

Department of Parks and Aviation

TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Hon. Robert G. Woodside,
Allegheny County Controller,
Courthouse,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Sir:

The year 1937 was one of great accomplishment in the North and South County Parks. It also set a new peak in the popularity and use of these large recreational areas. Physical expansion of existing facilities and added improvements in both parks were varied and contributed materially to the value of the parks.

The following were among the accomplishments in the North Park:

1. Competition of boathouse and artificial lake or lagoon with a five mile shore line drive. This body of water covers an area of seventy-five acres and has a maximum depth of eighteen feet and a minimum depth of three and a half feet, which provides an excellent course for the annual outboard motorboat regatta. The 1937 regatta, the first held in the Park, drew the largest crowd ever to attend such an event on inland waters. The boathouse is of pleasing architecture and adds to the natural beauty of the landscape as well as housing fifty skiffs which are available to the public for use on the lake. Boating picnics are now growing in popularity, the public taking advantage of the new shelters and landings erected along the lake shore.
2. Dedication of swimming pool and bathhouse. This pool, one of the largest in the country and the largest of its kind east of the Mississippi, holds 2,222,037 gallons of water and will accommodate in the pool, bathhouse and terrace area 10,000 persons.
3. Completion of filtration and pumping system. Centrifugal pumping system and modern filtration system with eight tanks provide Park water supply for storage in reservoir.
4. Opening of observation tower atop 102' standpipe reservoir equipped with airplane beacon and interior of tower observation chamber decorated as a planetarium.
5. Construction of 30 new shelters and 75 new ovens in groves.
6. Opening of new Lodge building completely equipped with every modern convenience for large group use.

7. First use of new archery range, one of the largest in this country.
8. Relocation of game preserve feed shelter to give public clear view of the buffalo and deer.
9. Opening of six all-weather tennis courts and nine clay courts.
10. Opening of new tennis field house equipped with lockers, showers and dressing rooms.
11. Improvement of new McFarland Road (or Hemlock Drive) as appropriate approach to the Park via Wildwood and Route 8.
12. Lake Shore Drive improvement adding two mile south shore line to drive around lake.
13. Widening of Babcock Blvd. for four-lane traffic to meet new bridge crossing the spillway.
14. Rapid progress on new Golf Club House, featuring modern dance pavilion and uniquely beautiful design and fireproof construction.
15. McKinney Road improvement—all-weather access to Service Group Buildings provided by 1,500 foot surfaced road.

The following is a list of improvements made during the year 1937 in the South Park:

1. Construction of new Sleepy Hollow Road, 1½ miles in length including barrier fence on each side.
2. Changed the contour of game preserve fence, reducing area from approximately sixty acres to twenty-five acres.
3. Addition to the storeroom of the service group for housing cement and pipe.
4. Miniature lakes constructed from natural streams at the Service group, Girl Scout House and Spreading Oake Grove.
5. Construction of new double garages at Glenn and Ewing Homesteads.
6. Construction of modern Hen House for Fair exhibit.
7. Construction of roof over judging stand at Fairground Cattle exhibit.
8. Construction of portable band stand for athletic field for County Fair use.
9. Renovation of Transformer Vault at the Fair Grounds, including waterproofing; increasing capacity from 175 K. V. A. to 200 K. V. A.; installation of new underground cable; installation of new cable for break down high tension feeders in vault, installation of 260 ft. of new cable between towers 7 and 8 on floodlights.
10. Construction of concrete steps at Tennis Field House, including landscaping and preparing courts for National Tennis Tournament.
11. Cleaning of filters at the Swimming Pool and refilling of the same.
12. Construction of furniture for Lodge, consisting of oak tables and benches.

13. Raising and harvesting of following feed for South Park animals:
 - 1,500 bu. oats.
 - 200 bu. buckwheat.
 - 5 tons of alfalfa hay.
 - 5 tons of hay.
 - 500 bales of straw.
14. Renewal of 5 septic tanks at Park residences.
15. Waterproofing of the Assistant Custodian's residence, and the construction of concrete steps.
16. Oiling of unsurfaced roads in park, consuming approximately 75,000 gallons of oil.
17. Repair and overhauling ten police trailers used in transporting horses.
18. Grading and surfacing of one mile of road from Police Headquarters to Ridge Road.
19. Construction of Flower Show Building, 30'x60', and landscaping this exhibit.
20. Construction of Pigeon Cote, 12'x20', providing a popular park attraction.
21. Resurfacing of road from Brownsville road to Police Headquarters.
22. Landscaping entrances to the Park.
23. Planting of 800 trees from woods to the Golf Course, McConkey Road, and Maple Spring Drive.
24. Installation of underground feeders at Circle for pylons.
25. Installation of flood lighting system at parking area above West Side Grandstand.
26. Installation of service and lighting in area at Flower Show display.
27. Installation of flood lights at intersection of McConkey Road and McConkey Road parking lot.
28. Installation of floodlights and lighting system for Sully Pool and parking lot.
29. Construction of a granary at the Gerhold barn.
30. Installation of lighting system for parking area at the Lodge.
31. Construction of concrete flower beds in the greenhouse.
32. Construction of parking area at Lodge, and landscaping several acres of land surrounding Lodge.
33. Waterproofing of Buffalo Inn, and sewerage of all rain water leaders.

