Paxton, James.  
Perrins, Edgar B.  
Perrins, Frank R.  
Perrins, Lyman P.  
Phelps, George E.  
Plumley, Edmund J.  
Pooley, Charles A.  
Porter, Stephen B.  
Potter, George S.  
Provoost, John M.  
Putnam, James O.  
Queenan, James F.  
Quinby, George T.  
Kebadow, Adolph.  
Keily, Dewitt C.  
Reyburn, P. C.  
Ribbel, Charles H.  
Robbins, Edward C.  
Roberts, James A.  
Robinson, George A.  
Robinson, Charles K.  
Rogers, Sherman S.  
Romer, John L.  
Sackett, Marcus.  
Sanger, Eugene M.  
Schattner, Joseph P.  
Schelling, Robert F.  
Scroggs, Gustavus A.  
Seaver, Marcy & Stein.  
Seymour, Henry H.  
Shaw, Edmund R.  
Sheehan, John C.  
Sheehan, William F.  
Sheldon James.  
Sheldon, James Jr.  
Shepard, Charles E.  
Shire, Moses.  
Sicard, George J.  
Sigman, Albert J.  
Silver, D. M.  
Simons, Seward A.  
Sizer, Thomas J.  
Smith, James M.  
Smith, F. Ralston.  
Smith, Lyman B.  
Sprague, E. Carlton.  
Sprague, Henry W.  
Sprague, Morey & Sprague.  
Stanbro, Almon W.  
Stern, Jacob.  
Stevens, Robert H.  
Stilwell, Giles E.  
Stone, Ralph.  
Stowell, John W.  
Strong, James C.  
Strong & Brendel.  
Swift, Zenas M.  
Stickney, D. C.  
Tanner, Amos B.  
Tefft, William M.  
Tabor, Charles F.  
Talcott, John L.  
Tanner, Alonzo.  
Thomas, Charles J.  
Titus, Robert C.  
Tyler, John.  
Van Peyma, Herman B.  
Vedder, Edmund B.  
Viele, Sheldon T.  
Volger, O. W.  
Wadsworth, George.  
Walker, Joel.  
Wall & Tillman.  
Wardwell, George S.  
Weaver, Ernest K.  
Weaver & Bell.  
Weisenheimer, Henry J.  
Welch, Samuel M. Jr.  
Welch, Theodore F.  
Wende, Gottfried H.  
Wheeler, Charles B.  
Wheeler, George W.  
Whelan, James.  
White, Truman C.  
Whitney, Milo A.  
Wierling, William J.  
Wilcox, Ansley.  
Wilhelm & Bonner.  
Williams, Benjamin H.  
Williams, Frank F.  
Williams & Potter.  
Wilson, Robert P.  
Wing, George.  
Winship, James.  
Woodworth, Wayland W.  
Worthington, William F.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PARK SYSTEM OF BUFFALO.

Benefits of Public Parks — Their Influence on Communities — A City without a Healthful, Free Resort — First Movement Looking to the Establishment of a Great Park in Buffalo — The Men who Instigated it — Action by the Mayor and Council — Engagement of Frederick Law Olmstead — Extracts from His Report — Adoption of His Plans — Beginning of the Work — First Commissioners' Issue of Bonds — Progress of Work from Year to Year — PresentExtent of the Park — Description of Its Different Sections.

In compiling a history of the city of Buffalo, no greater pleasure is experienced in the task, than that inspired by a proper reference to the magnificent Park system which has done and is doing so much for the general good of the community. If there are public benefactors who merit the lasting good will and gratitude of their fellows of every degree, they are surely those who are instrumental in establishing in our crowded cities, those physical and moral sanitariums—public parks; and the con-
viction that this is true is growing stronger in the minds of men and women in every city, with the passing years; so, also, is the belief in the beneficent influence exerted upon communities through such institutions as free public parks, so located and planned as to be convenient places of recreation for the masses of the people. In his original report to the Buffalo Committee upon the feasibility of establishing a park in this city, Mr. Frederick Law Olmstead, than whom there is no higher authority, wrote thus:

"It must be observed, also, that a really fine, large and convenient park exercises an immediate and very striking educational influence, which soon manifests itself in certain changes of taste and of habits, and consequently in the requirements of the people. To understand the character of these changes and their bearing upon the task we have in hand, it will be necessary to understand what a park is, or rather what it may be if properly designed and administered.

