did in Dallas, could no longer manage the vast array of urban problems with any degree of efficiency or economy. Furthermore, Dallas citizens no longer felt privileged to receive certain services, instead they demanded that all the modern conveniences be

provided in both an efficient and an inexpensive manner. As the inability of the aldermanic system to respond became more obvious, the reformers sought an alternative form of government.[4]

They found that new form in the wake of one of the most devastating natural disasters to hit an American city. In 1900 a hurricane and tidal wave struck Galveston, Texas, and within twenty-four hours destroyed one-third of the property and drowned one-sixth of the population. The city government, a mayor/council system racked with political infighting and corruption, ground to a complete standstill while the indecisive aldermen faced the crisis of reconstruction. The Texas Legislature, as a stop-gap measure, took over the city and appointed a commission of five well-known local businessmen to govern the city during the emergency period. All city functions were divided into four categories with one of the men solely in charge of each, the fifth commissioner acted as a coordinator between the other four. The state supreme court ultimately declared the appointive commissioners to be unconstitutional, but the arrangement proved to be quite efficient, even if autocratic. The commission worked so well that in 1903 the legislature made it a permanent institution in a new city charter whereby popular election selected the commissioners.[5]

News of the success of Galveston's new commission government spread and reformers all over the nation saw it as a means to achieve efficient city government while minimizing political corruption. Moreover, the commission form appeared to conduct the city affairs in a more business-like fashion, an important point in an era and a city that exalted the businessman. Several important Dallasites were among those favorably

impressed with the "Galveston Plan."

Some suggestions in relation to the commission form of government had surfaced in Dallas as early as 1901, but no concerted effort began to influence public opinion until 1903. In that year the editor of the Dallas Morning News, a strong advocate of the "Galveston Plan," determined to begin a campaign designed to create popular support for a change to the commission system in Dallas. His strategy consisted of a series of articles in the News favorably presenting the operation of Galveston municipal affairs. At the same time, he leveled a barrage of editorial criticism at the Dallas city council and its inept operations. In December of 1904, the News openly favored the switch to a commission government. Civic groups rallied to the cause and public sentiment began to swing in favor of the new system.[6]

When, in 1905, the council faced a work overload from the newly acquired Fair Park, the city fathers had several alternatives to meet the legal requirements of the city charter, yet relieve themselves of the details of park administration. They could have made the park committee a more workable group or they could have created another commission from among the members of the city council. But instead, they tried a new format. An independent board of commissioners appointed by the mayor, from the citizenry at large rather than from the council, was created with the mayor as its chairman to serve as a liaison between the council and the board and to fulfill certain legal requirements to make the board's actions official. The council funded the commission through the annual budget, but specific control of expenditures rested solely in the park commissioners with no powers of review residing in the

council. The park board essentially had independence.

The operation of this commission became a sort of testing ground for Dallas businessmen to observe the efficiency of such an arrangement. The success of the park board in its first years apparently influenced some groups to support a change to a similar system on a large scale for the entire city government.

In 1906, after much political haggling, the council finally presented a referendum to Dallas citizens who approved the change. With the question thus settled, preparations began to select the men who would become the commissioners.

The quality of men elected to the first commission was all important. As Alderman C. A. Gill, a former park committee member, suggested:

> ...the whole commission form of government will succeed or fail according to the character of officers first selected. If good citizens select good men it will succeed. If citizens are negligent and bad men are elected, the people will be disappointed and the system will fail.[7]

With that attitude in mind, a Citizens' Committee formed to seek and support those "good men" who would insure success to the new government. The group sought out experienced, successful businessmen, encouraged them to run for office, submitted the slate they endorsed to the News for publication, and then sat back to watch as Dallas elected the entire slate by a stout majority. This election represented a vote of confidence by the city for both the Citizens' Committee and the precept that businessmen make good city officials. Endorsement by this Citizens' Committee continued to be almost a prerequisite for election well into the 1920s.[8]

For the City of Dallas, the commission government promised a more

efficient administration that would be more responsive to the desires of the citizens. Among other things, the citizens' groups wanted a more attractive, pleasant town in which to live, since an aesthetically pleasing neighborhood was more likely to attract new residents than an ugly one. Since such accouterments as parks, playgrounds, and boulevards added immeasurably to the beauty of the city, these items gained a higher level of priority than ever before. If a more beautiful city would attract potential residents and consumers, then that beauty directly contributed to the prosperity of the community, and continued prosperity was the aim of the new city commission.

Civic leaders only hinted at this sort of logic, most of their public reasoning to support expanded park facilities being rendered in terms of public welfare, especially for the children. The latter line of reasoning proved more acceptable to the average Dallas citizen but the prosperity concept convinced the wealthy businessmen and civic leaders who still controlled the city policies through their influence, no matter what form the government took. While actual documentation of this assertion is unavailable, circumstantial evidence is found in the fact that the first commission granted the park board the largest budget allocation for parks in Dallas history to that date. In addition, the first year of commission government saw the park system begin an extensive expansion program financed by the levy of a ten cent tax on each one hundred dollars of property evaluation as provided by the new city charter. It is doubtful that such a property tax would have been approved over the objection of the behind-the-scenes leaders who had selected and supported the new commissioners. Since the large property

holders would have felt the tax most keenly, it must be assumed that these wealthy and influential citizens supported park expansion. This point seems to be supported by the fact that the original motion which began the legal process of levying the tax came from J. J. Eckford, himself a member of Dallas' wealthy and elite society.[9]

At the same time, it must not be assumed that the reasoning behind the expansion program represented strictly an investment in prosperity, conceived and promoted "behind closed doors" by merchant princes concerned only with their personal gain. Such an interpretation of the preceding discussion would be a complete misconception. These leaders were, indeed, civic minded and interested in helping Dallas in whatever ways they could. But in that era, many Americans accepted as truth the concept that "whatever is good for business is good for the city." A businessman could do what he considered best for Dallas and at the same time serve his own best interests. With this in mind, the businessman could then look about his city and find other genuine reasons to support his position.

In the case of park expansion, reasons for the creation of new parks could be found elsewhere. Dallas had grown from 38,067 in 1890, to 42,638 in 1900, and rapidly approached the 92,104 figure it would attain in 1910. But in 1907 the city still boasted only two parks, with a combined total of about 136 acres, which was only about two acres per one thousand inhabitants (estimating the Dallas population at about 70,000 in 1907), and actually not that much if consideration was given to the space occupied by the auditorium, exhibit halls, and other buildings at Fair Park. A casual wanderer through Dallas in 1907 would have

observed that although some enclaves of wealth around Swiss Avenue and Munger Place resembled rows of miniature parks, other areas like the Cotton Mills district not only did not have any park space, but also lacked the common necessities for waste disposal. The wealthy hardly needed public parks, but for the poor, parks represented one of their few pleasures.[10]

As need for parks grew, the ability to acquire them increased. The improved efficiency of the commission government channeled some funds into the parks account. Also, the nature of the commission seemed to remove most of the political considerations that had clouded previous property acquisitions. Since all five commissioners were elected at large, the bickering over special improvements for particular wards ceased.

In addition, Dallas felt the effects of a fully matured City Beautiful movement. Among the cities that influenced Dallas thoughts and styles in everything from business practices to clothing fashions, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Chicago were the most important. All three of the cities had accepted City Beautiful ideas and implemented them in noteworthy ways, utilizing professional city planners to beautify their cities and expand their park systems. Dallasites, emulating the more mature sophistication of these midwestern cities, began demanding similar park expansion and beautification.

All of these factors combined with available funds, and the time for park expansion in Dallas had arrived. When the new city commission assumed control of municipal affairs, the proponents of new parks began to stir. But land acquisition by a governmental body is a fairly slow

process filled with complications, and new parks simply could not be born overnight. After the city commission assumed command, however, the park board began the necessary preparations for acquisitions. Various citizens groups voiced arguments favoring particular sites for parks. The commissioners made studies and accepted propositions. In general, the board spent 1907 gearing up for a big expansion program. In the meantime, the park board expanded its services and amusements, the most important immediate additions to park activities being the beginning of regular motion picture shows at Fair Park, operated on a concessionaire basis, the introduction of automobiles which could be rented for short pleasure drives around the fair grounds, and the conversion of the race track infield into baseball diamonds.[11]

As the park board waited for the lawyers and abstract agencies to conduct the legal rituals of land acquisition, the park commissioners began an association with another city board which, although it did not add property to the park inventory, did serve to multiply the availability of playgrounds for children all over the city. The Dallas Board of Education approached the park board in January of 1907 requesting advice in beautifying the school grounds throughout the city. Superintendent Tietze was instructed to assist the schools in the matter, giving them whatever shrubs and flowers he had left from park plantings, as well as directing the school custodians in landscape planning. The results of this friendly assistance proved to be of lasting benefit to the city.[12]

The next year, the Board of Education reciprocated by allowing the park board to use all the school playgrounds during the summer as public

parks in return for assistance from the park board in caring for the grounds during the summer and paying nominal salaries to the janitors who would be the grounds keepers. Although the school grounds were used, the park board decided that it could not legally make permanent improvements on the properties, but it did place numerous portable settees in all the playgrounds.[13]

This simple exchange proved to be one of the wisest and most economical moves the park board could have made to expand recreational facilities. The park board needed, almost more than anything else, children's playgrounds located in the neighborhoods where the children lived. The purchase of numerous lots all over town as well as the playground equipment to furnish them would have been quite expensive. The arrangement with the school board provided both the land and the equipment for only the cost of grounds maintenance during the summer. Of course, the playgrounds were open to the public only during the school vacation months but that period was the prime usage time for play areas everywhere. Furthermore, the park board made the city more attractive by assisting in beautifying the school grounds.

This arrangement had another beneficial effect on the park system. Both Fair Park and City Park had always had rather strict rules about use of the parks for play areas. Fair Park had no such facilities and City Park had only two swing sets. The pendulum of change from aesthetics to usable parks began to swing with a 1907 resolution to allow children to play in the bottoms where Mill Creek meandered across City Park. Various individuals had suggested the need for children's playgrounds through the years, but finally those voices gained enough support

to warrant action. But the parks that resulted were just as limited in their own way as was the old purely aesthetic City Park. Playgrounds barren of aesthetics sprang from the board's early attempts at creating play areas. Apparently the commissioners felt that aesthetics and recreation were incompatible. But the park board had made a significant break with past policies in 1907 by providing playgrounds at all. The combination of the two park types became a matter with which future boards would have to deal.

As the commissioners began moves toward expansion, the first piece of property acquired proved to be a false start. The Dealey Realty Company owned a lot known as the "pagoda" on Forest Avenue at Gould Street, apparently used in previous years as a private amusement park. The company deeded this lot to the park board under circumstances not specified in the park records. No official entry in the Minute Books ever indicated acceptance or rejection of this property, but some arrangement seems to have been made between the realty company and the commissioners because in September of 1907 Tietze reported that he had laborers improving the plot of ground. However, after that statement the park never appeared again in the records or lists of park property. It must be assumed that this "pagoda" property reverted to the Dealey Realty Company sometime after September. The commissioners probably returned this lot to the realty firm possibly because they had begun negotiations for a more desirable lot only about five blocks away.[14]

One piece of property did manage to run the gauntlet of legal processes and officially enter the park inventory in 1907, although it was not a new park, only an addition to Fair Park. The incident described

in Chapter six in which the park commissioners and the fair directors gave their personal checks in order to allow the board to make a timely acquisition finally approached a legal conclusion. The financial situation had improved, however, since 1906 when city funds had been unavailable and the commissioners had been obliged to make their personal pledges. Enough money remained from the Fair Park tax levy that the $12,816.34 for the additional six and one-half acres could be provided from that fund.[15]

Although 1907 closed with only this one addition at Fair Park acquired as new park property, the board had been busily studying prospective locations all over the city. By March of 1908, the board took action on the purchase of its first new park--the Kindergarten Lot Playground. Actually, George B. Dealey[16] had proposed the site as a playground several years before the park board was even appointed. Dealey, W. O. Connor, Gilbert H. Irish,[17] Walker Edwards, and others had even mounted a campaign to arouse popular support to acquire a lot in that area, as well as another lot near the Cotton Mills. The men made speeches, hired a band to attract attention, and called neighborhood meetings. Their efforts failed to produce the parks, but both of the plots of ground they promoted were among the first new parks acquired by the park board, the Kindergarten Lot being the very first.[18]

Kindergarten Lot, located at the intersection of Ashland and Cedar Springs Road, having been previously pointed out as a good potential playground, finally became city property in April of 1908. The total cost was forty-three hundred dollars, with three thousand dollars going to James A. and Robert McNab for two lots owned by them, and the

thirteen hundred dollars being paid to H. Y. Lipscomb for a fifty by fifty foot plot to complete the park. After the purchase, the board sold all the improvements on the land, which included several houses, and proceeded to transform the property into an attractive playground. The little park possessed less than three-tenths of an acre when purchased, and this space decreased slightly in 1929 when a small square was sold to the Kindergarten Association which owned the property adjoining the park and from which the park derived its name. Although rather small, it served well as a neighborhood park until the 1940s when it was rendered ineffective for park purposes by the widening of Turney Street into the present-day Harry Hines Boulevard.[19]

While the board members wrestled with the problems and needs of the Cotton Mills area, the other neighborhood for which G. B. Dealey had previously proposed a park, a committee of ladies from the ninth ward (Oak Cliff) approached the board with an attractive proposition. The ladies offered to donate half of the purchase price of a small triangular plot at the intersection of Jefferson and Marsalis avenues in Oak Cliff if the board would assume the rest of the debt and make the land into a park. Since the total price was only six hundred dollars, there seems to have been no opposition to the proposal and the commissioners promptly accepted the offer, completing the purchase about a month later in mid-July, 1908.[20]

Although on the surface this acquisition seems to have been rather hasty, such was not the case. The ladies committee actually represented a support group for the Dallas Public Library which had been searching for an appropriate location for a branch library in Oak Cliff. An

arrangement had been made between the park board and the library's board of trustees to acquire a site for the branch institution, improve the grounds as a park, and at some future date when the library board was ready, or could afford it, the trustees would "purchase" the ground on which to build a library building while all of the ground surrounding it would remain under the control of the park board. The library trustees had apparently decided that the little triangle at Jefferson and Marsalis would be a good location. However, the park grew considerably in 1912 with the purchase of a large adjoining lot for ten thousand dollars on which the branch library was built in 1914. This park gained the name of Turner Plaza in 1909 and retained the name even after its enlargement and embellishment with the library. But in 1935 the board changed the name to read "Mrs. E. P. Turner Plaza" in memory of one of the ladies who had been so instrumental in obtaining the property for the library.[21]

This association with the library marked the beginning of yet another phase in the gradual evolution of park usage from a "look-but-don't-touch" sort of park to parks that were full of activities, facilities, and services. Only two decades earlier, the city council had ruled out the possibility of other city services, such as fire stations, occupying park grounds, but this point of view had evaporated as the park board assumed control. The combination of two urban services such as a library and a park showed good judgement as both complemented the other aesthetically and provided a more extensive center for leisure time activities as well.

A small square roughly in the center of the city at that time became the next park established. Some pressure had arisen from citizens

groups to purchase scattered lots for park purposes. One such petition favored the acquisition of a block bounded by Swiss Avenue, Hall, and Adair streets. This block formed the entry to the Swiss Avenue area, an exclusive enclave of the very well-to-do. For some reason this "entry" block was not acquired but another only one block away was substituted. The site, purchased in August 1908, cost ninety-five hundred dollars, with subscriptions and donations totaling between twenty-five hundred dollars and twenty-eight hundred dollars promised from the wealthy residents of the area to defray the board's expenses. However, the city had to pay seventy-five hundred dollars since only about two thousand dollars was ever realized from these pledges. The board officially applied the name of "Central Square" in October of 1908 to the new park bounded by Swiss Avenue, Oak, and Floyd streets because of its approximate location in the city and its shape. This park still exists with roughly the same appearance that it had after initial improvements were made. A large ornamental fountain erected in 1911 represented the only major embellishment placed in the park, but this feature was removed in 1952.[22]

The park board moved quickly to dispel any possibility of criticism that they might be slighting the poorer neighborhoods which sorely needed parks. Indeed, the board located the next park in the heart of Dallas' most depressed neighborhood. Furthermore, the nature of the eventual improvements made in this park demonstrated a genuine compassion on the part of the park board for the residents, especially the children, of that neighborhood as well as an understanding of some of their needs and desires.

The Cotton Mills addition of Dallas constituted an economically depressed area which had grown up around the Dallas Cotton Mills and which served as cheap housing for many of the poorly paid mill employees, as well as many other poor Dallasites. The addition contained an island of residences completely surrounded by railroad tracks, with one of the city's major railroad freight yards and the Trinity River bottoms completely cutting off the area from any southwestern access. As the city had grown, the population of this tract had risen to an uncomfortable level, although per residence density remained below the slum densities of eastern cities due to the fortunate absence of tenement housing. Such facilities as running water or sewer service seldom appeared in Cotton Mills homes and the existing wells were badly polluted. Rampant disease, crime, and violence had given the neighborhood a reputation as a very rough part of town that required the constant presence of several policemen.[23]

The conditions in the Cotton Mills neighborhood had been recognized as needing a park for several years. George B. Dealey had led an unsuccessful campaign to gain a park for this area long before the establishment of the park board. In spite of his defeat in that early endeavor, he had maintained a concern for the residents of Cotton Mills and through a personal contact in the trust department of the Dallas Trust and Savings Bank, he learned that the property he had proposed as a park some years earlier was about to be subdivided and developed. Dealey, still convinced that a park should be provided for that area, swung into action. He obtained an option on the land and, as he put it, "corralled" the park board, taking all five commissioners on the South Belt streetcar

line to the site opposite the mills in South Dallas. The newspaper man unleashed all his editorial skill to convince the board that the neighborhood needed a park and that a well equipped park with proper supervision could bring about better conditions for the people of the area.

After inspecting the property, the board convened a meeting in the back end of the street car as they returned downtown. Before their ride ended, they had decided to purchase the four and one-half acres of land, providing Dealey would raise fifteen hundred dollars[24] toward the purchase price of eleven thousand dollars, which he agreed to do. Thus, with the decision already made to acquire the land, the formalities of public acquisition began.[25]

The first official mention of the Cotton Mills park came in the park board meeting on August 31, 1908, when the Dallas Trust and Savings Bank presented a proposition to sell the board six full lots and parts of four more for park purposes for eleven thousand dollars. The board, without hesitation, accepted the offer, agreeing to pay eighty-five hundred dollars of the price, with the bank itself donating fifteen hundred dollars and the remaining one thousand dollars being paid by other donations. Since the Dallas Trust and Savings Bank served as a trustee for the Dallas Cotton Mills, the amount donated by the bank may have reflected a nascent corporate concern for the welfare of its employees, perhaps badgered into existence by the influential Dealey. With the formalities begun, they continued through legal channels and title checks until the land finally passed all the obstacles and became city property in May of 1909.[26]

The acquisition of the Cotton Mills property is a good example

to demonstrate some of the operations of the early park boards. The board informally received a proposition and informally met in the back of a street car to consider the matter. After deciding that the proposition represented a good opportunity, the board bargained with the parties involved for terms. After all was arranged, the parties entered a formal proposition in the minutes of a subsequent board meeting and a formal vote followed, thus fulfilling all the legal requirements of public acquisition. But it must be fully understood that such procedures did not represent an attempt to circumvent the proper course of city ordinances. No intent was evident to exclude the public from the deliberations. The streetcar meeting merely provided a convenient way to conduct business among the five men charged with adminstration of the park system and who conducted their business very informally despite the straight-laced tone of their Minute Book. Visitors and observers rarely attended board meetings and the few who did appear seldom remained longer than necessary to conduct their specific business. Common sense, rather than a set of by-laws for parliamentary procedure, prevailed as the rule of order. Therefore, what seems to have been a series of unannounced, behind-the-scenes, closed-door meetings was not that at all, and a modern reader must be wary of viewing such actions in terms of late twentieth century cynicism.

After finalizing the Cotton Mills purchase in May 1909, the improvement of the grounds began with a twenty-five hundred dollar appropriation. Mayor Hay appointed M. N. Baker and Emil Fretz as a special committee to supervise the operations of the workers. The work included landscaping, lighting, and the construction of a temporary building to

house shower facilities and an assembly room which doubled as a kindergarten. Fretz and Baker again constituted a special committee to hire all permanent park employees including the park keeper.[27]

The name of this park remained in question almost to the day of its formal dedication. Everyone generally applied the title of Cotton Mills Playground as a working name, but strong sentiment seems to have existed to disassociate the name of the low status neighborhood from the new park. The City Federation of Clubs promoted the name "Uncle Remus Playground" in honor of Joel Chandler Harris, but the board, apparently unimpressed, politely filed the suggestion. Finally, as preparations were being finalized for the dedication ceremonies on Thanksgiving Day, the board agreed on the name Trinity Play Park. This name was used for eighteen years, until 1927 when the board renamed the park Fretz Park in honor of Emil Fretz who retired from the board that year. This action recognized the special interest Fretz had always shown for the welfare of the residents, especially the children, in the Cotton Mills neighborhood. The name, Fretz Park, remained until the park was dismantled and exchanged for another park site in 1964. By that time, the Cotton Mills area had ceased to be a residential neighborhood and industry took over the area.[28]

The establishment of Trinity Play Park represented a giant step forward. Theories had been suggested for many years in large urban areas with serious slum problems that the conditions which bred crime and violence could be alleviated by interposing such facilities as parks, playgrounds, and activity centers into the problem neighborhoods. Dallas had always had poor people, but after the initial rough-and-ready aspects



Trinity Play Park

of a frontier town had been covered with a veneer of sophistication, the city had managed to survive without any major social problems except for scattered gambling and prostitution.[29] However, as the Cotton Mills area approached slum conditions, the welfare of the children trapped within its polluted boundaries seemed in jeopardy.[30]

The park board responded by establishing a park in its midst. But the nature of the facilities in this park represented a dramatic extension of the concept of public safety and welfare. As related in Chapter five, City Park had been provided with a power driven pump to give a more reliable flow of well water to the people who had to rely on the park well as a water supply. Those people had been generally from the Cotton Mills area. The placing of Trinity Play Park directly in that neighborhood provided an opportunity which the board utilized to great advantage to give extensive public welfare services to those people. Until the park opened, urban services in the Cotton Mills area had consisted only of police surveillance and a limited form of fire protection (limited by the lack of running water) and privately operated street car service. But this condition changed immediately after dedication of the park and the services improved and multiplied for as long as the park had a population to serve.

The list of services provided by the park began with the normal concept of a publicly provided open space attractively maintained so as to give aesthetic pleasure. But beyond that, Trinity Play Park presented services all new in concept to Dallas but ones which the park board recognized as badly needed. As the name of the park suggested, the area was intended primarily as a playground for children. The first community

center in any Dallas park developed there from a temporary building erected in 1909. This center consisted of an assembly room for parties and club meetings such as scouts and Camp Fire Girls, as well as the Dallas Free Kindergartern which was yet another service provided by the city in the park. The kindergarten gave working mothers of the neighborhood a place to leave their young children in the hands of competent baby sitters. By 1923 the Dallas Infants' Welfare and Milk Association had established a milk station in the park where those able to pay could secure purified milk for a low price, and those unable to pay could receive free milk supplies. But perhaps the most thoughtful innovation placed in the park was the free shower facilities. The absence of running water in the area resulted in a serious problem for personal hygiene and these showers provided the only opportunity for many of the inhabitants to bathe. This service could not be linked to any previous theory of park usage or services. It came as a pragmatic move by the park board to make a positive, active contribution to the welfare of the Cotton Mills residents. A measure of the response to the board's concern can be seen in a 1917 park board report which stated that attendance in the park for the year reached 146,493 and 10,733 free baths were taken. Those figures rose to an attendance of 206,090 and 10,914 baths by 1923.

Major improvements appeared in the park in 1915 when the temporary bath house and assembly room/kindergarten were replaced by an $18,895 field house which contained a forty-four by fifty-five foot gym, shower facilities for both sexes, play rooms, reading rooms, kindergarten rooms, offices for the recreation programs, and an auditorium which seated 250

people and was fully equipped for motion picture shows and amateur theatricals. Movies became a regular attraction at the park and were provided, free of charge, three times a week throughout the year. Other additions in 1915 included a wading pool and two tennis courts. Further improvements provided facilities for baseball, basketball, and track events, all of which became the scene of supervised tournaments for both boys and girls.

All of these programs and services did not, of course, spring into existence the day after Trinity Play Park was dedicated, but the shower and kindergarten services became operational immediately. Most of the others began operation following the 1915 construction program, and by 1923, all the park's facilities operated at capacity.[31]

The concept embodied in the park in the Cotton Mills district had been that some of the worst aspects of life in a slum-like neighborhood could be alleviated through an extensive program of public services based in the park. Physical needs of the residents might be met through the shower and milk programs; financial aid could be indirectly given through the free kindergarten and milk programs; recreational needs of the children could be handled by the extensive sports fields, playground equipment, and supervised programs, entertainment needs fulfilled by free movies and other events held regularly at the field house, and educational needs served through use of the assembly rooms. All of these services could combine to stifle delinquency by filling the hours for many children left at home while both parents worked to support them. If the concept worked, the entire town would benefit. Area residents would be healthier and less prone to crime and violence. The children

would be less likely to become delinquent and would have a better chance to grow up healthy and strong and become good citizens. The city administration would benefit from the reduced expense of police in the neighborhood as well as lower court and jail expenses due to the decreased crime in the district. The local charities would be relieved of some of their burden if the health of the residents could be improved. Finally, the Cotton Mills inhabitants would be encouraged to become better citizens as a result of their wholesome experiences in the park.

While expectations that improvements of this magnitude could result from the mere placement of a park in a problem area proved unrealistic, the park did achieve some of its desired effects. Mayor Sawnie R. Aldredge wrote in 1923 that Trinity Play Park "has been a real service in reducing crime and improving the moral conditions of its neighborhood."[32]

Next, the park board acquired the acreage contained in the "Old Marsalis Park" in Oak Cliff. T. L. Marsalis, one of the early founders and developers of Oak Cliff, had established, among other things, a fairly extensive amusement park which had included a skating rink, a pavilion for dancing, and another pavilion for summer shows and concerts. He had provided transportation service to the suburb by means of a narrow gauge railroad which had also serviced the park and made it a popular resort for Dallasites. The city of Oak Cliff had grown into a fashionable Dallas suburb when it was annexed at the turn of the century. However, Marsalis apparently failed in the management of his personal fortune, and although the suburb he established prospered, his own business interests languished, including the amusement park.[33]

When the park board began its expansion program in 1907, a group of Oak Cliff citizens clamored for a major park in their ward,[34] suggesting that either the old Marsalis property or a farm known as the Plowman Tract had excellent potential. Then in December of 1908, Mayor and board president S. J. Hay presented a report to the board stating that assets of about forty-three thousand dollars existed in the Park Fund available for any purposes the commissioners desired. Even subtracting the nine thousand dollars still due at that time on the Cotton Mills purchase, a substantial amount would be left. Hay felt that the money should be used to purchase land for another park and recommended that the Marsalis property would be, in his opinion, a wise purchase. Ownership of the old park had passed to the Dallas Trust and Savings Bank (the same bank which had owned the Cotton Mills park land and had contributed fifteen hundred dollars toward that purchase) which offered it to the park board for fifteen thousand dollars. The other members of the board apparently agreed with the mayor's judgement and unanimously approved the acquisition. The wheels of bureaucracy began to turn and thirty-six and one-half acres officially entered the city inventory in March of 1909.[35]

By May the board felt ready to begin improving the large park, the second largest in the system but still far behind the 147 acre Fair Park. The early improvements consisted mostly of landscaping on the rugged, cliff-like banks of the creek. Walkways, drives, and bridges came later and the park became even more popular for picnics and outings. Although this Forest Park presented, in its initial years, a rough and natural park setting with little beyond rustic beauty to attract visitors, it

became one of the city's most highly developed and popular parks when the Dallas zoo was established there in 1912.[36]

The board did not settle the official name of this park until the summer of 1909. The title Marsalis Park had served as a working title, but "Forest Park" became the official name on June 30, 1909, although several citizens objected who preferred either the original title or other descriptive names like "Woodland Park." This title, however, applied only until 1925 when the Oak Cliff Parent-Teacher Association and the Oak Cliff Chamber of Commerce requested that the park be named for the recently deceased T. L. Marsalis.[37]

The board next gained the park that had existed as a privately owned park longer than any other park in the city. But as a public park it failed completely and finally disappeared under the concrete of an expressway. Monument Plaza, a triangular plot measuring about fifty-seven feet by forty-eight feet by thirty feet, stood at the intersection of Pryor (later Monument Street), Good, and Elm streets. Its status as a park had begun on July 17, 1872, when A. H. Shepherd deeded the triangle to the Dallas Confederate Monument Association for the purpose of erecting a major monument to the Confederate war dead. But lack of funds prevented the immediate construction of the planned memorial.

The association floundered for a number of years and as death began to remove the original members of the organization, the purpose for the little triangle gradually became less important to the younger members. John Henry Brown, the last surviving association board director, went into court in 1888 to officially pass "the duty for erecting the monument, along with the ground, to a committee from another

generation."[38] But memories of the war faded rapidly and the new group did not follow through. Then in 1896 when the Daughters of the Confederacy erected their impressive memorial in City Park, the purpose for Monument Plaza seemed to disappear. Finally, on January 30, 1909, the Dallas Confederate Monument Association gave up the struggle and donated the triangle to the park board. But the little lot remained unused, undeveloped, and unrecognized as a park while the neighborhood around it gradually deteriorated into the notorious "Deep Ellum."[39] The beginning of the end arrived in 1933 as a few feet of the park were shaved off when an underpass was cut beneath the Texas and Pacific Railroad tracks on Good Street. But the Good-Latimer Expressway administered the coup de grace in 1952, covering the entire park with concrete. Unfortunately, the little triangle never served any purpose except as a place to install a street light.[40]

Oak Lawn Park, the last park acquired in 1909, was destined for a much brighter future than that which befell Monument Plaza, a future that even included a visit from a president of the United States. Furthermore, the establishment of the park presented a glimpse of the effect that various pressure groups had upon the city, particularly in the creation of such public resorts as parks. The Oak Lawn area, in the northern-most section of town, contained one of Dallas' upper-middle-class neighborhoods. The park itself had been operated as a popular and fashionable private park for several years by the Dallas Consolidated Electric Railway Company and the scenic property on the banks of Turtle Creek had great potential as a public park. Residents of north Dallas formed the Oak Lawn Improvement League to promote various causes for

their area. One of their more successful campaigns resulted in the acquisition of this seventeen and one-half acre park by the park board to which the League contributed fifteen hundred dollars to be used for improvements after the purchase. The park board agreed to the purchase in May of 1909 since no public parks existed in the north Dallas area, even though the price, thirty-eight hundred dollars, was more than twice what had just been paid for Forest Park which had twice as much land.[41]

When the park board gained possession of the land, it had many dead cedars and the only improvement was an eighty by two-hundred foot pavilion. Landscaping and construction soon cleaned up the park as a new shelter was erected, tennis courts were built in 1913, and a children's playground and a wading pool included by 1920. Free movies were shown four times a week just like they were in the parks in less affluent neighborhoods. The free concerts presented in the summers became extremely popular events for Dallas' socially elite. Later, under the W.P.A. programs of the depression years, the board erected a recreation center as a replica of General Robert E. Lee's mansion in Arlington, Virginia, and changed the park's name to honor the general. President Franklin D. Roosevelt personally unveiled the impressive statue of Lee in 1936, and today Lee Park stands as one of the focal points along beautiful Turtle Creek Parkway.[42]

Several other small park areas entered board control during this period of expansion including a tiny and shortlived park at the intersection of Cedar Springs and Harwood, a small lot on Maple Avenue, and the ill-fated Park Row. The latter, a series of tiny, landscaped islands in the center of Dallas' first boulevard (originally called Palm Street)

became known as Park Row in the late 1890s. These islands, in existence since about 1889, constituted a long thin string of land totaling about one and one-half acres which the city transferred to the park board for maintenance about 1910. However, these islands fell victim to a motorized age, becoming center-street parking spaces as the automobile increased in popularity. Similarly, the park board gained control of Hospital Park and transformed it into an attractive setting for the city hospital.[43]

Throughout this period of expansion, numerous offers, propositions, and donations came before the board. Some represented legitimate offers of land that would have made excellent parks; some consisted of sincere, but ill advised offers. Others constituted attempts to unload on the park board pieces of real estate worthless for other purposes, especially in the case of numerous tiny plots at irregular intersections. The board filed all of the offers received, and some became parks at a later date, Cliff (or Lake Cliff) Park being one major example.[44]

Donations for park purposes began to appear for the first time during this era. This was extremely important, because within only a few years, the park system grew to the extent that a surplus in the park budget became rare. Many decorative or ornamental items could have never been placed in the city parks without private and corporate donations, usually made for specific purposes, which freed board money for other purposes. Although real estate donations remained elusive, except for Monument Square, monetary donations became a part of many park purchases. For example, a total of twenty-five hundred dollars in donations assisted in the purchase of Trinity Play Park and contributions of

fifteen hundred dollars provided improvements at Oak Lawn Park. Other cash donations often defrayed expenses for the summer band concerts. Other types of donations provided specific park accouterments, such as the Commercial Secretaries Association of Texas installation of a miniature park in front of the Fair Park auditorium as well as an ornamental fountain which they later added. Many of the donations were small, especially those from children's groups, and some bordered on the eccentric, like the gift of a small flock of pigeons. But the board accepted all gifts, large and small, with gratitude, probably not realizing the full extent to which donations would ultimately influence park growth.[45]

Two major donations in this period are worth a closer look. The first came from the Dallas Art Association which had been formed in 1902 in a room of the Dallas Public Library built in 1900. But the devoted activity of the wealthy Dallas art patrons soon outgrew the limited space of that one room. By 1908 the Art Association had to seek new and more extensive permanent quarters. An arrangement made with the State Fair Association provided an art museum for the collection. Since all buildings erected on the fair grounds became the property of the city, an arrangement also had to be negotiated between the Art Association and the park board. The resulting contract required that the collection of paintings be donated to the City of Dallas in exchange for the use of the new art museum for eleven months of each year (the other month was under the control of the Fair Association). The art patrons formally presented their collection, valued in excess of five thousand dollars, to the park board in November of 1908 and the art building at Fair Park opened in the spring of 1909. This donation began the long standing

relationship between the Art Association and the city which culminated in the construction of the Museum of Fine Arts in Fair Park in 1936.[46]

Second, the Dallas Morning News donated and erected in Fair Park a replica of the Alamo, the shrine of Texas independence. The inspiration for this gift came from George B. Dealey, the vice-president and general manager of the News who had been instrumental in the selection and purchase of both Kindergarten Lot and Trinity Play Park. The replica presented a complete and detailed reconstruction of the famous chapel used as a fortress in the Texas Revolution, except that it was on a somewhat smaller scale than the original in San Antonio which had fallen into a rather poor state of repair by that time. The conditions of the gift included that the News would be allowed to place its inscription on the building for advertising and public relations purposes, that the News would be allowed sole use of the building during the annual fair and other such gatherings, and that the park board would protect, insure, and maintain the replica. The board gratefully accepted this gift, because in exchange for some advertising, the fair grounds gained a popular attraction. This replica, the first of its kind in the parks' history, stood near the center of the fair grounds for nearly a quarter of a century. When preparations began for the 1936 Texas Centennial, the board demolished the replica and, with the approval of the News, erected a larger and more elaborate Alamo in a different location.[47]

Throughout the 1907 to 1910 period of park expansion, details of selecting, purchasing, and improving the new parks dominated the attention of the board. Many of the minor details of park administration had been assumed by a growing number of park employees and staff.

Superintendent W. A. Tietze handled a considerable load of administrative details which dealt with everything from personnel problems to park maintenance. Even his vacations were not entirely his own. He took many trips in the nature of a vacation, sometimes paid in part or sometimes paid in full, to purchase special park shrubbery and other plants, to observe the operations of park systems in other large cities, or to attend conventions such as the American Association of Park Officials in Kansas City in 1911. Under his supervision, an increasing number of caretakers and policemen functioned with efficiency. In addition, a playgrounds director, J. K. Staples, began to plan and oversee activities at the children's parks beginning in 1909. By 1911 his successor, Edward A. Werner, supervised the work of several women playground instructors.[48]

A number of modern conveniences eased the increasing burdens of park development. The city installed telephones in several of the parks and the department bought its first motorized vehicle, a 1909 Buick. This car assisted the superintendent in making his rounds; however, it appears that Tietze's skill as a driver did not compare to his abilities as park superintendent. Less than a year after purchasing the automobile, he had an accident and the board had to pay for unspecified damages to the property of W. S. O'Neal as well as for repairs to the new car.[49]

The presentation of free moving picture shows represented another modern innovation. The shows first appeared as a series in Fair Park in 1909[50] when Henry Putz gained the movie privilege on a concession basis for one year. He continued to outbid other competitors (including

J. Waddy Tate, a future Dallas mayor and park board president) for a number of years thereafter. The concessionaire made his income by selling advertisement time to local merchants and then showing these "commercials" to the audiences between movies, much in the fashion of a modern television commercial. Also, in some parks the concessionaire sold cold drinks with a fifteen percent commission going to the park board. In 1911 this park attraction expanded to Oak Lawn and then later to all the playground parks.[51]

A small problem developed in 1911 with this movie concession which raised a furor among some Dallas elements. Prohibition represented a burning issue in parts of the United States at that time, and Dallas, a stronghold of fundamentalist religions in spite of its large German minority, had been witnessing heated battles on the question since the days of W. C. Connor's mayorality campaign when he won a majority of votes by supporting the "wet" forces. But the "drys" had become more powerful as the days of the frontier cattle town receded in the face of the twentieth century. Henry Putz, the movie concessionaire, sold some of his advertising time to an anti-prohibition group and subsequently screened the "wet" propaganda. The chairman of the State Prohibition Committee protested angrily to the park board against the showing of the literature, but the board took no action in the meeting and no evidence suggests that Putz was reprimanded or counseled concerning his advertising clients.[52]

When the year 1911 came to an end, a rather important era of park activities also closed. The era consisted of about five years of sustained progress. Not only had real estate holdings been expanded, but

also the concept of park usage and services evolved into a modern pattern. From the standpoint of land acquisitions, the Dallas park system started in 1907 with only two parks totaling about 152 acres. To those original areas seven new parks were added with a total of more than sixty acres, as well as several other small triangles and boulevard medians. These seven acquisitions represented an outlay of more than seventy-six thousand dollars, not including extensive improvements at several of the parks. This kind of growth in only five years was remarkable, but not as astonishing as the change in park philosophy.

The two old parks had had definite roles to play in city life. The venerable City Park had been an aesthetic driving park, while Fair Park had been a lively center of entertainment, recreation, and blatant commercialism. However, when acquiring the new parks, the commissioners seemed never to look back to the nineteenth century concepts that had guided the parks earlier but immediately sought with their first available funds to meet the needs which they recognized in Dallas. Specifically, the city needed children's playgrounds and the board responded by creating three parks for just that purpose and included playground equipment in most of the other larger parks. Even old City Park, whose grass had long been forbidden to children's feet, was opened for frolic.

But an even more dramatic shift became evident in the creation of Trinity Play Park in the midst of one of Dallas' most deprived neighborhoods. This park extended the concept of social services in Dallas to an extent that would have been unthinkable only ten years earlier. Not only were milk and baby sitters free in that park for certain low income groups, but the most elaborate facilities in the system were placed there

in the hope that a properly supervised park with such equipment would have a favorable impact on the neighborhood by decreasing the high levels of crime, disease, and immorality. On a more compassionate level, the park board did much more than merely "throw a bone" to the people in the Cotton Mills area in order to make them more amenable to civil control and middle-class morality. Facilities such as the free showers represented a sincere effort to make life more pleasant for the residents around the park, and the milk program was instituted by concerned individuals in the hope that the younger generation might be spared the curse of unhealthy bodies merely because their parents' income could not provide proper nourishment.

In general, the five years from 1907 to 1911 saw a headlong rush by the park commissioners to thrust Dallas into the twentieth century and into the forefront of national urban park development. It is most significant that the urban examples Dallasites admired most, and with which they had the most contact, were Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago, all of which were prominent in the City Beautiful Movement.

But from where did the stimulus come for this radical shift in philosophy and holdings? The answer seems to be: progressive reform. The reform movement had floundered in Dallas before 1900. The decentralized aldermanic form of government had possessed many faults which were emphasized as the city grew larger, but no viable alternative to the system had been available. After the Galveston experiment with commission government, reformers in Dallas had a rallying point and drummed and propagandized the city until they had their way in 1907. In the interim, a Board of Park Commissioners had been appointed, but

accomplished little because of limited funds. But the reform movement had been supported by such groups as the Chamber of Commerce and various civic improvement associations. It was natural that the product of their labors, the new city commission, should have a more favorable attitude toward parks and civic beauty. The shift in priorities by the city commission doubled and tripled the amount of money budgeted to the park fund in the years 1907 through 1911. The park board responded as though it had been injected with a powerful stimulant. But not only did the reform attitude affect acquisitions, it also affected the very concept of what purpose parks would serve for Dallas citizens. Thus, while governmental reform often involved only politicians, big business, and special interest groups, it seems evident that in Dallas, at least, reform in 1907 touched the lives of every citizen, especially those too young to vote, in a way which made their lives more pleasant, more healthy, and more entertaining. It also seems evident that such changes would not have occurred for many years under the older system, and Dallas would have grown to metropolitan size with a park system inadequate for even a small town.

It is ironic that the reform movement bestowed its benefits by instituting a more centralized, less democratic form of government that was more easily controlled by the socially elite and economically powerful. Even while the park board developed a system of playgrounds and parks for the enjoyment of the common man, the Citizens' Committee, which nominated all the city commissioners in this era, systematically eliminated (probably without malice) all representation of the common man in city government by nominating only successful businessmen for office who

would have the experience and training necessary to run the government efficiently. This criteria generally eliminated the commonalty because only executives of the larger businesses and industries had that kind of background. With the commission nominees selected by an elite Citizens' Committee from among Dallas' economically elite, and the local press convincing the people that this arrangement would produce the best possible government for the city, the common voter lost his effective voice in city politics. Certainly, other candidates ran for the offices, but for more than twenty years, the power of the elite group continued unbroken. Thus, it seems that Dallas citizens unwittingly gave up a certain amount of democracy in exchange for increased urban services through more efficient government. The dramatic changes in the park system, one of the urban services affected, came about as a direct result of this power shift within the city government.[53]

## NOTES

### THE CITY REFORMS--THE PARKS EXPAND

[1]Texas and Pacific Railway, An Economic Survey of Dallas County ([Austin]: n.p., 1949), unpaged; "Dallas Guide and History" (Unpublished manuscript written by the Texas Writers Project for the Work Projects Administration, located in Dallas Public Library, work suspended on project in 1940), p. 122; U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Population, 1:343; and U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890: Population, 1:331.

[2]Robert M. Newton, "No Boss for Dallas," Journal of the West, forthcoming issue.

[3]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), pp. 8-9; and Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (London: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 194.

[4]Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 167.

[5]Glaab, A History of Urban America, pp. 194-95; Seymour V. Connor, Texas: A History (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971), pp. 302-303; and William Bennett Munro, Municipal Government and Administration, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), I:398-402.

[6]Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 8-9; Carolyn Jenkins Barta, "The Dallas News and Council-Manager Government" (M. A. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1970), p. 3; and Dallas Morning News, 30 December 1904, p. 6.

[7]Dallas Morning News, 16 November 1906, p. 14.

[8]Philip Lindsley, A History of Greater Dallas and Vicinity, 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), I:160.

[9]Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 1, 8 June 1907, p. 291.

[10]Department of the Interior, Eleventh Census; U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population, 1:379; and U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population, 3:781.

[11]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 1, 15 May 1906, p. 123; 14 March 1907, p. 265; 8 June 1907, p. 291; vol. 2, 3 July 1908, p. 77.

[12]Ibid., vol. 1, 17 January 1907, p. 243.

[13]Ibid., vol. 2, 9 June 1908, p. 63; 13 June 1908, p. 67.

[14]Ibid., vol. 1, 4 May 1907, p. 277; 17 September 1907, p. 333.

[15]Ibid., 30 December 1907, pp. 359-63. See also Chapter six of this thesis.

[16]George B. Dealey was publisher and editor of the Dallas Morning News and a major civic leader of his time.

[17]These are the same Connor and Irish that were active in park activities around the turn-of-the-century. See Chapter Five of this thesis.

[18]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "Miscellaneous Notes."

[19]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 1, 9 March 1908, p. 377; 8 April 1908, pp. 387-89; vol. 2, 9 June 1908, p. 65; 26 June 1908, p. 73; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Kindergarten Lot."

[20]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 9 June 1908, p. 63; 11 July 1908, p. 79; 20 July 1908, p. 81.

[21]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Turner Plaza"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 24 April 1909, p. 139; vol. 3, 20 February 1914, pp. 274-75.

[22]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Central Square"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 9 June 1908, p. 65; 17 August 1908, p. 88; 6 October 1908, p. 99; 18 November 1908, p. 107. Beulah Cauley indicates that the purchase price was ninety-eight hundred dollars, although the park board records show that a ninety-five hundred dollar sum was approved.

[23]Dr. J. W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[24]There is some question about this figure. Dealey claims that he agreed to raise fifteen hundred dollars and did, in fact, raise that figure. However, the park board records indicate that the final arrangement included only one thousand dollars in subscriptions. Yet, Dealey may have been referring to the fifteen hundred dollars donated by the Dallas Trust and Savings Bank, since he had influential friends in that institution, and the one thousand dollars may have come from an entirely different source. But this theory does not seem to agree with Dealey's statement that: "In two or three weeks time I raised the $1500 from various and sundry people...." See Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Miscellaneous Notes - G. B. Dealey"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 31 August 1908, p. 87.

[25]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Miscellaneous Notes - G. B. Dealey."

[26]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 31 August 1908, p. 87; 6 May 1909, p. 143.

[27]Ibid., 9 June 1909, p. 149; 2 September 1909, p. 169; 19 October 1909, p. 181; 11 November 1909, p. 183.

[28]Ibid., 8 August 1909, p. 165; 19 November 1909, p. 185, 22 November 1909, p. 187; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Fretz Park." The decision to sell the park was finally made due to the changed nature of the neighborhood, minimal park attendance, and need for parks in other areas. The money obtained from the "sale" of the original 4.5 acres was sufficient to purchase 30.3 acres at Hillcrest and Belt Line Road which was named Fretz North Park. See Patricia R. Hogan, "The Step Into a Modern World: The History of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department 1931 to Present" (M. S. thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974).

[29]Both prostitution and gambling were apparently supported by large segments of the local business community because they helped to attract trade. One campaign to "cleanse" the city was defeated when it was reported that Fort Worth was offering free rent and thirty-five hundred dollars in cash to all gamblers kicked out of Dallas. The Dallas merchants feared that farmers and cowboys would go to whichever town was wilder and offered more amusements. See "Dallas Guide and History," pp. 116, 120, 143, 151. Most of the prostitutes operated in one of two areas in town, the "Hell's Half Acre" and the "reservation." The "reservation" was an area of several blocks in which prostitutes were generally allowed to operate openly unmolested by the local authorities. The police and city officials officially agreed upon the limits of the "reservation." It existed until 1904 when a morality campaign broke up the

[29]official support for the "reservation" although an unsuccessful campaign was mounted to designate a new official area where prostitutes could operate. The destruction of the "reservation" resulted in the scattering of prostitutes all over the town into areas that had previously been free of vice parlors and made the control of vice in Dallas considerably more difficult. See Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 29, 11 January 1904, p. 422. For national trends, see Charles E. Doell, A Brief History of Parks and Recreation in the United States (Chicago: The Athletic Institute, 1954).

[30]Glaab, A History of Urban America, p. 178.

[31]Sawnie R. Aldredge, Park and Playground System, Dallas, Texas, 1921-1923 (n.p., n.d.), pp. 16, 30; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Fretz Park."

[32]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 16.

[33]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Marsalis Park."

[34]Although the "ward" system was abolished when the commission form of government was instituted, the council and citizens continued to refer to the areas of the city in terms of "wards" for several years.

[35]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 1, 17 October 1907, p. 341; vol. 2, 18 December 1908, p. 113; 2 February 1909, p. 119; 16 March 1909, p. 129. City Park contained eighteen acres.

[36]Ibid., 6 May 1909, p. 143.

[37]Ibid., 30 June 1909, p. 155; 19 July 1909, p. 157; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Marsalis Park."

[38]A. C. Green, "'Ghost' Haunts Dallas Corner," Dallas Times Herald, 29 July 1962, p. 28-A.

[39]"Deep Ellum," once the bustling center for agricultural implement dealerships in Dallas became a notorious area of sleazy hotels, pawn shops, bars, and unrestrained burlesque houses in the 1930s and maintained that image until almost the 1970s. Crime and vice, especially gambling and prostitution, were common in the area. The name "Deep Ellum" derives from the fact that this particular part of Elm Street, like the Deep South, was predominantly a black neighborhood. Vestiges of "Deep Ellum" still remain, but practically all of it was destroyed by the swaths cut through the area by the Good-Latimer Expressway and both the old and new routes for the Central Expressway.

[40]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Monument Plaza"; Green, "'Ghost' Haunts Dallas Corner," p. 28-A; and Dallas County, Texas, Deed Records Book, vol. 439, p. 146.

[41]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Lee Park"; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 6 May 1909, pp. 141-43; 7 December 1909, p. 191; 8 December 1909, p. 193; and Jolly Franklin Kelsey, "The Growth and Development of the Park and Recreation Facilities and Programs for the City of Dallas, Texas, from 1876 to 1946" (M. A. thesis, North Texas State University, 1946), p. 16.

[42]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Lee Park"; and Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 19.

[43]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Row"; George Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas: Report of the Park Board (n.p., 1911), p. 36; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 15 May 1909, p. 145.

[44]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, 18 December 1908, p. 111.

[45]Ibid., 27 July 1909, p. 163; 8 August 1909, p. 165.

[46]Ibid., 18 November 1908, p. 105; 10 April 1909, p. 133; vol. 3, 19 February 1910, p. 2; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Fair Park - Musuem of Fine Arts." Cauley listed some of the founders of the Dallas Art Museum. The list reads like a register of Dallas socialites. It includes: Mrs. Edwin J. Kiest (wife of the first major benefactor of Dallas parks), Mrs. Henry Exall (wife of the founder of Texas Industrial Congress after whom Exall Park was named), Mrs. A. H. Belo (wife of the chairman of the board of Belo Corporation which owned the Dallas Morning News), Mrs. George B. Dealey (wife of the vice-president and general manager of the Dallas Morning News), Mrs. G. L. Westerfield, Mrs. George K. Meyers, Mrs. Sidney Smith (wife of the secretary of the State Fair Association), Mrs. J. S. Armstrong, and others. For more about the Art Association and Museum of Fine Arts, see Hogan, "The Step Into a Modern World."

[47]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 19 July 1909, p. 157; 22 July 1909, p. 161; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Fair Park - Alamo."

[48]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 15 June 1910, p. 13; 28 July 1910, p. 20; 27 July 1911, p. 85.

[49]Ibid., vol. 2, 15 April 1909, p. 135; 19 April 1909, p. 135; vol. 3, 6 April 1910, p. 5.

[50]Cauley places the first movies in Fair Park in 1907, but although an individual movie may have been shown then, the free series of movies did not begin until 1909, according to the board minutes.

[51]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Motion Pictures"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 2, 6 December 1909, p. 189; 18 December 1909, p. 195; 18 January 1910, p. 197; vol. 3, 27 January 1911, p. 37; 27 April 1911, p. 63.

[52]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 12 May 1911, p. 67. Another interesting, but minor, problem developed in 1911 as a small dispute between the board and J. Waddy Tate. Tate was a regular bidder on various concession and amusement privileges in the parks, especially Fair Park, with interests in shooting galleries, refreshments, and "midway" rides. In 1911, the board lost its patience with the unsafe condition of this attraction, a "Tour of the World," apparently an automobile ride, and terminated his contract by legal action involving the city attorney, ordering him off the park grounds within five days. This incident is particularly interesting since J. Waddy Tate became mayor of Dallas in 1929 and by virtue of that office was president of the park board. Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 20 September 1911, pp. 96-97; 26 September 1911, p. 99.

[53]The pattern of governmental reform in Dallas followed the general pattern of urban reform common in many American cities. Samuel P. Hays reveals a remarkably similar development in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in his paper, "The Shame of the Cities Revisited: The Case of Pittsburgh," in Herbert Shapiro, editor, The Muckrakers and American Society (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1968), pp. 75-81. Hays also discusses some of the national trends toward reform in "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," Pacific Northwest Quarterly 55 (October 1964): 157-69. A more recent study by John D. Buenker presents similar information in Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973). C. Vann Woodward places the Dallas reforms in the context of reforms throughout the South in his work, The Origins of the New South 1877-1913 (New Orleans: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), pp. 388-89. Richard Hofstadter sees the reforms as a type of class status conflict in The Age of Reform (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1955). James Weinstein provides an insight to other pressures for reform in his article, "Organized Business and the City Commission and Management Movements," Journal of Southern History 28 (May 1962): 166-82.

# CHAPTER 9

## GEORGE KESSLER AND THE FIRST PLAN

After five years of sustained growth, the Dallas park system had expanded to an extent that definite direction had to be given to future development. Indiscriminate acquisitions guided only by popular pressure or short range considerations could result in expensive duplication of facilities in some areas and complete deficiency in others. A comprehensive plan was needed to avoid such mistakes and gain the best advantage from the tax and bond money utilized by the park board.

