

Philadelphia's Wissahickon Valley 1620-2020

METROPOLITAN
paradise
THE STRUGGLE FOR NATURE IN THE CITY

Volume 2 | Park

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been shaped and reshaped by the central paradigms of succeeding eras. Recognizing, analyzing and incorporating each accreted layer is the first step in creating solutions that grow out of the best of the past and build new value for a future that is increasingly fluid and refocused on new and different lifestyles.

This book has been written with several audiences in mind. The authors, who live in the valley and are very much part of its larger community, were torn between the desire to explore every detail of interest to local loyalists, and the hope that we will be generic enough to provide insights for other communities with parallel issues. To satisfy both these ends, the more esoteric details of this particular place—vegetation and wildlife, buildings and artifacts and individual movers and shakers—have often been separated from the main narrative and put on individual pages. Accordingly, it is not necessary to read this book straight through, and the reader should feel free to delve into it at any point, moving backwards and forwards to flesh out particular interests.

Wilderness—Park—Valley—Corridor

The Wissahickon Valley is the result of a unique blend of landscape, social and political realities, land management and lifestyle and the consequence of a number of very different proprietors over time. To reflect these proprietors, their choices and the impact of these choices on the landscape, this book is divided into four volumes: Wilderness—Park—Valley—Corridor.

Park

The second volume is called "Park." It concentrates on the creation and elaboration of preserved open space in the lower and middle valley, made possible by the industrial wealth of the region. Philadelphia was one of the first major cities in the United States to establish a municipal park system and the first city to build this system on an interconnected network of stream valleys. Philadelphia's park system stands in contrast to others of the time. These other systems were either islands surrounded by urban development, like Central Park in New York, or a chain of individual parks circling the metropolitan area, like the emerald necklace around Boston. Unlike these other models, preserved valleys along Philadelphia's rivers and their tributaries allowed continuous park spaces to weave through the urban fabric.

In the 1840s, responding to pressure from many prominent citizens, Philadelphia began acquiring land along the Schuylkill River, largely to protect the urban water supply from industrial pollution. The city-county consolidation of 1854 allowed Philadelphia to break out of its two square mile rectangle and to extend its municipal boundaries over 130 square miles. Just after the Civil War, in 1867, the Fairmount Park Commission was established by an act of the state legislature to acquire more land along the Schuylkill and to administer the park. A year later, the Wissahickon Creek corridor was added to this fledgling park system.

Wissahickon Park began as a long, thin corridor that stopped short of the city limits at Northwestern Avenue. Over the years, it has expanded in length, eventually reaching to the edge of the city. A number of creek tributaries have been added to this preserved urban wilderness. In the early 20th century, a group of visionary citizens would try to extend the park, up the creek, into the adjoining suburbs of Montgomery County. The group was only

partly successful in realizing this goal, but private estates, semi-private institutions and a small public park system preserved much of the creek corridor in the middle valley.

In preparation for the Centennial of 1876, and as a reflection of the city's growing wealth and power, the Fairmount Park Commission began to "improve" Wissahickon Park in numerous ways. These efforts included condemning and taking land, removing nearly all the mill complexes and all but two of the inns. The few historic buildings that escaped demolition were incorporated into the park fabric. After a 20-year hiatus, at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a second wave of interest in improving the park. The park commission, helped by donations from wealthy, private individuals, added gateways, bridges, roads, trails, lookouts, steps, statues and plantings to a park system that did not have an official master plan. Tensions grew between advocates of an unembellished, scenic experience and those who wanted to improve park access and heighten enjoyment of the park through trails and facilities.

Civic activism, especially the efforts of powerful individuals in the city, was essential to the creation of the Fairmount Park system. This tradition continued to influence the growth and development of Wissahickon Park. Civic groups in Northwest Philadelphia coalesced around the campaign to save Valley Green Inn, a crusade to keep automobiles out of the park and a response to the devastation of the Chestnut blight. The most effective and enduring of these groups was the Friends of the Wissahickon (FOW).

During the Great Depression, another iconic conflict developed over the meaning of "wilderness" and its role in the park. This time advocates of a wilderness park confronted those who wanted to "democratize" the park with enhanced visitor access and organized sports. Local civic groups opposed efforts by New Deal agencies to impose a "recreational model" and build recreation facilities and more popular amenities in Wissahickon Park. Public protests and organized opposition to these pressures, in the 1930s, left a legacy of volunteerism and a well-organized and effective habit of public defense of park values for later generations to augment.

Wealthy residents of Northwest Philadelphia opposing the recreational model saw the park as their personal preserve. Recreational facilities were badly needed in the city, but, ironically, those who favored keeping the park a scenic wilderness ended up preserving "nature in the city" for future generations, when a broad, democratic constituency would flock to this oasis for unimagined recreational activities.

On the eastern side of Wissahickon gorge in the city, the acquisition of major tributaries allowed the park to filter through the neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods—Chestnut Hill and Mt. Airy—evolved a particularly sympathetic relationship to the forested valley. From large-scale community organization to the details of architecture and landscape design, there was a remarkable resonance between the built and the natural environments. This "sympathic bond" was expressed as the "Wissahickon Style," which reached its peak between the end of World War I and the middle years of the Great Depression. World War II brought a shift of focus. In the early, postwar period, with the development of the automobile suburbs and the movement of people from the city to the country, Wissahickon Park seemed to lose its public meaning.