"The main object we set before us in planning a park, is to establish conditions which will exert the most healthful recreative action upon the people who are expected to resort to it. With the great mass such conditions will be of a character diverse from the ordinary conditions of their lives, in the most radical degree which is consistent with the ease of access, with large assemblages of citizens, with convenience, cheerfulness and good order, and with the necessities of a sound policy of municipal economy. Much must necessarily be seen in any town park which sustains the mental impressions of the town itself, as in the faces, the dresses and the carriages of the people, and in the throngs in which they will at times here and there gather and move together. Inasmuch as there are these limitations to the degree in which a decided, and at the same time a pleasant contrast to the ordinary conditions of town life are possible to be realized in a park, and inasmuch as the town is constituted by the bringing together of artificial objects, the chief study in establishing a park is to present nature in the most attractive manner which may be practicable. This is to be done by first choosing a site in which natural conditions, as opposed to town conditions, shall have every possible advantage, and then by adding to and improving these original natural conditions. If this is skillfully done, if the place possessing the greatest capabilities is taken, and nature is not overlaid, but really aided discreetly by art, it follows as a matter of course that in a few years the citizens resorting to the locality, experience sensations to which they have before been unaccustomed, disused perceptive powers are more and more exercised, dormant tastes come to life, corresponding habits are developed, and a new class of luxuries begins to be sought for, superseding to some extent certain others less favorable to health, to morality and to happiness, if not wholly wasteful and degrading. The demand thus established will, of course, sooner or later, make itself felt in several other ways besides those which pertain to the park."

These expressions by one of the most eminent landscape architects in the country, may well be studied by the prominent men of every city that has not already provided for itself a park.

Inestimable as are the benefits derived yearly from the beautiful and spacious park that now adorns the city of Buffalo, how insignificant
they appear in contrast with the mighty tide of good that must flow from it through all coming time, increasing year by year, as the population of the city becomes more numerous and the park itself grows in beauty and comprehensiveness. In all those features and conditions that conspire to create both mental and physical healthfulness in a community, to foster a love for the beautiful and good, to create and broaden a proper appreciation of nature's grandeur and loveliness, a public park of such generous proportions and general attractiveness as that which has been wisely provided for the city of Buffalo, should be ranked side by side with her schools and churches.

Previous to the establishment of the Buffalo Park, the city was lamentably deficient in suburban attractions, especially in landward directions, where a walk or drive was too apt to end in an early desire to turn back from the flat and unattractive prospect, and there was absolutely no spot where the great mass of the people could cheaply and quickly resort for innocent, healthful recreation. In a city of the size attained by Buffalo even ten or fifteen years ago, and destitute of attractive places for free public recreation, other than such as might be obtained on the water, it will be readily conceived that there were many thoughtful men who saw the city rapidly spreading out over the surrounding country, steadily and surely absorbing all the available localities where parks might be laid out, and saw it with anxiety and regret; men who, consequently were not slow to speak their convictions to the effect that it was the duty of the city before it was too late, to secure for itself something in the nature of a public park. Among those men who are known to have often and forcibly referred to this topic previous to 1868, were Messrs. Dennis Bowen, Pascal P. Pratt, William Dorsheimer, Richard Flach, Joseph Warren, William F. Rogers, Sherman S. Jewett, and doubtless many others who could not have failed to appreciate the importance of the matter. If there were any one, two or three men who were more instrumental than were their co-laborers, in making the park measure a living thing, it would be invidious and unwelcome to them to mention their names in this place with such a degree of prominence.

The first public act that finally led to the establishment of the Buffalo Park, was the application by William Dorsheimer, to Olmstead, Vaux & Co., the distinguished landscape architects, for the requisite investigation by them which would enable them to give an opinion as to the most feasible plans for the park. This action on the part of Mr. Dorsheimer was the direct result of numerous consultations, chiefly between Messrs. Pascal P. Pratt, Sherman S. Jewett, Richard Flach, Joseph Warren and Mr. Dorsheimer, with much discussion of the subject in the city press. Mr. Olmstead came to Buffalo in the summer of 1868 and gave the matter a careful and thorough investigation, upon which was based his report, which was dated October 1st, 1868. The report was trans-
mitted to Hon. William F. Rogers, then Mayor of the city, accompanied by the following letter:

"To Hon. William F. Rogers, of Buffalo:

"Sir:—The undersigned, a committee appointed at a meeting of citizens held at the residence of S. S. Jewett, Esq., on the 25th of August last, herewith transmit to you a communication addressed to one of the undersigned, by Frederick Law Olmstead, of New York.

"The letter of Mr. Olmstead relates to the establishment of a park in Buffalo. This subject has, of late, been much discussed by the press of the city and even more, we believe, in private circles. It was thought advisable to obtain the opinion of some competent landscape architect upon the various questions involved in the enterprise, but more particularly to ascertain what scheme of improvement could be carried out within the limits of a reasonable expenditure. Mr. Olmstead was the architect in chief of the Central Park in New York; he is now engaged upon the Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and upon similar enterprises in other cities. In view of his large experience, there was no one so likely as he to give the information which was desired. Accordingly, several gentlemen, at their own expense, procured Mr. Olmstead's services. He came to Buffalo and spent several days in a survey of the suburbs of the city, and his views are presented in the accompanying communication.