Furthermore, the Dallas civic groups which had earlier united forces to bring about governmental reform began to unite again, this time in behalf of city planning. The City Beautiful Movement had matured somewhat and broadened its scope to include the entire city rather than just isolated parks. The move toward city planning came upon Dallas businessmen almost like Paris fashions appeared to Dallas ladies. The agitation for planning began in other cities, notably in the east, and articles lauding the economic benefits of such foresight appeared in leading business journals. Dallas businessmen, always alert to do everything possible to maintain their economic supremacy in north Texas, rushed to embrace city planning before they were left behind by more progressive communities. Advocates of the City Beautiful Movement expounded at great lengths on the need for beauty but gained only token support from the vast majority of Dallas merchants. Yet, when the movement evolved into discussion of city planning, persuasive arguments

gathered about the future blessing that planning could bestow upon land values and local economy. That was the sort of reasoning which, combined with a growing demand for efficiency in city government, activated the business community. City planning, it seemed, was an idea whose time had come for Dallas, if for no other reason than because other progressive cities were instituting plans. This analysis of Dallasites' motivation is not intended to be disparaging. Dallas had no natural trading advantages. Only innovation, boosterism, and sometimes sheer conniving had enabled the city to take maximum advantage of two economic breaks in national history and propel Dallas to prominence in the Southwest. If the local merchants and institutions slackened their vigilance, any one of a number of area towns--Fort Worth, Sherman, Denison, Weatherford, Waco, Cleburne--could have leaped to close the trading gap. Almost as a constant warning and challenge, the Dallas Morning News carried regular feature articles and pictures of the progressive improvements being made in the rival towns. Therefore, it is small wonder that the Dallas business community embraced planning. It mattered little whether planning represented a glimpse of the future or a passing fad; all that mattered was for Dallas to keep a step ahead of its competition.[1]

With the demand for planning rising from various civic and business associations--the Dallas Civic Improvement and Development League, the Progressive League, the Peoples' Franchise Rights League, the Citizens' Association, and the Chamber of Commerce, to mention only the most prominent--the question arose: who should devise such a plan for Dallas? In other cities, planning usually involved a coordinated effort by the city park board and a commissioned specialist. It seemed evident that

in Dallas a similar path should be followed. Any plan produced by the city commission would be subject to criticism that political considerations had influenced its recommendations, and every new set of commissioners would feel free to amend the plan according to individual considerations. In addition, the commissioners had been nominated for their jobs because of their administrative expertise as businessmen; they had no experience as landscape architects, civil engineers, or horticulturists. Similarly, the 1911 park board consisted of an attorney, an investments holder, a jeweler, a railroad executive, and a wholesale distributor. This capable group of men, each successful in his own field, had by 1911 become experienced policy makers. Although they had done an admirable job of selecting new park sites to date, they were not professional planners.

Apparently recognizing their own lack of qualifications, the park board sought independent, professional assistance from outside of Dallas. No one in the entire city had experience at creating the required comprehensive plan. This obstacle might have been overlooked if there had not been a growing number of nationally reputed planners available. A new profession known as city planning had emerged in loose connection with the reform movements in the late nineteenth century. Initially, their efforts had been aimed at alleviating the problems of slum areas in crowded cities, and their philosophy emanated from a growing sense of responsibility for public welfare as a result of about four decades of pure water, disease control, and sewage system movements. These city planners joined forces with the City Beautiful Movement to produce the elaborate redecoration of Washington, D. C. in the first decade of the

twentieth century, and the magnificently planned facilities for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis which inspired widespread beautification efforts across the nation. From this united city planning and City Beautiful Movement, emerged a number of engineers, landscape architects, and city planners who gained national reputations for their pioneering and innovation. One of these men was George Kessler, a landscape architect based in St. Louis.[2]

Some sources have considered George Edward Kessler a near genius of design. Certainly he had an extraordinary imagination, wisdom, and a stolid practicality that made his plans more than paper fantasies. But his genius combined natural gifts, an exceptional education, and a broad background of experience. Born in Frankenhausen, Germany, on July 16, 1862, to a landed family, Kessler traveled to the new world with his parents when his relatives gently eased his father out of his position as the heir-apparent to the family lands. The elder Kessler, artistic and talented, seemed unsuited for management of a large estate, so the relatives, rather than watch the property fall into ruin, financed the heir, first, in an unsuccessful business in Germany and then in his journey to America. Arriving in New York at the close of the Civil War, the Kesslers lived briefly in Missouri and Wisconsin before they settled in the frontier town of Dallas, Texas, where they invested in a cotton plantation. The elder Kessler died shortly thereafter, but the rest of the family remained in Dallas, where they saw the town boom. Since as a child George often showed more interest in bright flowers than toys, he may have even visited City Park which was established in 1876.

Antoine Kessler, noticing that young George evidenced strains of

his father's artistic nature, determined that their son should be educated in a way that would develop his creative powers but would also instill in him a practical element. Boyhood in a frontier town such as Dallas offered more practical experience than had his father's genteel upbringing, but Antoine took no chances. She got him a job as a bill collector while he was in his middle teens which proved, no doubt, an adventuresome occupation. Meanwhile, Antoine decided, in consultation with her relatives, that a formal education in landscape architecture would properly develop her son's creativity into a marketable talent, while the engineering involved would force him to discipline his mind.

The teenage Kessler returned with his mother to the Grand Ducal gardens at Weimer, Germany, where he began his studies. Private instruction at Weimar in forestry, botany, and landscape design preceded formal courses at Potsdam, Charlottenburg, and finally at the University of Jena where he studied civil engineering. He spent his last year of continental schooling touring the major European cities from Paris to Moscow with a tutor studying civic design.

Returning to the United States at the age of twenty, he worked for a few months in New York's Central Park where he met Frederick Law Olmsted, the dean of American landscape architecture, who wanted the bright young man to stay with his firm. But Kessler had other friends who owned stock in a little railroad that operated out of Kansas City. They persuaded Kessler to become the superintendent for the railroad parks operated as excursion resorts near Kansas City. He transformed the railroad's rough acreage into delightful parks which attracted regular crowds and became the subject of flattering articles in the Kansas

City press. In addition, he supervised the landscaping around all the rail line's stations in the area. He enlarged his own role for the railroad by planting and developing a fifteen hundred acre forest to produce railroad ties and telephone poles. He also opened an office in Kansas City and began landscaping private lawns and estates for wealthy residents. Through his work on these private lawns, Kessler came to the attention of the editor of the Kansas City Star who had been promoting the beautification of the city for years. Kessler also landscaped the grounds around the elaborate residence of the man who later became Kansas City's first park board president. Through the influence of these two men, Kessler gained appointment as "secretary" to the park board, a paid position, and served as "engineer to the board" as well, without pay. This move, apparently a public relations gesture, emphasized the utility of his work in a city where there existed sizable opposition to the park movement. The Kansas City Park Board published its first report in 1893, the year of the Chicago World's Fair which has been considered as the formal beginning of the City Beautiful Movement.

Kessler's position in the history of the City Beautiful Movement has been obscured, dismissed, and criticized by some because of his reluctance to design the over-embellished, classical "Columbian" (imitation Greek) style parks spawned by the Chicago Fair. Due to his studies, travels, and ability, Kessler could design either "Columbian" or the natural parks, depending upon the desires of his clients. But Kessler demonstrated his own preference for nature in the parks he planned for Kansas City. His designs spanned the gap between the haughtily formal gardens which had no regard for human usage and the twentieth century

parks based totally on people and their recreational requirements.

That first park board report published in 1893 served as a prelude of things to come. It was not a mere design for a park system, isolated and out of context. Rather, it presented a detailed and comprehensive study of Kansas City's topography, traffic patterns, population density, and growth which placed parks and boulevards in the most advantageous positions within that context. Kessler, who wrote almost all of the report, did not insert into his plan elaborate facilities designed to alleviate slum problems or work social wonders. But then, he worked for a park board which possessed very limited powers. The report became something of a classic in its field, and the beautification of Kansas City moved forward gradually, but with stubborn opposition from numbers of large land owners and corporations who feared increased taxes would be necessary to foot the bill for the parks.[3]

As Kansas City became more beautiful, Kessler's reputation spread. He was retained as a consultant by the park boards of many cities including St. Louis, Missouri; Wichita Falls, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Kansas City, Kansas; Kansas City, Missouri; Memphis, Tennessee; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Indianapolis, Indiana. He also advised many park boards on a temporary basis including Denver, St. Joseph, and Salt Lake City. Later in life, his work included major projects for Mexico City. Due to his increasing work load in St. Louis, as well as a growing disaffection with an unappreciative Kansas City, Kessler permanently moved his firm to St. Louis in 1911.[4]

George E. Kessler became the choice of the Dallas Park Board in producing its needed plan. But the board did not retain him on his

reputation or on a sentimental attachment to the "home-town-boy-made-good." Dallas already had concrete evidence of the man's abilities. He had been employed in 1906 by the State Fair Association to study the fair grounds and facilities and make long range suggestions. For his one thousand dollar fee, Kessler made detailed maps of drives, walks, and buildings, offering a number of valuable suggestions for improvements, the largest being the fair administration building which was soon built. Since M. N. Baker and Emil Fretz were both on the board during the 1906 study, when some direction was needed for the entire park system in 1911, the park board again retained Kessler as a consultant for four months, May through August of 1910. He presented his suggestions informally to the board and their full content is impossible to reconstruct, but the ornamental fountain erected in Central Square represented one of his recommendations.[5]

It may be that he suggested a comprehensive study of the entire city in order to plan properly for the expansion of the park system. He may have stressed that a full understanding of growth patterns, needs, and potentials were necessary to create a well coordinated system. If this was, indeed, one of his suggestions, it must have given hesitant board members a basis on which to proceed with a previously conceived action. At any rate, the board retained Kessler in 1911 at a salary of $1,250 to design a plan for Dallas. His report from these studies became the "Kessler Plan" which has dramatically shaped the course of expansion within Dallas.[6]

It should be understood at this point that although Kessler's name is attached to the plan, it was not a one-man study. Kessler headed a

firm of civil engineers and landscape architects who worked out of St. Louis. Kessler, himself, made visits to the cities which employed his firm, received reports from his associates, and worked on final plans in detail. But subordinates did most of the on-the-spot work--surveys, investigations, and studies. For Dallas, Kessler dispatched one of his senior associates, R. C. Barnett, to be his representative for conferences with civic groups, the park board, and city commission. Barnett's immense contribution to the plan and his total effect on Dallas has been an overlooked footnote in Dallas history.

Although the board commissioned Kessler to make a plan for expanding the Dallas park system, what he produced became much more than that. His plan, published in the form of an annual report from the park board at the close of 1911, encompassed the entire city, from its transportation facilities to its flood control mechanism. The architect described Dallas as a typical railroad terminal town which had grown according to the dictates of land speculation with no consideration given to providing either continuous thoroughfares throughout the city or room for vital downtown commerce to expand.

To improve the conditions of the city, Kessler detailed nine areas for improvement. While only two dealt directly with the park system, all nine pertained to the appearance and beauty of the city. First, he suggested that the Trinity River channel between Dallas and Oak Cliff be straightened and that levees be built to provide flood protection for the city. The basin between the levees would be dammed below the city to create a wide city harbor which would become a center for commerce as Dallas grew larger and when the Trinity was made navigable. Secondly,

he proposed a belt railroad to run in a double loop, one around Dallas proper and the other around Oak Cliff, to relieve the congestion of tracks in the city. Patterned after an earlier development in Chicago, all rail lines entering Dallas could be tied into the loops and their distribution system and thus avoid the unsightly proliferation of tracks that each line brought with it. Furthermore, the loops would draw the larger industries out of the inner city to the loops and decrease central city congestion. Thirdly, he recommended a union passenger station to be built in the vicinity of Main and Broadway to serve all lines entering the city. As an appropriate setting for this terminal, he suggested that the several blocks fronting it be converted into an open plaza to give Dallas a pleasing and dignified railroad entrance for visitors. Fourth, a central freight terminal was recommended, to be built between Akard and Broadway, to better organize the distribution of freight in the city. Fifth, a civic center composed of several public buildings was suggested as proper to surround the union terminal plaza and eliminate the usual unsightly conditions that surround railroad terminals. Sixth, he strongly recommended the elimination of all railroad grade crossings in the central city, even suggesting that the best solution would be to remove all tracks except those connected to his proposed loops. Since he realized this was a practical near impossibility, he detailed means by which to create a system of overpasses and underpasses to eliminate the barriers to traffic flow. Seventh, he diagramed a number of specific changes to be made in the street patterns, especially in the downtown area, to alleviate some of the problems caused by land speculators' development of areas without concern for

continuous streets. He offered plans to straighten, lengthen, widen, and extend a number of Dallas streets.[7]

In addition to these seven basic areas for improvement, Kessler included several general suggestions for the beautification of the entire city. He deplored the unsightly array of poles everywhere in town. Often crooked and ugly, the poles frequently carried telephone, telegraph, and electric wires on the main street front, rather than in the alley, especially in the downtown area. The electrified lines of the street trolleys added complexity to the web of wires, and street signs completed the maze of poles. Kessler implied that such a display of utilities made the city appear immature and suggested that Denver's policy of eliminating all such ugliness deserved imitation.[8]

Another general suggestion concerned the prolific use of advertising. He stated that:

> The mistaken idea of the need of glaring advertising has produced the most positive injury to the appearance of our American cities. The outrageous excess of bill board advertising and the entirely unnecessary signs on the sides and roofs of buildings has made this one of the most difficult factors to deal with in city government. Rarely does the average citizen derive sufficient advantage from such signs to compensate him for being constantly confronted with them, but probably the only means of checking the abuse will be to establish the practice of licensing bill boards.[9]

He firmly reproved the city officers for failure to establish, long before, any uniform regulations for quality of street construction, position of sidewalks, or the condition and care of street trees. He described many Dallas streets as ragged and unkempt, resulting in the overall lowering of neighborhood appearances.[10]

He advised the eventual establishment of a separate city department

with responsibility for planting and caring for street trees and general street service (not including construction or maintenance). On a shorter range, he prescribed a program to encourage private citizens to plant trees which would beautify their neighborhoods.[11]

After making these general beautification suggestions, Kessler proceeded to outline his eighth and ninth major area proposals, each of which dealt directly with the development of the park system. The eighth proposed a system of parks, all connected and coordinated by an elaborate network of parkways and boulevards. The ninth represented a change in park philosophy as well as a proposal for new parks. Kessler advised the creation and enlargement of children's playgrounds throughout the city. But, he designated only three parks to serve exclusively as playgrounds. Instead, he advocated a change of attitude with relation to all the parks. He wrote: "Considering this term [playgrounds]...as applicable to all forms of outdoor recreation every acre of park and parkway land in Dallas becomes a playground...." In other words, he felt that the division made in Dallas parks, and elsewhere as well, between a playground and a park should be eliminated. Certainly, the usual playground apparatus should be furnished at various locations, but no longer should children be prohibited by ordinance or custom from playing wherever their games led them. Some activities requiring great amounts of space, such as baseball, would, of course, have to be provided special grounds in some of the larger parks.

He proposed, in order to multiply the amount of playground space available to Dallas children, that school grounds be considerably enlarged. The proximity of schools to the youthful population, and the

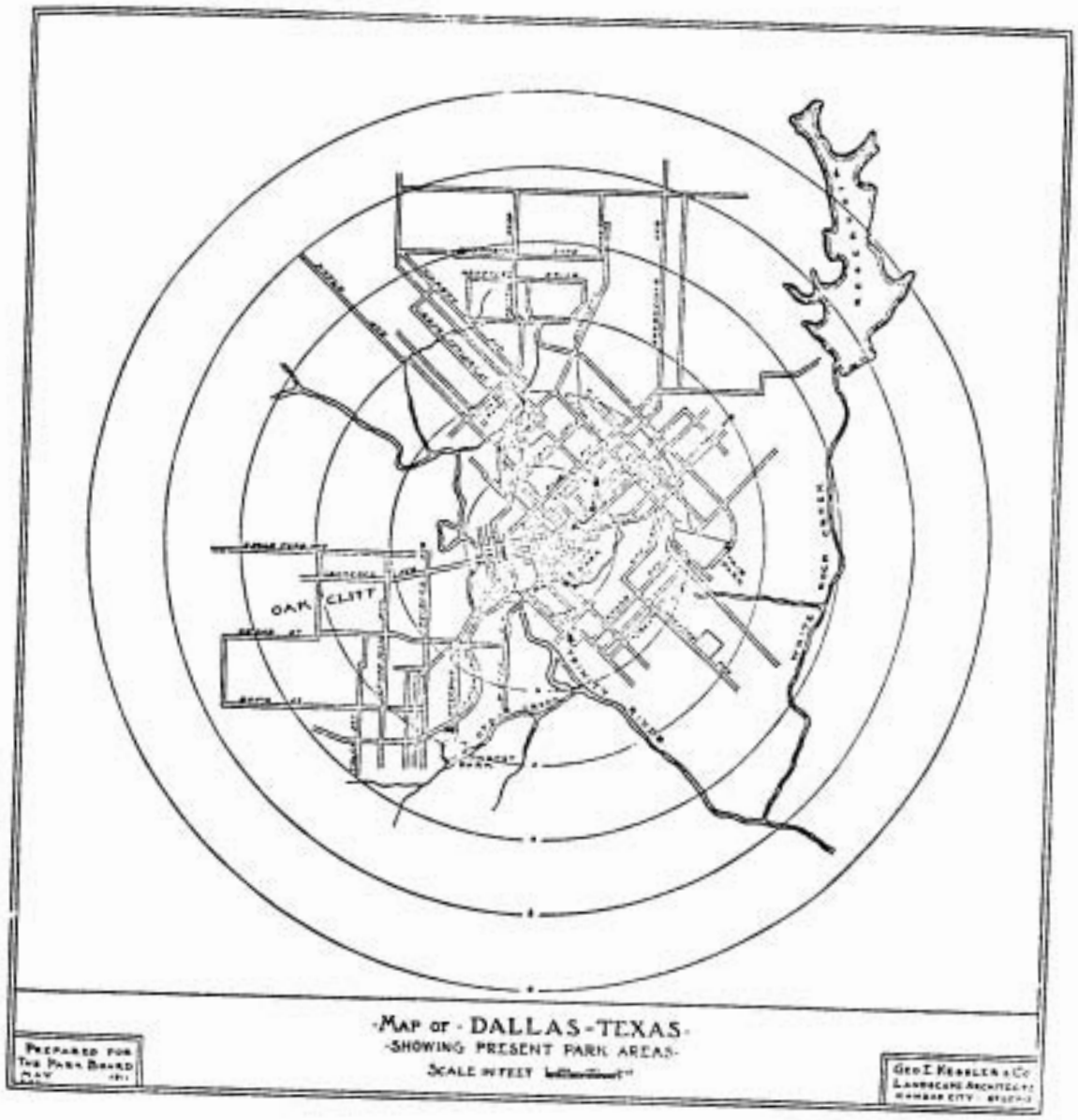
need for recreation space at the schools, made them logical partners with the park board and he felt that the duplication of facilities wasted money.[12]

The design for a park and boulevard system became the most important part of the Kessler study and formed the basis around which the rest of his plan centered. Outlined as a series of parks connected by an inner and outer boulevard network, the boulevard system was designed to raise the level of beauty throughout the entire city. For Dallas proper (the part lying east of the Trinity River), the parks included the existing City Park, Fair Park, Oak Lawn Park, Monument Triangle, Maple Avenue Park (one of the little lots held by the park board but undeveloped), and Park Row. To these Kessler wanted to add three new parks, one being a larger version of present-day Pike Park. The second he placed in a forty acre site between the Houston and Texas Central rail lines and his proposed Mill Creek Parkway at the point where it met Fitzhugh Avenue.[13] A third park he located on a block between Wall Street, Grand Avenue, and South Boulevard, in a neighborhood that flanked the Cotton Mills area and had equal need for park services.[14]

For Oak Cliff, Kessler included three parks in the scheme, two of which already existed--Forest Park and Turner Plaza. The third he proposed as a sixty to eighty acre park to be located at Burr Oak Avenue (which no longer exists) and Grover Avenue. This park finally became a reality in 1947, but on a much reduced scale, and was named Kidd Springs Park.[15]

To cap off the city park system with a major recreational park, Kessler then turned to a new property recently acquired as a water

MAP I-2--DALLAS PARK SYSTEM IN 1911




SOURCE: George Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas: Report of the Park Board, p. 27.

MAP I-3--PROPOSED PARK AND BOULEVARD SYSTEM




SOURCE: George Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas: Report of the Park Board, p. 29.

reservoir, White Rock Lake. He recommended that all lands around the reservoir be retained in public hands and used for park purposes. He foresaw that someday Dallas would grow to the extent that such a large park would be a necessity and that, since the city already owned the property and since it had excellent park potential, the city should begin improvement even though White Rock was still "out-in-the-country." He realized that Dallas would someday outgrow White Rock Lake as a water reservoir and emphasized that the park property around the lake would remain a wise recreation investment when that day arrived.[16]

To beautify the entire city, Kessler designed a scheme of boulevards and parkways which would connect all the parks together in a coordinated system in addition to channeling traffic in such a way that congestion would be reduced. Therefore, the boulevards represented planned and well landscaped arteries for commerce and travel. To make Dallas traffic flow in a more organized fashion, Kessler planned to have an inner and outer system of these embellished thoroughfares.

Within Dallas, he proposed two major parkways, both centered on creeks within the city, as scenic drives and important links in the boulevard system. This proposition required the acquisition of land on each side of Turtle Creek to serve as a double drive through one of Dallas' most beautiful natural areas, as well as one of its most elaborate neighborhoods. This parkway would provide some continuity with the parkway already established by Dallas' exclusive suburb, Highland Park, as well as provide that area a direct thoroughfare to downtown.[17] The other proposed parkway followed the course of Mill Creek (the creek in City Park) from where it entered City Park north to Fitzhugh Avenue

near its crossing of the Houston and Texas Central lines.[18] This parkway, like Turtle Creek, would have become a major thoroughfare as well as scenic drive, but unlike Turtle Creek, it had a renovative aspect. Kessler suggested that this parkway could give "new character" and a "general uplift" to the old neighborhood through which it passed, as well as providing much needed open space for children's play.[19] Five boulevards to connect all the parks and parkways composed the rest of the inner system for Dallas.

For Oak Cliff, Kessler proposed six boulevards. Some of these boulevards included viaducts over the Trinity River bottoms to eliminate the feeling of separation between Dallas and Oak Cliff. The plan for Davis Street, a candidate for boulevard status, incorporated a row of narrow blocks facing on that street into a "paseo" or string of larger-than-usual boulevard medians decorated as island parks.[20]

The outer system of proposed boulevards offered a connected double loop of thoroughfares, one half of which surrounded Dallas proper and the other half encompassed Oak Cliff. The Dallas half presented a somewhat disjointed, even if connected, composite of wide streets girdling the outer limits of the city's development except on the south side where the inner and outer systems converged to provide easy access to Fair Park. The Oak Cliff half much more nearly approached the modern "loop" concept, with a wide highway encircling the area leaving generous amounts of space for future growth within the circle. The ends of the Dallas and Oak Cliff loops connected by viaducts across the Trinity River. Kessler did not specifically locate the Oak Cliff half of the loop system, saying that it was a long range suggestion and future

development would pinpoint a logical route for the loop to follow.[21]

Overall, Kessler's plan represented an ambitious program of civic beautification using the park board as a tool for the general benefit of the city. The plan involved much more than the mere location of future parks. Kessler realized that no matter how beautiful, parks cannot transform the appearance of an entire city. But if the city's major traffic arteries are improved in a beautification program, a dramatic impact may be had on a large portion of any city. When such a street beautification program is combined with a carefully planned system of parks, a city can become a constant source of aesthetic pleasures. But more important, the increased possibilities for recreation, relaxation, and entertainment can raise the quality of life in the town. Furthermore, social services based on strategic parks can provide increased access to needy areas.

Kessler also recognized the importance of environmental beauty. A park surrounded by nerve-jarring congestion and urban blight may be lovely within its confines, but the environment diminishes its benefits. Therefore, Kessler suggested measures to control or eliminate specific environmental problems such as outdoor advertising and railroad lines through residential areas, designed his boulevards to reduce the congestion, and proposed parkways to instill new life into blighted areas.

Kessler's concept of renewal for blighted areas meant simply removal. Mill Creek meandered through one of the oldest neighborhoods in town. On its banks stood dwellings which had never been expensive and many of which were remnants of a rougher pioneer existence. Outhouses and ramshackle sheds lined the creek. Kessler's plan for renewal

proposed a wide swath through the neighborhood following the path of the creek bed and the conversion of this property into an attractive parkway. The surrounding land would then, theoretically, increase in value and attract a higher class of residents who would, in turn, gradually raise the attractiveness and value of the entire neighborhood. The plan included no consideration for the problems of the displaced residents. Their economic plight or relocation was not Kessler's concern. That such people, because of their economic disability, would be forced to settle in another area of similar status and raise the density level of that neighborhood to unhealthy levels, thus creating new blight, was ignored. That such people might have problems, such as lack of education or training which prevented them from ever rising on the economic scale, was ignored. That removal from the area might cause some of the residents to lose their jobs in the nearby downtown area because public transportation did not service more remote sectors was ignored. Rather than suggesting solutions for the problems which had created the blight, Kessler merely tried to eliminate the blight itself without instituting any supplementary programs to assist the displaced to find better housing. Kessler sought beautification for broad civic benefit, but failed, in part, to consider the human cost of such benefit.[22]

Such criticisms are properly aimed at Kessler's plan although they are, perhaps, unfair to the planner and his era. He was, after all, employed by a relatively weak park board in 1911, not an all-powerful federal agency that had evolved through the New Deal, the New Frontier, and the Great Society. He worked in an age when concepts of governmental responsibility for social welfare remained limited and controversial.

The Kessler organization stressed efficient, practical landscape architecture and civil engineering, not social uplift. His suggestions for opening all parks to playground use, instead of confining children to isolated, specially equipped lots, represented moderately radical proposals within themselves. The Kessler Plan should be given credit for being progressive within its era and can be criticized from a modern standpoint with a full understanding of the political and social realities of 1911.[23]

Looking at the Kessler Plan from a vantage point over sixty years, the important question is: "was the plan followed?" And the answer must be evasive. The city faithfully followed some aspects such as Turtle Creek Parkway while totally ignoring others like Mill Creek Parkway. Some proposed improvements, like the Kidd Springs Park, became partial realities while others, such as the outer loop system, became reality as Loop 12 on a scale that dwarfed Kessler's 1911 proposals. The Trinity River viaducts to tie Dallas and Oak Cliff were built; they were not in the places Kessler proposed. Only a limited system of embellished boulevards was established. The Trinity River levees stand fully completed but the turning basin for water freight is still in the planning stages and eventual completion is still doubtful. In general, the Kessler Plan became the foundation upon which all the later city plans based their proposals.

But in the six decades since Kessler's staff made its study, many things have happened to implement the proposals. In 1911, much optimism heralded the plan, but little assurance could be found that the plan represented more than a paper dream. The wealthy and elite supported

the plan, but then, they would benefit the most from increased property values, increased economic input, and stimulated development. The majority of Dallasites in 1911, like at any other time in any other city, were not involved and had no opinion on the subject. In order to make the plan truly successful, the gospel of city beautification had to gain grass-roots support. Therefore, the local press began publicizing every event related to planning.

The Dallas Morning News proved to be especially zealous about city planning and beautification. George Dealey, the editor, had organized the Cleaner Dallas League in 1899 and became a charter member of the Dallas branch of the American League for Civic Improvement. From his position as editor of the News, he had become the most influential opinion molder in the city. If he supported a measure, he could nearly always swing public opinion to support his stand by unleashing a clever and skillfully planned barrage of articles in his daily publication. And Dealey used this tactic to gain popular support for city planning.[24]

For years the News had made a habit of keeping Dallasites informed about progress in other cities such as Denison, Weatherford, and Cleburne in clean-up campaigns, park development, and civic beauty. By 1911 a daily item was a large picture entitled "An Example of Civic Attractiveness" which featured pictures of beautiful homes, boulevards, gardens, parks, fountains, and such, from all over the world. A brief caption, and often an accompanying column, exhorted Dallasites to take note of what other people and cities had done to make their environment more pleasing. Then, as the final push for local planning became more prominent, a special editorial style article on the local news page

began to discuss the benefits of city planning. But when the park board hired Kessler to make a city plan for Dallas, the frequent articles ceased to be merely a pleasant expression of one of Dealey's favorite subjects, civic improvement, and became a concerted, well planned campaign to insure public support for the final plan.

Beginning in February of 1911, the News moved to introduce Kessler and his work to Dallasites. One article on February 19 described his accomplishments in Memphis, Tennessee, while another less than a week later entitled "Tribute to Mr. Kessler's Work" praised his ability and genius. From that point, the News moved into a steady drumbeat of daily articles throughout the rest of February and all of March when much of the planning work was being done by Kessler and his staff. These articles bore such titles as "What Some Other Cities Are Doing," "City Plan Matters Have a Place For All," and "The Commercial Value of City Planning." Dealey's planning propaganda played on the apparent Dallas tendency to devour breathlessly anything to do with Europe and its royalty by including columns about the advanced state of city planning in Paris and the beautiful results that had been achieved.[25] A long series of Sunday articles during this period written by the former French premier Georges Clemenceau,[26] himself an editor and author, romantically described South American cities and their grandiose plans. Throughout the early part of this campaign, Dealey laid a solid ground work of respect for the articles by using only carefully selected and edited reprints from such diverse sources as the American City and Christian Science Moniter. Then as consultations between Kessler, Barnett, the park board, the city commission, and the City Plan and

Improvement League began to reveal tentative aspects of the plan, the daily editorial essay which accompanied the picture of "Civic Attractiveness" became an open campaign to insure enthusiasm when the entire report was made public. Such items of the plan as the union depot, the use of school grounds as parks, the belt railroad around Dallas, and the boulevard system all received previews in the News during March. Dealey cleverly arranged many of the essays to imply that if Dallas would only support Kessler's plan wholeheartedly, the city could become the show place of Texas. For instance, on March 14, 1911, the News ran a picture of a beautiful school in California surrounded by spacious grounds and lush vegetation. An article on the same page supported Kessler's proposal to enlarge Dallas school grounds and use them as parks. To garner support for a major civic center at the terminal plaza, the News ran several large spreads with pictures, drawings, and maps of new civic centers being built in other cities to attract the lucrative convention trade. The message became obvious. Dealey warned everyone that if Dallas did not follow the plan, the city might lose out to other more "progressive" cities.[27]

Then in April, the News ran a series of twenty-one articles on the plan. Each day the essay took one of Kessler's proposals in the unfinished plan and detailed its value to the entire city. The points selected were often minor, but they all dealt with city beautification. The essays paid particular attention to ways in which an individual home owner could contribute to civic beauty. For instance, Kessler's suggestion that Dallas needed street trees became a News article on how to beautify a residential yard with trees. The series climaxed with a

stirring call to arms entitled "The Time to Begin" in which Dallasites read that "years have been wasted" and that "the time to make a change is NOW."[28] With those words shouting from the newspaper page, the News moved on to another related campaign.[29]

In loose connection with Kessler's proposals, the Federation of Women's Clubs arranged for Dr. Henry S. Curtis of Clark University to appear in Dallas for a ten day speaking tour to promote the establishment of playgrounds for children. Curtis had gained a national reputation as an educator evangelically devoted to the theory that physically and mentally healthy children needed ample space for play and recreation. In particular, he declared that the type of play available under the watchful eye of playground supervisors was not only healthy, but it also made for better, more patriotic citizens less prone to crime and violence.

The professor was apparently a professional promoter and his ten day engagement became a whirlwind of unending oratory before organizations ranging from the Chamber of Commerce to the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In his one weekend in the town, he filled the pulpits of the massive First Presbyterian Church and the influential Temple Emanu-el. Several of his speeches gained verbatim coverage in the local press. The News shifted its "Civic Attractiveness" pictures into a daily flood of gleeful children frolicking merrily about lovely playgrounds in major cities from coast to coast, as well as a few pictures of Dallas' own three playgrounds. The daily essay-editorials that accompanied the pictures declared that a great movement was sweeping the nation to establish playgrounds in every neighborhood. One such article

on May 22, 1911, bore the headline: "Nowhere to Go; Nowhere to Play." It attacked park systems that had rules prohibiting play in the parks and ordering everyone to "Keep Off the Grass." This article, no doubt, made Dallasites squirm, realizing that their system had had such rules only five years before and that children's play was still generally limited to the playground areas. The News capped off the coverage of Dr. Curtis' visit by publishing a poem by Denis A. McCarthy which summarized many of the playground arguments:

Plenty of room for dives and dens,
(Glitter and glare and sin!)
Plenty of room for prison pens;
(Gather the criminals in!)
Plenty of room for jails and courts,
(Willing enough to pay;)
But never a place for lads to race,
No, never a place to play!

Plenty of room for shops and stores,
(Mammon must have the best!)
Plenty of room for the running sores
That rot in the city's breast!
Plenty of room for the lures that lead
The hearts of our youth astray,
But never a cent on a playground spent,
No, never a place to play!

Plenty of room for schools and halls,
Plenty of room for art;
Plenty of room for teas and balls,
Platform, stage and mart.
Proud is the city - she finds a place
For many a fad today,
But she's more than blind if she fails to find
A place for the boys to play!

Give them a chance for innocent sport,
Give them a chance for fun -
Better a playground plot than a court
And a jail when the harm is done!
Give them a chance - if you stint them now
Tomorrow you will have to pay
A larger bill for a darker ill,
So give them a place to play![30]

With Curtis' departure, the News seemed to relax its pace a bit although the pro-planning articles still appeared frequently. However, Dealey had conducted a rather massive public indoctrination and propaganda campaign for four important months during which the mass of the Kessler plan had been revealed to the public. Since public response was crucial to its success, Dealey did a major service for the park board.

Some measure of Dealey's success in molding public opinion can be seen in the fact that some citizens became so enthusiastic about the Kessler plan that certain aspects of it neared completion before the report even went to the printers. The major aspect of the plan, the boulevard system, presented an initial testing ground for the entire concept. M. N. Baker, vice president of the park board, pointed out that, "the success of the boulevards movement...depends upon the liberality of the property owners."[31] If the first boulevard project gave any indication of support, some Dallasites received the plan enthusiastically. The boulevard proposition became public knowledge in January of 1911. By early February, landowners around South Boulevard began offering their land to the city, much of the acreage being donated. By late April, work had already begun on the boulevard improvement. On April 25, Kessler, on one of his visits to Dallas, expressed amazement, saying that most cities spend the first year after a plan is made making preparations to begin, but Dallas had already begun work and he had not even submitted the final draft.[32]

However, not all Dallasites responded so enthusiastically. M. N. Baker also told the press that progress on land acquisition along the proposed Turtle Creek Parkway was not going well, indicating that, "Some

of the property owners seem to be holding back."[33] In fact, the park board had expected some opposition from individual property owners along boulevard routes. Those owners faced an assessment for a portion of the paving and curbing costs. Opposition did develop, but in general the plan moved through the next decade at a reasonable pace.

Actually, no one expected the plan to become an overnight reality. Kessler himself wrote:

> Of course these improvements are too extensive for immediate accomplishment, yet it will be found that once a beginning is made other improvements will follow naturally and easily, and the expenditures therefore will be readily met without material burden...it should not be forgotten that the people of the future will have many things to do and burdens to bear.[34]

His assistant, Barnett, further explained that the plan contemplated doing only what was possible at any moment and leaving the remainder for the future.[35] At the same time, Kessler did not suggest that improvements should only be made as they were convenient or could be made without legal action. He urged the use of eminent domain and advised that all:

> boulevard improvements should be made entirely at the cost of the abutting lands, for the benefits accruing from them are so material that no proper objection can be made against such a form of taxation.[36]

Such a statement did not endear him to the hearts of property owners, but Kessler, having had years of practical experience in dealing with cities and their improvement, realized that, "so long as it is necessary to await agreement with land owners and to rely on voluntary subscriptions of patriotic and sensible citizens, only a little of the work of real importance" could be finished.[37]

The final draft of the plan did not arrive in the city until early summer in 1911 and the full text of the plan in printed form did not become available to the public until February of 1912. But mechanics did not matter. Dallas had its plan. For whatever their reasons, business leaders had clamored for city planning and their demands had been met. Actually a wide variety of organizations from exclusive women's clubs to church groups had been actively involved in gathering support for various aspects of the plan that resulted.

The plan, itself, was commendable and ambitious. Kessler's keen foresight gave the city a framework upon which to begin organized growth and rectify some of the mistakes caused by the population spasms of an earlier age. It, however, required exertion and effort on the part of Dallas civic leaders, since some of the proposed alterations seriously realigned the cityscape. But the elements of the City Beautiful Movement present in the plan represented the first successful campaign for that sort of improvement in Dallas history. Other less serious movements for a cleaner or more beautiful Dallas had come and gone, making minor contributions in isolated ways. But George E. Kessler's plan for Dallas signaled the recognition on the part of Dallasites that the city had reached its first maturation point. The plan would guide Dallas' adult years when it emerged as a major metropolis.

The Kessler Plan marked the third time that park development directly influenced Dallas' growth. The first had been in 1876 when the establishment of City Park had drawn the city's growth to the south side of downtown. The second had come when the city agreed to take over the fair grounds and thus preserved the institution of the state fair and

the massive contribution that it made to the local economy. The Kessler Plan was the product of the newly organized park board reacting to the fact that Dallas had become a somewhat crowded city of about 100,000 people. In its urban condition, planning seemed the only sensible way to avoid the problems common in many older metropolises. Even though urged upon the board by civic organizations, drawn up in consultation with other commissions and a professional firm, and effected in coordination with other governmental bodies, the park board officially commissioned and paid for the work, and the park board in future years would receive the praise, and the blame, for its contents.[38]

## NOTES

### GEORGE KESSLER AND THE FIRST PLAN

[1]The Dallas Morning News issues in the period 1909-1912 carry many examples of the type of article referred to, usually found on page four of each weekday issue. See especially Dallas Morning News, 15 May 1911, p. 3.

[2]Mel Scott, American City Planning Since 1890 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 11, 47-57.

[3]Biographical information on Kessler and his work in Kansas City is based on William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1964), pp. 40-54.

[4]Ibid., pp. 133-34.

[5]Sidney Smith, "History of the Dallas Fair Enterprise," manuscript history of the State Fair of Texas 1886-1910, written about 1910, located in the Executive Offices, State Fair of Texas, Fair Park, Dallas, Texas, p. 97; and Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 3, 14 September 1910, p. 23; 15 April 1911, p. 58; 5 May 1911, p. 64.

[6]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 14 July 1911, p. 83.

[7]George E. Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas: Report of the Park Board (n.p., 1911), pp. 9-19.

[8]Ibid., p. 19.

[9]Ibid., p. 20.

[10]Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[11]Ibid., p. 22.

[12]Ibid., p. 26.

[13]This park never became a reality. If it had, it would have extended for several blocks south of Fitzhugh Avenue where it meets present-day Central Expressway.

[14]This park also did not become a reality. In relation to the present day rearrangement of streets in the area, it would have been found at the southeast intersection of Lamar Street and Grand Avenue.

[15]Much of the area Kessler had wanted included in the park became the fashionable residential neighborhood known as Kessler Park, which is sprinkled with such street names as Kessler Parkway and Kessler Canyon. The area that Kessler had envisioned as the center of his proposed park is today a residential street named Kessler Lake Drive (one block south of Colorado Boulevard). Methodist Hospital is located in what would have been the eastern edge of the park.

[16]All discussion of parks for Dallas and Oak Cliff based on Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, pp. 34-38.

[17]The park board began acquiring land for this parkway in 1913 and the parkway became a reality after many years of acquisitions.

[18]This would be the present-day intersection of Fitzhugh and North Central Expressway.

[19]Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, pp. 32-33. Creation of the Mill Creek Parkway was never attempted.

[20]All discussion of the inner system of boulevards and parkways based on Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, pp. 31-34.

[21]Ibid., pp. 38-40.

[22]Similar criticisms have been made of Kessler's plan for Kansas City in 1893. See Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement, pp. 51-52; and Henry S. Churchill, The City is the People (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1945), pp. 107-8.

[23]A broader discussion of the criticisms of the progressive improvements made in urban areas can be found in Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order 1877-1920 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), as well as Samuel Haber, Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era 1890-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[24]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), p. 8.

[25]The planning and beautification of Paris had been a product of the autocratic rule of French king, Louis Napoleon. If the material of the Dallas Morning News reflected accurately the news desires of the Dallas public, the Texans were avid fans of the royal families of western Europe. By 1911 the News had reduced its daily coverage of aristocratic parties and travels, but a study of the News before that date reveals a steadily increasing attention to royal activities as one moves backwards in Dallas history.

[26]Georges Clemenceau, French Premier, 1906-1909 and served again 1917-1920.

[27]Generally synthesized from Dallas Morning News, December 1910 through July 1911. Articles referred to specifically: 19 February 1911, p. 16; 25 February 1911, p. 4; 5 March 1911, pp. 16, 26; 9 March 1911, p. 4; 12 March 1911, p. 16; 14 March 1911, p. 4; 30 March 1911, p. 4; 31 March 1911, p. 4; 4 April 1911, p. 4.

[28]Ibid., 29 April 1911, p. 4.

[29]Ibid., series of twenty-one numbered articles, 9-29 April 1911.

[30]Ibid., 26 May 1911, p. 4.

[31]Ibid., 4 March 1911, p. 4.

[32]Ibid., 4 February 1911, p. 4; 11 February 1911, p. 15; 25 April 1911, p. 4.

[33]Ibid., 4 March 1911, p. 4.

[34]Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, p. 40.

[35]Dallas Morning News, 1 February 1911, p. 4.

[36]Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, p. 40.

[37]Ibid.

[38]It should be pointed out that a distinction must be made between influence by "park development" and "park department development." City Park began to influence the city in 1876, but a "park department" cannot be said to have existed in any shape or form until at least 1885.

# CHAPTER 10

## LIKE A SHOOTING STAR

With George Kessler's City Plan for Dallas firmly in hand, both the city and the park board entered a new era of development. This era differed from the surge of growth between 1904 and 1911 in that, for the first time in Dallas history, a pre-ordained pattern guided the city and its park system. No longer was development of Dallas left to the whim and best interests of land developers. At least for a few years, Kessler's plan closely directed most of Dallas' growth.

Despite the possession of a plan and firm resolve to follow that plan, the growth of the park system did not progress steadily. The activities of the park board gathered momentum throughout 1911 as Kessler formulated the plan and crescendoed after the voters approved a half-million dollar bond issue for parks. The year 1914 was marked by almost feverish land acquisition. Then like a shooting star that blazes gloriously across the sky only to disappear an instant later, the bottom fell out in 1915 as the local economy entered a period of recession. Land acquisition continued on a reduced scale, financed by the bond issue, but much of the property that had been acquired with those bonds remained mere open space instead of becoming embellished playgrounds and parks as intended. Then as the war in Europe engulfed the United States, the park system slowed its pace even more, requiring a postwar bond issue to bring the department out of the doldrums.

From a broader perspective, the period followed a complete cycle that has been typical of the Dallas Park Department throughout its existence. Similar cycles of expansion and contraction had occurred in the late 1880s and late 1890s,[1] although both periods had been short lived and abortive. The more extended cycle that began in 1907 and lasted until 1915 represented a truly successful period of growth for the system and reflected a changed public attitude toward parks and the services they rendered. The Kessler Plan divided this new cycle in half. All previous acquisitions were guided by the best judgement of the five member board of park commissioners, the later activity was guided by the professional hand of an expert.

The second half of this cycle began before Kessler presented his plan, when the civic leaders began to promote his suggestions even before they became final. This activity resulted in several immediate improvements including the beginnings of the boulevard system. For the park system itself, the board began action on one of Kessler's most obvious suggestions, the enlargement of Fair Park. Grounds utilization in the park had become an increasingly desperate issue, as every available space became occupied. Even the enormous race track, which contained about twenty percent of the park acreage, was utilized. The track infield had been equipped with four tennis courts, numerous baseball diamonds, storage facilities, and a large parking area. The fair directors had been asking for more space for years but had received only one small addition. So in April of 1911, the board bought about seven and four-tenths acres in the east corner of Fair Park for $11,164.50, from C. Weishsel which completed expansion of the park in that direction.

Later that year the board made initial efforts to acquire a strip of land two blocks deep along the entire southwest side of the park between Exposition and Second avenues.[2] This, however, became an extended project because the land involved had to be bought piece by piece from numerous owners.[3]

A more immediate solution to the fair's space problems developed in the form of an adjoining private park, Gaston Ball Park, for which negotiations began in 1911. The wealthy Gaston was a former Confederate army captain, a local banker, former city treasurer (through his position with his bank), a past president of the State Fair of Texas, and a generous benefactor to that organization. He and his family had been the original owners of all the land in that area, including the fair grounds which he had sold to the fair association in 1886. The fourteen acre Gaston Ball Park was one of the few pieces of land the wealthy family still possessed in the Fair Park area, and they had developed it into a private amusement park with expensive improvements, including a small stadium for baseball. The Dallas "Giants," a Texas League baseball club, maintained a lease on the park and played all its home games in the stadium. The initial price for this land totaled sixty thousand dollars, but lack of immediately available funds forced delays until after a bond issue could be approved, although after only one annual installment on the purchase price, in 1914 Gaston and his children relieved the city from paying the rest of the sum, essentially donating the park to the city for a mere pittance. This was completely in character for the old banker, since he had long been one of Dallas' most prominent city boosters and considered that whatever helped the fair

benefited Dallas, as well as his own banking interests. His semi-donation of Gaston Ball Park presented one more example of a long list of similar benevolent actions he had taken over four decades to aid the fair association and its corporate ancestors.[4]

Even after purchasing the park, the board faced a serious obstacle in the form of the baseball club's lease. J. W. Gardner, the club owner, had complete control over the park under the terms of the contract he had negotiated with Gaston and which passed to the park board as an encumbrance on the land in the purchase. Gardner refused to release his control of the park for fear that the fair's expansion into Gaston Ball Park would jeopardize the best interests of his club. Since no other baseball facility suitable for a professional club existed in Dallas, he insisted that any negotiations concerning his lease include a cash settlement large enough to allow him to relocate the "Giants" in a new stadium. After several months of bargaining in September of 1914, Gardner arrived at twelve thousand dollars as the minimum amount he would accept to cancel his lease and refused to budge from that figure. The park board, on the other hand, settled on a maximum of ten thousand dollars, one-third of which would be paid by the fair association. With negotiations stalemated, the board decided to let the club die a natural death when its lease expired in May of 1916 and had to move out of the park with no money to relocate. But the fair directors either took pity on the club or felt that they could not wait until 1916 to get access to the property. They agreed to pay the two thousand dollars difference between Gardner's price and the park board's offer in addition to their one-third of the base price. Considering that the fair association was

having financial difficulties, some doubt may be raised about the wisdom of this decision. In the final agreement, Gardner did not release the park until January 1, 1915, only seventeen months before his lease would have expired. Since the association only gained use of Gaston Park one fair season earlier than it would have anyway, it seems that $12,000 ($6666.66 paid by the park board and $3333.33 plus $2000 paid by the fair association) represented a rather high price to pay for the expansion privileges when the same opportunity would have been available one year later with no additional expense whatsoever. The fair directors may have felt that their $5333.33 investment to relocate the ball club would be more than compensated by the additional money that could be made in an expanded fair operation; or they may have been genuinely interested in amicably relocating the ball club, since the club, like the fair, was also an instrument of city boosterism; or the crowding in the fair grounds may have actually been so serious that any price would have been acceptable. There may have even been some pressure, in the form of drastically increased rates, from the insurance companies that covered the buildings in Fair Park to make some effort to relieve the congestion during the annual event. Mayor Holland expressed some anxiety along these lines when he voiced concern over the absolute inability of emergency vehicles, be they fire trucks or ambulances, to move about the fair grounds due to the congestion, not to mention the added danger to pedestrians caused by the mere presence of such vehicles unexpectedly rushing through their midst. Such apparitions of structural loss and tort liability may have made access to Gaston Ball Park attractive at any price. But for whatever reason, Gardner received satisfaction and

Gaston Ball Park became expansion property for Fair Park although the depression that enshrouded Dallas in 1915 delayed the permanent improvements for several years, and then only recreational facilities were expanded in the park. Nearly a decade passed before fair-related improvements appeared, although temporary facilities were erected in the park during the fair, and the parking lots there relieved some congestion in the main fair grounds.[5]

After the ball club vacated the premises, the park board officially changed the park's name to Gaston Park and the recreation facilities in that corner of Fair Park continued to be known by that name until the construction of the State Fair Music Hall on the site in 1925. Three unsuccessful moves have been made to rename the entire Fair Park in honor of W. H. Gaston. The park board rejected the first two in 1912 and 1913, but the third in 1924 passed the board only to be politely vetoed by the aged Captain Gaston.[6]

Simultaneously with the Gaston Park negotiations, the park board entered a new era of park development. When the contents of Kessler's plan for park acquisition became known to the general public, the board was besieged by offers and requests from developers, individuals, and neighborhood groups. At an earlier date, such a commotion and variety of choices would have probably resulted in indiscriminate purchases to satisfy immediate demands. But the city plan provided guidance for the commissioners, and they instituted a patient and coordinated program to acquire parks according to that plan. Of course, Kessler's study was only a plan, and he was not a soothsayer, so when the reality of subsequent city growth did not coincide with the plan, modifications resulted.

But the important change in park board policy of site selection could be seen as the commissioners aggressively sought out the sites instead of passively waiting for a neighborhood to request a park or for someone to urge a particular location upon them.

This change resulted in an altogether different pattern of park acquisition. The earlier pattern had generally caused each park to be purchased from a single owner in one transaction. This was understandable since, without a plan to specify locations, the board and interested citizens naturally looked for a complete plot of ground to satisfy the need. However, with the plan in mind, the commissioners determined the needed site and procured the necessary land in whatever processes were required. In most cases, this meant that a park inserted into an already established neighborhood required the purchase of numerous lots from individual owners. Since the lots often contained houses, some residents had to be displaced and their houses or businesses removed. This pattern became the predominate method of purchasing new park land following Kessler's plan and, although the entire system advanced remarkably, development of individual parks sometimes remained imperceptible as the board gained title to one lot at a time and did not begin major improvements until a sizable portion of the proposed park had been obtained.

Since the creation of parks in this era often required several years of acquisition involving numerous land owners each of whom owned but a fraction of the total acreage, an enumeration of each purchase, the parties involved, and the date of each, becomes an exercise in historical trivia. Therefore, the details of such piecemeal acquisitions will be omitted in favor of a more meaningful discussion of the parks

that evolved from these purchases and their contribution to the entire system.

The first complete property acquired through this pattern became a play park located on Turney Avenue[7] in one of the older neighborhoods in Dallas. Located north of the downtown, the area had been a part of the old second ward, a primarily middle and lower class laboring constituency. Mayor Sawnie R. Aldredge described the area as being "settled up largely by poor but worthy people."[8] Although living conditions and social problems did not approach the seriousness of the Cotton Mills area, the blocks immediately to the east of Turney Avenue had gained notoriety as a center of prostitution and vice. The establishment of the park in that vicinity coincided with a city-wide morality campaign which successfully extinguished the "red lights" of that district. There exists no available evidence to suggest a coordinated effort between the police department and the park board, in fact cooperation between city departments was often noticeably lacking during the era of commission government in Dallas. But it is possible that Mayor W. M. Holland effected some loose agreement of principles between the police commissioner and the park board which resulted in this convenient timing. Certainly, the morally lifting effects of parks and playgrounds had been extolled frequently in the Morning News, and such an attempt seemed logical after the success of Trinity Play Park. Furthermore, Kessler had suggested that this neighborhood needed a park and had specified a relatively large area for acquisition. Though the park board reduced the scale, it purchased a total of about four and one-half acres from three land onwers during 1912 and 1913. The cost, $18,085, came from



Undeveloped Region, Pike Park, 1912-1913

the board's ad valorem tax revenue. Originally called Turney Play Park, the name Summit Play Park was officially applied in 1913, deriving the title from the fact that the park sat on the very top of a hill which afforded a commanding view of the city. However, the name again changed in 1927 when it became Pike Park in memory of Edgar L. Pike, who served on the park board 1908-1919.

Summit Play Park served the congested old second ward in much the same way that Trinity Play Park served the Cotton Mills area. An elaborate, two story (plus basement) fieldhouse erected in 1914 contained an assembly hall, activity rooms, reading rooms, and a party room where free movies were shown. The basement contained shower facilities to be used in the free shower service exactly like those available at the Trinity fieldhouse. In 1915, a wading pool was built in front of the building and tennis courts and playground apparatus flanked the structure.

