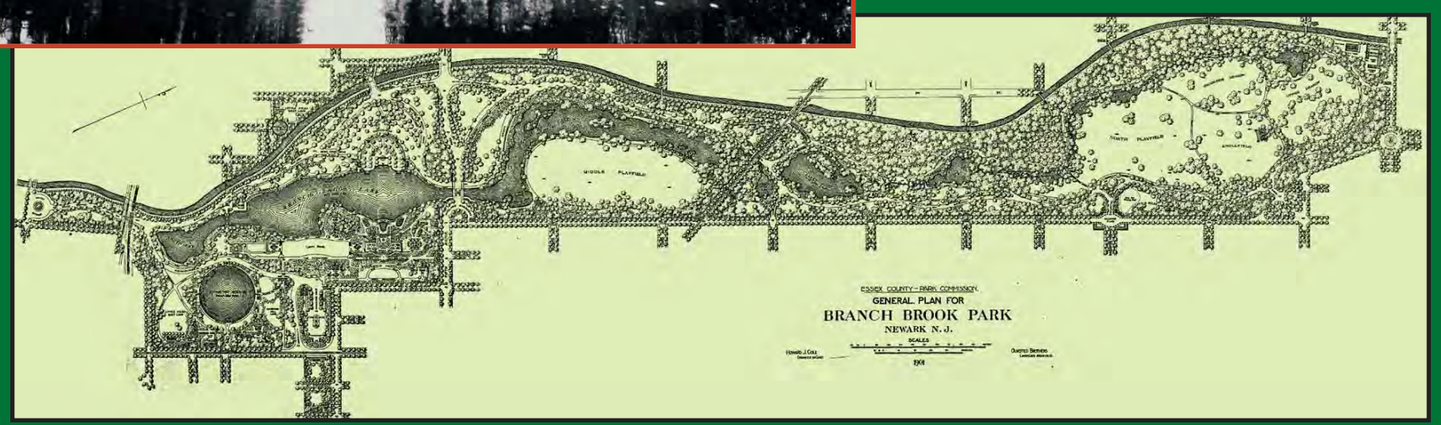
Cultural Landscape Report, Treatment, and Management Plan
for Branch Brook Park
Newark, New Jersey

Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods of Development



Prepared for:

Branch Brook Park Alliance
A project of Connection-Newark
744 Broad Street, 31st Floor
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Essex County Department of Parks,
Recreation and Cultural Affairs
115 Clifton Avenue
Newark, New Jersey 07104

7 November 2002

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"...there is...a pleasure common, constant and universal to all town parks, and it results from the feeling of relief experienced by those entering them, on escaping from the cramped, confined, and controlling circumstances of the streets of the town; in other words, a sense of enlarged freedom is to all, at all times, the most certain and the most valuable gratification afforded by the park."

- Olmsted, Vaux & Co.
Landscape Architects

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PREFACE

The beauty within the Branch Brook Park of today reverberates with ghosts and echoes. Its vistas of shimmering waters, shadowy woods and rolling greenswards, punctuated by bridges and buildings, laced together by sinuous roads and paths, and seasonally enhanced by a spring-time 'froth' of cherry blossoms –-these elements in their current state hint at past glories of a more complex designed 'presence' than that which presently exists. Extant landforms and architectural artifacts echo with past intentions and uses. They speak to opportunities pursued or diverted and reveal layers of change, which cannot be fully appreciated without some guide into the past.

The story of the development of Branch Brook Park is many-layered, a complex of people, purposes and potentials, mostly unknown to the contemporary park user, whose active or passive enjoyment of this nearly 400 acre landscape is, nonetheless, impacted by the weight of this rich history. This palimpsest of human interactions with the land speaks of cycles of utilitarian manipulations and design conceptions which have altered the landscape shape, yet at each period of change, retained something of what existed before.

Beyond its critical importance to the growth and enhancement of Essex County, Newark and later, Belleville, the park's evolution is of national significance. As the premier space of the nation's first county park system, Branch Brook Park presents a notable example of the prescience of early community and city planning. The early imprinting by practitioners Nathan Barrett and John Bogart prepared the 'canvas.' But the rich patterning of this landscape, most of what remains today, exhibits the genius of the nation's premier park designers, the Olmsted firm, spanning the generations from the mastery of Frederick Law Olmsted , Sr. through his partner and stepson, John Charles Olmsted, to their successor partner, Percival Gallagher. Each brought his creative ingenuity to bear on the problems to be solved; each designer making a unique contribution reflective of his time and its tasks. But each of these designers of the Olmsted firm worked within the defining principles of landscape artistry established by the senior Olmsted—to design with respect for inherent landscape features and to create a setting of beauty, accessibility and usefulness for the citizens of city and county over the decades. Their vision, a melding of artistry and pragmatism, has remained the coherent aesthetic theme throughout the successions of stewards and park users. It is this relationship of design ideas to their implementation to their use over time which the following study looks to elucidate.

Many people in many places enabled this study to proceed. The Branch Brook Park Alliance, shepherded by Pat Ryan and Barbara Bell Coleman, is to be applauded for supporting this project and the depth of research and study appropriate to a place with the rich historic provenance of Branch Brook Park. Danny Gale, Eline Maxwell, and Anita Fickensberger were always available to help coordinate logistics.

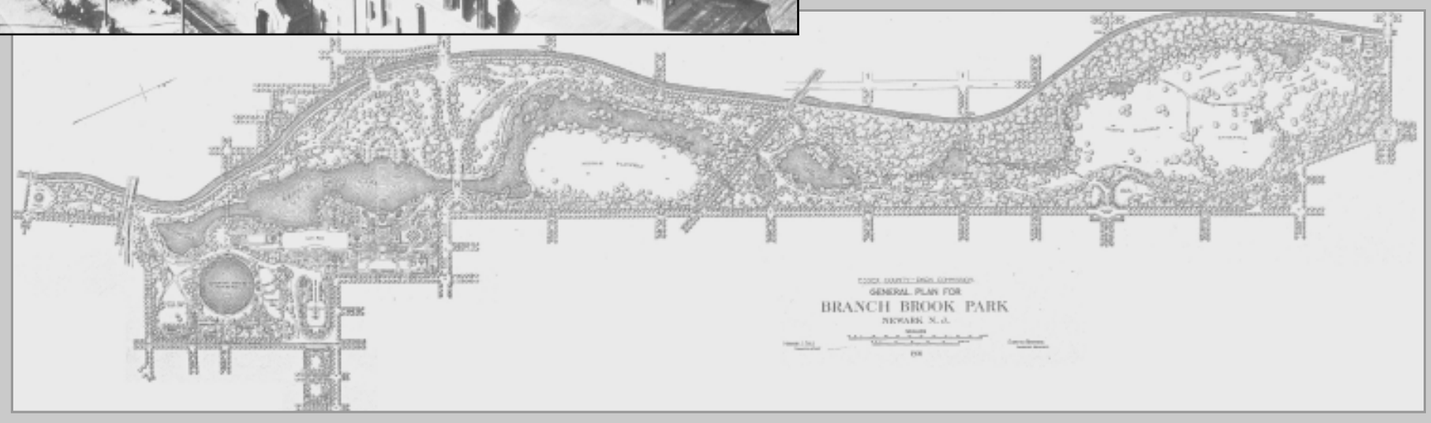
In addition to his sage collaboration in the development of this work, Dr. Charles Beveridge of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Project at American University was generous in providing critical documents and clarifications of material from his vast knowledge of FLO, Sr. I would also like to thank Rhodeside & Harwell, Incorporated for providing me with the opportunity to immerse myself in this remarkable history and for their support during the research and writing of this document. In addition to urging the work toward completion, Deana Rhodeside and Faye Harwell were the gracious brokers and ombudsmen for obtaining the necessary time required to prepare this volume. Thanks also to John Meisel and Sandra Pereira for transforming the manuscript and stacks of illustrations into the current presentation, and for developing with skill and care the 'Period Plans' that summarize so clearly the physical development of the park.

The archives staff, particularly Michele Clark and Mike Dosch, at the Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, MA, Olmsted's home and office, were extraordinary in their efforts to expedite access to the vast number of documents regarding Branch Brook Park. This project represents one of the largest and most complex in their holdings, making the processing of this research more difficult than the usual request.

I thank Dan Salvante and Sarah Hansen of the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs for making their archives and staff available for this project. It was a pleasure to work with Joe Lanzara at the County. His generosity of time and his remarkable knowledge of the Essex County park system and its resources, both in the archives and on the ground, eased a complicated process. Melissa Jurist and Miriam Solomon both helped to make materials available. It is to be hoped that the Essex County Parks archive will receive the recognition, financial and technical assistance needed to process, conserve and make accessible its remarkable and extensive collection of documents, which is critical to understanding the development of this park system and the notable practitioners who worked on it. Additionally, Charles Cummings and his staff at New Jersey Information Center of the Newark Public Library were very helpful in searching for material, both visual and documentary, to advance this research.

Several individuals were also critical to this process. Jim Lecky and Kathleen Galop were most generous with their time and sharing of materials. Exploration of the Library of Congress files was made more efficient by the perseverance of Tina Hummel, with help from Jonathan Powell and Camille Larson. Research assistants Janna Mendonca, Milene da Silva and Eugenia Sticca fulfilled multiple tasks to coordinate the material, while Zachariah Jonasson and Evan Levee provided technical computer assistance in times of need. Frederica Cushman was relentless in her pursuit of the 'split infinitive' and other misspeakings. And, finally, but by no means least, Newt Levee has been truly extraordinary in his abiding interest and endless patience over all aspects of this project, whether editing, organizing, or hauling boxes of research materials hither and yon.

Arleyn A. Levee
October 2002



Part I - Early History

CHAPTER 1: THE BRANCH BROOK - EARLY SITE CONDITIONS

Pre- History

Shaped by eons of scouring glacial ebb and flow, the area which was to become the valley of the Branch Brook, a tributary of the Passaic River, was molded by receding glaciers into a marshy coastal terrain of deep alluvial moraine atop sedimentary bedrock, set between rolling ridges of shale and sandstone. At its southern edge, the brook emerged from the marsh to form a channel punctuated by ridges and falls, which in turn flowed into that of the Mill Brook to form the First River. This watercourse, following what was later to become Eighth Avenue, reputedly teemed with wildlife and was of significance to early settlers. The rest of the valley, however, with its high water table and numerous springs, was mostly a swampy morass, unattractive for early settlements and agriculture, even, it seems, for early Native Americans, who had numerous other choice locales in the area on which to hunt and fish. The closest evidence of Lenape occupation may have been somewhat east of what was to become the Northern Division, off Old Bloomfield Road. The type of vegetation which was later found around the old "Blue Jay Swamp," as this area was known, consisted of native shrub materials, many of which might have been gathered for food.[1] Eventually, the rocky ridges of this valley would be quarried for building materials and the watercourses, both First and Second Rivers with their falls and tributaries, would service numerous early mills. [2]

From Colony to Civil War: Early Uses for the Land

Colonial settlement patterns developed close to the banks of the Passaic River, where a band of Connecticut Puritans had arrived around 1666 to establish a new colony based on theocratic principles. What was to become Broad and Market Streets, the 'Four Corners,' served for decades as the center of the new community of Newark. With the development of travel routes, settlers moved out from the center along these corridors to establish farms and small industries, exploiting, in particular, the recently discovered iron and copper deposits. The American Revolution quickened the pace of outward expansion and enterprise, and thereby the need for building materials. A map of 1806 [Figure 1-1] and an 1850 atlas [Figure 1-2] reveal numerous stone quarries already established in the vicinity of Branch Brook.[3] The land patterns in this pre-Civil War period tended to be large holdings of few individuals, John Garside and William Righter among others.[4]

Transportation was key to Newark's development in its industrial adolescence. As manufacturing diversified beyond the early forges to multiple factories turning out everything from leather goods to carriages, from jewelry to cutlery, from soap to beer, it became essential to get goods to markets economically, particularly to New York City. Although William Penn had ordered a survey for a canal as early as 1676, it was not until the early 1820s that plans began for such a canal to efficiently transport Pennsylvania anthracite and northern New Jersey iron to their markets.[5] By 1831, the great 101-mile 'ditch' had been converted into the Morris Canal, extending from Newark on the Passaic to Phillipsburg on the Delaware, replete with locks and inclined planes to

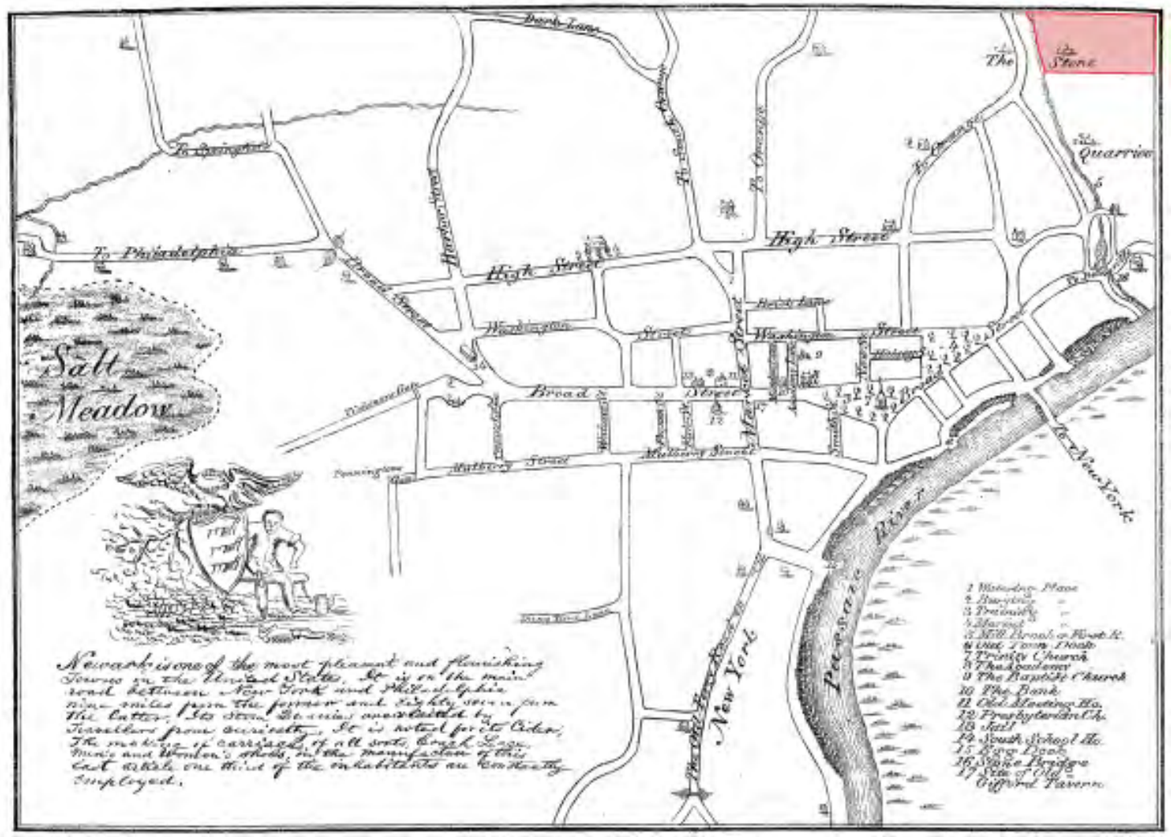


Figure 1-1: "Map of the Town of New-Ark," 1806. Note the quarries in the northwest portion of the town. The boundary of the present-day park (Southern Division) is shaded. Source: Cunningham, Newark, p. 90.

service a rise and fall reputed to be 1,676 feet.[6] As it traversed its course, the eastern slope of the Canal's steeply banked towpath skirted the swamps of the Branch Brook valley. The Canal's commercial success was short-lived, however, as the 1830s also brought the development of several railroad lines, including the Morris and Essex (later to be to become the Erie and Lackawanna Railroad), which were to prove a faster mode of transport for the newly incorporated city of Newark (1836).[7] With the establishment of numerous communities and a population growth now spurred on by increased immigration, tapping clean water resources became essential for sustenance and fire protection, as well as to power the growing number of small factories. A private company, the Newark Aqueduct Co., was formed in 1800 to supply water, initially through hollowed wooden logs, later through iron pipes, first to Market Street and then beyond.[8] Several retention pools were dammed, the spent quarries being ideal for these reservoirs, located as a series of ponds in the area around the future southern division of Branch Brook Park. [Figure 1-3] Also in this area was located the "Old Needle Factory" and the "Washington Factory" between Quarry [later Eighth Ave] and Drift Streets straddling Mill Brook's banks, and undoubtedly benefiting from its flowing waters.[9]

In 1860 the city established its own Aqueduct Board (eventually becoming the Board of Street and Water

Figure 1-2: "Map of Essex County, New Jersey, with the Names of Property Holders, etc.," Hiram A. Belding, 1850. Note the chain of dammed ponds stretching eastward from the Morris Canal. The boundary of the present-day park (Southern Division) is shaded.

Commissioners), which acquired and expanded the Newark Aqueduct Co.'s holdings and set about enlarging the reservoir system to meet growing demand. Water from the 73 springs which dampened the southern Branch Brook valley was collected in a large lake as well as in various holding ponds (one of which was entitled a "reservoir pond"). The already serious pollution from industrial waste and sewerage, which was sullying the waters of the Passaic River and private wells, accelerated the need for safe water. A grand circular Low Service Reservoir (400' in diameter, 20' deep) with steep sloping sides was built in 1871 on land east of the Morris Canal and east of the holding ponds. Lined with local brownstone ashlar and topped by a brownstone wall with decorative iron rail, this Reservoir reflected the site's earlier quarrying, becoming a significant marker for the developing neighborhood, and was later incorporated into the park planning. A 60' wide street encircled the reservoir edge. However striking this structure, it was plagued with leaks from the outset and had to be rebuilt in 1875, at which time a sizable brick pump house with a tall chimney was constructed below its eastern slope, to the south of the Seventh Avenue axis. [Figure 1-4] (A smaller circular service house with decorative architectural detailing and a cupola was situated within the Reservoir to the east, directly on the Seventh Avenue axis. Seventh Avenue at this time remained a paper road to the west of the reservoir, crossing neither the Aqueduct Board's holding pond nor the Morris Canal.)[10] At the outbreak of the Civil War, property of the Aqueduct Board was put to another use, adding another layer of historic significance to the land which was to become Branch Brook Park. In July of 1862,

Figure 1-3: South end of area to become park, showing Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad and Morris Canal in the background. Source: Newark Public Library.

in a relatively drained area between the Morris Canal and the lake of the Branch Brook, extending north to Bloomfield Avenue and south to the Morris and Essex Railroad, a training camp, known as Camp Frelinghuysen, was established to "muster" to arms volunteers from northern New Jersey. Training through the summer, the Thirteenth Regiment was sent off at the end of August 1862 to fight at Antietam, where they sustained heavy losses.[11]

With the great industrial boom of the post-war period, manufacturing of all sorts proliferated in this northern section of Newark, bringing with it the need for operatives' housing. [Figure 1-5] Once-open areas around the aqueduct holding-ponds and abutting the mills and factories of the earlier era were gridded into paper streets and gradually built upon with closely spaced small houses and tenements. [Figure 1-6] The larger land holdings to the north and east, likewise, were subdivided, though these became small estates or ample suburban tracts of such speculative ventures as the Forest Hill Association and Prospect Heights Co. Among the substantial new owners was George A. Clark, an1864 immigrant from Scotland, who put his wealth and textile acumen to work to create a very successful thread factory. To augment the grounds around his Mt. Prospect Avenue mansion he purchased substantial acreage near Blue Jay Swamp, including a seasonally dammed pond used for ice and for skating, then known as Patterson's Pond.[12] Under his ownership, the area became known as "Clark's New Park," the pond now a decorative feature with an island, connected to the shore by an elaborate rustic wooden bridge. Atlas (1889) and birdseye (1895) [Figure 1-7] maps record curving roads continuing Treadwell Street around the pond and to the north across what was still shown as open land at this period. The "waterlogged tangle of grassy bumps and hummocks" of the Swamp remained within this property.[13] These maps also reveal the remnants of former quarry excavations still existing along Parker and Ridge Streets,

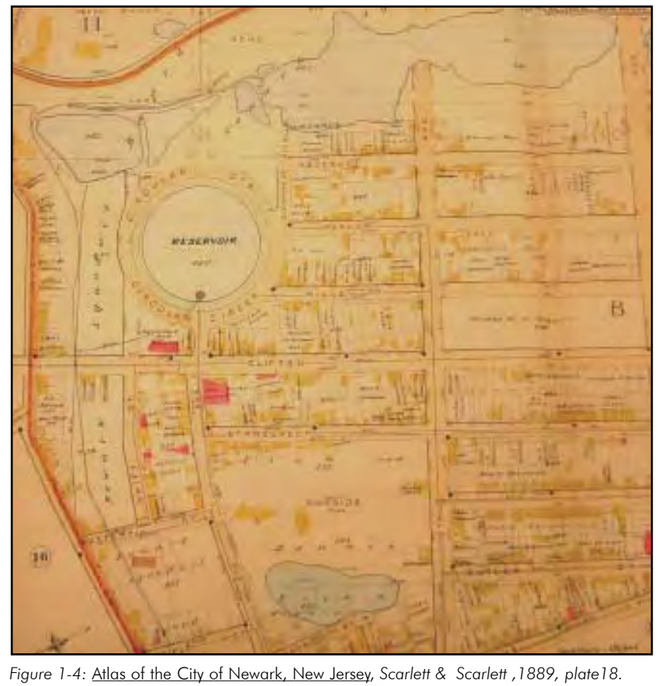


Figure 1-4: Atlas of the City of Newark, New Jersey, Scarlett & Scarlett ,1889, plate18. Note the various holding ponds east of the Morris Canal and the Reservoir with its circular street.

Figure 1-5: View south looking toward Eighth Avenue with the Pumping Station in the foreground and the edge of the Reservoir to the right, pre 1896. Source: Newark Public Library.

Figure 1-6: View from Clifton and Seventh Avenues, 1896. Source: 1898-99 Annual Report, after p. 10.

near Bloomfield Avenue, although the scale of these is difficult to judge from the map. An 1870 English visitor to the area described these quarries as so deep that "men below looked like little boys" standing "ankle deep in water."[14]

The northern residential section of the city attracted middle to upper class families, many of Scottish origin, while a growing population of recent arrivals, many from southern Italy, lived south of Bloomfield and Fourth Avenues between the Aqueduct lands and the railroad tracks. In 1889, as an amelioration to this increasing residential density, the Newark Common Council dedicated sixty acres around the old Reservoir, under the jurisdiction of the Board of Street and Water Commissioners, to be used for park purposes. The1895 birdseye map displays curving roads and tree groupings in this area east of the Canal from the railroad tracks at Eighth to Bloomfield Avenue, linking to those in Clark's Park, though no mention is made of any improvements.[15] This was the land soon to become Branch Brook Park.[16]

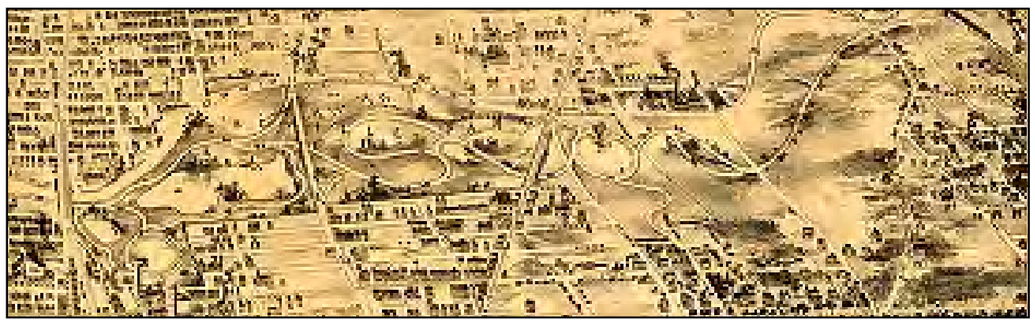


Figure 1-7: Section of 1895 bird's-eye map indicating the area to become park. Source: T.J.S. Landis, Harrison Kearney *[map].*

Chapter 1 Endnotes

[1] In-depth archeological studies for the Branch Brook Park area have not been performed. Accordingly, evidence of early Native American occupation has not yet been uncovered. See Michael M. Gimigliano and David Church, with Herbert Githens and Thomas Vint, "A Cultural Resources Survey of Branch Brook Park" (Unpublished typescript, Newton, N.J., c. 1978), pp. 23-27; see also Charles A. Stansfield, Jr., *A Geography of New Jersey* (New Brunswick and London, 1998), pp.55-69 *passim*.
[2] Charles F. Cummings, "Rivers and lakes played notable role in city's life," *Newark Star-Ledger*, 14 March 2002.
[3] See John T. Cunningham, *Newark* (Newark, 1988), p.90 (map); Hiram A. Belding, *Map of Essex County, New Jersey, with the names of property holders, etc.*[Newark, 1850].
[4] Gimigliano and Church, "Cultural Resources Survey," p.29.
[5] Stansfield, *Geography of New Jersey*, p.88.
[6] Charles F. Cummings, "Thoughtful leaders assured adequate water supply," *Newark Star-Ledger*, 21 March 2002; Cunningham, *Newark*, pp.100-101.
[7] In its iteration as the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, this railroad was to prove an insurmountable impediment to the full realization of Olmsted park planning.
[8] Cummings, "Thoughtful leaders…"
[9] Gimigliano and Church, "Cultural Resources Survey," p.32
[10] Gimigliano and Church, "Cultural Resources Survey," pp. 37-38; Cunningham, *Newark*, p.224; Cummings, "Rivers and lakes…"
[11] Cunningham, *Newark*, pp.157-58. Note the maker on the spot, unknown date and source.
[12] Cummings, "Rivers and lakes…"
[13] Scarlett and Scarlett, *Atlas of the City of Newark, New Jersey* (Newark, 1889), Plate 23; T. J. S. Landis, *Harrison-Kearny*_(Newark, 1895)[map]; Frederick W. Kelsey, *The First County Park System* (New York, 1905), p.102.
[14] Charles F. Cummings, "Early visitors left recollections of 'beautiful village'," *Newark Star-Ledger,* 4 July 2002.
[15] See Kelsey, *The First County Park System*, p.10.
[16] *Report of the Park Commission of Essex County, N.J., 1915* (Newark, 1916), p.15. The Annual Reports of the Park Commission will be cited hereinafter as [18__ or 19__] *Annual Report*.

CHAPTER 2: THE PARK IDEA

The First Proposal – 1867-71

Even in its nascent stage of development before the Civil War, New York's Central Park created a standard of urban beautification which cities across the still young nation strove to emulate. The innovative Greensward plan, designed by journalist- turned –scientific farmer Frederick Law Olmsted (FLO) and English architect Calvert Vaux, transformed a rocky Manhattan outcrop into celebration of romantic pastoral scenery. In a varied series of spaces—some wooded and shadowy, some formal and decorated, some spacious and open, all linked by an ingenious circulation system of alternative routes, they attempted to meet various needs for a rapidly growing city.[1] Such a park promised an antidote to city squalor and the pressures of the business world for laborer and manager alike—a place where citizens could gather regardless of class or ethnic distinction for the simple gregarious pleasure of congregating and enjoying the restorative benefits of rural scenery. Given Newark's proximity to and intense commercial connections with New York, this New Jersey City was keenly influenced by the events in its neighboring metropolis. As William Cullen Bryant, a leader of the Central Park movement, noted, many prominent New York businessmen chose to reside away from the city turmoil among the more "serene quiet and sylvan charms of rural life" in northern New Jersey.[2] With the post Civil War work of Olmsted and Vaux to shape Brooklyn's Prospect Park into its imaginative sequences of meadow, wood and water, Newark's leaders were eager to develop similar artistic and healthful improvements for their city.

From January 12 through February 7, 1867, the *Newark Daily Advertiser* urged their readers to pressure the legislature to create such a park in a 420 acre tract, bounded by Bathgate's Lane (now Roseville Ave), the Bloomfield Turnpike, Broad and North Broad Streets at its southeast and on the south by the Morris and Essex railroad. [Figure 2-1] In response, the New Jersey state legislature passed an act in April of 1867 authorizing the organization of a Newark Park Commission with a mandate to locate grounds for a municipal park of suitable size to accommodate the growing city. [3] The Executive Committee of this 26 man Commission [4] toured "the new public park at Brooklyn," and then requested the nation's premier park architects, Olmsted and Vaux, to prepare a report for a park for Newark.

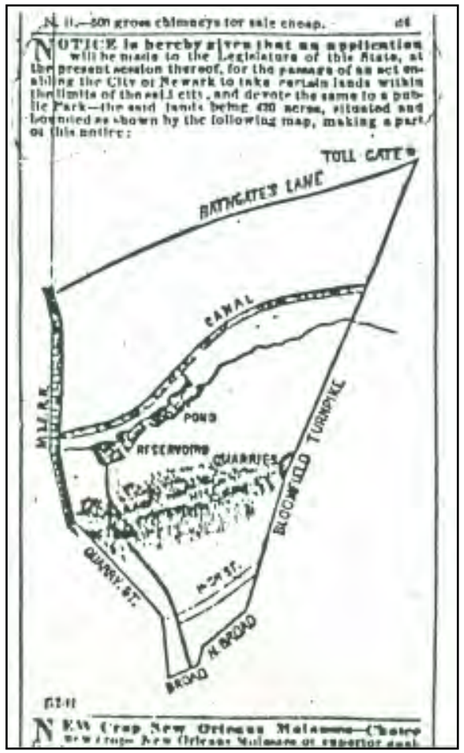


Figure 2-1: Sketch of land to be taken for a proposed park. Newark Daily Advertiser, January-February 1867.

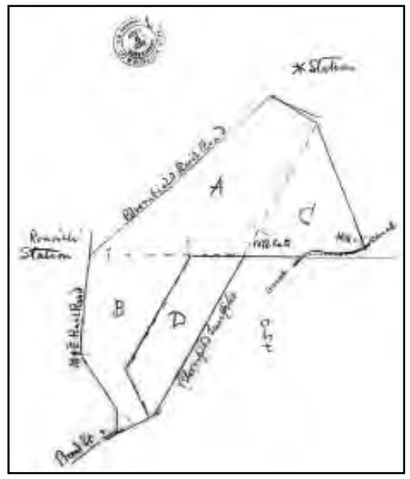


Figure 2-2: Olmsted & Vaux sketch of lands suggested for their proposed park, 1867. Source: Olmsted Job File #420, OAR.

After inspecting various potential sites, the Olmsted and Vaux reply of October 5th, 1867, recommended that the Commission consider a larger tract of 700 acres, encompassing the 420 acres suggested by the newspaper. [Figure 2-2] While noting that the growth potential of Newark would soon need a recreation ground where a desired breadth of "tranquilizing" pastoral scenery – the "green pastures" of the 23rd psalm [5] — could be achieved, the designers also reminded the Commission of the artistry of park creation.

> *"When entirely freed from extraneous considerations the central idea of a large public park is manifestly that of a work of art,…designed at the outset as all other works of art are designed, with the intention of producing, through the exercise of the natural perceptions, a certain effect upon the mind and the character of those who approach it."*[6]

Such an effect would enable a large group of visitors an "unbending of the faculties," "by moderate and agreeable exercise, to enjoy … a series of views and thus have their interest constantly stimulated by a pleasant variety." Mindful of the economic considerations of park construction, the Report noted that some of their recommended site consisted of presently wet, unproductive but not expensive land, with scenic potential. The flatter areas were suitable for parade and ball grounds while the higher grounds along the ridges would command fine views. [7]

The tract suggested by Olmsted and Vaux expanded the 420-acre site both westward and northward, choosing the Bloomfield railroad tracks as its western boundary instead of Bathgate's Lane. They noted that this area, (the space labeled 'A' on the Olmsted-Vaux diagram), contained "an unusual extent of scenery of a very desirable character," which included the so-called 'Boiling Spring.' [Figure 2-3] Additionally, they suggested another parcel to the northeast to augment the earlier proposal. This triangular area, labeled 'C' on their plan, was bounded by the Bloomfield Turnpike with the Morris Canal to the east, and incorporated Silver Lake into the site. This space, being "of much value," by adding "to the healthfulness," also made the land beyond it available for attractive residential development. [8] Expanding the newspaper's suggested acreage to include some natural features for different landscape experiences, Olmsted and Vaux were doing for Newark what Vaux had just completed in Brooklyn. As the planning for Prospect Park began in 1865, Vaux was able to negotiate a rearrangement of proper-

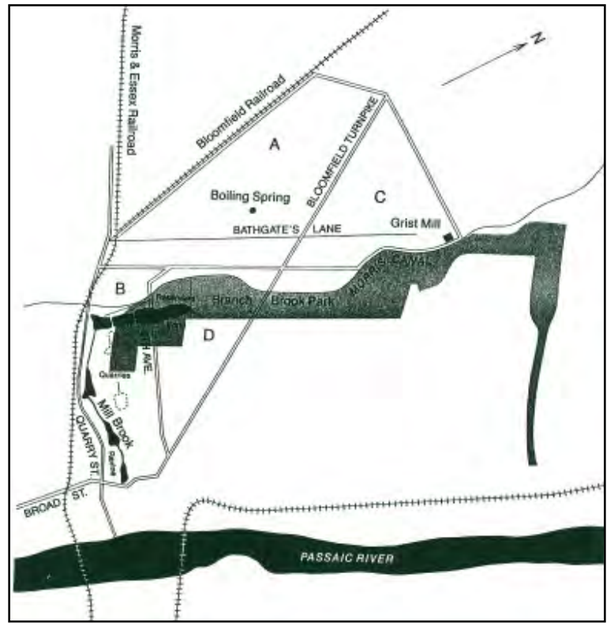


Figure 2-3: Sketch comparing Olmsted & Vaux 1867 park proposal with present-day outline of Branch Brook Park. Source: Sketch courtesy of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Project, from Volume VI, The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company: 1865-1874, p. 213.

ties to be taken for the park. The acquisition of enlarged acreage, encompassing interesting natural features and not bisected by Flatbush Avenue, enabled the designers to develop a range of scenic experiences, keeping the city intrusions at a distance, for "*a sense of enlarged freedom*" which was critical to Olmsted's purpose in creating parks for urban dwellers. [9] The lands suggested by these designers for Newark held the same potential for "the formation of pastoral landscapes of a refined and complete character," parkland to provide for respite, scenic beauty and recreation for a growing city.[10]

Similar to their concurrent planning for Brooklyn, Olmsted and Vaux were also concerned about accessible routes to connect the park with quadrants of the city, with the picturesque residential suburb of Llewellyn Park at the base of the Orange Mountains, or to the north toward Belleville and Second River. In particular, they noted that the ravine along Mill Brook with its old quarries could be transformed at reasonable cost into a way to the park [11] of "highly novel and interesting character." [See Figure 1-2] The report continued,

> *"The route for this purpose would follow up the ravine which is now crossed by a bridge at the north end of the principal street of the city, the sides of which—together with the abandoned quarries which adjoin it – are susceptible of picturesque treatment; after passing the quarries it would continue around the pond above the reservoirs, the west border of which is already agreeably overhung by trees and then be extended by a graceful approach to the ground already designated…We believe there is no large town in the world in which an unobstructed route, itself rural in character, giving access to a great park, is brought so conveniently near the doors of all its inhabitants…"*[12]

Transforming unproductive land (the ravines and quarries they called a "nuisance…a distortion of the plan of the city,") into urban assets was again following the pattern established so successfully with Central Park, with its associated increase in property values. They reminded the Commission of what they had learned in this experience, that

> *"The larger the area of the park the longer will be its boundary, and the longer its boundary the greater will be the amount of land which will be directly advanced in value by reason of its construction, and consequently the lighter will be the rate of taxation per acre of park which will fall upon the citizens generally."* [13]

This argument, and indeed the entire Report, was "very favorably received" by the Commission and twice passed the Assembly, as reported by the Commission's Secretary, Daniel F. Tompkins, a New York lawyer who resided in South Orange.[14] However, controversy arose in the New Jersey Senate, where a powerful senator from Essex County objected to the proposed legislation, saying "the people at large were opposed to the enterprise." [15] The estimated cost of $1million for land and construction which would be spent solely in the northern wards of the city fueled the opposition. This false economy based on regional interests was to be greatly regretted twenty-five years later when the purchase alone (not including construction) for a mere 280 acres for Branch Brook Park would cost over $1.2 million, of which over $500,000 was for buildings to be demolished.[16] While this proposal died in the legislature with a negative vote in 1871, the idea remained alive. In its second iteration, the park idea had progressed from a unitary site to a more comprehensive regional system with greater voter appeal.

The Second Proposal 1894-5

In the two decades between the early 1870s attempts at park creation for Newark and the 1890s, the park movement had engaged civic and corporate imagination across the country. Cities large and small from Montreal to Atlanta, from Boston to Chicago had requested the design services of Frederick Law Olmsted. [Figure 2-4] Having severed his partnership with Vaux in 1872, Olmsted moved his practice to Brookline, MA in 1884, where the office developed into an active landscape design atelier at a time when there were no training programs available for students interested in designing on the land. He was now in partnership with his stepson, John Charles Olmsted (JCO), [Figure 2-5] whose organizing skills systematized the complex workings in an office with clients across the country. In 1893, the firm added Charles Eliot as partner and was now known as Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot. Work included park systems for Buffalo, Rochester, Atlanta, Hartford, Louisville and extensive park work throughout the Boston, Brookline and Cambridge area. In addition to parks, the firm was engaged during the last decade of the 19th century in design for numerous private estates and institutions, with a growing number of residential subdivision clients, including the community of Bellegrove in Kearney, NJ. [17] Prior to joining the Olmsted firm, Eliot had launched the concept of a metropolitan park system around Boston, crossing municipal boundaries, to preserve for future public use spectacular natural scenery and water courses which might otherwise be lost to speculative developments. He brought this work with him to the new office. Other projects of particular importance, such as Stanford University, in Palo Alto; the Biltmore estate for George W. Vanderbilt in Asheville, NC, and park work in Boston, Chicago, Hartford, and other cities made this an extraordinarily busy and productive period. Unfortunately, as the decade progressed, the senior Olmsted's health declined, and although clients asked for his assistance, as in the case of Essex County, the work was increasingly handled by the next generation in the firm—JCO, Eliot and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., an 1894 graduate of Harvard.

Figure 2-4: Frederick Law Olmsted, c. 1890. Source: ONHS.

By the 1890s, there were now other practitioners in the country offering landscape design services. Some were engineers who had worked on landscape projects. Others were plantsmen or nurserymen, with experience in horticulture, and still others had managed estates or park construction. A few (such as Charles Eliot) had actually apprenticed with FLO or one of the few other major professionals with a record of creditable landscape accomplishments. But there was great variation in the design skills and breadth of planning vision among these other practitioners, and few incorporated into their proposals sound economic strategies which were critical to municipalities struggling at this time to provide multiple services to burgeoning populations.

Figure 2-5: John Charles Olmsted, c. 1900. Source: ONHS.

The Olmsted firm's national reputation was well-deserved. The services they offered combined in-depth understanding of the requirements of the land with the engineering skill and artistry needed to transform often problematic terrain into beautiful, usable and maintainable public spaces. Moreover, they brought sound management procedures to their projects, both in planning and design and in the supervision of construction. They further augmented these benefits with their skills in educating park commissions, municipal officials, the press and the public about the long and short-term responsibilities concerning park system development and comprehensive city planning.

Some of the park supporters in Newark and its neighboring towns had, over the twenty years, kept themselves informed about park developments in America and abroad and were well-aware of the multiple economic, social and scenic benefits that could be derived from good planning. Businessmen both from Newark and the Oranges had made efforts over the years toward re-igniting public interest in the park issue. In April 1894 these efforts began to coalesce into a formulated plan to seek once again legislative action to create a park system. This time, however, the approach was county-wide rather than purely local. A legislative bill was prepared by members of the Boards of Trade from both the Oranges and Newark to set up a temporary, nonpartisan, non-compensated commission to explore within two years the creation of a park system for Essex county. The bill passed in May 1894, authorizing the expenditure of up to $10,000 in the process.[18] The appointed Commission consisted of Frederick Kelsey, a nurseryman from Orange; businessmen Edward Jackson of Belleville, Cyrus Peck and Stephen Meeker of Newark and George Bramhall from South Orange**.** A young reporter on the *Newark Daily Advertiser,* Alonzo Church, was hired as secretary. [19]

After exploring numerous scenic landscape sites throughout the county from mountain to river in September 1894, the Commission sought expert advice. They interviewed five candidate groups who were asked to make proposals: Frederick Ehrenberg and his associate, A.L. Webster, from New York; Gray (Arthur S.)& Blaisdell (Frank M.) from Boston; Nathan F. Barrett from New Rochelle, NY; John Bogart, an engineer from New York, who ultimately teamed with Barrett; and Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot, requesting from the latter the personal services of FLO. Additionally, they requested from the Olmsted firm several reports from their other landscape projects. [20]

Interviews, site inspections and the candidates' proposals occupied much of the temporary Commission's fall of 1894. JCO visited on December 17 and 22, with FLO coming on December 29th and 30th for two carriage inspections to "refresh his memory as to the country thereabouts." [21]
What he saw pleased him, as John reported,

> *"It is a long time since my father has been so much pleased with any proposed park site as he was with the valley lying between the first and second mountains from the Reservoir southward. Indeed, he was very much pleased with the whole County, and saw admirable opportunities for minor parks in every direction. The chief difficulty will doubtless be an 'embarrassment of riches' in this respect, with probably a deficiency of money riches."* [22]

The Olmsted report, submitted to Cyrus Peck on January 16,1895, made some general observations concerning the purposes of public parks and the duties of a park commission. Written mostly by JCO, [23] this report contained language reminiscent of his father's earlier writings about the role of parks to civilize urban conditions. As places for "rural recreation," parks counteracted harmful urban influences, thereby increasing "physical, mental and moral health," "commercially productive capacity," and thus wealth. Furthermore, wise management by a park commission of a system of parks would enhance a district or a town, increasing its popularity as a place of residence, and thereby advancing the assessable value. [24] John expanded upon the duties of a future permanent commission in a later letter. In the latter, he explained that a park commission should be

> *"…in the nature of a Board of Trustees, like those of Public Libraries, Art Museums and the like rather than an Executive Board, like the usual Boards…It should be the policy of such a Board to sit in judgment on matters of general policy and finance and not to do the actual detailed work themselves. They should act through their superintendent."* [25]

Without topographic and boundary surveys and market value estimates of the various lands inspected, John declined to give specific site recommendations in his report. [26] Instead, he explained general features and component parts of a comprehensive system of public grounds "adapted to promote first, the health and comfort of the community, and, second, the financial prosperity of the County." He noted that while the county was still largely suburban and rural, the majority of its people lived among the factories in Newark, whose growing population would soon obliterate the nearby scenic and recreative opportunities. He set forth the various types of desired public recreation grounds—two classes of reservations (one for spacious scenery, the other, on the Orange Mountain, to preserve the view); neighborhood grounds; smaller squares and playgrounds; promenades and boat landings along the Passaic; and finally, two kinds of parkways, one "formal and stately," the other expanding at intervals into playgrounds or scenic features. In particular, he stressed the unique opportunity for "rural refreshment" provided by the potential mountain reservation in the valley between Orange and Second Mountain, where "almost ideal passages of pastoral and secluded sylvan scenery" could be found such as "have been obtained in the Central Park of New York only after years of labor, and by outlays of many millions of public money." [27] Concerning Essex County's potential for parkways, he stated that existing avenue system could serve as formal parkways, if suitable building setbacks could be established. To create the picturesque parkway type, he echoed and expanded the1867 Report by recommending a parkway from "Reservoir Park" along First, Second and Third Rivers, ending at Orange Mountain.[28]

It is clear from the correspondence that JCO did not realize initially that the firm was one of several candidates being considered.[29] Even in June, when informed of the selection of Barrett and Bogart " to act as Architects and Engineers in charge, for construction and supervision," with the request that FLO " act as consulting

Architect," it was still unclear to the firm what the chain of responsibility would be. The now-permanent Essex County Park Commission,[30] appointed in April, expressed its concern.

> *" The work being in a very conspicuous place and near the metropolitan Parks of New York and Brooklyn, the Board feels the importance of securing the highest order of talent in matters concerning designs and plans, and desires to have your cooperation as a recognized authority on such subjects."*

For $1000 per annum, the Commission was hoping to keep the Olmsted name associated with their park project.[31] Replying for the firm, FLO, Jr**.,** respectfully declined, noting that the firm had assumed that Bogart and Barrett had been employed only to make plans, not to design.[32]

> *"Our reason for declining your proposition is that we are convinced from long experience in similar works that the organization you have devised is not one which is likely to bring about thoroughly satisfactory results. Moreover, the line of division of responsibility between Messrs. Bogart and Barrett and ourselves would appear to us to be so vague as to be unsatisfactory."*[33]

It is tantalizing to speculate what the shape, outline and character of Branch Brook Park, and indeed, the entire Essex County park system, might have been had the Olmsted firm had the opportunity from the outset to advise on ample boundaries, grading and spatial flow, and the means of approach.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

[1] See Charles E. Beveridge, "Introduction," in Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, ed. Charles McLaughlin, Charles E. Beveridge, series ed., 7 vols. to date (Baltimore, 1977—) [hereinafter cited as *PFLO*], Vol. III, *Creating Central Park,* Charles E. Beveridge and David Schuyler, eds. (Baltimore, 1983).
[2] William Cullen Bryant, ed., *Picturesque America*, 2 vols. (New York, 1874), I:50 [quoted in Stansfield, *Geography of New Jersey,* p. 95.
[3] *PFLO*, Vol. VI, *The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company*, David Schuyler and Jane Turner Censer, eds. (Baltimore, 1992), p. 219 n. 1.
[4] The Executive Committee consisted of John H. Stephens (President); Beach Vanderpool, John Rutherford, Joseph P. Bradley, Cornelius Walsh and Nehemiah Perry (Vice Presidents); Daniel F. Tompkins (Secretary); and William A. Righter (Treasurer). "Letter from Trenton," *Newark Daily Advertiser*, 13 April 1868; 1867 Laws of New Jersey, Chap. 372, §1.
[5] The reference to the 23rd psalm was quoted from their 1866 report to the Brooklyn Park Commission. Olmsted, Vaux & Co., "Architect's Report," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, p. 212; Olmsted, Vaux & Co., "Preliminary Report to the Commissioners for Laying Out a Park in Brooklyn, New York," 24 January 1866, *PFLO*, Supplementary Series
Vol. I, *Writings on Public Parks, Parkways and Park Systems*, Charles E. Beveridge and Carolyn F. Hoffman, eds. (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 90-91.
[6] Olmsted, Vaux & Co., "Architect's Report," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, pp. 211-12.
[7] Ibid., pp. 216-19.
[8] Ibid., p. 216.
[9] Calvert Vaux to Frederick Law Olmsted [hereinafter "FLO"], 9 January 1865, *PFLO*, Vol. V, *The California Frontier*, Victoria Post Ranney. ed., (Baltimore, 1990), pp. 294-96; "Introduction," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, pp. 19-20; "Preliminary Report to the [Brooklyn] Commissioners," *PFLO*, Suppl. Vol. 1, pp. 83, 80-111 *passim*.
[10] "Architect's Report," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, p. 212.
[11] Note the use of the terms "park way" and "parkway" in Olmsted, Vaux & Co's Report to the Brooklyn Park Commissioners, 1 January 1868, *PFLO*, Suppl. Vol. 1, pp. 112-41.
[12] Architect's Report," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, pp. 212-18.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Daniel F. Tompkins to FLO, 7, 11 and 15 October, 1867, Olmsted Associates Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. [hereinafter "OAR"], Job #420, Series B. Citations to OAR Series A will give the job number, followed by the volume and page numbers (e.g., 2120 A21:624 for job number 2120, volume A21, page 624). Citations to OAR Series B will give the job number, followed by the folder number, if any (e.g., B2120 [f1] for job number 2120, B Series folder 1). Citations to OAR Series E will give the volume and page numbers (e.g., E10:5-5A for E Series volume 10, pages 5 and 5A). "Daniel F. Tompkins Dead," *New York Times*, 28 December 1905, p. 9.
[15] Daniel F. Tompkins, handwritten note appended to clippings from *Newark Daily Advertiser* of April 1868, OAR, B420.
[16] See 1897 *Annual Report*, pp. 10 et seq.
[17] Belleview was designed for John Watts Kearney in 1879.
[18] Kelsey, *The First County Park System*, pp. 12-23.
[19] Ibid., pp. 27-29, 32; "Alonzo Church, 67, Ex-Jurist, Is Dead," *New York Times*, 22 February 1937, p. 17.
[20] Kelsey, *The First County Park System,* pp. 36-37; Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot to Alonzo Church, 4 September 1894, OAR, 2120 A36:51.
[21] Minutes of the Essex County Board of Park Commissioners (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, kept at the offices of the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs) [hereinafter cited as "Minutes"], Minute Book I, [27] December 1894; Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot [John Charles Olmsted (hereinafter "JCO")] to Alonzo Church, 26 December 1894, OAR, 2120 A37:972.
[22] JCO to Cyrus Peck, 1 January 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:10-11.
[23] Olmsted Brothers to F.W. Kelsey, 24 August 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11].
[24] Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 16 January 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:145-56.
[25] JCO to Cyrus Peck, 20 January 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:184.
[26] An article in *Garden and Forest* of this period commented on the extraordinary scenic opportunites in Essex County and the importance of this design task. The article supported the need for a"skilled landspace-architect—an artist who has demonstrated his ability to cope with all the problems presented in a work of such magnitude…"in order to retain the value in such an enterprise. This type of professional skill was necessary to advise on the land selection and set the appropriate boundaries. "A Notable Park Project in New Jersey," *Garden and Forest*, vol. 8,
10 April, 1895, pp.141-142.
[27] Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 16 January 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:145-56.
[28] Ibid. We do not know what the other proposals were, since those documents have not yet been located at the Essex County Parks Department.
[29] JCO to W.S. Manning, 2 February 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:323-24.

[30] With the establishment of the Act on March 5,1895, Franklin Murphy and Frederick Shepard were substituted for original Commissioners George Bramhall and Frederick Kelsey. A $2.5 million bond issue was passed to begin the purchase and development of the system. Kelsey, *The First County Park System*, pp. 63-73; 1896 *Annual Report*, pp. 3, 11-13; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 5-6.

[31] Cyrus Peck, Frederick M. Shepard and Fred W. Kelsey, for the Essex County Park Commission, to FLO, 5 June 1895, OAR, B2120 [f1].

[32] In 1891, FLO, Sr. declined to "enter into competition with Mr. Barrett" concerning the design for Francis G. Newlands of lands which were to become the suburb of Chevy Chase, MD. As Olmsted stated at that time,"Mr Barrett must have long ago settled down upon a general theory of design as the basis of the plan he has furnished…we do not think our ideas could be well grafted on his stock. " F.L.Olmsted to [Francis G.]Newlands, 10 December, 1891, OAR A18:139-40.

[33] Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot [FLO, Jr.] to Cyrus Peck, 9 July 1895, OAR, 2120 A41:567.

CHAPTER 3: THE BARRETT AND BOGART PERIOD

The Designers of Choice

While the terms of the contract negotiated between Nathan F. Barrett and John Bogart and the Commission are not yet known, it is clear from the *Minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners* that their planning was only approved in small increments with a great deal of Board oversight. They were hired to "furnish all plans and designs for consideration and decision of the Park Commission, including preliminary and outline sketches and supervise the completion of full and complete designs and detail drawings for the execution of the work…" Since there was not yet an Essex County staff to implement the work, Barrett and Bogart were to take "general personal direction of the execution of the work," advising the Commission concerning draftsmen and engineers needed.[1]

Figure 3-1: Nathan Franklin Barrett. Source: Landscape Architecture, April 1920, facing p. 109.

In 1895, Nathan Barrett (1845-1919) [Figure 3-1] was a landscape architect of considerable standing with ties to New Jersey. He had been commissioned early in his career by the Central Railroad of New Jersey to lay out station grounds. He then was retained by George Pullman to lay out his ocean-front estate at Elberon, NJ, which in turn led to his long association with the company town of Pullman, Illinois, where he planned landscapes for buildings designed by architect Solon Beman. Among his many estate commissions were several for prominent businessmen in Seabright, NJ, as well as on Long Island and in Westchester County. Barrett was an ardent proponent of eclectic formal gardens, which he shaped into 'rooms,' mixing various landscape types: Dutch, Roman, Japanese, Moorish, etc.

> *"The charm of this design," he stated, "lies in its variety, its lack of conventionality, the absence of mass in color…and little patches of green grass, so often called lawns….and while abandon is aimed at, there is 'method in the madness,' and the wild garden and the formal play their part, each enhancing the charm of the other."* [2]

John Bogart, the civil engineer who teamed with Barrett after applying separately to the Park Commission, had worked with FLO on the implementation of Central Park, moving on to be assistant engineer, then engineer–in-charge, on the team for Prospect Park. Valued by FLO for his engineering skills, he was responsible for "…the elaboration of the designs in working drawings …with the data furnished by the topographical survey; the transference of the designs in this form to the ground…and supervision of the working force as is necessary to secure the intended result…" During the late 1860s and 1870s, he worked with Olmsted on community planning for Riverside, IL; on the Buffalo parks and on other parks in New York City (Morningside and Riverside Parks); and in Brooklyn (Carroll Park). Also between 1869 and 1872, in partnership with his engineering colleague from the New York parks, John Y. Culyer, he designed Washington Park in Albany, NY. In his later career he worked on hydroelectric projects and on rapid-transit systems.[3]

Setting the Boundaries

The first assignment for Barrett and Bogart was to consider and draw up the boundary lines for the sixty acres of Reservoir Park, which had been transferred to the Park Commission in July 1895. [4] The Commission was actively negotiating land purchases and pursuing gifts, seeking to expand their holdings by acquiring land owned by the Mutual Benefit Co. and others, abutting the Reservoir Park. (The Water Board had also agreed to vacate certain streets to accommodate park planning, and turned over their small parcels west of the Canal.) Land was acquired south of the railroad tracks to Sussex and Orange Street to allow for a future parkway entrance under the tracks.

It is not clear how much influence Barrett and Bogart had in these land acquisition decisions, other than to obtain "sufficient additional land …to give the necessary width for development on the Eastern side of the lake." Certainly the area from Clifton to Garside along Sixth Avenue, originally 26 small houselots (where the Park Department office now stands), ensured vistas to the New York skyline and may have resulted in their decision to augment their Avenue concourse plan into an "imposing entrance to the Park."[5] The scenic potential of this elevated Sixth Avenue ridge had already been noted in 1867 by Olmsted and Vaux, who had wanted to retain "perpetually for the public enjoyment the very fine views which would be commanded from it." [6]

There were considerable physical barriers which restricted planning opportunities—the Morris Canal to the west (although some Water Board land was west of the canal) and the railroad to the south (although park property was to extend south of the tracks to Sussex Avenue). Generally, two goals were aimed for in park planning: to have a street as boundary so that private property and the backs of houses would not encroach upon a park edge, and to try to acquire a complete landscape feature (e.g., to the top of a hill rather than part way) to protect both the views and the sense of landscape completeness.[7] In both 1867 park proposals, that of Olmsted & Vaux and that of the *Newark Daily Advertiser*, [See Figure 2-1] the southeastern boundary stretched to Broad Street in order to encompass the Mill Brook and quarry lands. The diagonal of the Bloomfield Turnpike shaped part of the northeastern boundary of the proposed taking, although in the case of Olmsted and Vaux the land extended further, to the Newark-West Bloomfield railroad. The Olmsted and Vaux proposed parkland did not extend east beyond the Morris Canal north of the Bloomfield Turnpike.

The1895-6 land takings, however, were for an irregular, long and much narrower shape on a north-south axis, with an average width of less than a quarter of a mile over a two-mile length, separated into three major sections by pre-existing roads.[8] Clifton Avenue, a major streetcar route, became the eastern boundary in the southern section, with a series of jogs westward, first to Parker and then to Lake Streets, so that these latter streets also formed parts of the eastern limits of parkland. The determining factor for this change was undoubtedly the increased development in this area, now the teeming First Ward of the city, where commercial enterprises (such as the Newark Brewery at 7th and Clifton), shops and crowded residences inflated the cost of this land. Likewise, the jog to Parker Street was probably determined by the property of the Archdiocese and the intended land for the Barringer High School. North of Fifth Avenue, to Bloomfield and beyond, and from Lake Street east, properties already built upon were probably too expensive to consider or, as former quarries, had serious site

defects. The cheaper land available for park uses was unproductive, wet and swampy. [9]

In 1895-6, the Commission was operating on its multitude of tasks with great haste. Simultaneously with the work on the Reservoir lands, Barrett and Bogart were advising the Commission on other park sites throughout the county, while the land agents, B.F. Crane and A.L.Cross, pursued parcels by donation, purchase or condemnation. Securing clear title to the parcels proved complicated in many circumstances. [10] Land at Waverly, later to become Weequahic Park, and on Orange (First) Mountain, later to become Eagle Rock Reservation, were among the first to be acquired, thus beginning to fulfill the Commission's regional mandate. Additionally, Cross and Crane were ordered to seek land for Branch Brook Park north of Fifth Avenue to Bloomfield Avenue and east to Lake Street, with their task expanded in July to extend the park further north into Blue Jay Swamp. [11] Barrett and Bogart, while preparing plans for southern Branch Brook Park and its anticipated northerly extension, were at the same time working on the outline of the whole system of parks and county parkways, which they submitted in December 1896. [Figure 3-2]. As they noted in their 1896 report, Essex County contained wonderful natural features, dramatic views, quiet countryside and a "remarkable variety of wood, water and rock." Their task was to locate park areas to make use of these features, determine the boundaries and connect these with parkways. To be effective, their planning had to anticipate lines of population expansion and development of desirable residential districts, influenced by the pattern of streets and railways, as well as economic conditions. [12]

Figure 3-2: John Bogart & Nathan F. Barrett, "Design for General System of Parks & Parkways," 30 November 1896. Source: 1897 Annual Report.

Much of the land at the northern extent of Branch Brook Park was unimproved but had already been divided into city lots. Between the end of 1896 and spring of 1897, much of this land had been secured, greatly aided by donations totalling 51 acres from the Ballantine, Keene, and Heller families and from the estate of one of the former Commissioners (from the 1867 Commission), William Righter. The Commission was given financial interest in lots along Bloomfield Avenue from the Peck family and from Charles McAndrew (owner of the Licorice works across the Canal at Abington). By purchase, the former Clark's Park with its scenic ice pond became the southern landscape anchor for this park section. Commenting on the timeliness of its actions, the Commission noted the rapid expansion of "unwholesome precincts" whose residents were "the very class of the people who most need purity of air and the enjoyment of verdant nature…But it is one of the uses of parks to absorb just such localities, remove the disease-breeding causes and make a beauty spot of a pest hole."[13]

The Work Begins — The Southern Section

In the spring of 1896, the houses which had stood on land around the former Reservoir property were auctioned off (bringing in less than $16,000),[14] [See Figure 1-6] and the designers submitted their ideas for "embellishment" of the area up to Fifth Avenue, with some discussion as to whether this avenue would be traversed at grade or under a bridge to carry the street. Of the June proposals received for work on the southern part of the park, the Shanley firm was selected, beginning the grading on June 15, 1896. [15] Work was accelerated to shape the lake shores while a series of terraces on the elevated east side, a greensward on the western shore, and walks, drives and bicycle paths were also under construction. Since the 'Branch Brook lake' (the largest of the ponds stretching south of Fifth Avenue) had been long used for ice skating, the Commission did not want to interrupt the public enjoyment of this space. Temporary shelters were erected for skaters at either end of the lake, eight electric lights installed and special policemen retained to service the area. [16] The Barrett and Bogart plans for Branch Brook Park were published in the 1897 Annual Report in 3 parts. The plan for the Southern Division was annotated, "Portion well advanced toward completion, Dec. 1897." [Figure 3-3] The designers had assured the Commission that when completed, Branch Brook Park would provide the citizens of Newark and the county with "a public ground for recreation not surpassed in any other city." Their design would "combine features of landscape treatment developed by the different schools of that art." [17] In the 1897 Annual Report, they elaborated upon this idea, particularly with respect to the terraces.

