

JUNE'S GARDEN

VILLAGE OF FLOWERS (continued) HISTORY OF CANNON BEACH PARKS

In 1962 it was recommended to the Cannon Beach City Council by the Planning Board and Parks Commission that a certain designated area within city limits be set aside for use exclusively as a park and recreation area. The ordinance was passed on January 7, 1963, by the Council, Smith, Dueber, North, Mcrae, and newly elected mayor Gerald R. Gower. The area set aside was approximately two acres that bordered Spruce St., Second St., Conference grounds, and west of wetlands and Ecola Creek. This also included the property on the southwest corner that the Commercial Club leased from the City when they built their club house. The Commercial Club later became the Chamber of Commerce.

This large piece was covered with underbrush, willows, blackberries, and some alder. A majority of the land was swampy. The vision of the people was to clear the underbrush, install some drainage, and fill an area large enough for sports. This came about with volunteer help and donations of equipment.

Townpeople of all ages helped clear the field of underbrush. Hundreds of yards of sand were brought from the beach for fill. Howard Johnson Sand and Gravel Construction Co. offered a loader, Van Fleet and Crown Zellerbach trucks and drivers, also Jim Scarborough, construction contractor, lent his help. The added sand raised the field enough to use as a ball field for the Little League baseball team organized and coached by Theodore (Ted) Erickson, also nicknamed 'The Bear.' Erickson's son Steve, an outstanding athlete, also helped coach. Eventually, Erickson and other volunteers added to the park a back-stop, bleachers, basketball hoop, and a tract for go-carts.

After the field was completed, at least to be able to use for sports part of the year, the first tennis court was built north of the Commercial Club building. Mr. Hoyt, a road contractor and a friend of Erickson, was hired to black-top the surface of the tennis court. Money to pay for the black-topping and the tall fence needed to enclose the court was raised in various ways. From donated lumber, picnic tables and benches were built to be used in the park. Donors who gave \$10.00 or more for a table were honored by having their names carved on the table. The American Legion donated two benches for the tennis court.

In 1962 the Women's Garden Club entered a Sears, Roebuck contest which offered funds for community landscaping projects. They won the contest. Their submitted plans were to landscape around the Commercial Club building and new City Park. Their plans also showed filling a ditch north of the building to provide more space to landscape. They used the funds to plant shrubs around the building, to plant trees in the park, and a red climbing rose on the fence of the tennis court. They set up a program to plant more trees in the park each Arbor Day, which they did for many years.

In August 1963, Lee Firebaugh donated and installed water pipes into the park, providing water taps for maintenance of the new plantings.

In 1964 a water fountain was added in memory of Harley Sroufe. Margaret and Harley Sroufe and family moved to Cannon Beach in 1951 and owned the grocery store (now Osburn's) for twenty years or more. The shell style fountain was designed

and made by John Yeon, a friend of the Sroufes. The bronze Yeon used to cast the fountain part had been donated. The fountain was originally installed south of the tennis court, later moved to its new site east of the Chamber building.

Eventually a levee was built on the east side of the park to ward off flooding from the wetlands and Ecola Creek. This levee also provided for a road to be built to enter from Second St. There still remained, however, standing water in the large field from winter storms. Drainage pipe was installed.

During the 1970s Jess Brownrig, a partner, and some volunteers did the maintenance, mainly mowing the large grassed area.

In 1973 Don Howell, Public Works Director, with the help of volunteers built a children's playground north of the tennis court. They filled the area with three feet of sand, built swings, a sandbox, and a metal climbing device.

In 1976 at the west entrance by the children's playground the American Legion Auxilliary had a stone monument built by brick and stone mason Milt Lagerquist. Inscribed on the monument:

AMERICA WE CAN'T GIVE YOU A BETTER
GIFT THAN YOU'VE GIVEN US, FREEDOM.
Sally Stevens

In this Bicentennial year by Cannon Beach
Post 168 American Legion
Dedicated June 26, 1976

Sally Stevens is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bud Stevens.

Materials left from excavation of the new sewer system built during the early 1980s were added to the park's field. At that time the drainage was improved.