The park became instantly popular. Records show that between April 1916 and April 1917, about 92,500 persons attended the park and that figure jumped to nearly 130,000 one year later and exceeded a yearly average of 160,000 by 1923. Similar figures for the free shower program demonstrated the wisdom of installing such facilities in the park. Over 10,500 showers were taken in 1917, 12,367 in 1918, and nearly 17,000 in 1928.[9]

Most parks can be established with the hope that they will be able to serve a neighborhood in a particular manner for perhaps thirty years before the neighborhood changes to such a degree that the park is either no longer functional or relevant. For instance, City Park

served for about twenty-five years as a driving park before the elite neighborhood declined to such an extent that the park's function was irrelevant to the surroundings. Trinity Play Park (later Fretz Park) served for about forty years as a slum park before industry replaced the slum. Summit Play Park, however, has had the good fortune to always have a surrounding "special" community to serve that has always needed similar services. The neighborhood, originally settled by laboring families of Anglo-Saxon descent, experienced its first evolution before the turn of the century when large numbers of Dallas' immigrant population settled in the cheaper areas of town, including Turney Avenue. Immigrants in Dallas, as elsewhere, tended to collect into ethnic enclaves within the larger community, no one nationality having an absolute majority in a given area, but often one group became concentrated enough to give a neighborhood a particular ethnic flavor. In the case of the Turney Avenue area, Reformed Jews became the dominant element for about twenty years, with Polish Jews assuming numerical superiority in the early 1920s. About the same time, however, a large influx of Mexicans began to settle in Dallas and the character of the Summit Play Park area slowly changed. A small Mexican community had lived in Dallas but its size had remained small until conditions in Mexico compelled many to seek homes elsewhere. First, employment in Mexico proved hard to find because of the confused state of the Mexican economy, and second, many sought a place to live away from the continual state of revolution that had existed in Mexico from 1910 to 1920. The growing city of Dallas offered job opportunities in the ranks of manual labor, whereas some of the cities further south had already absorbed all such laborers

that they could support. But for whatever reasons they came, once the migration began, it accelerated rapidly as families and relatives joined the first immigrants from Mexico. By 1925 a distinct ethnic community, much more isolated from the mainstream of Dallas life than any previous population in the area, had emerged which had gained the sobriquet of "Little Mexico" before the great depression of the 1930s. The Chicano population remains the dominant element around the park in modern times, although the Mexicans now share the facilities with a growing Negro population. But no matter what ethnic changes have taken place in the neighborhood, the need for the park and the particular services that it renders to an underprivileged community has remained the same. Summit Play Park (Pike Park) in 1974 is still providing the same vital service that it began in 1914 with no indication that its role will change in the near future.[10]

In other matters, the park board had arrived at the point where it needed more than the one-tenth of one percent ad valorem tax revenue allowed by the 1907 city charter. George Kessler had anticipated such a need and had made definite suggestions about what should be done. He urged the city to use ad valorem taxes for park improvements, that other incomes be used to conduct the programs, but that real estate acquisitions should be financed by bond programs approved by the people. The park board apparently did not move to follow this suggestion until the members felt that they had sufficient backing to insure success. It would seem that they did not want park board issues to be stigmatized as losing propositions from the outset. So they mounted a carefully calculated campaign to insure success.[11]

In February of 1913, the Dallas Playgrounds Association publicly proposed that a bond issue of five hundred thousand dollars for park purposes be submitted to the voters in the next election. The association promised to bring Dr. Henry S. Curtis[12] of Clark University, who had appeared in Dallas on a whirlwind tour in 1911, to town for a series of lectures to promote the bonds. The board had desired this sort of backing and officially transmitted a letter to the city commission in late February asking that the bond issue be included on the ballot for the April 1, 1913, election. The city commissioners complied and the campaign began immediately since only one month remained before the election date. The Dallas Morning News again mounted its usual effective campaign of pro-park literature. The Playgrounds Association brought in Dr. Curtis who made a repeat performance of his 1911 tour, with three weeks of speaking engagements before many local churches, including First Methodist and Temple Emanu-el, and numerous civic clubs. Various other civic groups, including the Chamber of Commerce and neighborhood improvement associations, also worked in favor of the bonds. Throughout the campaign, the park board members assured the public that the bond issue would not increase the tax rate nor impair the efficiency of other branches of city government. They pointed out that the five hundred thousand dollar figure represented the maximum amount allowed for a park bond issue under the city charter. The interest on the bonds would be paid out of the revenue from the ad valorem tax which provided the board with about ninety thousand dollars annually. The approximately ten thousand dollars that the board received from other incomes--concessions, admission percentages, rentals, and such--brought the park income

to about one hundred thousand dollars, which the commissioners asserted was quite sufficient to provide for the maintenance of the park system and to pay off the interest on the bonds with no additional taxes or appropriations from the city. This assurance apparently convinced enough Dallasites, for the bonds passed by a vote of 1,920 to 1,171 although, once again, voter turn-out was pathetically poor. Only 5,083 voters even cast their preference for mayor out of a total city population of almost 100,000. Only about three thousand of those who did vote even bothered to indicate their preference on the park issue.[13]

But J. F. Butcher, who opposed the issue, challenged the results and filed a suit alleging that several hundred fraudulent votes had been cast in favor of the bonds. He gained a temporary injunction against the issuance of the bonds and managed to delay any action by the board until the end of the year. Even after the election was ruled valid, the procedures required for printing and sale delayed the bonds even longer. When the money became available in early 1914, the board moved to make up for lost time with a flurry of purchases which dominated board activity for the entire year.[14]

One of the first parks to benefit from the bond issue became a classic example of the piecemeal pattern of land acquisition. Residents in the area of Bryan, Live Oak, Hall, and Floride streets had been pressing the park board to establish a park in their neighborhood since 1910. Apparently the board, in early 1911, reached a tentative decision to satisfy the residents' frequent requests, offers, propositions, and questions by placing a park in their sector. But the area presented a problem: every lot in the neighborhood was individually owned, and most had

residential structures. The board had encountered considerable legal difficulties in purchasing the Turney Avenue property from only three separate owners, but this proposed park involved dozens of owners and enough legal snares to make the city attorney wince. Nevertheless, the park for which the residents had been clamoring just happened to be a segment of Kessler's proposed Mill Creek Parkway, so the board approved the acquisition and purchased the first lot in February of 1911, a second in June, and four other lots in 1912 and 1913. Since the acquisition was obviously going to be a long process, the board arranged to rent several of the houses and made no attempt to improve any of the property until a more extensive and contiguous park could be obtained. Additionally, the piecemeal process proved to be quite expensive and the board needed the bond money approved by the voters in April of 1913. When that money was finally available in 1914, the board rapidly began acquiring land. Almost every board meeting in 1914 involved some action relating to land for this new park. Some meetings were held specifically to discuss only that one subject. Acquisitions included lots of every size and description ranging in price from $2,500 to $13,500. The board even ventured to use its powers of condemnation against one owner who refused to accept the appraised value of his land and demanded a higher price. The board had used such powers only once before, and then the mere filing of the condemnation papers with the city attorney had been sufficient to bring a settlement. On this occasion, the procedure went further along the legal path, but still the owner capitulated rather than fight an impossible battle in the courts. Although the right of a

park board to use condemnation proceedings had been a controversial power only a decade before, the principle had been well established in 1914.[15]

Since the bond issue made completion of the park in the near future a possibility, the board began to clear the lots, preparing for their conversion to a park in 1914. The commissioners officially applied the name Exall Park in January of that year in honor of Henry Exall, the wealthy and socially prominent Dallasite who had founded the Texas Industrial Congress. George Kessler, who was still retained as a consultant, designed the park although the short depression in 1915 delayed implementation of his design. Remaining lots were acquired as late as 1917, six years after the initial purchase. Total area for all this extended effort amounted to only slightly more than eleven acres, but the total cost of the combined properties reached a staggering $122,000, almost one quarter of the entire bond issue.[16]

After the depression ran its course and the park board recovered its financial footing, improvement of the park began in late 1916. By 1917 some landscaping and paving of walkways had been finished and two tennis courts had been installed. By 1920 ornamental lily ponds, a decorative bridge over Mill Creek, and a wading pool had been added. Later, ball fields, playground equipment, and free movies in the summer became part of the attractions. The park, once cleared and improved, provided a most attractive setting for St. Paul's Sanitarium which sat across the street from the park. More importantly though, it became one more vital link in the city-wide network of playgrounds, after the fashion of Trinity and Summit play parks. In addition, Exall Park

represented an important part of Kessler's proposed Mill Creek Parkway, but the difficulties of acquiring land in this older neighborhood may have discouraged any attempts to complete the parkway. For whatever reasons, only two isolated parts of Mill Creek Parkway ever reached park status, those being Exall Park and the smaller Walford Park at Haskell and Ross avenues, and their intended relationship with the parkway has been ignored.[17]

Concurrent with the acquisition of Exall Park, the board gained another important tract by similar piecemeal purchases. The residents in the area of Carroll Avenue and Worth Street, like those between Bryan and Live Oak (Exall Park), began to request a park in their neighborhood about 1911. But the board deferred action on each request and each offer of land until after the sale of the $500,000 in bonds in March of 1914. The board then moved to provide a park for that area. The northeast side of town was hardly devoid of parks in 1914. Central Square had been there for six years, Fair Park was only a few blocks away, and Exall Park was becoming a reality. These parks, however, lay quite near the older, more developed part of town, while Dallas rapidly expanded to the northeast, reaching out for the attractive real estate between town and the new White Rock Reservoir. But the Carroll and Worth Street site offered an opportunity for the board to make its first attempts to follow yet another suggestion of Kessler's plan.

Kessler had urged "a very material increase in the size of school grounds" in order that playgrounds might be provided in the neighborhoods which needed them most without expensive duplication of facilities by two divisions of the local government.[18] Located across the street from

the proposed park site stood the Dave Crockett School which was in need of a playground. Following Kessler's suggestion, the board moved to create a park to double as school playground and neighborhood park.

The area had already been subdivided and developed, so land acquisition quickly began. In one month, April of 1914, the board purchased ten lots opposite the school. Then, although the park was not complete to its planned extension and acquisitions continued into 1917,[19] sufficient acreage had been gained that improvement could begin. By the summer of 1915, the park opened with conventional playground apparatus. By the fall of that year, it served its dual purpose as an extension of the school facilities.[20]

While the other three "memorial" parks had been named after important civic leaders, this park honored an important Dallasite especially known for his relationship with children. One of the very first lots purchased in April of 1914 had belonged to Dr. R. C. Buckner, the founder of Dallas' well known Baptist benevolence, Buckner Orphans' Home. To recognize this man and the work he had done for children, the park board named the new facility Buckner Park.[21]

After the last acquisitions in 1917, Buckner Park covered six and one-quarter acres and cost a total of $68,153.40. Improvements included the playground apparatus, ornamental lighting, and a wading pool which was added in 1920. By 1923 the park included free outdoor movies during the summer among its attractions. In addition, luxuriant shrubbery and flower beds were planted to beautify the park and make it more than just a well used play lot.[22]

The board provided a second school with similar facilities about

the same time, but handled the financing differently. Buckner Park provided a complete park within itself, physically related to the Crockett School only by proximity--they were across the street from each other. But Colonial Hill School presented a different situation. Located in south Dallas, the school stood on a small portion of a block with very limited playground area, while the rest of the block remained, fortunately, undeveloped real estate. In August of 1914, the park board transmitted a letter to the Board of Education saying that, "It is the desire of the Park Board to cooperate more closely with the Board of Education in the future than has been done in the past relative to the purchase of park and playground property." The letter stated that the park board had been offered the rest of the Colonial Hill School block for a total of twenty-eight thousand dollars. But since the school would be the primary beneficiary, the park board wanted the school board to defray some of the expense. Specifically, the commissioners proposed that each board contribute half the price, fourteen thousand dollars, with the understanding that all subsequent improvements and maintenance would be provided by the park board. The Board of Education, eager to increase the property around the school, accepted the proposition in September. The two boards acquired the four and one-quarter acres later that year and began improvements immediately. By 1923 the facilities included ball fields and a wading pool, as well as regular presentations of free summer outdoor movies.[23]

The precedent set by the joint purchase of Colonial Park represented an important step toward establishing a long and mutually beneficial relationship between the Dallas Park Board and the Board of

Education. This transaction was not the first example of cooperation between the two boards, but it was the first time they had ever jointly purchased property. But creation of this park did not precipitate a rash of similar purchases. The depression in 1915 and the stringencies of war time may have delayed further joint purchases because no more "school parks" were acquired until 1919.

Although not a joint purchase with the school board, another school related park entered the system in 1914. St. Mary's College, an Episcopal girls' school for daughters of discriminating parents, occupied the southern portion of the grounds dominated in the north by St. Matthew's Episcopal Cathedral. Between the two spread several acres of open space which the bishop decided were not needed by the college or the diocese and which had become an expensive luxury to maintain, especially since the college had encountered some financial difficulties. Yet, the bishop must have wanted to preserve the tranquility of the open space and at the same time insure that future use of the land would always be in harmony with the purpose of the college and cathedral. This tranquility could be preserved and the diocese released from its burden if the park board could be convinced to make the acreage into a park. To this end, in September of 1914, two men appeared before the board in behalf of the bishop, offering the five and one-third acre tract for thirty-five thousand dollars. The commissioners counter-offered thirty thousand dollars with a guarantee that St. Mary's College would be relieved from any liability for paving assessments around the park. The bishop accepted the deal and the property changed hands later that year.[24]

The presiding bishop who conceived this transaction was the Right Reverend Alexander C. Garrett. Bishop Garrett has been considered to be one of two giants of religious history in Dallas.[25] Serving as the Episcopal bishop of north Texas for fifty years, beginning in 1874, he had developed an influence and power never before yielded by a man of the cloth in Dallas. His aristocratic cultivation and gentle manners propelled him into the upper levels of Dallas society, while his forceful personality and religious intellect pushed his influence far beyond the pulpits he supervised. His deep concern for education had been the driving force behind the creation of St. Mary's College in 1899, and his personal prestige had made it a "good" institution. But by 1914, Bishop Garrett was eighty-two years old and no longer able to sustain the college on the sheer strength of his personality. The school began a fatal decline and the aging bishop apparently hoped to avoid total collapse for the institution by an infusion of money. Thus, he arranged the sale of land to the park board. It was fitting that the board chose to name this park in honor of the bishop who had been so influential in Dallas for so long.[26]

Garrett Park became, in the 1920s, one of Dallas' most elaborately landscaped and beautiful parks. Embellished according to a plan by Kessler, it contained ornamental lights and walks which wandered among highly developed and formally patterned flowers and shrubs. But playground equipment, a wading pool, and tennis courts were included in the park facilities by 1920. It is interesting to note that the park retained its religious orientation for many years. The park became the site for Sunday evening open-air church services conducted by the Ross

Avenue Baptist Church in the summer of 1924. Throughout the rest of the 1920s, all east Dallas Protestant churches joined in the park for united evening services. Even in the late twentieth century, Garrett Park still provides a peaceful background to St. Matthew's Cathedral, amid the bustle of business that has encroached upon its aging dignity.[27]

The last new park acquired in 1914 presented a dramatic contrast to the serene formality of Garrett Park. Lake Cliff Park in Oak Cliff, a privately owned amusement park, had been founded in 1906[28] by Charles A. Mangold, J. F. Zang, and several other prominent Oak Cliff citizens. They turned the former Spann Sanitarium property into Dallas' second most important park in only a couple of years, ranking behind the publicly owned Fair Park in popularity and quality of entertainment. The owners capitalized on Lake Cliff's excellent location in relation to the street car lines which served Oak Cliff and promoted the park attractions in a manner reminiscent of the state fair. In the park lake, the men built a floating pool and bathhouse. On the shores they installed the latest in carnival devices and rides. Occasional attractions included fireworks displays and balloon ascensions from which parachutists descended performing tricks on a trapeze suspended from their parachutes. At one time during the period of private ownership, Lake Cliff provided three complete theaters, one for light operas and vaudeville, a second for stock company plays, and a third smaller one to accommodate the new motion pictures, which, at that time, were presented only as a novelty attraction. The first theater became the most important and presented big-name entertainers from the famed eastern Orpheum circuit, including Al Jolsen. The summer light opera season provided Dallas with its first

series of summer theater entertainments, the direct descendants of which have been the Fair Park Starlight Operettas and, more recently, the Dallas Summer Musicals. Other attractions included a dance hall, club house, and bowling alley.[29]

Although immensely popular and well established, the finances of the Lake Cliff Park and Theater Company must have experienced some setbacks during their eight years of operations which caused the owners to reevaluate their position, because in 1914, they offered to sell the park to the city for $75,000. The board was interested, but not at that price. The company declined a counter offer of $50,000, but accepted a compromise of $55,000 in October of 1914, although the compromise included the right of the park company to remove the theaters, bowling alley, casino, and club house. The swimming pool, however, remained and became the city's first public swimming facility. This pool represented one reason why the board had been interested in the property in the first place. Since 1912, the board had considered the construction of a swimming pool, first at Fair Park, then at Summit Play Park, and then at others. The acquisition of Lake Cliff provided the city with an already established full-sized pool and freed the board to use its construction funds to install the numerous wading pools which have been mentioned in relation to other parks. However, the Lake Cliff pool suffered an ignominious fate. In 1916 an outbreak of malaria occurred in the Dallas area, and the citizens, who recently had become aware of the relationship between disease and mosquitoes, rose up in arms against every body of standing water in the city. The fact that the Lake Cliff swimming pool was not a pool at all, but a floating pavilion on a lake

which could not be properly sanitized or chlorinated, brought the facilities under a withering attack from panicked residents. First, they demanded that the entire lake be drained, which amazingly, the park board actually tried to do. When that proved impossible, the board simply prohibited swimming in the lake, a policy which became a permanent injunction. Swimming in all other park waters likewise fell under the prohibition which included the lakes in Oak Lawn Park, along Turtle Creek, and in City Park.[30]

The forty-four and one-half acres of Lake Cliff Park transferred to public ownership in November 1914. George Kessler prepared a plan for the park and by summer of 1915, the resort began to assume a public park appearance with landscaping and tennis courts being the first additions. In 1921, the board placed two major installations in the park, the name of which had been officially shortened to Cliff Park. First, a one-quarter mile cinder track for athletic events was constructed and became an important facility for both the summer recreation programs and the school athletic departments. Second, the enormous Municipal Swimming Pool replaced the old floating pool in the lake and became the major attraction of the park for many years.[31] During the federally funded programs of the 1930s, Cliff Park became a garden center with acres of elaborate flower beds. This feature has remained until the present time, when it is once again known as Lake Cliff Park.[32]

Cliff, or Lake Cliff, Park was an important acquisition for the park board to make because of its strategic location and accessibility and because of its natural beauty. But while the city gained a public park, it also lost a great deal. The removal of the Lake Cliff theaters

deprived the city of the high caliber entertainment of its light opera house and vaudeville stars. No other local theater could immediately fill the void. The removal of the drama theater was the most unfortunate loss because the rest of Dallas' legitimate stages presented productions poor in both quality and financing. Not until the early twenties when the Dallas Little Theater organized did Dallas' performing arts recover from these losses.[33]

The money which had been used to acquire Lake Cliff Park, as well as Garrett, Exall, Colonial, and Buckner parks, had come from the proceeds of the sale of the $500,000 in bonds. But one of the primary items promoted in the bond election had been use of the money to complete Turtle Creek Parkway. The commissioners expended no effort to fulfill this aspect of the bond program until 1915, when they employed a real estate firm to aid in the acquisition of tracts needed to complete the parkway. Abutting property owners donated most of the property gained in this campaign. But as the city grew, so did the parkway, and by the late 1920s, another session of land acquisitions was necessary. The largest of the tracts acquired in 1915 became the southern terminal of the parkway. While Oak Lawn Park (Lee Park) bulged in the middle of the parkway's length in the midst of one of the city's more elite residential districts, the southern end of the thoroughfare lay in far different surroundings. Woodchuck Hill, a small neighborhood which adjoined the Turney Avenue neighborhood, had become one of Dallas' slum areas, surpassed in degree of economic deprivation only by the Cotton Mills area. The dwellings on Woodchuck Hill were makeshift hovels, thrown together for temporary shelter. Although the levels of pollution on

that Woodchuck Hill were more tolerable than those at the Cotton Mills, the moral conditions of the hill caused great concern among the social welfare workers. The park board, following Kessler's line of action, determined to remove the slum and convert the land into a beautiful park.[34]

But the factor that actually started the creation of what became Turtle Creek Park did not emanate from the social workers: it came from a landowner who lived in Denver, Colorado. In October of 1914, Colonel William E. Hughes contacted the Dallas Park Board with a proposition. Under certain conditions, he would donate to the city about one hundred and fifty acres of land he owned between the Chicago, Rock Island, and Gulf Railway and the Trinity River. Among the conditions was a requirement that the city acquire the adjoining Cole estate and combine it with the Hughes donation and the old Hospital Park around Parkland Hospital, making the three properties into one huge city park. The board declined to agree to the conditions but reached an agreement with Hughes in 1916, and the property was eventually used as a site for the Dal-High (P. C. Cobb) Stadium.[35]

But even though it had not agreed with the scope of Hughes' proposition, the board did acquire the Cole estate. In 1915, the board bought thirty-six acres from the estate of John D. Cole for forty thousand dollars. The estate contained the area known as Woodchuck Hill, which the city ordered vacated and leveled the hovels left behind. The park which resulted became known as Turtle Creek Park until June of 1915 when the name officially changed to Reverchon Park.[36] Although the lush natural beauty of the Turtle Creek bottoms attracted many visitors, the

commissioners deferred any major improvements in the park, providing only several baseball diamonds until after 1920. During the twenties and thirties playground equipment, tennis courts, and an open air theater were added.[37]

The most important use of the park, however, came to be the ball diamonds, and the name Reverchon became almost synonymous with baseball to generations of Dallas boys. A grandstand erected in 1924 served the diamonds for league play and the ball park gained the reputation as the best baseball field in the city.[38]

At the same time that the park board "solved" a part of the city's slum problem by creating Reverchon Park, the board finally took action to acquire parks to serve Dallas' most deprived group of people, the Negroes. Black people had been a part of Dallas history almost from the very beginning. A few slaves had been brought into the area by local farmers in the 1850s. Many more were sent to Dallas for safekeeping during the Civil War. Besides being well removed from the actual fighting, the area became an agricultural supply center for the Confederate Army and needed large numbers of cheap laborers to tend its suddenly important fields. After the war, many had stayed in the Dallas area and by 1890 the black community of 11,289 persons constituted about seventeen percent of the Dallas area population. The county ratio remained steady as the percentage of blacks in the city itself grew to almost twenty percent in 1910. Although the Negro population dropped to only fifteen percent of the total population in 1920, and stayed there through the 1930 census, the actual number of black Dallasites grew rapidly. The percentage figures reflect primarily that white population grew faster

than black population, but that fact may be related to the circumstances of the World War I years when masses of Negroes moved north, especially to Chicago, to work in war-time industries. Blacks moved to the cities, but the northern cities offered more opportunities than did southern cities.[39]

The large proportion of Negroes in Dallas around 1910 created a situation which many whites felt required a solution. The park system had always been open to people of all races in the city--Caucasian, Negro, Indian, and Asian. City Park had been used by all Dallasites freely. In the early days of the private ownership of Fair Park, it welcomed blacks and whites equally, but in the later years of the nineteenth century, a special day came to be reserved for the colored population. The 1890s also saw a privately owned park for Negroes develop, but it languished for lack of financial backing. Even as the races became more rigidly separated near the turn of the century, blacks were still not excluded from City Park, but they generally did not go there except on special occasions, like Emancipation Day, when the board reserved the park for them. When Fair Park became city property, the Negro community, especially the black churches, made frequent use of various buildings, such as the coliseum and track and often the entire fair grounds. The records of both the city council and the park board always reflected the race of Negro petitioners for use of facilities, but there was never any indication that blacks were discriminated against when they asked for reservations. Also the practice of reducing or eliminating the fee charged for use of certain buildings when a scheduled event proved to be a financial failure applied equally to blacks and

whites. But on a day when the blacks reserved a park, the general white public stayed away, although whites operated the concessions in the Fair Park and various white officials, like the mayor and city council, often made appearances at black gatherings. But a pattern of separate usage of Dallas parks gradually became an accepted rule of social order even though no city ordinance ever gave the practice the force of law. In the first decade of the century, Negro attendance at the State Fair of Texas became negligible, not by ordinance or by social practice, but by the establishment of a separate Negro fair which used the Fair Park for a one week annual exposition. Blacks were encouraged to go to their own fair and they apparently did. Although racism was certainly a pressure which spawned this separate fair, the Negro fair did offer the blacks a chance to participate, whereas they found themselves increasingly excluded from the State Fair events. This happened not so much because they were absolutely refused permission to participate, as because so few Negroes entered the events that a separate division for them could not be justified, and black competition against whites would have been socially unacceptable.

As the park system began to expand under the direction of the newly created park board, suggestions arose from time to time that a separate park for Negroes should be established somewhere in Dallas. No action to further separate the races by such a move appeared until 1914 when the reality of social exclusion of twenty percent of the city's population forced the board to find a solution. The black community, itself, supported the idea of a park for blacks and petitioned the board for such. With pressure from both the white and black

population, the board began to search for a park site. The commissioners studied and rejected several locations including acreage in the Trinity River bottoms subject to frequent innundation and tracts not easily accessible by all the Negro population. Finally, in January of 1915, the board found a solution. Two Negro parks were to be provided, one on each side of the Trinity River.

The first Negro park established became Oak Cliff Negro Park near the Trinity River on Sabine and Cliff streets. A payment price of $8178.30 gave the city four and one-half acres as a playground, although in 1928 the city reduced the park to half its size while following Kessler's suggestion to build levees along the Trinity River to control flooding. The remaining two and one-half acres received considerable improvements during the era of the second world war, and the park became known as simply Oak Cliff Park.[40]

The second Negro park developed in old North Dallas on Hall Street where it crossed the Texas Central rail lines.[41] This park, known as Hall Street Negro Park, became an important center for Negro social life as a field house was built there in 1921, and although it reputedly had most of the facilities provided in other community centers, including free showers and free summer movies, it was of inferior construction. In 1922 a swimming pool increased the recreational capabilities of the park. Negro recreation leaders provided activities for the children, and their park teams competed in tournaments with teams from the other Negro parks. Much later, this park was enlarged and renamed Griggs Park upon the recommendation of E. T. Atwell of the National Recreation Association in his planning report to the park board in the 1940s.[42]

A third park for blacks installed in 1920 became known as South Dallas Negro Park. Purchased as a joint action with the Board of Education for a total of $12,750, this two and three-quarter acre park remained relatively unimproved until the government work programs of the 1930s. The board named this tract Booker T. Washington Park and in more recent years renamed it Wheatly Park.[43]

With the creation of these three Negro parks, segregation in the Dallas system became almost absolute. The pattern of establishing parks for minority groups presented a reflection of an unfortunate development in the history of race relations everywhere in the South during that era. Following the Civil War, practices of racial oppression and subordination established before the war continued but actual segregation did not generally come until much later in the era of "Jim Crow." But segregation became a fact of life in the south and there are several theories as to why this happened, most of them based on arguments concerning white supremacy. But there is evidence to suggest that the blacks also wanted some degree of segregation. The only way many Negroes could combat the discrimination they encountered was to withdraw from association with whites. It certainly provided an easier solution than fighting for acceptance. Perhaps this reasoning explains why the Negro community in Dallas fully supported the movement to establish separate parks for blacks. Dallas race relations remained fairly calm in the early twentieth century, but discrimination became common and an occasional act of violence, like the lynching of a Negro at the corner of Main and Ackard in 1909, reaffirmed the underlying problems. With a large portion of the population being black, perhaps the board considered it wise to

supply separate facilities for the two races rather than provide an opportunity for violence to occur.[44]

It is evident, however, that malicious attitudes did not seem to play a part in the move for separate parks in Dallas. The Negro park served the same purposes as those placed in other deprived neighborhoods, like Cotton Mills and Turney Avenue. The parks were genuinely intended to be of service to the black community. They were not intended solely to remove blacks from "white only" parks, although the park board members must have realized that would be a practical result. The attachment of the word "Negro" to the park names apparently represented not a manifestation of "Jim Crow" segregationalism, but rather a way of telling blacks that they were welcome in those parks. No hint of "Jim Crow" segregation ordinances ever appeared in the proceedings of the park board. However, testimony of park employees in that era affirms that social pressure against crossing the color barriers became immense and no park rules or regulations could have made segregation any more rigid.[45]

The ascendency of the Ku Klux Klan following its establishment in Dallas in 1920 may have had some influence on the activities of the park board. Dr. J. W. Bass asserts that in the early 1920s practically all city officials and employees encountered pressure to become members of the Klan in order to maintain their positions. His assertion that most people complied is affirmed by Kenneth T. Jackson's study of the Klan in Dallas. In fact, the Klan influence in the city grew to great proportions before the Invisible Empire entered a fatal decline after 1924. At its peak, the Dallas chapter constituted thirteen percent of the Texas Klan, although the city represented only four percent of the

state's population. Such influence may have permeated the park board activities. Certainly, the political involvement of the board became more pronounced during that period than ever before.[46]

The acquisition of the parks in the Negro communities became the last major additions made to the Dallas park system from the proceeds of the 1913 bond program. The board continued to purchase individual lots for certain parks until 1917, as indicated, but began no new parks after 1915.

The era of the bond program had been a time of enormous growth for the park department. Ten new parks with over 133 acres were added and the approximately fifty-acre Turtle Creek Parkway essentially was completed. In addition, the board gained several other small areas by one process or another. For instance, Rosemont (later Stemmons) Plaza, a tiny triangle in Oak Cliff was donated by L. A. Stemmons in 1913, and Cycle Park, a private amusement park adjoining the fair grounds was leased in the same year. One larger area became important in future years as park property moved toward closer ties with the park department in 1915; as the park board, at the request of the Water Works and Sewerage Commissioner, assumed responsibility for development of the reservoir grounds while the land itself remained the property of the water department. White Rock Reservoir also began to move into the realm of park activities, although on a very limited scale. Kessler had suggested that the lake should be used for recreational purposes, but until the 1930s, the only positive action taken there by the park board was the establishment in 1914 of a nursery to supply shrubs and trees for the park system. Other park maintenance activities centered around the park

barns and depot on Nussbaumer Street purchased in 1914.[47]

But the growth of the system involved more than just physical expansion. The board had moved rapidly into the area of social concern after its early experiments at Trinity Play Park. With the exception of Garrett Park, the parks acquired in this era can be described as having had some element of public welfare involved in their operations, the most obvious example being Summit Play Park. Furthermore, the board embraced areas never before considered as a part of the department's concern. The commissioners included in their budget allocations aid to the free milk program conducted in several parks, assistance to the newly formed Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and support for the art association which was granted space at Fair Park.

In 1915, with the pattern of expansion established and with the Dallas citizens experiencing the pleasures of a park system that was making rapid gains in relation to the population growth, the park board seemed to be in an excellent position to continue its expansion. But several major international developments intervened and touched the lives of Dallasites. First, inflation, which affected people everywhere, gave the park department considerable difficulty. Second, a short-lived, but intense depression racked the city financial structure causing a reevaluation of programs in the park department. Third, the United States entry into the first world war forced a realignment of priorities, and park development had to wait until the hostilities ceased.

The abrupt end of so brilliant an era of park growth is, perhaps, more evident to a present generation than to Dallasites in 1915. The many parks that had been established did not disappear although the

embellishments planned for them had to wait. Only the department employees, not the general public, realized that park funds had been curtailed. But whether the man-on-the-street knew, or cared, about the demise of park growth, the end of an era in Dallas history had arrived.

## NOTES

## LIKE A SHOOTING STAR

[1]See Chapters two and five of this volume.

[2]In 1911, Exposition Avenue was the southwestern limits of Fair Park. In 1974, Second Avenue is the boundary line and Exposition is one of the major roads inside the park, passing in front of the State Fair Music Hall.

[3]Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 3, 25 March 1911, p. 51; 27 April 1911, p. 62.

[4]For a more complete discussion of W. H. Gaston's relations with the State Fair of Texas, see Chapter six of this volume. Also see Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 10 November 1911, pp. 106-8; 17 April 1912, p. 140; 26 March 1914, p. 284.

[5]State Fair of Texas, Financial Report for 1913, report of State Fair Association President, J. J. Eckford, to the stockholders, 5 December 1913, unpaged, located in the Executive Offices of the State Fair of Texas, Fair Park, Dallas, Texas; Sawnie R. Aldredge, Park and Playground System, Dallas, Texas, 1921-1923 (n.p., [1923]), p. 14; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 3 November 1913, p. 257; vol. 4, 22 September 1914, pp. 49-52.

[6]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 15 January 1912, p. 119; 4 January 1913, p. 195; vol. 4, 9 April 1915, p. 90; Jarvis, Putty, and Jarvis, Inc., Fair Park Music Hall Renovation: An Analysis and Feasibility Study (Dallas: n.p., 1970), unpaged, see section on "Supporting Data: History"; and E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "State Fair of Texas--Changing Name to Gaston.

[7]Turney Avenue disappeared in the creation of Harry Hines Boulevard.

[8]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 15.

[9]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Pike Park"; Aldredge, Park and Playground System, pp. 15, 31; George E. Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas: Report of the Park Board (n.p., 1911), pp. 35-36; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 15 August 1913, p. 249; vol. 4, 1 September 1914,

[9]p. 42; and "Dallas Guide and History," (Unpublished manuscript written by the Texas Writers Project for the Work Projects Administration, located in Dallas Public Library, work suspended on project in 1940), p. 174.

[10]"Dallas Guide and History," pp. 212-13; Lynn Schmid, former Dallas parks recreation leader, interview with author, July 1973; and Dr. J. W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[11]Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, p. 40.

[12]For more about Dr. Curtis, see Chapter nine of this thesis.

[13]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 3 February 1913, p. 204; 26 February 1913, p. 208; Dallas Morning News, 4 February 1913, p. 4; 25 February 1913, p. 4; 27 February 1913, p. 4; 4 March 1913, p. 4; 7 March 1913, p. 4; 2 April 1913, p. 12; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Bonds."

[14]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 15 August 1913, p. 248; and Dallas Morning News, 16 August 1913, p. 5.

[15]Frequent reference in the park board Minute Book to Exall Park, or the land which became that park, is found throughout the period 1911-1917, with almost every page in 1914 bearing some mention of the park. Those references specifically used in this discussion are: Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 15 June 1910, pp. 12-13; 3 February 1911, p. 39; 15 April 1914, p. 290; vol. 4, 25 May 1914, p. 10.

[16]Ibid., vol. 3, 14 January 1914, p. 267; vol. 4, 26 January 1915, p. 79; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Exall Park."

[17]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 18; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Exall Park."

[18]Kessler, A City Plan for Dallas, p. 26.

[19]Further additions to the park were made in 1938 (3.25 acres as a bequest from Dr. W. W. Samuell) and in 1945-46 (1.54 acres).

[20]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 8 April 1914, p. 286; 15 April 1914, p. 289; 27 April 1914, p. 296; vol. 4, 26 January 1915, p. 79.

[21]Ibid., 9 April 1915, pp. 89-90.

[22]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 23; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Buckner Park."

[23]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 20; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 15 July 1914, p. 29; 1 August 1914, p. 23; 2 March 1915, p. 84.

[24]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 16 September 1914, p. 44; and Dallas Morning News, 17 September 1914, p. 5.

[25]The other "giant" was George W. Truett, pastor of Dallas' First Baptist Church for forty-seven years and president of the Baptist World Alliance in 1934.

[26]John William Rogers, The Lusty Texans of Dallas (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 289-300; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 9 April 1915, p. 90.

[27]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 20; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Garrett Park"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 26 January 1915, p. 79.

[28]There seems to be some dispute about this date. John William Rogers cites 1906 as the founding date. Other sources, including Mayor Sawnie Aldredge, suggest that Lake Cliff Park was in operation several years before that date. A confusing reminiscence by Walter H. Billups, found in Beulah Cauley's "Notes," may explain some of the dispute over the date because he obviously mixes up his memories of the three private amusement parks in Oak Cliff, Lake Cliff Park, Old Marsalis Park, and Kidd Springs Park, the latter two of which were in operation long before Lake Cliff Park was established.

[29]Rogers, The Lusty Texans of Dallas, pp. 209-10; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 8 October 1914, pp. 53-54.

[30]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 9 October 1912, p. 178; vol. 4, 1 August 1914, p. 33; 8 October 1914, pp. 53-54; 3 November 1914, p. 61; 13 April 1916, pp. 141-42; 8 June 1916, p. 149; 25 April 1917, p. 174.

[31]This Municipal Swimming Pool will be discussed in more detail in Chapter thirteen.

[32]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Lake Cliff Park"; Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 20; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 26 January 1915, p. 79; 27 June 1915, p. 107.

[33]Rogers, The Lusty Texans of Dallas, pp. 210-11.

[34]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 22; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Reverchon Park."

[35]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, October 1914, pp. 55-56.

[36]Julien Reverchon was an internationally known botanist who had lived in Dallas. Born in Diemoz, France, about 1834 (sources disagree), he grew up on a farm near Lyons in southeasten France. His grandfather had been deeply involved and prominent in the French revolution. His father, a philosopher of sorts, was deeply concerned with the communistic ideals of Francois Fourier. When Emperor Louis Napoleon (Napoleon III) overthrew the Second French Republic in 1852, the elder Reverchon was outraged and immigrated to America with his youngest son. In 1856, they arrived at the French communist colony of La Reunion located on the present-day property of the large cement plant in northern Oak Cliff about where the Dallas-Ft. Worth Turnpike passes that industry. But the communistic community soon failed and the group of highly intelligent and talented Frenchmen gradually absorbed into the nearby town of Dallas, where their sophistication and education smoothed some of the rough edges of the frontier town of about four hundred people.

Young Julien had been about eighteen or nineteen (sources disagree) when he arrived at La Reunion and had already received a considerable education in France in the field of botany. In Texas, he began to study the flora of the area with intensity, collecting specimens and identifying them, and corresponding with well-known botanists throughout the world. He contributed articles concerning his discoveries to the scientific journals of his time and was honored by having a number of species of plants named for him. He became a professor of botany at the Baylor University College of Medicine and Pharmacy in Dallas where his studies and teaching influenced the lives of many students and patients. When he died in 1905, he was recognized as possibly the foremost botanist in the nation. See Rogers, The Lusty Texans in Dallas, pp. 77-88; Justin F. Kimball, Our City - Dallas (Dallas: Kessler Plan Association of Dallas, 1927), pp. 19-24; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Reverchon Park"; Stanley Walker, The Dallas Story (Dallas: Dallas Times Herald, 1956), pp. 21-22; Dallas Times Herald, Centennial Edition, 5 February 1956; and Robert Newton, Planning Components of the Trinity River Basin of Texas: History (Lubbock: Texas Tech University, 1972), p. 22.

[37]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 27 June 1915, p. 108; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Reverchon Park."

[38]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 29 April 1915, p. 95.

[39]John Hughes Cochran, Dallas County: A Record of its Pioneers and Progress (Dallas: A. S. Mathis Service Publishing Co., 1928), p. 88; Robert M. Newton, "No Boss for Dallas," Journal of the West, forthcoming issue; U. S. Department of the Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population, 3:852; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population, 3:995; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population, 3, part 2:972; and St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Clayton, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1945; also in paperback editon by Harper Torchbooks, 1962), pp. 58-64.

[40]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Oak Cliff Park"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 14 January 1914, p. 268; vol. 4, 13 January 1915, p. 75; 22 January 1915, p. 76; 9 April 1915, p. 88.

[41]In 1974, this is the intersection of Hall Street and North Central Expressway.

[42]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 16; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Griggs Park"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 26 March 1914, p. 282; vol. 4, 19 May 1914, p. 7; 3 November 1914, p. 60; 3 May 1916, p. 143.

[43]Cauley, "Notes," see "Wheatley Park."

[44]C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), passim; Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 274-80; George H. Santerre, Dallas' First Hundred Years (Dallas: The Book Craft, Inc., 1956), unpaged, see section for 1909. A complete discussion of differing views of segregation can be found in Joel Williamson, The Origins of Segregation (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1968).

[45]Schmid interview; and Henry P. Kucera, former Dallas city attorney, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[46]The political involvement of the park board will be discussed at length in Chapter thirteen. Bass interview; and Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 66-80.

[47]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 1 June 1912, p. 145; 9 June 1913, p. 232; 16 July 1913, p. 239; 5 August 1913, p. 243; 3 November 1913, p. 256; 12 March 1914, p. 279; vol. 4, 25 July 1914, p. 31; 13 May 1915, p. 102; 23 August 1916, p. 156.

# CHAPTER 11

## DEPRESSION AND WAR

The depression which racked the Dallas Park Department in 1915 was the intense climax of a period of mild "hard times." Every phase of the national economy felt the tremors which produced the depression and Dallas, still an insignificant provincial outpost in relation to the world's financial structure, felt the depression as keenly as the money emporiums of New York, London, and Paris.

Although Dallas lay a great distance from the French battlegrounds, the causes of the city's discomfort must be traced to the capitals of Europe, illustrating that Dallas was no longer a self-sufficient island in a sea of cotton. As early as 1912, Dallas experienced the beginnings of a mild recession related to the uncertainty on Wall Street as to the course of European events. An ominous foreboding hung over the great houses of finance as their heads began to see that trouble was brewing and unavoidable. With the declaration of war on July 30, 1914, a wave of economic disaster echoed around the world. The already existent recession plunged to the depths of an intense depression immediately as the hostilities paralyzed the world money exchanges, closed the stock markets, and restricted operations at hundreds of important industries in European nations. Thousands of workers found themselves suddenly without jobs, and the industrial slow-down spread rapidly to America as the European demand for steel lagged temporarily. The steel industry, always a barometer for the American economy, dropped to its lowest point

in history and the rest of the economy was not far behind. In addition, European nations began to recall vast amounts of gold invested in the United States which affected an even broader spectrum of American industry.[1]

As the European crisis deepened, pressures from within the states themselves added to the problems. Some banking institutions began hoarding cash by withholding it from circulation, while the public did the same by refusing to invest. The suspension of trade on the American stock exchanges affected business everywhere in the states. Before conditions got better, approximately one percent of all American business firms failed.

For Dallas the depression proved especially acute because one of the city's major commodities--cotton--reacted severely to the world situation. Cotton prices fell to the lowest point in fifty or sixty years, selling for as little as five and six cents a pound and averaging only eight and one-half cents per pound. The distress became so widespread that a national "Buy-a-bale" movement developed in which northern merchants and investors bought bales of cotton in order to relieve the South. But such a desperate movement, even on the part of investors who expected to reap windfall profits when the war-time demands sent cotton prices soaring, could not prevent depression in Dallas, one of the world's largest cotton exchanges. Many Dallas merchants reported losses and a number of business failures occurred.[2]

The Dallas city government felt the impact of the depression in the local economy. Throughout the city administration, officials reviewed and slashed departmental budgets, delaying or reducing projects

from street paving to sewer construction. Talk of "retrenchment" echoed in City Hall for the first time since the 1890s.

In the park department, acquisitions of land for parks already begun continued, but suggestions for new parks not approved in concept before the depression were filed for the duration. Purchases for Exall, Buckner, Reverchon, and the Negro parks continued, but all such activity had been approved prior to 1915 and financed by the proceeds of the 1913 bond issue. The financial difficulties foreseen by the board members caused them to reject an outright donation of two private railroad parks for fear that they could not afford to maintain them. The only exception to the war-time hiatus on new parks became Ferris Plaza, the park in front of the new Union Terminal in downtown, but it had been approved in concept in 1911 as a part of Kessler's proposals and financed completely out of a special bond issue in 1917.[3]

Park development, on the other hand, reflected more sensitivity to the economic conditions. When the depression occurred in the fall of 1914, the department felt little immediate effect because all projects underway had been approved and budgeted in the previous spring. But as funding for those improvements was expanded, difficulties began to arise.

The first indication that the park board had pulled in the reins on its expenditures came in January of 1915 when the Dallas North Loop League, a civic improvement group, asked for assistance in a tree planting campaign along the boulevard route suggested by Kessler. The board provided favorable publicity and approved the project, but specifically refused to assume any responsibility other than providing an advisor to establish a uniform spacing and alignment of trees. This response fell

short of the league's anticipation. About the same time, two interrelated railroad firms, the Texas Traction Company and the Southern Traction Company, offered to donate two private parks totaling over 117 acres to the board under the condition that the rail lines be allowed to provide excursion transportation to the parks. The board accepted the proposition in concept in April but delayed final action pending consultation with whoever became the new mayor in the upcoming election.

Before Mayor Lindsley could make any indication of his feelings, however, several things intervened. The depression deepened and the effects on the Dallas cotton market spread to all parts of the local economy. The preparations for a new park budget to be approved in June revealed that considerable cuts would have to be made. The acquisition of new parks, especially two outside the city limits, which would not have an immediate impact seemed to be an area where new expenses should be avoided. Besides, the offer looked like an attempt by the railroads to unload some unproductive country parks on the park board and let the city bear the expense of improving them, following which the railroads could reap a profit by transporting people to the remote parks. The park board reversed its acceptance and allowed the companies to withdraw their offers. In late summer of 1915, the board became more specific in an offer from Mrs. Virgi Dealey to donate some land for a park and other offers to sell property for park purposes. The board flatly stated that its 1915-1916 budget would not be sufficient to assume any new obligations, including simple maintenance.[4]

On November 3, 1915, the situation climaxed in a report from the city auditor advising the board that while nearly $85,000 had been spent

from the park fund in the first six months of that fiscal year, only $8822.45 remained available for all purposes for the last six months. This figure nearly doubled through a prompt reevaluation of assessed values of taxable property and the collection of delinquent taxes. But even the $16,400 finally available fell far short of the amount needed and barely covered the payroll, much less maintenance or improvement expenses. The park board reworked its budget and liquidated some of its unwanted assets, primarily vacant houses still standing on property purchased for Exall Park. The ladies "rest cottage" in Fair Park even gained a coin-operated toilet, the first ever used in the park system, in a desperate attempt to make various park facilities pay for their own maintenance. In other moves, the board laid off park employees and cut the salaries of those that remained.[5]

One of the park department's most expensive obligations at that time was the Kessler proposed boulevard system for which the board had assumed complete responsibility. This area of activity fell among the first to be reduced. In June 1915, the board postponed all work on Turtle Creek Boulevard indefinitely. Then in early 1916, due to the need for the thoroughfare, it received a temporary surface of gravel, but at least the road became usable. In February 1916, the board refused to cooperate with the city street commissioner in a project to open a boulevard into Fair Park. Finally the park board's inability to finance the boulevard system forced the city commission to act in order to continue the creation of the vital thoroughfares for commerce. Emil Fretz had suggested in February that the city might be persuaded to take over the boulevard system and assume responsibility for the interest on

the park bond programs. Amazingly, the city commission accepted the idea and supported the measure in an election for a city charter amendment to make the transfer legal.[6]

This turn of events provided a great relief to the park board, as it freed the department from its heaviest annual expenses, the boulevard system and the interest on the bonds. But this "bail-out" by the city commission came as a surprise. All the city departments, including the park department, had exhibited poor cooperation during the crisis and had tended to follow an "every-man-for-himself" policy. The willingness of the city officials to help the park board stemmed from an unavoidable fact of the city charter. The park board had legal responsibility for the boulevard system under the charter, but the board's only source of income (other than the small amount gained from concessions and the larger amounts from bond programs for special purposes like real estate acquisition) was the one tenth of one percent ad valorem tax. This income could not develop the boulevard system as rapidly as the city required, so a change had to be made. Therefore, the willingness of the city commission to relieve the park board of its debt burden came as a matter of necessity, not public spirited cooperation.

The international depression began to ease in late 1915 as the war effort created massive demands for material. The American economy went from the depths of a depression immediately into a boom cycle. As the gold which Europeans had recalled in 1914 flowed back into the United States to buy supplies, arms, and equipment, a wave of prosperity engulfed the nation. A time-lag of several months passed before the wave reached Dallas, but by the fall of 1916, the city economy began moving

again and the park board resumed several of its deferred programs.[7]

But things did not return to normal with the return of prosperity. A state of war existed in Europe and no prospects for peace lay in sight. The United States gradually abandoned its neutral position and prepared for a possible entry into conflict. Dallasites greeted the turn of events with an immense "Preparedness Parade" in the fall of 1916 in which more than twenty thousand people marched. The wave of anti-German feeling which swept the nation expressed itself in Dallas in numerous ways, including the immediate change of the name of Germania Street to Liberty Street and the impolite demands of native citizens that the large German population of the city denounce its homeland.[8]

When in April of 1917 Congress declared war against Germany, Dallas responded with a patriotic vigor typical of the nation as a whole. Before the end of the conflict, nearly ten thousand Dallasites served in various phases of military service. The city contributed to the military supply system as well, through numerous local industries, especially the cotton market.[9]

The Dallas park system contributed to the war effort in several ways. Various patriotic rallies and money raising events for such groups as the Red Cross and the Wounded Soldiers' Relief Fund used park facilities. The park board hastily erected flag poles in several of the parks and flew the national colors throughout the duration of the war. Park personnel became somewhat unstable as many men entered military service and quit their jobs or took leaves of absence. C. S. Reagan, the Secretary/Engineer for the park board, took military leave to attend Officers' Training Camp and later extended his leave for the duration of

the war, returning only briefly to his duties after the war. Another employee, Myron A. Kesner, the Superintendent of Playgrounds and second ranking employee in the park department, took a leave of absence to do special work for the War Department. Kesner's wife became the first woman elevated to a high level supervisory job when she was appointed to fill her husband's position. She served in that position for nearly three months. Mrs. Kesner did well and received warm compliments by the park board for her efforts, but the presence of a woman in such a supervisory capacity apparently became unacceptable to the board. After discussing the matter in early September 1917, the issue concluded on September 6th, when Mayor Lawther pointedly stated that it was "the concensus of opinion of the Board that a man should be employed...as Superintendent of Playgrounds."[10] W. H. Dana filled the position for about one year before being replaced in January of 1919 by Foster Jacoby.[11]

The Dallas Park Board played an important role in acquiring the aviation center for the city and it is possible that without the contribution made by the board that the base would have been placed elsewhere. Almost as soon as the U. S. declared war, the park commissioners began to consider the possibilities of granting the use of some park facilities to a military unit. The sudden calls for mobilization among the many National Guard units of Texas had caught many commanders without previously arranged mobilization camps for units larger than local companies. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the park board, offered either Gaston or Fair Park to, among others, the Sixth Regiment of the Texas National Guard.[12] However, before this offer could

be accepted, talk began of a bigger and longer lasting relationship with the military. Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and several other civic groups convinced the park board to offer the entire fair grounds to the U. S. government for any use that it could make of the grounds to further the war effort. Newly appointed board member, Sam P. Cochran,[13] showing no inhibitions because of his brevity on the board, almost dominated the first meeting he ever attended with discussion and propositions along this line. As a result, the board approved the following offer to the United States government:

> Whereas, we feel and believe it to be the paramount duty of all individuals and organizations, civil and political, during this crisis in the history of our country, to render every service in their power to the United States Government: -
>
> Therefore, be it resolved that the Park Board of the City of Dallas, hereby tenders to the Government of the United States, on behalf of the City of Dallas and with the concurrence of the State Fair of Texas, the use of the grounds of the Fair Park (including Gaston Park) and such of the buildings as can properly be assigned, for such purposes as the government may deem to be advantageous to it in the conduct of the present war, and under such arrangements as may be agreed upon by the Park Board, the directors of the State Fair of Texas and the proper officials of the government.
>
> Signed by Sam P. Cochran and Edgar L. Pike[14]

Negotiations with the federal government began within a month and by February of 1918 they reached an agreement.[15]

Activities began immediately to transform Fair Park into Camp Dick. The board granted use of the Art Building for dances and entertainments for the expected soldiers. A portable Y. M. C. A. building appeared near the Exposition Building. The town generally geared itself to entertain and profit from the influx of trainees. But the excitement

disappeared in early May when the government informed Dallas authorities that the grounds would not be needed for any purpose. The State Fair of Texas began hastily to make contracts and arrange for entertainments and exhibits for a 1918 fair. Then, much to the dismay of the fair directors, the government reversed its decision in July and accepted the grounds for immediate occupation. But the fair directors had already expended thirty-five thousand dollars preparing for their annual presentation and had made contractual obligations for even more. The directors fully supported the Camp Dick concept, but they faced a legal and financial bind. They insisted that before waiving their rights to present a fair in 1918, that they be guaranteed compensation for their expenditures which they made in good faith when the government rejected the park offer in May. Furthermore, they insisted upon indemnification against liability on the various contracts which had been signed with exhibitors and concessionaires. The Chamber of Commerce, anxious to accommodate the federal government, agreed to underwrite and indemnify the fair for all losses. With this obstacle removed, the army took control of Fair Park in late July and established Camp Dick as an aviation concentration (boot camp) training center.[16]

The activities for soldiers again sprang to life, but this time with a new element. The army planned to install a completely equipped swimming pool for use of the soldiers at Camp Dick. Since, according to the contract, all improvements made in the park became property of the park board, the pool would be left behind and become available for public use when the war ended. The park board hurriedly contacted George Kessler to get his concurrence on a location for the pool and proceeded

to make plans with the camp commander, Colonel E. Z. Steever, to get construction started. But before work could begin, Colonel Steever's superiors halted the operation. He had planned for the ten thousand dollar cost of the pool to come from the funds available to the Post Exchange, but such a use of P. X. funds proved to be illegal. Then a Mrs. E. W. Harriman of Washington, D. C., notified him that she would donate the necessary ten thousand dollars and hopes for the project soared again. But the war ended in November before construction began. By December the military closed the camp, left Dallas, and returned the property to the park board in April of 1919.[17]

Although the members of the park board and Chamber of Commerce, no doubt, genuinely rejoiced in the success of President Woodrow Wilson's peace efforts which brought a halt to the war, they may have also regretted that Dallas and Camp Dick had played such a brief role in the war effort. The motives of the Dallasites in offering the park to the government had not been entirely patriotic in spite of the wording of the offer which stated: "we...believe it to be the paramount duty of all...to render every service in their power to the United States Government."[18] A telegram from Mayor Lawther to Dr. John O. McReynolds accurately expressed the real motive. In the letter, the mayor discussed a possible offer of Gaston Park to the government for use as a medical research laboratory and the various departments necessary to support such a facility. Lawther told McReynolds:

> we believe that this [offer of Gaston Park] will help Dallas in securing the Reconstruction Hospital and Vocational School also eventually an old soldiers home and generally in making Dallas the center of Government activities in the Southwest.[19]

The city desired the additional business generated by government payrolls, construction contracts, and other future government benefits. It should not be implied that this was improper. Quite the contrary, such considerations have been customary in building a city's economic base.

But in Dallas' case, the city made an expensive commitment to the government--the city had assumed the fair's liabilities, the insurance on the property, and responsibility to return the grounds to their original condition--and very little had been gained in return because Camp Dick existed less than five months. But most disappointing of all, during that five months, a large input to the local economy had been lost by the cancellation of the annual fair which regularly filled Dallas cash registers with out-of-town money. Furthermore, the loss was hardly off-set by the brief tour of duty of a relatively small number of aviation trainees stationed at Camp Dick. In the five months, about eighteen thousand men passed through the camp either as trainees, instructors, or support personnel. Since the overwhelming majority of those men lived and ate in the camp's temporary barracks and mess facilities, the bulk of economic input into the Dallas economy had to come from leisure-time spending. Unfortunately for the city, only about one-third of the eighteen thousand men held officer ranks, and thus received salaries sufficient to enable them to spend freely in the local markets and amusement centers. Actually, due to the constant turnover, no more than about one thousand officers were ever present at Camp Dick at any one time. Other regrets about Camp Dick stemmed from the fact that no significant construction contracts had been awarded during the existence of the camp.[20]

Almost as if to make up for the losses incurred by the city in an attempt to make money off the government, the park board presented a bill to the War Department for damages done to the park property by the soldiers. The initial claims amounted to more than eight thousand dollars and climbed to more than twenty-seven thousand dollars in later months, although some of the damages must have been of dubious validity. The army dispatched a military lawyer of no less rank than a lieutenant colonel to investigate and negotiate the matter with the park board. But even after several months, the parties had not settled the issues involved, and not until late August of 1920 did the government finally agree to honor about half of the valid damage charges, $10,639, of which only $787.26 went directly to the park board.[21]

Looking at the city's venture into the realm of federal association (in an era before federal money permeated all levels of government), it must be concluded that Dallas gambled and lost. The Chamber of Commerce, seeing an opportunity to bring large sums of money to the city in the form of federal payrolls, construction, and support industries, had urged the park board to make an offer which was ultimately accepted. Both the board and the commercial group had to assume large monetary obligations to gain the government's acceptance. Furthermore, the State Fair of Texas had to forfeit its annual production in the process. All these obligations and losses would have been insignificant if Camp Dick had existed long enough to contribute the expected amounts to the local economy and had drawn other anticipated government activities to Dallas. This concept rested on sound economic reasoning, but the timing proved to be all wrong. Civic leaders obviously knew more about economics than

about international military and political affairs. About the same time that the Chamber of Commerce eagerly promised to reimburse the fair directors for their losses, the German armies began to crack under the onslaught from American troops. The city boosters continued to make financial concessions to bring federal expenditures to Dallas when the end of the war was already in sight. Dallas did gain some federal offices after the war but they related more to the Federal Reserve Bank established in Dallas before the war than to the war-time efforts of the boosters.

Although it is sometimes misleading, or artificial, to impose the structure of international history upon the study of a microcosm, in Dallas the period of the first world war proved to be one of several international events which directly affected the city. The four years of conflict, 1914-1918, gave Dallas a period of unusual conditions during which the local economy produced at a furious rate. Development of the park system came to a standstill in spite of the efforts of the park board to cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce and other civic leaders and to make gains from the disappointing and unproductive affiliation with Camp Dick. The final return of peace resulted in a reshuffling of city priorities which again thrust park development into a position of high visability. With the year and a half of American involvement in the war finished, Dallas, like the nation, turned away from great causes and looked inward once again.

