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CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

Annual Report
1957

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~~Board of Public Parks and Recreation~~
City & County of Honolulu, H

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BOARD OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION

City and County of Honolulu

1957 ANNUAL REPORT

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It has become strongly evident in retrospect during the past year, and the several preceding it, that the greatest loss which the City and County of Honolulu is suffering in its park and recreation system is its inability to keep up with its own growth in the acquisition of new playground sites. New subdivisions are spreading at a tremendous rate. The city Planning Commission requires that they show playground areas proportionate to the number of lots, and people buy into the area thinking this is a settled matter.

More often than not, in recent years, these playground areas are merely proposed and the city lacks the funds to acquire the land. This in spite of the increased taxes which such a city growth might be expected to bring in. After a time, the people who have built homes discover that there is no playground for their children, and considerable irritation results, the park board itself usually getting the main criticism.

Once the chance to acquire the vacant land is lost there is little likelihood of the property being obtained later, since the tremendous increase in price that results

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from development is prohibitive. The city is thus falling behind an acceptable standard in the relationship of playground area to density and spread of population.

During the past year, this Board initiated a study to try and remedy this land loss. Two ways are found possible; one, to discover some acceptable way of financing such acquisitions; two, by requiring subdividers to dedicate a playground area. This study was incomplete at the end of the year.

Indefinite Revenues Lost

In general, services rendered to the public by this Board were curtailed in many ways during the year by the lack of city funds and the loss of the Board's own income from concessions and other indefinite realizations. In the past, these latter funds have many times helped to meet an emergency or opportunity which could not be foreseen as a budget item.

Area and Plant

With a total acreage at the end of 1957 of 2,597 acres, of which well over 1,300 acres are part of the spreading Koko Head Natural Park, the Board of Public Parks and Recreation operated 41 shoreline areas and beaches, 54 playgrounds and

fields, 16 green parks and squares. In addition to Koko Head there are two other "natural parks" (Liliuokalani Garden and Kalihi-uka along the Kalihi tunnel approach road.) The Honolulu Zoo and Foster Garden, with its three subsidiary areas, are special parks. The Board also maintains 21 traffic circles and triangles.

Special recreational facilities included 12 clubhouses and centers, five gymnasiums, three swimming pools, three music bowls or bandstands, three golf areas, 12 tennis areas, three archery ranges, a rifle range, a boathouse, a riding school, a costume unit and two ponds for miniature boats. The Board makes use of five service areas which have shops, offices, warehouses and plant nurseries.

The largest single addition to the park board's jurisdiction in 1957 was the recreation area at Waialua, formerly operated by the plantation. It consists of eight and a half acres of land on which are a playing field, bleachers, paved and lighted tennis courts, and a large gymnasium with auxiliary recreation rooms. This property was leased to the city for one dollar a year.

PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION

A system of judicious borrowing from certain building accounts, which are stymied by conditions beyond the control of the park board, has made it possible to advance the Board's building program by about two years. Although 1955 bonds were sold only in October, 1957, at least two projects, to be financed by these funds, were completed during 1957 and a number of others were put into the planning stage. The borrowing system provided for engineering and architects' fees. Such borrowed funds are, of course, returned to their original account when the designated bond money becomes available. This system has put money to work and at the same time provided for more careful and thoughtful planning than could be done when a job is rushed.

Construction Completed

Four park areas which saw major improvements entirely completed during 1957 are:

1. Waipahu Field. The sprinkler system was installed at a cost of \$18,000. Basic ground improvements were completed with the grassing of this new 13.5 acre play field. An offer of flood lighting equipment from the Oahu Sugar Company's

athletic field was accepted and arrangements undertaken to salvage the light fixtures, transformers and poles. Planning was also accomplished on other facilities, particularly a comfort station. An effort was made to firm up the thinking of all concerned as to the location of the proposed Waipahu Gymnasium, whether to place it on this field or on school property.

2. Ala Moana Park. The food concession building and utility extensions were completed at a cost of \$35,000. This new modern food center was completed and put into operation for the convenience of the thousands of picnickers and swimmers who use this popular beach park.

3. Nuuanu Valley Park. (Queen Emma Museum) A new entrance, along with improvements to the parking area, was created with the assistance of the Territorial Highway Department, in connection with the widening of Nuuanu Avenue.

4. Kalihi Valley Field. Initial ground improvements covering grading and drainage were made on this new ten acre field at a cost of \$30,000. Planning of facilities was started and will be put into construction in 1958.