The following improvements were made in South Park during 1937 with the cooperation of the Works Progress Administration:

1. Construction of new bridge at McConkey and Catfish Run Roads.

2. Basin for Sully's Pool improvement.
3. Construction of 22,462 lineal feet wooden post barrier on various drives in the park.
4. Painting and repainting buildings, fences, tables, signs and toilets.
5. General cleanup project.
6. Completion of Lodge and equipping with furniture and kitchen conveniences.
7. Construction of 8 inch high pressure water line from North Reservoir to Lodge, and from the Lodge to the intersection of the main line to the golf course and the line supplying the South Reservoir at 100 Acre Drive.
8. Construction of Stone Shelter 56'x22'.
9. Grading, draining and paving of 100 Acre Drive from Silent Brook to Lodge, approximately one mile in length.
10. Tree surgery, tree bracing, cavity repair work, pruning, fertilizing and spraying trees; pruning, fertilizing and cultivating shrubs, throughout the northeast section of South Park.
11. Transplant 8,000 trees from Nursery to various locations in the park along park roads, driveways, bridge paths in various groves.
12. Quarrying of 15,940 tons of native stone for road and other purposes.

In addition to picnic facilities, swimming pools and a 75 acre lake, the people of Allegheny County have at their disposal for continuous use, golf courses, tennis courts, archery range, baseball, soccer, mushball, volleyball and football fields, bicycling and a one-half mile race track where track and field meets as well as horse races are staged. Bridle paths gird miles of wonderful riding facilities through the most scenic sections of both parks where healthful play and recreational opportunity in every sport have been provided.

The removal of deer and buffalo to smaller quarters made it possible to add additional groves, and with the improvement and enlargement of facilities, thousands were afforded the enjoyment of a "day in the country."

A continuous year-around program was conducted as herewith outlined:

PICNIC GROVES

Popularity of the County Parks is further indicated by the volume of picnic grove requests from diversified groups, ranging in size from twelve to twenty thousand persons. Grove use was constant summer and winter in both North and South Parks. In response to a demand for enclosed facilities for winter picnics of large groups unable to use the facilities on week days, permits are issued for Sundays and holidays. Indoor facilities include the Lodge, Spreading Oak, Silent Brook and Community House at South Park. The Lodge, School House, Rose Grove, Hemlocks and Parish Hill at North Park.

Individuals and family groups, fraternal organizations, church groups, Bible classes, high schools and colleges, Boards of Trade and other commercial and industrial organizations, were issued permits during the past year as follows:

	Number of Permits Issued	Estimated Attendance
South Park	1,638	250,000
North Park	2,122	200,000

Among the larger organizations were the following:

International Brotherhood of Teamsters	20,000
Oakland Board of Trade	1,000
Westinghouse Clerks' Association	2,000
Mine Safety Appliance Company	1,500
C. I. O.	2,000
Pittsburgh Council Knights of Columbus	1,000
W. P. A.	5,000
Shriners	5,000
United Engineering & Foundry Company	1,000
Observatory Hill Business Association	2,000
Knights Templars	1,000
Westinghouse Engineering Department	1,000
Presbyterian Church of Aspinwall	1,000

Picnic facilities at both North and South Park, (increased by the creation of twenty-five new groves in each park) are now equipped with drinking water, shelters, picnic tables, comfort stations, cooking ovens (with logs and firewood furnished), horseshoe courts, see-saws, swings, slides, sand boxes, baseball, football, soccer, mushball and volley ball fields. Groves in South Park that include shelters with refinished dance floors are as follows: The Lodge, Spreading Oak, Silent Brook and Community House; in North Park: The Lodge, Hemlocks, Rose Grove, Parish Hill and School House have dance floors.

GOLF

The excellent condition in which the County courses were maintained by Greenskeepers, Golf Professionals and staff is indicated by attendance and play records. Permit sales and rounds played in 1937 exceeded those of all previous years. Exclusive of those having permits, approximately 45,000 rounds of golf were played at the South and North Park courses.