## NOTES

## DEPRESSION AND WAR

[1]Otto C. Lightner, The History of Business Depressions (New York: Burt Franklin, 1922; reprint; 1970), pp. 218-19. An excellent description of the pre-war saber-rattling is found in Barbara Tuchman, The Guns of August (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1962; also in paperback by Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), pp. 33-87.

[2]Lightner, The History of Business Depressions, pp. 220-22; Harold Underwood Faulkner, American Economic History, 8th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 584; and George H. Santerre, Dallas' First Hundred Years (Dallas: The Book Craft, Inc., 1956), unpaged, see sections for 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1914.

[3]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "Ferris Plaza"; and Dallas Morning News, 6 November 1917, p. 16; 15 February 1918, p. 6; 12 March 1918, p. 7; 7 June 1918, p. 15.

[4]Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 4, 13 January 1915, pp. 73-74; 22 January 1915, p. 76; 9 April 1915, p. 91; 13 May 1915, p. 102; 27 June 1915, p. 107; 6 August 1915, p. 118.

[5]Ibid., 3 November 1915, p. 127; 28 March 1916, p. 139.

[6]Ibid., 27 June 1915, p. 108; (date omitted in Minute Book), p. 134; 17 February 1916, p. 136; 10 June 1916, p. 151.

[7]Lightner, The History of Business Depressions, p. 222; and Faulkner, American Economic History, pp. 584-87.

[8]Santerre, Dallas' First Hundred Years, see section for 1916.

[9]Ibid., see section for 1917.

[10]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 6 September 1917, p. 191.

[11]Ibid., 19 June 1917, p. 181; 2 July 1917, p. 185; 9 July 1917, p. 186; 25 July 1917, p. 188; 14 August 1917; p. 190, 6 September 1917, p. 191; 9 October 1917, p. 196; 12 December 1918, p. 245.

[12]Santerre, Dallas' First Hundred Years, see section for 1917.

[13]Sam P. Cochran may have been appointed to the board specifically to push for this offer to the U. S. government. He served on the board only the two years of the war and initiated many resolutions of a "patriotic" nature. Although a freshman on the board, he and Edgar L. Pike negotiated the important contract with the government. Also, Cochran was seldom involved in matters that did not concern the establishment or operation of Camp Dick.

[14]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 15 November 1917, p. 200.

[15]Ibid., 9 July 1917, p. 186; 16 July 1917, p. 187; 15 November 1917, p. 200; 13 December 1917, p. 202; 2 February 1918, p. 210.

[16]Ibid., 25 February 1918, p. 212; 26 February 1918, p. 212; 11 March 1918, p. 213; 16 July 1918, p. 227; and State Fair of Texas, Minutes of the Meetings of the Directors of the State Fair of Texas in the Annual Report of 1918, typewritten, unpaged, 15 July 1918, 16 July 1918, 22 July 1918.

[17]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 22 July 1918, p. 228; 20 August 1918, pp. 233-34; 23 September 1918, p. 239; 7 April 1919, p. 253.

[18]Ibid., 15 November 1917, p. 200.

[19]Telegram from Joe E. Lawther to Dr. John O. McReynolds, spread upon the park board Minutes, see Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 31 July 1918, p. 231.

[20]Dallas Morning News, 20 January 1919, p. 12.

[21]Most of the $10,639 went to the State Fair Association. Various individuals received a total of $356.04 in damages. Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 21 December 1918, p. 246; 19 April 1919, p. 255; vol. 5, 28 August 1920, p. 48; and Dallas Morning News, 18 April 1919, p. 8; 19 April 1919, p. 11; 29 August 1920, sec. II, p. 3.

# CHAPTER 12

## THE TWENTIES: PARADISE GAINED, PARADISE LOST

With a resumption of a peace-time economy, the park board reopened its files on a number of deferred projects and geared for an era of development and expansion. Initially, however, financial difficulty slowed expansion and forced policy changes. The park board had expanded its real estate holdings to such an extent that its income became inadequate to develop the parks properly. The depression of 1914-1915, followed by the war, postponed public discovery that the board had overextended itself, since the board had deferred most park development during that era due to war-time shortages. But, war or no war, the real estate of the system had been expanded to such a degree that simple maintenance requirements preempted funds for improvements in many of the parks.

It seems, however, that the board members were well aware of what they had done. George Kessler had urged the board to acquire parks as soon as possible because the price of real estate would continually rise as Dallas grew. The commissioners heeded Kessler's advice, but by 1918 their policy of early acquisition had to be abandoned. The time had arrived for development of park holdings.

A mighty task lay ahead for the park department. Several parks, like Reverchon, lay totally unimproved. Others, like the Negro parks, had received only rudimentary park services such as lawn maintenance and

a few basic playground devices. In addition, several areas of Dallas still had no park land at all. With such problems facing the board, a new set of priorities had to be established by the commissioners.

Mayor Wozencraft initiated the priority changes in 1918 even before the war ended. In a discussion of a proposed bond issue, the mayor expressed his desire that the entire bond issue, as well as the park fund, should be spent on park development, not acquisition. Financial reality made the policy an obvious path to follow, so the board confirmed the mayor's suggestion. One year later, the commissioners stated several priorities within the new policy. At the mayor's urging, the board abandoned its previous futile efforts to improve all parks at once and concentrated on one or two parks at a time. Garrett and Buckner parks received attention and first priority in 1919, followed by Forest Park and the zoo in 1920, and Lake Cliff Park and the gigantic municipal swimming pool in 1921. Improvements included landscaping, ornamental lighting, benches, walks, and extensive playground equipment. The many essential improvements in parks which had been deferred--curbing, sewerage, restrooms, plumbing, and such--were included in the projects slated for each park before the board considered it "finished."[1]

During this post-war period, the park board rejected or filed all requests and offers concerning new property. But the extreme need of two areas could not be overlooked and the board proved malleable enough to meet its public responsibility.

First, the Mexican community in Dallas needed a park. The number of Mexican immigrants in Dallas rose sharply during and after the world war as a result of the political chaos in that Latin nation. Many of

these migrants settled in a densely populated neighborhood immediately north of the oldest part of downtown where the houses crowded close upon the streets and lacked backyards. Children played in the streets simply because no other space was available. Sanitation facilities were extremely poor and the local social workers expressed much concern. One group of volunteer workers, the War Camp Community Service, undertook to obtain a park, in some form, for the neighborhood. They succeeded in 1919 by securing a lease to some property on Caruth Street[2] near its intersection with Griffin. The park board, by prior arrangement, agreed to assume the lease and improve the lot. By the end of 1919, facilities in the park included playground equipment and free showers. The little plot became the scene of fiestas and Mexican celebrations, including a visit from Alvaro Obregon,[3] president of Mexico.

Although the board established the park for Mexicans in the same period that separate parks were designated for Negroes, more than prejudice seems to have prompted this move. Park recreation workers complained that they had difficulty getting the Mexican-Americans, especially the girls, to participate in activities. The Latins stood back and watched with interest but bashfully declined to take part in any activity which involved a mixture of nationalities. A few experiences with exclusively Mexican activities, however, proved that the children wanted to participate. Mexican Park provided a place where the Mexicans felt welcome and were not inhibited by their hesitancy to associate with Anglos. No ordinances or discriminatory practices restricted Mexicans to this one park or excluded them from any other park. The leased park on Caruth Street seemed to serve as a means to improve

conditions in that neighborhood and to get the Mexican children involved with park programs. As more immigrants arrived from across the Rio Grande, they began to use other parks, especially Pike (Summit) Park, more freely and association between the nationalities became more open, although for an interim period in the 1920s, the recreation leaders divided the hours of use equally among Mexicans and Anglos in an attempt to move the Mexicans gradually into the main stream of park activity.[4]

A second area in desperate need of park space was the district around the Alamo School, located in an older neighborhood that had never been provided with adequate playground facilities. The park commissioners joined with the Board of Education to purchase the entire block between the school and the Santa Fe rail lines for a total of $25,950, of which the park board paid half. Alamo Park, bounded by Hickory, Merlin, and Nettie streets, comprised about three and one-half acres and provided ample space for the grammar school.[5]

Only one other park entered the system in this immediate post-war period. The Park View Improvement League, a neighborhood civic improvement group, donated a half-acre triangle, located in the edge of east Dallas, which became Park View Park. Although very limited in space, the board soon equipped the triangle with a wading pool and it became a teeming playground each summer. It should be noted that, while the donation of this small park was relatively insignificant in relation to the entire park system, Park View marked a sort of stepping-stone in park history. The neighborhood which surrounded the little park had not even been projected for growth in Kessler's 1911 city plan. The mere presence of a park in that area signaled that the 1911 plan needed to

be brought up to date.[6]

The park board had never severed its relationship with Kessler in the ten years since his firm had studied the city. As a consultant, he contributed to the development of every park in Dallas until about 1925. By 1918 many changes in Dallas required that his firm update the 1911 city plan. After the city rehired the planner on a full-time basis, a platoon of Kessler's men inspected the areas of Dallas' growth and, after approval by Kessler himself, made several revisions in the earlier plan. The suggestions projected the next areas of city development and established traffic patterns, especially for the street car lines, to avoid the problems which had created havoc in the old downtown. The primary suggestions for new park development related to Fair Park expansion and development of Bachman and White Rock reservoirs, anticipating that Dallas construction would reach both lakes in only a few years. This suggestion, however, only repeated a concept developed in the original plan.

This activity by George Kessler and his associates has, through the years, been erroneously labeled as "Kessler's Second Plan." Such a title is misleading. The 1918 studies only amplified the 1911 plan in light of changes which had occurred in Dallas during the intervening years. Except for suggestions concerning parks in areas that did not exist in 1911, the revision made no new proposals. Kessler's foresight in 1911 had provided a skeleton of thoroughfares and traction lines which could easily be enlarged to service new areas. His system of boulevards required few changes, only implementation. The park board already had gone beyond the system of parks he had proposed, although

development in most of them remained rather limited. Kessler needed only to provide designs for the new properties to bring park board requirements up to date, and the updated plan did not change the concepts of the 1911 proposals. It only projected Kessler's original plan into areas unforeseen in 1911.

This second planning effort involved roughly the same civic and governmental groups that had been active in the 1911 work, but the park board no longer dominated the proceedings. The Kessler Plan Association, which had remained active through the years, assumed a more prominent role, as did the city commission and its appointed planning commission. The park board participated only in those sessions which involved the parks. This diminished role did not reflect lack of interest, but since the city commission had relieved the park board of responsibility for the boulevard system, Kessler's plans on that complicated subject no longer concerned the department, except in relation to beautification of the thoroughfares. Thus, while the updated plan was vitally important to Dallas, it had little direct effect on the park board. The process of updating was something which Kessler had been doing all along for specific parks in the department in his capacity as a consultant landscape architect. His contribution to park development had been continuous since 1910, and it continued for years to come.[7]

With the three post-war parks established and the Kessler plan formally updated, the park board began work on its stated priority, park development. But finances placed strict limitations on how much improvement could be accomplished each year. Realizing this fact, the board members reacted favorably to a suggestion from Mayor Wozencraft that a

new bond issue be presented to the voters, and that the revenue be used primarily for development, rather than acquisitions. Little fanfare preceded the election and the intensive campaign to gain voter approval for park bonds, which typified earlier bond elections, never appeared in the local press. Nevertheless, Dallasites approved the issue on April 1, 1919. The park department felt little immediate effect, however, because the city could not sell the bonds until November of 1919, and even then only part of the total issue was placed on the market.[8]

While awaiting revenue from the bonds, the board expended much energy planning and preparing for the park developments. In particular, the commissioners strove to satisfy the public demand for swimming pools. The board initiated installation of numerous wading pools as indicated in previous chapters, formulated plans for three major city pools, the first of which would replace the condemned Lake Cliff Pool. Other actions to "fill out" the existing parks included the installation of ornamental lighting, the placement of playground equipment, and the improvement of landscaping. Even half-century old City Park received a refurbishing.

Many day to day activities of the park department during this development period generated a great deal of time-consuming administrative work. Authorization for everything in the department, from expenditures to work orders, required the signature of the mayor (as park board president), or in his absence, the signature of the vice president. In addition, many other city functions thrust equally demanding requirements upon the mayor. As long as Dallas remained a medium-sized city or less, the office of the mayor handled the work load. However, by 1920 the

city population had soared to 148,976 people, and the administrative work load surpassed the capabilities of one man. Besides, Governor William P. Hobby appointed Mayor Wozencraft to several state-level study commissions on city problems and this consumed much of his time. To relieve the pressures on his office, Wozencraft appointed several intermediate level administrators and delegated to them much of the day-to-day administration of city functions under his supervision. After divesting himself of the demands of the city health department and the hospitals, he arranged for the park board to create a new position, the Director of Parks, to assume the mayor's everyday chores in that department.[9]

The park board appointed Foster Jacoby to fill the position. Having served since 1919 as Director of Playgrounds, the members of the board knew the capabilities of the young man and felt confident in them. Jacoby, in turn, knew the administrative operation of the Dallas park system. But more important, the board selected him for his personality and background which well suited him for a job as the top man in a park and recreation department. An accomplished athlete, Jacoby had gained recognition on the cinder tracks, first at the University of Texas in Austin and later at Vanderbilt in Nashville, Tennessee. After graduating from Vanderbilt, he coached at a preparatory high school in Nashville for a few years before returning to Texas. Every description of his personality when he assumed the directorship always made reference to his "unlimited energy" and "pep." The park system needed this sort of young, energetic leadership to carry out the planned extensive development program. These personality traits probably determined Jacoby's

promotion over the other man who would have been an obvious choice, Superintendent Tietze. A much older man, Tietze lacked the vitality of his young competitor. But more important, the board wanted a department head who could direct all phases of the park program equally well. Tietze possessed great abilities in the areas of horticulture and maintenance, but apparently lacked the ability to supervise recreation, athletics, and other people-oriented park activities. The board bypassed Tietze, but increased his salary and kept it at par with Jacoby's until Tietze retired in 1933.[10]

Another important consideration may have influenced Jacoby's selection. He belonged to a socially prominent Dallas family and his elevation to the directorship reinforced the board's connections with the upper stratas of Dallas society which had been weakened by some recent appointments to the board. While the board certainly operated for the benefit of the general public, as a matter of practicality close ties to Dallas' wealthy elite class needed to be maintained; such people could be expected to make sizable contributions to park real estate, facilities, or programs.

Until 1919, all board members had been related to the established families of Dallas who had become wealthy as the community grew from small town to city. Emil Fretz, a Swiss immigrant, constituted the lonely exception to this pattern. He lived in Dallas for many years before the park board began, becoming quite successful as a businessman and gathering great respect from his fellow citizens. He did, however, move among some of the rarified circles of local society, although he was not truly a member of those circles. The balance of the board

members, however, read like a social register until 1919. In that year, Mayor Wozencraft appointed a new board, retaining only Fretz. The new appointees were capable men, but lacked the social prestige common to the previous board members. For instance, Charles A. Mangold, a wealthy hotel owner, commanded immense popularity and public recognition, but his ownerhip of several liquor stores and theatrical enterprises made him socially unacceptable in discreet circles. Likewise, Fred Wilson and Edgar S. Hurst had gained prominence as businessmen, but lacked social connections. Hurst, in particular, associated with the anti-reform, quasi-political party, later infamously known as the Catfish Club, which was anathema to the "better circles" of Dallas society. Mayor Wozencraft, possibly in an attempt to counterbalance the board, may have influenced the selection of Jacoby. Whether this reasoning existed or not, the fact remains that "balance" became the actual effect of Jacoby's appointment and the large donations from several socially elite Dallasites--W. W. Samuell, Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Tenison, and Edwin J. Kiest--may be traced to Jacoby's personal association with those families.[11]

Foster Jacoby took control of the park administration in 1920, but his promotion changed little in the department. The direction of development was already established by the board and beautification continued to be the domain of Superintendent W. R. Tietze. Jacoby, himself, had already begun the foundations of the park's extensive athletic competitions and recreation programs during his tenure as Director of Playgrounds. But in his new position, he placed a new emphasis upon those programs and increasingly developed the concept of park activity. Under

his aegis, playground leaders sponsored plays, pageants, festivals, handicraft classes, story telling and reading classes, hikes, lectures, games, parties, dances, and a myriad of other activities to attract the Dallas youngsters, as well as the not-so-young. In the athletic fields, recreation leaders established teams in football, baseball, basketball, track, tennis, and swimming and held inter-park competitions which occasionally developed into fierce rivalries. The establishment and development of these programs represented Jacoby's greatest contribution to the park system, although his responsibilities for supervision also covered many other fields.

The implementation of Jacoby's programs in the early twenties rapidly multiplied the recreation possibilities in many neighborhoods. The seventeen playgrounds operated in 1920 increased to thirty in 1921 (including several temporarily leased lots and school grounds). The number of wading pools rose to nine by 1923. In addition, two fully equipped municipal swimming pools opened for use. A new gigantic public pool at Lake Cliff replaced the condemned facility in that park in 1921. The pool, 425 feet by 125 feet, held about three million gallons of water supplied from its own artesian well in the park. One of the largest swimming pools in the nation at that time, the Lake Cliff pool frequently accommodated fifteen hundred people at a time, with attendance for the first year in excess of a quarter of a million people. But the excessive size of the pool created many problems. The city closed the pool after only two months because of a severe local water shortage. Citizens feared the enormous water requirements for the pool would deplete the underground water table. And after several close

calls, pool lifeguards were required to maintain their watch from a row boat in the middle of the pool rather than from towers along the side. Special equipment had to be devised to maintain the pool because standard cleaning devices, for instance, could not reach the center. In short, the park board created a small man-made lake. The pool built in Hall Street Negro Park did not have the problems of such enormous size. Opened in 1922, the one hundred feet by fifty feet wide pool adequately met the needs of the community and proved to be more manageable than its counterpart.[12]

The construction of the Negro swimming pool provided further illumination of an unfortunate period of Dallas history. Racial prejudice had always been present in Dallas, but the city, like the rest of the South, had managed to keep segregation as primarily a matter of social mores. But the supporters of "Jim Crow" segregation did not spare Texas, and by the 1920s such laws were well established. But another factor intensified the racial feelings in Dallas, the Ku Klux Klan. Reestablished nationally in 1915 and organized in Dallas in 1920, the local chapter, Klan No. 66, rose from obscurity to total political dominance over the city and county in only three years, becoming one of the most powerful and "respected" local klans in the entire fraternity, claiming ten thousand members in the city alone. Such a phenomenal rise to power can only suggest that the Klan merely capitalized on the previously formed prejudices of many Dallasites. The evidence certainly demonstrates that the Klan, supported openly by several prominent Methodist, Baptist, Christian (Disciples of Christ), and Presbyterian ministers, fanned local fundamentalist tendencies into open hatred

of Catholics. But the principles of white-supremacy were the Klan teachings which directly affected park policies and development.[13]

Local Negroes had used the facilities of the city's parks, both public and private, through the years, although such use generally remained segregated in nature, as described previously. However, the annual fair apparently admitted ticket holders regardless of race since Negroes frequently can be spotted in candid pictures of fair activities in earlier years. When the city suggested parks in minority communities, the residents of those communities responded favorably. But the Negroes soon found themselves increasingly limited to those parks. At first, the park board politely suggested on occasion that blacks use the Negro parks for their special events--such as religious and fraternal gatherings--instead of Fair Park, but by 1922 social pressure apparently hardened the board's position, and it refused to allow Negroes to use the Fair Park ball diamonds, although they had frequently played there before. The board instructed Jacoby to provide diamonds for them elsewhere. This, of course, meant in the Negro parks since black baseball in white neighborhood parks would have brought a hail of protests from the residents. Similar reasoning led the board to improve Hall Street Negro Park with a fully equipped field house in 1921 and to build the separate Negro pool in 1922. With such facilities provided, the board eliminated the "need" for Negro use of white parks.[14]

In the period of Ku Klux Klan domination, it appears that blacks did not challenge the unwritten policies of park segregation, although it should be recognized that the black community of Dallas expressed delight with the facilities in Hall Street Park and the two other Negro

parks. Yet, the three parks in the black communities hardly met the criteria of "separate but equal" accommodations. Blacks constituted about fifteen percent of Dallas' population in 1920, yet in 1923, after all improvements in the separate facilities, the three parks for "coloreds" comprised only about one and one-half percent of the city's park acreage.[15] Nearly six-hundred acres were available for the 159,000 white Dallasites, but only ten acres welcomed blacks. No laws or park rules sanctioned segregation, but social pressure staunchly enforced the practice and labels clearly indicated "Negro Parks."[16]

No doubt, the "social pressure" received quasi-official support from numerous city officials who openly claimed allegiance to the Invisible Empire in 1922, including the Dallas County sheriff, most of his deputies, the city police commissioners, the Dallas (city) chief of police, and the district attorney. Among the primary city officials, only Mayor (and park board president) Sawnie R. Aldredge publicly opposed the Klan. After appealing to the local Klan members to voluntarily disband, in final desperation he issued an executive order requiring all klansmen employed by the city immediately resign from the fraternity. The effort, however, proved fruitless. In 1923 Aldredge did not run for reelection and Louis Blaylock succeeded him. Blaylock was "a friend, if not a member" of the Dallas Klan and headed the Klan political ticket in the city race.[17] In fact, the 1923 municipal election marked the first major defeat for the slate of candidates nominated by the Citizens' Association. That year the candidates openly supported by the Klan (and openly condemned by the Citizens' Association) won every seat on the city commission in a campaign that centered around

the issue of Klan influence.[18]

The Ku Klux Klan became a regular user of Dallas parks, providing some of the most impressive and spectacular events held in Fair Park in the 1920s. A minister named Ridley began the use of Fair Park in 1921 when he moved Klan meetings from the Majestic Theater in downtown to the fair coliseum for a mass meeting. In 1922 the Live Stock Arena apparently proved more suited to Klan needs and it was used often. The board, in a move which plainly violated a previously established policy limiting the frequency of reservations, granted the building to the Klan five times in less than a month in the summer of 1922. In 1923 the biggest event of the State Fair proved to be "Klan Day," October 24th, and easily overshadowed "Confederate Day" (the usual "big" day) with a total attendance of 151,192 people. The mass gathering brought national attention to the secret order as Knights of the Invisible Empire gathered from all over Texas. The main speaker of the day was the Imperial Wizard (national president) Hiram Wesley Evans, himself a Dallas dentist who had gained the post in a bitter intra-fraternity coup in 1922. The fair grounds filled to capacity with Klansmen wearing fraternal badges as rodeo performers appeared in Ku Klux Klan regalia. When Imperial Wizard Evans spoke in the main fair plaza, seventy-five thousand people gathered to listen and cheer. The day climaxed with a mass initiation at the Fair Park stadium, a two hour parade of Klan patrols, and a ceremonial cross burning in the stadium infield.[19]

The national attention drawn by the Klan gathering generated a great deal of publicity for the State Fair, especially for the new facilities recently installed. The old race track had been replaced in 1921

by a new athletic field (the forerunner of the Cotton Bowl), which seated sixteen thousand. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce partially paid for a new exposition building for automobiles in 1922. In the same year, the board began sponsorship of the new Texas Museum of Natural History which found a temporary home in the halls of the art building. But perhaps most important to the average fair visitor, the board entered a contract with the Wortham Shows, an amusement company, to convert the hodge-podge midway (previously each ride and amusement on the midway was separately owned and seasonally operated) into a complete and permanent amusement area. The twenty year contract required, among other things, the immediate installation of the fair's first roller coaster. In general, the fair grounds began to take on the appearance of its modern-day descendant, although most of the modern civic center buildings were not built until 1936.[20]

These developments at the fair grounds had been paralleled by development in other park areas as well. The board began, once again, to acquire new parks in a desperate attempt to keep pace with the skyrocketing Dallas population. From 1920 to 1923, the commissioners acquired several temporary parks through lease arrangements which contained purchase options. Two of these parks became permanent park property after a bond election provided funds for purchase in 1923; they became Cole and Randall parks. Cole Park, leased in 1921 at the urging of the Parent-Teacher Association of Ben Milam School, belonged to the heirs of John D. Cole, one of Dallas' earliest pioneers. The board leased the eight acres under an arrangement whereby the city relieved the heirs of all tax responsibilities on the land. In 1923 the

commissioners exercised a clause in the lease contract and purchased the acreage out of revenue expected from the sale of a new bond issue. The purchase price, $52,588, represented only about half of the actual value of the property because of the generosity of the heirs who wanted the park to stand as a memorial, of sorts, to their father. Randall Park also owes its existence to its unofficial relationship with a school, albeit a private orphans home. Leased in 1922 to provide much needed playgrounds for the Juliette Fowler Home, the eleven acres were purchased as soon as possible out of the same bond issue that bought Cole Park.[21]

Several other parks related more directly to the Dallas school system and their acquisition involved either monetary cooperation or consultation with the Dallas Board of Education. The first of these school-parks, Exline Park which served the Silberstein School, entered the park rolls under an unusual (for park transactions) installment arrangement by which the park board paid only $1,000 and the Board of Education paid $2,000 of the $15,750 price until after the 1923 bond election granted the board new funds. In 1923 the board added Winnetka (later changed to Greiner) Park to provide play area for the Winnetka School. In 1924 the park board, using its bond issue money, single-handedly bought the private Wahoo Club which adjoined the Julia P. Frazier School and converted the nearly twenty acres into a play park that included an approximately twelve acre lake. The Board of Education did not participate in this purchase because the size of the park and the $54,366 purchase price were clearly beyond the needs of the Frazier school. Nor did the Board of Education assist in the acquisition of

Lagow Park in 1923, the last school-related park gained during the period of this study. The Lagow School property stood across the street from the four and one-half acre Lagow Park, but adequate park space could not be gained in a tract that was contiguous with the school grounds, so the park board bought the park entirely from its own funds. All of these school related parks were provided with complete playground equipment and wading pools, or in the case of Lagow, a junior pool (a size between a wading pool and a municipal pool).[22]

The park board also improved a number of school grounds in which it owned no real estate interest. Beginning in 1922 with the Brown Elementary School, the department installed playground apparatus on at least fifteen school yards owned by the Board of Education. In several instances, the board included wading or junior size pools at the school sites. Some of the school grounds contributed to the summer recreation programs and even served as a base for department recreation supervisors. All of these school related activities were in direct accord with George Kessler's admonition that duplication of facilities by the park board and the school board was unnecessary.[23]

During the entire decade of the 1920s, the park board purchased only one park completely on the basis of park needs alone, with no considerations for neighborhood schools. Keith Park (changed to Tietze Park in 1934 after the aging superintendent retired), located at Skillman, Llano, and Clements streets, provided an excellent location for a junior pool, although it was not constructed until 1930.[24]

Of all the park property gained by the park board throughout its existence, nine special parks acquired between 1922 and 1930 represent

one of the most important developments in Dallas park development. Each of those parks entered the park rolls by means of donations to the board. Generous citizens had made gifts to the park system before 1922, but such earlier gifts had been of marginal value--lovely to look at, but not large enough to be developed as full-fledged parks. However, during the twenties, the park board received gifts of land totaling over 650 acres and valued at more than half a million dollars at the time of donation. These donations relieved the park board of the burden of purchasing land and freed hundreds of thousands of dollars for use in improvements. Furthermore, the large size of the donations--three of them were in excess of one hundred acres--gave to the system real estate that it could never have afforded to buy. These donations, and the improvements placed on them brought national attention to the Dallas park system when, in 1928, the Department of Labor ranked the Dallas parks as the best in the nation in its population category on the basis of acreage per resident and recreation facilities, a position that could not have been attained relying exclusively on the regular park income.[25]

The sudden appearance of such donations cannot be explained easily through existent written material, but at least three theories seem reliable. First, Foster Jacoby expressed some satisfaction in later years about his personal role in securing certain donations. It seems probable that he actively sought donations for the park system from his wealthy country club friends. Second, after the initial donations, it may have become a very prestigious measure of wealth to give a sizable piece of real estate to the public as a park. In a community where almost every member of the elite society could be described as nouveau

riche, being only one generation removed from their pioneer roots, such an ostentatious display of family success could have been expected, especially in the flamboyant 1920s. Third, the evolution of a genuine philanthropic effort by some wealthy citizens must be considered as a possible reason for the donations, although the available evidence suggests that the first two theories have more validity.

The donations began in 1922 when Mr. L. Craddock, one of the pioneer citizens of Dallas County, and his wife, Belle C. Craddock, presented the board with the deed to nine acres of their property in the north Dallas area. The board accepted with gratitude the triangular plot located at the intersection of Lemmon Avenue and Hawthorne Street and bounded on the west by the Cotton Belt Railway.[26] Craddock Park was the first donation made to the park system large enough to become a fully developed park. Although donated in 1922, the park did not open officially until 1925, and even then a few limited walks, flag poles, and benches comprised the extent of improvements until the middle of the 1930s. Because of the sparse population of the area in the 1920s, the board deferred further development in Craddock Park, but beginning in 1934, the department converted the broken and wooded land into a beautiful resort complete with a formal rose garden.[27]

The second donation came in March of 1923 from the president of the City National Bank of Dallas. Mr. and Mrs. Edward O. Tenison, wealthy and respected members of Dallas society, tendered to the city a deed to about seventy-nine acres between East Grand Avenue and East Pike. Then, less than a month later, they delivered a deed for an additional twenty-six acres to bring the complete park to a total of 105

acres. Donated as a memorial to the Tenisons' deceased son, Edward Hugh Tenison, the property stood at the eastern edge of Dallas in 1923. Heavily wooded in some places and gently rolling open land in others, the park provided magnificent possibilities for development. The Tenisons donated the land about the time that golf was becoming popular in Dallas and the growing demand for a set of public "golf-links" made the large size of Tenison Memorial Park an obvious location for a golf course. The board began to improve the park as such in 1924 with a clubhouse and grass greens.[28]

The park board augmented Tenison Memorial through the lease of several adjoining properties (all of which became park property in later years). Most important of the leased land was approximately one hundred acres on the southwest side of Tenison Park belonging to Dr. W. W. Samuell which became a major athletic park with twelve baseball diamonds.[29] Twenty additional leased acres brought the grand total of contiguous park land centered on the Tenison donation to almost 225 acres, by far the largest park area in Dallas at that time.[30]

The generosity of the Tenisons presented a major breakthrough for the park board. The simple acreage requirements of a golf course had presented a basic obstacle to the board. Land for a golf course cost too much to buy. A temporary solution had been found in a leased golf course, but that arrangement would be unsatisfactory over a long range period. The Tenison donation solved the board's problem. But the commissioners considered more than just a golf course in their development. In 1923 the board's consistent friend, the Dallas Morning News, had sharply criticized the park system in an editorial bemoaning the fact

that Dallas seemed destined to have only small, chopped-up, neighborhood parks, while other major cities, like St. Louis and Houston, provided their populace with dramatic, sweeping vistas of landscaped acreage. The News granted the necessity of neighborhood playgrounds, but suggested that the commissioners were being short sighted. The board members responded promptly to this criticism by acquiring the leased additions to Tenison Park which more than doubled the park's size. The News, apparently pleased and satisfied, once again filled its columns with praise for the park system. From a long range standpoint, the department gained yet another benefit from the Tenison donation. The Tenisons set a grand example for the rest of Dallas, and the board soon discovered that donations seemed to beget donations.[31]

Later the same year, 1923, the board accepted another sizable piece of property as a memorial. Walter A. Stevens and his sister, Annie L. Stevens, donated forty acres in Oak Cliff in memory of their parents, Dr. and Mrs. John H. Stevens. The commissioners, again seeing the opportunity to create a truly sizable park, purchased several adjoining tracts in 1927 and 1928 until they accumulated an additional ninety acres, at a cost of $140,803, financed from a 1927 bond issue.[32] Meanwhile, the board did not wait to begin improvements but started in 1924 the development of a golf course to serve Oak Cliff. The clubhouse opened on May 17, 1924, and began golf operations immediately. The rolling hills and woods in that part of Oak Cliff blended nicely with the greens and fairways of a golf course and the park became an instant success.[33]

Close on the heels of the Stevens' donation came yet another

donation which, technically, antedated all three previous gifts. When Mrs. Emma H. Grauwyler passed away in 1923, her will, dated August 22, 1919, bequeathed to the city virtually her entire estate. She and her husband, John H. Grauwyler who died in 1908, had not been immensely wealthy, but as old pioneer residents of Dallas County, they had amassed a respectable estate. In her will, Emma Grauwyler specified that all of her real estate property (except an isolated lot at Crossman and Second in west Dallas) was to become a park dedicated to the memory of her husband. Her personal property, which included about twenty thousand dollars in bonds, cash, and accrued interest, as well as household furniture and jewelry, totaled over forty-one thousand dollars in value. The only restriction which she placed on the park use was that the old gentleman who served as grounds keeper for many years was to be allowed to remain in the little house he occupied for as long as he lived. The park board filed the will in June of 1923, but the Grauwyler heirs contested the donation and kept the estate in an unsettled condition for several years. Meanwhile, the courts placed the Grauwylers' personal property in a trust fund which became a permanent trust when the courts finally dismissed the heirs' suit. The board did not begin improvements on the twenty acres that constituted the old homestead until 1933 for two reasons. First, the board could not act until the courts settled the estate, and second, Grauwyler Park lay in a very sparsely settled area and improvement would have been premature.[34]

After the impressive contributions of 1922-1924, the rest of the decade passed before another wealthy Dallasite provided the foundation for a third major park. But donations continued, even if reduced in size.

In 1924 Roy Munger turned over to the park board a one-half acre lot, at the corner of Junius and Henderson, that he had dedicated for park purposes in 1914. Then in 1925, B. F. and Velma Farrar donated two acres at Griffith and Van Buren. This was followed in 1926 by a two and one-half acre gift from Mr. and Mrs. Sam P. Cochran (he was a former park board member) located at Mission and Henderson streets. These parks became Munger Park, Ruthmede Park, and Cochran Park, respectively, and all three served as vital neighborhood playgrounds when improved with playground equipment. Cochran Park, strategically located adjoining the Vickery School grounds, received additional duties as a school playground.[35]

The park board did not receive any further donations until 1930. In that year the children of John H. and Helena Walford gave their parents' homestead to the park as a memorial. The old home was preserved as a small community building housing a toy library and game room until 1947. The six-tenths of an acre became known as Walford Park and playground equipment made the little lot a valuable playground.[36]

That same year, 1930, the publisher of the Dallas Times-Herald, Edwin J. Kiest, gave the largest donation of real estate received in park history to that date. His initial donation totaled over 176.6 acres, to which he added seventy-one acres in two subsequent gifts in 1933 and 1934. Kiest specified that the park was to be a memorial to his wife, Elizabeth Patterson Kiest, who had died in 1917. Mrs. Kiest, herself, had played a pivotal role in civic, social, women's and charity organizations. In particular, she helped found the Dallas Art Association and she belonged to the exclusive Matheon Club. Edwin Kiest, who

also figured prominently in Dallas affairs, was no stranger to the park board. His contributions to the Dallas parks prior to 1930 included five hundred dollars to assist in the construction of the golf greens at Tenison Park, golf score cards for several years in the earlier operations of Tenison, Oak Grove, and Stevens golf courses, a $350 donation for two ostrich and two cassowaries at the zoo, playground medals for athletic events for six years, $150 for the Texas Museum of Natural History, and sponsorship of Easter egg hunts in the parks for many years. After Kiest donated the park land, his gifts continued and included $5,000 as an initial payment on the pipe organ in Fair Park Auditorium, $500 for the chimes installed in Fair Park, a baby grand piano for park use, several thousand yards of gravel for park roads, as well as two tennis courts and a piano for the park property which adjoined Sunset School.

Kiest Memorial Park, located in Oak Cliff, contained a beautiful assortment of natural trees on rolling terrain. Although dedicated on November 13, 1932, development of the large park began slowly because of the great depression which seized the nation. But when federal funds began to flow for public projects in the New Deal years, the park received its share of attention and improvement.[37]

During the period from 1922-1930, most new acreage entered the park board rolls through donations, while a number of smaller parks became joint acquisitions of the park board and the Board of Education, or at least related directly to the city schools in one way or another. But during the same period the park commissioners expended considerable effort on an attempt to develop the parks appropriately.

Park development took many forms. Landscaping of the parks reached a level never before seen in Dallas. Playground apparatus became common in every park. Restrooms, gutters, curbing, and paving appeared in most parks. In general, the board converted the majority of its holdings from merely pleasant open spaces, into embellished, functional public resorts, pleasing to the eye and fully capable of accommodating the sports and play activities of Dallas youngsters.

In particular, three areas received major attention in the development program. First, the personal interests of Foster Jacoby resulted in a comprehensive recreation and athletics program. Participation in these activities reached thousands of children and young people throughout the city and augmented the still underdeveloped physical education programs within the school system.

Second, as a spin-off of the recreation program, the adult game of golf became a major part of park offerings in the 1920s. Citizens had voiced desires for facilities to play the Scottish game as early as 1914. Private country clubs, notably the Dallas Country Club and Lakewood Country Club, provided lush golf courses for their members long before the first world war, but the general public did not have access to them, since initiation fees in the private clubs started at $250 in 1915 and annual dues were $60. The park board began to seek an appropriate location for a public course about 1918 but the only property which the board could afford to acquire in the quantity needed for a golf course lay in the Trinity River bottoms. Given the current technology, this land was totally unsuited for a permanent improvement such as a golf course. By the 1920s, public demand intensified and the board sought a

solution by leasing 118 acres from the John D. Cole estate in November 1922. The following May the course opened under the name of Oak Grove Park and provided eighteen holes with sand greens (to avoid the expense of installing grass greens on leased property). In the interim, however, the Tenisons and Stevens made their donations and it became immediately obvious that the land would be used for golf. Construction began for golf courses and both Tenison Golf Course and Stevens Golf Course opened in May of 1924, each offering eighteen holes complete with the more expensive grass greens. That same summer, the board began operation of a children's golf course in Randall Park, although they abandoned it in 1931. The raison d'etre for Oak Grove disappeared with the creation of the Tenison and Stevens courses and the board abandoned the leased course in 1935.

The public demand for golf courses, however, did not guarantee financial success for the three adult courses. Besides the expenses normally involved in the opening of any new facility which can be expected to reduce any potential profit, golf in Dallas had an additional problem. Participation in golf, a relatively new sport to the average Dallasite, had been essentially limited to the members of the private clubs. Consequently, several years passed before a golfing public developed sufficiently to support three golf courses. The courses lost nearly sixteen thousand dollars in the first five years of operations, but after 1928 the courses began not only to pay their own way, but also to make a profit which could be put to use for further development of the golf courses and also for other parks as well.[38]

A third area which received major attention during the 1920s was

the municipal zoo. As described in preceding chapters, a nascent zoo existed in City Park as early as 1888, although application of the word "zoo" was a glorification of the hodge-podge menagerie found there. From its inception until the establishment of the park board, the collection of animals included an assortment of deer, bears, wolves, and birds. Several attempts to eliminate the animals during various retrenchment moves failed. Each time public pressure saved the animals. When cages constructed to hold the bears became unhealthy, a small tempest arose in the city council concerning the value of the animals to the public. The council did not remove the menagerie from City Park, but deliberately failed to replace the animals when they died, hoping to eliminate them by gradual attrition. But the plan collapsed when the property of the State Fair Association transferred to city control. The fair had maintained its own menagerie of monkeys, bears, deer, anteaters, eagles, and several other animals, and the fair animals swelled the numbers living at City Park in 1905. After that date, efforts to eliminate the animals disappeared, but no attempt was made to increase their numbers. However, the handful of deer thwarted population control as they rapidly multiplied their numbers into a herd which Superintendent Tietz occasionally had to diminish in size. And he often had to sell deer to other city zoos.[39]

The animals in City Park created a popular attraction, but the venerable old park lacked sufficient space to display the animals properly. The potential problems of enlarging the size of the menagerie became obvious to the first park board appointed in 1905. Interest voiced by several citizens desiring a more fully developed zoo led the

board to seek an alternative site in Fair Park, the only other suitable property owned by the board at that time. In 1909 a zoo facility began to rise in the fair grounds, and by 1910 the City Park animals had been transferred to Fair Park, except for a small number of the ever-popular deer which remained at the old location. For the next three years, the board rather indiscriminately enlarged the zoological collection by accepting gifts from well meaning citizens and by purchasing a few inexpensive specimens.[40]

The Fair Park location soon proved to be an unwise choice for a zoo. The fair association steadily expanded its operations to the point that all available space at the park was required for fair purposes. Furthermore, a vigorous campaign developed, led by the Dallas Dispatch, to promote the creation of a truly respectable zoological collection in the city. A search to find suitable accommodations for such a project produced a board decision in 1912 to place the new zoological garden in Oak Cliff's Forest Park.[41]

To administer the new municipal zoo, Mayor W. M. Holland created a rather odd arrangement of officials. The zoo grounds, located in a city park, were to be improved and administered by the park board. The zoo collection was to be enlarged and supervised by an independent zoo commissioner who also held some supervisory authority over park personnel who worked in the zoo area. The funds for purchases of specimens came from allocations by the city commission, the park board, and several quasi-official organizations and civic groups which supported the zoo. The funding and supervisory arrangements would have been an administrative nightmare if any disagreements had occurred. But Mayor Holland

appointed United States District Attorney William H. Atwell to be the zoo commissioner in 1912. He worked well with all parties involved and personally led an enthusiastic drive to develop the zoo which produced a dramatic result. When Atwell resigned only two years later, the zoo included specimens which ranged from kangaroos and lions to monkeys and exotic birds. He had acquired most of the animals through donations from civic groups and private citizens whom he had systematically solicited in order to improve the zoo as an educational exhibit rather than a mere collection of assorted animals.[42]

When Atwell resigned in 1914 to accept an appointment as a federal judge, the mayor abolished the office of independent Zoo Commissioner and all zoo administration reverted to park board control. Park Commissioners Fretz and Pike assumed duties as zoo commissioners, or essentially a special park board committee to supervise the zoo, and that arrangement prevailed until 1922. In that year, Mayor Sawnie Aldredge appointed a special zoo commission, headed by park board member Edgar Hurst, to raise money for zoo improvements. This special commission, consisting of Hurst, Mrs. W. P. Zumwalt, T. M. Cullum, Judge Atwell, and Dr. J. J. Simmons (a former park board member) conducted a hearty campaign and raised nearly ten thousand dollars for the zoo fund. This money represented the first serious attempt made in Dallas to remove its zoo from the ranks of mediocrity. A promising start had been made by Judge Atwell before the first world war, but except for some beautification, little attention had been given to the zoo since that time. No concentrated effort to improve the offerings and quality of the collection was made until the early 1920s. Then, in conjunction with the

policy for overall park development, the special zoo commission focused attention on the animals, raised money, ordered specimens from the world famous big game hunter Frank Buck, and increased the number of animals on exhibit from only 161 in 1920 to 1,065 in 1925. After that the pace slowed, but acquisitions continued and reached a peak of 1,540 specimens in 1931 before the exigencies of the great depression forced the park board to reduce zoo holdings to less than half that number. But the reduction of exhibited animals did not erase the vast physical improvements made in the park during the growth period of the twenties. Many new buildings and support facilities had been built. These structures and operations provided a strong foundation upon which the federal programs of the depression era based their improvements.[43]

The pattern of improvements in the municipal zoo during the twenties, presents a fairly general picture of the development of the entire park system in that decade. The years 1921 through 1924 bustled with activity. Dramatic improvements appeared everywhere in the parks. Beginning about 1925, however, the pace slackened a bit. Work continued on a vast number of projects but the amount of new development fell off. A massive bond issue in 1927 should have sent the park board into a frenzy of activity, but no such result occurred, apparently because of political involvement within the board. By 1929 the lack of genuine accomplishment became noticeable and even became an issue in the political campaigns of the city. The decline in development became especially acute since the population of Dallas mushroomed in that decade, growing from 159,000 in 1920 to 260,000 in 1930. The park system that was so highly praised in 1928 as the best in the nation for its size

classification, had been chosen for that honor at a moment when the park system was already in decline. The accomplishments for which Dallas was cited represented the products of an earlier board. In 1920 the park board provided about .0025 acres per person in Dallas, in 1930 that figure increased to about .0030, but virtually all the advancement came through donations prior to 1924. Significantly, the Negro population of Dallas increased from 24,023 to 38,742 in the decade, but no acquisitions were made for the benefit of Negroes after the purchase of less than three acres in 1920. Only the improvement of a couple of insignificant school grounds in conjunction with the Board of Education could be listed as even token developments for the black community.[44]

Several situations contributed to the declining rate of park improvement in the later half of the decade. First, in spite of all the economic glitter and tinsel openly displayed in the 1920s, the nation's economy was not healthy. The soaring stock market presented only an illusory facade which covered a myriad of potential problems. Of particular concern for Dallas, the economic position of the nation's agriculture and related industries declined. As the decade progressed, the effects of the ailing agricultural market began to depress the local economy of Dallas.[45]

Second, park development and acquisition generally occurred in cycles. The park board experienced a definite upswing cycle between 1919 and 1924, perhaps the time had arrived for a downswing. Enthusiastic public support can only be maintained for a limited time, and the campaigns for zoo contributions, among others, may have sapped the public interest.

But a third reason seems to have played an important, and detrimental, role in the activities of the park board. Politics infiltrated the non-partisan halls of the park department and the accomplishments of the board went in direct contrast to the amount of politics in the park board deliberations. As the board grew more and more political, it accomplished less and less. This pattern only reflected the general pall of decay that had settled over all governmental activities conducted or supervised by the city commission. The time for another reform of municipal government had arrived.

## Notes

### THE TWENTIES: PARADISE GAINED, PARADISE LOST

[1]Dallas Morning News, 24 September 1918, p. 12; 2 October 1919, p. 15.

[2]Caruth Street should not be confused with Caruth Boulevard in modern-day University Park. Caruth Street no longer exists, but in 1919 it was the western portion of present Munger Street, which even today is still disconnected from the main drive of Munger Street. The Mexican Park was located near the present intersection of Griffin Street and McKinney Avenue.

[3]Alvaro Obregon, president of Mexico, 1920-1924.

[4]Lynn Schmid, former Dallas parks recreation leader, interview with author, July 1973; Lillian Schwertz, Dallas park recreation director, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 4, 21 November 1918, p. 243; 21 December 1918, p. 246; Sawnie R. Aldredge, Park and Playground System, Dallas, Texas, 1921-1923 (n.p., n.d.), p. 26; and Dallas Morning News, 10 November 1918, sec. I, p. 5.

[5]In 1974 Merlin and Nettie streets no longer exist around the park, although Hickory still serves as its northern boundary while the Santa Fe tracks still mark the southern line. Merlin Street at that location disappeared in the construction of Oakland Avenue as a thoroughfare through the area. Nettie Street was changed to Jefferies Street. Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 24; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 8 July 1919, p. 273; and E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "Alamo Park."

[6]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 20 May 1919, p. 262; 3 June 1919, p. 266; and Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 24.

[7]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 13 December 1917, p. 202; 24 June 1919, p. 269; and Dallas Morning News, 29 November 1917, pp. 10, 16.

[8]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 28 April 1919, p. 256; Dallas Morning News, 28 April 1919, p. 7; 14 August 1919, p. 11; 24 September 1919, p. 12; 10 October 1919, p. 19; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Bonds"; and Dallas, Texas, Ordinance Book, 21:32, ordinance number 439.

[9]Dallas Morning News, 9 November 1920, p. 22; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population, 3:995.

[10]Dallas Morning News, 30 January 1921, sec. II, p. 9; 29 May 1921, magazine section, p. 3; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 8 November 1920, p. 59.

[11]John William Rogers, The Lusty Texans of Dallas (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1951), p. 209.

[12]Dallas Morning News, 29 May 1921, magazine section, p. 3; 2 June 1921, p. 2; 9 August 1921, p. 8; and Aldredge, Park and Playground System, pp. 30-35.

[13]Particularly vocal among the ministers were Reverend T. O. Perrin of Westminister Presbyterian Church, Reverend W. H. Wynn of Forest Avenue Baptist Church, A. C. Parker of Rosemont Christian Church who became the Exalted Cyclops (local chapter president) of the Dallas Klan, Reverend Alonzo Monk of First Methodist Church in Arlington, and J. T. Renfro, a Methodist minister who abandoned his pulpit to become an itinerant lecturer for the Klan. See Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 70-71.

[14]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 23 May 1922, p. 152.

[15]Figures do not include acreage for Bachman or White Rock reservoirs.

[16]Aldredge, Park and Playground System, pp. 7, 30; and Department of Commerce, Fourteenth Census.

[17]Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, p. 75.

[18]Ibid., pp. 69, 72-75.

[19]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 11 August 1921, p. 120; 9 May 1922, p. 147; 15 June 1922, p. 154; and Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, pp. 76-77.

[20]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 25 January 1921, p. 70; 31 January 1921, p. 70; 8 March 1921, pp. 78-82; 22 March 1921, p. 83; 19 April 1921, pp. 92-94; 14 February 1922, p. 134; 28 February 1922, p. 136; 23 May 1922, p. 151.

[21]Ibid., 22 March 1921, p. 86; 7 April 1921, p. 89; 19 April 1921, pp. 94-96; Aldredge, Park and Playground System, pp. 21, 24; and Cauley, "Notes," see sections on "Cole Park" and "Randall Park."

[22]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 9 August 1922, p. 167; 22 August 1922, p. 169; Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 24; and Cauley, "Notes," see sections on "Exline Park," "Greiner Park," "Wahoo Park," and "Lagow Park."

[23]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Schools." Miss Cauley omitted exact dates from some of the schools she listed, but the number of schools involved was at least fifteen.

[24]Ibid., see section on "Tietze Park."

[25]Dallas Morning News, 2 November 1928, p. 4.

[26]The path of the Cotton Belt Railway has become the modern route of the Dallas-North Tollway. Part of the western side of the park was shaved off in the construction of the tollway and the park board was compensated for the lost acreage. The money paid to the board was placed in a permanent trust fund. Part of the accrued interest on that fund financed this study.

[27]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Craddock Park"; Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 23; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 17 November 1922, p. 179. Historically, Craddock Park represented a much more important addition to the park system than its size would indicate. The park contained the site of old Cedar Springs, one of the earliest settlements in Dallas County, and one of three contenders in an election to determine the seat of government for Dallas County. The springs, around which the community centered, entered recorded history in 1840 when a military expedition explored the area looking for a route for a Republic of Texas highway. See "Dallas Guide and History" (Unpublished manuscript written by the Texas Writers Project for the Work Projects Administration, located in Dallas Public Library, work suspended on project in 1940), pp. 655-56.

[28]Cauley, "Notes, see section on "Tenison Memorial Park"; and Aldredge, Park and Playground System, p. 11.

[29]This park land became Samuell-East Grand Park when Dr. Samuell died, leaving an enormous fortune in real estate to the park department. See Patricia R. Hogan, "The Step Into a Modern World: The History of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department 1931 to Present" (M. S. thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974), Chapter 7.

[30]This total had increased to over 380 acres as a result of an expansion program in the 1950s. See Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Tenison Golf Course - Expansion."

[31]Dallas Morning News, 21 December 1923, p. 16; 1 January 1925, p. 15.

[32]Another twelve acres was added in 1941.

[33]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Stevens Memorial Park."

[34]Ibid., see section on "Grauwyler Memorial Park."

[35]Ibid., see sections on "Munger Park," "Ruthmede Park," and "Cochran Park."

[36]Ibid., see section on "Walford Park"; and Dallas Morning News, 2 February 1930, p. 10.

[37]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Kiest Memorial Park"; and Dallas Morning News, 13 September 1930, p. 1.

[38]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Golf"; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 5, 23 December 1920, p. 64; 28 November 1922, p. 181.

[39]The animals in City Park are discussed in detail in Chapter three.

[40]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 1, 8 June 1907, p. 291; 11 June 1907, p. 295; vol. 2, 9 June 1908, p. 63; 10 September 1908, p. 89; 10 March 1909, p. 127; 10 April 1909, p. 133; 9 June 1909, p. 149; 17 June 1909, p. 151; 27 July 1909, p. 163; 2 September 1909, p. 169; 27 September 1909, p. 177; vol. 3, 15 June 1910, p. 13; 31 January 1911, p. 38; 3 March 1911, p. 45; 16 March 1911, p. 48.

[41]Ibid., 1 June 1912, p. 144; 24 July 1912, p. 164; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Marsalis Park" and "Marsalis Park Zoo."

[42]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 14 January 1913, p. 197; 26 November 1913, p. 262; vol. 4, 19 May 1914, p. 7; and Cauley, "Notes," see sections on "Marsalis Park" and "Marsalis Park Zoo."

[43]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 19 May 1914, p. 7; vol. 5, 15 December 1920; 8 November 1921, p. 127; 4 January 1922, p. 131; 24 January 1922, p. 133; 14 February 1922, p. 135; 15 November 1922, pp. 177-78; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Marsalis Park Zoo."

[44]Department of Commerce, Fourteenth Census; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population, vol. 3, part 2:972.

[45]Harold Underwood Faulkner, American Economic History (8th ed.; New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960), pp. 625-30.

# CHAPTER 13

## OF POLITICS AND PERSONNEL

The term "the park board" has been used constantly throughout this study with only occasional digressions to explain who the personalities were that constituted that body. Following the world war era several political realignments occurred in city politics which had a strong effect upon all phases of the city government, including the park board. In order to gain a better understanding of the board as an independent body within the municipal corporation, it will be necessary to consider the membership on the board and to study their relationship to the broader spectrum of city government. This perspective can be achieved most easily by considering the park board itself throughout the entire period from 1907 to 1931.

Sometimes change of personnel on the park board shaped the actions of the board for a period, but such was not the case during the period before 1915. Few changes occurred during that era, and those few did not effect the policies or direction of park activity.

Before 1915 the most frequent turnover on the board occurred in the president's chair. Four men moved in and out of the mayor's office in that ten years, three of them in only three years. Bryan T. Barry, the mayor who appointed the original board, left office one year later, completing a full six years in command of the city corporation. The available records indicate that he possessed a strong interest in park activities and worked for park development throughout his three terms.