Under Construction

Four projects which were under construction at the end of 1957 are:

1. Kapiolani Park Hibiscus Garden. Grading, fencing, walks and sprinkler system were finished and paid for with \$10,000 from park concession income. The planting work is being done by park crews. (See also under Botanical Gardens.)

2. Pililaau Field in Waianae. Over \$50,000 worth of additional improvements were underway to this major recreational area. Among the improvements are six paved play courts and floodlighting which will cover these courts and also the softball field.

3. Puuloa Beach Park, near Ewa. A \$57,000 contract is underway to develop this new five acre beach park. Improvements will consist of a bath house with comfort facilities and recreation pavilion, a paved play court, parking area, fencing and landscaping. These should be ready by next summer.

4. Keehi Lagoon Park near the airport. ("Kalihi Playground") Work on the basic ground improvements, including drainage, grading, utilities and top soil was delayed, due to the local shortage of dynamite. Planning of facilities

proceeded, however, and the construction of a road, parking area, comfort station and landscaping will be undertaken as soon as possible.

Planning Work Done

The planning work carried out by this division has brought eight projects to the point where their construction can probably start in 1958. Six others had active planning started.

Brought to advanced planning stages were:

1. Honolulu Zoo. Paving of walkways at a cost of \$50,000.
2. Aiea Field. Floodlights for courts and softball field, also new parking area, comfort station and reconstruction of the bleachers.
3. Kalaniana'ole Beach park, at Nanakuli. New park building with dressing rooms, etc., to replace the one destroyed by fire in 1952.
4. Manoa Valley Field. Comfort station to be built as the first unit of a full park building; paved courts and parking.
5. Wilson Playground. Terracing and other ground improvements.

6. Kalihi Valley Field. (see above)
7. Alewa Playground. New comfort station to be built.
8. Kailua Field. Combination community building and park pavilion, planned jointly by the park board and Territorial Public Works Department. The latter will build the structure with \$100,000 from 1955 Territorial funds.

Put into active planning were:

1. Asing Field. Improvement of the access road is being studied with the Bureau of Plans and Ewa Plantation.
2. Cartwright Field. Revamping of this area, including a new comfort station and paved play court, is involved in the Territory's highway plans for the realignment of Keeaumoku Street.
3. Kahaluu Beach Park. Comfort station and other improvements are contemplated.
4. Palolo Valley Field. Planning of general facilities is proceeding.
5. Kamehameha Field. Floodlighting and paved courts.
6. Waimanalo Beach Park. Comfort station, paved courts, parking and other improvements.

MAINTENANCE DIVISION

This division was faced in 1957 with its usual discouraging job of keeping up with a constantly expanding area and plant while its staff was not increased proportionately.

An attempt, begun five years ago, to repaint each building at least once in five years has succeeded, on the average, of doing only two each year. In 1957 only the Kapiolani Beach Center, formerly known as Waikiki Public Baths, was thoroughly rehabilitated. This was done in preparation for the greatly increased usage expected in 1958 from the new sand beach placed in front, by the Territory. This Beach Center building will now accommodate more bathers than that on any other public beach, with multiple showers and large dressing rooms. It is in need of a replaced water system, due to corroded old pipes and an insufficiently large meter. Comparable situations exist in many of the older areas.

RECREATION DIVISION

Children and Youth

Thirty areas offered leadership programs during the year, with five additional areas having Summer Fun programs. This division was handicapped by being short 22 recreation workers. Through arrangement of personnel it was possible, however, to open three important new areas.

1. A suitable director was established at the Waialua Recreation Center and Field, an area turned over to the city by the plantation early in 1957.

2. A program was also started on the new Kalihi Valley Field, although it is far from completed. The worker uses school rooms for indoor programs.

3. It was also possible, for the first time, to find a qualified worker living in Waianae to work at Pililaa Field there.

Summer Fun attendance was seriously curtailed by the influenza epidemic.

The outstanding new event in recreation for children was the work during the summer in creative dramatics, carried on in the Waikiki Shell. The Department of Public Instruction

cooperated by furnishing one of the four instructors, and ten DPI teachers, acting as assistants, received inservice workshop credits from the DPI. As a result, this type of creative learning is being more extensively introduced into the schools than before. It is also being quite regularly offered on most of the playgrounds and centers.

