

Early Documentation of the Moberly Park Board

*In Celebration of the
Centennial Founding in 1923*



By: D. Craig Asbury
2023

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PARKS OF MOBERLY IN 1883

(The City Reservoir at that time is now known as the Deer Pond)

MOBERLY WEEKLY MONITOR.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21, 1883.

Our Parks.

Much has been said through the columns of this paper of what we have not, and of the many successful enterprises that might be inaugurated here, if our men of means would only take hold of them, all of which we admit as facts and hope that the time will soon come when our capitalists shall conclude that it is better to have their money invested in the handling or manufacture of some staple article used throughout the country than to have it invested in property to rent and do nothing but wait for the pay car to come to get their rents. But while things are not exactly as we would have them in every respect, and many enterprises calculated to attract immigration and capital to the city have been neglected, we possess many both natural and acquired advantages which make Moberly one of the most desirable towns to live in of any in the state.

Few cities, if any, in the State of Missouri with the population we have, possess the park accommodations we do. By this we do not mean to speak of their present attractiveness, but that the all important step of securing grounds for park purposes was taken at an early day, when the town was in its infancy, and the very best locations have thereby been set apart for that purpose.

The value of Tannehill Park, as a park, situated as it is, so convenient to the business portion and to three-fourths of the dwellings of the city, cannot be estimated. At this pleasant retreat, during the spring months and amid summer's heated term, any one with but a few moments to spare from business can be transported, as it were, to a lovely spot in the country. All honor to him who has thus donated to the

city this oasis, as it were, in a desert, where the rich, the poor, the youth and the aged and the infirm may alike enjoy a retreat from the every day routine of the school room, the bank and the various pursuits of business and mechanical and mental labor, with all their attendant ills and cares, and there commune for a time with the beautiful works of nature and renew their energies, that they may thus be better enabled to stem the tide of life with all its stern realities. Much praise and sincere gratitude are due from the people of the west side to the donor of this park.

What Tannehill Park is to the people of the west side, Moss Park is to the residents of the east side of town. More credit is due to the memory of Dr. Moss for this donation than if he had conquered a city or overthrown an empire. At least, it cannot be said of any man that he has lived in vain when he has left to posterity so pleasant a reminder of his free and unreserved liberality. Among the many owners of Moberly's valuable real estate, how few and far between are those that have of their own free will consented to part with any of it without a direct money consideration! In more instances have they sold as lots what should have been left as streets. If so much can truthfully be said of the beauty of these parks now, in their naturally uncouth and untended state, what may be said of them when others of our public spirited citizens shall have opened their hearts and their pocket books and placed in them beautiful fountains, music stands, gravel walks, rustic seats, and other like attractions. But, says one, all of this should be done by the city; but only a small appropriation can be set apart each year for these purposes on account of other obligations to be met, and it would no doubt be a pleasure and source

of enjoyment to the giver, as well as to others, if done by private individuals.

These two parks, if properly taken care of and improved, will afford ample facilities for the comfort and enjoyment of pedestrians for years to come, and as to driving parks our city fathers have secured to us, unawares, or rather unintentionally on their part at the time, what will, we hope, at no distant day become a most elegant driving park provided they see fit to set it apart for that purpose. We refer to the tract of land upon which is located the city reservoir. This tract contains 47 acres and is naturally well adapted for a park, if taken in time, before the timber is destroyed. Its deep ravines, grassy hillsides, and shady nooks may easily be made doubly attractive by laying out driveways and converting the surplus timber into rustic bridges over the larger ravines. The land should be first of all fenced to stop the destruction of the best trees; then, after removing the surplus timber except such as is needed for shade, the land would of itself become thickly set in bluegrass. Parties if permitted would furnish the reservoir with row boats, and the place would in time become a favorite place for driving, rowing and fishing and a suitable

place for picnics and public gatherings. This park, though small for driving, would be conveniently situated in that Franklin street, one of the principal and most thickly populated streets of the city, runs directly to the east line of the tract, making a drive out and return of nearly three miles. Some work has been done already this year on this street, and by continuing a little farther out and putting in one bridge, it would render the reservoir tract owned by the city much more valuable by building up that part of town. This is no wild scheme and would only require the outlay of a small sum, and the city will have secured to herself something to attract people of wealth and refinement, whose object in life is not alone to acquire the almighty-dollar by persistently following in the well beaten paths of commerce and the every day pursuits of life, but to enjoy occasional rest, recreation and innocent amusement in the enjoyment of all that is true, beautiful and good. For it has been truly said that the advance in civilization and culture of any people may safely be estimated from the extent and variety of its parks and gardens.

