

## Playground Punts

"The boy without a playground is father to the man without a job."

—*Joseph Lee*

"Play in a boy is like steam, and superheated steam at that. You can sit on the safety valve of a steam boiler, but it is a risky experiment—you must give the boy a chance to blow off his steam."—*Jacob Riis*

"Without play and recreation it is impossible to develop good citizenship."

—*Henry A. Barker,*

Sec. Metropolitan Park Com., Providence, R. I.

"The other day a man called for grown up volunteers to show children how to use playgrounds—*how to play*, in other words."

—*Boston Journal*

"We are apt to fence about a little lot of grass, stick up 'Keep off the Grass' signs, and post three \$1,400 a year policemen to guard it and keep the children off. It would cost ten dollars to replant the grass annually. We call this *municipal economy*."—*Jacob Riis*

"Playgrounds are well enough, but smokestacks are more essential. Let the little ones play, but do not forget to help the old man to get a living."

—*Comptroller Herman A. Metz,*

Brooklyn, N. Y.

"*One big playground* in the neighborhood where the boys (delinquent) live would do far more for them than the law courts, jail, and policemen."

—*Judge Ben B. Lindsay*

## Playground Construction

LORNA H. LELAND

*Playground Architect and Organizer*

### *I. An Ideal Development for a Playground on an Irregular Tract of Land Between Five and Six Acres in Extent.*

The fullest possible utilization of a piece of land for play purposes is not in any way inconsistent with its development as a work of outdoor art. In preparing this plan the play possibilities have, I think, been developed to the fullest extent consistent with the maintaining of landscape beauty.

#### GRADES

The lowest grade called for is in the center of the athletic field, where two

catch basins are to be placed for draining the left-hand half of the entire playground. The running track and 100 yard straightaway are each approximately the same grade, but higher than the athletic field, so that they drain into it. In winter time the entire surface of the athletic field and running tracks is to be flooded for skating and for coasting; the all-seasons' coast being conducted down the shoot and around the running track, ending over on the

end of the straightaway running track, making a coast of about one-third of a mile. The boys' playground, the borders around the athletic field and the borders outside the athletic field are all higher than these other two grades.

The little children's playground and the girls' playground will be graded at still another level.

The space taken up around the all-seasons' coast, winter coast, neighborhood club house, dancing green, and the right hand side of the girls' playground is all on the grade given by following the natural slope of the land. Considerable of the apparatus in the girls' playground will be set up on a slope, the peculiar construction of this apparatus making this possible.

#### WALKS AND TRACKS

The main entrance to the grounds and the plaza in front of the neighborhood club house and on the side should be of concrete. The slope of the walk at the right hand side of the club house will give admirable opportunity for roller skating and small wagon coasting. In order to economize space, the walk and irregular one-quarter mile running track are combined with each other. This and the 100 yard straightaway track should be made of a combination of clay and cinders, or a combination of clay and certain kinds of sand is sometimes cheaper and nearly as efficient.

The runways for jumping, for the baseball diamonds and playing surfaces for boys', little children's and girls' playgrounds can be made of the same material, preferably of clay and cinders, and the playground surfaces should have a larger proportion of cinders than is used in the runways.

#### FENCES

The entire field should be surrounded by a fence, the construction of which will depend upon the amount available for this purpose. An iron picket fence is best, but a very good substitute can be made by attaching a strong fine mesh (not more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inch opening horizontally) field fencing attached by bolts to second hand  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 inch iron pipe. This should be 5 or 6 feet high. Above this and very close to it should be suspended three strands of hog style barbed wire fencing.