No doubt, he would have provided strong, dynamic leadership for the board if he had served a fourth term, but he retired in 1906 after starting the board on its way. Although time limited his contributions to the new board, nevertheless he made the all-important selection of the first board of park commissioners. Barry's successor as mayor, Curtis P. Smith, served as board president only one year since the new city commission form of government was approved during his term and he lost his bid to head the new system in 1907. S. J. Hay became the new "reform" mayor and he presided over park board affairs throughout the next four years, although the inspiration for most activities seems to have come from the appointed members. After serving as mayor for four years, Hay dropped out of politics to become the president of Dallas Trust and Savings Bank and W. M. Holland succeeded him. Holland, a lawyer who had traveled extensively, presided over the first four years of development under the Kessler Plan. Holland took special interest in numerous park projects and frequently made his own investigations and reports to the board just like the appointed members, a practice seldom imitated by other mayors. Holland did not run for reelection in 1915, and his successor, Henry D. Lindsley, the president of Southwestern Life Insurance Company, failed to accomplish much because of the brief recession. Lindsley's background as chairman of the Dallas City Plan and Improvement League in 1911, which was one of the groups that conferred with George Kessler in the making of the city plan, suggests that Lindsley had strong convictions about parks and civic beautification which must have been frustrated by the economic fluctuations due to the developing world war. Lindsley's exit from City Hall in 1917 roughly

marked the beginning of decay within the city commission form of government in Dallas. Turnover in the mayor's chair became more frequent and the caliber of men sitting in that chair generally declined.[1]

Throughout this early period, the appointed members of the board remained quite stable. No changes occurred among the board members who were appointed in 1908, until August 6, 1912, when Murrell L. Buckner resigned to devote more time to his duties as a railroad executive. Mayor Holland appointed John W. Philp to fill the vacancy, but during the two months he was officially listed as a member of the board, he attended only one meeting, that being on August 6, 1912, when he took the oath of office. Why Philp failed to serve remains unclear. Surely a man of Mayor Holland's experience consulted his nominee before submitting his name to the city commission for confirmation. The records imply that Philp did want to serve since no resignation from him was ever recorded (as was faithfully done with all other personnel) and no other sources indicate that he resigned. But the board had entered an era of heavy work and needed a full-time member, so Philp was apparently eased out of the picture.[2]

Mayor Holland's second nomination for this vacancy proved more successful. John J. Simmons, the owner of a wholesale grocery company and chairman of the Citizens' Association nominating committee, approached the job with an enthusiasm that was reassuring after the experience with Philp. Simmons became quite active and served on many investigative committees, searching for park sites or checking on facilities.[3]

Mayor Holland, M. N. Baker, Emil Fretz, Edgar L. Pike, and

finally John J. Simmons comprised the core of the board which presided over the massive job of expansion that followed the 1913 bond election. They competently guided the fortunes of the system until the depression in 1915 brought their activities to a halt. At that point, John Simmons, apparently suffering setbacks in his grocery business, resigned stating that his private affairs demanded his attention.[4]

The new mayor, Henry D. Lindsley, allowed the position to remain vacant for three months, the longest delay in appointments to that date, before he nominated S. H. Boren who assumed the position in September of 1915. Boren, an investments broker, became moderately active in board affairs. But both Boren and Mayor Lindsley served only until the elections in 1917. Lindsley did not run for reelection and Boren was not reappointed.[5]

Joe E. Lawther, a prominent Dallas bank executive, became the mayor and park board president in 1917, and whether he intended to do so or not, his administration started an era when politics again became an important factor in city government. The problems inherent in the commission system asserted themselves after nearly ten years of attempts to gloss over the difficulties through inter-departmental cooperation. Since each commissioner served as the head of an independent department and political parties in the normal sense did not exist, the races for commissioner positions basically became an every-man-for-himself situation. Civic groups still nominated slates of candidates, but temporary organizations based on personalities conducted the actual campaigns.

By 1917 the honeymoon of good relations between commissioners was long gone. The ideal situation sought by the Citizens' Association in

which only men of proven business ability (generally meaning executives of large corporations) ran for commission seats became more difficult to attain. Competent executives chose not to give up their lucrative positions to fill the temporary full-time job of a city commissioner. As the list of willing executives was depleted, less qualified men had to be relied upon. Since, as historian James Weinstein has pointed out, the commission system functioned smoothly only when the commissioners were experienced business executives, as the quality of Dallas' commissioners declined, governmental efficiency suffered. What little inter-departmental cooperation remained among the independent commissioners deteriorated. City elections lost their non-partisan pro bono publico flavor and became more politically oriented although parties, as such, did not emerge.[6]

The efficiency-minded businessmen who had initiated the reform in 1907 by 1915 began to drop out of the political scene. As Sam Bass Warner has pointed out in his studies of Philadelphia, most of these wealthy lawyers and businessmen who became involved in the reform movements considered themselves amateurs at government and contributed their time in a temporary philanthropic fashion. But after a few years, these experienced and qualified leaders gradually dropped out of the political scene, returning to their professions and executive suites. Their exit from municipal government resulted in a leadership vacuum which slowly filled with less capable men or even professional politicians. In Dallas the caliber of commissioners declined and the reins of leadership fell, first, to a professional politician supported by the Ku Klux Klan, and then to a coalition of bunglers, before the business and professional men

reassumed the civic leadership they had abandoned and instituted a second reform in 1931.[7]

As the atmosphere in City Hall changed after 1915, politics apparently crept into the appointive commissions--the park board, the city planning commission, and the library board--since the mayor had to make political bargains in order to get his nominees approved. This does not mean that the park board became a political body or made policy along political lines. But the appointees did have to pass through the political gauntlet before they could assume their roles as non-partisan board members. This fact of life affected the park board in primarily one way. Every time the city elected a new mayor, the make-up of the board changed, sometimes slightly, sometimes completely. This pattern continued until 1931 when the commission system was junked in favor of the city manager form of government. Even then, the new governmental form did not eliminate political considerations, but for a few years in the early thirties, the board again operated free of political pressure.[8]

The evidence to support the contention that politics became involved in board appointments remains circumstantial. No political analysts bothered to record the minutiae of each appointment and relate it to the broader spectrum of city politics, as was done with the national government. But an understanding of the way in which board appointments are made in modern times, coupled with the concrete facts of political in-fighting that affected the park board in the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s and may have indirectly resulted in the scandals of 1939 which shook the park system to its foundations, leads to the logical assumption that some amount of political consideration went

into most park board appointments in the earlier years, as well.[9]

The first sign that the park board was being dragged into the political arena came in 1917 when Mayor Joe E. Lawther failed to reappoint S. H. Boren to the board. Boren, an appointee of Lawther's predecessor, had served less than two years. The normal length of service had been longer, and no one had ever been removed from the board, except John W. Philp, unless he resigned first. Boren was not reappointed and he did not resign. The new mayor simply submitted a new name to the city commission for approval. That man, W. A. Green, the wealthy owner of Green's Department Store in Dallas, also served only two years and was removed by Mayor Lawther's successor, Frank W. Wozencraft.

Another Lawther appointee suffered a similar fate. M. N. Baker had been the vice president of the park board since its creation in 1907, but he resigned in 1917 and Emil Fretz became the new vice president. Lawther filled the vacancy itself with Sam P. Cochran, a local insurance man who became a vocal patriot and was instrumental in the war-time park activities. But Mayor Wozencraft removed Cochran, also, in 1919.

But perhaps the most difficult-to-understand change that Wozencraft made was the removal of Edgar L. Pike, who had been on the board since 1908. Certainly his experience on the board and his active contribution had earned him plaudits and, perhaps, the right to remain as long as he chose. But he, too, fell under Wozencraft's appointive ax.

Of the entire board membership in 1918, Mayor Wozencraft retained only Emil Fretz and he continued in office until 1927 when he retired. Exactly why Fretz survived the political rearrangements is not clear, but his competence and extreme devotion to the park system may have

overridden all other considerations. The fact that he did survive seems to be an indication of the esteem which he commanded from all elements of the city's political spectrum.

Wozencraft's 1919 appointments included Emil Fretz, Fred Wilson, Charles A. Mangold, and Edgar S. Hurst. Wilson, a real estate investor, served only for the duration of Wozencraft's two year administration. Mangold, the wealthy hotel owner who had been one of the owners of Lake Cliff Park and Theater Company, and Hurst, a clothing store owner, both served through the administrations of Wozencraft and his successor, Sawnie R. Aldredge. But both were replaced after the election of Louis Blaylock to the mayorship. Blaylock again swept out the entire board except for Fretz and appointed a new slate, only to have his entire board replaced in 1927 by his successor, R. E. Burt. Since Fretz retired in 1927, Burt's park board would have been totally inexperienced except that he turned to Edgar Hurst, who had served under Wozencraft and Aldredge, and reappointed him to the board. But the instability persisted as Burt's successor, J. Waddy Tate, appointed a new board, retaining only Hurst, in 1929, only to have that slate completely removed by his successor in 1931 when the first city manager government assumed power.

The rapid turnover of board members gained some respite in the four years of Louis Blaylock's administration. Blaylock, the wealthy and prominent head of the Baptist Publishing House and a director of one of Dallas' banks, has been generally noted as the most competent of the mayors elected to the city commission. But he gained that distinction primarily by becoming a professional politician and learning the



EMIL FRETZ



SAWNIE ALDREDGE



CHARLES MANGOLD



W. R. TIETZE



FOSTER JACOBY



E. BEULAH CAULEY

Leaders of Park Growth, 1920's

intricacies of Dallas government through first-hand experience in three of the five commission seats. He served on the city commission for thirteen years, first as finance commissioner, then as police and fire commissioner, and finally as mayor. But he could not turn the tide of rampant partisan politics that gradually destroyed the Dallas city commission and affected the various boards. Indeed, strong evidence suggests that Blaylock participated wholeheartedly in the political struggle. Blaylock had served as police and fire commissioner from 1917 to 1922, during which time the Dallas Klan had been established and grown to impressive proportions. As a result of Klan affiliations on the part of nearly every county and city law-enforcement official, Klan violence became so open and brutal that even the Klan's imperial officers in Atlanta expressed concern. Following a year of floggings, kidnappings, and acid brandings virtually unhampered by the local police and courts, Blaylock headed the Ku Klux Klan slate of commission nominees in 1923 when the Klan swept to total control of the city and briefly exercised power suggestive of a political machine. Blaylock even sat on the speakers' platform with the Imperial Wizard Hiram Wesley Evans and a flock of other Klan notables and addressed the assembled Knights of the Empire at the dedication of Hope Cottage (a children's home) in Dallas, an event which gained national publicity in 1923.[10]

When the Invisible Empire began to crumble in 1924 and its influence in Dallas waned, the conditions of the city government, unfortunately, did not improve. Politics had permeated every door in City Hall and Blaylock's successor, reform mayor R. E. Burt, proved unable to halt the political invasion. With the election of J. Waddy Tate to the

mayor's seat in 1929, all vestiges of non-partisanship disappeared. All of Tate's appointments have been characterized as political henchmen. The spasms of change during the Burt and Tate administrations were further heightened by a change in the city charter which increased the park board membership to a total of six commissioners, five appointees and the mayor. Only the institution of the city manager government in 1931 returned some degree of stability to the park board.[11]

No attempt will be made in this study to pinpoint the political ties, or lack of ties, of each park board member. Such relationships were nebulous at best and often imperceptible. It should, however, be pointed out that the political "in-crowd" during the administration of J. Waddy Tate basically formed the "out-crowd" before 1929 and after 1931. Tate's cronies closely correlate to the political crowd known in the mid-1930s as the "Catfish Club" from whose membership the park board was largely drawn in the era of the 1939 scandals. The reform movement which resulted in the change to the city manager form of government became a battle between the supporters and opponents of Mayor Tate, although the movement had been gaining support since the early twenties. Tate became the object of attack from the reformers because he made such a good target as a result of his personality and campaign style, his terribly inefficient administration, and his refusal to live within the municipal budget.

The activities of R. E. Burt's and J. Waddy Tate's administrations present the classic examples of the politicization of a non-partisan civic board. During Burt's two year tenure, the main thrust of commission efforts centered on a new development program for the entire city.

The Ulrickson Committee, appointed by the city commission, formulated a nine-year capital budget program with eighty-one proposed projects, including such items as schools, a hospital, fire stations, and an airport, as well as many other common service needs like sewers and street paving. The $23,900,000 ($1,500,000 specifically designated for the park system) Ulrickson Plan, an updated version of Kessler's 1911 study, gained voter approval in December of 1927. If the citizens, city commission, and the park board had responded in a fashion similar to their 1911-1912 burst of energy to fulfill Kessler's plan, then 1928 should have been filled with press coverage of magnificent accomplishments, considering the scope of the Ulrickson proposals. However, the local newspapers reported instead that the city commission deadlocked in late March of 1928 over disagreements about the value of some of the projects. Without the consent of the commission, the city officials could not sell any of the bonds, thus stagnating progress in several departments, especially the park department.[12]

By 1919 the dispute over the Ulrickson program became one of the major issues of the municipal elections. The voters, however, rendered the commission even more helpless as they elected the least capable and most political slate of officers that ever led the city corporation. Apparently, even some of the commissioners recognized the basic problems which impeded accomplishment. John Fouts, the water commissioner in 1929, told a Dallas Morning News reporter that the many delays in the Ulrickson program were caused by "too much politics."[13]

Finally, a portion of the bonds passed through the commissioners' bickering and the city issued $4,300,000 (about eighteen percent of the

total program)in bonds. However, only $200,000 (or less than five percent of the bonds issued in 1929) went for parks; the vast majority went for sewers and waterworks. But even this pittance for the park system suffered opposition on the city commission. Finance Commissioner John Harris strongly disapproved any further issuance of Ulrickson bonds for park purposes in 1930 citing the lack of funds to pay the interest and sinking fund on the bonds as his basis for opposition. Again the commissioners erupted into political back-stabbing as Mayor Tate, who had been elected partly on a platform of controversial park development, declared that he would support the issuance of bonds for parks anyway. Within a week, Tate's park board appointees leaked a message to the press saying that the park at Bachman reservoir would be improved (an issue which had proved popular in the 1929 elections) only if the city commission granted $100,000 of the Ulrickson bonds for park purposes that year. The message insinuated that if the park opponents on the city commission failed to approve the bonds, such action would be used against them in the next election. The ploy failed but demonstrated the political entanglement of the park board.[14]

Such political pressure, however, worked both ways. In the spring of 1931 some of the city commissioners tried to cause a division of opinion among Oak Cliff residents over a proposed park in their area. The contrived dispute resulted to a degree in some unpleasant pressure on the park board. This sort of maneuvering encouraged those Dallasites who favored new reforms because it added fuel to their arguments.[15]

Simultaneous with the politicization of the board, the Ulrickson Plan increasingly became a political baseball batted from commissioner

to commissioner until after governmental reforms in 1931. Even then the problems of depression-era financing stymied the program. A city report on past planning in Dallas issued in 1956 revealed that nearly thirty years after the Ulrickson program was approved only five of the eighty-one projects had been completed, only thirty-three had entered final construction stages, and twenty-five percent of the proposals had never been attempted. The effect of the Ulrickson program upon the park system remained quite limited until the mid-1930s. Virtually all bond money allocated for parks until that time went for limited improvements in several existing parks.[16]

During this same period an open dispute arose between the city commission and the park board. The State Fair Association wanted to build a larger athletic stadium at Fair Park but could not afford it. Conferences with various city officials revealed that everyone recognized a need for such a stadium but that several people opposed use of city funds to assist in its construction, especially Finance Commissioner John Harris. Nevertheless, a majority of the city commission favored a plan whereby the park board would assign a portion of the park tax to finance the facility and transmitted the approved plan to the park board for a "rubber-stamp" approval. But the park board balked, pointing out that the city could not exercise such authority over the expenditure of park tax money. The board members, fearing a dreadful precedent, flatly rejected the plan and negotiated a different arrangement with the fair association.[17]

But perhaps the most glaring example of "park politics" developed around the White Rock reservoir and became a serious struggle between

opposing political factions, park ideologies, and economic classes. For many years, the ultimate development of White Rock reservoir as a park of some type had received periodic attention. George Kessler had suggested the park value of the property as early as 1911 when the reservoir lay nearly two miles from the nearest residential outskirts of the city. But no serious attempts to develop the lake as a park appeared until the mid-twenties. By that time, the population of the city had reached the reservoir and a number of fine homes had been built around the lake by some of Dallas' most wealthy residents. Actual control of the reservoir rested in the hands of the water department which had expressed little interest in operating parks as a sideline. But when Colonel S. E. Moss became the water commissioner in 1927, he began to investigate the possibilities of a park development at the lake.

Colonel Moss favored a "Coney Island"[18] type amusement facility for White Rock but found that the wealthy lake residents abhorred the concept. After about a year of frustration, Moss announced to the press that his attempts to begin development of a popular resort for Dallasites had been thwarted by "the blue stocking crowd."[19] He declared that the wealthy property owners surrounding the lake objected to any development which would include music, dancing, swimming, and amusement rides because such activities would lower the property values of their elite neighborhood. Instead, the residents favored development of golf links and bridle paths. Moss responded to their suggestions by seeking a political solution. He announced his intention to inject the issue into the next municipal races, apparently thinking that political advantage could be gained by pitting popular support against the elite who lived

at White Rock Lake.[20]

The issue did play a major role in the 1929 city elections, but Moss did not became the champion of the common man as he had supposed and dropped out of the race. His "thunder" had been stolen by the more flamboyant J. Waddy Tate, who became something of a political demagogue. As mayor, Tate's calls to "Coney Islandize" White Rock Lake reached a serious level and he arranged the transfer of the city property around the lake to park board control where he could directly influence the development. The park board began formulating plans for White Rock in January of 1930.[21]

However, the affluent lake residents mustered powerful opposition to Tate's proposals. The Dallas Morning News blasted the Coney Island concept repeatedly throughout the spring of 1930. The issue became so important that even the editorial cartoon, a space usually devoted to national and state issues, contributed a devastating blow on April 19th. But still Tate pushed for the amusement park, although he backed away from a full-blown "Coney Island" as originally planned. In late April and early May, the News stepped up its criticism and published an interview with a nationally prominent planner who disapproved of the Tate proposals. Then John Fouts, who had become water commissioner in 1929, suggested the Coney Island development be transferred to Mountain Creek Lake where no residential area would be affected. After another major editorial attack on May 1st, Park Commissioner Hugh January became so distressed at the political pressure and criticism being leveled at the board that he resigned his position. After that, the controversy seems to have subsided. The Coney Island amusements never appeared at White

Rock and the News criticism stopped.[22]

Although that one issue disappeared, the park board proceedings hardly returned to a non-partisan level. The city commission continued to interfere in strictly park board affairs and the factionalism that had engulfed the City Hall took a severe toll on the park system. The park commissioners frequently resorted to internal bickering which stagnated their accomplishments because they could not agree on courses of action. The News resorted to editorial understatement in December of 1930 when it bemoaned the "lack of unanimity" on the park board.[23]

From an overall viewpoint, the park board had lost its effectiveness. Once the board had been able to cut through details and achieve great results because of the civic-minded service rendered by men who kept their deliberations free of political considerations. But by 1931 politics and factionalism had become as dominant in the park board as they had been in the old city council parks' committee. As factional struggles increased within the city commission, the park board was drawn into the fray and genuine accomplishment declined radically. Certainly individual parks gained improvements during the late 1920s, but the new acreage purchased by the board after 1924 dropped to insignificant proportions. Had not generous citizens made several donations and the city commission transferred thirty-one hundred acres (Bachman and White Rock reservoirs) to the park board control, the actual lack of accomplishment would have been far more evident.

The political excesses of Tate's administration signaled that the city was ripe for a new wave of reform. Suggestions for reform had surfaced several years before, but in 1927 the Dallas Morning News began an

organized campaign under the leadership of Tom Flinty, Jr., who had become editor of the paper. Several procedural setbacks delayed reform until 1929 when an anti-reform mayor, J. Waddy Tate, was elected. Although this seemed to be another setback, it proved a blessing because Tate's administration provided all the issues for which a reformer could ask. His performance as mayor contributed to the ability of various reform organizations to convince sixty-eight percent of the voters in 1930 to favor reform.[24]

The reform instituted in 1930 was the city manager form of government which still operates Dallas affairs. The voters elected the first new city council for this government in the spring of 1931. And under this new system, the mayor no longer served as board president. All board positions became appointive and the members elected their president from among their own ranks.

The new city council, which took office in 1931, dismissed Tate's park board appointees and approved a new slate of commissioners which recalled George S. Leachman who had served six years on the board under Mayors Aldredge and Blaylock. The rest of the board represented new faces but few strangers to the park department. In particular Edwin J. Kiest, who had donated the Kiest Memorial Park only a year before, became president of the board. In general the council returned the quality of business expertise on the board to a high and respected level. Tate's board had included a retail merchant, a grocer, a housewife, a landscape architect, and real estate brokers. Certainly most of these people possessed business experience and at least one of them had special talents appropriate for the job. The new board, however, represented an

obvious statement of the Dallas businessmen's concept of reform. Excluding George S. Leachman who had been returned to office to provide some continuity for the board, all the rest were high level executives in Dallas banks and corporations. President Kiest, the most prominent, was the owner and publisher of the Dallas Times-Herald.[25]

With the institution of the 1931 reforms, the park board gained a brief respite from the perils of municipal politics which had racked the department and slowed development in the parks. The numerous changes in board membership which revealed the politicization of the policy making body can be seen in Volume III. Other information about the men on the board between 1905 and 1932 can be found in Volume III.

Through the years, as park board members came and went according to the political winds of the day, numerous changes also occurred among the employees within the park department. Most of these changes were insignificant, but at least three bear mentioning. First, George Kessler had suggested that the park board should hire as its secretary an engineer who could provide technical assistance while supervising a department office staff. Such an idea seemed quite practical in an era when no park director existed and Superintendent Tietze, who was concerned primarily with maintenance and beauty, represented the highest ranking employee. In 1916 the board finally found a secretary/engineer in the person of C. S. Reagan, but his tenure proved short as he entered military service during the world war and returned to his park duties only briefly after the war. When he left, no attempt was even made to find another secretary/engineer.[26]

Second, after some interim secretaries, the board hired a young lady who became one of the most important park employees of all time, Miss E. Beulah Cauley. She assumed her secretarial duties in 1920 and held that position continuously until her retirement in 1965. Her efficiency and knowledge of park affairs eventually made her second only to the Director of Parks and Recreation in influence within the department. Indeed, her ability became so highly respected in City Hall that after the 1939 scandals involving park board members, she received appointment as Acting Director of Parks and Recreation for an interim period between Foster Jacoby and L. B. Houston.[27]

Third, in 1919 the board hired an athletic young man named Foster Jacoby to fill the position of Supervisor of Playgrounds, a rank equal to that held by the Superintendent of Parks. The playgrounds supervisor was responsible for the recreation programs, the activities of all the parks, and the supervision of the recreation staff, while the Superintendent of Parks was responsible for the physical aspects of the parks, like maintenance and development. Jacoby's employment began a long career with the park department. He became the first Director of Parks and Playgrounds in 1920 and held that position until 1939 when he was replaced in the reorganization which followed the park scandals. Under his direction, the park system developed strong recreation programs which influenced the lives of thousands of Dallas youngsters, as discussed in Chapter twelve.[28]

The early establishment of the Jacoby/Cauley team of administration in the department offices probably represented one of the most important developments in early park history. The swirling tempest of

city politics, complete with domination in the early 1920s by the Ku Klux Klan, could have wrought havoc in the department and its programs, as it did in other city departments, especially under the Tate regime. But the park department, below the level of board activity, remained calm, thrifty, and remarkably efficient in comparison to other city departments. This state of affairs must be directly attributed to the abilities of Foster Jacoby and Beulah Cauley.[29]

In general, it must be admitted that most changes in park personnel, whether political appointee or employee, did not dramatically affect the park department one way or another for several reasons. First, many of the board members served for too short a time to yield much influence on the system. The average number of years of service for the twenty-five men appointed to the board between 1905 and 1931 reached only about four and one-third years. However, a more realistic average appears if three men are removed from the list, Emil Fretz, M. N. Baker, and Edgar L. Pike, who served exceptionally long terms of twenty-two, twelve and one-half, and eleven years, respectively. With these exclusions, the average falls to slightly less than three years. The average term in office for the mayors who served as board presidents barely exceeded two years. With park board tenure for most members, elected and appointed, only lasting between two and three years, few individuals could make extensive contributions. Second, agitation from outside the park board usually produced the bond elections. Few of the board members, and never a majority, proved willing in this time period to initiate bond movements without significant support from influential civic groups. Thus individuals on the board itself cannot be credited

with beginning bond improvements. Third, professional plans and generous donations guided the selection of many park sites, and thus the possibility of direct board influence on that factor was reduced. And fourth, the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which the parks were placed usually determined the nature and use of the parks within certain general guidelines essentially established by the first board appointed. With so many things predetermined by outside influences, the board members' individual contributions were necessarily limited to the details of park development. Few park commissioners, probably less than six, could claim to have directly influenced park philosophy.

Only one man in the entire history of the parks in Dallas can realistically be classified as having been a dominant influence before 1931--Emil Fretz. Due to his long tenure on the board, Fretz was able to direct much of the thrust of park development into areas of his personal concern, those areas all relating to children, especially underprivileged children. Fretz enthusiastically supported the Trinity and Summit Play Park programs and all the social welfare work conducted there. His deep concern for the health and happiness of the children in the slum areas of Dallas resulted in his desire to see playground equipment placed in every park. He actively sought closer relations between the park board and the Board of Education. In 1919 he directed the employment of Foster Jacoby, whose athletic and recreational programs meshed well with Fretz's concern for children. The overall contribution that Emil Fretz made to the entire park system has become so permanent and pervasive that it can only be compared to the effect that George Kessler has had on the entire city. Other people came and went;

Emil Fretz stayed, survived the politics, and worked. His personal dedication to the park system and his intense concern for the welfare of children influenced so many park decisions that his personal contribution to Dallas was not surpassed until the federal programs of the 1930s overwhelmed all previous park developments.[30]

But regardless of whoever was responsible for the philosophy, improvements, and details, the park system had progressed impressively since 1876. The beginnings of the system at City Park could have raised high hopes for an extended system in a few years, but those hopes collapsed in the face of economic depression. Other early attempts at expansion met untimely ends at the hands of petty politics among city aldermen. But the expansion finally arrived in the form of a life or death matter--would the State Fair be saved from financial collapse or be allowed slowly to strangle to death on mounting indebtedness? The citizens chose to save the fair. The subsequent establishment of a park board to operate the two parks, as well as the vastly increased city population, virtually guaranteed expansion within the park system.

The expansion of facilities made by the park board through the years may be viewed in terms of mounting acreage, real estate value, park programs, and recreational centers, as has been done throughout this study. But parks represent much more than investments in property and facilities; they are investments in both present and future lives. The influence of parks and playgrounds upon the minds and attitudes of millions of individuals throughout a century of existence is beyond the realm of scientific measure. But for generations of Dallasites, City Park and all its many offspring throughout the city have provided

places for quiet escape, noisy frolic, grand entertainment, busy creativity, wholesome recreation, and much more. The children who played joyfully in the parks, the readers who sought nature's setting for literary adventure, the lovers who strolled the garden paths, the athletes who first tested their skills in the park programs, the people who heard their first concert in the parks--the list is endless--all these people have been influenced by the Dallas parks in subtle ways which, perhaps, only a psychologist could explain. Hopefully, the influences have been positive. Certainly the parks have provided immeasurable amounts of pleasure for many years. Those pleasurable experiences did not come accidentally. Much hard work by many laborers, supervisors, administrators, and policy makers produced parks in Dallas which had received national recognition by 1928.

The leadership of this park system generally provided well considered direction for the department. The people who served on the park board generally possessed distinguished credentials for their jobs and served capably. Upon occasion, particularly in the late 1920s, leadership faltered, but the foundation of parks, facilities, and programs had been so well laid by the early boards that little serious damage could have been done to the system. Certainly the reforms in city government precluded any permanent deviation from the established pattern of operation.

That "pattern of operation" may be described as moderately conservative and civic minded. The innovations and facilities in Dallas parks by 1931 reflected accepted and uncontroversial national trends. Dallas did not lead the way with either dramatic innovations or a humanitarian

philosophy. Rather, the city moved with the mainstream of contemporary American thought concerning park development. Perhaps a significant measure of the conservatism practiced by the park board may be drawn from the fact that the "Coney Island" concept at White Rock Lake represented the only development ever attempted by the board which caused more than isolated protests from one or two individuals. Most of the criticism leveled at the board between 1905 and 1931 cited the commissioners' lack of action or shortsightedness, not their excessive activity.

By 1931 the park system had completed another cycle of development. After several fluctuations, the system had experienced a massive injection of donated land in the early 1920s. Following that period of growth, the parks had entered a downswing of both growth and development due in part to political intanglement. The national financial crash in 1929 contributed to bring the development cycle of the 1920s to a close in the depths of depression by 1932. In addition, the institution of a reform city government and a new park board essentially brought the first half of Dallas' park history to a close at the same moment that the downswing reached its lowest point. The new board, combined with the federal "New Deal" work programs of the mid-1930s, would change the face of many parks and provide the system's greatest achievements in 1936. But in 1931-1932, the Dallas park system hesitated, standing firmly upon a strong foundation of achievement, but economically unable to proceed.

## NOTES

## OF POLITICS AND PERSONNEL

[1]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, see section on "Park Board Members"; Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 4, 5 May 1915, p. 99; and Dallas Morning News, 2 March 1911, p. 6; 18 May 1911, p. 16; 24 May 1911, p. 4.

[2]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 6 August 1912, p. 167; 11 November 1912, p. 181; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board Members."

[3]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 3, 9 October 1912, p. 178; Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board Minutes"; and Dallas Morning News, 2 March 1911, p. 6.

[4]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 14 June 1915, p. 113; 6 August 1915, p. 119. More extensive discussions of the early board members can be found in Chapter seven of this thesis.

[5]Ibid., 16 September 1915, p. 124; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board Members."

[6]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), pp. 10-15; and James Weinstein, "Organized Business and the City Commission and Manager Movements," Journal of Southern History 28 (May 1962): 178.

[7]Sam Bass Warner, Jr., The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Its Growth (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), p. 214.

[8]Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 10-15; and Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board Members."

[9]Patricia R. Hogan, "The Step Into a Modern World: The History of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department 1931 to Present" (M. S. thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974), Chapter four.

[10]Kenneth T. Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City 1915-1930 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 75-76; David M. Chalmers,

[10]Hooded Americanism: The First Century of the Ku Klux Klan 1865-1965 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965), pp. 41-42; and Charles C. Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), pp. 93-94.

[11]Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 11, 12, 16, 28; and Jackson, The Ku Klux Klan in the City, pp. 79-80.

[12]Dallas Morning News, 29 March 1928, p. 13; 21 March 1929, p. 1.

[13]Ibid.; 22 June 1929, p. 13.

[14]Ibid., 2 July 1929, sec. II, p. 1; 18 July 1929, sec. II, p. 1; 24 July 1929, p. 17; 30 October 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 5 November 1930, sec. II, p. 1.

[15]Ibid., 20 March 1931, sec. II, p. 1.

[16]Dallas Master Plan Committee, D. A. Hulcy, Chairman, A Look at Past Planning for the City of Dallas (Dallas: City of Dallas, 1956), unpaged.

[17]Dallas Morning News, 28 February 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 2 March 1930, p. 3; 5 March 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 12 March 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 21 May 1930, sec. II, p. 1.

[18]Coney Island is a famous beach and amusement park in Brooklyn, New York, which contains numerous carnival rides and attractions.

[19]Dallas Morning News, 14 July 1928, p. 13.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 10 December 1929, p. 17.

[22]Ibid., 8 January 1930, p. 4; 12 January 1930, p. 12; 19 April 1930, p. 16; 26 April 1930, p. 3; 29 April 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 30 April 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 1 May 1930, p. 18.

[23]Ibid., 14 December 1930, Auto section, p. 6.

[24]Detailed accounts of reforms which resulted in the city manager form of government in Dallas may be found in Stone, City Manager Government. Also see Carolyn Jenkins Barta, "The Dallas News and Council-Manager Government" (M. A. thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1970).

[25]Cauley, "Notes," see section on "Park Board Members."

[26]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 4, 8 June 1916, p. 150.

[27]Ibid., vol. 5, 24 November 1920, p. 61.

[28]Ibid., vol. 4, 12 December 1918, p. 245; vol. 5, 8 November 1920, p. 59.

[29]Dr. J. W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973; Earl Freeman, former Dallas park employee, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[30]Emil Fretz, III, grandson of Emil Fretz, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

# CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE DALLAS, TEXAS PARK SYSTEM, 1876-1976

VOLUME II

1930-1976

by

PATRICIA R. HOGAN, M.S.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE POLITICAL SETTING 1931-1945

The history of the Dallas Park System reflects the political, social, and cultural status of the city at each and every point in time. Many reasons for Dallas being nationally famous are related by some means to the park department. Until a short time ago, the Dallas Cowboys, the local professional football team, called Fair Park's Cotton Bowl Stadium their home. This same stadium is also a supposedly neutral meeting ground for the intense rivals, the University of Texas and Oklahoma University, and it is the site for the nationally televised, New Year's Day Cotton Bowl game. The largest annual state fair in the world also makes Fair Park its home, drawing thousands of visitors each day the gates are opened.

Nationwide golf tournaments have been held in Dallas parks, while famous athletes such as Babe Didrikson Zaharias, Lee Trevino, and Lee Elder all honed their skills on park facilities. Fair Park was the site of the State of Texas' Centennial celebration in 1936 of its independence from the bonds of Mexico. Famous gangsters, like Bonnie and Clyde were rumored to be frequent visitors in Dallas parks. One of the world's best zoos and one of the South's best collection of museums are administered by the Dallas Park Department.

Many social problems have rested on the shoulders of the park board members. Parks were used to provide welfare services during the depression and for fund raising during world wars. During pre-air

conditioning days, parks provided pleasant outdoor sites for Sunday evening church services. Improved race relations rested partially upon the activities of the park board. And when the eyes of the entire nation were watching to see what Dallas would do in memory of President Kennedy, the responsibility was handed to the park board.

There is no way for a park department to avoid being involved in the local political trends of each era of the city's history. If an area of town has no parks and it happens to be a minority section or lower income section, the politicians latch on to the situation, demanding reform. If a city council selects a highly partisan park board, politics become involved. When the Fine Arts Museum negotiated for a showing of paintings from socialist countries, politics entered the picture again. If anti-Vietnam rallies were granted park board approval, it becomes another issue of political viewpoints. To many people, the department that does not keep "hippies" or "freaks" out of its parks is condoning the use of drugs. No matter how a problem is approached acts of the park department are judged from the political, social, and cultural viewpoints of the citizenry it serves. A city's park history should be a microcosmic view of a city's history, and should interpret the development of the life of the residents of the metropolis.

The years 1931 through 1945 in Dallas marked a transition period in both city history and park history. In general it was a time when actual visible accomplishments seemed few, but in reality, the foresight and insight forced upon the people by the circumstances may be largely responsible for the rapid growth and considerable success

enjoyed in most facets of Dallas' local government since 1945. A severe depression, a growing trend of apathy, and a world war served to limit entry into the modern era of city government, but the ground work was laid effectively.

A growing awareness of needed change in Dallas government began during the late 1920s when the Dallas Charter Association was formed to carry out the campaign for council-manager government. Having effectively manipulated the media, the Charter Association received generous support from all local newspapers and radio stations. People representing the Charter Association went to any size gathering anywhere in the city. Volunteers talked to housewives, invalids, and civic clubs. This educational effort proved effective; however, even without this communication barrage, the new form of government had excellent chances of receiving the voters' approval.

General dissatisfaction had been brewing in Dallas government for some time. The commission government had been effective in 1905 when it was first placed in operation, but with a growing city, the ambitions of five equally powerful commissioners were hard to correlate. Each man had his own ideas of what was important and what was unnecessary which made conflict almost inevitable. Nationwide, just as in Dallas, the commission form of government consistently proved itself inadequate to manage a rapidly growing metropolis.[1]

In addition to commissioner conflicts, the city government up to 1930 had been rather poorly managed. The Public Works Department funds were over one million dollars in deficit while the Water Department's overdraft was $460,000. The Fire Department suffered losses

of five dollars per capita which seemed rather high when compared to similiar-sized municipalities. The Health Department was classified as "inefficient" and garbage pickup was described as "erratic." Recruiting and promoting of city employees was ludicruous because there was no method based on merit, and departmental payscales were neither standardized nor equalized.[2]

Based upon this knowledge, Dallas' citizens on October 10, 1930, voted for the thirty-nine amendments to the city charter which in effect gave Dallas a new form of government. Six councilmen were elected from the six specific districts and three councilmen received election at large. All candidates had been nominated by petition without party or group designation. The councilmen then selected from among themselves T. L. Bradford as the first mayor and then they appointed John Edy as the first city manager. By charter provision, the city council also had the power to appoint the city attorney, the supervisor of public utilities, the city auditor, the city secretary, the corporation court judge, and the members of the park board.[3]

The city manager's task was to oversee the seven departments specified by the new city charter and one created by ordinance of the council. The directors of each department answered directly to the manager, resulting in the obvious advantages of tight control which the manager could hold over a small number of departments. In turn the department directors needed to answer to only one boss instead of five. The separation of power between manager and council made clear the responsibilities of each, ending the potential for "buck passing," as well as "pork barrel" legislation. Dallas was to be "run on a

business schedule by business methods by businessmen," very analogous to a corporation president and a board of directors.[4]

John Edy, the new city manager, ordered a major overhaul of every department. Having previously served as city manager in Berkeley, California and Flint, Michigan, Edy established a civil service system in Dallas similar to the ones in those cities. The new system required merit performances and provided standardized payscales. A program of training and apprenticeship for young men that quickly gave them positions of responsibility was set up. Political activity of any kind by city employees was forbidden by the charter, and Edy promised no compromises in the rules of law enforcement written in the charter. He brought strict budgetary control into a previously lax environment. Each department under the city manager had to present not only the annual budget, but he required that it be segmented into twelve proposed monthly expenditures.[5]

The new charter did have a few clauses which caused some difficulties. It had specified that the library board, the hospital board, and the park board were to be appointed by the city council and answerable to the council, not the manager. Edy felt that this was a difficult situation because he believed that the public held him responsible for the activities of these boards but yet he had no power without a call of interference. Actually, however, under Edy's 1931-1935 term the independence of these civic-minded boards caused him little trouble, and their effectiveness was slowed only by the same economic conditions which affected the entire city.[6]

All of the central city and the outlying suburbs were affected

by the great depression, but some citizens suffered disastrously while others claimed awareness of no real hardships. However, when one newspaper proclaimed the winter of 1930 as "the coldest of the century" the reporter was probably making reference to the general outlook of many city residents as well as the weather. Long lines formed outside fire stations to get whatever meager portions of food might be handed out. Estimates of unemployment figures for the winter of 1931 ranged from thirty thousand to eighty thousand, depending upon how many non-Dallasites stumbled into the city in search of jobs and food. Church attendance climbed by an average of three hundred thousand per week in the Dallas area, and the consumption of cigarettes and illegal liquor increased tremendously.[7]

In general, the banks of the Dallas area proved to be stabilizing factors in the stricken community. The overall economy of this southwestern city did not suffer as severely as those located in the east. As a light manufacturing center balanced with large percentages of banking and insurance, the city was less affected by the rapid economic fluctuations than a city relying solely upon heavy industry. Banking, insurance, and distribution did not require extensive layoffs when business slowed.[8]

However, unemployment was locally severe, even if not proportionately as severe as the industrialized eastern states. The triple underpass of Commerce, Main, and Elm streets, the four new viaducts, and the new sewer and water lines laid during the early 1930s were all city make-work projects which helped relieve the unemployment roles. Private charities, such as the United Charities and the Civic Federation

immediately were overwhelmed. The welfare department with the help of the park department opened milk stations in several parks, particularly those near the Trinity Heights area which was then dubbed "Hungry Heights." The situation looked dismal again in 1932 as the city ran out of funds for make-work projects and the welfare board seemed to fall further behind in what appeared to be a hopeless task.[9]

During 1933, the newly elected president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, provided some help to Dallasites under the Federal Emergency Relief Authority. With federal funds combined with city staffs and facilities, a case load of more than ten thousand families was served. Another federal agency designed for relief was the Civil Works Administration (CWA), which was designed for early phaseout in hopes that the world would have returned to normal. Unfortunately, the dismal economic situation did not disappear.[10]

In spite of the lack of money, the new city government was able to adhere to the rigid budgetary restrictions imposed under Edy's direction. Most of the city departments, including the park department, even were undercutting the budget in order to relieve the city of debts accrued by the previous administrations. The wisdom of such drastic reductions can be questioned in light of the situation and during the time when extra funds might have employed a few more jobless men. Nevertheless, Edy had promised Dallas that he would straighten out the financial records, and that he intended to do. The Charter Association won the 1933 council election with an overwhelming vote, indicating strong citizen approval for the Charter Association and its appointed administrator.[11]

However, by 1934 trouble clouds began to form in Dallas politics. The Catfish Club was the major reason behind the strong partisanship. This was a group of left-over, disgruntled advocates of the commission government who organized shortly after the 1933 elections. Its existence was kept secret until 1934 when an opponent discovered the private meetings. There was some debate as to how the title of Catfish came to be. It was either because a catfish lives in muddy waters and out of sight or because a catfish was known to have a big mouth and a little brain. Wherever the name came from, it was true that meetings could be attended only with a membership card and reporters were barred completely. The club's organizers worked chiefly among the lower-income groups and members of ritualistic organizations like the Elks and the Odd Fellows. Being intelligent enough to realize that such an underground group could not win an election, they recruited Hal Moseley, former Commissioner of Public Streets and Public Property, as campaign manager for the new Civic Association. This new organization, silently backed by the Catfish Club, took over Dallas government in 1935.[12]

There was one other factor that helped keep Edy out of the city manager's office in 1935, and that was the state of Texas' one hundredth anniversary of its freedom from Mexico. Several prominent Dallasites convinced the Texas Legislature to designate Dallas as the state's location for the celebration. Dallasites were worldly enough to realize that Edy's strong enforcement of law and order would have a detrimental effect upon the fun-loving visitors to the Texas Centennial. A "blue-nosed town" would not have a chance of drawing enough people

to make the event worthwhile. With the election of the Civic Association ticket in 1935 a workable compromise was put into effect. The Dallas citizen was ruled by strong law enforcement, at least in theory, while the visitor was encouraged to enjoy himself. On the surface this strange compromise seemed to work.[13]

Hal Moseley, the former campaign manager, was chosen by the new council to be Dallas' second city manager. Immediately the Catfish Club began giving strong hints as to whom they wanted appointed to each position. Much to their surprise, Moseley failed to comply with their suggestion for the new chief of police. Only five men out of a council of nine were behind Moseley and it was merely the beginning of his term. Undaunted, the new city manager proceeded to refuse the Catfish choices for tax assessor and fire chief. He did yield to council requests when he removed the welfare director, but he made his own choice on her replacement.[14]

With Moseley in office, matters appeared to be growing brighter. He was not bowing to every wish of the Catfish Club, Dallas had been chosen as the site for the Texas Centennial, and most importantly, the federal government had implemented several relief programs. With the realization that much more money would have to be pumped into the economy to overcome the slump, the Roosevelt administration instituted the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the National Youth Administration (NYA). It was these four alphabet agencies that proved most successful nationally and helped Dallas the most, particularly in the development of its park system. The millions of dollars injected

into the city's economy helped bring Dallas out of the depression. Soon Dallas was selected as a regional headquarters for the WPA, while the city led the entire state with 13,365 on local WPA payrolls. With the atmosphere of gaiety created by the Centennial celebration and a drop in unemployment, Dallas' future looked bright.[15]

But the good fortune did not last long. After the close of the Centennial in 1937 unemployment rates rose steeply, and another controversial election was in store for the city. A revived Charter Association demanded that law enforcement be tightened. They felt things had become entirely out of control during the Centennial, and that it was time to revert back to a clean city, to make Dallas a good place to raise children once again. Accusations were levied at the city administration, labeling the wide open, wild saloons, illegal whiskey, gambling, and prostitution as the fault of the councilmen.[16]

The incumbents believed differently. The behind-the-scenes Catfish leaders realized that their goal of a patronage system was not yet a reality, so they decided to change their tactics. They changed their organizational title to the Legion of Honor, which backed the new Forward Dallas Party. The new party took the place of the Civic Association as the main opposition to the Charter Association. The Forward Dallas Party favored most of the incumbent council members, but they left Moseley's name out of their campaign speeches. They could not afford to have the voters think they had refused to back the city manager because he had failed to comply with Catfish wishes, but because they were upset with him, they did not want to publicly endorse him.[17]

By openly vying for the vote of the Negroes, blighted areas, and workingmen's neighborhoods, the Forward Dallas Party gained a victory. But the victory was not unanimous--five of the nine councilmen were of the Forward Dallas Party while four were of the renewed Charter Association. Internally, the councilmen either disagreed with Moseley as manager or they supported him. It was only because they so seriously disagreed with each other that Moseley remained. Everybody was getting on each other's nerves, and general opinion agreed that the economic state should be on the recovery, but conditions appeared to be on the downside once again as unemployment began to creep even higher. City leaders were weary from the responsibilities of having held a tremendous Centennial celebration and the following Pan-American fair. Tolerance of federal red tape relating to the numerous work projects was growing low. In general, Dallasites were depressed and apathetic. Much to the grievance of the park board, a few of their members took advantage of the lackadaisical atmosphere and available funds to involve themselves in a scorching scandal. Such actions aroused the newspapers, but the general public appears to have simply accepted the fraud and graft of the park board as something to be tolerated or as something of minimal proportions compared to the lingering signs of the depression.[18]

The election of 1939 got rid of all the Catfish, and returned the Charter Association to tight control of Dallas civic affairs. The new council strengthened law enforcement, avoided patronage, and insisted upon accurate record keeping and budgetary reporting. The new council selected Woodall Rodgers as the mayor and James Aston became

the third city manager of Dallas. At the time of taking office the objectives were to remove any causes of scandal or misconduct in the municipal government. For this reason, the park board, which had been most adversely publicized, was reorganized with five new members who chose a new president and a new director to unscramble the difficulties in the park department.

Not long afterward, the bugles of World War II called away the labor force, leaving the city with a serious void in the available work force. The concern for the world's future shattered the personal and political barriers that had been erected. However, with the shortage of manpower and material, municipal activities came to a new standstill. This became a period for planning in all departments of the city. Plans of all types were drawn up in excited anticipation of the war's end and the return of the men and prosperity. The park board and its new director were leaders in the post-war planning effort. The end of the war made an ideal ending for the initial development phase of the modern Dallas Park and Recreation Department including its trials and troubles with the new council/manager government in Dallas, Texas.

## NOTES

### THE POLITICAL SETTING 1931-1945

[1]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), p. 13.

[2]Ibid., p. 18.

[3]Dallas Morning News, 23 September 1930, sec. I, p. 1.

[4]Stone, City Manager Government, p. 24.

[5]One young man who took advantage of Edy's training program was a young public works department employee, L. B. Houston, who was to become director of parks in 1939.

[6]Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 26, 33, 45.

[7]Henry P. Kucera, former Dallas city attorney, interview with author, June 1973; Elgin Crull, former Dallas city manager, interview with author, June 1973; L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973; Jean Craft, assistant Dallas park director, interview with author, April 1974; Wylie Moore, Dallas golf pro at Stevens Park, interview with author, June 1973; Lillian Schwertz, Dallas park recreation director, interview with author, June 1973; Lynn Schmid, former Dallas parks recreation leader, interview with author, June 1973; William Keeling, former Dallas parks superintendent of recreation, interview with author, July 1973; Earl Freeman, former Dallas park employee, interview with author, July 1973; Dr. J.W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, all tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; Mavis Bryant, "Dallas' Legacy to the Great 1930's Depression," Dallas, October 1972, p. 18; and Dallas Morning News, 18 January 1930, sec. II, p. 1; 27 August 1931, sec. II, p. 2; 4 October 1931, sec. II, p. 1.

[8]Bryant, "Depression," p. 31.

[9]Dallas Morning News, 27 August 1930, sec. II, p. 2; 4 November 1930, sec. II, p. 2; 9 November 1930, sec. I, p. 1; 4 November 1931, sec. II, p. 2; and Bryant, "Depression," pp. 18, 31.

[10]William Leuchtenburg, The Unfinished Century (Boston: Little Brown, 1973), p. 365; and Dallas Morning News, 23 February 1934, sec. II, p. 1.

[11]Dallas Morning News, 5 April 1933, sec. II, p. 1.

[12]Crull interview; Bass interview; Houston interview; and Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 65, 66.

[13]Bass interview; and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 52.

[14]Crull interview; and Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 71, 72.

[15]Dallas Morning News, 16 July 1935, sec. II, p. 1; and 1 January 1936, sec. I, p. 1.

[16]Bryant, "Depression," p. 18.

[17]Bass interview; and Stone, City Manager Government, p. 78.

[18]Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 79, 80; Bryant, "Depression," p. 18; and Neil G. Sapper, "A Survey of the History of the Black People of Texas, 1930-1954" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1972), p. 64.

## CHAPTER 2

## THE FORCE OF A DEPRESSION 1931-1935

These four years, between 1931 and 1935, are often thought of as some of the most difficult Americans have had to endure. Everywhere people were having to readjust their lives and lifestyles in order to cope with the hardships inflicted upon them by the stock market crash of 1929.

The park and recreation field was no different from the majority of professions which were forced to operate on drastically reduced budgets, except that the municipal park systems took on greatly increased responsibilities. Generally because of the shortage of spending money, citizens demanded and participated in increasing numbers in public recreation programs.

L. H. Weir, a park specialist with the National Recreation Association, reported in Public Management a nationwide fifty percent reduction in park expenditures. Salary cuts between five and twenty percent were common in the profession. Across the country, park departments discontinued capital expenditures, economized on their equipment, eliminated the less productive parts of their programs, secured the aid of volunteer workers, and tried to engage in the federal assistance programs that were available.[1]

Compared to the national trends in park and recreation, the Dallas system reacted in a similar manner, only there was one additional factor that affected the operation of the park system. The board appointed in

1931 was the first to function under Dallas' new council/manager form of municipal government. Edwin J. Kiest, the park board president, undertook the responsibility of establishing the working relationships needed with city government. Although the basic responsibilities of the park board had not changed with the switch in municipal government, the growing demand for recreation combined with the hardships of the depression and the introduction of a new form of government to make the duties of park supervision a more difficult task.

The same five men named to the park board in 1931 were reappointed in 1933 for a second term. Foster Jacoby continued as park superintendent during these two terms. Because of the monetary shortages imposed by the economic conditions of the 1930s period, this administration left few completed tributes as a sign of their dedication, but the contributions of this board centered around preparation for the future. They laid the ground work and made application for the federal monies that were made available for the following park board. The board supervised and helped direct the development of plans for the vast amount of construction to be done for the 1936 Centennial celebration. They established policies for welfare agencies which operated from many park areas while simultaneously the park board provided other relief outlets in the parks. Recreation programs were expanded with surprisingly little money but many volunteers to meet the increased demands. The board, serving these two consecutive terms under the new city government and during the worst of the depression years, worked diligently and then graciously handed their efforts to the following park board which received the visual glory and praise for their accomplishments. Without Kiest's

directorship and the dedication and energy of the 1931-1935 park board, the 1935 board perhaps would not have been as successful.[2]

The board appointed in 1931 did not have sufficient money. Land, however, did not constitute a shortage. According to the general standard set by the National Recreation Association, the Dallas park system had well over the minimum of ten acres per one thousand persons. Records showed that in 1930 the city had a population of 260,475 with 4,196 acres in park lands, which is 15.9 acres per 1000 persons.[3]

Particularly large increases had occurred when Stevens and Tenison golf courses were given to the department in the 1920s. In 1930 Bachman Lake and White Rock Lake, City of Dallas reservoirs, were transferred to the park board for development as park areas. Edwin Kiest had donated over 176 acres of wooded land in memory of his wife, Elizabeth, in September of 1930. By 1934, Kiest had increased his gift to the people of Dallas to 264 acres. The additional acreage given by Kiest during his terms on the park board was the only land acquired during these four years.[4]

There were a few attempts made to acquire additional lands, but in general they were met with limited enthusiasm. Martin Weiss set his heart on the purchase of the Thomas Hill tract adjacent to Marsalis Zoo Park. Weiss paid the five hundred dollar option-to-buy for several years in hopes of saving the land until the park board could purchase it. The board eventually took over the option, but an actual purchase waited until 1945.[5]

In the meantime, Mrs. Weiss had purchased a small piece of property also adjacent to Marsalis Park. Hord Cottage, located upon the

land, was restored and expanded by the Weiss family for a community center. Because over three hundred civic organizations annually used the building, the park board provided the general maintenance. That is, they mowed the grass at the same time Marsalis Park was mowed, replaced light bulbs, and performed any small maintenance jobs. In 1932 the board announced that they were discontinuing the upkeep of the structure. A long list of names petitioning the board to reverse its decision failed. The park board simply did not have the funds to maintain a quasi-park property, no matter how inexpensive.[5]

Although Kiest's policy not to purchase any new land had been adherred to for almost four years, a few events in 1934 altered the land policy to some extent. The Public Works Department had two blocks of excess land that became available near the eastern approach to the Commerce-Main-Elm streets underpass that was then in the planning stage. When the underpass was completed, the parcels of land, which were not useful for private ownership because of shape and size, were transferred without any monetary exchange to the park board for development. The board also negotiated with the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, offering them an easement at the White Rock Lake fish hatchery. In return, the Commission abandoned their hatchery at Fair Park so that a race track could be constructed on that land. Mr. R. B. George, the man for whom the track was named, furnished $150,000 for construction. John Edy and Edwin Kiest signed the contract, bringing a race track to Dallas. However, the state legislature soon passed a bill illegalizing horse racing in Texas, so the track only operated a very short time. Although neither of these transactions required capital outlay, both

brought new acres to the park system.[6]

A park system has increasingly been seen by the citizens of a community as a necessary service. The board undertook the responsibility of carrying out many civic tasks at either a non-profit margin or even at a loss of revenue, especially in times of hardships. Welfare was a responsibility assumed by the Dallas Park Board. Some services were at their expense, while some were provided by the welfare department on park properties. The effort was one of joint cooperation between the park board and the various service agencies.

