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San Diego's City Park 1902-1910 From Parsons To Balboa

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The early days of San Diego's famous Balboa Park (called City Park before 1910) from its 1868 founding to 1902 were marked by a struggle between park proponents and real estate opportunists over how the unusually large 1400 acre tract of arid mesa and canyon land should be improved, sold off or both.¹ A core of park defenders were quite successful, considering the speculative times, in warding off would-be park poachers. But by August, 1902 it became apparent that if the long-proposed comprehensive plan for City Park was not developed soon, the City Council might begin to sell off parts of the park land to housing developers.²

On August 15, 1902, at the suggestion of Julius Wangenheim, a highly intellectual and philanthropic local businessman, the San Diego Chamber of Commerce formed a Park Improvement Committee to develop a master plan for City Park and solicit funds for its implementation.³ Immediately, George W. Marston, rightfully called a "local merchant prince," offered to pay a professional landscape architect to design the park.⁴

Between the first comprehensive park planning of 1902 and naming the park Balboa in 1910, when preparation began for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition on the City land, the seeds of two great urban improvement movements were brought to San Diego by dedicated citizens. The basic characteristics, inter-relationships and San Diego competitions of these two fertile streams were to forecast the present development, problems and potential of Balboa Park.

The Picturesque Park

In October, 1902, George Marston went East and, at an eventual cost of \$10,000 to himself, hired Samuel Parsons, Jr., then official landscape architect of Greater New York; Superintendent

of New York's Central Park in 1882-97; President of the American Society of Landscape Architects and one of America's most prominent landscape designers, to draw up a plan for San Diego's City Park.⁵ Marston also hired Mary B. Coulston, horticulturist and former editor of *Garden and Forest* magazine, whom he met through San Diego's renowned horticulturist, Kate Sessions, to be the Park Improvement Committee Secretary.⁶ Mrs. Coulston was to maintain committee records and provide the San Diego press with regular articles on the general virtues of public urban parks and in particular the favorable natural conditions for a great park in San Diego. The promotion was essential because the park plan had to be approved by the City and many San Diegans could not see the need for a 1400 acre park next to a town of 20,000 people.

Samuel Parsons, Jr. was a direct heir of the "Picturesque" park tradition. This park style, first developed in eighteenth century England, broke from rectilinear and diagonal Renaissance and Baroque park patterns to espouse curvilinear landscaping which accentuated local, characteristic natural features; artfully framed distant "pictures" of nature with irregular clumps or "belts" of trees and tamed nature with wandering smooth lawns and "serpentine" lakes. The nineteenth century, Victorian, Anglo-American social reform movement saw these large country-like parks as essential sources of relief in major industrial cities for the congested multitudes of all classes.⁷

Parsons, who had studied in England and France, and his former colleague in New York, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., learned of English landscape gardening from the Briton Calvert Vaux who worked with both of them, successively.⁸ Also, Vaux had worked earlier with American horticulturist Andrew Jackson Downing who adapted the European Picturesque to accentuation of American natural beauty and vegetation.⁹ The Olmsted-Vaux "Greensward" plan for Central Park, which began construction in 1858, introduced Americans to their first major Picturesque city park. On his visit to England in 1850, Olmsted saw and was greatly affected by the Picturesque work of Sir Joseph Paxton at Birkenhead Park, inaugurated near Liverpool in 1847.¹⁰ In turn Paxton was a disciple of John Nash's curvilinear designs for London's St. James Park, 1828-35, and Regent's Park of 1822-38. Nash was heavily influenced by Sir Humphrey Repton, his partner of 1796-1802, who wrote considerably on Picturesque park principles.¹¹ Repton transmitted ideas on irregular, curving, rustic garden design and framed natural views propounded by eighteenth century English writers: Sir Uvedale Price (*Essay on the Picturesque*. . . , 1794); Edmund Burke (*Inquiry Into. . . the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1757); William Hogarth (*The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753) and Joseph Addison (*Remarks on Italy*, 1703).¹² Repton also learned from the successive designs for Stowe, Sir Richard Temple's estate near London, where Picturesque garden design first emerged by 1769 in the work of William Kent and was polished as of 1780 by his assistant, Lancelot Brown.¹³

In their turn, the eighteenth century English Picturesque authors and designers gained inspiration from several sources, including: naturalistic landscapes in Italian stage sets which had clear Renaissance and Roman origins;¹⁴ seventeenth century French Romanticist landscape painters Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain;¹⁵ increasing contact with depictions of artful naturalism in Chinese gardens;¹⁶ visits to overgrown Italian Renaissance gardens;¹⁷ the post-Puritan English desire for more simplicity and less royal formality and expense in parks;¹⁸ and the general goal of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment to more closely observe rather than constrict nature.¹⁹

The basic outlines of the Anglo-American Picturesque Park tradition and earlier park history, were frequently described in the San Diego press in 1902-04 by Mary Coulston and alluded to by Samuel Parsons, Jr.

The City Beautiful

While the landscaping style of Parsons and Coulston originated in early industrial, eighteenth century England, Marston, Wangeheim and other San Diego business people were further driven in their park efforts by the "City Beautiful Movement" which grew out of the fully blossomed, post-Civil War, heavily industrializing "Gilded Age." That era was crowned at Chicago's World Columbian Exposition in 1893 with its large but harmonious ensemble of imposing Neo-Roman and Neo-Renaissance buildings overlaid with French "Beaux Arts" white plaster decoration.²¹ The "White City," on the shores of Lake Michigan entranced throngs of visitors with its classical fantasy and sparkling electric lights. "And when (the visitors) returned to their homes in cities all over America they carried with them a starry-eyed excitement over the possibility of emulating in hometowns some of the impressiveness sensed at the the Fair."²² For those who could not go to Chicago, a journalist, Charles Mulford Robinson, and Daniel Burnham, chief architect of the exposition, wrote "The Fair of Spectacle," an illustrated description of the great event.²³ Dazzled himself by the fair, Robinson began advocating a "City Beautiful" movement for adornment of American cities with ornate, white, classical buildings; large, Picturesque parks and tree-lined boulevards linking urban nodes.²⁴ The idea was that such urban beautification would lift the morale, satisfaction, health and productivity of all classes.

