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ANNUAL REPORT

of the

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

of the

BOROUGH OF RICHMOND

CITY OF NEW YORK

For the Year 1922

THOMAS R. MCGINLEY - *Commissioner*

CHAS. BORMANN - - - - *Secretary*

OTTO LUNDT - - - - *Superintendent*

JOS. BRANDENBURG - - - - *Clerk*

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February 21, 1923.

HON. JOHN F. HYLAN,
Mayor, City of New York.

DEAR SIR:

In transmitting this, my Third Annual Report of the Department of Parks, Borough of Richmond, for the year 1922, I desire to state that while I am impressed by the fact that the improvement and extension of our facilities have not kept pace with the development and increasing population of Staten Island, still it is marvelous that so much has been accomplished despite the small force employed and the limited appropriation allowed for this department during the past year. The success achieved was brought about by efficiency, economy and co-operation on the part of the employees, from the Arboriculturist down, who responded willingly and took much pride in what was being done in the line of progress. The public has been very observant of the substantial progress made and the general improvement of the park system, as attested by reports from the Chamber of Commerce, various Civic Organizations, local press and letters of commendation from realty dealers and individuals. In addition to my report, I desire to bring to the attention of the City Authorities the necessity of establishing as soon as possible small parks and playgrounds in the thickly populated districts for the benefit and convenience of mothers and children, who are gradually being crowded from the streets and forced into back yard regions for the purpose of securing breathing space and recreation. Property for the desired purpose can now be purchased at a nominal cost and it is suggested that plots of land in the various growing communities be acquired before the value is so increased as to make it prohibitive. In connection with this recommendation, I am pleased to state that I have the earnest support of Borough President Lynch, and the members of the Local Board of Aldermen.

In closing this review for the year, I would suggest that the members of the City and Borough Government should know the

parcs under the jurisdiction of this department better, and I hope to have the pleasure of the company of these officials in the spring to make a systematic survey of what has been accomplished in the present park system, and acquaint them with the future needs of Staten Island in the way of proposed parks, I venture to say that such an examination would be mutually beneficial.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS R. MCGINLEY,

Commissioner of Parks,

Borough of Richmond.

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1922

SILVER LAKE PARK.—This park has an area of 165.45 acres, 96.-275 acres of which are under the jurisdiction of the Board of Water Supply, and used as a reservoir in connection with the Catskill Water System. This park with its high elevation commanding an excellent view of New York Harbor, Bayonne and the Orange Mountains in New Jersey will eventually make one of the finest parks in the Greater City.

In April 1922, a Corporate Stock Issue for \$50,000, was authorized for the development of this park, which was proportioned as follows, \$34,896.00 for personal service and \$15,104.00 for equipment, materials, supplies and hire of horses and vehicles. The amount provided for personal service has been expended and it is expected that a liberal allowance will be provided for 1923, so that the development under way can be continued without interruption, as the work so far accomplished is reflected in the marked improvement and appearance of the parks. A personal observation of the improvement would be necessary to appreciate the wonderful transformation of the area developed.

The following is a summary of the work performed up to and including December 30, 1922.

Sub-soil excavated and hauled to various sections for filling, grading and leveling.....	13,215 cu. yds.
Rocks removed with an approximate weight of from one (1) to three (3) tons.....	50
Tree stumps removed and destroyed.....	525
Trees removed and split into cord-wood.....	162
Trees pruned and treated.....	123
Sewer pipe laid and connected, 18" x 24"	244 ft.
Catch basin constructed.....	1
Retaining wall constructed.....	1

Concrete sidewalk broken and removed.....	7,500 sq. ft.
Area from which brush and undergrowth was removed.....	47½ acres.
Area plowed, graded and leveled.....	21¼ acres.
Area covered with top soil and sowed with grass seed..	11% acres.
Quantity of wood cut.....	75 cords.

A sanitary drinking fountain with sewer connection was installed, also a temporary Comfort Station and Waiting Room in the building on Richmond Turnpike for the benefit of the patrons of the Municipal Trolley. A tool house for the storing of equipment and materials was constructed, sidewalks repaired and general maintenance work conducted.

HERO PARK.—Located on Richmond Turnpike, Louis Street and Howard Avenue, was dedicated by Louis A. Dreyfus and Berta E. Dreyfus to the Staten Island men who paid the supreme sacrifice in the World War and deeded to the City of New York in 1921. The area of this park is 1.924 acres. An artistic bronze tablet was designed by this Department to commemorate the dedicators, which was approved by the Municipal Art Commission on December 13, 1920, and unveiled with appropriate ceremonies on Memorial Day, May 30, 1921, the assemblage being one of the largest ever gathered on Staten Island. This park has been maintained by the Park Department and entails a large amount of work in caring for the 146 evergreen trees "representing the number of Staten Island men who sacrificed their lives" and the various varieties of shrubs and trees that require careful attention, they are fertilized and covered with salt hay to protect them from the severe weather, during the winter months. Hero park is considered a sanctuary for the families of the deceased heroes, especial care is given to all details connected therewith. The Annual Memorial Day Ceremonies are conducted at this park by the various Veteran Organizations of Staten Island. A sanitary drinking fountain with sewer connection, was installed. A sixty-five foot flag pole with a nine-foot copper "Liberty" weather vane was erected and appropriate ornamental flower beds were created in addition to fertilizing the lawns, repairing walks and routine maintenance work.

