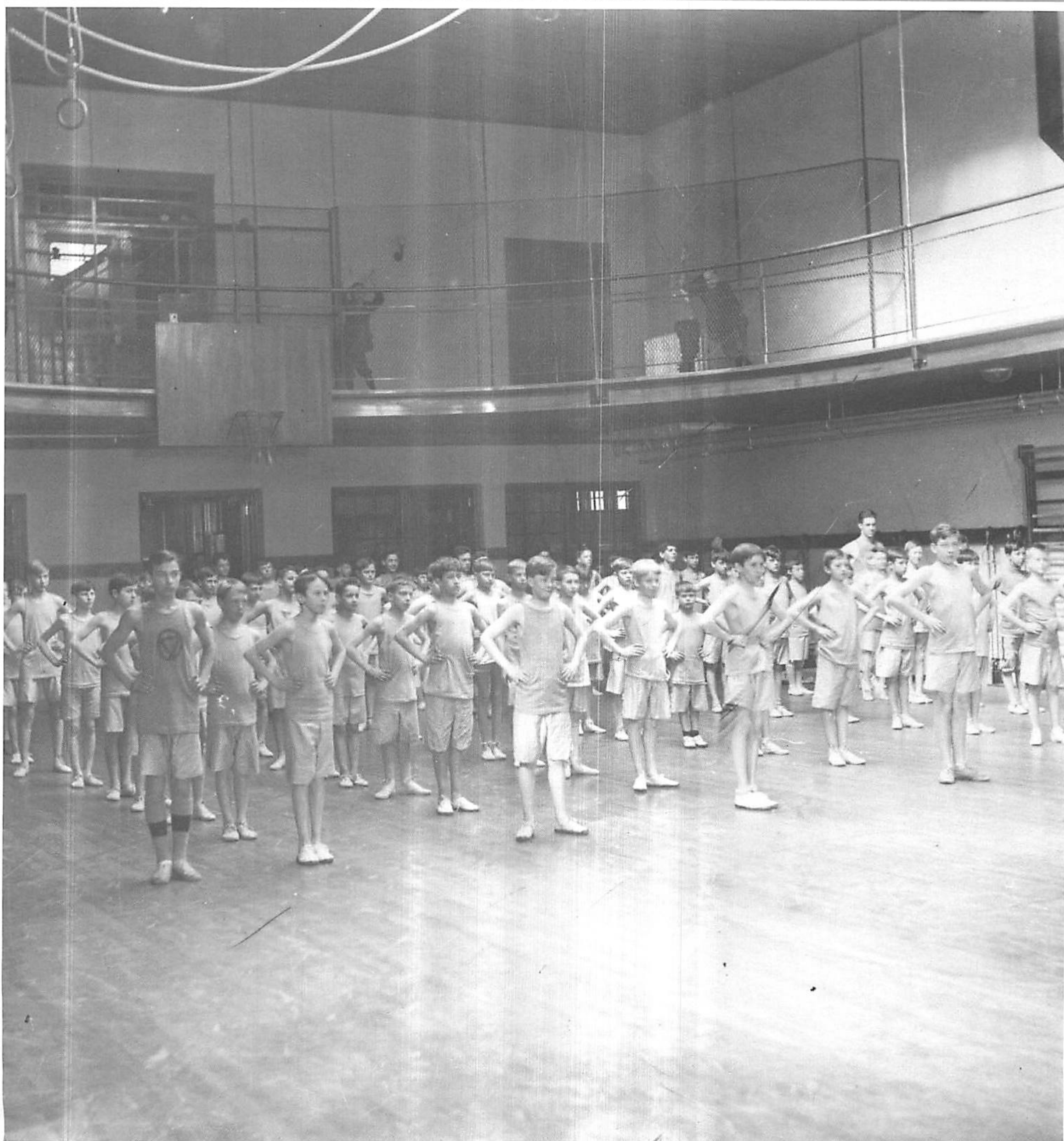
Chapter 3
Advocacy and Management



YMCA, built 1914, Warren, Pennsylvania (HABS photograph from the Borg Family Collection, circa 1945)

Public Playlands

Government Owned Amusement Sites

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Government owned amusement sites are few and far between. Where they do exist, such sites are subject to the challenges and opportunities that public ownership provides. This paper will share how government owned amusements, primarily the Playland Amusement Park, address these challenges and maximize opportunities to preserve their historic resources and character.

In 1928, Playland Amusement Park opened along the shores of the Long Island Sound in Rye, New York. Located about thirty miles north of New York City in Westchester County, Rye developed as a summer resort for wealthy residents of Manhattan in the late nineteenth century. As the popularity of the automobile grew and people began to move outside of the cities in the early twentieth century, Westchester County realized the need for a regional planning authority. The Westchester County Board of Supervisors established the County Park Commission in 1921 to plan for and manage the area's growth, beginning with an extensive parkway system that is still in existence today. Transportation and recreation elements were considered to be fundamental needs for the county's suburban community. The Bronx River Parkway, Sawmill Parkway, Hutchinson River Parkway, and Playland Parkway were all part of a newly created road system connecting the city to residential areas throughout the county. The park commission also created the county parks system, which established most of today's Westchester County Parks. It was fortuitous that the county acted quickly in acquiring property for recreation as rapidly rising land values may have prohibited the county from obtaining parkland later.

Some of the county parks, including Playland, were renewal projects. In the 1920s, there were two beach parks on the site, Rye Beach Amusement Park and Paradise Park. Neither of these parks attracted local residents, as the location was better known as an area of ill repute than a beach resort. In 1927, the Westchester County Parks Commission obtained the site through condemnation, including 280 acres, the existing bathhouses, and the amusement park.

After acquiring the land, the county wisely ran the existing amusement park and beach, gaining valuable experience in the administration of this type of resource and beginning a research and design process for a new park. At the close of the 1927 season, the existing park was razed and construction began on what was to become Playland Amusement Park. The commission hired amusement park expert Frank Darling, first as a consultant and later to lead the construction of the new park. (Darling eventually became the first general manager.) The commission's lead land-

Figure 1. Playland Amusement Park, Rye, New York

scape architect, Gilmore D. Clarke, traveled to various amusement parks east of the Mississippi, gathering knowledge and experience that contributed to the planning and administration of Playland. The commission hired the architecture firm of Walker & Gillette (A. Stewart Walker and Leon Gillette) to design the park with Clarke.

The design of the amusement park was organized as a series of Art Deco colonnades and corner pavilions along a main axis. In these original plans, a reflecting pool was centered along this axis, leading to the Music Tower at the northern end. The entrance to the park was at the southern end of the main axis, featuring more Art Deco pavilions, an administration building, and a multi-use casino building (completed 1929–1930). The main axis was bisected by a single cross-axis. The colonnades and Art Deco architecture served to visually and spatially unify an otherwise discordant collection of rides and services. The park's landscaping, likened to the contemporary designs for the grounds of World's Fairs, was also critical to the park's visual and spatial continuity. When built, the reflecting pool in the center of the axis was replaced with a lawn. The park complex was extensive, including the beach, pool, and bathhouse—an elaborate structure designed in the Spanish Revival style with two towers serving as landmarks of the park from the land or water. Additional resources were the eighty acre man-made lake and boat house at the northern end of the park, a 122 acre wildlife preserve, and a long dock extending out into Long Island Sound.

The park was completed in eighteen months and opened for its first season on 26 May 1928. While the entire plan for the park was laid out prior to the opening, some structures, such as the Casino Building, were added later. Playland was immediately popular, attracting visitors by car along the Playland Parkway and on ferries from the city. The park's first season saw over 2.8 million visitors.

The original poster for the opening of Playland in 1928 offers insight into the intentions of the County Park planners and administrators:

> Playland is not an amusement park alone as that term usually applies. It is a greater [sic] better thing. Playland is the part of a modern recreation center such as the world has never known. 1928 will show but the beginning of the contemplated development. If the people of Westchester show their patronage, a desire for the remainder, it will be provided.
>
> The Westchester County Parks Commission has heretofore provided the best public boulevards, the best public park areas, the best public pools ever given to a community. They are now committed to give Westchester the best public playground, if they want it.[1]

Remarkably, Playland looks much the same today as it did in 1928. When the park opened, it was administered by the Playland Park Commission, a group which sunset fifty years later. Except for a brief time when Playland was managed by the Marriott Corporation, the park has been owned and operated by Westchester County. Marriott instituted a few changes during its tenure, including a "Pay One Price" ticket structure replacing the free admission and individual tickets per ride strategy that had been in place since Playland opened. However, this strategy did not work at a family based park such as Playland and management of the park reverted back to the county. The park then became the responsibility of the County Parks and Recreation Department, and it remains so today. Playland is administered by a director, who also serves as the Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, an assistant director, and permanent and seasonal staff. The pricing structure is still free admission to the grounds and nominal charges for the rides. The beach and pool as well as the boat rides on the lake have individual pricing systems.

The level of integrity at Playland today is outstanding. In 1984, Playland was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and in 1987, Playland was designated as a National Historic Landmark, one of only two amusement parks in the nation to receive this designation. (The other is Kennywood, a privately owned park located outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania).

Playland still operates seven of its original rides. These include the Dragon Coaster, Derby-Racer, Ye Old Mill, and the Carousel. At 82 feet high and 3,400 feet long, the Dragon Coaster hurls riders into a tunnel that is the mouth of the dragon. Restored in 2004 by Adirondack Scenic of Argyle, New York, nearly 200 hand-painted scales cover the dragon's body. The Derby Racer was designed by Fred Church, with horses carved by Marcus Charles Illions. The horses are athletic and the ride moves fast; this is a carousel on caffeine. Ye Old Mill is a watercourse under the Dragon Coaster and the Whip, Ye Old Mill was designed and manufactured by the Mangels Company. The Carousel was designed by Charles Carmel, whose jumper horses (modeled on those in stables near his Brooklyn workshop) are known for their beautiful manes, carved flowers, and jewels. The mechanicals were built by Charles Mangels and the music of the carousel is generated by a rare Gavioli band organ, recently restored with funds from a New York state grant program.

The Playland staff has also preserved and continues to use the park's original structures, including the casino. Completed in 1930, the casino originally housed various functions such as bowling, dining, dancing, games, and ice and roller skating. Interior renovations in 1973 created additional skating areas. The building's exterior and rare lamella roof remain unchanged.[2] Additional existing original structures include the administration building, pool and bathhouse, boardwalk, and colonnades, all serving their original uses.

It can be difficult for a government entity to own and operate resources that are both recreational and historical in nature. The first challenge is balancing the needs of the overall community and county government with the needs of the resource. Second, some local residents consider the recreational resource to be a neighborhood park and become frustrated when the visitation levels increase substantially over weekends and in the summer, in many instances by visitors from outside the neighborhood or county. A third challenge is that the historic recreation resource is usually not operated for profit but rather to serve the community. This approach can be a challenge at times in Westchester County as Playland must maintain the character and experience of a family amusement park yet must also bring in revenue and updating

when necessary. The cost effectiveness of the park can also be a challenge, with some critics suggesting that Playland could be run more efficiently.

There are also benefits to government ownership and stewardship of a historic amusement resource. The park has had an unparalleled level of continuity, with a single owner continuously focused on the mission of the Parks Department and the individual park, Playland. As a government agency, the county is able to maintain the records of the history of Playland. The Westchester County Archives has an extensive Playland collection including administrative files, concession files, maps, building plans, and photographs, some of which are available online.

Another benefit is the county's ability to provide a resource that everyone can enjoy. The county strives to make the park as accessible as possible through public transportation, affordable prices, and extended hours of operation. Through free admission and a price-per-ride policy, visitors pay only for the actual rides taken, and can enjoy the grounds without charge. Playland's various resources are available 365 days a year.

County ownership of Playland has also provided for the preservation of a nationally significant resource. Westchester County is one of the wealthiest counties in the nation. As such, the pressure on land development and the attraction of high land prices is incredible. Government ownership of Playland has helped resist this pressure, protecting the 280-acre park and all of its resources. Ownership of Playland by the county ensures that all capital projects will be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC), providing additional assurance that the park's historic resources are protected. (As a county resource, Playland is not subject to the historic preservation ordinance of its municipality, Rye.) The park and the county excel at promoting Playland's importance, not just as a local resource but as a nationally significance historic property.

Playland is currently undergoing development of a master plan and readying numerous projects for implementation. The park's master plan will also address issues of continued operations and specifics such as the rehabilitation of the boathouse to be done in consultation with the SHPO, and the addition of new water features in historic pool.

One major project proposal is the rehabilitation of the park's colonnades and tower pavilions. The colonnades on the main axis leading to the Music Tower have been altered with removal of the original fins and installation of plastic replacements in the 1970s. While these colonnades still define the space, they are not compatible with the original Art Deco architecture of the park. The south colonnade, the secondary axis of the park, still retains the original columns and pavilions, but they have structural problems. The park, with input from the HPAC, New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the regional office of the National Park Service (NPS), has decided to reconstruct the colonnades where necessary and rehabilitate the colonnades and pavilions whenever possible.

The process of evaluating this project in an effort to maintain the park's historic character assisted the cause of preservation. Some voices advocated the demolition and reconstruction of the colonnades and pavilions but after much study, it was determined that rehabilitation will prove to be more cost effective than complete reconstruction. The rehabilitation will also employ up-to-date technologies to help the structures resist the harsh waterfront environment. When completed, the colonnades will be restored to their original appearance with columns, painted friezes, and flags atop the structure. In September 2005, Playland was awarded a Save America's Treasures grant to help support the $6 million rehabilitation project.

The Playland staff has worked hard to preserve its historic resources while continuing to provide a family entertainment experience for almost a century. These efforts have been rewarded by several awards and by recognition from various groups including the International Association of Parks and Attractions, the National Amusement Park Historical Association, American Coaster Enthusiasts, and the National Park Service

Playland Amusement Park is a unique resource among amusement sites and is the only amusement park of this scale originally planned and continually owned by a government entity. It is useful to briefly look at other government owned amusement sites when searching for a paradigm for preservation and continued use of these historic resources. A search for other government owned amusement parks that could be considered historic

began with reviewing the 1987 Recreation Theme Study prepared by the NPS, querying databases of National Historic Landmarks and National Register properties, searching the internet, and other informal surveys. A database was begun that includes government owned sites incorporating amusement parks, coasters, and carousels. The database continues to develop as new resources are identified. The search resulted in only two other resources that might be considered government owned amusement parks: Glen Echo Park in Maryland and Bay Beach Amusement Park in Wisconsin.

Glen Echo began as a National Chautauqua Assembly in 1891 on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., in Glen Echo, Maryland. This area progressed into a resort area and trolley park, eventually becoming one of the Washington area's premier amusement parks. Upon closure in 1968, there was great pressure in this area along the Potomac River for development, especially tower condominiums or apartments. Local residents urged the government to step in to save the open space of the park. In 1971, the National Park Service acquired the park. By then the amusements had been dismantled and the amusement park buildings had declined. Glen Echo quickly became a community resource, with the Children's Theater moving into the old arcade space. The NPS worked with the community in the spirit of the original Chautauqua movement, providing workshop and meeting spaces for various arts groups. Today, the historic Spanish Ballroom has been restored; an effort led by the hundreds of dancers who use the space weekly, and a carousel has also been returned to its pavilion and is being restored. The grounds also include a Children's Museum and Garden.

Glen Echo has a unique management structure in that NPS owns and maintains the buildings and provides interpretation. Maryland's Montgomery County works with NPS to rehabilitate and reuse Glen Echo's buildings and resources, while the park is managed by the nonprofit Glen Echo Partnership for Arts and Culture.

Bay Beach Amusement Park is owned by the city of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The park began in 1892 as the private enterprise of Mitchell Nejedlo and John Cusick as a beach resort and grew to include amusement rides. In 1911, the park was sold to Frank Murphy and Fred Rahr, who added more amusement rides until the park began to decline. In 1920, the 11.6-acre park was donated to the city with the stipulation that the land be used for park and pleasure purposes. The city shortened the name to Bay Beach and leased the park prior to taking full control through its Parks and Recreation Department. Today, the original 1909 pavilion and other features remain. Recently, the pavilion was restored to its original appearance and the park administration added traditional rides that were being sold from another closing park. Bay Beach also recently built a replica of one of Green Bay's train stations. The park has been considered potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Wisconsin SHPO.

The search also resulted in the identification of historically significant single amusements. A few coasters, including Leap the Dips in Altoona, Pennsylvania, and the Santa Cruz Coaster in Santa Cruz, California, are both National Historic Landmarks but neither is managed by a government entity. A number of historic carousels, ten of which are National Historic Landmarks, were identified but not all are government owned

The Meridian Carousel in Meridian, Mississippi, is a designated National Historic Landmark. It was manufactured in 1896 by Gustav Dentzel of Philadelphia for the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. It was then sold to the city of Meridian and has remained there ever since. According to the Director of Meridian's Parks and Recreation Department, the Meridian Carousel is the only two-row stationary Dentzel carousel in the world. In 1996, in honor of the carousel's one-hundredth birthday, it was completely restored. It took more than ten years to restore the twenty-eight animals, including horses, giraffes, goats, a lion, and a tiger, at a cost of approximately $6,000 per animal. This work was funded by various sources including the NPS Urban Parks Recreation and Recovery Program and the NPS Land and Water Conservation Fund. The city of Meridian provided fifty-fifty matching funds. The state also provided funds to restore the pavilion roof—the only one in existence designed by Dentzel. Conservation and maintenance work continues with the conservationist, Rosa Renkin, returning to the park biannually to tend to the figures.

One of the benefits of government ownership of the carousel has proven to be the city's ability to provide continued maintenance and care of the

carousel and pavilion. The city as owner is also not subject to pressures to dismantle and sell off the carousel figures. Additionally, since the carousel is not open every day, when enthusiasts arrive in town on "off" days the Parks and Recreation Department, located across the street, is able to open the carousel when possible. The major challenge is that the city's inability to operate the carousel every day of the year. The Parks and Recreation Department pays for the staff and utilities through ticket sales, while special event rentals and cotton candy sales pay for the part-time staff that runs the carousel when it is open. Another challenge is that the carousel is located in a depressed area of town and there is pressure to relocate the carousel to downtown Meridian. From a preservation standpoint, the Parks and Recreation Department would rather not move the historic carousel. All work on the Meridian Carousel is subject to review by the Historic Preservation Board and Architectural Review Committee. The city also has a preservation specialist on contract through the Community Development Department.

When asked what saved this National Historic Landmark, Park Director Mark Naylor responded that the carousel survives because it is a valued community resource. Community members support the city's stewardship of this amusement. The carousel is a great source of community pride and is still operating not because the community had to save it but because of a desire by the Parks and Recreation Department to "do the right thing." The department had to decide whether to make the carousel a museum or a functioning carousel and they chose the latter approach—to use this community resource and care for it.

In conclusion, what can be learned from Playland and other government owned amusements? Their experiences have a few things in common. All of the sites and government entities focus on that which makes the resources unique— a historic family oriented park or amusement, and the continued fostering of community involvement and support for the future success and preservation of these historic amusements.

Sources for this paper include: *Playland Then and Now: A Photo Documentary*, Westchester County, circa 1985; and conversations with staff members of Playland Amusement Park, Westchester County Planning Department, Bay Beach Amusement Park, Glen Echo Park, and the Meridian Carousel.

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Notes

1. "Play at Playland," advertisement.

2. Lamella roof structures originated in Europe in the early twentieth century. They consist of structural framing members assembled in a diamond pattern that support one another to span a large open space.

You Win Some, You Lose Some

Identifying the Factors for Successful Heritage Conservation

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In Western Australia, places of recreation and entertainment are increasingly vulnerable to the forces of development. What looks like an important heritage place to some, appears to be a valuable piece of real estate to others. In many cases, considerable skills of persuasion are required to gain a reasonable conservation outcome. Four factors are crucial to the success of any heritage conservation effort: owner support, community support, heritage status, and viable function. The importance of these factors can be illustrated through the successes and failures of the conservation of 1930s-era places of recreation and entertainment in Western Australia.

Western Australia is a vast area comprising about a third of the Australian continent (Figure 1). With a population of almost two million, one might imagine that there would be ample space to build new structures without demolishing the old. However most of the population lives in the capital city of Perth, and the southwest corner of the state. As elsewhere, pressures for redevelopment arise when a place is rundown, redundant, or occupying a valuable site; the desire of owners to make the most of their assets often puts them in conflict with those in favor of heritage conservation.