The 1893 exposition and Robinson's many articles and books on the City Beautiful had a quick effect.²⁵ By 1904 there were over 1,200 city-wide and neighborhood civic improvement groups in the United States.²⁶ San Diego's Park Improvement Committee, formed in 1902, was one of them.²⁷

George Marston, and probably other members of the Park Committee, including Julius Wangeheim and U.S. Grant, Jr., son of the former President, were familiar with the urban improvement theory derived from the Columbian Exposition and with Robinson's writings.²⁸ Marston was a member of the American Civic Association, the national City Beautiful Organization, and in 1920 he was elected one of its five honorary vicepresidents.²⁹

As of late 1902, the San Diego press published many articles by Mrs. Coulston and others which made the City Beautiful point to businessmen that urban improvements would not only please and impress everyone aesthetically, but, much to their particular benefit, would draw more tourists, residents, workers, commerce, higher property values and tax revenues to their small but growing port town.³⁰

Mary Coulston touched on both the Picturesque and City Beautiful movements in one of her first *San Diego Union* articles in October, 1902: ". . .beyond the artistic example of improved natural scenery which this park will be, and this is the fundamental characteristic of a park-the practical business value to the city is sure to be great."³¹ An improved City Park could attract droves of tourists, especially during the bitter Eastern winters, and greater local profits to San Diego, set in California's benign, Mediterranean climate and beautiful scenery.³² Coulston concluded that

while Olmsted and Vaux formed hills and vegetation at Central Park to block out views of New York's harassed urban life and bring an idyllic country park to Manhattan, at San Diego's City Park, nearby mountains, bay, oceans and offshore islands could be "the frame and finish of a great and beautiful picture."³³

In a subsequent *Union* article, the Park Committee Secretary described the many exotic, sub-tropical plants, including cacti and bougainvillea, which could be grown more abundantly in San Diego than anywhere else in the United States.³⁴ Later she outlined the history of parks from Babylon and Rome, through medieval royal forests later made public, on to early American communal grounds such as Boston Common and finally to Central Park in 1858.³⁵ Other articles noted that after overcoming initial opposition from businessmen who feared influxes of poor people to large public spaces, the quick recreational and financial success of Central Park first awakened Americans to the value of major city parks which soon spread across the nation.³⁶ Thus: "Like the whole movement for civil aesthetics, the wish for large parks is a product of mature civilizations." "... let us strive to realize. . . the vision of the artist and poet becoming humanity's-the dream of cities beautiful."³⁷

In a similar vein and about the same time, an anonymous letter to the *Union* stated: "San Diego's greatest attractions and present capital are its magnificent climate, beautiful surroundings. . . and its health-giving properties all the year round as an out-of-door resort."³⁸ But the city, with its undeveloped "alleged park" was behind Los Angeles, Pasadena, Redlands, Riverside, Santa Barbara and other California cities in providing attractive places where tourists could enjoy the fine scenery.³⁹ The park supporter concluded, "The Lord helps those who help themselves."

Views of the Artist

On December 21, 1902, Samuel Parsons arrived in San Diego to inspect the City Park site.⁴⁰ After two days of traversing steep canyons and high mesas, Parsons affirmed his Picturesque, naturalistic heritage: "I do not believe in cutting up a park into a thousand and one little 'gim-cracks.' The idea now-a-days is to treat a park as much as possible to make it conform to nature. There should be nothing artificial."⁴¹ Undaunted by his sizable task, within ten days Parsons had staked out all tentative park roads, proposed the main trees for the park and explained his design approach to the San Diego Chamber of Commerce.⁴² Parsons said of the unique City Park site with its "spreading mesas" and "rugged, picturesque canyons. . . There is nothing else like it among the parks of the world."⁴³ The Reptonian landscape architect noted that the expansive, exciting views from the park formed a "great natural picture" which should be carefully framed by plantings: "Harbor, bay, islands, sea, promontories, mountains and miles of open country, each with its own unusual and distinct character, are all incorporated in the park scheme and form an inseparable and vital part of it, hundreds of square miles of land and sea are thereby added to the territory of the park."⁴⁴ Mr. Parsons sought to protect "the genius of the scenery" (phrases favored by Repton and Downing)⁴⁵ with minimal grading and low plantings on the mesas, such as acacias and pepper trees, to accentuate the variegated colors and forms of low-lying, widespread wild flowers.⁴⁶ Eucalyptus trees were to frame but not block the stupendous views.

While in San Diego, Parsons chose two outstanding local horticulturists, Kate O. Sessions and T.S. Brandagee, a cactus expert, to advise him on which imported plants, from similar climates in Mexico, Chile, Australia, South Africa and elsewhere, would do best at City Park and would best complement the native plants and multi-colored wild flowers.⁴⁷ From her arrival at San Diego in 1883 until her friend Mary Coulston came in 1902, Kate Sessions was the main proponent of Picturesque landscape architecture in town. In 1905, when some balked at continuing the Parsons Plan, Miss Sessions insisted that it be followed and it was. In 1904 she moved her nursery from ten acres in northwest City Park, which she had leased since 1892, to make way for carrying out the Parsons design. She left Torrey Pines, eucalyptus and other trees which still stand in the the park and sold to the City, for \$125, her irrigation system valued at \$500.

Preliminary Work

On December 31, Parsons returned to New York while work progressed on the park. Between January 21 and June 11, 1903, a contour map of City Park was made and sent in sections to Parsons who used it as base plan for the detailed park design.⁴⁹ Picturesque park design and horticulture gained strength in San Diego in March, 1903 when John MacLean, a Scottish botanist-surveyor, former foreman of Golden Gate Park and student of San Francisco's Park Superintendent John MacLaren, was hired to become Head Gardener of City Park and establish a nursery there.⁵⁰

In late April, the San Diego Common Council adopted and the Mayor approved an ordinance which authorized the Board of Public Works to "lay out and improve" all of City Park according to the plan to be done by Parsons.⁵¹

Some eager San Diegans could not wait for Parsons to complete his work. On July 4, 1903, two local fraternal orders, the Woodmen and Foresters, planted 600 eucalyptus trees at the south end of the park according to a sketch plan by Parsons.⁵² Actually the civic gentlemen only tamped earth around one of the trees.⁵³ The Park Improvement Committee hired six men to dig holes, in place, water and maintain the trees, some of which still stand near the south end of Cabrillo Freeway.

The Parsons Plan

On July 24, 1903, George Cooke, the English partner of Samuel Parsons, arrived in San Diego with the finished plan for the entire park.⁵⁴ The Parsons plan was completely within the Picturesque tradition. Winding walks and roads adapted, as much as possible, to natural contours, including steep canyons, provided a great variety of views to "surprise" and "delight."⁵⁵ Curving peripheral roads and belts of trees gently defined the park edges, entrances and "individuality" and framed distant views.⁵⁶ Sinuous lakes and ponds supplemented the rich natural scenery with views at every turn. Plantings were to "intensify" the sense of depth in the canyons.⁵⁷ Public buildings and formal flower gardens were to be few and in the lower, southern parts of the park, nearer to town.⁵⁸ Parsons wrote then: "We have tried our best... to preserve and accentuate natural beauties of a very unusual kind, which we trust may be kept free from interjection of all foreign extraneous and harmful purposes or objects."⁵⁹ The main goal of

Parsons was to, ". . . enhance the natural beauty of the park rather than to detract from it by artificial or conventional effects."⁶⁰

Unfortunately only a small part of the Parsons Plan was carried out, and of that even less survives today. To see that, one need only compare the Parsons design (left) and a current map of Balboa Park .