Mrs. Albert Walker, director of Public Welfare, constantly petitioned the board for help which it gladly donated. She was given Fretz Park at Lamar and Corinth streets in the cottonmill district as a location for routing unemployed men to various available jobs each morning. Pike Park served as a routing station for the Mexican-American laborers on welfare work. The welfare department provided recreation leaders for many of the community buildings with the understanding that the park department would provide the training and supervision of these leaders. Equipment for play not to exceed $150 was offered by the board for each supervised park. The welfare department also gave the men it had employed for the day meals and milk in the parks during the noon hour. The availability and location of the parks, especially in the needy areas, allowed the city welfare department to be far more effective than possible without the park board's cooperation.[7]

Free baths had been provided in some parks since 1910, but their importance was renewed during the depression years. Fretz, Pike, and Hall parks provided over 62,000 baths in 1932 alone. Predominantly

located in the rundown cottonmill district (near Fretz) and in the black (Hall) or Mexican (Pike) areas, these facilities reached the hardest hit groups. The cottonmill district had no sanitary facilities, no running water or sewers while the majority living near Pike Park were alien Mexicans who did not qualify for federal aid. The blacks, although eligible for welfare, were not actively recruited and were ill-informed as to the benefits available to them.[8]

The responsibility of taking care of Dallas prisoners was a duty shared by the park department and the city jail. There was a prison farm in existence on the White Rock Lake property at the time the park board was authorized to develop the lake as a park. The park department agreed to let the non-violent prisoners work off their fines at a dollar per day while helping to clean up the lake area. Originally the board received a dollar per day for feeding and guarding costs. However, this payment was cut in half in 1931, making the project much less profitable. In fact, the board claimed to be losing money, but they continued the use of prison labor. In August of 1932, City Manager Edy suggested a further reduction to thirty cents per day. Because the park budget had been severely reduced under Edy's administration, the board refused to accept the newly proposed terms. Their protest was effective. The park department continued to receive fifty cents per day per prisoner to help cover the expense of meals and guards until 1935 when the city prison farm was abandoned.[9]

During this time, various projects were accomplished with inexpensive prison labor. White Rock Lake received most of the benefits of the prison labor, because the lake was far enough outside the city limits

that the prisoners were not constantly in public view. A major concentration was placed upon cleanup. Litter was gathered and weeds were cut. A bridge was built over Dixon's Branch at the lake and "tin barns" of corrugated iron were constructed for storage of equipment. The prisoners erected toilets at both White Rock and Bachman Lakes.[10]

The responsibility of caring for city prisoners was one of mutual rewards. The board received inexpensive labor, the men received credit toward their fines and the jailer was spared the task of guarding for the day. However, the time to halt the use of prisoners was nearing. The expanding city brought many more visitors to the lake each day. It was not a good public-image to see a man working in the parks who was wearing the same clothes he had whenever he was thrown in the jail. Often the prisoners were rude or unknowledgeable when a visitor happened to ask a question. From time to time prisoners continued to be used until the 1950s when it became unfeasible and undesirable. But during the onslaught of the depression, the parks had a labor crew, and many men who had no job received regular meals. Thus, at the time, prison labor was basically an asset to Dallas provided with the assistance of the park board.[11]

Also at White Rock Lake there were nearly 250 camp sites and boat house locations which were leased to Dallas residents for twenty-five dollars per year. The leasees had agreed not to live in the shacks and shanties built upon the land because none of them had running water or sewer lines. They also agreed to keep the lots clean and attractive. During the depression, however, the board found people living in the huts. Generally, the department ignored the situation since many of

those people had no other place to live and probably had no job. But the appearance was still a major concern. Owners were told at least to keep trash from collecting around the shacks in order that it might not appear completely unsightly. The camps remained along the shoreline until around 1939 when a campaign was organized to further beautify the lake. Even then some camps were left in place for one reason or another until after World War II.[12]

The park board continued to encourage churches and religious groups to use the park for outdoor services. For years prior to the 1930s, it had been quite popular in Dallas to hold Sunday evening services in the parks. In this "pre-airconditioning" era, several churches usually banded together to share the cost of any temporary lighting and construction of platforms or piano storage boxes. The churches were allowed to move benches wherever was most convenient. Schedules were coordinated in the park department offices. During these hard hit years, church attendance did increase and so did the use of the parks for services, but basically there was no major difference in policy.[13]

The park board became involved with the social life of its patrons. The Girl Scouts, for their day camp activities, obtained permission to use park donkeys which had been acquired in the late 1920s for children's rides. Card playing in public places was forbidden by the Texas Penal Code, and a park is a public place. But while trying to prohibit card games (a most difficult task during a time when many could not find jobs), the board voted to allow "non-intoxicating" 3.2 beer into the parks. However, beer could only be brought to a park and it could not be sold by either park concessionaires or private vendors.[14]

Race issues were not considered major problems for the park board in 1931. Perhaps because the minority groups were not accustomed to defending their rights, there were not usually any protests as long as each minority group stayed within the boundaries set by the dominant society. The park board, whether by knowledge of the future or by luck, adherred to several policies, which in retrospect, showed considerable foresight.

A stock answer used during the depression years and again used during the period of integration was "parks are for the people." Occasionally a citizen would appear before the board requesting that a fence be built to prevent blacks from cutting through the park. The board usually replied that they would investigate the matter, and slowly let the complaint fade without ever taking any definite action. One man complained of black encroachment at Walford Park. Kiest exercised great diplomacy when he appointed Jacoby to investigate the matter. Together Kiest and Jacoby concurred that "the city is powerless in the segregation of races."[15]

Statements such as these, whether enforced, encouraged, or ignored, appeared in the park board minute books where it was written as proof of open minds. The board categorized parks as white or black in order to ascertain the type of facilities and activities needed or desired within, but this was in accordance with the basic philosophy of the times that races should be separated. Credit goes to the board for being able to avoid the pitfall of putting in print rules of forced separation of races, though they operated the parks under traditional "separate but equal" policy.

Establishment of policies and promises to undertake basic moral responsibilities did not require much operating capital, but to provide park development and recreation programs did. And the park department, along with every other city department, was hard pressed for funds in 1931. The new city manager, in an attempt to lighten the debt accrued by the previous administration, made deep cuts in each division's budget. To further draw the ties to the money bag, Edy proposed that it was a civic duty of city officials to avoid using all of the budgetary funds allocated to their department for the year. Any money saved at the end of the year was applied to the accrued debt.

Kiest and Jacoby worked closely together to accommodate the manager's request. To acquire additional funds, the board decided that the insurance coverage could be reduced. In January of 1932, the board cancelled all tornado and hail insurance on park property except for the City Park greenhouses. They agreed that it would be unwise to completely cancel the hail insurance on the greenhouse, because it was most subject to destruction from elements of weather, so they substantially reduced coverage. Later, as an afterthought of such speedy reductions, the board decreed that the Dallas Insurance Association was authorized to increase storm coverage on the greenhouse to $2250, an increase of $150 over the recently adjusted figure. The cancellations of hail insurance on the other properties remained in effect.[16]

Although storm damages were not insured, damages by vandalism, fire, and theft remained adequately covered. Additional effort was expanded to find methods to reduce insurance rates. A reduction was granted the board when they had a fire hydrant installed near the field

house at Kiest Park. They also replenished and added to the fire extinguishers located in the various park buildings. All personnel were asked to be alert for other possible dangers which might be avoided with proper precautionary procedures.[17]

To further comply with the city manager's orders and to keep in line with the other city departments and private businesses, the salaries of the park employees were either greatly reduced or eliminated entirely. The reduction of ten percent on all office salaries saved the park department one thousand dollars per month. Wages of day laborers were slashed from $3.20 to $2.40 per day. The position of assistant director of parks was eliminated, creating a savings of $125 per month. The motion picture operator lost his $47.50 per month job, thus eliminating the park movies. To further reduce the payroll, the director of parks was to assume the duties of the superintendent of White Rock Lake. And in a desperate attempt to still further initiate economic efforts, all supervisors and playground leaders were dropped from the payroll, an effort which met with a great protest from the parents.[18]

The city manager refused to approve the proposed budgetary allocations for the forestry division. The Texas Museum of Natural History received no funds from the board for operation, and consequently it was closed until the Centennial, when it opened its doors again under a new name. Plans worked out by the engineering department for dredging silt-filled White Rock Lake were quickly shelved. The meager zoo became even more so when the board voted to sell four bears, one leopard, two lion cubs, one tiger, one zebra cow, and two rhesus monkeys.[19]

While all possible means of saving money were executed because of the stringent demands of the new city manager to help alleviate previous city debts, the sources of funds remained quite limited due to the economic depression hovering over the country. The federal government was a potential source of funds, but most Dallas agencies still held a mental block about accepting money from Washington, D.C. The park board agreed in 1933 to not borrow federal money because of the already accumulated debts that were proving so difficult to pay off.[20]

However, by 1934 the stigma placed on federal money was receding somewhat. The city accepted Civil Works Administration (CWA) help in late 1933. Over one thousand men were paid forty cents per hour for a thirty or thirty-two hour week. One of the CWA's primary work assignments consisted of cleaning up the highways. Either lack of supervision or lack of knowledge resulted in the destruction of numerous redbud trees and other ornamental plants by the working men. One citizen emphatically told the press that she "hoped the country did not get any more money for cleaning up the highways." To the relief of many the CWA did not have a chance to be effective before it was shelved. This initial make-work project was then replaced in 1935 by the more successful Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).[21]

Local money came from the general taxes, recreational revenue, and one bond issue. The Ulrickson bond program of 1927 called for $1,500,000 for parks and recreation. Adding to the $550,000 already issued were $100,000 sold in October of 1931. The remaining bonds were not sold

until 1945. The interest and sinking fund under the Ulrickson program was payable out of the general tax fund and not from the charter authorized tax allocation for parks.[22]

Budgetary allocations, based upon the income from the available sources, were coupled with the reductions encouraged by the city manager. The apparent results demonstrated that the park board effectively reduced their budget. The first partial year under the council/manager government ended with expenditures of $144,871, safely within the $146,702 budget for the period.[23]

For the 1931-32 fiscal year, the board was given a total operating budget of only $331,000 as compared to the last annual park budget of $368,000 allotted by the commission government. During the first full fiscal year of operation (October 1, 1931-September 30, 1932), $33,000 was saved below the budget figure. After setting aside over $12,000 for emergencies, approximately $22,000 was returned to the city to help retire past liabilities. As time passed, the city manager continued pressing for savings. The city council ordered another saving of $35,000 by October 1, 1932, the end of the third full fiscal year.[24]

There are definite signs that the park department's efforts to comply with the city manager's wishes may have been overdone. If an item or project was approved in the annual budget, there must have been a reason. To lower the budget to compensate for circumstances was understandable, but the wisdom of further reducing an approved budget was somewhat questionable.

Reducing insurance coverage and lowering wages was understandable. Luckily no major calamity happened to destroy or greatly damage any of

the park properties during the four years under this board, and the wages were lowered in the park department just as throughout the city. Thus, in retrospect, most of the reductions and eliminations could not be considered actual mistakes.

However, the elimination of playground leaders in 1932 was a great mistake. Since the 1931-1935 board had only a meager development program, even less of a beautification program, and no land acquisition program, the recreation program was the main focal point of public attention. The park director, Jacoby, was a very avid believer in recreation for children, especially for children living in low income areas. Because Jacoby's main interest was recreation, this was one cut that seemed unlikely unless the board was unanimously behind it. He had often been described as a "very inspiring man," a man who could recruit volunteer help easily and could retain the services of those who worked with him. Nonetheless, the fact remained that a recreation program could not be run without trained personnel to direct and organize the volunteered help, and the parents in the city were more enraged by the prospects of not having a recreation program than the park board had envisioned.[25]

The shortage of money claimed by the board was highly questionable. Even with the $22,000 unspent from the budget that year, there appeared to be more than sufficient funds to continue the program. Prior to the release of all recreation leaders, the board publicly had patted themselves on the back for having completed the previous year, 1931, with $43,000 below the budget and with $39,000 more in revenue than they had anticipated. There was no reasonable explanation given

for releasing the recreation leaders, a program which cost $19,000 when the unexpected income and the other total reductions resulted in over $81,000. For this reason, several hundred irate parents vigorously protested, and playground supervisors were quietly reinstated for the summer months only.[26]

Recreation, outside of the supervised playgrounds, was limited severely by the board. The board members did consent to having a dance floor built at White Rock Lake in 1934 for a cost of $5,444. During its first year of operation, the small admission fee charged on the huge concrete slab amounted to over four thousand dollars. The attendance figures of over 25,000 persons during the summer of 1934 proved it to be a success.[27]

Swimming, as usual, showed great popularity, but the limited swimming facilities did not result in any profits. The golf courses retained a modest margin of profit during the four years. In fact, their profit totals were elevated slightly because many citizens dropped their country club memberships and reverted to municipal facilities. Fishing was banned in the city lakes, but there was an increased effort to increase fish production at the White Rock Lake hatchery for later distribution. Aquaplaning bans, lifted in 1931 by the new board, caused a flood of surfboarding orders to swamp local sporting stores. As has always been the case, fad activities came and went, while tennis, golfing, and swimming reigned high on the list of priorities.[28]

During the first full fiscal year, 1931-1932, attendance records showed that over five million used the facilities of the park department. The following year, the system had an attendance of only 2,500,000, one

half of the previous year's attendance. The principal reason for the marked decrease was that the playgrounds were only operated for three months. Other considerations included the elimination of band concerts and free motion pictures in the parks. Attendance increased in the 1933-34 year because of increased special activities, year-round play programs at many of the parks, and the new dance pavilion. Music concerts were reinstated during the summer of 1935, drawing 42,100 listeners. The rise in playground participation and park activities was a trend that continued until World War II. More and more people turned from the more expensive private recreation to the park program. Thus, in a time when reductions were encouraged by the city government, the lack of individual money was turning people to the public parks. The park department was in a difficult position.[29]

As a result, non-essential work was not attempted. Development was kept to the minimum. Marsalis Zoo was a popular attraction which could have benefited by an extensive development program. There was a new elephant house, but several of the animals had been sold to raise funds for the remaining ones. In spite of its physical appearance, many Sunday afternoons were passed at the zoo. Thus, Wilber, the nine thousand pound bull elephant, enjoyed the status of Dallas' major attraction. It was a sad, sad day in July of 1934 when, after a thrashing, crashing tantrum, Wilbur died of a heart attack at the age of nineteen. No damage was done to the new elephant house, but due to lack of work and an over abundance of time, Wilbur's head ended up as a wall decoration for a local taxidermy shop. "We probably hoped someone would pay us for mounting the head," one of the artists recalled, "but work was scarce

in 1934 so we did it just to have something to do."[30]

Additional swimming facilities were developed by Kiest's board. The existing locations were extremely limited in size and sanitary standards were substandard, even for the 1930s. White Rock Beach was sterilized by a four-cylinder motor boat from which large dosages of chlorine were dumped at night. The pool at Fair Park had been recommended for demolition by one board member because it was so difficult to clean. However, the Fair Park pool was closed for only a few years which left Lake Cliff the only other oversized pool, and Lake Cliff was filled with Oak Cliff's artesian water which ran warmer than most Dallasites preferred their swimming water. Griggs pool at Hall and Thomas Street was a smaller pool which served the black community.[31]

The board completed the details remaining on six junior pools begun by the commissioner board. The pools at Lida Hooe School, Tietze Park, Rosemont School, Lagow Park, Wheatley Park, and Hay School helped relieve some of the swimming congestion. The new board allocated funds for a junior pool at Wahoo Park for the black community nearby. Lake Cliff pool got a new water main so that swimmers could enjoy cool Dallas water. The three large pools were used by people from all over the city, excluding the blacks, while the junior pools and Griggs pool were mostly located in the black and lower income areas.[32]

Only one community center, located at Lagow Park, was opened between 1931 and 1935. The centers, at that time, were not like the modern, multi-purpose buildings of the 1950s and later. Because a supervised program was considered to be a deterrent to juvenile delinquency programs, the target areas were centered in the lower income

areas. A community center was used only for crafts and meetings and other similar passive uses. A field house provided additional space for lockers and showers although it had no indoor gym space. The only field house built was at Kiest Park in 1932, and it cost over ten thousand dollars, an expense which was justified by the fact that Kiest Park was a gift which had cost Dallas nothing.[33]

Besides the two recreation structures built, the park board managed to scrape together the funds to pave a few roads. The road around White Rock Lake was completely paved. The project was financed with $11,000 saved from the lake's swimming beach and with $7,500 received from the sale of a part of Fretz Park for the Corinth Street overpass. Mr. Kiest, in his benevolent manner, donated twenty-five hundred cubic yards of gravel to pave the road at Kiest Park from the field house to Hampton Road. The only other significant developments during the two terms were few. A greenhouse was built at City Park for $1,854. Two tennis courts were built at Sunset High School by park labor, but again the material was donated by Kiest. In 1934, a bridle path was constructed at White Rock Lake.[34]

If developments and improvements were slowed because of the lack of funds, aesthetic development received even less attention. The people would not have understood large sums of money being spent on beautification projects. A park generally consisted of whatever plantings grew naturally or existed when the land was acquired, altered occasionally by a garden club which volunteered to plant a few trees in a given park. However, during the 1930s roses experienced a rebirth in popularity.

Because of the interest shown, a garden of .64 acres was planted in Craddock Park with park labor. Also in 1932, the Oak Cliff Society of Fine Arts donated two thousand rose bushes for Lake Cliff Park. But these occasional trees and two rose gardens comprised the total effort at beautifying the parks of Dallas. Since no one expected intensely manicured parks with seasonal plantings, no one noticed the lack of them. A few roses were considered impressive.[35]

Memorials expressing sentiment for a person, a race, a country, or an event often provided an aesthetic development with no expense to the park department. People tend to identify with parks more than most other city services. If someone is going to leave money to the city or present a memorial in honor of someone or something, it is far more desirable to have the gift placed in a park for the public to see than to have it donated to the public works department for a new sewer or water line.

Mrs. John McClellan left money to finance a memorial to her late husband. She wanted a fountain placed in both a white park and a black one. One fountain graces an area near the Garden Center in Fair Park while the other identical fountain was placed in Griggs Negro Park.[36]

Trees were often planted in memory of someone. A grove of trees at Fair Park were planted by Forest Avenue High School in honor of the fifty-eight signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The United Confederate Veterans planted a grove of Walnut trees at Kiest Park. The only stipulation usually given by the board was that they were able to select the sites and that the trees could be removed if deemed necessary.[37]

Activities in honor of special holidays were logically held in the public parks. Just as July 4th was celebrated throughout the city in practically every park, so were the special days of the various ethnic groups. The blacks celebrated Juneteenth in the Negro parks accompanied by Miss Emancipation contests and tons of watermelons for all celebrators. Fair Park and Reverchon Park usually were the scenes of the largest Juneteenth crowds. The Mexicans celebrated two independence days, one from Spain and one from France. Until the early morning hours at Pike Park, the drifts of mariachi music could be caught between the whiffs of the distinctive aroma of Mexican food.[38]

The board began to lay the ground work for a much larger event in 1936, the celebration of Texas' independence from Mexico. R. L. Thornton and others had exerted the effort which resulted in Dallas being chosen as the site of the gala. The city council and the park board agreed to back the Centennial Committee. In October of 1934 a three million dollar bond issue was successfully submitted for the voter's approval. An estimated expenditure of ten million dollars covered buildings, landscaping, lighting, and exhibits.[39]

This board did not have the fortune of the next board which reaped the glory of the Centennial. Their entire four years were spent with their hands tied by strong economic strings. Their story was one of a struggle to adjust to a new form of municipal government while under the shadow of a heavy depression. Their limited funds were principally used to provide minimum upkeep and minimum facilities on the property already included in the park property lists. The 1931-1935 board can be praised for being able to hold the department together and make limited progress during times of great stress and little money.

NOTES

THE FORCE OF A DEPRESSION 1931-1935

[1]L. H. Weir, "What the Depression Has Done to Park and Recreation," Public Management, August 1934, pp. 227-31.

[2]Foster Jacoby served as park supervisor from 1920 until 1939 when L. B. Houston received the appointment.

[3]City Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Open Spaces: Dallas Metropolitan Area (Dallas: City Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments, April 1959), p. 11; and Jolly Franklin Kelsay, "The Growth and Development of the Park and Recreation Facilities and Programs for the City of Dallas, Texas from 1876-1946," (M.S. thesis, North Texas State University, 1946), p. 63.

[4]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, pp. 133, 227, 242.

[5]Charlotte H. Moses, Hungary Sends a Dallas Builder: The Story of Martin Weiss (Dallas: privately printed, 1948), pp. 173, 176; Dallas Morning News, 10 June 1931, sec. II, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 8, 24 May 1932, p. 62.

[6]Dallas Morning News, 25 April 1934, sec. II, p. 1; and 9 February 1934, sec. II, p. 1.

[7]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 12 July 1932, p. 79; 36 July 1932, p. 82; and 7 February 1933, p. 132.

[8]Dallas Morning News, 12 October 1932, sec. II, p. 1; and Neil G. Sapper, "A Survey of the History of the Black People of Texas, 1930-1954 " (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1972), p. 192.

[9]Dallas Morning News, 12 August 1931, sec. II, p. 1; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 11 August 1932, p. 89; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 267. Dallas Power and Light purchased for right-of-way the land on which the prison farm was located.

[10]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 26 July 1932, p. 84; 11 August 1932, p. 88; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 267.

[11]L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[12]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 24 May 1932, p. 66; 8 November 1932, p. 114. The custom of leasing campsites for a fee had been carried forward by arrangements made by the water department prior to 1930 when the ownership of White Rock Lake was transferred to the park board.

[13]Ibid., 14 June 1932, p. 72; 26 July 1932, p. 83; and Dallas Morning News, 27 September 1933, sec. II, p. 1.

[14]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 24 May 1932, p. 67; 24 July 1932, p. 83; and Dallas Morning News, 27 September 1933, sec. II, p. 1.

[15]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 22 August 1932, p. 84.

[16]Ibid., 26 January 1932, p. 30; 23 February 1932, p. 38.

[17]Ibid., 30 December 1932, p. 124.

[18]Dallas Morning News, 27 January 1932, sec. II, p. 6; 28 September 1932, sec. II, p. 1; 10 May 1933, sec. II, p. 1; 26 July 1933, sec. II, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 10 January 1933, p. 127.

[19]Cauley, "Notes," pp. 38, 70; and Dallas Morning News, 27 January 1932, sec. II, p. 1; 15 August 1934, sec. II, p. 1.

[20]Dallas Morning News, 12 July 1933, sec. II, p. 1.

[21]Ibid., 14 November 1933, sec. II, p. 1; 16 February 1934, sec. II, p. 1.

[22]Cauley, "Notes," p. 8; Dallas Morning News, 27 January 1932, sec. II, p. 1. This ad valorem tax allocation for parks was "not to exceed" 10¢ on the tax dollar, but it varied from 8½¢ to 10¢.

[23]Ibid., 10 January 1932, sec. II, p. 1. The first calender year under the new government ended after approximately four months of operation.

[24]Dallas Morning News, 27 January 1932, sec. II, p. 1; 28 September 1932, sec. II, p. 1.

[25]Lillian Schwertz, Dallas park and recreation director, interview with author, June 1973; Lynn Schmid, Dallas parks recreation leader, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[26]Dallas Morning News, 11 February 1932, sec. II, p. 1; 2 March 1932, sec. II, p. 1; 28 September 1932, sec. II, p. 1; Moses, Martin Weiss, p. 189; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 15 February 1932, p. 40; and City of Dallas, Progress: An Official Report on Municipal Achievement (City of Dallas, 1934), p. 23.

[27]Cauley, "Notes," p. 267; and City of Dallas, Progress: Official Report, p. 24.

[28]Wylie Moore, Dallas golf pro at Steven Park, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; and Dallas Morning News, 21 June 1931, sec. II, p. 1.

[29]Dallas Morning News, 12 October 1932, sec. II, p. 1; City of Dallas, Progress: An Official Report, p. 23; and Kelsay, "Growth of Parks in Dallas," p. 53.

[30]Dallas Morning News, 17 May 1933, Sec. II, p. 1; Dallas Times Herald, 23 July 1932; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 163.

[31]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 12 April 1932, p. 51; 10 May 1932, p. 63; and Dallas Morning News, 27 April 1931, sec. II, p. 1. The pool at Griggs Park had been built in 1922 to serve the blacks in Dallas. Although much larger than the "junior" pools, it was small in contrast with the three swimming areas which would accommodate a couple of thousand swimmers. During the 1950s when the park department was preparing for integration by alleviating the huge pools, Griggs pool was the only one of the four city pools kept in operation because it was approximately the same size as the new ones the city was building.

[32]Cauley, "Notes," p. 154; and Dallas Morning News, 24 February 1932, sec. II, p. 1.

[33]Dallas Morning News, 1 August 1931, sec. II, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 19 April 1932, p. 53.

[35]Ibid., pp. 22, 135; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 28 February 1933, p. 138; and Dallas Morning News, 12 October 1932, sec. II, p. 1.

[36]Cauley, "Notes," p. 146.

[37]Dallas Morning News, 26 February 1935, sec. I, p. 4; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 24 January 1933, p. 129.

[38]Dallas Morning News, 20 June 1931, sec. II, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 9 August 1932, p. 86.

[39]Dallas Morning News, 11 August 1934, sec. II, p. 1; 17 August 1934, sec. II, p. 1.

# CHAPTER 3

## A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 1935-1937

The economic tailspin of the 1930s caused all major park development to come to an almost standstill until local, state, and federal monies came to Dallas in 1935. Although some relief programs were initiated as early as 1931, they were not very successful either because of a lack of efficient organization or a lack of sufficient funds. But by 1935 the path had been cleared for Dallas to receive twenty-five million dollars worth of improvements between 1935 and 1937.[1]

This money was crucial for the emerging metropolis, for while Dallas did not suffer the same percentages of the bitter pangs of hunger and loss of self pride as the residents of more industrialized cities, an unemployment rate of at least seven percent caused extensive problems. Suffering still existed in Dallas as was evidenced by the long, ever-present lines outside of the fire stations which served as soup kitchens. Loss of jobs for the less fortunate and chronic underemployment for the luckier men added to the demand within the city for help.[2]

During this period, the new less restrictive policies of the federal government became the chief spur to city growth and economic recovery. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal pumped millions into Dallas. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the National Youth Administration (NYA) financed improvements and provided labor for Dallas.

Although most of the city departments received funds, the results of the park department's accomplishments were highly visible and easily recognized by the citizen. People naturally continue to notice beautification projects and recreation facilities more so than water lines. Highways, after completion, no longer attracted attention. Welfare money was soon spent, free meals were consumed, and then all was soon removed from the spotlight, while parks continued to attract visitors.[3]

Not only did the men who made up the park board between 1935 and 1937 bring to the city beautified parks and improved maintenance, but they also were responsible for the world fair held in Dallas in 1936. Jim Dan Sullivan, manager of his family estate, was elected president of the new board. Widely known as a member of a prominent Dallas family which had taken an active interest in park affairs, Sullivan proved to be a capable leader at a time which demanded firm direction. Harry E. Gordon, a Dallas Certified Public Accountant, served as vice-president of the board, headed several park board committees, and sponsored numerous Centennial projects.[4]

R. T. Shiels, George Chesnut, and Martin Weiss comprised the remainder of the five man board. Shiels, the board's public relations man, was an engineer and executive officer of an electrical company. Chesnut was also an electrical engineer, while Weiss was in the wholesale millinery business. Together the energy and drive of these five industrious men accomplished remarkable feats--most of which are still visible.[5]

Foster Jacoby was reappointed as director of parks by this new board, but not without much heated debate. Due to an assorted number

of personal and health problems, the board believed Jacoby had not been dedicating himself fully to his job. However, because of the apparent lack of a replacement, this board kept Jacoby and apparently worked around him.[6]

The new Dallas Charter proclaimed that the park board's income for operating and acquisition expenses came from the allocated tax levy "of not more than ten cents on each one hundred dollars assessed valuation." But for the 1935-1936 fiscal year, the city council gave the parks an 8½ cent allotment. City Manager Hal Moseley pointed out that although their allocated money from the general fund for the new year was less than the previous year, the expenses of Fair Park's Centennial grounds were taken from them. The Centennial Board handled many expenses from a separate account after receiving park board recommendations and approval of all actions.[7]

Although the city council had to give final approval for projects requiring a vast allocation of city funds, the park board had more freedom of action in spending its money than most city offices. The numerous federal grants and loans were requested by the board and were issued directly to the board. Dispersal of such federal funds remained with the board under the supervision of the federal government.

Though under the city manager form of government, administration was supposed to be free of political hassling, politics, nonetheless, caused sufficient conflict to affect the park department. In 1935 Hal Moseley became the second city manager. The "Catfish Club," a political group which opposed the Charter Association, had backed Moseley with the apparent expectation of having his cooperation in giving patronage jobs

to those who supported them. The city council, made up largely of Catfish Club men, found that Moseley had not followed their wishes. Perhaps to award loyal supporters or to retaliate against the manager, the council appointed a few men to the park board that they knew would be helpful to them. Sometimes this conflict caused difficulties and disagreements between the park board and the city manager, but much can be said for the fact that, in spite of the differences, the city manager, the city council, and the park board were working for the same goal--a better Dallas and a great Centennial celebration.[8]

The first task of the newly appointed park board was to organize a World's Fair for Dallas. New York, Chicago, and San Francisco fairs preceded Dallas' extravaganza, which was scheduled to open in June of 1936 to celebrate Texas' one hundred year anniversary of independence from Mexico. "No mist of glory hung over the Trinity bottoms, and no eloquence could invent any," nor could Dallas' history claim an Alamo or Battle of San Jacinto or anything relating directly to the Texans' fight for independence. But through the super salesmanship of R. L. Thornton and others, backed by the bond money voted by the citizens, and enriched by plans of most elaborate scale, Dallasites convinced the Texas Legislature to choose their city as the location of the state's celebration.[9]

The citizens of Dallas, led by the park board, the State Fair Association, and a newly formed Centennial Board, were determined to surpass anything other cities had done. A three million dollar Centennial bond vote of 1934, a three million dollar grant from the State of Texas, and another three million dollars in federal funds as well as a

five hundred thousand dollar bond vote of 1927 for a Museum of Fine Arts gave the Centennial a sound start. Private firms and corporations donated even more in the way of displays and exhibits. Federal labor and matching grants provided by the WPA and the PWA were used extensively while the NYA and CCC aided many of the smaller projects. The park board and Fair Association offered the State Fair grounds (owned by the board and leased by the Fair Association) for the splendid event. The grounds were inadequate in size for such a fair, but the use of this land saved millions of dollars compared to the expense of purchasing all new property.[10]

Original plans called for an addition of ninety-five acres to the already owned land, but obtaining additional acreage for the expansion of Fair Park was not quite as simple as planned--even with cash-in-hand. The condemnation proceedings became so involved at one point that it was rumored that the park board had almost decided to build the planned Museum of Natural History and the Aquarium at Marsalis Park Zoo instead of in connection with Centennial Park. Two condemnation boards awarded what the park board considered rather steep remunerations to the people living on the coveted real estate. These high prices and red tape finally resulted in the board settling for the purchase of 26.5 acres (102 pieces of land), and even that amount came after considerable wrangling between city and resident.[11]

One more major problem caused by the Centennial demanded attention. Leaders in Dallas were worldly enough to realize that a "blue-nosed" town, straight, moral, and lacking in excitement would never attract the six and a half million fun-loving visitors that were to render the

exposition successful. Fort Worth, with its own Centennial celebration, the Texas Centennial Livestock and Frontier Days Exposition, completely opened up and even began advertising--"Go to Dallas for culture and to Fort Worth for fun." Whether in retaliation or in an attempt to keep people in Dallas, civic leaders allowed twenty-three hundred prostitutes to work in Dallas, ignored gambling dives, and overlooked striptease and peep shows. This was an off-the-record acceptance with an understanding that such activities be limited to areas around Pecos and Griffin streets. Dallas citizens were strongly discouraged by the law from visiting such areas while visitors received active encouragement to enjoy themselves. If results prove the beneficence of the action, the compromise helped to create a successful Texas Centennial Exposition.[12]

Because of the desire for a "Texas-sized" world's fair, the plans for the new Civic Center were elaborate, and it was this aspect of the Exposition that most involved the park department. Concessionaires and private corporations built their own displays to serve only their present needs, while the park department had the Civic Center built with thoughts of permanence. With the large amounts of federal aid available, the plans did indeed become immense. The funds were provided from an account consisting of the voted bond money and from an account maintained for federal money. Because money was often originally spent out of the bond account and later reimbursed partially or totally by the federal funds, it is difficult to quote separately how much was federally or locally financed. Most of the labor provided was from the federal agencies set up to aid the unemployment situation. The WPA Park

Improvement Fund was an account into which proceeds from city bond sales were deposited to finance the city's share of WPA work projects. The largest expenditure for these projects came directly from the federal government to cover payroll--paid directly to the individual workers. Therefore, the amounts shown on city ledgers reflected only a small part of the total cost of WPA work projects.[13]

The Civic Center proper included a Museum of Fine Arts, a Museum of Natural History, a Horticulture Museum, an Aquarium, a Museum of Domestic Arts, a bandshell, and an amphitheatre. The State of Texas funded the Texas Hall of State after the City of Dallas agreed to deed the land it was to be built upon to the state. And the federal government gave additional capital specifically for the U. S. Federal Exhibits Building. To further expedite planning and construction, each building of the Civic Center was assigned a park board member as a sponsor.

Planning and hard work were a necessity because of the short time left before the June opening of the Centennial. Double and triple shifts were put into action during the last few months. In January of 1936, the park board let the contract for the Museum of Fine Arts. Later to be acclaimed one of the finer art museums, plans called for a hall seating three hundred and fifty guests, a number of classrooms, a kitchen, a dining hall, and all types of galleries and display rooms. The eventual cost, not including the displays, came to $444,543 which was financed by the $500,000 bond issued for that purpose in 1927. This museum, in its completed form, was of most adequate size for its time, and much was owed to the energetic planning of Martin Weiss in consultation with architect Roscoe P. DeWitt.[14]

The Dallas Museum of Natural History was to serve as a repository for extensive displays by Texas nature habitat groups. Groundbreaking ceremonies in January prepared the way for construction under an approved PWA grant for $107,140. The additional $155,406 needed was paid from the park account. T. R. Shiels acted as sponsor for this elaborate home of Texas fauna and flora. In order to protect and add longevity to museum displays and to curtail the cost of air conditioning, the building was constructed with few windows. Texas materials were used with every possible opportunity in the formation of the building. The main halls were of Texas shellstone and the outside walls were of Texas limestone.[15]

At the time of construction, the Dallas Aquarium was the twelfth in the country and the only inland institution of its kind. More than two hundred species were displayed, ranging from tiny gold fish to several exotic varieties, all placed as nearly as possible in natural habitats. Money for construction of the building and tanks came from the bond fund in the amount of $207,984.[16]

Park board president, J. D. Sullivan, sponsored the Horticulture Building, erected at a cost of $92,509 from the bond funds. The Horticulture Building offered some cause for debate from time to time. The Centennial Board wished to lease it to various organizations, but the park board disapproved of several of the leases. A solution was reached and the building was put to good use with assorted displays. However, the years to follow found the building empty as often as full, until it became the Dallas Garden Center in 1941. Although the Horticulture Museum was not extensively used at this time, the construction of the

building provided more jobs. It was eventually used for permanent display, making it a worthwhile contribution.[17]

The Museum of Domestic Arts, like the Horticulture Building, is another example of a building constructed without definite plans as to content or use. Disagreement again occurred between the park board and the Centennial Board over the subject of displays. The board did not see the necessity for a furniture auction in the building, but once more a compromise was reached and the show went on. Costing $115,267 by the time of completion in 1937, the structure often has been used by numerous groups for a variety of functions. After the Pan-American Exposition, which occurred in 1937, the building was turned over to the Texas Institute of Natural Resources for use as their headquarters. Later the same building became the Health Museum. However, this building never has been used efficiently or continually.[18]

The Texas Hall of State was built by the State of Texas at a cost of over $1,200,000. The park board made this grand memorial to the founders of Texas possible by deeding 3.32 acres to the State of Texas. The massive doors underneath the tribute to the friendly Tejas Indian open to a magnificent collection of Texas commemorations. Each of the four geographical regions has a wing dedicated to it, while the six reigning flags of Texas also have their own hall of honor.[19]

Under the leadership of the park board numerous other projects reached fruition. A gigantic bandshell and an amphitheatre were erected to accommodate music theatrical productions staged during the Centennial days. Park board members approved contributions by others of a replica of Judge Roy Bean's "Law West of the Pecos" courthouse. The board rushed

ahead on a flimsily built model of the famous Alamo for the Fair grounds. The WPA, the National Park Service, and the Texas Park Board all had individual displays. The Texas Rangers Headquarters, a rustic, rambling log structure, was another interesting example of Texas' early architecture. Not leaving out the essential, a combination police-fire-radio station-emergency hospital was completed for the convenience of the millions of guests.[20]

A group of black citizens decided they wanted a Negro Hall of Life to honor the achievements of their race at the Texas Centennial. Their requests to the Texas Legislature and to municipal officials for funding were answered with a negative response. Finally, the federal government allocated fifty thousand dollars of the three million dollar Centennial grant for the Negro building. However, there were no black architects, contractors, or artisans, and, at the most, one-third of the unskilled work force was black. The building was hastily completed in colors of red and green, but yet it did not open until over two weeks after the Centennial opening. To add further injury, several exhibits were either closed or intermittently operated on the Negroes' day at the Centennial, yet the admission prices stayed the same.[21]

To have any large scale fair like a Centennial Exposition, it must not only be impressive in content but also in upkeep. F. K. McKinnis was assigned the enormous task of landscaping the surroundings to their fullest possible point of enhancement. Thousands of dollars were spent on plants edging the walks that guided the tourist throughout the pageant. The myriads of extra greenery added increased aesthetics to the revamped fair grounds. Lighting and well-placed fountains provided

striking emphasis. General Electric Company supplied plans as well as advertisements for the nightly displays of multi-colored illuminated buildings and exhibits. Splashes of water burst forth from jet nozzles into calm reflection pools and constantly changed through rainbow colors as lights flashed, blinked, and glowed from everywhere.[22]

Not to be outdone by nighttime views, the park board deemed it advisable to have as many monuments as possible. Statues were moved from many area parks to aid in the adornment of the Centennial grounds. A memorial erected to Captain Sydney Smith, first State Fair secretary, was moved to the entrance of Fair Park Auditorium (now the Music Hall). Prospero Bernardi, Italian "Texas Hero" at San Jacinto, was honored with a statue located on the grounds of the Hall of State purchased with funds raised by Texas citizens of Italian descent. In memory of firemen who died in service, the Fireman's Memorial was once moved from City Park and then moved again to the south entrance to the Cotton Bowl. Numerous other assorted monuments--the petrified tree, the Aztec Idol--added to the grandeur of the absolute plan.[23]

In addition to the beauty encircling Fair Park, a main concern of the park board was neatness and maintenance. Over $57,000 of PWA funds were used in order to complete storm sewers, water mains, and restrooms. The park board also pushed for the withholding of concessionaires from the Civic Center. It was decided not to ruin the grandeur of the area with such clutter. Maintenance and clean up, the unromantic end of any planning operation, were given many exclamations of praise at this Texas Centennial.[24]

Long-run benefits of the great fair were of permanent value to

Dallasites. Although not a financial success since no profit was made, the Centennial gave Dallas a position of national prominence, putting Dallas "on the map." Millions of visitors took news of the hospitality to their home states, giving Texas and especially Dallas excellent advertising. The present State Fair of Texas, which claims to be the world's largest state fair, obtained a fabulous plant. With vast amounts of federal and local money, thousands of jobless, depression-stricken workers had wages to purchase food. Dallas had no regrets for having the privilege of holding the Texas Centennial Exposition.

During the same particular period of time, not only was the park board staging a world fair, but also a massive improvement plan for almost every park in Dallas was put into effect. Prior to the opening of the Centennial, emphasis was placed on general city-wide beautification. Homeowners were urged to adorn their residences with landscaping suggestions made by the park board's landscape architect. Civic groups were encouraged to fund planting and clean-up crews to impress the expected visitors. After the close of the Centennial, much debate ensued concerning the use of the left-over city bond funds. The board decided to further improve and beautify parks with this money.[25]

White Rock Lake, one of the area's most popular parks benefited from federal aid. In 1935 an extensive improvement program was initiated by the CCC. Plans were made for dredging the lake and a fish hatchery erected at the site. Prior to the installation of the CCC at White Rock Lake, the board had authorized the expenditure of any reasonable amount to get the CCC camp established (on Winfrey Point) at the lake. Obtaining the camp meant development of more than six hundred

acres of park property with the federal government paying expenses for material and labor. If the board paid the eleven hundred dollar costs of moving the camp from Lake Dallas, over two hundred needy young men from all over the Southwest would be enlisted. It was essential to obtain the CCC camp for Dallas in order to have the benefits that came with the federal program. The park board approved the expenditure and Dallas benefited. The Park Improvement Fund provided for money while the CCC furnished the labor for building soil retention walls, adding landscaping, placing sewers and culverts, erecting boat piers, and laying out ball diamonds. In the way of more basic improvements, the two federal groups, the WPA and CCC, widened scenic Lawther Drive which circles the lake.[26]

Another White Rock Lake accomplishment that required much attention from the board was the fish hatchery. The board financed the hatchery at the Lake in 1930 for a cost of approximately $23,700. Prior to the Centennial expansion of Fair Park, the board conveyed the hatchery at White Rock to the Texas Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission in exchange for the state hatchery at Fair Park. The Fair Park hatchery site was desired so that the board could allow the land for a race track. The track was subsequently destroyed and the land redeveloped for the Centennial expansion. So in 1936 after having decided to recover their White Rock Lake hatchery, the board paid the State of Texas $1,454 and contributed accumulated salvage pipe for state use in constructing a new state hatchery at Lake Dallas. Twofold benefits came from the various trades--Dallas had its original hatchery again and Centennial Park had land for exhibits.[27]

Improvements planned under the Park Improvement Fund for Marsalis Zoo Park were estimated at $100,000. The WPA projects included new monkey cages, large animal dens and paddocks, wild fowl cages, and different types of housing for the assorted other animals. The zoo also benefited from the beautification program, gaining paving, walks, bridges, and landscaping. A new building served as both commissary offices and entrance way. All in all, impressive improvements were made at the zoo grounds which had long range benefits for today's visitor to enjoy as he strolls through the well-kept, clean animal shelters on walks outlined by lush, verdant landscaping.[28]

The park known for years as Oak Lawn Park had a change in name during these years of vast alterations. The name change to Robert E. Lee Park in honor of the Confederate general also brought an aesthetic change to the acreage. WPA funds provided for 1,322 cubic feet of Texas pink granite to be used as a base for a statue of Lee which was to be placed in the park. During June, the opening month of the Centennial, President Franklin Roosevelt came to Dallas for the festive occasion. There before some twenty-five thousand spectators, the President unveiled the finished sculpture created by the noted sculptor A. Phinister Proctor, commissioned and paid for by the Southern Memorial Association. In addition to the gallant statue, visitors viewed the effect the thirty thousand dollars of other improvements had on the park's beauty. The recreation building constructed there was a replica of General Lee's home in Arlington, Virginia. The paving, landscaping, retaining walls, bridges, and picnic units without a doubt increased Lee Park's value as a recreation center.[29]

Not all advancements in the system were concentrated on the parks already owned by the City of Dallas. For example, Maple Park was laid out adjacent to a one million dollar PWA housing project. The park had been required by the agreement which brought the federal funds for the housing project to Dallas. Condemnation proceedings, authorized by the city council to acquire the park, were slow (six offers to buy were made and six were rejected), but finally, in spite of some resident resistance, 1.42 acres were acquired in 1938 for $16,743. Such efforts provided much needed work for unemployed citizens as well as creating a valued housing project for those in need of decent accommodations.[30]

The park board prided itself on service to the Negroes of the Dallas community. When a committee of Negroes appeared before this board requesting that Wahoo Park be designated as exclusively black, the Negroes had their request granted. An improvement program provided the park with an $11,552 community house, erected a retaining wall, landscaped with many types of shrubbery, and made provisions for the other essential improvements which totaled approximately $25,000. The summer of 1935, this board's first season of operation provided eight concerts for the Negroes to enjoy on the warm, summery evenings in their parks during that time of the year. Thus, while blacks were still racially segregated from the Dallas white community, some attention had been shown to the needs of the minority group in South Dallas by the park department.[31]

The Mexican-American population of "Little Mexico," a run-down locale near Maple Avenue between Cedar Springs and Oak Lawn Avenue where many did not speak English, claimed Pike (Summit) Park as its own.

Several times Jim Dan Sullivan, park board president, discussed the plight of these people, in terms of their own suffering as well as the effect it would have on Centennial visitors; but since the park board did not construe its responsibilities to include social welfare outreach, little was done. The park board did give consent for the many Mexican holiday celebrations that traditionally were held in Pike Park and usually a park board member went as a representative of good will. However, Pike, as well as Fretz Park, was one of the Dallas parks that had provided free baths for all who came. This proved to be quite beneficial for the surrounding populations, most of whose homes were without such facilities. Pike Park was, at the very least, an open, somewhat treeless, area for the displaced Mexican to enjoy his spare time with his "amigos."[32]

Throughout the entire city, small parks received attention even if not bestowed with the same impressive quantity as the larger facilities. Under the WPA Park Improvement Fund, most parks were landscaped, walks and paths were laid, picnic units and some shelters were erected, and where needed, retaining walls were added. Several drinking fountains and sewer lines were installed over the park properties. Tenison Park and Stevens Memorial Park (both were golf courses) were furnished shelters in addition to the basic improvements like sodding, grading, and mowing. The Oak Cliff area had a total of $105,000 spent on parks. Federal funds of $1,200 plus $3,029 of park funds converted the shelter at City Park, Dallas' first park, into offices for the WPA personnel and was subsequently used as a recreation center. At this same park, $3,100 was spent on renovating the supply of water from the old Gill

Well, whose mineral water some Dallasites considered useful for medicinal purposes. Giant plantings of iris were arranged at Reverchon, White Rock, and Lake Cliff parks. And by 1936, because of a combination of park board vigor and adequate funding, almost every park in Dallas was either enlarged or substantially beautified.[33]

Although the largest amount of assistance came from the Park Improvement Fund set up for that purpose, another federally financed group worked separately but in cooperation with the park board and WPA. The National Youth Administration (NYA) headed by Texan, Lyndon B. Johnson, provided seven thousand dollars in wages for one hundred and forty young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. Their largest project in this program was to beautify Dealey Plaza, located at the triple underpass entrance to downtown Dallas. During this period, a total of $9,550 was spent on labor plus grading and sodding for the "front door to Dallas." Although, the park board gained considerably by the labor done by such work forces as the NYA, the board willingly planned and organized projects which resulted in a more beautiful Dallas while at the same time provided badly needed jobs.[34]

In addition to all of the physical changes being executed in the parks of Dallas, the park board busily initiated entertainment and recreational activities for the children's benefit. The board announced that free band concerts would be returned to parks during the summer. WPA drama and musical productions entertained the many who could no longer afford commercial productions.[35]

Thirty city parks had a supervisor of play activities, but the recreation program was more concentrated in minority and poverty sections

of Dallas. The WPA recreation program provided salaries for additional assistants or recreation leaders in the lower-class areas, while the welfare department continued using the parks as food distribution stations and as centers for their clinics. None of the more affluent parks received the extra services necessary in a poor neighborhood, existing without sanitary facilities or running water. Pike Park, in a Mexican neighborhood, and several other parks received an active recreation program of athletics, drama, movies, crafts, and organized play activities. In addition, Pike Park, several black parks, and the cottonmill district's Fretz Park continued the program of free baths, with towels and soap provided. Whereas, the summer recreation program existed in over thirty parks, only the less affluent neighborhoods received winter recreational programs under park leadership. Fretz, Wahoo Negro, and Pike parks were the locations of several afterschool programs, chili suppers, and an occasional film or special program.[37]

Any criticism that could be levied on the park department about their recreation program in the lower income areas can be justified somewhat by the location of the parks. In other words, if there were parks in poverty areas or minority areas, these were the parks that received an intensive recreation and welfare program; however, proportionately to the percentages of population in either black, Mexican, or lower income neighborhoods, there were too few parks serving these areas. The fault lay in the distribution of parks more so than in the recreation programs.[38]

Public opinions in Dallas seemed favorably inclined toward park board activities. Praise was given in liberal dosages by the Dallas

Salesmanship Club for the organization shown and the pressure endured by the board in readying facilities for the Centennial. After the first seven months of service by this particular board, the Dallas Morning News called their program "the most momentous ever attempted in the Southwest." This article further related vast amounts of work accomplished by five men serving Dallas without pay. Tribute was paid by the North and East Dallas Lion's Clubs to the "most important one (board) in the history of the City." Emphasis was given throughout the city to the men who held more meetings in one year than any similar board in the record of Dallas government. Dallas was proud of itself and the accomplishments achieved under the guidance of these men, but shortcomings were present with any group and the park board was no exception. Through no actual fault to the board but because of federal regulations, large numbers of unemployed, poverty-stricken Mexicans in the city could not be worked on federal relief programs because they were aliens. However, the percentage of Americans of Mexican descent that were hired remained quite substandard. A small percentage of Negroes found jobs as laborers in the park improvement programs. Another vocal complaint came from a few contractors who commented before press and board that delays in payment were unnecessarily long. Whether by form of praise or complaint, actual public awareness that the park board existed and was definitely doing something says much for the group.[39]

Many Dallas citizens chose a more non-verbal manner to show their approval of the park work being done, and so began projects to aid the park department in their beautification project. The board encouraged this help, and simultaneously urged private property owners to beautify

their property. As a result, suggestions were handed out free of charge for re-landscaping homes. The overall goal was to produce a mass of color as never before seen in Dallas. Garden Clubs, Parent-Teacher Associations, and various civic groups came to the fore with donations of money, plantings, and physical labor.

An example of all out citizen participation was a "nudist colony" exhibited by a Bluffview area garden club. Admission of five cents allowed one to view all the store mannequins in the buff one could ever desire to see. The proceeds went toward the Park Improvement Fund. Undoubtedly, such an effort did not raise much money, but it did attract considerable attention which in turn further emphasized to the public that they could help the park board beautify the city. This spur gave other garden clubs and interested groups or individuals the impetus to organize other projects.[40]

It is almost inconceivable that the short span of two years could bring so many changes, even with the gifted leadership of an energetic park board. They held a State Centennial and a Pan-American Exposition--both drawing visitors from all of North America. The Centennial Civic Center left Dallas with a permanent exhibition area for the State Fair as well as a show place for Texas culture and natural history. They played a major part in getting the CCC camp located at White Rock Lake instead of Lake Dallas. Building Maple Park guaranteed the city a low-rent federal housing project. The NYA and WPA provided labor and funds for materials throughout the city's parks under the board's direction. PWA funds helped finance board plans for construction of the Museum of Natural History and assorted other projects. Parks throughout the city

received extra attention--landscaping, maintenance, and improvements.

All of this was accomplished despite stringent economy at the local level. This board managed, with council encouragement, to cut their portion of the tax rates from 10 cents to 8.5 cents on every one hundred dollars of assessed property value. Labor was required in large quantities and although wages were not high, the many employed at least had jobs at a time when unemployment was typical. The attempt to stimulate the economy by pouring money into the city for machines and materials was aided. And through all of this, the board kept stringently, some feel even penuriously, within their budget.[41]

Careful planning, cautious management, and federal assistance allowed Dallas to maintain over ten acres of park land per one thousand persons, the minimum acceptable standard according to the National Recreation Association. Through the midst of adversity, this board coped with an immediate problem and admirably provided for the future at the same time. Without a doubt, the solid base built by the 1935-1937 park board comprised of Sullivan, Gordon, Shiels, Chesnut, and Weiss prevented backtracking which could well have occurred, inspired a forward looking approach to problems, and built the base for what was to become a highly respected park system.[42]

## NOTES

## A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 1935-1937

[1]Stanley Walker, "The Dallas Story" (Dallas: Dallas Times Herald, 1956), p. 34.

[2]Mavis Bryant, "Dallas' Legacy to the Great 1930s Depression," Dallas, October 1972, p. 18.

[3]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, 1935-1943.

[4]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930-1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, pp. 206-207.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Dallas Morning News, 30 May 1935, sec. II, p. 1; Elgin Crull, former Dallas city manager, interview with author, June 1973; and Henry P. Kucera, former Dallas city attorney, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[7]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), p. 22; and Dallas Morning News, 10 August 1935, sec. II, p. 1.

[8]Stone, City Manager Goverment, p. 75; Sam Acheson, "City Hall's Hectic Era: Catfish Club," Dallas Morning News, 24 March 1964, sec. D, p. 2; Dr. J. W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; and Crull interview.

[9]Walker, "The Dallas Story," p. 33.

[10]Bryant, "Depression," p. 32.

[11]Dallas Morning News, 18 September 1934, sec. II, p. 1; 23 September 1934, sec. II, p. 1; 19 September 1935, sec. II, p. 1; Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 8, 9 July 1935, p. 384; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 52.

[12]Walker, "The Dallas Story," p. 8; Bass interview; and Stone, City Manager Government, pp. 4, 75.

[13]L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[14]Dallas Morning News, 14 January 1936, sec. I, p. 5; Cauley, "Notes," p. 67; and Charlotte H. Moses, Hungary Sends a Dallas Builder: The Story of Martin Weiss (Dallas: privately printed, 1948), p. 182.

[15]Hal Kirby, director of Dallas Museum of Natural History, interview with author, June 1974, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; and Cauley, "Notes," pp. 67, 69.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 69; and Dallas Morning News, 28 May 1936, sec. II, p. 1. The Horticulture Museum was used for several temporary uses until during the 1960s when the garden clubs of Dallas united to provide a garden center. With the help of the board and private donations, this building became one of the few buildings on the fair grounds that is used year-round.

[18]Cauley, "Notes," p. 62.

[19]Ibid., p. 65.

[20]Dallas Morning News, 26 February 1936, sec. II, p. 1; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 9, 7 March 1936, p. 35; 21 May 1936, p. 121; and Houston interview.

[21]Neil G. Sapper, "A Survey of the History of the Black People of Texas, 1930-1954 " (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1972), pp. 192-193, 464-466.

[22]Dallas Morning News, 11 August 1935, sec. II, p. 1.

[23]Cauley, "Notes," p. 30.

[24]Dallas Morning News, 7 January 1936, sec. II, p. 1.

[25]Ibid., 29 January 1936, sec. I, p. 7; and Houston interview.

[26]Dallas Morning News, 3 July 1935, sec. II, p. 1; 14 July 1935, sec. II, p. 1; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 268.

[27]Cauley, "Notes," p. 270; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 26 March 1935, p. 346.

[28]Dallas Morning News, 10 January 1936, sec. I, p. 1; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 140.

[29]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 9, 4 April 1936, p. 68; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 140.

[30]Moses, Martin Weiss, p. 182; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 25 June 1935, p. 329; and Dallas Morning News, 3 August 1935, sec. II, p. 1.

[31]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 8, 25 June 1935, p. 380; vol. 9, 14 May 1936, p. 118; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 263.

[32]Ethelyn C. Davis, "Little Mexico" (M.A. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1936), p. 18.

[33]Cauley, "Notes," p. 184; and Dallas Morning News, 29 July 1936, sec. II, p. 1.

[34]Dallas Morning News, 1 April 1937, sec. I, p. 4; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 31. The bronze markers on the reflecting pools in Dealey Plaza give credit to the NYA for the work. It is ironic that L. B. Johnson, NYA administrator, was riding in a parade, thirty years later, past Dealey Plaza when President Kennedy was assassinated, making Johnson the next president of the United States.

[35]Dallas Morning News, 5 July 1935, sec. II, p. 1.

[36]Ibid., 4 June 1936, sec. I, p. 3; Stone, City Manager Government, p. 6; Lillian Schwertz, Dallas park recreation director, interview with author, June 1973; Lynn Schmid, former Dallas park recreation leader, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[37]Schmid interview; and Schwertz interview.

