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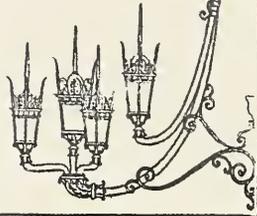
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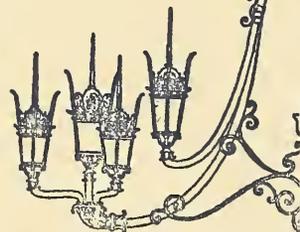
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319 Forest Hills Street, Boston, MA 02130 522-7431



**The Planting of
Franklin Park**
*Selected Park Department
Reports — 1906 to 1910*

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INTRODUCTION

JOHN A. PETTIGREW, PARK SUPERINTENDENT

John A. Pettigrew (1844-1912) was born in Gateshead in the north of England, where his father was a gardener. He himself became a gardener's apprentice at the age of ten, as was common at the time, and gained horticultural experience at large estates such as that of Lampton Castle in County Durham. He also worked for various nurseries in England before coming to the United States in 1866, where he lived in Chicago for many years. His career in Chicago followed an unusual course: for five years, he ran a florist business and then went into the manufacture of brick and stone until 1889, when he was offered the position of Park Superintendent, first with the West and then with the North Park System. In 1894, he became the Superintendent of the Milwaukee Park System, staying in that city only a year before taking a similar position in Brooklyn. In 1897, he became the first Superintendent of the Boston Park System, which post he held until his death.

From the time of their first contract with the Boston Park Commission in 1878 until 1897, the Olmsted firm, in keeping with its founder's conviction that the role of a landscape architect was not only to provide plans but also to supervise their execution, made all major decisions concerning construction,

COVER:

Franklin Park oil on panel by Maurice Prendergast (1896).

planting and management as well as design of the Boston parks. E. W. Howe was Engineer-in-Charge of construction work. His horticultural counterpart was W. L. Fischer, whose title was Assistant Landscape Gardener and who had had extensive experience as a gardener in his native Germany, in England and at Central Park before coming to Boston in 1884.

In building the parks of the Boston system, priority was always given to engineering. Massive deployments of men were necessary to construct roads and drainage systems, to clear and grade the surfaces of the parks, and to erect the more utilitarian of the structures. The bulk of the Park Commission's construction budget went into these activities and into building the shelters and bridges designed by the Olmsted firm with the help of consulting architects. Planting lagged behind, except in entirely man-made parks, such as the Back Bay Fens and the lower valley of the Muddy River, where trees and shrubs were needed at once. (The Arboretum was an exception, since both trees and tree care were paid for by Harvard University.) The situation was aggravated by the Park Commission's practise of charging gardening expenses to construction for a period of only two years after the initial outlay, thereafter putting it under the much smaller maintenance budget. Fischer was often left with an insufficient work force and limited funds for acquiring new nursery stock.

Between 1895 and 1897, several circumstances combined to cause a sharp shift in horticultural policy. In September of 1895, Olmsted retired, and his step-son, John C. Olmsted, became the senior partner in the firm. W. L. Fischer retired in January of 1897 at the age of 77. In March of 1897, Charles Eliot of the Olmsted office died suddenly, and four months later the Park Commissioners let the Olmsted contract lapse, thus severing, for the time being, all formal connection with the firm that had created the park system. Since the construction was virtually complete, E. W. Howe's job was also eliminated.

Rather than appointing another gardener, the Park Commissioners decided to hire a superintendent whose chief responsibility would be to complete the plantations. There is evidence that Charles Sprague Sargent, Director of the Arnold Arboretum, may have played a role in the selection of Pettigrew. By this time, Sargent was acting as advisor to the Park Commission on landscape as well as arboricultural matters, although in an unofficial and unpaid capacity. Sargent and Olmsted had always strongly disagreed over the use of exotic (foreign as opposed to native) plant materials in the parks, Olmsted preferring limited use of such plants in appropriate landscape settings and Sargent insisting that only native trees and shrubs were suitable for parks. In his first years in Boston, Pettigrew followed the

Sargent party line, although he later fell out of favor with Sargent for unspecified reasons. While many of the exotic plants which Pettigrew removed from Franklin Park and elsewhere in the system were undoubtedly trees and shrubs from the gardens of the old estates on the site, at least some must have been part of the plantations made by Fischer under Olmsted's direction. Others may have been made by Fischer on his own after 1895; letters written by Charles Eliot show that in these years, without Olmsted's tactful and restraining presence, Fischer's taste in plants became overly "exotic" and inconsistent with the original designs for the parks.

