

History Tour of Park

From 1915 until 1943 the area remained under the Water Department. Even then, it was only turned over to the Department of Recreation to supervise the recreational use. The Water Department always retained the right for use as a water supply which, rumor has it, may have been done in 1917, was discussed again in 1919, 1923 and 1930. An inspection around 1917 recommended that all pipes to Hampden be cut to prevent the polluted waters from going down into the City. The engineer at that time refused, always keeping open the possibility of using the system again. In 1957 the old conduit was used to refill the Hampden Reservoir after that was drained to search for a pistol used in the death of Vincent Dipietro. The water was sent slowly down the old conduit so as not to put too much pressure on it.

In 1937 the City due to a bequest from Mr. Leakin to build a park decided to look at this area. The name Leakin Park was considered for here as there were a number of Leakins still living on adjoining lands and he had owned some of the land. As we know, that name was given to another City park.

In November 1942 the Bollman bridge (which had been condemned several years before) was sold to Baltimore Salvage for \$50 for use as scrap metal for WWII purposes.

Again in 1944 the City decided to make a park around the lake. The City owned about 50 acres of land and 116 acres of water at this time. Of course it was war time and there wasn't the money, BUT . . .

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. Additional acreage was purchased with this fund.

By 1949 the City had added picnic sites east of the Valve House. A 1949 Sun article said that Old Water Department stable foundations and ice storage plants were favorite locations and Foxes Rocks was used for all day camps by Boy and Girl Scout troupes. Several natural springs dot the grounds and medical tests have proved this water fit for drinking.”

By 1952 the park claimed to have 400 acres with the lake covering 100. The plan in 1952 was for Picnic grounds, athletic grounds, hiking/horseback riding trails, boating, fishing and other features of a public park would be provided. It was hoped that eventually a modest recreation building would be erected at about the spot where the old

Hollins Station once stood. Plans called for providing covered structures for picnickers, fireplaces, a small toilet building and other conveniences. The pedestrian bridge was also to be replaced and 27 parking spaces added. The Sun stated that the charm of the lake was diminished by the polluted water but that a plan for a sewer interceptor either under or around the lake was in the blueprint stages and carried out in 1955.

In December 1955 the lake was drained for the building of a covered boat house. And in 1957 a new caretaker's cottage was completed. At some point the picnic area got its stone fireplaces. 1964 - The shelter was constructed on the peninsula

Plans were carried out only as the budget allowed.

Prior to Baltimore County taking over the operation of the park, Relay Hill had been closed down for dog pollution, the 1952 bridge had been condemned, the caretaker's house had been pretty torn up.

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Other Items to Cover:

Concession Stand building

New Parking area

Sewerage under lake

Closure for dog problems on peninsula

Closure for unsafe bridge