The Art Deco Society of Western Australia, Inc., (ADSWA) and the National Trust of Australia (Western Australia) (NTWA) are both advocates for conserving heritage places, and together have been instrumental in obtaining positive outcomes for 1930s-era places of recreation and entertainment. ADSWA is a small but influential group that, since 1988, has developed a comprehensive inventory of Interwar heritage places throughout the state. The most significant of these places and those most likely to come under threat are fully assessed and recommended to the National Trust for inclusion on their heritage register. The National Trust Register is highly respected, but listings can only be promoted by public advocacy. This contrasts with the State Government Heritage Register. Inclusion on the State Government Heritage Register deems a place to be of a "state level" of heritage value, and that status can be enforced through a statutory act if necessary or desirable.

There are several important differences between the heritage practices of the NTWA and the state's Heritage Council of Western Australia (HCWA). Both bodies assess four basic heritage values: aesthetic, historic, social, and scientific. In reality,

Figure 1. Map of Australia: Perth, Kalgoorlie, Beverley, and Sydney (National Trust of Australia, Western Australia)

Figure 2. Beverley Town Hall and Picture Gardens, built 1938 (Art Deco Society of Western Australia, Inc.)

HCWA bases its judgments of heritage significance primarily on scientific (including architectural) and historic values, whilst NTWA gives all values equal weight. In addition, HCWA distinguishes different levels of significance within a place, with the result that areas of a low level of significance are vulnerable to development.

Early heritage identification by community-based groups such as ADSWA and NTWA is a powerful tool in advocating conservation. Heritage listing forms the basis of advocacy directed to owners, the community, and to HCWA. Viable function is fundamental to on-going conservation, but this is a challenge that can usually be met when it is determined that a place will be retained. This paper illustrates the importance of these four areas by showing a number of places in Western Australia where ADSWA and NTWA advocacy has influenced outcomes. Not all outcomes are ideal, but all are better than demolition.

Owner Support

Owner support is critical to a successful outcome. In fact, when an owner agrees to retain and maintain a heritage place, the future of that place seems secure. In the following example, the conservation of the Beverley Town Hall and Picture Gardens was easily obtained through immediate owner support.

Beverley is a "wheatbelt" town eighty-two miles east of Perth, serving a regional farming community (Figure 2). This small town developed rapidly in the economic boom of the 1930s. Today, the town has a population of 1,200 and pressures for change and redevelopment are largely absent.

The Beverley Town Hall and Picture Gardens were built by the community in 1938 to accommodate administrative offices and provide a recreational centre, including indoor and outdoor picture theatres. Picture gardens were widely popular in Western Australia in the 1930s, in both city and country.[1] Today, many have been lost, and those attached to picture theatres have been enclosed, so that the Beverley example is important for both its excellence and rarity.

When first assessed in 1988, the town hall was still in use, although neither the indoor nor outdoor picture theatres were used for their original purpose. The picture gardens were an open space, their original function evident from the intact projection box. To conserve the Beverley Town Hall and Picture Gardens, the only effort required was for ADSWA to inform the local government owners of the significance and rarity of the place. They responded with pride and pleasure, and increased the level of care and maintenance. Today, the picture gardens are retained as a garden space in the complex, and, as it was entered on to the State Heritage Register in 2004, its future is assured. Together with other Art Deco buildings in the town, the town hall and picture garden is the focus of considerable community pride and is used to promote tourism.

The situation of owner support in Beverley is in strong contrast to most places in Perth, where through high land value, neglect, or loss of function, owners seek to demolish or redevelop a place of recreation or entertainment. Advocacy then needs to be aimed in other directions.

Community Support

The role of community support becomes of major importance when it appears that a place may be demolished. The local community, wider community, and community-based heritage groups all have a role to play in raising awareness of the issue in as broad an arena as possible. A strong assertion of heritage value from the community can influence local Government Councils and planning authorities, and ultimately the State Government's Heritage Council and Government Ministers. Two places in WA illustrate the importance of community voice, following early heritage identification by ADSWA and the NTWA.

Mosman Park Memorial Hall and Picture Gardens

Considerable effort was required to save the Mosman Park Memorial Hall and Picture Gardens. Mosman Park is an affluent riverside suburb of Perth. The Memorial Hall was built in 1921 to house shire offices and picture theatres and was given an Art Deco "makeover" in 1937. Though it was the focus of considerable community pride, after various unsympathetic alterations and changes of function, the building deteriorated. By 1989, faced with a run-down building, the Mosman Park Council considered either demolishing the hall, or restoring it to the 1921 original appearance.

The local community newspaper led the way in alerting its readership to the threat of demolition (Figure 3). They sought the views of ADSWA and published letters to the paper. Heritage status had already been identified by ADSWA (1988) and the place was promptly classified by the NTWA (1991), giving a sound basis for the community campaign. After strong displays of community support for the Art Deco building from the local community, the Mosman Park Council engaged a heritage architect to restore it as a Community Arts Centre. Again, entry on the State Register of Heritage places followed in 1999, and secured the site's future. The crowning delight is that the restoration resulted in a revival of the Picture Gardens, which now operates throughout the summer.

In this case, advocacy from ADSWA and the NTWA, together with local community support, persuaded the local government to undertake a conservation program. The following example shows the force of a much wider community campaign.

The Raffles Hotel and Beer Garden / Dance Hall

The Raffles Hotel is situated at the confluence of the Swan and Canning Rivers, facing the city and the hills. The original 1895 hotel was redeveloped in 1937 in the avant-garde Art Deco style, and featured Perth's first bier garten in a spectacular riverside recreational space also used for swimming, picnics, and boating. Changes in the early 1960s resulted in the replacement of the beer garden with a dance hall/nightclub. The picnic areas were lost to motel units. By the mid-1990s both the hotel and the dance hall were fully functional and popular,

Figure 3. Mosman Park Memorial Hall and Picture Gardens, 1937 (Vyonne Geneve)

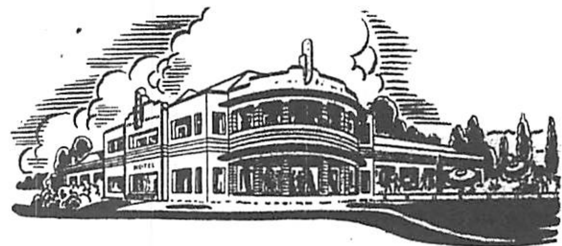

Figure 4. Raffles Hotel and Beer Garden, 1937 (Art Deco Society of Western Australia, Inc.)

despite being run down and in need of maintenance. In 1995, the owner of the hotel applied to demolish the entire complex and redevelop the site as high-rise apartments. This threat was of great significance, as the Raffles was one of only three Art Deco Moderne hotels left in Perth, and the only one in the nautical streamlined style. The conservation challenge was made increasingly difficult when the State Government Heritage Council rejected the place for inclusion in the State Heritage Register, saying that it was of "only" local value. Reassessment of that decision could only be requested with the presentation of new information.

Strong community support, backed by National Trust and Art Deco heritage status, was essential to resist the demolition application (Figure 4). Both groups were highly outspoken, and ADSWA led a grass-roots community campaign through petitions, demonstrations, and newspaper coverage. Advocacy was directed to two areas: the State Heritage Council (for reassessment and listing), and the local planning authority (for rejection of the demolition application). The local historical society and local residents and businesses supported ADSWA. Community, state, and even national newspapers took an active interest, and generated a high level of awareness of the issues. Members of the international community of Art Deco societies also expressed strong support, adding considerable weight to the heritage arguments. Submissions from Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Washington, Toronto, and New Zealand, amongst others, all asserted the excellence of the Raffles in an international context.

Despite all this activism, redevelopment plans and demolition were approved by the local authority, then rejected by the state authority on grounds unrelated to heritage. The owner's appeal against this rejection assumed demolition of the hotel, and discussion related only to the new development.

The community campaign assisted ADSWA to achieve two important outcomes:

1. Reassessment of the Raffles by the Heritage Council of Western Australia.
2. Admission of ADSWA as a third party to the Town Planning Appeals Tribunal to present the arguments against demolition and promote heritage conservation.

As a result, the Raffles was finally included on the State Heritage Register (2002), and the owner/developer was obliged to make new plans for the site, which allowed for conservation of the hotel. Although the beer garden/dance hall has now been demolished, and high-rise development will overshadow the old hotel, there is some consolation in the fact that the Raffles Hotel is still standing, to be redeveloped as a bistro and tavern, with an outdoor eating and drinking area near the site of the original beer garden.

The outcome for the Raffles was made possible by the strong support of the community from the local to the international level. Their high levels of activism influenced the Heritage Council of WA and the Minister for Heritage in granting a state level of heritage value, which was essential to ensure the cooperation of the owner in saving the Raffles.

Heritage Status

Heritage status needs to be assigned to a place before it comes under threat. Proactive heritage identification and assessment by ADSWA and NTWA provides a strong base for discussion when redevelopment is proposed. Without acknowledged heritage status, planning authorities have no basis for refusing a redevelopment proposal that otherwise complies with planning regulations. This was the harsh lesson that ADSWA learned from the demolition of one of Perth's rare Art Deco hotels. ADSWA identification was not published, and NTWA listing was made only after development plans were well advanced. As a result, there was insufficient heritage status to enable the planning authority to reject the plans. This was particularly unfortunate as the owner conceded that he would have retained the hotel if he had known of its interest and importance.

The next example, the Cottesloe Beach Hotel and Beer Garden, illustrates what may happen as a result of the differing heritage practices of NTWA and HCWA: the NTWA classifies an entire place, and the HCWA distinguishes "levels of significance" within that place, with the lowest rating left vulnerable to developers.

The 1937 Cottesloe Beach Hotel overlooks Perth's most popular beach (Figure 5). Its beer garden, at the rear of the building, has a high level of social significance, being a popular meeting place for

Figure 5. Cottesloe Beach Hotel, constructed 1937, with beer garden at the rear, to the left in this view (R. Lawe Davies)

young people, who regard the "Sunday Session" as a rite of passage.[2] Proactive heritage assessment by ADSWA (1990) and the NTWA (1993) led to listing on the State Heritage Register (2004), after plans had been lodged to redevelop the site. However, whilst the National Trust assessment valued the entire site, including the beer garden, HCWA's assessment valued only the hotel. As a result, the beer garden area will most likely be conceded to developers for more high-rise apartments. This is despite a strong community campaign in which young Australians around the world bombarded the Cottesloe Council with emails urging retention of the beer garden. Their views have been ignored, and now only the height of the proposed development is being debated.

Viable Function

Underlying all these examples is the consideration of viable function. Specialized places of recreation and entertainment face particular challenges in this regard. Lateral and creative thinking may be required in order to find an adaptive reuse for a place whose original purpose has been lost. Through conservation and interpretation, there is always the hope that the original purpose may eventually be restored.

Swimming pools are some of the most difficult places to conserve. They are costly to run and maintain, and when they lose viable function, it is not easy to find an alternative use. The Lord Forrest Olympic Pool in Kalgoorlie is a good example of this problem. Its heritage value is high: it is Australia's first fresh-water Olympic pool, made more special by being in a most unexpected location, dependant on water pumped from Perth through an extraordinary 1901 pipeline.

Kalgoorlie is the state's major gold-mining town, situated in the desert 373 miles east of Perth. In 1938, the gold-rich town built an Olympic pool (i.e., meters not yards), with top-level technology and avant-garde Art Deco architecture. Complete with top-quality diving facilities, Kalgoorlie became the benchmark for other states to follow, and the centre for excellence in swimming and diving in Western Australia until 1962, when Perth gained its first Olympic pool for the Empire Games.

The Lord Forrest Olympic Pool (Figure 6) became redundant in 1999 when a new swimming complex was built outside the town. Pro-active listing by the Art Deco Society (1989) and National Trust (1993) paved the way for inclusion on the State Heritage Register (2000). Faced with strong reluctance from the local government owners, the state even made a large sum of money available to conserve the place, but the Kalgoorlie Council has been deliberating for four years, and the place continues to deteriorate.

Finding a useful function is the primary problem. The latest, somewhat indeterminate, proposal is that the female change rooms will become either a café or a lounge area, the male change rooms will become a venue for youth agency programs, the

Figure 6. Lord Forrest Olympic Pool, 1938, Kalgoorlie (Vyonne Geneve)

entrance building will either display a site history or house youth agency officers, and the wading pool will become either a water feature or water activity area. The whole site will be integrated with the neighboring park, and the pool basin will be "retained for other, as yet unspecified, uses."[3] So progress has at last been made in finding a use for the site, and it seems that the pools will be retained and the place will continue to be used for recreation. It is even possible that the swimming pool will one day be restored to full use.

Conclusion

These conservation stories from Western Australia only have value if they can be translated into strategies for future conservation campaigns. Four factors have been identified as integral to success, and the strategies that flow from these can be summed up as follows:

1. Owner support:
   - Approach the owner as early as possible; you never know your luck
2. Community support:
   - Maintain a high respect for your heritage body
   - Maintain networks and contacts with local newspapers and other media
3. Heritage status:
   - Be proactive with heritage listings
   - Aim for the highest possible status for statutory protection
4. Viable function:
   - With sufficient will, a suitable function can be found sooner or later

Every place that is conserved is a "win" even when the outcomes are not ideal, and demolition is the ultimate loss. You win some, you lose some . . . but it is important to be persistent, and keep trying.

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formal qualifications are a Bachelor of Arts (English and Psychology), Master of Education (Applied Linguistics) and PhD (Education), and she continues to research in these areas, as well as continuing research to identify and conserve heritage places in Western Australia.

Notes

1. V. Geneve and R. Facius, "The Picture Gardens of Western Australia," *Trust News* 14, Autumn 1998.

2. Historically, the "Sunday Session" at a hotel referred to the limited Sunday hours of trading. Dedicated drinkers gathered at those few outer metropolitan hotels that were open for a limited period. Crowds could be large, as were the quantities of beer consumed. Today, with more relaxed trading hours, the Cottesloe Beach Hotel's beer garden is an iconic place for up to 2000 young people to meet for drinks on Sunday evening.

3. R. O'Connell, "Youth facility all clear," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 2 October 2005.

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Sanitas per aqua
Balneology and Adaptive Reuse at Saratoga Spa State Park

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Water: 72 percent of our bodies are composed of it, 71 percent of our earth is covered by it; and a human can last no more than a few days without it.[1] Water is an integral part of our lives. So it is no wonder that we have come to revere it, fear it, and in some cultures venerate it. Through the sacred and the profane, water's elemental importance is seen in both the metaphysical and physical spheres worldwide throughout history.

Designated a National Historic Landmark and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, Saratoga Spa State Park in Saratoga Springs, New York, is a reflection of water's importance. Saratoga's centuries-old affinity to "take the waters" or "take the cure" has earned it a celebrated reputation among the loyal.

For millennia water has been largely used for three purposes: spiritual practices; physical cleansing, inside and out; and recreation. The spiritual relationship to water has two different faces: either with ethereal implications in the form of symbolic cleansing or as generally symbolic where water functions as a metaphor, such as Pilate's hand washing in Christian tradition or the use of the word *umi* meaning both "ocean" and "to give birth" in Japanese deity mythology.[2]

Since the beginning of time, mankind has struggled with disease and has attempted to combat it. Before modern-day plumbing and social grooming practices, disease was rampant due in large part to the lack of proper waste disposal and personal hygiene. Bathing was infrequent and reserved largely for the upper classes.[3] The native cultures were the first to discover that water could be used as an elixir for many ailments; the Iroquois extolled the virtues of the springs of Saratoga.

Healing was also found in the consumption of the waters. Mineral water is defined as "water that contains no less than 250 parts per million of dissolved solids and no minerals can be [unnaturally] added to it."[4] Mineral waters are of two general kinds, those for internal use and those for external use. Many of the European spas possess only one type of water.[5] What makes Saratoga Spa unique is that among its multitude of springs, Saratoga has numerous examples of both. When mineral waters are taken internally, the effects obtained depend primarily on the mineral components, the alkaline and the gas content.[6] In general, mineral water has been used for relief in cardiovascular, rheumatic, and gastro-intestinal conditions as well as to assist in the treatment of metabolic disorders.

Finally, throughout history, but more prevalently in the past century, water has also been used as a form of recreation. Roman *thermae*, or baths were designed as a form of daily regeneration that was felt to be a social responsibility. The emphasis of this responsibility was on relaxation and pleasure.[7] It was also used as a form of social contact; a meeting place where one could enjoy oneself, discussing social, political and religious matters and, in a highly pleasurable way, to indulge oneself in idleness.

Only in the twentieth century has the bath as a public meeting place and communal bathing as a setting for business and other official or social occasions gone out of fashion. Instead, a shift toward water for recreational purposes has developed. Pools, no longer for bathing, are commonplace. Oceans, lakes, and rivers are used for a plethora of water sports and activities. Although viewed as recreational without any further ethereal implications, this popularity demonstrates people's continued need to have physical contact with the water.

The Spa

The origins of the word "spa" are not entirely known. One theory is that it is an evolution of the Walloon word *espa*, which means fountain. Alternately, some think it derived from *spargere*, Latin for "to scatter, sprinkle, or moisten." The most popular explanation, however, is from "*sanitas per aqua*" a first century expression that produces the acronym, SPA. Latin for "health through water," the acronym was first adopted as a name in fourteenth century Belgium.[8]

Before the amenities of the spas that we know today, major bathing traditions were found in many of the ancient cultures. Finland perfected the sauna, Greeks and Romans developed the public baths, Moslems bathed to reach enlightenment, and Japanese baths were a means by which to maintain balance with the forces of nature. The Romans are credited with combining the spiritual, social, and therapeutic values of bathing and exalting it to an art form. After the construction of the Julia aqueduct in Rome, water was more accessible and free public bathhouses that included hot, tepid, and cold baths and massage rooms were available.[9] The Roman baths combined physical fitness, social interaction, and entertainment. They were institutions that reflected a holistic concep-

Figure 1. "Guide to Saratoga Springs," Promotional literature, State of New York, 1937 (All images are courtesy of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation archives.)

Figure 2. Aerial view of the spa's axial plan looking east. Pictured from top left clockwise, The Gideon Putnam Hotel, The Simon Baruch Research Institute, Administration Building and Spa [Little] Theater; The Recreation Center [Victoria Pool Complex]; Roosevelt II bathhouse; Roosevelt I bathhouse; and the Hall of Springs. "Restore Your Health—and Enjoy It . . . The Saratoga Spa," Promotional literature, State of New York, 1951.