If there were a clear sequence of photographs from this period, it would be much easier to evaluate the respective merits of Fischer and Pettigrew. As it is, although numerous old photographs of Franklin Park exist, few show the planting in any detail, many are undated, and still others are too late to show anything but the Pettigrew and post-Pettigrew phases. Furthermore, no planting plans or lists were ever made for Franklin Park. The new Superintendent was apparently authorized to make radical changes. Many of these were undoubtedly necessary. However, it seems clear that he also undid a great deal of work which had been approved by Olmsted. In a report commissioned by the Park Department in 1910, a portion of which was reprinted

in the Franklin Park Coalition Bulletin of July 1979, John C. Olmsted remarked that "the arboricultural work done of late years on the parks cannot be too highly praised...", adding in a quiet dig at Sargent and Pettigrew that "...the artistic side of park planting has not been quite what it should be.... Few artists are attracted to well developed, round headed, healthy trees, almost evenly spaced...". Elsewhere he commented on the "dignified monotony" of such planting.

There can be no doubt that Superintendent Pettigrew approached his job with energy and thoroughness and that he instituted many practical improvements. Among other achievements he is credited with the invention of the bubbler fountain. He also submitted detailed and descriptive reports. The sections on Franklin Park reprinted here are a valuable record of the park's history in the years immediately after the Olmsted era.

Cynthia Zaitzevsky

June 1981

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Information about Pettigrew is found in his obituary (Boston Herald, July 3, 1912) and in City of Boston, Document No. 115-1900, 1101-5. The planting of Franklin Park will be discussed in Chapter XIII of my book on Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System to be published in the fall of 1982 by Harvard University Press.

13TH ANNUAL REPORT DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
(for the year 1887)

TREE-CUTTING ON FRANKLIN PARK

In the proper order of the work of Franklin Park many trees must be removed the coming season. To those who consider this operation without regard to the leading general purposes of the adopted plan of the park, the operation will appear a grievous one. During the last two years the Department has taken much pains to make the public familiar with these purposes. To this end a carefully prepared explanation of them was printed, with a map of the park, which has been circulated in different forms in large numbers. It has been reproduced in the leading daily and weekly newspapers, and copies, on cardboard and in the form of roller maps, have been hung on the walls of many offices and places of general resort. Several thousand have been distributed to individual addresses. Copies have been posted in the park, and, to aid those who might wish to trace out the plan on the ground, numerous guiding stakes have been set. Not a single remonstrance or objection to the general plan has been made, except where, along its boundaries, it has been supposed that individual interests might have been better promoted.

One feature of the plan, as thus fully made known in advance, is a series of roads and walks through existing woods. In planning these care has been taken that they shall involve the least possible injury to the natural features, and the least possible destruction of the finer and more promising trees. Necessarily many must be taken out to make way for the roads and walks, and more that slopes of natural character may be formed where the existing natural surface has to be broken. Not unfrequently, also, insignificant or decaying and unpromising trees are to be removed that others may be better developed, and that natural features of various kinds may be better brought into view. No trees will be removed at any point without careful consideration.

Respectfully,
FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED,
Landscape Architect Advisory.

Boston, 30th December, 1887.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

To Charles E. Stratton, Laban Pratt, and John T. Wheelwright, Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks, Boston:

GENTLEMEN: I herewith submit my report for the year ending January 31. 1898:

FRANKLIN PARK.

The current year commenced with tree thinning in the woods and plantations of Franklin Park. This is one of the important operations in park making: sound, healthy trees cannot be grown under crowded conditions, the side branches are killed for want of light and air, and nothing is left but the top branches, each struggling to overcome the other in search of light. While it is not necessary, or even desirable, in woodland to have each tree a perfect specimen, yet each may retain in some measure its individuality or characteristic beauty, without impairment of naturalness in massing for woodland effects.

The careful and intelligent thinning out of such woodlands produces better conditions for tree growth: the branches spread out, the boles, under the influence of more light and air, gradually put forth branches, while ground cover, undergrowth, and saplings for the same reason begin to grow below. In this work care is taken to retain and emphasize, in the direction indicated, any natural or pleasing features already existing, and at the same time to bear in mind the difficulty of policing dense tangles of wood growth.

On the sites of old residences, and on fence lines within the park, considerable cutting had to be done, to thin out the neglected tangle of former plantations of trees and shrubs of foreign origin, which, from their position, character, or condition, could not be blended into a harmonious connection with their surroundings.

On the boundary lines of Franklin Park, including Morton street, Canterbury street*, Blue Hill avenue, Seaver street, and Sigourney street, large areas have been prepared for screen belts of timber trees; the ground, having been ploughed and subsoil-ploughed several times during the past summer, is in a fine mellow condition for planting next spring. The intended permanent trees will be planted at from twenty-five to forty feet apart, according to their expected growth, and the intervals thickly planted with other trees to serve as protection. As growth progresses and they interfere with each other, the nurse trees may be removed for transplantation elsewhere, so that the plantation will serve the purpose of a nursery as well. To encourage rapid growth in these border plantations, cultivation should be maintained for at least three years, when grass or some suitable ground cover may be planted among the trees.