A SUBSCRIBER.



TANNEHILL PARK— circa 1900

The bandstand gazebo (just to the right of center) was constructed in 1897.

Moberly City Ordinance

Establishing a Public Park to the West of the City on September 4, 1906

An Ordinance establishing a public park out of and on the property now owned by the city of Moberly, Missouri, and known as the Old Reservoir Grounds.

"Be it ordained by the council of the city of Moberly, Mo., as follows:-
Sect. 1—

That the property owned by the city of Moberly, Missouri, known as the Old Reservoir Grounds and more particularly described as follows, to-wit:- All of the North west quarter of the North west quarter of section two (2), Township Fifty Three (53) Range fourteen (14), containing forty eight (48) acres more or less, is hereby and herewith set aside and apart for a public park for the use of the public in general.

Sect. 2—

That the Chairman of the Public Grounds Committee or his successor or successors shall act as park commissioner and recommend to the council any and all needed improvements to beautify and improve the park.

Sect. 3—

That after any improvement has been recommended by the park commissioner and ratified by the council there it shall be the duty of the Park Commissioner to immediately have such work or improvement done.

Sect. 4—

It shall be the duty of the Park Commissioner

to preserve the forest trees that now stand on said tract of land and shall add as many other trees as he, the park commissioner, and the city council deem necessary. The Park Commissioner shall have the brush cleared off of said land, lay out drive ways and cause the same to be graded, walks and erect benches and make any other improvements that will beautify said park.

Sect. 5—

The Park Commissioner shall at all times have proposed improvements ratified by the council before having said work done.

Sect. 6—

This ordinance does not contemplate interfering with the water right given the Natchez Railroad Company by the City of Natchez, Mo.

Sect. 7—

This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed by the Council Sept. 4th 1906.

J. M. Williams
Pres. of the council

approved Sept. 4th 1906.

J. M. Williams
Mayor

attest

J. F. Henry
City Clerk.

PLANS FOR THE NEW PARK

Landscape Gardener Engaged and the Active Work of Beautifying Forest Park to Commence at Once.

THE MOBERLY
DAILY MONITOR

April 5, 1908

(The original name of Rothwell Park was Forest Park)

With the opening of this week will begin the active work of making the new Forest Park, one of the prettiest and most attractive in all this part of Missouri.

The Park as it stands today comprises more than 200 acres of ground and is most beautifully situated.

Within the park are two as beautiful lakes as can be found anywhere, one of them, when full, being more than three-fourths of a mile long. In this lake, last fall, Mayor Rothwell, through the kindness of Col. Dick Porter, of Paris, Chairman of the Fish Commission of Missouri placed nearly 20,000 fish of the bass and croppie species. As many more will be added again this next fall, in this lake spawning beds will be arranged and within a few years it will be known as one of the greatest fishing spots in all this part of the country. The fishing privileges will be reserved for the people at large, and opened to them when the fish have attained a size that will permit of them being worth something to the fisherman when caught. At present fishing is absolutely prohibited.

A force of men will be put to work Monday by the Park Committee and all of trash and leaves will be removed from that part of the park lying to the east of the big lake and comprising about sixty acres.

The stumps will also be removed.

A competent landscape gardener Mr. Sid J. Hare, of Kansas City, has been engaged to lay out the park and prepare planting plans. He has but recently finished a park for Joplin and it is said to be one of the prettiest in the state. When here some time ago he gave it as his opinion that Moberly could make of the new Forest Park the very prettiest in the state, size considered.

City Engineer Swan McDonald will have charge of the preliminary work of making surveys and then Mr. Hare will take charge and assist in the arrangement and beautification of the grounds.

The method of handling the amusement features at the park will be by contract, advertisement for propositions now running in the daily papers.

These amusements will be such as a large dancing pavillion, open air roller skating rink, boating, and such others as are usually found at amusement parks.

A public bath house will also be built by the lake and bathing permitted when bathing suits are used. Tennis courts will also be established and playgrounds for children.

A boat house and band stand will also be erected and wells for drinking purposes sunk in various parts of the park.

Aside from a general clearing up the west side of the park, little will be done on that side this summer.

A number of electric lights will in all probability be placed in the park for use at night.

Rustic bridges will be built and walks of artistic design laid out. The planting design will not be known until Mr. Hare has made his plans.

The design of roadways will include drives through all parts of the park, the west portion being reached by a driveway over the big dam.