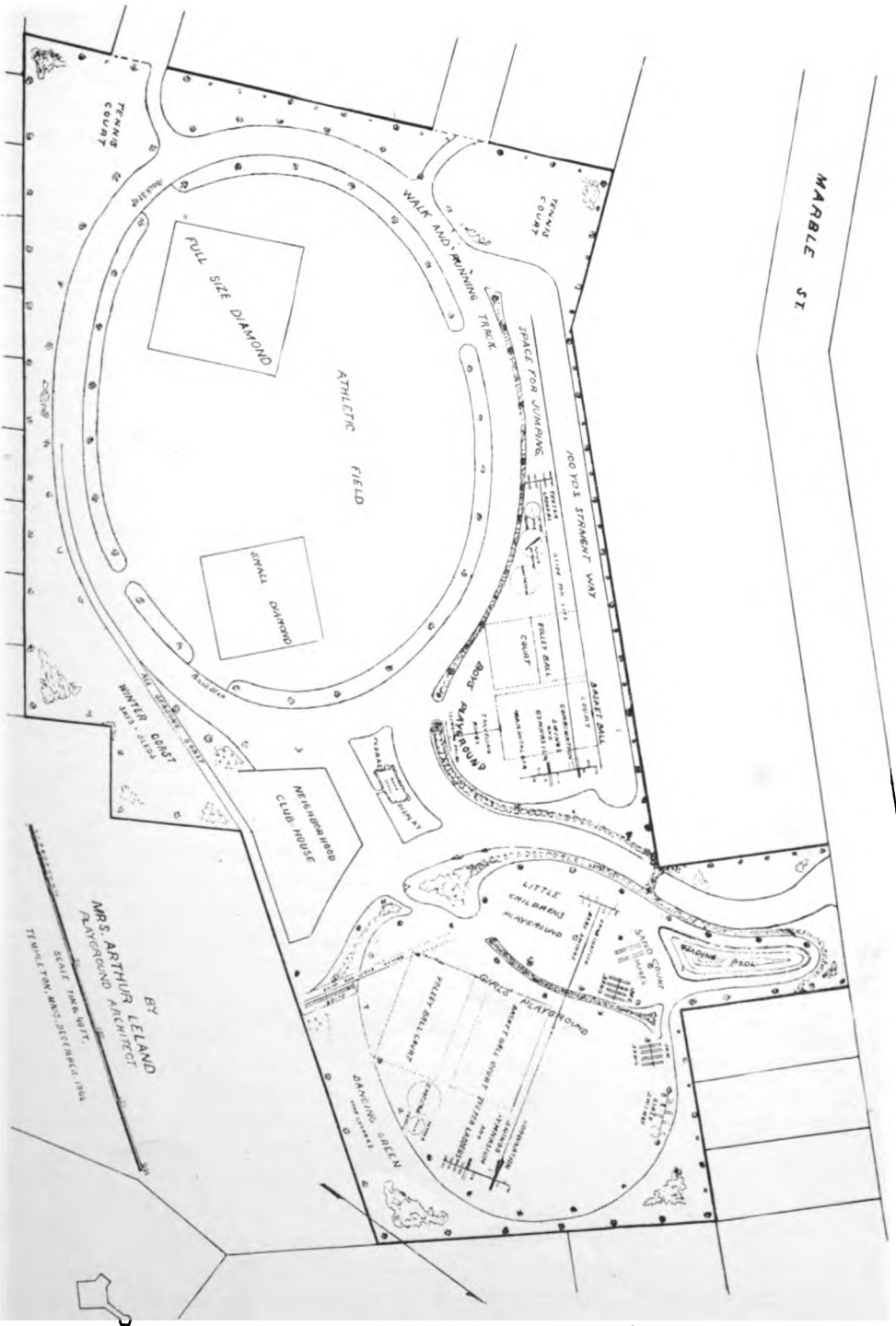
There should be a fence around the boys' playground and around the little children's and the girls' playgrounds and a fence around the running track would be very valuable during exhibition games and meets, but could be dispensed with, or a temporary fence could be made by setting permanent posts through which rope could be run whenever competition games were to be held.

#### LANDSCAPE GARDENING

The entire grounds with the exception of walks, tracks, boys', little children's, and girls' playgrounds, as well as the athletic field and tennis courts should be covered with turf. If the playground is not in a very populous district, it may be possible to maintain turf on the athletic field and girls' playground and on part of the little children's playground.

The plan calls for the planting of over 100 elms and about 50 Carolina poplars together with some other trees and various hardy shrubs which are massed in corners.