"It was the intention of the gentlemen who have interested themselves in this matter, merely to give form to a project which was entirely undefined in the hope that they might excite a thorough discussion of the matter, and that the Common Council and the Legislature might be led to take some definite action towards the accomplishment of a work so important to the citizens of Buffalo.

"We venture to request that you will transmit Mr. Olmstead's letter to the Honorable, the Common Council, with such recommendations as, in your judgment, the present and future interests of the city may require.

"Very respectfully, your servants,

PASCAL P. PRATT,
S. S. JEWETT,
RICHARD FLACH,
JOSEPH WARREN,
WM. DORSEYER.

The subject was brought before the Common Council in the following communication:

"To The Hon. Common Council:

"Gentlemen:—I have the honor to transmit herewith the accompanying communication from a committee of your fellow citizens who, with a commendable public spirit, invited the well-known and distinguished landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmstead, Esq., to visit the city and present his views in reference to a public park.

"I took the liberty on a former occasion of directing the attention of your honorable body to this subject, and to urge upon the council the importance of acquiring at an early day the land necessary for securing to our people the benefits to be derived from a public park, proportionate to the wants of a large and steadily-increasing population. The report
of Mr. Olmstead, it will be seen, presents a plan which, in many of its features, corresponds with many of the suggestions then made, and with the ideas on this subject held, I believe, by a large majority of our citizens who have given the subject attention. Its perusal, I feel confident, cannot fail to impress on the public mind the vastness of the benefit which the city now has in its power, by prompt action, to secure to itself. Indeed, few cities enjoy equal advantages with our own of securing a large tract of land so well adapted to park purposes, and at comparatively small cost, if the opportunity now presented is at once taken advantage of.

"I therefore respectfully recommend that a special committee of five members of the council be appointed to co-operate with the citizens' committee for the purpose of securing the enactment of a law clothing the council with authority to acquire, by purchase or otherwise, the land and property necessary to carry out the object in view, and to issue the bonds of the city for the payment and improvement of the same.

"I beg leave also to recommend that the report of Mr. Olmstead be printed in the minutes and referred to such joint committee, with the instructions to report the result of its deliberations to the Council at an early day. Respectfully submitted.

W. F. Rogers, Mayor."

It is not considered necessary in order to give a clear idea of the growth of the park scheme, to quote Mr. Olmstead's report in full, but such references to it and extracts from it will be given as will suffice to make its more important recommendations understood, for it was upon them that the park was founded.

The report states relative to the general aspects of the subject as follows:—

"We think it necessary, first of all, to urge that your scheme should be comprehensively conceived and especially that features the desirability of which are most apparent, should not at the outset be made so important as to cause others, the possible value of which may seem more distant, to be neglected. For this purpose it should be well thought of that a park exercises a very different and much greater influence upon the progress of a city in its general structure than any other ordinary public work, and that after the design for a park has been fully digested, a long series of years must elapse before the ends of the design will begin to be fully realized. Even in the initiatory discussions of a plan for such a work, therefore, it would be unwise to have in view merely the satisfaction of the probable demand of those who will be expected to use it in the immediate future. If a park should prove not adapted to the requirements of those who are to come after us, and even of those who are to come after our immediate successors, the outlay which will be needed for it will be an extravagant one. This caution applies especially to questions of situation, extent, general outlines, approaches and relations with other public ways and places. Minor interior arrangements may be adapted merely to suit immediate and clearly obvious requirements, as the cost of adding to those when found advisable will not necessarily be very formidable, provided the ground first secured shall have been of good shape, wisely located, and the general plan of improving it shall have been a well-balanced one."
After referring to the objections existing against the establishment of a great park near to the business center of the city, the report says:—

"For these reasons we would recommend that in your scheme a large park should not be the sole object in view, but should be regarded simply as the more important member of a general, largely provident, forehanded, comprehensive arrangement for securing refreshment, recreation and health to the people. All of such an arrangement need not be undertaken at once, but the future requirements of all should be so far foreseen and provided for, that when the need for any minor part is felt to be pressing it may not be impossible to obtain the most desirable land for it.