On July 30, 1903 the laying out of City Park began according to the Parsons Plan with plowing, blasting and grading on the half-excavated hill near Sixth and Date streets.⁶¹ By the time Cooke returned to New York a month later, all roads and many footpaths had been staked out in the park.⁶² George Cooke was back again in San Diego between December, 1903 and March, 1904 to supervise more park work.⁶³ Over three miles of two major south-north drives in the western and central sectors of City Park and a generally east-west route in the south section were graded and macadamized.⁶⁴ It is interesting that E.W. Morse, one of the park co-founders of 1868, sharply asserted that the Park Committee and George Cooke violated Picturesque principles in moving several "natural rock mounds" in the grading of the central drive, now Park Boulevard.⁶⁵ Cooke maintained that the road closely followed natural contours and flowed in a "highly pleasing" manner.⁶⁶

About 1,000 trees were planted in the southwest area of the park, nearest downtown, and watered by a 7,000 foot, \$1,700 irrigation system.⁶⁷ That part of the park began to flourish and take on a verdant appearance. The Park Committee hired a guard to patrol the park and arrest anyone shooting quail, gathering firewood or carting away soil.⁶⁸

To pay for work at 1400 acre City Park in 1902-05 the people of San Diego raised \$11,081 of which \$3,000 came from a bequest of Dr. John Allyn.⁶⁹ In 1902-04, George Marston paid out for park improvements and Park Committee expenses \$20,958 above the \$10,000 he expended for the Parsons Plan.⁷⁰ Years later Marston wrote of the early financing and planting of City Park: "It was a brave beginning for a great park. Mr. Parsons said he never had seen anything to equal it in a city of 20,000 people."⁷¹

Gains and Losses

On March 17, 1904, Arbor Day was first celebrated in San Diego. About 2,500 school children, with an audience of over 1,500, planted sixty pines and cypresses on the west edge of Pound (now Cabrillo) Canyon at the west side of the park, near Quince Street.⁷² The planting was according to a sketch made by Cooke before he left, two weeks earlier. With her usual thoroughness Mrs. Coulston had coaxed telegrams of congratulations to the San Diego school children for their Arbor Day activity from George C. Pardee, Governor of California; Gifford Pinchot, Forester of the United States; and President Theodore Roosevelt-all three, ardent conservationists.⁷³ Roosevelt boisterously noted the many values of trees, much as the City Beautiful Movement championed parks on both aesthetic and practical grounds: "Hearty greetings and congratulations on the establishment of Arbor Day. Your love of trees now will make you as men and women, lovers of forests, both for their Natural beauty and economic value. Let your motto be to preserve and care for them as permanent factors for the production of

wood, as storage places for the water which is needed in irrigation and as play grounds for young and old."⁷⁴

In April, 1904, after nineteen months of explaining park history, theory and worth to San Diegans, during a crucial stage of park decisions, Mary Coulston left for Berkeley to take a course in farm improvement. She died suddenly of an intestinal obstruction on July 18.⁷⁵ Mrs. Coulston was cremated and her ashes were buried next to a Cedar of Lebanon in City Park.⁷⁶ Her death was widely mourned in San Diego.

Samuel Parsons and George Cooke returned to San Diego in December, 1904 to oversee further work, especially in the west and southwest City Park area which was well planted.⁷⁷

The semi-improved state of the park led to some use conflicts in late 1904. In December, Mr. A. Reynolds and others petitioned the City Council to remove rifle ranges from City Park where they had been since 1893.⁷⁸ The complainants protested that on December 4 they were in the park near the Naval Reserve and German Rifle Association rifle ranges and suddenly found that: "Our lives were endangered from the firing of some of the rifles from both the ranges, many of the bullets passing over our heads and ricocheting wildly over the park boulevards."⁷⁹ The petitioners noted that the rifle ranges were used most on Sundays and holidays when the park drives were used "very extensively."⁸⁰ Apparently under public pressure, the Pastime Gun Club and Naval Reserve removed their target practice from City Park in 1904-05.⁸¹

Permanent City assistance for the park came in January, 1905. The City charter was amended to annually provide between five and eight cents per \$100 of assessed property value for San Diego park improvements and maintenance.⁸² It amounted to about \$14,000 per year.

On April 17, 1905, the first, three-member Board of San Diego Park Commissioners was appointed, with benefactor George Marston as President.⁸³ Thus the Chamber of Commerce's Park Improvement Committee, which had brought City Park into being since August, 1902, handed over to the City supervision of park construction.

The exodus of rifle clubs from City Park which began in 1904-05 was followed by that of several other uses undesirable for Picturesque scenery. In 1906, several unsightly shacks were removed from Pound Canyon and not long after, the Water Department Stable and Pound were also gone.⁸⁴ The pest-house was evicted.⁸⁵ The City Park Commissioners noted in January, 1907: "The grazing of cattle, dumping rubbish and shooting in the park are a source of annoyance but with the increased area of improvement, we trust the people who do these things will realize their inconsideration."⁸⁶

Effectuation of the Parsons Plan continued in 1906. Wide Park Avenue (now Sixth Avenue) was constructed along the west boundary of the park from Juniper to Upas streets; new park entrance roads were built on Sixth at Juniper, Maple and Quince streets and some flowering shrubs were planted along footpaths in the most heavily used southwest area of the park, "so as to complete the main plan of plantation for that portion of the park."⁸⁷

Park Beautiful

In proposals, City Park was, as of 1906, tied closer than ever to the City Beautiful movement with its dual goals of aesthetic and economic urban enhancement. With an increasing number of large American cities commissioning "comprehensive" plans, the Chamber of Commerce's Civic Improvement Committee, headed by Julius Wangenheim and including George Marston and George Cooke, hired John Nolen, noted city planner from Cambridge, Massachusetts to do a "master improvement plan" for San Diego.⁸⁸

The Nolen Report of 1908 recommended, besides an ornate Civic Center and redesigned Horton Plaza, construction of a wide, landscaped walkway, "The Paseo." It would descend twelve blocks between Date and Elm streets from the southwest entrance of City Park to San Diego Bay, thus connecting "the two great central recreation features of the city."⁸⁹ In the Spanish-American style, the Paseo was to be "a pleasant promenade, an airing place, a formal and dignified approach to the big central park."⁹⁰ Within a formal, overall unity, each block of the Paseo was to have a variant design, taking into account the skewed blocks west of Union Street. The whole was to be a magnificent set of terraces, staircases, pergolas and flower-beds.⁹¹ If the Paseo had been built, it would have been one of the most unusual, impressive urban places in the western United States. Now crossing its onceproposed route is the freeway which overran a large corner of Balboa Park in the 1950s.

The Paseo was one of the more elaborate proposals in the Nolen plan which also suggested that relatively inexpensive, tree-lined parkways connect a city-wide system of parks with City Park at its center. The system would embrace the wide range of San Diego scenery and existing open spaces, especially along the variegated, twenty-mile coastline.⁹² At most of the proposed park sites, as Nolen put it: "little more is needed than a viewpoint, a foreground to a picture. Nature herself will supply the picture and maintain it without cost."⁹³

John Nolen typified a group of landscape architects encouraged by the writings of Charles M. Robinson to take up city planning in the early 1900s.⁹⁴ These designers combined at the city-wide scale, the Picturesque concept of making urban improvements adapt to and accentuate natural conditions and characteristics with City Beautiful formalism and grandeur.⁹⁵ The Picturesque and City Beautiful symbiosis, cut short by the impact of World War I and mass-produced autos, contained some humanistic, urbane elements still missing today in urban planning.⁹⁶

Park Milestone

By March, 1908, large parts of the Parsons Plan had been constructed.