The receipts from all sources at the golf courses together with a comparison of former years:

1932	\$43,878.00
1933	29,095.00
1934	39,260.11
1935	48,914.30
1936	50,310.35
1937	59,444.20

PERMIT SALES

	Unlimited \$20.00	Limited \$12.00	Juni \$5.0
1935	607	223	95
1936	648	250	118
1937	738	330	197

TENNIS

Tennis was an exceptionally popular sport. The twenty courts at South Park and the fifteen courts at North Park were continuously occupied throughout the year. Tennis players rate the County Parks' layouts the best in this section of the state.

At the South Park tennis courts the 1937 National Public Parks Tennis Championships were held. Tennis champions, men and women, from all the States and Hawaii participated.

All fifteen courts at North Park were available for the first time, six of these courts being of the hard surface "all weather" type, quick drying and permitting play regardless of weather conditions.

Nominal rates are charged: Season permits, \$2.50 or an hourly charge of 10 cents per person, with free play to children under 12 years of age.

Exclusive of children and those having season permits, these attendance reports show the popularity of this sport:

NORTH PARK

1937—Total paid attendance 8,089 Total Receipts\$ 833.30

SOUTH PARK

1937—Total paid attendance 12,100 Total Receipts\$ 1,250.10

SWIMMING

The North Park pool was officially opened and was constantly filled to capacity by bathers. On several occasions thousands of prospective bathers were turned away from this pool, although one of the largest concrete outdoor swimming pools in the United States. It has facilities for 10,000 users of pool and terrace; has a bath house with 5,000 locker accommodations; a wading pool in which more than 1,000 children may bathe with enjoyment and comfort. Grandstands with a total seating capacity of 1,500 spectators flank the Southern end. Adjacent to the pool is a parking for more than 2,500 cars.

Many swimming competitions were held at the North Park pool, the feature event being the Amateur Athletic Union Swimming Championships, in which aquatic stars from the Tri-State Area participated, and witnessed by approximately 10,000 spectators.

The attendance and revenue records for the North Park pool for 1937 are as follows:

Total Paid Attendance, 191,812; Total Receipts, \$18,261.40.

The South Park swimming pool also enjoyed a successful season, as well as the small pool at Sully's Grove. A new pool, modernly equipped, is now being constructed at the Sully Grove and will be opened for public use in the spring or early summer of 1938.

The attendance and revenue records for the South Park pools for 1937 are as follows:

Total Paid Attendance.....129,188 Total Receipts\$11,652.20

Water in these pools is constantly tested and kept to the highest standard possible for health and sanitation.

A comparison of the receipts of former years is as follows:

SOUTH PARK	NORTH PARK
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1931.....	\$21,086.20
1933.....	15,173.95
1934.....	13,296.26
1935.....	19,880.07
1936.....	14,652.20
1937.....	11,652.20

A fee of fifteen cents was charged for admission to the pools with children under 12 admitted free of charge.

NORTH PARK LAKE

The North Park Lake, dedicated July 5th, 1937, is one of the beauty spots of the County. Around this 75 acre lagoon is a paved driveway of five picturesque and scenic miles—the Lake Shore Drive.

In August, an outboard motor regatta was participated in by contestants from all over the United States. This two-day motorboat regatta was enjoyed by approximately 250,000, one of the largest crowds ever to attend such an event on inland water.

The boathouse, a club house and storage shelter for skiff rental and private canals presents a most attractive sight as it rises from the lake shore in natural stone.

During the season of 1937, fifty skiffs were rented to the public at nominal charge of 25 cents per half hour, and approximately 20,000 persons enjoyed boating picnics, with total receipts amounting to \$1,392.00.

RIDING

Hundreds of men, women and children took advantage of the sixteen miles of bridle trails in North Park and twenty-eight miles in South Park maintained for the use of the horse loving and riding public. Bridle trails give the only access to some of the most scenic sections of the parks. They are used daily throughout the year.

Harness races, show activities and horse polo games were held on holidays, and especially during the County Fair. These events brought thousands of enthusiastic fans.

For the convenience of horse owners wishing to stable horses at the Fairgrounds, South Park, stabling facilities were available at the Round Stable at a nominal rental rate of \$1.00 per month, per horse, for polo and harness horses, and \$4.00 per month, per horse for pleasure horses.

Total rental in the sum of \$724.00 was received for stabling of horses at the Round Stable, South Park. The rental was changed at the year end from a monthly to a yearly basis, payable in advance upon execution of the lease as of January 1st.

ARCHERY

Allegheny County archery enthusiasts were able to use, for the first time at North Park one of the largest and finest archery ranges in this country Weekly, throughout the year, members of the Pittsburgh Archery Club held competitive tournaments and practice.