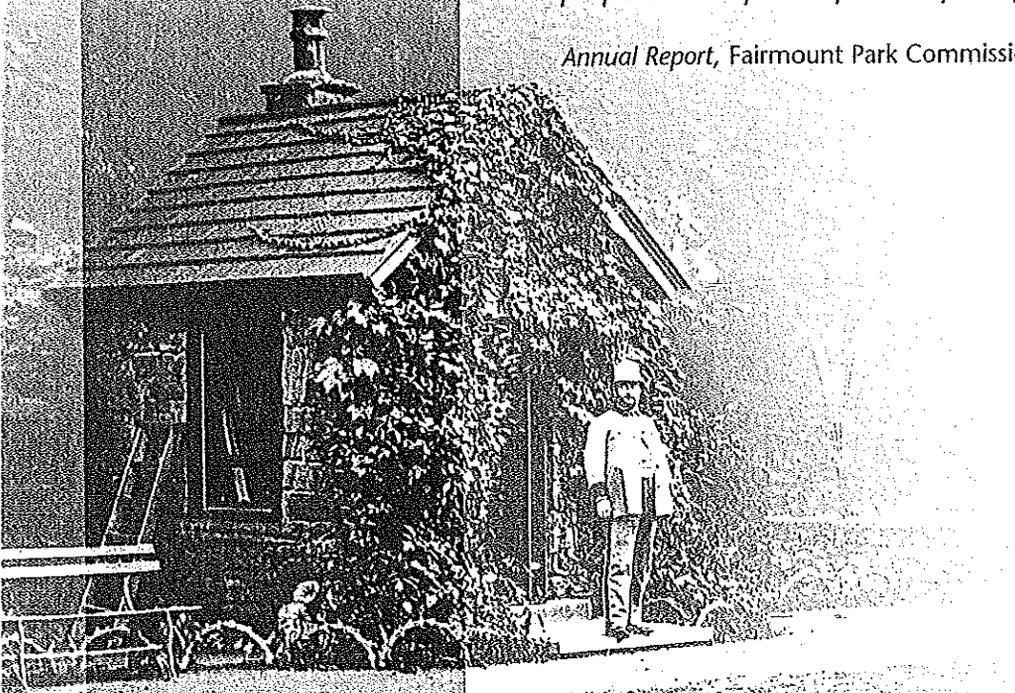
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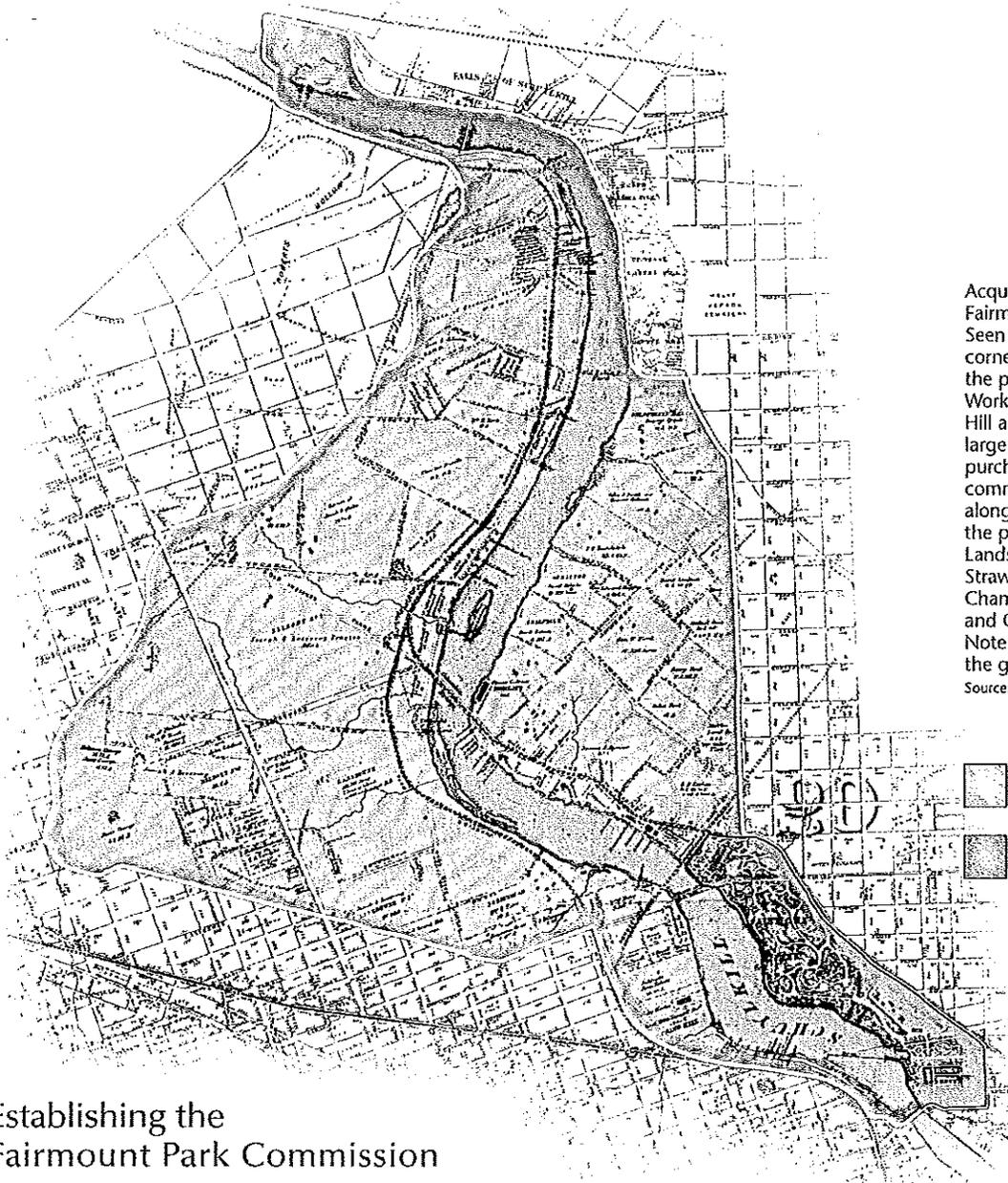
Making the Park

1870-1890

No other city in the Union has, within its boundaries, streams which, in picturesque and romantic beauty, can compare with the Wissahickon and Schuylkill; and there are few which can include within their limits landscapes which, in sylvan grace and beauty, surpass those ... we propose to appropriate. Nature has so adorned them that little remains for art to do except skillfully ... develop the natural beauties of the ground. The ground we propose to acquire is peculiarly adapted to Park purposes.