Franklin Park and other portions of the park system contain a large area of rocky, sterile hills and slopes, where the thinness of the soil will not permit fine tree growth. During the past season, such grounds have been treated with a dressing of commercial fertilizer, containing a large proportion of the elements that enter into tree growth. This is good in its way, yet under such conditions it is simply begging the question. The want of a suitable

*Now American Legion Highway.

depth of soil must be met, or the same stunted growth that we see today will meet the eyes of posterity. True economy and a regard for the future demand that this essential to successful tree growth be supplied without delay. A large quantity of trees and shrubs of mostly native kinds has been purchased during the past year, amounting to about 30,000 of the former and about 100,000 of the latter. The stock is in very fine condition; maples, oaks, beeches, ash and lindens, predominate among the trees, while the shrubs consist largely of cornels, thorns, viburnums, Judas trees, sumacs, and witch hazels. The greater proportion of this stock will be planted next spring, on the grounds that have been prepared during the past summer.

The removal of the Williams house and repair shops from the centre of Franklin Park, has been accomplished with gratifying results, the site being graded and made ready for planting to bring it into harmony with the surrounding grounds.

By the transfer (which you have ordered) of the sheep from the barn at Scarboro' Hill to the barn at Franklin Field, which will be accomplished early this spring, another disfigurement on the face of the park will be obliterated by the tearing down of the sheep barn and shepherd's house. The repair shops moved from the site of the Williams place have been set up as temporary shops in a hollow near the greenhouses at Morton street, a location easily hidden from the park drives. The selection of this place will enable the department to concentrate all shops, barns, storehouses, greenhouses, and necessary administration buildings, for a large district at one point, effecting thereby a saving in time and money by reason of convenience and availability, as well as ease of management. For the permanent buildings, it would be well to have plans prepared, so that the work of erection could be completed during the coming summer.

The grading and planting done last spring in Franklin Park comprised the planting of the border mound at Blue Hill avenue; the grading and planting of the refectory and horse-shed grounds; and the grading and planting of the grounds on either side of the drive from Forest Hills street to the forks of the road east of Forest Hills bridge. A number of young hemlocks have been moved from various parts of the park, where too thickly crowded, to the hill on which the Peters' house stands. These were transplanted with frozen balls of earth, and ranged in height from five to nine feet; to quicken the foliage effect and to give shelter, clumps of birches have been planted among them. This plantation will in time tend to broaden the evergreen effect along the drive leading to Scarboro' Pond bridge, the hill of the opposite side of the drive being clothed principally with a growth of fine white pines.

Among the improvements planned and ordered by the Board for the coming season in Franklin Park, may be mentioned the drainage course, the flow of which is not sufficient to form a brook, and which frequently is dry altogether.

Thereby it forms a marshy hollow for the greater part of its course, and is filled with coarse marsh-grasses and rushes. These, trampled by the feet of golfers and other frequenters of the park, produce an effect neither natural nor artistic. The plan of drainage will carry the water in an underground channel, which, with tile drains running laterally, will bring the ground into condition for the forming of a simple turf-covered valley. This will greatly enhance the beauty and simplicity of the large meadow, and will be a great convenience to the public. In connection with this a branch pipe will be carried to Scarboro' Pond to replenish its waters when necessary and opportunity offers.

Another work of improvement planned for execution this season is the formation of a long grassy glade, extending from Blue Hill avenue to the Playstead, and lying between Glen road and Seaver street*. The natural features favor this treatment of the ground, and the work will not be of a costly character, being simple in design. The heaviest item of cost will be loam, the rock being mostly near the surface. It will effect, too, the removal of the piles of stone which have so long littered the ground, and bring into use and enjoyment a very beautiful and convenient part of the park. The glade will be bordered on both sides by a meandering path, which will be of great convenience to those wishing to reach the Playstead from the cars at Blue Hill avenue.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1899
(for the year 1898)

FRANKLIN PARK.

In carrying out the design of your Board to preserve and accentuate the New England woodland character of Franklin Park, it became necessary to remove quantities of exotic trees and shrubbery which did not blend harmoniously with the native plants; such old friends as the common and Thunberg's barberry, the common privet and a few others have been retained; although not indigenous, these seem, by long association and fitness, to belong to New England's woodlands.

The thinning out of overcrowding trees was completed early last spring. The beneficial result of this work of the past three winters is now quite evident in the great improvement in the health and growth of the remaining trees; the increase of underwood, encouraged by the admission of light, has

*This area is today the zoo. Pettigrew completely changed Olmsted's plan for the Greeting.

has heightened the natural effect, relieving the woods, in a great measure, from the monotonous appearance where trees are allowed to grow thickly together to their mutual destruction; to the destruction, also, of the undergrowth, the varied forms of which add so much that is charming in woodland scenery.