About 100 children, in three age groups, were in the classes. Instruction in music, dancing and play-making was offered in a program which combined the three concurrently. Using "The Story of Joseph" as a theme, the children planned the dialogue and business, wrote the music and words of the songs, and created the dances. The play was produced at the end of the session before an audience of parents and friends.

Its success created a demand for further work of this kind, so a similar program was started in the fall on Saturdays. It will end at Easter.

Activities

Year round classes and activities in recreation covered arts and crafts for children, teens and adults; camping; clubs for boys, girls, teens and adults; community nights and services; cooking; creative activities in music, dance and drama combined; dancing, covering hula, rhythm classes,

social, folk, square and modern forms, story telling, play-making and puppetry; excursions, hikes and picnics; exhibits on a city-wide, a district and an area basis; free play; games, contests and tournaments; hobbies; meetings for teens, for council groups and for community associations; music including Hawaiian choral and community group singing, also instrumental instruction in such things as the ukulele and harmonica; natural science; physical fitness and slimnastics; social recreation, and radio broadcasting with the Playground Quarter Hour on KGU.

In athletics, leagues and classes were sponsored in swimming, archery and all the various seasonal sports.

Senior Groups

Senior Citizens met regularly on two areas, for the most part making up their own program of activities. Adult recreation was also offered in various arts and crafts, choral and instrumental music, social dancing and exhibits.

Life Guards

During the summer, in answer to a general demand, a re-organization of this unit took place. Four additional men worked full time during the summer and two more during weekends and holidays. The regular staff of twelve men and one

director were deputized as special police officers, with control over the beach areas.

New uniforms were made mandatory, consisting of red shirts, blue bottoms, a sun helmet with badge in front, and a whistle. The corps was also given some new equipment, including portable loud speakers used to control the public.

A workshop was set up where the men can repair their own equipment, especially surfboards. A new ambulance was also provided.

The increase of beach facilities, especially with the new beach at Kapiolani Park, and the increased number of people using the beaches have caused the work of this group to be spread over a larger area than before and more help is needed. Men of this city unit work only on the Waikiki beaches and in sections not patrolled by private hotel guards.

Volunteer life guards went with private picnic parties to distant beaches when requested in advance to do so. In 1957 such volunteers put in 238 hours of this duty, by attending 69 picnics. It is estimated that there were 14,920 people on these picnics. No major casualties were reported. Groups holding picnics included 40 schools, seven scout groups, eight business organizations, one armed service group, three church groups and ten youth groups.

An estimated 3,585,156 people were on the Waikiki beaches patrolled by this corps during 1957. The peak months were March to September.

Seven drownings took place. In addition one swimmer did not return and his body was not found.

There were 33 rescues, of which five had to be resuscitated. By age groups among those rescued; three boys were aged one to ten, eight were aged 11 to 20, and six were over 21. Of the girls, six were aged one to ten, seven were aged 11 to 20 and three were over 21. By months there were 28 rescues in June, 40 in July, 25 in August and 16 each in October and November, with a few in the other months.

Situations from which victims had to be rescued included drifting on surfboards, tiring as swimmers, wading into deep water, (especially small children); cramps, skin divers becoming exhausted and because of surfboard accidents.

Waikiki Shell

An estimated total of 7,000 persons made use of the Waikiki Shell during 1957 and over 100,000 residents and visitors attended functions at this site.

The Waikiki Shell during this period served as the site for 33 public performances, four private functions which included the Kaimuki High School commencement exercises and the University of Hawaii junior prom. Eleven programs were free to the public and 23 children's creative activity classes were conducted on the premises.

To further the cause of good music and the enjoyment of audiences at the Waikiki Shell, the Board of Public Parks and Recreation underwrote three Honolulu Symphony concerts and three Honolulu Pops Orchestra concerts.

A total of 62 activities were presented on the Shell stage plus 436 hours of rehearsals to make these productions possible.

Pali Golf Course

Charles Chung, who became manager of the course in January, 1957, put his major efforts during the year into improving the course, especially the greens. They have been constantly aerofied and sanded to prevent compaction and improve drainage. The fairways were also improved as the grass was fertilized and thickened. Several pathways were built from tees to fairways where the slopes were hazardous.

There were ten rainy days during the year when the course was closed, due to flooded greens and fairways. An unusual number of rainy weekends (noted also by the Zoo) reduced the number of players. It has been noted, however, that as the greens have been improved so that they are not too soggy, people will play even in the rain.