Ten miles of winding park boulevards had been completed, three and a half miles of roads were under construction and four and a half more were proposed.⁹⁷ The projected avenues were to be, "every bit as picturesque as the completed boulevards." Although the roads curved into steep canyons and over rolling mesas, no grades exceeded eight percent. In 1904-06, over 14,000 trees and shrubs were planted in City Park. The increasingly lush park attracted "hundreds" to drive, ride and walk there every day.⁹⁸ The *Union* wrote proudly of the Picturesque site: "Everything has been so arranged that the general appearance is as though Nature herself had done the planting and it is only after an investigation that it is found that the planting has been done by

man."⁹⁹ In shallow Mulvey Canyon on the west side of City Park, between the lines of Fir and Juniper streets, after 1902, rustic wooden bridges were built, stone stairs went up the canyon side and James Mulvey, who lived nearby, planted shrubs in dense groups to form "perhaps the most picturesque part of the park."¹⁰⁰ While parts of the Parsons Plan were carried out, the public and private park opportunists of pre-1902 still scurried about.¹⁰¹ In 1905-09, proposals for five new schools and a fire house in City Park were defeated.¹⁰²

George Cooke left the prestigious Parsons firm in 1907, moved to San Diego for the balmy environment and worked part-time as City Park consultant. Cooke died on August 6, 1908 at age sixty from injuries received in a road accident near Alpine while on his other job as County road engineer.¹⁰³ At Cooke's funeral, George Marston, the City Beautiful philanthropist, eulogized the architect of Picturesque landscapes: "He put aside money making in order to do the work he liked to do. He loved the brown earth and its tender plants more than business success."¹⁰⁴ In 1909, the Park Commissioners hired a Los Angeles landscape architect, Wilbur D. Cook, to continue Cooke's work in guiding City Park improvements according to the Parsons Plan.¹⁰⁵

Business Sense

The expensive, arduous conversion of City Park in 1903-1910, from rough scrub growth to a Californian English park, was strongly criticized in March, 1910 by wealthy newspaper publisher E.W. Scripps. He wrote the Park commissioners that the \$44,500 he spent on planting and maintaining his 1,800 acre Miramar estate, north of San Diego, was probably less than the amount devoted to City Park in 1909.¹⁰⁶ The millionaire complained: "Large sums of money have been expended in making over a very small part of the park wilderness into finished garden spots."¹⁰⁷ The sensible businessman recommended that drought-free pine trees and hardy palms be planted in groups for best effects-in the Picturesque style. Scripps suggested that the City Park nursery propagate about 500,000 trees of durable species, at a cost of only about \$3,000, which would cover "the whole planting area of the San Diego park" in about six years. In the Picturesque Park-City Beautiful traditions of using city parks partly to help mollify the urban poor, Scripps recommended that a rose garden be laid out in City Park and the public allowed to pick roses on a rationed basis, thus: "Free roses in the park would give the plain people of the city the idea that their interest and pleasure was as much considered by the Park Commission as that of the people who rode in carriages and autos."¹⁰⁸

Balboa Visions

In 1909, banker G. Aubrey Davidson, President of the Chamber of Commerce, suggested that San Diego hold an exposition to garner some of the increased Pacific tourism and trade expected with the opening of the Panama Canal in 1915.¹⁰⁹ An economic boost was especially needed in San Diego which was hit hard by the Panic of 1897.¹¹⁰ Thus the Panama-California Exposition Company was formed in September, 1909.¹¹¹ A private subscription and City bond issue soon raised \$2 million to pay for the international fair.

Incomplete City Park offered a ripe site, near downtown San Diego and the port, for the exposition. The project architect, Bertram G. Goodhue, soon insisted on use of the highest, central part of the park for a complex of ornate, stuccoed Spanish Plateresque and Mexican

Ultrabaroque (Churrigueresque) buildings. The Parsons concept of a Picturesque park, free of man-made obstructions on the high ground with its panoramic views, was shunted aside forever. However, the Goodhue buildings brought to the park, rich decoration, exotic architecture and pleasing fantasy which are still enjoyed by many people today. Perhaps the greatest damage of the 1915 exposition was that it prevented fulfillment of the Parsons Plan and encouraged massive encroachments of the park which eventually included a major hospital, a high school and two freeways.

A contest was held to give City Park a name worthy of the elaborate fair being built there.¹¹² Apparently, a Mrs. Harriet Phillips of the San Diego Club and Pioneer Society, suggested the name, "Balboa Park."¹¹³ Park Commissioners Thomas O'Halloran, M.A. Luce and Leroy Wright liked the name for its linkage with Panama and thus the new canal. They unanimously approved it on October 27, 1910.¹¹⁴ The name also recalled a felicitous coincidence for San Diego. While the expedition of Spanish explorer Vasco Nuñez de Balboa crossed Panama and first reached the Pacific Ocean on September 29, 1513; twenty-nine years later, also on September 29, Day of San Miguel, the ship of Sebastián Viscaíno discovered San Diego Bay.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

Between 1902 and 1910, citizens of San Diego, led by George Marston, Julius Wangenheim, Kate Sessions and others, made a tremendous effort in beginning to landscape their arid, rocky 1400 acre City Park according to the Picturesque plan of Samuel Parsons, Jr. The plan and its designer had direct antecedents in eighteenth century English Picturesque parks; then seventeenth century, Renaissance and Roman landscape art. The San Diego businessmen who supported the park and other urban improvements were inspired aesthetically and financially by the City Beautiful Movement born in Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 with its roots in grandiose Renaissance and Roman architecture, Thus the rural and urban attachments and art trends of Mediterranean Antiquity ultimately focused on a major city park facing the California Pacific.

After 1910, increased American population, mass production, world wars and suburbanization led to the ascendancy of successors to the City Beautiful, with its emphasis on grand buildings and regional road systems. These included expanding freeways in the 1950s and unrestrained redevelopment projects in the 1960s. The City Beautiful-inspired exposition of 1915 began a forty year urban assault on partly Picturesque Balboa Park.

Today only the west one sixth of Balboa Park has the curving paths, drives, green lawns and groups of vegetation which the Parsons Plan envisioned. But the Picturesque Park tradition tells us that the intended effect has been battered by insufficient, adjacent extent of similar improvement; the noise of two nearby freeways and the frequent roar of jets on an airport approach. Other parts of the park contain buildings, restricted access or unimproved state. We can see now what Balboa Park and San Diego lost in terms of urban relief and naturalistic landscaping. San Diegans must decide what they can and want to regain for the park.

Highly prosperous, educated mercantile classes appreciated similar architecture and landscaping (or art) in Imperial Rome, Renaissance Italy, eighteenth century England and early twentieth

century America. We see in those still living from the early 1900s that many of them had inquiring minds and gentility which we increasingly miss today. But urbanity based on privilege could not hold sway for long in a modernizing world. Julius Wangerheim, writing in 1942, reminisced about pre-World War I: "The cream which had through time floated to the top of the social order was resented; the bottle was shaken, and while the milk is richer, the cream that gave our culture its tone is gone." "... everywhere the crowds surge."¹¹⁶

A great challenge for our society today is to try and draw, for urban and individual life, on the more satisfying, understanding aspects of the classical cultural succession, yet within the context of a pluralistic, democratic, technological society. In San Diego and throughout our country, humanism and environmentalism are growing within urbanism, from the neighborhood and ethnic levels up to the commercial establishment. If we can reach a balance with our resources, and combine the best of the past with the most invigorating of the present, we may achieve an urbanism in which parks, people and the City will benefit more.