The little children's and girls' playgrounds should be surrounded with a high growing hedge and the boys' play-



AN IDEAL DEVELOPMENT FOR A PLAYGROUND ON AN IRREGULAR TRACT OF LAND BETWEEN FIVE AND SIX ACRES IN EXTENT.



ground should be surrounded with a thorn hedge. If hedges are too expensive they can be replaced by hardy annual climbing vines, which will cover the fences around each enclosure. The fence around the entire ground should be covered with hardy vines or with annual climbers if the others are too expensive. The little children's playground and the girls' playground should be separated by a low fence covered with sweet peas. The walk should be bridged by an arched trellis and vines should be trained to run over this and over the fence concealing the disagreeable effect of the sharp corner, where the walk runs near the property line.

#### PLAY FACILITIES

Mr. Leland has assisted me in developing the various pieces of play equipment. Only those pieces of apparatus which we have proven by years of observation as play directors, to be most valuable and interesting to the children, are suggested. The opinions and experience also of such play authorities as Doctor Curtis, Joseph Lee and others have been consulted in this study of play equipment. The details of construction, and how they can be made economically by home labor or local contractors will be dwelt upon later.

#### BOYS' PLAYGROUND

Combination swings and gymnasium, consisting of six 11 foot swings, two pairs trick rings, one trapeze, one incline steel ladder, one incline steel wire cable ladder, two pairs incline steel sliding poles, one slide for life, leading to teeter ladder frame, one horizontal bar.

Teeter ladder frame with four teeter ladders and attachment for slide for life.

Volley ball and basketball courts.

Tether pole tennis.

Flying Dutchman.

Giant Stride.

The traveling rings are planned to be suspended from wire cables stretched from the top of the climbing pole frame to another support on which is attached one of the basketball screens. This is a new piece of apparatus which has not been tested as yet and if it works successfully, it will entirely do away with the necessity of using square, iron pipe gymnasium frames, as traveling rings are the only pieces of apparatus which cannot successfully be attached to straight line frames. Straight line frames are more economical of space and money and better adapted to make possible artistic landscape effects than square frames.

#### GIRLS' PLAYGROUND

The girls have a combination gymnasium and swing frame similar to the boys only somewhat lower and containing only three swings and four teeter ladders, and omitting the horizontal bar, which I think of little use in the girls' playground.

Giant Stride.

Tether pole tennis.

Set of four see-saws.

Girls' swings, including three 11 and six 8 foot swings.

Basketball goals and volley ball court.

Playground slide and roller coast and slide and dancing green complete the equipment.

#### LITTLE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

The little children have a frame with two 8 foot wood seat swings and eight 6 foot leather seat baby swings; also two small playground slides and a set of

four see-saws, sand court and wading pool complete the equipment.

#### FOR BOYS AND MEN

Athletic field, space for several baseball diamonds, full sized football and field hockey field.

#### FOR ALL

Tennis courts, use of running track and athletic field, all seasons' coast, winter coast. A very good hand-ball court can be developed against the side of the neighborhood club house.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB HOUSE

This should include assembly hall, club rooms, branch of public library, baths, and small gymnasium for use when it is impossible on account of bad weather to use the outdoor play facilities.

#### GENERAL REMARKS

The intention is in this suggestive plan of treatment to make the play facilities out of doors so attractive both summer and winter that there will be little need of indoor amusements and attractions. Unless I had at least \$50,000 to \$75,000 to expend on this ground exclusive of club house, I should not include a more elaborate outdoor gymnasium equipment. Such equipment as is outlined can be used almost

to the fullest extent of its possibilities, without requiring much of the attention of the director, leaving his time free for the formation of athletic teams, teaching of games, etc., which is much more important than the teaching of gymnastic stunts from a social and moral as well as physical standpoint.

All of these pieces of play equipment, with the exception of all seasons' coast, roller coast and slide should be purchasable ready-made from the machine companies, and set up ready for use for about \$1,100 to \$1,200.

They can be made by local contractors from proper specifications for this sum if not for less. Provided such a plan is feasible, wherever there is a lack of financial support, frames can be erected by local contractors and the apparatus to attach thereon made by manual training students of the public schools, working from properly prepared plans, or in case of extreme necessity the trades' union people may be induced to contribute their services in erecting the frame, provided merchants' associations will contribute materials.

A playground in Omaha, Neb., was equipped in this way.