The improvement of the Glade has been nearly completed. Drainage has been provided for its marshy hollows by cutting through the rock for a connection with the Nazingdale meadow drain. The Glade and the woods on either side, which were very deficient in soil covering, have been given a six to ten-inch dressing of good loam and seeded with grass. This treatment will invigorate the trees that have suffered from exposure of roots and want of nourishment. These woods are set apart for picnic purposes and are subjected to hard usage, so that undergrowth cannot exist except in a torn and dilapidated state. Several knolls and pieces of high ground that were needed for planting to emphasize the glade-like character of the surroundings, were liberally covered with loam, the ground being first plowed with a sub-soil plow; this treatment cannot fail to produce vigorous growth in the plantations. The result of the work is very satisfactory, transforming an unkempt tract of ground covered with piles of stone, loam and other material, into a pleasing turf-covered Glade. A pathway on one side, meandering within the shade of the bordering woodland, gives easy access from Blue Hill avenue to the children's playground, while the Glade, conveniently near the shade of the picnic woods, serves as a playground for picnic parties.

Among the important operations of the past season has been the laying out of bordering plantations, important in the necessity for producing as soon as possible a screening belt of woodland on the borders of the park. This bank of foliage serves to give seclusion as well as to form a background for views within the park, which contains in its centre a magnificent meadow; across its rolling contour are to be found the most delightful landscape effects, which are now marred in places by the intrusion of street life with its accompaniment of trolley cars, telegraph poles and other features destructive of quiet retirement.

It is not desirable nor necessary to omit the planting of any part of the borders of Franklin Park in the fear of shutting out views of interest lying beyond the park; there are many elevated points on the drives and walks where extensive outlooks can be obtained, a notable one being that from Hagborn Hill, where a view to the Blue Hills - six and a half miles away- is one of seemingly unbroken forest. For these reasons the work of planting the borders has been vigorously prosecuted during the past year.

Plantations have also been made at the old Williams house site* and on the hillside bordering the Glade; much has also been done on the borders of plantations and old woodlands in the way of planting witch and common hazels, red-buds, dogwoods, June-berries and thorns, in the effort to extend the foliage line nearer to the ground.

*Schoolmaster Hill.

Two gangs of four men each were kept steadily at work pruning trees, from June of the past year until the fall of the leaves. In the work of cutting out dead, diseased, or interfering limbs, the men are becoming expert; they begin to comprehend its importance, and to understand the art of pruning to correct defects in form or constitution.

The old gravel pits on the line of Scarboro' Pond have been filled and graded to an undulating slope, reaching from the winding of the road near the top of Scarboro' Hill down to the tennis grounds, thereby opening a very pleasing view of the meadow below. Projecting knolls and bluffs have been prepared, or are in preparation for planting at the proper season, which will add materially to the woodland effect of Scarboro' Hill on the north.

A marked improvement has been made on the west and south slopes of the Hill, by the removal of the sheep barn and the Galvin house. The service roads to the house, the exotic trees and shrubs have also been removed in the endeavor to restore this beautiful piece of woodland to a natural condition. The site of the greenhouses and barn including the slopes have been graded and loamed, and are now ready for the planting of forest trees.

The nurseries have been enlarged to accommodate the increasing stock of trees and shrubs added by purchase or propagation; the stock is large and in fine condition. Further extensions are necessary to receive the thousands of seedlings of native trees and shrubs now ready to be transferred from the seed beds to nursery-rows.

We have continued the transplanting of large trees during the past year. While this practice cannot generally be defended on account of its costly character and danger of loss, yet the circumstances seemed to warrant it in our case. The trees are fine ones, ranging from hemlocks and white pines, six to ten feet high to oaks, hard maples, ash and linden, four to eight inches in diameter. Planted in groups, eight or ten years ago, they were injuring each other by overcrowding, and it seemed wasteful to apply the axe, in spite of the extra cost. Those transplanted one year ago are in fine condition and well repay the cost. The method employed is the removal of the tree with a large frozen ball of earth, and thinning out the branches sufficiently to compensate for root cutting. There will be little further need of transplanting large trees; an abundance of fine stock of convenient size can be had from the thinning out of young plantations which have been set out during the past two years.

The foundation of Seaver street boundary wall has been laid, and a contract made for the erection of the superstructure. The Forest Hills traffic road has been partially completed and opened for use, which relieves the Arborway crossing at Forest Hills street from funeral processions.



Aerial view of the Playstead and the Country Park Meadow (now the Franklin Park Golf Course). This photograph shows the massing of planting around the country park. Note particularly the narrow neck between the Playstead and the meadow which separates the active from the passive parks. Also note the thick screen of planting along Seaver Street on the left.



Clump planting of oaks and white pines in Ellicott Dale. The line of sight between the trees in the background to the meadow beyond gives the impression of great space.