Gregory Montes graduated from Yale University in 1969 and from Yale Architecture School in 1972. He now works as Associate Planner with the San Bernardino County Planning Department. The article published here was the First Place winning paper in the Copley Books Awards Graduate-General Division at the San Diego History Center's 1977 Institute of History.

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This article is dedicated to my niece Hilary Griffeth Wright and to my nephew David Montes Wright.

NOTES

1. Gregory E. Montes, "San Diego's City Park, 1868-1902: An Early Debate on Environment and Profit," *The Journal of San Diego History*, XXIII (Spring, 1977), pp. 40-59.

2. *San Diego Union* (hereinafter SDU), April 8 1902, p. 3. City Clerk's Office (hereinafter CCO), City of San Diego, Balboa Park File No. 1 (hereinafter BP-1), Doc. No. 2003, Filed June 23, 1902.

3. Julius Wangenheim, "An Autobiography," California Historical Society *Quarterly*, XXV (December 1956), p. 357. George W. Marston, *History of San Diego City Parks* (San Diego: Privately Printed, 1936), p. 6. The Park Improvement Committee, typical of early twentieth century urban beautification groups, was composed of prosperous, "prominent" businessmen: banker and wholesale merchant, Julius Wangenheim, appointed Chairman; department store owner George W. Marston; hotelier Ulysses S. Grant, Jr., son of the President of the United States; and William Clayton, manager of the Spreckels family business interests in San Diego. SDU, August 17, 1902.

4. Article by Julian Hawthorne, *Los Angeles Examiner*, March 9, 1905; in "Balboa Park Scrapbook" (Hereinafter BPS), V.2, San Diego History Center Library and Manuscripts Collection (hereinafter SDHC). Also within one day of a City Park subscription campaign, Marston pledged \$1000 for the park improvement; others subscribed another \$1000 and \$500 was promised. SDU, August 17, 1902.

5. SDU, October 21, 1902, "Samuel Parsons, Jr. Will Plan Big Park." For the work agreement, payment and schedule of plans and visits to San Diego, see Letter of Samuel Parsons, Jr. to George Marston, October 21, 1902, in Early Correspondence Folder, Marston Box File No. 3 (hereinafter Marston File 3), SDHC. In September, 1902, John McLaren, Superintendent, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, visited San Diego and offered suggestions on proposed City Park improvements and the choice of a landscape architect. SDU, September 21, 1902. McLaren recommended that San Diego choose the City Park designer from "the three most expert landscape architects in the United States," who were: Olmsted Brothers, Samuel Parsons, Jr. and Warren Manning. SDU, October 5, 1902. Mary Coulston first wrote Parsons on August 25, 1902 about possibly designing City Park and he responded affirmatively on September 5. Parsons to Coulston, Marston File 3, SDHC. Samuel Parsons, Jr. was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1884, the third of his name in an old Quaker family of horticulturists. He earned his B.S. degree from Yale University in 1862. Parsons was President of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in 1902 and again in 1906-07. Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land, The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1971), p. 390. By 1902, Parsons had a long list of works to his credit. He had designed public parks and private gardens in twenty-two states, including: League Island Park in Philadelphia, Evergreen Cemetery in Brooklyn, Bryn Mawr and Colorado State University campuses and worked on redesigning the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C. Parsons left his position at the New York Park Department in 1911 and died in New York on February 3, 1923. *Ibid.*

6. Mrs. Coulston, originally from Pennsylvania, was on the staff of *Garden and Forest* for ten years. The paper, owned by famous horticulturist and Harvard professor, C.S. Sargent, was discontinued in 1900. SDU, July 19, 1904, Item 11, Folder 1, Marston File 2, SDHC.

7. George F. Chadwick, *The Park and the Town, Public Landscape in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966), p. 19.
8. Newton, *Design on the Land*, pp. 386, 390. Parsons and Calvert Vaux were partners from 1880 until the latter's death in 1895. At least in 1899, Downing Vaux, son of Calvert, named after Andrew Jackson Downing, worked with Parsons.
9. Downing's views on landscaping were presented in his *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*. . . (1841) and *Cottage Residences. . . and Their Gardens and Grounds Adapted to North America* (1853). In the Picturesque tradition, Downing emphasized recognition of the "genus loci" or the basic, unique visual qualities of any site to be landscaped. G.B. Tobey, *A History of Landscape Architecture, The Relationship of People to Environment* (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 156.
10. Frederick Law Olmsted, *Walks and Talks of An American Farmer in England* (New York: George Putnam, 1852), pp. 78-82. Olmsted published an article, "People's Park," about Birkenhead Park, in *The Horticulturist*, edited by Andrew Jackson Downing after 1846. Charles C. McLaughlin, Charles E. Beveridge, eds., *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Vol. I, The Formative Years, 1822 to 1852* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 75
11. Chadwick, *The Park and the Town*, pp. 29, 31, 22. Humphrey Repton's five books on landscape architecture were published in 1840 in one volume edited by John Claudius Loudon, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of the Late Humphrey Repton, Esq.* (London: Printed for the Editor, Republished in Facsimile, Westmead, England: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1969).
12. Chadwick, *The Park and the Town*, pp. 20-21. Joseph Addison visited Italy in 1699-1703. Tobey, *Landscape Architecture*, p. 128. Sir Uvedale Price wrote of the Picturesque aesthetic in his *Essay on the Picturesque*. . . (1794): "It is the coquetry of nature, it makes beauty more amusing, more varied, more playful. . . by its active curiosity. . ." Marcia Allentuck, "Sir Uvedale Price and the Picturesque Garden. . .," Chapter III in, *The Picturesque Garden and Its Influence Outside the British Isles* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 1974), pp. 60-61.
13. Tobey, *Landscape Architecture*, pp. 130-135. Before Kent, by 1739, Thomas Bridgeman and Henry Wise, gardeners to Queen Anne, had begun the first transformation of Stowe gardens from rectangular parterres to various polygonal shapes. Thus Tobey (p. 159) writes that use of framed views or "pictures" in landscape design: ". . . initiated by Bridgeman, modified by Kent, and simplified by Brown, appears. . . as translated into the American idiom by Downing, and through him to Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, Senior." And from Vaux and Olmsted it was only one more step to Samuel Parsons, Jr.
14. S. Lang, "The Genesis of the English Landscape Garden," Chapter I in *The Picturesque Garden*, p. 28. Lord Burlington, who commissioned Picturesque gardens for his Chatsworth estate, owned drawings of Italian stage sets by Inigo Jones and Filippo Juvarra who were influenced by the Renaissance treatises of Serlio and Alberti who in turn derived ideas on theater

design from the Roman architect Vitruvius. William Kent, England's first full-fledged Picturesque landscaper, edited a volume of Jones' architectural designs (*The Designs of Inigo Jones*, London: 1727) Lang, *The Picturesque Garden*, p. 29 writes "... the true progenitor of the landscape garden of its first and second phase was stage design and its written emanations, evolving from Vitruvius and particularly from its Renaissance tradition."

15. Tobey, *Landscape Architecture*, p. 128.

16. Lang, *The Picturesque Garden*, p. 25.

17. Tobey, *Landscape Architecture*, p. 128.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 128. King George II (1727-60) had London garden designers, Thomas Bridgeman and Henry Wise, prepare a cost analysis to show the excessive labor costs required to maintain formal gardens.