Later on a day will be set for the formal opening of the park. When that day is selected the Commercial Club, business men, individual citizens and organizations of every kind will be invited to participate and take a part in the day's proceedings. Such a day should be made memorable in the history of the city and the crowds attending will be enormous.

Moberly has long needed such a park as it now seems certain that in the course of a few years she will have. One of our weaknesses as a city has laid in our inability to offer to visitors any great form of entertainment when they came here. For the outsider our big days begin at 1 p. m. and end at 5 p. m. Before that hour and after it, there is absolutely nothing for them to do and no where for them to go except up one side of the street and down the other.

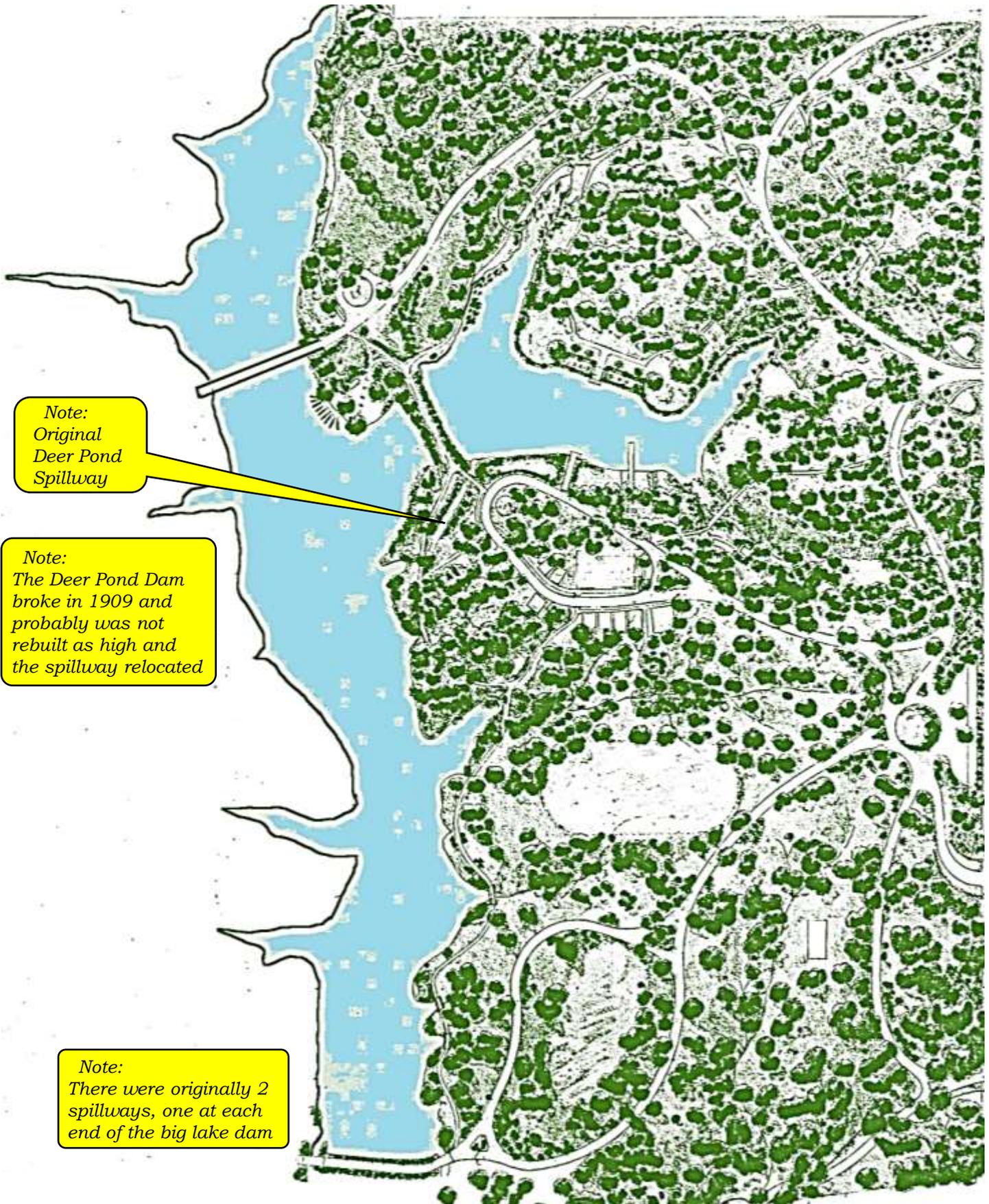
With such a park as is planned and hoped to be established, visitors would not find an idle moment on their hands upon their visit to Moberly and would come here by the thousands.