Photo by: Richard Heath

Abbotswood, having been very popular as a resort for picnic parties, for many years past, shows the effect of wear; the loam, from want of undergrowth to hold it in place, has washed down the slopes, exposing the roots of the trees to their injury and, eventually, to their destruction. To correct this the surface has been partly dressed with loam to a depth of six or seven inches, which when completed, will be seeded in grass, and picnic parties will be excluded during the coming season at least.

To provide a site for an administration yard to contain stable, shops, sheds, etc., an excavation was made during the past season in the hill at the nursery, the material excavated being used to fill up the swamp on the Morton street boundary nearby. The yard location is very convenient and easily screened from view.

A brick stable 74 by 38 feet containing twenty-seven stalls is nearly completed. The retaining wall of the bank surrounding two sides of the yard is now under construction, loose rocks from the grounds being used for the purpose. When completed this will serve for a back wall for sheds and shops, plans for which are now in preparation in our Engineering Department for the consideration of your Board.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1900
(for the year 1899)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The most important work of the past year throughout the park system, has been that of planting and preparing ground for planting. Work was continued in Franklin Park on the bordering belts, much material for these strips being obtained from the thinning out of the plantations made two years ago, which were planted thickly for the mutual protection of the trees and shrubs. These plantations now are nearly completed; little remains to be done excepting the filling up of a gap here and there, the ground for which has been prepared in readiness for planting when the season opens.

In the preparation of ground for planting much care has been given. Where a sufficient depth of soil was found the ground was well ploughed and subsoil ploughed, the operation being repeated two or three times, until the soil was reduced to a mellow, friable condition. Where the depth of soil was deemed too light for good tree growth, loam was added until a depth of about two feet was attained, the depth varying with the character of the subsoil. This careful preparation, although seemingly costly, is in the line of true economy, for, without a sufficiency of loam as a basis, luxuriance of growth cannot be attained. For example, such tracts at the Wilderness, Long Crouch Woods,

Abbotswood and Scarboro Hill, where the soil is thin and poor, are covered mostly with a growth of oaks of scrubby, starved appearance, which will not improve as they grow older. The addition of twelve inches of loam to these areas would stimulate the growth of saplings, and produce woodlands, the luxuriance of which the next generation would appreciate. Such treatment, at the present price of loam, would cost about eleven hundred dollars per acre, but it means the difference between a woodland of weak, starved growth, and one of trees of individually fine proportions and beauty. A portion of the woodlands has had from six to ten inches of loam applied, the results of which will soon be apparent. The places selected were Abbotswood, Schoolmaster Hill, the rocky boundary of Walnut avenue, and a few smaller areas where clumps of timber have established themselves on rocky knolls in the meadows. It is much to be hoped that this work can be continued until all requirements of this nature are furnished, as loam is the foundation of fine tree growth.

On the street line and outer boundaries of the park, substantial walls have been built of seam-faced Quincy granite. These walls are three feet six inches high, and two feet in thickness, and form a very handsome and dignified fence for the protection of the park, preventing indiscriminate tramping over the borders, to the destruction of the adjoining plantations. Openings are provided to give easy and convenient access to the paths in the park. The planting behind these walls of trailing vines and pendulous shrubs will be completed in the spring. When grapes, bitter-sweets and Virginia creepers, beneath a canopy of shrubs, partly cover the walls, the effect to passers on the street will be pleasing.

Tree pruning was continued until the fall of the leaf, when the work of thinning out saplings was begun in the old woodlands.

The grounds that for the past three years have been used as nurseries will be cleared of stock in the spring, and graded and planted in harmony with the adjacent landscapes. The ground is of a fine, rolling character, which gives an opportunity to form some charming, grassy slopes, receding from the drive to a background of timber, which will add very much to the beauty of that part of the park. New grounds have been prepared for nurseries in West Roxbury Parkway, Franklin Field and at Chestnut Hill Reservoir. Considerable young stock was planted in them last spring, and preparation has been made to continue the work this year. The stock will include hickories, maples and twenty thousand seedling oaks of various species, besides a variety of other trees and shrubs. Large sowings have also been made for future use of the seeds of many kinds of trees and shrubs.

The drainage of Nazingdale was completed during the past season, with the exception of a little more tile drainage that may be necessary in spots. The work was not fully carried out according to plan, in the expectation that the main pipe and a few lateral pipes thrown out into the wet places, together with the cutting off of the open brook, would render further draining unnecessary.

Work on the Glade was continued, and was completed early in the summer. The small pond opposite Elm Hill avenue was retained for the use of the children of the neighborhood, who enjoy playing around its shores and sailing little boats on its surface. The swale running southeast from this is now being tile-drained into the pond in the hope that it may thus be kept supplied.