> *"The natural topography …rises rather sharply on the east of the lake to the highest elevation of the park, suggesting a series of terraces connected by slopes of green. Each of these terraces is subdivided into courts or spaces, each one having a different garden treatment, but so arranged as to give an entirely harmonious effect. These series of terraces will be, as nature develops the planting which surrounds them, relieved from what might otherwise suggest an objectionable harshness. …A judicious but not necessarily expensive architectural embellishment will create in this portion of Branch Brook Park effects …entirely different from what has been accomplished in any of the public parks of this country."* [18]

The natural elevation at Sixth and Clifton Avenues, a remnant of the glacial ridges, was made into a raised carriage and pedestrian concourse with several structures on it, from which the garden terraces were intended to be viewed as foreground to the lake. The meadows on the west provided green counterpoint to the floral elaborations, while the distant vista terminated at the Orange Mountains. From the concourse, the eastern view extended to the Palisades and the spires of New York. Northward from this elevation, the "open view of the

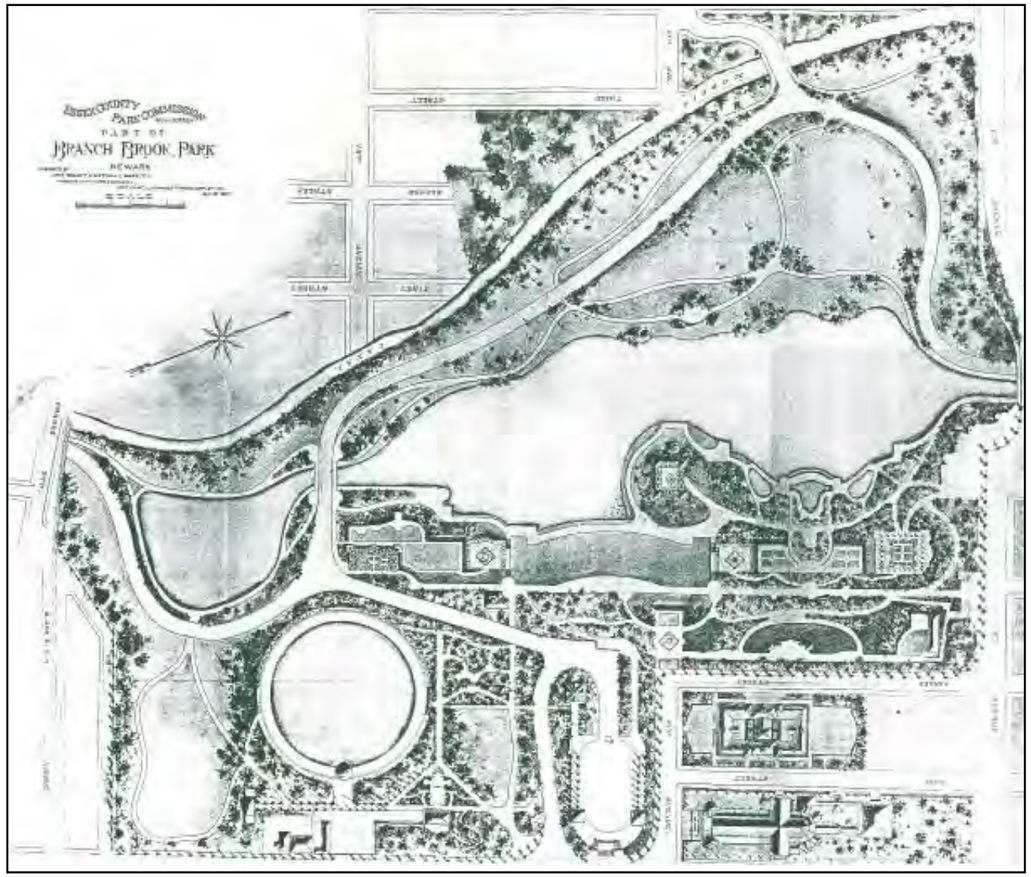


Figure 3-3: Plan of the Southern Division by John Bogart & Nathan F. Barrett, entitled "Part of Branch Brook Park: Portion well advanced toward completion" 1 December, 1897. Source: 1897 Annual Report.

park" was to include the new cathedral and high school as "important features in this neighborhood." Of the Reservoir in the southern view, they said,

> *"While we might not have designed this peculiar feature, yet we believe that it can be made a desirable part of the Park by …erecting shelters which shall cover in part or in whole the path surrounding this reservoir, and give relief to this part of the landscape. These shelters will afford desirable seats for pedestrians, and will command charming views of the park scenery."*

Beyond the Reservoir, they provided a children's playground "sheltered from winds, and not interfering with other uses of the park." [19]

Barrett and Bogart's statements throughout their reports evinced appreciation for "the wonderful natural features of Essex County," [20] but their plan for Branch Brook Park's southern section was a reversion to the design contrivances of Victorian floral bedding-out, with intricate geometric beds connected by straight or curving lines. There was little cohesion among complex components of their design, which seemed to have been planned as fanciful patterns on paper, reflecting the shapes of the drawing guides known as French curves rather than actual ground conditions. This is particularly true of the edge treatment for the entire lake, which reflected nothing of the irregularities of a natural shoreline.

Additionally, many of the features, including roads and bridges, had little axial relationship to each other or to conditions beyond the park's edges. For example, the proposed bridge across the lake was south of the centerline of the circular Reservoir (which had been centered on Seventh Avenue); Fifth Avenue across the park was north of the actual line of the Avenue at its eastern end; the elevated carriage concourse was off-axis with Sixth Avenue; and the main garden area, with its lotus pools and horseshoe garden, was neither centered on the block between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, nor on the High School. In classic parterre gardens such as are found at French chateaux or English great houses, the formal designs are traditionally symmetrically balanced. In Barrett and Bogart's plan, many of the elements are relationally placed but of different shapes and sizes, although with their grading eccentricities, as recorded by the historic photographs of this area, it would have been difficult to visually grasp any symmetry from any one location.

Finally, while this area of the park was land disturbed from decades of quarrying, followed by the Aqueduct Co. use, it apparently had retained some vegetative charm before park construction began. In fact, the Olmsted and Vaux report had noted that the west border of the reservoirs was " agreeably overhung by trees." [21] The Barrett and Bogart construction seems not have retained any mature vegetation, resulting in expressions of regret by the Park Commissioners in their 1897 report at the destruction of the "fine oaks and elms which formerly stood there," leaving a site devoid of desirable shade.[22]

The Extension of the Plan

The 1897 Annual Report also contained Barrett and Bogart's plan for the middle section, [Figure 3-4] from Fifth to Bloomfield Avenues, as well as their completed plan for the entire park. In the former plan, the lake extended from the south into the middle section, with a place on its western bank for music gatherings away from the crowds where, they stated, there would be opportunities for "special displays, as of fire works, electric fountains, & c." Across from this there were to be "wild gardens and a pedestrian ramble," adorned by two

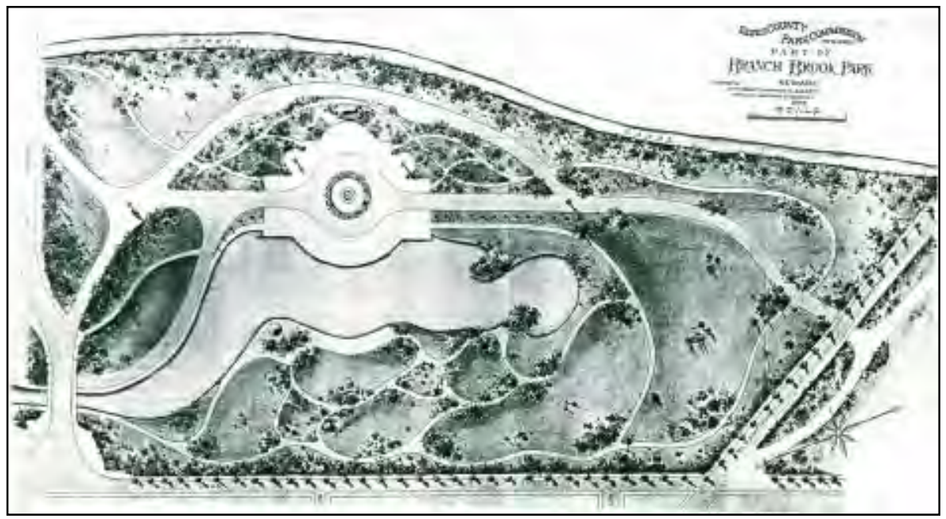


Figure 3-4: Plan of the Middle Division by John Bogart & Nathan F. Barrett, entitled "Part of Branch Brook Park," 1897. Source: 1897 Annual Report.

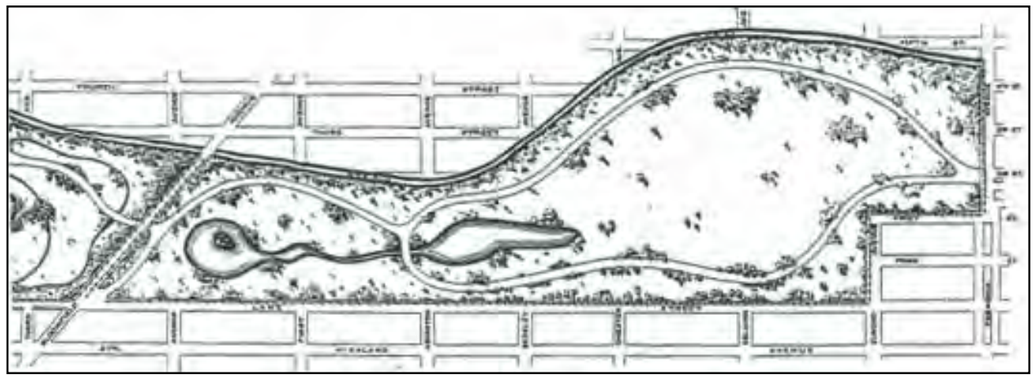


Figure 3-5: Portion of "Design for Branch Brook Park," by John Bogart & Nathan F. Barrett, 1896-7. Source: 1897 Annual Report.

lakeside shelters. [23] The Commission's intention for this area included a "parade ground for the local military and fields for outdoor sports."[24] Curving paths and roads wound though the space around scattered tree groupings, segmenting the lawn areas into lozenge-shaped units. North of Bloomfield Avenue, [Figure 3-5] according to the Barrett and Bogart explanation, the park treatment was to be "broad and natural, with well kept meadow lands and planting suitable to the character of the design." [25] Clark's Pond is shown on the plan of the whole park as unconnected to the middle section waterways; rather, it is elongated northward. The Commission, on the other hand, intended that a brook, rising north of Bloomfield, would connect to Clark's Pond and "so into Branch Brook lake." [26]

With limited prime documents available concerning Barrett and Bogart's work for Branch Brook Park (with none of their working plans and only their printed plans for Southern and Middle Divisions and their General Plan), it is difficult to assess all the features that they intended or their rationale for these. When their working documents, their explanatory reports and correspondence with the Commission are found, much more can be understood of their design aims. Some elements not easily read on the plans can be understood from what was reported as under construction by 1898. One such example is the 'subway' or underpass taking the path from the Sixth Avenue Concourse under the park drive on the east side of the lake. (A second subway was also planned under the drive on the west side, with a third east of the south end of the lake.) This feature does not read as such on the plan, but was indeed being graded by late summer of 1898. [27] More than a circulation necessity for Barrett and Bogart's Branch Brook plan, where linkage between paths and drives is often unrelated and inconsistent, the use of this underpass device seems to be yet another ornamental feature, a concession to the fashion created by Olmsted and Vaux in their New York park work.

Termination of Barrett and Bogart's Work

Barrett and Bogart had promised the Park Commission that their proposals for Branch Brook Park would be "judicious but not necessarily expensive…"[28] In fact, the complex grading with its necessary flights of steps and stone parapets; the extravagant flower beds with proposed gardenesque architectural accessories and ornamental vases; the suggested roofed or vine-clad shelters; and, finally, the recommended "Italian Romanesque" stone bridge to cross the lake overran the budgetary allotment. Other than benches and some lights, most of the contemplated shelters, pergolas, underpasses, bridges, etc., had not been acquired. Acquisition of much of the land for Branch Brook, Eastside, Westside and Orange Parks; for some of Weequahic and parts of the other two reservations, and for a section of East Orange parkway, together with the initial park development work, had used up most of the initial $2.5million appropriation by the end of September 1897. [29]

Aside from the economic issues, dissatisfaction with Barrett and Bogart was increasing at the Commission, both in terms of design and management. As early as November 1896, Chief Engineer Howard L. Cole (who was John Bogart's nephew) had requested a visit from the Olmsted firm, which they could not accommodate due to the pressure of firm work at that time. [30] A year later, John Olmsted responded to a request from Commission Secretary Alonzo Church by recommending the employment of William McMillan, former superintendent of the Buffalo system of parks and parkways from 1872-1897, who had worked most successfully with the Olmsted firm in implementing their designs. [31] On February 11, 1898, Commissioner George W. Bramhall, acting as an approved committee of one "to report upon reorganization of the forces and to secure a landscape architect in place of Messrs. Bogart and Barrett," opened negotiations with John Charles Olmsted. [32]

At their initial meeting Bramhall stated that

> *"…the majority of the Board advocated having the naturalistic style of park improvement, and that for that reason had become dissatisfied with Messrs. Bogart and Barrett, and had terminated their employment, ostensibly, it may be inferred, on the grounds that their appropriations are now nearly exhausted….Mr. Barrett was an excellent designer in his own particular line, but that he was entirely given over to formalism and artificiality, and could see nothing to admire in landscapes undecorated by architectural embellishments. He had often quarreled in a mild way with Mr. Barrett with regard to his style of improvements and that another of the Commissioners had frequently wrangled with him quite bitterly."* [33]

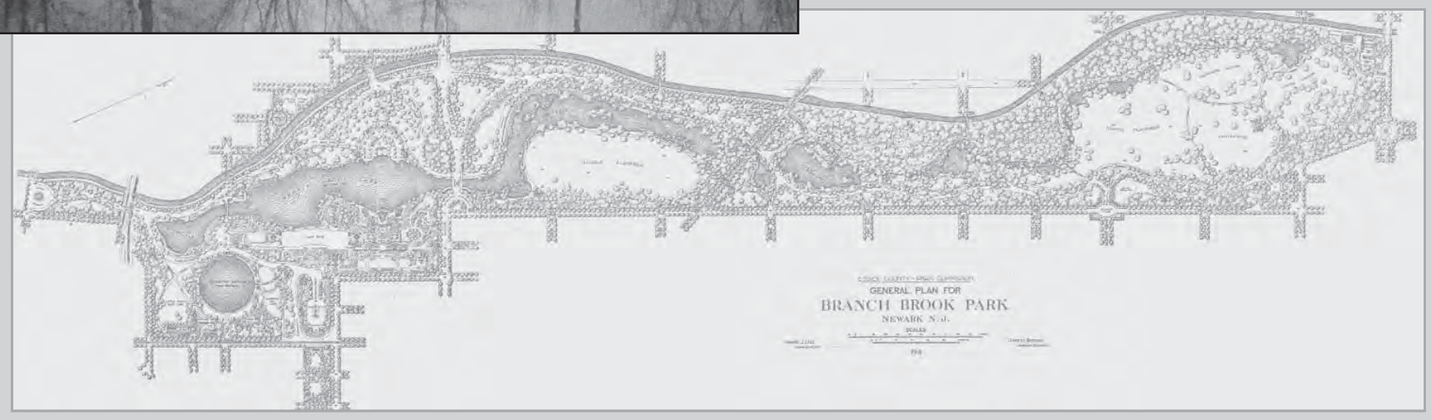
Additionally, Bramhall noted that publishing the Barrett and Bogart plans in the 1897 Annual Report had been done to please the public, but that, in fact, the plans had not been formally adopted by the Board. The Commission's original contract with Bogart and Barrett had been for one year, renewed month to month. [34]

Bramhall was charged with exploring with JCO the Olmsted firm's fees to continue the work for the entire system and to advise on the engineering, architects and administrative reorganization, including the need for a competent superintendent. Although Bramhall objected to McMillan on the grounds that he was "cranky and obstinate," within the week following this February 11,1898 meeting McMillan was hired at $3000 a year, beginning March 1,1898. [35] The Olmsted firm received a telegram at their Brookline office the day after the meeting on February 12th, requesting a proposal. This time, unlike the 1895 experience, Olmsted Brothers had no competition for this design project, embarking upon a professional relationship with Newark and Essex County which outlasted the life of John Charles Olmsted by four decades. [36]

Chapter 3 Endnotes

[1] Minutes, 23 May 1895.
[2] Richard Schermerhorn, Jr., "Nathan Franklin Barrett, Landscape Architect," *Landscape Architecture*, Vol. X, No. 3 (April 1920), pp. 108-113; E. Lynn Miller, "Nathan Franklin Barrett," in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, ed. Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson (New York, 2000) [hereinafter cited as *Pioneers*], pp. 12, 10-14 *passim*.
[3] Olmsted, Vaux & Co. to the [Prospect Park Commissioners], 1 January 1867, *PFLO*, Vol. VI, pp. 159, 162 n. 24; see also *PFLO*, Vol. VI, pp. 300 n. 6, 501 n. 5 and 630 n. 39.
[4] Barrett & Bogart's reports and sketch plans have not been located, so their full intentions are unclear.
[5] 1896 *Annual Report*, pp. 5-6; Minutes, 9 November 1896.
[6] "Architect's Report," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, p. 215.
[7] 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 11.
[8] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 39-40.
[9] 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 5; 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 11 and maps.
[10] The Commission meetings were closed, given the sensitive nature of their deliberations and the danger of inflating land costs if areas of potential acquisition were publicized.
[11] Minutes, 18 July 1895, 3 September 1895, 24 September 1895, 1 October 1895, 31 October 1895, 11 November 1895 and 15 July 1896.
[12] "Landscape Architects' and Engineers' Report," 1896 *Annual Report*, pp. 1-3.
[13] Minutes, Minute Book I, 8 June 1896, 9 July 1896, 14 December 1896 and 31 December 1896; 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 7; 1897 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-12.
[14] Kelsey, *The First County Park System,* p. 103.
[15] Minutes, 6 February 1896 and 25 June 1896; Kelsey, *The First County Park System*, pp. 105, 113.
[16] Minutes, 23 November 1896, 21 December 1896 and 25 December 1896. Daily attendance was estimated at 2,000. 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 7. See "Landscape Architects' and Engineers' Report," 1896 *Annual Report*, pp. 4-5.
[17] "Landscape Architects' and Engineers' Report," 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 5.
[18] "Landscape Architects' Report," 1897 *Annual Report*, pp. 42-43.
[19] Ibid., pp. 44-45.
[20] "Landscape Architects' and Engineers' Report," 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[21] Olmsted, Vaux & Co., "Architect's Report," *PFLO*, Vol. VI, p. 214.
[22] 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[23] "Landscape Architects' Report," 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 45.
[24] 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 10.
[25] "Landscape Architects' Report," 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 45.
[26] 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 10.
[27] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24; B2120 [f1]; B2121 [f1].
[28] 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 43.
[29] Minutes, 30 September 1897.
[30] Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot to Howard L. Cole, 7 November 1896, OAR, 2120 A48:515.
[31] JCO to Alonzo Church, 23 December 1897, OAR, 2120 A54:859-61; Arleyn A. Levee, "The Olmsted Firm in Buffalo: The Next Generation," in Francis R. Kowsky, ed., *The Best Planned City: The Olmsted Legacy in Buffalo* (Buffalo, 1991), pp. 31 and 29-40 passim.
[32] JCO, Report of Visit, 11 February 1898, OAR, E10:1-1B.
[33] Ibid.
[34] In fact, Bogart continues as an engineering advisor, particularly with regard to the parkways, until mid 1899, overlapping the beginning of the Olmsted work. See George Bramhall to JCO, 16 August 1898, OAR, B2121 [f1]. He also advises regarding an artesian well for the North. JCO, Report of Visit, 26 October 1898, OAR, E10:16.
[35] Minutes, 18 February 1898.
[36] JCO died in 1920. Olmsted Associates, the successor firm to Olmsted Brothers, was still doing planning for Essex County in the 1950s and 1960s.

Part II - The Olmsted Brothers Era
1898-1937



CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK FOR REDESIGN

The Olmsted Design Philosophy

In 1898, when the Essex County Park Commission turned once again to the Olmsted firm for advice, it was to the newly formed partnership of Olmsted Brothers. By then, the energetic creative genius, the originating force behind the American landscape profession, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., had retired. His renamed firm was in the experienced hands of John Charles Olmsted, the senior Olmsted's 46-year-old nephew and adopted son who had been his partner since 1884, in partnership with his young half-brother, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., then just 28 years old.

Both men of this next generation had absorbed the aesthetic values of their father and mentor, whose landscape art had been governed by a deep appreciation for natural scenery, by a profound belief in the curative psychological effect of such scenery upon people, and by a design sensibility strongly influenced by the pictorial arts. Moreover, in his park planning, FLO, Sr. added another tenet to his design philosophy. His artistry served a social purpose, to create places where people could interact without regard to economic advantage, social status or diverse backgrounds.

This was an art form where Nature was to be "…discreetly aided by art…" to soothe and refresh and withdraw the mind from the artificiality and pressure of city life. Designs were to be treated as harmonious integrated compositions, responsive to the natural character of a site, subordinating parts to the whole and avoiding incongruous mixtures of styles or conflicting uses. Spatial organization, separation of spaces for differing uses, and sequential patterning all contributed to unity of design. Necessary user amenities –roads, paths, buildings, —indeed, all elements, architectural, horticultural or stylistic, were subordinated to the totality of the composition so that the viewer could be immersed in the enjoyment of Nature.[1]

In similar fashion, the Olmsted sons conceived of park system planning as a comprehensive and integrated task, also a balance of parts to create a whole. A well-planned city should provide opportunities for differing landscape experiences, spread throughout the urban metropolis. If the terrain would allow, such a system would range from extensive reservations, seemingly untouched by human intervention, to large parks with the capacity for gregarious or solitary interactions with nature, to smaller playground-parks for more active recreation, to small formally-treated city squares, all to be linked by parkways around which pleasant residential areas would coalesce. Comprehensive planning for future needs should ensure a healthful, attractive and civilized city where the creative energies of its citizens could work toward the advancement of society. At the turn of the century, with possibilities diminishing for spacious public lands near urban areas, the Olmsted professionals worked diligently to educate their clients to the economic benefits of farsighted and rational comprehensive planning, attuned to present and future neighborhood needs. The soundness of their landscape advice was also demonstrated by their efficient and business-like working procedures.

John Charles Olmsted, the major partner in charge of the Essex County work, was a pragmatic and professional problem-solver. While his published writings are few, his extensive professional correspondence and reports reveal his comprehensive philosophy of design: innovative yet pragmatic; reflective of the naturalistic aesthetic tenets of his stepfather, yet responsive to the new social, economic and political demands of the more diverse 20th century cities; blending formal elements into his projects where necessary. Successful city planning, of which he was an early pioneer, required, he felt, a liberal provision for parks of all types and sizes located throughout the municipality. "As in the case of almost every complex work composed of varied units, economy, efficiency, symmetry, and completeness are likely to be secured when the system as a whole is planned comprehensively and the purposes to be accomplished defined clearly in advance." [2] Based on this philosophy, JCO continued the park planning begun by FLO, Sr., for Boston, Buffalo, Detroit, Rochester, Atlanta, Hartford, Louisville, Brooklyn, and Chicago, among others. He developed park systems for cities such as Portland, ME and Portland, OR; for Seattle and Spokane, for Dayton and Charleston. In New Orleans and Watertown, NY, he found innovative solutions for challenging site conditions, designing parks of great originality. For Chicago's densely populated industrial South-side, he turned derelict land parcels into an imaginative and efficient network of playgrounds to serve immigrant families. Many of these park projects, as well as numerous residential subdivision and institutional jobs, were managed simultaneously with the Essex County work, a testament to the efficiency of the Brookline office procedures. [3]

Working Procedures

At the February 1898 meeting with Commissioner Bramhall, John Olmsted outlined the firm's general working procedures and charges, which were based upon the expectation that there would be a competent superintendent on the Essex County staff to interface with the designers, the Commission and the contractors and workmen. In this role, John's strong recommendation of William McMillan, whom the firm regarded as "decidedly the best Superintendent of Parks in the country," was followed. With his knowledge of surveying, design, planting, construction and "his practical ability in handling men and getting work done efficiently," McMillan had overseen the complex implementation of large and small parks and parkways in Buffalo from 1872 to 1897 period. Most importantly for the Olmsteds, he had shown "his ability to understand plans which he was engaged in carrying out, and has always defended the plan [from] encroachments by Commissioners and citizens who desired to make changes for one reason or another which would have been injurious to the best interests of the parks." [4]

Typically, an Olmsted project began with detailed topographic surveys of the site and some of its abutting lands supplied by the client, which would record the terrain, including vegetation, water conditions, and any other special features. From this survey, augmented by site inspections to verify its accuracy, the team of designers would begin the preparation of preliminary designs and sketches, moving on to working drawings for grading, drainage, paths and roads and other engineering issues, which would be continually adjusted in the course of construction. They prepared planting plans, often making complicated orders for plant material from nurseries across the country. While the Olmsted firm continually stated that they were not building architects, they frequently prepared preliminary sketches for needed structures to ensure that the landscape character would predominate, and that buildings would be subordinate. As a final step in the planning process, a general plan would be produced, rendered in a form suitable for lithography for inclusion in park reports, newspapers or other publications which would help to educate the public about park purpose and design.

The prolonged contract negotiation process between the Commission and Olmsted Brothers was in itself an

education for the Commissioners, who had commercial experience and some familiarity with architectural procedures, but little with landscape designers, especially those with the type of professional business acumen that the Olmsteds had developed. Since professional landscape planning was such a new field at this time, the services provided were misunderstood and often devalued (and clearly the Commission's experience with Barrett and Bogart had not broadened their understanding of sound procedures.) The lapse of time from preliminary outline to design implemented on the land disturbed Bramhall, who had to be convinced that more than a pretty picture was required. The Commissioners wanted the ability to make changes throughout the designing process. John explained that being planless did not mean "aimless," but that "…parks once planted cannot be radically changed without sacrifice of trees which few care to be responsible for." He continued,

> *"A park is a complex organism, having its due relation with approaches, with the character of the neighborhood, with the topography, the existing trees and other elements of pleasing landscape. Its structural features, if wisely planned, are as carefully adapted to the requirements as the various parts of a waterworks distributing system. It is usually much less reasonable to spend public money in improving parks, without a plan than it is to build a waterworks system without a plan…"* [5]

One of the items for discussion in the contract negotiations concerned the use of assistants, with Bramhall trying to insist on the exacting attention of JCO to all of the work and at all of the Commission meetings. From the outset, John Olmsted refused, saying the firm's widespread practice would not permit it. As he noted, "The acknowledged success of our designs for the Boston parks has been due to…liberal employment of trained assistants…the expense of such management of public works is amply justified by the quality of the results obtained." [6] The Olmsteds' method of establishing recompense and their insistence that they be paid for their "ability as designers not advisors" [7] was the second complication of the negotiations. The overlay of their work upon the earlier, partially implemented plans for many of the county parks further convoluted the process. Payment was calculated by the acre for original design ($10 per acre for large areas, $20 for smaller) in addition to a straight consulting salary for other services, such as advice, reports and meeting attendance.

Finally, the duration of their contract was an issue. John Olmsted insisted that three years (five years for reservations over 1000 acres) was the minimum time it would take to create and refine designs and to oversee construction, to ensure their designs were correctly implemented. The Commission, having held Barrett and Bogart to one year, renewed month by month, was reluctant to agree. After six months of debate, the Park Commission voted on August 22, 1898, as John Olmsted noted in his report of visit, "our employment on our terms." A complex written agreement was reached, based on a three-year contract, dividing services variously into consulting and/or designing for the several parks and parkways already acquired and for future acquisitions. Designs for Branch Brook Park north of Fifth Avenue were estimated at $10 per acre, while the portion south of Fifth was covered by consulting services, all of this based upon Essex County employing consultants, staff and assistants to cover engineering, architecture, forestry and gardening under the "general direction and supervision of the parties of the second part," i.e., Olmsted Brothers. [8]

Establishing General Policies

From his extensive work across the country creating park systems and working with park boards, the public and various political entities, John Olmsted could provide invaluable experience to the Essex County Commission, advising on general policies concerning the makeup of the commission and its interaction with the public.

Always conscious of the budgetary constraints of the public dollar, he saw part of his professional role, as his stepfather had before him, to educate both Commission and the public about the efficiency and economic benefits of sound planning. In evaluating current costs in terms of future gain, they needed to consider the enhancement of value in conserving natural features to maintain scenic beauty; the avoidance of cheap temporary construction; the use of funds to complete an area needed for public enjoyment, thereby gaining supporters, rather than spreading inadequate dollars too thinly, leaving nothing finished satisfactorily. He cited the Louisville experience, where some work was done inefficiently on a temporary basis; while Boston committed more initial money, recognizing that the "handsome completion" of the parks would broaden its tax base. "If parks are not managed with regard to the beauty of such scenery as can be embodied in them, they are an extremely wasteful and extravagant municipal undertaking," he noted.[9] Managing the parks required money to maintain the landscapes attractively for public use and to protect the capital investment. This had not been calculated into the original bond appropriations; and John advised securing suitable legislation to provide assessments for annual maintenance. [10] To his great distress, the law made the maintenance appropriation subject to political interests, to the Freeholders' judgement rather than as a dedicated park levy. [11] He felt it his duty to warn the Commission that

> *"such an arrangement will almost inevitably lead…. to the introduction into the management of the parks of local politics and self-interested motives on the part of a limited number of real estate owners and others having some money interest in the development and maintenance of the parks in some particular way rather than in the way most beneficial to the largest numbers of citizens. This method of supplying the Park Commissioners with funds will inevitably result in subordinating their judgment in the discharge of their duties, more or less unconsciously and insensibly…to that of the Board of Freeholders. Under these circumstances, able and successful business men, whose experience and judgment ought to be of the greatest possible value to the community at large in the proper management of the parks for the benefit of the people, soon become discouraged and will not accept the position of Park Commissioner."* [12]

Parks Commissioners needed to have some artistic judgement and to remain "public spirited citizens whose main interests are the intellectual one of directing the creation of such interesting public grounds and the philanthropic one of giving the public the benefit…of their experience, thought and time." [13]

The Landscape 'Team'

Work done by the firm was all handled under the rubric of the Olmsted Brothers name, with no special recognition of the individual involved. The Essex County work was originally the work of John Olmsted, with his brother, FLO, Jr., giving some minor advice on the parkways. Various firm assistants, some later to become partners, also worked on the Essex system— most notably Olmsted partners James Frederick Dawson, Percival

Gallagher and Edward Clark Whiting. Of the numerous Olmsted assistants who worked on plans or made site inspections, Percy Jones was most notable, responsible for numerous alternative sketches of features considered for the Branch Brook Park plan. In particular, the boulder bridges in the northern section were among his plan renderings. Emil Mische and later Hans J. Koehler were the plantsmen from the firm who guided the horticultural development. Well before John Olmsted died in 1920, Percival Gallagher had assumed most of the design work for the newer parks acquired by the County Commission. In addition, beginning in 1921 he designed the system of parks and individual sites for Union County, and after 1926 worked on parks for Passaic County. Trained at Harvard, Gallagher brought artistry, horticultural acumen and personal charm with a modest manner to his projects, which endeared him to his many estate clients as well as to municipal managers. [14] He put these skills to work in Branch Brook Park after 1926 on the northward extension, designing the cherry tree embankments to accommodate to the wishes of the philanthropic donor, Caroline Bamberger Fuld. [15]

A professional staff with clearly delineated tasks was essential to advise the Commission in the management and further development of the system, and to this end William McMillan was hired in March 1898 as superintendent. When McMillan died unexpectedly in August1899, he was replaced by William S. Manning, another former landscape manager who understood the Olmsted working methodology and aesthetic goals. Manning had earlier been in charge of Florham, the estate of H. McKay Twombly in Madison, NJ (now the campus of Farleigh Dickinson University) which the firm had designed between 1890 and 1903. [16] He remained as the Essex County superintendent for 6 years, leaving in early 1906 to take charge of developing the Baltimore park system, also designed by the Olmsted firm.

Defining the respective responsibilities shortly after Manning's appointment as Superintendent, John Olmsted noted,

> *"the landscape architects should be consulted by the engineer in charge and the superintendent in all matters affecting the appearance of the parks, even if they are not matters of sufficient importance to be directly acted upon by the Board itself. The color of stone, the color of paint used for fences and buildings, the style and color of lamp posts, flag poles, seats, shelters, fences, culverts, bridges, buildings, watering carts, uniforms of police keepers, maintenance gangs, the choice and location of trees and shrubs, perennials, annual and tender plants and all other objects should be passed upon by the landscape architects."* [17]

In the search for a new superintendent after Manning's resignation, Olmsted regretted the "distinct misfortune to introduced to the work a new superintendent who will not have had Mr. Manning's opportunities to familiarize himself all the numerous amount of detail contained in our plans…" He continued, "We very much regret the intellectual and artistic grasp of laying out of parks is not always combined with the executive ability essential to economical and efficient management of construction and maintenance forces." [18]

The engineer in charge, Howard J. Cole, [Bogart's nephew] had worked for the Essex County parks from their outset. With the employment of a superintendent, his role needed redefinition. In the interests of "having the plans properly carried out," John clarified the responsibilities.

> *"I think …the execution of all construction work done by day's labor ought to be done under the superintendent, while constructions done by contract under specifications and involving accurate measuring quantities should be done under the supervision of the engineer…when it involves engineering problems... The superintendent should be free to criticize and direct the engineer in matters of horticulture and arboriculture occurring in contract work…The engineer should have the same relation to engineering constructions that the architect has to architectural constructions...It is enough for him to give his directions to a competent contractor or superintendent…"* [19]

When Cole was replaced in 1903, A.M. Reynolds, a member of a distinguished Newark family, who had been supervisor of the Orange Park work until he became Manning's assistant, took on the job, remaining on as both Engineer and, after the resignation of Manning in 1906, as Superintendent until 1931. [20] These men, together with competent sub-managers and assistants from the Olmsted office [21] supervised large, multi-lingual crews of Italian, Irish and Polish workers, hired sometimes by contract, sometimes as day labor. [22] [Figure 4-1] These teams of immigrant workers posed challenging problems for efficient management of the simultaneous projects underway in Branch Brook, Eastside, Westside and Weequahic parks, with other sites added as more parkland was acquired. As Emil Mische, Olmsted firm planting supervisor, described the problem with the planting forces, most of the under-gardeners, grouped by ethnicity, perhaps because of language barriers, were specialized in their tasks—hole-diggers, planters, tree movers, nursery men, etc.

Figure 4-1: Work crew and their carts beneath High Mound wall in the Southern Division. In the background can be seen the path next to the Statuary garden. JCO photograph, 9 April 1900. Source: Photograph #2121-39, ONHS.

> *"The principal objection…is that only one gang can be used in planting … invariably the Poles and Italians drift apart and that means that Poles dig and plant and the Italians go so much slower so as not to get too far ahead of the Poles,. . with the result that the amount of work one would reasonably expect from the force is not obtained… [P]rincipally to superintend such a conglomerate gang requires more than one person can give, besides placing plants, watching the digging and planting and straightening out errors in plants sent…A foreman is put over every gang which vary from 10 to 50 men but as a rule these foreman see that the men are engaged and do not look to the thoroughness of their work…because it is difficult to make the men understand and once understood to have them continue."* [23]

Mische's solution was to divide up the planting and nursery tasks more efficiently, and to hire only young men "desiring an opportunity in park work." [24]

Consulting Architects

To complete the elaborate architectural embellishments — the bridges, underpasses, shelters and pergolas—which were called for by the Barrett and Bogart plan, particularly for the Southern Division of the Park, an architect was required. Before the termination of their contract, Barrett and Bogart and the Commission had interviewed James Lindsley as a candidate to design the bridge across the lake between Sixth and Seventh Avenues.[25] Since appropriations for parks were then limited, and dissatisfaction with Barrett and Bogart growing, this project was not pursued at that time.

In establishing procedures to be incorporated in their contract, John Olmsted noted that "an architect of first class reputation should also be employed for the architectural works," adding that "his designs should be subject to our approval, in order that they should be properly subordinated to the landscape design."[26] Bramhall had come to the February 1898 meeting determined to hire Carrère and Hastings for the architectural work and he must have succeeded in getting them under contract by the summer. By August 23,1898, even before the Olmsted contract was signed, John met at the Carrère and Hastings' office to go over plans for the bridges and other features that the architects already were designing.

The Olmsted firm had collaborated (and would continue to collaborate) with Carrère and Hastings on numerous other jobs. These included the estate for William D. Rockefeller in Tarrytown, NY, the epileptic institution at Sonyea, NY and a planting project for clients Otto Kahn and Henri Wertheim in Morristown, NJ which was concurrent with the Branch Brook work.[27] Supervising these Beaux Artes architects for the Branch Brook Park constructions was certainly problematic. They had developed a practice which went beyond designing buildings to include the surroundings for many of their projects, which they shaped and decorated in grand style. Their taste for monumental rococo or classical design in bridges and buildings, promenades, walls and pergolas was frequently out of scale for the topography and settings already established within the park, as well as out of keeping with the modest neighborhood and industrial context surrounding the southern section. Moreover, the structures were not readily affordable for a park commission with an entire county system to implement and 'furnish.'

With control over the approval process and with the respect of the Park Commission for his pragmatic design sensibility, John Olmsted continually found himself diplomatically suggesting alterations to bring Carrère and Hastings' schemes into a more appropriate scale to fit the land. For reasons beyond simply differences of style, John also rejected many of the architectural proposals due to their disregard of actual site conditions – a bridge span drawn too short for the actual waterway; a path and pergola which would require a new allée of trees to be cut down, etc.[28] Such inaccuracies required revised drawings and caused delay. At a time when the Carrère and Hastings' practice was burgeoning with major commissions (including the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, NY in the Olmsted-designed Delaware Park), the Branch Brook Park project did not attract their prime office attention.[29] The Commission became dissatisfied with their slowness and expense and chose not to rehire them for the second round of architectural construction.[30]

Of their many designs for structures at Branch Brook Park, approximately 15 were constructed,

Figure 4-2: East Arch, looking east with the Clifton Concourse Arbor to the left, c. 1900. Source: Photograph #2121-155, ONHS.

Figure 4-3: Sand-Court Shelter in the Playground, Southern Division. JCO photograph, 13 August 1902. Source: Photograph #2121-128, ONHS.

designed in conjunction with Olmsted Brothers' 'refinements.'[31] Of these, seven still remain, all in the Southern Division except one, although all have been altered over the years: the Subways or boulder underpasses #1 and #2 (called East Arch and West Arch on the Olmsted General Plan) [Figure 4-2]; the Concert Grove wall, balustrade and steps; the Octagonal Shelter on Meeker's Mound; the Children's Sand-Court Shelter [Figure 4-3]; the Playground Comfort Station; and the Ballantine Gates in the Northern Division. The Parker Street shelter [Figure 4-4], originally similar to the one at the Sand Court, survived until the new Barringer High School was built. The seven elaborate wooden pergolas which enhanced many of the garden and overlook areas and the music court [Figure 4-5], disappeared over the years, unfortunately, unrecorded in the park reports. Of the minor constructions, oddly placed flights of steps (of concrete rather than the granite of the Carrère and Hastings specifications) and some wall fragments remain as echoes of past stature, now somewhat lost in their forlorn spaces.

Figure 4-4: Parker Street Shelter, 1899. Source: 1898-99 Annual Report, after p. 14.

Figure 4-5: Music Court North Arbor, looking northeast. This was matched by a similar arbor on the south and both heavily planted with vines. Note the temporary shelter to the right. The comfort stations were built within these arbors in 1920. JCO photograph, 30 May 1901. Source: Photograph 2121-85, ONHS.

When the Park and Bloomfield Avenue bridges were to be constructed, beginning in 1903, Secretary of the Commission Alonzo Church refused to consider Carrère and Hastings, turning instead, on Olmsted advice, to another New York architect, Walter Cook of Babb, Cook and Willard. The Commission had already employed Charles Ackerman of Newark in late1899 to design structures in Eastside and Westside parks. He continued his

work in 1904 by designing a series of bandstands for several parks, including the one for the Branch Brook Concert Grove. [32] The boathouse, added to the southern end of the lake in1906, was designed by F.A. Wright, then of Rossiter and Wright of New York, who was also responsible for the Knollfield Shelter in the Northern Division and for the Octagon Fieldhouse by the Middle Division wading pool. [33] By the time of construction of these buildings, Olmsted Brothers was mostly employed by the Commission on an advisory basis, their design and supervisory contract having expired in June 1905. Much of their work was now directed toward the planning for newly acquired park sites, such as Montclair, Glen Ridge, Irvington and the Watsessing extensions. Therefore, there is little extant correspondence giving evidence of their involvement in the design and actual siting of these structures for Branch Brook, although the location for the fieldhouses was indicated on the General Plan of 1901.

Many of the structures throughout Branch Brook Park's older sections were designed by the staff of the Olmsted firm, rather than by consulting architects. The rustic stone bridges which still punctuate the meandering brook in north Branch Brook Park were designed by John Olmsted in conjunction with Percy Jones, a respected draftsman of long standing with the Olmsted firm. To transform this northern section of the park, originally Blue Jay Swamp, into pastoral meadow set within its wooded surround, required careful supervision to retain the natural vegetative attributes while draining the malarial morass. Great care was taken in both design and in construction oversight to make each bridge unique, yet discreetly recessive into the once-lush woodland setting. In fact, John Olmsted required several of the bridges to be rebuilt to retain the intricate distinctions in stone patterns and proportions which he had intended to differentiate each structure. [34]

From 1922 to 1927, the addition of properties to the north of the Northern Division, beyond Heller Parkway, to form the extensions of Branch Brook Park and the Hendricks Golf Course (the abutting Belleville Park had been acquired by the Commission in 1915), again required outside consultants. This time, the tasks involved several bridges for pedestrians, trains and automobiles crossing over the new parkland and its parkway. Olmsted partner Percival Gallagher, together with A. Burton Cohen, a consulting engineer from New York, and the staff of the Park Commission crafted the bridges and their complex of intersecting roads for this irregular terrain, to retain some landscape beauty for this linear parkland. [35]

Chapter 4 Endnotes

[1] Olmsted, Vaux & Co., "Preliminary Report to the [Brooklyn] Commissioners," *PFLO*, Suppl. Vol. 1, pp. 89-90; Olmsted & Vaux to H.G. Stebbins, January 1872, *PFLO*, Suppl. Vol. 1, p. 250; Olmsted & Vaux to H.G. Stebbins, February 1872, *PFLO*, Suppl. Vol. 1, pp. 256-60; Charles E. Beveridge, "Frederick Law Olmsted's Theory of Landscape Design," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 3, no. 2 (summer 1977), pp. 38-43.
[2] Arleyn Levee, "John Charles Olmsted," *Pioneers*, pp. 283, 282-85 *passim*.
[3] Ibid.
[4] JCO to Alonzo Church, 23 December 1897, OAR, 2120 A54:859-61; Arleyn Levee, "The Olmsted Firm in Buffalo: The Next Generation," in *The Best Planned City: The Olmsted Legacy in Buffalo*, ed. Francis R. Kowsky (Buffalo, 1991), p. 31.
[5] JCO to George W. Bramhall, 9 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A59:901.
[6] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to George W. Bramhall, 14 February 1898, OAR, 2120 A56:337-40.
[7] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to George W. Bramhall, 21 February 1898, OAR, 2120 A56:452-53.
[8] JCO, Report of Visit, 22 August 1898, OAR, E10:3; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 35; Articles of Agreement between Board of Park Commissioners of Essex County and Olmsted Brothers, September 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:150-58.
[9] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 22 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO to Franklin Murphy, 16 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]. The Essex County Commissioners' design aims outdistanced their budget, and they too had to use "temporary expedients" for some of the work. See 1900 *Annual Report*, p. 17, and 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 47.
[10] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 22 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[11] 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 25-26.
[12] JCO to Franklin Murphy, 16 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[13] Ibid. Unfortunately, when Murphy became Governor he did not support funding for an independent Park Commission, leading JCO to ruminate upon Murphy's weakness in the face of politicians. See JCO, Report of Meeting, 4 March 1902, OAR, B2120 [f6].
[14] Robin Karson, "Percival Gallagher," *Pioneers*, pp. 131-32. As Gallagher was designing the parks for Union County, he was hoping to connect the Union park and parkway system to that of Essex County. Percival Gallagher, Report of Visit, 14-15 July 1921, OAR, B2120 [f14]; see list of Gallagher's firm projects, 10 June 1929, OAR, B2120 [f15].
[15] Gallagher also reviewed the older small parks in Newark in 1926, writing a report on their renewal, but this was not pursued at that time. Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Charles P. Gillen, 2 June 1926, OAR, B420; Charles Gillen to Olmsted Brothers, 20 July 1926, OAR, B420; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Charles P. Gillen, 21 February 1927, OAR, B420; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Charles P. Gillen, 28 February 1927, OAR, B420 [draft, noted "Not sent"].
[16] Percival Gallagher worked on the azalea gardens at the Twombly estate in 1928.
[17] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to W.S. Manning, 10 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:820-21.
[18] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Alonzo Church, 26 November 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11].
[19] JCO to George Bramhall, 19 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[20] Olmsted Brothers to George Bramhall, 29 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:550-53; JCO, Report of Visit, 5 August 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]; 1931 *Annual Report*, last 2 (unnumbered) pages of "Report" section.
[21] Charles Dawson, James F. Dawson's brother, who had good horticultural training, was an Essex County Assistant Superintendent beginning in 1899, in charge of planting, etc., particularly relocating the mature trees. In 1902, he left to go into his family's nursery business, Eastern Nurseries, in Jamaica Plain, Mass., which supplied some of the Park's plants. See Olmsted Brothers to George Bramhall, 29 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:550-53; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 May 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 4 March 1902, OAR, B2120 [f6]. He had died by 1905. FLO, Jr., to Alonzo Church, 23 January 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11].
[22] Correspondence in October 1899 notes that there was a crew of 700 men working on Branch Brook Park. JCO, Report of Visit, 3 October 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[23] Emil Mische, General Notes, 19 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[24] Ibid.
[25] Minutes, 9 November and 23 November 1897.
[26] JCO, Report of Visit, 11 February 1898, OAR, E10:1-1B.

[27] The Rockefeller estate (1887-94) was Job #1121; the Sonyea institution (1894-1907) was Job #190; the Kahn-Wertheim project (1899) was Job #2226. Carrère and Hastings had numerous clients in New Jersey, especially on the shore, including Franklin Murphy's estate in Elberon.

[28] JCO, Report of Visit, 25-28 July 1899 [mistyped 1898], OAR, E10:1C-1G; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 13 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:539-41; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 24 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:5-8.

[29] See Carrère and Hastings to JCO, 12 January 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1]. They were doing major work in several locations for Henry Flagler, as well as major estates for the Guggenheims in Elberon, New Jersey, the Gambill estate in Newport, etc.

[30] JCO, Report of Visit, 8 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f2]; [Olmsted Brothers] to Carrère and Hastings, 10 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:826-28; JCO, Report of Visit, 5 August 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7].

[31] Of the fifteen plans from Carrère and Hastings which once existed in the Olmsted Brothers' files, only 8 plans remain in the collection at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, in Brookline, Mass. (hereinafter "ONHS"): #2121-71; 2121-222 (seven sheets); 2121-227 (three sheets); 2121-250-52; 2121-262; and 2121-297. The correspondence indicates a number of other plans which the New York architects prepared and presented at Park Commission meetings. These may still be extant within the Essex County park collection, but this was not explored due to the fragile condition of their collection of plans.

[32] JCO, Report of Meeting, 3 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 3 February 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 11 February 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8]; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 March 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].

[33] Re: boathouse: F.A. Wright, Rossiter & Wright, to Olmsted Brothers, 11 January 1906, OAR, B2120 [f12]; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to F.A. Wright, Rossiter & Wright, 12 January 1906, OAR, B2120 [f12]. Re: Octagon and Knollfield Shelter: 1906 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-12.

[34] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 July 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 28 September 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4].

[35] Land for Belleville Park (Job #2148) was acquired in 1915, and 14 plans were prepared by Olmsted Brothers from 1915 to 1917. Olmsted Associates (the successor firm) returned in 1957 to advise on extending the park. Initial planning for land which was to become the Hendricks Golf Course was part of the work for the Branch Brook Park Extension. In 1928, it was given a separate job number (#2155), and 4 plans were prepared for it.

CHAPTER 5: A NEW PLAN FOR BRANCH BROOK PARK

Existing Conditions in 1898

By the time of John Olmsted's February 1898 interview with George Bramhall, much of the Barrett and Bogart plan had been constructed on both sides of the lake south of Fifth Avenue, although some of it was still quite rough. From evidence in the early photographs, many taken in the fall of 1898 by John Olmsted on his inspections of the park site, and from the topographic surveys which the Olmsted firm required before beginning the work, it appears that many of the paths and flower gardens east of the lake had been built, planted and furnished with lights and benches. [Figure 5-1, 5-2, 5-3] Bramhall noted that some plantings had been done by "their own gardener,

Figure 5-1: Looking southeast across the various gardens with the lake edge on the right and Barringer High School in the background. JCO photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph #2121-116, ONHS.

Figure 5-2: Looking west across Meeker's Mound (before the shelter was built), to the site of the future Concert Grove. JCO Photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph #2121-123, ONHS.

Figure 5-3: Looking south-southwest across the South Diamond Garden and terraces of the Dutch Garden in the distance. JCO Photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph 2121-118, ONHS.

Figure 5-4: Looking southwest over the site of the proposed Concert Grove, beyond the skating shelter. This was the northern end of the lake at this time. JCO photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph #2121-126, ONHS.

and he could see that they were not what they should have been,"(but he does not specify exactly who did this work).[1] Where stairs had been installed on the steep slopes, they were built of wood. The Sixth Avenue Concourse was still incomplete; the Overlook along Clifton north of Seventh Avenue was at finish grade, with its tall rubble retaining wall in place, but with a wooden railing along its outer edge and with no stairs on its steep path. While the lake edge was mostly graded, with a path along some of its banks, the water terminated south of Fifth Avenue, with no apparent connection to the brook north of the Avenue. None of the major architectural features indicated on the plan —the numerous shelters and arbors; the bridges across the lake and across the Morris Canal; the two bridge-underpasses at Fifth and at Bloomfield Avenues; and the three underpasses under the park drives—had been designed or constructed. At the south end and on the west side of the lake, roads and paths had been graded and lined with trees. Other trees had been planted along the south side of Fifth Avenue. The skating shelter which had been installed in late1896 was still evident on the topographic survey. [Figure 5-4]

Between Fifth and Bloomfield Avenues, however, no construction pursuant to the Barrett and Bogart plans had yet been accomplished. On the September1898 survey prepared by Howard Cole [Figure 5-5], the Essex County Park Engineer, Fifth Avenue appears as a straight, roughly graded street , on axis with its section east of Lake Street, without the slight curve suggested in the designers' plan.[2] The ground between the Morris Canal and Lake Street is recorded as rugged and unworked, a steep sided irregular brook valley, with sparse tree cover, mostly willows with a few elms to the north. Although the 1889 atlas indicates a pond in this area, the survey only reveals an area (marked by dotted lines) where the brook probably ponded seasonally. At the northern edge of this section, the land is shown as steeply banked against the sides of Bloomfield Avenue.

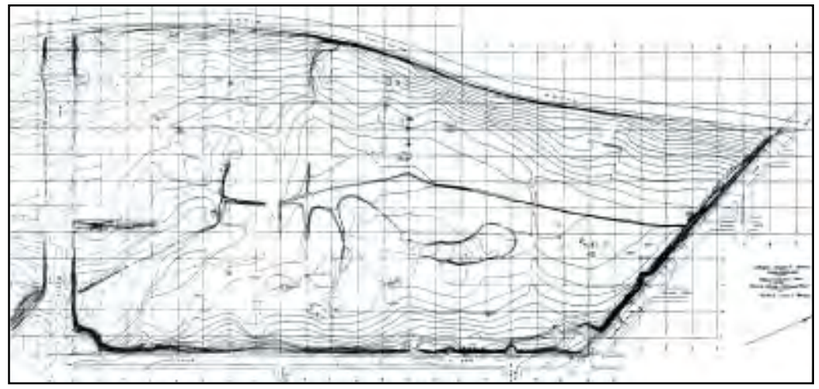


Figure 5-5: Topographic Survey between Fifth Avenue [Park Avenue] and Bloomfield Avenue, Plan #2121-10,sheet 1, September 1898. Source: ONHS.

The section of parkland north of Bloomfield Avenue was likewise uneven, marked by swamps on either side of the brook, by erosion gullies and by densely clumped vegetation spread over parts of the area. The 1898 survey [Figure 5-6] for this space[3] records paper streets, including Second Avenue and Lake Street, the latter not yet constructed at the park's eastern border.[4] There is evidence of various improvements in the area just north of Bloomfield Avenue known as Clark's Park. A narrow road, probably from the Clark mansion on Treadwell Street, encircled the round steep-sided pond, past a boat house on the eastern shore. Small spruce and pines outlined the property boundaries. (See Figure #, the 1898 Period Plan, for a detailed depiction of these elements). A long oval island hugged the western shore of Clark's pond, with a bridge connecting it to the mainland at its southwest corner. Early photographs record a wooden bridge with an attractive intricate rustic design in this location. [Figure 5-7]

Though largely a swampy area, the survey records areas of use. The middle of this section was marked by a deep gully crossed by a stone bridge, with culverts and pipes nearby. A foot bridge crossed the canal somewhere near Chester Avenue. An "ash heap" to the west evidenced early attempts to fill the swamp. To the east,

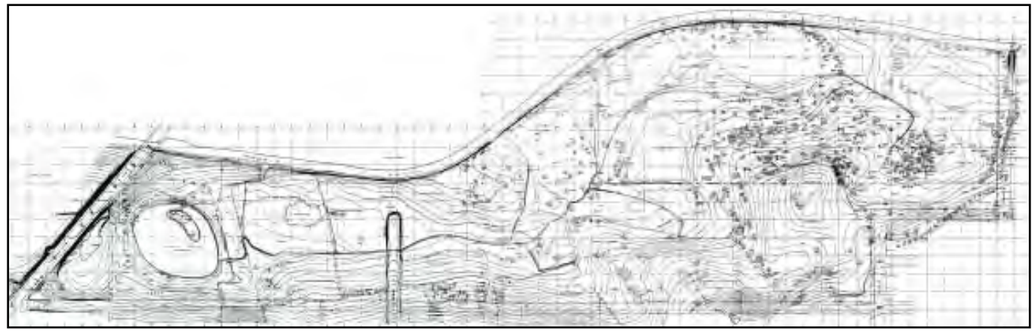


Figure 5-6: Topographic Survey between Bloomfield Avenue and Fredonia Avenue [Heller Parkway], Plan #2121-10, sheet 2. Source: ONHS.

in the path of the future Lake Street near the Old Road to Bloomfield, stood a brick house with barns surrounded by orchard and "cultivated land," probably pastures. Likewise, along Fredonia, later to become Heller Parkway, more farm buildings and agricultural land are in evidence, the property outlined to its east by an allee of sizable maples. Many of the trees indicated in this section are identified as oaks, chestnuts and maples of good girth, along with maple coppices bordering the swamp and at the brook and around the base of a knoll. (See Figure # for a detailed depiction of these elements). At Fredonia Avenue, a narrow, steeply banked bridge crossed the canal and towpath , the survey recording only 8.7' of head room at the towpath. The survey indicates no evidence of the curving, northward road, called "Park Driveway," shown on the 1895 birdseye map.

Figure 5-7: Looking northeast over Clark's Pond, with rustic bridge to the left, before any Olmsted work. JCO photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph #2121-87, ONHS.

Thus, less than a third of the nearly two hundred and eighty acres of Branch Brook Park had been developed, the rest mostly available for reinterpretation and reshaping according to the Olmsted aesthetic. As Commissioner Bramhall informed John Olmsted, the area south of Fifth Avenue must be considered "as fixed, as so much work has been done upon it that only trifling changes of detail would now be possible." For the rest, JCO was invited to review the earlier plans and "discard them wholly or in part…"[5]

Recommendations for Change - Southern Division

The Commission's first assignment for John Charles Olmsted in 1898 was to complete construction on southern Branch Brook Park and begin the work on the other divisions. He had the difficult task of trying to refine, with diplomacy, a fellow professional's design[6] which he basically deplored, but which he was charged by the Commission to retain. Laid out with little relation to the realities of either the natural land forms or present and future community needs, the Barrett and Bogart plan was marked by paths ending in cul-de-sacs; entrances illogically placed for the neighborhoods; and inconsistent symmetry of features, among other problems. In John's analysis, the design was generally not well adapted to either walkers, bicyclists or large crowds. Little consideration had been given to views in or out; thus, the west side and other boundaries were poorly screened, with factories and other intrusions interfering with the respite the park was intended to provide. The unconnected lakes from south to north looked as artificial as the French curves with which they had been drawn; the natural topography had been tortured into mounds and stiff plateaus for curlicue planting beds, and the roads were monotonous— a design totally in conflict with his own aesthetic.

John Olmsted began work on Branch Brook Park in late August 1898, spending several days walking the grounds and in meetings with Carrère and Hastings, consulting on their early designs for the Southern Division. Together with Thomas Hastings, John Olmsted began to analyze the deficiencies and define remedies for some of the problematic elements left by their predecessors' eccentric planning. As a classicist , Hastings was keenly attuned to the lack of axial relationships among the elements.[7]

In an August 27th letter to Cyrus Peck, President of the Commission, and at an August 29th meeting, John laid out some of their criticisms of the southern section, distinguishing between "our desire to improve the design… as a matter of symmetry and style from those suggestions which are based upon our conviction as to the requirements of public convenience in the use of the park." Since there was a work force still following the earlier plans, John prioritized his suggestions: those affecting work underway that should be acted upon immediately; those concerning alteration of work already done; and finally, suggestions for postponing or changing features not yet executed.[8]

Underlying all of John's observations was a basic criticism, that the greater portion of the park east of the lake "has been designed rather as a garden than as a park," and as such served a more limited purpose, very different from the Olmsted aesthetic of restorative breadth of scenery for the urban public. A garden emphasized the artificial rather than the natural, using horticultural extravagance for "savage display and fashion," for "considerations of ornament" rather than "true art" to serve a social purpose and to educate public taste.[9] The Branch Brook "garden" was not well adapted to "freedom of movement" for large crowds, an essential requirement for an Olmsted park intended to provide the antithesis of the circumspection and restriction caused by the crowded urban condition. Cross-connecting paths and steps were needed to give greater mobility among the garden spaces; drives needed to be widened, with broad accompanying paths to avoid the danger of collisions; numerous entry points were required, particularly crossing the canal, to provide access from populated areas. Two of the three masonry underpasses beneath the park drive also had to be widened, for commodious unconstricted passage through them. Additionally, accommodations for park users were required: shelters with toilet facilities, integrated into the landscape and placed for convenience; the lake widened to provide for adequate boating and skating opportunities, crossed by bridges planned for ample passage beneath them.[10]

The stylistic issues concerned bringing the symmetrical inconsistencies of the plan into better visual balance. An

immediate change was needed in the alignment of the eastern underpass, already under construction in August 1898 on a diagonal which John considered "extremely ugly," since it adjoined "so many rectangular lines and symmetrical arrangements." For Hastings, bringing the intended bridge across the lake and its extension across the canal on axis with the line of Seventh Avenue would be a significant improvement. Likewise, John suggested transferring the proposed Concert Grove from the Middle Division to the west side of the lake on cross axis with the gardens, so that "the large and formal artificial features of the park will be combined into a single general design, instead of being ineffectively scattered and mixed with informal natural scenes which they would tend to injure rather than to benefit." A rearrangement of some of the garden areas would remove the awkward lack of axial connection between the dominant symmetry of the new High School, under construction, and the landscape it overlooked. The removal of the "great mound covered with bushes…on the axis line of Sixth Avenue at the south end of the garden near the lake" (later to be called Meeker's Mound) would greatly strengthen the important views from this park entrance.[11]

In time, some of these suggested alterations were accomplished. Besides good design and public convenience, another rationale ultimately operated to change the Barrett and Bogart plan for the south. The cost of implementing some of the components, even with the improvements suggested by JCO and others, caused much of the construction to be eliminated. Regrading to lower the drive at the south end of the lake eliminated the third underpass, at the same time enabling a lakeside circuit road. This, in turn, removed the necessity for a carriage or foot bridge over the lake. The various proposals by Carrère and Hastings to decorate the Garside Street extension on the east side of the Park, a two block area intended to protect the view out from the elevated carriage concourse at Sixth Avenue, were also simplified. Lawns for young children, with seats on the surrounding paths, and trees, carefully placed to preserve the view, were substituted, at considerable savings, for the formal masonry terraces, steps and elaborate gardens proposed by the architects.

Recommendations for Change - the Middle Division

Between late August and early September 1898, John Olmsted not only explored the land between Fifth and Bloomfield Avenues, he walked through the areas adjoining the parkland, as far east and south as Broad Street and west, across the Canal, assessing existing uses, potential development and possible routes of approach to the park. As was his habit, he traversed the ground, examining the terrain, vegetation and water sources, shaping the space in his mind's eye to enhance the natural attributes of the site for public use. He took the Barrett and Bogart plan with him, making no comments upon his predecessor's design for these areas, but sketching out his proposed rearrangement of drives and paths as he walked.

With the removal of the proposed Concert Grove from the middle section, this essentially open ground could be designed in a more natural manner. He rearranged the drive to enable "an effective border mound … formed of material excavated from the lake," next to the Canal boundary. Changing the contrived lake of Barrett's plan to become longer, more "riverlike" and closer to the relocated drive, he was able to gain breadth on the east side of the lake for a 13-acre open greensward, a "Playstead," for ball games, replacing the intersecting paths and plantings of his predecessor's 'Ramble' conception. Planned for picturesque views across water, meadow and woods, Olmsted's long lake, enlivened with islands, was also planned to deter short–cut paths across the ballfields. Lowering the lake's water surface to the same level as in the Southern Division would make a connection possible between the two for better boating opportunities.[12]

This area was to be embellished with sun-loving shrubbery, along with "beeches, white oak, ash, cucumber tree, tulip, hickory, elm and buttonwood," with "poplars on [the] outer edge to hurry skyline, and willows on [the] water's edge to hurry shade and effect." The intended impression was to be that of the local Passaic River scenery of the northern part of the county, with the planting exaggerated in a painterly fashion to give this division "a more striking general aspect." From his initial impression John developed his ideas into a more elaborate planting scheme, an "exaggeration of what one would expect to happen under a state of nature."[13]

To achieve a connection with the Southern Division's drives, John suggested entrances northward and southward from Fifth Avenue, east of the canal bridge. Such an expedient would provide a convenient route, usable for many years, thus postponing the "enormous expense of the double-arched bridge" intended to carry Fifth Avenue over the lake, the drive and two walks.[14] Likewise, in the absence of a Bloomfield Avenue underpass, he sketched similar connections between the Avenue and the anticipated park drives of the Northern Division, although this would have been a more difficult intersection, given the heavy traffic of wagons and trolleys along this avenue.