The three sites which presented themselves prominently to the architects for consideration in the Buffalo Park scheme, were the tract on High street near the old Potters Field; the grounds adjoining Fort Porter (now the Front) and the tract to the westward of Forest Lawn Cemetery. These three sites are each referred to at length in the report, concluding with the following relative to the desirability of the present main Park as the chief attraction and the center of the system:—

"We have seen no other situation nearer the center of population in which it would be possible to form a spacious park, even at an expense several times larger than it would be required for one at this point, where it would not very certainly prove a great inconvenience to business and involve large changes in the general plan upon which the building up of the city is otherwise likely to advance. The site which we have in view is now either waste land or is occupied, with the exception of a single unimportant manufacturing establishment, exclusively for agricultural purposes, and for farming land near a large town, can be bought at an extraordinarily low rate. A park would neither interfere with nor be interfered with by any existing or probable line of business communication, the character of the topography of the neighborhood not having encouraged the formation of roads from either side through it. It would be feasible by a slight divergence from the present route to carry the only existing public thoroughfares across it, whenever it shall be found desirable, where, by means of a natural depression of the surface, it would be out of the view from the pleasure routes of the park."

The report then pays attention to the approaches to the park and the smaller and less important grounds for the convenience of those who have but limited time for recreation, as follows:—

"Grounds need to be provided, therefore, less complete in their opportunities for a variety of forms of recreation, and adapted to accommodate a smaller number of persons at a time, but to which many can resort for a short stroll, airing and diversion, and where they can at once enjoy a decided change of scene from that which is associated with their regular occupation. The sites near Fort Porter and on High street are both suitable for this class of grounds; each would be conveniently accessible from a different quarter of the town, and each of these quarters would have less direct access to the main parks than to any other quarter where vacant land can be found offering any advantages for the formation of pleasure grounds."
"Fortunately the plan of Buffalo is such that the proposed site of the main park is already accessible by the most direct way possible from the very center of population and from the only quarter not proposed to be otherwise provided with a local pleasure ground, by Delaware avenue, an approach of stately proportions. So far as this quarter of the city is concerned, a better solution of the difficulty is thus at once offered than can often be obtained at large expense in other cities. The avenue is susceptible, also, of great improvement at a very moderate outlay.

"For the rest we would suggest that the two ends of the main park on the southeast and west be gradually narrowed and curved toward the town so that the greater part of the ground taken would be included within a crescent-shaped figure; and that strips of ground at least two hundred feet wide, be acquired, extending from them toward the north and west parts of the city on one side, and the south and east parts on the other. Through those strips a series of roads and walks adapted exclusively for pleasure travel should eventually be formed, and outside of them roadways to answer the purpose of ordinary traffic, which could thus be dissociated from the movement to and from the park. So much of these strips as should not be wanted for passage-ways should be occupied by turf, trees, shrubs and flowers: they should follow existing lines of streets as far as practicable so as not to interfere unnecessarily with the present divisions of property, and they should be so laid out as to connect the two subordinate grounds which have been indicated, with the main park.

"Thus, at no great distance from any point of the town, a pleasure ground will have been provided for, suitable for a short stroll, for a playground for children and an airing-ground for invalids and a route of access to the large common park of the whole city of such a character that most of the steps on the way to it would be taken in the midst of a scene of sylvan beauty, and with the sounds and sights of the ordinary town business, if not wholly shut out, removed to some distance and placed in obscurity. The way itself would then be more park-like than town-like."

A perusal of the above extracts from the report of the eminent architects, shows that the scheme of making a comprehensive park system for Buffalo was the one which, in all its most important features, was finally adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners.

The first Board comprised the following named gentlemen:—
His Honor, the Mayor, ex-officio; Pascal P. Pratt, Dexter P. Rumsey, John Greiner, Jr., Lewis P. Dayton, Joseph Warren, Edwin T. Evans, Sherman S. Jewett, Richard Flach, James Mooney, John Cronyn, Dennis Bowen, William Dorsheimer.

From this Board of Commissioners the following committees were appointed:—


Auditing Committee—Alexander Brush, Lewis P. Dayton, Edwin T. Evans, John Greiner, Jr.

Committee on Grounds—Dennis Bowen, Dexter P. Rumsey, Richard Flach, John Cronyn.
The report of the landscape architects having been in all essential points a most acceptable one, the next step taken in the matter was the preparation of a law entitled:

"An Act to authorize the selection and location of certain grounds for public parks in the city of Buffalo and to provide for the maintenance and embellishment thereof."

This act was passed April 14, 1869, and conferred the necessary authority for the taking of lands and procuring title to the same, the appointment of Commissioners, provided for the issue of bonds to the amount of $500,000 for park purposes and other kindred matters.

The act also provided for the future payments of principal and interest of the park fund, through the medium of general city taxation.