[38]Schwertz interview.

[39]Dallas Morning News, 6 September 1935, sec. II, p. 1; 20 February 1936, sec. I, p. 3; 14 August 1936, sec. II, p. 1; 15 April 1936, sec. I, p. 5; Moses, Martin Weiss, p. 182; and Bryant, "Depression," p. 18.

[40]Dallas Morning News, 21 September 1935, sec. II, p. 1.

[41]Ibid., 15 July 1936, sec. I, p. 14; 6 August 1936, sec. II, p. 1.

[42]City Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Open Spaces: Dallas Metropolitan Area (Dallas: City Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments, April 1959), p. 12.

## CHAPTER 4

## A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT 1937-1939

The excitement of two gigantic fairs in Dallas had worn thin and was replaced with the relief that followed the climax of such a gigantic undertaking. The closing of the fair resulted in another drop in employment figures. People who erected the buildings and people who worked in the exhibition halls lost their jobs. The intensified beautification projects that Dallas received during the Centennial were slowed considerably. The hotel and restaurant operators and other entrepreneurs dependent upon the tourists lost their source of business, forcing a lay-off of employees.[1]

Politically speaking the 1937 to 1939 term was one of continual conflict in the upper echelons of Dallas city government. The Charter Association weakly entered the race on a political platform designed to clean up their tarnished city. They felt affairs had grown entirely out of control during the Centennial; and now that the gaiety was over, it was time to revert back to the clean city of pre-exposition days. They accused the city administration of allowing wide open saloons, illegal whiskey, gambling, and prostitution. The Charter Association acknowledged that these activities had increased the success of the Centennial, but that it was now time to put a stop to such illegalities.[2]

The group in favor of reelecting the incumbent councilmen obviously believed differently. Although supported strongly by the beer and gambling interests, the Civic Association leaders made some drastic changes

to insure their reelection. Several disgruntled Catfish leaders left the Civic Association to form the Legion of Honor. With this substantially more reputable name, the Legion of Honor became the source of the Forward Dallas Party which took the place of the Civic Association as the principal faction in opposition to the Charter Association in the 1937 elections.[3]

The Forward Dallas group favored the incumbent council members, but they quietly left City Manager Moseley out of their campaign speeches. They did not want to replace him as city manager because of fear that publicly it would appear that he had received the ax for his failure to follow Catfish whims, but neither did they want to publicly endorse Moseley.

By openly vying for the vote of the blacks, blighted areas, and workingmen's neighborhoods, the Forward Dallas Party won the election. But the victory was not unanimous--four men out of nine councilmen were of the newly invigorated Charter Association. Due to such partisanship this two-year period suffered from a considerable amount of conflict which kept tension high during the term.

Three of the former park board members were reappointed by the split council. J. D. Sullivan was named president again and Harry Gordon was again vice-president. The third appointee was George Chesnut. H. J. Railton, a sheet metal contractor, and George Ripley, owner of a shirt manufacturing firm, were the two men chosen by the council to replace Martin Weiss and R. T. Shiels, both of whom had asked not to be reappointed.[4]

Newspapers again gave rampant speculations that Foster Jacoby

would not be reinstated as park director. Perhaps for a lack of a suitable replacement or perhaps because some board members saw a chance to operate more freely without an adept director, Jacoby was reappointed to the position he had had since 1920. Due to his illness that was growing increasingly worse, Miss Beulah Cauley, the park board secretary, managed most of the office tasks and covered to the public for the ailing Jacoby. Because of such conditions, the WPA engineer, the park engineer, the head maintenance man, and project foremen usually bypassed the director's office in a direct route to the members of the park board.[5]

An opportunity existed for any board members seeking personal gain to achieve it without immediate detection. The city councilmen had too many problems among themselves to have time to scrutinize park board's activities closely, even if they had so desired. Jobs were too scarce for the park employees to risk losing theirs by reporting suspicious happenings. In general, the existing political exigencies combined to allow two members of the board to weaken to the temptation to seek personal gain from the federal monies being used by the department. What was probably more surprising was that the park board was the only known city agency that publicly fell into the trap.

Nonetheless, the park board of 1937-1939 worked closely together on most of the projects, accomplishing considerable good during their term. Perhaps because there were so many activities being carried out by the board, no one noticed the smaller illicit events. Since three of the board members appointed in 1937 were prominent personalities of the previous board and because of the tremendous awareness the public

had of their prior accomplishments, it was easy to believe the new board was fail-proof.

Probably the most public-oriented project involved the continuation of the Centennial regala under the name of the Greater Texas and Pan-American Exposition. Opening in June of 1937 and continuing for a five-month run, the experience acquired previously by the park board and the Centennial Corporation provided a simple and advantageous operation of Dallas' second world's fair. The exhibits were again on a grand scale, but the emphasis was turned from Texas' fight for independence to a broader Latin-American theme. With the exception of seventy thousand dollars worth of building improvements, landscaping, and grounds maintenance, the main contributions of the park board to the second exposition were in the form of advice since the fair plant, the largest expense, was already in existence. Displays were handled chiefly by a specific board set up for the Pan-American show. Based upon the millions of visitors, Dallas again enjoyed a successful event while the inevitable employment drop was postponed for another five months.

These fair years were memorable ones certainly because of the depression but also because of these dazzling fairs. The Centennial and its successor brought money into the Dallas economy, people into the Dallas area, and a touch of glamour into the hearts and minds of Dallas residents. The greatest difficulty the park board faced was deciding what to do with the Civic Center on the fair grounds. The buildings had been built for permanence in accord with the original plans, and there was no question that too much had been built at Fair Park to let it go to waste by not using it. The problem was simply a

question of money. The upkeep of the collection of museums was expensive, and it became quite a burden to be shouldered by this board and all that followed.

Over twenty-eight thousand dollars was spent in converting the Domestic Arts building to the Museum of Natural Resources. The Museum of Natural History benefited from six thousand dollars of new exhibits. Additional landscaping, walks, and two reflecting pools became a part of the grounds. In further efforts to reopen the civic center, the board authorized the restoration of Fair Park's auditorium to its original condition. Because the auditorium had been used by General Motors for exhibit purposes during the Centennial and as a mock casino during the next fair, General Motors paid $6,600 and the Pan-American board contributed $10,384, leaving the park board to spend over $35,000 of the $51,530 restoration costs. Once the renovation was completed the auditorium was available for public use as were the reopened museums.[6]

Maintenance of the fair grounds proved to be almost hopeless. Without any special labor allocations to help finance the cost of removing the concrete foundations of the temporary structures, the situation looked bleak. The park department did not own any mechanical equipment designed to perform demolition work. In fact the park department was relying upon mule drawn wagons to haul the broken concrete from Fair Park to the point of disposal. It was a slow, tedious task, but one that had to be finished in order to return the park to a presentable state.[7]

The park board sought a solution to their problem at Fair Park by presenting a compromise to the city councilmen. Because the end of

fairs meant the cost of maintenance of the Civic Center reverted from the special committees set up for the fair years back to the shoulders of the park board, President Sullivan suggested that their tax income be raised. A few years earlier when the special Centennial account had removed the expense from the park board's account, Sullivan had ordered their 10¢ on every $100 of assessed property tax be cut to 8½¢ in a gesture to save the local property owner some money. The return to the 10¢ tax allowed under the city charter provided the park board with an annual addition of $35,898.[8]

In return for the additional income, park board president Sullivan voiced resolutions turning back to the general fund of the City of Dallas the sum of $300,000 in Centennial bonds and $35,000 in unused Museum of Fine Arts bonds. Sullivan advocated the return of money because he said that there was enough money to complete the list of park improvements. Some of the other board members disagreed with him. Their opinion was that since the citizens of Dallas had voted the money for park improvements that was what the money should be used for--park purposes. Although the dispute over the final fate of the money began at the initiation of the 1937 term, the resolution to return the $335,000 was not officially adopted until July of 1938. However, the subject remained controversial; and as a result, the money was not actually given to the general fund. The board appointed in 1939 agreed to use the money for park improvements; thus, the park bonds remained intact to be used for civic improvement.[9]

Sullivan had the best interests of Dallasites in mind while arguing that the money should be returned to help the general sinking fund

and debt. However, with the antiquated machinery and dilapidated equipment available to a department whose main focal point was to be maintenance and improvement, it seems that Sullivan was being much too generous and gallant for the public eye. His actions were certainly not in the best interest of the park department. Although as fate would have it, the money may have been more effectively used by the following park board which was not bothered by questionable activities.

Improvements made with the tax income and various revenue sources were distributed throughout the city. Most of the projects were submitted for federal funding and subsequently most of the applications were accepted. It was easily understandable that the situation was confusing. Unlike during the Centennial construction when the majority of federal aid went to the Civic Center, during these following years several federal organizations were involved in various projects in all parts of the city.

In cooperation with the National Youth Administration (NYA), eighteen thousand dollars was spent at Stevens Park golf course to protect it from soil erosion, to construct a caddy house, and to improve the greens. A similar program was carried out at Tenison in conjunction with the Works Project Administration (WPA). Marsalis Park Zoo received several bridges and new landscaping in addition to the animal houses which already had been constructed with WPA help. The wading pool at Alamo Park was refurbished and ten tennis courts were added. In scattered work, the road around Lagow Park was paved, a shelter house was built at Fretz Park, and a new floor in the center at Pike Park became a reality.[10]

Two lakes under park board jurisdiction, White Rock and Bachman, received a great deal of improvements from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This federal agency, a branch of the National Park Service, had established a camp at White Rock Lake in 1935 with the intent of providing jobs for the unemployed young men of the area. The CCC continued to assist the park department with the paving of Lawther Drive around the lake, laying water and sewer lines, and constructing several piers and bridges.[11]

Several CCC men helped an ill-fated White Rock Lake dredging program, working as oilers or assistants. The dredge, purchased for $21,973 in November of 1937, began operations at the lake. A few days later the dredge sank. A diver called in from Galveston floated the monstrous piece of machinery. A report issued by the project supervisor blamed faulty construction for the incident. However, to further complicate matters, rumors began flying that the workers were drunk much of the time; thus, the high frequencies of injuries and the wreck were supposedly explained. The completed investigation failed to prove the rumors. Some men were drinking on the job, but poor supervision and a lack of knowledge about operating a dredge were probably more substantial reasons for the sinking of the machinery and the accidents. Operations began anew in April of 1938 and continued until February of 1939 when the work ceased for another period because of a lack of funds. Although CCC labor helped on this project, the responsibility for the poor direction and management was attributed to the park department personnel and not to the CCC labor.[12]

A further indication that all was not well in the park department

occurred immediately after the dredge sank. City councilmen turned from their internal conflicts long enough to order the director of the public works department to supervise the rehabilitation of the dredge. The idea was considered absurd by the angry park board. In a private meeting, the board declared that they did not wish to be subservient to the public works engineer because they had their own engineer. So much noise was raised that a few days later the councilmen stated that the park board was only answerable to the city council and not to any other department in the city government. Thus, at the one time the park board probably needed strict supervision, it received none, because the council returned to their more obvious problems, leaving the board entirely free to handle its own affairs.[13]

In spite of the bad publicity, the dredging project accomplished a considerable amount of good. Almost ninety acres of land was reclaimed--sixty-eight acres at the north end of the lake and twenty at Dixon's Branch. Most of the silt dredged from the lake's bottom was used to fill those swampy areas around the lake's shores. A very insignificant amount was sold inexpensively to anyone that would carry it off. The revenue from the sales was deposited in the White Rock Lake dredging fund to help continue the operations.[14]

Additional plans to beautify White Rock Lake and to make it more usable by Dallas citizens had included the removal of hundreds of private cabins. However, perhaps for additional income, the board in 1937 rescinded this policy. Sullivan encouraged people to build more cabins at the lake, adding that any development would add beauty to the lake, but his encouragement ceased when several home owners voiced public

protests. The residents of the area claimed the lake needed no further clutter to detract from its natural beauty. Apparently, the time for private shoreside cabins had come to an end because the board of 1939 quickly demanded the demolition of the cabins.[15]

Although the CCC gave the majority of the federal assistance at White Rock Lake, the WPA worked on a few minor projects. The only one that resulted in any problems was a new pier built with WPA labor. Because WPA labor was used for a pier constructed for the Dallas Sailing Club, the board was told to make restitution or else open the pier to the public. Of the total cost of $5,081, the government pro rata expense was calculated at $1,787, which the park board refunded the federal government.[16]

Bachman Lake received several benefits from the federal programs during this term. The lake was still being used for a water supply for the City of Dallas, but its potential as a recreational area had been recognized. During 1938 the CCC cleaned up the area around Bachman Lake. They smoothed the shoreline and planted trees. Meanwhile, over two thousand dollars of park improvement money was combined with WPA labor to build picnic units throughout the park. An additional five thousand dollars provided comfort stations, additional landscaping, and miscellaneous improvement in 1939. With the help of these two federal programs, the park board began the development of a picturesque lake, which served as a welcome contrast from the cityscape surrounding it.[17]

The federal government made possible the park improvement program undertaken by the 1935 board and continued by the 1937 board. On

an even broader scale, the federal government had not only provided more developed parks, but it had also helped keep the unemployment figures under control. In spite of these facts, Dallasites grew anxious to call such assistance to a halt. The pride of the city returned with a strong desire to rid themselves of federal red tape. The board voted to discharge the WPA park engineer and several other WPA men in December of 1938. It went on record that their services were no longer needed. The board agreed to favor private contracts over WPA projects. However, the determination of the board to close down their WPA division was easily understood in light of the low rumblings that insinuated that something was afoul in the park board's federal help division.[18]

Recreation programs in Dallas under Sullivan's board were varied. The WPA helped considerably to provide supervised playgrounds by paying the salaries of approximately ten recreation leaders during the summer programs. These leaders worked cooperatively with the park supervisors and the volunteer assistants. The WPA recreation program also provided equipment at several of the city's parks. Maple Park, adjacent to a one million dollar PWA housing project, was one of the area parks to receive over four thousand dollars for playground apparatus for the underprivileged children. Partially to the credit of the WPA assistance, the attendance on Dallas playgrounds rose to 4,846,000 during 1937. The next year, along with the cut back of federal recreation funding, attendance fell to 4,323,000. The federal recreation program was curtailed along with several other forms of federal aid, because the nation's economy had shown signs of returning to economic prosperity. In addition, Dallas was more than ready to return to pre-depression independence

and eliminate their reliance upon the federal government.[19]

A growing interest in organized, team sports may have been partially responsible for the decrease in playground attendance in 1938. The interest in baseball was rapidly expanding, not only drawing several thousand active participants but also several thousand spectators. Baseball fields were built throughout the city, but playing time was limited to daylight hours. In order to combat that problem, the first lighted softball field was installed at Railton Field at Fair Park in 1938. Its chief backer, board member E. J. Railton, bragged of the ingenuity used to erect a lighted ballfield for Dallas. Costing very little, salvage material was taken from storage and put to use. Several hundred floodlights were removed from the Centennial grounds and attached to numerous wooden flagstaffs. Limited funds were provided by the Dallas Softball Association to purchase the few materials needed in addition to the salvaged materials.[20]

Statistics prove the success and growing enthusiasm for the athletic program, not only for baseball but also for football, tennis, soccer, and others. During the 1936-37 year the participation count was 800,000, but by the next year this figure increased to 1,900,000. With this many playing during one year, several million could be surmised to have been spectators.[21]

Compared to the development program, recreation was somewhat slighted during this time; but, just as during the previous terms, land acquisition programs remained close to non-existent. The city simply lacked the funds for any more than a limited land acquisition effort. The federal government and the remaining Ulrickson and Centennial bonds

were the major sources of income besides the ten cent ad valorem tax money. The federal assistance, usually in the form of labor, aided in development and recreation, while the bond money had been designated for improvement and development of existing parks. Finally, land acquisition was the least urgent need of the park department in Dallas. The board held park acreage in the excess of the accepted ten acres per every thousand persons, and little demand for additional purchases existed.[22]

As a result of this lack of urgency, very little land was actually purchased. The board looked at a pauper's burial ground with an idea of converting it to a black park. City records showed that the cemetery was acquired in a trade with the Thomas and Gaston families in 1878, but heirs of both families claimed the cemetery still. Avoiding a controversy, the board bought twenty-five acres on Eighth Street instead for a black park, but almost three acres of the park were immediately sold for twenty-five hundred dollars to help reduce the purchase price. Another 28.5 acres, known as Glendale Park, were purchased in 1938.[23]

The land acquisition program had little momentum, but in spite of this fact, several hundred acres were acquired in 1938. Dr. W. W. Samuell, one of Dallas' leading physicians, left his real estate to the city he loved. He had said that Dallas had been good to him, and so he wanted to do something for the city. Typical of the busy, non-pretentious man he was, he left his vast acreages by means of a holigraphic will written on a prescription blank:

> Real estate to City of Dallas Park Board for park purposes--not to be sold. Balance to Park Board as permanent foundation. First National Bank, administrator.
>
> W. W. Samuell
> March 30, 1937

This one man, who had always been a great benefactor to Dallas' poor and who had shunned the social lifestyle, gave to his home city a gift valued by the First National Bank at $1,222,847.96.[24]

Receipt of the gift made Dallas one of the country's richer park systems. Although most of the doctor's farmlands became some of the city's most prized parks, several properties in the downtown area were kept as revenue producing properties. A few more were later marked as unsuitable for either parklands or revenue properties. These were sold and the money deposited in the Samuell Foundation. Because the bequest was so excessive, the legal technicalities necessary lasted until March of 1940 when a court judgement was entered and the distribution settled. The 1937-39 board had the privilege of accepting the gift and of planning for its future uses, but they could not develop this land pending the court action of 1940.[25]

As the year 1938 concluded, low rumblings of some sort of shocking, scandalous activities in the park department were heard. Then the news erupted in a loud outbreak:

> Astounding story alleging pay-offs, fixed specifications on park department purchases, nepotism, and sales of city materials with splitting of proceeds.[26]

One park board member, George Ripley, grew suspicious of several activities being activated by two other board members. Quietly, the man gathered enough information to confirm his suspicion that there was indeed foul play in the Dallas Park Department.

After the major newspapers in the city made the story into a front-page headliner, a thorough investigation began. However, the impression given by the papers was erroneous--the entire citizenry did not

go into shock at the news. In fact, as the evidence of the wrongdoings snowballed, many citizens confessed previous knowledge that much was astray. The tendency to have overlooked such actions can be attributed to two major reasons. Squealing would have displaced several men from their jobs, although illegal, during a time when unemployment still remained quite rampant. And, perhaps justifiably, the citizens of Dallas simply were tired of the drawn-out years of sacrifice and hardship and wanted only to be left alone.

Nonetheless, the city government, if not the citizens, was strongly shaken in late 1938 when Ripley called for an investigation in the park department. Prior to Ripley's insinuations, three men from the FBI and a few city officials had already investigated the White Rock Lake dredging project and were then engaged in investigating the municipally owned radio station, WRR, but their attention was quickly redirected toward the park department.[27]

When scandal was first broached, Ripley indicated that the furor revolved around some large quantities of cement that were purchased by the department and stored in a little red barn outside the city limits of West Dallas. Supposedly, the cement was used for resale and for payoffs. Ripley promised to follow through with the White Rock Lake investigation. With the method of presentation, an outsider would have believed that Ripley was only trying to make a mountain out of a molehill, but threats against Ripley's life surfaced and one had to suspect that there was much festering within the park department.[28]

The park board held special meetings to discuss the adverse publicity it was receiving. At this point all suspicions were

principally directed towards the WPA division. Investigations uncovered more than anyone had suspected. Because of the expanding realm of wrongdoings, the park board, in conjunction with the city council, soon decided to turn the entire affair over to the courts.[29]

A hearing on January 6, 1939 began rather quietly. There were Texas Rangers occupying the corners of the council chambers because of the threats, but more than anything they were only for precaution. Ripley was called to the stand to give in detail his knowledge of the cement in question. Instead, he fired accusations at park board vice-president Harry Gordon of having his home remodeled with city-paid workmen. Silence fell over the courtroom. Gordon, refusing to answer, was told he would be asked again at another hearing. Ripley continued, saying he had more information which would reveal the mastermind, but he would need more time to present his case.[30]

Claude Jordan was called next to testify. Jordan, a park laborer, stated that Al Simpson, the park board's engineer for WPA, had told him some work was to be done on the Gordon house. He then answered that he had received no pay other than his regular salary in return for the remodeling.

Following Jordan's testimony, Al McKay claimed to have done some work on the home of Ernest Allen, a former park department foreman. Part of the cement stored outside the city limits had been traded for shingles and tiles for the house repairs. McKay also said that he had witnessed garage work, sand and gravel yard leveling, painting, termite poisoning, and wallpaper hanging at Allen's house. Although a large concrete mixer that belonged to the city was used to lay the cement, no

one in the neighborhood cared to report its usage.[31]

The situation took on a new level of drama as the Texas Rangers stood alert and Al McKay was named as Ripley's bodyguard. Ripley promised to uncover more. Upon such an announcement, Mrs. McKay began receiving telephone threats which resulted in the McKay's home being granted a twenty-four hour police guard.[32]

Throughout the hearing, Gordon feigned surprise, but Ripley mentioned that he and Mayor George Sprague had already told him of the intended charges. Then, the hearing was recessed to give the chief investigators time to uncover more evidence.

Ten WPA investigators from the New Orleans office were assigned to the probe because of several new charges. Evidence was rising that the park department actually had sold the cement outright or traded it for material for private jobs. Several parks had their names changed during the thirties: Keith Park to Tietze Park, Oak Lawn Park to Robert E. Lee Park, City Park to Sullivan Park, Fair Park to Exposition Park, etc. Understandably much of the material had been requisitioned for a fictitious "McNeeley Park" which was overlooked because of the confusion of name changes.[33]

During this interlude between hearings, the practically unheard from director, Foster Jacoby, reappeared to suggest selling the bookkeeping machine that had been used in the WPA division where the trouble began. President Sullivan snapped back in reply that if it had been used perhaps better track could have been kept of materials. As with these two men, the anxiety was shortening tempers and prohibiting much of the routine park work that needed to be performed.[34]

The courtroom chamber stood ready for the second hearing on January 21, 1939. As the astounding stories alleging pay-offs, fixed specifications, nepotism, and sales of city materials with splitting of proceeds were told by Jordan again, park board member E. J. Railton's name entered the list of alleged guilty. Shouts of "liar" came from Railton, who was stopped rather hastily by the Texas Ranger when he lunged forward toward Jordan. Next, Al Simpson revealed that pay-offs were split between himself, Railton, and Gordon, and that was done at Railton's orders. Simpson also claimed that thirty to forty men were sent to him for employment by Railton who had told him that he had political obligations to meet. Most of the remaining charges were small: a stolen truckload of dirt for an employee's yard, two tires for Railton's shop, tile and shrubbery for Railton's home.[35]

After long hours of hassling and questioning, the meeting was adjourned. But things did not remain quiet for long. Three nights later an attempt to break into the office of Ross Lawther, the court reporter, was frustrated by the night watchman. Three men were routed from an outside window on the first floor of the old courthouse. Upon receiving such news, Ripley announced that he had done his share and that someone else would have to continue it.[36]

On January 26, 1939, the city council ordered vacant the two seats on the park board of Gordon and Railton. Council also voted to sustain the charges against Gordon, enumerating thirty specific items and actions. Gordon denied emphatically the charges of having conspired illegally for the remodeling of his house. He contended that he had paid Allen $650 for the work. Allen had told the same story but added

that he gave the money and job to Simpson. And so the stories went, around and around.[37]

In late March of 1939, the Dallas County Grand Jury returned five indictments against Gordon, Railton, Jordan, Simpson, and Allen. It was finally concluded that Gordon had been involved but not to the same extent as the others, while Railton appeared to have been the mastermind behind much of the work. Sentences were not rendered until 1941. Railton was given the maximum prison sentence of two years in Leavenworth plus a five hundred dollar fine. Allen was given a suspended year and one day sentence provided he made restitution to the federal government within fifteen days for stolen lumber valued at $122.24. Jordan was given a sixty day sentence and Simpson received a sixty day suspended sentence. Gordon received no sentence, but his career as a C. P. A. was totally ruined.[38]

The board continued to function. Ripley declined the chair as vice-president so Chesnut took the position. Apparently glowing in the glory of having disclosed such a scandal, Ripley announced intentions to run for the city council. The city attorney, Henry Kucera, stated that there was no legal way for Ripley to be both on the park board and city council; thus, a new member would have to be appointed. But instead, the council let things ride until the new council could make an appointment. In addition, park employees who had been hired upon Railton's request were released by the three remaining members.[39]

A rather tense two years ended quietly and quickly. It was a time which probably could not be recreated, since all of the existing factors had combined to allow the situation to run out of control as it did. No

matter how faulty any one circumstance was, it was only the combination of the parts that allowed the peculations into the private well-being.

With the exception of this one particular term, the independent standing of the Dallas Park Board has been advantageous to the citizens of Dallas. Decisions can be initiated more quickly and will not be bogged down with the amount of difficulties involved in other departments. The board has been able to take immediate action whenever needed. Construction could be executed easily when the contractors were directly responsible to the park board. Whatever the need, the independent board between 1906 and 1937 generally had proven most effective and efficient.

The years 1937-1939 were the exceptions. Political controversy had placed one man on the board as a reward and another had succumbed to the temptations of greed. The director, who usually acts as a check, was in no condition to observe much at all, and the park board secretary could only relinquish the majority of his responsibilities to the willing board members.

The city council was so involved with its own partisan squabbles that no one watched the park board. After 1935 the rigid financial reports required by City Manager John Edy ended. By 1937, City Manager Hal Moseley was kept occupied by the divisive council. Such a set of internal municipal affairs combined with a high unemployment rate and an exhausted state of apathy to allow corruption to strike park board affairs for the one and only time.

In spite of the troubles, the park board ended the term with a large cash balance. A great number of parks enjoyed completed WPA improvement programs of building and landscaping. White Rock Lake was

beautified with CCC help. Recreation had been strengthened by the lighted softball diamonds allowing nighttime play. The Civic Center was opened to the public for enjoyment and education. W. W. Samuell generously willed his real estate to the city, giving Dallas more acreage than most comparable sized cities.

With such vast improvements and such new additions of land, the incoming park board certainly had sufficient material with which to work. A new board, a new director, and a new decade would soon erase the 1937-1939 term's unpleasant memories.

## NOTES

## A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT 1937-1939

[1]Ray Ginger, Altgeld's America: The Lincoln Ideal v. Changing Realities (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1958), pp. 15-22. Ginger explains that the Panic of 1893 was postponed in Chicago because of the World Exposition celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus' voyage held that year in Chicago. The Exposition drew a swelling stream of visitors to spend their few remaining dollars in Chicago. On a smaller scale, the Centennial had the same effect in Dallas in 1936.

[2]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, And Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), p. 77.

[3]Ibid., p. 78.

[4]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, pp. 192-194.

[5]Dallas Morning News, 9 May 1937, sec. IV, p. 1; 11 May 1937, sec. I, p. 15; Wylie Moore, Dallas golf pro at Stevens Park, interview with author, June 1973; Henry P. Kucera, former Dallas city attorney, interview with author, July 1973; Earl Freeman, former Dallas park employee, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[6]Dallas Morning News, 7 June 1937, sec. II, p. 8; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 68.

[7]L. B. Houston, "Memories of the Dallas Park Department," taped, Spring, 1973, Dallas Park Department, typed transcribed copy.

[8]Dallas Morning News, 29 May 1937, sec. I, p. 10.

[9]Ibid., 29 May 1937, sec. I, p. 10; 29 June 1937, sec. II, p. 1; 9 July 1937, sec. II, p. 1; 15 July 1937, sec. II, p. 1; 28 July 1937, sec. II, p. 11; 29 July 1937, sec. II, p. 12; 8 March 1938, sec. II, p. 1; Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 9, 27 July 1938, p. 234; Cauley, "Notes," pp. 10, 11; and Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 49, 26 May 1939, p. 611.

[10]Dallas Morning News, 31 March 1937, sec. I, p. 5; 23 June 1937, sec. II, p. 14; 30 September 1937, sec. II, p. 12; 24 February 1938, sec. II, p. 1; 21 July 1938, sec. I, p. 5; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 24 January 1939, p. 35.

[11] Ibid.; and Houston, "Memories."

[12]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 13 December 1938, p. 4; 24 January 1939, p. 35; 7 February 1939, pp. 40-42; Houston, "Memories"; Dallas Morning News, 4 December 1937, sec. II, p. 1; and Cauley, "Notes," pp. 266-267. Actually the dredging project was not completed until 1941 when labor became limited because of World War II. Further dredging of the lake was continually proposed until 1974 when the project was again undertaken.

[13]Dallas Morning News, 3 December 1937, sec. II, p. 1; 4 December 1937, sec. II, p. 1; 7 December 1937, sec. II, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 9, 17 December 1937, p. 382.

[14]Cauley, "Notes," pp. 266-267; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 13 December 1938, p. 4; and Houston, "Memories."

[15]Dallas Morning News, 25 May 1937, sec. I, p. 5; 22 August 1937, sec. I, p. 12; L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973; Joseph Rucker, former executive manager of the State Fair of Texas, interview with author, July 1973; Arthur Hale, secretary of the State Fair of Texas, interview with author, June 1973; Elgin Crull, former Dallas city manager, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[16]Cauley, "Notes," p. 270; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 7 February 1939, p. 40; 28 February 1939, p. 60; 29 April 1939, p. 78.

[17]Cauley, "Notes," p. 282.

[18]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 27 December 1938, p. 11; and Dallas Morning News, 23 July 1937, sec. I, p. 6; 9 November 1938, sec. V, p. 8.

[19]Jolly Franklin Kelsay, "The Growth and Development of the Park and Recreation Facilities and Programs for the City of Dallas, Texas from 1876-1946" (M.S. thesis, North Texas State University, 1946), p. 53; Dallas Morning News, 23 June 1935, sec. II, p. 1; 23 June 1937, sec. II, p. 14; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 27 December 1938, p. 11; 31 January 1939, p. 28.

[20]Kelsay, "Growth of Parks in Dallas," p. 53; Houston, "Memories"; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 52.

[21]Kelsay, "Growth of Parks in Dallas," p. 53.

[22]City Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Open Spaces: Dallas Metropolitan Area (Dallas: City Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments, April 1959), p. 12.

[23]Dallas Morning News, 29 July 1937, sec. II, p. 1; 30 July 1937, sec. II, p. 12; and Cauley, "Notes," pp. 87, 113.

[24] Cauley, "Notes," pp. 236-237.

[25]Dallas Morning News, 15 August 1938, sec. II, p. 1.

[26]Ibid., 21 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[27]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 13 December 1939, p. 6.

[28]Dallas Morning News, 13 December 1938, sec. II, p. 1; 21 December 1938, sec. III, p. 2.

[29]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 14 December 1938, p. 78; 19 December 1938, p. 40.

[30]Dallas Morning News, 6 January 1939, sec. II, p. 1; 7 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[31]Ibid., p. 7.

[32]Ibid., p. 1.

[33]Ibid., 8 January 1939, sec. IV, p. 6.

[34]Ibid., 11 January 1939, sec. II, p. 1; 21 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[35]Ibid., 24 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[36]Ibid.; 21 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1; 24 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1; 25 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[37]Ibid., 26 January 1939, sec. I, pp. 1, 7.

[38]Ibid., 29 March 1939, sec. II, p. 2; 20 April 1939, sec. I, p. 6; 3 February 1941, sec. II, p. 1; 7 February 1941, sec. I, p. 1; 8 Febuary 1941, sec. II, p. 1; 18 February 1941, sec. II, p. 1.

[39]Ibid., 27 January 1939, sec. I, p. 10; 28 January 1939, sec. II, p. 1; 29 January 1939, sec. I, p. 1; 30 January 1939, sec. II, p. 1; 8 March 1939, sec. II, p. 1; 25 March 1939, sec. II, p. 1.

# CHAPTER 5

## A TIME FOR THOUGHT 1939-1945

City Hall's hectic era was over. The last traces of the Catfish Club submerged along with any continued power that the Civic Association or Forward Dallas Party may have desired. With the support of a strong slate of business and civic leaders, the Charter Association made a clean sweep at the polls in 1939. A new city manager, James W. Aston, succeeded Hal Moseley and the new mayor of Dallas was Woodall Rodgers. This new Charter Association council headed by Rodgers and Aston was the beginning of the city administration that carried Dallas into World War II and prepared for the post war growth of Dallas.[1]

The first task of the new council of 1939 was to reestablish credibility to the city government, and the park department suffered from the greatest loss of confidence. The council decided that the wisest procedure was to clean the slate. Although only two board members were left at this time and their names were scandal-free, the council voted to start over with a completely new board.[2]

The council found five persons whom they believed could cope with the tremendous job of reorganizing and cleaning up the scandal-ridden park board. Dr. Robert G. Storey, a well-respected Dallas lawyer, was appointed president of the board, and Hamilton Lee, an insurance man, served as vice-president. The second woman in the board's history, Mrs. Albert Wilkinson, was appointed along with W. B. Dougherty, a retail druggist, and Harry Stone, a diamond expert for a local jeweler,

accepted the appointments of the city council.[3]

With the appointments of these five new board members, the problems of restructuring a faltering park department shifted from the city council to the new park board, and due to the previous troubles, every move made by this board was watched carefully. In short, any action made by these board members had to be above question.

For these reasons, Storey advocated that the board proceed with extreme caution. He was very careful not to rush any decision unless it was absolutely necessary. The first meetings involved policy discussion. Storey told the press that ultimately the park board would not be directly engaged in any activities of the department. The board would function like a board of directors for a corporation, making the decisions, having a top administrator enact their wishes, and reporting back to them as progress was made. Board members would no longer be in a position to individually grant contracts or jobs. All actions would be voted upon as a unit and then passed to the director of parks to be fulfilled.[4]

It was apparent to the new board that Foster Jacoby, the incumbent director, was not capable of taking on the responsibilities deemed necessary by Storey. Although it was never believed that Jacoby had anything to do with the scandal, many felt it obvious that his inefficiency as an administrator created the atmosphere in which it occurred. Thus, speculation ran rampant as to who would be the new director.[5]

The board remained silent on the subject of director, no doubt because they knew of no obvious successor and the search would be extensive and time consuming. They continued to deal with everyday obligations

and duties. Miss E. Beulah Cauley, park board secretary since 1920, was reappointed and asked to serve as interim director until another could be appointed. Jacoby was retained by the board but no work was assigned to him, and he was not directly responsible for any directorship duties.[6]

During these first few months, the board tried to complete the projects put in action by the preceding board and to plan for the future. The question of what to do with the remaining $335,000 of Centennial bond money voted for park improvements had to be settled. Former president Sullivan continued to argue that the money should be used for the direct relief of the taxpayer by using it for the city debt. However, the board members agreed with President Storey's opinion that the money had been voted for improvements and thus should be used for that purpose. It was still possible to obtain further WPA grants, and abundant federally funded labor was still available. The board thought it wise to take advantage of the opportunity. The bond money was to be used to pay the fifteen to twenty percent costs the park board had to provide for federally funded projects.[7]

Before applying for WPA assistance, the board thought it wise to hire a planning specialist to determine the direction of development most needed in the Dallas Park System. The planning firm of Hare and Hare of Kansas City was employed as consultant and landscape architect for the board. S. Herbert Hare's firm was already familiar with the parks of Dallas, having been employed during the Centennial preparations. Now on a full-time basis, the board agreed to pay the firm $250 each month as a consultant fee plus another $250 per month to cover traveling,

office, and incidental expenses. With the services of a professional firm the board had the guidance they felt necessary for achieving an optimal program with carefully planned professional procedures.[8]

Hare and Hare suggested that White Rock Lake be kept in a natural state and that the White Rock Lake development project initiated by the previous board be halted. Removal of the private campsites and boathouses was strongly encouraged. The board agreed to issue no more licenses when the current ones reached their expiration dates. An active fight was promised by campsite leasees to prevent this policy from being activated, but the board stood firm. Several group clubhouses remained for a number of years, but the majority of cabins were removed within a year.[9]

The other major carry-over project left by the previous board was also at White Rock Lake. The dredging of the lake, which had created so much controversy, was still not completed. As a result of the rapid accumulation of silt, the board directed that eighteen hundred dollars be transferred from the park improvement fund to continue the desilting operations. Dredging of the lake continued until 1941 although at a much slower pace than when the project first began. Because the silt accumulation was virtually uncontrollable, the build up in the lake remained a constant concern, but rumors of inefficiency or accidents caused by carelessness ceased.[10]

Six months after taking office the board had completed plans and had initiated the policies that they would strive to maintain during their remaining term. It was time to announce their choice as the chief administrator. President Storey announced in October of 1939 that

Louis B. Houston had accepted the challenge of directing the department of parks and recreation. The thirty-one year old Houston had been with the City of Dallas since 1932, shortly after his graduation from Southern Methodist University. After rising to administrative assistant to the director of public works, he had become assistant to the city manager in 1935. And just prior to accepting the job as park director, he served as acting city manager for a short time.[11]

A contemporary professional journal published a list of what it deemed necessary characteristics for a park director. Comparison of Houston with the list illustrated many similarities:

(1) He must be a proven executive with a working knowledge of budgets and other implements of business administration.

(2) He must be deeprooted in the soil and have a genuine love for the lands.

(3) He should be interested in people as individuals and collectively; their backgrounds, their problems, and their needs.

(4) He should have a professional training by education or employment.

(5) He must recognize and reconcile the needs for serving the people who own the land, and the land itself, which must be conserved for them and their successors.

(6) He should have a park background embodying experience or knowledge of similar areas.[12]

Requirement number six was the only one that Houston could not directly qualify. He had grown up on a farm between Prairie Dell and Salado, Texas, and during high school he worked at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and had intended to study agriculture at Texas A & M University until the last minute when he learned of a program at Southern Methodist University in electrical engineering where a student alternately could attend school for a month and then work for a month. In

eight years of city administration, Houston had proven experience in budget management while serving in the city manager's office. Also during Houston's time in the city manager's office he had earned the reputation of being a good public relations man. One of his principal duties had been to meet the people wanting to speak to the city manager and to handle the situation. Houston had shown that he could adjust in several fields already; thus, there was no reason to think that his professionalism in other departments would not be redirected toward the park department.

Whatever requirements were used, Houston was the choice of the park board. It was upon him that they would rely and he would be the one to enact their wishes. He would be the one to report any needed new improvements or the progress on projects in process. But his first and most difficult task appeared to be in reorganizing the structure of the park department.

Almost everyone in the department had had some kind of charges against them, whether deserved or not. In the midst of the accusations, anyone and everyone seemed to get their name involved, some in cover-ups, and some were simply accused of not reporting any wrongdoings of which they had known. Although the park board had made new policies in an effort to prevent any future ill-deeds, they had left the departmental problems alone. Only those three employees indicted on charges of mishandling federally owned property and money were relieved of their jobs.[13]

Although a thorough housecleaning would have been easy because the park department did not operate under civil service regulations,

Houston decided to follow a more difficult procedure. He assumed that everyone was innocent of wrongdoing and capable of handling their jobs until they had proven otherwise. He left any reduction or replacement of line employees to the foremen or supervisors in charge. If the particular supervisor felt that a man was not doing his job properly, it was his responsibility to take the required action. It became a Houston policy never to go below a supervisor.[14]

In compliance with the wishes of the board, Houston tried to keep Jacoby within the park department. His health, mental and physical, kept him from performing well in any of the positions given to him, and eventually he retired to a quiet life away from the public eye.[15]

Personnel problems were not the only major problems faced by the new director. Immediately, it was obvious to him that the department was suffering a great loss of efficiency because of the way daily affairs were being handled. Almost every employee of the department received his orders and instructions from the main office of the park department--the individual playground leaders, the forestry division, the plumbing division, and even the building maintenance division. It was impossible, in Houston's eyes, to imagine the director personally supervising each employee, so he emphasized the authority invested in each area playground supervisor or each area maintenance supervisor. Houston wanted only the different division leaders reporting directly to him.

At first the department employees were either resentful that a young man with no actual park training was their new boss, or they were afraid that they would all lose their jobs. In a short time, most of

them realized that they were not going to lose their jobs for political reasons, and that even though he was young, Houston's faith in each of them to do their jobs properly gave them added prestige. Besides, it was possible for an electrical engineer to learn about grass, trees, and basketball. Because he showed fairness and respect for his employee's knowledge and capabilities, fear and apprehension developed into a great respect for Houston's capabilities.[17]

Houston initiated several practices to save time within the department. An example of the loss of time and money suffered by the department was the forestry division. When a call came requesting to have a tree trimmed, one of the girls in the office would write out the work order on three different forms and pass it on to the forestry division which would send someone out to trim the particular tree. Houston gave the girl who took the call a pad for multiple copies. He then had the forestry foreman to spot check the calls on a large city map. A pattern soon appeared; all the trees in a particular area needed attention at approximately the same time. By following this procedure, the tree trimming and maintenance crew could save time by working all trees in a certain area instead of driving back and forth across town for a single tree.[18]

Although the general economic condition of the country had improved somewhat, the financial status of the park department was binding because of the debt obligations incurred by previous boards. In 1939, the park department was still funding warrants which had been issued in 1931 to liquidate the overdrafts run by the department before the new city charter went into effect in 1931. Also from the maximum ten cents on

every one hundred dollars ad valorem tax evaluation allowed, interest on sinking fund requirements on bonds issued prior to 1927 was being paid. The Music Hall at Fair Park was also built with warrants for which the park fund was still paying. It was estimated that over one-third of the first year's budget went into debt service.[19]

Expenses fluctuated during this period in direct relationship to the state of the country. The department operated on a budget which had increased annually for several years, but which dropped drastically when the nation became involved in World War II. In 1940 the cost of operating the park department was $412,869, and this figure rose to $442,436 in 1941. By 1942 the nation's manpower shortage caused a budgetary decrease to $425,526 which was lowered the following year to only $401,072. However, by 1944 with the close of the war, the expense figures went up to $420,970. Attendance records and revenue income followed proportionately with the expenses. Both dropped each year after 1941 until 1944 when the increased recreational enthusiasm and the return of many war veterans raised attendance which in turn increased the revenue from swimming pools, golf courses, and field reservations. In accordance with these increases, the expense of operating a park system and recreation program for a larger number of persons, raised the expense of operation to a greater extent than the increased revenue. In short, the close of the war and the results there of, raised the park department's financial burden more so than the increased revenue aided it.[20]

The other sources of income also fluctuated considerably between 1939 and 1944. The board voted to use $300,000 of the remaining Centennial bond money and the $35,000 of Fine Arts Museum bonds for park

improvements. This $335,000 total was spread over the five year period; but, for the most part, it was spent in conjunction with federally provided labor and grants. In addition to the $335,000, the board sold $75,000 of the remaining 1927 Ulrickson bonds for park improvements.[21]

Revenue from the various park activities with fees decreased during the war years. In 1941 the annual budget was lowered over ten thousand dollars from the year before, because the department received fifteen thousand dollars less from golf, boat rentals, fishing, and park concessions. The loss of campsites at White Rock Lake resulted in a decrease in license fees. Revenue continued to fall, especially in 1943 when the city had a polio scare which resulted in the closing of all municipal swimming pools. The park board became dismayed when they lost their swimming revenue, and they went before the city council to ask for some monetary relief. The council then agreed to take on the debt requirements on all the bonds that the board had been paying. Actually the board came out far ahead because the debt requirements often accounted for one-third of their total budget while swimming revenue was considerably less.[22]

The years between 1939 and 1945 were tight, but they could not be considered as years of extreme financial hardships, at least not in comparison with the 1931-1935 period. There were no excessive balances at the end of each fiscal year because of a more accurate budgeting process. The years before the war when revenue was high, the expenses were high because the attendance was high. The reverse held true during the years when attendance decreased because of the war. The bond money was spent carefully and according to plan. The necessary improvements

to various city parks were made within the budget. Although there was no excess money for any superfluous projects, there was money to provide for adequate maintenance and improvement plans. The shortage was of materials and manpower, a result of World War II.[23]

Basically, the theory that governed the park board as well as the City of Dallas as a whole, with its shortages of materials and manpower, was to concentrate upon planning for the immediate and distant future. The board had already hired the firm of Hare and Hare when Houston took office. Their assignment was to advise and act as landscape architects for the continuance of the park improvement program. Under this board and its new director, organization took precedence. All improvements were first planned and then budgeted carefully. There were none of the rush projects experienced by the 1935-37 board in preparing for the Centennial nor were there separately delegated projects as with the 1937-39 board which had made them susceptible to temptations. Everything was carefully planned and easily accountable.

When the war was in full swing and there was little available labor, federal or civilian, the park board asked Hare and Hare to expand their project. A master-plan for park acquisition and development was desired for the growth expected when the war ended. The finished plan called for a boulevard system in and around Dallas connecting the principal parks. At the time, the after-the-war improvement plan carried a cost of $1,281,436, but before long this cost was expanded. The idea behind the time of the presentation in 1942 was to allow time for acquiring the large federal grants expected after the war. Although such grants did not materialize, the plan proved invaluable when implementation

was begun under a bond program issued shortly after the post-war boom.[24]

In 1943 the city planning board decided to have a masterplan drawn up for the entire city of Dallas. Harland Bartholomew and Associates of St. Louis, Missouri, was chosen to complete the plan. Released in June 1944, Bartholomew's plan included a section on parks and schools together. Many of Hare and Hare's suggestions were either used directly or they had been the source. In addition to the plans and suggestions, Bartholomew included a great deal of philosophical advice. He inserted that the cost per acre depends upon the character of development maintained on a particular park. Cities having ample land cited costs as low as one hundred dollars per acre, while those with short supplies had annual costs up to eight hundred dollars per acre. Dallas in 1944 had the lower costs per acre, but he emphasized that they would have a growing population which could quickly make the present acres inadequate.[25]

The greatest innovation of the Bartholomew report was its emphasis on land acquisition. For almost two decades, including the wartime period, boards had focused almost entirely on improvement and development of already acquired land because Dallas fell within the standards (see Table 1). Of the land acquired during this 1939-1944 period, much of it was annexed by the City of Dallas. The only donated park received by the board was a two acre site known as Cherrywood Park which came as a gift of the Christian Weichsel family, but the number of acres that were annexed amounted to almost thirteen. In 1942 five acres were annexed which consisted of several small areas which were known as the Greenway Park triangles. During 1943 the parks which served the

TABLE II-1

DALLAS PARKS AND RECREATIONAL AREAS--1940
COMPARED TO EIGHT OTHER CITIES

| City | No. of Parks | Acres | Per 1000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dallas | 94 | 5066 | 1.7 |
| Tulsa | 146 | 3105 | 2.1 |
| Houston | 62 | 3012 | 0.7 |
| Rochester | 64 | 1937 | 0.6 |
| Louisville | 27 | 2130 | 0.7 |
| Portland | 64 | 2114 | 0.7 |
| Columbus | 40 | 2128 | 0.7 |
| Toledo | 1329 | 5046 | 1.8 |
| Memphis | 41 | 1433 | 9.5 |

SOURCE: Harland Bartholomew and Associates, Your Dallas of Tomorrow (Dallas: privately printed, 1943), p. 28.

Field-Frazier community and the Midway-Manor community were annexed into the Dallas park system at the same time the small towns became a part of the city. The fourth park to be annexed during this period was Gannon Park which was added to the park rolls in 1944; however, the 3.5 acre park had been originally given by the American Home Realty Company to the County of Dallas in 1939.[26]

Actual land purchases between 1939 and 1944 were limited to three

new parks and slight additions to smooth out jagged boundaries to six already existing parks (see Table 2). Glencoe Park was purchased for $22,007 in 1943, but soon afterwards two and one half acres were sold for $3,116 for street purposes, which reduced the total price for the 14.65 acre park to $18,890. Only a few months later, the board purchased approximately ten more acres for Glendale Park which brought the area to almost twenty-five acres. Twelve acres known as North Hampton Park were acquired in 1944 for a black park at a purchase price of $2,680. An area of 1.29 acres were purchased adjacent to Terry School for $6,915 which added to the school playground area and served as a park for another black neighborhood.[27]

Of the five park sites which received land additions, three were for white neighborhoods and two were for black neighborhoods. In 1941 Herndon Park was enlarged at a cost of twenty-nine hundred dollars which made the park a six acre area. During the same year, twelve acres at a cost of $12,088 were purchased from a Roman Catholic Church adjacent to Stevens Golf Course. Also in 1941 two very small parcels of land were added to the property at Turtle Creek because the small tracts would have permitted encroachment of undesirable private development; however, the areas were also suitable for public usage, and the board voted to purchase the land for fifteen hundred dollars. Approximately 2.6 acres were added to Eighth Street Negro Park (now called Moore Park) which brought the total acreage there to over twenty-four acres, and Hall Street Negro Park (now called Griggs Park) received a small addition in 1943.[28]

Money seemed a real limitation in the purchase of land; however,

TABLE II-2

PARKS ACQUIRED AND PARKS EXPANDED
BETWEEN 1931 AND 1944

| Park | Date | Method[a] | Acreage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cherrywood | 1939 | G | 2.00 |
| Dealey Plaza | 1936 | O | 3.10 |
| Fair Park | 1904, 1936, 1957, 1970 | B-G | 239.20 |
| Field-Frazier | 1943 | G | 2.50 |
| Gannon | 1944 | G | 3.50 |
| Glencoe | 1943 | B | 13.20 |
| Glendale | 1938 | B | 60.13 |
| Herndon | 1921, 1941 | B | 6.30 |
| Maple | 1938 | B | 1.40 |
| Midway-Manor | 1943 | G | 1.60 |
| Moore | 1938, 1945 | B | 24.70 |
| North Hampton | 1944 | B | 12.00 |
| Samuell-Grand | 1938 | G | 99.44 |
| Samuell-Colorado | 1938 | G | 5.03 |
| Samuell-Garland | 1938 | G | 45.93 |
| Samuell-East | 1938 | G | 608.17 |
| Samuell-New Hope | 1938 | G | 120.00 |
| Stevens | 1923, 1941 | B-G | 145.15 |
| Terry | 1944 | G | 1.29 |
| Total | | | 1394.64[b] |

SOURCE: Dallas Park Department, "Dallas Park Property List," 1 February 1973.

[a]B - Purchased
G - Gift
O - Land acquired by another city department, but used as a park.

[b]Total figure not exact for 1944 because, where noted, additions have been made since 1944 and some parks were purchased prior to 1931 but had additions during this time.

in addition to the small number of purchases, the board discussed several possible and desirable locations if the price was ever suitable. Several prominent citizens debated that Pioneer Cemetery near the downtown area should be purchased as a memorial to the founders of Dallas. (This cemetery was eventually given to the city in the 1950s to provide more downtown greenspaces.) The Thomas Hill tract adjacent to Marsalis Park Zoo was another highly desirable area, because there were plans for a future zoo expansion. The undeveloped land near Love Field was considered as a site for a Negro golf course. All of these areas under discussion were eventually acquired for park spaces after the close of the war.[29]

However, there was a major emphasis placed upon Dr. W. W. Samuell's estate which had been donated in 1937. The board moved slowly with the Samuell's property as they gained clear titles to the various lands and settled undivided ownerships with family members. Written on a prescription blank, Dr. Samuell gave his real estate and balance to the park board. After determining that most probably the doctor meant the Dallas Park Board and the executor was intended to be the First National Bank of Dallas, Lindsley Real Estate Company was given the authority to accept rentals, and general supervision of the properties until full settlement was reached. The codicil to the will gave the Samuell's house to his wife along with $100,000. Two brothers and a Samuell sister received twenty-five thousand dollars, with the other close relatives receiving between one thousand and five thousand dollars each. Dr. Samuell's sister, Mrs. Bettie Samuell Williams, owned undivided interest in the property adjacent to Tenison Golf Course. The First National

Bank, the park board, Mrs. W. W. Samuell, and the Attorney General of the State of Texas were parties in a pleading before a district court in Dallas County. Witnesses were called to testify and all appearances and presentations were made in good spirit by all involved. After hearing the testimony, the judge of the court issued a decree, dividing the real properties into classes and specifying the usage or disposition. As a result, the park board in 1945 acquired Mrs. Samuell's interest and they attained title to all the land that later became Samuell-Grand Park.

Meanwhile, the park board laid plans for the development and disposition of the lands to which they held cleared titles. The estate consisted of three types of properties: those suitable for park lands, those suitable for revenue, and those to be sold. The balance, after all the heirs were paid, was put into a permanent foundation. Into this foundation went the money from the sale of any Samuell property. The interest from foundation investments and revenue from any Samuell property makes up the spendable portion of the Samuell trust. This money has been used for improvement and maintenance of the Samuell parks.

Much of the real estate received by the board was farm land. What is known as Samuell-Mesquite (492.49 acres), Samuell-Garland (99.06 acres), and Samuell-New Hope (215.18 acres) were all kept as farmland and leased to various farmers for planting and grazing until the city grew enough to sufficiently use the acreages as park lands. Samuell-Grand (101.60 acres) adjacent to Tenison Golf Course was immediately used as a park. In fact the board designated this park to be the site of a memorial they had planned for Dr. Samuell. Samuell-Elam (202 acres) was purchased later with the receipts from the sale of one of the downtown properties.

Most downtown property was deemed most useful as revenue producing by the courts. The various parcels differed from vacant lots leased out as parking space to those with office buildings which were leased to assorted firms and businesses. A few of the properties were sold when a fair price was offered.[31]

There has been some past debate about Dr. Samuell's real intentions for his real estate. Because he did not specify any parcel of land for parks or revenue, the decision was left to the courts. Some people feel that Samuell meant for his downtown lots to become downtown greenspaces. There were others who felt the rental from these lots could be more effectively used to provide the funds for developing the beautiful farm lands as parks. There was no way of knowing the doctor's wishes; however, perhaps he knew that if he was non-specific, the executors would have the flexibility to make allowances for circumstances and changes that no one could possibly foresee, all in the best interest of the citizens of Dallas.[32]

Park development projects were numerous until the manpower and material shortages were inflicted upon the nation by World War II. In 1939 the board announced that they were applying for more federal help in spite of the fact that the preceding board had recently announced that private contracts were favored as opposed to federal funding. Although the previous board had experienced major problems in the WPA division of the park department, the new board and director believed the trouble had been with the employees and not the federal program itself; thus, there was no real reason to not take advantage of any federal programs which would help the park system.