Recommendations for Change - Northern Division

Most of the road rearrangements sketched out on the Barrett and Bogart plan were at the southern end of the Northern Division, where John Olmsted reversed road curves to provide more screening for the objectionable establishments west of the Canal.[15] [Figure 5-8] Complete seclusion from the noise and smell of the factories would not be achievable in this narrow part of the park; therefore, he concluded that the main drive should be on the east side, with a narrower drive carried along close to the west side of the brook, leaving room along the canal banks for planting. His sketches altered Barrett and Bogart's drive, which they had located near the Canal edge, pulling it eastward in a graceful arc along the water course. This water course, to be a meandering brook, was JCO's imaginative transformation of "shallow ditch, dry in summer" which he planned to deepen and widen

Figure 5-8: Looking south along canal edge and towpath with factories to the west. Fifth Avenue over the Canal is in the background. JCO photograph, 30 May 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-82, ONHS.

irregularly, beginning near the northwestern corner. The earlier plan had only extended an elongated Clark's Pond to midway through this division.[16] [See Figure 3-5]

West of Old Bloomfield Road, north of Elwood, he described a triangle of land to be added to the park in order to "complete the local scenery…because with it the E. [sic] drive could be run by the grove of nice trees on the flat land without cutting so many."[17] His wish to retain many of the "promising trees" in this division meant that some transplanting would be necessary and grading would have to be carried out with great skill so as not to damage roots. He noted the fine pin oaks, swamp maples, swamp white oaks, nyssa, sweet gum, hornbeams and hop-hornbeams in the area.[18]

In contrast to the open undifferentiated meadow-like area which Barrett and Bogart contemplated for this area, John felt it would "be possible to develop a very agreeable type of local scenery with plenty of turf and shade, yet diversified with thickets….A very crooked and alternately wide and narrow brook will do much to afford a centre of interest" meandering through deeply shaded woods. Describing this concept to the Park Commission as "the most important feature proposed" to set the character of this area, he urged that a sufficient water source for the brook be ensured.[19]

Clark's Pond needed to be lowered, for drainage and for appearance, its artificially built-up edges altered. [See Figure 5-7] This would avoid the awkwardness of having the proposed drive lower than the Pond in order to get under Bloomfield Avenue when the underpass was built. Screen plantings needed along the perimeters should be done "to secure greater intricacy." He continued,

> *"Where the park widens out, notwithstanding it is largely covered with swamp bushes and coppice, the opportunity for broad, parklike effects and for a ball-field without artificial accompaniments is so extraordinarily good that a great deal of clearing will be advisable. Some of the coppice may be preserved, however, in irregular patches, especially where it now has a fine edge. Where the undergrowth is thin along the east border of this wooded section, hemlocks and kalmias may be introduced as local attractions…"*[20]

To protect the verdure of the North while preparing it for development, John recommended discontinuation of pasturing, removal of fences, root pruning some trees to ready them for transplanting, careful drainage work and soil improvements, and protection of native herbaceous materials to enhance the future design.[21]

In order to proceed with designs for these sections, more precise topographic surveys were needed to correctly locate the trees. Sending the Olmsted Brothers' printed circular of instructions to Howard Cole, the park engineer, John noted, "the more accurate and detailed the topographic maps, the more exactly will our plans fit the existing conditions." Three months later, however, JCO was still having difficulty, noting errors in tree locations as he worked on grading the park edge along Lake Street. "In every part of the ground such inaccuracies are very trying, but especially in this particular locality, not only because the trees are unusually fine, but because the grade of Lake Street here necessitates a double carriage-way entrance, which must be most carefully adjusted to the individual trees."[22]

Developing the Plan

Over the subsequent months of 1898 and early 1899, these initial concepts were broadened into a coherent design to 'fit to the ground' in all sections. Staking the drives and paths and adjusting their lines; grading the meadows and underdraining them; excavating the water bodies and contouring their verges; even transplanting some trees in the path of the grading operations, these tasks began with a large crew in the north and middle sections during September 1898. As the work progressed, site conditions led to subsequent revisions of the plans, keeping the essential outlines but refining the details. Concurrent with the initiation of work beyond Fifth Avenue, some changes were also being carried out in the southern section, acceptable to the Park Commissioners only if they involved minimal revision, as they were acutely alert to public criticism about "this extravagance of doing work over."[23] As the Commissioners were anxious to fulfill public expectations to develop the entire park and not create undue delay with the change of landscape professionals, this project was on a very fast schedule.[24]

Before the end of 1898, 87 plans for Branch Brook Park had been produced, 50 of which came from the Olmsted office. As early as September 29, 1898, a study for a general plan was underway.[25] The following year, 1899, was the apex of the fast-paced planning, with the production of 329 plans for the park, of which about 57 came from outside sources such as Carrere and Hastings or the Essex County engineer. By 1900, the rate slowed considerably to 111 plans, of which 86 emanated from the Olmsteds, reduced still further in 1901 to about 42 plans out of a total of 50. Between 1902 and the end of Olmsted Brothers' contract in 1905, about 100 more plans were produced which came either from the firm or from Essex County. Then the planning slowed down to a few a year, sometimes none, until 1920. (During this period, from 1915 until 1917, fourteen plans were made for Belleville Park.) As the planning for the park extensions #1 and #2 commenced, lasting until 1937, there were another hundred or so plans recorded, some regarding renovation work in the original three Divisions.

Among the 1901 documents was the lithograph of the *General Plan for Branch Brook Park,* (Plan # 501), [Figure 5-9] finished in July, and included in the Annual Report for that year. This carefully rendered plan[26] reflected much of the planning and choices among alternatives of the 500 plans which had gone before. This General Plan encoded the designers' intent for Newark's premier park—the skillful modeling of surfaces, which both incorporated and changed natural site conditions; the configuration of waterways, paths and drives by which the unique and complex spatial sequencing was created; and the interplay of textures and open and closed spaces revealed by the stylized rendering of the vegetation. Careful inspection of the plan also discloses, though minimized through aerial perspective, the 'furnishing' of some of the spaces by structures. Finally, the plan gave names to paths and roads, pools and woods, including the numerous Barrett gardens. These names, such as Midlake Bridge, Willow Island, Pine Tree Garden, Brookside Drive, Beech Wood, Pin-Oak Pool, Laurel Drive, were either geographic locators or gave individual character to the various park places which in themselves told a story of the designer's aesthetic aspirations.

However, by July of 1901, this rendered image was far from the reality of the Branch Brook Park on the ground, where grading was still incomplete, raw banks still in evidence everywhere [Figure 5-10]; where planting had not

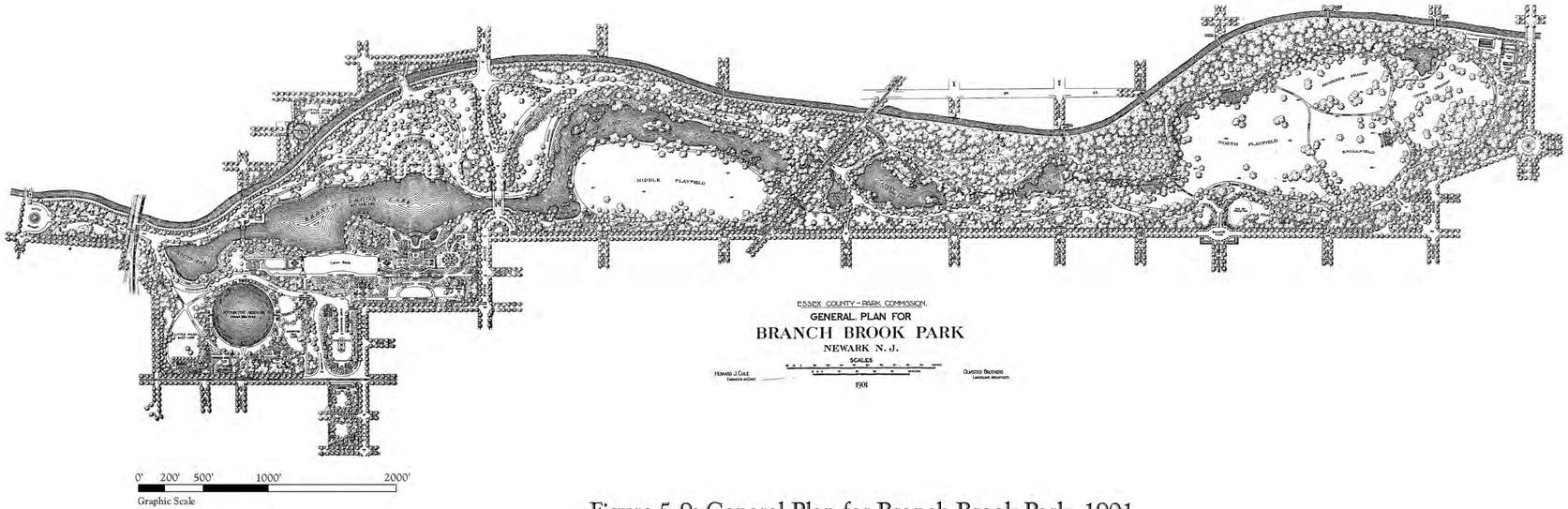


Figure 5-9: General Plan for Branch Brook Park, 1901

Legend

North

Sources:
Plan #2121-501, ONHS.

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November 2002

Figure 5-10: Water course in the Northern Division under construction. JCO photograph, 9 April 1900. Source: Photograph #2121-45, ONHS.

Figure 5-11: Looking south-southwest from Fourth Avenue toward the site of the Fifth Avenue underpass. Grading work along the Lake Street slope is in process. JCO photograph, 7 May 1900. Source: Photograph #2121-49.

yet been installed or trees too young to offer shade dotted the land; and where the circulation and water systems were still severely truncated by the lack of bridge underpasses for Fifth and Bloomfield Avenues. [Figure 5-11] The designer's words enlarged upon both the groundscape reality and the General Plan to paint the picture of what was to come. Writing in the Sixth Annual Report of the Essex County Board of Commissioners, John Olmsted commented,

> *"It will be easy for the visitor to form ideas as to the adaptability of the park to its intended purposes of recreation and pleasure to the eye from what is now to be seen above the surface of the ground. It will be more difficult for the visitor to appreciate the enhancement of beauty and dignity which will be gained by the growth of the plantations …but it will be practically impossible for him to judge the designed effect of plantation and features which have been planned but not executed."*[27]

Describing his scheme, he noted that although separated into three main divisions, the park was conceived as a single unit, occupying the continuous brook valley, its designed elements—the flow of its slopes, its waterway, drives and walks, its consistency of plantings — all reinforcing its totality. The divisions, each designed to project a unique character, were, nonetheless, interrelated in theme and variations. From the ornate constructions of the gardenesque Southern Division which the Olmsted firm had inherited, through the intermediate Middle, which they planned to plant with a more intricate plant palette than was typical for them, to the "stretch of simple natural meadow" of the North, this park in its original tripartite conformation was to provide a tasteful example of diminishing artificiality and formality.[28] This progression was evidenced in the water system, in the planting patterns and in the range and scale of structures which 'furnished' the three divisions.[29] The design and development of the Branch Brook Park Extensions after 1923 added another variation to this theme, dictated by the circumstances of its time.

A Coherence of Parts

The genius in the Olmsteds' landscape designs can be found in the importance they placed on grading, on modeling the land to achieve a series of distinctive, separate but integrated spaces. The components of the circulation system, the roads and paths, are critical products of this grading, definers which both enable physical passage through and around the sites and provide for visual delineation. The circulation elements, together with the earth-shaping, often separated spaces of different character and usage. These were the instruments by which the Olmsted firm designers manipulated their 'passages of scenery,' effectively expanding and contracting the perception of the site. In the case of Branch Brook Park, sectioned into divisions by two elevated, pre-existing roadways, the passages along the curving park drives and accompanying paths, under the bridges at Park and Bloomfield, provided the most effective unifier for this park. (The design of these bridges was a critical part of this system, to allow passage without drawing undo attention to their architecture, although the Park Avenue bridge provided an important visual terminus for the lake view.) The result of the carefully crafted, well-graded circulation lines, gracefully winding through the three spaces, was to effectively diminish the interruptions of the urban streets, though connecting with them at designated entry points. By the subtlety of grading, by the placement of plant materials and features, interest was distracted from the urban surround and focussed within the park. This unifying design contrivance was all the more critical in Branch Brook Park because a perimeter road, often a device used in Olmsted designs, was not possible here due to the railroad, the canal and the peculiar street patterning.

Interwoven with the circulation system was the water system, another strong unifier for the Olmsted design, again a theme and variations (although this one logically should be read in reverse from North to South, following the water flow from its quiet beginnings to its broadest reach)[30]. The water course, accompanied by bordering drive and paths, emerged from the shadowy woods in the northwest of the Northern Division as a gurgling brook with pools, terminating in Clark's Pond. It resumed south of Bloomfield Avenue in the riverine landscape of the Middle Division, ending finally in the South in the former reservoir ponds, now transformed into a broad scenic lake with an irregular shoreline. This water theme, likewise, wove the sections together into a coherent composition of distinct visual and physical experiences. While the pre-existing water bodies in both Southern and Middle Divisions required careful construction to contour the banks and form the islands into a seemingly natural system, the greatest skill was essential for the water course of the North. The challenge of building a brook and pools to appear as natural occurrences was intertwined with drainage issues for the meadow and drive construction in this former swamp. In instructing William McMillan on the grading, John rejected draining the meadow toward the brook, which would necessitate lowering its profile. Rather, he stated his intention "to keep the water surface usually not more than a foot or two below the surface of the meadow, so that it will have somewhat the brimful effect characteristic of streams which flow through flat meadows."[31] Using a "chain of waters"[32] as a linking element, winding through a valley with an accompanying road-path system, [Figure 5-12] was a design module with which John Olmsted had successful prior experience. In designing, with his stepfather, the park and parkway spaces through Boston and Brookline along the Riverway from the Fens to Jamaica Pond, he had contended with similar issues of keeping the unifying themes and variations vital and coherent across interrupted spaces and disparate landscapes.

The planting textured these experiences, providing shade or screening, intricacy or color, demarcating open areas or small passages, and, likewise, unified the spaces with variations of greenery. The horticultural extravagances and grading eccentricities of the Barrett and Bogart gardens and concourses in the South, which the Olmsted firm had to incorporate, were tempered where possible in their new plan for this area by simpler tree

Figure 5-12: Ponds, roads and paths in Northern Division. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection, no date.

and shrub groupings.

Planning the vegetation for Branch Brook and the other parks, John Olmsted reminded the public in his 1898 report that it was essential to determine the appropriate style to be followed and to be consistent in its implementation. "Parks cannot be properly designed without taking a broader mental attitude." In a public park, the grounds must be "more highly improved;…the turf must be finer…the trees must be more perfect…" to engage the visitor. He continued,

> *"any effect of wildness or disorderliness encourages almost everyone to disorder or actions which tend to injure or destroy the verdure so essential to give pleasure through the eye….Almost anyone will hesitate to trample across a neatly kept bed of flowers which he recognizes have been put there for ornament at some expense, while if he supposes by their appearance that they are merely wildflowers which have grown up accidentally, he will scarcely hesitate to …walk that way without regard to the damage he may do them. However charming it might be to bring the absolute wilderness of treatment …it is generally utterly impracticable. The style of improvements must be more artificial, the style of planting must generally be less natural in a city park than in an outlying reservation."*[33]

Therefore, the planting material was carefully chosen by John Olmsted to be added to Branch Brook's southern section. Along lakeside paths and drive; around the lawn at the children's playground; and covering the steep banks along the Morris Canal or railroad, the vegetation was of a more natural character in the Olmsted layered plant palette, with heavy emphasis on evergreens for screening at the Canal. The Concert Grove in its new location, originally laid out by Carrère and Hastings to JCO's suggestions,[34] and the Sixth Avenue Concourse (also with the architects' involvement), required more formalized patterns. For the Southern Division, according to the Olmsted 1898-9 report, the plantings included "native and exotic trees, shrubs, creepers and perennials suited to the accomplishment of somewhat marked landscape gardening effects."[35]

Between Fifth and Bloomfield Avenues, the plan utilized a plant palette of similar materials, using more strikingly decorative trees and shrubs than usual in an Olmsted planting to

> *"have a character intermediate between the distinctly artificial style of the Southern Division and the tolerably natural style of the Northern Division. While its constructive details are on curving lines and its plantations irregular, yet in choice of trees and shrubs the idea has been to use somewhat extensively, yet in a naturalistic way, some varieties which have been more or less artificially produced…It has not been the intention to make a collection of such curious freaks of nature, but to create a local landscape …exaggerated and accentuated beyond what one would have experience of in nature."*[36]

The dark-foliaged deciduous trees and broad-leaved evergreen shrubs to be planted at the southern end were to gradually merge into "masses of small-leaved and generally light green trees, and finally at the north end, into trees and shrubs having notably gray or grayish-green foliage." Given the bowl-like boundary contours of this Middle Division, creating an "enclosed scene, complete in itself," such horticultural manipulations and their interplay with sun and shadow were intended to give it a defined pictorial character. Such an effect would be sufficiently obvious to those passing along the park drive or the Lake Street perimeter "so that the least trained and most careless visitor can hardly escape noticing the distinct expression of a purpose."[37]

The third variation of plantings, where the formal and clearly artificial elements were most diminished, was to be found among the woods and thickets in the Northern Division. This was "planned in a style of landscape gardening as naturalistic as it is feasible to have for a comparatively limited area."[38] Here, with the underdraining of the swamp at the northern end of the division, the Olmsted design was "to produce a broad, open meadow effect, with sparsely scattered, broad-spreading trees in the manner of the English deer park. In two or three places, by way of variety we proposed to leave the existing wild shrubbery and to supplement it by additional plantations."[39] "Pretty pastoral views…of simple yet satisfactory beauty" enfringed by woods was the theme of part of this division. As a bordering feature on the west side of the meadow, much of the existing woods and understory growth was to be retained, augmented and varied, to enhance the brook and pools meandering beneath their shady canopy. The woods stretching southward were diversified into the "Beech Wood" or "Laurel Wood," denoting the plant materials to be used to enrich and texture these areas. Dense understory plantings of shade-enduring shrubs served to screen loops of drives and paths from each other, making the space seem larger.

Finally, architectural embellishments, varied by number, type and style, were yet another definer of character for each section. They presented a study in diminution from south to north. The ornateness of the Southern Division was as dependent upon the intended structures as it was on the elaborate flower gardens. The plan shows that Barrett and Bogart had made provision for 15 or so pavilions, shelters or arbors at the gardens, at entrances and around the Reservoir, as well as for three drive underpasses and a bridge across the lake, and for numerous retaining walls. In April 1899, in conjunction with Carrère and Hastings, the Olmsted firm presented estimates on the construction costs for the Southern Division architectural features both to the Commission and in a letter to Cyrus Peck as the Commission President. Unfortunately, these two documents do not totally agree in either the

pricing or in the descriptions of the features, many of which they do not locate. However, they do indicate that, at this early stage, John Olmsted was considering approximately 9 shelters, pergolas or pavilions; one public comfort station; about 8 terrace areas, some at entrances, some in the garden, others at outlooks, to include various retaining walls, balustrades, etc.; a bridge across the lake and one across the canal; music court with a bandstand, boat landing, water and bicycle terrace; 500 feet of retaining wall along the shore edge (to be 10 feet high but with only one foot above lake surface); the constructions needed for the Sussex Avenue entrance, including the underpass at Orange Street under the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad tracks; and 20 or more flights of steps needed immediately (others to be decided later after grading studies were done). The skating-boating pavilion also being designed as part of the lake-bridge is missing from this list.

Such a display of features would certainly establish a defined formality in the Southern Division, as well as characterizing the range of uses possible in this locale. These terraces and shelters afforded various opportunities for promenading, for being 'seen' and for observing the passing scene from balustraded terrace or arbor bench. While Carrère and Hastings had the task of filling out the details for these features, their designs were subject to the Olmsteds' final approval for appropriateness. Therefore, the potential for extravagant ornamentation was tempered by John Olmsted's perseverance in protecting landscape values and by the Park Commission's preservation of its 'purse.' As a final precaution, many of the structures to be constructed would be screened by careful grading and suitable planting arrangements so as not to unduly intrude upon the park scenery.

By contrast, the Middle Division, with the emphasis on its playfield and water course, was to be decorated by very few structures. The Middle Division, of necessity, had several flights of steps planned for access from Lake Street, at Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues and at Bloomfield Avenue. Only two buildings were contemplated for this section: "the field-house for shelter, refreshments and toilets for young children playing at the wading pond" in summer and for skaters in winter, located on the eastern side of the lake near the Fifth Avenue entrance; and another at the upper end of the pond and meadow, close to the street railway on Bloomfield Avenue. The latter was situated for the convenience of "large numbers of visitors…in connection with skating in winter and field sports for children" in the summer.[40]

Though "all decoration by means of flower beds and sculpture and architecture" was to be "rigidly excluded" from its meadow and woods,[41] the North contained many more structures than the Middle. The grand entrance at Ballantine Parkway, the memorial gift from the Ballantine family, was a feature which contradicted the stated intent to exclude architecture. On the park periphery, this elaborate wrought iron gate with its classic twin shelters and approach plaza was first considered in January,1899, when Carrère and Hastings began their design, with noteworthy adjustments by the Olmsted firm to keep it in scale and character with the meadow and wilderness beyond.[42] At various points in this section—at Bloomfield or Abington Avenues, for example—steps were needed to make the entries accessible, as well as the numerous stairs that were planned for the five bridges (probably iron) across the Canal.

In addition to the rustic wooden bridge to the island in Clark's Pond, a remnant of Clark's ownership, eight rustic stone bridges in differing conformations were planned (and constructed) to cross the brook, bearing paths over them which meandered through the woods or connected to other paths crossing the meadow or drives. Some of these bridges included built-in benches to provide shady resting places. Unpretentious and rustic, nestled within their plantings, these bridges represented an architectural treatment in stylistic contrast to the showmanship of the southern section, a lesson in taste. The two fieldhouses to be placed in this area were similarly unassuming, the one abutting the children's playground to the north of the Ballantine Gate, a rearrangement of the original small boathouse which had graced Clark's Pond.[43] The so-called Knollfield Fieldhouse, atop its hillock near the Elwood Avenue entrance, was to have "broad verandas" from which to overlook the meadows and playfields. Although the Olmsted firm did not design this structure, Frank A. Wright's building of 1906, with low shingle roof and pebble-finished walls, was respectful of the setting. On the other hand, the utility buildings, the greenhouses and park service administration offices and barns, which had been installed by 1901 in the northwest corner of the park, were "lacking in architectural beauty…designed to be hidden by border mounds and plantations."[44]

Thus the various organizing systems—circulation and grading; the water courses, the planting and the architectural embellishments—all contributed to giving individual character to the three major original sections of the park –gardenesque, intermediate, and pastoral with a touch of picturesque. When the additional land was acquired for the northward expansion, begun in 1923, this section, likewise, was designed with a distinct character, modeling its component parts and systems to develop into a unique landscape composition. Following a basic tenet of the senior Olmsted's planning, these separated spaces, each adjusted to its own aesthetic and uses, were unified by design elements into a synthesis of exceptional charm and beauty.

An Approach to the Park

For the Olmsted firm designers, the planning concern which followed the determination of a possible park site was developing the route of approach. Considering the individual park as an entity interdependent with its immediate district and the city beyond, they sought ways to extend the park amenity further out into the urban fabric, both as an attractive means of travel and as a stimulus for healthy city development. In their 1867 report, Olmsted and Vaux dealt with this issue at length, stressing the economic as well as the aesthetic importance for Newark. Their suggested route connected their proposed park to the city's commercial core at North Broad Street. The creation of park-way routes for pleasure driving to and from the park lands, to avoid contending with the bustle of commercial traffic, would expand the physical and psychological benefits which green space was intended to foster. As the concept of park systems developed, where a variety of large and small park spaces were located throughout a city or, in the case of Essex County, throughout the larger and more diverse multi-municipalities of the county, parkways, restricted to pleasure vehicles, were integral components of this planning, functioning as green connectors to link the units of the system. Therefore, the points at which the parkway arrived at and entered the individual parks were significant design considerations.

Parkway development was a prime consideration for the Essex County Commission as it began its deliberations in 1895, but from the outset, this aspect of the county-wide planning was problematic, due to issues of difficult terrain and resultant economics. The various municipalities were reluctant to give up control over their selected streets, to restrict commercial traffic from them or to widen them to more gracious proportions by setback restrictions. Property purchase or acquisition by eminent domain for parkway sites was financially prohibitive, especially with streetcar companies rapidly acquiring rights to the prime routes.

Barrett and Bogart had made an attempt at parkway connections in their system plan of November 1896, but did not resolve the problems. Many of their proposed routes ended abruptly, leaving incomplete linkage between the parks, while others seemed to follow existing city streets, adding bordering trees to distinguish a change of status. In their plan, Branch Brook Park had no parkway connection to the city center. The early references to developing a grand approach through Sixth Avenue had not materialized,[45] leaving only the curving drive into the park from Clifton on the south side of the Concourse. Instead, the park was to be linked to Llewellyn Park[46] on the west by Fifth Avenue, and was to be serviced by a parkway loop connecting to Second River on the north, following its path east to the Passaic River, and then turning west to the park, past Mt. Pleasant Cemetery through the lands of the Prospect Heights Association to connect with the park boundary at Lake Street near Abington Avenue. In general, the Barrett plan, as drawn in 1897, seemed to turn its back on the surrounding neighborhoods and even the city beyond, with few points of entry along its entire perimeter. This was one of John Olmsted's earliest critical observations of his predecessors' work, noting "how extremely deficient Colonel Barrett's plan was in cross connections and general freedom of circulation."[47]

By contrast, the Olmsted plan for Branch Brook Park offered a hierarchy of alternative routes into the park, creating pedestrian entrances at the eastern intersections of most of the east-west avenues and recommending several bridges across the Canal on the west. In addition to the approach established under Barrett, from Clifton near Sixth Avenue by Concourse Hill, driving entrances north and south were offered from both Fifth and Bloomfield Avenues to connect to the park drives. Barrett's proposed parkway approach into the Northern Division from the east was rejected by John Olmsted early in the replanning process as too steep, expensive and limited in opportunity.[48] Instead, JCO planned an entrance to the park at its northeast corner from Elwood Avenue, to provide access from another quadrant of the city where residential development (particularly of the Forest Hill Land Association) was anticipated. The corner could only accommodate a pedestrian entry, he cautioned, "unless Mr. Heller is willing, for the sake of the benefit it would be to his neighboring real estate, to deed at low cost or at no cost to the Commissioners the triangular piece of land required for the change in boundary ..."[49] The donation of memorial gates by the Ballantine family added another major carriage entrance to the east, which resulted in the renaming of Chester Avenue as Ballantine Parkway. Beyond a widening to form a terminating plaza at the gates , little actual change was made to this avenue (other than to increase the value of the Prospect Heights Land Company's subdivision development).[50]

The primary efforts toward suitable entrances to Branch Brook Park from planned parkways, however, were directed toward the northern and southern extents of the park. In the north, the junction of Fredonia Avenue, renamed Heller parkway, and Forest Hill parkway was designed with a circular traffic arrangement, while at the southern end, across the railroad tracks at Orange and Sussex , a semi-circle was proposed.[51] These entrances were to be part of an anticipated "picturesque circuit parkway," to make a great loop through the county, connecting northern Branch Brook with the reservations and western parks and eventually leading southward to Weequahic Park, from which another parkway would link to the southern entrance of Branch Brook at Sussex Avenue.[52] In the middle was Fifth Avenue, renamed Park Avenue in 1902, when it came under the Commission's jurisdiction, to be an east-west "main connecting parkway" to Llewellyn Park.[53] This route passed through Branch Brook Park, with side drives from it into the park, but these were handled simply, not as major entrances. The eastern end of Park Avenue, at the Lake Street junction on the park perimeter, echoed the decorative semi-circular treatment of the south. [Figure 5-13]

Figure 5-13: Looking west across the Park Avenue Bridge. Source: Newark Public Library photograph collection, no date.

Studies for parkways were early considerations when Olmsted Brothers began the Essex County planning because, as Bramhall noted, "the march of improvement in Essex County is rapid, and very much delay in establishing parkways will lead to cost that will seriously minimize them."[54] Citing the " urgent need in Essex County for…broad shady parkways, with widenings and pleasing features in them…varied and attractive private places along them, and command of occasional picturesque bits of local scenery and of distant views,"[55] the firm worked from the outset to create these necessary linkages across the jurisdictions for aesthetic, environmental and practical reasons. "Parkways, both for the benefit of the general public using them and for the immediate neighborhood, should include, where practicable, picturesque natural features, such as ponds, brooks, low meadows, woods and open groves" and should preserve "the natural water courses for storm drains."[56] Without adequate legislation for land taking, construction and maintenance assessments, and property betterments and restrictions, developing a system of park-like routes was severely limited.[57] Finding "the demand for neighborhood parks and playgrounds in different sections of the County were so numerous, and so deserving of precedence over parkways as an immediate consideration," around 1903, the Park Commission had postponed making the investment in parkway development that both Barrett and Bogart and Olmsted Brothers had recommended earlier.[58]

By 1913, with the population growth, the increase in property values partly due to the park system and the increased use of automobiles, the Park Commission again revisited the parkway issue, hiring Olmsted Brothers to do an intensive and comprehensive study for "pleasure driving or walking…to meet the future needs of the entire County"[59] The publication of this report in 1915 coincided with the acquisition of land for Belleville Park, also designed by the Olmsted firm, but the inadequate appropriation truncated the Commission's aims to acquire as well the adjoining Second River valley. They noted, "This would not only have made this park itself much more attractive but would also have formed the nucleus of a parkway to connect the park with Branch Brook Park in Newark and with the Passaic River—a most charming addition to the park system."[60] Thus, while small gains were made toward the parkway goal over the long tenure of the Olmsted firm's involvement, particularly in the development of Oraton Parkway, the visionary nexus of parkways for the nation's first county system achieved only partial realization.[61]

As a result of this truncated parkway implementation, the intended entrances into Branch Brook Park were not achieved as contemplated. The loss of the southern entrance, however, was also due to other factors. To accomplish the Olmsted design for this narrow entry space, additional land had been acquired from the Street and Water Commission on the south side of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad tracks. The original hope of both the Commission and John Olmsted was that a handsome underpass, or 'subway' would be constructed, permitting vehicular traffic to enter the park under the train tracks. This would

> *"afford visitors a very agreeable sense of seclusion and a very beautiful and characteristic view of the lake and its surrounding scenery free from the distractions which the minds of many persons would be occupied with if they were compelled to cross Orange Street with its railway tracks and heavy traffic on grade."*[62]

In 1899 John Olmsted urged the allocation of the $40,000 needed for construction before a pending law would force the Railroad to eliminate grade crossings, thereby lowering these tracks, which would then block the park entrance scheme.[63]

An additional concern was the future of Morris Canal, owned by the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company, which formed the western boundary of this entry area. While some Commissioners hoped this land would become park when the Canal was abandoned, John Olmsted predicted that some form of rail line would occupy this linear site[64] From November 1898 through August of 1899, numerous sketch proposals were made for the Orange Avenue underpass as well as for a temporary drive entering the Park from Eighth Avenue. When the railroad decided in 1904 to lower the tracks, another series of studies[65] attempted to bridge over them to retain this Park entry; but the grade was too steep and the distance too short to connect with the drive around the south end of the lake. Thus this important and dignified approach and entrance, which would have connected Branch Brook Park with the central city and the southern parks, was lost.

In November 1924, the Olmsted firm, under the guidance of Percival Gallagher, made one last attempt to salvage an approach at this southern end of the park. At the request of Park Commission President Robert Sinclair, he returned to the senior Olmsted's idea of fifty-six years earlier to explore the possibility of developing a parkway paralleling the railroad tracks to connect to Broad Street. The sketches (Plan #2121-702) sent to Sinclair, the following March suggested a green corridor near the tracks, through mostly industrial land. This would have involved straightening Eighth Avenue, taking some of the smaller establishments between Eighth Avenue and Nassau Street and removing the trolley tracks. This route joined State Street to enter Broad Street at that wide junction. However, there seems to have been no follow-up to this effort.[66] The approach at the northern extent of Branch Brook Park was more successful, though not in accord with the original concept. Beginning in 1923, with negotiations under way with Harmon Hendricks, owner of a considerable amount of land along Mill Street to Belleville, Gallagher was asked to establish the taking-lines for a parkway to and eastward along Second River, leading to Mt. Prospect Avenue. Again, the Commission noted regretfully that insufficient funds prevented the parkway extending to the Passaic River.[67] From the land so delineated Gallagher then fashioned the extensions to Branch Brook Park, including Hendricks Golf Course. This parkway fulfilled several of the senior Olmsted's and Olmsted Brothers' planning goals for Essex County. As early as their initial 1895 proposal for the county, the Olmsted firm had recommended the development of parkways of the informal type which included picturesque attributes of the county, widening out in places to include recreational advantages. John Olmsted had encoded this ideal in his 1915 *Report on a Proposed Parkway System for Essex County, New Jersey*. [Figure 5-14] Belleville Park, already constructed, abutted the northern extension of Branch Brook Park making this new linear park-parkway also a connective route.

Figure 5-14: Map of Essex County, New Jersey, showing the proposed county-wide parkways to accompany the1915 Report on a Proposed Parkway System for Essex County, New Jersey.

However, this new land acquisition left unfulfilled a decorative treatment to accentuate the point of arrival at the original Branch Brook Park's northern extent. Rather than the design device of a decorative traffic circle to join the various intersections, which the firm had originally planned at Fredonia Circle, or the use of a bridge-underpass to allow the park drive to avoid the commercial traffic route, as at Bloomfield and at Park Avenue, this entrance, placed at the western edge of the junction of roads, is marked merely by a traffic light, reflecting none of the design language used so skillfully in the parkland to its north or south.

Chapter 5 Endnotes

[1] JCO, Report of Visit, 11 February 1898, OAR, E10:1-1B.
[2] The 1889 atlas indicates Fifth Avenue east of Clifton Avenue as finished, with streetcar lines. West of Clifton, it is shown, but was probably more a working road than finished, due to extant quarries to the north. Scarlett & Scarlett, *Atlas of the City of Newark* (Newark, 1889) [hereinafter "1889 Atlas"], Plate 18.
[3] Plan #2121-10 sht. 2, tc2.
[4] Lake Street grading began around April 1, 1899, with issues of elevation of the street and the relationship of the lots to the park under consideration. JCO to FLO, Jr., 29 January 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 24 April 1899, OAR, E10:90.
[5] JCO, Report of Visit, 11 February 1898, OAR, E10:1-1B.
[6] JCO refers to Nathan Barrett politely as "Colonel Barrett," a reference to Barrett's rank in the Union Army, in which he served under Sheriden. No Civil War connection to FLO has been uncovered.
[7] JCO, Report of Visit, 22 August 1898, OAR, E10:3; JCO, Report of Visit, 23 August 1898, OAR, E10:2.
[8] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[9] Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (New York, 1995), pp. 42, 34-44 *passim*.
[10] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[11] Ibid.
[12] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 43-45.
[13] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 43-45; 1901 *Annual Report*,
p. 44.
[14] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 43.
[15] In particular, he objected to the "Newark Licorice Works," the McAndrews & Forbes factory at Abington Avenue and Third Street. See 1889 Atlas, Plate 24; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A.
[16] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 46.
[17] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A.
[18] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A.
[19] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[20] JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[21] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 3 October 1898, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[22] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Howard J. Cole, 10 September 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:147-48; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 21 January 1899, 2120 A63:664-65.
[23] JCO, Report of Meeting, 26 September 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[24] See Olmsted Brothers to William McMillan, 28 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:684-83 [sic]. The letter states that the Board wants the work finished by "next fall." In view of the great amount of work to be done, they were likely referring to the fall of 1900, rather than 1899.
[25] The note on the Plan Index card, kept at ONHS, for this early (September 29, 1898) drawing, #2121-28, indicates that it was renumbered as #2121-500. While Plan #500 still exists, and gives evidence of numerous erasures, it is not clear whether this is actually the base sheet begun earlier or another generation of plan.
[26] This plan was rendered by Alling DeForest, a landscape architect who had trained with the firm, but was now back in Rochester beginning his own practice, although still doing contractual tasks for Olmsted Brothers. He observed that the drawing took him 45 hours to produce. Alling S. DeForest (Parce and DeForest, Rochester, NY) to Olmsted Brothers, 15 May 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Alling S. DeForest to Olmsted Brothers, 21 June 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[27] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 40.
[28] The Park at this time was actually in six parts, the other three being the extension south of the railroad at Sussex Avenue, the triangles of land west of the Canal between Seventh and Fifth Avenues and the two square parcels between Clifton Avenue and Garside Street.
[29] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 40-47; 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 40-50.
[30] In the Annual Reports the explanations tended to move from the older, more formal part of the Park—the Southern Division—to the newer and more natural—the Middle and Northern Divisions.
[31] JCO to William McMillan, 17 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:593-99.
[32] FLO, "Suggestions for the Improvement of the Muddy River," in S.B. Sutton, ed., *Civilizing American Cities: A Selection of Frederick Law Olmsted's Writings on City Landscapes* (Cambridge, First MIT Press paperback edition, 1979), p. 231.
[33] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 37-39.
[34] JCO, Report of Visit, 12 September 1898, OAR, E10:9; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 3 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:793.
[35] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 42.
[36] 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 43-44.
[37] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 44.
[38] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 47.
[39] Olmsted Brothers to William McMillan, 28 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:684-83 [sic].
[40] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 45; 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 46.
[41] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 47.
[42] Essex County Park Commission [Josephman] to Olmsted Brothers, 19 January 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to George W. Bramhall, 16 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:939; JCO, Report of Visit, 20 March 1899, OAR, E10:52; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 22 March 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:289; JCO, Report of Visit, 1 May 1899, OAR, E10:66.
[43] Plans #2121-534 through 2121-545.
[44] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 50; Olmsted Brothers (Emil Mische) to William S. Manning, 1 August 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[45] 1896 *Annual Report*, p. 5.
[46] Wendell P. Garrison (Llewellyn Park) to George Bramhall, 14 August 1898, OAR, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1]. Garrison, a resident of Llewellyn Park, suggested that Park (Fifth) Avenue be made into a parkway.
[47] JCO, Report of Visit, 23 August 1898, OAR, E10:2.
[48] Plans #2121-20, 2121-25; JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A.
[49] Olmsted Brothers to Stephen J. Meeker, Committee on Boundaries, 17 December 1898, OAR, 2120 A62:210-12.

[50] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 24 January 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 16 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:936-38; JCO, Report of Visit, 1 May 1899, OAR, E10:66; Olmsted Brothers to Robert Ballantine, 23 May 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:929-30.
[51] Traffic circles were frequently used along the parkways in Buffalo and in Boston.
[52] Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck [dated 2 August 1899, but probably sent after 14 August], OAR, 2120
A67:865-68; 1915 *Annual Report*, pp. 41-42, 62-64.
[53] Calling this residential park a "gem of its kind and a valuable object lesson," whose character warranted protection from injury from traffic, JCO suggested skirting it to make a parkway on its western end to connect directly with Eagle Rock Reservation. 1915 *Annual Report*, pp. 41-42, 62-64, 66-67.
[54] George Bramhall to Olmsted Brothers, 15 November 1898, OAR, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[55] 1915 *Annual Report*, p. 40.
[56] JCO, Report of Visit, 23 December 1898, OAR, E10:36.
[57] Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 27 December 1898, OAR, 2120 A62:328-41.
[58] 1913 *Annual Report*, pp. 20-21.
[59] 1913 *Annual Report*, pp. 21-22.
[60] 1915 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-14, 20-21.
[61] In 1923, Prospect Avenue was returned to West Orange, to be maintained as a county road. 1923 *Annual Report*, p. 13. In the late 1950s, other parkway rights held by the Park Commission were sold to obtain funds for other park purchases, or reverted to their municipalities. 1961 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).
[62] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 12 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:527-31.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 22 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:385-89; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 5 December 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].
[65] Plans #2121-652 through 2121-665, 2121-669; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 26 November 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 5 December 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; JCO to A.M. Reynolds, 5 December 1904, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[66] Olmsted Brothers to Fairchild Aerial Camera Corp., 16 November 1924, OAR, B2120 [f14]. Robert Sinclair to Percival Gallagher, 18 March 1925, OAR B2120 [f 14]. At the same time, planning was commencing for land-takings and for the Extension at the north end of the park. Additionally, the Morris Canal was abandoned in 1924, which may have stimulated Gallagher to examine a solution at the southern end as well.
[67] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 14 November 1923, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 12 March 1925, OAR, B2121 [f3].

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Overview to Chapters 6 through 9

While the Park Commission was in negotiation with Olmsted Brothers to assume the multiple design projects for the park system, Barrett and Bogart continued to supervise the implementation of their plan in the Southern Division through June 1898. John Olmsted began his analysis at the end of August, walking the tri-partite site with topographic surveys and his predecessors' plans in hand, making notes on them as he progressed along the rough, sometimes impassable terrain, evaluating boundary lines, natural assets and problems of the land. Within a week of JCO's August 29-31st visit, Percy Jones in the Olmsted Brookline office began layout and grading plans for the Northern Division roads. At the same, John undertook evaluation of the active construction in the Southern Division while simultaneously beginning his consultations with Carrère and Hastings about the architectural features.

The whirlwind of planning activity which ensued from this 1898 beginning intensified through the subsequent years, as active construction simultaneously in all park divisions followed the hundreds of sketches and plans, letters and reports, photographs and planting lists generated by the firm. After the Olmsted Brothers' supervisory contract expired in 1905, production of plans and sketches still continued from the firm, now as an advisory consultant, to direct the planting and construction of features and areas of the General Plan which were still unbuilt. Changes in use of park areas, such as the Reservoir in 1920, required additional advice. In 1923, planning for the northern Extensions to the park renewed the level of Olmsted firm work, which continued until 1937, when the last plan was produced by the Olmsted Brothers' office for Branch Brook Park. Besides the new design work in this period, the firm continued to advise on the development and maintenance of their earlier design, making necessary adjustments to meet new needs or changed site and economic conditions.

To analyze the development of Branch Brook Park in terms of the implementation of the Olmsted plans, each of the major Divisions of the park, including the Extension, will be looked at individually. Within each Division the various significant areas or systems will be examined in terms of their evolution within the Olmsted Brothers period – how the area or system was shaped, enhanced and used. Since an Olmsted park was designed as an integrated complex of elements, there is considerable overlap among these categories.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN IN THE SOUTHERN DIVISION

Development of the Lake and its usage

Work to connect the old reservoir holding ponds and shape them into a decorative lake was the first task undertaken by Barrett and Bogart in June 1895. They joined the separate ponds from the Reservoir system and the so-called Branch Brook Lake (the larger water body north of the smaller holding ponds, near Fifth Avenue), into a single water body with essentially three lobes. At the southern end of the lake, the designers retained much of the outline of the prior holding pond, as indicated on 1889 atlas map. [See Figure 1-4] Two smaller ponds shown in 1889 were shaped as a 'neck' of water, narrowed to permit a bridge crossing. This 'neck' connected the southern pond to the larger water body on the north which retained its bi-lobed shape, similar to its earlier conformation. As revealed in the1898 photographs taken by John Charles Olmsted [See Figures 5-1,5-4] the lake edges were treated in some places as steep banks, occasionally grassed, occasionally with tree groupings. According to the1898 survey (Plan #2121- 87) [Figure 6-1],[1] the edge treatment along parts of the eastern side consisted of retaining walls, possibly needed due to the abrupt drop-off of the land. This feature was reported in the cost estimates of April 10 and 12, 1899, as being "10 feet in height, extending one foot above the water surface to one foot below the bottom of the lake," with much of it still to be built 'to complete the grading and planting of the shores." This wall was to be finished with a "rock-faced granite course and on this a cut granite coping 8 inches thick." In some places, these decorative "shore walls" were to be augmented with railings, providing terrace areas when the lake level was lowered for winter skating.[2]

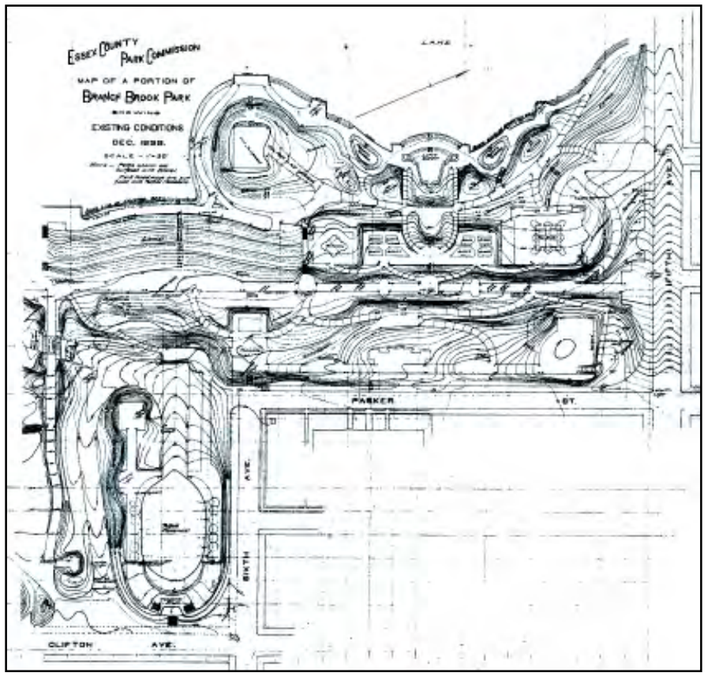

Figure 6-1: Topographic survey showing existing conditions as of December 1898 from Fifth Avenue to the Ravine Path in the Southern Division, prepared by the park engineer, H.J. Cole. Plan #2121-87. Source: ONHS.

The 1898 photographs also record the temporary wooden skating shelter, erected in 1895-6, on the west shore near what was then the northern extent of the lake. Beyond this terminus of the lake, the ground rose steeply to meet the elevation of Fifth Avenue.[Figure 6-2] The second temporary skating shelter appears on an 1898 topographic survey (Plan #2121-52) [Figure 6-3] , located at the southern end of the lake, with a sluiceway and overflow pipe to its east and elms and spruce planted to its west. South of this shelter, a precipitous 15' high bank is indicated, descending from the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad tracks.

Figure 6-2: Looking Northwest across the gardens to the west side of the lake with the early skating shelter. Note the steep slopes below Fifth Avenue to the right, at the terminus of the lake that is not yet connected beyond this point. JCO photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph #2121-120, ONHS.

Edges and beaches

From the outset, JCO felt the lake would need to be widened for recreational use, to be no narrower than 50 feet at its smallest point, with changes made to its edges.[3] The stiff containment of the lake edge, particularly below the various garden 'rooms,' was at variance with the softer edge treatment which the Olmsted firm typically preferred. Access to the water at several places was always important in an Olmsted park, and in this instance John Olmsted recommended a beach cove for "toy boat sailing," near the southern end temporary skating shelter, as well as 'beaches' in other locations. Additionally, a more appropriate overflow outlet was needed instead of the existing sluiceway which was located near the southern shelter.[4] The southern beach was constructed by November 1899 [Figure 6-4] as was a beach on the western shore, although JCO was less pleased with the latter, which he felt looked "stiff and monotonous" and needed planting to soften it.[5] In a 1907 article on "The Essex County Park System," the author praised the opportunities for children's play in the parks, particularly the various areas for "the excitement of building and launching diminutive ships, while the beach provides all the delights of well-digging and fort-building."[6]

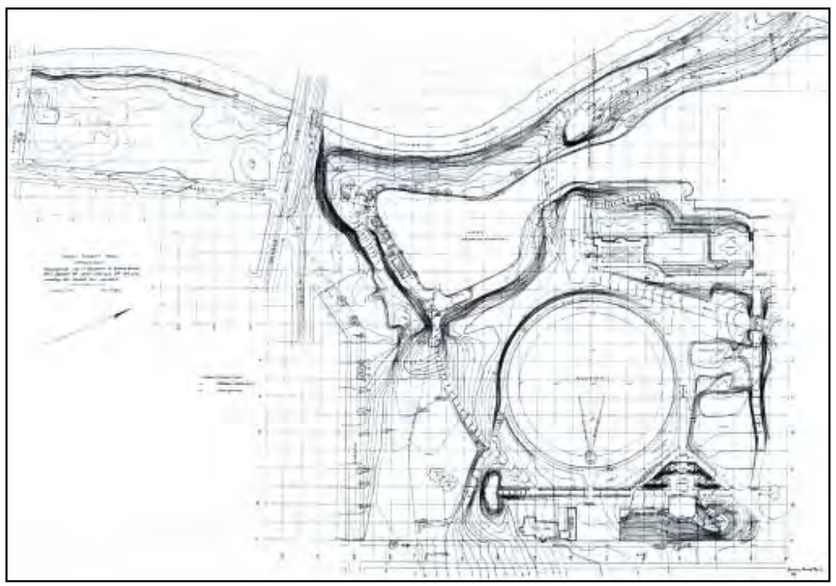

Figure 6-3: Topographic survey from Eighth Avenue to the Ravine walk, including the Sussex Avenue approach, in the Southern Division, prepared by park engineer, H.J. Cole, [November 1898]. Plan #2121-52. Source: ONHS.

By the end of 1899, with less available money, the Commission agreed to eliminate any further construction of the expensive shore walls, although the record is unclear about the fate of the walls already built. The Olmsted firm did produce, in 1900, a plan for both soft shore edge and a bollard and chain design for more structured areas. Although John Olmsted recommended that some of these walls be obliterated in order to increase the water space in the con-

tracted channel, some hard-edged 'terrace' areas are still evident in 1912 plans when the firm reworked some of the garden areas.[7] As JCO observed, when consulted about the lake in 1904,

> *"We have found that it is far better in digging an ornamental park lake to have a shallow margin from five to ten feet wide, which of course, being under water, is practically invisible…When the lake in the Southern Division is deepened (as it most assuredly ought to be) the surplus material… could be most economically disposed of in making a shallow margin of water along the border of the lake, or at any rate in those places where there is most danger."* [8]

Figure 6-4: View northeast across the lake to Barringer High School from the southwest corner of the park. Note the 'beach' at lakeside and the edge treatments for drives, paths and plantings. The Octagon Shelter is in the background at left, c. 1902. Source: Souvenir of Newark, N.J., Photo-Gravures, A. Wittemann, Brooklyn, NY.

Historic photographs reveal the banks around the southern end of the lake as heavily planted with both shrubs and trees. According to the September 1899 Planting Plan (Plan #2121-327) [Figure 6-5], the proposed planting palette consisted of a dense layering of deciduous shrub material—native azaleas, viburnum, symphoricarpus, potentilla and various members of the cornus family (both shrubs and small trees), among many others — under which were to be various iris, lilies and ground covers. Elms, basswood, beech and tulip poplars were to provide the upper canopy, carefully placed to frame the views.

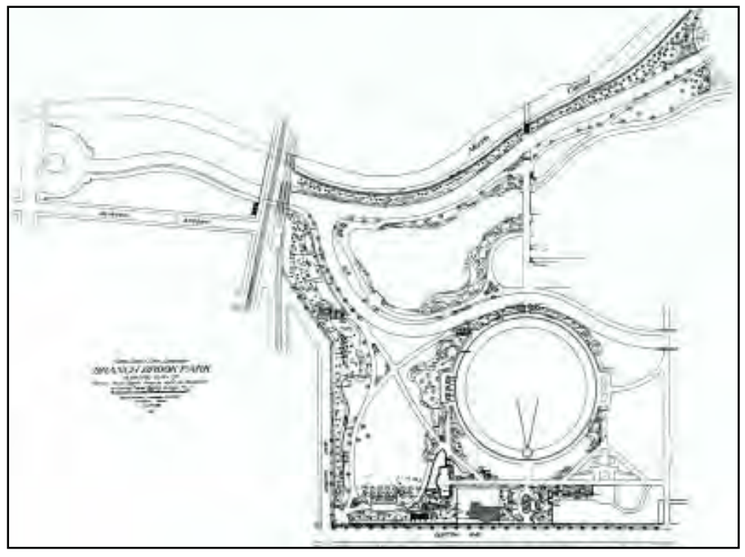

Figure 6-5: Planting Plan from Eighth Avenue to Reservoir and along Canal Bank, Southern Division, Plan #2121-327, 6 October 1899. Source: ONHS.

Meeker's Mound

To John Olmsted's thinking, another large obstacle interfered with developing a graceful lake edge—the so-called Meeker's Mound. This elevated knoll, possibly a remnant of earlier quarrying operations, was covered with shrubs but was not yet surmounted by a shelter when the Olmsted firm assumed the project in 1898 [See Figure 5-2]. It seems to have already been a controversial issue among the Commissioners. From the outset, John Olmsted tried to get it removed, commenting to Commission President Cyrus Peck on its "inappropriateness" next to the formal gardens because it interfered with the long axial view to the lake from Sixth Avenue. "If this slope had been laid out in an informal, natural way, this defect would not have been so marked, but the formality and symmetry of the slope inevitably forces attention to the interference with the symmetry of the view caused by this large mound near the lake." His early recommendation to remove the mound, reverting the area to lake, was ignored.[9] He tried again in 1904, by which time the Octagon Shelter was atop the mound. [Figure 6-6] Needing fill to regrade along Orange Street, John again suggested cutting down the knoll, lowering the shelter to the grade of the lake shore walk, noting that "no doubt a former member of the Park commission would be rather pleased with the change in local topography." This attempt was likewise unsuccessful, and today this Mound continues to separate the two bulges of the lake.[10] It was given a degree of distinctiveness when, following the development of the dramatic Japanese cherry tree collection in the Branch Brook Park Extension, the firm was asked to recommend additional locations for these showy trees. Olmsted Brothers (probably plantsman Hans J. Koehler), suggested Meeker Mound, saying "It would not be amiss if practically all of the planting on this mound were eventually almost entirely replaced by Japanese Cherries."[11]

Figure 6-6: "Shelter on the Mound east of the Lake, 1899" [Meeker Mound]. Source: 1898-99 Annual Report, facing p. 34.

Lake Depth

The depth of the lake in the southern section, and the source for the water throughout the park divisions, were issues of constant concern to the Olmsted planners. From the outset, JCO questioned whether there would be a sufficient water supply, for, although there were numerous springs, they originated in private lands and could not be depended upon. It was resolved by the Park Commission that water would be obtained, if necessary, from the canal company in order to carry out the Olmsted plan.[12]

It was JCO's intention to provide throughout the entire lake system a uniform 8' depth for summer to prevent the growth of aquatic plants. For winter skating, the water could thus be drawn down to a consistent 3' depth.[13] Much of the southern lake covered an old quarry and had not been graded down for fear of losing water if the old rock crevices and fissures were exposed. Instead, this area was left rather shallow, with a resultant chronic problem of 'green scum,' which the Olmsted firm had predicted. In 1903, they explored various solutions to remove the algae, including stocking the lake with ducks and swans, which would also be a scenic advantage. Adding fish also alleviated some of the algae, and provided for sport fishing; but the Olmsted firm continued to advocate for regrading the bottom of the southern lake to a consistent depth with a shallower margin.[14]

The water source was equally problematic. When the springs proved inadequate to retain the necessary water level, the Commission resorted to purchasing city water. By 1903, purchasing 100,000 gallons became too expensive and the Commission ordered an artesian well dug, which had originally been recommended by John Bogart.[15] To augment the well water, Morris Sherrerd, the engineer from the Newark City Water Department, devised a method whereby the natural overflows from the Middle and Southern lakes could be pumped back to

the Northern brook.[16] However, with the abandonment of the Morris Canal, the water levels throughout the lake system lowered, indicating the amount of seepage that had occurred.[17]

Bridge

The Barrett and Bogart plan had called for a bridge over the lake, and as long as the design of this feature remained unresolved, contouring the lake edges and grading and connecting paths and drives could not be completed. Carrère and Hastings began their study of this architectural element in the fall of 1898, planning for a "magnificent bridge,"[18] since Hastings felt "there was too much petty designing in the park already." In response, John felt that such a grand structure would be "out of proportion to its surroundings" and to the "crooked, indirect approaches" already established, which the Commission would be reluctant to redo. After much deliberation, by the end of 1898 the carriage bridge idea was reduced to a footbridge, at JCO's recommendation, and Carrère and Hastings were asked to develop a design.[19] In order to simplify the architectural elements in this section of the park, the footbridge was to be coordinated with a skating/boating pavilion, which was planned as an extension of the bridge's northwestern wingwall. During 1899, several alternative studies were made and cost estimates prepared by the architects. The footbridge, without its attached skating/boating pavilion, would cost over $30,000, and involved redoing some existing grading.[20] With Commission finances at a low point and estimated costs for needed Southern Division structures at $393,000, fiscally conservative Commissioner Vanderpool declared that "everything would have to be scaled down."[21] The footbridge-skating/boating pavilion plans were, therefore, put on hold, but never totally rejected, with the result that they were still drawn in the Olmsted General Plan of 1901. Before that time, however, the Olmsted planning had resolved grading issues at the southern end of the lake to allow room for a drive and paths. These connected to the road and paths already built on the western side, completing a circuit route and thus reducing the pressing need for a bridge across the lake. This bridge-less condition remained until 1971.

Usage and services

As early as 1900, as the lake edges neared completion and open-air concerts were started in the Concert Grove, boating began on the lake, becoming so popular that "the number of boats had to be trebled."[22] Winter skating continued also to draw vast crowds. [Figure 6-7] By 1906, with the construction of the bridge at Park Avenue (formerly Fifth Avenue), the southern lake was connected to the newly created water course of the Middle section, expanding the usable water area to 5,000 feet. [23] This bridge (which will be discussed in Chapter 7) became an important visual and decorative terminus for the Southern Division Lake, offering an enticing glimpse of the shimmering water beyond to beckon the adventurous boater to a different type of water setting.

Figure 6-7: Skating at the southern end of the lake near the skating shelter. January 1900. Source: 1898-99 Annual Report, facing p. 22.

To service this growing popularity of the lake, two other facilities were constructed in 1906, the Concert Grove boat landing and a new boathouse, the latter replacing the wooden skating shelter at the southern end. Placing the new boathouse in this location effectively signaled the end of the bridge/pavilion idea. The boat landing consisted of a concrete wall with an ornamental balustrade, in the centre of which were broad steps leading to the water. [24] These features may have been originally designed by Carrère and Hastings as they had been asked to prepare plans for the Concert Grove walls, pavilions, and steps in February 1899 (though no plan from them is extant in the ONHS collection). [25] Listening to the concerts from rowboats or canoes became a popular entertainment.[26] [Figure 6-8]

Figure 6-8: "Listening to the Band." Source: 1907 Annual Report, p. 26.

The boathouse, of white frame and concrete construction, consisted of a long two-story central building, fronted on the water side by a 182-foot platform, with boat sheds at each end.[Figure 6-9] It was designed by Frank Wright of New York, who consulted John Olmsted in January of 1906 about the layout. Wright had kept the boat sheds separate from the main structure in order to "give vistas between for the people who drive around the head of the lake …[and] access for skaters and others to the front of the boat house and the lake front." Olmsted responded with suggestions for extending the balcony across to the two canoe sheds, and providing an exterior broad stairway to it, to encourage its use. He also recommended planting areas around the front of the building to give it a more park-like appearance, and made extensive interior rearrangements for the convenience of large crowds. [27] In 1905, he had set forth principles for this type of structure in his recommendations for the Weequahic Reservation boathouse. Here he observed, "in locating a boat and skating shelter, it is expected that more visitors will use it as a resting place, from which to enjoy views of the landscape…For this reason it becomes a matter of the greatest importance to locate the shelter where it will command the longest and most imposing and most beautiful lake views," and not be inharmonious or injurious to the park landscape. Inspecting Branch Brook Park in 1909, JCO reviewed the boathouse, which seemed to him "much too large for the size of the lake," and recommended the removal of the boat storage houses. [28] This boathouse, much photographed in its day, soon became too small, and was renovated in 1914 with the balcony roofed over. It survived until 1940,

Figure 6-9: Boathouse at the southern end of the lake. Note the trees from the Poplar Walk in the background. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

when it was declared unsafe, demolished and replaced by a simpler structure (see chapter 10).[29]

Increased use of the lake in both summer and winter brought the need for other services. As early as 1900, before there was a permanent boat shelter, Olmsted gave the Park Commission advice regarding possible privileges for a concessionaire in Branch Brook Park, for boat rentals, sale of refreshments and other services related to skating and boating. He specified the 3 types of boats, as well as canoes, available for rent: a simple square-sterned rowboat , available for 25 cents per hour; a similar rowboat but equipped with cork cushions, carpet and awning for 40 cents per hour (the same rate for a canoe); and specially painted rowboats from which fishing was to be allowed. (Fishing was also to be permitted from the shore.) Private boats could also be kept on the lake, cared for by the concessionaire, No sailing was to be allowed. He also set forth rules for use of boats and lake. A year later he added advice concerning refreshment privileges.[30] By 1905 there were "fifty boats on the park lake, which were in almost constant use, and thirty canoes owned by private individuals and cared for the lessee of the boating privilege."[31] In 1911, a canoe regatta was added to the other athletic field-day events, a competition which continued through the years, encouraged by the development of canoe clubs. In 1931, "livery motor boats" were placed on the lake to afford "an opportunity to see the beauties of the park and the intriguing landscape features of the lake shores."[32]

With the construction of the boathouse and the connection of the southern and middle lakes, a boating, skating and refreshment franchise was leased for 5 years with rights to provide service from both the southern and Bloomfield Avenue ends of the lake.[33] Some type of franchise operation continued for the Branch Brook Lake and Concert Grove area until 1930, when the Park Commission took over the operations in this and the other parks.[34]

Safety issues were handled by special police officers assigned to patrol the lake. They had to pass swimming and rescue proficiency tests, which became one of the field-day contests. Life preservers were installed along the banks.[35] After drownings in the lake in both 1912 and 1913, the police were provided with motorboats, and their rescue training intensified.[36] To increase the recreational enjoyment of the lake, as well as to aid maintenance efforts to reduce the algae growth and mosquito larvae, the lake was stocked with fish, particularly bass and pickerel, by the New Jersey Fish and Game Commission, although a fishing license was not required.[37]

Development of the Circulation System : The Underpasses; Paths; Drives and Entrances

The paths and drives were all in an incomplete state when the Olmsted Brothers' contract began. Telford macadam covered the entrance drive from Clifton Avenue, near Sixth, which came to an abrupt terminus near the "Dutch Garden." The connecting drive and Sixth Avenue Concourse had also been paved. The main drive on the west side of the lake was likewise paved with macadam, ending by the lake in the location of the anticipated bridge. Various paths, ranging from 8 to 20 feet wide, had been graded and gravelled— along the lake side; around the various garden 'rooms;' in the ravine south of the Sixth Avenue entrance; from Eighth Avenue connecting the playground to the boathouse and the Reservoir; and along the Poplar Walk between the southern overlook and the "Statuary Garden." The surveys (Plans # 2121-52 and 87) indicate an 8-foot wide path encircling the Reservoir, separated from the inner slope by a coping. They also record naptha lights and various water gates and lawn hydrants at intervals along these paths, with a drinking fountain at the entrance to the Ravine Walk. There were temporary steps connecting Clifton Avenue to the top of the Concourse, as well as in several locations in the gardens west of Parker Street.