The first Board of Commissioners whose names appear above, made selections of the lands for the parks and approaches, a detailed report of which was filed with the city clerk November 1, 1869, setting forth the considerations which governed the board in their action; such action was promptly ratified by the Common Council and the necessary steps were at once taken to acquire the property. For this purpose in January, 1870, Messrs William A. Bird, Gibson T. Williams and Albert H. Tracy were appointed by the Superior Court of Buffalo, as commissioners to ascertain and report the just compensation to be paid to the owners of lands chosen. These Commissioners held a meeting February 21, 1870, completed their work and filed their report with the clerk of the Court June 30, 1870; this report was confirmed, upon application of the council on the 4th of August, 1870. The amount of the awards made was as follows:

- For lands: $247,785.66
- For buildings: $46,381.00
- Total for lands and buildings: $294,166.66
- Expenses attending the acquisition of title: $10,991.19
- Gross total: $305,157.85

In anticipation of the favorable action of the Council on the park question which fully decided the issue that Buffalo should have a park appropriate to her other institutions and her increasing population, the commission arranged with Olmstead & Vaux, the landscape architects, in May, 1870, to furnish plans and designs for the park, and a competent engineer, Mr. George Kent Radford, was engaged to make the necessary topographical survey of "The Park," "The Front," and "The Parade." Mr. William McMillan, a thoroughly competent horticulturist and landscape gardener, was appointed as Superintendent of the Park, and has ever since held the position and performed its duties to the eminent satisfaction of the different Boards of Commissioners.

Actual work was begun on the park in September, 1870; fences were erected around the Park and the Parade; about two hundred and fifty
acres were ploughed; about fifteen acres were partially graded; nearly two thousand feet of main drains were laid and eleven and one-half acres of the Parade were tile-drained. The excavation of the lake was also well advanced before the close of the season. In the report of the Commissioners for January, 1871, they said:

"It is not the intention of the commissioners to enter into a lavish expenditure of money for improvements that may be safely deferred. It was important that the land should be acquired and dedicated to public use, for a delay in this matter would have trebled its cost a few years hence. This accomplished and improvements made, whereby the public can be admitted for purposes of recreation and amusement, it may be safely left to the future to carry out more complete and elaborate designs of embellishment."

This expression foreshadowed a policy which, in a general way, has since been followed by the Park Commissioners. The expenditures to January 1, 1871, were $24,152.61.

The same Commission and Committees were continued through the next year (1871) and the work of improving and beautifying the park and its approaches was vigorously prosecuted. During the year the expenditures amounted to $169,941.34. The principal work of the year was the building of the piers and abutments of the bridge, for which the woodwork was also made ready for erection the following spring; the excavation of the lake west of Delaware street; the erection of the dam and waste-weir at the west end of the lake; the completion of nearly 3,000 feet of drive, with stone foundation; the grading of the playground at the front; the grading of thirty acres at the parade and laying 51,400 feet of the tile in the grounds; the establishment of three nurseries and other work of a less important nature.

The report of the Commissioners urged upon the Council the consideration of a topic relating to the park finances, which caused considerable discussion, but was finally satisfactorily adjusted. The report says:

"The Commissioners feel it their duty to call the attention of the Council to the action of the assessors, by which the whole cost of the parks and their improvement has been thrown upon the general fund. The intent of the law is unmistakable. One-half of all taxes to pay the principal and interest of the bonds issued by the city is required 'to be levied and collected exclusively upon and from the lands deemed to have been benefited by the improvement in this act provided for.' Such provisions of law are common, and are to be found in every charter which has been granted to the cities of his State. To declare that all the property in the city is benefited, and thus to bring the whole charge upon the general fund, is a plain violation of the law and of the duty which was imposed upon the assessors. At the last session of the Legislature an amendatory act was passed which was designed to carry out the intention of the original act. By that act it is provided that 'the said assessors shall not deem the lands so benefited to embrace all the lands in said city of Buffalo,' and that the one-half of the taxes 'shall be
assessed, apportioned and levied and collected exclusively upon the lands lying in the vicinity of, and which are directly benefited by said improvements. We recommend the Council to inquire whether further legislation is needed to secure the proper distribution of taxation for park purposes."

In the Commissioners' report of January, 1873, the following are given as members of the Board:—His Honor, the Mayor, ex-officio, Pascal P. Pratt, Edward Bennett, Britain Holmes, Cooley S. Chapin, Edwin T. Evans, Patrick Smith, John L. Alberger, Dennis Bowen, John Greiner, Sherman S. Jewett, Michael Mesmer, DeWitt C. Weed.