## Playground Notes

### GRAND JURY OF PHILADELPHIA ON PLAYGROUNDS

An interesting side light on the developing importance of what is commonly called the "playground movement" is noted in a presentment of the Grand Jury in Philadelphia. That such a body should give the matter serious attention and offer such recommenda-

tions as are offered is sufficient reason why it should be given attention by thinking folks, official and lay. There are several phases of the movement and several ways in which playgrounds and recreation centers may be useful to a community, but the Philadelphia Grand

Jury is mainly concerned with them as essential means for the prevention of crime among children in cities; and almost equally so in towns.

The Grand Jury presentment contains some local allusions but for sake of completeness it is given in full:

"The opening of the new House of Detention emphasizes the duty of the municipal government to guard against the commission of crime on the part of the children of the city. The problem of juvenile delinquency has been receiving the careful attention of the larger cities of the country. Playgrounds have been established in Chicago during the last ten years at an expenditure of more than eleven million dollars, raised by bond issues. In New York over sixteen million dollars have been likewise expended within a similar period, one playground alone costing \$1,811,127, a block of tenement houses having been torn down to make way for it. Boston has also made marked progress.

"In Chicago playgrounds and recreation centers have been established at a cost of less than two dollars per each ten thousand dollars of assessed valuation of the property benefited, and is the cheapest way, from the standpoint of the municipality, of dealing with the problem of juvenile crime. It is today costing the City of Philadelphia many thousands of dollars per day to punish those guilty of crime and protect property from the criminal.

"Experience teaches that the most economic scheme for handling the problem of crime is that which prevents rather than that which, at fearful expense, is merely the engine to con-

vict and punish after crime has become an established fact. As the actual return in dollars is more or less invisible, it is difficult for some people to see the necessity for public playgrounds. Where the parents, as is usually the case, are the sole source of support, they should not as a general rule be blamed for the delinquency of the child, for the responsibility is the responsibility of the entire community. It is the duty of the municipal government to provide proper opportunities for healthful out-door exercise and play for the children of the city. The founder of the Juvenile Court System in the United States has declared, 'It is no longer a question that playgrounds do more to prevent crime than jails, courts and policemen.'

"Judge Staake, of Philadelphia, likewise calls attention to the fact that 'an adequate system of playgrounds will work a transformation in many of our children, reduce the petitions to and the commitments by the Juvenile Court.' 'The public playground,' he also says, 'has proved itself to be the greatest deterrent of delinquency and lawlessness among children.'

"We recommend that the Councils of the city of Philadelphia institute a careful investigation into what has been done in the matter of playgrounds in other cities, and we further recommend that a general plan for the entire city be formulated which will be adequate to the needs of the children throughout the community."

--*Philadelphia Public Ledger.*

### CONTINUATION OF PLAY- GROUND CAMPAIGN IN MASSA- CHUSETTS

*(Springfield Union)*

In order to keep up the campaign for favorable votes on acceptance of the Public Playground Act in towns of 10,000 people, the Massachusetts Civic League has appointed a State Playground Committee which includes in its membership George D. Chamberlain of this city. It has begun active work in continuation of the campaign that resulted in 23 of 25 cities accepting the Act at the December elections, by a total vote of approximately 125,000 in favor to only 27,000 opposed, in all the cities that took action. By this action the State of Massachusetts "has given the playground movement the most emphatic endorsement which it has yet received in this country." The present work is aimed at making the registered endorsement still more emphatic through subsequent action of the towns.

The Act to be voted upon states that every town and city accepting it shall provide and maintain at least one public playground and recreation center for each 10,000 population. There are 18 towns to have local elections the coming spring when they will vote on this particular question.

Of the towns that may not vote, because they already comply with the law or are moving toward that condition so rapidly that it will be complied with by the time limit mentioned in the Act, are Revere, Webster, Watertown and Brookline. There may be other towns equally fortunate, but these are known to the new committee which is taking special pains to ascertain the situation in each locality.