It is hoped every citizen will take great delight in their new park. We are mostly a working class of people and our after working hours should find a place where a breath of fresh air and a few hours innocent enjoyment will all the better fit us for the work of the day to follow.

The new park should be the pride of every citizen and all should cooperate to the end that it become all it can be made.

Hare and Hare Company

Plans for Forest Park - 1908



Note:
Original
Deer Pond
Spillway

Note:
The Deer Pond Dam
broke in 1909 and
probably was not
rebuilt as high and
the spillway relocated

Note:
There were originally 2
spillways, one at each
end of the big lake dam

FOREST PARK OPENING DAY

Moberly Weekly Monitor

July 14, 1908

FOREST PARK OPENED

Two Thousand People Visited
Beautiful Pleasure Resort of
Moberly Yesterday.

From Monday's Daily.

Forest Park, Moberly's new pleasure resort was formerly opened to the public yesterday and 2,000 people, it is estimated, spent the afternoon in that delightful spot.

The five boats purchased last week by Mr. Fiorita were on the lake and many availed themselves of the opportunity to take a first class boat ride.

The 100 bathing suits purchased as a first order by Mr. Fiorita were soon exhausted and 100 people old and young could be seen paddling in the big lake which

makes an ideal swimming place.

Tedford's superb band discoursed sweet music during the afternoon.

Mr. Fiorita had on sale ice cream and all kinds of soft drinks and was liberally patronized.

The big dance pavilion and roller skating rink will be completed in about three weeks. Toilet rooms are being erected today and work on all the buildings is being pushed rapidly.

Mr. Fiorita wired last night for five more boats and 100 more bathing suits and will be prepared for the crowds next Sunday.

Electric lights will be installed about the grounds this week and wells bored and it won't be long until Forest Park will be open every afternoon and night with something doing all the time.

Mr. Fiorita is having a conference today with our liverymen looking towards them reducing price for carrying people to and from the park.



RUSTIC BRIDGE IN FOREST PARK - circa 1910

It crossed the inlet that is to the south of the old Dance Pavilion (to the left) that was built in 1908 and burned down in 1920.

(It was replaced with the current Dance Pavilion somewhere around the 1930's)

PARK BOARD SUGGESTION

MOBERLY MONITOR-INDEX

MOBERLY, MO. FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 27, 1923.

TO CLEAN UP FOREST PARK

**Mayor Rothwell Issues Order
Prohibiting Dumping of
Garbage and Rub-
bish There.**

WOULD REVIVE OLD LANDSCAPING PLAN

Dumping of garbage and rubbish in Forest Park was prohibited by Mayor Rolla Rothwell this morning. He has instructed the police to arrest persons who are found throwing rubbish in any part of the park.

During the past year a large number of Moberly people have been taking all sorts of rubbish to the park and dumping it on the west side of the park. A roadway has been built through the dump grounds, which now extend over quite a space in the park.

Yesterday afternoon Mayor Rothwell and a committee from the Rotary Club composed of Arthur Marriott and George H. Dawson inspected the park and it was following this visit that Mayor Rothwell issued the order prohibiting the dumping of rubbish.

Motorcycle Officer G. D. Burgess will make inspections of the park several times each day.

Camp House Windows Broken.

An inspection of the camp house built for the Boy Scouts showed that every windowlight had been broken out by vandals. Locks had been pried from the doors, but otherwise the building was intact.

"The care of this park," the mayor said, "for sometime must rest with general public sentiment and a personal guardianship on the part of each individual. The mental and moral fiber of one who, for no cause but that of wanton destruction, would attempt to destroy a boy's recreation house or playground is hard to understand. A thing that means so much to the community should be carefully

protected, not deliberately and maliciously despoiled.

"Public grounds, parks and cemeteries, mean as much to a community as clothes to an individual; visitors gather lasting impressions from them and they count for much in an estimation formed of a city.

"We are going to try," said Mr. Rothwell, "with the help of all who should be interested, to improve Forest Park. It can not be done in one year or two years as it should be done, nor will it be done in a burdensome or extravagant way. The work must start along definite lines for continuation through coming years.

Park Once Landscaped.

"A few years ago the entire forty acres this side of the big lake was landscaped by Sid Hare, of Kansas City, one of the best landscape gardeners in the West. Roadways and walks were laid off; each tree to be removed was carefully marked; location of tennis courts, a baseball diamond, children's playground, boat landing, bathing beach and bath houses were located by a practiced eye and with a view to the harmony of the entire part of the park in question.

"These plans, by ordinance, were adopted by the city council and all work at the park ordered to follow the design. Seemingly, this was forgotten or overlooked, and the work which should have gone on orderly has not been done that way.