WASHINGTON PARK.—Located in the heart of Stapleton in a very congested part of the Borough, with an area of 1.43 acres. This park was established prior to the consolidation with the greater city in 1898. Routine work and maintenance, such as cutting grass, removing and replacing dead trees, maintaining flower beds, repairing and painting benches, planting shrubbery, in addition to resodding and seeding a large portion of the grass plots and the laying of 500 ft. of 2" galvanized iron water pipe in connection with the installation of three sanitary drinking fountains with sewer connection, replacing the old drainage system and establishing outlets for automatic sprinklers. This park is greatly patronized by the public during the summer months and the seating capacity is inadequate to accommodate the mothers and children who seek shelter there during the torrid season. A comfort station is very essential.

TRIANGLE PARK.—Located in close proximity to Washington Park. Routine work such as cutting grass, establishing and maintaining flower beds, and painting the surrounding fence was prosecuted in this park.

DEPRESSED PARK.—Located at St. George opposite the Borough Hall and adjoining the retaining wall, has an area of 0.21 acres, with an excellent view of New York Harbor. The care of trees, shrubs and cutting of grass is the principal work connected with this plot in addition to painting the flag pole during the season of 1922.

PORT RICHMOND PARK.—Located in the Third Ward at Port Richmond, adjoining Public School No. 20, has an area of 1.28 acres, it is situated in a very populous section and largely patronized by the public especially the school children who value the benefits derived from open air recreation. Routine work and maintenance such as cutting grass, establishing and maintaining flower beds, repairing and painting benches, sodding and seeding the surface was prosecuted in this park. Additional benches and a comfort station are among the necessary improvements required in this park.

WESTERLEIGH PARK.—Located in the First Ward in Prohibition Parks, has an area of 2.87 acres. This park is unimproved property, deeded to the City of New York about twenty years ago with the

understanding that the city authorities would improve the grounds and maintain it as a city park. Improvements such as grading and laying sidewalks could be done at nominal cost as the park itself is one of the finest tracts of land in the City's possession. Care of trees and general maintenance is the principal work connected with this park.

EXISTING PARKS.—The following existing Parks and Parkways are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Highways, due to the fact that no appropriation is available to maintain them, consequently it was deemed advisable to have them remain under the jurisdiction of the above department until such time when provision will be made for their maintenance.

TOMPKINSVILLE SQUARE PARK.—Area 0.44 acres, improved and in excellent condition.

BARRETT PARK.—Located at St. George, adjoining the Borough Hall, area 0.14 acres of improved property.

CLIFTON PARK.—Located at Clifton, foot of Vanderbilt Avenue, area 0.18 acres of improved property.

ST. AUGUSTINE PLACE.—Area 0.14 acres.

HAVEN ESPLANADE PARKWAY.—Area 0.18 acres, partly improved.

HENDERSON AVENUE PARKWAY.—Area 0.01 acres.

CANAL STREET PARKWAY.—Located in Stapleton, area 0.20 acres, improved.

ELLCOTT PLACE PARKWAY.—Located in New Brighton, area 0.10 acres.

MAPLE AVENUE PARKWAY.—Located in Mariners Harbor, area 0.64 acres.

Total area of Parks.....173.64 acres.

Total area of Parkways..... 1.90 acres.

Total area of Parks and Parkways in
the Borough.....175.54 acres.

The total area of Richmond Borough is 57.154 square miles or 36,578.56 acres. The percentage of area of existing Parks in the area of the Borough of Richmond equal 0.48% which is entirely

inadequate compared to the need of one Borough in the Greater City of New York and compared to the percentage of other Boroughs.

The Board of Estimate has now under consideration for adoption plans prepared for acquiring title to additional parks to do justice to this Borough and relieve the situation. The present time is best because the land affected would be relatively cheap in price now, before the territory is built up and in the near future they will almost double and triple in value on account of improvements perfected on the water front and the improved transit facilities. The proposed parks under consideration are the following.

Clove Lake Park.....area	190.996 acres.
Governor Dongan Park.....area	7.27 acres.
Sunrise Park.....area	2.20 acres.
Ravine Park.....area	14.10 acres.
Billopp House Park.....area	9.18 acres.

Total area of proposed parks, 217.99 acres, which is 0.59% of the total area of the Borough. Title would increase the total percentage of Parks the Borough should have.