Annual Report, Fairmount Park Commission, 1868





Acquisitions for Fairmount Park, by 1869. Seen in the lower right-hand corner is the original core of the park—the Fairmount Water Works and the former Lemon Hill and Sedgley estates. Other large estates that were purchased by the park commission can be seen along both sides of the river on the plateau above—Belmont, Landsdowne, Sweetbrier, Strawberry Mansion, Chamounix, Rockland, Bellville and Ormiston, among others. Note how the park cuts across the grid pattern of streets. Source: FPC

- Early Parcels
- Land Acquired by 1869

Establishing the Fairmount Park Commission

Four years of Civil War (1861-65) distracted Philadelphia's attention from the park movement.¹⁴ When the war was over, attention returned to civic issues. Park supporters proposed a commission to administer and expand the fledging park. Since the city did not have a home rule charter, it could not establish a new governing body without state approval. The creation and empowerment of a separate park commission required an act of state legislature.¹⁵

In 1867, the state legislature established the Fairmount Park Commission. According to the act, this commission would "maintain [it] forever, as an open public place and park, for the health and enjoyment of the citizens [of Philadelphia], and the

preservation of the purity of the water supply to the City of Philadelphia."¹⁶ Almost immediately, the commission began acquiring additional parkland on both sides of the Schuylkill River that included many of the fine old estates lining the top of the bluffs. Commission members were to be appointed by the Philadelphia Common Pleas Court so that they would be independent of the city government.

Unfortunately, the legislation made park funding dependent on general city funds. Without a separate dedicated funding source or independent means of raising money, city government held ultimate control over the Fairmount Park Commission. As a result, its independence was often more symbolic than real. When the city declined economically and lost sight of the park's importance as a key contributor to a vital civic life, the commission lacked the power to get financial support from the city or raise independent funds.

Although not financially independent, when money was available, the commission could and did take the initiative to acquire extensive additions to Fairmount Park. With the coming Centennial, the commissioners bought property and also seized it through the power of "eminent domain." With this power, the commission was able to condemn land, but was required to compensate owners at fair market value.¹⁷ This power remains, but is rarely used because of lack of funds, political will and grand vision.

Two Kinds of Parks

For the new municipal park system, the Fairmount Park Commission initially created two kinds of parks—a "pastoral" park along the Schuylkill River and a "wilderness" park along the Wissahickon Creek. By the early 1870s, East and West Parks along the Schuylkill together had 2,240 acres, which included a relatively broad floodplain. It was flanked on both sides by modest, rocky bluffs. On the tops of these bluffs, the land rolled gently and overlooked the wide river. When the industrial buildings were cleared away, this relatively open land, with ample flat areas, easily accommodated a variety of genteel Victorian recreations—strolling, horseback riding, carriage driving, picnicking, nutting and boating.

To allow the addition of the lower Wissahickon Valley to the Fairmount Park system, the state legislature passed a second park act in April 1868, largely drafted by Eli Kirk Price.¹⁸ In contrast to East and West Parks, the initial 450 acres of parkland along the Wissahickon Creek were confined to a steep, narrow gorge, with considerable forest, despite its industrial history. Charles Keyser's 1872 *Guidebook to Fairmount Park* captured these differences between these two park types: "[The Wissahickon's] unbroken quiet, its dense woodland, its pine-crowned hills, its sunless recesses, and sense of separation from the other world, contrast strongly with the broad lawns, the open flowing river, and the bright sunshine which characterize the banks of the Schuylkill...."¹⁹



64-8

By the early 1870s, the park commission had acquired most of the corridor along the main stem of the Wissahickon Creek, within the expanded city limits. The combined parks (on the west and east sides of the Schuylkill River and along Wissahickon Creek) extended for over thirteen miles—seven of them along the Schuylkill and a little over six miles along the Wissahickon. With a total of nearly 3,000 acres, this new, public open space was one of the largest metropolitan parks in the United States, and was, at the time, the largest river valley park in the nation.²⁰

6:7

Sewers and Stream Valleys

Stream valleys in Penn's original city had served both as sanitary sewers and as storm drains. Combining sewage and rainwater in a single pipe was characteristic of most cities at the time. In Philadelphia, where the original city was located in the relatively flat Coastal Plain, this drainage system required some engineering, but was not prohibitively difficult or expensive. As the city expanded outward, it took increasing time, money and effort to bury the steeply incised stream valleys. In the newly consolidated city, turning stream valleys into parks was ultimately cheaper than using these valleys as a part of Philadelphia's sewage disposal system.

In the 1880s, when the city engineers drew up their preliminary drainage maps for the consolidated city, they showed many smaller streams converted into sewers. As described by Adam Levine in his "History of Philadelphia's Watersheds and Sewers," "Culverting the streams before they became polluted was seen as a positive step to protect the public health. In undertaking these projects, the engineers also hoped to

reduce the cost of the city's infrastructure in a number of ways. Sewage, being mostly liquid, flows most cheaply by gravity—pumping it up a slope is expensive in terms of fuel costs, and is only as reliable as the pumping equipment. By placing sewers in the natural stream valleys, the engineers got the gravity flow they needed, and in the process they managed to avoid the high cost of making extensive excavations. Once the valleys were filled in over the newly built pipes—in some stream valleys in Philadelphia, more than 40 feet of fill was used—the cost of building a bridge each time a main street crossed the stream was avoided as well.

