

History of Park 1937-2010

1927 – December 5 – a Sun letter to the editor suggested that the area at Lake Roland be named after Mr. Leakin who lived in the area.using the money bequeathed by Mr. Leakin.

1937 – Plan to develop area as Leakin Park. In 1937 the city wanted to give name to the park and they considered the name Leakin Park as there were a number of Leakins owning property around the Lake area. That name was eventually given to another city park.

1940 – By 1940 LR was open for boating and fishing

1942-45 – Bollman bridge taken for scrap for WWII

1943 – Lake Roland turned over to City Parks Department

1944 – City owned 50 acres land and 116 acres of water = 166 acres

Evening Sun 1/31/1944 – Plan to create the Robert E. Lee Memorial Park on the land around Lake Roland is under consideration.

Robert E. Lee: in 1944 the city planned to create a park around Lake Roland They had 50 acres of land around the lake at that time. Mrs. Elizabeth Garrett White, sister of John W. Garrett (B&O fame???) and great aunt of Robert Garrett, chairman of the Municipal Department of Recreation (in 1944?) left in her will in 1917 a bequest that her house at 12 East Mount Vernon be sold and the proceeds go for a statue for General Robert E. Lee to be put in Druid Hill Park. The money from the sale at that time was not enough for the statue and was invested and (probably forgotten) and by 1944 was \$76,000. However, by then someone else had left money for statues of Lee and Jackson to go in Wyman Park so another statue of Lee was not wanted. Since Lee was very fond of nature, it was concluded that a park, which could be enjoyed by the public, would be most fitting. In 1947 the city used \$30,000 from the fund to purchase another 100 acres By 1952 the park claimed to have 400 acres with the lake covering 100.

Picnic grounds, athletic grounds, hiking/horseback riding trails, boating, fishing and other features of public park would be provided. It is hoped that eventually a modest recreation building will be erected at about the spot where the old Hollins Station once stood. Plans called for providing covered structures for picnickers, fireplaces, and other conveniences.

1947 – 100 acres purchased with \$30,000 from Garrett White fund = 266 acres (paper states 118 ac land/116 water=234 plus this 100 acres=334)

1949 – Sun stated acreage at 408 (when did they get the last 74 acres?)

5/3/1949 Eve Sun Article states: “Existing picnic sites extend east from the Valve House. Old Water Department stable foundations and ice-storage plants are favorite locations. Foxes Rocks (Tinkerbell’s cave?) on the north side of the lake is used extensively for all-day Boy and Girl Scout Camp. City dwellers arrive from two Pennsylvania RR stations Lake and Bare Hill by No 24 streetcar line extending from Roland avenue, and by automobile. Several natural springs dot the grounds and medical tests have proved this water fit for drinking.

- 1952 – Plans to build a pedestrian bridge to replace the Bollman removed in WWII, picnic facilities will be cleared of brush, tables and grills added and a small toilet building. Proposed also were 27 parking spaces. Future improvements: Bridle trails, hiking trails, athletic fields and playgrounds suitable for a rural park. A covered boat landing platform near the Valve House. Designation of a large part of the area as a bird and wildlife sanctuary. Improvement of the approach road from the Hollins Avenue entrance to the caretaker's cottage and provision of parking spaces. The Sun stated that the charm of the lake was considerably reduced by the pollution, but that sewerage under or around the lake was then in the blueprint stage. Construction of a small house for the caretaker which was finished in 1957.
- 1952 – December, partial drainage of lake done for building of bridge
- 1955 – 12/14/55 Baltimore Sun – Lake Roland drained for building of a boathouse
- 1961 - 8/12/1961 Sun article: “As the motorist drives up to the park along Lakeside avenue from the Falls Road, he finds picnic groves with stone fireplaces along the lake shore within sight and sound of the artificial falls made by the dam.” Mr. & Mrs. George L. Nickle lived in caretaker's house.
- 1964 – Annual Report of Depart of Rec & Parks, Baltimore City – this park was improved by the construction of a shelter, installation of a water line to it, seeding and mulching the area adjacent to the shelter, and constructing a hard surface road from the end of the existing road at the caretaker's house to the shelter area, and installing a drinking fountain and two more lights. A plaque was also installed on the shelter in accordance with Ordinance #173 of February 1945 informing the public of the designation of this park as General Robert E. Lee Memorial Park in the name of Elizabeth B. Garrett White. Total cost \$16,514.00.
- The shelter: A rustic shelter of Butler stone and wooden beam construction. Designed to provide protection against inclement weather and a vista point overlooking Lake Roland. Park lights, water service, 1800 feet of service road and 50 shade trees were installed to complete the development of the peninsula area of the park.
- 2/7/1969 – Mayor D'Alesandro asks State to take over Robert E. Lee Memorial Park and two others.
- 1972 – March Baltimore County will ask for title for to R. E. Lee Park
- 2010 – County Rec and Park will lease, repair and maintain
- 2011 – October 15 – Park reopened