Rounds of 18 hole golf played during 1957 were 23,655.

Rounds of nine hole golf played were 2,398.

The largest months were July and August, with 2,398 rounds played in July and 2,825 in August. Weekends and holidays naturally saw the heaviest play, with a total of 14,267 rounds.

Clubhouse

The Pali Clubhouse was put to use by the windward community as various groups met there. The installation of a dumb waiter to the concessionaire's kitchen, which will make it possible to serve full meals in the upstairs lounge, will increase the use of this room by luncheon clubs and others.

HONOLULU ZOO

A series of rainy weekends and the fact that there were no spectacular new animal shipments from the mainland in 1957 combined to bring down attendance somewhat, compared to the previous year. There were still 490,000 admissions, making the zoo the largest in Hawaii of any comparable attraction.

A number of zoo babies were born. The one that attracted the most attention was Samson, the lion cub. He was kept in the director's home and fed from a bottle for four months, but when he began to get dangerously playful he was returned to the zoo where he is now a center of attention.

BOTANICAL GARDENS

Harold Lloyd Lyon

Dr. Harold L. Lyon, first director of Foster Garden, died May 15, 1957. In his place Paul Weissich was appointed director.

Dr. Lyon, who had been a botanist and director of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Experiment Station for about 45 years, had retired in 1950. His life work had been largely concerned with reforestation and had taken him to most of the world's tropics. In the course of his travels, and later through correspondence, he introduced into Hawaii an enormous amount of new plant material.

As part of his work he had organized a tree nursery on Vineyard Street and an experimental tree planting area in a gulch at Wahiawa. The Vineyard Street nursery adjoined the estate of Mrs. Mary E. Foster. This estate had formerly been the home of Dr. William Hillebrand, Hawaii's first outstanding and importing botanist. Dr. Lyon suggested that Mrs. Foster leave her estate with its splendid old trees and other tropicals to the city as a memorial botanical park. This she did on her death in 1931.

However, there was some hesitation on the part of the city supervisors in accepting the bequest. It was felt to be more practical for the property to be sold by the heirs and the city receive the taxes which would come from cutting it up for housing and business. By a fortunate coincidence, Dr. Lyon learned that the heirs were planning to sell the land for a church school, which would be tax exempt. When he presented this fact to the supervisors they accepted the property and turned it over to the old Park Board, naming it in honor of Mrs. Foster.

Foster Botanical Garden

Dr. Lyon was made director and as opportunity afforded, proceeded to convert the old estate into a botanical garden and park. He cleared it of heavy growth, planned and built the glass houses, the lath houses and a quarantine house. The property was enlarged to include the old HSPA tree nursery on Vineyard Street. This became the working area of the garden. The residence area was opened to the public as Hawaii's most beautiful garden-park.

In 1955, after construction of the new entrance and office building on School Street, Dr. Lyon made his headquarters there, continuing to work up to the day before his death. He was constantly arranging for new plant material to be brought in. The last specimen which arrived just

before his death was numbered 9,670. Other items are still coming in.

During 1957 there were 420 new plants introduced into the garden. Among these, 315 were from foreign countries and the mainland which had been arranged for by Foster Garden. Also received were 105 plants presented by other institutions such as the University of Hawaii which had initiated their introduction.

Of these new materials, a number are flowering trees which are to be tested under local conditions for street tree use. This is a cooperative project being carried on with the Outdoor Circle and the Garden Club of Honolulu, to beautify the island.

A group of women, members of the Outdoor Circle, volunteered in 1955 to staff the new entrance and office building when it was opened. They have continued in this work for over two years, welcoming and registering visitors and generally assisting in making the garden a more interesting place.

A count of the number of visitors taken during 1955, the first year of this volunteer service, showed an attendance of about 75,000 people. In 1956 there were 82,603 and during the past year 89,278. This shows an increase

of about 10 percent a year. These figures are probably somewhat low as some visitors escape being counted when large parties enter. About half of these visitors are tourists from the mainland and foreign countries, since the garden is on the regular tour of most sightseeing leaders and taxi men. The number of kamaainas visiting the garden has also increased as word has spread of its beauty and interest.