In Barrett's design, "the frequent occurrence of dead ends in the walks, especially on high abrupt slopes" and the "steep grades in the gravel walks" troubled John Olmsted, who felt that visitors would wear short-cut paths down the slopes to other walks, while the steep paths were a problem for maintenance and pedestrians.[38] The underpass beneath the main park drive at the end of the Ravine Walk, called variously Subway #1 or East Arch, already under construction in August 1898, was also of concern. Olmsted objected to its narrowness as a passage and its oddly angled alignment in a design where other major lines were rectilinear. But the lack of walks to accompany the drives was the most serious, and potentially dangerous, problem, since in the Olmsted firm's extensive experience "it was of utmost importance to guard in every way possible by good design against the use of the drives by persons on foot," particularly with the increased use of bicycles.[39]

The Underpasses

Once the Park Commission agreed to the re-alignment of Subway #1, with the subsequent regrading of slopes, Olmsted and John Carrère began work in October 1898 to develop the architecture for underpasses for both east and west sides of the lake. By November, the Olmsted regrading studies for the path/drive system had enabled the elimination of the third underpass planned for east of the lake, south of the Reservoir.[40] By early January 1899, the Park Commission, grumbling over the high bids received for the stone facings of the arches, asked the architects to modify their design. (No Carrère and Hastings plans are extant in the Olmsted collection for these arches.) While John Olmsted supported the architectural embellishment of this design as being in keeping with the decorative style of park gardening, he suggested as an alternative the use of "some kind of stone that could be cheaply cut in elaborate patterns," such as the brownstone or buff sandstone used in Central and Prospect Parks. He commented,

> *"Personally I should very much prefer the color and texture of either of these stones [Indiana limestone or Potsdam red sandstone] for the park masonry to any kind of granite that has been suggested. The reddish color of the earth will always be more or less obvious in this park, and for structures which are subordinate in importance to the landscape of the park, it seems to me much more appropriate to use red or buff-colored stone than to use white or gray granite."*[41]

While Carrère agreed with the suggestion to employ the softer stones for the ornamental work, while the granite could be used for the heavier structures, the subway-arches and some of their accompanying flights of steps were eventually constructed of granite, perhaps because Commissioner Bramhall preferred the harder stones.[42]

Underpasses such as these had been used by the senior Olmsted in his park designs from New York's Central Park to Franklin Park in Boston as a means of avoiding pedestrian, equestrian and carriage traffic conflicts. In most cases, the accompanying steep-sided embankments were heavily planted, often with vines draping over the stone work, particularly if it was rusticated boulders. In the Branch Brook examples, the more formal cut stone masonry did not lend itself to being so obscured, but the abrupt slopes from the drive to the subway path required skillful grading and planting to attain a "picturesque effect." [Figure 6-10] Instructing Superintendent

Manning on handling the 1:1 slopes on the east side of Subway #1, JCO requested large boulders, regardless of cost, "not less than 3 feet in diameter, of irregular shape, with rough, weather-beaten surfaces showing, laid as far as possible from each other in the horizontal direction and filled in between with good rich soil in which to grow prostrate juniper and other suitable plants."[43] Inspecting the work in May 1900, John Olmsted was displeased to see that the plan had not been followed. Small boulders had been used instead of the recommended size, and looked "like raisins in pudding … especially deficient at the bottom of the slope where they are much needed, and are plentiful on the top of the slope where it is so gentle as to need no boulders." Manning promised to make adjustments.[44]

Figure 6-10: Looking west through the East Arch. E.F. Keller photograph, c.1901. Source: Photograph #2121-141, ONHS.

Paths and Steps

The Poplar Walk was one of the few paths completed and planted by late 1898. This straight gravel walk was nearly 700 feet long parallel to Clifton Avenue between the pumping station and the Reservoir. At its southern end, it terminated at the elevated overlook, (later to be called the "Tee Mound" on the Olmsted plan) southwest of the pump house. At the path's northern extent, it passed east of the "Statuary Garden" which had already been shaped and planted, beneath the walls of the Clifton Avenue overlook (called the "High Mound Terrace"), connecting with the Ravine walk near the Clifton Avenue entrance.[45] A side-path veered westward from the Walk at this garden area. As indicated on the December 1898 survey (Plan #2121- 52), the elevation of this path rose about 3 feet over its length from the southern overlook to its high point at the Statuary Garden. The Walk was about 15 feet wide, lined on both sides for much of its length with poplars, which in 1898 were of a 2-inch caliper, planted 5 feet apart. [Figure 6-11] These poplars also continued along the westward side-path near the Statuary Garden. The rationale behind this strong design feature can only be surmised, without evidence from Barrett's correspondence or reports. Since Barrett was not enamored of the Reservoir, calling it a "peculiar feature" in his 1897 report, it may be that the close planting of poplars and the heavy vegetation around the Reservoir, indicated on the 1897 plan, were intended to hide this element. Additionally, since he acknowledged that the Cathedral was soon to be built, he may have intended this Walk to align with its main entrance, as indicated by early photographs. [Figure 6-12] Neither the Olmsted documents nor the Annual Park Reports mention this path, except for a 1910 letter concerning replacement trees and a 1917 reference to trimming the poplars.[46]

Figure 6-11: Looking west over Poplar walk and Reservoir. Source: courtesy, James Lecky.

Figure 6-12: Poplar Walk, looking toward the Cathedral. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

Even before the topographic surveys for the Southern Division were completed, the Olmsted office draftsmen were at work completing other path lines, particularly on the east side of the lake. They worked to correct the unduly steep grades, to add some grace of line to curves, while providing easy access to the various features. Since a crew was at work on the ground in the Southern Section, John Olmsted worked closely with engineer Howard Cole to find appropriate solutions which could be quickly installed without too much regrading. Olmsted was concerned about "those having baby carriages" negotiating the irregular surfaces. He also recommended walls and steps (initially constructed of wood) in several locations to provide pedestrian access down the steep slopes.[47] In conjunction with Carrère and Hastings, who provided a drawing of the "typical steps in Branch Brook Park" in August 1899 (drawing not extant in ONHS collection), JCO was ultimately to suggest more than 27 flights of steps to provide necessary access. With the shortness of funds in early 1900, this number was reduced to 19 flights — near the Reservoir; the children's lavatory; the Subways; the Concourse Hill; the entrance walk, the earthen terrace; at the Music Court and opposite the High School. [Figure 6-13; See also Figure 5-3] Until these were agreed to, the grading and planting of the various slopes could not proceed. As JCO observed, "We believe these stone steps are much needed as a matter of convenience and will do a great deal to give the park a finished and substantial appearance."[48] There was, however, disagreement over the material for construction. Olmsted favored bluestone or brownstone; the architects (and Commissioner Bramhall) favored dark granite; and the Park Commission eventually chose concrete, citing its cheaper cost. Agreeing to the economy, John Olmsted specified that the "artificial stone" should be treated with "the proper admixture of coloring matter and with suitable tooling of the surfaces to give a pleasing texture."[49]

Figure 6-13: Looking east across the gardens to Barringer High School. c. 1907. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

In some places, the firm recommended formal path designs to complete important elements where Barrett's plan left no clear connection. One such example was on axis with the drive entrance of the Clifton Avenue Concourse, where Barrett's planted and turfed slopes had blocked direct access to the water. Percy Jones of the Olmsted office sketched a series of alternative solutions with broad staircases and intermediate terrace walks, which he used to enhance and link the abutting north and south Diamond Gardens,[50] so that the visitor could descend from the Concourse to the lakeside. Likewise, a progression of steps was designed on axis with the Lotus Pool to connect this lakeside feature to the upper Promenade, which paralleled Parker Street.[51] Ultimately these ideas did not survive the Commission's budget cutting. In the newly

relocated Concert Grove, formal radial paths were implemented to develop its structure, with a broad bicycle concourse at a higher elevation above the central bandstand area. (see Concert Grove section below). Additionally, an entry path with sidewalks was developed, centered on the main front door of the new High School. In most other places, however, paths were curvilinear, such as at the newly designed entrance from the corner at Eighth and Clifton, which gracefully led visitors to the playground area, to the Reservoir and beyond to the new drive/path system around the southern end of the lake.[52]

Most paths were originally constructed of well-compacted stone, about 5 feet wide with an additional two feet for a gravel edge, so they could be driven over. Additionally, turf or paved gutters and catch basins accompanied them on either or both sides. In some cases, where the grades were problematic, such as the paths through the two underpasses, Olmsted recommended macadam surfaces.[53] While period photographs through the 1930s indicate some form of soft-surface paths, the record is not clear what this material was. [Figure 6-14] Paths in the North and Middle Divisions were treated with macadam surfaces. Unlike contemporary multi-layered asphalt construction, the macadam mixture of this period was a binder course serving to harden the surface for a more sure-footed and well-drained path. The path widths varied, but wherever possible were made amply wide to achieve the Olmsted goal to easily service crowds of visitors. Barrett's original shore walk by the lotus pool had been 20 feet wide, which he reduced to10 feet when he added the aquatic pools. John Olmsted insisted the path be returned to its original dimension by eliminating the unfinished balustraded wall along the lake edge. Likewise, he had the Reservoir perimeter walk widened to 12 feet.[54]

Figure 6-14: Park drive near Concert Grove. Source: Newark Public Library photograph collection.

Drives

Connecting the drive between the east and west sides of the lake was an critical early component of Olmsted planning in the Southern Division. This had been left truncated by the indecision over the bridge. In Barrett and Bogart's plan, the main drive from east to west was solely across the bridge, with a path circumnavigating the end of the lake and a narrow road exiting beneath Orange Street. The passage between the steep bank from Orange Street and the lake edge was very restricted, requiring skillful manipulation of the difficult grades in order to gain the room for a graceful drive with accompanying walk. Well-designed drive and path lines in this area were of heightened importance since this was to be the major Branch Brook Park entrance from the city center, intended to pass through an underpass beneath both the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad tracks and Orange Street with its busy trolley lines. The Park Commission acquired from the Water Commission additional land along Sussex Avenue and Duryea Street south of the park in order to enhance this entrance.[55] By January 1899, the Olmsted firm had explored several alternatives for grading the slopes and shaping the lake edge. Their revisions not only allowed for a drive (called Concourse Drive on their plan) and path to connect with those on the west side of the lake, but also provided a more interestingly irregular lake edge and an easier grade with a "longer view from the upper end of the Little Folk's Lawn" at Eighth Avenue and Clifton. This drive was intended to be planted on either side with American elms, continuing from the east around the south end and north on the west side drive.[56]

Plans for a handsome bridge, with the façade of its underpass designed by Carrère and Hastings, were prepared to give this entrance a 'presence,' all of this at an estimated cost of $40,000.[57] In the absence of a clear decision by the Railroad as to its plans, this bridge was put on hold, and the Park Commission authorized the construction of a temporary 20 foot wide road from Eighth Avenue down the steep slope near the playground area to connect with the lake circuit drive. This was installed by the end of 1899.[58] By that time, the circuit road, with its paths, was completed and "stoned" with paved gutters.[59]

Negotiations with the railroad continued until 1904, when they decided to lower the tracks, making an underpass at Orange Street impossible. The Commission "very reluctantly" concluded that there was "no way of directly connecting Sussex Avenue with the Park avoiding all grade crossing. The problem of an appropriate entrance to the southern end of this park is therefore as yet unsettled."[60] The problem was compounded by the anticipated abandonment of the Morris Canal (owned by the Lehigh Valley Railroad) and the hope of some Park Commissioners that this land could be added to the park to enable a possible southern entrance. John Olmsted repeatedly advised against this optimism, observing as early as September 1899 that the canal site probably would become a steam or electric railroad.[61] To be prepared, in case the faint possibility became reality, he recommended boundary streets be developed to give the park a suitable western edge. The firm produced several plans in September and October1899, exploring variations for shaping and planting these western land parcels.[62] From 1902 through 1904, the firm explored various alternatives to develop a southern park entrance by bridging over the tracks, by making a grade crossing, or by making an alternative entry drive from Eighth Avenue. None of these proposals were satisfactory, either for issues of safety for visitors, or injury to the park and undoing work already done. A suitable southern entrance drive remained (and continues to remain) unresolved.[63]

With the relocation of the Concert Grove into the Southern Division (see below), the curve of the western drive was somewhat altered to accommodate the semi-circular Music Court plan. Until the Fifth Avenue underpass (the name changed in 1902 to Park Avenue) was built to allow both the Southern Division water and the road/path system to be connected to those of the Middle section, what had been a path connection in the earlier plan became an 18 foot wide spur from the western drive to provide access to Fifth Avenue near the Canal.[64]

As originally constructed, the drives were 40 feet wide, " a greater width than is demanded for the present pleasure driving," paved with macadam, with stoned gutters on either side.[65] Curbing was to be used in places "where walks follow drives without any intervening planting strip, or where walks intersect drives." The curbs needed to be in place in order to attain the correct height of walk or drive. In places where curbing was to be used, whether for paths or drives, there was a disagreement over material. The Olmsted preference was "for bluestone rather than granite, but it would be almost necessary to have granite curbing if the Commission insists upon having granite steps, which we very much dislike to use."[66] Carrère and Hastings had specified both bluestone and granite for their various step treatments and JCO urged that bluestone should be used wherever possible. He preferred

> *"bluestone curbs with the top edge neatly dressed, but not sawn or polished…cutto fit the curves. Where the curbing ends in a turf strip or planting strip, it should have a length of at least four or five feet beyond where the edge of the walk intersects the drive. The top of the curb should be rounded off on a gentle elliptical curve. These curbs ought to be set on a bed of small stones, concrete or very coarse gravel…:* [67]

The record is not clear as to how much of this curbing was installed and exactly where.[68] The historic photographs indicate most drives without curbing, which became problematic with increasing motor traffic. Beginning in 1913, the Park Commission reported on what became a chronic problem –the need for funds for drive renovation, for paving, edging, lighting and plant rearrangement in order to accommodate the "speeding" automobiles.[69]

Entrances and the Clifton Concourse

Accessible, carefully planned park entries were important components for the Olmsted designers. Therefore, in the Southern Division, in conjunction with Carrère and Hastings, they developed entrances where there had been none on their predecessors' plan: at the corner of Eighth and Clifton Avenues, which began as a pedestrian entrance, amplified in 1899 by the 'temporary' drive from Eighth Avenue when the Orange Street entrance was thwarted by the railroad; along Parker Street, where they provided two sets of steps into the park, one aligned with the High School's main door; and at the corner of Parker and Fifth Avenue which needed a flight of steps.[70] They reshaped Barrett's proposed rectangular entrance at the end of the Promenade walk at Fifth across from Aqueduct Street into a semi-circle, while on line with Lake Street at Fifth they provided parallel paths instead of the large but undefined plaza area which the 1897 plan had shown. Along Parker Street, they recommended elms as street trees, with birch, dogwood and various shrub underlayers planted along the Parker and Fifth Avenue slopes.[71] Though they were not able to construct their proposed staircase and terrace design down the slope to the lake, aligned with the Clifton Avenue Concourse to heighten this area's importance, they did rearrange the wall treatment at the end of Sixth Avenue at Parker Street, and added a driveway entrance which gave access to visitors from the north.[72] On Clifton, on axis with the Reservoir, they refined an entrance with stone posts and walls. An iron picket fence marked the street-side boundaries from Eighth Avenue along Clifton Avenue to Sixth, and along Parker to Fifth Avenue, with openings for foot entrances at the appropriate locations [Figure 6-15]. In rejecting a citizen petition for another pedestrian entrance opposite Drift Street, John Olmsted observed that although this might be of convenience to some, it had greater consequences.

> *"The multiplication of foot entrances into a park surrounded by a dense population is, in our experience, almost absolutely certain to result in the formation of short-cut paths, started and for the most part kept going by working people and business men having occasion to pass almost daily across the park. It is found in practice to be almost impossible to prevent … The beauty of the park and the satisfaction of the vast majority of visitors in its use depends so much upon the maintenance of an unbroken sheet of beautiful green turf that convenience of access to the park and of passage across it must in a great many cases be sacrificed to this more important object."*[73]

Figure 6-15: Fence at Children's Playground, Southern Division. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

In addition to places to enter the park from the south and east sides, there was active consideration of footbridges over the Canal, often colored by the various Commissioners' property holdings. Commissioner Shepard wanted an entrance near Third Street and Sixth Avenue; while the architects' schemes for the bridge over the lake was aligned with a canal bridge at Seventh Avenue. [74] Additionally, as the plans for the Concert Grove developed, these included the so-called "Roseville Entrance" carriage bridge over the canal, which pleased Commission President Cyrus Peck with his extensive property in the Roseville area. [75] Various plans were produced for iron bridges suitable for canal crossing,[76] but the correspondence makes no mention of such an installation, and the various atlases from the period do not record a canal bridge except at the major east-west streets. Since there were issues over the Canal boundary line which affected fence installation and planting, this may have been a factor.[77]

In the absence of the proposed principal entrance at the southern end of Branch Brook Park, the drive in from Clifton Avenue had been treated as the main vehicular entry. Under the earlier designers, according to the 1898 survey [See Figure 6-1] a 40 foot paved drive abutted the Concourse Hill. The Concourse had been graded with steeply sloping sides along Sixth and along the park drive, the latter planted with shrubs. Along Clifton Avenue, three flights of wooden steps had been provided to ascend the slope. At the top, a carriage oval had been paved and guttered with Telford, with wide paths along the north and south sides, graded and lined with maples (species unspecified), some naptha lights and lawn hydrants. The path to the north descended the slope to connect to the walled terrace at the end of Sixth Avenue while the southern path ended at the square overlook above the park drive, with its view across the gardens and the lake. The 1897 plan [See Figure 3-3] indicated two small square shelters on the eastern end of the concourse, while the overlook was adorned with a larger structure.

Giving the drive entrance suitable importance was linked to the treatment of the Concourse. John Olmsted and Carrère and Hastings consulted during 1899 on various alternatives for both of these areas. These included a retaining wall along Sixth and along Clifton Avenues; entry posts and gates to mark the drive; a shelter for "the convenience of people waiting for [street] cars"; a terrace with balustrade and steps for the Concourse; and a square arbor with steps for the overlook. Flag staffs, small corner shelters, path connections, type of wall, all became topics of negotiations over the months until the specifications were produced in August.[78] The Commission was "dumbfounded" by the high bids for Carrère and Hastings' very grand terrace entrance, with stairs, balustrade, walls and substantial gateposts abutting the drive. John Olmsted felt it "hardly seemed advisable to spend so much ($63,000) on the outer edge of the park and that certainly the Orange Street subway was twice as important." Instead, the Commission ordered the Olmsted firm to prepare less elaborate alternatives[79], despite Commissioner Bramhall's complaints about "inadequate architectural treatment." [80] In response, John observed,

"I have had grave doubts as to the propriety of such a grand design…considering the rather contracted and somewhat squalid outlook and surroundings. I think it would be much more satisfactory to put up a grand masonry terrace facing into the park instead of out of it. It seems to me that to build such a terrace facing Clifton Avenue would at once call attention to certain bad features. It would certainly always be a great eyesore to have the houses on the east side of Clifton Avenue so close upon the view and so entirely unsymmetrical, and in going out of the entrance drive it would be still worse. I think it would be worth a great deal more to the park and to Mr. Barrett's design of the portion in question to take some more property on the east side of Clifton than to build a great stone terrace at the east end of the concourse…I am of the opinion that it would be a great deal better to spend $40,000 or $50,000 in condemning enough land opposite the entrance to secure a dignified aspect for anyone going out of the entrance and a greater sense of symmetry and balance in the foreground of the view from the concourse." [81]

Figure 6-16: Looking east at Arbor and steps on Clifton Concourse Hill. JCO photograph, 7 May 1900. Source: Photograph #2121-55, ONHS.

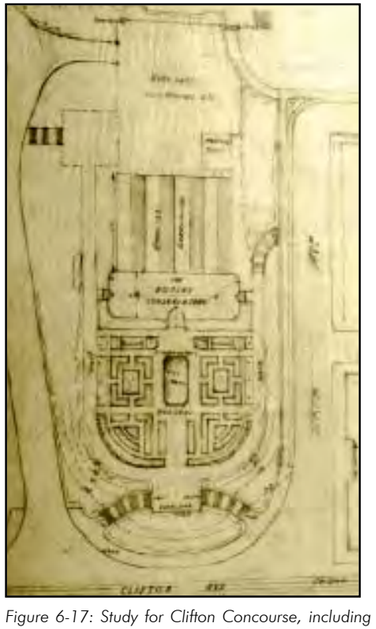

Figure 6-17: Study for Clifton Concourse, including greenhouses and parterre garden, Plan #2121-712, 17 November 1926. Source: ONHS.

Instead, he suggested some "plain substantial construction that would be unpretentious, but sufficiently satisfactory in size and durable in material," and would recognize but not compete with the masonry mass of the cathedral.[82] With restricted appropriations needed for parkland acquisition as well as for construction, and concerns about the concentration of money needed for Branch Brook Park, the terrace plans were laid aside.[83] Only simple redesigned steps and a modest terrace wall between them at the top, and the square arbor with its accompanying steps were added to the Concourse in 1900 [Figure 6-16], surrounded by heavy planting.[84]

The Concourse was enjoyed over the years as a place to stop and peruse the view over the park and toward the New York City skyline. By 1922, with the construction of the Park Administration building on what had been the Garside lots on the east side of Clifton, this viewing function was no longer possible. Percival Gallagher contemplated the possibilities of this space in conjunction with his re-use recommendations for the former Reservoir, with consideration being given to the Concourse as a potential site for greenhouses. A sketch plan produced in November 1926 suggested four greenhouses, a "display conservatory," several parterre gardens around a central lily pond with an overlook at the eastern end over Clifton Avenue. [Figure 6-17] The survey of the area done a year later recorded the paths and concourse as gravel, surrounded by plantations with a semi-circular hedge and lawn defining the eastern end.[85] No further correspondence on this topic is extant, and there is no mention in the park reports of such a construction.[86]

Development of Specialized Areas: The Concert Grove, The Playground and The Reservoir

The Concert Grove

In September 1898, the Park Commission agreed to the relocation of the Concert Grove from Barrett's suggested location in the Middle Division to the west side of the lake on axis with the Lotus Garden in the Southern Division. Carrère and Hastings drafted plans to reshape the space according to John Olmsted's instructions, while the Olmsted firm worked on grading plans, raising some of the existing oaks and relocating others.[87] The Commission was anxious to have this project finished quickly since it involved redoing work, the meadow and tree plantings already installed according to the Barrett and Bogart plan. By April 1899, grading was nearly complete, footpaths shaped and lawn about to be planted. John wanted American elms for the Grove. Since he needed 67 equal trees for the design, he decided to use nursery stock and saying "They can give evening concerts until the trees grow…"[88] Carrère and Hastings' schematic plan (not extant) and their estimate for the Music Court proposed a bandstand, two shelters, a water terrace with boat landing, and a bicycle terrace with retaining wall and balustrade, all of which they expected would cost under $40,000. For economy, turf slopes were substituted for walls to retain the elevation changes, with steps at three of the radiating paths. A curving path, also with steps, connected the park drive with the central walk, in line also with a proposed bridge over the canal. Along the water in line with the lowest tier of the grading, two rectangular water-side overlooks extended out into the lake to the north and south.[89]

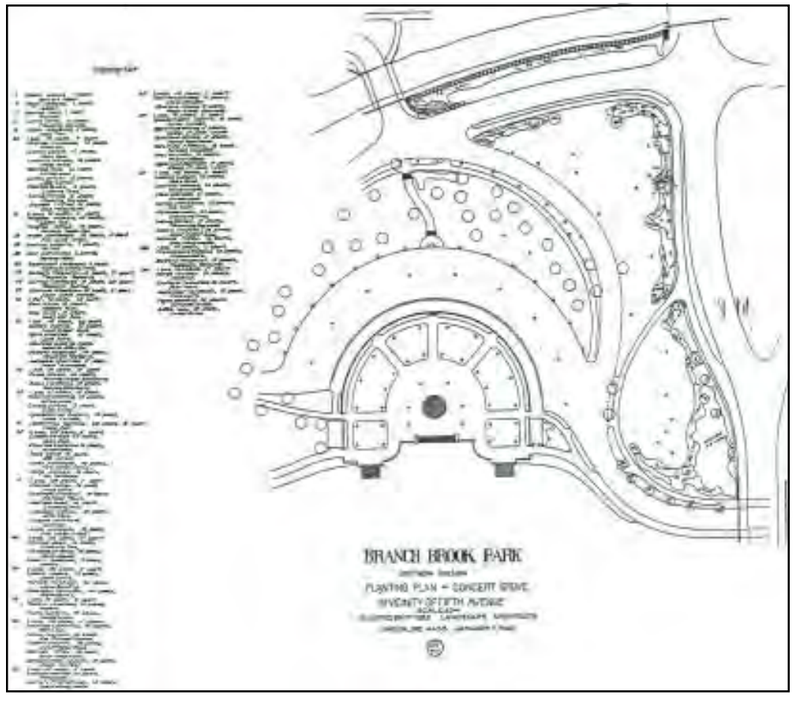

Figure 6-18: Planting Plan for Concert Grove, Plan #2121-576, January 1902. Source: ONHS

This feature was not constructed to John Olmsted's satisfaction as quickly as had been hoped, particularly due to the complex grading, tree-moving and planting of

the formal semi-circular shape. Carefully placed elms and oaks reinforced the architecture of the radial design, while at the outer edges, selectively placed yellow wood and pin oak trees and shrub groupings canopied and separated this space from the park drive.[90] [Figure 6-18] However, by 1900, open-air concerts, sponsored by the Newark Daily Advertiser, drew "a phenomenal assembling of people," who crowded onto the turfed slopes and on to the few benches.[91] Studies for pergolas, which do not appear on any of the early plans for this area, were made in June 1899 [92] and sent on to Carrère and Hastings for refinement of structure and architectural detail. Installed during the 1900 season, they complemented the design by demarcating the northern and southern extent of the area.[93] The Commission consulted Newark architect Charles Ackerman concerning temporary bandstands and toilet houses for Branch Brook and several other parks. A wooden structure appears in the historic photographs which may have been the former wooden skating shelter at the lake edge or a new temporary comfort station.[94] [Figure 6-19] The 1903 Annual Report recorded the installation of a classical 30 foot diameter bandstand with Doric columns, probably a temporary structure, since the following year Olmsted sent sketches to Ackerman of a bandstand design produced for a Watertown, NY park. [95] He consulted Supt. Manning as to the size of the band and revised Ackerman's plans to accommodate them, to ensure " a proper degree of harmony between the architectural design and the landscape design... The difficulty in this case is that the amount of money which the Commission is willing to spend is very restricted, the intention being to erect frankly temporary bandstands." This enlarged structure, a circular pavilion with 8 columns, installed in September 1904, seemed to John Olmsted "large and showy for $2500." It was electrified in 1905, with naptha lights also used to illuminate the Music Court.[96] [Figure 6-20]

Figure 6-19: Looking east across Concert Grove before the construction of the Bandstand. Note the Arbor and small shelter to the left. E.F. Keller photograph, c. 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-135, ONHS.

Figure 6-20: Band concert in the Music Court, c. 1907. Source: 1907 Annual Report, p. 10.

In 1906, a concrete boat landing with 475 feet long balustraded wall and broad steps down to the lake was constructed, which altered the earlier lakeside edge by curving the once-rectangular overlook bays and extending the promenade. The broad steps also proved to be ideal for toy boat launching, one of the many educational activities of the Park Commission's social programs.[97] [Figure 6-21] Photographs and the park reports record large crowds in attendance at band concerts, sitting on the lawn and on park settees which lined the walks, with numerous attendees in boats and canoes. The number of weekly concerts expanded in 1923 to include the Newark Philharmonic, a welcome practice which continued through the Depression years, when barbershop quartet and harmony groups also performed. In addition to the Park Commission, sponsorship of these popular public events came from private philanthropy (such as Louis Bamberger) and federal programs (the ERA and WPA during the Depression).[98]

Figure 6-21: Toy Boat competition at the Concert Grove boat landing. Note the benches surrounding the bandstand, after 1925. Source: Newark Public Library photograph collection.

To meet this increased usage, two comfort stations were constructed. When consulted by Superintendent Reynolds concerning this need in September 1920, Gallagher suggested simple construction of stucco over block, with sky lights for light. Architect Wilson Ely was ultimately responsible for the design of concrete block with stone finish. These structures were carefully inserted under the vine-clad arbors to be hidden in the foliage.[99] Likewise, additional seating was required. Consulted by Supt. Reynolds, Gallagher recommended a "park settee of wooden slats fastened to cast or wrought iron frames, the seat of which is… tilted backward to a comfortable position. Such a settee can be gathered up at the end of the season for winter storage which is an advantage in many ways." He rejected the then-current vogue for cast concrete seats permanently affixed to the ground, saying they were less easily mended and were "apt to look heavy and massive" and to be costly. Suggesting that benches could be made economically with in-house carpentry, he advised placing them in concentric circles on the level space around the bandstand, leaving free both the area toward the lake for the convenience of boaters and the ground sloping up to the driveway. "It is quite possible here and there along the walks at some little distance many more seats should be provided to advantage. The whole point is to avoid too large a mass of seats at any one point." By the 1924 season, seating for 5,000 was provided, with an "augophone" for amplification for crowds which were said to number about 11-12,000, with consequent parking problems.[100]

Gallagher also provided alternative plans for a refreshment building in conjunction with the Concert Grove. One was designed to have "architectural merit, forming a distinctive feature of the park…commanding good views of the lake," located west of the bandstand at the junction of the path and the drive. Another involved a more temporary structure to meet immediate demands without changes in grades or walks, located along the drive to the south.[101] The Annual Reports make no mention of such a structure being constructed.[102]

The Playground Area

Barrett and Bogart had made provision, in "a moderately depressed portion of the park" south of the Reservoir, for "a children's play ground, sheltered from the winds, and not interfering with other uses...," but had given no indication of their intentions on their General Plan.[103] It was up to the Olmsted Brothers' planning to refine the shape and 'furnish' this area. Given the numerous poor families living in the First Ward, the need for attractive play space and lavatory facilities was critical.

The Olmsted work included refining Barrett's grading for the playground lawn, which they called "The Little

Folks' Lawn East," to accommodate several changes: the inclusion of entrance paths from Clifton and Eighth Avenues connecting to the southern path which, in turn, led toward the lake and "Concourse Drive"; the inclusion of a shelter with sand courts, playground equipment and a comfort station; and further to the southwest, the development of an overlook on the steep slope beneath Eighth Avenue to provide a long view northward up the lake and across the park. By January 1899, while grading was in process on the lawn area, Carrère and Hastings were beginning preliminary design and estimates for a women's and children's shelter with attached sand courts and a lavatory, as well as the Eighth Avenue Overlook.[104] They approximated costs for a shelter with "seats for the mothers" and a curbed sand court with rolling awning ($2000) which JCO supported as being "immediately popular"; for "a brick and stone public comfort station" with " separate entrances for men and women [and]…ample plumbing fixtures"($4000); and, thirdly, for an overlook, "a terrace with retaining wall and balustrade" for Eighth Avenue ($1000), all of which had to be constructed in order to complete the surrounding grading and planting.[105] [See Figure 4-3]

By the end of May 1899, the sand court was in use and the following year, a play instructor was paid for by the Newark Ladies' Educational Society. By July, contracts for the buildings had been let. Olmsted was most concerned to ensure that grading around the lavatory should render the building inconspicuous, "somewhat the appearance of being in a valley. It is intended to plant very thickly all about this building, and so far as possible conceal it from view." This planting was nearly completed by December.[106] Grading the playground area beyond the sandcourts was carried on during the fall so that some planting could be installed. A double row of gum trees, transplanted from the Northern Division, was carefully aligned with the awning posts of the sandcourt, much to Commissioner Vanderpool's satisfaction.[107] The shelter and comfort station were constructed by the end of 1899, though for considerably more than Carrère and Hastings had estimated; but after several planning iterations, the elaborate architectural terrace overlook beneath Eighth Avenue was abandoned, simplified into a widened path area.[108]

To screen this area from the traffic on Eighth Avenue (where silver maples were recommended as street trees), the edge planting along this street was planned to be a thick combination of hemlocks intermingled with cucumber magnolias and poplars, with an occasional shingle oak, and a mixed shrub understory of viburnum, kalmia, and berberis, among other materials. Along Clifton with its street tree planting of Norway maples, birch were added to the hemlocks, again with a mixed spring-flowering shrub understory. The southern slope of the Reservoir was to be planted with a large grove of red oaks, beneath which were other shrub groupings, with various crabapple species included.[109] In 1909, Gallagher faced the regrettable administrative decision to remove the apple trees planted in this area, whose flowering, he felt, added materially to the charm of the plantings. "[W]e presume at this end of the park it is very difficult to restrain the children from picking the fruit and it would simplify the care of the place if they were removed."[110]

Playground equipment from a frequent Olmsted firm supplier, the Narragansett Machine Co. of Providence, RI , was not installed until fall of190, (although Olmsted had consulted with George Seikel of the German Gymnastic Society as early as June 1899 as to type of equipment recommended).[111] JCO made careful adjustments to the play pieces, even redesigning the 'scups'(double swings) to fit the site. He specified that the frames be painted "a mild inconspicuous brown," that wood rail fences with wire netting be installed to keep the various activities separated, and that the seesaws be placed under the shade of the willows.[112] [Figure 6-22; see also Figure 6-15] Praising the Essex County parks in 1907, writer Archibald Hill observed that this system had shown that "the practical and aesthetic are not inherently at variance with each other," while also teaching social skills to children. "The playground thus becomes a laboratory for the development of character in a sense not possible under the discipline of school rules." To that end, instructors were engaged to supervise and direct play into healthy competition, while a flagpole was erected for "patriotic inspiration."[113]

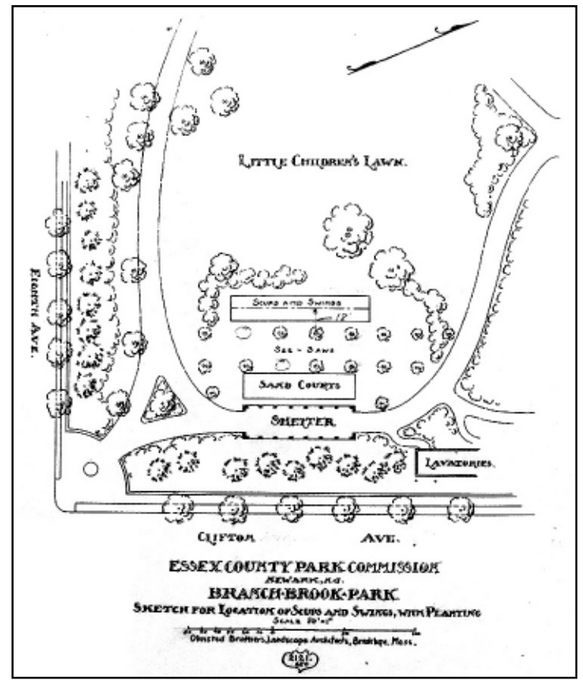

Figure 6-22: Plan for Playground Equipment with planting, Southern Division, Plan #21221-650, 27 June 1904. Note the parallel rows of gum trees. Source : ONHS.

The Playground area remained essentially as planned throughout the Olmsted period of design, a well-designed and popular enclave serving the recreational needs of a densely populated neighborhood. In 1920, when the re-use of the drained Reservoir was contemplated, one of Gallagher's proposals was to obliterate the Reservoir structure and regrade the site, extending this recontouring to the southeast corner where the level playground space could be expanded. The walk which had formerly connected the East Arch (underpass) to the Reservoir could be lengthened to the southeast corner, planted on each side to extend the flower garden down to the "Little Folk's Lawn." This area could thus be transformed into a flowery vale, such as Prospect Park's Vale of Cashmere, with direct access through it from the southeast corner to the flower gardens. This idea was not pursued.[114]

The Reservoir Area

Until the trees in the Southern Division began to mature, the bulk of the 400-foot-diameter, brownstone-lined Low Service Reservoir dominated the area by its breadth and its height. Barrett's solution to deal with "this peculiar feature" was to construct other elevated elements adjacent to the Reservoir on its eastern and northeastern sides to visually interrupt its predominating effect, especially from the Clifton Avenue area. He also stated his intention to cover the surrounding path with shelters to "afford desirable seats for pedestrians, "…[to] command charming views of the park scenery."[115] As indicated on the 1897 plan [See Figure 3-3], three features were planned to screen the Reservoir: a rectangular Overlook with its south-facing bay (the "Tee Mound") to the southeast of the Reservoir; a thickly planted poplar-lined walk along the east side, paralleling Clifton Avenue; and finally a high-walled west-facing overlook (the "High Mound Terrace") between Clifton and the Reservoir at its northeast edge. According to the 1898 survey (Plan #2121- 52) which recorded the work accomplished according to the Barrett plan, the top elevation of the "Tee Mound" Overlook was approximately at the height of the path around the Reservoir. The Poplar Walk rose slightly from this grade to an elevation five feet higher (above the area later called the "Statuary Garden"), connecting at its northern end to a lawn plateau

at the same grade. The most elevated area created was the plateau of the "High Mound" Terrace. Retained by a rubble stone wall, this terrace rose to a level 18 feet above the Reservoir Walk. [Figure 6-23] Beneath this wall and the Poplar Walk, along Clifton Street was the Water Commission's1875 brick pump house with its service yard. Abutting this building was an L-shaped frame building, three stories with mansard roof and cupola, which served as the Park Administration office.[116] Plans for the Reservoir were considered in conjunction with these other components as an ensemble for this section of the park.

Figure 6-23: Looking northwest across the High Mound terrace. Note the East arch still under construction; the Octagon Shelter installed but the Clifton Concourse arbor not yet erected., c. 1900. Source: courtesy James Lecky.

From the outset both John Olmsted and architect Thomas Hastings considered the Reservoir site for a conservatory and garden, but this idea was abandoned because Commissioner Shepard felt "the reservoir would never be given up by the Water Board." At the very least, Olmsted felt that the circular walk on the embankment needed steps as an architectural feature.[117] In fact, early planning for walks and steps north, south and at the edge of the Reservoir and for regrading the "ugly depression" along the southeast side, below the Poplar Walk, began in January 1899. By September, the walk on the reservoir embankment was widened to 12 feet, with enlarged planted terraces to the north and south; by the end of the year, work was underway to finish the walks in the "Statuary Garden" and fill and replant the hollow along the southeast side.[118] The south and west sides of the Reservoir were steeply sloped, requiring some filling, seeding for turf to hold the bank and flights of steps for access to the Reservoir promenade. Steps were also required on both sides of the "Tee" Overlook, to connect it with the lavatory and with the Reservoir; and four flights for access to the southern corner of the High Mound Terrace. It is not clear how many of these planned steps were implemented.[119] By the summer of 1900, the "Tee Mound" arbor was under construction, "the last of the seven authorized," with John Olmsted requesting a planting of euonymus radicans to soften the tall posts.[120]

The planting plan for the "Portion from Eighth Avenue North to the Reservoir and along the Canal Bank to Subway No. 2" suggested that the steep southern slopes should be planted with various vines—bittersweet, jasmine and ground rose – with a mixed shrub layer under middle-story trees such as hawthorns and crabapples. To the south, a red oak grove added necessary scale against the Reservoir bank, with a shrubby underplanting to fill in texture. The banks beneath and around the Tee Mound were to be filled with Hall's honeysuckle and some mixed shrubs, including fragrant clethra. Pines, hemlocks, rhododendron maximum and azaleas were among the plants to be placed under the wall of the High Mound terrace. Anticipating the removal of the frame Park Administration building on Clifton Avenue, this 1899 Planting Plan proposed double entrance walks around an oval planted island, leading to the Reservoir from the street. On either side of the paths, dense shrub plantings under oaks, poplars and tulip trees blocked out the pumping station and the high rubble wall of the terrace.[121] Evaluating the planting during two visits in 1901, Emil Mische, one of the Olmsted Brothers' plantsmen, observed that "the straight line formed by the edge of the reservoir bank should be broken up by shrub planting—jasminum, kerria and some Rosa lucid and Rosa setigera. Some dogwoods and lower shrubbery should be planted on either side of the steps."[122]

In 1903, a fountain designed by Commissioner Vanderpool (who died on July 3, 1903) and Morris Sherrerd, the hydrological engineer from the Newark City Water Department, was installed for decorative reasons and to improve the aeration on the Reservoir. [Figure 6-24] Consulted about this fountain, Olmsted advised increasing the number of jets and bringing them closer together to have "more solidity of effect," although he cautioned the Park Commission to "get some written assurance on the part of the Water Board that the fountain would be run for several years at least."[123] When running at its full capacity, it was praised as a great attraction to thousands of visitors, but in fact by 1914 the Park Commissioners were complaining that the "fountain had been practically abandoned by the Water Department," with not enough water to operate it even on weekends and holidays. The Reservoir was not needed for the water supply and the city wanted to have the Commission take it for recreational purposes.[124]

In 1920, when "the city authorities" suggested the Reservoir become a much-needed swimming pool, the Park Commission consulted Percival Gallagher. In his report of December 13,1920, he put forth three alternatives, though he cautioned that because of the Reservoir's size and the amount of stone involved, cost would be the determinant. His suggestion for a swimming pool to serve about 500 people involved regrading for a safer interior depth and breaking into the Clifton Avenue side of the Reservoir to insert necessary buildings for dressing and administration. One concern about this scheme was to ensure that the city would supply the water, since the water from Branch Brook Lake was not suitable for swimming.[125]

Figure 6-24: Fountain in the Reservoir, Southern Division. Source: 1910 Annual Report, p. 40.

His second idea was more radical, the obliteration of the Reservoir and the regrading of the entire area from the Little Folks' Lawn to the East Arch underpass. "The complete obliteration of the old reservoir in this way would probably …be the best thing for the park, for, of course, the reservoir as it stands is a wholly artificial thing that has not special park values outside of the impressiveness of its geometrical form and size." Such a regrading, Gallagher observed, could enable the improvement in the entrance driveway alignment. [126] This concept appealed to the Commissioners, who suggested, in their 1921 Report, a three part transfer based on it. The Garside Street tract owned by the Park Commission could become the swimming pool; the playground could then be relocated from the corner of Clifton and Eighth Avenues to the old reservoir site, thus clearing the way to make a new entrance to the park at this corner to avoid the present circuitous route. Noting that it " would greatly help traffic conditions in the city of Newark if this scheme could be carried out," they recognized the negotiations necessary to "harmonize the conflicting interest of the two corporations, each acting for the best interests of the taxpayers…"[127]

Gallagher's third scheme involved retaining the eastern wall of the Reservoir as the backdrop for an "out-door auditorium," with the audience, with their back to the afternoon sun, seated on some of the western slope retained for that purpose. "[The scenic effect that might be created with trees and shrubbery and flowers about

the stage and the surroundings of the auditorium might be made a distinct feature of the park and one to be enjoyed at all times."[128] Gallagher then enlarged upon this idea by designing an island arrangement to become the stage, to be scenic from many directions, with flower gardens as the backdrop to the east along a path from the East Arch.[129] None of these schemes was pursued. Instead, although Gallagher had strongly advised against using the area for baseball and other games for larger boys, activities which he felt should be restricted to the Middle Division, this is how the 3-acre space at the bottom of the Reservoir was used in the summer. In the winter it was flooded for skating. Access was by a somewhat precarious "long wooden stairway down the forty foot walled slope" until a cut was made in the reservoir embankment.[130] [Figure 6-25]

Figure 6-25: Reservoir drained, c. 1925. Source: courtesy James Lecky.

The Gardens and Other Plantings of the Southern Division

The Flower Gardens

The elaborate flower terraces of the Southern Division gave Branch Brook Park a unique character for an urban neighborhood park. A product of 19th century gardenesque taste, these varied gardens were both an asset and a liability for the Park Commission. Although they were enjoyed by the public from their early construction, they had been expensive to build and plant, even to the incomplete state in which Olmsted Brothers found them, and they were labor-intensive to maintain. Even though John Charles Olmsted was told from the outset that his design work could not change these terraces, much of the early planning and expense for this Division was directed toward finishing the architectural elements – the paths, stairs, walls, shelters and pergolas —which were necessary to complete the original garden concept, but which had not been accomplished under Barrett and Bogart's tenure. And within this new planning, some subtle improvements to the design structure and some rearrangement of planting, were managed.[131]

The historic images from the first decade of Olmsted Brothers' involvement reveal dense planting of bright-hued perennials and annuals, some with exotic leaves, planted throughout the intricate parterre beds. On the slopes around these beds were plantings of shrubs and small trees, sometimes in groupings set in turf which separated the garden 'rooms,' sometimes as individual plants arranged according to elaborate patterns around benches. The 'bedding out' plantings in the parterres must have been chosen mostly by gardeners of the Park Commission staff, since from these early years the evidence in the correspondence or planting lists indicates only minimal Olmsted involvement in these plant selections.[132] [Figures 6-26, 6-27, 6-28]

However, by August of 1899, anticipating the construction of a shelter for Meeker Mound (the Octagonal Shelter) and one for the top of the Parker Street slope near Fifth Avenue, as well as various arbors for the gardens, the Olmsted firm analyzed the plantings surrounding these areas. Their "Notes on Proposed Treatment in Regard to Planting" reviewed the existing plantings throughout the entire Southern Division, making recommendations for relocating some trees and shrubs, adding others. In the garden area in particular, their suggestions for the separating slopes incorporated ground covers, herbaceous material, bulbs, large and small-scale shrubs, and carefully placed trees. What is most unusual for an Olmsted planting palette is the number of colored-foliaged materials recommended to create distinct patterns. On either side of the lotus pool, extending to the lakeside edge of Meeker Mound, golden-foliaged shrubs were to be used, such as Philadelphus foliis aurea, Kerria japonica argentea variegata. Beneath the Parker Street shelter and along the eastern slope of the Promenade walk, purple-foliaged shrubbery was to be considered, such as purple hazel, barberry, corylus avellana atropurpurea, and prunus pissardi. More usual for Olmsted plantings was the use of "prickly and twiggy shrubs," such as aralia cydonia, rhamnus or viburnum, in areas where cross-cutting was to be discouraged, such as along the sloping edge at Fifth and Parker.[133]

Figure 6-26: Looking north over the Box Garden. JCO photograph, 1898. Source: Photograph #2121-118, ONHS.

Figure 6-27: Looking north, just east of the Lotus Garden. E.F. Keller photograph, c. 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-138, ONHS.

Working with the Carrère and Hastings office, JCO refined their designs for the two shelters for the area. Installed atop Meeker Mound by the fall of 1899, the Octagonal Shelter required careful attention to drainage and the planting of its sloped sides to prevent erosion, while not limiting the view.[134] [See Figure 6-6] The Parker Hill Shelter required a flight of steps rather than a sloping walk up its steep bank. [See Figure 4-4] Instead of the seats, "heavy and dignified to harmonize with the shelters," which Carrère and Hastings and John Olmsted had wanted, "cheap stock settees" were authorized due to budgetary concerns.[135]

Three of the seven arbors designed for the park by the architects were located in the gardens: two simple

Figure 6-28: Looking north across South Diamond Garden. Note the Octagon Shelter with the Arbors and small shelter across the lake at the Concert Grove. In the right distance is the tall chimney of the Licorice factory. E.F. Keller photograph, c. 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-139.

rectangular structures across the 20-foot wide Promenade Walk on either side of the garden's central axis,[136] and a more complex two levelled square arbor at the western end of the so-called Pine Tree Garden, on axis with Sixth Avenue.[137] These arbors were rustic in character but elegant in proportions. Constructed of 10-foot high, slightly tapered chestnut posts ("the bark to be stripped without injuring the surface of log by pounding with a mallet when green"), with an open overhead of pine beams (some 5" x12" and others 7"x 8"), these structures were intended to be thickly covered with various vines to provide a place shaded and sometimes fragrant resting place with a view over the flower beds to the lake. Planting consisted of wisteria and various euonymus cultivars, among other vines.[138] [Figures 6-29; 6-30]

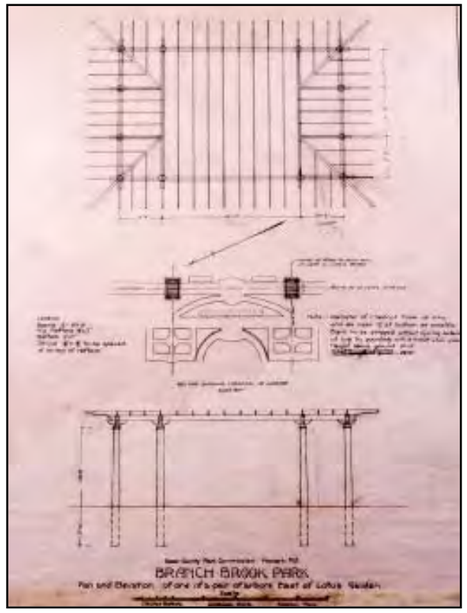

Figure 6-29: Plan and Elevation of one of a pair of Arbors, east of the Lotus Garden, Plan #2121-237, 15 August 1899.

In addition to the arbors, the Promenade was also decorated by a "heroic-sized bronze bust of Mendelssohn" won at the 'saengerfest' by the German United Singers of Newark. Before the Park Commission would accept this sculpture, created by "J.M. Didusch & Sons, Sculptors, Baltimore Md.," it requested a review of the work on its artistic merits by a committee from the National Sculpture Society, headed by noted sculptor, J. Q. A. Ward. John Olmsted, when consulted on the placement of the bust, had suggested Ward among others (D.C. French, Augustus St. Gaudens and Frederick MacMonnies). With this group's approval, and the donation of a granite pedestal, this feature was installed in the turf "ten feet more or less east of the long straight walked designated in our plan for Branch Brook Park 'The Promenade' and to be also on the centre line extended of Sixth Avenue." [139] [Figure 6-31] At the unveiling observance on May 23, 1903, Park Commission President, Cyrus Peck expressed the Board's gratitude for this "public-spirited act," noting that the "parks are created for the people and it is a great satisfaction to have the people contribute in this way to their adornment." While the Olmsted firm did not necessarily agree with decorating their park designs with sculptural objects, they frequently had to work with park commissions to find appropriate accommodations. Their experienced advice resulted in the Park Commission's standard for the entire system, to accept only "decorations of real merit in the parks" after approval from "competent experts."[140]

Figure 6-30: Arbors along Promenade, c. 1900. Source: Kelsey, The First County Park System, after p.232.

By October1909, plantings throughout all the divisions of the park were in need of review, partly due to sightline issues with the increased use of automobiles. John Olmsted and Percival Gallagher, joined by the Olmsted firm's plantsman, Hans J. Koehler, walked the park, making intricate notes on the General Plan[141] which then translated into defined recommendations in March 1910. Koehler and Holocek, the park department gardener, worked together to implement some of these replanting suggestions on the ground. In particular, they wanted new plantings around the Octagon Mound consisting of a berberis hedge at the top, while "extending, irregularly down the slopes, is to be a mass of Rosa lucida interspersed with a few larger growing shrubs, such as Rhodotypos, Berberis thungergii, Ligustrum regelianum, etc., and below the Rosa lucida the planting is to be terminated by Lonicera japonica." They included a list of trees intended for use on the east side to provide more shade in that area. Some of these trees were of the "gardenesque" type, "...our idea being to differentiate the tree effect of this locality from that existing or called for in other parts of the park." Among them were 55 tall-trunked American elms to replace the Norway Maples existing along the Promenade.[142] [Figure 6-32]

Figure 6-31: Mendelssohn bust on pedestal in flower garden. Note the Promenade Arbor in the background. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

Figure 6-32: Promenade with maturing trees. Pedestal of Mendelssohn bust can be seen in background right. (no date). Source: Newark Public Library photograph collection.

Gallagher was asked to review the "hardy gardens" for both Branch Brook and Orange Parks the following fall, because "the gardens have run out," due to the deterioration of the plantings and the resultant loss of "color harmony" and sequence of bloom. In response, he reminded Superintendent Reynolds that Olmsted Brothers did not design these gardens originally and did not have precise plans of their dimensions or their intended designed character. He continued, "It is our experience that in the planting of herbaceous plants and flowers in general much more attention must be paid not only to the question of composition but as to the habit of growth and durability of the plants for the purposes."[143] In his 23-page report, which included Westside and Orange Parks, Gallagher analyzed Branch Brook Park in terms of the general structure of the gardens, recommending remedies for long-standing defects. He noted that

> *"Except for the introduction of vine arbors and a certain amount of shrub planting no change has been made in the design and several changes suggested on our general plan have never been carried out. The opportunity, therefore, seems appropriate for us to bring this more important matter to your attention, particularly as the changes would enhance the charm and beauty of the gardens themselves."*

The opportunity had finally arrived to state what John Charles Olmsted had been proscribed from expressing from the beginning of the project.[144]

In Gallagher's evaluation, the chief defect of the gardens was "that while there was an attempt to relate the gardens to one another, yet in reality because of the very extent of the scheme, it is impossible to appreciate their relationship." The core of the composition, the central axis through the Lotus Garden, was "undefined on the ground," with only a zigzag path possible from top to bottom of the slope. From the Promenade, "the chief point of view," it was impossible to follow the center "without losing all sense of the intended balanced composition of these gardens…thus losing the effectiveness of the entire scheme." He continued, "When we advised the establishment of the Music Court on the opposite side of the lake it was with the purpose of strengthening the effectiveness of this garden arrangement, and to define its axis now would be an improvement of more than local importance."[145]

Gallagher made specific recommendations concerning various sections of the gardens. For example, the connection between related elements, such as the two Diamond Gardens, was made incomprehensible by their distance from each other. He therefore recommended eliminating them, their accompanying walls and long flights of steps, recontouring the area "to conform to the natural sweep of the ground." The Dutch Garden and its rectangular panel, "strong and bold in design and serve well to terminate the long 'Promenade,'" required a balustrade to finish its low retaining wall. Since the evergreen retinosporas of the surrounding beds were overgrown, constricting their accompanying flowers, these panel plantings should be improved. The seating alcoves on the curving walk below the Dutch Garden interfered with the walk's "simple character" and should be eliminated.[146]

The English Garden required considerable revision of its design and paths around it, because of the large amount of pedestrian traffic passing through it (students from the High School going to and from the Middle Division playfields). Rearranging the paths to divert the traffic, he added grass panels to eliminate some of the macadam surface, removed plants which had reached their prime. replacing some of them with a two to three foot high hedge to retain the sense of enclosure. The Horseshoe and Lotus Gardens with the accompanying small pools, "an interesting arrangement," required steps on axis with them and rearrangements of some of the herbaceous and small shrubby material. He praised the plantings in two formal gardens on either side of the Horseshoe Garden, suggesting only the "careful consideration of the proportion of one color to another and one mass to another," while other perennial bank plantings had to be completely renovated using "broad stretches of ground covering plants." The Pine-Tree Garden needed revision of its color combinations, while the Promenade should be extended to the south arbor to strengthen "the avenue effect of the trees."[147]

The specific recommendations for design and planting changes were incorporated into a series of plans with accompanying planting lists, produced in February and March 1912, in order to get the gardens ready for spring planting.[148] This work appears to have been carried out, with Gallagher's continued oversight.[149] In late 1930, a leader of the Morristown Garden Club, Ella Porter McKinney, consulted by Commissioner Robert Sinclair, again made recommendations for the gardens. She suggested that the "constant tramping of the beds which lie across the shortest line to the water could be ameliorated, perhaps eliminated, by carrying to completion the architectural suggestion in the original plan by Olmstead [sic] Brothers…wide steps down the bank in axial relation to the Band Stand across the lake. Through this a magnificent sweep of design is provided as well as an escape from the upper terrace…" Recommending specific herbaceous materials which could be added, she praised the keen interest and skillful management of the park's horticulturalist, Carl Witte, reminding the Park Commission that "Restoration of gardens cannot be done in the twinkling of an eye. We hope by what some one has called the 'inevitability of gradualness' to bring the perennial plantings to the point of beauty originally planned."[150]

Other Plantings

Elsewhere in the Southern Division, the plantings were treated in the more typical Olmsted manner of irregular curvilinear beds, densely planted with layered material. The plant choices were in a richly texured palette of major trees (beeches, cucumber magnolias, elms, maples, oaks, etc.); smaller trees (birches, dogwoods, hawthorns, hornbeams, poplars, redbuds, witchhazels, etc.); evergreens (pines and hemlocks); and an extraordinarily varied shrub layer containing native and exotic material, broad-leaved and needle evergreens and deciduous shrubs, both flowering and leafy. Included in the list, in addition to various ground covers (among these, xanthorriza, yellow-root, a popular Olmsted plant) were also various sub-shrubs such as hypericum and daphne, and herbaceous material such as ferns, trilllium and siberian iris, among others.[151] Some of this material was nursery stock, with an emphasis on local nurseries; other plants were collected from nearby areas or from as far away as North Carolina woods. The Arnold Arboretum even supplied azalea seeds for propagation.[152]

Describing the planting plan to landscape architect Elsa Rehmann, an accomplished author and teacher as well as a Newark native, Olmsted partner James F. Dawson credited John C. Olmsted with the original planting scheme, which accommodated to the formal designs but treated the edges in "a natural condition with trees and shrubs in order to shut out the unsightly buildings along its borders."[153] In fact, the border plantations were of particular importance to screen out or mitigate such buildings as the brewery at Seventh Avenue, or the tall chimney of the pumping station along Clifton Avenue; to hide, to the extent possible, the vehicular, trolley and train traffic along Orange Street and Eighth Avenue; and to keep at bay the commercial traffic, though increasingly sparse, of the barges along the Morris Canal. The canal borders were given particular attention in the planting schemes, the steep slopes mounded to permit a dense screen planting. According to the plan, the edge of the tow path (ultimately fenced) was lined with a hedge of prickly aralia, beneath which was a staggered row of hemlocks and some poplars, underplanted with various shrubs and ground covers. At the bottom of the slope, along the western side of the western park drive, English elms were to be planted, to relate to the American elms placed on the eastern side of this drive.[154] This dense all-season screen needed the hemlocks to "give suitable height and interesting outline." Otherwise, this extended area of shrubbery is apt "to appear monotonous and uninteresting, and the existing clothes-yards, outbuildings,...will seriously affect the enjoyment and restfulness to be derived from the contemplation of park landscape."[155] Unfortunately, the hemlocks were not a successful planting, due to the shade created by the faster-growing accompanying deciduous shrubs; Gallagher suggested substituting Austrian pines as an alternative. After the 1909 park-wide planting evaluation the recommendation for replanting the canal length was " a mixture of trees, in part selected from the nursery, comprising various kinds of oaks, ash, Austrian and Scotch pines, and strong growing shrubbery such as Viburnum, Cornus, Ligustrum, etc, which can be obtained from the thinnings."[156]

Consideration of using such a distinctly "gardensesque plant" as the Japanese cherry began as early as 1913 with a request from the Commission secretary Alonzo Church. Gallagher's response was that "it may very well

have a place in certain of the parks…in such places as would be appropriate for flower gardening" but that Olmsted Brothers would need to advise on the location.[157] After the development of Branch Brook Park Extension in the late 1920s, and the success of its extensive Japanese cherry tree display as a result of the Fuld family philanthropy, the Park Commission had Olmsted Brothers report on the use of these trees elsewhere in the system. The issue was explored by Hans Koehler of the firm and Carl Witte of the park staff who concluded that, although cherry trees could be used elsewhere, they should not to compete with the "climax" of the presentation as intended in the Branch Brook Park Extension. With that in mind, they recommended that cherry trees could be used on Meeker Mound and a sizable group established further north of the flower garden. "Whether to make the substitution gradually or all at once is a matter of policy and expediency rather than of esthetics." By 1934, cherry trees had been added to the lakeside planting. [158]

The Park Perimeter and the Parklands Beyond

A clear delineation of the boundary was an important aspect of an Olmsted park, an element to separate the park landscape from the city, while still being inviting and accessible. In the Southern Division of Branch Brook Park, the irregular eastern and the northern and southern boundaries were marked by various streets, with abutting neighborhoods filled with park users. The western line formed by the Morris Canal was, instead, problematic, since, due to its elevation, it created an intrusion, potentially destructive to park values. Additionally, its fate as a waterway was unclear, as was the disposition of its land. More than that, it was an unbreachable barrier which necessitated expensive bridges to provide park access from the communities beyond. Easy park accessibility was critical, though this was not to be totally unfettered. Distinct areas of entrance were important to protect the park landscape from errant trampling. Therefore, more than the heavy boundary planting, the park perimeter was to be defined by a fence.