19. Derek Clifford, *A History of Garden Design* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1963), pp. 123-160, Chapter Six, "The Great Revolution of Taste."

20. *Ibid.*

21. Christopher Tunnard, *The Modern American City* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1968), pp. 46-48.

22. Newton, *Design on the Land*, p. 413

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*, p. 424.

25. Charles M. Robinson, in 1901, wrote his first book, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities*, which quickly became a best seller. *Ibid.* In 1903, Robinson published an enlarged version of this book entitled *Modern Civic Art, or the City Made Beautiful*.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Also, around July of 1903, the Florence Heights and University Heights areas of San Diego formed civic improvement clubs as did the Golden Hill neighborhood around August, 1902. SDU, October 10, 1903, "Planning to Make the City Beautiful." The three areas were adjacent to City Park on three sides.

28. Mary Gilman Marston, *George White Marston: A Family Chronicle*, 2 Vols. (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1956). Vol. II, p. 3, speaks of "father's sympathetic interest in this (City Beautiful) movement, . . . the nation-wide movement toward civic improvement that culminated in city and regional planning."

29. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 33.

30. The *Union* noted that large urban parks had aesthetic value but that "the business argument" was what appealed in "every community" and had been used most frequently in San Diego. SDU, January 25, 1903, "On Business Grounds." The *Union* exclaimed that San Diego wanted "growth, prosperity and happiness." The newspaper noted "Beautiful parks, well-kept lawns, flowers and foliage have much to do with the growth of a city." SDU, October 22, 1903. According to the *Union*, city parks encouraged better maintained private gardens which spread throughout the city and stimulated sales of yard plants, recreational equipment, carriages, autos and land. San Diego historian E.W. Smythe gave a talk to the Chamber of Commerce in October, 1903 in which he said: "In other words, it is a matter of plain, business common sense for us to make the most attractive city possible, because it will bring settlers and investors in constantly increasing numbers. Our prosperous neighbor, Los Angeles, is a monument erected to the grateful memory of tourists-at their own expense. We want a similar monument here-a big city builded with the surplus money and surplus people of less favored climes. The tourist of today is the resident of tomorrow." SDU, October 10, 1903, BPS, Vol 2, SDHC. In those early days of industry and autos, neither Smythe nor other prominent San Diegans would have guessed that within seventy-five years, many San Diegans would question the future of growth in their exceptional, partly beleaguered environment.

31. SDU, October 6, 1902, "San Diego's Advantages," by M.B. Coulston (MBC).

32. *Ibid.*

33. SDU, October 9, 1902, "Functions of Public Parks," MBC.

34. SDU, October 15, 1902, "Native Plants in the Parks," MBC.

35. SDU, October 28, 1902, "Parks, Ancient and Modern." SDU, November 27, 1902, "Development of Park Systems," MBC.

36. SDU, November 16, 1902, "Parks as Art Influences." SDU, November 19, 1902, "Opposition to Public Parks." MBC. By 1900, about fifty of the major urban parks in North America had been designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Chadwick, *The Park and the Town*, p. 190. Their more prominent works included, besides Central Park, Prospect Park in Brooklyn (1866), Golden Gate Park, San Francisco and parks at Chicago, Detroit, Montreal, Buffalo and Philadelphia (3,500 acre Fairmount Park, then "the largest urban park in America.") Mrs. Coulston noted that after Central Park was laid out, mansions were built along its edges to obtain the best views. Visitors to Central Park increased from four million per year in 1863 to over eleven million in 1871. Several prominent businessmen wrote in a pamphlet in 1884 that rising land values around the park had offset its entire cost plus interest which amounted to \$44 million. *Ibid.*, p. 188

37. SDU, November 6, 1912. Mary Coulston felt that it was "only a question of more or less time" before improved transportation would bring more travelers and commerce to San Diego from both the eastern United States and the Orient. The U.S. population center was by then west

of the Mississippi River. Accordingly, public improvements in San Diego would bring more tourists and residents from the East and in fact the park beautification would make the San Diego Cuyamaca Eastern Railway (to connect San Diego with Yuma, Arizona), championed by George Marston, even more necessary. SDU, October 29, 1902, "United Action for City Parks, MBC. In short, it was the ideal City Beautiful symbiotic relationship of economics and aesthetics. George Marston was also aware of the increased real estate values to be realized from park improvements. In March, 1903, he was thinking of buying the Crittenden Addition, "just above the city park," for "residence building purposes." SDU, March 9, 1903, "Mr. Marston's Plans."

38. SDU, September 22, 1902, "Views of Park Improvement."

39. SDU, September 12, 1902, "For Park Improvement." While Riverside had Magnolia Avenue and Victoria Heights and Redlands had Smiley Heights, "We in San Diego with infinitely finer advantages, have heretofore neglected to make use of them" and "rested content on what nature has done for us."

40. SDU, December 23, 1902, "Mr. Parsons Much Pleased With Park Site."

41. SDU, December 24, 1902, "Has Buckled Down to Work." After hiring Samuel Parsons, Jr., George Marston said that the designer was "a warm advocate of the natural method of developing park grounds, rather than the formal treatment." SDU, November 23, 1902. Parsons followed not only the Picturesque principle of adapting parks to existing topography but also of protecting and accentuating native vegetation. Marston assured San Diegans that Parsons would not impose, "any artistic design that will be unsuitable to California conditions."

42. SDU, December 29, 1902, "His Work Practically Done" and SDU, December 31, 1902, "Reception to Mr. Parsons."

43. SDU, January 1, 1903, "Mr. Parsons' Impressions."

44. *Ibid.*

45. Chadwick, *The Park and the Town*, p. 23, for Repton, and Tobey, *Landscape Architecture*, p. 156, for Downing. "

46. SDU, January 2, 1903. In January, 1903, Mary Coulston quoted parts of a recent letter from Samuel Parsons, back in New York, who praised in Picturesque terms, the native vegetation of City Park with its: "distinctly individual quality of form and coloring, of mould and contour, as of a marvelous piece of living earth sculpture; of plant or shrub and vine clothing that is wonderful and unique." SDU, January 25, 1903, "Nature's Flowers on the Park," MBC. Mrs. Coulston noted that City Park native plants included: sumac, chilicothe (a white-flowered vine), shooting stars (white and pink flowers), yellow-flowered wild caper, white forget-me-nots, mosses on the mesas and ferns on canyon walls.

