

JUL 30 1984

DATA ON HISTORY OF
SEATTLE PARK SYSTEM

COMPILED APRIL 19, 1960

UPDATED REGULARLY TO DATE

COMPILED BY

DON SHERWOOD

B

CITY OF SEATTLE (WASH.)

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

R333.78097
Se18D
B

e.l

NORTHWEST

Building a new town in the "wilderness" of Puget Sound Country was a large undertaking for the Pioneer Homesteaders of 1852. The various settlers had as many concepts of what the town should be: a Sawmill Company town, a farm-oriented town, a fishing town, a seaport for lumber, coal, + mining.... A. A. Denny, leader of the Pioneer Party of Settlers who landed at Alki in 1851 had the Big Plan: a bourgeois city encompassing all these endeavors - and more, all kinds of commercial ventures. But Denny was not a "Planning Commission", even though he tried, in his way, and probably did the most to shape the growing city. The Oregon Territory Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 gave each claimant 320 acres (double that if married) to "clear, cultivate + occupy for four consecutive years." Each of the Land Claims around the town site was divided into farm tracts and thereafter platted into town streets + lots. At a much later date, City Engineer George Cotterill noted that "anybody platting a piece of land did pretty much as he pleased: he didn't bother to join up with the streets of adjacent plats - nor use the same names for streets - resulting in one street having many names along its length or many streets about town with the same name: i.e. half-a-dozen named Lake St., Pine St., etc." (-STimes) Under a new City Charter in 1892, the Engineering Dept. began a long + painful process of renaming streets - painful because the residents were fond of the pioneer names or national heroes, etc. It was a problem still being dealt with in the 1970's.

One of the early appearances of the street name "Broadway" was on a plat filed in 1858 by A. A. Denny + Wm. H. Bell: platted 80 ft. wide, from the waterfront just west of Front St. (now First Ave.) to Depot St. (now Denny Way) and is now (re-)named Broad Street - it was only 3 blocks in length. (It does give a clue as to the origin of that re-name.) In 1869 "Broadway" appears again on a plat by C. D. Boren (Eastern Addn.), again 80 ft. wide, from Fir St. to Cherry St., running northerly on the ridge of First Hill. Apparently there was a "Gentlemen's Agreement" on this name and location, for subsequent plats filed in 1872, 1880, 1883, 1890..... firmly established the name of BROADWAY from Mill St. (Yesler Way) across First Hill and up along Capitol Hill. McKee's Correct Map of 1894 shows it continuing as far as Prospect, where it jogs easterly to 10th and continues on towards Latona crossing Lake Union at 6th Avenue (site of today's high-level I-5 Freeway bridge). In 1894 Broadway became the eastern edge of the town's development, with only scattered clusters of houses among the farm tracts on east to Lake Washington. In the matter of the origin/location of a street named BROADWAY, C.T. Canover (STimes) noted that "every town has to have a Main Street and also a Broadway."

The 1880 plat was filed by D. T. Denny for the Estate of John H. Nagle, a part of Nagle's Donation Land Claim. It was bounded on the west by Broadway and on the south by Gould St. (now Pine St.), extending northerly and easterly for several blocks. It included an "open" tract one block east of Broadway to the east side of (12th), and from the north side of Gould St. to the south side of Hawthorn St. (now Denny Way). This clearly indicates that this tract was being considered for "something big". In 1897 it was purchased by the City: 11.133 acres for \$10,800 - \$3,179 paid out of Park Funds, the balance from Water Dept. Funds as a site for a low-service Reservoir + Seattle's first Hydraulic Pumping Station, pumping water to reservoirs at Volunteer Park, Queen Anne and Magnolia. It went into operation in 1900 and was named LINCOLN RESERVOIR by the Water Dept. As part of the development, Nagle Place was developed along the west side of the Reservoir and 11th Ave. along the east side + the Reaffor was free to plat the balance of the tract.

[John H. Nagle was a native of Germany who was educated in Indiana and then crossed the Plains to Seattle in 1853. He cleared and improved (farming, no doubt) his Claim and together with the A. A. Dennys + Mrs. David Blaine, organized Seattle's first Protestant Church, First Methodist at 2nd + Columbia in 1853. Nagle became a paper manufacturer until his death in 1896.]