Exploring fence alternatives in his October 1898 examination of the park lands, John Olmsted noted that the fence in use at that time along Bloomfield Avenue at the canal "would be suitable for use throughout the whole length of the canal boundary of the park. This boundary will, in general, be thickly planted and will be harder than any other to protect from undesirable intrusion. A high fence and one that is difficult to scale, is, therefore of the first importance." Along the other boundaries, as a matter of economy in maintenance, a fence of about 4-1/2 feet with a stout durable picket was needed "with foot entrances at reasonable intervals so that the neighboring population will have no ground for any reasonable complaint as to being shut out from the use of the park." "As the object of the fence is not to exclude the view, but merely to prevent careless persons from trespassing upon the plantations, this form of fence seems to be best adapted to the purpose."[159] The fence design was given to Carrère and Hastings to refine, who estimated that the iron picket enclosure from Eighth Avenue along Clifton, Sixth, Parker and Fifth would cost $7,000. In July the contract, awarded to the Anchor Post Co. of New York, was increased by the addition of a fence enclosure for "Garside Square," as the Olmsted firm labeled the two lots from Clifton Avenue to Garside Street.[160] By the end of1899 the fence installation was completed, with various foot entrances along the sidewalk edge.[161] Still unresolved, however, was the issue of fencing along the canal edge, which involved establishing the exact boundary along the irregular tow path with the owner, the Lehigh Valley Railroad Co. The line decided upon by engineers from both the Canal Co. and the Park Commission, approximately 12 feet from the water, made for a "ragged" fence line, which the Olmsted firm advised be planted with trees.[162]

The Park Commission owned three parcels of land beyond the park perimeter: the acreage to Sussex Avenue between the Canal and Duryea Street, intended to become the main southerly entrance; the two lots between Clifton Avenue and Garside Street, acquired to protect the view to the Palisades; and various triangles of land on the west side of the Canal, which were to coordinate with anticipated bridges across the Canal. The Sussex land became a playground in 1906 when the plan for an Orange Street bridge/underpass was abandoned. Within a well-planted surround, a running track and gymnastic apparatus were installed, with a shelter added in 1908. This space became a popular location for the field games, for softball and basketball, as well as for Fourth of July fireworks.[163] In 1937, this Park Commission holding was augmented by a strip of land from the abandoned canal tow path, but in 1964 much of the entire area was taken by the New Jersey Highway Department for the new Route 280.[164]

Development of the western parcels, part of the acquisition from the Water Commission holdings, was hindered by the lack of bridges across the canal to integrate these lands into the general park planning. Some of this land around Third Street, where Supt. McMillan lived, was in what John Olmsted called a "fairly good class" neighborhood and therefore would warrant some investment. This was also near the prestigious Newark Academy, the premier boys' preparatory school for the city, which would benefit from the proximity of good playfields. Moreover, this land was also held in case the canal was abandoned, so that a good boundary street could be developed as a park edge definition.[165] Much of the planning for these lands came during 1901, and later in 1904 when the abandonment of the canal was under consideration, in conjunction with the designs for the southern Orange Street entrance to the park.[166] The 1901 General Plan for Branch Brook Park treats this land as a playground with shelter, wading pool and Little Folks Lawn [See Figure 5-9] ; but in providing an overall estimate of construction costs in late 1901, most of the playground features were eliminated due to cost. The neighbors on the west at that time favored using the land for an administration building to replace the old frame structure next to the pumping station at 60 Clifton Avenue. This idea, likewise, did not flourish.[167]

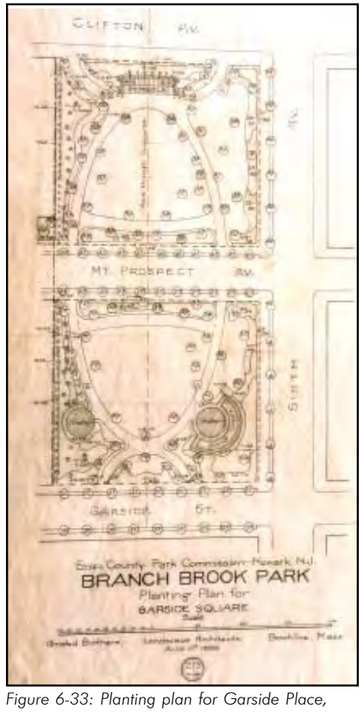

Figure 6-33: Planting plan for Garside Place, Plan #2121-273, sheet 1. 2 September 1899. Source: ONHS.

An administration building for the Park Commission was finally constructed on the Garside parcels. These two blocks, originally considered viewshed protection for the Clifton Concourse, were first developed by Olmsted Brothers as a passive overlook and playground space. Preliminary grading began in March 1899, with planning for fences and arbors assigned to Carrère and Hastings under JCO review. Although the site was bisected by Prospect Street, the design treated the two blocks as one large oval with heavy screen plantings around the periphery and arbors on each block. [Figure 6-33] Fencing enclosed each area with defined foot entrances. By the fall of 1899, tree and shrub planting was underway, with "great quantities of prickly shrubs well-spaced" to accompany the iron picket enclosure. The intended arbors were rejected by Commissioner Vanderpool as an economy measure, leaving the space, in JCO's opinion, as "tame and featureless

without it."[168]

There is no record of the popularity of these spaces, rather peripheral to the main park active space. Therefore, the site was available in 1914, with a $100,000 appropriation, for the Park Commission to embark upon its long-held wish to construct a new Administration building, with the hope that the old building and its neighbor, the pumping station, could be converted to attractive park land. New York architect H. Van Buren Magonigle set his Italianate brick and terra cotta structure toward the back of the lot, leaving room for attractive formal front gardens, intending this to be a "decided architectural addition to the park and the surrounding neighborhood." The grounds for the building, finished in 1916, were planted in 1917.[169] The second block between Prospect and Garside continued to serve as a playground, with wading pool, sand courts.[170]

In conjunction with the some of the park planning for the Extension , Gallagher was asked to consult on the Administration entrance. He made recommendations for restructuring the space providing walk material alternatives and suggesting various plantings to enhance this sunken entry garden.[171]

Chapter 6 Endnotes

[1] The 1898 survey of the Southern Division was created in two parts: Plan #2121-52, entitled "Topography of portion of Branch Brook Park between the ravine walk and 8th Ave., including the Sussex approach," dated Nov. 1, 1898; and Plan #2121-87, entitled "Map of a Portion of Branch Brook Park showing existing conditions," dated Dec. 1898 [covering the area from the entrance drive to 5th Avenue].
[2] Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 12 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:527-31; JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[3] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[4] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 42; JCO, Report of Visit, 19 January 1899, OAR, E10:42-42A; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 12 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:527-31; JCO, Report of Visit, 28 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 3-4 January 1899, OAR, E10:26.
[5] JCO, Report of Visit, 28 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[6] Archibald A. Hill, "The Essex County Park System," in *Charities and the Commons*, 7 September 1907, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[7] JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 October 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 14-16 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; see Plans #2121-321, 678.
[8] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Alonzo Church, 28 July 1904, OAR, B2120 [f9].
[9] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[10] JCO to A.M. Reynolds, 12 December 1904, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[11] Olmsted Brothers, "Report of Investigation Regarding the Use of Japanese Cherries," 6 April 1932, OAR, B2120 [f15]; 1932-34 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).
[12] JCO, Report of Visit, 22 August 1898, OAR, E10:3; JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[13] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[14] 1900 *Annual Report*, p. 19; 1909 *Annual Report*, pp. 9-10; William S. Manning to Olmsted Brothers, 1 October 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]; see also Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 7 October 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].
[15] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 47; 1903 Annual Report, p. 15; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 October 1898, OAR, E10:16.
[16] 1907 *Annual Report*, pp. 27-28.
[17] Ibid.; 1926 *Annual Report*, p. 8.
[18] See Plan #2121-71.
[19] JCO, Report of Visit, 10 November 1898, OAR, E10:19; JCO, Report of Visit, 22-23 November 1898, OAR, E10:24.
[20] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 18 April 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 5 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A66:323-25; Olmsted Brothers to John M. Carrère, 12 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A66:384.
[21] JCO, Report of Meeting, 12 September 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 10 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 17 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[22] 1900 *Annual Report*, pp. 5-6.
[23] 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[24] 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 10.
[25] Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 3 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:793.
[26] 1909 *Annual Report*, p. 11.
[27] F.A. Wright, Rossiter and Wright, to Olmsted Brothers, 11 January 1906, OAR, B2120 [f12]; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to F.A. Wright, Rossiter and Wright, 12 January 1906, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[28] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 28 October 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11]; JCO, Report of Visit, 3 and 7 April 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[29] 1910 *Annual Report*, pp. 35-37; 1914 *Annual Report*, p. 16; 1940 *Annual Report*, p. 11.
[30] Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 21 April 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2], B2120 [f3]; JCO, Report of Visit, 30 April 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 9 May 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[31] 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 12.
[32] 1911 *Annual Report*, p. 6; 1922 *Annual Report*, p. 18; 1931 *Annual Report* (unpaginated), ca. p. 13.
[33] 1906 *Annual Report*, pp. 10-11.
[34] 1930 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).
[35] 1907 *Annual Report*, pp. 34-35; 1911 *Annual Report,* p. 6.
[36] 1912 *Annual Report*, p. 17; 1913 *Annual Report*, p. 23.
[37] 1913 *Annual Report*, p. 11; 1916 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-13; 1922 *Annual Report*, p. 18; 1935 *Annual Report*, p. 13.
[38] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A.
[39] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].
[40] JCO, Report of Meeting, 9 November 1898, OAR, E10:17. The third underpass is indicated on Plan #2121-

62.
[41] JCO to John M. Carrère, 11 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:517-21.
[42] Carrère and Hastings to JCO, 12 January 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 26 September 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[43] JCO, Report of Visit, 3 October 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 30 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:473-75; see planting plan #2121-318. The total cost of both "subway bridges" was $18,985.00. 1898-99 *Annual Report,* p. 8.
[44] JCO, Report of Visit, 7 May 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]. This condition is apparent on Photos #2121-53, 141 (boulders seem larger) and 155 (with Concourse Hill shelter).
[45] The various "rooms" on the Barrett and Bogart plan were unlabeled. The Olmsted General Plan (#2121-501) gives names to the park sections and features, which, in fact, helps to identify the various park locations. In their 1897 Report, Barrett and Bogart suggested that these overlooks were for viewing the Orange Mountains, the Palisades, and for "an open view of the park." "Landscape Architects' Report," 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 44.
[46] Ibid.; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to A.M. Reynolds, 7 March 1910, OAR, B2121 [f2]; 1917 *Annual Report*, p. 7.
[47] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 28 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A61:682-84; JCO, Report of Visit, 4 January 1899, OAR, E10:39; Photo #2121-121.
[48] [Olmsted Brothers] to Carrère and Hastings, 26 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:57-59; JCO, Report of Meeting, 8 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 7 February 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[49] JCO, Report of Meeting, 26 September 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 7 November 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 13; Plans #2121-97, 128 and 471.
[50] See Gallagher's comments in the "Gardens and Other Plantings" section of this chapter.
[51] Plans #2121-65, 97, 128, 289 and 351.
[52] [Olmsted Brothers] to H.J. Cole, 14 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:873; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 22 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:385-89.
[53] JCO, Report of Visit, 22 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 22 December 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 10 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[54] JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[55] JCO, Report of Visit, 10-11 July 1899, OAR, E10:87-87E; 1900 *Annual Report,* p. 6.
[56] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 42; Plans #2121-62, 72, 82 and 105; see also planting plan #2121-327.
[57] Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 21 March 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:279-81; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 5 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:452; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 12 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:527-31.
[58] JCO, Report of Meeting, 8 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 22 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 8.
[59] JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 22 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[60] 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 10.
[61] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 22 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:385-89; JCO, Report of Visit, 29 November 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 5 December 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].
[62] Plans #2121-570-75; 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 43. Plan #2121-572 provided the most articulated entrance design.
[63] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 8; JCO, Report of Meeting, 28 January 1902, OAR, B2120 [f6]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 6 November 1902, OAR, B2120 [f6]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 26 November 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; JCO, Report of Visit, 29 November 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 5 December 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; JCO to A.M. Reynolds, 5 December 1904, OAR, B2121 [f2]; 1904-5 *Annual Report*,
pp. 9-10.
[64] Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1]; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 43; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 April 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]; see topographic Plans #2121-33 and 68; Plans #2121-798, 427 and 429.
[65] Olmsted Brothers to JCO, 8 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:862. In the Northern and Middle Divisions, as an economy measure, the paving only covered 18 feet of the 40-foot width, but it is not clear whether that was true in the Southern Division. JCO, Report of Meeting, 21 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[66] [Olmsted Brothers] to Howard J. Cole, 30 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:100-103.
[67] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Howard J. Cole, 23 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:398-400.
[68] JCO objected to the curbing set along the west side of the East drive adjoining the Reservoir, which was made up of straight pieces instead of pieces cut on a radius, producing "an extremely ugly and unworkmanlike effect and entirely contrary…to our wishes." Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to H.J. Cole, 15 December 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[69] 1913 *Annual Report*, p. 10; 1916 *Annual Report*, p. 8; 1918 *Annual Report*, pp. 7-8.
[70] Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A:60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 28 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A61:682-84; Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 12 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:527-31; [Olmsted Brothers] to H.J. Cole, 14 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:873; JCO, Report of Meeting, 21 November 1899, OAR B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 7 February 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[71] The planting plan and list is Plan #2121-330.
[72] Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 28 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A61:682-84; Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[73] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 18 May 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:857-58.
[74] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A (noting, among other things, that Supt. McMillan lived at 120 Third Street); Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 28 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A61:674-77; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 5 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:458-62.
[75] JCO, Report of Visit, 27 September 1898, OAR, E10:13; Plans #2121-286, 2121-290.
[76] Plans #2121-312 and 342.
[77] Howard J. Cole to Olmsted Brothers, 19 April 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 30 April 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[78] JCO, Report of Visit, 6 January 1899, OAR, E10:29; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 3 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:793; Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 May 1899, OAR, E10:78-78A; JCO, Report of Visit, 20 June 1899, OAR, E10:86; JCO, Report of Visit, 1 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; [Olmsted Brothers] to Carrère and Hastings, 7 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:771-72.
[79] Plans #2121-294, 339.

[80] JCO, Report of Meeting, September 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 12 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 17 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[81] JCO to G. Bramhall, 30 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[82] Ibid.
[83] In October 1899, the estimate for construction needed immediately for the Southern Division alone was $393,000.00, not including planting. JCO, Report of Meeting, 10 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[84] Plans #2121-239, 288, 291; JCO, Report of Visit, 8 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1];1900 Annual Report, pp. 5-6.
[85] Plans #2121-712, 737.
[86] Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 4 January 1922, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Robert S. Sinclair to Olmsted Brothers, 28 September 1927, OAR, B2120 [f15]; Olmsted Brothers [Carl Rust Parker] to J.H. Philips, 4 October 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers, 15 October 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; K.V.C. Wallace to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 17 November 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[87] JCO, Report of Visit, 29 August 1898, OAR, E10:4-4A; JCO, Report of Visit, 12 September 1898, OAR, E10:9; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 2 March 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:86; Olsmted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 20 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:602; Plans #2121-100, 120, 129, etc.
[88] JCO to "Ned" [Edward Sturgis?], 18 February 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]. At the same time, he was planning to use lindens in the Orange Park Concert Grove to differentiate the parks. Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 24 February 1899, OAR, 2121 A64:15-16.
[89] Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 28 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:685; JCO, Report of Visit, 12 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; see Plans #2121-150, 328, 576. Note that the walk and the canal bridge continue to be shown on the plans even though they are never implemented.
[90] Plan #2121-328.
[91] JCO, Report of Visit, 19 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 May 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]; 1900 *Annual Report*, pp. 5-6; 1901 *Annual Report,* p. 12.
[92] Plan #2121-161, not extant in the ONHS collection.
[93] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 21 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:985; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; 1900 *Annual Report*, pp. 5-6. These arbors are clearly delineated on Plan #2121-500, preliminary to the General Plan, #2121-501.
[94] JCO, Report of Meeting, 3 October 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Charles Ackerman, 16 October 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:691; Photo #2121-135. There is no record of when the earlier shelter was removed, or whether a temporary structure was installed. Ackerman's plan for these buildings (Plan #2121-556, sheets 1-4) is in the ONHS collection. The "Approximate Estimate of Construction" of October 8, 1901 (OAR, B2120 [f5]) shows that in addition to a bandstand, a "Concert Grove shelter and toilet" were contemplated. However, a subsequent letter stated, "we would omit, as a measure of economy in maintenance, the proposed shelter or toilet house north of the concert grove," anticipating that the sand court shelter and the boathouse (at its still planned location north of the proposed bridge over the lake) would serve the concert grove. Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 7 November 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[95] The Watertown park was called variously Pinnacle or Thompson Park, Job #175. The notable Boston architects Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge produced plans for a bandstand for this park in 1901 (Plans #175-257 and 281).
[96] 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 15-16; Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 3 February 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8]; JCO to Charles Ackerman, 12 February 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8]; Olmsted Brothers to Charles Ackerman, 19 February 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; Plan #2121-665a; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, pp. 12, 20.
[97] The boat landing cost $6,244.00. 1904 *Annual Report,* p. 10.
[98] 1923 *Annual Report*, p. 12; 1927 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1932-34 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1938 *Annual Report*, pp. 18-19.
[99] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to A.M. Reynolds, 2 September 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3]. The comfort stations cost $14,882.00. 1921 *Annual Report*, p. 13. Plans are in the collection at the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs (hereinafter "ECDPRCA").
[100] Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 18 July 1923, OAR, B2121 [f3]; 1924 *Annual Report*, p. 25.
[101] Percival Gallagher, Report of Visit, 14-15 July 1921, OAR, B2120 [f14]; Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 25 January 1922, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Plans #2121-694, 695, 696.
[102] Upon the termination of the concessionaire leases in 1930, the Park Commission took over the refectories throughout all the parks, both for the profit and to help with work distribution during the Depression. 1930 *Annual Report* (unpaginated), c. p. 11.
[103] "Landscape Architects' Report," 1897 *Annual Report*, pp. 44-45.
[104] JCO, Report of Visit, 3-4 January 1899, OAR, E10:28; JCO, Report of Visit, 6 January 1899, OAR, E10:29.
[105] Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Cyrus Peck, 12 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:527-31.
[106] JCO, Report of Meeting, 16 May 1899, OAR, E10:72-72A; 1900 *Annual Report*, p. 5; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 May 1899, OAR, E10:78-78A; JCO, Report of Visit, 10-11 July 1899, OAR, E10:87-87E; [Olmsted Brothers] to H.J. Cole, 29 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:546-48; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]. Unfortunately, most of the plans for these areas are not extant in the ONHS collection.
[107] JCO, Report of Visit, 5 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[108] The shelter/sand court cost $6,020.00, the lavatory, $10,230.00. 1899 *Annual Report,* pp. 7-8. JCO, Report of Meeting, 26 September 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 October 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[109] See Plan #2121-327 with accompanying planting list.
[110] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Hans J. Koehler, 18 December 1909, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[111] JCO, Meeting Notes, 8 June 1899, OAR, E10:83.
[112] JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Alonzo Church, 23 April 1904, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO to W.S. Manning, 30 April 1904, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Plan #2121-633. By this time, JCO, at age 52, had his own young daughters, so his familiarity with playground needs was now more than academic.
[113] Archibald A. Hill, "The Essex County Park System," in *Charities and the Commons*, 7 September 1907, OAR, B2120 [f12]; 1912 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[114] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 12 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 18 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[115] "Landscape Architects' Report," 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 44. Without topographic surveys predating the Barrett and Bogart work, it is difficult to ascertain how much of the grade they changed, except from scant references throughout the Olmsted correspondence.
[116] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 50; 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 13-14. The 1914 *Annual Report* notes (at p. 9) that

this wooden building had formerly been "a saloon and dance hall." As for the pumping station, the Commission called this building "an ugly break in the beautiful parklike territory that surrounds it, and into which it intrudes in a most offensive manner." 1917 Annual Report, p. 8. The Park Commission offices were for many years at 800 Broad Street. See Hans J. Koehler to Olmsted Brothers, 27 March 1902, OAR, B2120 [f6].

[117] JCO, Report of Visit, 12 September 1898, OAR, E10:9; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 27 August 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:12-24, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1].

[118] JCO, Report of Visit, 6 January 1899, OAR, E10:29; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 7 June 1899, OAR, 2120 A66:75; JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 October 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].

[119] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 25 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:419; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 7 February 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; see Plans #2121-97, 128, 243, 249 and 292.

[120] JCO, Report of Visit, 19 June 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]; Plan #2121-230. This plan is no longer extant in the ONHS collection, but exists at the ECDPRCA.

[121] Plan #2121-327, with its accompanying list.

[122] Emil Mische, Report of Visit, 30 May 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers [Emil Mische] to William S. Manning, 1 August 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].

[123] 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 12-13; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 27 June 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]; Plans #2121-604 and 607.

[124] 1914 Annual Report, pp. 13-15.

[125] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers [attn: Percival Gallagher], 8 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 12 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3]; 1920 Annual Report, pp. 7-8.

[126] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 12 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3].

[127] 1921 *Annual Report*, pp. 14-15.

[128] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 12 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3].

[129] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 18 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Plan #2121-693.

[130] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 12 December 1920, OAR, B2121 [f3]; 1942 *Annual_Report*, p. 11. A photograph in the 1925 *Annual Report* (p. 8) shows the drained Reservoir with a grassy base.

[131] JCO, Report of Visit, 11 February 1898, OAR, E10:1-1B.

[132] A Mr. Holocek emerges from the correspondence as someone with good plant sense who apparently worked his way through the ranks to become the gardener supervising flower bed planting in several of the parks. By the 1920s, Carl Witte seems to be in charge of the park staff's horticultural team. Plan #2121-563 provides a list of plant materials, but these are for the slopes and beds surrounding the parterre gardens.

[133] [Olmsted Brothers], "Notes on Proposed Treatment in Regard to Planting," 12 August 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]. This document coordinates with Plans #2121-304 and 305. It should be noted that among the recommendations are plants, such as Japanese knotweed, berberis and bittersweet, which are now considered invasives.

[134] A plan for this shelter, probably from Carrère and Hastings, with surrounding hedges, benches and flowerbeds, exists at ECDPRCA.

[135] Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 24 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:5-8; JCO, Report of Visit, 12 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 21 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].

[136] Plans #2121-237, 311 (the latter not extant).

[137] Plan #2121-242.

[138] Instruction notes on the various plans for the arbors, e.g., Plans #2121-237 and 242.

[139] 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 10-12; JCO, Report of Visit, 13-14 October, 1903, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO to Cyrus Peck, 13 November, 1903, OAR B2121 [f2].

[140] 1903 *Annual Report,* pp. 10-12.

[141] Plans #2121-675 and 676, sheets 1 and 2.

[142] JCO, Report of Visit, 5-6 October 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Hans J. Koehler, 18 December 1909, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to A.M. Reynolds, 7 March 1910, OAR, B2121 [f2]; A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 15 March 1910, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers [JCO], 23 August 1911, OAR, B2120 [f12].

[143] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 17 January 1912, OAR, B2120 [f13]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Alonzo Church, 16 September 1911, OAR, B2120 [f12].

[144] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 17 January 1912, OAR, B2120 [f13].

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Plans #2121-678 through 683 (not all extant at ONHS).

[149] 1913 *Annual Report*, p. 6; Hans J. Koehler, Report of Visit, 2-4 October 1913, OAR, B2120 [f13].

[150] Ella P. (Mrs. Colin) McKinney to Robert S. Sinclair (President, Essex County Park Commission), 31 December 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]. She also referred to "the new refectory with its setting of green" as a place where flowers could be placed, but it is not clear from the record if this was the structure which Gallagher had recommended for the Clifton Concourse and its vicinity.

[151] Plan #2121-327 and its list, dated October 1899. The records indicate that in some places, this rich palette was installed. A planting evaluation of August 1901 noted the need for additional plantings of rhododendron, kalmias and azaleas "to afford shade to the ferns and orchids…." Olmsted Brothers [Emil Mische] to William S. Manning, 1 August 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].

[152] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 28 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:690-91; 1919 *Annual Report*, pp. 7-8. Former Park Commissioner Frederick Kelsey was associated with a nursery which the Olmsted firm had used for materials for other jobs and somewhat for the Essex County jobs. However, his prices were not always modest enough for the restricted park budgets. Olmsted Brothers to G. Bramhall, 14 November 1899, OAR, 2120 A76:862.

[153] Elsa Rehmann to Olmsted Brothers, 19 October 1925, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers [James F. Dawson] to Elsa Rehmann, 20 October 1925, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to Elsa Rehmann, 24 October 1925, OAR, B2121 [f3]. Rehmann lived at 492 Mt. Prospect Avenue.

[154] Plan #2121-327.

[155] Plans #2121-327 and 564. Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 19 August 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].

[156] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Hans J. Koehler, 18 December 1909, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to A.M. Reynolds, 7 March 1910, OAR, B2121 [f2]. In 1904, Supt. Manning had noted that the hemlocks were "starving for light" among the taller shrubs. William S. Manning to Olmsted Brothers, 27

February 1904, OAR, B2120 [f8].
[157] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 13 November 1913, OAR, B2120 [f13]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 3 December 1913, OAR, B2120 [f13].
[158] [Olmsted Brothers], "Report of Investigation Regarding the Use of Japanese Cherries," 6 April 1932, OAR, B2120 [f15]; 1932-34 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).
[159] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 7 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:453-54; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 12 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:527.
[160] Carrère and Hastings to Essex County Park Commission, 10 April 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Essex County Park Commission and Anchor Post Co., contract, 5 July 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 1 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; [Olmsted Brothers] to Carrère and Hastings, 11 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:837.
[161] JCO, Report of Visit, 13 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 8.
[162] JCO, Report of Visit, 1 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; [Olmsted Brothers] to H.J. Cole, 24 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:12-16; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 October 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[163] 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 12; 1907 *Annual Report*, pp. 22-23; 1908 *Annual Report*, p. 13; 1909 *Annual Report*,
p. 11; 1910 *Annual Report*, p. 35. See also J.M. Lathrop and L.J.G. Gordon, Civil Engineers, *Atlas of City of Newark* (Philadelphia: A.H. Mueller, 1911) [hereinafter "the 1911 Atlas"], Vol. 1, Plate 4; E. Robinson, J.M. Lathrop and Thomas Flynn, *Robinson's Atlas of the City of Newark* (Newark: Elisha Robinson, 1926) [hereinafter "the 1926 Atlas"], Vol. 1, Plate 8.
[164] "Property Map—Grantors, Branch Brook Park—Southern Division," sheet 4 of 4, located at ECDPRCA.
[165] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; John T. Cunningham, *Newark* (Newark, 1988),
pp. 214-15; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[166] Plans #2121-564, 566, 570, 572, 574, 575, 622, 624 and 629, not all of which are extant in the ONHS collection.
[167] Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 22 July 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 7 November 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[168] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 22 March 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:289; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 24 June 1899, OAR, 2120 A66:253; [Olmsted Brothers] to Carrère and Hastings, 11 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:837; [Olmsted Brothers] to Carrère and Hastings, 26 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:57-59; [Olmsted Brothers] to W.S. Manning, 2 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:158; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 17 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[169] 1914 *Annual Report*, pp. 8-14; 1915 *Annual Report,* p. 13; 1916 *Annual Report*, p. 7; 1917 *Annual Report*,
pp. 7-8. The former building continued to stand, along with the pumping station.
[170] 1921 *Annual Report*, p. 13.
[171] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 5 April 1930, OAR, B2120 [f15]; Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 16 April 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Plan #2121-782a.

CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN IN THE MIDDLE DIVISION

Refining the plan and implementing the design on the ground was a less complex process for the Middle Division of Branch Brook Park than for the Southern Division. Construction to transform the irregular land, swampy in some places, dry in others, steeply sloped along its edges, into a lake and playfield, was fraught with engineering problems. These, however, were not as arduous to resolve as those in the South had been, where two divergent styles of design had to blend, where new construction had to merge as seamlessly as possible into the existing conditions, without too much interruption of on-going public use. The Middle required fewer plans to bring its design to fruition; [1] needed few architectural elements and was planned with a relatively simple interior circulation system of circumferential walks and those accompanying the curving park drives, as compared to the array of intersecting paths and drives in the south. The 13 acre lake in the Middle Section, with its large and small islands and sinuous edge, was a more intricate water body than the southern lake, but its margins were sloping turf or planted verges without the wall treatments which articulated some of the southern lake edge. The most complex and most expensive components of the Middle Division were the two bridges, the Park Avenue or "Midlake Bridge" as John Olmsted preferred to call it, and the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge. While these elements were not only related to the Middle section, their construction enabled this median part of the park to be the intended linkage for the northern and southern acreage.

No implementation of Barrett and Bogart's plan had been performed in this division. Once the Park Commission had agreed to the relocation of the Concert Grove into the Southern Division, John Olmsted was freed to redesign the convoluted path and lake patterning which his predecessors had suggested, to develop a more natural area "of great value artistically as well as practically." [2] His concept for this section, intermingling the three elements of shaded woods, glistening water and sunny greensward, balanced the aesthetic and the practical. The riverine scenery to be created around the linear lake, with its intended rich border of abundant vegetation, was to provide for a richly visual, somewhat more solitary recreational experience of boating or strolling, in counterpoint to the intensive gregarious activity intended on the Playfield. This counterpoint also contrasted the idea of 'passage through,' whether on the park drive or paths, or on the lake with the more settled event-oriented athletic use of the greensward. The Playfield, which Olmsted developed by rearranging Barrett's proportions for this area, responded to the intense athletic needs of this period. More than that, it also provided a destination point, a reason to remain a while in this 'midway' park space.

Development of the Lake and its Planting

Grading plans were generated by the Olmsted draftsmen within weeks of receiving the topographic survey of September 9, 1898 [See Figure 5-5], with the final grading plan approved by the Commission in early November 1898. In these plans, the irregular lake outline, the four islands and the wading pond cove with its island barrier were already detailed.[3] At its northern extent, the lake was to have a boat landing and skating steps, with a nearby shelter. The lake then narrowed through a culvert ending with a pool which was intended to connect to the Northern Division water course. A long flight of steps led up to Bloomfield Avenue, at the top of which was to be a trolley car shelter. On the southeast, near the wading pool another shelter was located, with steps and paths leading to Lake Street. [4]

The first challenge to be met was a necessary adjustment of intended grading to accommodate a large sewer line which John recommended be built of concrete rather than brick. The natural vegetation of value to remain had to be protected from the ravages of the contractor's machinery by installing fences. Lake excavation was accomplished by a large steam shovel, moved about on temporary railroad tracks. [Figure 7-1] Unlike the total clearing which apparently took place in the initial construction of the southern division, the Olmsted working method was to conserve as much of the native vegetation in place as could be managed within the design, transplanting other material when necessary. Many of these salvageable trees were near the borders, particularly some large willows near Lake Street, although there were also some large elms near Bloomfield Avenue.[5] Quick-sand found just below the surface in these former "swamp lots" caused the first contractor to quit and the contract to be relet with attendant delays. Therefore, providing for good drainage became an important component of the construction operation for both this section and for the Northern Division, the former "Blue Jay Swamp." [6]

Figure 7-1: Steam shovel at work excavating the lake in the Middle Division, 1899. Source: 1898-9 Annual Report, after p. 38.

The Middle Division was filled with springs, an ample source of water for the lake, but a problem in developing a dry playfield and circulation system. Redirecting water from the 13-acre area intended to become the greensward and from the paths and drives involved engineering expertise and careful estimating, technically the responsibility of Park Commission engineer, Howard Cole. In addition, there was concern about lake overflow in heavy storms. Commissioner Vanderpool, was responsible for bringing the anticipated expenses to develop the entire park system in line with the reality of the appropriations. An engineer by training, he made oversight of the drainage facilities a priority, requesting a complete report from the Olmsted firm. Olmsted made some practical recommendations concerning methods of laying pipes, type and location of drains and catch basins for the turf gutters, and noted that he felt the staff needed a capable foreman specializing in land draining.[7] In the1899 Annual Report, John reported that "No park in the country has a more complete system of storm water drainage" which was "completed in a most thorough and workmanlike manner." By that time the playfield had been graded, drained and planted to be ready for use in spring 1900. [8]

Spoil from the lake excavation, underway by late1899, was hauled by the work train to the canal edge where it was used to build border mounds. Olmsted intended to heavily plant these mounds to create a sense of seclusion within the park by screening out the factories on the west.[9] Some spoil was also used to develop islands in the lake for scenic effect. As finances grew tighter, saving money on the contractor's work became an issue and Engineer Cole suggested eliminating the little island between the two larger islands, as shown on the grading plan. John replied, "We do not see any good reason why the Commission should pay $1500 or $1600 to the contractor for taking away this island which we planned to have and which is desirable as a matter of appearance, merely because it makes a little more trouble for the steam shovel." He suggested making the lake shallower in some places by "widening the shallow, sloping under-water beach from twenty to forty feet wide at the two above-water beaches." In some places he advised widening the channel for skating, balancing that work by making other areas shallower. Noting that this would create future maintenance expense due to the growth of water plants, he suggested that the depth could be corrected at a future date, together with the Southern Division lake. The lake bottom, however, was made uniform so that it could "be drawn down in winter to afford safe skating." [10]

Olmsted also suggested reducing expense by spreading gravel less thickly on the shore slopes. The gravel should be "of a nice quality of natural-looking, water-worn stones," varying in size "from very coarse sand, say of the size of French peas to the size of hickory nuts." Since the estimated costs for Middle Division improvement remained at $141,667 in early 1900, the Commission voted against any cost-increasing change and, indeed, the little island between the larger "Twin Islands" and "Willow Island" was not included in the General Plan, although it is still recorded in the Atlases of 1911 and 1926. Within two years of opening the lake, as predicted, the "green matter" became a problem.[11]

By October 1900, the contractor had completed the lake construction with the water within two inches of the intended level. The east side was ready for planting, the west still requiring grading to be done by day labor. A wading pond, a broad bay at the southeast lake edge, made very shallow (one foot deep with a sand bottom) and separated from the main water course by an island barrier, was in use by 1901, "a source of much enjoyment to small children."[12] [Figure 7-2] Prior to the bridge connection at Fifth Avenue, this lake was self-contained within the Middle Division, with a temporary receiving chamber at the southern end to maintain the water level.[13] [Figure 7-3] By the end of 1906, construction of the Midlake Bridge at Park Avenue, formerly Fifth Avenue, had enabled the joining of the Middle and Southern lakes by a 55-foot wide channel. The water body now formed an extent of water 5,000 feet long, about 25 acres. This enlarged lake was immediately popular for summer recreation, attested to by the number of boats, both private and rentals on the lake, as well as for extensive winter skating. With the development of the boathouse on the Southern Lake and the leasing of privileges for boating, skating and refreshment, the intended boat landing with skating steps was installed at the northern end of the Middle lake "in order that parties may begin their journey from either end." Cable laid in the lake in 1907 allowed ten arc lights along the shore to extend the hours of usage.[14]

Figure 7-2: Wading pond with barrier island, looking northwest over Playfield. c. 1905. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

Figure 7-3: Looking north over newly constructed lake between two islands. Lake is not yet connected through to the Southern Division. Playfield is to the right. JCO photograph, 30 May 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-69, ONHS.

The construction of the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge, enabled the connection of the Northern Division ponds and the Middle Division lake by means of a "waterway fifteen feet wide…to resemble a running stream," but not large enough to allow a boating connection.[15] Since the northern waterway had an insufficient water supply, in 1907 an electric centrifugal pump and its piping were installed at the head of the lake to carry the natural overflow from the lake system to the source of the brook in the Northern Division. This was intended to create a faster flow to the brooks, so that the full effect of their designed rills and small falls could be appreciated. As designed by Morris Sherrerd, the Chief Engineer for the city, the water was then to flow "under the Bloomfield Avenue bridge by special arrangement of the grade [and] pass in a series of small rapids over a stony bed into the lake in the Middle Division." Engineer Reynolds reported in 1909 that about 1,000,000 gallons a day was being pumped from the lake and Clark's Pond into the brook system.[16] At some point, the children's wading pool at the southeast corner disappeared without being referenced. Later plans in the park department office record the simple bend in the lake without this 'alcove.' This feature would have been difficult to maintain at its shallow depth, and given the poor water quality of the lake (noted as unfit for swimming when the pool options in the Reservoir were being explored [17], it may have been eliminated for health and maintenance reasons.

Planting the Lake Margins

Planting throughout the park was slowed from late 1900 through 1901 when a legal challenge to the Park Commission's authority prevented the sale of park bonds. Once the issue was settled and a full schedule of work resumed in 1902,planting began on the lake margins of the Middle Division.[18] In addition to the boat landing at the northern end of the lake and the 'beach' around the wading pool, the plans indicate two other 'beaches' for the lake, one on the west side, the other on the east side, slightly to the south, across from the so-called "Willow Island." Other than these areas, the verges on the west were intended to be heavily planted with a more exotic mixture than found in a typical Olmsted planting. Planting Plan #2121-454 [Figure 7-4] specified a

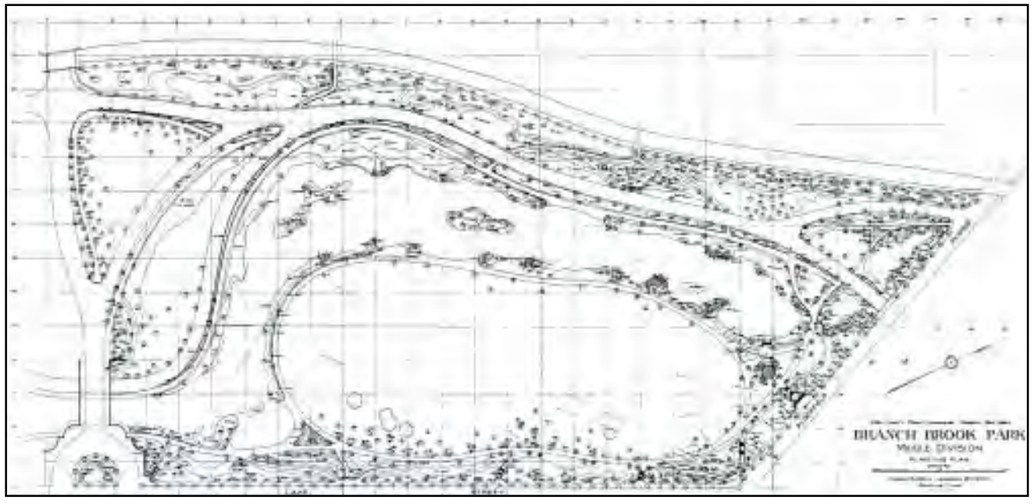

Figure 7-4: Planting Plan for the Middle Division, Plan #2121-454, 14 February 1900. Note the boat landing-skating steps and nearby octagonal shelter indicated at the northern end of the lake. Source: ONHS.

ground layering of vines and herbaceous material (including several plants now considered invasive); shrubs, such as leucothoe and vitex; with upper canopy trees such as sycamore maples and catalpa, interspersed with occasional needle evergreens, including bald cypress. The planting along the eastern shore of the lake included more open areas, so that inviting views to the water from the Playfield would be possible. "Willow Island" lived up to its name with several different willow cultivars recommended, underplanted with water-loving materials such as elder, sassafras and iris; while "Twin Island" was to be defined by purple beech and yellow-wood trees, also richly underplanted. Many of these specified materials were attractive habitat for water birds, which may have been a consideration, though not stated. (The design intent for the Middle Division planting as a whole is discussed below.)

There is no record among the reports or correspondence to indicate when or how much of the suggested planting was installed. Within a few years, however, some of the plants proved problematic. By October 1905, the Park Commission sought advice on managing the cattails which had choked one of the boating channels. JCO responded that "these cattails are appropriate and extremely effective as elements of the lake landscape, and it would be a source of much regret to have them eradicated." They were growing in a narrow channel which was not at the specified eight-foot depth, so the cattails would have to be managed by " a certain amount of hand work." It was the superintendent's responsibility to keep this plant within the limits "intended by our planting plan." [19] [Figure 7-5]

Figure 7-5: Looking south across the lake toward the Fifth Avenue Bridge. Note the water-edge plantings. J.G. Perrett photograph, before 1914. Source: Photograph #2121-164 (second album), ONHS.

Development of the Circulation System: Drives, Paths and the Bridges

The bridges, one for Park Avenue (formerly Fifth Avenue) and one for Bloomfield Avenue, were the most important elements of the circulation system, linking the Middle Division to the other parts of the park, thus making Branch Brook Park a complete entity. Until these structures were in place, the drive and path linkages could not be completed or planted. Unlike the senior Olmsted's sunken transverse roads for New York's Central Park, the Newark city traffic passed across the park on elevated roads, necessitating skillful grading and plant groupings to protect the park scenes from this traffic intrusion. Construction of the bridges required a major financial outlay and was continually forestalled by less expensive park projects to make other spaces available for public enjoyment. However, the public was reminded yearly in the annual reports of the critical need for this sizable budgetary appropriation. In his 1901 report, John Olmsted observed that "Of these two bridges, that under Bloomfield Avenue is of more pressing importance because of the dangerous and disagreeable grade crossing of the street railways, upon which cars are now run with great speed…" [20]

Drives, Paths and Bridle Paths

While these bridge issues remained unresolved, paths and drives for the Middle Division were constructed in conjunction with the lake and playfield development. By December 1900, the "shore walk" (probably along the western lake edge) had been layered with stone from Fifth to Bloomfield, while the east shore walk was being edged. The drive had been subgraded with storm drains installed and was being macadamized, probably to the 18-foot width which JCO had recommended as an economical temporary measure. A walk leading to the proposed footbridge over the Canal at Third Avenue was being graded.[21] Since the Middle Division was essentially in a hollow, most of the path entrances from Lake Street, from the corner at Fifth, and from Bloomfield Avenue required steps, which were temporarily constructed of wood but which John Olmsted had hoped would be of stone. However, due to the tight finances, in late 1901, as he assessed the "Approximate Estimate of Construction" still to be done, he decided that a considerable saving would be made by constructing all the steps, including ramps and copings, of "artificial stone, with proper admixture of coloring matter and with suitable tooling of the surface to give a pleasing texture." The cost was one-fifth that of stone. In this estimate, he also listed eight walks and paths still to be macadamized, which could be interpreted to mean that by this date, they had at least been graded and layered with stone.[22]

Although the General Plan proposed two footbridges across the Canal for this section, there is no record of their construction. More importantly, no bridge was to cross the Middle lake except for the small culvert at the Bloomfield end of the lake between it and the small pool where water from the northern brooks entered. "By this expedient," Olmsted wrote,

> *"the beautiful meadow will be preserved from the fate of so many meadows in parks surrounded by comparatively dense populations, namely that of being cut to pieces by short-cut paths at first and later by numerous and usually straight , broad walks with ugly paving, ugly-paved gutters, benches, rows of shade trees, and sometime ugly electric-light poles and wires, and even occasionally by*

fences to guard the remaining patches of grass from being destroyed. It is of great importance that the purpose of this natural and automatic obstruction to short-cutting should be kept in mind and that future administrations should not yield to the demands for an additional bridge,… especially after the canal has been abandoned…" [23]

Automobile usage on the drives increased steadily so that by 1911 the Commission requested help in rearranging drive-edge plantations in various parks to conform to changed conditions of the increased vehicular traffic. Additionally, lighting the roadways became an issue, as was rebuilding old macadam surfaces for the modern cars. While the automobiles made parks more accessible, their use also created problems unforeseen in the original planning, in particular, where to park the vehicles especially for the ballgame crowds.[24] The Olmsted plans had called for bluestone curbing for the drives of the Middle and Northern Divisions. Some form of "curbing" continued to be included as an item on the various yearly estimates which the firm made while they were under contract, but, it appears that this item was not completed. In 1922, the Middle Division roads were resurfaced, widened by 10 feet "to the sod edges." [25]

In 1921, "acceding to the wishes of a large number of citizens whose love of horses has not been superseded by the automobile," the Park Commission authorized the construction of a bridle path. Beginning at the Park Avenue Bridge, the path was constructed among the trees on the west side of the park drive, meandering for two miles through the Middle Division into the North and ending at Ballantine Parkway.[26]

Bridges

Planning for the bridges began long before the funding was available. They were to be "the largest structures yet erected by the Board…of great importance, connecting as they do the three divisions of the most important of the city parks." The bridge concept of 1901 called for the Fifth Avenue bridge to have two 60–foot spans, one for the waterway with a walk and one for the main drive with its walks. The Bloomfield Avenue Bridge was to have a lesser span, be simpler and more rustic in its appearance. By 1902, the Park Avenue Bridge concept had been changed to have only one span of 130 feet to overarch walks, a 40-foot drive and a 40-foot waterway. [27] Preparation of schematic designs [28] began for both bridges as early as 1899, when Carrère and Hastings were still employed by the Park Commission, but nothing in the record supports the notion that they worked on these features (unless there are sketches extant in the Essex County collection). The early sketches which do remain were produced by Percy Jones of the Olmsted firm, who integrated into his bridge plans the various stairways needed to provide access from the higher street level into the park.[29] Following the decision to use concrete and steel (the Melan arch construction), the Olmsted firm produced numerous further designs in 1903, primarily working to resolve the difficult grading issues at Park Avenue. Bloomfield Avenue was to remain at its grade, supported by trestles as the bridge was constructed, requiring fewer adjustments and enabling the trolley service to continue uninterrupted. [30]

However, as skilled as the Olmsted firm designers were, they were careful to emphasize to all their clients that they were not architects. In presenting plans for these bridges to the Park Commission, JCO "urged that an architect be employed." Alonzo Church, the Commission secretary, objected, noting "that they had paid Carrère & Hastings very large sums for very unsatisfactory services." In answer, John thought that "a first-class architect would help in the design without charging full fees," suggesting Walter Cook of Babb, Cook & Willard.[31] As John explained the project to Cook, the structural plans would be prepared by the Concrete Steel Engineering Co. of New York, who would construct the arches. What was needed was a consulting architect to refine the design in terms of "form, color and texture of the material" in conference with the landscape architects. Cook would need to advise on the character of the trim, "the method of securing perfection in the delicate graceful curves desired in the arch and parapet lines," and to review the specifications "with regard to texture and color of the surface of the concrete work."[32] Olmsted instructed the Concrete Steel Engineering Co.:

"The arch will be of your usual construction, with the exception that the whole exterior surface is to be made of a specially prepared concrete mixture two inches thick, including crushed granite or other stone and special colored sand to give the concrete the desired color and texture; the whole surface will be cleaned with acid or stippled with a pointed tool so as to remove surfaces made by the contact of the concrete with the mould." [33]

Cook's detailing for the Midlake Bridge included a dull terra cotta Greek balustrade with white marble base and coping. Truncated obelisks surmounted massive, elaborately-cut marble lamp posts. [Figure 7-6] Given the need for economy, he hoped to get the marble from rejects from the New York Library construction "for a price very much less than we could get granite." While Olmsted did not object to the large scale, the light color or the conspicuous light standards for this bridge, he stated that by contrast the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge [Figure 7-7] was to harmonize with the earth, with minimal detail and "a plain surface to be covered with vines."

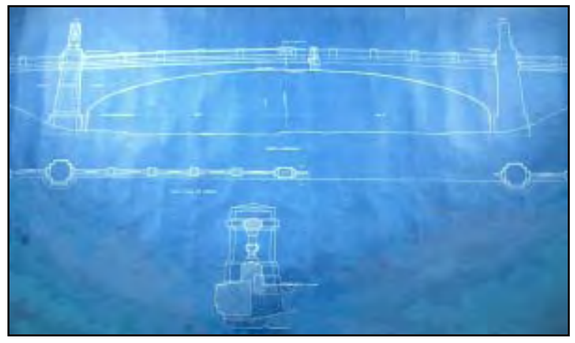

Figure 7-6: Elevation of Midlake Bridge, by Walter Cook, Plan #2121-641, sheet 1, 28 March 1904. Source: ONHS.

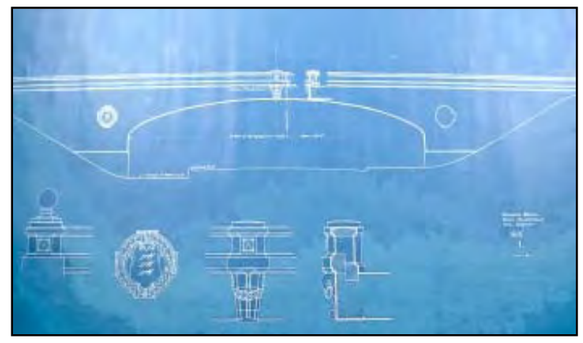

Figure 7-7: Elevation of Bloomfield Avenue Bridge, by Walter Cook, Plan #2121-640, 21 March 1904. Source : ONHS.

Lighting for this bridge would be handled by the city at the curb line.[34] Cook did manage to insert octagonal medallions on each side to decorate the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge.

As soon as $500,000 of park bond money became available, contracts were let for this bridge work.[35] Bloomfield Avenue Bridge foundations were finished by September 1904, and the bridge completed by 1905. [Figure 7-8] The excavation spoil from this construction was used to fill a 32-acre tract of the Northern Division swamp. Improvement of the approaches, the shaping of the banks, the completion of the road under the bridge, the connection of the Northern and Middle waterways and finally the planting "according to the plans of the

Figure 7-8: Bloomfield Avenue Bridge, c.1906. Source: 1907 Annual Report, p. 15.

landscape architects" followed over the next year. The Commissioners heralded the "continuity of park landscape." [36]

To accommodate the Midlake (Park Avenue) Bridge, extensive grading changes were required along Park Avenue between Lake Street and the Canal to fill the original hollow. In fact, this Avenue was completely realigned, to improve "the scenic effect of the park," this realignment enabling construction to take place without disrupting traffic. The approach to the Bridge was placed further to the north than the original avenue, and enhanced with a planted central semi-circular island to direct traffic flow. The new route then curved gently southward through the park, "doing away with the ugly effect of a straight line of roadway bisecting a park, and giving it [the avenue] more of the character of a Parkway," which enabled the visitor to focus on the park

Figure 7-9: Park Avenue [Midlake] Bridge. c. 1906. Source: 1907 Annual Report, p. 12.

landscape. The Midlake Bridge was also completed in 1905 [Figure 7-9] , except for its lamps. Because of the prominence of these lightoliers, "situated between open stretches of meadow and lake where they can be seen from almost any point in the Southern and Middle Divisions and at an elevation of thirteen feet above the bridge itself and thirty-nine feet above the level of the park" the Commission was cautious in its giving its approval. It took another year before the lake connection under the bridge could be completed, with the resultant linkage of water systems and the park drives, replete with plantings. With the installation of a sidewalk and the paving of Park Avenue, underground conduit for lighting was laid through the park in 1907 along the length of this drive enabling the bridge lights to be illuminated at night.[37]

In yet another economizing mode, during the course of the construction, the Park Commission suggested a re-arrangement of the approach to the Midlake Bridge. The Olmsted firm reacted to Secretary Church with uncharacteristically strong words.

> *"If the original scheme of Messrs. Bogart & Barrett for the treatment of the East approaches to the bridge is not to be carried out now, I am convinced it will bring the Board into ridicule, or at any rate subject them to much adverse criticisms as to the location of the bridge itself. I believe that no designer of reputation would ever have dreamed of locating the bridge where it is without some such symmetrical plaza treatment as that devised by Messrs. Bogart & Barrett to give its position entirely off the line of Fifth Avenue artistic justification. From the point of view of design, the plan you submit is simply horrible, and I must decline to stand as endorsing it… The whole matter is primarily one of design and a very important one as a justification for the location of the bridge and I am confident that if you do not see the necessity of the arrangement originally planned as a matter of design, I can assure you that there are lots of others who will. I earnestly hope that you will do everything you can to persuade the Board not to adopt the arrangement which they have caused your engineer to prepare, but to carry out the original scheme. There are plenty of other features of the park system that it would be preferable to economize upon"* [38]

The semi-circular planted island which shaped and distinguished the eastern approach to the Park Avenue Bridge was implemented and planted. In 1924, when the park plantings were evaluated for traffic safety, Koehler's shorthand notes recommended: "Park Avenue & Lake Street. Half oval. Take out all shrubs and lay down to grass." [39]

To alleviate the congested traffic conditions at the corner of Lake Street and Park Avenue, the Park Commission acquired some property in 1927 and requested Gallagher to improve the alignment and visibility of Park Avenue. The firm produced several studies, recommending that Park Avenue should be widened and linear islands developed instead of the half oval to create safety zones and to restrict traffic to definite lanes. [40]

The Playfield and its Uses

The 13-acre greensward which the Olmsted plan developed was a significant attribute for the park, enhancing the aesthetic character with its calming expanse of lawn while providing flexible space for a variety of athletic needs. [Figure 7-10] The area was originally intended for mixed-age boys, but as the fields in the Northern Division were completed, these Middle fields were reserved for boys under fourteen. Beginning in 1900, this space was in use daily, and at its capacity on Saturdays. It could handle 12 baseball games and had 2 cricket creases, the latter a popular sport in Newark at that time.[41] A request to the Park Commission to lay out a football field in the fall, resodding the area for spring use, was rejected by John Olmsted. He suggested that the Board pursue a policy like that in use for Boston's Franklin Park, allowing only grammar school boys to play, "using portable bases … set at a different place for each game so that permanent paths will not be worn out in the turf." [42] The playfield served as the venue for the Board of Education annual exercises in 1909, offering exhibitions of children's work and drills and dances.[43] Over the years, football and later soccer were added to the intense baseball usage. Both the 1911 and the 1926 Atlas record the recreational opportunities as four football fields and nine baseball fields.[44]

Questions arose concerning lighting and policing the park. This was a complicated issue depending on public demand and financial possibilities, the firm responded.

"In general, very large parks …are not thoroughly lighted, although certain portions that are the most resorted to in the evening are lighted, in some cases, until ten or eleven ,,,provision is usually made by means of fences and gates for keeping the public out after ten or eleven o'clock." [45]

They felt that given the surrounding population at that time, only the playfield in the Middle Division should be lighted.[46] By 1925 the population had grown to require consideration of a more thorough illumination system.[47]

Figure 7-10: Looking north over channel of the lake, to the Playfield. The lake is not yet connected to the Southern Division. Note the small shed which served as a field house until the shelters were built. c. 1901. Source: 1901 Annual Report, after p. 8.

Two buildings were planned for the Playfield, a women's and children's shelter at the wading pool, and another shelter for both sexes at the northern end of the field, close to the pond and to the Bloomfield Avenue street railway for use in connection with winter skating and field sports. Sand courts and playground equipment were installed under a grove of trees near the wading pool in 1904 to provide supervised exercise to keep children from "the evil influences of the streets." [48] Numerous settees and four drinking fountains (exact location unspecified) were also to be added when the budget allowed. The new bubbler fountain used by Boston parks was deemed "healthy" for use in the parks by Newark's Board of Health.[49]

Due to tight money, building the shelter near the wading pool/playground was postponed until 1906. A temporary structure (seen in some of the historic photographs in the middle of the southern end of the playfield) had been used, but it was inadequate for the needs. The new shelter, the so-called Octagonal Shelter, was built of concrete blocks with a "pebble dash finish" and shingled roof. Hidden in the shrubbery on the slope of Lake Street, this small structure was "exclusively for the use of small children using the wading pool" and contained lockers and showers under the watchful eye of a matron. [50] Although Olmsted Brothers was no longer under contract, their General Plan had specified locations for shelters throughout the park and they had produced several sketches for toilet houses, shelters and fieldhouses from 1899 through 1901.[51] The correspondence does not record their involvement in the actual placement of this structure, nor do the park reports indicate when the shelter at the north end of the Playfield was installed. However, the 1911 Atlas indicates two frame buildings at the north, one in line with the double stairway from Bloomfield Avenue and near the boat landing. The other structure, shown slightly northwest by the culvert to the small pool, was probably the pump house for the water system. The 1926 Atlas does not show this building, although it adds another, at the southern end, near the stairs from Lake Street at Park Avenue. This may be a foreman's shed later moved to the boat landing.[52]

In 1920 and again in 1931, Gallagher worked on the fieldhouse problem, designing alternatives for the north end of the playfield and for the enlargement of the children's shelter. One alternative, "distinctly picturesque and interesting architecturally" was convenient for those arriving by automobile and provided toilet facilities and refreshments for men and boys using the northern portion of the playfield, combined with commodious boat storage. The second alternative placed a fieldhouse for boys and for the public on the Lake Street side of the playfield, leaving the refreshments to be supplied by an enlarged boat landing shelter. The record does not indicate which of these ideas were followed, although the Annual Report for 1931 records "planting around the refectory building in the Middle Division of Branch Brook Park and in the vicinity of the several field houses…" [53]

Planting for Scenic Effect

The Design Intent and its Implementation

From the outset, John Olmsted had planned to give the Middle Division a distinctive character, to make it more than simply the transitional park space between the decorated and architecturally 'furnished' South and the more natural North. His riverine landscape of intricate passages between islands and the bays and headlands of the shore made this an individualized part of the water system in contrast to the broad open lake of the South. In the Middle Division, the effect of broad open expanse was to be found, instead, in the meadow. Therefore, in the planting, he also sought to develop an effect which would make the Middle Division memorable, using the plantings to distract from the narrowness of the physical site and dominant surrounding buildings.

Working essentially with a *tabula rasa* since the Middle section had minimal natural vegetation of stature,[54] Olmsted's concept was to exaggerate Nature, to create a particular effect using plant material with desired colors or textures in a painterly fashion. In his initial visit, he had already decided to contrast the shade- and water-loving trees, such as sweet gum, tupelo and hornbeam, which he found in the North with more sun-loving trees such as beech, white oak, ash, cucumber tree, tulip, hickory, elm and buttonwood which he intended to use south of Bloomfield Avenue. During 1899, several planting studies were made, refining a diverse plant palette which contained more unusual vegetation than was typical for an Olmsted park. At the same time two groupings of existing trees were retained and worked into the design, one a group of willows on the east side of the meadow south of Third Avenue, the other, of elms, around the area to become the boat landing. [55] Olmsted first described the effect he was seeking in the1899 Annual Report.