An act was passed by the Legislature in May, 1872, authorizing the Mayor to appoint, with the advice and consent of the Common Council, fifteen citizens of Buffalo as a Board of Park Commissioners, in place of those appointed under the act of April 14, 1869; the Mayor to be ex-officio, a member of the Board. In accordance with this act, the Mayor sent to the Council on the 27th of May, the names of the following gentlemen, to constitute the new Commission:—

For two years:—William H. Peabody, A. Porter Thompson, John Greiner, Patrick Smith and John L. Alberger. For four years:—Michael Mesmer, Abraham Altman, Britain Holmes, Sherman S. Jewett and DeWitt C. Weed. For six years:—Edward Bennett, Cooley S. Chapin, Edwin T. Evans, Dennis Bowen and Pascal P. Pratt.

Five of the above named men were members of the former Board. On the 30th of July the Common Council confirmed the nominations, with the exception of Messrs. Peabody, Thompson and Altman. The Board as confirmed, duly qualified and on the 7th of August organized by re-electing Pascal P. Pratt, president, and William F. Rogers, secretary and treasurer; the latter official still holds the office. The act above referred to, contains the following as section 2:—

"SECTION 2.—For the purpose of laying out, improving and embellishing the Park or parks, approaches thereto, and connecting streets, under the act to which this is an amendment, the bonds of the city of Buffalo to such an amount, not exceeding $400,000, as shall be necessary, shall be issued by the Mayor and Comptroller of said city, from time to time, as the same shall be required for the purposes aforesaid; provided, however, that such bonds shall not be issued to exceed in amount $100,000 in any one year, and that they shall not be disposed of or sold at any less than their face or par value."

Under the above section authority was granted on the 8th of July, to the Mayor and Comptroller, by the Council, to issue the bonds of the city for $100,000. The delay in making this appropriation caused embarrassment and it was late in the season before much work was done in the Parks. The bridge over the lake was finished in August, and a large amount of work was done on the Parkway; a new avenue was opened from Delaware street to the Park, through Chapin Parkway, Soldiers' Place and Lincoln Parkway. During the fall and succeeding winter the
excavation of the lake was nearly completed. Little was done at the Parade. Great interest now began to develop throughout the city relative to the Park; vacant lands in the vicinity were sought for purchase and real estate appreciated in price.

There was no change in the Park management for 1873, except the substitution of Lewis P. Dayton as one of the Auditing Committee, in place of Alexander Brush. In that year the drive, over six miles long, connecting the Front with the Parade, was opened and graded. A fleet of row-boats was put upon the lake, and the number of visitors greatly increased over the previous year. The Council took the necessary action to acquire the land for opening the avenue from the Parade southerly to Seneca street, which now constitutes Fillmore Avenue; the grounds around the lake to the extent of fifty acres, which had been roughly prepared the previous year, were finished and seeded and shrubbery planted, and the iron bridge over the creek was built. One drive of Humboldt Parkway was opened from the Park to the Parade; both the side drives from the Circle to Main street were opened and the double drive from Ferry street to the Parade. One drive in Bidwell Parkway was opened in June, and in August, the Avenue was opened from Bidwell Place to the Circle. At the front all of the grounds that had been roughly graded the previous year were finished, seeded and planted with shrubbery; forty large trees were also set and the footpaths stoned and graveled. In August, of this year, a special Park Guard of six patrolmen was appointed by the Police Commissioners at the request of the Park Commissioners.

For the year 1874, Joseph L. Fairchild, William Dorsheimer, Daniel D. Harnett, Joseph Bork and Augustus Fuchs were added to the Board of Commissioners, and John Greiner and John L. Alberger retired. Mr. Dorsheimer was placed on the executive committee; Dennis Bowen, C. S. Chapin, Joseph L. Fairchild, Joseph Bork and Augustus Fuchs, committee on grounds; and Patrick Smith, Edward Bennett, Michael Mesmer, Britain Holmes, and Daniel D. Harnett, auditing committee. The officers of the board remained as before. In May of this year, (1874) work was begun on Fillmore Avenue, which had been opened under Chapter 540, Laws of 1873. The avenue was laid out one hundred feet wide and $100,000 was appropriated for its purchase and improvement. The length of the avenue is a little over two miles. The dike that had marred the appearance of the lake was removed early this year, giving a better view of the entire lake expanse—about forty-six acres—and the grounds about the lake were generally improved. The building of the summer house on the knoll in front of the beach also refectory and boat house, was well advanced. A brick sewer was built from the creek to near the foot of Lincoln Parkway, with a branch leading to the boat house. The city water was also introduced in the fall of this year. A contract was made
in August with Thomas Dark & Sons for the masonry of a stone viaduct to carry the park drive over Delaware street, and it was finished in November. Large advancement was made in stoning and graveling the different drives, and in the planting of shrubbery. Humboldt Parkway was much improved and its drainage perfected. On the Parade a good deal of work was done on the drainage system, and the excavation of the cellar for the refectory was nearly finished. North and East Parade streets, bounding the grounds from Avenue A to Genesee street, were opened in October and Fillmore Avenue was opened from the Parade to William street, over one mile and a quarter, and a plank walk laid along the same. Important improvements were also made on the parkways and avenues. Work on the Circle was begun in May, but was soon suspended until late in August, on account of a change in its plan to its present design, after which the work on it was early finished. Important improvement was made in Porter Avenue as far down as Ninth street; the number of visitors to the parks was much greater than in the previous year.