The Park Department's 3.28 acres south of the Reservoir had probably been used as a work site by the Reservoir contractor, so it was left in a "cleared but un-

improved condition, but development and planting plans have been prepared by the Olmsted Bros. (famed firm of Landscape Architects of Brookline, Mass., hired by the Park Dept. in 1902 to develop a Comprehensive System of Parks + Parkways for Seattle.) - 1904 Annual Report.

By this time Capitol Hill and Broadway were undergoing great changes: the arrival in 1897 of the steamer Portland with a "Ton of Gold" from the Klondike touched off a massive Gold Rush and Seattle became the Port of Departure for the prospectors - completely outfitted by Seattle merchants - and the Port of Return, complete with Entertainment to help the victorious prospectors celebrate. The "Pioneer" Millionaires had built their mansions on the hill immediately adjacent to the new townsite - and the hill was appropriately named First Hill. The new (Gold Rush) Millionaires chose to build their mansions on Capitol Hill + Queen Anne - "away from the mixed living of First Hill + Denny Hill - the seclusion of being away from the bustle of town" (R. Sale). [re: Volunteer Parkway + Park] The population of Seattle went from 42,837 in 1890 to 80,571 in 1900: one result being a demand for more schools. Mrs. David Blaine (noted above) had opened the first school in 1854 with 12 pupils, her kitchen serving as a temporary classroom. The School District's first high school was a frame building at 6th + Madison built in 1883 + named Central: it burned in 1888 and was replaced with a brick building; but with the population surge it soon became overcrowded. So, a new Seattle High School was built in 1902 at the north-west corner of Broadway + Pine St. In 1906 the name was changed to Washington High School which resulted in confusion with the University of Washington, so the School Board adopted Broadway High School as the name in 1908. The last senior graduating class was in June 1946, when Broadway Hi became a vocational-training school renamed Edison Tech - a Depression-born school program born in 1930 + using quarters in many parts of the city, won a national recognition. This program was phased out at Broadway in 1965 to become a two-year Seattle Central Community College program. The old stone building proved to be inadequate for the new demands put into it plus some community pressure to replace the "OLD" building. Whereupon, in 1974, it was placed upon the National Register of Historic Places by the State which caused a great controversy - and "History" lost, except for the stone auditorium added to the west side of the High School in 1911. During the demolition enough of the stonework was carefully removed and stored, until the new brick Community College building was completed - in 1972 + 1976 - that the east face of the Auditorium, originally an interior wall, could be rebuilt with the old stonework. (J. Almquist, J. Reddin, R. Sale, Sch. Dist.)

In 1914 another school opened across the intersection of Broadway + Pine from the High School in the Booth Building (currently occupied by the Burnley School of Art and a Savings Bank). It was a school of Music + Allied Arts founded by Miss Nellie Cornish (1876-1955) a native of Nebraska, who had frequently taught music in Seattle since 1910. Beginning with music classes, expanding to include art and then, in 1921, expanding into a new Spanish-style building at Harvard and Roy and adding ballet: together with a small theatre for dance + music. In 1977 Cornish became an accredited 4-year college Institute of Allied Arts: and the building placed on the Nat'l Register of Historic Places. Relatives of a Russian student musician established The Samovar Restaurant in 1931 across the street from Cornish, adding a new flavor to the menus being offered along Broadway. (D. Sutfin, H. Belanger, C. Cleveland)

Another school had opened nearby in 1891 at the corner of Broadway + Madison: Seattle University, founded and taught by Jesuit priests: one of the original regents and long-time benefactors was the real-estate broker, Henry Broderick. The school had humble beginnings with a handful of buildings, until Father Lemieux, a French-Canadian from Idaho + graduate with B.A. + M.A. from Gonzaga Univ., became president of S.U. from 1948-65. During his tenure, the S.U. added 8 new buildings + several renovated buildings + extended the campus: "He practically built S.U." (N. B. Clarke)