"By the creation of a park board, with appointment of members who by nature and inclination are interested in such work, it is hoped and expected that all this can be changed and Moberly be brought to realize what an undeveloped asset she has lying right at her gates.

Wholesome Recreation Needed.

"The playgrounds for children, have been wiped out by residence districts. They must be re-created and the boys and girls, young men and young women, old men and old women be given some wholesome attraction and interest in life. A large part of our municipal ills can be traced to the fact that while we command people, especially boys, to cease doing certain things we fail to provide attractive substitution for what we would abolish."

CITY-WIDE VOTE FOR FUNDING THE PARK

THE MOBERLY WEEKLY MONITOR

THURSDAY, JULY 26, 1923

ONLY 64 VOTES AGAINST PARK

Program Adopted by 251 Majority; Commission to Be Named at Next Council Meeting.

ORDINANCES TO BE DRAWN UP AT ONCE

With only 379 votes cast, Moberly's park election which was held yesterday was probably the quietest election ever held in the city. Of the 379 votes, 315 were for the establishment and maintenance of the park system of the city and 64 votes were against it, giving a majority of 251 for the park program.

Only one person in 20 voted yesterday. However, only one in fifty voted against the park movement.

The vote by wards follows:

Ward	Yes	No.
1	74	27
2	52	18
3	139	6
4	50	13
Total	315	64

By this vote the people of Moberly have signified their willingness to adopt Mayor Rothwell's plan for the establishment of a park commission to work like the water board and the library board. Mayor Rothwell stated today that he would name the commission before the next meeting of the city council. The recommendation will have to be approved by the council.

The vote for the establishment and maintenance of the parks will not increase the taxes now imposed, but an apportionment of city revenue will be made for the upkeep of the parks.

Ordinances creating the park commission will be drawn up at once for the consideration of the council.

Moberly City Ordinance

Establishing a Park Commission

AN ORDINANCE IN RELATION TO ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING FREE PUBLIC PARKS IN THE CITY OF MOBERLY, MISSOURI, PROVIDING A MILL TAX THEREFOR, ~~AND ESTABLISHING~~ AND PROVIDING FOR A PARK COMMISSION UNDER THE TERMS AND PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 2, CHAPTER 80, OF THE REVISED STATUTES OF MISSOURI, 1919, AS AMENDED BY THE LAWS OF MISSOURI, EXTRA SESSION, 1921, PAGE 119, AS DIRECTED BY AN ELECTION HELD IN THE CITY OF MOBERLY, MISSOURI, ON TUESDAY, THE 24th DAY OF JULY, 1923, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING WHETHER SUCH ACTION SHALL BE TAKEN.

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, the 24th day of July, 1923, upon the petition of 100 tax paying voters of the City of Moberly, Missouri, a City of the third class, asking that an annual tax be levied for the establishment and maintenance of free public parks in such incorporated city and specifying in their petition a rate of taxation not to exceed two mills on the dollar annually, on all taxable property in the city, to-wit: one-third of a mill on the dollar annually on all taxable property in said city, an election was held for the purpose of voting on such question and at such election each voter could vote "For a one-third of a mill tax for free public parks" or "Against a one-third of a mill tax for free public parks" and,

WHEREAS, the Judges of said election and the City Clerk have certified, as provided by law, that a majority of the votes cast at such election were "For a one-third of a mill tax for free public parks", now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Moberly, Missouri, as follows, to-wit:

Section 1. That it is hereby found and declared that a majority of the voters voting at the election held on Tuesday the 24th of July, 1923, in the City of Moberly, Missouri, for the purpose of determining whether or not a one-third of a mill tax for free public parks should be established in said city, voted for said parks.

Section 2. Forest Park and Tannehill Park and any public park hereafter established in the City of Moberly, Missouri, are hereby declared to be and are established, and ^{are} to be maintained under the terms and provisions of this ordinance.

Section 3. The tax specified in the petition above mentioned and approved in the before mentioned election shall be levied and collected in like manner with other general taxes in ^{such} incorporated

city and shall be known as the Park Fund, provided that such tax shall cease in case the legal voters of ~~any~~ ^{and} such incorporated city have so determined by a majority at any annual election held therein, provided further, that in case of an increase in valuation in any year of the taxable property within the City of Hoberly, Missouri, the common council of the said City may reduce the levy herein provided for, by levying a tax for the maintenance of said free public park which in the judgment of said common council shall be sufficient for the maintenance of said free public park throughout the year, but in no case shall the tax so levied for any one year, by the Common Council exceed ten percent more than the tax of the previous year.