A cluster of administration buildings have been erected, comprising store-rooms, carpenter and paint shops, machine shop, blacksmith shop, carriage-house, and sheds for wagons, carts, steam-rollers and other machinery. The buildings are of brick with slate roofs, and one steam-boiler heats the whole plant, including the harness-rooms of the stable built last season. A gas engine is now being set up to operate saws, grindstones, lathes, drills, etc., which will greatly facilitate and economize the work of the department.

The retaining wall of the administration yard is fast nearing completion. For the construction of this wall the department has made use of a large quantity of rocks and boulders gathered from the lawn surfaces throughout the park. The work yet to be done here is the surfacing of the yards and the completion of the service roads.

On Morton street boundary a swampy piece of ground was filled with the excavated material from the years. A double purpose was thereby served, thus enabling the department to screen its administration buildings from view, while forming from the swamp a very good piece of open ground. Next to the street will be planted a screen belt of timber, and a space will still remain which could, if needed, be advantageously used for a playground.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1901
(for the year 1900)

FRANKLIN PARK.

Notable among the areas planted in Franklin Park last year were the plantations of red cedars (*Juniperis Virginiana*) on Schoolmaster Hill and on the hillocks lying to the northwest; the plantations of deciduous trees and shrubbery in the bordering belts along Morton street, from Forest Hills street to a point north of Caterbury street, and in portions of the bordering belts of Canterbury street, Forest Hills street and Seaver street.

The greater part of the material used in this work was obtained by the thinning out of plantations made within the past four years. Such plantations, when properly handled, furnish better plants for transplantation than can be



White pines on Schoolmaster Hill.

Photo by: Richard Heath



American beech trees at Scarborough Pond, one of the most noble stands of trees in Franklin Park.

Photo by: Richard Heath

found in the market. Planted thickly at first, they give the immediate effect of density of foliage, and the individual plants afford shelter to each other.

The work of loaming the thin and sterile woodlands in the park, unfortunately, could not be continued last year. This work is of the greatest importance, and should be prosecuted, with the least possible loss of time, until a depth of loam sufficient to insure vigorous tree growth is furnished.

The small amount of rainfall, too, during the summer, made the care of newly planted trees much more difficult. But by mulching on the driest locations, and stirring up the soil immediately around each tree, the trouble was tided over without any loss of consequence, and the plantations generally are in very good condition.

The increasing popularity of the game of golf in Franklin Park necessitated the making of a new lot of tees and greens, for alternate use and rest with the old ones. Until the commencement of the season of 1900, the links had been under the care and control of a professional golfer, who maintained the course for the revenue derived from the sale of golf material, from teaching the game, and from a charge of fifteen cents per round of the links. Commencing with last season's play, the Department assumed the management of the game and the care of the links, opening the course to the public free of charge. The use of the links greatly increased, and forth thousand players went over the course during the season of seven and a half months; the attendance for one day, September 22, being 884. For the public safety the links are closed on holidays. No serious accident, up to the present time, has occurred.

The game of tennis awakened considerable interest last year. An average of forty-two courts were provided in Franklin Park, and, to meet a further demand, twelve courts were made in Franklin Field, which were equipped with permanent posts and wire-netting backstops.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

1902

(for the year 1901)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The principal work of planting has been completed in Franklin Park, that of the past year having been confined to the finishing up of details in the general scheme. The bordering plantations of trees are fast producing the effect of seclusion in the park. Thrifty young woodlands now may be found, where once open views of the adjacent streets marred the prospect, and detracted from the enjoyment of persons driving or walking in the park. To

produce as quickly as possible this desired effect of a screen, and to provide mutual protection, the trees were planted thickly; this has necessitated considerable thinning out to avert damage from overcrowding. The surplus material has been used in making new plantations. From this time on the work of planting in Franklin Park might properly be charged to maintenance, as the greater part of the material used will be obtained from plantations which require thinning out.

The thinning out of diseased and surplus trees in the old woodlands, which has been prosecuted for the past five years, continues to bear fruit. The gradual spread on top of a healthier growth, made possible by the admission of air and light, makes each tree a better specimen of its kind, and at the same time enhances the natural woodland effect.

The floors of many of the woodlands, notably those in the Wilderness, need attention in the way of grubbing out tree weeds, such as locust, cherry, and other seedlings, which grow rankly to the detriment or the exclusion of the more natural ground cover of wild shrubbery and herbaceous plants. Some work of this character has been done in Long Crouch Woods, which was badly infested with wild cherry seedlings. This piece of woodland is much frequented by picnic parties; and as the loam covering originally was very thin, over a rocky foundation, the trees have suffered from lack of nutrition and from hard usage. To ameliorate these conditions about 9,000 cubic yards of loam were spread over a large part of the wood. This gives an additional covering of loam, averaging about six and one-half inches in thickness over the treated part, which will greatly tend to the improvement of the trees, which have been starving in a thin and impoverished soil.