ANALYSES OF THE WATERS AT SARATOGA SPRINGS

Hypothetical combinations	Geyser	Coesa	Hathorn No. 2	Hathorn No. 3	Hathorn No. 1
Ammonium chlorid	61.17	38.77	59.10	55.14	26.75
Lithium chlorid	27.00	42.43	64.49	65.71	23.30
Potassium chlorid	233.81	348.00	789.54	915.50	390.40
Sodium chlorid	2,511.61	4,930.39	8,594.84	7,984.81	3,851.99
Potassium bromid	32.00	16.00	160.00	32.00	22.50
Potassium iodid	1.60	2.00	4.80	.40	1.00
Sodium sulphate	Trace	None	None	None	Trace
Magnesium sulphate	None	None	None	None	None
Sodium metaborate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace
Sodium nitrate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace
Sodium nitrite	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace
Sodium bicarbonate	2,206.54	433.70	424.71	171.22	703.89
Calcium bicarbonate	1,877.09	2,545.74	3,380.84	3,369.28	2,201.87
Barium bicarbonate	Trace	39.03	25.65	32.45	20.30
Strontium bicarbonate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace
Ferrous bicarbonate	23.15	14.25	40.07	16.05	9.55
Magnesium bicarbonate	874.71	1,378.52	2,244.88	2,130.23	1,266.84
Alumina	1.59	2.70	4.98	13.79	2.31
Silica	6.60	9.60	14.40	9.60	9.60
Total solids	7,856 87	9,801.22	15,808.30	14,796.18	8,530.30

Hypothetical combinations	Lincoln	Hayes	Karista	Old Red	State Seal
Ammonium chlorid	11.54	38.24	61.17	7.63	.015
Lithium chlorid	24.54	24.07	28.54	6.94	None
Potassium chlorid	371.41	465.40	213.02	72.33	2.470
Sodium chlorid	3,099.78	5,941.82	3,109.42	869.04	.940
Potassium bromid	20.00	30.00	22.00	12.50	None
Potassium iodid	Trace	1.25	1.75	.50	None
Sodium sulphate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	4,810
Magnesium sulphate	None	None	None	None	8,310
Sodium metaborate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	None
Sodium nitrate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	2,430
Sodium nitrate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace
Sodium bicarbonate	1,346.85	712.76	2,104.42	295.46	None
Calcium bicarbonate	2,020.67	2,849.13	1,774.23	1,100.94	108.650
Barium bicarbonate	14.73	30.88	14.95	10.04	None
Strontium bicarbonate	Trace	Trace	Trace	Trace	None
Ferrous bicarbonate	78.04	10.82	19.62	22.29	Trace
Magnesium bicarbonate	1,264.20	1,626.90	1,227.43	436.30	26.720
Alumina	3.97	.74	2.39	1.99	None
Silica	40.60	10.80	11.20	38.00	8.700
Total solids	8,296.24	11,742.81	8,590.34	2,873.96	163.045

State Seal is a sweet spring water, not carbonated. Geyser, Hathorn No. 2, Coesa and State Seal waters are bottled at the springs, unchanged in any way from the form in which they flow from the earth

Figure 3. Composition of spa mineral waters ("The Medicinal Waters and Baths at Saratoga Spa," Promotional literature, State of New York, Saratoga Springs Commission, circa 1945, 31)

tion of health. So exalted were these institutions that enormous shrines and architectural edifices were created, such as the estimated 32.5-acre Diocletian baths that could accommodate 6,000 people.[10]

Saratoga Spa was a melting pot of cultural bathing traditions offering social and therapeutic programs that balanced entertainment and both mental and physical health in a natural setting. Although not a religious retreat per se, Saratoga Spa was a place to relax and cleanse oneself of the everyday stresses at home: a social ablution, perhaps.

The Medicine of Saratoga

The mineral waters of Saratoga all originate in a geologic formation comprised of metamorphic crystalline rocks; layers of sandstone, limestone and shale; and topped with a combination of clay and gravel. Much of the deposits were formed through the glacial drift of the Cambrian period/Paleozoic era sea and by a series of faults, also formed during this era.[11] The waters have been recognized for centuries for their curative powers. As early as the fourteenth century, Iroquois Indians took advantage of the medicinal qualities of the waters from High Rock Spring. The waters were also one of the reasons the city was established in the eighteenth century. The springs became a source of recognition for the area, as their sanative reputation received wide acclamation at a time when modern medicine was in its infancy. This recognition led to the nineteenth-century development of Saratoga Springs as an elegant Victorian-era resort center, which attracted tens of thousands of visitors annually. By the end of the century, however, the springs were so heavily exploited as a source for carbonic gas that the water table, the water quality, and ultimately the economy of Saratoga were threatened. In 1909, the New York state legislature responded by establishing the State Reservation to conserve and develop the springs for public benefit.

Perhaps the most vocal proponents of Saratoga Spa's waters were Dr. Simon Baruch and later, his son, Bernard Baruch. Simon Baruch, who was a surgeon in the Confederate Army and later a professor of balneology at Columbia University, was the first American to scientifically study the therapeutic use of water, or hydrotherapy. His strong interest, dedication, and belief in the powers of the waters at Saratoga never waned. During his lifetime he did more than any other person in this country to expand the scholarship and lend credibility to hydrotherapeutics.[12]

As a well-known authority on hydrotherapy, Simon Baruch was very interested in the development of Saratoga as a health spa. Born in Europe, he was familiar with spas and spa therapy. Baruch volunteered to make an intensive study of the important European spas and make recommendations to the development of a spa at Saratoga. In 1913, at the request of the Commission of the State Reserva-

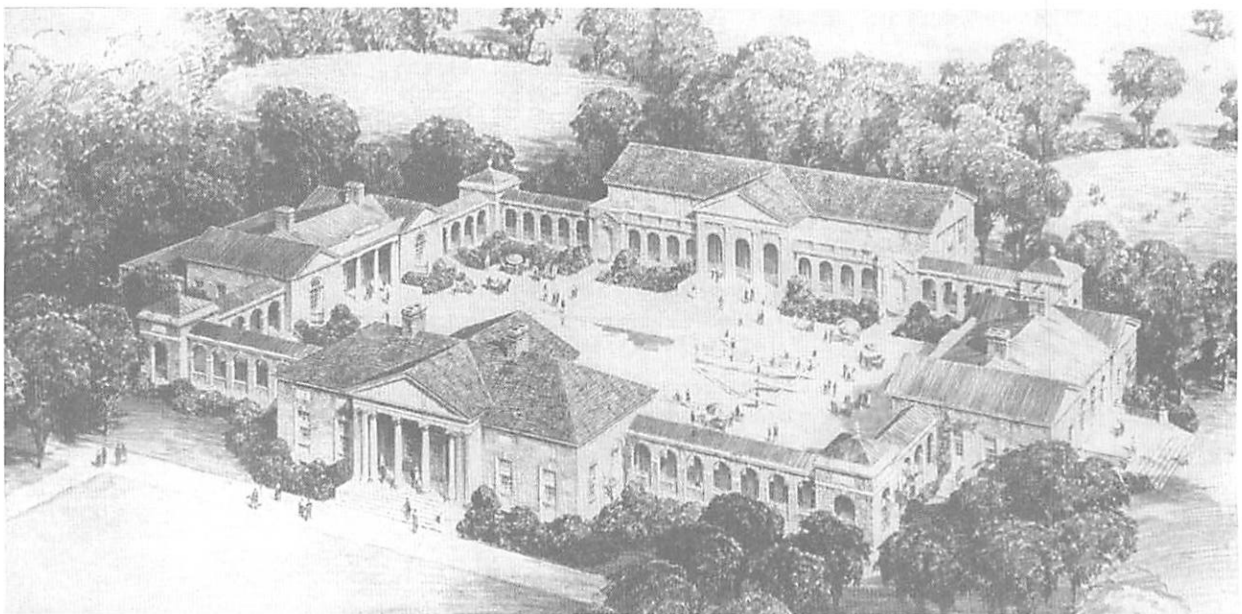

Figure 4. Architect's rendering of the Victoria Pool complex, circa 1934

tion at Saratoga Springs, which was established by the 1909 legislation, he visited several spas throughout Western Europe and returned with empirical data that assisted in the development of the future spa. He subsequently cultivated a cardiac therapy program based on methods observed at Nauheim, Germany, using the Saratoga mineral waters. Not only did Saratoga's version of this special therapy use a regimen of bathing and water-related treatments based on a doctor's prescription, it combined the mineral baths with other hydrotherapy techniques such as steam rooms, electric light cabinets, massage, inhalation treatments, salt, alcohol and oil baths, colonic irrigations, mineral water packs, and mudpacks. These treatments were generally recommended as a two or three week therapy program.

During Baruch's tenure from 1910 to 1915, the reputation of Saratoga as a health resort grew and the mineral springs were saved by placing them under the unified control of the State of New York. By 1915, the state owned the springs, as well as over 1,000 surrounding acres. The active springs were largely grouped in four major areas: High Rock Park, at the north edge of the city; Congress Park, downtown; Geyser Park; and Lincoln Park; the latter two constituting the Saratoga Spa State Park as we know it today. Construction during this period included the conversion of two carbonic gas plants into the Washington and Lincoln Bathhouses, construction of supporting buildings such as the powerhouse and laundry building, and park buildings such as pump houses and picnic shelters.

A devastating fire destroyed the original Lincoln Bathhouse in 1928. Two years later a much larger and more luxurious building was erected in its place. The new cast-stone building was evidence of the increasing demand for baths. Its imposing neoclassical design also asserted a new concept of park design, leaning toward the more formal European ideal thereby elevating the springs at Saratoga to "the most widely known of the American springs."[13]

Saratoga Spa's increasing popularity and the continuing development of medical research led to a severe supply-and-demand crisis. The State Park Commission published a report in 1930, which called for an ambitious expansion program that would upgrade the reservation to a standard

Figure 5. Label from bottled mineral water, pre-1911. The Lincoln Springs contained a high degree of carbon dioxide and were drilled between 1896 and 1910 on land owned by the Lincoln Spring Company, which bottled both the water and carbonic gas. After the State of New York acquired the land in 1911, all but a few of the springs were capped. The remaining springs were used to supply the mineral water to the Lincoln and Washington bathhouses. (Swanner, 71)

comparable to European spas of the period. This report was likely based upon observations and comments supplied by Dr. Gustav Toepfer of Carlsbad and Dr. Paul Haertl of Bad Kissingen. Both doctors practiced at leading spas in Europe and were very candid in their comparison of Saratoga with these sites. Haertl stated, "If Saratoga is ever to be able to enter into serious and highly desirable competition with the great health resorts of the world, it absolutely must have extensive, impressive buildings with all up-to-date technical improvements, comforts, and accessories of such resorts."[14] He saw great potential in Saratoga because of the greater quantity of available mineral water in comparison to European spas like Bad Kissingen.[15] Toepfer felt that Saratoga should follow the Nauheim example and use baths to specialize in circulatory system disease treatment, a regimen that was eventually employed.[16]

Under the administration of Governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the state embarked on an expansive building campaign designed to develop "a state health resort and spa for use by the public for balneological, therapeutic, and other similar healthful purposes."[17] Governor (later President) Roosevelt was stricken with poliomyelitis in 1921 and discovered the value of hydrotherapy through the salutary properties of the water from Pine

Mountain in Warm Springs, Georgia.[18] Roosevelt's fervent support further illustrates contemporary estimations of Saratoga Spa's potential.

The state's development of the park was motivated by therapeutic considerations, as well as to advance recreation and conservation agendas, as seen in its active property purchase and management programs. Funded by state appropriations and the federal Reconstruction Finance Commission, a major spa complex (the "New Saratoga Spa") was constructed between 1931 and 1935. This included a grand Hall of Springs in the European style, two bathhouses, the Gideon Putnam Hotel, a bottling plant, a recreation complex that included a swimming pool and two gymnasiums, an administration and research center, and a comprehensive landscape design, which featured athletic fields, scenic trails, forested drives, formal walks, and exceptional scenic vistas, all of which continued to promote the state's public health program.[19] These landscape features also served the dual purpose of turning therapeutic activity into play and of being a diversion for visitors to the spa who were accompanying patients but not taking the waters themselves.

"Taking the cure" became quite popular. Because of its uniqueness as a natural resource, its new state-of-the-art equipment for the bathhouses, its resort atmosphere, and use of the most advanced spa therapy techniques, the Saratoga Spa flourished, growing from 98,870 baths in 1934 to a peak of 198,306 baths in 1946. During this time, "the cure" cost $110 to $375 per person for the entire recommended three-week treatment.[20]

The Fall

By the early 1960s, reduced attendance caused by many factors led to the spa's decline. First, there was a shift in health practices including an increasing reliance upon penicillin and vaccines. Discovered in 1928 and developed in 1940, penicillin was used for the service personnel during World War II, and became widely available after the war. The first successful use of the polio vaccine was in 1952.[21] While many of the faithful continued to pledge their loyalty to the mineral waters and baths, there was a movement away from natural remedies towards scientifically engineered ones.

The post-World War II baby boom years also saw a shift in types and modes of travel, which directed people away from the spa-style retreat to beaches and foreign locales. Much like the resorts in the Catskill and Pocono Mountains, Saratoga Spa became a less desirous destination. The emerging automobile age and the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 facilitated independent travel with great ease.[22] In addition, jets revolutionized air travel throughout the world. Pan American Airways' inaugural flight in October 1958 finally allowed the middle class to conveniently travel beyond their time zone.[23]

Largely as a result of the two trends mentioned above, New York State Governor Nelson Rockefeller cut the $400,000 annual appropriation to Saratoga Spa in 1960, thereby requiring it to "pay its own way."[24] Under pressure to make the spa self-sufficient, the Conservation Commission developed plans for expanded park facilities that included a large swimming pool complex; picnic sites; expansion of the nine-hole to an eighteen-hole golf course; converting the Hall of Springs to a premier dining and dancing establishment; modifications to existing structures for use by park staff; and road realignments for better park access.[25] Opponents to these projects believed rather prophetically that the focus on the "vacation" approach would divert the spa's facilities to uses other than those for which they were designed.[26]

Finally, with more local significance, Saratoga Spa lost several members of the medical and scientific team. The founding research director, the research radiographer, the chemist, the spa engineer, and Walter McClellan, spa medical director from 1931 to 1952, all either died suddenly or retired after a total of 125 years of service among them.[27] Although the aforementioned reasons were much more significant in the decline of the spa, the absence of the founding medical and scientific team and the loss of their knowledge and dedication left a chasm that was never filled.

As the spa declined, the baths and their related structures closed. The Washington Baths ceased operation in 1978 and the Lincoln Baths in 1971. During the 1980s, the underused Lincoln, in need of major repairs, was slated for demolition. Both Roosevelt Baths were vacated in 1960; the once

grand Hall of Springs lost its interior fountains in the 1960s; and the Bottling Plant ceased operation in 1970. Although the laboratories remained in the Research Building, they gradually decreased in numbers throughout the seventies until finally leaving for good in 1981. The only buildings in continued operation with their original functions are the Gideon Putnam Hotel and portions of the Victoria Pool complex.

The 1970s and early 1980s were especially bleak. Saratoga's distinction as a spa— let alone a world class one— had long since faded. Its now completed transition to a park left vacant buildings with moribund uses as monuments of a bygone era. The prophecy had indeed materialized. Instead of a spa facility that also offered recreational activities, it had become a park that offered some baths and massages. In fact, a 1979 letter from the newly formed Friends of the Spa laments that "it is impossible . . . for two people to visit the baths together, have a bath and massage (the basic treatment) and leave at the same time . . . since only one masseuse or masseur is available . . . during one time period."[28] The "spa" seemed to be reduced to an irritating obligation rather than a public health service.

The Phoenix

With the buildings slowly disintegrating, it became imperative that new tenants and/or uses be found to fill the voids. The first conversion of use was done with the Washington Baths. Initially, it was converted to various offices, but in 1986, the National Museum of Dance moved into the space and remains there today. Concurrently, the conversion of the Research Laboratories into state and regional park offices was completed. Restoration of the Victoria Pool complex was recently completed and it is the home of an elegant pool (thought to be the first publicly-accessible heated pool), a golf pro shop with offices, and a restaurant and bar.

The fall of 2004 saw a glimmer of the world-class spa return with the re-opening of the Roosevelt I Bathhouse. A more modern example of its predecessor, it still functions with many of the same treatments offering various styles of hydrotherapy, massages, and body treatments, such as salt and sugar scrubs and algae and mud wraps. Also available are the amenities that have redefined the modern spa: facials, manicures, hair styling, and body waxing. Unfortunately, the Roosevelt II remains vacant.

The Hall of Springs continues as a place for social gathering but instead of offering mineral water to its patrons, it is used as a banquet facility. It also serves as a backdrop for the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, a 5100-seat amphitheater that is the summer home of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York City Ballet.

After its near fatal blow, the Lincoln was reborn in the late 1980s with varied office uses. In 1995 all five first and second floor wings were converted into a unified court system, court of claims, and regional park police offices. The only remaining vestige of the bath era in the building is a once functioning bath at the rear of the first floor, where much original equipment remains as if it is an archive of the spa's great history. With the opening of the Roosevelt I, its future is uncertain. Currently, it is operated only as overflow, providing additional bathing facilities for the Saratoga summer crowd.

The last major conversion was the reopening of the Bottling Plant as the Saratoga Automobile Museum in 2002. This $5 million renovation, which included the addition of an automobile elevator, was ideal for the display of thirty to thirty-five cars at any one time.

What is in store for Saratoga Spa State Park and the former spa within? With interest from private and professional organizations such as the New York Spa Preservation Alliance and the American Society of Medical Hydrology and Spa Medicine, the future is very optimistic. Plans are already underway to develop an appropriate use for the one remaining vacant structure incorporating all the natural, recreational, and cultural opportunities already existing within the Spa's boundaries.

Grace Maguire Swanner, former medical consultant to the Saratoga Spa, writes that Saratoga was "truly an American institution" because the waters were very democratic.[29] Regardless of one's financial, social, or health status, the benevolent waters bestowed their health-giving benefits on whoever was willing to accept them. As the phoenix rises from the ashes, so too has Saratoga Spa. With a renewed interest in the spa, this oasis with

its "water cure" once again offers an elixir and refuge, this time from the ills of the new millennium.

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8. Ibid., 136.

9. Ibid., 81.

10. Ibid., 84.

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27. Ibid, 251–252. Oskar Baudisch, Ph.D. (1939–1950), founding research director; Dr. Lester Strock (1939–1952), research radiographer; Herbert (Doc) Ant (1914–1954), chemist; Cyrus B. Elmore (1915–1956), spa engineer; Dr. Walter McClellen (1931–1952) spa medical director.

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Take Me Out to the Ball Park
The Restoration and Revitalization of Rickwood Field

David M. Brewer
Executive Director
Friends of Rickwood
Birmingham, Alabama

Recognized by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) as America's oldest baseball park, Rickwood Field served as the home park for the Birmingham Barons from 1910 through 1987.[1] From 1920 through 1963, it also served as the home park of the Birmingham Black Barons, and is today recognized by the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum as one of only two remaining former Negro League ballparks.[2] Rickwood also frequently hosted games of traveling and barnstorming teams from the heyday of major league baseball, including more than fifty current members of the Baseball Hall of Fame.[3]

Rickwood Field, however, is more than *just* baseball. It is a key component of both local and national social fabric and collective history. During Rickwood's heyday, going to your local baseball park to support the hometown team constituted a major social event and provided both a source of community pride and identity (Figure 1). In broader terms, the opportunity to witness the play of American cultural icons brought Birmingham and regional residents into the national fold and reassured them that they too shared a stake in the "great American pastime."

Our nation and its game have changed dramatically during the past ninety-five years. Rickwood Field has witnessed and experienced many of these changes, yet today it remains as a reminder of a bygone chapter in our nation's past. An unforgettable experience I had highlights this and helps to remind us why historic preservation remains a worthwhile endeavor. On a rainy March evening just before dusk, as I walked through the tunnel of the park and emerged onto the field, I suddenly became aware of an elderly gentleman sitting to my right, in the box seats behind first base. He had not spoken to me; I simply felt his presence. When our eyes met, he stood and adjusted the collar on his overcoat, and after pulling his hat down tight, he walked laboriously down the steps onto the field and extended his hand in an unspoken greeting. And then in a tone rich with emotion, he said "Son, this park is still just like I remember it." At that moment, a gust of wind peeled-back the corner of the tarp covering the pitcher's mound. When I had replaced the weight on the tarp and turned back around to face the dugout, he was no longer standing there. After making one more pass through the grandstands, I locked the gate and began my drive home. Later that evening, I thought more about what he had said . . . "this park is still just like I remember it." In those few heartfelt words, he had given value to everything that we are doing at Rickwood Field. Not the Friends of Rickwood alone, but the entire Birmingham

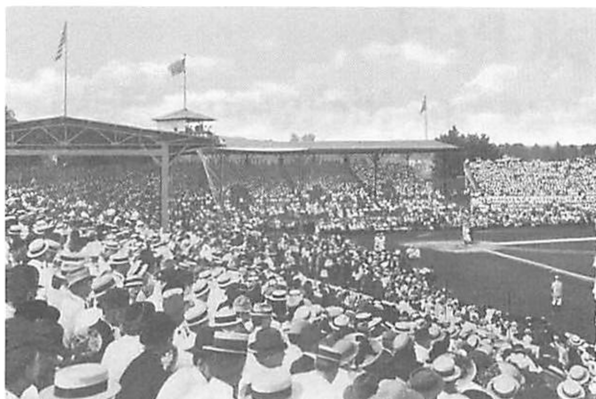

Figure 1. Birmingham baseball fans fill Rickwood Field, opening day, 18 August 1910. (Historic postcard, author's collection)

community, and every visitor and ball player that steps through the gate. A true labor of love, we are together keeping one of America's treasures alive.[4]

If the "why" of restoring and revitalizing an old ball park seems obvious, the "how" remains a bit more elusive. By pursuing a multi-tiered strategy defined in the Rickwood Master Plan, the Friends of Rickwood has established itself as an effective steward of this American treasure and has successfully completed more than a dozen renovation component projects, consisting of upgrades to the facility, field, and grounds.[5] Central to the comprehensive revitalization of the park is its continued role as a high profile baseball venue, buttressed by the marketing of the park as a dynamic destination and living history museum.