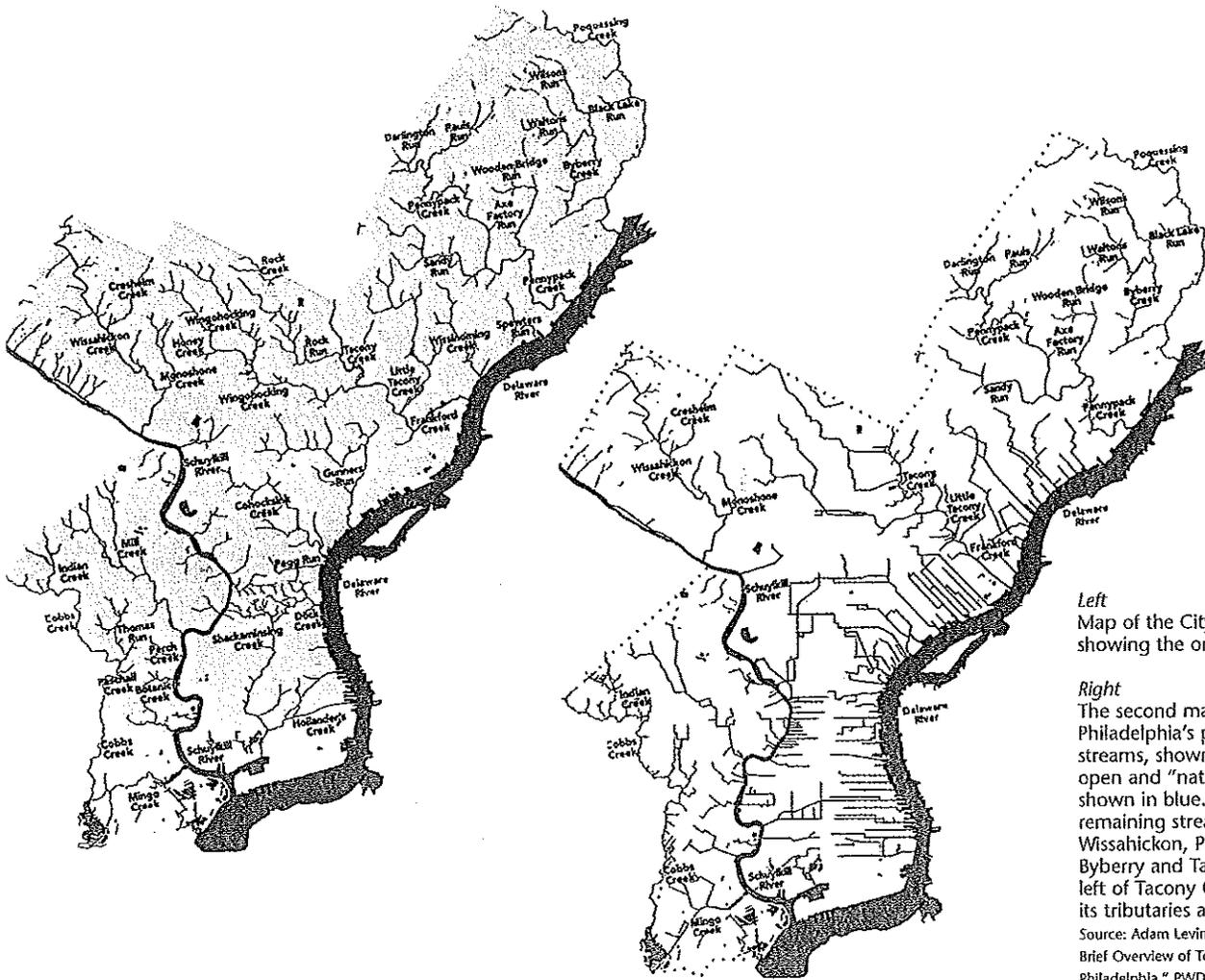
"Building sewers in advance of development also gave engineers more freedom in their designs. Since most of the land the sewers traversed was open farmland or woodland, the cost of paying out land damages to property owners was less. Often, building a sewer in a creek bed was to the advantage of private landholders, especially in areas of the city where the rectangular grid system of streets prevailed.

"A piece of land with a creek cutting through it was impossible to subdivide into regular slices, but with the creek in a sewer, and the grid laid over the valley, real estate speculators could divide their property into the tightly fitted rectangular lots so common throughout Philadelphia. Since the streets were built on top of the new sewers, with water and gas lines put in as well, the developers had a ready-made infrastructure that tended to speed up the sales of these lots. The City, in return, could count on a quick return on its investment in infrastructure from the resulting increase in tax revenues from the new buildings. In some watersheds, it took many years to completely obliterate the main stream and its tributaries. The Mill Creek conversion from creek to sewer took more than 25 years, and the city's largest such project, the burying of both branches of Wingohocking Creek, took about 40 years."¹

1. "History of Philadelphia's Watersheds and Sewers," Philadelphia Water Department Website: phillyh2o.org; and "From Creek to Sewer: A Brief Overview of Topographical Change in Philadelphia," 2005; also, Adam Levine, interview by authors, May 6, 2003.

Purchase of the Wissahickon Valley set a precedent for Fairmount Park's eventual acquisition of four other tributary streams within the city—Cobbs, Tacony, Pennypack and Poquessing Creeks—all tributaries of the Delaware River. By doing so, the park system preserved at least the key riparian corridors. Even more important, the Wissahickon Creek and its tributaries ultimately created a network that reached into the urban fabric, and allowed both water and forest to become an integral part of many neighborhoods, connecting them intimately to a large, natural system.

6:7



Left
Map of the City of Philadelphia showing the original streams, c. 1640.

Right
The second map, reveals present-day Philadelphia's piped and culverted streams, shown in red. The remaining open and "natural" streams are shown in blue. Note that the only remaining streams are the Wissahickon, Pennypack, Poquessing, Byberry and Tacony Creeks. All that is left of Tacony Creek is the main stem, its tributaries are buried.