The report of January, 1876, notes but one change in the Board of Commissioners; this was the substitution of Joseph Warren for William Dorsheimer, the same change applying to the composition of the executive committee. In the report is made the following statement:—

"One hundred thousand dollars per year of the bonds of the city were issued during the years 1872, 1873 and 1874, leaving one hundred thousand to be issued last year. During the winter of 1874-'75, a large portion of our population who depend upon daily labor for daily bread, were unemployed. The office of the park superintendent was daily besieged by this class—coming in crowds in the early dawn of the winter morning, beseeching work in terms which proved the dire necessity which had driven them forth in the hope of obtaining employment. The park was their objective point; it was a public work, and where else could they look for employment with less risk of being denied? Importunity resolved into a demand. The funds at the disposal of the board had been consumed in the previous season's work, and it became a serious question how the demands of the laborers should be met. The Common Council met the question promptly by passing a resolution requesting the park commissioners to continue such work on the parks as would furnish employment to unskilled labor, and early in February of last year authorized the issue of bonds to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars to continue the work. Legislation was also obtained to enable the council to make a further issue of park bonds to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars—one hundred thousand to be issued in the year 1875, and one hundred thousand in 1876."

"In July last, the issue of bonds to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars was authorized. The appropriation of two hundred thousand dollars during the past year has enabled the commissioners to furnish employment to a large number of laborers. The work has been pushed vigorously, of which the improved appearance of the grounds bears the ampest proof. The following statement exhibits the receipts
and expenditures in each year since the work commenced. The sum paid for the lands taken is also included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Receipts</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>$330,000 00</td>
<td>$330,778 07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>159,106 40</td>
<td>160,976 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>104,459 83</td>
<td>110,278 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>103,620 27</td>
<td>105,534 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>128,690 14</td>
<td>127,543 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>201,874 00</td>
<td>201,580 70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $1,047,750 64 $1,045,512 80

"This financial statement is presented for the information of your honorable body and the citizens of Buffalo whom you represent. The lands originally taken for park purposes, cost the city in the year 1869, $305,000—an average of about $600 an acre. The cost of the improvements made during the past six years have averaged about $1,400 an acre, making the entire cost of the park, excluding Fillmore Avenue, in round numbers, $2,000 an acre. The lands taken for this approach to the park (Fillmore Avenue) have an area of about eighteen acres and cost the city by appraisal in 1873, $72,000, an average of about $4,000 an acre. This fact is stated to illustrate the rapid increase in the valuation of real estate in the vicinity of the park improvements."

The above extract from the report, gives a clear idea of the park finances at the time mentioned. The more important park work for the year may be briefly summarized thus: Since the excavation of the lake, it had been found impossible to keep the water up to the level given in the plan on account of the backwater overflowing lands in the cemetery and others belonging to Dr. Lord. An arrangement was, therefore, made with the cemetery trustees and Dr. Lord, by which the banks of the lake were raised around the overflowed portions, with material excavated from the swampy lands. The expense was shared by those most interested in the improvement. This work formed an ornamental pond of about three acres, developed many living springs of clear water in the bottom, and filled the lake to the required level. "Farmstead," the residence, office and outbuildings of the Superintendent, was begun in August, and the house and foundations of the barn and stables were substantially finished. The boat house was finished; further improvement was made on the different drives and walks and considerable work was done on Porter Avenue. Changes were made in the entrance from Amherst street, made desirable through the opening of the Belt Line of the Central road; stations were established at the Main street crossing and on Colvin and McPherson streets. The Amherst street entrances were closed and a new one opened opposite the head of Colvin street and another on the east boundary, connecting with the Main street station by an approach through the grounds of Mr. E. R. Jewett, called "Jewett Avenue." These changes necessitated a corresponding change in the location of "Farmstead," and it was moved to the east border of the park, between Amherst and Chapin streets. Planting of shrubbery
was much advanced during the year; the Refectory at The Parade was enclosed; West Parade Avenue and Keller street on the west and north boundaries of The Parade, were graded and opened. The drive at The Front and the broad terrace were completed, and the fences and disfiguring shrubs were removed from Prospect Hill Parks and Niagara square.