47. SDU, September 22, 1935, Ada Perry, "Kate Sessions' Title, 'Mother of Park, ' Earned One," in Kate Sessions Notebook, K.O. Sessions Box File, SDHC. SDU, March 20, 1903, Parsons mentioned other countries where compatible plants for City Park might be found.
48. Doc. 7137, BP-2, CCO, Filed September 23, 1904. From Board of Public works to Common Council, transmitting request of George Marston, Chairman, Park Improvement Committee, of September 22, 1904, that City purchase the pipe system of Miss K.O. Sessions in her leased ten acre tract of City Park. Referred to Water Committee by Council, September 26, 1904, which recommended on October 24, 1904 that the irrigation system be bought if the cost did not exceed \$125. The Committee report was adopted by the Council on October 31, 1904 and stated that a new irrigation system would have cost \$500.
49. SDU, January 22, 1903, "Contour Survey Begun," and June 12, 1903, "Survey of the Park Completed."
50. SDU, March 13, 1903, "A Gardener for the Park," MacLean built a lathhouse at the existing park nursery site. Florence Christman, *The Romance of Balboa Park* (San Diego: The Committee of 100, 1977), p. 17.
51. SDU, May 5, 1903, "Ordinance No. 1335." The Common Council also allocated \$1600 from city funds for City Park improvements in 1903-04, \$6000 in the following year and annual appropriations thereafter. SDU, June 27, 1926, Daniel Cleveland, "San Diego Pioneer Tells History of Balboa Park," pp. 16-17 of SDU Excerpts by Richard W. Amero, January 16, 1977, SDHC (Hereinafter SDU Excerpts, 77).
52. SDU, July 2, 1903. The fraternal orders paid fifty cents per tree to the Park Improvement Committee.
53. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol II, p. 15.
54. SDU, July 25, 1903. Cooke was born in Surrey County, England in 1848. He came to the United States in 1896 and joined the Parsons firm, becoming a partner about 1901. SDU, August 7, 1908.
55. SDU, January 2, 1903.
56. *Ibid.*
57. SDU, January 1, 1904.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Robert L. Horn, "A History of Balboa Park," *California Garden*, (Summer, 1960), Part III, p. 26.
60. SDU, January 1, 1905, in BPS, Vol. 2, SDHC

61. SDU, July 31, 1903, "Work on Park is Commenced." On that first day, July 30, Mayor Frary and George Marston went out to see George Cooke working on City Park.

62. SDU, August 28, 1903, "Artist Cooke Bids Temporary Adieu."

63. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol. II, p. 16.

64. SDU, January 1, 1905, BPS, Vol. 2, SDHC. Minutes, PIC, 1904, pp. 20-21 March 8, 1904, "Report of George Marston on City Park Work Done," Marston File 3, SDHC. "Technical Description of the General Course of Proposed Roads for San Diego City Park," Marston File 3, SDHC. Most roads were thirty feet wide. Horticulturist T.S. Brandagee worked with George Cooke during seven weeks in this period to survey for laying out the City Parks roads. SDU, January 1, 1904, BPS, Vol. 2, SDHC. Mr. John H. Gay, who owned a large mansion next to the park, donated 5570 barrels of oil for macadamizing six miles of City Park roads. SDU, October 15, 1904, BPS, Vol. 2, SDHC.

65. E.W. Morse to George W. Marston, February 25, 1904, Item 8, pp. 2-3, Folder 1, Marston File 2, SDHC. Marston quickly responded to Morse, saying he had asked Cooke to avoid the mounds but that a proper road grade could not be obtained elsewhere. Marston to Morse, February 27, 1904, Item 9, Folder 1, Marston File 2, SDHC. Apparently, landscaper George Cooke referred proudly to the same controversial "Central Parkway" when he wrote two weeks earlier: "The road fits to the natural contour of the land as closely as possible,.... The views afforded by this driveway are best seen when driving southward, and are of such beauty as to be sure to make this road famous throughout not only the State, but the world." "Landscape Architect George Cooke's Report to the Park Improvement Committee, February 11, 1904," signed by M.B. Coulston, Item 7, p. 1, Folder 1, Marston File 2, SDHC.

66. *Ibid.*

67. SDU, January 1, 1905, BPS, Vol. 2, SDHC. For details on the piped water system see Ordinance No. 1345, City of San Diego, approved April 30, 1903, original copy in Petitions and Ordinances Folder, Balboa Park Box File, SDHC. Horn *California Garden*, p. 26.

68. SDU, August 21, 1903.

69. W.R. Maize, Chairman, Park Improvement Fund, to Park Improvement Committee, San Diego Chamber of Commerce, in "Subscriptions, Lists and Reports," Marston File 3, SDHC.

70. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol. II, p. 16.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

73. Mrs. Coulston wrote Pinchot on March 8, 1904, requesting the congratulatory telegrams for San Diego's Arbor Day. Pinchot took her letter to the White House for President Roosevelt to

read. Gifford Pinchot, Forester of the United States, Bureau of Forestry, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., to Mrs. M.B. Coulston, PIC, San Diego, Marston File 3, SDHC.

74. Telegram from The White House, Washington, D.C., to The School Children of San Diego, care of Park Improvement Committee, March 16, 1904, enclosed with PIC Minutes, 1904, p. 25, in Marston File 3, SDHC. The minutes of April 6, 1904 also contain the telegrams from Governor Pardee and U.S. Forester Pinchot.

75. SDU, July 19, 1904, "Talented Woman Summoned by Death," Item 11, Folder 1, Marston File 2, SDHC. Mrs. Coulston died of an intestinal obstruction.

76. SDU, September 22, 1935, "Kate Sessions. . .," Sessions Notebook, Sessions Box File, SDHC. PIC Minutes, June 1904, p. 1, Marston File 3, SDHC.

77. Cooke returned to New York on March 3, 1905. He said that he would not return in his official capacity since he and Parsons felt the park work "would advance without further delays." Christman, *Romance*, p. 26.

78. Montes, "San Diego's City Park," p. 50.

79. Doc. No. 7998, BP-2, CCO, Filed December 5, 1904, "Petition of A. Reynolds et al, for Discontinuance of target ranges in the City Park." Petition granted by Aldermen, December 5, 1904; tabled indefinitely by Delegates, December 30, 1904. Petition consists of a one page letter to City Council from A. Reynolds, W.L. Frevert et al, December 5, 1904.

80. *Ibid.* Mr. Reynolds noted that since the City Council authorized rifle ranges in Resolution 1749 of May 2, 1904, large damage suits could be brought against the City if anyone were injured or killed by the target practice.

81. SDU, January 1, 1905, BPS, Vol 2, SDHC.

82. William Smythe, *History of San Diego, 1542-1907* (San Diego: The History Company, 1907), p. 621.

83. SDU, April 18, 1905, "First Park Board Named Last Night," BPS, Vol. 2, SDHC. The other two Park Board members were Ernest E. White and A. Moran, The Park Board took office on May 1, 1905.

84. Board of Park Commissioners to Hon. John L. Seton, Mayor of San Diego, "San Diego Park Board Report, 1906," p. 2, Early Correspondence Folder, Marston File 3, SDHC.

85. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol. II, p. 22. For some descriptions of the pesthouse, see Herbert G. Hensley, "Byways of Old City Park," *San Diego Historical Quarterly*, I (July, 1955), pp. 35-36.

86. "Park Board Report, 1906," p. 2.

87. *Ibid.*

88. John Nolen, *San Diego, A Comprehensive Plan for Its Improvement* (Boston: George H. Ellis Co., Printers, 1908), p. iv. The major American city plans which preceded Nolen's work for San Diego were: The McMillan Commission resurrection after 1901 of L'Enfant's late eighteenth century plan for Washington, D.C., led by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.; the grandiose redesign plan for San Francisco in 1905 by Burnham and Edward H. Bennett (plan shelved after 1906 earthquake); and the 1907-09 Burnham and Bennett plan for Chicago. See Tunnard, *The Modern City*, pp. 53, 63, Tobey, *Landscape Architecture*, p. 181 and Newton, *Design on the Land*, pp. 417, 420-22.