It is my hope that information presented herein will illuminate both the "why" and the "how" of the equation, through an examination of the strategies and challenges integral to this ongoing project. This overview will also propose that the restoration and revitalization of Rickwood Field can serve as a model for similar endeavors, while not ignoring the notion that preservation success may be fleeting. And although we frequently talk in terms of having "saved" the park, in reality the project remains ongoing, with many challenges still ahead.

Okay, So Why Save an Old Baseball Park?

When talking about any preservation project, the obvious place to start is "why?" In the case of Rickwood Field, the question is specifically, "why invest in an old baseball park?" We think that there are a number of compelling reasons:

- HABS status as America's oldest baseball park—there is only one "oldest" anything, and we believe that this NPS recognition adds tremendous credibility to our project
- the park's rich baseball history
- the park's role in community and national social fabric, including the Civil Rights story
- the park's architectural significance
- the park's potential role as a catalyst for community revitalization

In August 1993 the National Park Service's Historic American Building Survey completed its Rickwood Field documentation project, and concluded that Rickwood Field is the nation's oldest baseball

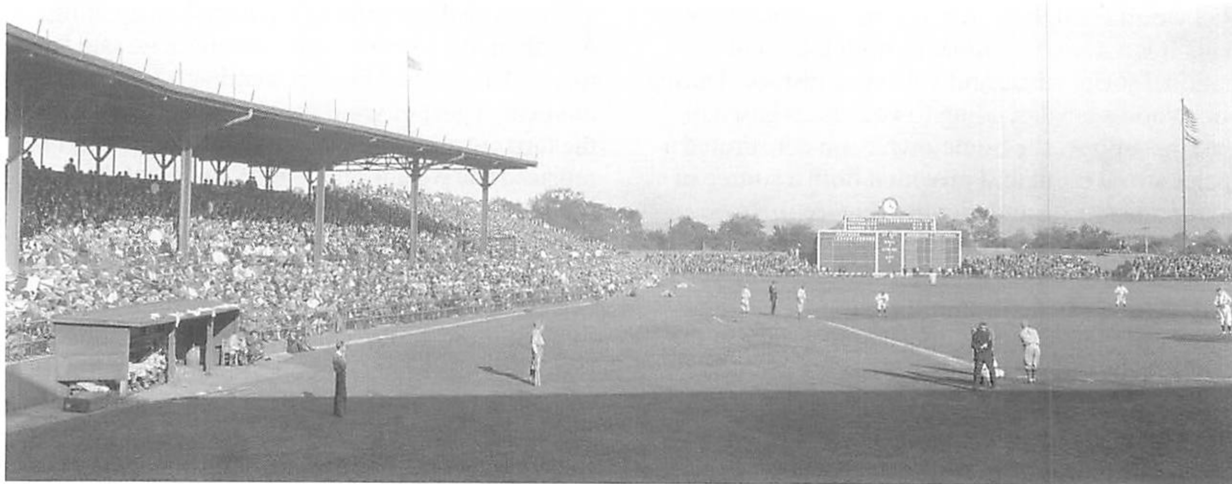

Figure 2. A capacity crowd fills Rickwood Field in 1929. (Glynn West)

grandstand on its original site, thereby qualifying it as America's oldest baseball park.[6] There are of course many other great old parks, and not infrequently, we receive comments about a particular park being a challenger to this status. But, to date, no challenger's claims have been substantiated. In each case thus far, it has proven to be an earlier piece of real estate occupied by a later grandstand.[7]

Rickwood's role as host for the Barons and their Southern Association and later Southern League rivals, the Black Barons and their Negro League counterparts, and the frequent play of Major League teams further supports the preservation argument (Figure 2). The park's first six decades produced an impressive list of alumni, including baseball legends Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Jackie Robinson, Ted Williams, Willie Mays, Joe DiMaggio, Satchel Paige, Dizzy Dean, Hank Aaron, Honus Wagner, Rube Foster, Rogers Hornsby, Cool Papa Bell, Lou Gehrig, Stan Musial, Ernie Banks, Reggie Jackson, and many others.[8] And although the Black Barons concluded their last season in 1963, and the Barons left for the suburbs in 1987, baseball continues today to be alive and well at Rickwood, with approximately 200 games played annually.

Paralleling the park's baseball legacy is its role in Birmingham and American social history. Erected in 1910, Rickwood Field exemplifies the enthusiasm and optimism of early twentieth century America, a nation transitioning from a rural agrarian society to that of an urban industrialized society. A.H. "Rick" Woodward, son of a wealthy Birmingham industrialist and builder of Rickwood Field, typified the enthusiasm and boosterism of early twentieth century America, and specifically the young city of Birmingham, the rising industrial center of the New South.[9] As industry established itself in Birmingham, neighborhoods and communities sprouted around the plants, mills, and mines of this blue collar, working class town.

The economic and social transition that accompanied this growth, however, brought profound changes to everyday life. The new industrial worker found himself faced with a much more regimented and much less autonomous lifestyle, including a growing domination by the company and the time clock. As industrial life became more arduous, employers instituted programs designed to boost both morale and productivity. The introduction of company-sponsored recreation

Figure 3. Rickwood Field's distinctive front entry (Bill Chapman)

programs, such as baseball teams, became commonplace, with Birmingham firms large and small fielding competitive baseball squads. Baseball in general, and Rickwood Field specifically, became a core component of Birmingham's working class industrial identity.

The high caliber of play among many of these company-sponsored teams set the precedent for professional baseball in Birmingham. Ultimately, both the Barons and Black Barons tracked and recruited local talent from this rich pool. As this talent feeder system developed, fan loyalty toward individual company squads soon evolved into a passionate following for Birmingham's professional baseball teams.

In the broader view of Birmingham civic pride, Rickwood became the focal point of community identity. And although segregation statutes prevented black and white fans from socializing together at Rickwood Field, both groups packed the grandstands to cheer on their respective teams and heroes. Moreover, due to the Barons' and Black Barons' shared use of the park, Rickwood occupies a place in our community's and nation's civil rights story, a place recently acknowledged by its inclusion in the National Trust's "African American Historic Places Initiative."[10]

In architectural terms, Rickwood Field represents classic early twentieth century ballpark design and is considered to be the first minor league stadium built of concrete and steel.[11] The grandstand, coupled with a 1928 Mission Style entryway (Figure 3) and 1936 field light towers, forms the core of the park. While researching ball park design, Rick Woodward enlisted the assistance of legendary

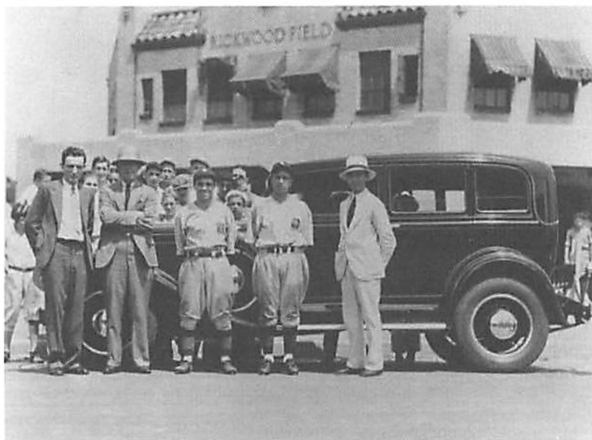

Figure 4. Barons ballplayers and fans pose in front of Rickwood's distinctive entrance, 1930. (Chuck Stewart)

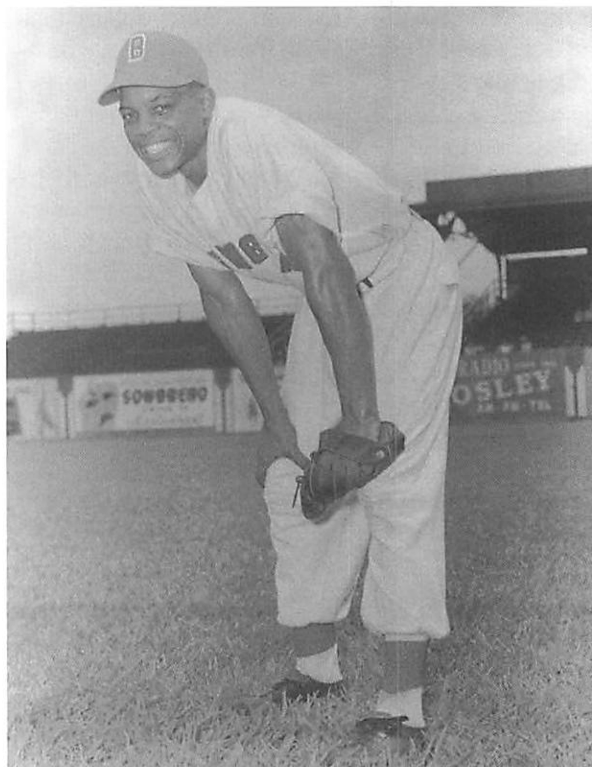

Figure 5. Seventeen-year-old Black Baron Willie Mays, with Rickwood right field in backgound, 1948 (T.H. Hayes Collection, Memphis Shelby Public Library)

baseball icon Connie Mack in the building of Rickwood, resulting in a park fashioned after Pittsburgh's Forbes Field and Philadelphia's Shibe Park, and referred to at the time as "The South's Finest Base Ball Park."[12] Today, Rickwood remains a prime example of a second generation American ballpark design, a style that replaced the earlier wooden grandstands. This era of ballparks offered greater fan comfort and amenities while retaining the human scale lost in the later generation of larger, more grandiose modern baseball stadiums.

Reflecting this combination of sports history, social history, and history of the built environment, *Baseball America* magazine ranked Rickwood Field as one of the top five minor league ballparks of the twentieth century in terms of "significance beyond their cities." And in an analysis of ballparks old and new, *Baseball America* editors wrote that "the history of Rickwood Field . . . speaks for itself," with the park's significance continuing "to stand the test of time."[13] Ultimately, however, the preservation case must be made not only in cultural and historical terms, but also in economic terms.

To that end, we cite the approximately 20,000 annual visitors to Rickwood, many of whom stay the night in Birmingham and spend their money at local hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Moreover, a revitalized Rickwood Field is serving as a catalyst for the reinvestment and redevelopment of not only the neighborhood surrounding the park, but also Birmingham's larger West End community. National media exposure for the park, including Rickwood's portrayal as one of Birmingham's numerous cultural and historic attractions, has direct economic implications for the city's heritage tourism and entertainment industries.[14] However, as we continue to make the pitch for Rickwood's on-going revitalization, the bottom line remains, "how do we go about achieving our objective of comprehensive revitalization of the park?"

A brief examination of the organization's background sheds light on this central challenge. The Friends of Rickwood, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 1992, is a true grassroots organization with one full-time employee, a Board of Directors, and roughly 500 members. The group's diverse board and membership, consisting of preservationists, baseball purists, and community members, is committed to keeping alive this unique piece of Americana. To date, approximately $2 million in renovation to the park has been completed, highlighting the broad support for the project and the tenacity of the organization, including its ability to establish goals and see them to fruition.[15]

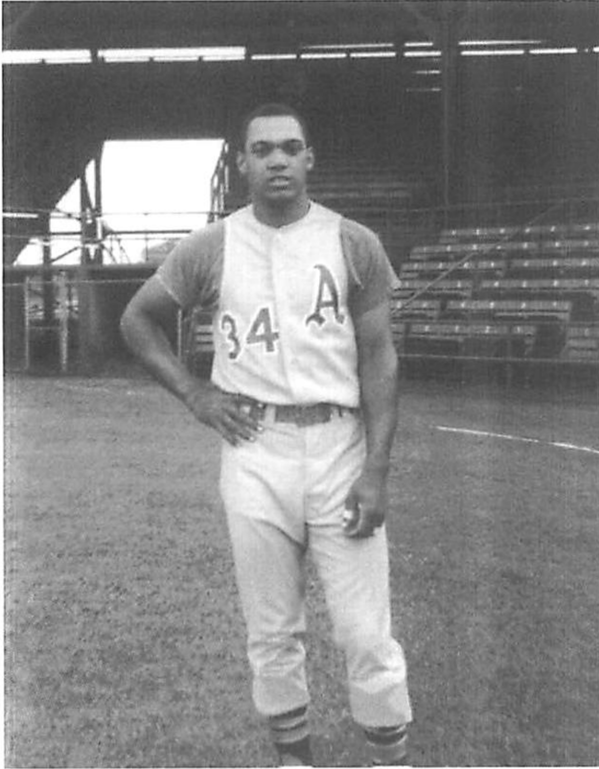

Figure 6. Birmingham A's Reggie Jackson at Rickwood Field, 1967 (Buddy Coker)

Figure 7. Rickwood Classic action, Barons versus Montgomery, 2005 (Christopher Frey)

The Strategy

The total revitalization of Rickwood Field includes the ongoing marketing of the park as a competitive baseball venue. Our game schedule has averaged approximately 200 baseball games per year in each of the past eight years, including the play of the Birmingham Board of Education's high school baseball program, the Birmingham Police Athletic League, numerous men's amateur leagues, college and junior college ball, and the hosting of tournaments and showcase events. This range of activities highlights the park's role in providing recreational opportunities across a broad demographic range. The Rickwood Classic, the annual turn-back-the-clock high profile fundraising event, also continues to bring the Birmingham Barons back to their old home park, generating both significant revenue and invaluable media exposure.

The marketing of the park as a key component of the local and regional historic site community, as well as a living-history tourist destination, is also ongoing. Toward this end, the Friends of Rickwood has in the past several years more aggressively pursued an educational and tourism path using a combination of means. Efforts have included launching a revised Rickwood Field web site, and design and production of a new multi-page marketing brochure, as well as a new "rack" brochure. The latter, funded in part by the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, is now available to the traveling public through the state's brochure distribution program.[16] The City of Birmingham, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Birmingham Convention and Visitor's Bureau have also been instrumental in marketing efforts. Inclusion in several recently published travel guides, as well as a presence on numerous ball park and heritage travel web sites, highlights our tourism and educational marketing campaign.[17]

On-site efforts include the creation of the "Rickwood Self-Guided Tour," designed to address "walk-up" visitors to the park. Moreover, we continue to host field trips and student groups of all ages, emphasizing further Rickwood's function as an educational site. This multi-tiered marketing approach has proven successful, so much so that Rickwood Field was recently listed by *USA Today* newspaper as one of the "10 great places to touch base with the best."[18] Despite this success, funding remains the key ingredient, bringing us to the core of the "how" component.

Fortunately, the revenue stream originates from several sources, including a mix of public and private funds, leaving us not solely dependent upon a single revenue source. Rickwood Field is currently a line item in the city of Birmingham's annual budget, but is not funded fully in the same

Figure 8. Middle school students visiting Rickwood Field as part of their Civil Rights study (Friends of Rickwood)

manner as other city-owned sites. Our line item status not withstanding, the city's supportive role, both financial and emotional, is invaluable. Other public funds have come through grants from the state, including the Alabama Historical Commission, the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, the Alabama Department of Community Affairs, and the Alabama State Park's Joint Study Committee.

Private sources also continue to account for a significant portion of funding, including the crucial support of the foundation community. The Birmingham business community has been extremely supportive, with a 1993 corporate campaign raising considerable funds. In addition to cash pledges, Birmingham businesses and firms have contributed generously with in-kind services and expertise.

Facility rentals generate essential revenue, along with a modest addition generated from merchandise sales. Individual contributions remain an invaluable funding source, as does the aforementioned Rickwood Classic, which continues to produce a profit each year. The Friends organization has also been successful in marketing the park as a ready-made vintage baseball set for photo shoots, commercials, and movies, all of which generate revenue as well as increased visibility.[19]

But despite our success to date, many challenges lie ahead, with funding remaining the biggest issue. Rickwood's status in the city's budget is precarious at best, and requires a renewal of the relationship each fiscal year. Grant funds and corporate support are also becoming increasingly competitive. Recruiting "new blood" into the organization and project is also an ongoing challenge, as is developing a relationship with the younger generation that ultimately will have to "take over the reins." Keeping the project in the media spotlight also continues to be a formidable task. At the core of all of these challenges, however, is the realization that a ninety-five year old facility requires almost constant attention and care. The park's mechanical systems are old and outdated, and will require extensive upgrades in the near future. Exposure to weather and climate is taking its toll on the physical structure, with the need for extensive stabilization and repair to the concrete becoming more acute.

Accompanying these mounting challenges, however, is the growing relevance of saving the park, and Rickwood's role as a potential model for similar public-private efforts in other cities. Preservation and revitalization efforts are being considered or are ongoing in various stages at numerous other historic baseball parks, including several examples involving grassroots "Friends" type organizations working with community members to save local parks.[20] Other communities have pursued for-profit paths and view minor league and independent league baseball and the modernization of their facilities as salvation. The growing trend toward building new parks with a vintage look and feel further reinforces the relevance of preserving and revitalizing the classic ball yards of yesterday.

Whatever the case, it is our hope that the revitalization of Rickwood Field may in some way assist other communities in their baseball park preservation and restoration projects. Our approach is of course not fail-proof, nor does it fit every case, and each day presents new challenges. While the success enjoyed to date by Friends of Rickwood certainly does not provide all of the answers, hopefully it helps reveal some of the questions.

In conclusion, I'd like to quote briefly a true friend of Rickwood Field, Donnie Harris, former Black Baron centerfielder. In response to a question concerning Rickwood's relevance in the new-park-versus-old-park argument, Donnie replied simply, "You can have those new fields with artificial turf and sky boxes. This *is* a *ballpark*. You need the sun and wind in your face. To me, Rickwood is a one-

of-a-kind place." We concur, and look forward to many more years of baseball and community pride at Rickwood Field.

Employed since 1998 as the Executive Director of the Friends of Rickwood, **David M. Brewer** has served as the primary coordinator for the restoration and revitalization of Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama. He holds a Master of Arts in History from the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a focus on American social history and historic preservation, and with specific interest in the development and history of the Birmingham Industrial District.

Notes

1. National Park Service, HABS Report # AL-897, "Rickwood Field," 1993, 2.

2. Statement by Raymond Doswell, Curator, Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, quoted in article on Hinchliffe Stadium (Patterson, NJ), by Steve Strunsky, accessible at http://www.nlbm.com/ns/NewsDetail.cfm?NewsID=69.

3. For a partial list of Rickwood veterans who are Hall of Fame members, see Timothy Whitt, *Bases Loaded With History: The Story of Rickwood Field* (Birmingham, Alabama: R. Boozer Press, 1995), 103.

4. Recount of this experience first published in the Friends of Rickwood newsletter, *Out of the Park* 3, Spring 2001.

5. Rickwood Field Master Plan, by Davis Speake & Associates (now Davis Architects), 1993.

6. HABS Report, 2.

7. For example, Warren Ballpark in Bisbee, Arizona.

8. Birmingham newspapers during the period covered extensively the play of both the Barons and Black Barons, and contain references to these, and many other, legendary ball players.

9. For a discussion of Birmingham as a New South industrial center, see W. David Lewis, *Sloss Furnaces and the Rise of the Birmingham Industrial District: An Industrial Epic* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1994).

10. "National Trust's African American Historic Places Initiative: An Update," 23 June 2004.

11. HABS Report, 3; Michael Benson, *Ballparks of North America: A Comprehensive Historical Reference to Baseball Grounds, Yards, and Stadiums, 1845 to Present* (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1989), 33.

12. Whitt, *Bases Loaded With History*, 21–22; caption from 1930s Rickwood Field postcard, Birmingham View Company.

13. *Baseball America* 19, no. 3 (15 November 1999), 50; Ibid. 23, no. 26 (22 December 2003), 39.

14. For example, HGTV, "Restore America," April 2000; Turner South, "Three Day Weekend," June 2004; Turner South, "Blue Ribbon Ballparks," April 2005.