The committee is composed of one person or more from each of the cities that voted to accept the act, with the addition of a few other members of the Civic League, and is as follows:

Edward T. Hartman, Chairman; Joseph Lee, Boston; Thomas Curley, Waltham; Francis Bardwell, Sherburne; Miss Helen Cheever, Boston; Rev. R. Kidner, Boston; Ray S. Hubbard, Boston; Frank L. Boyden, Deerfield; B. Preston Clark, Boston; Miss A. A. Wyss, New Bedford; Rev. James E. Gregg, Pittsfield; Edgar Weeks, Marlboro; Frank E. Parlin, Quincy; Dr. William Marvel, Fall River; Edward F. Cregg, Lawrence; Clark Carter, Lawrence; N. P. A. Carter, Chicopee; Miss Mabel Hill, Lowell; H. W. Smith, Lowell; Mrs. C. S. Millett, Brockton; Antoine Silva, Gloucester; Mrs. George A. Brown, Everett; Ralph Davol, Taunton; George D. Chamberlain, Springfield; Edward H. Byington, Beverly; Mrs. William Fox, Woburn; Harlan P. Kelsey, Salem; Dwight L. Rogers, Lynn; Rev. Frederick B. Greul, Haverhill; Rev. Harold L. Marshall, Melrose; David W. Armstrong, Worcester; Miss Fanny C. Stone, Newburyport; M. P. Conway, Holyoke.

### PLAYGROUND NEEDED UPTOWN

The Women's Municipal League of New York has begun a fight to have the city establish a public playground in the upper West Side.

In support of their request they said that the proportion of juvenile arrests is greater in that section than in the worst districts in the city, chiefly because the West Side boys are well dressed, well fed, and full of animal spirits, but having nowhere to play save in the streets get into trouble that takes them into the police courts.



"Chicago's parks and playgrounds have caused a decrease of 50 per cent in juvenile crime," said Prof. Frank Miles Day, B.S., of Harvard University, in a Brooklyn Institute lecture on "City Parks and City Planning." The lecture was fully illustrated, showing original plans and their carrying out in Washington, Cleveland, St. Louis, St. Paul and many other of our cities. In Philadelphia 42 organizations have been taken into one coöperative body for parking and improvement in the city and suburbs. Boston's system, whereby 32 towns and villages are connected by drives and parkways, was highly commended. A comparison with park systems in progressive European cities showed that as a rule the cities of the United States are far behind in work along this line.—*Brooklyn Citizen*.

"Much of the burden of future education, in teaching children loyalty, honesty, coöperation and self-sacrifice, rests on the public playground instructor," declared Thomas Curley of Waltham, in an address on "The Playground Movement," given before a meeting of the Boston Physical Education Society at 24 Trinity place.

"The very foundations of the Republic are to be worked out on the public playground," he continued; "that is where boys learn how to resist evil. A young man will never in his life have such great temptations, in the midst of such absorbing interests, as on the ball field, when he wants to cut corners. There he learns that it doesn't pay to play crooked. Where can he show greater self-sacrifice than when he effaces himself in order that his team may make another run? The play-

ground movement is one of the largest silent revolutions that have ever gone on in our educational system."

A general discussion followed the address. President Christian Eberhard occupied the chair.—*Boston Evening Herald*.

"E. H. Harriman is building a playground several hundred feet north of his mansion on Tower Hill. It is being blasted out of solid rock and covers two and a half acres. It will be covered with a cement floor and enclosed by a wall of concrete four feet high. On one part will be built a framework of pipe for gymnastics. The Railroad King has devised means by which the two and one-half acres can be flooded during the cold weather for a skating rink. Such an area is large enough for the fast and furious game of hockey, curling, and other ice sports. The playground will be illuminated at night by numerous arc lights. The cement floor is to be covered to a depth of several inches with earth for summer use. This dirt will be removed before flooding for the winter."—*Sussex (N. J.) Independent*.

"Sixty playgrounds and six school gardens are to be conducted by the Board of Education this year. Miss Elizabeth O'Neill has been appointed Supervisor of the playgrounds, with three assisting supervisors, and Miss Stella Nathan has been selected as General Supervisor of the school gardens, with a teacher and gardener for each yard."—*Philadelphia Telegraph*.

Massachusetts is the only State as yet that has enacted a law providing for public playgrounds in cities and towns.