

The village—the prosperous town to that population to be classed as a city of a certain class—one people being a progressive community—were looking for suitable grounds for the establishing of a larger park for the better enjoyment of all classes of our community. Certain citizens viewed the surrounding farm lands and connecting outlets, tramping through the high weeds, climbing fences, passing over hills and through the ravines. Finally Senator John Sherman was approached. He was found to be willing to give about twenty acres of primeval forest for park purposes.

Mr. Heineman proposed to donate about sixteen acres of land north of Fourth street for the same purpose. To connect these two tracts of land, it would be necessary to purchase the valley between Park Avenue West and Fourth street. On or about March 7, 1887, a paper was circulated among our citizens, when we succeeded in securing \$3,710. This money was used for the condemnation of certain land—the purchase of property, preliminary survey, and the proper opening up of the Sherman-Heineman park.

Some years ago a tract of land in the Johns Addition, to our city, was donated by the heirs of the late Benjamin Johns for park purposes. There appears to be some misunderstanding between the donors and the city in regard to the transfer of the park property to be called the Johns Park. I am informed that our city officials have this matter now under consideration. It certainly should have prompt and immediate approach on our part. Streets have been laid out, approaching and surrounding the park, and if we, as a city, have in any manner been in fault, let us be prompt to adjust the matter.

Charles F. Ackerman has recently laid out an addition to the city on South Main street, a beautiful tract of ground, in the center of the addition, with connecting streets has been given to the city for a park, and the same

has been accepted by the city.

As we pass along in our growth in population, from the village to the town—and to the city of churches, schools, factories, mills, wholesale establishments, railroads, both steam and electric, we as a progressive city and people, are becoming educated as to the value of parks.

It is a topic of conversation and inquiry to the park commissioners from citizens in general and residents in all wards of the city—“Anything new in regard to the park? How about the lake? Have you purchased all the proposed abutting land on Maple street? I understand attractive ground adjacent to Heineman or North park can be secured on reasonable terms. My family have enjoyed the park from north to south. We are looking forward with great expectation for the coming summer.”

The superintendents of Sunday schools, pastors of churches, masters of various lodges, leaders of clubs and societies, neighborhood and associate families are joyous to speak, of the Sherman woods in South park as the most attractive place for a good time to be found within the confines of Ohio.

Such remarks spontaneously made by our good people, is of great encouragement to city officials, to appropriate funds to beautify, keep in good repair, and purchase land for the broadening of the area, to properly care for the rapidly growing population of Mansfield and vicinity.

Referring to the extension of South park or Sherman park, west and south of Maple street, certain land has been purchased, a new street, Bird avenue, and driveway thrown open.

The heirs of the late Fred Bird and the Taylor brothers are ready to donate about twelve acres on certain conditions. This property is located just outside the city limits in Madison township. The deed for same is recorded and on file with the city auditor, to make an extension of Maple

street outside the city. We met the responsibility of the county commissioners, and the township trustees, the city council, board of public service, the county surveyor, city civil engineer city auditor, city solicitor and his honor, the mayor. I wish to say that the meeting of these various official gentlemen was an inexpressible pleasure. The question was not, “what will the improvement cost? Can we as a county, township and city, invest a few hundred dollars for the proper enlargement of Mansfield’s park system?”

They simply wished to know the legal text to govern the joint action of these various bodies of official responsibility. It is now with our city fathers for their action. I feel confident of true investigation and protection when in such time it will be convenient for this honored body to take final action—for the securing of an addition to our park—a limited time of a few years, will make it the most attractive division of South park, all the abutting land in this new south-west quarter of the city limits has been laid out into streets and lots, known by names and blocks; in fact the lots have been placed on the market, and all have been sold, thus insuring the early building of houses for the accommodating of our thrifty, advancing people.

The fact is clearly demonstrated to the park commissioners and city officials that dealers in real estate fully understand the value of a park, a breathing place to be located within or near their land, laid out as city lots, numbered so and so and offered for sale.

Mansfield is not in a class with New York City, but the figures are a good illustration. New York bought Union Square park in 1833 for \$116,051; Madison Square park in 1847 for \$63,952; Tompkins Square park in 1843 for \$93,359; Washington Square park in 1827 for \$77,970. These four down town parks costing \$351,332, are now at rul-

ing real estate prices worth \$25,000,000.

A recent edition of the Cleveland, O., Plain Dealer, Feb. 24, 1907, under large headlines: “Cleveland has the finest park system in America. Development of the Forest City’s great park and Boulevard system will soon be completed.” In 1871 there was but one small park in Cleveland. Now it claims, when completed, their park system will excel in size and loveliness any park system in the world, Paris alone, perhaps, excepted.

I notice in the February number of Park and Cemetery, published in Chicago, that many metropolitan centers, Denver, Col., Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, have joined the procession. Cincinnati has a bond issue of \$350,000. Philadelphia, Pa., will in a few days vote on a loan of \$650,000 for parks—has just announced the date for opening bids for tearing down houses to bring Fairmont park to Logan Square, a distance of one-half mile, at a cost of \$2,000,000, already provided.

St. Louis, Mo., has appropriated \$1,700,000 for small parks. You may say Mansfield should not be classed with these great American cities—it is a fact however, that most of our large cities deferred the purchase of land for parks, when same could have been secured at nominal cost. Now, they are at the mercy of the owner and must pay the price, no matter how excessive.

Mansfield has acted wisely by starting early to secure a park system. Some money has been expended. There was considerable opposition fifteen or eighteen years ago, but that opposition has passed away, those citizens are now all friendly for the care, protection and proper enlargement of our park system. We should try to forget the little expense already paid out, and go forward in a business-like manner in the future for the people are with us. They are the majority.

Speaking of the class we, as a city, are in, it appears to me our beautiful Queen City stands alone in Ohio, in