"In order to give the planting a more striking general aspect…we propose to plant at the south end largely with broad-leaved evergreens and dark-foliaged deciduous trees and shrubs. Further north, merging into the masses of small-leaved and generally light green trees. At the north end will be concentrated trees and shrubs having notably gray or grayish-green foliage. The transition is not to be sudden, but the contrast between the dark evergreens at the south end, planted on a bank sloping to the north, and to be shaded from the southern and western sun, to the light green and gray foliage of the north end, planted on a bank facing south and without shade, will be sufficiently obvious to even the casual observer… a certain resemblance to the appearance which might reasonably be expected, under the conditions, through the natural adaptation of plants to exposure— the

evergreens having the relatively shady northern exposure and the pale, bleached-out foliage being on the hotter, sunny southern slope." [56]

Working out the details of this concept with the firm's plantsman, Emil Mische, and future Olmsted partner, James Dawson, who had an experienced horticultural background, John further refined his idea, adding specific types of plants to heighten the desired effect (including a bit of social commentary). He stated,

"The south end having a northerly slope is to be planted with evergreens and dark-foliaged trees, including even purple maples, purple beeches and the like and considerable quantities of rhododendrons for foreground effects near the drive. Coming northward the foliage is to gradually change to large-leaved trees, making a special feature of Magnolias near the water. Toward the north end the foliage would be kept in the lightest green shades possible and fine and pinnate-leaved trees and bushes. The north end and the end of the view from the south end would be planted with light gray foliage as much as practicable and in sufficiently large masses to produce a decided effect, the easterly boundary to be somewhat similar to the west side, but much less devoted to striking
nursery specialties, preference being given to prickly shrubbery and such as would not have flowers, tempting the poorer classes to pick them. On the west side…as it is protected from the rough classes likely to use the ballfields, more ornate shrubbery and trees could be used. Throughout this division the choice of trees and shrubs would be largely confined to exotic, so that the whole effect would be of a somewhat foreign landscape treatment, intermediate in degree of artificiality between the Southern Division and the Northern Division." [57]

The natural topography of the Middle Division, with its steeply banked sides, encouraged Olmsted in his idea to treat this section as an "inclosed [sic] scene, complete in itself." He did not intend by his use of "purple-foliaged or golden or silvery foliaged trees and shrubs" to make a collection of "freaks of nature," but rather to heighten the drama of this area.[58]

The use of such colored foliaged materials was very unusual for an Olmsted planting. In the planting recommendations for the borders around the parterre gardens of the South, the use of purple and yellow-foliaged materials had already been suggested, setting up a pattern of light and dark to emphasize a particular effect. The plant recommendations for the Middle Division were a continuation of this type of horticultural manipulation.[59] In the hands of a master, and properly maintained, the effect could be striking. But without the artistic sensibility of the Olmsteds, without their sense of balance and proportion, of the subtleties of color and chiaroscuro, and an innate comprehension of spatial character, the effect could be a disaster. As Olmsted partner, James Dawson was later to describe this concept to local landscape architect, Elsa Rehmann,

"The planting in the middle section of Branch Brook Park was designed in an informal fashion, but in order to make it interesting to the public a number of large masses of different colored foliage trees and shrubs were used, such as gray willows, red maples and variegated trees. As you probably remember, the middle division …was entirely created. There were no trees or shrubs and the grading was entirely new, and the heavy banks of the border plantations were all excavated and put in place." [60]

These planting ideas were embodied in Planting Plan #2121-454 of February 1900 [See Figure 7-4]. A limited implementation of this scheme was installed in spring 1901 along the west drive with mixed results when evaluated the following February. The waterlogged soil, attesting to drainage problems still to be resolved, had killed off species such as catalpa and honeylocust, while in other areas, dry conditions had killed off the larches. The plant palette evaluation consisted of needle evergreens, several types of pines, spruce, and fir; major deciduous trees of oaks, lindens, maples, ailanthus, cork trees and yellow-woods; medium trees of dogwoods, birches, and hawthorns underplanted with viburnums, aralia, spiraea with ground covering iris, roses, akebia and yellow root (xanthorrhiza). A new plan of February 1902 revised the rest of the planting, including many more herbaceous materials to carpet the ground around the shore and underplant the shrub layers along the periphery. The waterside slopes also required sedges, ferns and other herbaceous, shade-tolerant material, according to an inspection by Mische in 1904. Historic photographs, many by local photographer J.G. Perrett, reveal textured and dense planting along the lake edges and along the paths.[61] [Figures 7-11, 7-12, 7-13]

Figure 7-11: Plantings along bank of lake in Middle Division. J.G. Perrett photograph, before 1914. Source: Photograph #2121-166 (second album), ONHS.

Figure 7-12: Plantings along shore and on islands, Middle Division. J.G. Perrett photograph, before 1914. Source: Photograph #2121-161 (second album), ONHS.

In late 1909, JCO, Gallagher and Koehler again evaluated the plantings for the entire park, observing that all the shrubs needed thinning.

"The outlines are often too smooth and hard; those of a kind are too much in a lump—need more mixing; generally grown too high. This is especially the case with Rhus aromatica, the upright having been used instead of the prostrate…Too many Kilmarnock willows haven used in places. These should be thinned to isolated specimens and low growing shrubs and perennials introduced to cover ground. The gardener has clipped many of these willows. This should be stopped. He has also quite often pruned off shrub branches to facilitate lawn mowing." [62]

In the Middle Division, shrubs along the east border needed rethinking and underplanting. The seepage stains on the cement concrete bridges needed to be covered with Boston ivy.[63]

The restructuring of the planting for automobile safety in 1924 required removal of some of the shrubs at intersections, such as near the Bloomfield Avenue entrance and the Park Avenue semi-circle, replanting with ground-hugging perennials or lawn.[64] In the middle and late 1930s, cherry trees and more shrubs (unspecified) were added to the Middle Division.[65]

Figure 7-13: Azalea plantings along eastern path [along Lake Street]. J.G. Perrett photograph, before 1914. Source: Photograph #2121-162 (second album), ONHS.

Planting the Boundaries

One of Olmsted's first reactions on his initial examination of the Middle Division site was the need to screen out the unfortunate intrusion of the MacAndrews and Forbes Licorice Works —the view of the tall chimney, the smell and the noise. Although this factory was on the west side of the canal across from the Northern Division, its 180 foot chimney dominated the landscape in all directions. Likewise, the commerce of the canal, as in the Southern Division, had to be distanced. The traffic and trolley bustle along the elevated Bloomfield Avenue required thick planting to remove its presence, as did the developing neighborhood of closely-spaced triple-decker homes along Lake Street.

In addition to the border mounds along the canal edge, built up during late 1899 and spring 1900 with the material from the lake excavation, the northwest corner was also mounded to distract the eye from the factory chimney, especially on the long diagonal view. Oaks and maples were transplanted to these mounds to screen the canal and the factory rather than using only nursery stock.[66] According to Planting Plan #2121-454, the canal edge was to be lined with silver maples. On the slopes below the canal, trees were to be planted in groves, from lindens and scarlet oaks at the southwest to various pines and hawthorns in the middle west to ash, birch and silver maples in groups intermingled with fir, larch and black locust on the northwest corner mounds. Under these trees were to be rhododendron maximum, box and other shrubs with a herbaceous ground layer which included asters and golden rod. Silver maples were continued along Bloomfield Avenue as a street tree with the slopes descending to park level thickly planted with broad-spreading trees and shrubs. Lake Street required some careful grading to integrate the boundary edges "in a more graceful, natural and easy slope than now exists." Norway maples were to be used here as street trees with purple-leaved tree cultivars—beech, oak and other Norway maples mixed with yellow-woods and various magnolias. Beneath these, tall narrow shrubs such as shadbush, weigelia and autumn olive were layered.[67]

This wealth of diverse plant material textured and enclosed this section of the Park. From the lower level of the lake or the Playfield spaces, the city conditions— factories, canal barges houses and traffic – were to be viewed beyond a thickly planted foreground of green, with purple or silvery overtones.

Chapter 7 Endnotes

[1] Approximately 92 plans were either generated by the Olmsted firm or received from the Park Commission for the Middle Division, as opposed to over 400 for the Southern and over 200 for the Northern. Olmsted Brothers office Plan Index card file for Job #2121, at ONHS. Also, less of the correspondence is concerned with the development of this park section.
[2] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 43.
[3] Plan #2121-10, sheet 1, "Topographic Map of the Middle Section….," 9 September 1898; Plans #2121-13 (indicating line of the sewer) and 2121-41, "Grading Plan for Portion Between Fifth Ave. and Bloomfield Ave."
[4] Grading Plan for the Portion between Fifth and Bloomfield Avenues," (Plan #2121-41, October 19. 1898) ; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 September 1898, OAR, E10:12; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 October 1898, OAR, E10:16; JCO, Report of Meeting, 9 November 1898, OAR, E10:17. Plans #2121-336 and 338 (extant in the ONHS collection) provide the sketches for the Bloomfield Avenue steps and streetcar shelter.
[5] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 21 September 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:242; JCO, Report of Visit, 16-17 November 1898, OAR, E10:22; JCO, Report of Visit, 5 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Howard J. Cole to Olmsted Brothers, 19 April 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1]; 1897 *Annual Report*, p. 9; Topographic Survey, Plan #2121-10, sheet 1.
[6] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[7] JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 September 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 4 October 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:545-46; Olmsted Brothers to Eugene Vanderpool, 7 October 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:565; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 8 October 1899, OAR, 2120 A69:569-71.
[8] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 9, 18.
[9] JCO, Report of Visit, 9 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[10] Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 22 December 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 28 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 17 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; 1901 *Annual Report*,
p. 45. Plans #2121-406, 414 and 415, indicating revised excavation and grading for the waterways, are not extant in the ONHS collection.
[11] Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 31 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:568-69; Olmsted Brothers, "General Estimate,"
22 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].
[12] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 45. In the report, the Park Commissioners referred to the wading pool and being "for children under twelve years…." Ibid., p. 12.
[13] Plan #2121-550.
[14] 1904-5 *Annual Report*, pp. 8, 12; 1906 *Annual Report*, pp. 9, 11; 1907 *Annual Report*, p. 29.
[15] 1903 *Annual Report*, p. 8; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 7.
[16] 1907 *Annual Report*, pp. 27-29; JCO, Report of Visit, 5-6 October 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[17] 1920 *Annual Report*, p. 7.
[18] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 47; 1902 *Annual Report*, pp. 6-8, 15.
[19] A. Church to Olmsted Brothers, 11 October 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11]; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to William S. Manning, 17 October 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 17 October 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11].
[20] 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 46-47.
[21] JCO, Report of Visit, 20 November 1900; OAR, B2120 [f4]; JCO, Report of Visit, 11 December 1900, OAR,

B2120 [f4]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 21 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[22] "Approximate Estimate of Construction," 8 October 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 7 November 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 13; 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 17; 1909 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[23] 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 45-46.
[24] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers [JCO], 23 August 1911, OAR, B2120 [f12]; 1912 *Annual Report*, p. 10; 1916 *Annual Report*, p. 8; 1918 *Annual Report*, pp. 7-8; 1922 *Annual Report*, p. 10; 1923 *Annual Report*, pp. 5-6; 1925 *Annual Report*, p. 25.
[25] [Olmsted Brothers] to Howard J. Cole, 30 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:100-103; "Approximate Estimate of Construction," 8 October 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; 1922 *Annual Report*, pp. 9-10.
[26] 1921 *Annual Report*, pp. 13-14.
[27] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 47; 1902 *Annual Report*, p. 12.
[28] No longer extant.
[29] Early sketches for the Fifth Avenue Bridge (Plans #579 and 580, from January 1902) are extant in the ONHS collection, but those for the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge are not. The "Plans Sent Index Cards" at ONHS indicate that the latter sketches were sent to Essex County.
[30] 1903 *Annual Report*, p. 7. Twelve of these various bridge plans for Park Avenue have remained extant at the ONHS collection, as opposed to one for the Bloomfield Avenue structure.
[31] JCO, Report of Visit, 5 August 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]. The engineering company had produced bridge proposals which JCO deemed "likely to produce an ugly appearance" and "inartistic." He requested the authority to "prepare sketches" concerning the lines and the surface texture and color, recommending for the latter that Pecora mortar stains be mixed in. Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 27 June 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]; Olmsted Brothers to Concrete Steel Construction Co., 27 June 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7].
[32] Olmsted Brothers to Walter Cook, 9 September 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7].
[33] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Concrete Steel Engineering Co., 10 September 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7].
[34] JCO, Report of Visit, 13-14 October 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]; Walter Cook to Olmsted Brothers, 8 October 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7]. Babb, Cook & Willard detailed a simple bridge with decorative medallions on each side (Plan #2121-640). Plan #2121-635 records their design for the Midlake Bridge.
[35] 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 6-7. The Park Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue bridges were to cost $84,000.00 and $34,000.00, respectively.
[36] JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 7; 1903 *Annual Report*, p. 7; 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[37] 1903 *Annual Report*, p. 7; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, pp. 7-8; 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1907 *Annual Report*, p. 29.
[38] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 13 April 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11].
[39] "Notes by H.J. Koehler and Mr. Holocek regarding plantings in order to lessen traffic dangers," 19 January 1924, OAR, B2120 [f14].
[40] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 20 December 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 17 January 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 6 February 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]. Of the several plans produced to address this problem (Plans #2121-743, 746, 748-50), including those from Essex County, only Plan #2121-748 survives in the ONHS collection.
[41] 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 12-13. Sunday games were proscribed by a 1792 law, a ruling which was overturned after 1918. 1916 *Annual Report*, p. 16; 1918 *Annual Report*, p. 9.
[42] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 21 September 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 22 September 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4].
[43] 1909 *Annual Report*, p. 11.
[44] 1911 Atlas, Plate 19; 1926 Atlas, Plate 20.
[45] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 17 July 1906, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[46] Ibid.
[47] 1925 *Annual Report*, p. 25.
[48] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 46; 1905 *Annual Report*, p. 11; JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 13.
[49] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 21; William S. Manning to Olmsted Brothers, 26 April 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[50] 1906 *Annual Report*, p. 11. Although no architect is mentioned in the record, it is very possible that this fieldhouse was designed by F.A. Wright. At this time, he designed the boathouse for the Southern Division lake and is credited with the fieldhouse on the Knoll in the Northern Division. The preliminary plans to the General Plan indicate a large octagonal shelter at the northern end of the lake by the boat landing.
[51] Most of the sketches for these buildings are no longer in the ONHS collection, although there is indication that some of them were sent to the Essex County Park Department offices.
[52] 1911 Atlas, Plate 19; 1926 Atlas, Plates 17 and 20; 1949 *Annual Report*, p. 15.
[53] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to A.M. Reynolds, 7 January 1931, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Plans #2121-792-95 are not extant in the ONHS collection; 1921 *Annual Report* (unpaginated), ca. p. 14.
[54] Topographic Survey, Plan #2121-10, sheet 1; 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 44-45.
[55] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A. Six of the ten planting studies remain in the ONHS collection.
[56] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, pp. 44-45.
[57] JCO, Report of Visit, 16 August 1899, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[58] 1901 *Annual Report*, pp. 44-45.
[59] At this time, Olmsted is also suggesting the use of purple maples (Acer platanoides Schwedlerii) in Westside Park. Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 23 June 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[60] James F. Dawson to Elsa Rehmann, 20 October 1925, OAR, B2121 [f3]. As can be seen from the topographic survey and the planting plan (#2121-454), Dawson was incorrect in stating that there were no pre-existing trees which remained in the plan. A differentiated graphic on the plan indicates the existing material, probably willows and elms, which were retained.
[61] Planting Plan #2121-602; "Notes Relating to Preliminary Planting along West Drive of Middle Division…as executed Spring of 1901 and compiled February 19, 1902," found among Planting List collection for Job #2121 at ONHS; Emil Mische, Report of Visit, 12 May 1904, OAR, B2120 [f9].
[62] JCO, Report of Visit, 5-6 October 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12]. These recommendations were incorporated into Plan #2121-676, sheet 1.
[63] Ibid.
[64] "Notes by H.J. Koehler and Mr. Holocek regarding plantings in order to lessen traffic dangers," 19 January 1924, OAR, B2120 [f14].
[65] 1932-34 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1939 *Annual Report*, p. 17.
[66] JCO, Report of Visit, 9 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 10 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 22 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 July 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]. As if to thwart this screening operation, yet another factory was constructed on the west at the

northern corner of the Middle Division, with a light brick circular chimney "more conspicuous than that of the licorice works." JCO, Report of Visit, 22 September 1903, OAR, B2120 [f7].

[67] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 31 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:108-11; Plan #2121-454.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN IN THE NORTHERN DIVISION

When John Olmsted first explored the more than 100 acres of the Northern Division in August 1898, it was part pasture and part impassable swamp thicket to its north, with the primitively graded Clark's Pond and its accompanying roads to the south. Despite its dense tangle of brush and sometimes sodden surface, he was able to quickly assess the scenic potential of its "promising trees," its open turf areas and its little brook. [Figures 8-1, 8-2] From these elements, he conceived a design which enhanced these natural features, which respected the *genius loci*, creating yet another medley of wood, water and greensward to complement his plans for the other divisions. This section was intended to appear as the most untouched by 'the hand of man,' the most natural and undecorated, with its pools and brook meandering through woods in contrast to its expanse of lush meadow. To develop such an ostensibly artless landscape, and one which could distract the visitor form the "noise and smell nuisance" and tall chimneys of the factories to the west, took consummate skill.[1] This was a landscape based on ever-changing 'passages of scenery' through a harmonious preserve of Nature. The necessary user amenities, the roads and paths, were adroitly woven around ponds and stream, over rustic bridges, subtly receding into the shadows, through the seemingly natural, varied woods, past the expansive sunny meadow, to develop a feeling of enlarged, yet secluded space, which belied the narrow urban conformation of this section.

Figure 8-1: Condition before improvement in Northern Division, c. 1901. Source : 1901 Annual Report, after p. 12.

Figure 8-2: Looking northeast over Clark's Pond before improvement. Note the former skating shelter. JCO photograph, 3 October 1899. Source: Photograph #2121-26, ONHS.

Development of the Water Course

The water course of the Northern Division, called by John Olmsted, "the most important feature proposed," was intended to be the most character-defining element of this section.[2] Both the other Divisions had lakes of various shapes; the Middle Division had an expanse of turf and of woods, though both less extensive than those of the North; but neither other section could offer the variety of changing experiences, the intimate spaces and intricate textures of the brook and pond system. Development of this water course was inextricably related to that of the drives and paths, particularly the latter. Unlike the lakes, which could be visually enjoyed from a boat, from the shore or from afar, for their vistas and reflections, the brook system, for the most part, had to be 'experienced.' To hear the gurgle of its flowing stream, to sense the cool of the woody canopy, to smell the fragrance of its plantings, to feel the interplay of its enclosing vegetation with its calculated vistas out to the broader landscape, the visitor had to be moving along its sinuous route or stopped at one of its designed resting points. A few of the associated larger ponds offered more expansive visual experiences, such as Clark's or "Midwood" Ponds, but these did not offer the boating opportunities of the Southern and Middle lakes. Shore fishing was the most energetic use of these water bodies.

Although in August 1898 the thickets made it "impossible to design by walking over the ground," within the month John Olmsted had a preliminary road proposal ready for this Division, followed by a study of the waterway related to the roads. These guided Supt. McMillan, once the brush was cleared, to stake out on the ground the drive and water courses which John refined as he examined the lines. Operations to deepen the existing brooks and begin underdraining the meadow, to eliminate old fence lines and relocate all trees suitable for transplanting which were in the path of the proposed work began in October, with care taken to protect trees and herbaceous vegetation to be retained. At the November meeting of the Commissioners, John presented this plan. [3]

The survey [See Figures 5-6a and b] and correspondence indicates that in addition to the several thick swamp maple coppice, existing tree groupings across the site included sweet gum, black walnut, chestnut, elm and oak, some of great girth, with a shrubby understory of laurels, spicebush and viburnums among other species and wildflowers.[4] At the beginning of construction, John explained his concept:

> *"It is our idea that all the narrow portions of the waterway should be excavated at once by Mr. McMillan and his force. In executing this part of the work, we are extremely anxious that as little damage as possible should be done to the existing growths and surface of the ground in the vicinity of the proposed brook. To accomplish this result, we advise that the material excavated be removed in wheelbarrows and run on planks to the nearest proposed drive, or to open ground…and thence removed by carts…Where the proximity of trees compels the brook to be narrow, we should expect to have the sides rather steep, the slope above the water being held by bushes and plants and that below the water by boulders, small stones or coarse gravel…The depth of water should be generally two feet. It is proposed to keep the brook full of water by means of little dams placed at or near the points indicated. These dams may be made of concrete, but the surface showing is to be everywhere covered by natural-looking stones, either slabs of ledge stone, or small cobble stones and coarse gravel…The dams are in no case to be built with vertical or steep faces, but are to have gentle slopes both above and below , so that the water (if it flows at all) will not form a waterfall, but a ripple or rapid….In forming this brook it is not expected to provide adequate capacity for flood waters within the limits of the brook as indicated. We consider that there will be no objection to the flood spreading to some extent on the adjoining grounds, especially in the wooded areas."* [5]

Keeping the trees was critical both for picturesque effect and to retain dense shade over the brook in order to prevent the growth of aquatic weeds. Therefore, JCO was anxious to have the work handled by McMillan, whose skill and judgement he respected to protect the native material and to decide which trees it was economical to move and which to cut. [6]

As in the Middle Division, a good drainage system was critical to the development of the plan, both for this water feature and for the meadow. Like the Middle section, a sub-surface sewer had to be accommodated in the grading plan.[7] Olmsted did not want to use the pools and brook for drainage, which would have required lowering the water unaesthetically below the elevation of the meadow surface; rather, he wanted to have a "brimful effect" for the brook, keeping its level close to that of the meadow. Therefore, he intended to use "underground agricultural drains emptying into a main drain," on both the east and west. Such a system would be costly and problematic to construct without killing too many trees, but he considered " the advantage to the naturalness and beauty of the landscape… well worth the additional trouble and expense." [8] The drains were necessary, and without them, construction and planting could not progress. But, he continued,

> *"We do not wish to be misunderstood with regard to the effect of the drainage on the existing trees. We have no doubt that the thorough underdrainage which we deem essential to proper sanitary conditions will result in the death of a good many trees, especially of the largest ones, that are now growing in swampy land. We believe, however, that by adding a few inches of porous soil and mulching the trees that are worth preserving, the mortality will be reduced to a reasonable amount…the risk of the loss of trees must be taken, as it is essential to provide sanitary conditions in a public park. "* [9]

Shaping the ground for drainage affected the design not only of the brooks, but also the accompanying drives on the west and the meadow to the east. John concluded to keep the waterway narrow and shallow for a great part of its length, retaining as much shade as possible from the "natural growth," particularly south of what was to become Ballantine Parkway. To keep the brook watertight, "clay puddling" overlaid with gravel was to cover the bottom and sides, with "the earth edges of the brook protected by clumps of bushes, ferns, sedges and other suitable plants." Any boulders excavated from the site were to be stockpiled for use in the rustic culverts, bridges and brook edges. [10]

Superintendent McMillan's unexpected death on August 1, 1899 interrupted knowledgeable supervision of this sensitive construction. The new superintendent, William Manning was not able to prevent a foreman and "large gang of men with bush scythes and axes" from cutting down all the undergrowth and dumping the spoil from the excavation on the sides of the brook, smothering the plant materials. John objected, noting that the existing wild flowers and bushes could be "preserved to advantage, not only for looks but for economy." Since money for planting was an issue at this time, he altered his proposed evergreen shrub plantations in the woods "to narrow belts wandering crookedly among the trees between neighboring drives and walks so as to screen one from the other and yet not look stiff and artificial." [11]

Construction of the various brook areas progressed through 1899 into 1900, needing subtle adjustments of grading to keep the water level deep enough without drowning the nearby trees, as the dam-culvert-bridge structures were built. [12] As planning for the drives and paths developed, Olmsted associate Percy Jones had created a series of sketches for the eight brook culverts, each with an individualized stone bridge. The collected boulders were variously patterned into arched or straight-topped bridges, some with ashlar stones, others using rounded rubble, with rough-cut lintels of "sap-faced granite." The bridges were set on diagonals or perpendicular to the brook, as the path system required.[13] Since following the brookside path which criss-crossed back and forth across these bridges was to be a linear experience, this diversity of masonry added to the richness of the passage, further enhanced with an intricacy of small and large-scale plantings. The importance of the textural variety to the design caused JCO to have the first three bridges rebuilt, as the plans had specified, to achieve the differing patterns, rather than accept the ones that had been produced with the same character of masonry.[14] [Figures 8-3, 8-4, 8-5]

Figure 8-3: "Cobble Bridge," between Ballantine Gates and Abington Pool. JCO photograph, 30 May 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-73, ONHS.

Figure 8-4: "Brownstone" footbridge near Ballantine Gates. JCO photograph, 30 May 1901. Source: Photograph # 2121-74, ONHS.

Figure 8-5: "Brownstone Lintel" footbridge near north end of brook. JCO photograph, 30 May 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-78, ONHS.

A few of the bridges were planned with seats to be resting points along the route, and the remarkable attention to detail, both for aesthetics and practicality, was part of what made an Olmsted plan so unique. As Olmsted instructed the mason in constructing the bluestone seat for this bridge,

> *"We suggested that a large boulder be placed at each end of the seat, forming a low arm and concealing the end of the bluestone to anyone approaching the bridge. Perhaps it will be easier to make a fit if the boulder is split in two vertically and the front side tooled enough to conform to the front line of the seat and support. The whole space under the bluestone slab should be filled with masonry in order that there may be no open places for catching refuse …The bluestone should be made to overhang the boulder front below it by about two inches and at the turn the top edge should be rounded off. There will be no objection to using quite small boulders under the seat."* [15]

This brook system terminated at the southern end of the Division at the pre-existing Clark's Pond. The sides of this former ice pond had been artificially built up from the pond excavations, forming a pool, with "rather formal rounded form and stiff, regular banks." [16] It had to be lowered in order for a drive to pass by and under the proposed Bloomfield Avenue Bridge. Since Clark's Pond was at the entrance and road junction to the Northern

Division when traveling along the park drive from the south, its setting and aspect was of major importance. To keep the natural character of this Division, this pond was elongated northward, its southern banks covered with lawn and open groves, its north narrowing to a stream through the woods, which linked under a culvert-bridge to the next large pool. Its edges were irregularly contoured into bays and headlands, its island retained with Mr. Clark's decorative rustic bridge [See Figure 5-7], with another smaller island added to the north. Some of the original surrounding vegetation— oaks, ash, chestnut, spruce and small pines— was transplanted; the former skating house was set aside for reuse as a shelter elsewhere.[17] Work on Clark's Pond was underway through 1899 to the spring of 1900, when the island was planted with hemlock, willow, swamp oak and shrubs, such as Indian currant and elder. Its banks had been graveled with stone, " nearly white…very unnatural and formal in effect," a material which was altered in future work to brown gravel.[18] The planting of the banks and surrounding area followed with a similar closely-spaced native palette, which matured into a rich green backdrop to contrast with the expanse of water. [Figure 8-6]

Figure 8-6: Weeping willows on Clark's Pond island. J.G. Perrett photograph, before 1914. Source: Photograph #2121-185 (second album), ONHS.

From the outset of his design concept for this water course, Olmsted questioned the availability of water to sustain the brook (since it was dry at the time of his first August visit). He was unwilling to rely on springs whose source was not within Park Commission control, and the Canal was an unreliable source since its future was in doubt. The brook system originally received some water from the city system as well as from an artesian well, which had been recommended by Bogart, and was placed near the towpath of the northeast corner.[19] By 1903, the cost of the 100,000 gallons of city water required daily to maintain the brook and water the plantings was "too great a drain on the maintenance appropriation," and a 10-inch well was driven to supply an alternative source. This was still inadequate to keep a sufficiently rapid flow to prevent the growth of algae. Stocking the brook and pools with fish was attempted to keep the water wholesome and to reduce the risk of mosquito breeding areas. [20]

Since increased park usage brought the need for more drinking fountains, and yet more water was needed for the expanded plantations and the new greenhouses, the water problem remained unresolved. The 1907 solution from Newark Water Engineer Morris Sherrerd, to recirculate the lake water by pumping it back to the top of the brook rather than wasting it in the city sewer, made a considerable difference. [21] With this increased flow of about one million gallons a day, the brook was "full and running nicely" when Olmsted reviewed it in October 1909, but there was still much loss from seepage and "it appeared that the shores must have settled too much," requiring dams to be lowered, particularly in the wooded areas. As he succinctly observed, "The brook needs more study." [22] Once the Canal was abandoned and drained by 1926, the level of the brook and lakes declined again, attesting to the amount of seepage into the system through the canal banks. The solution at that time was to pump more water from the artesian well.[23] This was not a thorough solution for this problem, which has continued to erode the grace and beauty of the Northern Division's water course.

Development of the Circulation System: Entrances, Drives and Paths

The related issues of drives and entrances challenged John Olmsted on his initial exploration of the site, and his sketches on the Barrett and Bogart plan reflect his creative thinking to ameliorate what he considered a defect in his predecessors' plan. Barrett's plan called for the main drive, once under the proposed Bloomfield Avenue Bridge, to turn sharply west at Clark's Pond, hugging the canal border. From the outset, John Olmsted disagreed with this awkward turn. He found that there was room for only a narrow drive between Clark's Pond, the brooks and the Canal, not for the wider main drive. Although he noted that a route east of the Pond had the disadvantage of a view over the Pond marred by the noxious factories to the west, these could be distanced with planting. The advantages this eastern route offered were those of pulling the traveler further from the noise and smells of the industries; of allowing for a main drive of ample width and graceful curves; and of enabling the archway under the Bloomfield Bridge to angle to the right which would look better immediately adjoining the drive. This route also was intended to connect to the several roads entering the park from the adjoining neighborhood.[24] On the west, a narrower drive could be designed focussing on the brook system, to divert views from the commercial intrusions to the west. As Olmsted noted, "the canal and the probable occupation of the neighboring territory by a population not much addicted to riding in carriages made it inexpedient to have any carriage entrance except at the north boundary." [25]

As in the Middle section, this was to be circuit drive system accompanied by corollary paths, allowing for travel around the periphery. But in contrast to the other Divisions, cross connections and interchanges of both drives and paths were critical for accessibility in the Northern section. This was due to the long narrow shape of this section and to the complex design for the brook and pools. The design development of this circuit drive was interrelated to the creation and protection of park views and the treatment of the park boundaries, including the definition and enhancement of entrances.

Entrances: Elwood Avenue and the Ballantine Gates

Barrett's plan had called for an entrance at Bloomfield Avenue and Lake Street and another at the north off Fredonia Avenue, later Heller Parkway. Reviewing the site in 1898, Olmsted observed the proposed Bloomfield and Lake neighborhood "unfortunate' for a park entrance, preferring to push it northward to "2nd Avenue where there is good reason to expect a much better class of residences." The Park Commission had no objection to such a change. [26]

What had been obvious to John Olmsted from his early site inspections was that a triangle of land immediately north of Elwood Avenue, west of Old Bloomfield Road "ought to be added to the park because its slope would

complete the local scenery nicely, and because with it the E. [sic] drive could be run by the grove of nice trees on the flat land without cutting so many." This would enable the drive to be "3 or 4 feet above the meadow and thus command a good view of it." To so enhance this northeast corner of the park required negotiation with George E. Heller, a wealthy industrialist and one of the principals of the Forest Hill Land Company, which had already donated several acres to the Park Commission.[27] Correcting what he considered "a decidedly objectionable" boundary, Olmsted prepared several plans expanding the line eastward from First Street so that the natural declivity and its grove of trees were included in the park. [28]

Other projects to complete the design took precedence, and this proposal remained dormant until late 1899 while when John again made a strong plea for its consideration to Commissioner Vanderpool, in charge of the Commission's financial decisions. Noting that this boundary line and the topographic conditions had been a problem from the beginning of the design work because it forced the circuit drive eastward into the park, he continued,

> *" This slope [west of Old Bloomfield Road, north of Elwood Avenue] is not only literally natural but it is precisely the slope we should have sought to secure artificially had the land been practically level. Such a slope is of the greatest value as a matter of landscape design to border and give a sense of completeness and naturalness to the gently sloping land between the circuit drive and the low ground near the canal…If is a feature that is very essential to give pleasure through the eye and to afford the sense of satisfaction which a complete scene of a given character has as compared to one which is incomplete."* [29]

Appealing to Vanderpool's frugality, he noted that if the present boundary were to remain, it would require a considerable investment for filling the edge for planting, for fencing along the "decidedly crooked and perceptively longer" line and for regrading, but all "at great injury to the general landscape value of the Northern Division." By contrast, "the cost of acquisition of the land needed at this point is a comparatively small one," and not acquiring this land would cause irreparable damage to the investment already made. [30]

This matter continued unresolved, but for John Olmsted by no means forgotten. When the firm produced a requested series of plans conforming the drive to the "boundaries of land already controlled by the Commission," Olmsted tenaciously took the opportunity to remind Vanderpool that the effect of the necessary circuit drive was to reduce the apparent size of the park. Therefore, he suggested a possible exchange of land with Heller, noting that "the value of such a readjustment of the park boundary at this place would be far greater than any loss or inconvenience that would occur from the postponement of improvements in that locality."
He continued,

> *"We trust you will not feel annoyed with our persistent endeavors to impress you with the need of an readjustment of the park boundary at this place and if it were merely a matter of policy we should be quite willing to acknowledge that it was not our duty to say anything more after you had decided the matter, but as it very seriously affects the design of the park, and very much to its detriment, we venture to bring up the new idea of an exchange of land instead of a purchase."* [31]

Negotiations dragged on through 1901 between Heller and the Park Commission, with a series of offers and counteroffers concerning the various roadways abutting the Forest Hill Land Company properties.[32] By 1904, Olmsted's persistence paid off, although the victory involved taking the land by eminent domain to achieve a boundary line close to what Olmsted had desired. The settlement also involved the City of Newark abandoning portions of Old Bloomfield Road and Elwood Avenue.

The firm produced a series of studies to work out the subtle grading to complete the lines and develop a graceful entrance into the park from Elwood Avenue.[33] [Figure 8-7] The plans of 1904 changed the entrance design shown on the General Plan of 1901, where the roadway was to make a direct connection to the corner of Lake Street and Elwood Avenue. As Olmsted explained to Supt. Manning, the earlier more formal entrance was designed to be of commercial advantage to the adjoining land owners in the hope that they would give the needed triangle of land to the Commission. Since the gift did not occur, the new design, a curving entry road was arranged for the enjoyment of the park user and located further northwest, near the corner of Elwood and Degraw Avenues. A revised planting plan to enhance this new arrangement [34] was intended to create

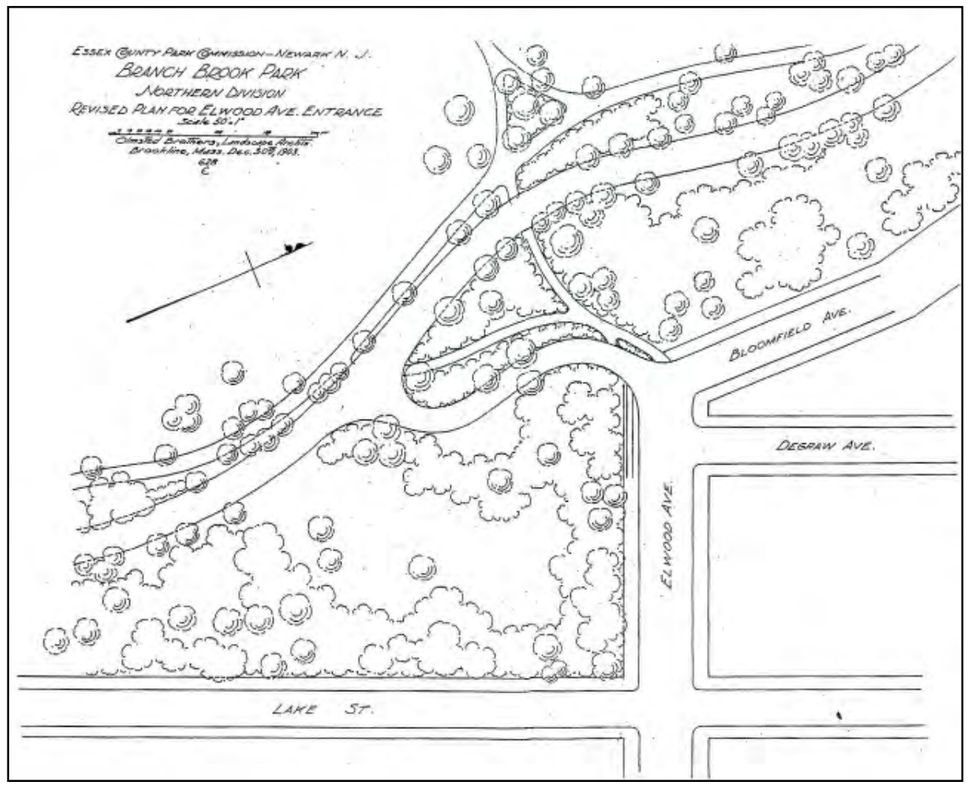

Figure 8-7: Revised Preliminary plan for Elwood Avenue entrance, Plan #2121-628, 30 December 1903. Note the proposed heavy planting to screen the entrance. Source: ONHS.

> *"a simple, continuous mass of woods with undergrowth along the portion of the park so extensive as to ensure a complete screening of the houses and other artificial features outside of the park, and so simple and natural and monotonous that the attention of visitors would not be particularly drawn to*

it, but would be left free to appreciate the extensive and far more dignified views west and southwest and south over the broad park meadows. In short, we felt that an intricate, elaborate and perhaps even fussy outline of narrow planting along the border of the park in this locality…was no longer appropriate…" [35]

With the construction of this entrance, the planned Fredonia Circle at Forest Hill Parkway, which had also been an enhancement of the Heller properties, was less of a priority. The park drive as shown on the 1901 General Plan, which connected to Heller Parkway at the midpoint along the Northern boundary, became the main entrance for this area, to become of greater significance when Branch Brook Park was extended along Second River.

As automobile use increased, in 1909-10, the Elwood Avenue entrance was renovated to provide for two straighter roadways, leading north and south, to accommodate vehicles. leaving a central island with a tree. Planting rearrangements for automobile safety consisted of removal of most shrubs, leavings some dogwoods planted in turf. [36]

By comparison, development of the Ballantine entrance with its grand gateway was a much easier process. Although Olmsted had stated that the Northern Division was to exclude architectural, sculptural and horticultural decoration, this prohibition did not extend to the treatment of the periphery. In January 1899, Robert F. Ballantine, scion of the brewing company family who had already been generous land donors to Park Commission, proposed a gift of a gateway, in memory of his father, near the family land holdings. John was asked to develop a concept for a special form of architectural entrance, to cost about $20,000, in consultation with Carrère and Hastings.[37] The earlier idea for an eastern parkway entrance through the Mt. Pleasant Land Co. holdings, which JCO had rejected, was intended to connect to the park near Abington Avenue, at a point where the Northern Division was most narrow. By contrast, Chester Avenue, to become Ballantine Parkway, entered at a wider location near the southern end of the meadow, and offered better opportunities for an important design.

Sending his initial sketch to Carrère and Hastings in mid February 1899, Olmsted described his intentions as an oval junction of Lake Street with Ballantine Parkway, with a central "island of refuge" surrounded by stone posts.

"We suggest that the gateway proper should be of massive but simply-cut stone posts, flanked on either side by a building which we think should not exceed two-thirds of the height of the posts… One of these buildings would be the gate-keeper's room; the other a house in which tools would be kept. In our design for the entire park it is our intention that the architectural treatment should be confined to the southern division. In the middle division there is to be only the necessary architecture of bridges, etc., and though some trees and shrubs not native are to be used in the planting, the treatment of the whole is to be strictly natural and informal. The character of the northern division is to be even more natural, and in our planting we shall use only native trees and shrubs so that the scenery will be rural and as simple as possible. We, therefore, feel that while this Ballantine gateway, forming as it will the end of the formally treated Ballantine Avenue and the division between it and the natural scenery of the park, should be dignified, it should be as simple as possible and free from all elaborateness…[I]t is necessary that the entrance drive should curve soon after passing through the gates. This and the necessity for a belt plantation between the circuit drive and Lake Street will prevent any important view of the gateway from within the park." [38]

Thomas Hastings' first plans for the gates [39] were, in Olmsted's view, probably too expensive, obstructed the view unnecessarily into the park and were "too ornate and elaborate for the simple, wild and small park behind it." Hastings agreed to simplify the designs, to lower the high wall and the roofs, making a less costly design for the gate-houses while still retaining "mass and dignity." He complained, however, about the cost of making so many elaborate drawings. JCO's response was that without some design presented for consideration, neither the Commission nor the Olmsted firm could tell just what was wanted. [40]

To implement the revised Carrère and Hastings design for the gates and entry plaza required more land (about 50 feet by 100 feet from 2 lots) along Lake Street. On May 1, 1899, Olmsted presented this scheme to Robert Ballantine, discussing the importance of making this approach "as a dignified and pleasant centre of interest, like squares, places and architectural centres in foreign cities." [41] The concept required the approval of the Trustees of the Ballantine estate, who had already agreed to the widening of Chester Avenue to become the parkway. Olmsted wrote to Ballantine that the Trustees' decision should not be "from any generous motive on their part, but entirely as a business matter." He continued,

"We believe that the enhanced value of the remainder of the estate that will accrue by reason of the location of the entrance at this point, and by reason of the handsome treatment of the oval at the junction of Ballantine Parkway with Lake Street, especially to the portion in the immediate vicinity, will be much more than the value of the land to be given the Park Commission…You may therefore safely assure the Trustees that, if they will give the needed land, the proposed improvements will be completed within a reasonable time, so that the full benefit of their gift, as well as of your own, will begin to be realized in time to affect favorably the first sales of lots which they are likely to make in that portion of the property. [42]

By the summer of 1899 an agreement from the Prospect Heights Land and Improvement Co. had been reached to donate a quarter of an acre. Working drawings were prepared by Carrère and Hastings, and difficult issues resolved to establish the grade and width for the Lake Street lots relative to the park boundary, while at the same time preserving some trees. In addition, details of the buildings and gates had to be decided, particularly where to insert the name for the gates.[43] The contract for the construction was awarded "to a Newark man who had been given the job without competition to please Mr.

Figure 8-8: Looking into the park through the Ballantine Gates. c. 1905. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

Figure 8-9: Looking toward Ballantine Gates from inside park, 1915. Source: 1915 Annual Report, p. 20.

Ballantine. He gives his $25,000 and the Commission will pay the $1500 besides doing all the 'plaza' work." [44] Although the structure was completed in the spring of 1900, grading of the plaza and the parkway was still in process in December 1900. Grading the park side area of the gates and finalizing the paths and plantings for the plaza took place in the spring of 1901.[45] [Figures 8-8, 8-9]

Since this entrance was conceived as part of a residential development to be enhanced by its proximity to the park, the amenity of a playground to serve the neighborhood families was added to the park design in conjunction with these gates. To the north of the gates, tucked around a sycamore grove there was to be a wading pool, sand courts, a Little Folks' Lawn with play equipment and a shelter, to be installed when "the increase of population creates a demand for it and justifies the expense of maintaining it." [46] Plans for the shelter indicate that this was to be a rearrangement and expansion (with addition of a wing and veranda) of the structure which was formerly the skating building at Clark's Pond. Plans were made for this shelter in 1901, but there is no indication in the record whether this or the proposed playground equipment was ever installed.[47] No structures near the Ballantine Gates are indicated on the 1911 or the 1926 Atlas. Instead, by 1926, the area north of the Ballantine Gates was the terminus for the bridle path. [48]

Drives and Paths

Between September and October 1898, many of the drive-path ideas which John Olmsted had considered on his initial visits were sketched, staked out on the ground, and their lines refined in conjunction with the developing water course, grading and planting plans. [49] [Figure 8-10] Working with Supt. McMillan, Olmsted's concept for the circulation system evolved as he worked out the shapes for the various pools and the sinuous course of the brook. The main route, to be called "North Branch Brook Drive," was little affected by these water features, but rather was used to define the eastern extent of the meadow as it wound circuitously northward, close to the Lake Street boundary, continuing in a generous curve around the northern extent of the Division. The roads entering from Second Avenue, through the Ballantine Gates and from Elwood Avenue, were all designed to gracefully intersect with this drive. By contrast, the narrower western drive, called "Brookside Drive," upon emerging from the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge underpass was made "to divide and divide again among the trees …thus accentuating the dense woodland treatment." These divided drive were to be hidden from one another by a dense planted undergrowth, characterized by particular shrubs which gave their name to these various sub-areas, drives and paths — "Rhododendron Drive," "Laurel Drive," "Beech Drive." The choice of curvilinear routes in this constricted portion of the Northern Division was intended to distract attention from the Canal's proximity while enlarging the sense of space. Skirting the edge of the brook and pools,

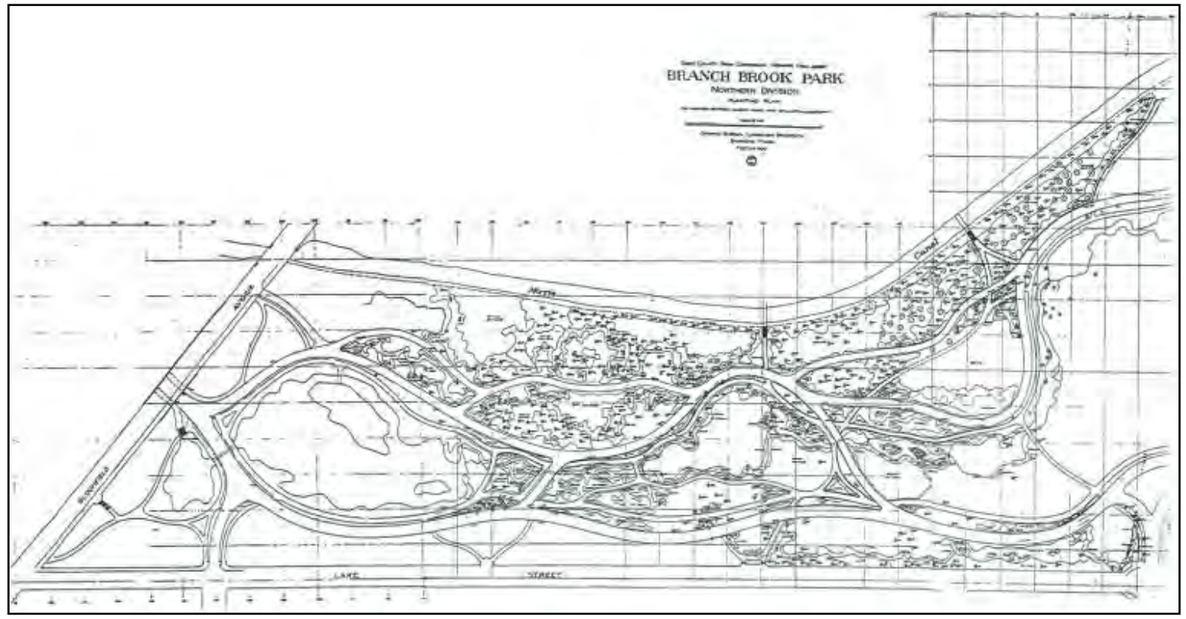

Figure 8-10: Planting Plan between Clark's Pond and Ballantine Gateway, #2121-469, 17 March 1900. Note the clearly articulated system of roads and paths. Source: ONHS.

the "Brookside Drive" eventually joined the main drive at the northern end of the park division.[50] Acknowledging that there would be objections to the indirectness and reverse curves of this drive system, John Olmsted considered these were appropriate to "break the otherwise somewhat monotonous north and south alignment." He observed,

> *"I do not see that there is anything unnatural in the arrangement, and if it satisfies most visitors in this aspect, I am not afraid of the inconvenience. The brook being…a feature well worth retaining, will afford sufficient satisfaction to visitors to tolerate the crookedness of the drive."* [51]

By February 1899 many of the drive and path patterns had been refined, along with several of the brook crossings and one path across the meadow. The several step locations on the entering paths from Lake Street or from Bloomfield Avenue had been developed. But the northeast corner of the park was left blank due to the unresolved boundary line near Elwood Avenue.[52] Within the next several months, grading studies developed the circulation system, now including the Ballantine Gateway, the formal Elwood Avenue proposal (as it was to appear on the General Plan) and several paths crossing the meadow, dividing it into discrete topographically varied units.[53] These paths were to be built "low enough to avoid seeing them from a distance." They were not to be visible "as walks or streaks in the meadow views." [54] Beginning at the southern end of the Northern Division from 1901 on, drives and paths were gradually graded and macadamized, [Figure 8-11] except for the northeast corner, pending the Elwood Avenue resolution, and for the southern connections, pending the construction of the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge. The Elwood entrance was built in1904, and the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge by 1905, the latter requiring a considerable replacement of some of these roads and walks. As an economy measure, Olmsted recommended that the drives "be macadamized only 18 ft. wide [sic], leaving rest in earth

Figure 8-11: Looking northwest across propagating pool to Clark's Pond. Note the paths and drives with their richly planted edges. 1901. Source: 1901 Annual Report, after p. 12.

for some years," with the border plantings set back to accommodate the future full width. [55]

The question of lighting and policing the parks arose in 1906, to which the Olmsted firm responded that there was not yet enough population in the Northern Division to warrant the expense. The issue arose again in 1908, instigated by the motorists. The firm again responded that the time "had hardly arrived, considering limited maintenance money for lighting and policing the northern division." Without lights, the public is at its own risk; with lights, "they invite the public and must protect them by more policing and more lighting." JCO's suggestion was to light only one road, and put up notices informing the public that the lights would be turned off at 10:30 P.M. Before roads were lighted, however, he felt that "expenditures for lighting and policing during the evening for the benefit of visitors on foot" should take precedence, with warning signs that "unlighted portions of the park…are not open to the public at night after dark." [56] Forty-one lights were installed along the east drive in 1909, upgraded in 1923 to 82 lights,10 feet high, on ornamental concrete posts placed 150 feet apart. [57]

In 1921, a bridle path from the Middle Division was continued into the Northern Division. This path, winding along the western edge, was inserted among the trees, concealed by plantings, ending at the Ballantine Gateway. [58]

Development of the Meadow and its Usage

Defining the extent of the meadow was interrelated to both the brook and the drive planning. As he considered the various twists and turns of the water course, John Olmsted was very aware of the visual impact upon the green expanse. In his early site evaluation he observed that as the park widened, although "largely covered with swamp bushes and coppice, the opportunity for broad, parklike effects and for a ball-field without artificial accompaniments is so extraordinarily good…" [59] Writing to Supt. McMillan in January 1899, as the concept plans were being refined, he noted,

> *"The greatest landscape value of the land will be obtained by throwing the drive and brook at least as far west as I have contemplated, thus securing the largest possible unbroken extent of meadow in one body and making the brook with the trees which will shade it and the adjoining walk and drive a bordering feature for the open meadow. Rather than reduce the meadow in extent, I have concluded in this portion of the waterway to keep it narrow for a greater part of its length." [60]*

The meadow was made from former fields and pastureland, grubbed of thickets of worthless trees, combined with underdrained former swampland, and all seeded in grass. Along its western margin and at other selected locations, some of the pre-existing trees were allowed to remain to develop into specimens to enhance the "simple, yet satisfactory beauty" of this pastoral scenery. Olmsted's idea was "to produce a broad, open meadow effect, with sparsely scattered, broad spreading trees in the manner of the English deer park." Some existing shrubbery was to remain to be supplemented by additional plantations, but in these locations it would be necessary to grub out tree stumps and seedlings. Olmsted cautioned McMillan to be protective of the natural ground cover. In other areas, once cleared and with subsoil drainage installed, " perfect clean turf" was to be developed. [61]

Beyond its bucolic splendors, this gently undulating open meadow was of great use for "field sports and for strolling upon." [62] By 1901, thirty-seven grass tennis courts had been laid out on the so-called "North Playfield" meadow [Figure 8-12] , their use regulated by permits, while on another portion outdoor summer gymnastics were supervised by the Board of Education. Excavation material from the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge construction was used to fill 32 acres of this meadow, enabling fields to be prepared for sports for older boys which had previously been played in the Middle Division. Cricket, baseball and football for those over 15 began in 1906.[63]

Figure 8-12: Tennis Courts on the North Playfield. E.F. Keller photograph, c. 1901. Source: Photograph #2121-130, ONHS.

From the earliest sketches, it was intended that the knoll slightly south of Elwood Avenue be graced with a fieldhouse [64] to provide toilet accommodations and a broad veranda from which to view the surrounding meadow. In 1901, John Olmsted had presented plans for two shelters, the men's on the knoll and the women's near the Ballantine Gate (see above under Entrances), although he noted at that time that there were some advantages in combining the structures. [65] The Olmsted plans were not pursued. It was not until 1905 that the Commission could afford planning for the several buildings it needed for Branch Brook Park. Also since usage of the playfields had greatly increased, it was crucial to provide facilities for the players. A large structure, of pebble-dash finished concrete, was designed by F.A. Wright of New York and erected in 1906 to serve both men and women, supervised by a matron. Heating was added in 1907 to handle the fall football schedule. [66] Inspecting the park in 1909, John Olmsted found the fieldhouse of "low and pleasing design, but so long that it seems to dwarf the park." He suggested plantings of maples, pines and large shrubs to screen it. Hans Koehler of the firm was later to recommend the addition of red oaks. [67]

Enhancing the 'Natural': Planting the Division

Though overgrown, crowded and entangled, the abundance and diversity of the natural vegetation found on the site in the Northern Division was enticing to John Olmsted and his associates as they developed their plans for this area and for the park. Retaining as much of this material as possible and incorporating it into the design arose from Olmsted operating principles based on aesthetics, on conservation and on practicality. Aesthetically, respecting the inherent character of a place had been an operating principle for the senior Olmsted from the beginning of his practice, one which he had learned from his study of the18th century English landscape theorists, gardeners and artists.[68] Respecting and enhancing rather than destroying the *genius loci* usually led to a more beautiful design, in keeping with natural conditions, which worked because it was 'fitting' and was sustainable on many levels. Conserving native materials, retaining the context for their sustenance, and melding these into a landscape plan which, at the same time, provided for sanitation, accessibility and necessary amenities for public enjoyment, made for landscapes of scenic interest, where man's skillful manipulation of the elements was not obvious. Finally, since budgets were frequently constricted, labor at this time was cheap and great horticultural skill available for tree-moving, it made for poor economy to waste plant material if it could be used in place (the design adjusting to noble trees or great rock outcrops), or relocated elsewhere within the project. Many of the trees and some shrubs from the North were, therefore, used in the other divisions; many of the shrubs used throughout the Essex County parks had been collected from the reservations and redistributed.

While the1898 topographic survey for the Northern Division [See Figure 5-6a and b] recorded many of the trees, with their species and girth, it is clear from the correspondence records that this was incomplete and inaccurate in many areas, with John complaining that it was difficult to design without knowing the exact location of many of the trees. Throughout letters and reports concerning the development of this division there are references to the diversity of shrubs and wildflowers found on the site, which are not indicated on this survey.

This plethora of native plants and the potential for an interesting, seemingly natural rural setting provided John Olmsted with the opportunity to develop an area of most contrast to the bedded-out planting exuberances of the Southern Division gardens, and he took full advantage of it. Beyond the typical swamp maples and pin oaks expected in this type of setting, he had praised the swamp white oak, nyssa[tupelo], sweet gum, hornbeams and hop-hornbeams. [69] By January 1899, after much of the general concept for this section— the brook system and the flow of the drives— had been settled upon, Olmsted associate, James Dawson explored the site to evaluate the locations of the intended features in terms of the existing plants, making adjustments wherever possible to retain significant material in place. This analysis evolved into a plan for tree relocations, many to be moved around Clark's Pond once that regrading was completed.[70] The Clark's Pond planting plan,[71] [Figure 8-13] produced by December 1899, augmented the relocated trees with suggested groupings of native material around the pond. These included cucumber magnolia and white oaks to the east, underplanted with inkberry, sumac, viburnum, elders, spice bush and native azaleas among many others, with ground covers of vinca, low roses, and yellowroot, etc. On the western pond edges, hemlocks were to screen the pond from the road connection to Bloomfield Avenue. Norway maples were to be used as the street trees along Bloomfield,

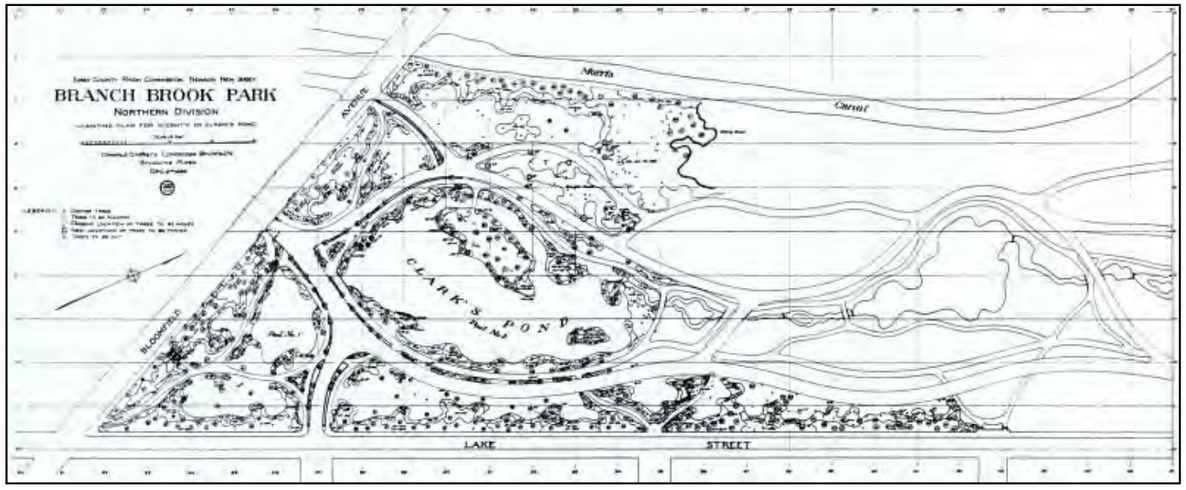

Figure 8-13: Planting plan for vicinity of Clark's Pond, Plan #2121-383, 6 December 1899. Source: ONHS.

intermingled with lindens, oriental planes, hemlocks and scotch pine, again with varied shrubs below. Norway maples were again used along the Canal slopes, which as in the Middle Division had been built up to screen out the Licorice Factory, [72] with mixed beds of hornbeam, cornelian cherry, witch hazel, rhododendron and viburnums.

By March 1900, the planting plan extended as far as the Ballantine Gates, [73] and by August the entire Northern Division was included.[74] The plant selections and combinations represented an extraordinary range of trees, shrubs and herbaceous material, many with flowers which would extend over a long period of bloom. The record does not indicate how much of this material was planted, and whether it was installed in the specified dense quantities, so characteristic of an Olmsted planting. Planting lists represent idealized quantities and combinations; the plant order lists for the nurseries give a more accurate record of what was ordered and available.[75] But in the case of the plantings for the Northern Division, since the intended design character stressed native materials, the plants are harder to trace. Some of the plantings came from rearranging or thinning plants found on the site; others were collected from the Essex County reservations, including Weequahic Park. Since Branch Brook Park and parks elsewhere in the system were developed simultaneously, there was a sharing of materials to ease the Park Commission's overall financial burden. In January 1902, the firm prepared two plans with accompanying plant lists which provided a detailed analyses of the "condition of planting," noting materials called for in the plans but missing or failed on the ground. [76] The historic photographs document the beauty as the plant groupings matured into a diverse and intricate textured surround for paths, drives and waterways.

After the Olmsted firm was no longer under contract, they periodically consulted on the condition of the planting, rearranging groupings to prevent some plants crowding out others. While this type of service from the firm was not atypical, the degree of oversight which given to this park is an indication of the personal importance JCO attached to the continuing appropriate maintenance of his creation, particularly of the brook area. On visits in April and October 1909, John Olmsted objected to the poor pruning which had left trees "trimmed up unnecessarily." He continued,

> *"A general thinning of trees and shrubs is now desirable and in many places the shrubbery should be more mixed and accidental-looking. There are too many solid beds of one kind. A good many more hemlocks should be added to thicken the border screening plantations."* [77]

Six months later, he was still advocating thinning and mixing the plantations, particularly near the water where prostrate varieties were needed. Shrubs had been clipped "to facilitate lawn mowing" as had the turf along the watercourse, making the brook "too formal and artificial." In other places, the brook was "too much concealed from view." He recommended adding waterside shrubs and perennials , such as "ceanothus (the New Jersey tea plant), low shrub willow…pickerel weed and Iris." In some of the larger pools "water lilies should be added in tubs so as not to spread too much." [78]

In 1928 Hans J. Koehler made an inspection with the task of training the park department's plantsman, Carl Witte, about maintenance needs. He also recommended thinning of the materials which had become leggy, to create "a loose aggregation of shrubs that individually have a better, more spreading development …some of them may even be allowed to develop into specimens, others into what might be termed semi-specimens; and yet the general mass effect should be retained and the ground covered…" Some larger shrubs close to paths should be carefully pruned to create a "pleasing over-arching effect." [79] He had specific thinning recommendations for the northeast corner of the Northern Division.

> *"[T]he frequenters of the park have increased greatly in numbers, and are more unruly than used to be the case, and the plantations are now subjected to abuse that could hardly have been foreseen when the parks were first designed. We refer to people making paths through the plantations, breaking them down, and finding concealment in them for various purposes…Therefore, we propose, in many cases, to break up such masses into groups of widely spaced, wide-spreading, more or less individual and specimen-like shrubs standing in the grass."* [80]

He felt that the general appearance of the parks was excellent, and that his recommendations were to be considered "in the way of caution to prevent things going wrong in order to keep up the present general excellent condition. Nothing sudden and radical is contemplated; changes, as a rule, are to take place gradually and imperceptibly…"[81] In 1932, Koehler and Witte examined the Northern Division as they had the Southern and Middle, looking for locations to plant cherry trees. Ignoring the controlling design intent for this section to remain natural in its plantings, not decorated with gardenesque material, they suggested locations close to the numerous pools, though they warned that the water table was probably too high for cherries to thrive. [82]

Antoinette Perrett, garden writer and photographer, who had provided the Olmsted firm in 1914 with its images of Branch Brook Park, contributed a short article to the Thirtieth Annual Park Report (1925) in praise of the park's horticultural splendors. While her remarks apply to the entire park, many of the plants which she singled out for comment were those chosen for the Northern Division. [Figures 8-14, 8-15] The "astonishing wealth of material" providing continuous seasonal interest

Figure 8-14: Looking north along brookside path. Note the rich understory planting of rhododendrons. JG. Perrett photograph, before 1914. [A similar image was used in Kelsey, The First County Park System, p. 24]. Source: Photograph #2121-145, (second album), ONHS.

Figure 8-15: Looking north along the water course in the Northern Division. J.G. Perrett photograph, before 1914. Source: Photograph #2121-149, ONHS.