Section 4. The Mayor of said City, shall, with the approval of the legislative branch of said city, proceed to appoint a board of nine directors for said park, chosen from the citizens at large, with reference to their fitness for said office; and no member of the municipal government shall be a member of said board.

Section 5. Said directors shall hold office, one-third for one year; one-third for two years; and one-third for three years from the first of June following their appointment, and at their first regular meeting, shall cast lots for their respective terms; and annually thereafter the Mayor before the first of June of each year, shall appoint as before, three directors who shall hold office for three years and until their successors are appointed. The Mayor may by and with the consent of the legislative branch of the municipal government remove any director for misconduct or neglect of duty.

Section 6. Vacancies in the board of directors, occasioned by removals, resignation or otherwise, shall be reported to the City Council, and be filled in like manner as original appointments, and no director shall receive compensation as such.

Section 7. Said directors shall, immediately after appointment, meet and organize by the election of one of their number president, and by the election of such other officers as they may deem necessary.

They shall make and adopt such by-laws, rules and regulations for their own guidance and for the government of the parks as may be expedient, not inconsistent with this ordinance. They shall have the exclusive control of the expenditure of all moneys collected to the credit of the park fund and of the supervision, improvement, care and custody of said parks; Provided, that all moneys received for such parks shall be deposited in the treasury of said city to the credit of the park fund, and shall be kept separate and apart from other moneys of such city, and drawn upon by the proper officers of said city, upon the properly authenticated vouchers of the park board. Said board shall have power to purchase or otherwise secure grounds to be used for parks; shall have power to appoint a suitable person to take care of said parks and necessary assistants for said person, and fix their compensation, and shall have power to remove such appointees; and shall in general carry out the spirit and intent of this ordinance in establishing and maintaining public parks.

Section 8. The said board of directors shall make, on or before the second Monday in June, an annual report to the city council, stating the condition of their trust on the first day of May of that year, the various sums of money received from the park fund, and from other sources, and how such moneys have been expended and for what purposes, with such other statistics, information and suggestions as they may deem of general interest. All such portions of said report as relate to the receipt and expenditure of money shall be verified by affidavit.

Section 9. Any person desiring to make donations of money, personal property or real estate, for the benefit of such parks, shall have the right to vest the title to the money or real estate so donated in the board of directors created under this ordinance, to be held and controlled by such board, when accepted, according to the terms of the deed, gift, devise or bequest of such property; and as to such property, the said board shall be held and considered to be special trustees.

Section 10. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval and shall repeal and annul all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the terms and provisions hereof.

Passed and adopted by the council of the City of Moberly, Missouri, this 6th day of August, 1923.

Russ R. Travell
President of the Council.

Approved on the 6th day of August, 1923.

Russ R. Travell
Mayor.

Attest : H. F. Rothwell
City Clerk.



OLD SWIMMING AREA IN ROTHWELL PARK - circa 1950'S

PARK BOARD ORGANIZATION

MOBERLY EVENING DEMOCRAT

MOBERLY, MISSOURI, TUESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1923

PARK BOARD WILL ORGANIZE TONIGHT

First Meeting of Members of Park Board Tonight—Main Business Will be Organization.

Members of the Park Board Commissioners will meet tonight at the city offices and perfect their organization.

This will be the first meeting of the park governors since their appointment to office two weeks ago by Mayor Rothwell. The board consists of nine citizens who will serve the city as park commissioners without pay.

At the meeting tonight after officers are elected and the other routine of organization finished, the park men will probably discuss some of their plans for immediate improvement of the city parks.

They will have \$1,000 to work with at present, as the council last night voted them a loan of that amount, owing to the long time before the park funds will be in the hands of the commissioners.

The members of the park board are Forrest Martin, L. S. Jacobs, Louis Klein, J. E. Lynch, Gus J. Ginther, Allen White, Swan F. McDonald, Arthur E. Marriott and E. A. Willott.

Three are to serve three years, three for two years and three for one year. The various members will draw lots tonight to determine the length of their terms.

Note:
\$1,000 in 1923
is about \$18,000
in 2023

THE FIRST PARK BOARD PRESIDENT

MOBERLY EVENING DEMOCRAT

MOBERLY, MISSOURI, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1923

LOUIS KLEIN IS MADE PRESIDENT PARK BOARD

Work on Parks Will Commence at
Once on a Moderate Scale—Will
Make New Roads.

The nine city park commissioners met at the city offices last night and elected officers and made some plans for work they will start immediately.