Broadway was not only "getting educated" but the street was getting "commercial" as well: shortly after 1891 the most advanced form of transportation - the electric trolley car - had its tracks laid on Broadway, from the James St. cable car terminal at Broadway + James to 10th + E. Lynn, then the north boundary of the city. (In 1940 the trolley cars were replaced with the more maneuverable electric trolley bus.) (L. Blanchard). In 1900 there appeared another new form of transportation - the automobile. Just as people had laughed at - and feared - the horseless streetcars in 1889, so they did with the horseless carriage - "a toy for the rich and the young sport!" they said. And, since the rich lived on Capitol Hill, then Broadway became the place to sell the automobile - to the nearby barons. By 1909 Broadway was known as "Automobile Row" - which Henry Ford came to Seattle to see, as much as the A-Y-P Expo. As late as 1929, Automobile Row was credited with handling 70% of Seattle's automobile sales, accessories, repairs, used autos + wholesale automotive equipment - a commerce that totaled over \$10 million per year: and it covered 54 city blocks about Broadway. (Kirk Herre) And still there was room on Broadway, between Union + Roy St. for small markets, shops, restaurants, apartment houses, homes... a home built in 1909 at 1822 Broadway that was converted into a rooming house during World War I and continued as such until 1975 when it was restored as "the last house on Broadway" and turned into a "Do-it-yourself picture framing shop." (W. Reed, CHTimes) Some of the more renowned apartment buildings were built just off-Broadway by Fred Anhalt around 1928 and shortly after that Arthur Loveless built a handsome Tudor-style complex of shops and apartments surrounding an inner courtyard at Broadway and Roy - "probably the city's first shopping center." (J. Krenmayer) And so on....

Thus the park acreage just off-Broadway at Pine was assigned to the attention of the Olmsted Bros. in 1903: preparing detailed plans for any specific park area was in addition to the original contract for a Comprehensive System. (The Olmsteds frequently complained that their advice as to the improvement of an area was sought by the Park staff with no offer of a contract or even an hourly stipend permitted under an existing contract. - Letters in file) According to the Olmsted Assoc. (1975), the Olmsted Bros. prepared 15 drawings for the "development + planting" of LINCOLN PARK (so known then because it was part of the Lincoln Reservoir tract) but by 1975 none of the plans could be found in Park Dept. files (of the 375 drawings prepared by the Olmsteds for 37 Park projects in Seattle only 39 drawings could be found in 1975: the estimate then by the O. Assoc. to reproduce the missing drawings was for \$45,300). From the Annual Reports and some Olmsted correspondence of 1903 + '04 is this condensed description: 1903 - the narrow strips around the reservoir are mostly occupied by a steep turf bank, while the ground south of the reservoir, of a comparatively gentle slope, has come to be used as a ball field, much to the annoyance of neighbors. (The 1908 Report identifies the annoyance as "men and boys who played their games without regard to the proprieties of decency in regard to the use of profanity, vulgarity and undesirable loitering.") So, the 1903 Olmsted scheme was for a landscape park whose design allowed "no provision for the more vigorous forms of play... particularly... baseball." A formal design of park was proposed with the north-south axis centered upon "the stone gatehouse (pumphouse) of the reservoir" with a row of beech and hazel trees along each side of this axis - this purple foliage would give this park a very marked individuality. The east-west axis would be centered upon the High School and the Olmsteds strongly urged the acquisition of the block of property in between - Broadway/Pine/Nagle + Olive. Almost immediately the "City... instructed us that under no circumstances" would this property be acquired so the new axis of the design became "the great jet of water at the center of the reservoir... and to accent this idea and also to unfit the lawn for baseball", an oval walk lined by the trees and enclosing a central lawn: this oval would permit short-cutting across the park yet avoiding straight lines. "We suggest a pergola at the lower end of the oval where visitors may sit in the shade and watch the jet." Floral bedding designs and low, ground-covering plants (to avoid the artificiality of trimming) was planned for the perimeter.

Scarcely a month later came "Preliminary Plan No. 2: "in accordance with your (the Park Board) instructions, we have devoted the greater part of the portion south of the reservoir to a rectangular ball field... covered with turf... which will need to be protected from the development of short-cut paths... by surrounding it on three sides with a vine-and-shrubbery-hidden fence, further softened with varied and interesting irregular masses of foliage and summer flowers between the fence and promenade walk. (Probably this was U-shaped - the open end to the reservoir + jet.) "Absolutely essential for public convenience, especially as one of the approaches to the High School, is a walk across the park, centered upon Olive St. In order to make this walk harmonize with the playfield (which was to be on an even slope from the level surrounding the reservoir to the level of the curb at Pine St.)... this will involve steps, but the height is not excessive." North from this walk was a semi-circular walk, intersecting the one around the reservoir - to accommodate short-cutting. In the midst of this semi-circle was proposed "various amusements": a wading pool - also useful for sailing toy boats - only 15 inches deep with a bottom of clean sand over a layer of puddled clay. To the east and west of this, areas of hard gravel surface, upon which may be disposed seesaws, scups (chair-swings for tiny children), swings and other apparatus for children. The rest of the semi-circle to be turf for lawn games.