15. Component projects completed to date include the replacement of the original drop-in scoreboard, the installation of a new public address system, the rebuilding of a vintage-style gazebo press box as well as the building of a modern grandstand press box, the restoration of the distinctive front entry building as well as the repainting of the park's entire exterior, improvements to the playing field, the reproduction of vintage style outfield billboards, the replacement of portions of the grandstand roof and the placement and painting of additional structural support columns, the renovation of the main men's and women's restrooms, and the renovation of the visiting team and home team locker rooms. Relationships with similar organizations have added credibility to the project and include the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Alabama Historical Commission, Jefferson County Historical Commission, Birmingham Historical Society, Alabama Negro League Players Association, Society of American Baseball Researchers, International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame, and the Alabama Museums Association.

16. Rickwood Field web address: www.rickwood.com

17. For examples of references to Rickwood Field in recent travel guides, see Chris Epting, *Roadside Baseball: Uncovering Hidden Treasures From Our National Pastime* (St. Louis, Missouri: Sporting News, 2003), 107; and Jim Carrier, *A Traveler's Guide to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York and London: Harcourt, Inc., 2003), 224.

18. *USA Today*, 8 April 2005.

19. Feature length films shot in-part at Rickwood include *Cobb* and *Soul of the Game*; numerous television commercials and print ads have also been shot at Rickwood.

20. Historic parks that have attracted the attention of preservationists include, among others, Durham Athletic Park (Durham, North Carolina), Bossie Field (Evansville, Indiana), Engel Field (Chattanooga, Tennessee), League Park (Cleveland, Ohio), Luther Williams Field (Macon, Georgia), Hinchliffe Stadium (Paterson, New Jersey), Bush Stadium (Indianapolis, Indiana), War Memorial Stadium (Greensboro, North Carolina), and Gill Stadium (Manchester, New Hampshire).

School-Owned Recreation Facilities
The Challenges of Their Preservation . . . No Slam Dunk!

Paul Rogerson
Friends of the Shelton Gymnasium
Shelton, Washington

Janet Rogerson
Friends of the Shelton Gymnasium
Shelton, Washington

The effort to save a vintage gymnasium in Shelton, Washington, was "no slam dunk." While this paper is framed as a sporting event, the preservation effort was far from fun. The "Game Plan" includes discussions of: the role of all public recreation facilities, the significance of historic public facilities, why preservation of the Shelton Gymnasium was important, and an exploration of the obstacles faced, strategies used, and lessons learned in the preservation process. In the "Post Game Show" specific action steps are provided, which should be carefully considered by others who determine to play—and win—the preservation game.

The Role of Public Recreation Facilities

The role of public recreation facilities in small towns is essentially the same as in any community; however, in a smaller community, these facilities often represent the sole opportunity to satisfy those needs. Public recreation facilities, such as a school gymnasium, serve as city parks and recreation infrastructure, represent one of a very limited group of venues for promoting residents' physical health, serve as an activity center that helps combat crime and juvenile delinquency, and are, in many cases, the primary place where a town builds its sense of community. That crucial function of community building and serving as a social hub includes helping form a sense of neighborhood identity, allowing multi-generational contact and interaction, and generally providing a place for gatherings and activities. Finally, by providing a needed venue for performances, trade shows, and the like, public recreation facilities are often a key part of the local economic infrastructure.

The Significance of Historic Public Recreation Facilities

Historic public recreation facilities have an added level of significance, especially in small communities. These facilities often symbolize the community's past optimism, its sense of vision, and a selfless effort to build a better community, and they often stand alone as this symbol. In other words, historic public recreation facilities embody heritage. Such places can provide an educational opportunity, a place to tell the story of the citizens who have gone before. The pride of place of past generations is visible in such structures, and the history of the community-building efforts, and the value of civic involvement can be brought to life there. Use of historic public recreation facilities as interpretive sites is even more significant if the facilities remain as part of, or adjacent to, currently used schools. Stewardship of these resources can be modeled for future leaders. Historic public

recreation facilities represent a significant investment made by citizens who anticipated a better future, and expected that future generations would treat their investment as a treasured inheritance.

Why Preserve the Shelton Gymnasium?

In January 2003, after decades of anticipatory demolition, the Shelton School Board announced their intent to demolish the vintage Shelton Gymnasium. Citizens immediately demanded that the board reconsider their decision. Why? The Shelton Gymnasium had historic value, it was a valuable public recreational facility, and it had community value.

The historic Shelton Gymnasium had a heroic beginning. Its story began in a small Pacific Northwest timber town, when the ambitious citizens of post-Depression Shelton, Washington, determined that their students—and the entire community—deserved a great gymnasium. Originally the classic Art Deco structure was to be funded by federal money from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) matched by funds from a local bond measure that had been overwhelmingly approved by the voters. When the WPA contribution suddenly dried up, the civic-minded voters returned to the polls once again to overwhelmingly approve an additional bond measure in order to build what preservation architect Gene Grulich later called "a temple to a gym."[1] Prominent northwest architect Joseph Henry Wohleb, who was responsible for many of the buildings on the state capitol campus, as well as numerous other civic, business, and residential structures, designed the Shelton Gymnasium. Completed in 1941, the form, massing, symmetry, and detailing make it a significant example of the Moderne Art Deco style. Decades later, the Shelton Historic Preservation Board included the gymnasium in the local historic inventory, and requested its listing in the local historic register. The Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation determined it to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Shelton Gymnasium has been the most important recreational facility in the community for nearly sixty-five years. It was the primary site of high school athletics from its opening in 1941 until 1974. The gym was in constant use from 1941 until it was closed by the school district in anticipation of demolition in 2004. But perhaps the most compelling reason for saving the Shelton Gymnasium is that it is still needed. Many activities, such as adult men's league basketball, have ceased to operate since its closure. The adjacent alternative high school and middle school have been without easily accessed physical education facilities. The building could—and should—continue to provide 21,000 square feet of needed recreational, instructional, and public use space for this growing area.

The Shelton Gymnasium has immense value as a place that builds and binds community. It is the last portion of a high school complex, the rest of which was given to the community in 1928 by one of its founding families but demolished in 1984. Six thousand community members, spanning three generations, have graduated from high school on the gymnasium floor. It has the potential to satisfy ongoing needs and functions into the future, thereby serving as it had from its beginning to build a stronger community. This is one of those hallowed places, found in most towns and neighborhoods, which tells us who we are and where we came from. As we look at the architectural drawings for this massive structure, we see that it was built to last. The gym was constructed with massive cast concrete walls, a solid maple floating floor, built-in wooden bleachers, pink and aqua tiled shower rooms, and a soaring trussed roof. As historical architect Michael Sullivan and his staff said, the Shelton Gymnasium has "wow" factor.

Obstacles Faced

The Friends of the Shelton Gymnasium, the nonprofit group formed to push for preservation of the gymnasium, faced many obstacles, not the least of which was school district ownership. Like many states, Washington has seen a taxpayer revolt over the past decade. One of many results has been a severe squeeze on school budgets. Combined with a matching formula that provides less state funding to local districts for rehabilitation than for all-new construction, the result has been a pattern of anticipatory demolition. Districts have been less able, or inclined, to maintain existing structures. Ownership of important historic buildings, by school districts ill-equipped to be adequate stewards, is a challenge found nationwide.

There has also been a change in many school districts' understanding of their mission. School districts have traditionally understood that schools were part of a larger fabric of institutions that

Figure 4. Cleaning and repair on Paul Sargent's Jamestown, 1607

Under this model, the Chicago Park District would only have to commit resources once the Chicago Conservation Center had demonstrated local support for the effort and ensured completion of the work at the most urgent locations. Supporters of the general mural preservation effort, and Sherman Park in particular, included Chicago Park District Superintendent Timothy J. Mitchell; the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, which provided 501(c)3 status for the fundraising effort through the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce Foundation; LaSalle Bank; the Chauncy & Marion Deering McCormick Foundation; the Driehaus Foundation; and the Libra Foundation.

The start of work at Sherman Park was critical for two reasons. Not only would the Chicago Conservation Center be demonstrating its commitment to the preservation of the Chicago Park District collection as a whole, but the center would also be responding to a set of murals in critical need of conservation. The eighteen works at Sherman Park were painted in the spring and summer of 1912 by students of the School of the Art Institute (Beatrice Braidwood, Anita Parkhurst, Lucille Patterson, Paul Sargent, Nouart Seron, Gerritt Sinclair, George Steinberg, and Roy Tyrrell) under the direction of the mural painting department. All of the artists were Chicago natives, with the exception of Gerrit Sinclair who came to the Art Institute from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Located in the field house auditorium, the murals are divided into two distinct sets. On each of the east and west walls are three large format rectangular murals, 6-1/2 feet high by 12-1/2 feet wide. On the north and south walls are six pairs of spandrel murals placed over top of the auditorium windows, each approximately 6-1/2 feet high by 9-1/2 feet wide. The series as a whole takes as its theme constructive moments in the history of the New World. The three murals on the east wall and the six murals on the south wall focus on events in American history, with topics such as *Columbus, 1492* by Nouart Seron and *The Pioneer of the South* and *The Settlement of Kentucky* by Lucille Patterson. On the west and north walls attention shifts to local Chicago and Illinois narratives, with titles including *Joliet and Marquette, 1673* by Beatrice Braidwood and *Crossing the Prairies* and *Pioneers of the Middle West* by Anita Parkhurst.

Over the years, these Progressive-era murals had been slowly coated with heavy particulate and discolored varnish films that obscured the original palette and rich details of the narrative scenes (Figure 1). Fluctuating heat and humidity levels had also resulted in lifting and peeling paint layers, particularly in the rectangular east and west wall murals (Figure 2). Several of the murals further experienced lifting of canvas and tears, the result of structural cracks that formed over time in the supporting wall surfaces.

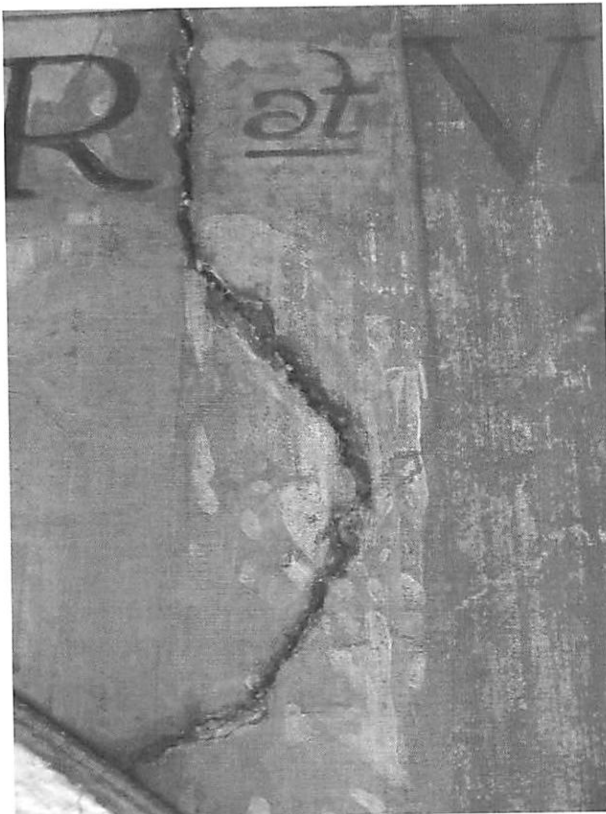

Figure 3. Structural damaged to Lucille Patterson's Winter in Valley Forge *exposed during cleaning*

With an awareness of the severity and extent of the murals' condition, work at Sherman Park began in May 2004. Further complications were discovered, however, as the conservation treatments progressed.

Work began with surface cleaning of the murals to return the original color palette. It was determined that the artists had added linseed oil to their original varnish mixture, a combination resistant to solvents to the effect that attempts to remove it along with the heavy surface films in a single step could have threatened the integrity of the paint layer below. As a result, cleaning was undertaken in two stages, the first to lift the heavy dirt and particulate films and the second to remove the varnish layer alone. Through this careful cleaning process, the rich details and original tones of these individual pieces were slowly uncovered and brought back to life.

The cleaning process also revealed additional structural tears, which had been obscured by the dark films on the surface of the murals (Figure 3). After the murals were cleaned, these areas were gently relaxed back to plane and set into place. Lifting paint layers were consolidated using archival conservation adhesives applied with syringes and brushes to secure individual paint sections back onto the supporting canvas. Areas of paint layer loss were then filled with gesso and textured to emulate the original paint surface (Figure 4).

Due to the size of many of the loss areas, the conservators found that traditional conservation paints were often unsuited to the degree of inpainting required. This led them to consult Tony Rajer, a mural conservator based in Wisconsin who has worked on similar projects in Latin America where traditional conservation supplies are often difficult to obtain. Rajer had developed a custom formulation that would meet the needs for color- and light-fast paints in the quantities needed to compensate for the larger areas of loss, which was adapted to meet the needs of the Sherman Park murals.

The effort to clean, consolidate, and preserve all eighteen of the murals at Sherman Park was finally completed in February 2005, after ten months of extensive on-site work. With support from a number of additional individual, corporate, and non-profit supporters, including Marsh USA, AXA

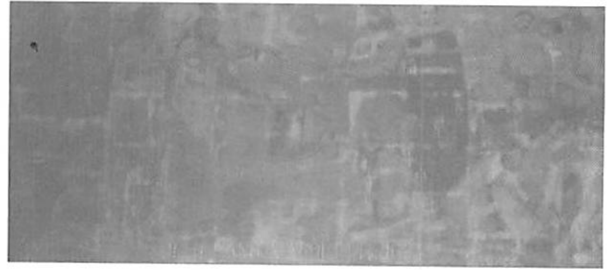

Figure 5. Beatrice Braidwood's Joliet and Marquette, 1673 *after consolidation*

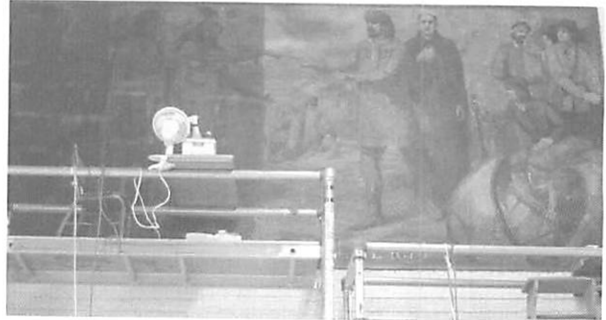

Figure 6. The work during cleaning and retouching

Figure 7. The mural after all repairs were completed

Fine Art Insurance, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and the Field Foundation, the center's fundraising campaign reached its target goal of $188,000 by December 2005, ensuring preservation of all fifty-eight targeted murals.

In addition, through summer 2006 work had been completed at Fuller Park Field House, Independence Park Field House, Jefferson Park Field House, and Pulaski Park Field House. A formal unveiling of the preservation effort as a whole and announcement of the fundraising success was held at Pulaski Park Field House in June 2006, presided over by Mayor Daley with comments by Chicago Park District Superintendent Timothy Mitchell, Chicago Conservation Center CEO Heather Becker, Norman Bobins, President & CEO of LaSalle Bank, and Marshall Field V.

Each of the treated field house locations continues to present its own unique conservation challenges and successes. Eugene Park Field House, for example, is home to two works from the WPA, *The Participation of Youth in the Realm of the Arts*, which had been vandalized and *Portrait of Eugene Field*, which had experienced an earlier structural tear repainted with oil paints, which had shifted tone and discolored over time.

Once treatment was complete, *The Participation of Youth in the Realm of the Arts* was reinstalled in the field house auditorium, home of the Albany Park Theatre Group, where it will be protected from the type of graffiti damage that had compromised the original composition. During the examination of the second work, *Portrait of Eugene Field*, an exciting discovery was made when the signature of artist Josh Holland, a participant in a 1941 WPA-sponsored art program at Pottawatomie Park Field House, was found on the verso. The previous conservation attempt on this piece has been reversed and the tear repaired anew, with the portrait reinstalled in the auditorium study room.

Treatment at Pulaski Park Field House on the auditorium's monumental arch-shaped mural, which frames the stage, revealed for the first time in decades the vibrant colors and composition of Jas Oligert's *Allegorical Scene*, hidden under years of heavy accretions and discolored varnish layer.

Through summer 2007, work is scheduled to complete the conservation efforts at the four remaining project locations: Palmer Park Field House, Hamilton Park Field House, Rutherford Sayre Park Field House, and Warren Park Field House.

Even as preservation work is completed at the individual locations, the project is ongoing. Community and foundation interest has already been expressed to support related arts and educational programming to ensure that the importance of this collection is recognized for generations to come. In demonstrating how public, private, and non-profit supporters can join forces to achieve a common goal, the hope is to also forge a positive and successful model for future public arts initiatives.

Megan Ann Jones is Vice President of Client Services for the Chicago Conservation Center, where her responsibilities include the in-house management of the center's mural department. She received a Master of Arts in Art History from the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, after spending five years studying local heritage and conservation issues in the region. The Chicago Conservation Center is actively involved in the preservation of Progressive and New Deal-era murals, conserving over 500 public murals in Chicago and nationwide over the past decade.

Table 1. Chicago Park District Field House Mural Locations

Anderson Park Field House	Hamilton Park Field House
Bessemer Park Field House	Independence Park Field House
Calumet Park Field House	Jefferson Park Field House
CPD Central Administrative Offices	Palmer Park Field House
Columbus Park Banquet House	Pulaski Park Field House
Davis Square Park Field House	Ridge Park Field House
Eugene Field Park Field House	Rutherford Sayre Park Field House
Foster Park Field House	Seward Park Field House
Fuller Park Field House	Sherman Park Field House
Gage Park Field House	Trumball Park Field House
Grand Crossing Park Field House	Warren Park Field House

Of Mice and Mermaids

The Fight to Save Florida's Early Roadside Attractions

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Tourism has always held an interesting if somewhat obscure role in the history of our culture. It is not considered a force by which history is shaped like politics or social movements. Instead, tourism is like a side trip taken off the main drag of time. In Florida, the pre-colonial explorer's descent into the vastness of exotic new worlds fostered such romantic allure that others soon followed to search for prestige of name, personal wealth, or elusive youth. Florida, the land of sunshine and flowers, hawked its wares to the weary, the renegade, the traveler, and yes, the tourist.

Tourism in Florida began at about the same time that Ponce de Leon searched for the famed Fountain of Youth in 1512. This quest for curative waters brought visitors in droves to Florida's abundant natural springs by the early nineteenth century. In the 1850s and 1860s, steamers plied the winding narrow rivers of Florida, bringing early tourists to large resorts that served up the "winter cure." The journey started in Palatka at the mouth of the St. Johns River and then made its way down the Ocklawaha. Romantic travel stories appeared in national magazines like *Scribner's*, detailing the harrowing night trip to Silver Springs. They described how pitch torches lit the way through the dark forest, past giant cypress and live oak trees draped in Spanish moss; how ancient limbs scraped the boat's hull and gators roared in the black night. It was a trip timed perfectly to hit the crystal clear springhead at the break of dawn. By 1874, this pilgrimage to the "Shrine of the Water Gods" was taken by more than 50,000 tourists.[1]

The modern roadside attraction as it is understood today can be traced to the 1890s when Henry Flagler built a railroad down the east coast of Florida. He transformed the sleepy Spanish town of St. Augustine into a world-class destination replete with old colonial houses and an even older fort. With the influx of visitors, roadside attractions soon followed. The St. Augustine Alligator Farm, opened in the 1890s, charged admission to see alligators and other curiosities.

By 1919, the steamers were retired and the once glorified spring was considered "no more than a picturesque pool tucked away in a remote Florida forest."[2] The untamed interior of Florida could no longer compete with the sophistication of the coastal regions. The "impersonal and mechanical" railroad was soon eclipsed by the popular automobile.[3] Early promotional literature appealed to tourists by describing the automobile as freeing them from the "bondage of timetables."[4] The lure of the open road was irresistible to a new breed of tin can tourists that followed, setting up camp wherever they could. This unprecedented flood of people to Florida culminated in the short-lived

land boom of the 1920s. Speculative property deals, railroad embargos, and hurricanes quickly forced Florida into the Great Depression almost three years before the rest of the country. And yet, even with the economic devastation brought on by the Crash, tourism never stopped. Local projects funded by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) improved roads and parks and by 1935, nearly two million visitors came to Florida, compared to only a half million in 1932.[5]

In these early years, Florida's natural beauty was the primary tourist attraction. The unchecked growth of the land boom had instilled a renewed interest in Florida's landscape. Entrepreneurs carefully manipulated the wild environment into a safe and beautiful haven for tourists. In 1936, using assistance from the WPA, Dick Pope opened Cypress Gardens in central Florida to 182 visitors who paid 25 cents each to visit the grounds.[6] In the ensuing years, he added spectacular waterskiing shows and southern belles who regularly strolled the grounds. It would become one of Florida's most beloved tourist attractions.