Louis Klein was elected president of the board; E. A. Willott, vice president; Allen White, secretary, and Gus J. Ginther, treasurer.

Each commissioner drew lots to determine the length of his term as is the rule governing time of service on the board. The result of the drawing was as follows: E. A. Willott, Arthur E. Marriott and Allen White will serve for one year; Lewis S. Jacobs, Forrest Martin and Louis Klein will serve for two years; J. E. Lynch, Swan T. McDonald and Gus J. Ginther will serve for three years.

Mayor Rothwell met with the board last night and after the meeting expressed himself as being highly pleased with the board and the way they started to work.

On next Tuesday Louis Klein, president of the board will give a supper at Forest Park for the commissioners, and after the banquet park problems will be discussed fully right on the park grounds. President Klein feels that the commissioners will in this way be very close to the subject they are to discuss.

Work at Forest park will begin immediately. The first work to be started will be cleaning the west side of the park as the east side has been. There are more than two hun-

dred acres in the plat on the west side of the lake that have never been used to a very great extent. After this portion of Forest park has been thoroughly cleaned a system of roadways will be laid out in it similar to the network on the east side of the park. All the roads in the park will be improved so that the park drives will be a real pleasure and afford hundreds of places for family picnics and outings.

The commissioners believe that a part of this program can be carried out before the weather gets bad.

All the members of the board are enthusiastic over the work they have been appointed to.



LOUIS KLEIN

FOREST PARK RENAMED TO ROTHWELL PARK

Moberly City Council Minutes

April 21st 1931

Councilman Wisdom introduced an Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance changing the name of "Forest Park" to the name of "Rolla R. Rothwell Park" in the city of Moberly Mo was read first time, the rules were suspended on motion carried and the Ordinance was read second and third time and adopted by the following vote; Bell, Aye - Bowers, aye - Butler Aye - Cavanaugh aye - Edwards Aye - Fortis aye - Fray Aye - and Wisdom aye.

MOBERLY WEEKLY MONITOR

THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 2, 1931

Mayor Rothwell Dies Suddenly

His Accomplishments

Mayor Rothwell, known throughout his public career as a progressive mayor, had many large accomplishments to his credit.

During his first and second terms, a city park issue of \$25,000 was carried. This election was held September 23, 1907, and Forest Park was established as a result. The park remained very dear to the mayor's heart through succeeding terms.

1907



ROLLA R. ROTHWELL

Rothwell served as Mayor off and on over the years.

(\$25,000 in 1907 is around \$800,000 in 2023)

Death Ends Long Public Career



MAYOR ROLLA R. ROTHWELL

MOBERLY MONITOR-INDEX

MOBERLY, MISSOURI, FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 3, 1940

Louis Klein Again Heads Park Board, Preparing for Summer Season; Development Reviewed

Louis Klein was reelected president of the Moberly Park Board last night, as the board conducted its annual reorganization meeting and made plans for formal opening of the park on May 30 for the 1940 season.

Other officers of the board are: Marvin Rowland, vice-president; Chester Wilhite, secretary; and Gus Ginther, treasurer. Other members are: Dr. J. F. McLellan, Mose Callaway, Ernest Bartle, Allen White and Herbert Walden.

John Groeber, who has "grown up" with the park as its superintendent, was reappointed superintendent and Joe Henry Graves was named as watchman for the summer season.

Charles Sons was appointed head life guard for the bathing season. His assistants will be Clifford Smith, first assistant, and Thomas Butterly, second assistant. Sons has been at the park for sometime, while Smith and Butterly will be serving their first season.

Growth in Popularity

Moberly's Rothwell Park of today is a far cry from the "For-

est Park" of 1923, when Groeber was first named superintendent. "There was nothing but the land and the Boy Scout cabin then," Groeber recounted today, as he outlined improvements made during the past year, preparing for the 1940 park activities.

Not more than a hundred people a day visited the park throughout the summer season during 1923, Superintendent Groeber reminisced today. Those who wanted to go swimming then would just "drive out in the brush a ways, walk to the lake edge, pull off their clothes and hang them on limbs, and wade in."

Last year an average of 1,500 to 2,000 persons used the park daily during the three most popular months. "In early days of the park," Groeber recalled, "we would have small bathing parties from about 9 to 10 a. m. and 6:30 to 8 p. m., while now there are from 100 to 300 there all day long."