At the center of the "Olive St." walk, the Olmsteds proposed a shelter building to afford accommodations for toilet rooms, a policeman, a foreman, other such workmen, a tool room, storage room and a room for heating apparatus to allow for winter use: these rooms extremely useful during a sudden shower or for the workmen at noon during cold or inclement weather. Shelter for the public - women and children - would be provided by an open shelter, arranged with a contrivance of awning curtains or shutters - "a very popular feature in Boston." Benches in the open shelter would provide a view of the wading pool, play apparatus - and the jet in the reservoir. "It will be necessary to be unusually liberal with the depth and quantity of topsoil and with fertilizing and cultivation for two or three years at least..." because the soil was composed of excavation material from the reservoir + from basements of nearby buildings: - 1908 Report.

"Until (1907) this park (Lincoln Park PLAYFIELD) received little attention, being used merely as a field by students of the nearby High School. During 1907 an agreement was reached between the Park + Water Departments that the cost of improvements designed by the Olmsteds would be shared proportionally by both departments: Water = 3/5 and Park = 2/5 plus maintenance + control by the Park Dept. Park Betterment Fund provided \$5,639. The pergola-type Shelter House was completed in time for use by the neighboring church at Broadway, Olive St. and Nagle (built in 1823/ rebuilt in 1922) for a Christian Endeavor Convention. A half-mile cinder Running Track for the spring events of the High School was built around the reservoir - outside the existing concrete Promenade Walk around the reservoir and a wire fence was placed on top of the low ornamental wall around the inner edge of the Promenade. The grading plan of the whole park was changed: the "Olive St." walkway across the park was level from Nagle to 11th - along the north side the slope went more steeply up to meet the grade at the reservoir + upon this was accommodated the circular walk and into the slope was placed the wading pool, sand boxes + seesaws - all arranged upon the axis of the jet fountain. The playfield south of the "Olive St." walkway was also shifted to this jet axis: the new Promenade U-shaped Walk around the field was now off-center - as was the reservoir - so that the planting beds were wider on the west side than on the east. Also, the Practise (Ball) Field was not large enough for regular games by the larger boys because along the south side of the Olive St. walk were located the Shelter House + south of that a Tennis Court at the west corner. Later on the play apparatus was placed on the northwest portion of the ball field - swings, rings, ladders, climbing poles - except the scups (chair swings) which were installed under the roofed, open wings on each end of the Shelter House. (When the Promenade Walk west of the Ballfield is clean, the faint lines of Shuffleboard may be seen embedded in the concrete.) All of this work

4.

DMS/042378

BROADWAY P.F.

Olmsted Development

was "completed in accordance with the importance of this location: the number of people in the community and the erection of a great many apartment houses in the vicinity - it bids fair to become one of the most popular and useful of the Inside parks." And the community was pleased with the "well-devised scheme... which created a whole new scene, so that the undesirable elements vanished." (1907 Ann. Rpt.)

By 1908 the Washington/Broadway High School was using the field for practice games, the Grammar School played a regular schedule as did the Seattle Church League, Mail Carriers, Wholesale (Auto parts) Teams + Independent Leagues - so that "scheduling was required ten days in advance!" [By 1970's, city-wide scheduling was required in advance of each season.]

This period marked the beginning of the Playground Division of the Seattle Park Dept. It was part of a national trend to provide playfields both for the larger as well as the smaller children. The Olmsteds believed that playground supervision should be undertaken by qualified teachers; but the trend went the other way and by 1909 Seattle had a Superintendent of Recreation, J. H. Stein: supervising a man and woman placed in charge of activities at Lincoln Park P.F. and other Department playgrounds. In 1910 the first Interplayground Athletic Meet ever held in Seattle was here because of its central location and access by trolley cars. One of the officials was from the YMCA and another was William Hill, of the Geo. Hill Co (Geo. Hill became a Park Commissioner from 1916-1920).

In 1922 the Department purchased a large new park in West Seattle, just north of Fautleroy Cove and the Park Board named it Lincoln Park. Fortunately, they renamed this playground as **BROADWAY PLAYFIELD**: fortunately, because it has not been a policy to avoid the confusion of similar names for several parks.