Hundreds are actively interested in this picturesque recreation, and thousands more paused by the roadside during the weekly "shoots" to witness the sport.

THEATRE

The South Park Theatre presented six weeks of theatrical entertainment in a specially constructed stage in the Museum Building, using professional forces both as to actors and technical staff. This was the first time in the East that a professional theatre was subsidized by public money for free public entertainment.

The shows played to packed houses, and the estimated total attendance was 10,000. Both the acting and stage settings were on a high professional standard.

The season was originally planned for eight weeks but because of unprecedented demands for Fair exhibition space, it was necessary to cancel the final two weeks engagement.

FAIR

The annual fair free both to exhibitors and to the public continued to grow in interest and popularity, attracting more than a million visitors. The success of this great agricultural and industrial show in its fifth year gives evidence of continued growth. The 1938 fair, the sixth, will be held in conjunction with the Allegheny County Sesquicentennial celebration scheduled from September 3rd to September 24th.

LODGES

Two large Park lodges opened in the summer of 1936 have taken on the character of country clubhouses for the general public. They are used almost daily both summer and winter by groups numbering 125 or more. This unique free privilege is in constant demand and has been much appreciated by the public.

DEER AND BUFFALO

The deer and buffalo herds of each park are in excellent condition. Expert authorities were engaged to reduce the size of the South Park herd to one third its present size. The same authorities assured the department that Allegheny County has the finest specimens of buffalo and deer east of the Rockies.

GENERAL COMPETITIONS

Many competitive recreational activities were held at the County Parks throughout the year, such as A. A. U. Track and Field meets at South Park A. A. U. swimming meets at the North and South Park pools. Entrants included noted athletes from leading athletic clubs, high schools and colleges in the Tri-State area. One of the feature events was the twelve A. A. U. boxing bouts held at South Park on Labor Day evening which were witnessed by a capacity crowd of approximately 50,000 persons.

Other activities included the Pennsylvania Horse Shoe Pitching Championships held during the week of the County Fair at South Park. Soccer football games were played on Sundays throughout the soccer season, and especially at South Park, as many as three championship games were played on the same day.

Baseball, mushball, softball and volleyball games were staged by amateur teams and picnickers throughout the summer season.

The County high schools also arranged a schedule of highly interesting football games and used the excellent playing facilities at the County Parks.

Winter sports such as ice skating at the South Park pool and at Lake Marshall, North Park, sledding, etc., are enjoyed by thousands each year, weather permitting.

With the constant increase in facilities the citizens of Allegheny County have a system of parks in which a complete year-around program of recreation has been developed.

All types of recreational activities have been created or developed, chiefly, public recreation has been largely recreation for the masses, and the County Parks have been used more than ever before.

An estimate of the attendance at the Parks during the year 1937 is as follows:

	South Park	North Park	Total
Boating		83,408	83,408
Golf	43,988	41,859	85,847
Swimming Pools	129,188	191,812	321,000
Tennis	12,110	8,089	20,199
Picnic Groups (permits)	250,000	200,000	450,000
Picnic Groups (Sat. Sun. Holidays)	500,000	500,000	1,000,000
Fifth Annual County Fair	1,500,000		1,500,000
Tennis (Nat'l. Public Championships)	15,000		15,000
Horse Shoe Pitching (Penna. Amateur championships)	5,000		5,000
Football Games (Amateur & high school)	15,000		15,000
Football Games (Professional)	75,000		75,000
Soccer Football Games	100,000		100,000
Archery, etc.		15,000	15,000
Winter Sports	25,000	15,000	40,000
Motor Boat Regatta		250,000	250,000
Golf Exhibition (professional)		10,000	10,000
Theatrical performances (playhouse)	10,000		10,000
Track and Field Meets	75,000		75,000
Swimming Meets	10,000	10,000	20,000
Total Attendance Season—1937	2,765,286	1,275,168	4,040,454

The following revenue was derived from Park activities during the year 1937:

	South Park	North Park	City Office Permit Sales	Totals
Boating		\$ 1,392.00		\$ 1,392.00
Golf	\$27,192.95	25,190.25	\$ 7,061.00	59,444.20
Round Stable	724.00			724.00
Swimming Pools	11,652.20	18,261.40		29,913.60
Tennis	1,250.10	835.30	30.00	2,115.40
Total Recreation Receipts	\$40,819.25	\$45,678.95	\$ 7,091.00	\$93,589.20
Concessions	3,978.05	1,236.58		5,214.63
Total Receipts—1937	\$44,797.30	\$46,915.53	\$ 7,091.00	\$98,803.83

Respectfully submitted,

H. Hornbostel,

Director, Department of Parks.

GEK:LM