Other woodlands in Franklin Park are suffering from the thinness of the soil covering. Fine tree growth is one of the chief features of a pleasing landscape; and as loam at present is offered freely at cheap rates, it would seem to be wise to make liberal appropriations for the purchase of this prime necessity for producing a good growth of trees on the rocky, sterile portions of Franklin Park.

During most of the season two gangs of four men each were kept at the important work of tree pruning. Considerable additional under-drainage was laid in Nazingdale, with good results. The greater part of the length of the old brook (now carried in a pipe below the surface) was levelled and seeded, which made a vast improvement in what was once a rough and swampy hollow.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1903
(for the year 1902)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The improvement in the old woodlands of Franklin Park resulting from the careful and continued thinning out of all overcrowding trees and the pruning off of dead and diseased branches is very marked. This is especially noticeable in the greater spread of branches in the trees and in the increase of desirable undergrowth. A considerable area of woodland has been cleared of tree weeds, notably in the woods opposite and west of the Overlook, on Juniper Hill, and in the woods bordering Morton street. On account of insufficient funds little was done the past season in adding loam to the sterile parts of the old woods. This is regrettable, and it is to be hoped, in the interests of the future, that sufficient money will be given the Board to permit the carrying on of this work.

Thinning out in the plantations was continued, as in past years, to allow room for the full development of trees and shrubs. A large part of the material removed was used in preparing new plantations, and the remainder was sold.

The larger part of the work of the past season in Franklin Park, however, consisted in the preparation of ground for planting and in the care of the young plantations. These plantations, owing to the dryness of the three preceding seasons, required constant cultivation and the application of mulchings for the conservation of moisture in the ground. This work extended generally over the entire system of parks, and, in consequence, the trees and the shrubs are in good growing condition.

The wall on Walnut avenue, between Seaver street and the entrance to Franklin Park was completed last spring, and the slopes behind the wall were graded and planted. The construction of the widened street at this point by the Street Department would improve very much this important entrance to the park.

The drainage of the Nazingdale hollow was extended into Ellicottdale, and spurs were carried into the wet spots. It is expected that this will complete the tile-drainage of the golf course. The beech plantation near the Refectory also was tile-drained.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
1904
(for the year 1903)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The systematic thinning out of diseased and overcrowding trees in the old woodlands, which as been carried on for several years past generally throughout the park system, is bearing abundant fruit in the improvement in the general effect of the woodlands, as well as in the more healthy appearance of the trees



Horseback riders on the original bridle path in The Wilderness. The change of grade and the plantings separate the bridle path from the foot path on the right. Using trees, shrubs and grade changes to segregate carriage drives, footpaths and bridle paths was characteristic of Olmsted's design techniques.



Clump planting of Red Oaks in the Playstead. As one walks along the drive, the trees open up more views of the open fields of the Playstead. The thick planting also screens out the busy street in the background.

individually. The cutting having been done gradually, the effect of mass has not been impaired, and the letting in of light and air has encouraged the growth of side branches.

The important work of pruning, which is tedious and expensive, has also been prosecuted as thoroughly as means have allowed. By the end of the next year it is expected that the old woodlands in the main part of the system will have had their initial pruning completed, and that, thereafter, they will require only ordinary maintenance care.

Dead branches, or stumps of branches, carry decay into the heart of the trees and do irreparable injury; hence the necessity of provision for carrying on this essential work of pruning.

The young plantations generally are looking well. Thinning out has been carefully done, but more rapid growth would have resulted had we had an appropriation large enough to give more cultivation. With each year the area of planted ground has increased, with no material increase of funds provided for its maintenance, and, consequently, we cannot obtain the best possible results in growth. Considerable plantings of oaks were made in the young plantations, and also in Long Crouch Woods. About seven acres of the meadow (Nazingdale) were plowed, levelled, and seeded with red fescue (*festuca rubra*). It would be well to continue this work, as circumstances may permit, until the levelling of the whole is completed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1905
(for the year 1904)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The woodlands and plantations have been carefully looked over, and all overcrowding, diseased, and unhealthy material has been cut out and removed. Under the method of treatment practised the past few years, - that of thinning out, and, in some cases, of mulching with loam,- the old woodlands have greatly improved in appearance. The young plantations, too, are in good condition; yet they do not show the rapid growth that might have been accomplished by thorough cultivation, which it is to be regretted we have been unable to give. During the past winter preparation has been made in the Wilderness for planting a large number of oaks, flowering dogwoods, witch hazels, thorns, and similar material. Ground is being also prepared in the young plantations for the planting of young oaks next spring. All this material will be furnished from the department nurseries. Among the thorns will be a quantity of the new