Source: Adam Levine, "From Creek To Sewer, A Brief Overview of Topographical Change in Philadelphia," PWD, 2005

groups rather than city government took the initiative in planning. This was in direct contrast to Washington D.C., where Congress spearheaded the McMillan Plan, and Chicago and Cleveland where the mayors took leadership in the physical renewal of the city fabric.

In Philadelphia, physical renewal focused on creating parkways in all sections of the city. There was to be a northwestern boulevard, which became Wissahickon and Lincoln Drives, various radiating boulevards in South Philadelphia, which were never realized, and a northeastern parkway, which became Roosevelt Boulevard. The jewel of this system was to be a grand boulevard punctuated by outdoor sculpture that would connect City Hall to East and West Parks.

In 1900, two private activist groups—the City Parks Association, and the Fairmount Park Art Association, founded in 1872 as the nation's first private, nonprofit organization dedicated to integrating public art and urban planning—both appointed new activist directors. The City Parks Association turned their attention to the broader concerns of the role of parks in the city. In 1902, these two groups collaborated to publish "A Special Report on the City Plan." This report protested against the city extending the rectangular street grid of the flat coastal plain into the steep topography of the surrounding piedmont. They suggested instead the creation of broad, diagonal parkways.⁶

By 1904, they established Organizations Allied for the Acquisition of a Comprehensive Park System." This consortium "campaign[ed] tirelessly for the conversion of virtually all of the regions creek and river valleys into parkland."⁷ In an age of greater mobility and leisure, these acquisitions and the other city-wide improvements expressed Philadelphia's economic importance, provided spaces for a burgeoning public life and promoted the important role that art plays in the creation and enhancement of civic spaces.

Enlarging the Park

Between 1888 and 1938 the total acreage in the entire Fairmount Park system increased from approximately 2,250 acres to 7,500 acres, the greatest expansion of any equivalent time in the park's history.⁸ The bulk of these land acquisitions were along major stream valleys in the city: 786 acres in Cobb's Creek Park, beginning in 1904; 1,618 acres in Pennypack Park, beginning in 1905; and 255 acres in Tacony Creek Park, beginning in 1915.⁹

Local residents in Northwest Philadelphia actively campaigned for broadening and lengthening the Wissahickon Park. One group in particular, the Chestnut Hill Improvement Association, headed by Colonel Samuel Goodman, pushed to acquire additional parkland on both sides of the creek—25 acres in Chestnut Hill and 390 acres in Roxborough.¹⁰

This association's vision included a parkway to Fort Washington that would begin at Bell's Mill Road, where the park stopped at that time, and continue for approximately four miles along the creek to the village of Fort Washington.¹¹ This parkway would be built through private subscription, with property owners donating land for the cartway and for an extension of Wissahickon Park on either side. Heavy wagons would be banned, and the road reserved for "carriage driving, horseback riding and bicycle riding only."¹² The parkway to Fort Washington was never built, but these proposals would launch discussions about extending Fairmount Park up through the middle valley—an idea for a continuous park corridor connecting the lower and middle valley that would have increasing meaning after World War II.

By the early 1900s, Wissahickon Park had grown to slightly over 1,100 acres from the 450 acres originally acquired. These additions were primarily a number of small tributary streams. The largest and most important of these tributaries were the Cresheim and Monoshone Creeks. Up to this time, the narrow ribbon of parkland along the Wissahickon Creek had only included the confluences of these tributaries and a small area above them. These new acquisitions brought the forest and the natural drainage system into the heart of the neighborhoods of a major city. Many more houses were now located adjacent to parkland—greatly increasing the residential area with park frontage. In contrast, New York's Central Park, at only 850 acres, along with many other American city parks, were magnified versions of an English square, defined by the grid of city streets. This configuration kept any but the immediately adjacent neighborhoods from direct contact with the park.

8:2-7
1897

Additions to Wissahickon Park 1888-1917

1888: 7.263 acres—part of Rittenhouse Town, through purchase.

1889: 20 acres—part of Rittenhouse Town, through purchase.

1891: 10.905 acres—at Wissahickon Avenue and Lincoln Drive, later known as the Houston Ramble, gift of Henry Howard Houston.

1895: 25.274 acres—east side of Wissahickon Creek, between Bell's Mill Road and Northwestern Avenue, through purchase.

1895: 17.16 acres—near Hermit Lane, through purchase.

1896: 390.187 acres—from Bell's Mill Road to Andorra Nurseries, by eminent domain.

1897: 3.571 acres—along Lincoln Drive, added to Houston Ramble, gift of George C. Thomas.

1902: approx. 35 acres—Wise's Mill Run, through purchase.

1903: 4.112 acres—Walnut Lane and Lincoln Drive, in exchange for "outlying lots."

1906: 2.067 acres—Lincoln Drive near Harvey Street, gift of Sallie Houston Henry.

1906: 12.242 acres—in Cresheim Valley, west of Germantown Avenue, gift of Gertrude Houston Woodward and Sallie Houston Henry.

1908: 75 acres—Livezey Mill property and surrounding land, through eminent domain.

1909: 0.233 acre—near Harvey Street and Lincoln Drive, gift of Bayard Henry.

1912: 26 acres—along Gorgas Lane, through purchase.

1914: 8.43 acres—along Cresheim Creek, east of Germantown Avenue, gift of George Woodward.

1914: 6 acres—along Cresheim Creek, east of Germantown Avenue, gift of Randall Morgan.

1915: 41.925 acres—a combination of five unspecified parcels on both the Roxborough and Chestnut Hill sides of creek, by eminent domain.

1916: 6.17 acres—at Wissahickon Avenue and Hermit Lane, site of the Lotus Inn, by eminent domain.

1916: 2.5 acres—at Monastery Avenue and Wissahickon Drive, the site of the Second Indian Rock Hotel, by eminent domain.

1916: 37 acres—Carpenter's Meadow (later Carpenter's Woods), through purchase.

1917: 28 acres—southwest side of Walnut Lane, from park boundary to Daniel Street, partly through purchase and partly by eminent domain.