The park now is a mecca for persons throughout this area. Emphasizing the use that out-of-

(Continued on Page 4)

Louis Klein Again Heads Park Board

(Continued From Page 1)

town persons make of the park. Mr. Groeber estimated that on Sundays last year 8 out of every 10 persons in the park were from other communities. More family reunions and similar gatherings were held in the park last year than ever before. Picnic groups have become so numerous now it is sometimes a problem to accommodate them all, he added.

Much Development Work.

Mr. Groeber recalled his first work as park superintendent was to clean up the 320 acres of ground, cut out the dead timber and begin a program to make the tract useable as a recreation center. There was only the one building, the Boy Scout cabin, in the 320-acre tract. That building had been built from materials donated by business men and labor by craftsmen.

There wasn't even a road to the cabin. To get there a visitor had to drive to the end of a "cow path," then walk the rest of the way. "Brush was so heavy you couldn't even see the building until you had walked into the park a way," says Groeber.

In 1925 the bath house was erected, located then on a point off to the left of the present structure, and a considerable distance from the water. A log cabin was erected at the site of each of the present shelter houses (they still stand) and they were used as "shelter houses" by picnic groups.

The beach was constructed in 1928. Bathers had been using it before that time, but improvements and enlargements were made then to serve the increasing number of swimmers.

The first shelter house was constructed in 1930, following the depression of 1929. Relief labor was used in the construction.

From time to time various other improvements have been made. CWA, NYA and WPA made possible many of the improvements in roads, retaining walls, repairs and remodeling of buildings, and in general upkeep of the park.

Playground Equipped.

The playground has been equipped largely through efforts of the American Legion. However, gifts from the Brown Shoe Company employes' organization and Louis Klein have supplemented their donations. Women of the city have aided in beautification.

Three new tennis courts in the park proper and one in the negro park have been added this year. Work still is under way on them, but they will be completed in time for formal opening of the park season. They will have limestone and clay surface and are expected to meet general approval of tennis enthusiasts.

A swimming pool approximately 100 by 150 feet in size has been provided in the negro park.

The Reed street entrance is being black-topped, while both the Franklin and Concannon street entrances are being repaired.

"Rothwell Park" signs have been installed on each of the pillars at the various park entrance ways.

A new furnace has been built in the new shelter house.

To Gravel Parking Lot.

A project now is pending to gravel the parking lot on the main entrance way and the road to the new shelter house and to the Boy Scout cabin. These would be done as WPA projects, with Eight Mile Road district assistance.

The next scheduled improvement is installation of modern toilets, to replace the present "Chick Sale" types. This will be done immediately as an NYA project, Mr. Groeber said, with work probably beginning May 9. The log cabins near the two shelter houses are to be remodelled and made into buildings with modern toilets. The exterior of the two cabins will be stuccoed.

The bath house and beach shelter house and pavillion are to be painted before the season opens.

With these improvements, the park is looking forward to one of its greatest seasons this year. Few other improvements can be expected now because of lack of funds, it was pointed out. Maintenance and operating expenses of the park are approximately \$2,500 annually. The 3.8 cents tax levy allotted for park purposes net only about \$2,800, which leaves not over \$300 annually for improvements.

*\$2,500 yearly maintenance is about \$54,000 in 2023
\$300 yearly improvements is about \$6,500 in 2023*

THE SECOND PARK BOARD PRESIDENT

MOBERLY MONITOR-INDEX

MOBERLY, MISSOURI, FRI., MARCH 6, 1959

Head of Park Board Offers Resignation

**Marvin Rowland, 87,
Unable to Continue;
Seek Superintendent**

Marvin Rowland, 617 South Williams, has resigned as a member and president of the Moberly Park Board, effective at once. His resignation was presented at a meeting of the board held last night at the Connors Tire and Sporting Goods store, whose senior partner, Emmett Connors, is a member of the board.

Rowland has been a member of the park board for about 20 years and has been its president since the death of Louis Klein. Previously he served as acting president during the illness of Mr. Klein.

Mr. Rowland said he was resigning on account of his age, which makes him unable longer to accept responsibility as a member and president. Rowland is 87, and retired several years ago as a Wabash locomotive engineer.

To Name Superintendent

The special meeting of the board was called to consider applicants for Rothwell Park superintendent succeeding the late John Groeber, who had served since the opening of the park in 1923. Approximately 15 persons are seeking the appointment. No action was taken at last night's meeting. A call meeting will be held later.

Ed Brogan, vice-president of the board and a member for about 15 years, will temporarily act as superintendent until appointment is made.

Brogan said he and two park employes will have fishing permits ready for anyone seeking them. The fishing season is opening March 15.



Old Boy Scout Cabin
(across the lake)

OLD ENTRANCE TO LAKE SWIMMING AREA