For the year 1876 the Board of Park Commissioners was changed by the substitution of James R. Smith, Hiram Exstein, Frank Perew, George Urban and James Metcalfe, in place of Joseph Warren, Daniel Harnett, DeWitt C. Weed, Joseph Bork and Britain Holmes. The depressed condition of business at the time, and the fact that the drives of the several Parks were substantially completed and the parkways and avenues opened as good dirt roads, while shrubbery planting and seeding were in a satisfactory state of advancement, caused a suspension of work on the Parks to a large extent. The Superintendent's house and buildings were completed, and the drive encircling "The Meadow," those running to the Farmstead and to the east meadow gate were constructed, while considerable extension of the walks was made. The Parade Refectory, which had been begun under contract with Mr. Joseph Churchyard, was finished and opened on July 4th. Work of a general character was done in different portions of the Park, but which need not be further detailed. The receipts for the year were $131,094.53; there was expended the sum of $132,426.63.

With the close of the year 1878, Mr. Pascal P. Pratt resigned the office of President of the Board of Park Commissioners—an office which he had filled since the first organization of that body (about ten years) the responsible duties of which he had discharged to the eminent satisfaction of every citizen of Buffalo. Since then the office has been most acceptably filled by Sherman S. Jewett, Esq. It will not be necessary to follow in further detail the work that has been done on the Parks since the year 1876; general improvements and the proper maintenance of the system have been carefully attended to each year down to the present time, with as liberal expenditures as the means at the disposal of the Board would allow; yet the importance of such work, as compared with what has been described above, is insignificant. The work done since 1876, has been chiefly confined to what was necessary for the proper care and keeping of the grounds and structures.

On the night of August 26-7, 1877, the beautiful Parade House was burned to the ground; it was rebuilt on a plan of less magnificence in 1878-79, for which purpose only a portion of the moneys received from the insurance companies was used, leaving over $30,000 to be expended in the general improvement of avenues and parkways.

On the 27th of July, 1879, the street railway company opened their lines from Cold Spring to the Park. This was, perhaps, the most im-
important movement that had been made towards popularizing the Park, thus carrying out the hopes of the originators, that it would become a place for the healthful and innocent recreation of the masses. During the month of August, the street cars carried about 10,000 people to the Parks, clearly showing that cheap and regular transportation was an important element in making them a popular resort. The following season the line was put in better order and well equipped; it was still more largely patronized, has been since: during the four months that the road was operated in 1880, over 31,000 were carried over it to the Park.

In 1882, the Lake View House was erected at the Front, adding much to the attractiveness of that resort; its cost was nearly $10,000.

The following table shows the areas of the Buffalo Parks and Public Places:—

"Gala Water," 46½ acres; "The Meadow," including part of Deer Paddock, 150 acres; "Water Park," all west of Delaware Avenue, 121 acres; "Meadow Park," all east of Delaware Avenue, 234 acres; The Park, including Agassiz Place, 355 acres; The Parade, 56 acres; The Front, including "The Bank," 33 acres; Prospect Place, 7½ acres; The Circle, 4½ acres; Bidwell Place, 5½ acres; Chapin Place, 5 acres; Soldier's Place, 8½ acres; Parks and Places in charge of Park Commission, 475 acres; Niagara Square, 5 acres; Lafayette Square, ½ acre; Day's Park, 1½ acres; Johnson Place Park, 1 acre; Public Places in charge of Common Council, 8 acres; Fort Porter, adjoining the Front, 17 acres. Total, 500 acres. Park approaches in charge of Park Commission, 120 acres.

Of the Buffalo Park System as a whole Mr. Olmstead has said:—

"I am not unreasonable in saying that in the more important qualities of a Park, that of Buffalo, compares favorably with that of New York city."

Another gentleman, who was characterized as being one of the half dozen best qualified non-professional judges in the country on such a matter, said a few years ago:—

"In respect to the more quiet, tranquilizing and simply wholesome and refreshing forms of recreation—in beauty of water, meadow and woodland, which is the soul of a park—Buffalo has already more and is much faster gaining value than New York."

In conclusion it is but justice to emphasize the fact that to the men who have done most towards making the Buffalo Park System what it is, the people at large in the city are indebted almost beyond measure. That the expenditure of the large sums devoted to the work and the general management of the system, have been wisely, economically and honestly done, it is acknowledged by all who are conversant with the subject. The important offices of president, secretary and treasurer, and superintendent, have been filled almost without change since 1868—the two latter offices entirely so. In each of these cases, as well as in those of other officials, the most eminent satisfaction has been given.