Source: FPC, *Annual Reports*

8:2

Park Embellishments | Parkways

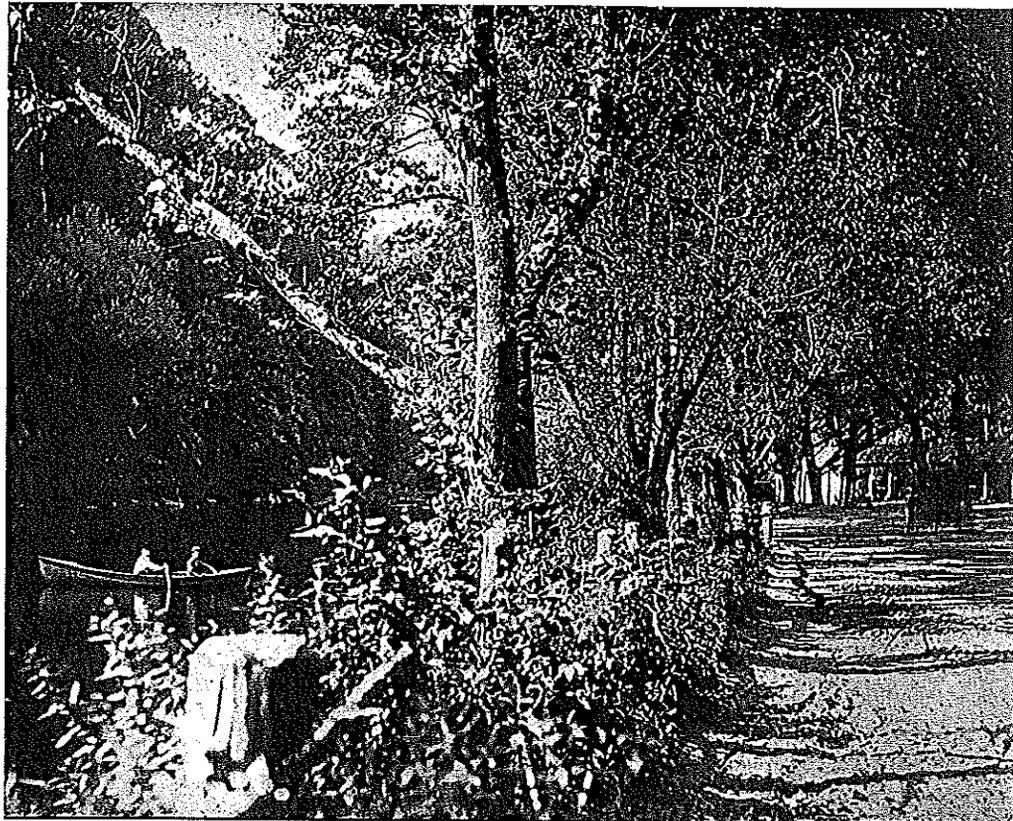
At the turn of the century, parallel to the plans for Philadelphia and inspired by the City Beautiful Movement, Wissahickon Drive was improved and extended as Lincoln Drive. These roads were conceived as the parkway for the Northwestern section of the city. The Northeastern parkway became the Roosevelt Boulevard.

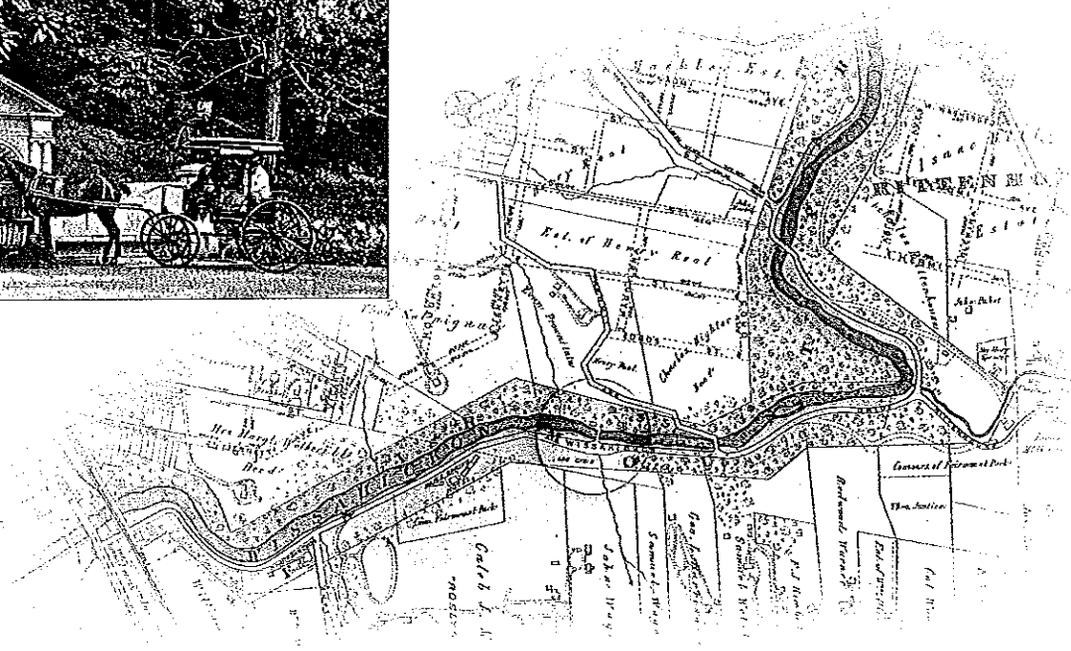
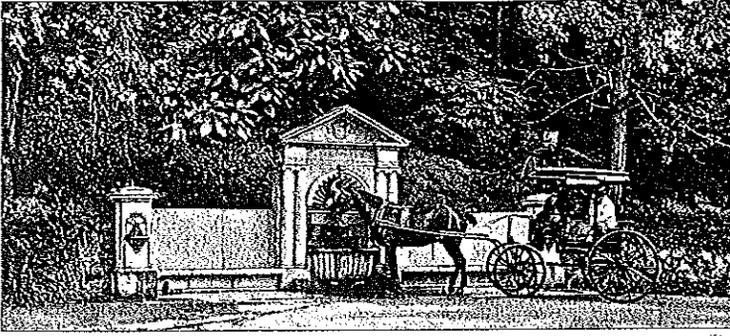
In 1900, Russell Vodges, Chief Engineer of Fairmount Park, recommended widening and paving the lower end of Wissahickon Drive, east of Ridge Avenue, to remedy a dangerous traffic problem resulting from a sharp curve near the entrance, long known as "dead mans curve"¹³ At this place, drivers could see no more than 100 yards ahead because of the large rock formation that came down to the road. The initial proposal called for blasting away more of this scenic rock, described in the local press as a "beautiful natural entrance," prompting residents in Northwest Philadelphia to begin an intense newspaper campaign against removing any more of the obstruction. Park commissioners compromised and went to great expense to preserve the remaining rock by building a wall out into the east side of the creek, and filling in behind it to allow the roadway to be widened. While this construction narrowed the creek and increased the flow, it also raised the road, helping to alleviate the frequent flooding and washouts that had plagued this lower stretch of the drive.