89. Nolen, *Comprehensive Plan*, p. 40, and Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol, II, p. 31.

90. Nolen, *Comprehensive Plan*, pp. 40-41.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 41. In line with City Beautiful economics, the ornate Paseo was to be "of great value for handsome residences or semi-public buildings, increasing perceptibly the city's annual receipts from taxes." At the waterfront, The Paseo was to spread out to a 1200 foot wide esplanade with a casino, art museum, aquarium and "lovely parks and gardens." *Ibid.*, p. 45.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

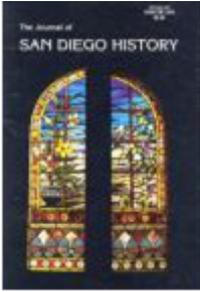
93. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

94. Tunnard, *The Modern City*, p. 65 and Newton, *Design on the Land*, pp. 416, 424.

95. Nolen wrote in his 1908 plan for San Diego: "There are four general principles of landscape design which are peculiarly applicable to city planning. They are: (1) to conform, so far as possible, to the topography; (2) to use places for what they are naturally most fit; (3) to conserve, develop, and utilize all natural resources, aesthetic as well as commercial; (4) to aim to secure beauty by organic arrangement rather than by mere embellishment or adornment." When Nolen agreed to do his first plan for San Diego, he wrote George Marston that, "well-planned city development" is "individual and distinctive, recognizing the peculiar quality of a city." Nolen to Marston, June 3, 1907, Item 1, p. 2, Folder 9a, Marston File 2, SDHC. As with many of his planning contemporaries, Nolen was influenced not only by the formalism of Chicago's Columbian Exposition (1893) and the late nineteenth century Ecole de Beaux Arts of Paris, but also by the Picturesque viewpoint set forth by late nineteenth century Austrian urbanist, Camillo Sitte in his work, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* (New York: Random House, 1965; 1st ed., 1889, Vienna). Nolen included the Sitte title in the bibliography of his 1908 San Diego report. Thus Nolen wrote in relation to "organic" urban planning: "The beautiful cities of Europe, the cities that are constantly taken as illustrations of what modern cities should be, are practically without exception the result of a picturesque, accidental growth, regulated, it is true, by considerable common sense and respect for art, but improved and again improved to fit changed conditions and new ideas. It is here that we (Americans) fall short." Nolen, *Comprehensive Plan*, p. 13.

96. Tunnard, *The Modern City*, pp. 61, 65, writes that the generation of greatest City Beautiful patrons in architecture and planning died in 1913-14 with the death of financier J.P. Morgan and the beginning of World War I.
97. SDU, March 29, 1908. The important southwest corner of the park was planted in 1904; the northwest area, southeast Golden Hill section, Russ School and Children's Home grounds in 1905; and again in Golden Hill and in the "Fraternal Grove" (of 1903) in 1906. Several thousand trees and many shrubs were planted in City Park and a playground built in the Golden Hill section in 1907. SDU, January 1, 1908. In 1908, "numerous" trees and many shrubs were planted in City Park. SDU, January 1, 1909.
98. *Ibid.*
99. SDU, January 1, 1908, "Fine Boulevards and Park System Would Be A Credit to Larger City."
100. SDU, January 1, 1903, SDU Excerpts, p. 18, SDHC. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol. II, p. 13.
101. Montes, "San Diego's City Park," pp. 48-54, on attempted City Park encroachments of 1890-1902.
102. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol. II, p. 22.
103. SDU, August 7, 1908. Not long before the fatal accident, caused by a runaway horse team sending Cooke's wagon over a fifty foot embankment. Cooke had been appointed Chief Engineer to both the City and County boulevard commissions.
104. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol. II, p. 23.
105. Horn, *California Garden*, p. 27.
106. E.W. Scripps to San Diego Board of Park Commissioners, March 12, 1910, in "Scrapbook on Balboa Park, 1909-1914," (attributed to Thomas O'Halloran) in California Room, San Diego Public Library, p. 1 (hereinafter Scripps Letter). In 1910, the Park Commissioners were Judge M.A. Luce, State Senator Leroy Wright and Thomas O'Halloran. Scripps overestimated the amount spent on City Park around 1909 by double. In March, 1908 to March, 1909 (then considered the fiscal year), \$22,000 were spent on improvements and maintenance at City Park. George W. Marston, Chairman, Board of Park Commissioners, to Mr. Daniel Potter, City Auditor, March 29, 1909, "Park Budget Resume of 1909, FI," Early Correspondence Folder, Marston File 3, SDHC.
107. Scripps Letter, p. 4.
108. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-6

109. Elizabeth C. MacPhail, *Kate Sessions: Pioneer Horticulturist* (San Diego: San Diego History Center, 1976), p. 71.
110. Horn, *California Garden*, Part IV (Autumn, 1960), p. 24.
111. Marston, *George White Marston*, Vol, II, p. 34.
112. Names suggested in the 1910 contest included: Horton, Silvergate, Del Mar, Pacific and Darien (eastern part of Panama). SDU, March 17, 1935.
113. SDU, May 27, 1916, p. 36 in O'Halloran Scrapbook (see note 110).
114. SDU, October 28, 1910, p. 73, O'Halloran Scrapbook.
115. *Ibid.* and SDU, March 17, 1935.
116. Julius Wangenheim, *To My Grandchildren and Theirs* Unpublished Typescript (San Diego: 1942), p. 205. The manuscript is in the California Room, San Diego Public Library.



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San Diego's City Park 1902-1910 From Parsons To Balboa

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Page iv. A turn of the century map of San Diego showing City Park (renamed Balboa Park in 1910) at its center. The period from 1902 to 1910 saw some of the first comprehensive planning for the park.



Page 5. San Diego's local "merchant prince" George W. Marston offered to pay for a professional landscape architect to design City Park.



Page 6. The design by Samuel Parsons for City Park was in the Picturesque tradition. He said of the park site, "There is nothing else like it among the parks of the world."



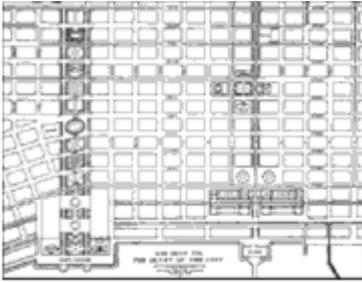
Page 8. A wide Central Drive winds its way through City Park (ca. 1904) as it approaches downtown San Diego in the distance.



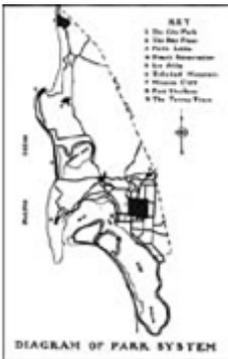
Page 8-9. The southwest corner of City Park at Sixth and Date Streets about 1904. Some 1000 trees were initially planted in this area of the park.



Page 10. Arbor Day planting in City Park on March 17, 1904



Page 13. The 1908 plan of John Nolan recommended the construction of a wide landscaped walkway, "The Paseo," which would descend twelve blocks between Date and Elm streets from the southwest entrance of City Park to San Diego Bay.



Page 14. The Nolan plan recommended that tree-lined parkways connect a citywide system of parks with City Park at its center.



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