Care of Trees in Parks and Streets.—The force of Climbers and Pruners consisting of five men cover an area of 58 square miles with thousands of trees on the highways that require immediate attention, and in many instances whole blocks of ancient Elm Trees are in such a condition of decay as to necessitate their removal. Many of these trees are of such height that it requires from four to five days to dispose of them. In addition this force is called upon by the Fire Alarm Telegraph Bureau for quite a period during the year to keep their wires free; also the Municipal Trolley System running to Richmond, Port Richmond and Midland Beach, come in for their share of attention and the recent installation of the trackless trolley system required a considerable time of this force to clear the overhead space for the stringing of feed wires. This system extends from Meiers Corners, to Sea View Hospital via Rockland Avenue from Richmond, the terminus of the Municipal Trolley to Tottenville, via the Arthur Kill Road and is heavily wooded. This work detracts considerable time from the regular street work in the congested districts with the result that complaints are accumulating

rapidly, with this small force to handle the situation. The general condition of the old trees throughout the park system is bad. There has practically nothing been done towards cleaning out dead and diseased wood and branches. Numerous complaints have been received about insects ruining trees in various localities and the attacks from these pests are becoming more severe and doing more damage each year, nothing could be done to relieve this condition due to the lack of a spraying machine in this Department.

Dead, decayed, dangerous trees removed by Department.....	184
Trees trimmed by Department.....	166
Trees removed by permits.....	16
Trees trimmed.....	31
Trees planted on streets by Department.....	62
Trees planted by permit.....	29
Washington Park, Cu. Yds. of Manure on Lawn.....	22
Hero Park, Cu. Yds. of Manure on Lawn.....	16
Silver Lake Park, Cu. Yds. of Manure on Lawn.....	11

NURSERY ACTIVITIES.—General maintenance and care of trees for future use in the Parks and on the Parkways. Varieties suitable for different locations are grown and cared for until large enough to be transplanted to permanent locations. Several hundred cuttings of shrubs and trees were propagated for future reforestation purposes and are progressing in excellent shape, several acres have been added to the original nursery and this will aid materially in the horticultural work of the department.

GREENHOUSE.—A corporate stock issue for \$15,000, was authorized for the construction of a greenhouse, work-shop and boiler room. This contract was awarded to Lord and Burnham, and is completed and ready to be stocked with botanical and agricultural supplies as soon as available funds are provided for the purpose and sufficient fuel secured to put the heating system in operation. This addition to the department will enable us to cultivate our own plants and eliminate the annual expenditure formerly incurred for purchasing these supplies. The construction of a sunken garden has been started in the intersection between the highway and the greenhouse

and it is intended to make a show place of this section by the installation of ornamental flower beds and various varieties of shrubs.

REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENTS.—The largest item under this heading was the installation of drinking fountains in Silver Lake, Hero and Washington Parks. Renovating the park cottage, establishing a comfort station and waiting room at Silver Lake Park, repairing walks and incidental repair work.

SNOW REMOVAL.—During the past winter snow fell from six to fourteen inches and it required the entire force of laborers, climbers and pruners and gardeners, to handle the emergency situation, with the result that within 48 hours after the heaviest fall of snow the surrounding and cross-section walks were thoroughly cleaned to their full width. In former years no effort was attempted to remove snow in the parks and it usually remained until mild weather and nature assisted in that respect. Numerous letters of commendation regarding the prompt and efficient work of this department in opening these lanes to traffic were received.

MUSIC.—Fourteen regular department concerts were given as per the following schedule, Curtis Field, six; Washington Park, four; Port Richmond Parks, four.

The following additional concerts were conducted at Curtis Field without cost to the department other than the erection of temporary stands to accommodate the musicians and hire of camp stools.

- August 29, Police Department Band.
- Sept. 7, Street Cleaning Department Band.
- “ 13, Police Department Band.
- “ 19, Fire Department Band.
- “ 26, Salvation Army Band.
- “ 28, National Biscuit Company Band.

On September 25, a testimonial concert to the new President of the Borough of Richmond, Hon. John A. Lynch, was tendered by the Hon. Philip Berolzheimer, City Chamberlain, as a mark of respect and admiration for the Borough's Chief Executive. Goldman's Concert Band officiated on this occasion. Hon. John F. Hylan, with his official family was in attendance. In addition to the various Borough Officials, prominent business and professional men and

women and the public in general. Concerts during the season were rendered by large bands of high class players assisted by selected soloists and were attended by large and appreciative audiences.

COMFORT STATION.—In 1922 a Corporate Stock Issue for \$250,000 was authorized for the erection of Comfort Stations in the several boroughs, as the necessity for these stations has become more acute since the advent of prohibition. Richmond Borough up to date has not received its proportionate share of this appropriation and a strenuous effort is being made to have a portion allocated for at least two stations in the most thickly populated sections. It is estimated that \$50,000 will be necessary to meet the present requirements.

ATHLETICS AND PLAY GROUNDS.—I desire to call to the attention of the City Authorities at this time the necessity for establishing athletic and play grounds in this borough, as there are none in existence at present and the need is becoming more apparent as time passes and private property is being restricted against athletics. In connection with this subject I have several places in mind that would be ideal and could be purchased reasonably, as there are no buildings encroaching on the property and the formation of the ground is almost level, eliminating the cost of expensive development. This property is located in fast growing sections and in close proximity to the congested districts.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS R. MCGINLEY,

Commissioner of Parks,

Borough of Richmond.