Evidently additional Tennis Court(s) were added - at the north end of the ballfield area east of the original one? - for the High School requested the use "of one of your tennis courts (at Broadway) for High School girls on school days." (1924) The original design of all tennis courts was a clay playing court which presented difficulties in playing - dusty or slippery if wet - and in maintenance - maintaining a smooth surface and controlling the growth of weeds. These factors, plus the demand for more courts and more ballfield space resulted in the relocation of and construction of 3 new concrete courts in 1932. By some coincidence, it was noted that the planting bed area between Nagle Place and the west Promenade Walk was wide enough and long enough - from the Olive St. walk to Pine St. - for the 3 courts. A new activity now developed on the tennis courts: roller skate hockey - with no damage to the surface.

Checkers is a game that was known to "the ancients" (5000 yrs. ago, according to one enthusiast, W.A. Hartman) and played in Europe since the 16th C. and known in England as draughts. The game quickly became one of the activities in the Shelter House at Broadway, for the Room and Boarding Houses in the neighborhood were home to many of the city's retired folks. It appears to have been a community activity for them for it was the only park where the activity was promoted by the Dept., so that in 1928 an outdoor large scale concrete checker board was constructed at the southwest corner of the reservoir, half of the \$180 cost was donated by the Pioneer Sand + Gravel and the Superior Portland Cement Companies. The checkers were one foot square and two inches thick of white or black concrete; the pieces were round and moved by means of hooks and eyes with a long hooked stick; a storage box and benches were alongside the Board. By 1938 the Board was so popular that "about one player in ten got a chance to play if he awaited his turn" and the loser of every game gave up his place to the next player waiting in line. So they petitioned for more boards and the Dept. countered with the proposal to relocate it on the north side of the reservoir where there was more space (presumably for additional Boards) but the petitioners rejected the plan (too far from the Shelter House?)

In 1908 the residents of the community were new families with young children - photos of the period show great numbers of children using the play apparatus. As a city grows, the new families settle on the outer perimeters (suburbia). So by the '30's much of the play equipment had been removed and there were complaints about the deteriorated

wading pool - and worn out ballfield. Some of the play equipment east of the Shelter House had been replaced with Horseshoe Pitching Courts. And about this time the two wing "porches" were removed from the ends of the Shelter House.

This was also the period of the Great Depression. To cope with it, the Federal Govt. initiated a series of Relief programs: first as work programs and then as construction projects of public facilities - the Feds funding the labor costs and the public agency (City) funding materials + equipment; the largest program was the Works Progress Admin. (WPA) and the improvements to Seattle Parks were many and varied.

The WPA "remodelled" Broadway P.F. rather extensively and particularly the area between the reservoir and the Olive St. walk. This whole area was regraded + raised so that a low retaining wall was built along the north side of the walk for almost the entire length across the P.F. Into this were set two sets of steps equidistant from the north-south axis and another opposite the west Promenade Walk: the east Promenade Walk was absorbed into the ballfield area. A new Wading Pool was built just east of the Checkerboard. And play equipment was located at the opposite corner, next to 11th. Fencing was placed around the entire playfield - as had been suggested by the Olmsteds - but this was a much higher one, to keep batted balls out of the now-busy streets. Some screening was attempted with shrubbery + trees, but many of the neighbors had become commercial establishments rather than residences. Also the old wooden back-stop and wing fences were replaced with the new pipe frame hoop design, the one wing fence running just south of the Shelter House. Jump pits were placed along Meagle Pl. and field lights were installed for ballfield + tennis evening games.

Seattle University was expanding its student body and began to supplement its own athletic field at 14th + Jefferson by scheduling special events + games: at Broadway. In 1948 SL requested the use of Broadway P.F. by the Air Corps ROTC unit. The Department resisted this non-recreation use, but later gave permission.

"The 1940's witnessed a tremendous country-wide interest in recreational problems and the growing conviction that the need for recreation is almost as important as food + shelter." (Planning Comm.) In 1948 the City Council requested that the Planning Commission prepare a Study on the Capitol Hill-Broadway Recreation Needs. Their 25 page Report recommended that the needed Indoor Center + additional Athletic Fields would best be sited at the Miller P.G./Meany School where land acquisition + combination of Park/School facilities was more feasible. Though Broadway P.F. was more centrally located - referred to as Seattle's "Central Park" in 1949 by N.A. Knettle (STimes) - it was locked in by commercial establishments and cut off from Edison Tech facilities by a major arterial. Evidently the petitioned replacement of the old Shelter House as a WPA project had been withheld pending a Study. The old Shelter House continued to serve, but with diminishing efficiency until 1963, when a new brick one was built up on the north side of the Olive St. Walkway, between the two sets of steps - on the axis. At the time, the 1907 building was the oldest park building in the system. This then permitted the enlargement of the playing field to the present Aerd ball, Softball + Football: the entire field was resurfaced with Cintrax in 1974 and new floodlighting.