Dr. Lyon's enthusiasm for orchids had led him to build up the garden's orchid collection until it is one of the important drawing card for visitors. About 300 to 500 blooming plants are always on display. During the second World Orchid Conference held in Honolulu in September, 1957, five staff members attended the lectures. The garden also provided decorative plant material and assistance for the special orchid exhibition held during the conference in the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

During 1957 two important new staff members were added on a volunteer basis. Mr. William W. G. Goodale Moir, orchidist and hybridizer, who has been named to form an over-all Hawaiian Botanical Garden, became advisor on special problems. Dr. Irwin E. Lane, of the University of Hawaii, volunteered as consultant botanist.

The regular staff was enlarged by the addition of Mrs. Nora Potter as botanical clerk.

During the year, plans for the construction by the Territory for two large automobile arterials on either side of Foster Garden, one along Vineyard Street and the other along School Street, indicated that the garden will be considerably reduced in those areas. Fortunately neither of these contain any large and important old botanical specimens. In its planning, however, the Honolulu Redevelopment Agency has extended the future limits of the garden down to Nuuanu Stream so that in the end the total garden area will be actually enlarged by about three acres. This will bring it to adjoin the park presently known as Liliuokalani Garden. The latter includes a section of Nuuanu Stream and the picturesque and historical Waikahalulu Falls. Liliuokalani Garden was formally annexed to Foster Garden by Board action in 1956 and eventually will be developed as a naturalistic botanical park, bringing Foster Garden to 19 acres. It will be a major unit in the proposed over-all Hawaiian Botanical Garden.

The master plan for this newly delimited area shows its future entrance on River Street just above Vineyard with all of the present River Street in that block becoming part of the garden.

Since work will soon start on the Vineyard Street widening this section of the garden, which contains the nursery and reserve plants, was reorganized in 1957. Plants have been redistributed to a considerable extent, 824 going to the park board's nursery in Kapiolani Park, 957 to Lyon Arboretum in Manoa and 1,410 to Wahiawa Botanical Garden.

Wahiawa Botanical Garden

The old HSPA experimental forest tree proving ground in the gulch at Wahiawa, where Dr. Lyon had planted a good many of his imported plants, had come to the end of its usefulness to the HSPA about 1950. The land was turned back to the Territory which owned it. Since it had become a thick jungle of rare trees and other tropical plants it was felt to hold possibilities as a public park, and so was turned over to the Board of Public Parks and Recreation. It was designated administratively as a branch of Foster Garden and here Dr. Lyon again began to rehabilitate an area into a botanical garden and public park.

During the past several years large portions of this gulch have been cleared of underbrush and unwanted trees. A working road and paths have been built, a botanical area enclosed by a fence, and new plantings put in. Part of

the gulch is now used as a forested picnic area, while the botanical area is getting established.

During the past year an additional four acres of the gulch were cleared of underbrush and planted, among other things, with 35 experimental new trees. The 1,410 plants sent from Foster Garden, including some orchids, have been placed out. These plants were selected for this location because they are likely to find the cooler climate of Wahiawa more congenial.

Lyon Botanical Garden

The newest botanical garden under the park board was set up as a memorial to Dr. Lyon shortly after his death. He had long felt there was need for an area where plants native to dry and sunny climates could be grown and had selected a spot in Koko Head Natural Park as a likely site. Our board set aside over a hundred acres here for such a garden. It is as yet in the planning stages although a few plants which like this type of climate have already been set out. This garden, along with the whole of the Koko Head Park area, will be maintained in a naturalistic manner, conserving as far as possible the primeval feeling which characterizes it,

Kapiolani Park Hibiscus Garden

About two acres of land at Monsarrat, Leahi and Pali Streets in Kapiolani Park were set aside several years ago as the site for a public display of hibiscus. Paul Weissich designed the master plan for this garden and undertook a specialized study of hibiscus, so that plantings could be of greatest interest and variety. The Hawaiian Hibiscus Society has shown a great interest in the project and donated many fine hybrids recently developed by its members. Unusual examples of the hibiscus family, including tree forms and native Hawaiian species have been included in the planting plan. During the past year the area was fenced and black top walks put in. A fine collection of hibiscus plants has been set out and are slowly gaining size. It is planned to open it to the public when these plants have attained size enough to be interesting, probably some time in 1958.

The New Director

Paul Weissich joined the Board of Public Parks and Recreation in 1953 as landscape architect for the planning division. He was graduated from the University of California in 1950 after having served in the navy during the war. He had practiced his profession for three years

in Hawaii before becoming a part of the staff. At present he is carrying on his original duties as landscape architect and is acting as assistant director of planning and now also as director of Botanical Gardens.

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