Up to 1983 there were only two other parks besides City Park: Whale Park and South End Park. Bordering Hemlock St. and Highway 101 at the southernmost exit and entrance into Cannon Beach, a grassy knoll surrounded by patches of many varieties of native berries, a replica of the cannon, a picnic table and benches had been installed. The replica of the cannon was moved years later to the grounds of the Cannon Beach Historical Society. Also at one time the Garden Club planted flowers in this small park and at the northern exit and entrance.

Whale Park was designed by Larry Bonderant. This park is located at the north end of the business district. It overlooks the ocean and Ecola Creek. The wooden sculpture of the whale was designed and carved by Greg Hartwick in the late 1970s.

Taken from part of a journal telling of the Lewis and Clark Expedition that wintered at Fort Clatsop from December 8, 1905 until March 23, 1906, 'Captain William Clark, 12 men, Sacajawea & infant traveled far south to an Indian Village which was located on a creek, to buy blubber and oil to supplement their meager food supply. The Expedition was told the Indians had procured blubber and oil from a nearby beached whale. In Clark's words, 'proceeded to the place the whale perished, found only the skeleton of this monster, measured 105 ft.' Clark did purchase 300 pounds of blubber and a few gallons of oil the Indians had boiled in a large wooden trough by means of hot stones.

The creek they wrote of is now called Ecola Creek (Ecola, the Chinook word for whale). Thus the name Whale Park and the sculptured whale also symbolize this event.

Bonderant's plans were designed for low maintenance. The landscaping he and others did includes cement paths, some native shrubs such as salal, a few trees, a mound seeded in grass which provides more interest to the otherwise flat area, and benches located for viewing. Entering the park, the raised sculpture is silhouetted against a broad expanse of ocean and sky. The park was dedicated in November 1980.

In the early 1980s one city worker, Nick Morris classified as General Utility Worker, took over the maintenance of the three parks. Other landscape maintenance was minimal as the restrooms, parking lots, and beach accesses had no formal landscaping.

(to be continued)

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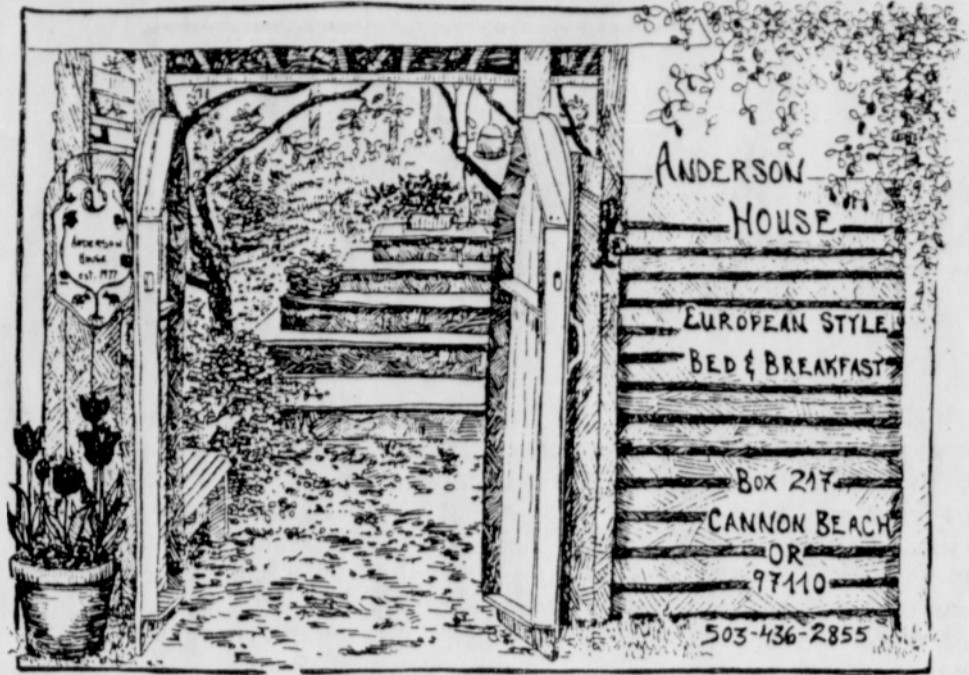
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Augustine Birrell