Sometime during the 1940's a new fence was built around the reservoir, placed between the Running Track + the walk around the reservoir. When the "Turbulent '60s" exploded in Watts, Detroit, Newark; and Campus protests at Kent U., etc. against Prejudice, the Establishment + police brutality - there were incidents of "foreign substances" - including a swimmer - being thrown into the city's reservoirs. A guard was hired to patrol each of the reservoirs while the Water Dept. put together a \$20 million program to put a "lid" on all 12 reservoirs: Lincoln/Broadway and Volunteer Park topped the list. The ensuing controversy produced schemes for tennis courts on the Broadway lid and a shallow reflecting pool on the one at Volunteer. To be financed by Bond Issues, the program was to begin in 1973 but was "postponed"...

###

† The WPA-built Wading Pool was named in honor of Joseph Lee, pres. of Natl. Rec. Assn.

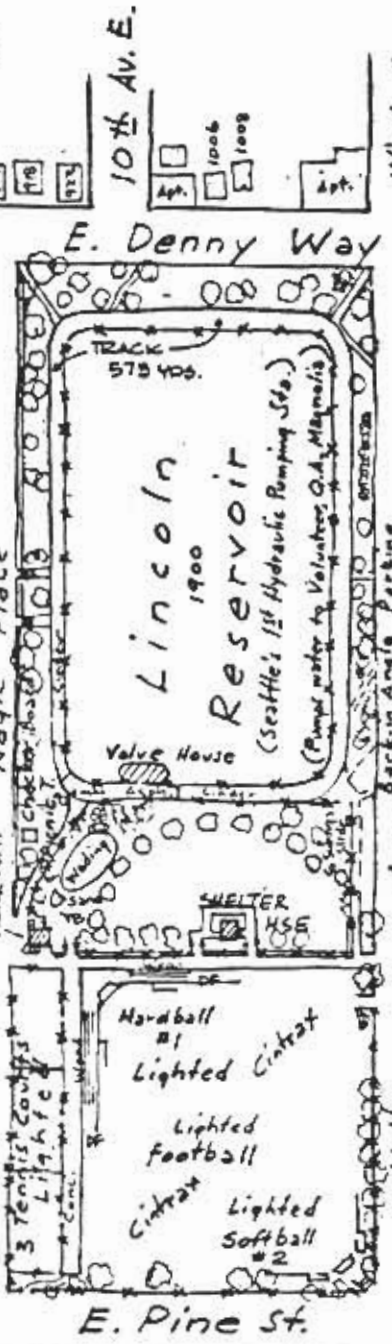
BROADWAY P.F.

G.
DNS/042478

Wading Pool named in honor of Joseph Lee, pres. of National Rec. Assn: WPA 1938-9 (Plaque)/replaced existing pool

Shelter House 1963 (16,000*)
 Lights @ T.C. '22 - 47,696* (Tennis Courts - 1932; replaced clay courts originally petitioned in 1913)
 Bullfield Lights 50 - 2,814* + 2,767* '52
 Outdoor Checkerboard has been a popular feature - particularly in 1930s. (Built 1928)

Area was original Donation Claim of John H. Nagle; German immigrant educated in Indiana who crossed the plains to Seattle in 1853. Cleared + improved property; together with A.A. Denny's + Mrs. D. Blaine organized the 1st Methodist Church in 1853. Nagle Place created by Council in 1899 to provide for Reservoir. Nagle died 1896; property platted by O.T. Denny "as guardian of the Estate of - an insane man." By trade Nagle was a paper mfr.



221

Originally named "Lincoln Park" by Council in 1901.
 One of first playgrounds to be developed - 1908.
 1922 - Renamed by Park Board (R.J. Fisher) for district whose main school and street was Broadway - the renaming caused by the acquisition of a new major park in West Seattle.
 Shelter House: 1963 - 16,817* P.F. (Replaced one in service since 1907.)
 PREVIOUSLY NAMED BROADWAY P.F.

BOBBY MORRIS P.F.
 name 3-21-80

410

102776