Lincoln Drive, the proposed extension to Wissahickon Drive, was begun in 1900 and completed seven years later.¹⁴ The alignment of this new road followed the Monoshone Creek Valley from Rittenhouse Street all the way up to Allen's Lane, three miles away. It became the main carriage and then the main automobile route into the community of Mt. Airy.

The *Germantown Independent-Gazette* described the new road as a splendid way to experience the park, and explained the importance of its alignment in providing views that stirred the imagination: "Where the new drive meets the Wissahickon Drive, the fine broad curves of the two roads make one of the most imposing prospects, from a horseman's point of view, that the Park contains."¹⁵ These two roads together fulfilled Olmsted's idea of a carriage drive that extended the park experience into residential neighborhoods and that linked parks to a city's downtown.¹⁶

Wissahickon Drive (later Lincoln Drive), at the curve just below Wissahickon Hall. The road is crushed stone, the traffic is leisurely—bicycles and carriages—and the framing forest is short and young. Photograph c. 1890s.
Source: The Free Library of Philadelphia



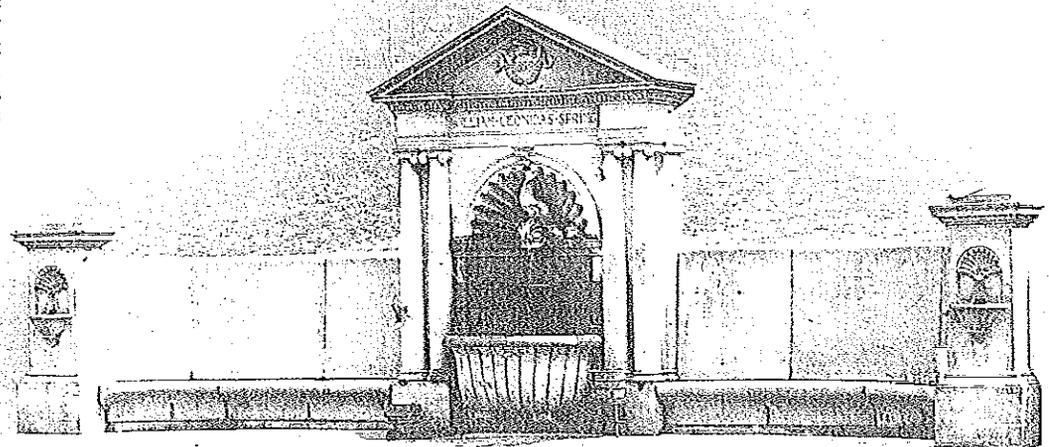


Leonidas Fountain along Wissahickon Drive (Lincoln Drive) just below the Hermit Lane Bridge. Photograph, 1916.
Source: David Bower, postcard collection

Map showing Wissahickon Drive. This road began at the junction with the old Wissahickon Turnpike (later Forbidden Drive). This junction was located at the big bend in the creek, where the Monoshone entered the Wissahickon. This drive then traveled along the lowest portion of the creek, meeting Ridge Avenue near the confluence with the Schuylkill River. The map also shows the location of the Leonidas Fountain. A small tributary stream fed by two springs, flowing out of the steep slopes below East Falls, supplied the fountain. Source: Hopkins *Philadelphia Atlas*, 21st Ward, 1885

The Leonidas Fountain was one of a number of embellishments along the newly improved Wissahickon Drive. In 1899, Jeanette Springs donated money for this fountain in memory of her father, William Leonidas. The fountain was built on the east side of the creek, at the site of the former Old Log Cabin Inn. Like the Pro Bono Publico fountain, built half a century earlier along the Wissahickon Turnpike (later Forbidden Drive), it marked one of the many springs that flowed out of the cracks in the crystalline bedrock of the lower valley. At a time when horses required frequent watering places and when people in the area prized this still pure drinking water, such fountains offered an important public service while beautifying the park.