—succession of bloom, fall foliage colors, winter berries and colored stems – made this park a source of endless beauty and educational interest Reviewing the seasonal changes, she commented that "It is a great cultural loss to the community not to have this pageant fully advertised. It outdoes the movies in pleasurable excitements…" She appreciated the park's wealth of material from the earliest catkins of the alders and hazelnuts, through the April to June blooms of shadbush, viburnum and azaleas, through the great diversity of autumn berries and seed pods to the winter "color harmonies" of stem and berries. She found the real distinction for the park "in the way that it has been assembled," saying that in her travels she had not come across

> *"a park of its kind and size that has been planted with such exquisite taste in assembling of shrubbery, with such thoughtfulness for a succession of bloom and fruits, with such a color sense in the wintertime, with such a fine knowledge and with such a feeling for shrubs. It has truly been one of the joys of our life, as it must be to all who live near it."* [83]

The Greenhouse and Maintenance Complex

Plant propagation and, therefore, glasshouses, were critical to sustaining the intricate bedding-out plantings needed in the Southern Division gardens, as well as plantings in other parks. An early suggestion to place propagating houses in Weequahic Reservation was deemed inadvisable by Olmsted for several reasons. Besides the inconvenience of the distance from the other parks, he feared it would lead to ornamental gardening in the Weequahic Reservation where

> *"it would be entirely out of harmony with the proposed style of keeping and the plan for its [Weequahic's] improvement. It would be easy to say that this could be prevented by orders to that effect, but we know by experience that the gardener in charge of propagating houses will have an irresistible tendency to do gardening work in the vicinity of the greenhouses, or at least in the same park, simply because it is convenient for him and comes under his observation continuously."* [84]

Instead of Weequahic, Olmsted suggested the north end of Branch Brook Park as the better location. Green-

houses and sheds were erected in the northwest corner of the Northern Division in 1899, establishing this area, with its accessibility to Heller Parkway, as a maintenance and utility area. A stable and other buildings were erected in 1900, causing JCO to urge Manning to "follow the architects design as closely as possible in the next piece of the administration buildings" since the ones erected were "lacking in architectural beauty." [85] Other buildings were added in 1903, and this became the location of the artesian wells. The intention at that time was to hide all these utility structures with mounds planted with evergreens.[86] The planting for the mounds was slow to be installed, and in 1904 Olmsted's evaluation was that administration buildings were "architecturally an abortion, both form and surfacing material being different on three parts. [They] should be covered w/ vines." [87] In 1909, Olmsted was still calling for hollies and rhododendron to conceal the service yard. Again in 1923, as work was about to begin on the Extension which would bring more traffic past these service structures, the firm prepared a plan to upgrade this area. [88]

However, the greenhouses were to prove more than purely utilitarian. Fall flower shows –chrysanthemums, begonias, dahlias, etc— used the greenhouses when they were not needed for propagation. These became events of expanding popularity, drawing great numbers of people, which caused a need for expanded facilities. As a component of the educational mission which the Park Commission considered among its responsibilities, it sponsored horticultural education programs and flower competitions, very aware that flowers "were an important contribution to recreational enjoyment." [89]

Chapter 8 Endnotes

[1] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A.
[2] JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[3] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 18 September 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:206; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 14 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A61:522; Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Meeting, 9 November 1898, OAR, E10:17.
[4] Topographic Survey, Plan #2121-10, sheet 2; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 March 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[5] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 16 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:579-81.
[6] JCO to Howard J. Cole, 8 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:888; JCO, Report of Meeting, 24 April 1899, OAR, E10:60.
[7] JCO, Report of Visit, 25-28 July 1899 [mistyped 1898], OAR, E10:1C-1G; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 March 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[8] JCO to W. McMillan, 17 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:593-99.
[9] Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 5 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:458-62.
[10] JCO to W. McMillan, 17 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:593-99; JCO, Report of Visit, 27 March 1899, OAR, E10:53.
[11] JCO, Report of Visit, 1 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 9 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; JCO, Report of Visit, 13 March 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2].
[12] Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 24 March 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 21 June 1900, B2120 [f3].
[13] Plans #2121-346, 348-55; JCO, Report of Visit, 10 July 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3].
[14] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 July 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3].
[15] Olmsted Brothers to H.J. Cole, 28 September 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4]; Plan #2121-349, "Plan for Culvert No. 3 (north from Clark's Pond)."
[16] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 46.
[17] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 46; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; Plans #2121-534-39.
[18] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 July 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3]; JCO, Report of Visit, 16 October 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4]; JCO, Report of Visit, 20 November 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4].
[19] JCO, Report of Visit, 26 October 1898, OAR, E10:16; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 5 November 1898, OAR, 2120 A61:763-64; 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 47.
[20] 1903 *Annual Report*, p. 15; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 16; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 28 June 1904, OAR, B2121 [f2].
[21] 1907 *Annual Report*, pp. 27-28.
[22] JCO, Report of Visit, 5-6 October 1909, OAR, B2120 [f 12]. There is no indication in the Olmsted firm records that they were ever hired to do this study.
[23] 1926 *Annual Report*, p. 8.
[24] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[25] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 46.
[26] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A; JCO, Report of Visit, 19 September 1898, OAR, E10:10.
[27] JCO, Report of Visit, 30 August 1898, OAR, E10:5-5A; JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A; "Property Map—Grantors, Branch Brook Park, Northern Division," sheet 4 of 4, compiled 1945, located at ECDPRCA.
[28] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to Cyrus Peck, 1 October 1898, OAR, 2120 A60:397; Olmsted Brothers to Stephen J. Meeker, Committee on Boundaries, 17 December 1898, OAR, 2120 A62:210-12; Plans #2121-30, 78.
[29] Olmsted Brothers to Eugene Vanderpool, 30 December 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[30] Ibid.
[31] Olmsted Brothers to Eugene Vanderpool, 7 November 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4].
[32] 1900 *Annual Report*, pp. 18-19; Elias G. Heller to Eugene Vanderpool, 13 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to Elias G. Heller, 18 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Elias G. Heller to Olmsted Brothers, 19 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to Elias G. Heller, 23 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Elias G. Heller to Olmsted Brothers, 26 February 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to Elias G. Heller, 1 March 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Plans #2121-527, 529, 557-59.
[33] Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 14 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10]; 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 14-15; Plans #2121-625-28, 631-32, 636-37, 647-48. A final portion of Old Bloomfield Road just southeast of Heller Parkway was abandoned by the city for park purposes in 1919. "Property Map—Grantors, Branch Brook Park, Northern Division," sheet 4 of 4, compiled 1945, located at ECDPRCA.
[34] Plan #2121-648.
[35] Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 14 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].
[36] 1909 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1910 *Annual Report*, p. 35; Hans J. Koehler and Mr. Holocek, "Notes regarding plantings to lessen traffic dangers," 19 January 1924, OAR, B2120 [f14].

[37] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 47; Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 24 January 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1], B2121 [f1]; JCO to FLO, Jr., 29 January 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Plans #2121-116-19.
[38] Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 16 February 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:936-38.
[39] Not extant in the ONHS collection.
[40] JCO, Report of Visit, 20 March 1899, OAR, E10:52; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 22 March 1899, OAR, 2120 A64:289; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 13 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:546-47.
[41] JCO, Report of Visit, 1 May 1899, OAR, E10:66.
[42] Olmsted Brothers to Robert Ballantine, 23 May 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:929-30.
[43] Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 7 June 1899, OAR, 2120 A66:63-64; JCO, Report of Visit, 10-11 July 1899, OAR, E10:87-87E; JCO, Report of Visit, 25-28 July 1899 [mistyped 1898], OAR, E10:1C-1G; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 28 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:537-40; Olmsted Brothers to Carrère and Hastings, 31 July 1899, OAR, 2120 A67:572-73. Several studies and revisions prepared by the Olmsted firm in May and July 1899 are no longer extant in the ONHS collection. The notes indicate that they were sent to the Essex County Parks Department. The only extant plan is Plan #2121-222, seven sheets of blueprints of the Carrère and Hastings plans of July.
[44] JCO, Report of Visit, 14-16 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1].
[45] JCO, Report of Visit, 10 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 22 January 1900, OAR, B2120 [f2]; JCO, Report of Visit, 11 December 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 March 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; William S. Manning to Olmsted Brothers, 9 April 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Olmsted Brothers to William S. Manning, 11 April 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Planting Plans #2121-546-47.
[46] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 50.
[47] JCO, Report of Meeting, 26 March 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; Shelter Plans #2121-534-42; Playground Plans #2121-458, 470a, 494.
[48] 1911 Atlas, Plate 17; 1926 Atlas, Plate 25.
[49] Plans #2121-11, 47.
[50] As in the other divisions, an alternate connection was provided to the traversing city street (Bloomfield Avenue), in the area at the southwest corner, to provide access prior to construction of the bridge. This appears on the plans beginning in 1900 with a planting plan (#2121-436a, no longer extant) produced for this road.
[51] JCO to W. McMillan, 17 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:593-99.
[52] Plan #2121-123.
[53] Plan #2121-137.
[54] Emil Mische, Report of Visit, 15-28 August 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; Olmsted Brothers to Howard J. Cole, 31 August 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:108-11.
[55] 1900 *Annual Report*, p. 7; 1902 *Annual Report*, p. 11; 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 14-15; 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 7; JCO, Report of Meeting, 21 November 1899, OAR, B2120 [f1]; 1900 *Annual Report*, p. 19.
[56] Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 17 July 1906, OAR, B2120 [f12]; JCO, Report of Visit, 17 September 1908, OAR, B2121 [f2]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 21 September 1908, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[57] 1909 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1923 *Annual Report*, p. 11.
[58] 1921 *Annual Report*, pp. 13-14.
[59] JCO, Report of Visit, 7 September 1898, OAR, E10:7-7A.
[60] JCO to W. McMillan, 17 January 1899, OAR, 2120 A63:593-99.
[61] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 47; Olmsted Brothers to William McMillan, 28 April 1899, OAR, 2120 A65:684-83 [*sic*].
[62] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 49.
[63] 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 13; 1903 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1906 *Annual Report*, pp. 12, 15. The 1911 Atlas (Plate 17) increased the number of tennis courts to 40, while indicating that the playfields accommodated 4 football, 5 baseball and 3 cricket fields. The 1926 Atlas (Plate 25) also listed the latter. By 1926 other tennis courts were under construction in the Extension, just north of Heller Parkway.
[64] JCO, Report of Visit, 5 January 1899, OAR, E10:41.
[65] JCO, Report of Meeting, 26 March 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[66] 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 11; 1906 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-12; 1907 *Annual Report*, p. 22.
[67] JCO, Report of Visit, 3 and 7 April 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12]; Olmsted Brothers [Hans J. Koehler] to A.M. Reynolds, 17 January 1928, OAR, B2120 [f15].
[68] Olmsted, Sr., was very respectful of many of the works of Alexander Pope, William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, William Kent, "Capability" Brown, Humphrey Repton, etc., which had influenced his own landscape sensibilities.
[69] JCO, Report of Visit, 31 August 1898, OAR, E10:6-6A.
[70] Plans #2121-9, 110, 113-14; Howard J. Cole to Olmsted Brothers, 19 April 1899, OAR, B2121 [f1].
[71] Plan #2121-383.
[72] JCO, Report of Visit, 9 April 1900, OAR, B2120 [f3].
[73] Plan #2121-469.
[74] Plan #2121-503.
[75] Only some of the plant order lists are extant in the ONHS collection.
[76] Plans #2121-577-78 and list "To Accompany Plan No. 578," from the Planting List collection at ONHS.
[77] JCO, Report of Visit, 3 and 7 April 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[78] JCO, Report of Visit, 5-6 October 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12].
[79] Olmsted Brothers [Hans J. Koehler] to A.M. Reynolds, 17 January 1928, OAR, B2120 [f15].
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Hans J. Koehler, "Report of Investigation Regarding the Use of Japanese Cherries," 6 April 1932, OAR, B2120 [f15].
[83] 1925 *Annual Report*, pp. 37-41.
[84] Olmsted Brothers [JCO] to W.S. Manning, 6 September 1899, OAR, 2120 A68:178.
[85] 1898-99 *Annual Report*, p. 9; JCO, Report of Visit, 20 November 1900, OAR, B2120 [f4]; JCO, Report of Visit, 26 March 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5]; 1901 *Annual Report*, p. 50.
[86] 1903 *Annual Report*, pp. 13-15; Olmsted Brothers [Emil Mische] to William S. Manning, 1 August 1901, OAR, B2120 [f5].
[87] JCO, Report of Visit, 26-27 September 1904, OAR, B2120 [f10].
[88] JCO, Report of Visit, 5-6 October 1909, OAR, B2120 [f12]; Plan #2121-698.
[89] 1911 *Annual Report*, pp. 6-7; 1912 *Annual Report*, pp. 15-17; 1930-31 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1935 *Annual Report*, pp. 10-11.

CHAPTER 9: A NEW DIRECTION FOR BRANCH BROOK PARK : EXTENDING THE PLAN

Renewal of an Old Idea : The Scenic Parkway and its Development

The idea to protect the wilder scenery around Second River by incorporating it into some form of park space had been under consideration for decades, as had the notion of a pleasant tree-covered route to link Branch Brook Park at its northern end to other scenic areas of the county. The Olmsted firm proposal of 1895 suggested a parkway of "picturesque character from 'Reservoir Park' one mile along First River, thence one mile through lands as yet almost vacant, thence two and a quarter miles along Second River…," then turning west to connect to their suggested reservation on Orange Mountain. Toward the east, they had also recommended parkways along the banks of the Passaic River to "preserve the beautiful passages of scenery which still remain along the river and allow others to be gradually established." [1] The Barrett and Bogart system plan [See Figure 3-2] , likewise, suggested a parkway at the north end of Branch Brook Park which continued further north to Second River, where it joined a nexus of other tree-lined roadways, one of which turned east toward the Passaic. [2]

By 1915, when the "Report of Olmsted Brothers on a Proposed Parkway System for Essex County" was published [See Figure 5-14], the route which was to become the Branch Brook Park Extension was clearly delineated both on the accompanying map and in a description of the much-needed "picturesque parkway" [3] from the north end of Branch Brook Park extending toward the mountain reservations. Olmsted linked this proposed route with what he called "a picturesque connection…running a road down each side of Second River from the proposed parkway at Soho to the Passaic River and parking as much of the land between as possible." Some of this area was residential which had not yet been built up; some of this area was industrial, with coal yards, the Tiffany factory and the nearby Belleville Copper Works, among many other large and small businesses. Pragmatically, Olmsted suggested saving expense by not taking factory properties still doing business, "merely establishing upon them certain restrictions needed to secure reasonably good appearances."[4] This Second River parkway was the connector to a larger proposed Passaic River Parkway, intended to enhance both sides of the river in cooperation with Bergen and Hudson Counties and to link to Passaic County. Although he did not anticipate much traffic for a while for the river parkway, he considered it a worthwhile undertaking to influence tasteful development of the banks. [5] It was not until 1924 that the Park Commission took up this idea, calling for the recapture of the river from its polluted state and its return to recreational usage, the banks developed to support "boat basins, recreation piers, shade and lawn together with an attractive driveway." The acquisition of land for a Passaic River Parkway began in 1930 by condemnation. [6]

From the earliest evocation of the parkway idea, as Olmsted and Vaux had conceived it in their early work in Brooklyn and Buffalo, a parkway was intended to provide a pleasure way with park-like character, considerably wider than a city street, and graced with broad planted edges and possibly with planted islands. These "thoroughfares by which parks and other public recreation grounds are approached and brought into connection one with another" might within themselves contain "parklets" to expand the recreational possibilities.[7] Development of a system of such pleasure ways in Essex County lagged far behind that of parks for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was the political and financial complexity of creating this first-in-the-nation county-wide park system. Although the Park Commission recognized that the comprehensive park system that they idealized included parkways, they had given precedence to fulfilling the need for neighborhood parks and playgrounds throughout the county, postponing the issue of creating these green park-like routes. By 1913, noting that with the growth of wealth and property values in the county justifying the investment in the park system, and with the increased use of automobiles, public desire made the time propitious for parkway development. Hence, the Park Commission had authorized the Olmsted Brothers Parkway Report. [8]

Much of the land contemplated for this parkway was beyond the Newark city limits, in the town of Belleville. The Park Commission had intended to acquire property in 1911 to become Belleville Park, but the park bond authorization for $100,000 did not materialize. [9] When land was acquired in 1915, the meager appropriation forced the Park Board to abandon

> *"the acquirement of the beautiful valley of the Second River adjoining. This would not only have made this park itself much more attractive, but would also have formed the nucleus of a parkway to connect the park with Branch Brook Park in Newark and with the Passaic River—a most charming addition to the system."* [10]

The topographically irregular square of 32 acres to become Belleville Park was designed by Olmsted Brothers as a playground between 1915 and 1917. [Figure 9-1] Percival Gallagher's initial inspection of the site observed that the sloping land was "well adapted for park purposes," with an abandoned redstone quarry, views of the mountains, and sizable trees, many of which were wild cherries, "quite important and should be kept." His initial idea was to place a shelter in the center of the park for its views and convenience; surround it with playfields; place a children's playground to

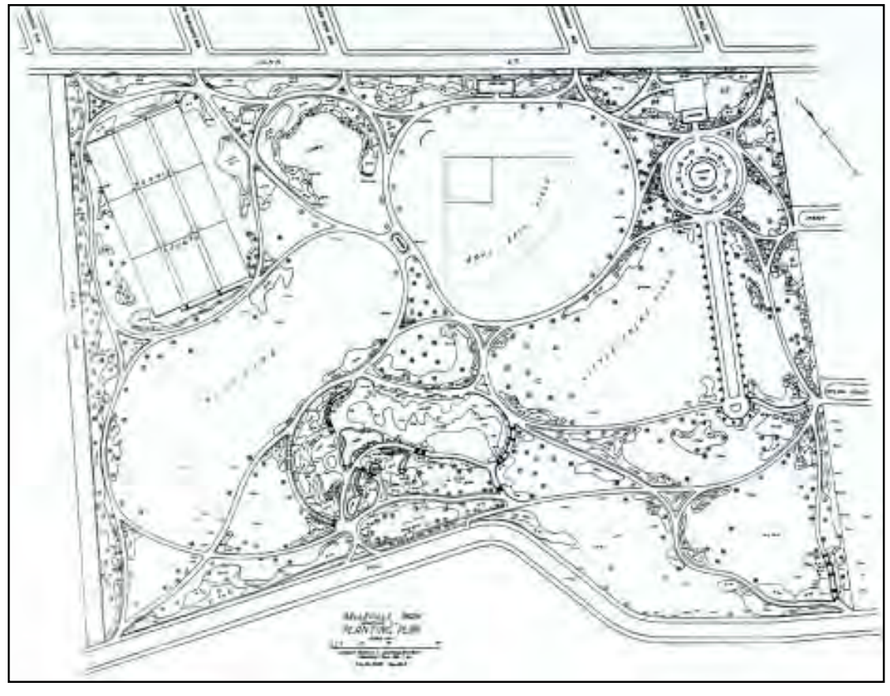

Figure 9-1: Planting Plan for Belleville Park, Plan #2148-8, 7 February 1917. Source: ONHS.

the east and transform the quarry into a series of decorative pools. The plan was approved, and construction took place over the next two years [11] In 1924, Harmon W. Hendricks, owner of much of the property in this Belleville area, donated his family home and 23 acres adjoining Belleville Park, which the Park Commission intended at this time to add to the park. Eventually, this land became part of the Extension. [12]

In 1916, citizens from the Forest Hill section of Newark and Belleville appeared before the Commission "requesting construction of a connecting driveway between Branch Brook and Belleville Parks," to be "a boulevard along the line of the canal." The Commission wanted more land than merely a "driveway" north of Heller Parkway for "much needed recreational facilities."[13] By late 1923 the Park Commission had already acquired some property north of Branch Brook Park for the Extension. Since they opined that Harmon W. Hendricks was "in the frame of mind to possibly make us some concessions," they requested Percival Gallagher to inspect Hendricks land and the Job Haines Home for the Aged along Forest Hill parkway and to develop 'taking lines.'[14] Within a year, the Park Commission owned property north from Heller Parkway to Sylvan Avenue, and east along Second River to Quarry Street. This consisted of holdings from the Ballantine estate, from the Forest Hill Association, from the Y.W.C.A. and from Hendricks, some of whose land had already been laid out as a golf course for the Forest Hill Country Club. [15] The Park Commission praised Hendricks, for his "spirit of noteworthy munificence," for accepting from the Park Commission "the value fixed by the Commission's appraisers," and for donating the remainder of the lands needed. The Hendricks family had lived in Belleville since the early 1800s, a location which provided easy transportation, either by the Morris Canal or the Passaic River, for their Soho Copper Works. [16]

With approval for $500,000 of County bonds, the Park Commission proceeded to finish the acquisition of necessary lands, much of which had been degraded by its prior industrial uses or had been eroded by Second River. [Figure 9-2] They were particularly interested to develop an 18-hole golf course which, because of its location and easy accessibility for a large population, would be a great asset to the system.[17] From August 1926 through late 1928, Gallagher worked out a parkway scheme, a gently curving road with a gracious westward arc which then turned east to follow Second River. The road curves, with sometimes steep sloping edges, while seeming artless, were carefully calculated to retain sizable areas of land undivided into which an ample playfield with its necessary parking, and tennis courts could be inserted. [18] [Figure 9-3] The linear route along Second River intertwined

Figure 9-2: Looking up Second River from Mt. Prospect Avenue. c. 1925. Source: Photograph #2121-211 (second album), ONHS.

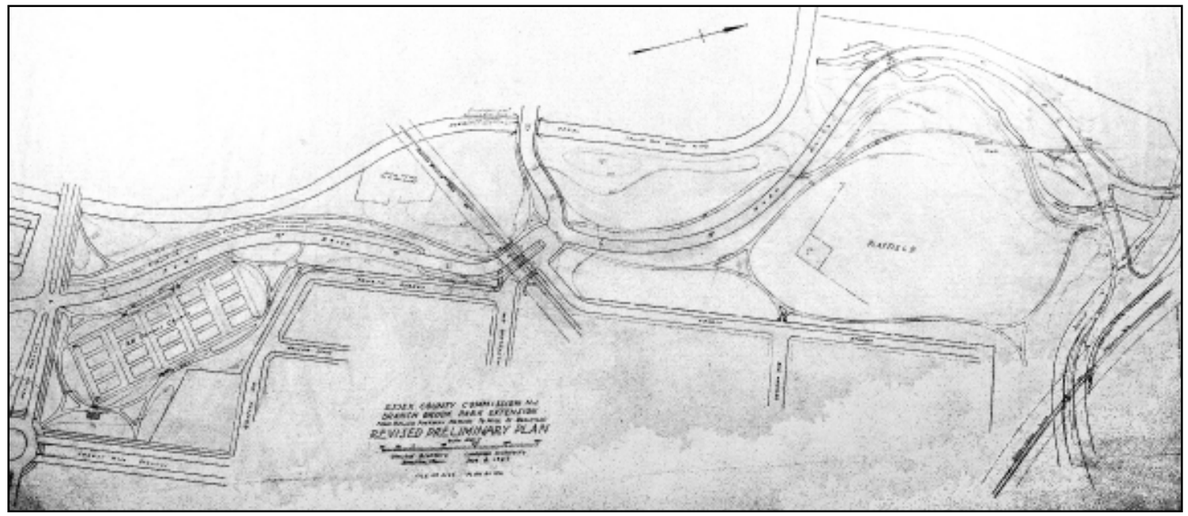

Figure 9-3: Revised Preliminary Plan from Heller Parkway to Mill Street, Belleville. Plan #2121-726, 8 June 1927. Source: ONHS.

parkway, river, intersecting side roads and paths within a narrowly constricted area.[19] These plans were developed jointly by both the Essex County park engineers and the Olmsted firm, with the latter used to refine the plans for aesthetics.[20]

Although they were anxious to move quickly to develop the parkway and its associated recreational spaces, the Park Commission engineers and their New York engineering consultant, A. Burton Cohen, faced several major obstacles. In addition to the variable topography around the steep-sided Second River valley and a spur of the Branch Brook, the route was crossed by several railroads, the N.Y. & Greenwood Lake line and the Orange Branch of the Erie Railroad. [Figure 9-4] Working to get the parkway under these tracks required the considerable expense of bridge building. [21] Complicated grading was also needed to provide intersections with major streets, some of which had to cross Second River and the Morris Canal, about to be reconstructed for a subway. Roadways to connect to Belleville Park and the Hendricks Golf Course, as well as foot bridges to abutting businesses, such as the Tiffany factory, added to the problems.[22] Finally, the decision to include a bridle path on the west side of the drive made the bridge designs even more complex. [23]

Figure 9-4: Railroad tracks near Second River. c.1925. Source: Photograph #2121-204 (second album), ONHS.

This work presented a challenging exercise in grading, in cut-and–fill, so that the result would be a curving parkway that was safe for motorists and pedestrians; aesthetically pleasing slopes that were also sustainable; a flow of landscape spaces

with paths of manageable inclines; and the necessary sanitary engineering components be accommodated, all of this with the least possible destruction of the river valley and its native vegetation. In rejecting the engineers' road line at one point in 1928, Gallagher noted that while their line was shorter, it was more destructive.

> *"What seems to Mr. Gallagher a more important point, the road line as you propose will be rounding a hill with a shorter line of vision ahead. Then, too, as the lower part of the valley which always attracts the vision is on the outside of the curve, one's sight is taken away from the direction of traffic instead of directed toward it, as with the valley on the inside of the curve as shown on our plan. In skirting the edge of the park, one has the hill rising from the road to act as a natural barrier turning the road around the edge of the valley. Also less trees are destroyed on the line we have suggested, and the woodland character of this section is very fine. As a park drive, Mr. Gallagher feels that the location we have shown is more natural and pleasing."* [24]

As the bridge details progressed, it became obvious that the bridle path could not be managed without undue cost, and it was eliminated from the planning. This change enabled relocation of the park drive, border mounds to hide the industrial plants and the introduction of a parking lot for 150 cars "which would be very desirable in the ultimate use of the playground."[25] In all there were nine bridges [Figure 9-5] which needed to be developed as part of this project, as well as a large storm sewer and several culverts, one of which was to handle some of Branch Brook.[26] A clipping in the Olmsted files of an article from the Lawrence Dragon noted that this was a $2 million project for "a comprehensive program of beautification and utility."[27] By 1931, a 272 foot long pedestrian bridge connecting Mill Street, Belleville with Tiffany Boulevard was completed, along with the Mill Street road bridge. Bridge construction for the Greenwood Lake Branch line was slow so as not to interrupt service, but it was finished by 1934, with the bridge for the Orange Branch of the Erie railroad completed in 1936. Given the national economic conditions, this work was largely financed by the Works Progress Administration. [28] Work continued on refining roadway connections and on finishing the work along Second River into the early 1940s, well beyond the Olmsted firm's involvement in the process. Although areas closer to Heller Parkway and near Belleville Park and Hendricks Field were in use earlier, some of the river area was not open to the public until 1939.[29]

Figure 9-5: Bridge over Second River. Source Newark Public Library photograph collection.

Development of Recreational Areas

While the parkway designs were in process, the Park Commission moved ahead to provide recreational facilities to meet the demand and to relieve the overuse in the Middle and Northern Divisions of Branch Brook Park, particularly the tennis courts. Commission President Robert Sinclair instructed Gallagher that tennis courts were to be the first work of construction, to be in shape for the next season.[30] Gallagher provided several alternatives from November 1926 through February 1927, analyzing their effectiveness in terms of optimum play in morning and afternoon light.[31] A design with twenty courts, [32] [Figure 9-6] approximately following the line of the proposed park drive, was selected by the Commission, who pushed through the construction in order to have the courts ready at the end of 1927 for fall planting. Gallagher recommended the location of a tennis shelter with a veranda, planned paths, benches, drainage and planting by the end of 1927. He also designed a polygonal tool house to be ornamental within the shrubbery, rather than hiding in the background it so that it would become "a catchall."[33] The 20 clay courts were quickly put to use in 1928 for tournaments and exhibition matches, the fees being 10 cents an hour to play. Though some form of a clubhouse was available when the courts opened, architect Arthur Dillon prepared a plan for a tennis pavilion in 1930. The record is unclear as to whether this was constructed. [34]

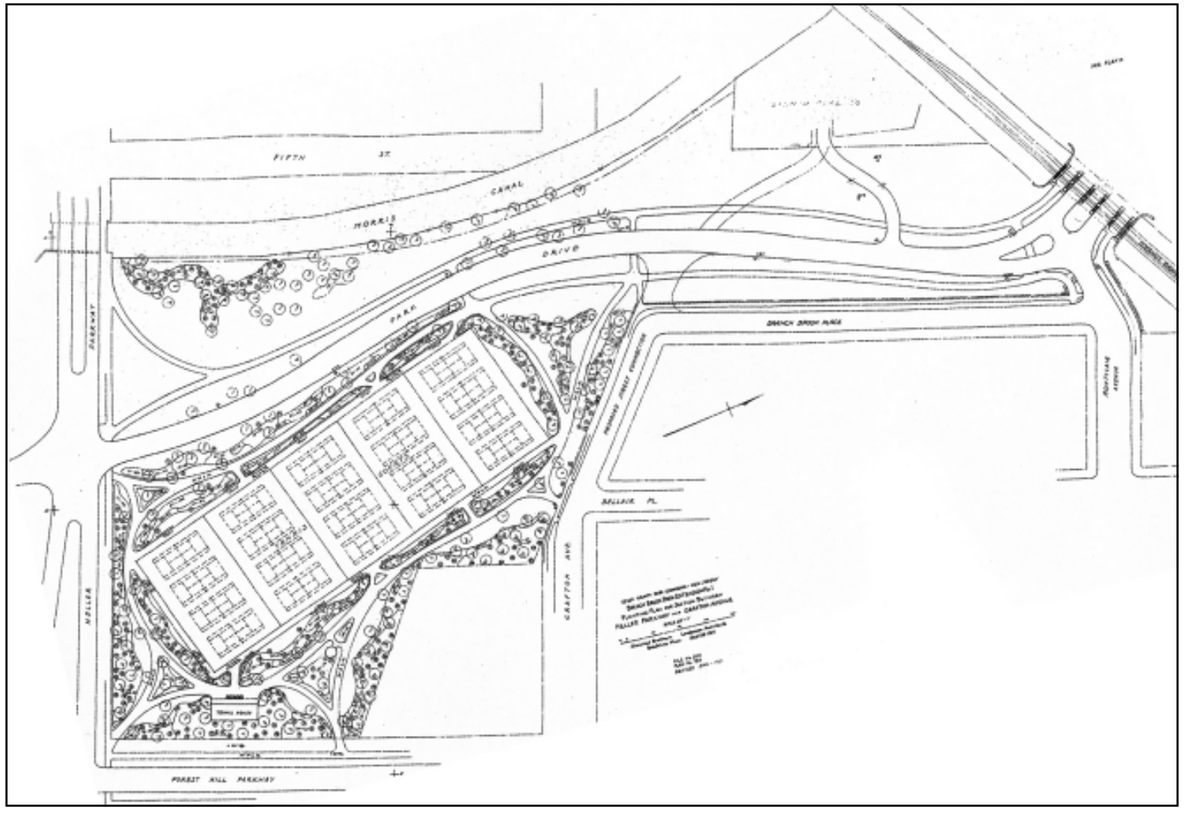

Figure 9-6: Planting Plan from Heller Parkway to Grafton Avenue, Plan #2121-734, sheet 1, September 1927. Source: ONHS.

The popularity of golf had overwhelmed the small course at Weequahic Park, and the Commission was anxious to provide for more courses. The purchase of the Forest Hill Country Club course as part of the Extension of Branch Brook provided an important opportunity to ameliorate the problem. Reconstruction of the Forest Hill course was scheduled for completion by 1928, with Charles Banks as the architect, but a temporary course was set up on lands leased from Hendricks, some of which abutted the property being planned for the Extension. [Figure 9-7] Therefore, golf holes appeared on some of the drawings for the parkway.[35] Gallagher was called upon to devise grading and access for both the temporary and the permanent courses. Additionally, the firm prepared a planting plan in spring of 1929, ordering the plant materials. Following the rich planting palette used in Branch Brook Park, the specified selection, according to the Planting Order List, included hemlocks and eight different kinds of pines; numerous types of oaks, maples and willows; smaller trees such as dogwood, birch, redbud and crabapples; with a diverse grouping of deciduous shrubs. [36] The new course was not opened until late1929, immediately proving itself remunerative. [37] Again in 1933, the firm was asked to advise on the rearrangement of several holes and on the location of the new golf house.[38]

Figure 9-7: Construction of Hendricks Field , green #5, August 1927. Source: Newark Public Library photograph collection.

Development of the Water Course

The constricted linear area, the steep slopes and the requirement to devise a scenic parkway to take advantage of the Second River valley necessitated channeling the river. Carefully calculated as to depth and width to handle potential flash flooding, this channel also had to be an aesthetic asset, not a utilitarian concrete construction. Gallagher's early instructions were to build the revetment wall of stone to present "a more rustic character. [Figure 9-8] The stone, of course, may have to be of a variety of kinds which would not be out of place…some red Belleville sandstone … would be especially appropriate in this section…since it would preserve one of the characteristic natural features of the locality." To Supt. Reynolds' suggestion that granite and trap rock block would be "as economical as any and I believe a wall of very satisfactory appearance," Gallagher recommended developing samples with various intermixtures of stone beginning at various levels. "We have in mind that the wall which is about seven feet would in effect look less high when the water is low by reason of the slightly different character of the masonry horizontally." [39] At several areas the alignment of Second River had to change to accommodate the difficult grading. [40]

Figure 9-8: Second River channel, no date. Source: Newark Public Library photograph collection.

Construction of these walls did not begin until 1935 and was a slow process, interfered with by flooding from the1938 hurricane which undermined walls and riverbanks. The walls between Broadway and Mt Prospect were completed by 1939, opening both sides of the river to the public. Most of this work had been paid for with funding from the Works Progress Administration. [41]

Planting for Distinction

The idea of using cherry trees in Branch Brook Park had arisen more than a decade before the munificent Fuld gift to the park extension. As early as 1913, the Park Commission had asked for advice about the use of these trees. In reply, Gallagher cautioned against the use of such "a distinctly gardenesque plant" without careful placement. It does not appear that cherry trees were installed at this time and there were no further references until the Extension planning in 1927.[42] At this date, probably at the instigation of Commissioner Sinclair, Gallagher began to gather information about cherry trees, the diverse species and their cultivars; the possible importation from Japan; and the expense to create an extraordinary collection. Inspired by the spring-time show of cherry blossoms around the Potomac Basin, Caroline Bamberger Fuld, sister of the president of Bamberger's Department Store and wife of the vice president, had decided to give the Essex County Park Commission a gift of a grove to rival the nation's Capital.

Percival Gallagher was not unknown to Mrs. Fuld. Between 1920 and 1925,he had advised her on her South Orange garden, an experience which had ended unpleasantly. [43] However, the prior situation does not seem to have affected her generosity to the Park Commission, knowing full well that Gallagher was in charge of the work. After canvassing the nurseries across the country, Gallagher responded to Sinclair that it was possible to purchase two to three thousand trees, though the exact cultivars were still to be decided. With regard to location, he recommended,

> *"A most effective display could be made in the extension of Branch Brook Park, in the stretch between the junction of Branch Brook and Second River and Mount Prospect Avenue. We have estimated that about 1,000 trees would be required in this area, making them when in bloom a predominating and striking feature in the valley that they would occupy. Of course, due regard would be given to other kinds of trees, of which there would be a goodly share, particularly hemlock to set off the cherry bloom. This area would not be ready to receive the trees for a few years, however, and if there is any danger of losing the offer of the gift if its acceptance is put off too long, we advise that the trees be ordered very soon for delivery next spring…They are then to be planted in the Park nursery…and left there until the area in question is ready to receive them. Another location for a much smaller display in the same extension of Branch Brook Park would be around the tennis courts, where between 100 and 200 trees would be sufficient. We mention this locality only in case the foregoing one were not available…we are not very enthusiastic about it because this display would be an incidental one rather than a distinctive feature of the Park."*[44]

He estimated the cost of acquisition, planting in the nursery and then transplanting this collection at $10,000 to

$15,000, "prefering the larger amount." [45]

Mrs. Fuld gave her authorization for the $15,000 in October 1927, and Gallagher proceeded to order the trees, mostly from a Pennsylvania nursery, deciding to obtain 180 larger than average trees (6-8-foot).

> *"[T]hese trees are to be used in the section of Branch Brook Park between Heller Parkway and Grafton Avenue…Our idea was that an early demonstration could be made here that would afford Mrs. Fuld something actual to look at until such time as the larger quantity has been planted in that larger extension of Branch Brook Park."* [46]

By February, orders at four nurseries totalled under 2000 trees, at a cost of nearly $8,000, leaving the rest of the donation to cover planting. The firm was still looking for some of the more unusual varieties. [47]

Hans Koehler was dispatched to Washington, DC, to evaluate the planting at the Basin for shape and spacing. He concluded that the double-flowered trees were "stiff, not as graceful as the yedoensis" and planted in monotonous rows. For Branch Brook, he foresaw planting the Yoshino Cherry (prunus yedoensis) in irregular groups along the drive,

> *"with a few scattered ones between the groups, and between these will be groups of the other kinds of Japanese Cherries, mostly double-flowered forms, with a few scattered through the groups of Yoshino Cherry. In this way, there will be procured a varied yet united effect, and throughout the blooming season of these cherries—between three and four weeks – there will be a striking effect of bloom along the whole length of the drive. In this respect the scheme will differ from that followed in the arrangement of the Japanese Cherries in Washington. There, the Yoshino Cherries on the one hand, and the other forms on the other are pretty much segregated, which on the whole is a much less interesting and effective arrangement."* **48**

The Washington collection had "the mirroring advantage of the Potomac Basin," but in Branch Brook "the steep sides of the valley and the varied topography …afford opportunities for picturesqueness and beauty in arrangement…of the landscape effects with cherries depicted in Japanese and Chinese paintings."[49]

From November 1927, C. Feland Gannon of the L. Bamberger & Co. advertising department had been in correspondence with the Olmsted firm for a statement about the design, so that he could publicize the philanthropy. In August 1928, Gallagher (possibly with help from Koehler, since there are similarities of wording) composed a twenty page document entitled "A Statement of the Scheme of Establishing the Collection of Japanese Cherry Trees, the gift of Mrs. Felix Fuld, in the Extension of Branch Brook Park," in which he set forth the design intentions and its status to date.[50] He accompanied this with a plan for publicaton. [Figure 9-9] The Fuld gift "to the people of Newark" was intended to surpass the number of trees and the effect of the Washington, D.C. collection. For the latter planting, the meadowy banks of the Potomac and the broad foregrounds of water enhance the effect of the blossoms. In Branch Brook, on the other hand, the opportunities for reflection are fewer, given that they will not be extensive in the narrow flowing stream. Instead, the drive through the varied picturesque scenery of the Essex County valley "becomes in the design something of more than ordinary importance," which is why, Gallagher stated, he chose this location for the gift. This setting was not only the most appropriate for the trees, but would "add to the scenic attraction which we foresee in the development of this extension Branch Brook Park," to become "a feature of outstanding importance among the lovely passages of landscape scenery which the parks of our country have to offer." He continued poetically,

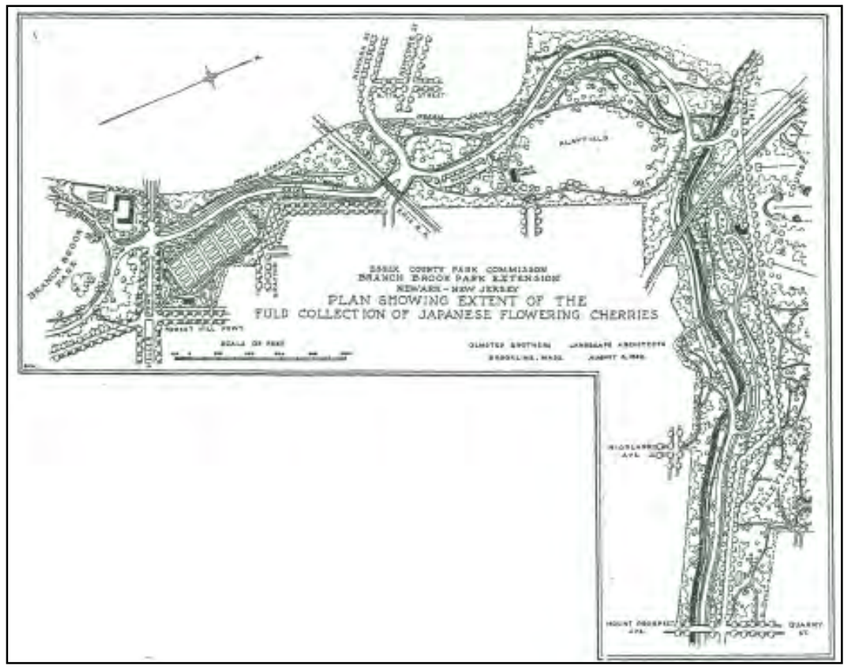

Figure 9-9: Exhibition plan showing the Extent of the Fuld Collection of Japanese Flowering Cherries, Plan #2121-757, 8 August 1928. Source: ONHS.

> *"To see the cherry trees in bloom, rising one above another, as they ascend the sloping ground, or again sometimes to look down upon the blossoms fringing the river's edge, and at other times, to view them at a distance across the valley, will offer a never ending range of flowering effects that will prove, we have no doubt, highly picturesque and notable, Indeed, there is much about the conditions here that will prove singularly reminiscent of the country from which the cherry tree has come."*[51]

Beyond the description of the intended design for Essex County, Gallagher's Statement discussed the various species and their cultivars which the firm had reviewed for this project, in terms of flowers, blooming time, habit, use in Japan, etc., apparently supplementing the original document with pictures. (At the time of his report, he had purchased over 2000 plants in 28 varieties for the Fuld collection.) He also reviewed literature concerning "Some Notable Collections of Japanese Cherries in America" in Washington, D.C., in Philadelphia, at the Arnold Arboretum and in Highland Park, Rochester, in order to provide a context for "The Fuld Collection of Flowering Japanese Cherries at Branch Brook Park ." For the latter, his aim was to provide a collection mostly of single-flowered forms, chosen for their long lasting flowers and their mass effect, especially in vistas, contrasting these with groupings of the double-flowered variety, to provide closer interest. He ended his report by stating his aspirations for this project.

> *"There is no doubt that the beauty of the Cherries themselves, given a proper setting, will have a greater appeal to the human soul than any literature can ever be written about them. So it is to be hoped with the opportunities offered to the America public for getting acquainted with these natural*

gems through the welcome extended by our parks, that the flowering Cherry in America will one day arouse something of that same depth of feeling here that is sponsored in its native country." [52]

How far afield Gannon publicized this donation has not yet been explored. Certainly he got coverage in the Newark newspapers. [53] As this planting was installed as the sections of the Extension were completed, Carl Witte, the parks department's horticulturalist, discovered some of the difficulties with the various prunus species. Some of them were mislabeled and were not the variety intended (there had been fewer Prunus yedoensis in the original order than anticipated) ; some did not propagate easily, some were afflicted with fire-blight and others subject to winter damage. In order to fulfill the design,[54] he was in need of more plants, requiring Park Commission President Sinclair to ask for another donation from Mrs. Fuld. [55]

The beauty of the plantings installed stimulated other sections of the county to request cherry trees for their parks, so Witte and Koehler made their "Investigation Regarding the Use of Japanese Cherries," finding that they could place about 1200 trees in other park areas. However, they cautioned that the intention of the gift was that "in Branch Brook Park Extension should be the outstanding Japanese Cherry display of the whole Essex County Park System. No matter how many cherries were used elsewhere in the system, the climax should occur in Branch Brook Park Extension, to such a degree, in fact, that it would be very evident to the average public that this display overshadowed all others and was so remarkable and of such pre-eminent beauty and magnificence that pilgrimages from afar would be made to it annually." [56] [Figure 9-10] Unfortunately, Percival Gallagher never lived to see his planted creation for Branch Brook Park Extension come to fruition. He died at age 59 in 1934.

Figure 9-10: Cherry Trees in bloom along the banks of Second River. Source: Newark Public Library postcard collection.

Chapter 9 Endnotes

[1] Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot to Cyrus Peck, 16 January 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:145-56.
[2] Barrett and Bogart, "Design for General System of Parks and Parkways," 30 November 1896, 1897 *Annual Report*, insert.
[3] The use of the same language is further indication that the 1895 report was mostly written by JCO. See Olmsted Brothers to F.W. Kelsey, 24 August 1905, OAR, B2120 [f11].
[4] Olmsted Brothers, *Report of Olmsted Brothers on a Proposed Parkway System for Essex County, New Jersey* (Newark: Essex County Park Commission, 1915), pp. 41-42, 69-71. "Parking," as Olmsted used it, meant "to turn into parkland," rather than the vehicular association of contemporary usage.
[5] Ibid., p. 71. One of the most interesting ideas JCO puts forth in this report concerns the use of parkways throughout the city as "fire guards" between closely built combustible neighborhoods. Ibid., pp. 62-65.
[6] 1924 *Annual Report*, pp. 21-30; 1930 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).
[7] Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot to Cyrus Peck, 16 January 1895, OAR, 2120 A38:145-56.
[8] 1913 *Annual Report*, pp. 19-22; 1915 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-13. In 1916, the Park Commission made a study of the increase in the assessed values of property abutting the various parks. From 1895 to 1916 the assessed value of Branch Brook Park itself had increased from about $3 million to $15.5 million. 1916 *Annual Report*, pp. 30-32.
[9] 1911 *Annual Report*, p. 6; 1914 *Annual Report*, pp. 7-8.
[10] 1915 *Annual Report*, pp. 20-21.
[11] Percival Gallagher, Report of Visit, 15 June 1915, OAR, B2148 [Belleville Park].
[12] 1924 *Annual Report*, p. 18.
[13] 1925 *Annual Report*, p. 17.
[14] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 22 November 1923, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 12 March 1925, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[15] Plan #2121-704. The Forest Hill Country Club land had come "part by purchase and part by gift from Mr. Harmon W. Hendricks." 1925 *Annual Report*, pp. 17-19.
[16] 1924 *Annual Report*, p. 18; William B. Helmreich, *The Enduring Community: The Jews of Newark and MetroWest* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1999), pp. 12-13. This author noted that the Hendricks family were cultural leaders of the Sephardic Jewish community. Their successful business had provided employment for the Spanish and Portugese Jewish community from the New York-New Jersey area.
[17] 1925 *Annual Report*, p. 19.
[18] Plans #2121-709, 711, 713 sheets 1-3.
[19] Plan #2121-713, sheet 3.
[20] Compared to the extensive correspondence detailing the development of the other areas of Branch Brook Park, the records for the Extension are quite sparce, and terse when they do exist, making it more difficult to reconstruct the designer's rationale as he worked out his ideas. Additionally, many of the plans are no longer in the ONHS collection to record the subtle alterations of line and grade which are discussed in the letters.
[21] Topographic Plan #2121-708, sheets 1 and 2; Olmsted Brothers to J.H. Philips, 18 January 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers, 25 January 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to J.H. Philips, 7 May 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers, 2 June 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 21 November 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[22] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 26 October 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[23] A. Burton Cohen [engineer] to Olmsted Brothers, 12 November 1926, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers, 27 May 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[24] Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 17 January 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3].
[25] Harry Wilson [engineer] to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 18 March 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to A.B. Cohen, 29 March 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to Percival Gallagher, 23 July 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 21 February 1931, OAR, B2121 [f4].
[26] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 25 January 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted

Brothers to A.B. Cohen, 29 March 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to Percival Gallagher, 23 July 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4].

[27] Construction of three bridges and walls was being handled by the John W. Heller Co. "Essex County, N.J., Park Commission Spending $2,000,000 in Branch Brook Park Extension," *The Lawrence Dragon*, March 1932 [?], p. 5, OAR, B2121 [f4].

[28] 1930 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1931 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1932-34 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1936-37 *Annual Report*, p. 9. Newark was well served by the various Depression era programs until 1938, with CCC work continuing into the early 1940s. Labor from the CCC carried out Olmsted Brothers plans for several parks, as well as maintenance and repair. The ERA, the Civil Works Administration and the Works for Relief (eventually superseded by the WPA) funded clerical, drafting and engineering services. 1932-34 *Annual Report* to 1942 *Annual Report*, *passim*.

[29] 1939 *Annual Report*, p. 9.

[30] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 28 October 1926, OAR, B2120 [f14].

[31] J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 4 January 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers, Notes, 14 February 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers, 17 February 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Plans #2121-711, 718.

[32] This reduced by half the number of grass courts which had been operating on the North Playfield of the Northern Division, which had been "used constantly." 1904-5 *Annual Report*, p. 11.

[33] Olmsted Brothers to J.H. Philips, 5 August 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to J.H. Philips, 8 August 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; J.H. Philips to Olmsted Brothers, 30 August 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to J.H. Philips, 1 September 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to J.H. Philips, 14 September 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to A.M. Reynolds, 20 June 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3].

[34] 1927 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); 1928 *Annual Report* (unpaginated). Arthur Dillon's plans for a Tennis Pavilion are at ECDPRCA.

[35] 1926 *Annual Report*, pp. 7-8; 1927 *Annual Report* (unpaginated); Plans #2121-719, 721, 738.

[36] Plan #2155-4; "Planting Order List and Planting List for Plan No. 4," dated March 1929 [in ONHS collection]. Job #2155 is the Hendricks Field Golf Course.

[37] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers, 31 March 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers, "A Statement of the Scheme of Establishing the Collection of Japanese Cherry Trees, the Gift of Mrs. Felix Field, in the Extension of Branch Brook Park," 17 August 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to A.M. Reynolds, 30 January 1929, OAR, B2121 [f4]; 1929 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).

[38] Edward C. Whiting, Memo, 15 December 1933, OAR, B2121 [f4]; 1932-34 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).

[39] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to A.M. Reynolds, 31 May 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]; A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 25 February 1929, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to A.M. Reynolds, 4 March 1929, OAR, B2121 [f4]. The *Lawrence Dragon* article (see endnote 27, supra) noted, at p. 6, that the walls "present an attractive Contex finish—that is, a finish where the coarse aggregate of the concrete protrudes slightly from the rest of the mass."

[40] A.M. Reynolds to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 26 February 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers to Percival Gallagher, 23 July 1930, OAR, B2121 [f4].

[41] 1935 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1936-37 *Annual Report*, pp. 9-10; 1938 *Annual Report*, pp. 9-10; 1939 *Annual Report*, p. 9.

[42] Alonzo Church to Olmsted Brothers, 13 November 1913, OAR, B2120 [f13]; Olmsted Brothers to Alonzo Church, 3 December 1913, OAR, B2120 [f13].

[43] In 1920, she had hired Olmsted Brothers to prepare plans to rework an expansion to her garden in South Orange which was unsatisfactory to her. Olmsted associate Carl Rust Parker's initial observation was that "we ought to have a very clear understanding as to fees and expenses before we do any work at all. However, I believe that if we can get started right with Mrs. Fuld that she will be inclined to let us do a great deal of work on the place and there is certainly need of much being done." Mrs. Fuld wanted plans, a meeting with Gallagher and the firm to be only in an "advisory capacity," as she was anxious not to have undue expense. The work consisted of grading terraces with a balustrade, which was expanded over the months to include other garden areas. She was alternately content and displeased with the progress of the work, giving her approval sparingly. By 1924, landscape architect Marjorie Sewell had been engaged to work on the flower garden. Asked to return in late 1925 to review a garden area, Gallagher then sent his bill. Mrs. Fuld returned the bill, saying that it was incorrect, that it "shakes my confidence in your house…There is always something lax in your service which I have endeavored to overlook but will do so no more." OAR, B6901, *passim*.

[44] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher] to Robert S. Sinclair, 19 September 1927, OAR, B2120 [f15], B2121 [f3].

[45] Ibid.

[46] Olmsted Brothers to Robert S. Sinclair, 11 November 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]. These trees were to be planted according to Plan #2121-734.

[47] Olmsted Brothers [Hans J. Koehler] to Robert S. Sinclair, 11 November 1927, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to Robert S. Sinclair, 31 January 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]; Olmsted Brothers to Robert S. Sinclair, 14 February 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3].

[48] Hans J. Koehler, Memo, 6 August 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3].

[49] Ibid.

[50] Plan #2121-757, "Plan Showing Extent of the Fuld Collection of Japanese Flowering Cherries," August 8, 1928, prepared to accompany Gallagher's Report.

[51] Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], "A Statement of the Scheme of Establishing the Collection of Japanese Cherry Trees, the Gift of Mrs. Felix Fuld, in the Extension of Branch Brook Park," August 1928, OAR, B2121 [f3]. Not enough is known at this time about Gallagher and his travels. We do not know whether he drew his inspiration for this design from the famous Philosophers' Walk in Kyoto, where the cherry trees cascade over the banks of a channeled river with nearby hillsides. Certainly his partner in the Olmsted firm, FLO, Jr., would have been familiar with the Kyoto conditions.

[52] Ibid.

[53] "City's Cherry Tree Grove to Rival Country's Best," *Newark Star Eagle*, 1 September [1928], OAR, B2121 [f3].

[54] Plan #2121-803.

[55] Carl P. Witte to Olmsted Brothers [Percival Gallagher], 15 February 1933, OAR, B2121 [f4]; Olmsted Brothers [Hans J. Koehler] to J.H. Philips, 4 May 1934, OAR, B2120 [f15].

[56] [Hans J Koehler and Carl Witte], "Report of Investigation Regarding the Use of Japanese Cherries," 6 April 1932, OAR, B2120 [f 15].

Part III - Maintaining the Vision

CHAPTER 10: MAINTAINING THE PLAN IN THE POST OLMSTED ERA

Over the years of the Essex County Park Commission's existence, from the inception of the first temporary Commission in 1894 through the dissolution of the permanent Commission in 1979, it acquired, constructed and oversaw parks and parkways, reservations and recreation areas throughout the county. In doing so, it perceived that its mission was to protect and preserve for public use the extraordinary scenic landscapes of the county while at the same time provide for the changing recreational needs of growing and diverse communities. This ideal had been greatly influenced by Charles Eliot's work to create the Metropolitan Park Commission around greater Boston. In pursuing the twin goals of conservation and recreation, Eliot held that areas of special scenic interest or recreational advantage, many of which crossed jurisdictional lines, should be open and accessible to citizens regardless of municipal boundary.

Among many of the early Essex County commissioners lay a real appreciation for the natural beauty which surrounded them in the turn-of-the-century decades and the desire to prevent these lands from being ruined by thoughtless development. They were motivated by a sense of civic responsibility to provide services for the various populations who were settling within their bounds. And finally, as business leaders they well recognized the long-term economic advantages toward increasing the county's value and commercial appeal brought by the kind of comprehensive park system they envisioned. They used their business acumen to ensure that development of such an encompassing system would be done frugally but with tasteful wise design. [1]

For the latter, the Essex County Park Commission was sagacious, after their earlier diversion to Barrett and Bogart, in their appointment of Olmsted Brothers as their landscape architects. These experienced, innovative yet pragmatic designers understood the importance of comprehensive planning and the relevance of park spaces in shaping urban form. In all their projects, whether for vast reservations or for small city squares, they were cognizant of the context in which they were designing, making their plans with a broader scope than simply that encompassed by the site's boundaries. As has been seen in the study of Branch Brook Park's evolution, the design elements created or refined always considered the physical connections of park space to city beyond for current conditions or potential future needs. Conscious of working within a system construct, John Charles Olmsted and his associates and successors were attuned to enhancing individual character in the spaces created, developing beauty while meeting some recreational needs. But they were most aware that not all needs could or should be met in any one park. The accessible system enabled a balance of resources spread over several locations and thus a mixing of user populations, while at the same time, heralding the unique attributes of each park for a sense of local pride.

The design ingenuity, planning skill, economic practicality and long-term vision which the Olmsted firm brought to Essex County's parks was respected by the Commission, who engaged them as consultants for decades after their initial contract ended in 1905. Even in the post World War II period, in the 1950s and 1960s, when the principals of the Olmsted firm who had guided the construction of this remarkable park system were no longer involved, the County returned to the later firm for advice on locating the new skating facility at South Mountain Reservation and in developing new parks (Rheinheimer and adjustments to Yanticaw and Belleville Parks), [2] still recognizing the value of this experienced advice.

Figure 10-1: Children's Field Day on the Sussex Avenue Playfield, c. 1907. Source: 1907 Annual Report, p. 20.

As the parks were constructed, as the accrued property values justified the initial investment and the usage increased exponentially, the mission of the Commission broadened to encompass a range of educational and service programs, more extensive than those offered by many other park systems across the country. In Branch Brook Park in particular, the typical playground and athletic programs culminated in extensive yearly field games, races , tennis clinics and exhibitions. [Figure 10-1] The scope of athletic opportunities offered expanded beyond field sports and ice-skating to include fishing on the stocked lakes, model boat races, archery and horseshoes. Horticultural programs and exhibitions at the greenhouses augmented the rich floral tradition of the gardens while educational programs for the natural areas included bird watching, etc. Concerts and musical events continued with great popularity. And in the mid 1960s, facilities specific for senior citizens were provided, including bocce courts. [3] All in all, this was a remarkable legacy of services to be under the aegis of a parks department.

Providing for this range of use while maintaining the complex of areas, the rich plantings, the numerous roads, paths and bridges and the several architectural features, particularly in the Southern Division, became increasingly difficult. As in park systems across the country, in Essex County reduced dollars had to stretch to cover more activities and greater land areas, since the Commission and the later Parks Department continued to take strategic advantage of land opportunities of merit to expand their holdings to serve the growing suburban communities. Changing social values and difficult urban conditions spilled over into attitudes toward parkland, particularly affecting maintenance procedures. Branch Brook, like so many other parks, suffered the loss, through attrition or removal, of many of its plantings, to simplify maintenance procedures, to provide openness that was perceived as a security advantage and through lack of recognition of the relationship of plantings to the design. The once-heralded horticultural richness, the diverse tree canopy, shrub and herbaceous layers, which were intended to provide seasonal interest and texture for beauty, wildlife habitat, and most importantly, screening for intrusive elements beyond the park borders, gradually thinned to a minimal plantation. With the loss of so many layers, with more sustained drought, interspersed with occasional flooding, the ecology of the land has altered significantly to stress much of the remaining vegetation.

These changes over the past sixty or so years since the Olmsted firm had an active involvement in Branch Brook Park occurred mostly by increments, some more radical than others.[4] Some of these resulted from system-wide

decisions; some were related solely to Branch Brook; and still others happened Division by Division. The effect has been cumulative, distancing the park from its original intended design, both that of Barrett and Bogart and of Olmsted Brothers.

Changes on the Ground: The Southern Division

Most of the changes in the Southern Division began with restructuring or rebuilding various architectural features, with consequent alterations to the areas around them.

The Reservoir and its Context

Although Percival Gallagher had provided several alternatives to reuse or rearrange the Reservoir space creatively, reluctance and the expense of altering this large structure stalled any major redesign. Instead, the area inside the Reservoir was grassed and used for summer baseball and flooded in winter for use as a skating rink. Since a wooden stairway down the steep slopes was the main means of access, one wonders how the equipment (lawnmowers, ice-servicing machinery, etc,) necessary to maintain these uses was handled. By 1935, new lighting was installed. To resolve the accessibility issue, an entrance was cut in the embankment facing the boathouse,

> *"thereby furnishing access by an easy gradient for the sport participating public and motor driven maintenance equipment. Brownstone masonry walls, to support the earth on each side of the opening, were constructed. The stones were cut and faced to conform in size and design with the old walled slopes inside the reservoir. A concrete bridge spanning this entrance was built to support the path, which is continuous around the outside perimeter of the reservoir. This bridge was likewise faced with brownstone, and a coping and iron rail fencing was erected to make all of the new work match and blend as a pleasing part of the old reservoir structure."* [5]

The architectural sensitivity with which this work was planned, and the care taken to preserve much of the integrity of this historic structure, are remarkably prescient for the time. The concrete span used only permitted a narrow entry road, which was to become a problem as the popularity of the site increased its usage. [Figure 10-2]

Figure 10-2: Construction of the skating rink in the former Reservoir, indicating the road cut in the embankment. c. 1955. Source: courtesy James Lecky.

Another feature was added to this area in 1949-50 when a bicycle track was built around the bottom rim of the Reservoir for summer use, surfaced with a "sand-clay mixture, graded to meet with the cyclists' approval." Bicycle races of 10 to 50 miles were held in cooperation with the Police Athletic Leagues, this use continuing well into the 1960s.[6] The need for year-round ice-skating facilities brought about the development of a multi-functional rink in 1956, intended for roller-skating and dancing in summer. Opened in October 1957, nearly 50,000 skaters were recorded before December of that year, using it for ice-hockey and figure skating.[7] [Figure 10-3] An "entrance way" (probably an enlargement of the 1942 design, though not specified) and parking area for 230 cars within the Reservoir walls were constructed in 1961, funded "from monies which the Park Commission received for the sale of park land to the New Jersey Highway Department." Pressure for skating facilities made this new rink almost obsolete as it was being built, which resulted in the 1969 enclosing of the structure for all-weather use.[8] This solution remained until 1991-2, when the present Roller Rink was designed. Included in the project for the rink was the small boatshed, which now occupies the southern lake shore. [9] At some time during this period, the small circular building, the pump house from the Reservoir's earlier use, was demolished. [10]

Figure 10-3: Skating rink in Reservoir, c. 1960. Source: 1960 Annual Report, p.16.