The silver screen also took notice of the state, and Florida became a premier location for the movie industry. In 1938, Marine Studios, the world's first underwater motion picture studio, opened. This venture was conceived by several prominent men including Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney and Count Ilia Tolstoy, grandson of Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy. By 1940, Marine Studios' visitation reached a half million people.[7]

During World War II, tourism was declared "an essential industry for entertainment of service men and women in the state."[8] Many of the veterans who had been stationed in Florida returned there to settle after the war. Weeki Wachee Springs was opened in 1947 by an industrious Navy frogman instructor who had experimented with underwater breathing techniques. Combining the natural beauty of the crystal clear water, the drama of theater, and the draw of dazzling young swimmers, the attraction was dubbed the "City of Mermaids" (Figure 1).

Weeki Wachee's attendance soon outgrew its humble beginnings. Using the architectural style popular at the time, Perry transformed the park into a modern wonder in the 1950s (Figure 2). A much larger underwater theater was constructed into the side of the first magnitude springs. It was a feat—a building that could withstand the immense pressure of over 170 million gallons of water each day. Celebrities soon followed. Famous visitors, including Elvis Presley, were captured on newsreels and in photo spreads published in popular magazines. Such attractions kept the mystique of the springs in the public eye. Women from around the world auditioned to become Weeki Wachee mermaids. Young swimmers were recruited and transformed into glamorous stars. They became one of Florida's must-see attractions. It was a time of innocence . . . a time when watching a beautiful woman eating a banana or drinking a coke underwater was more than most people could expect at a tourist attraction. It was a time that wouldn't last.

Figure 1. The girls breathed from air hoses invented by Newt Perry that gave the illusion of freedom in the water. (Weeki Wachee Springs, LLC, Archive Collection)

Figure 2. The Mermaid Theater under construction in 1958 (Weeki Wachee Springs, LLC, Archive Collection)

In 1965, after years of covertly buying up tens of thousands of acres in Florida, Walt Disney announced plans to open his dream world in central Florida. Within five years the surrounding property was selling for $10,000 per acre. Disney had originally paid about $200 an acre.[9] Newsreels of the time show the unbridled enthusiasm that accompanied the announcement. Even the venerable founder of Cypress Gardens, Dick Pope, thought there would be enough to go around.[10]

Walt Disney World opened its castle doors for the first time in 1971, and its local competitors immediately paled in comparison. At the time, there were approximately sixty-eight major commercial attractions operating, but within ten years, twenty-eight had closed.[11] In the years after, Floridians grew accustomed to the closing of smaller, more regionalized tourist attractions. It was expected that these would succumb to the popularity of Mickey Mouse, but no one predicted the demise of more successful attractions.

Sunken Gardens in St. Petersburg announced plans to sell its property to developers in the late 1990s. Founded by George Turner in 1903, the gardens officially opened as a tourist attraction in 1935 and later added a variety of animal shows (Figure 3). Ninety-five years later the Turners said they could no longer maintain Sunken Gardens, which had been losing money for years. A small grassroots campaign was organized. The owners began working with a non-profit group dedicated to preserving the gardens. A nomination for local designation was prepared and submitted, but once a developer became interested in the property, the owners decided it would not be in their best interest to support the nomination. It was reported that the developer would withdraw his offer if the property were listed.

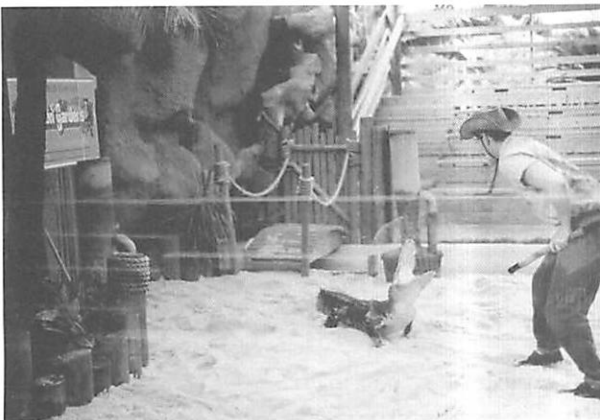

Figure 3. Alligator shows were added to Sunken Gardens but were discontinued when the City of St. Petersburg acquired the gardens. (Sherry Anderson)

For weeks leading up to the designation vote, citizens pounded the pavement and the airwaves. Signatures were gathered, eye-catching posters were plastered all over downtown St. Petersburg, and daily letters to the editor and nightly news coverage reminded everyone what was coming. At the hearing, the owner's attorney argued that the attraction should not be listed due to economic hardship; however, the ordinance cited economic hardship only in the context of applying for a demolition permit *after* a property had been listed. Although everyone empathized with the owners, the city ultimately voted in favor of locally designating the attraction as a historic landmark. As had been expected, the developer withdrew his offer and the city stepped in to buy Sunken Gardens with the support of the taxpayers. It was a huge victory. The main building is currently leased out to several businesses including a restaurant and children's museum. Weddings, family reunions, company picnics, and night concerts have given the park new life.

In 2003, employees at Cypress Gardens were told they had seventy-two hours to vacate the property. Rumors began almost immediately that the park's largest shareholder planned to sell to developers. The public outcry was deafening. Governor Jeb Bush promised to do everything he could to help save the park and the Trust for Public Land stepped in to broker the deal. The result was a state investment of $11 million to protect the entire 150-acre property from condo and commercial development through a conservation easement. The county purchased the thirty-acre historic core of the park and a private owner bought the land less the development rights for $7 million. Cypress Gardens re-opened in late 2004, complete with skiers and southern belles.

Weeki Wachee Springs was also threatened with closure that same year after the attraction's management company neglected to perform much-needed repairs mandated by the springs' owner, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (called "Swiftmud"). The management company donated the business to the tiny city of Weeki Wachee (population: nine), which sparked a battle that continues today between the city and

Table 1. Currently Operating Attractions Opened prior to 1971

Name	Location	Year Opened
Ancient Spanish Monastery	North Miami	1953
Bok Tower Gardens	Lake Wales	1929
Busch Gardens	Tampa	1959
Caribbean Gardens	Naples	1954
Cars of Yesterday	Sarasota	1953
Citrus Tower	Clermont	1956
Coral Castle	Homestead	1940
Cypress Gardens	Winter Haven	1936
Everglades Wonder Gardens	Bonita Springs	1937
Flamingo Groves and Gardens	Davie	1968
Gatorama	Palmdale	1957
Gatorland	Kissimmee	1949
Gulfarium	Ft. Walton Beach	1955
Gulf World	Panama City Beach	1969
Lion Country Safari	West Palm Beach	1967
Marineland	Marineland	1938
Monkey Jungle	Goulds	1935
Nature's Giant Fish Bowl	Homosassa Springs	1940
Placid Tower	Lake Placid	1961
Rainbow Springs	Dunnellon	1937
St. Augustine Alligator Farm	St. Augustine	1893
Sarasota Jungle Gardens	Sarasota	1940
Seaquarium	Miami	1955
Shell Factory	Ft. Myers	1940
Silver Springs	Silver Springs	c1860
Sunken Gardens	St. Petersburg	1935
Theater of the Sea	Islamorada	1946
Wakulla Springs	Wakulla	1937
Warm Mineral Springs	Venice	1954
Weeki Wachee Springs	Weeki Wachee	1947

Swiftmud. The future of the attraction remains uncertain. The mermaids, however, are not about to sink without a fight. Led by the mayor of Weeki Wachee, an energetic former mermaid, they started the "Save Our Tails" campaign, which landed them on the front page of the *New York Times*. The retired mermaids still perform twice a month, sometimes to standing-room only crowds (Figure 4). They remain in the forefront of the fight and say they have earned the right to swim.

Of the 130 commercial attractions operating prior to Disney World's opening, only 30 remain in business today (Table 1).[12] Four are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places: The St. Augustine Alligator Farm, McKee Jungle Gardens, Marine Studios, and the main building at Sunken Gardens. Weeki Wachee has been determined potentially eligible for listing by the State Historic Preservation Officer and there are plans to formally list the park in the near future. Despite the ongoing controversy, the current management wants to restore the Mermaid Theater to its Mid-Century Modern design. Recently, the carpet was removed

Figure 4. Barbara Wynns swam from 1967 to 1975 and now performs in a retired mermaid show twice a month at Weeki Wachee. (Barbara Wynns)

Figure 5. View of the interior of the Mermaid Theater, 1960s (Weeki Wachee, LLC Archive Collection)

to reveal the original mosaic tile wall under the viewing windows, and aluminum trim was re-installed (Figure 5). The attraction's next goal is to uncover the original 1950s clamshell roof, which sits beneath an insensitive remodeling effort.

Even with recognition of the significance of these early attractions, most occupy prime real estate and remain vulnerable to developers. Located right on the coast, Marine Studios may be developed into a neo-traditional seaside village. The owner wants to retain the dolphin park but admits that the future of the original dolphin pools is unknown.[13]

What is the future of Florida's roadside attractions? Can they survive? Or will they become extinct? Although listing in the National Register may help the attractions market retro-tourism, getting the word out about these unique sites is challenging. And drawing in new generations of tourists is even more difficult. So the next time you vacation in Florida, come see the mermaids, and the alligators, and the fabulous skiers. Come see what started it all. And tell all your friends that Florida is more than just a state defined by a mouse.

Sherry Anderson is an architectural historian with the Transportation Compliance Review Program of the Florida State Historic Preservation Office. She has also written and produced several programs for TLC, the Discovery Channel, and the National Geographic Channel. Ms. Anderson is currently working on an independent documentary about the fight to save the mermaid attraction at Weeki Wachee Springs. She holds a Master of Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.

Notes

1. Skip Whitson, compiled by, *Florida 100 Years Ago* (Albuquerque: Sun Publishing Company, 1977), 7.

2. Richard Martin, *Eternal Spring: Man's 10,000 Years of History at Florida's Silver Springs* (St. Petersburg, Florida: Great Outdoors Publishing Company, 1966), 152.

3. Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road from Autocamp to Motel, 1910–1945* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979), 19.

4. John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 103.

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8. Harvey Dickson, "Dick Pope, Sr.: Mr. Florida" *The Ledger* 9 September 1986.

9. Donald Lundberg, *The Tourist Business*, 3rd ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Cahners Book International, Inc., 1976), 201.

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11. Breslauer, 83–85. Revised Index 4/25/05.

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13. Marineland, "Marineland of Florida Announces Plans for the Future," news release November 2004, http://www.marineland.net/pressrelease.html (accessed 29 April 2005).

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The Decline and Rebirth of an American Bandshell

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Design Committee
Main Street Orion
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The History of the Bandstand

From the Civil War through World War I, town bandstands served as a symbol of local identity, civic pride, and cultural commitment. Because music had the power to bridge social and cultural barriers, bandstands brought people together. Through these structures, the alienated individual was at least briefly reintegrated with society, which explains why mental institutions had bandstands at their center. Americans everywhere enjoyed relaxing in the grass in the park with the local band seated on a picturesque bandstand, preparing to strike up an air—this was the quintessence of summer bliss in the United States for three generations. Thousands and thousands of bandstands were erected in America's towns and cities. Only a few remain today.[1]

Bands were the most popular musical organizations of the day. They performed virtually everywhere. By the end of the nineteenth century, open-air concerts in the community bandstand had become so integrated into American life that people often arranged their weekly routines around performances. The band movement was one of the most widespread and all-embracing cultural trends to appear in pre-World War I America.[2]

Instrument makers perfected innovations in metal-working technology that enabled brass instruments to play melodies. The technical innovations transformed the sound of band music. The public response to these developments was phenomenal. Not only were brass instruments loud and durable and thus unequaled for outdoor performances, they could also render any music from the simplest song to the grandest operatic excerpt. By far, the most common and cherished of the avocational bands were the town groups organized throughout the country by music-loving citizens. Villages with only a few hundred inhabitants could boast a band of ten or twelve pieces. That the band members received a pittance for their performances in no way diminished the fact that they devoted substantial amounts of time, energy, and personal income to their hobby.[3]

Initially, bandstands were conceived purely as functional pieces of civic architecture. Some were intended for parade viewing stands as well as holding concerts. They were often simple in design, were usually not expensive, and could be built in a few days by amateur carpenters.[4] Bandstands were placed at whatever point convenience might dictate, usually on a main axis in the public square. A fresh current in landscape architecture, however, caused Americans to view bandstands and similar structures as vital links between people

Figure 1. The old stand, the original construction date of which is unknown, stood directly in the center of the park and was open on all sides. (Glenn Sheesley)

and nature. Music emanating from the bandstand had the potential to free people from the urban environment. The new thought required the bandstand to fit picturesquely into the landscape.[5]

By World War I the entire range of urban ideals that had inspired the construction of thousands of bandstands nationwide was under attack from every side. The automobile now enabled Americans to motor through the countryside. Recordings and the radio made national bands accessible to everyone. The old-time local band concert now seemed "hopelessly tame."[6]

Franklin Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA) was responsible for a burst of bandstand construction during the 1930s. These structures were controversial, as they did not owe their existence to local initiative. The lack of local involvement in these cases is not surprising, for by now the brass-band movement and the urban sociability that underlay it were moribund in most American cities and towns. Bandstands fell into a state of decay during the next two generations until Americans looked with fresh eyes at what they had been so blithely destroying under the banner of "renewal." In dozens of towns this led to the restoration of crumbling bandstands, and even to the erection of totally new structures for music, designed in the old spirit.[7]

The Orion Bandshell's Heyday

The history of the Orion, Illinois, music pavilion—called a bandshell instead of a bandstand because of its closed back side—followed much the same pattern of popularity, decline, near destruction, and rebirth as others across the country

In the 11 July 1912 issue of the *Orion Times*, editor F. S. Fullerton called for the development of a band in Orion. The town had an orchestra but wanted a band to play when the orchestra was not available. Fullerton wondered what a town was without a band. He felt if the "boys would only take hold of the matter" a band could be organized. The editor was of the opinion if a band was formed it would cheer up and help the town, and added that the "summer is long and we are all waiting for the music."[8] Unfortunately, no mention of a band appears after that issue. Concert programs, which always made front-page news in the *Orion Times*, only listed the Orion Musical Club, which consisted of the Orion Symphony Orchestra and vocal groups. During this time period, the music concerts were performed in a small, open-sided bandstand located in the center of the town square, now known as Central Park.

The Opera House was another source for entertainment. It was a venue for musical entertainment, but it was also used as a meeting place and for theatrical plays. In later years it was used for school dances. Though not documented, the Opera House was not comfortable in the summer months and people most likely preferred to be entertained in the open-air atmosphere of the park.

By 1913 open-air park concerts were proving to be highly pleasing to residents of Orion and those in surrounding communities. People traveled from Bishop Hill, Sherrard, Geneseo, Woodhull, and Rock Island to enjoy the entertainment. This was made possible by the increasing popularity of the automobile. Inclement weather could affect the size of the crowd, and road conditions were still somewhat primitive. It was not until 1930 that the main highway from Coal Valley to Orion was improved with concrete.

Since the concerts were such a success, the musical club proposed construction of a new bandstand in the park. The old stand, the origination date of

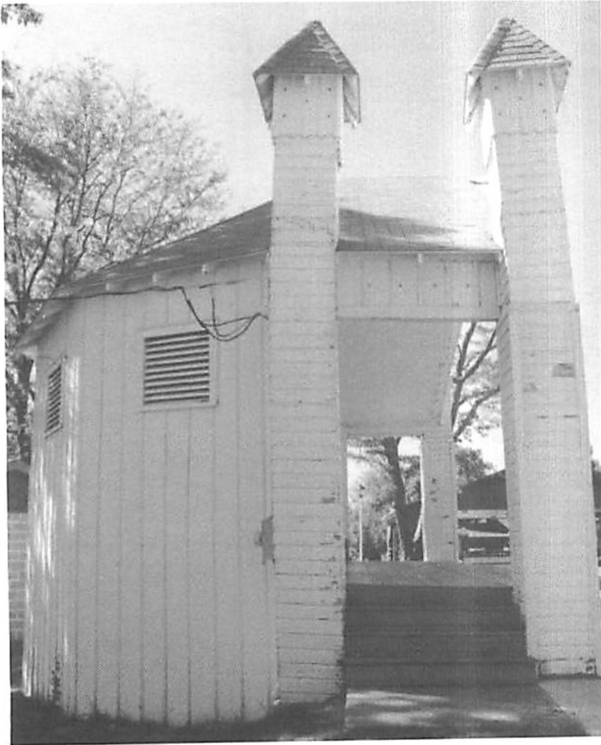

Figure 2. East towers of the Central Park bandshell during the exterior visual inspection prior to the renovation, 29 September 2001 (L. Sampson)

which is unknown, stood directly in the center of the park and was open on all sides. By the 1910s it had become too small to accommodate the orchestra and was in poor condition.

To raise funds for a new bandstand the musical club asked for donations from the citizens of the community and from those attending the concerts. Club members also sold refreshments during the concerts and used that money for the construction of a new stand. The concerts in the park had become the social center of the town with free performances being held almost every Thursday, Friday, and Sunday evening.

On 17 July 1913, it was determined by the musical club that enough funds had been raised to plan construction of the proposed bandstand. A local contractor, J. C. Ericson, designed and built the structure. There is not much written about Ericson, though he is known by Mary Ann Long, longtime resident of Orion, to have built several "square" houses in the village and the surrounding farm community.

The contractor followed a recent trend by designing the structure with a closed backside. Stands with open sides had fallen out of favor. Those facing one direction, called bandshells, were able to project the sound of the music forward.

The editor of the *Orion Times* disagreed with the majority regarding the placement of the structure in the park. The bandshell was to be placed on the south side of the park with its front facing the center of the square. The problem, according to the editor, was that it was placed only sixty feet from the center, not allowing enough space for seating.[9] Apparently, his opinion was not held in high regard, as the bandshell was constructed exactly sixty feet from the edge of the circle in the center of the square.

In the space of less than three weeks the new bandshell was built; its dedication was set for Thursday evening, 7 August 1913. The crowd was anticipated to be one of the largest in the town's history. Judge L.E. Telleen of Cambridge delivered an address, and musical talent included Mrs. William Westerlund and her daughter, Lillian Westerlund, who traveled from Chicago to sing and play violin. The Streed Family Entertainers and the Orion Musical Club also performed. The front page of that week's local paper proudly announced the concert program, listing six musical performances and the address, followed by an intermission and five more musical numbers.

The Decline

Concerts were held in the park three times weekly until 1915, when the schedule was reduced to a single performance per week. Around this time, the town began to show motion pictures in the bandshell during concert intermissions. In 1922, evening church services were held each Sunday from early June through mid-September. Park concerts were front-page news until 1925, when no further mention of them can be found in the local paper. It may be that musical performances scheduled for Thursday evenings at the Orion Country Club helped bring a halt to the park concerts. The Orion Country Club also offered such activities as swimming, boating, fishing, and golf.

Although occasional church services and Memorial Day services continued to be held in the bandshell, the much-anticipated concrete highway

Figure 3. A crowd of 1,500 gathered for the concert at the restored bandshell, 24 July 2003. (Diane Welborn, Main Street Orion)

Figure 4. Featured entertainment Bill Allred's Classic Jazz Band played at the Central Park Bandshell's Ninetieth Birthday Celebration, 24 July 2003. (Diane Welborn, Main Street Orion)

made out-of-town entertainment readily accessible to residents of Orion. It was easier for those from other communities to get to Orion, but it was also easier for Orion citizens to travel outside the village for entertainment.

In 1947, the first Midwest Corn Show was held in the park and the bandshell was used for several attractions during that Labor Day weekend event, including band concerts. This show thrived for several years but was eventually superseded by the Orion Fall Festival, which continued its tradition as an annual Labor Day weekend event. For the remaining 362 days of the year the bandshell sat dark and empty, virtually ignored.