Leonidas Fountain. Photograph, 1908.
Source: GHS



Park Embellishments | Statues

Two statues were placed within the gorge on the tops of the steepest rocky outcrops overlooking the east side of the creek. The first, a statue of William Penn, with the word "Toleration" carved on its base, was placed on a huge rock outcropping that rises 200 feet above the creek. The ridge and steep slopes were once covered in ancient gnarled hemlocks (*Tsuga canadensis*) growing out of the rock crevices. It was long known as "Mom Rinker's Rock" after Revolutionary War spy Molly Rinker, who according to legend had dropped sensitive information off the cliff to runners below. John Welsh, a member of the Fairmount Park Commission from its inception in 1867 until his death in 1886, and a former U.S. minister to Great Britain, donated this statue, along with 12 acres around it.²⁷

8:23-24

In 1902, at the foot of Rex Avenue, Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Henry installed an Indian statue—actually a generic Indian figure supposed to represent a Lenni-Lenape chief named Tedyuscung. This statue was designed by J. Massey Rhind, the New York sculptor who also created the statue of Henry Howard Houston at the Houston Ramble. Tedyuscung symbolized a lost era before industrialization and rapid change. The statue stands on Indian Rock, the highest point along the valley, also once known for its solid, dark clusters of hemlocks, where the Lenape had held their tribal councils. Just after the third big bend in the creek, the site offers a commanding view of the Roxborough Hills on the opposite side of and of the stream far below.²⁸ The top of this massive rock forms a small clearing in the woods and was once covered with mosses, ferns, wild flowers, and soft, low-growing grass-like sedges.

Commemorative sculptures were common at the time, especially at battlefields such as Gettysburg. In the Wissahickon these sculptures seem part of an elegiac vision of the past, when the proud and free Lenni-Lenape once hunted in the valley, or of the time when William Penn's Holy Experiment seemed to hold such promise for toleration and peace. Historian Michael Kammen, in his *Mystic Chords of Memory*, captures the spirit of that era, when men and women used sculpture to feel more at ease with an unsettling time: "It is precisely because so much that genuinely mattered was new that people needed notions of the past that would help to define their ... identities in positive ways.... Our enduring legacies of that nostalgic surge take several forms. The most visible are great public monuments of various sorts: statues, memorials, obelisks, fountains, ... and other structures."²⁹

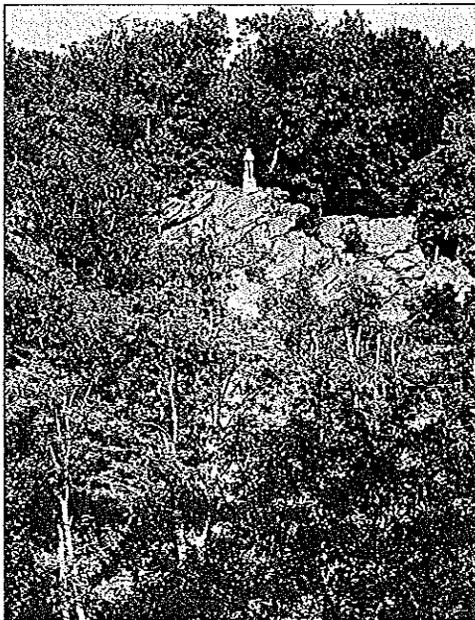
In the Wissahickon the two mythic men on the tops of the steepest and highest rock outcrops—William Penn and Tedyuscung—also brought a human presence from an idealized past into the natural world. In many ways they represented the enduring American tension between the progress that generated wealth and new creature comforts, and the progress that also despoiled the wilderness and drove the American Indian from the forest.

Statues in the Park | Toleration

The statue of William Penn was placed on the top of what was called Mom Rinker's Rock (after the mythical revolutionary spy Molly Rinker). This statue was a gift of John Welsh, one of the original Fairmount Park Commissioners. In addition to the statue of William Penn, Welsh gave the park 12 acres of surrounding land. Called "Toleration," the statue celebrates William Penn's extraor-

dinary policies of toleration, which led to a recruitment of people from a wide variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds and to generally fair dealings with the local Indian tribes. This limestone statue by the sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel was erected in 1883.¹

1. Sarah West, *Rediscovering the Wissahickon* (Philadelphia, 1993), 68; Edwin C. Jellett Scrapbooks, 4:125.



Statue of Toleration, seen from Forbidden Drive, emphasizes the high rocky promontory on which it is set. Source: GHS

Statue of Toleration.
Photograph, c. 1890.
Source: HSP, Shoemaker Collection.



Statues in the Park | Tedyuscung at Indian Rock

8:24

The statue of the Lenni-Lenape chief Tedyuscung, placed on the top of Indian Rock (also called "Council Rock") in 1902 by the Henry family, was not the only Indian image to stand at this site.¹ Joseph Middleton, a Chestnut Hill resident and president of the Wissahickon Turnpike Company, put the first image here in 1856—a two-dimensional painted wooden cut-out made from an old barn door.²

By the early 20th century, the wooden Indian had rotted and the Henrys replaced it with a marble statue by J. Massey Rhind, sculptor of the statue of

Henry Howard Houston at Harvey Street and Lincoln Drive. Over the years there has been considerable debate about whether the statue was intended to represent the real person of Tedyuscung, or an idealized representation of an American Indian.

Rhind's Tedyuscung was actually a duplicate of four identical Indian figures that he had done for a public fountain in Hartford, Connecticut.

But a plaque at the back of the statue clearly identifies it as Tedyuscung, as did the *Annual Report of the Fairmount Park Commission* and the newspaper accounts at the time of the dedication.³

Tedyuscung or "he who makes the earth tremble," also called "Honest John," was a Lenni-Lenape of the Minsi band. As pressures mounted on the Delaware following the Walking Purchase, Tedyuscung, who was not a hereditary tribal leader, rose to become a major spokesman for the tribe. Weslager describes him as "an aggressive and eloquent man conversant in the English language."⁴

1. *Philadelphia Record*, January 12, 1902.

2. *Germantown Guide*, May 24, 1902; Edwin C. Jellett, *Scrapbooks*, 7:136.

3. *Independent-Gazette*, June 3, 1902; Edwin C. Jellett, *Scrapbooks*, 8:137; Edward W. Hocker, "Along the Wissahickon, *Independent-Gazette*, 1911, Council Rock;" *FPC, Annual Report*, 1912, 14.

4. C.A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History*, (New Brunswick, NJ, 1996), 210.



Statue of Tedyuscung. Photograph, c. 1902.

Source: GHS