The Lake and its Features

With the construction of the ice rink, pressure to provide for skating on the lake was reduced. Summer activities continued to offer boating and fishing. In 1940, the boathouse, which had remained since 1906, was declared unsafe due to settling and demolished. Using WPA funds, a new boathouse was designed by John and Wilson Ely, constructed in 1941, and opened to the public at the start of the ice-skating season. This structure covered the footprint of the 1906 boathouse, but was a smaller and less elaborate building. Bituminous paths were installed around the boathouse in 1943, a new dam constructed for the lake and a new section of dock extended northward "to supply the public demand for additional landing space." A refectory operated by the Park Commission supplied refreshments.[11] This boathouse remained until 1986, when it was destroyed by fire. The current structure was installed as part of the project for the roller rink construction. [12]

The lake was well-used by fishermen, and kept continuously stocked by the New Jersey Game and Fish Commission with a range of fish. Five thousand fishermen were counted in 1947. In 1951, due to a problem with stunted fish, the existing large stock were seined out after lowering the lake level, the rest killed off and the lake restocked with trout, bass and catfish. Summer programs, developed to teach fishing to inner city children, were hailed as a great mixer for children of different ethnic backgrounds, important during this period of social upheaval.[13]

Physical changes to the lake area began in1955 with regrading at Eighth Avenue due to construction of the Stickel Bridge highway approach. This caused changes 140 feet into the park, altering paths and removing concrete steps at the Orange Street entrance to the park drive. In 1971 the construction of a concrete bridge across the end of the lake on a diagonal required some restructuring of the lake shores and a redirection of the park drive. Unfortunately, this bridge was not located with any reference either to the location suggested in the Olmsted plan for a bridge (which was straight to relate it axially to the Avenues), or with any apparent consider-

ation of the important long vistas up the lake from the south end that the 1901 plan had carefully contrived. Instead, the new bridge with its small arch rather ungracefully blocks the views, visually disconnecting the south bay of the lake from the greater expanse and thereby leaving it somewhat truncated in effect.[14] The construction of the Academy Towers on the site of the former Newark Academy constituted a major visual change to the southwest views from this end of the park.[15]

The health of the lake was compromised, and boating was interfered with, by serious siltation due to storm sewer run-off and erosion problems. This was one of the first issues addressed by the new parks department, with an intensive lake and natural resource study , funded as part of $4 million restoration program. The work of dredging the lake to remove the pollution, to be finished by 1982, included the installation of erosion controls and rehabilitation of the boathouse, which was by this time closed and vandalized. The burning of the latter negated that effort.[16]

The Greater Playground Area

The playground at Clifton and Eighth Avenues, though aged, received little attention until a land swap in 1960 by which the Park Commission acquired title to the small tract of land between Sixth and Seventh. This land, the former bathhouse-pumping station site, completed the Commission's frontage along Clifton and enabled them to redevelop the playground to include new equipment, basketball courts and space for field games. By 1971, basketball courts were built. The perimeter context also changed with the construction of Colonnade Apartments, which became a visual element for this part of the park in addition to creating (as had the Academy Towers) a new population of users. In 1978, funding was requested to rehabilitate the basketball courts and replace the utility building near them with a single unit building.[17] Other recreational facilities were installed earlier on Garside Place on the block east of the Administration Office. Here 3 bocce alleys, a basketball court and a softball field were constructed. On the Sussex Avenue playground, the infield of the running track was used for softball and basketball, with bocce alleys added sometime later.[18]

The Concert Grove

Concerts of all sorts at the bandstand provided a continual source of enjoyment for park users. Whether barbershop quartets, bands or symphony concerts, the summertime usage occupied weekday as well as weekend evenings. From the late 1930s through the war years, concerts were underwritten by WPA funds, supplemented by other sources when this program ended. From the 1950s through the 1970s, concerts continued to be held several times a week with major artists, such as Duke Ellington and Herbie Mann performing, particularly in 1970 to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Park Commission, these events underwritten by corporate donations.[19]

Evergreens were added to the plantings around the comfort stations in 1946 (which may have signaled a change of the surrounding arbors, since at this time several of the arbors elsewhere in the park needed rebuilding). By 1948, the bandstand was remodeled, but with the recognition that "a modern type bandshell is considered desirable and justified." [20] In 1959 a pair of lions, sculpted by Karl Bitte, which formerly " stood guard for 55 years over the main entrance to the Prudential Insurance Co.," were donated to the park, placed on either side of the boat landing steps, where they became a popular site for photographers. [Figure 10-4] On the plan for their installation, a bandshell rather than the circular bandstand was recorded.[21] Additionally, at some recent point, a large boulder marker was installed on the banks of the Concert Grove to commemorate the Civil War training ground, Camp Frelinghuysen. A planting of 12 axially located plane trees on the banks above the music court area in 1983 reflected some of the planting pattern originally set by elms.[22]

Figure 10-4: Lion from the Prudential Insurance Company, installed at Concert Grove boat landing, 1959. Source : 1959 Annual Report, frontispiece.

The Gardens and Barringer High School

Over the sixty years since the Olmsted work, the most serious change has been to the Garden area. Once the pride of this park, these high-maintenance areas seem to have continued, albeit under reduced circumstances, through the late 1950s. Bedding–out plants by the thousands, grown in the greenhouse, were installed yearly in the gardens. Of particular satisfaction were the spring displays of Cottage and Darwin tulips in both the Dutch Garden and around the Administration Building, with the tulips imported from Holland except for the interruption during the war years.[23] In 1946 the various arbors and the Parker Street shelter were reconstructed, with significant changes to the proportions of the original Carrère and Hastings designs. [24] However, in 1961, a land swap began the undoing of the gardens. Four acres at their eastern edge, between Parker Street and the Promenade, were transferred to the city in exchange for a 28 acre tract in Cedar Grove. These four acres became part of the site for the new Barringer High School. Lost in this land taking was the Parker Street Shelter and any entrance on this side of the park, since the high school was constructed without an intervening sidewalk. In 1963 a high chain link fence was added, emphatically completing the sense of separation from this city resource.[25]

Gradually, the various gardens ceased to be planted, whether due to maintenance costs and other budgetary considerations, lack of knowledgeable supervision or lack of public response. The areas were regraded in places, grassed over, leaving wall remnants behind at the Dutch Garden or at the horseshoe of the flower garden; concrete steps leading nowhere in particular; and the 'beheaded' pedestal from the Mendelssohn bust (the sculpture taken elsewhere to protect it from vandalism). [26] The once-numerous benches were reduced to few, offering minimal invitation to linger and enjoy the scenery. The Carrère and Hastings Shelter on Meeker Mound remains in a very precarious condition. To the north of the gardens, at the southeast corner of the Park Avenue Bridge, a masonry overflow chamber was installed in 1953. This semi-circular structure was built to prevent the chronic problem in this area of surcharge washouts, and was once well screened by plantings, which are no longer of significance.[27]

Changes on the Ground: The Middle Division

With fewer architectural structures, the Middle Division has remained closer to its original plan. As with the other sections of the park, however, the changes or loss of plantings, more subtle than structural, have significantly altered the intended character. In the Middle, there is little remaining of its specialized plant patterning. The main alterations to this division involved roadways and the end of the lake.

Traffic issues concerning the two intersections with Park Avenue became a major problem by 1949, with resultant restrictions concerning turns from the drives on the Avenue and a small road linkage constructed to connect the south side of Park Avenue with the park drive. These traffic concerns were addressed as part of the $ 4million rehabilitative master plan of 1981 which eliminated the northern of these drives, turning it into a path. As part of this work, the entire park drive was curbed with six inch high Belgian block. Underneath the Park Avenue Bridge a "foot-bridge for pedestrian and bike use" and reconstructed walls on either side of the lake channel were also added as part of this project. [28]

A small shed near the Park Avenue Bridge, variously a tool shed and foreman's office, was demolished in 1949 and the office relocated to the former boat landing building at the northern end of the division. Twenty years later this structure was renovated to become a seniors' center with bocce alleys. The end of the lake was altered, some of the edge filled in and the northern small pond eliminated, to provide for parking for this center. As part of the 1981 project, the parking lot was further expanded to allow for 78 cars, anticipating the expansion of the building.[29] The building was destroyed by fire in 1985 and rebuilt according to a design by park personnel.[30]

During the Korean war crisis, 8 acres of the Middle Division ballfields were leased by the US Army for an anti-aircraft installation (AAA Gun battalions) "for the term of the present emergency." This land was not restored to park and athletic use until 1960. [31]

In the 1949 inventory, the Playfield contained 4 hardball diamonds, 1 softball diamond, 3 football field, one soccer field, while in the rest of the park, there were .56 acres of bridle trails, a wild-life preserve, and a comfort station and a field house. By the end of the 1990s, the comfort station had been incorporated into the senior citizens' building, the Octagon Fieldhouse still remained and a press box had been added to the north end of the Playfield. The recreational facilities offered now consisted of the Rick Cirone youth Field; the Louis Lopez youth field; the Ray Dandridge softball field; the Jerry Grecco softball field; the Roberto Clemente hardball field and a football field with a fitness course which replaced the bridle path. [32]

Changes on the Ground: The Northern Division

The intended attraction of this division, the brook and pond system and its accompanying lush plantings, has suffered one of the greatest changes. The water source, from the beginning problematic, continued to be inadequate. Rather than the serious restudy that John Olmsted had suggested in 1909 to make this system flourish, in 1940 two small ponds and connecting channels were cleared of silt, while the larger ponds, considered of a dangerous depth, were filled to be no more than five feet deep. This project was done in conjunction with laying 700 feet of curbing. In 1949 more silt was removed (205 truckloads). This work did not adequately address the water system's problems, and the effect of low water levels, erosion and road run-off has seriously changed the ecology of this area. [33] In 1947 the rustic wooden bridge to the island in Clark's Pond was vandalized and replaced by a bridge of "concrete with an ornamental iron railing." This pond was studied in 1954 by New Jersey Fish and Game to revitalize it and develop it as a location for managed fish propagation.[34] At some later point, possibly in conjunction with the 1981 rehabilitation of many of the park's systems, the channel to the island was filled in, removing this as a scenic feature. Additionally, the small pond to the southeast (called by various names over time, but eventually known as the 'propagating pool'), from which the water system connected to the Middle Division, was filled in.[35]

The other major change in this division has been to the road system. Between 1951 and 1953, the widening of Bloomfield Avenue to have a 100-foot right-of-way had a serious impact on this part of the park. Associated with this project was the installation of a 30-inch storm sewer laid from the upper pond to the main lake. A 30-inch gas main and a 16-inch water main were installed along the additional width of the Avenue. The 34 feet of increased width for the Avenue was taken from the southern end of this division. This work was accomplished by constructing a rigid frame concrete arch next to the old bridge span with a rubble stone wall north of the bridge to support the slopes. Extensive regrading and replanting were required. "A number of pine trees of fairly good size were used to provide an immediate effect, and were fortified with groups of deciduous trees and shrubs, which will require somewhat longer period to produce the effect of seclusion." Eleven new aluminum light standards along the west drive were installed as part of this work. [36] In 1955, entrances along the east side from Lake Street were improved, also with lighting system work.[37]

The most significant changes, however, to the Northern Division circuit road came as part of the 1981 rehabilitation project. Under VEP Associates' "Roadway Improvements," much of the original main west drive was relocated, many of the gracious curves made straighter. The new road became a one-way system, which was also curbed at this time with Belgian block edging. The new route followed seems to have been made up of a combination of the various road alternatives which John Olmsted had created in this area. The major effect of this change has been to pull the road further west, away from its curvilinear route following the brook system. Many of the old road beds have become paths. Included in this project were two parking areas made from a road widening at the northwest corner by the Maintenance Buildings. [38]

Figure 10-5: Cross Country race in the Northern Division, 1964. Source: 1964 Annual Report, p. 8.

The use of the Northern Division for athletics varied over the decades after the Olmsted work, with a range of sports activities. [Figure 10-5] By 1940, horseshoe pitches, constructed in the northeast corner near the Elwood entrance, a location which provided a pleasant vista over the meadow, were in great use for competitions. A two and a half mile track, which included the Southern and Middle Divisions, was actively used for athletic clubs, high schools and AAU cross country meets. Archery championships were also held in this division.[39] The 1949 inventory listed 3 cricket creases, 3 football fields, 10 horseshoe pitches, one soccer field, 10 grass tennis courts and a field for hurling and gaelic football. In addition there were 1.18 acres of bridle trails, a cross country course and a fieldhouse, while the former Midwood Pool (the large pool north of Clark's Pond) was the location for curling. By the 1981 project, soccer, football and five ballfields were still listed as Northern Division meadow activities, but this proposal, which involved some rerouting of traffic on the east, brought forth a storm

of protest and was considerably altered.[40] The Knollfield Fieldhouse existed until the late1990s when it burned, leaving the meadow without one of its anchors.[41] Under the current conditions, some of this still damp and ecologically sensitive area has become a butterfly meadow; there are fewer dedicated athletic facilities in the meadow, other than a soccer field to the northwest and some cricket creases.

The popularity of flower shows at the greenhouses necessitated changes to accommodate the visitors. An adjustment in the fence at Heller Parkway enabled direct access to the greenhouse from the subway, and the greenhouses were enlarged and lighted. There was active involvement in these programs from the various garden clubs of the county. [42] A renovation of the buildings in this service area began in 1962 with a structure to replace the original stable, funded by the sale of parkland to the State Highway Department. While the new garage and maintenance center met the utilitarian needs for the parks, the long-term problem of screening this complex from its visual intrusion into the meadow area was not and still has not been accomplished, even with the greenhouse reconstruction of 1988. [43]

Changes on the Ground: The Extensions and Belleville Park

The implementation of the Extension plan with its complex of landscape planning and planting, traffic engineering and hydrology was still in process in the 1940s. By the end of 1937, most of the roadways and parking areas were paved; some boulder walls constructed; a portion of Second River paved and over 40,000 shrubs and trees planted, but work on the Extension east of Union Avenue would not be finished for several years. In 1940, Franklin Street was realigned and extended, requiring a property exchange with Hendricks Field. For the next two years, still using WPA funding, 16-foot high concrete walls were constructed along both sides of Second River and the bottom of the channel rebuilt with granite blocks for durability and for "a more pleasing ripple effect during low water flow." [44] Even though parts of the drive were still incomplete, crowds coming to enjoy the cherry blossoms increased yearly, fulfilling the donor's intention. [45] The installation of floodlights in 1955 along the ravine extended the hours for viewing, bringing the visitor count to over 100,000 that year. Along Tiffany Boulevard, acquisition of some land in 1953-4 brought a part of the south bank of the Second River under parks department control for beautification. Replanting became necessary as the collection aged, and with another donation from L Bamberger & Co., 200 cherry trees and crabapples were planted and more lighting installed to increase the display. The visitors were said to reach half a million in 1957.[46] [Figure 10-6]

The expanded sports facilities in the Extension listed in the 1949 inventory included 20 tennis courts; 4 baseball fields; a bicycle area; 3 fieldhouses (at the tennis courts, at the playfield and at Hendricks Field) and an 18 hole golf course. All of the facilities were heavily used over the decades, with tennis and golf facilities in particular demand. At the playfield, a wooden comfort station, recorded on plans but not mentioned in the reports, was demolished in 1981 to make way for an information center for "visitors attracted to the area when the trees are in full bloom." Bocce courts were also included in this reconstruction. [47]

The Olmsted plan for Belleville was only partially implemented when the land was first acquired, due to a shortage of labor caused by the First World War and by deficient funds. The tennis courts, playfields and children's playground were installed on this difficult site, as was some planting, including an allée of lindens focussed on the river view. As a small neighborhood playground park, it is scarcely mentioned in the Annual Reports. In 1942, the children's shelter with a porch overlooking the playfield was at last constructed, along with replacement of some of the lindens in the allée. Another fieldhouse was included, along with 3 baseball diamonds, 2 playgrounds and horseshoe pitch, in the 1949 inventory. Beginning in 1951, Belleville was also leased by the Army for an anti-aircraft installation and not released by them until 1960, when the work of regrading could begin. It appears that the topography around the old quarry was altered at that time, since presently a ballfield exists in what was once very irregular ground.

Figure 10-6: "A vivid weekend attraction," 1957. Source: 1957 Annual Report, p. 5.

Recapturing the Vision

At the beginning of a new century, Branch Brook Park, once Essex County's "most important park"[48] reveals the stress of its hundred years of age. While it still serves many of the public as an attractive recreation space, its non-athletic areas have suffered. The 'good bones' of its carefully crafted original design remain essentially intact, but the tapestry of its mantle—its once-manifold plantings, its architectural adornments, its glistening waterways, its user amenities (paths, benches, etc.,)—is somewhat tattered. Many of the changes noted above have occurred because the rationale behind the original design for the park has been overlooked or forgotten. Changes were made, motivated by utilitarian necessities, either the amelioration of physical deterioration or the demands of new recreational needs, but frequently not with consideration of the impact of these alterations on the unity of the park's artistry. More than constructed changes, Branch Brook Park over the decades has been well populated, 'loved' into decrepitude, without adequate maintenance staff or monies to repair this abuse of overuse.

Cities across the country, trying to recapture the intended beauty and grace of their historic landscapes, are contending with similar problems, with the attendant planning issues to develop strategies for funding rehabilitation and long-term management. These well-designed historic parks, particularly those created by the Olmsted firm over its many generations, are significant components of the national artistic legacy, more than simply local places for active or passive recreation. These parks constitute a distinctly American, three-dimensional art-form, where utility and beauty merge, adding value and prestige to their communities. Although hailed for their artistry when they were first constructed, historic urban parks over the post World War II decades have not been treated with the consideration they deserve as more than mere play space. It is critical to understand these parks in terms of their significance to the local and national legacy; in terms of the force and factors of their creation;

their designers' intentions; the materials and methods used; their history of usage and changes over time. Blending this information with current cultural needs and conditions enables the creation of an appropriate plan for rehabilitation.

The complex evolution of Branch Brook Park provides a remarkable exemplar of the genius and vision of its creators, of the artistry and skill which gave this vision form, and of the dedication and commitment of its stewards over time. Recapturing the artistry, the beauty and utility of that vision will restore to the city, the county and the nation an important part of its historic landscape legacy.

Chapter 10 Endnotes

[1] This is not to say that some of the commissioners might not have benefited from some of the decisions made about park locations, etc. Among the earliest group, long-time president Cyrus Peck, Stephen Meeker and Robert Ballantine had land holdings in the area of Branch Brook which were enhanced by the park's development. Franklin Murphy was most anxious that Weequahic Park be developed, though his motives for this are still to be explored. In general, a study of the Park Commissioners would enrich the public understanding of this formative aspect of county development.
[2] Job #2120 correspondence files at ONHS.
[3] How well all of these activities responded to the changing ethnic and cultural composition of the neighborhood is another topic which requires more research.
[4] While the Annual Reports provide a reasonable record of the conditions and changes, they are frequently lacking on the reasons behind the decisions. For this, a more thorough exploration of the Park Commission and later Park Department minutes, correspondence and reports would be necessary, in addition to a review of the newspaper coverage of park issues and events.
[5] 1935 *Annual Report*, p. 14; 1942 *Annual Report*, pp. 11-12. The work was designed by Joe Anderson; plans at ECDPRCA.
[6] 1949 *Annual Report*, p. 28; 1950 *Annual Report*, p. 14; 1951 *Annual Report*, pp. 8, 28; 1966 *Annual Report*, p. 7 (image).
[7] 1955 *Annual Report*, p. 42; 1956 *Annual Report*, p. 4; 1957 *Annual Report*, p. 12. A photograph in the 1963 *Annual Report*, at p. 5, indicates a brick shelter at one end of the rink.
[8] 1961 *Annual Report*, pp. 8, 13; "Parking Lot Enhances Rink," *Newark News*, 1 October 1961; 1965 *Annual Report*, p. 17; 1969 *Annual Report* (unpaginated), noting cost at $305,000.
[9] The Roller Rink, boat house and an arbor for the Clifton Concourse were parts of a project from Berger Associates of Newark in 1992. It is interesting to note that they still depict the Dutch Garden on their plans.
[10] This building still existed in 1954, when it was re-roofed (1954 *Annual Report*, p. 14), and it shows up in skating rink construction photos.
[11] 1940 *Annual Report*, p. 11; drawings at ECDPRCA; 1941 *Annual Report*, p. 11; 1942 *Annual Report*, p. 12; 1943 *Annual Report*, p. 23. The 1949 inventory for the Southern Division indicated that a boat landing with canoe storage still existed, probably at the northern extension of the dock built in 1941.
[12] See endnote 16 below; Progress Report of ECDPRCA; Roller Rink Plan, Berger Associates, 2 October 1992, ECDPRCA. It is not clear at what point the boating program ceased.
[13] 1942 *Annual Report*, p. 16; 1944 *Annual Report*, p. 26; 1947 *Annual Report*, pp. 24-25; 1951 *Annual Report*, pp. 26-27; "Branch Brook Park Lake," *Newark News*, 6 April 1952; 1953 *Annual Report*, p. 23; 1971 *Annual Report*, pp. 14-16.
[14] 1955 *Annual Report*, p. 8; 1971 *Annual Report*, p. 4.
[15] Cunningham, *Newark*, p. 309.
[16] This program, "Proposed Restoration and Improvement of Branch Brook Park," was funded by the Green Acres Fund (50%), the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (40%) and a 10% Essex County match. This may be when the concrete slope erosion treatment near the 1971 bridge was installed. Application for Funding, 3 March 1978, at ECDPRCA; "Dredging promises new look for Branch Brook," *Newark Star-Ledger*, 2 March 1981.
[17] 1960 *Annual Report*, p. 8. Through this swap the city acquired a piece of land for parking adjacent to the Extension. 1965 *Annual Report*, p. 20; 1971 *Annual Report*, p. 4; Cunningham, *Newark*, p. 309; Application for Funding, 3 March 1978, at ECDPRCA.
[18] 1944 *Annual Report*, pp. 8-9; 1952 *Annual Report*, p. 30. The 1992 plans for the construction of the Roller Rink by Berger Associates record 3 bocce courts on the top of the former "High Mound." (plans at ECDPRCA)
[19] 1959 *Annual Report*, p. 24; 1968 *Annual Report*, p. 3; 1970 *Annual Report* (unpaginated).
[20] 1938 *Annual Report*, pp. 18-19; 1940 *Annual Report*, pp. 25, 28; 1946 *Annual Report*, p. 24; 1948 *Annual Report*, p. 29.
[21] "Lions in Park," *Newark News*, 2 June 1959. The Annual Reports do not record when the bandstand was removed. Plan:"Base for Limestone Lions," February 1959, ECDPRCA
[22] There is no record of the installation of the Camp Frelinghuysen marker. Plan: "Planting of 12 Platanus," Poul Krarup, ASLA, September 1983, ECDPRCA.
[23] 1938 *Annual Report*, p. 17; 1939 *Annual Report*, p. 15; 1941 *Annual Report*, p. 15; 1943 *Annual Report*, pp. 15, 18; 1946 *Annual Report*, p. 29; 1949 *Annual Report*, p. 20; 1954 *Annual Report*, p. 19.
[24] Plans at ECDPRCA, no architect listed.
[25] 1961 *Annual Report*, p. 8. The rationale behind this transfer, and the design intentions and development of the high school, should be explored to fully understand the evolution of conditions in this part of the park. Given the fact that John Olmsted sought to correct Barrett's disregard of the high school by providing axial paths, etc., in his design, it is ironic that the contemporary building's site plan seems to have reverted to another lack of connection.
[26] Nothing in the Annual Reports records the dissolution of the garden area, much of which seems to have occurred over the last decade or so. It is surprising that the garden forms, particularly the Dutch Garden, continue to appear on plans until at least 1992. (Berger Associates plan for the Roller Rink, 2 October 1992, at ECDPRCA).
[27] 1953 *Annual Report*, p. 17.
[28] 1949 *Annual Report*, pp. 13-14; "Essex readies 'model' park," *Newark Sunday Star-Ledger*, 13 December 1981. "As Built" plan, Restoration & Improvement of Branch Brook Park, VEP Associates, Inc., c. 1984, ECDPRCA.
[29] 1949 *Annual Report*, p. 15; 1969 and 1970 *Annual Reports* (both unpaginated); Plan: "Roadway Improvements," by VEP Associates, Inc., 18 December 1981, ECDPRCA.
[30] Progress Reports, ECDPRCA.
31 1951 *Annual Report*, p. 16; 1952 *Annual Report*, p.15; 1953 *Annual Report*, p.25; 1959 *Annual Report*, p.15; 1960 *Annual Report* p. 8.
[32] 1949 *Annual Report*, p. 8; Map of Middle Division, at ECDPRCA.
[33] 1940 *Annual Report*, p. 13; 1949 *Annual Report*, p. 24.
[34] 1947 *Annual Report*, p. 12; 1954 *Annual Report*, pp. 24-25.

[35] There is no image yet uncovered of the concrete bridge. Nor has any record been found concerning the alterations to the water system—the filling of the channel on Clark's Pond and the removal of the propagating pool. The latter may have been related to the changes in the Middle Division when the senior citizens' center was constructed. More exploration is needed on this topic to understand all the water linkages, in order to repair the hydrological problems of the entire park.
[36] 1951 *Annual Report*, p. 9, 15; 1959 *Annual Report*, p. 8; 1953 *Annual Report*, pp. 8, 16.
[37] 1955 *Annual Report*, p. 8.
[38] Plan: "Roadway Improvements," by VEP Associates, Inc., 18 December 1981; and "As Built" plans from VEP Associates, Inc., c. 1984, ECDPRCA.
[39] 1940 *Annual Report*, p. 27; 1942 *Annual Report*, p. 24; 1946 *Annual Report*, p. 24; 1947 *Annual Report*, p. 28; 1948 *Annual Report*, pp. 27-28; 1950 *Annual Report*, p. 31.
[40] Donald Warshaw, "Essex drops softball, picnic areas for 'revised Branch Brook revamp," *Newark Star-Ledger*, 27 February 1980.
[41] It is to be hoped that when this structure is replaced, it will echo in its sensitivity to site conditions and to its purpose that which the earlier structure by architect F.A. Wright had demonstrated.
[42] 1935 *Annual Report*, pp. 10-11; 1956 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1964 *Annual Report*, p. 12.
[43] 1962 *Annual Report*, p. 8; 1963 *Annual Report*, p. 10; Progress Reports at ECDPRCA.
[44] 1936-7 *Annual Report*, pp. 9-10; 1938 *Annual Report*, pp.9-10; 1939 *Annual Report*, p. 9, 14; 1941 *Annual*
Report, p. 11; 1942 *Annual Report*, p. 10.
[45] 1944 *Annual Report*, p. 16; 1947 *Annual Report*, p. 17; 1948 *Annual Report*, p. 20; 1952 *Annual Report*, p. 19.
[46] 1954 *Annual Report*, p. 40; 1955 *Annual Report*, p. 42; 1956 *Annual Report*, p. 9; 1957 *Annual Report*, p. 4;
1971 *Annual Report*, p. 5.
[47] "Essex readies 'model' park," *Newark Sunday Star-Ledger*, 13 December 1981.
[48] [JCO], 1901 *Annual Report*, p.41.

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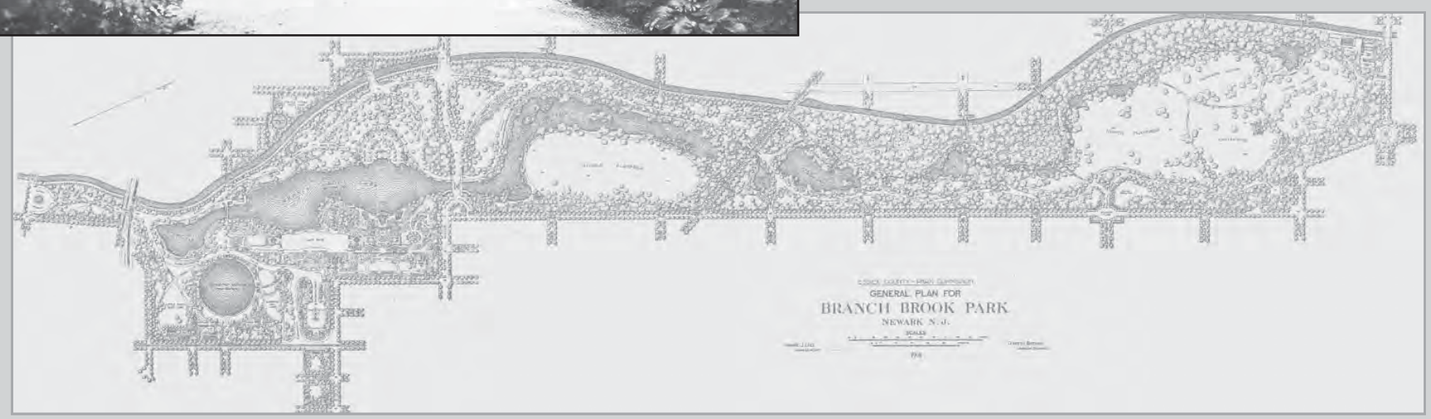
Part IV - Critical Periods of Development



PERIOD PLANS: A GRAPHIC DEPICTION OF THE PARK'S EVOLUTION

At each period of the history of Branch Brook Park, decisions were made and interventions on the land were undertaken which formed not only the elements and features of the park, but its configuration as well. From early use of the site for quarrying and farming, through the periods when rolling uplands and low-lying swamps were transformed to satisfy the recreation and leisure needs of Newark's burgeoning population, the park's shape and texture evolved into the place we see today. Layers of history developed and were removed, meshed and blended into the landscape of the present.

As a convenient way in which to understand the history of a landscape, the National Park Service's (NPS) "Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports" (U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C., 1998) establishes the preparation of plans to demonstrate various periods in landscape development. This series of illustrations, or "Period Plans" captures the development and the transition of the park site over time. Along with the written history in the previous chapters, the plans allow the determination of the most important time periods, or "period(s) of significance," in the physical development of the park. The Period Plans and the determination of the period(s) of significance are not only essential components of any Cultural Landscape Report, as outlined by NPS. The period(s) of significance also help guide treatment recommendations for the site. Understanding the most significant periods and developing treatment recommendations for Branch Brook Park will be the focus of the next phases of the Cultural Landscape Report project.

The development of Period Plans is a complex task, requiring close analysis of numerous sources that show what physically existed on the site, and later, what was actually built over time. While there is an abundance of plans, reports, and other information documenting what features and elements were planned and designed for Branch Brook Park during its evolution, there is relatively little information showing what actually existed on the ground before, during, and after park construction. The written material and illustrations in this volume are some of the many sources of information used in preparing the following Period Plans. Documentation also included photographs, historical atlases, surveys, and written descriptions of existing conditions at various times during construction. The individual sources are listed on each period plan.

During the study, seven periods emerged as crucial to the development of the park. These are shown on a series of ten Period Plans. For the first period, an early map has been included in the report text. For the remainder of the park's evolution, one or more plans were developed for each period. The division of the site history utilizes the beginning and/or end dates for each period which correspond with important dates or periods in the park's pre-history, planning, construction, or management. Thus, the plans represent a summary or a distillation of the complete park history described in the previous chapters.

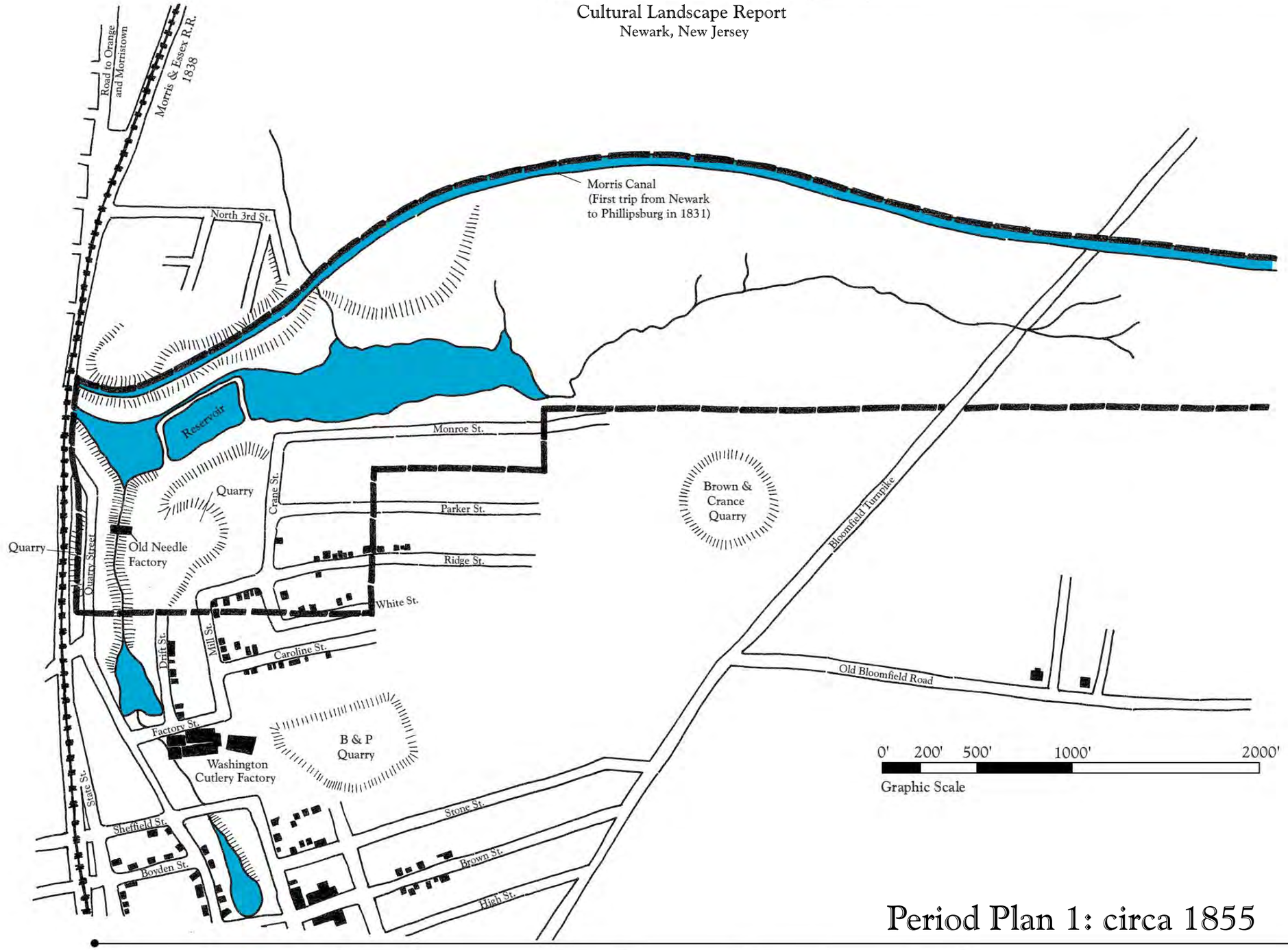
For each of the seven periods, a date has been selected which depicts the fabric of the park for that period. Thus, each plan is a compilation of the most important developments to take place during that period, along with selection of a date, or dates, for which source information was actually available. The result is that while each Period Plan shows a specific date (circa 1855, for instance), the plans are intended to show a coalescing of events, in a way a 'snapshot' of the evolution and development of physical realities over the years during the period surrounding that specific date.

The periods are as follows:

- **Early history up to 1831** : This period covers the prehistory and early uses of the park site, up through the construction of the Morris Canal. The period is described in Chapter 1 of the written history and is illustrated in Figure 1-1.
- **1832 - 1870, Plan 1** : This period spans the early industrial and utilitarian use of the site up through the first proposal for a park. The period is described in Chapters 1 and 2.
- **1871 - 1894, Plan 2** : This period covers the two decades after the early 1870's attempts at park creation up through the second park proposal in 1894. The period is described in Chapter 2 of the written history.
- **1895 - 1898, Plan 3** : This period corresponds to the work of Barrett and Bogart, and is described in Chapter 3 of the written history.
- **1899 - 1937, Plans 4, 5, 6, & 7** : This period spans the work of the Olmsted firm and the major period of park construction, including the park extension and Belleville Park. The period is described in Chapters 4 through 9 of the written history.
- **1938 - 1977, Plan 8** : This period spans the four decades after park completion up through the change in management from the Essex County Park Commission to the Essex County Parks Department. The period is described in Chapter 10 of the written history.
- **1978 - Present, Plan 9** : This period covers the most recent decades of the park's history, and is described in Chapter 10.

BRANCH BROOK PARK

Cultural Landscape Report
Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 1: circa 1855

Legend

- Water bodies
- Boundary of present-day park
- Steep slopes
- Railroad tracks

North

Sources:
- Cultural Resources Survey of Branch Brook Park; Essex County Park Commission, 197_; Figures 7, 8.

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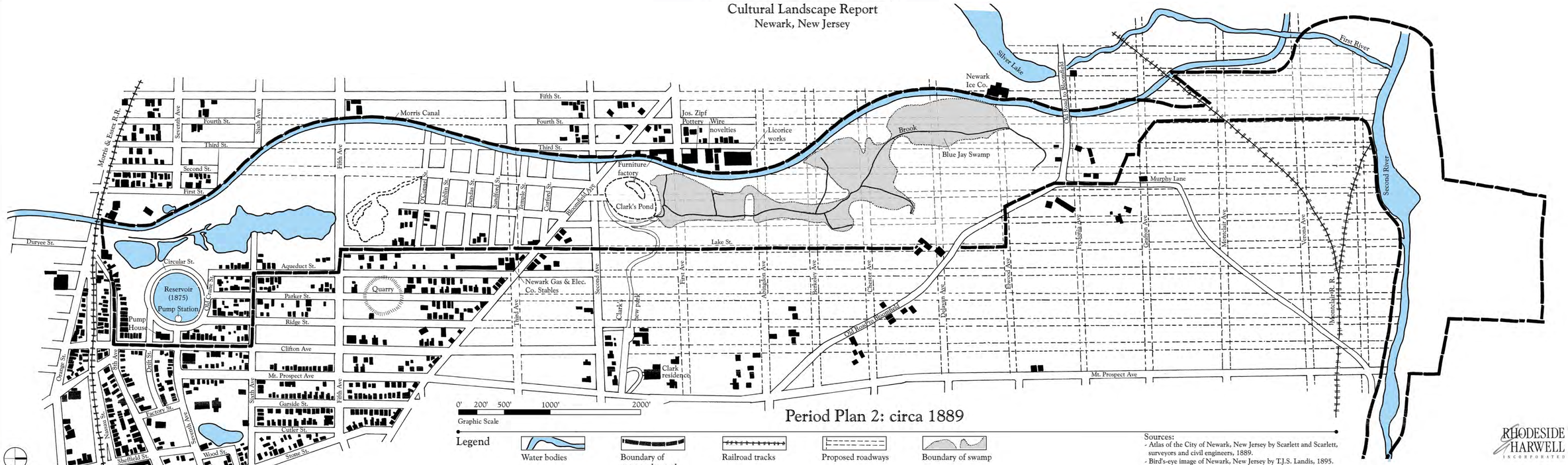
BRANCH BROOK PARK

Cultural Landscape Report
Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 2: circa 1889

Sources:
- Atlas of the City of Newark, New Jersey by Scarlett and Scarlett, surveyors and civil engineers, 1889.
- Bird's-eye image of Newark, New Jersey by T.J.S. Landis, 1895.
- Topographical maps of middle and northern sections of Branch Brook Park, Olmsted Brothers, 1898.

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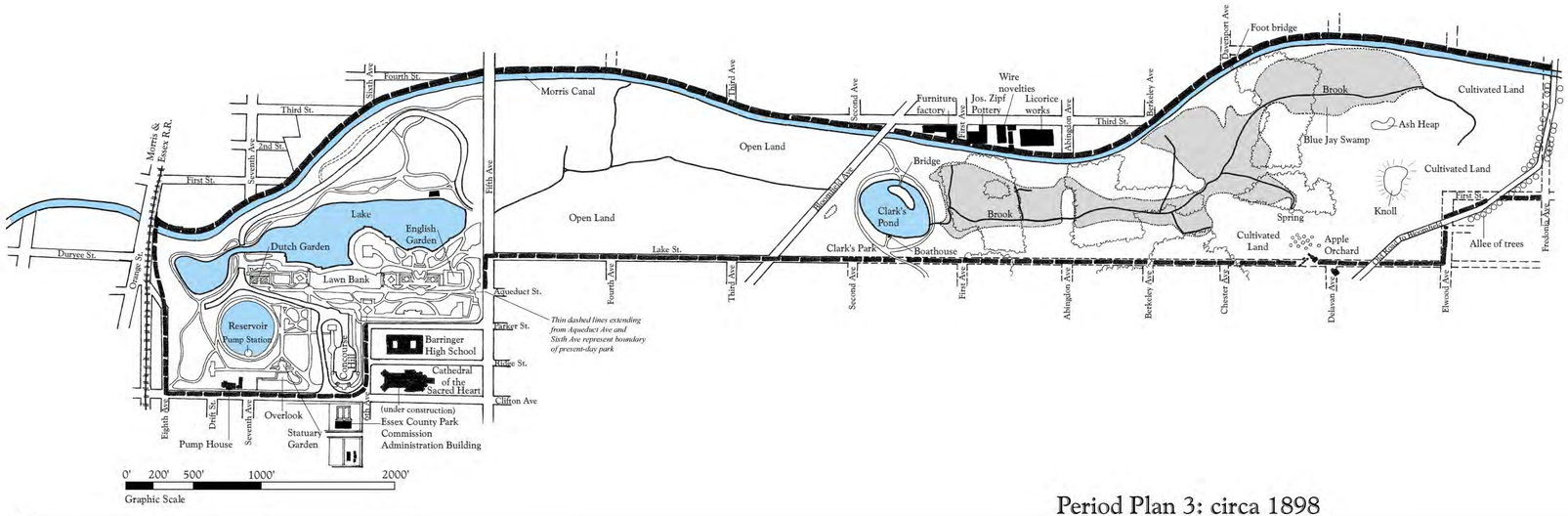
Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 3: circa 1898

Legend

- Water bodies
- Forested areas
- Railroad tracks
- Boundary of present-day park
- Boundary of swamp
- Proposed roadways

North

Sources:
- Topographical maps of middle and northern sections of Branch Brook Park, Olmsted Brothers, 1898.
- Design for Branch Brook Park by John Bogart and Nathan F. Barrett, landscape architects and engineers, 1896-7.
- Various photos of Southern Division of Branch Brook Park, 1898. From collections at FLONHS.

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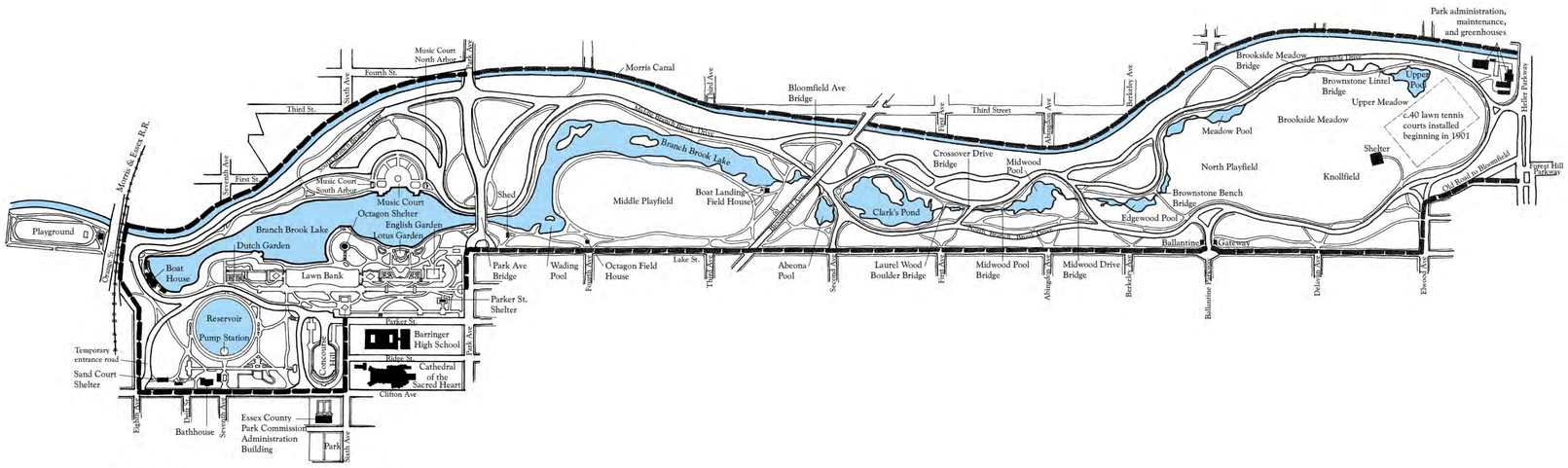
Cultural Landscape Report
Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 4: circa 1915

Legend

- Water bodies
- Boundary of present-day park
- Proposed features
- Railroad tracks

North

Sources:
- General Plan for Branch Brook Park, Newark, New Jersey, by Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects, 1901.
- Atlas of City of Newark, New Jersey, by J. M. Lathrop and L.T.G. Ogden, civil engineers, published by A.H. Mueller, 1911.
- Various photos of Southern, Middle, and Northern Division of Branch Brook Park, 1900-1915. From collections at FLONHS.

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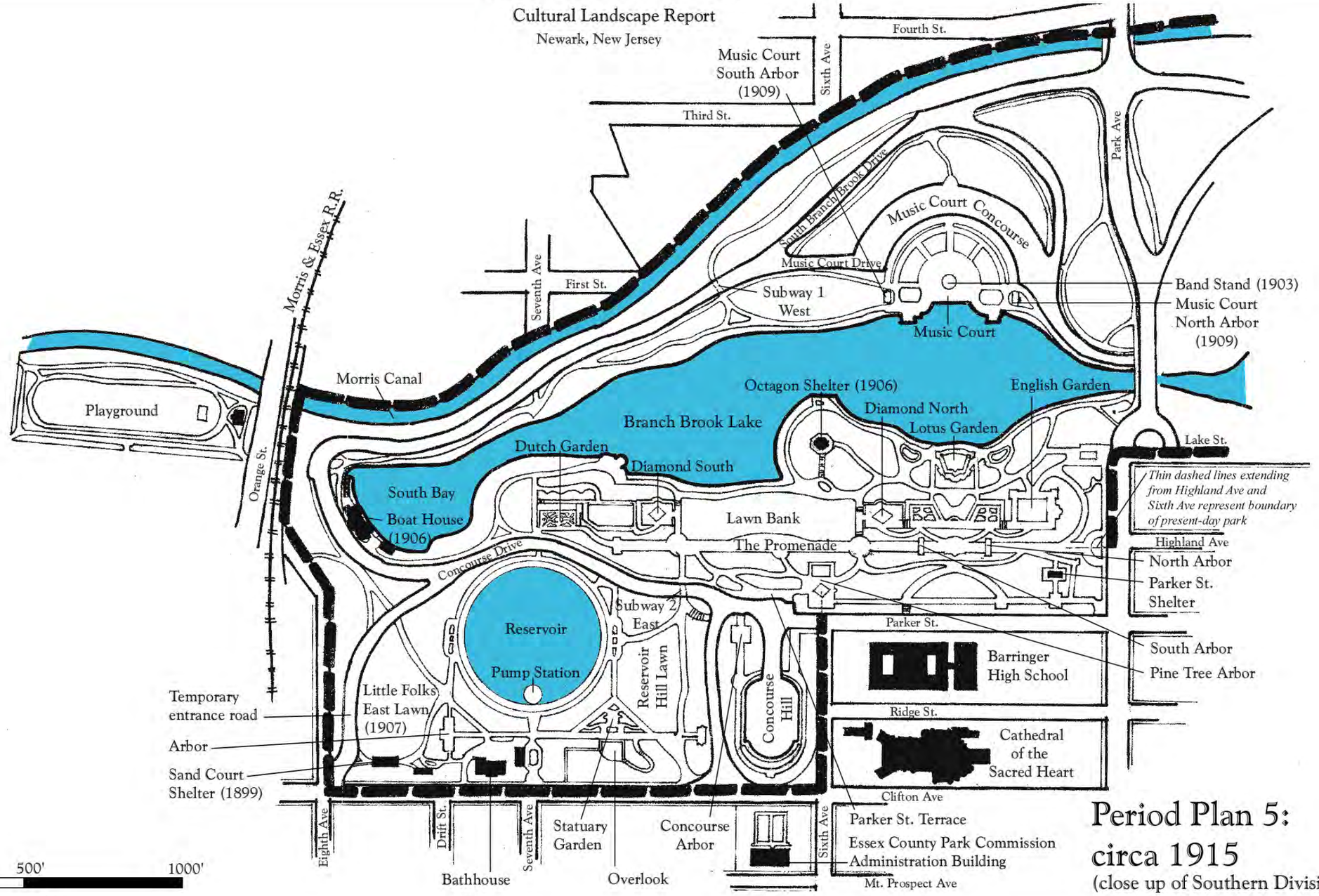
Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 5: circa 1915
(close up of Southern Division)

0' 200' 500' 1000'
Graphic Scale

North

Legend
- Water bodies
- Existing park's boundary
- Railroad tracks

Sources:
- General Plan for Branch Brook Park, Newark, New Jersey by Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects, 1901.
- Atlas of City of Newark, New Jersey by J. M. Lathrop and L.T.G. Ogden, Civil engineers, published by A.H. Mueller, 1911.
- Various photos of southern division of Branch Brook Park, v1900-1915. From collections at FLONHS.

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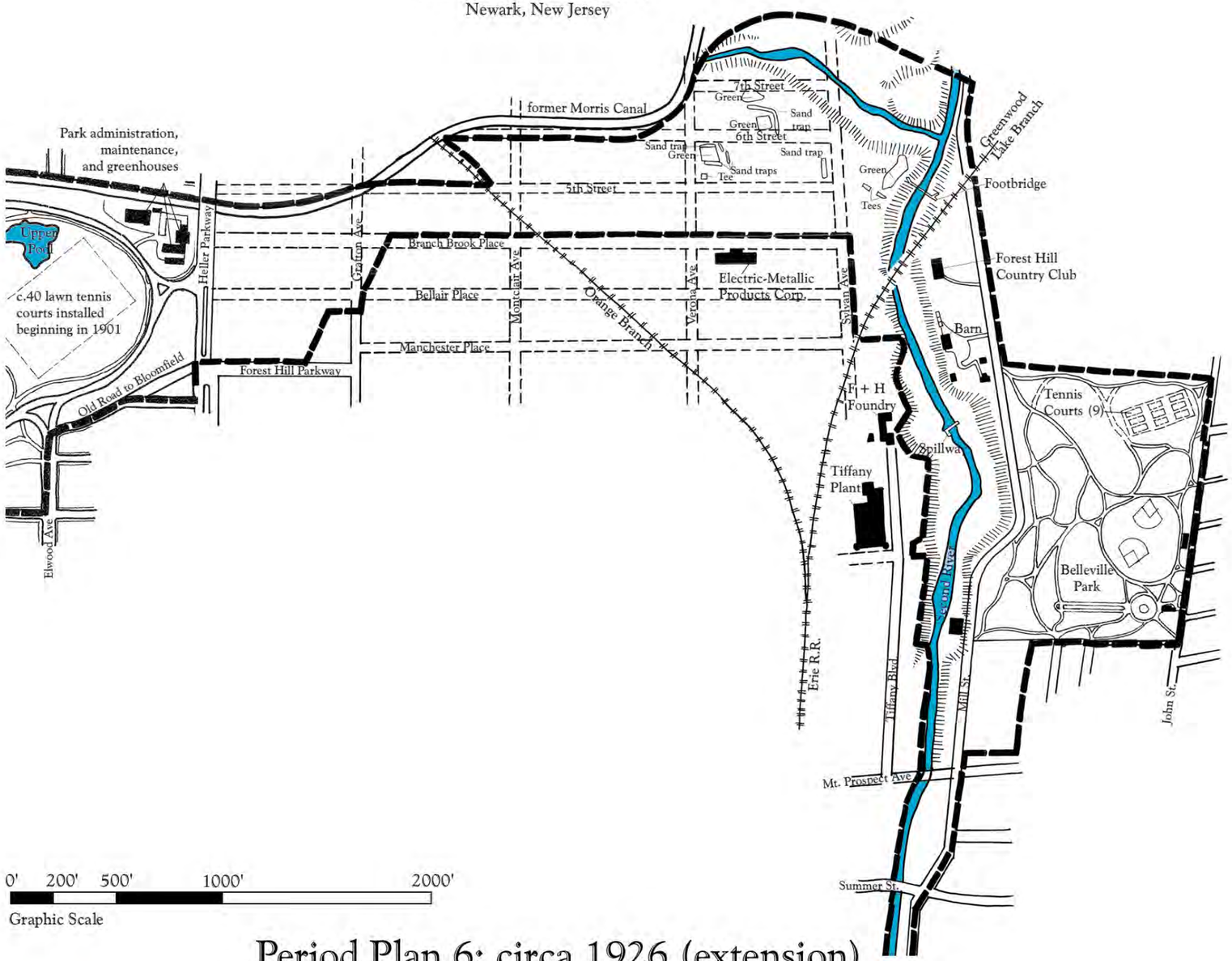
Cultural Landscape Report

Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 6: circa 1926 (extension)

Legend

- Water bodies
- Railroad tracks
- Steep slopes
- Proposed features
- Boundary of present-day park

North

Sources:

- Topographical map of Branch Brook Park extension, August 14, 1926; FLONHS 2121-708 Sheet 2.
- Topographical map of Belleville Park, 1926; FLONHS 2148-1.
- Grading plan for Belleville Park, July 1, 1915; FLONHS 2148-3.
- Topographical survey of Branch Brook Park extension, October 20, 1926; FLONHS 2121-710, Sheet 1.

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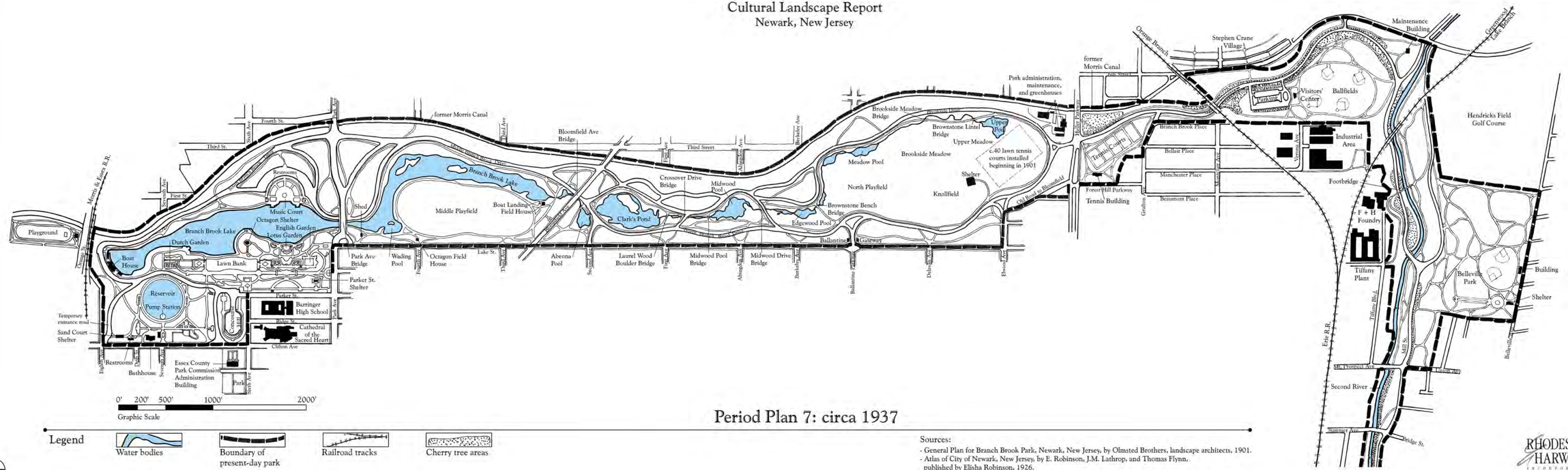
Cultural Landscape Report

Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 7: circa 1937

Legend

- Water bodies
- Boundary of present-day park
- Railroad tracks
- Cherry tree areas

North

Sources:

- General Plan for Branch Brook Park, Newark, New Jersey, by Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects, 1901.
- Atlas of City of Newark, New Jersey, by E. Robinson, J.M. Lathrop, and Thomas Flynn, published by Elisha Robinson, 1926.
- Aerial survey of Branch Brook Park extension, April 30, 1951; Copyright Aerial Viewpoint, Spring, Texas.
- Various photos of Southern, Middle, and Northern Division, 1900-1915. From collections at FLONHS.

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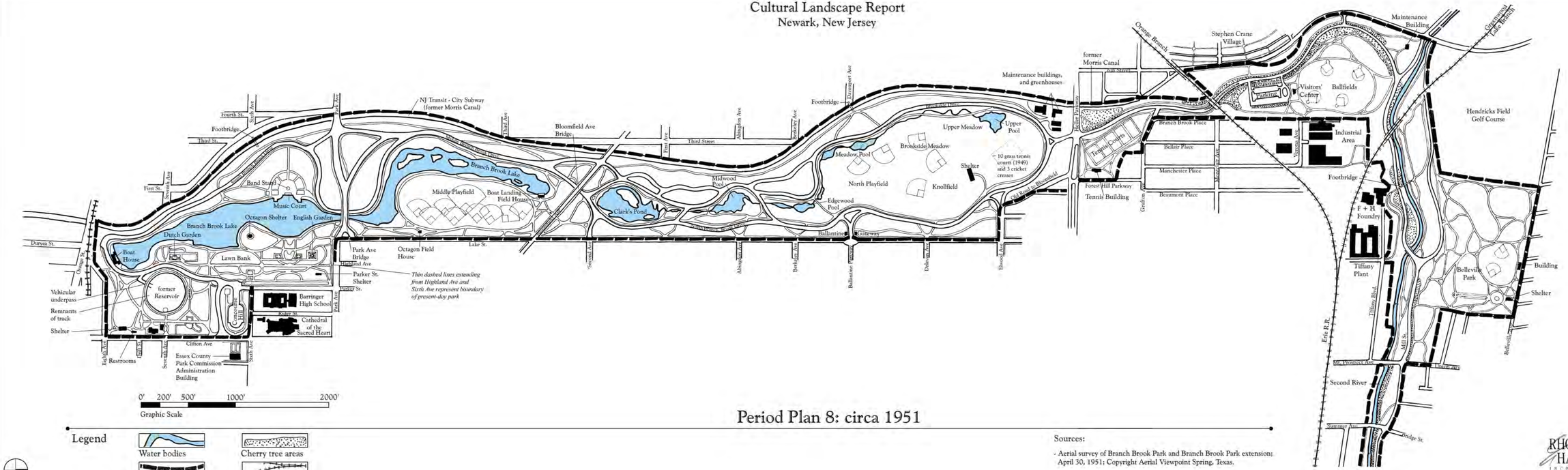
Cultural Landscape Report
Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 8: circa 1951

Legend

- Water bodies
- Cherry tree areas
- Boundary of present-day park
- Railroad tracks

North

Sources:

- Aerial survey of Branch Brook Park and Branch Brook Park extension; April 30, 1951; Copyright Aerial Viewpoint Spring, Texas.

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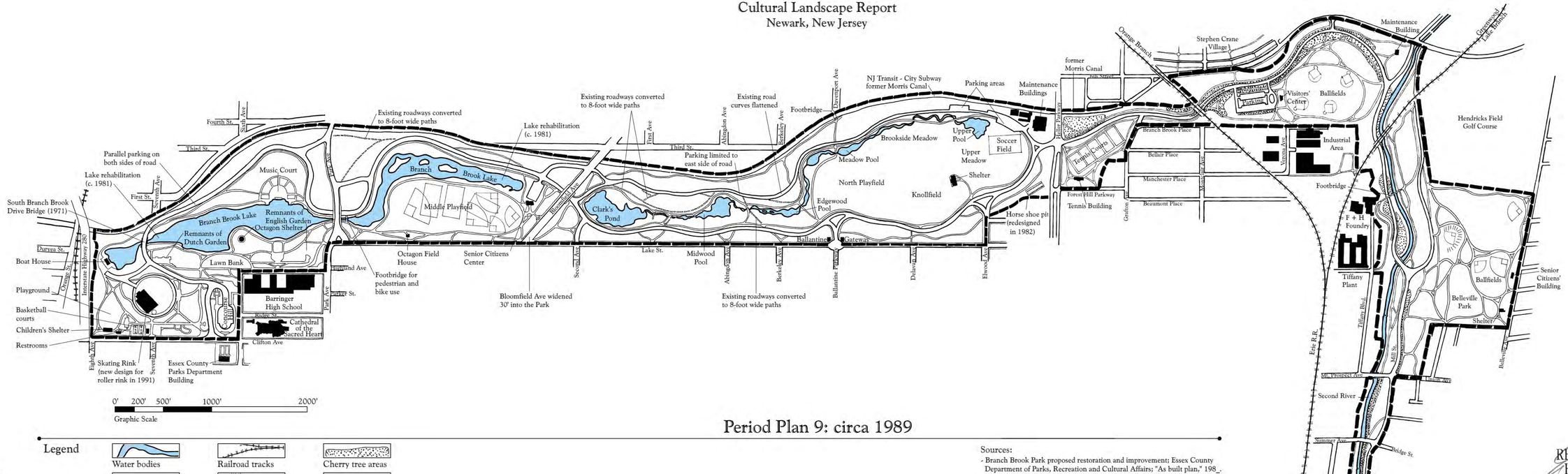
BRANCH BROOK PARK

Cultural Landscape Report

Newark, New Jersey



Period Plan 9: circa 1989

Legend

- Water bodies
- Railroad tracks
- Cherry tree areas
- Boundary of present-day park
- Steep slopes
- Roadways converted to 8-foot wide paths

North

Sources:

- Branch Brook Park proposed restoration and improvement; Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs; "As built plan," 198_.
- Map of Branch Brook Park; Greensward Foundation, Inc., 1995.
- Aerial survey of Branch Brook Park extension; April 30, 1951; Copyright Aerial Viewpoint Spring, Texas.

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