Renewed Interest and Rebirth

In the 1960s Florence Isakson, wife of a village trustee, and the mayor's wife, Bonita Thompson, opposed the village board's decision to demolish the bandshell. They convinced the board to reverse its decision and then started a fundraising campaign to pay for cosmetic repairs.

But in more recent times it took the eyes of a stranger to make the community notice the treasure in their midst. Upon advice from Illinois Main Street architect Anthony Rubano, the fledgling Main Street Orion organization proceeded with plans to get the bandshell listed in the National Register of Historic Places. After the designation was granted, Main Street Orion tried to obtain grant funds to rehabilitate the structure. However, their timing was unfortunate—the economy had taken a turn for the worse and grant funds were not available.

Not to be stopped by this misfortune, Main Street Orion convinced the village board to take on the project of rehabilitating this once glorious structure. The group also devised a plan to "sell" each of the 235 light bulbs in the bandshell for $35. This money was donated to the village to help finance the project. Main Street Orion managed to raise $8,500 for the rehabilitation effort. Donations came from individuals, funeral memorials, local high school drama students, and grade school music programs.

When the bandshell was originally built in 1913 the cost was $500. In 2003 the cost to rehabilitate the structure was approximately $60,000. Engineer Brian Frickenstein of Missman, Stanley & Associates was hired to design an appropriate foundation for the columns, which carried the weight of the structure; the stage floor was strengthened; the columns rebuilt; boards that covered the louvered windows were removed; and a fresh coat of paint was applied. In addition, three local electricians donated countless hours to rewire all 235 lights with the help of two personnel lifts donated for the electricians' use.

In July 2003, members of Main Street Orion realized more than their dreams could imagine. The rehabilitated Central Park bandshell sat sparkling in newfound glory, waiting for its nineti-

Figure 5. Orion Community Band played for the Ninetieth Birthday Celebration under a star-filled night sky, 24 July 2003. (Dick Oberg Photography)

eth birthday celebration. At dusk the lights were shining on columns that stood tall and proud where once only an atmosphere of age and decay was projected.

Rarely had music been heard from this bandshell in the past four decades and during this time, no one seemed to take note of the leaning columns and decaying foundation. But on 24 July 2003, 1,500 people milled about under a star-filled night sky, listening in awe to the sweet jazz tunes floating from the bandshell. To say it was a perfect celebration would not be an exaggeration.

After the success of the bandshell's ninetieth birthday party, Main Street volunteers realized the story could not end with one celebratory concert. A new committee was formed within the Main Street organization—the bandshell entertainment committee. In 2004, a violin recital was scheduled, along with three major concerts—bluegrass, jazz, and country—and three movie/community band nights. The response from the community was wonderful.

An unforeseen byproduct of the bandshell's rehabilitation was the formation of the Orion Community Band. In 2004, the band played music themed to each of the chosen movies—1950s and 1960s music for Elvis's *Jailhouse Rock*, Disney music for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, and big band music for *The Glenn Miller Story*. The community band plays prior to the featured movie and also plays between sets at major concerts. The band, which started with six or seven members, grew to twenty-five members for the 2003 celebration and now numbers around sixty.

The bandshell is truly a building that brought the community together and sparked a renewed interest in the downtown spirit. Every event requires numerous volunteers, from the Main Street Orion folks who plan the concert schedule to the Boy Scouts who haul chairs for the community band. Local bank employees sell popcorn for their favorite charity; the Orion Lion's Club serves sandwiches and drinks; and Main Street Orion dishes out ice cream and strawberry shortcake.

Imagine the smell of popcorn wafting through the cool night air, an elderly couple standing motionless, holding hands and staring at the movie screen in fascination, or two concert-goers who, while caught on video walking through the park during a jazz concert, stopped, turned, gazed at the bandshell and said "Wow." That is the magic of Orion's Central Park bandshell.

Lori Sampson is the Village Clerk in Orion, Illinois, and has served the community in that capacity since 1979. She has taken a special interest in historic structures in the community, working as a volunteer for Main Street Orion's design committee and more recently as a board member. Ms. Sampson also serves as an advocate on the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council.

Notes

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2. Margaret Hindle Hazen, "The Band Movement," *The Oberlin Book of Bandstands,* 30.

3. Starr, 31–32

4. Ibid., 11–12

5. Ibid., 14

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8. F.S. Fullerton, editor, "A Band is Wanted," *The Orion Times*, 11 July 1912.

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Bringing the Past to a New Audience

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American Coaster Enthusiasts
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Secluded in a beautiful area of central Pennsylvania just south of Altoona is a traditional amusement park called Lakemont Park. Amid the typical array of rides, games, and attractions stands something rather remarkable. For those who enter unwittingly, most are unaware that they have accidentally stumbled upon the Holy Grail of roller coasters. It is here, far from any major cities or highways, where the Leap the Dips resides.

Structures like the Leap the Dips were common at the turn of the century when Americans were visiting picnic and trolley parks for summer recreation. Based on W.A. Dodge's 1889 design patent, the roller coaster, originally called a toboggan slide or roundabout (and later a figure eight) started sprouting up in hundreds of parks across the country. By the time of the first Great War, nearly four hundred of these rides, which could be constructed in three to six weeks, had proliferated in nearly every major park in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. And as fast as they were built, they were quickly replaced with newer versions. From the end of World War I to the present, every figure eight was destroyed—except for one. The single survivor, Lakemont Park's Leap the Dips, still operates today as the world's oldest roller coaster. The Wright brothers took their first flight during its *second* season, indicating just how old this ride actually is. Its age, rareness, and survival are cause for celebration, especially among park historians and the many roller coaster enthusiasts who visit religiously on their treks across the country.

In the last century more than a thousand coasters have succumbed to the wrecking ball, but Leap the Dips somehow escaped and endured. In more recent times, its story has been one of perseverance. Though it was considered state of the art when it first opened in 1902, by the early 1980s, the ride had lost much of its grandeur. At about forty feet high with its largest drop not more than nine feet, Leap the Dips was no longer capable of providing a white knuckle experience to a public accustomed to much larger modern coasters. By late 1985 it was in such deplorable condition that it was closed and remained that way for nearly a decade, awaiting the inevitable bulldozer. A group of local business people and coaster enthusiasts who recognized the significance of the ride came to the rescue and formed the Leap the Dips Foundation. Their preservation efforts raised enough funds through donations, grants, and loans to rebuild the roller coaster and eventually restore it to its original condition.

Today the Leap the Dips provides a ride experience similar to that from the turn of the last century. It is living history that anyone can touch and experi-

ence—not just some dusty museum exhibit. It serves as a valuable educational tool, as a piece of Americana that one hopes will be preserved for generations to experience and to enjoy. And it sits almost side by side with a more contemporary coaster, clearly sending the message that the past really can be part of the present. For those who admire it, Leap the Dips is a gem.

The Origins and Development of the Roller Coaster

The first coaster devices were believed to be the descendants of sixteenth-century Russian ice slides and of rolling cars on French-designed inclines in the early 1800s. Later, a coal transport business in Pennsylvania converted its operation and re-opened as the Mauch Chunk Switchback Gravity Railway in 1874, with a nine-mile course down Mt. Pisgah, near what is now the town of Jim Thorpe. There is no doubt that this renowned attraction was the concept behind the first roller coaster type railways and may have been the inspiration for a Sunday school teacher named LaMarcus Adna Thompson. In 1884 Thompson leased property in New York's Coney Island and built two straight undulating tracks on which passenger cars rolled. Generally credited as the first roller coaster of the modern era, the Switchback Railway was such an unexpected success that Thompson parlayed that one ride into a career, building additional rides across America and Europe. Though generally credited with the invention, unconfirmed rumors suggest that Thompson's creation was based on earlier rides he observed during his travels.

In the following years many entrepreneurs added new innovations—forest coasters, cars that zig-zagged or switch-backed down a course, cars that jumped gaps, and eventually trains of cars that raced each other. Thompson would simply improve on those designs while guarding his own patents and ideas. Within a decade he introduced the Scenic Railway—a long and breathtaking ride that incorporated buildings with scenery, lit by another new invention, electric lighting. Combining the thrill of shallow drops and theatre, Thompson built rides for expositions, fairs, parks, and private venues. Few parks could afford not to have one of his devices, although there were many rivals who built faithful imitations.

By the late 1910s, over 800 parks boasted some 1,250 wooden roller coasters in a variety of sizes and styles. Then, within a decade, the private automobile arrived, giving the traveler new freedom, while sounding the death knell for hundreds of small operators. For the most part the modest local parks suffered with their outdated rides and attractions, while virtual wonderlands developed in larger cities with names like Luna Park, Electric Park, and White City, all now within driving distance. It was here that a larger ride base and more popular entertainment abounded.

While designers kept thrill seekers busy, it wasn't until 1917 that the roller coaster began to take on the shape familiar to today's rides. The Scenic Railway was forgotten for bigger drops and curves, and a more high-profile design began to shape the parks. In essence, the roller coaster became the billboard, its presence announcing the park from those who would pass from a distance. There was nothing to hide and the public was ready for more stimulation, which coaster designers and parks were more than happy to provide. John A. Miller, who began his career with Thompson, was soon the key figure in the advancement of the ride safety and design. He observed how the public looked for bigger thrills and was convinced he could design the structure, track, and rolling stock to make this a reality. His wonderful Giant Coaster at Paragon Park in Nantasket Beach, Massachusetts, topping out at 98 feet, was the tallest ride for nearly a decade.

The trend continued. Fewer parks now competed for a growing population, although more intense coasters were being constructed in unlikely places, in a last ditch effort to draw business. The building frenzy between 1919 and 1930 has been characterized as the Golden Era of the roller coaster. While the quantity was significant, it was the quality that highlighted this period. New designers, like Prior and Church, and Herbert Schmeck, competed with the older masters to create a wonderful collection of sensational coasters. But this innovative string of development would come to an unnatural halt.

The Decline of Amusement Parks and the Near-Disappearance of Wooden Roller Coasters

The onset of the Great Depression in October 1929 virtually eradicated the existing amusement industry and a lack of funding impeded future development. In the years leading up to the Second World War, many parks were abandoned or sold, their property value almost nil. Between 1914 and 1974, many parks closed, and although a few coasters were relocated, over 700 coasters were unceremoniously demolished. By 1978, only ninety wood coasters remained operating in the United States, with nearly half considered seriously endangered.

There are many reasons why the wood coaster almost met its demise. For the most part, a significant portion of the industry was affected by the poor economic times of the Great Depression and World Wars, which essentially brought the industry to its knees with little growth or new design development. The lost personnel, reduced guest spending and attendance, and the rationing of building materials brought on by war debilitated amusement parks across the U.S. Without parts or lumber, maintenance suffered. In many cases, real estate value often exceeded the actual value of the park property. Many owners, typically established park families, got out of the business during economic down times, depriving the next generation of their operational knowledge. Park properties were wanted for new homes as urban sprawl reached the countryside; others were replaced by recreational parks, bowling alleys, and even parking lots. Aging rides, susceptible to fire and rot, were neglected by owners with little capital to invest in even minimal maintenance. Nature took its toll, with major storms, hurricanes, and flooding destroying a noteworthy number of rides.

Operational and human error also hurt business. While most parks could deal with the brazen patron who might fall from a ride, many horrific deaths were attributed to the operation or condition of the coaster, particularly before 1920. While the publicity damaged the park, it was often the settlements—sometimes larger than the actual value of the park—that eventually closed the property. In addition, by the 1950s, racial segregation was easing and some managers were not adept at operating under the new social system. Another reason, often overlooked, was the aging of the designers and the demise of their companies. The craftsmen eventually succumbed to poor health, poverty, or old age. Without their expertise and with no one to take up the trade and carry the business forward, many designers simply walked away from the coaster business. Because there was no national amusement organization or association to gather information and assist park owners, there was no collective understanding of the threats faced by the industry. By the 1960s, the nation was losing at least two major parks each year. Closures touched every area of the country including notable properties like Steeplechase Park in Brooklyn, New York (1964); Olympic Park in Irvington, New Jersey (1965); Pacific Ocean Park in Santa Monica, California (1967); Glen Echo Park in Bethesda, Maryland (1968); and Fontaine Ferry Park in Louisville, Kentucky (1972). Some of the biggest coaster parks in the world eventually closed their doors; most notably Chicago's Riverview Park (1967) (with *seven* coasters), Cleveland's Euclid Beach Park (1969), Coney Island near Cincinnati, Ohio (1971), Palisades Amusement Park in Cliffside Park, New Jersey (1971), and two Pennsylvania parks, Willow Grove Park, north of Philadelphia

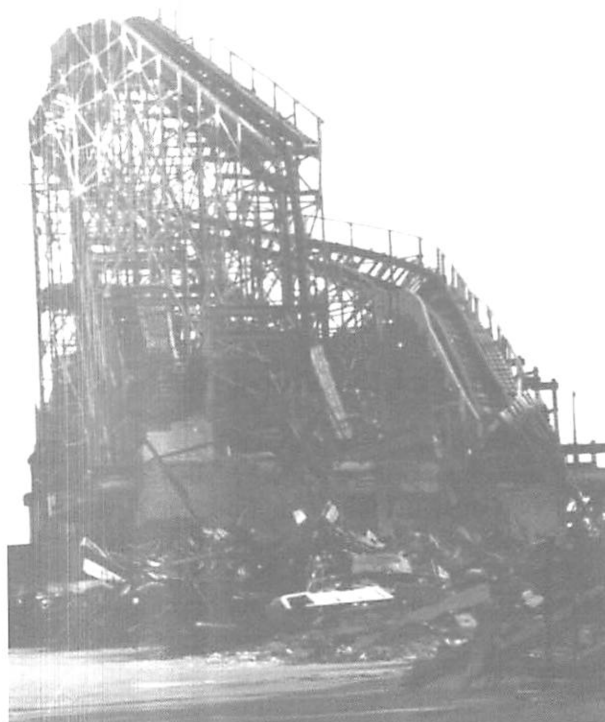

Figure 1. The Tornado, Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York, during demolition in April 1978. The firm of Prior and Church designed this curve-packed layout, which has been replicated by present-day designers. (R. Munch)

(1975), and West View Park, just north of Pittsburgh (1977). In addition, the regal Cyclone Racer in Long Beach, California (1930–1968); the Cyclone in Revere Beach, Massachusetts (1925–1969); and the Giant Dipper in Belmont Park, San Diego, California (1925–1976), all closed independently. The Tornado in Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York, originally constructed in 1926, closed after the 1977 season and was demolished the next year (Figure 1).

Resurgence of the Wood Coaster

The combination of these and other losses did not cause any major uproar until the late 1970s. By then several groups, including the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) and the National Amusement Park Historical Association (NAPHA) began to educate the public on the history of these rides and threats to their continuing existence. Both groups formed in 1978, when coasters were at their most vulnerable. The following year the first guidebook on the subject, *Roller Coaster Fever*, was published accompanied by a listing of the most endangered coasters in the country. Of the fifteen rides listed, only three are still in operation today. One of these is the aforementioned Giant Dipper, was saved after a fourteen-year hiatus through the efforts of the energetic Save the Coaster Committee in San Diego.

Despite the continuing closure and demolition of coasters taking place throughout the 1960s and 1970s, there were signs of a resurgence. John Allen of the Philadelphia Toboggan Company single-handedly designed some of the greatest family-style rides of that era, starting the latest coaster renaissance; many still exist today. Between 1960 and 1979, just before his death, Allen designed the late Mr. Twister in Denver, Colorado (1965), the Swamp Fox in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (1966), the Shooting Star in Salem, Virginia (1968), and the Racer at Kings Island (now operated by Cedar Fair) just outside of Cincinnati, Ohio (1972). Because of the extensive publicity the Racer received while opening with the new theme park, many credit it with starting a renewed interest in roller coasters. It was only the second racing coaster built since the late 1930s.

Two other men can take some credit in the resurgence. In 1968, Kennywood Park, just southeast of Pittsburgh, tempted fate. Instead of adding a new ride at a sizeable expense, it rebuilt its popular John Miller Pippin with an extended track plan designed in-house by the late Andrew Vettel. Over time the Thunderbolt has helped to establish the facility as one of the great traditional parks. Today with three distinctive Miller coasters, Kennywood Park boasts the largest collection of John Miller's work in one park.

Meanwhile the late William Cobb, a Dallas engineer, was contracted to move Coney Island's famous Cyclone to Texas in 1974. It was during the mid-1970s that there was a concerted effort to save the Cyclone from expansion plans of the nearby Aquarium. After the Cyclone was saved by local businessmen, Cobb was instead given the opportunity to design and build a replica near Houston, Texas. Astroworld's Texas Cyclone began a remarkable duplication effort as three additional Cyclone clones were eventually installed in the Six Flags theme park system. While other coasters have been replicated in an attempt to bring the past to present riders, the Cyclone copies have been particularly successful.

Typically a major capital project, a new wood coaster might return its investment in two or three seasons, although some owners discovered that relocating a ride was more economical than designing and constructing a new one. Successful projects to move coasters in the last twenty years include the noteworthy Phoenix at Knoebels Park in Elysburg, Pennsylvania (reopened in 1985), relocated from Texas; the Wild One at Wild World (now Six Flags America) in Largo, Maryland (1986), moved from Massachusetts; and the Comet from Crystal Beach Park in Ridgeway, Ontario, Canada, rebuilt at the Great Escape Park, in Lake George, New York, in 1994. Over that time, other opportunities for parks included the retention and restoration of existing coasters, the faithful replication of the old designs, and the total rebuilding of existing coasters, thereby keeping the guest interested in returning to visit an improved or new attraction. All wood coaster design and construction is based on established standards, but designers are currently bringing certain historical elements to their new rides. Today, a number of American companies deliver these forgotten thrills to a new audience. Great Coasters International has used a straightforward method of inserting specific time-tested thrills into their new rides. Twisting curve-packed rides like Hersheypark's Wildcat (1998), an unadulterated complement to the long-lost Crystal Beach Cyclone, and

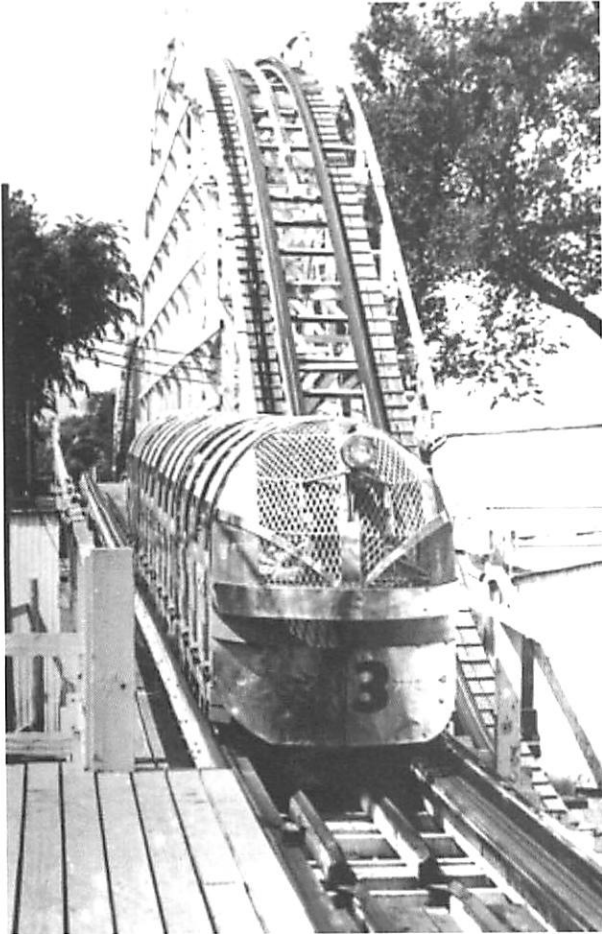

Figure 2. The American Coaster Enthusiasts has acquired one of the unique covered trains from Chicago's Riverview Park's Silver Flash coaster for display in its future museum. (B. Derek Shaw Collection)

Dollywood's popular Thunderhead (2004) are the foundations for much of their work. Fetterman/ Adams have also looked to the past and offered the brilliant Twister at Knoebels Park (1999), paying tribute to the wonderful defunct ride of the same name once located at Denver's Elitch Gardens. Meanwhile, Gravity Group debuted Hades in Mt. Olympus Park, in the Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. With an astounding two-way high-speed tunnel under the main parking lot, innovation has not been lost with this true frontrunner. Its head designer, Larry Bill, created Boulderdash, which runs along a mountainside at Lake Compounce (a success story in itself), in Bristol, Connecticut (2000), and the Great White at Morey's Piers in Wildwood, New Jersey (1996), reminiscent of the pier coasters once found all along the California coast. And more intense thrills, more indicative of the Golden Era, have come from S&S Power and Alan Schilke, with the 2004 debuts of J2 at Clementon Lake Park in New Jersey and Avalanche at Timber Falls Park, also in the Wisconsin Dells.