species lately discovered by Prof. Charles S. Sargent*. The positions of the thorns will be located on a plan of the ground, from which, in case of the loss of labels, the individuals may be readily relocated.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1906
(for the year 1905)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The improvement in the woodlands generally throughout the department becomes more noticeable with each season. Our work in thinning out over-crowding or worthless growth, and the cutting off of dead and diseased limbs, shows its good results in the feathering out of the trees and the more vigorous undergrowth of native shrubs and herbaceous plants, strengthened by our letting in light and air. Another factor in the improvement of these woodlands has been the mulching of the surface with loam where the soil covering was found to be thin or poor in quality. We have done considerable of this work, yet much remains to be done. Many of the old woodlands in Franklin Park are situated on rocky slopes with a light covering of loam for their support. Additions of loam (for which we need additional appropriations) to trees growing under such conditions would materially increase their growth and beauty.

During the past fall and winter extensive preparations were made for spring planting, a large number of holes being carefully prepared along the Canterbury-street border for young oaks. On Juniper hill ground was prepared for planting oaks and junipers, and preparations were made along the face of the slope of Scarboro hill for planting thorns, dogwood and other large-growing shrubbery. Arrangements for this sort of planting were also made on the edge of the young plantations on the opposite slope of the hill, along the Circuit Drive. The material for this work is all at hand in the nurseries of the department. Ground was prepared last spring in the Wilderness for a colony of mountain laurels. The plants were collected from native stock, which had been cultivated in the department nurseries for four years, and were in fine condition. The planting forms an irregular grouping along the road and bridle-path in the Wilderness, and promises, in a little time, to be a very pleasing feature. The young tree plantations are generally in good condition. Much better growth, however, would accrue each year did our means permit a higher degree of cultivation.

*Director of the Arnold Arboretum. Pettigrew was Sargent's protege.

Smoke conditions are becoming more serious with each season. Evergreens especially show the effect very markedly. At the present rate of increase in smoke pollution in the atmosphere a very few years will see the end of evergreen conifers in our parks, except as stunted, blackened specimens. Therefore the planting of conifers for permanent effect would seem to be unwise.

Efforts have been made for the past two seasons to breed pheasants in the park, by using domestic hens as brooders. Last year about fifty were carried through until fall, enough of which still remain to interest visitors to the park. Quail, too, are protected and fed in winter, and are fairly plentiful in the Arboretum and in Franklin Park.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.
1909
(for the year 1908)

FRANKLIN PARK.

By the rapid growth of the trees, the young plantations throughout the park system are fast assuming the character of woodlands. This is especially noticeable in Franklin Park, where the oaks, beeches, maples, etc., which were planted as saplings nine to twelve years ago, now range from 15 to 30 feet in height. The pines and hemlocks, too, show a corresponding excellent growth. These good results have been brought about by a thorough use of the horse cultivator, in loosening the surface of the ground under the trees, for four or five years after planting. The results would have been still more pronounced had our finances enabled us to continue this process to a later date. Five or six years ago the plantations were seeded down, and since then only such hand cultivation as our appropriation would allow has been given to individual trees.

The old spring at Abbotswood*, having become unfit for drinking purposes during the past summer, was abandoned and the flow cut off. The fountain was then moved inward from the walk and connected with the city supply. A space was reserved around the fountain for fixed seats, to form a rendezvous or rest, and a convenient walk, connecting the fountain with Canterbury street, was constructed.

A constantly increasing number of visitors come to Franklin Park, especially on Sundays, when the links, the meadows and the woodlands are well besprinkled with groups of people.

*Near Blue Hill Avenue and American Legion Highway.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
1910
(for the year 1909)

FRANKLIN PARK.

The plantations of young trees in Franklin Park continue to show the same satisfactory progress. These plantations have been regularly thinned, in order that the trees in their young stages of growth might not injure each other by overcrowding. The soil conditions are excellently suited for tree growth, and within a few years the plantations should assume more the character of old woodlands than of plantations of young trees. This treatment of the thinning out of young plantations need not be continued to the extent of making each tree a specimen of its kind, but only until the trees have attained strength and show some individuality, when the thinning should be done with the view of forming pleasing combinations in groups and masses, having due regard to provision for development and healthy growth. This will allow for a fair measure of individuality in each tree without destroying the mass effects.

Some of the old woodlands, of which The Wilderness, Long Crouch Woods and Abbotswood are examples, are underlaid with rock, with picturesque outcroppings of ledge and large boulders. These areas, by their location and the character of their topography, are eminently fitted for forest growth, but, unfortunately, they are thinly covered with loam and the growth consequently is stunted. Efforts have been made in the past to remedy this condition by the addition of loam, but, with the exception of the woodlands and bare slopes surrounding the glade, the work has been limited from lack of funds. Now, however, that the Parkman Fund is available for expenditures in Franklin Park the interests of the future call for an appropriation from this fund for the addition of loam to sterile areas on which tree planting or tree growth is clearly indicated.