During the years between 1935 and 1939, the WPA program provided the park department with the most help. WPA funds of forty-two thousand dollars were approved for Lake Cliff Park. Supplemented by seventeen thousand dollars from the city, a new shelter, a pergola, walks of flagstone, and general maintenance enhanced further the natural beauty of the park. Hare's plan for the area consisted of several sheltered areas from which a visitor could view the park's native features and new gardens. Tenison Golf Course received a new clubhouse, storm sewers, landscape work, and greens maintenance with $10,333 of city money supplemented with $21,574 from a WPA grant. Stevens Golf Course acquired a twenty-six thousand dollar clubhouse built with WPA help and completed in 1942.[33]

The WPA also conducted an extensive tree planting program. At Dealey Plaza, the entrance to downtown Dallas, the WPA provided structures of architectural concrete, grading, sodding, and planting of trees. Over thirty thousand dollars were provided by the WPA throughout the city for the tree planting project. With the property owner's contribution of $1.25 per tree, the park department and WPA bore the additional cost and provided the installation.[34]

The NYA also did extensive landscaping work at Dealey Plaza, and other various city parks. Labor was provided by the NYA in constructing a comfort station at Oak Cliff Negro Park while the park board engineer supervised the project. At Fair Park the NYA furnished the labor and the park board provided $950 in materials to dig a fifty-foot well for the Aquarium.[35]

The third federal group which was still working with the park

board in 1939 was the CCC. Their work concentrated upon White Rock Lake where they were continuing work projects begun as early as 1935. CCC labor was used on the revived dredging program. Five hundred tons of stone for rip-rapping at the north end of the lake were laid with CCC labor. This rip-rapping helped prevent shoreline erosion by the constant lapping of waves.[36]

The CCC group helped remove a long unused spur track of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad which had once served the abandoned White Rock pumping station. Sunset Inn and the Big Thicket, both recreational centers at White Rock, were built with the help of both the WPA and CCC. A shelter and concession building was built on Doran Point and an observation point was installed on Flag Pole Hill. In addition to building comfort stations at Dixon Branch and the Municipal boathouse, the widening of Lawther Drive with this federal labor gave the visitors an easier and more scenic drive around the lake.[37]

Projects and improvements without federal aid were wide in scope but more limited in funds. Lee Park's community center was completed shortly after this board came into office. Later over thirteen thousand dollars was appropriated for construction of a shelter building, asphalt walks, service drives, and water lines for the park. The small lake was desilted while grading, sodding, and planting was done. In addition the Dallas Garden Club donated many cherry trees to form a half circle background for the statue of Robert E. Lee, placed in the park during the Centennial.[38]

In addition to the construction of the Lee Park Community Center, three others received extensive improvements. An addition was made to

the community center at Lagow Park at a cost of $6,222. A shelter costing $2,000 at Randall Park was enclosed to make room for a year-round community center and, finally, a two room addition was given the community center at Exline Park at a cost of $3,000.[39]

In 1939 most of the parks serving Negroes were in poor condition and badly overcrowded, because they were too small for the area they served. Before the board made additions to two of the five parks serving the Negro communities and purchased two new parks for black neighborhoods, statistics revealed that the blacks needed additional park land. A review of the 1940 population census reveals that blacks made up seventeen percent of the city population; thus, the white population accounted for eighty-three percent of the total count. With fifty-five parks in the city (4,267.93 acres), one served the Mexican community (3.75 acres) and five served black areas (50.99 acres), which provided the white population with more than 4,200 acres of park areas. This meant that the eighty-three percent white population had ninety-one percent of the parks and the seventeen percent black population had nine percent of the parks and only one percent of the park acreage.[40]

Perhaps realizing that this failed to meet the "separate but equal" tradition, the park board began an improvement program for these minority parks. A softball field and shelter house were built on Moore Park (Eighth Street Negro Park). Water and lights were installed and grass was planted. A six hole golf course, where the first round cost a dime and any additional ones cost a nickel, was built at Moore Park. Oak Cliff Negro Park was improved with a thirty-three hundred dollar junior pool that was ten feet longer than the city's standard wading

pool. Both Oak Cliff and Moore parks received street improvements and new entrance ways to the parks.[41]

Oak Cliff Park also received ninety-eight hundred dollars for enclosing the shelter and the installation of play facilities. A tennis court, walks, curbs, and gutters were also constructed here as in the other parks serving the black communities. Plans for improving the Elm Thicket Park (later changed to Hillard Park) were made. This park, located on excess Love Field property, became the site of a Negro golf course.[42]

The department acknowledged the thanks offered by the black Chamber of Commerce which gave their praise liberally. The black parks were greatly improved even if the custom of segregated parks had little more than a decade remaining. Although the improvements principally were done because they were needed, it was impossible not to feel the good will generated by the Negro park improvement programs.

Another special type of development was required at Fair Park. For the most part, the fair grounds were not yet cleaned completely from the super expositions held a few years prior to this 1939 board. The department did not have the equipment for removing the remains until Director Houston recommended the purchase of several trucks and a gasoline powered mowing tractor to relieve maintenance problems. Until then most equipment had been mule drawn or manually pushed. After the grounds again looked presentable, the board became deeply involved in restoring and renovating the Civic Center at Fair Park.[43]

The Hall of State was kept opened with funds from three sources--the city council, the State Fair Association, and the park board. The

three contributions totaled seventy-five hundred dollars annually. However, in 1941 the board released the State Fair from its share of the Hall of State maintenance costs. The board also released the Fair Association from their yearly contribution of two thousand dollars to provide grounds maintenance and upkeep.[44]

For a short time the board closed the doors of the Horticulture Building to the public until March 1941 when the Dallas Garden Center opened in the buildings. A trained horticulturist employed by the Center was the director for the purpose of promoting knowledge of gardening. He assisted with landscape problems, conducted classes, lectured on gardening techniques, staged flower shows, and promoted plant and bird conservation. A library was established in the building for public use and for the various clubs. In addition, the garden groups and clubs had a suitable place to hold their frequent meetings. A use had been found for the controversial Horticulture Building.[45]

From the remaining Centennial bonds, the Museum of Natural History received funds for building permanent exhibits. The Museum of Fine Arts received fifteen thousand dollars of the unexpended funds to help cover the expenses of staff salaries and maintenance, but the Aquarium and Natural Science Museum barely received enough money to continue operation even with the greatly reduced staff. The Women's Building was in use only about one-half of the year.[46]

Outside of the Civic Center with its ill-funded museums, there were developments made which improved the quality of the annual state fair. The only livestock building was changed into an ice skating arena in 1941. Then a new livestock building for displaying animals during

the fair was built by covering the opened court yard between the new ice skating arena and the science building. The plans for further enhancement of the Civic Center were then thwarted by the war.[47]

By the time most of these improvments and developments were gaining momentum, the clouds of an approaching world war had darkened the sky. U. S. involvement in the war brought a new shortage obstacle for the department to hurdle. Money had usually been the problem, but now there was neither a sufficient amount of manpower nor materials to complete some of the unfinished jobs or to begin many new ones. The list of completed projects slowed considerably.

Although building slowed, maintenance and upkeep of park areas continued as necessities. During the labor shortage, there was little chance of keeping up with demand. Houston and the city judge declared their own personal war against both weeds and loafers. A program of working corporation court prisoners was renewed at White Rock Lake in 1940. Just as in the past, non-violent prisoners were allowed to work off their fines by helping clean up the lakeshore. As long as White Rock Lake was secluded from the city and separate from residential areas, this program proved beneficial to the park department during the time of labor shortages.[48]

Because the department was forced to rely upon salvage material so much, the director requested that the Central Yard, headquarters of the parks maintenance division, be updated to make it a more suitable working area for constructing the new equipment of salvaged material. Coincidentally, salvaged pipe from White Rock Lake camps made up the steel framework for the new storage sheds in the central yard. Other

general improvements were made with fourteen thousand dollars appropriated for construction costs.[50]

Recreation programs between 1939 and 1944 were not as restricted as land acquisition programs, but they were not as extensive as the development program. Like the park department as a whole, the recreation division had to adjust to a new boss, only the adjustment was probably most difficult for the recreation leaders because the former park director had been very partial to athletics. Understandably, many of Houston's employees were suspicious of his ability and interest toward recreation when they knew he was an electrical engineer.

Almost immediately he was put to the test by one of the playground supervisors. She asked her new boss if he thought the girl's basketball teams should play two court or three court basketball that season. Not even knowing what she was talking about, Houston tried to look wise and asked for her opinion as to the advantages of both. After she had argued the advantages and disadvantages of both, he asked for the benefit of her recommendations. She stated her preference. Then Houston said, "That's what I want to play and your facts justify that. Let's play that." That same lady said that from that moment she knew she had a smart boss.[51]

From 1939 until the war was in full swing, the recreation program was similar to previous years. Varied recreation programs were offered. Swimming was always popular, and there were four big pools to choose from. A summer water carnival was held at White Rock Beach. Boys who volunteered to help scrub Lake Cliff pool received free passes and lemonade. A Red Cross lifesaving program was offered at most of the pools while

several smaller junior pools served the smaller children with neighborhood swimming opportunities.[52]

Dancing was still popular and could be found in the community centers almost any night of the week, until the board fell into the influence of the Sunday blue laws. In 1939 they prohibited the use of community centers, field houses, or other park properties for Sunday dances; however, the ruling was rescinded soon after the involvement in the war, because the war industry workers often only had time for social activities on Sundays.[53]

Several special events and activities added variety to the recreation programs. The Sinfoneeta unit of the WPA music project was continued for the summers of 1940 and 1941. Several private concerts were also held throughout the park system. Church services were held on Sunday evenings in the parks, usually with two or three congregations gathering for a group service. Fourth of July celebrations were enjoyed along with other summer holidays for both Mexicans and blacks. Community Night Variety programs provided a wealth of entertainment. Talent shows were planned, rehearsed, and presented in rotating community centers. To further the enjoyment of the parks, wildlife was added to some. The lakes were stocked with bass and sunfish for the fishermen.[54]

In 1941 the National Municipal Review observed a nationwide increase in supervised public recreation. Dallas, one of the twelve hundred cities providing public playground leadership, increased its own recreation budget by $11,500 in the summer of 1941. Funds were available because of a revenue increase the year before from swimming, golf, licenses, etc. In addition the Dallas Parks System hired a

superintendent of recreation. The recent graduate of the University of Texas began his new job at three thousand dollars per year, formalizing the recreation program and the organization structure.[55]

Dallas was alert to the rising importance of recreation and to the increased interest being shown by many citizens, but their efforts and plans suddenly had to change direction. As with almost everything that concerned people daily, recreation for children and civilians was willingly sacrificed for the war and the war workers. Development of parks stopped because of the war caused shortages of manpower and materials, but recreation programs only changed to include the soldiers.

Everything possible was done by the Dallas Park Board to help the war cause. Community centers near factories supplying war needs were kept open through additional hours. The resolution prohibiting Sunday dancing was rescinded and often the dances would last as late as 6:00 am for the employees who worked the late shifts. The board directed that overnight camps within hiking distance from home be set up at White Rock Lake, Bachman, and Lake Cliff parks for the younger boys who otherwise would be deprived of campouts at remote locations because of the gasoline shortage. To save metal, ribbons substituted for medals for the recreation events and contests at the parks. Any group raising money for patriotic reasons could use any park building without paying the reservation fee. The board voted to use $125,000 of the Samuell's spendable money for temporary investments in U. S. Treasury Certificates. The State Fair of Texas invested in $212,800 worth of bonds of the U. S. government to be released only with the consent of the park board.[56]

A national conference was held in November of 1942 to explore

wartime recreation. Recruitment of volunteers, especially women and older boys and girls, was suggested to keep emergency recreation plans going. Following the advice given, the Dallas Park Board gave out-of-town soldiers free swimming and golf passes. Special recreation programs and dances for the servicemen in transit through the Dallas area were often arranged through the park department.[57]

Several park properties were offered to the government. The Second Division of the U. S. Army camped at Samuell-Grand Park during their appearance at the 1940 State Fair. Space was arranged in the automobile building at Fair Park for the mobilization of soldiers en route to Brownwood, Texas. The 29th Battalion of the Texas Defense Guard was granted a temporary contract for use of the old WPA building at Fair Park with renewal options for the continuance of the emergency. The Horticulture Building was relinquished by the garden clubs to the U. S. Rationing Board for one dollar per year to serve as headquarters for the supply rationing program. The government was given use of the Portland cement building without a rental charge. Lake Cliff Park was available for drill practices.[58]

The chairman of the Dallas U. S. O. requested permission to use a room of the Ferris Plaza concession building for a shower room for transient soldiers passing through Dallas. Because Ferris Plaza was adjacent to the train station, the request seemed a logical one and permission was granted for the U. S. O. to install the showers. A year later the 8th Service Command requested permission to build a Negro U. S. O. center on the southwest corner of Ferris Plaza. The request was denied because of a park policy not to permit the erection of additional

structures of any kind on the park. The board, however, did obtain permission from the owner of the property across the street for the building.[59]

The U. S. Army requested the use of the CCC camp at White Rock Lake. The contract with the park board gave the War Department use of the land for as long as it was required without cost to the United States. Before long the park board's generous offer proved rather embarrassing. The Army Medical Corps had become tremendously concerned over the prevalence of venereal disease among the women who followed the army camps, so they announced that men and women suffering from venereal disease would be brought to Dallas for treatment at the White Rock Lake CCC camp. Despite their patriotic offers, the residents loudly protested such a move as the board quietly, but quickly, asked the army to alter its plans. Eventually the board's wishes were granted.[60]

The Fifth Ferrying Command began using the CCC land as a training camp until they developed more effective quarters elsewhere. When the camp was abandoned by the training units, it was used for a prisoner-of-war camp. Many men, reported to have been a part of General Rommel's famed Afrika Corps, were confined at White Rock Lake. Observers reported that the group consisted of fine looking young men, many of whom were very skilled mechanics and technicians.[61]

Besides cooperating in nearly every way possible to aid the war effort, the park board suffered a turnover of people. Storey, the board president, resigned his post to report as a major in the Air Corps. Hamilton Lee assumed the leadership, but soon he also volunteered to join the Air Corps, serving as a captain. He entered the hospital for

a necessary operation before leaving, but died while still in the hospital. With these two men gone, the city council appointed to the board, Ray Hubbard, independent oil operator, and Frederick Mayer, executive in an oil supply company. In May of 1943 Hubbard was elected park board president and Mayer, vice president.[62]

As the war neared its end, the park board became extremely busy with plans for the future. During 1942 and 1943, the active concentration had been on war needs, but simultaneously, a large scale planning program was being developed. The park board knew that as soon as the war ended, there would be a building boom, a great boost to the economy, and several veterans needing civilian jobs.

Dallas had fifty-five parks of which five were designated Negro parks and one a Mexican park. Compared to eight other cities of comparable size, Dallas held a good record. The land owned by the system met the ten acres per one thousand persons standard set by the profession. Dallas knew their major emphasis in the next few years would have to be land acquisition because of the growth spurt expected of the city.[63]

Hubbard, the new president, outlined plans for a $250,000 park acquisition and improvement program to be initiated with the return of the servicemen. City council was asked to submit the program at the first post war bond election. With the return of peace and prosperity, the board was anxious to develop a superior park system for the City of Dallas.

It was entirely feasible that the board could accomplish their goals as an era closed in park history. The struggles of the depression,

adjustments to new city governments, departmental strife, and war were all in the past. With a thoroughly competent director now familiar with the field of park and recreation, and a strongly established park board president, the time was ripe. The era of the modern Dallas Park System had arrived. These two men, Houston the administrator and Hubbard the leading policy-maker, would work together with the board and with anyone else to give Dallas a beautiful and beneficent system of parks. With this team for close to thirty years to come, programs were to be developed and carried through by the same group that originated them, ending the short terms of the thirties. The board between 1939 and 1944 was ready to prove that their time had been well spent. The transition to a modern park system was made and now they were ready to forge ahead into that new era.

## NOTES

## A TIME FOR THOUGHT 1939-1945

[1]Sam Acheson, "City Hall's Hectic Era: Catfish Club," Dallas Morning News, 24 March 1964, sec. D, p. 2. Except for the years between 1935 and 1939, no organized group other than the Charter Association has been able to place a majority on the city council since the council-manager government was adopted in 1931. Aston went on active military duty in 1942 and was given leave of absence by the city council, but when he returned from the war he never reentered city service.

[2]Out of a park board of five, two members had been impeached, the only city officials in Dallas' history to be impeached, and one had resigned to run for city council, based on his newly acquired reputation from reporting the park scandal to the public.

[3]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930-1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, pp. 202-204.

[4]Dallas Morning News, 4 May 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[5]Henry P. Kucera, former Dallas city attorney, interview with author, June 1973; Earl Freeman, former Dallas park employee, interview with author, July 1973; Wylie Moore, Dallas golf pro at Stevens Park, interview with author, June 1973; and Lynn Schmid, former Dallas parks recreation leader, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[6]Dallas Morning News, 6 May 1939, sec. II, p. 6; and Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 10, 5 May 1939, p. 98.

[7]Dallas Morning News, 21 May 1939, sec. IV, p. 1; 25 May 1939, sec. I, p. 1.

[8]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 28 June 1939, p. 101.

[9]Dallas Morning News, 12 July 1939, sec. II, p. 1; 29 July 1939, sec. III, p. 1.

[10]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 10 June 1939, p. 120.

[11]L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[12]"Necessary Characteristics of a Park Executive," Park and Recreation, April 1942, pp. 299-300.

[13]Dallas Morning News, 7 October 1939, sec. II, p. 1.

[14]Houston interview.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Jean Craft, assistant Dallas park director, interview with author, March 1974; Lillian Schwertz, Dallas park recreation director, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; Freeman interview; Schmid interview; and Moore interview.

[18]Houston interview.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Betty A. Beasley, "A Comparative Study of the Expansion of Recreation Facilities, Equipment, and Activities of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department with the Increase in the Population of Dallas, Texas from 1940-1950," (M.A. thesis, North Texas State University, 1950), p. 65.

[21]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, vol. 49, p. 511. It was difficult to determine the exact extent of federal aid because the cost of the labor provided was not computed into the project costs by the park department.

[22]Houston interview; Dallas Morning News, 16 January 1940, sec. II, p. 1; 1 August 1942, sec. I, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 1 May 1940, p. 180; 18 July 1943, p. 395.

[23]Houston interview; L. B. Houston, "Memories of the Dallas Park Department," taped, Spring 1973, Dallas Park Department, typed transcribed copy.

[24]Dallas Morning News, 19 March 1942, sec. I, p. 5.

[25]Harland Bartholomew and Associates, Preliminary Report on A System of Parks and Schools, Dallas, Texas (Dallas: privately printed, 1944), pp. 36, 38, 50, 61.

[26]Cauley, "Notes," pp. 30, 112, 113.

[27]Ibid., pp. 86, 113, 155, 178, 252; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 5 April 1944, p. 420.

[28]Cauley, "Notes," pp. 126, 226; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 14 January 1941, p. 243; 3 March 1941, p. 273; 5 April 1944, p. 420.

[29]Dallas Morning News, 11 November 1940, sec. II, p. 4; 16 January 1941, sec. II, p. 1; and Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 11 June 1944, p. 210; 10 October 1944, p. 445.

[30]Dallas, Texas, Probate Minutes, vol. 105, 12 January 1938, p. 489; Cauley, "Notes," pp. 237, 240; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 26 March 1940, p. 182; Kucera interview; Houston interview; and Mrs. Joseph Rucker, niece of Dr. Samuell and volunteer at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[31]Cauley, "Notes," pp. 81, 108, 235. One piece of property that was listed as salable was a lot in Glenrose, Texas which cannot be found in the official records of that city. The lot was finally dropped from the property listing in 1973.

[32]Mrs. Rucker interview.

[33]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 10 December 1940, p. 239; and Dallas Morning News, 4 March 1940, sec. II, p. 1; 13 November 1940, sec. I.

[34]Dallas Morning News, 3 January 1940, sec. I, p. 3; 26 January 1940, sec. II, p. 1.

[35]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 28 September 1939, p. 123; 10 October 1939, p. 135. All of the construction, either direct control, city force, or with federal aid was under supervision of the park board.

[36]Cauley, "Notes," pp. 267-268.

[37]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 23 July 1941, p. 292.

[38]Dallas Morning News, 3 February 1940, sec. I, p. 1.

[39]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 23 July 1941, p. 292; 5 April 1944, p. 421.

[40]Harland Bartholomew, Parks and Schools, Table V, p. 36; Harland Bartholomew and Associates, Your Dallas of Tomorrow (Dallas: privately printed, 1943), Table IX, p. 23; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of the United States, 1940: Population; and Ernest T. Attwell, "Report on Recreation Available to Negroes in Dallas, Texas," prepared for the National Recreation Association, 1945, Dallas Park Department, typed copy.

[41]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 10 April 1940, p. 197; 12 January 1941, p. 248; 19 February 1941, p. 251; 9 April 1941, p. 272; 14 July 1941, p. 263. Parks were segregated and remained so through the 1940s without any overt action of the board which generally accepted the traditions of a segregated society which existed throughout the South.

[42]Ibid., 24 August 1944, p. 401; 10 October 1944, p. 445.

[43]Houston, "Memories."

[44]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 9 April 1941, p. 272.

[45]Dallas Morning News, 9 February 1941, sec. I, p. 10.

[46]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 28 September 1939, p. 123; 16 January 1940, p. 168; Houston, "Memories"; and Cauley, "Notes," pp. 63-67.

[47]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 14 July 1941, p. 289; 23 July 1941, p. 292.

[48]Dallas Morning News, 12 June 1940, sec. I, p. 3.

[49]Ibid., 17 July 1940, sec. I, p. 5; and Houston, "Memories."

[50]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 10 February 1942, p. 325.

[51]Houston interview; Schwertz interview.

[52]Dallas Morning News, 19 July 1940, sec. II, p. 1.

[53]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 20 December 1940, p. 166.

[54]Ibid., 10 June 1941, p. 280; 8 July 1941, p. 287; Dallas Morning News, 1 July 1940, sec. I, p. 1; 17 July 1940, sec. I, p. 4; 8 March 1941, sec. II, p. 1.

[55]"Growth of Supervised Public Recreation," National Municipal Review, June 1944, p. 370; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 10 September 1941, p. 303; Dallas Morning News, 6 August 1940, sec. II, p. 1; 31 August 1940, sec. I, p. 2.

[56]Houston interview; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 10 January 1942, p. 335; 17 July 1942, p. 350; 31 January 1944, p. 412; and Dallas Morning News, 14 September 1942, sec. II, p. 2.

[57]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 8 July 1941, p. 286.

[58]Ibid., 24 September 1940, p. 226; 26 November 1940, p. 237; 10 August 1942, p. 254; 18 August 1942, p. 355; 10 February 1944, p. 415.

[59]Ibid., 18 August 1942, p. 355.

[60]Ibid., 26 November 1940, p. 333; Houston, "Memories"; and Lowell Cook, former Dallas park superintendent of lakes, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[61]Houston interview; and Cook interview.

[62]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 10, 12 May 1942, p. 340; Dallas Morning News, 25 April 1942, sec. I, p. 11; and Cauley, "Notes," p. 192.

[63]Bartholomew, Parks and Schools, pp. 36, 50.

CHAPTER 6

# NEW DIRECTIONS FOR AFFLUENT DALLAS 1945 TO PRESENT

The open areas, such as playgrounds, playfields, parks, reservations, and preserves have become increasingly important in the years after World War II. Since 1945, fields, timber, and grazing lands surrounding Dallas have been replaced rapidly by homes, factories, shopping areas, and institutions. As Dallas evolved from a population of approximately 300,000 in 1945 to a densely developed metropolitan area far in excess of one million persons in 1970, open spaces and recreation became more essential to total community development.[1]

The era of Dallas' development from 1945 to the present has brought an increasing amount of leisure time to the urban dwellers. The average work week was reduced gradually to forty hours, and sometimes to even less, per week. There is evidence that the trend will be toward still shorter work weeks. A three-day weekend may become standard for some classes of workers. The children of Dallasites have been relieved of many tasks and responsibilities which occupied much of their time before "affluent America" emerged after the war.[2]

Life spans have been increased by technology and better nutrition for all classes of people. Thus, the number of people in the older age groups has increased. Retirement systems and pensions tended to create a growing leisure class among the elderly population. Because of this, increasing attention has been directed toward the provision of facilities for the senior citizen.[3]

Immediately after the war, a "baby-boom" began a trend toward larger families for the urban dweller which lasted the better part of two decades. The results of this population increase, especially in percentage figures of children, made additional demands upon both the park department and the schools to provide recreational and educational facilities. Although the size of the families began decreasing after 1965, the increased population figures guaranteed that the facilities built in conjunction with the post-war baby-boom did not go unused. Along with the population explosion came the increased number of farm dwellers who migrated to the city in hopes of better jobs.

The increased incomes resulting from expansion of the national production and consumption made it possible for greater percentages of Dallas' population to obtain recreational equipment. Facilities had to be provided to accommodate the increased ownership of boats, camping equipment, fishing tackle, home craft equipment, and even private planes.[5]

The mobility which the automobile provided partially assisted park planners. Facilities neither had to be immediately adjacent to the citizen nor on a major public transit line to be utilized. On the other hand, added mobility increased the public's appetite for recreation facilities. And due to all of these factors, the park board was forced to provide an adequate distribution of open spaces and recreational facilities throughout the Dallas metropolitan area. Unless open spaces are provided at the time of development, the excessive cost of removing buildings and acquiring developed land tends to complicate and preclude the later creation of adequate open areas.

Several theories were promulgated on park development which served as guidelines for the Dallas park's post-war development. Playgrounds were considered a definite aid in the alleviation of growing post-war flux of juvenile delinquency. If the children could be occupied with safe, productive activities at a nearby recreation center, the opportunities for mischief were slighter. As the federal government provided more funds for urban renewal and housing projects, the requirements of park acreages and recreational facilities rose as standards of living were elevated.[7]

Authorities agreed that city, county, and state parks had to be coordinated for maximum results. Museums should be modernized and dramatized for increased interest and educational value. Reclamation became an ally of the park department and lands or areas once thought valueless were filled, while marginal floodplains were used to make room for more recreation lands.[8]

Incorporating the changing trends and the changing philosophies, the post World War II era brought a sharp upward trend to the park and recreation movement.

> Population explosion, urbanization, and an even more discriminating public resulted in the widespread inauguration of not only planning effectively for park and recreational facilities, but this discriminating public has insisted upon a swift transition from planning to actual achievement throughout this modern era.[9]

The growth of Dallas' municipal government during this modern era has been commensurate with the growth of the park department. This Texas city has evolved from a medium sized city to one of the largest metropolises in the nation, but the city government has observed relatively few and minor changes until the decade of the seventies. This

is not to insinuate that there have been no major changes or problems, but the organizational structure of Dallas' government has remained relatively unchanged.[10]

Warren Leslie, author of Dallas Public and Private, accused Dallasites of being extremely apathetic about their local government. Basically unopposed since the 1939 elections, the Charter Association's purpose is to find the best men possible and persuade them to run for the selected office. "When it (Charter Association) succeeds in getting them elected, as it usually does, the councilmen have been beholden to the Charter Association which has been closely related to the Citizen's Council."[11]

It is by this method that the non-political Citizen's Council exercises a strong political influence in Dallas. The Citizen's Council differs from similiar organizations in other cities in that it is not articulately opposed, it is not appointed, and it is not subject to recall. "Its membership is highly selective, limited to company presidents and board chairmen, and recommended as having a 'sincere interest' in Dallas and a 'willingness' to assume a leadership role in the community at large." In other words, each member is in a position to say whether their company will contribute financial support to any particular issue, and in turn, they decide who will receive their support at election time.[12]

When the city council and manager form of government was adopted in 1931, the council selected from among themselves a mayor to act as the group spokesman. Mayors were selected in this manner until 1949 when J. B. Adoue ran for the council. He received more votes than any

other councilman and fully expected to receive the council vote for mayor but instead the councilmen selected Wallace Savage. Adoue took the fight to the people in 1951 and won with the majority vote. Since then through charter change, mayors have been elected by the people of Dallas.[14]

R. L. Thornton received an overwhelming majority of the votes during the next three elections, but in 1959 he received competition from Earl Cabell. Although the philosophy of Cabell and the Citizen's Council (and subsequently, the Charter Association) were indistinguishable, the Charter Association was not ready for him to be mayor. Thornton entered his fourth term, and the next election made Cabell mayor.[15]

Cabell retired during his second term, leaving a vacant office, and immediately the news media announced Erik Jonsson had accepted the position as mayor. Leslie tells the story:

> There had been no prior announcement that Jonsson had been offered the job. Five councilmen simply went out and asked him. They came back and reported his acceptance. Any other place there'd [sic] be a thousand pickets down there protesting it. Somebody for some reason has to be against him, but not a peep in Dallas.[16]

Erik Jonsson held his popularity through the next seven years until he declined to run in 1971. Wes Wise took office as mayor with more Charter Association opposition than any mayor since the 1930s.

Although the Citizen's Council influence produced clean government for Dallas, there are signs that the times may be changing. Leslie surmises that in most cities, the power group could be voted out if this were the case, but in Dallas they were never voted in. It is agreed that leaders have been benevolent but, yet, out of touch with much of the populace, and city government has suffered from a loss of debate or criticism to provide new ideas.[17]

Beginning in the 1970s, non-establishment people began to have an active role in politics. Instead of solving problems entirely through cash and power, professors, sociologists, psychologists, lawyers, doctors, and minorities began to exert powers of intellectual and experiential influence in efforts to solve the growing problems of a metropolitan government. John Schoellkopf, president of the Citizens Charter Association, lists three reasons for the decline of popularity being endured by his organization:

(1) The alienation felt by so many people to their institutions,
(2) The changing nature of business in Dallas,
(3) The minority problem.

Increases in the minority population, the influx of younger newcomers, and other imminent sociological changes could be ominous clouds over the city's future or they could bring another bright era.[18]

Within this municipal organization structure, the Dallas Park Board has held its independence but has seen several basic alterations as have other city departments. From the close of World War II through the seventies, the park board enjoyed utmost respect and faith offered by the governing city officials. Several mayors, city managers, and other officials have not really paid attention to park board activities other than to approve the appointment of board members and to oversee the budgets and expenditures as required by the city charter. In view of the troubles in the park department during the late 1930s, this is evidence of the good faith and reputation given to the members of the park and recreation board and those professionals in the department.[19]

Longevity of service is partially credited with adding to the success of the park department since 1945. Coupled with amazing talent

and complete dedication, it is no small wonder that Dallas gained national fame for its park system. L. B. Houston, appointed in 1939 to fill the role of park and recreation director, served until his retirement in 1972 after forty years with the City of Dallas. Although formally trained as an engineer, he rapidly achieved national recognition in the field of parks and recreation. In the early 1950s, he was named director of the American Institute of Park Executives. In 1956 he was appointed a member of a team of park experts to study organizational and operational procedures of the National Capital Parks System. He served a term as president of the Texas Recreational Association, was a member of the Technological Club of Dallas, worked actively as an officer in the Boy Scouts of America, and contributed his time and efforts as a member of the advisory board of the Y. M. C. A. In 1963 he was named to the board of trustees of the National Recreation Association. The National Park and Recreation Association's Distinguished Service Award was awarded to Houston in 1969. In addition to numerous other awards, plaques, and certificates, Houston was constantly in demand for speeches. He participated in several university seminars dealing with urban park problems, and he served as adjunct professor at Texas Tech University. Houston's career, impressive as it was, did not keep him aloof from the lower eschelons of park personnel. He had the combination of integrity, intelligence, and industriousness that was required to develop the Dallas Park System to the degree required by a modern society.[20]

In addition to thirty-three years of service to the City of Dallas as park and recreation director by Houston, many others on the staff

also have dedicated many years to the park department. Ray Tribble served as park board engineer from 1939 to 1969. Walter Clarke, assistant park director until retiring in 1972, had worked with the city since 1941. In 1940, W. H. Keeling began working with the city's swimming pools, and in 1945 he accepted the position of superintendent of recreation, an office he held until his 1972 retirement date. E. Beulah Cauley, park board secretary, was a member of the department from 1920 until her retirement in 1963. Jean Craft, who came to the department as a clerk in 1945, now serves as park board secretary and assistant director of parks. Somewhere between 1970 and 1972, an era in the Dallas Park Department came to an end. The evolution of the park system from World War II to 1972 was organized and overseen by a group who began, worked, and eventually, retired together, leaving the park department open to move in a new or different direction after more than thirty years. Essentially 1945 to 1972 was a distinct era in contemporary park history.

The same longevity of power held true for the park board during this thirty year period. A board member was chosen by the city council usually because of his business profession. The men at the top of Dallas' power structure had knowledge, experience, and time for civic concern. As said of the city government, the board may have been limited by the additional insight that could have been provided by professors, doctors, and minority groups. Although their suggestions could have proved beneficial, this particular era concentrated upon development of facilities, more so than the complexities posed by the psychological factors that have become more apparent during the late sixties and

seventies. Since the major efforts of the board pointed toward land acquisition, development of facilities, expansion of physical recreation programs, and the evolution of aesthetic appreciation, the most effective board was the kind that existed in Dallas during that time. The Dallas power structure held to the theory that only successful businessmen could have thought in the terms necessary for physical development, to have conceived the vast expenditures of money, to have afforded to provide free civic services, and to have remained free of political pressure. The park board members aided Dallas because they were mostly in positions of power.[22]

Park board presidents have been strong, determined men with definite plans and ideas. Ray Hubbard, president from the midst of the war in 1942 until his death in 1970, was top executive of a multi-million dollar oil business. Whenever the board needed advice or help that someone could provide, Hubbard usually called upon the person and, in his direct way, asked them. He was personally involved in every aspect of the park's development, backing Houston, his director of parks, through the often difficult or complicated problems that constantly faced a powerful park department in a modern society.

The successor to Hubbard's chair was Julius Schepps who had served on the board as vice president since 1953. This president of a wholesale beverage company had shown remarkable determination and foresight in the previous years, in areas of welfare and racial problems. However, his chance to lead the park board for a long period was limited by his death less than one year after Hubbard died. Following a short termed interim president, Floyd V. Gish, a pediatrician from Oak Cliff,

Dr. William B. Dean, who had served on the board since 1962, was elected as the next board president. Dean has taken the initiative in leading the board towards greater interests in the arts and aesthetics and in further expanding the responsibilities of a park department towards more public-service-oriented projects.[24]

Board membership also has proven to be oriented toward long terms and powerful executives during these thirty years. The majority of board members have served over two consecutive terms with turnovers being attributed to the board member's own request for termination. Real estate executives have been the most numerous members appointed to the board, but they have not been far ahead of insurance and oil executives and attorneys. In addition several accountants, public utility executives, and private businessmen have rounded out the board.

The trend which began in the late 1960s to include board members who belonged to some group other than the power structure of Dallas affected the park board. In 1968 the revised city charter expanded park board membership to seven members instead of the five members which had been traditional since 1905. This increase gave the council a chance to appoint the kind of people whom they were being pressured to appoint without actually decreasing the traditional type of member. As a result, Pettis Norman, a black professional football player, was one of the new appointees, but the other new member was another top executive. However, since 1970 a woman, a Mexican-American, and another black have been appointed to membership and the length of service apparently has grown shorter for all members to allow more citizens a chance to serve on a civic board. Whereas, previously board members were appointed because

of their prominence and prestige, now the trend is to use membership to gain these goals. The park board, along with other city boards, has become a means of upward mobility rather than a sign of acceptance by the power structure.[25]

Although the park board shows signs of changing in character in the future, the long-term, executive membership and leadership granted the board since 1945 tackled their problems effectively and wisely. It was no easy task to cope with the post war booms in recreation demand and population. The Korean War slowed major development projects during a time when everything was in full swing, forcing the board to work around the setbacks to still provide the demanded recreation. Integration was handled smoothly in the Dallas parks and pools in spite of a few civil rights movements and several disputes over the powers of eminent domain. An increasingly sophisticated public demanded constant updating in recreation facilities and programs. The public's development, culturally and aesthetically, an outgrowth of affluent America with more leisure time, required higher maintenance standards than ever conceived before World War II. Greater public awareness of increasing land values resulted in the vast land expansion projects and greenbelt projects undertaken by the park board. The park boards from 1945 to the 1970s have had to cope with Dallas at its finest, most affluent, and most demanding era, a task which they have handled with enthusiasm and experience, bringing Dallas parks a national reputation of superiority.

NOTES

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR AFFLUENT DALLAS
1945 TO PRESENT

[1]J.C. Dretzka, "Parks and Recreation in the Postwar Period," Recreation, January 1946, pp. 516-18; City Planning Department and Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Open Spaces: Dallas Metropolitan Area (Dallas: City Planning and Parks and Recreation Departments, April 1959), p. 2; and L. B. Houston, "The City is Organized Around Open Spaces," report from Park Department general files, 1956, typed copy.

[2]Houston, "The City is Organized Around Open Spaces."

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Robert Moses, "Park Department's Urgent Needs," American City, November 1945, p. 121.

[8]Ibid.; and Marvin Springer and Associates, Open Space Development: Trinity River System in Dallas, Texas (Dallas: privately printed, 1969), p. 1.

[9]L. B. Houston, "Partners in Progress--Unified Goals and Objectives," speech given at American Institute of Park Executives, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 20 September 1965, typed copy.

[10]Elgin Crull, former Dallas city manager, interview with author, June 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[11]Warren Leslie, Dallas Public and Private: Aspects of an American City (New York: Grossman Co., 1964), p. 66.

[12]Ibid., p. 64; and Carol Thometz, "Power Structure" (M.A. thesis, Southern Methodist University, 1963), p. 35.

[13]Harold A. Stone, Don K. Price, and Kathryn H. Stone, City Manager Government in Dallas, Texas (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1939), p. 10.

[14]Leslie, Dallas Public and Private, p. 66.

[15]Ibid., p. 67.

[16]Ibid., p. 67-68.

[17]Ibid., pp. 74, 84.

[18]Ibid., pp. 80, 82; and Mike Kingston, "Death Knell for the Establishment? Despite CCA's Success," Dallas Morning News, 16 June 1973, sec. D, p. 2.

[19]L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973; Erik Jonsson, former Dallas major, interview with author, March 1974; Dr. J. W. Bass, former Dallas public health director, interview with author, July 1973; Dr. Robert Storey, former Dallas park board president, interview with author, April 1974, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; and Crull interview.

[20]Dallas Morning News, 12 December 1956, sec. I, p. 23; 27 October 1963, sec. II, p. 1; 26 September 1969, sec. D, p. 7; 29 September 1969, sec. D, p. 2; Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, Vol. 16, 19 October 1972, p. 204.

[21]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 14, 30 September 1963, p. 33; vol. 15, 12 November 1969, p. 206; vol. 16, 30 November 1972, p. 237; 27 July 1972, p. 161.

[22]Theodore Harris, former Dallas park board member, interview with author, July 1973; Jean Craft, assistant Dallas park director, interview with author, April 1974; William Keeling, former Dallas parks superintendent of recreation, interview with author, July 1973; Dr. William Dean, president Dallas park board, interview with author, April 1974, Dallas, Texas, tapes in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; and Houston interview.

[23]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 15, 2 November 1970, p. 498; and Leslie, Dallas Public and Private, p. 286.

[24]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, pp. 192-204; Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 15, 6 October 1969, p. 270; 2 November 1970, p. 498; 31 May 1971, p. 637; and Dallas Morning News, 18 November 1947, sec. I, p. 16; 30 May 1951, sec. III, p. 1; 22 June 1956, sec. III, p. 2; 17 December 1957, sec. IV, p. 3; 15 November 1968, sec. A, p. 20; 29 December 1970, sec. D, p. 1; 1 June 1971, sec. D, p. 1; 26 August 1971, sec. D, p. 1.

[25]Dallas, Texas, Minutes of the City Council of Dallas, Texas, 2 December 1968.

## CHAPTER 7

## A DREAM COME TRUE--SAMUELL-GRAND PARK

A few miles to the northeast of Dallas' central district on Grand Avenue, there is one park which can be singled out as a nearly ideal recreation area. Almost all aspects involved with Samuell-Grand Park--from its acquisition, to its development, to its future--tend to reveal the "ultimate" plan of the Dallas Park and Recreation Department. Success is accredited often to planning, and plans have dominated strictly the growth of parks in Dallas. Samuell-Grand is the child of coincidence, but the product of careful planning.

Although land acquisition by purchase for neighborhood parks must follow carefully laid plans in order to provide the city with adequate and equal distribution of parks, the same does not hold true for donations. The board does have the power to reject offers of land if they do not adhere to the overall plan; however, to fail to alter plans when a feasible opportunity is present would be foolish.

Such was the situation when in 1937 Dr. W. W. Samuell, the prominent Dallas physician, wrote his will on a prescription blank. The short statement provided Dallas over nine hundred acres of land, most of it in either large, wooded, park-like tracts or cultivated farm lands. The remaining scattered small properties were declared revenue properties. A trust at First National Bank was set up to administer the permanent trust funds left by Dr. Samuell and to transfer the earnings to the park board for use in developing and maintaining parks developed on Samuell's land.[1]

The trust itself cannot be touched, but the interest from the permanent trust is used for the development and improvement of the several Samuell parks. Money from the revenue properties is added to the fund and not the Foundation, a procedure that adds to the amount of spendable money. When Samuell land must be sold--usually through the city condemnation courts for highway developments--the awarded money is deposited in the trust. On rare occasions the courts have decided that the money from a sale of property could be used to purchase additional park land instead of being placed back into the trust. With such regulations and without being planned, Dallas inherited several hundred acres of park lands, complete with a source of development and maintenance funds which have cost the taxpayers of Dallas very little. The entire estate was valued at over one million dollars in 1938. By the 1970s, the Foundation alone increased to over three million dollars and the land, either left by Dr. Samuell or purchased with Samuell money, skyrocketed in value to somewhere around twenty-one million dollars.[2]

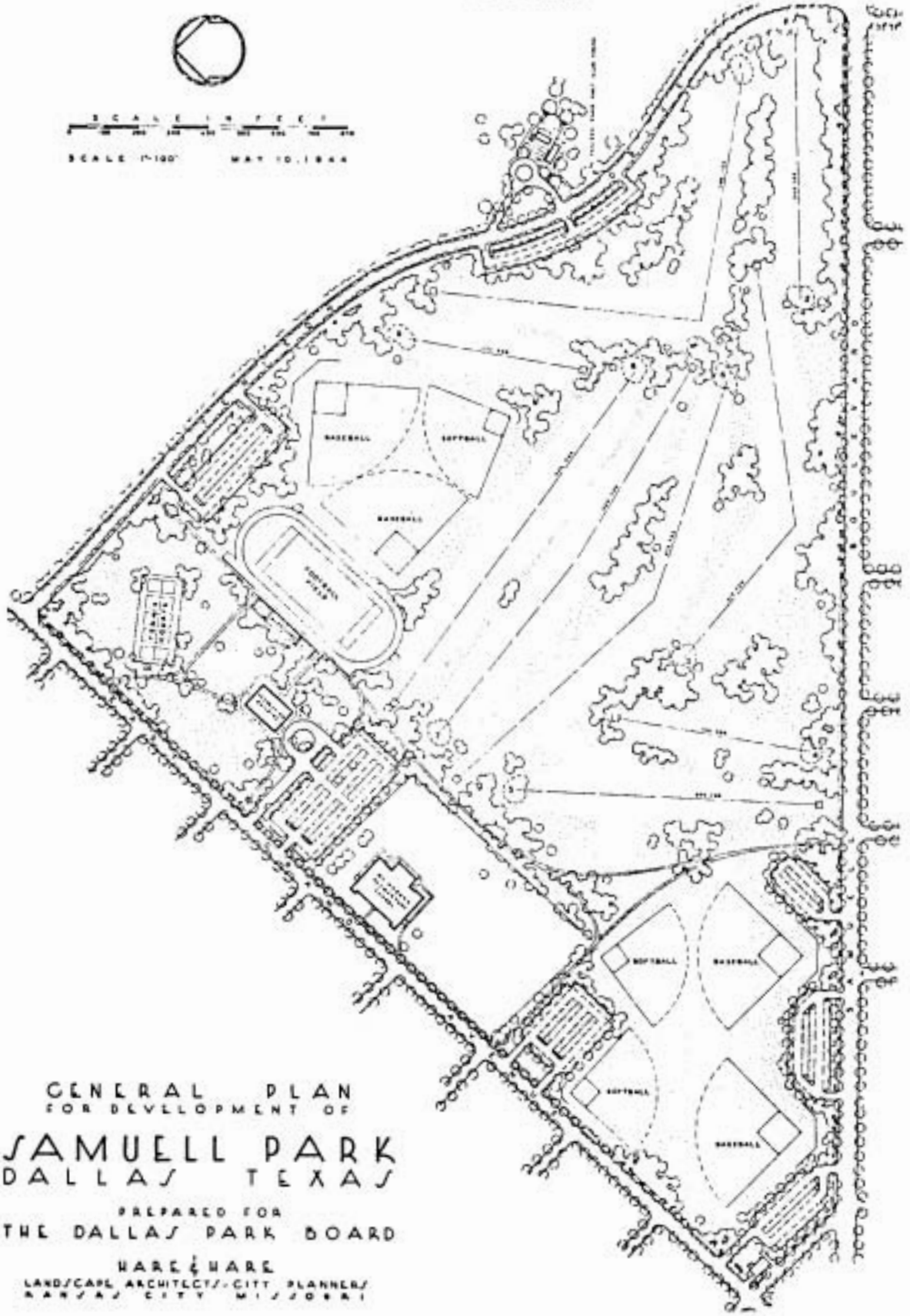
The story of Dr. Samuell's generosity to his home city is responsible for the philosophy used by the park board in developing Samuell-Grand Park. This park was chosen to be a memorial park in honor of Dr. Samuell because it is the most centrally located of the doctor's properties and because most of the other Samuell park areas were still far removed from the city's populated areas. Samuell-Grand was located in an area of town where intensive use would be made of the park, because there were few parks for the immediate neighborhood which could be classified as lower-middle class to upper-lower class, an area varying in social and racial groups. For these reasons, Samuell-Grand

Park consistently received the best of everything available. The park is an example of a neighborhood park that also has regional use, and its development is closely related to the general trends apparent in similarly used parks throughout Dallas. Despite the fact that Samuell-Grand was not in either an upper-class neighborhood or in a poverty stricken section, the park received "a lot more frosting" than most parks. Ample funds were available, and to be a memorial to the good man who willed it, this park became an example of an outstanding neighborhood park.

The present outcome of Samuell-Grand Park is a result of planning. The acquisition may not have been planned, but since then planning has guided each step vital to success. The board often repeated its desire to develop the park slowly so as to be certain of the final results. A major aim was the elimination of fads or trends that would be short-lived. The overall goal for Samuell-Grand Park was not to waste any of the Samuell funds yet provide the citizens of Dallas with the best possible park facilities.

Because of legal detail work, the city did not attain a clear title to the undivided interests of other heirs until the early 1940s. Unfortunately, work could not begin immediately because of the manpower shortages created by World War II, but this allowed the time to plan for the future development. Hare and Hare of Kansas City, the landscape firm retained by the board for years, drew several sketches for approval (see Map 1--Samuell Park). In 1946 the plans began to be implemented. Twenty-five thousand dollars was allocated for improvement at the park; however, these funds came from the regular park improvement funds rather

MAP II-1--SAMUELL PARK



than the funds of the Samuell Foundation. The board agreed that the Foundation's funds should be allowed to accumulate further before dipping into them. The consensus was that the trust money could be used to provide a more outstanding reminder of Dr. Samuell's generosity than simple, routine grading, sodding, and drainage work.[3]

Development of parks in Dallas hit a new high with the post-war building boom. The board concentrated on completing plans drawn up during the slow war years--except for the Samuell lands. Instead, the board members were keeping the Samuell grant in the back of their minds. No one was going to rush into a project which they felt held such an underlying responsibility. That time would come.

By late 1949, the board got its chance to begin actual development of their carefully laid plans--at a great savings too. The paving of the roadways and parking areas in the park was expected to cost around seventy-five thousand dollars. However, the contractor that was building Central Expressway, a major north-south thoroughfare in the city, needed to dispose of many tons of rock. Knowing that the contemplated roadways for the park needed similar rock for a base, the board negotiated with the contractor, and the rock was obtained for only the hauling costs. The new cost was estimated at a figure of twenty-six thousand dollars, a savings of about fifty thousand dollars--because they chose to wait.[4]

Having the roads built in Samuell-Grand stimulated the park board to quickly progress to the next stage--a swimming pool. This pool was to provide swimming for an area which lacked accessibility to a large pool. Although it had not been publicly announced, the board had

decided to discontinue using the outdated, above-the-ground pool at Fair Park, which was the nearest pool. This pool at Samuell-Grand was to be the best of the Dallas pools. Its final price was in the ninety thousand dollar range, ten thousand dollars in excess of the other pools built at that time or for the next ten years. Samuell-Grand pool was the largest and most expensive pool to be built for almost another fifteen years--without applying the inflation factor. But the one major snag was the U. S. government. Because the country was involved in the Korean War, permission for extensive building projects had to be received from the National Production Authority. The money had been appropriated from the Samuell's fund, the low bid had been accepted, and the NPA said "no." Six months later, an application was again submitted, only to obtain the identical answer. Over one year later, in late 1952, another application was submitted and this one, at last, received acceptance.[5]

The building of this pool began during the time the board was formulating their basic policies and solutions to the integration problems. If there were to be any racial problems, the swimming pools were expected to be the most logical locations for the trouble. The board decided to gradually close the four huge "city wide" pools in existence, and to replace these with smaller "neighborhood pools." The new pools were designed, through elimination of dressing facilities, to discourage travel to the pools from out of the neighborhood. Thus, even though the Samuell-Grand pool was larger than the other new pools, dressing facilities were non-existent, and it was operated as the other neighborhood pools.[6]

Because attendance at this park had increased so much during the 1940s while Dallas recreation demands expanded in leaps and bounds, the park department grew more sophisticated along with its participants. Long gone were the days of an open field with one summer recreation leader and a one-room shelter building. The public demand was for lifetime recreation to be fulfilled in a sophisticated building suitable for all ages and backgrounds. A frame residence occupied earlier by Dr. Samuell was converted into a small recreation building as an interim facility, but it really was not very impressive and the area had outgrown it. Adding to these facts, the board had decided to place their memorial to Dr. Samuell in this park. Thus, they decided to move the existing building to Samuell-East Park and to build a new "area" recreation center at Samuell-Grand.[7]

Although Samuell-Grand Park had experienced great popularity as a recreation center before the new building, the demand increased greatly in connection with the new building. In existence were five lighted ball diamonds, the pool built in 1953, and a few tennis courts. It was decided in 1962 to put the projected tennis center at Samuell-Grand. Tennis had been growing consistently in popularity and there existed a general clamor for additional facilities. Having agreed upon the location, the center was contracted for $107,981. Another major addition in the late 1960s was the inclusion of a tennis shop. During 1974 eight new tennis courts were added bringing the total to twenty, making Samuell-Grand one of the major tennis installations in the U. S. Such facilities meant that all tournaments for tennis would be held at Samuell's, in addition to the softball tournaments. All facilities--

tennis and softball--were lighted to provide maximum use.[8]

In keeping with the latest trends in recreation and the concept of the best for Samuell-Grand, plans for the new building began to be conceptualized. The new center followed the pattern initiated at Beckley-Saner Recreation Center in 1953, large enough for a double basketball court and a central office which allowed close observation of the entire building with a limited staff. Additional rooms across from the courts served as meeting rooms for all ages and activities. When Samuell-Grand Memorial Center finally opened in 1963, it included the best qualities from the other centers. In addition, the building expense of almost three hundred thousand dollars far exceeded the amounts spent on any of the other similar-use buildings of the time. The extra costs were attributed to the additional use of glass to further aid in total supervision, to the well-equipped kitchen, and to the more expensive flooring and furnishings used throughout the building. When the beautiful building was completed, a bronze plaque adorned with a bas relief of Dr. Samuell relayed to all visitors the story of the doctor's bequest:

> Physicial and Surgeon
> Who had Concern
> For Life and Health
> In Well Men Also[9]

It seems axiomatic that as more facilities are placed in a park, the more popular the park usually becomes. And the more popular a park becomes, the more facilities it usually receives. Thus having become designated as a major recreation area for Dallas, Samuell-Grand also was developed aesthetically. The Samuell Fund provided for the outstanding

azalea plantings lining the drives of the park during the springtime beginning in 1961. During the azalea's prime two-week blooming period, fifty thousand Dallasites toured the park. The entire park, immaculately groomed throughout, is kept in a year-round state of beauty, exemplifying top maintenance and care. In addition, the First Men's Garden Club chose to provide over four thousand roses of numerous varieties to enhance the Samuell Memorial Garden and to provide beauty for another period of the year.[10]

As should be expected, one day the Samuell's Memorial Building will be outmoded and new concepts will replace old ones. Until that happens, this park's history, from its inception through its development, its recreation resources, and its aesthetic concepts serve as an example of a well designed neighborhood park which has impact on its region as well as on nearly every citizen of Dallas.

## NOTES

### A DREAM COME TRUE--SAMUELL-GRAND PARK

[1]E. Beulah Cauley, "Notes on Dallas' Parks, approximately 1930 to 1965," typed copy, Dallas Park Department, unpaged manuscript notes, p. 237.

[2]L. B. Houston, former Dallas park director, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas.

[3]Dallas Morning News, 27 November 1946, sec. I, p. 12.

[4]Ibid., 26 February 1950, sec. IV, p. 2.

[5]Dallas Park Department, Minutes of the Park Board of Dallas, Texas, vol. 11, 21 November 1950, p. 335; and Dallas Morning News, 10 April 1951, sec. III, p. 1; 21 October 1952, sec. I, p. 9; 20 January 1953, sec. II, p. 12.

[6]William Keeling, former Dallas superintendent of recreation, interview with author, July 1973, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas. Later the term "neighborhood pool" was changed to "area pool" so that the term "junior pool" could be replaced by "neighborhood pool." It seems that the term "junior" applied to the small four-foot deep pools tended to psychologically restrict participation by the older children and adults.

[7]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 13, 7 November 1960, p. 276; and Keeling interview. "Area recreation center" is the terminology applied to the large, many-roomed, multiple use structures built after 1953 and based upon the pattern used at Beckley-Saner recreation center. "Community" is the term applied to the older buildings still being used that are not as extensive in purpose as the area recreation centers.

[8]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 12, 2 October 1954, p. 103; 19 November 1956, p. 408; vol. 13, 31 December 1962, p. 528.

[9]Ibid., 7 November 1960, p. 276; and speech given by Ray E. Hubbard, park board president, at dedication of Samuell-Grand Recreation Center, 11 October 1964, copy on file in park board office. Estimated costs of other area recreation centers built about the same time as the Samuell-Grand Center were:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Walnut Hill | 1959 | $234,574 |
| Pleasant Oaks | 1958 | $230,845 |
| N. Hampton | 1962 | $180,000 |
| Jaycee | 1962 | $125,000 |

The wording on the memorial plaque was composed by Mrs. Rucker and Mrs. Becker, both nieces of Dr. Samuell.

[10]Dallas Park Department, Minute Book, vol. 13, 30 October 1961, p. 384; 23 April 1963, p. 564; Phil Huey, assistant Dallas park director of maintenance, interview with author, April 1974, Dallas, Texas, tape in the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas; and Houston interview.