For the past two decades the American Coaster Enthusiasts has acted as a watch group, reporting on the pulse of the parks and their prized coasters. Its 8,000 members have a considerable voice in the coaster arena and find delight in concerted and creative efforts to preserve rides of the past, while exhibiting unending enthusiasm for the classic icon. The organization is also planning a museum that will utilize an archive collection housing dozens of cars and historic documents acquired through donations. Notable in the collection are examples from Ohio's Euclid Beach Park and Chicago's famed Riverview Park (Figure 2), as well as a full train from the Elitch Garden's Twister. American Coaster Enthusiasts has also begun to bestow Classic Coaster designations and ACE Landmark status upon the most significant rides. The first ACE Landmark was presented in 2002 to the Leap the Dips, the quirky little coaster in Lakemont Park. (This coaster was also recognized by the National Park Service when it was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996.) The Leap the Dips Foundation remains responsible for the $1 million restoration of the coaster completed in 1999, so it is not out of the woods just yet.

For about 125 years roller coasters have provided a thrilling experience to generations of Americans. The challenge now is to preserve historic rides, while accommodating the changing needs of park owners and offering new thrills to park visitors. At the same time the steel coaster with tubular steel track, a product of the late 1950s, continues to dominate the world's coaster construction. For many it doesn't seem to matter. The wood coaster continues to survive, and remains the classic king of the amusement park.

Richard Munch has been documenting the roller coaster phenomenon for over thirty years. He is a founding member and the first president of American Coaster Enthusiasts. He assisted in the publication of *Roller Coaster Fever*, the first ever roller coaster guidebook, and in 1982 authored ACE's first book, *Harry G. Traver: Legends of Terror*. More recently, he has been associated with the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives project. Since 1998, Mr. Munch has served as historian for the current ACE Executive Committee. He is presently a staff architect with Herschman Architects in Cleveland, Ohio.

Reflections on "Catch All, Fast Pitch"
A Review of Threatened Resources

Liz Creveling
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Grassroots efforts have always played an integral role in historic preservation, beginning in the 1850s with the acquisition of Mount Vernon by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. The actions of concerned citizens can spur a local community into action to save a historic resource, help identify funding opportunities, and stimulate creative thinking about viable reuse strategies. Threats ranging from deterioration to new development encourage citizens to take matters into their own hands, establishing initiatives and organizing to preserve historic properties or even entire districts. This is especially true for recreation and entertainment resources, which are often neglected for newer resources and not seen as historic or worth saving.

The following six case studies highlight grassroots preservation projects at varying stages of completion. The case studies demonstrate a variety of approaches to grassroots preservation including dedicated youth programs, a well-developed internet presence, and a media campaign in the local newspapers. The diverse group of subjects and participants represented in this collection illustrates the power of a dedicated group of people and the far-reaching effects of their actions.

Whalom Park, Lunenburg, Massachusetts

Whalom Park opened its gates in 1893 at the end of the Fitchburg and Leominster Street Railway in Lunenburg, Massachusetts. Amusement parks at the end of trolley lines were common in the late nineteenth century since such recreation destinations increased trolley ridership, especially on weekends. Boasting rides such as the Flyer Comet Coaster, Tumble Bug, Dodgems, and the Whip, the amusement park at Whalom Park was soon considered the "playground of central New England." [1] Other attractions included a bathing pavilion, theater, ballroom, carousel, bowling alley, and an open-air roller-skating rink (Figure 1).

The 1920s and 1930s were the golden years for amusement parks in America. After World War II, the economic boom and increasing popularity of automobile tourism contributed to falling attendance at many traditional parks like Whalom. Cars provided American families access to more varied and distant vacation destinations, including Disneyland and the many "theme parks" opening across the country. Despite these changes, Whalom continued to operate as a traditional amusement

park while many others closed. However, a change in the management of Whalom Park in the late 1990s sent the park into a final decline, and by 2000 its owners, citing financial hardship, closed the 107-year-old park and shuttered its rides for good.[2]

The Bowen family, who possessed controlling interest in the park from 1935 until the late 1990s, currently holds only 41 percent of Whalom's stock and does not want the park to be sold to developers intending to raze the property for new development. The Save Whalom Park web site run by Allyson Bowen provides updates on the fate of the park and opportunities for volunteers and donors. After the park closed, Bowen raised money from a group of private investors in order to purchase the property and preserve it as a classic amusement park. The most highly advertised part of the effort was the "Buy a Whale" campaign, in which "whales" representing original Whalom tickets were sold to raise money for a bid on the park. Unfortunately the two-year effort proved unsuccessful and funds were subsequently returned to donors. In the last several years, many of the rides have been sold to other parks. The Save Whalom Park organization is keeping track of the rides, hoping to one day buy them back. At the time of publication the Bowen family and its supporters are exploring new initiatives as well as raising awareness and continuing their work to preserve and reopen this important recreation resource.[3]

Ridgewood Ranch, Willits, California

Thanks to a successful book (2001) and film adaptation (2003), many Americans are familiar with the Depression-era saga of Charles Howard and his racehorse, Seabiscuit.[4] During the 1930s and 40s, Howard constructed several buildings for his thoroughbred operation at Ridgewood Ranch in Willits, California. In 1939 Seabiscuit was stabled at Ridgewood and the prize-winning horse was returned to the ranch to spend his retirement from 1940 to 1947. In 1962, Christ's Church of the Golden Rule acquired Ridgewood Ranch. The property is still a working ranch and the church's small congregation supports the ranch with various ventures including a dairy operation and a print shop.[5]

More than twenty sites survive from the time when Seabiscuit and owner Charles Howard occupied the property. The restored stud barn specially constructed for Seabiscuit serves as the centerpiece (Figure 2). Other sites constructed by Howard include two large mare barns, a breeding barn, feed barns, paddocks, and a half track. In 2004, Ridgewood Ranch was placed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of eleven most endangered sites and the Cultural Landscapes Foundation included the ranch on its list of ten most threatened cultural landscapes.[6]

Figure 1. Whalom Park Bathing Pavilion, circa 1893. Situated on Lake Whalom, Whalom Park boasted a bathing pavilion, theater, ballroom, carousel, bowling alley, roller skating rink, and several classic amusement park rides. The park's final season was in 2000, and it now sits shuttered. (Allyson Bowen, Save Whalom Park)

Figure 2. Stud Barn, circa 2004. The stud barn built by Charles Howard especially for Seabiscuit was the racehorse's home from 1939 to 1947. The barn, currently being restored, serves as the centerpiece of the preservation project for the Howard-era buildings. (Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation)

The two main threats to the ranch are deterioration due to weathering and aging of materials and new development pressure. A nearby ranch similar to Ridgewood was recently developed into a residential golf community. The owners of Ridgewood fear their property could meet a similar fate.[7] Ridgewood's owners are now working with the Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation, which was founded in 2004. The foundation is a grassroots organization established by people dedicated to preserving the ranch and telling the story of Seabiscuit. Its mission is to "promote the cultural legacy of Ridgewood Ranch, the home and final resting place of the legendary racehorse Seabiscuit, through historic preservation, environmental conservation and public education."[8] Currently the foundation has several projects underway including the rehabilitation and preservation of Seabiscuit's stud barn, the procurement of preservation easements with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, historic walking tours, and museum exhibits. It is working closely with the owner as well as other local organizations to save Ridgewood Ranch and restore several other Seabiscuit-era structures.[9]

Myrtle Beach Pavilion, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

The Myrtle Beach Pavilion was built in 1949, the third pavilion to be constructed on the site since 1907 (Figure 3). Located in the historic downtown area of Myrtle Beach, the building has housed restaurants, concessions, bathhouses, dance halls, shops, and amusements throughout its history. The Burroughs Chapin Company (a local developer since 1900) owns the eleven-acre Myrtle Beach Pavilion and adjacent amusement park. Two features of the complex are listed in the National Register of Historic Places: a hand-carved 1912 Herschell-Spillman Carousel and a circa 1920 Wurlitzer band organ. The amusement park located adjacent to the pavilion includes roller coasters, thrill rides, go-cart tracks, water rides, arcades, shops, and carnival games. Currently the first floor of the pavilion is used as an arcade and the second level houses the city's only under-twenty-one club, the Attic.[10]

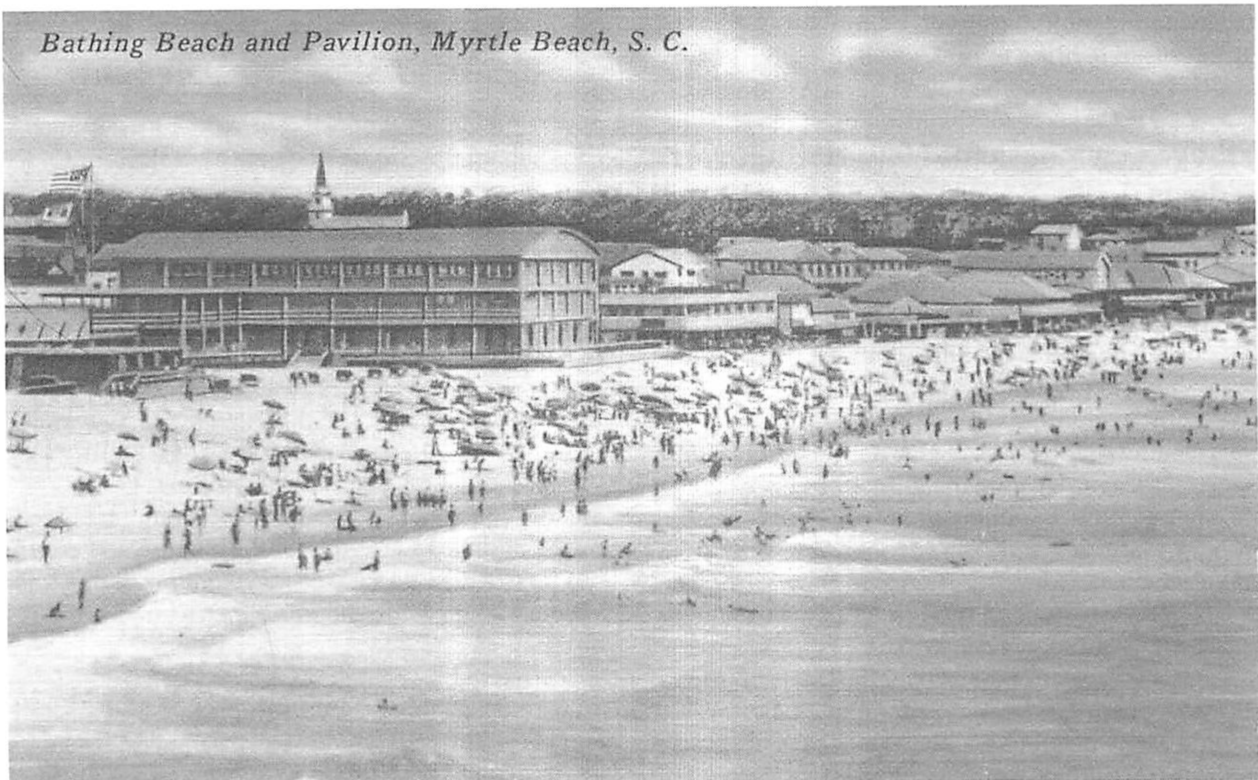

Figure 3. Myrtle Beach Pavilion, circa 1950. This historic postcard view of the Myrtle Beach Pavilion (three-story building at left) depicts its prime location on the South Carolina coast. The pavilion, built in 1949, currently houses "The Attic," the city's under-twenty-one club, and an arcade. (Chapin Memorial Library, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

Businesses in the historic downtown have suffered in recent years as tourists have moved to newer entertainment venues in more recently developed parts of the city. In addition, the city's downtown is experiencing problems with prostitution, theft, vandalism, and other crimes. Although the Myrtle Beach Pavilion serves as a cultural and historic landmark in the community, it is vulnerable to developers interested in the economic value of the land. Several redevelopment plans have been suggested for downtown Myrtle Beach that do not include the pavilion. The Downtown Redevelopment Corporation (DRC) has expressed its intention of dealing with downtown's problems and restoring to the area vibrant economic activity. The DRC would like to make better economic use of the property's current location, which most likely includes tearing down the building if no acceptable adaptive use can be found.

Figure 4. Ribeyre Gymnasium, circa 2002. Donated to the New Harmony school in 1924, the Ribeyre Gymnasium is currently being rehabilitated by a student-led group, the Ribeyre Gymnasium Restoration Group. Once completed, the gymnasium will serve as a community center and athletic facility. (Ribeyre Gymnasium Restoration Group)

Community members and local business owners have expressed their desire to keep the pavilion; however, thus far no group has organized to generate support and present alternatives to proposed demolition of the building. To successfully lobby for the retention and restoration of the pavilion, a grassroots level organization dedicated to saving the building should be formed. Without an advocate fighting to preserve it, the Myrtle Beach Pavilion could be lost to new development.

Ribeyre Gymnasium, New Harmony, Indiana

In 1814, Father George Rapp founded New Harmony, Indiana, as a utopian society. Rapp was a leader in a German Lutheran sect that believed the Second Coming was imminent and he brought his 850 followers to Indiana in preparation. However, Rapp and his followers abandoned the town in 1824, selling it to Robert Owen, an industrialist and social reformer. Despite the failure of Owen's utopian community, many of his followers stayed in New Harmony and helped found the community that exists today. In 1924, local philanthropist Alfred Ribeyre donated the Ribeyre Gymnasium to the town (Figure 4). The two-story brick structure sits at the intersection of two main streets in the downtown area and has a prominent clock tower as part of the head house. Residents have always been aware of their town's unique history and many of its nineteenth century properties have been restored. In 1965 New Harmony was designated a National Historic Landmark, and Historic New Harmony, Inc., was created to manage the preservation of the town's historic buildings.[11]

In 2002, a group of middle and high school students in New Harmony chose to focus on the restoration of the Ribeyre Gymnasium for a community service project. At that time the gymnasium was in a state of disrepair. It was suffering from deterioration due to water damage and years of constant use. The student led initiative, named the Ribeyre Gymnasium Restoration Group, wrote bylaws, articles of incorporation, and applied for nonprofit status.[12] During weekly meetings before school, the group wrote grants, conducted a market study, and investigated possible new uses for the gymnasium including a much needed community center. Consultation with local architects, contractors, and attorneys helped the students learn about the preservation field as well as how to effectively organize fundraisers. In addition to winning several awards and grants, including the 2004 Servaas Award from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, the group has hosted "Rib-eyes for Ribeyre" dinners and has sought to collect enough quarters to line the entire building.[13]

To date the group has raised approximately $603,000 (the estimated project cost is $1,468,742).[14] These funds have been raised through donations by several local, state, and national organizations as well as fundraisers and grants. Recently the students applied for and received a

$500,000 grant with the Indiana Office of Rural Affairs, Small Cities Community Development Building Grant Program.[15] As students graduate from high school each year, the group admits new members and will continue to operate until it reaches its goal of restoring the gym and reusing it as a community center.

Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan

Belle Isle was once known as Wah-na-be-zee (Swan Island) to the Chippewa and Ottawa. Over time, custody of the 985 acre site passed from the French to the British and finally to American settlers. When the city of Detroit acquired the island in 1879, the name was changed from Hog Island to Belle Isle. The city hired famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted to develop a design that included lakes, lagoons, a canal system, and wooded areas. An aquarium, conservatory, bandstand, lighthouse, and casino were also built on the island (Figure 5). Several of the buildings were designed by the well-known architect Albert Kahn.[16]

Figure 5. Belle Isle Bandstand, circa 1900. This historic postcard shows the Belle Isle canal system designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. Also in view is a bandstand used for concerts in the park. (Lori Feret, Friends of Belle Isle)

Belle Isle enjoyed decades of use by the people of Detroit and it was not until the 1970s that the park began to decline due to neglect and misguided stewardship. In 1973, a grassroots organization, the Friends of Belle Isle (FOBI), formed with the mission to "promote the preservation of natural beauty, restoration and preservation of historical sites, and the adaptive use of existing structures on the island for the enjoyment and use by all people."[17]

In 2002, the Belle Isle Zoo was closed by the city of Detroit and in April 2005 the Detroit Zoological Institute closed the 101-year-old aquarium. The Belle Isle Aquarium is the nation's oldest public aquarium and the only public aquarium in Michigan. The Friends of Belle Isle Aquarium (FOBIA) was founded in January 2005 in an effort to keep the aquarium from closing. This organization is currently raising money and awareness to reopen the building.[18]

In recent decades, discussions of privatizing and developing the island have caused many Detroiters to worry about the island's historic buildings and landscapes. Both the FOBI and FOBIA are strong advocates for the park. They have played a key role in encouraging the city to better maintain the island and its facilities and promoting public awareness of the island's significance and value to the city. The FOBI has planted several thousand trees on the island and helped to develop the park's master plan. The FOBIA has distributed literature to schools, churches, and aquarium guests, and representatives have appeared on local news and radio stations to educate Detroiters about the threats to the aquarium. The Friends of Belle Isle and the aquarium believe that the city has a wonderful resource that it should invest in and preserve for future generations.[19]

City Park Golf Course, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Unlike the previous five examples, the City Park Golf Course in Baton Rouge no longer faces the threat of imminent development and demolition. Architect Tom Bendelow, a Scottish immigrant who designed over 700 other courses around the country, completed the course in 1928. This nine-hole golf course has been a public course since it opened, serving a diverse group of patrons includ-

Figure 6. City Park Golf Course Club House, circa 2002. Tom Bendelow designed City Park Golf Course in 1928. It is one of only a very few Bendelow courses that have not been significantly altered from their original configuration. (Robert Matthews, City Park Golf Course)

ing students enrolled in school programs. In its prime, the park had several circulation avenues, a swimming pool, tennis courts, a zoo, a carousel, a clubhouse, and the golf course (Figure 6).[20]

City Park is currently owned and operated by the East Baton Rouge Parish Recreation and Park Commission (BREC), a division of the state of Louisiana government. In 2002, BREC introduced plans that would significantly alter or destroy the historic golf course, one of just a few Bendelow courses that has survived without being significantly altered. In response, the Friends of City Park, which was created in 1979, began an initiative to nominate the City Park Golf Course to the National Register of Historic Places. In December 2002, the course was listed in the Register under Criterion A for its entertainment and recreation significance as the first municipal golf course in Baton Rouge. Disagreement about the course's future continued between BREC and the Friends of City Park, along with concerned citizens supporting both sides of the argument. A heated debate played out in the local newspaper, adding further visibility to the plight of the golf course.[21]

In May 2005, BREC offered a revised plan that included retention of the golf course and the redesign and relocation of three of the historic holes. Though the course will not be demolished or developed into a parking lot, fishing hole, party pavilion, and sand volleyball court (as originally proposed), the Friends of City Park are continuing to work toward retaining the historic course in its original configuration.[22] The City Park survived the 2005 hurricane season undamaged and the historic course continues to operate.

Conclusion

Although the projects described above involve resources that are not yet fully preserved, they show the important contribution a dedicated grassroots group of citizens can make towards this goal. Several approaches have proven to be effective: the formation of a formal "friends" group; active solicitation for support from the local community; development of a website to keep the public updated; meetings with local developers, government officials and civic leaders; utilization of local newspapers, radio and television programs to create interest and maintain momentum; and finally, persevering until the resource is saved.[23] While the techniques of the grassroots groups highlighted here vary, their goals remain the same, to preserve and protect a community's historic recreation resources for future generations.

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For Further Information

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http://www.seabiscuitheritage.com/

Myrtle Beach Pavilion
The South Carolina Historical Society
The Fireproof Building
100 Meeting Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401
http://www.schistory.org/

Ribeyre Gymnasium
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City Park Golf Course
Friends of City Park
1 Palm Drive
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http://www.friendsofcitypark.com/

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