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THE TROY DAILY TIMES  
TROY, N.Y.  
SATURDAY,  
JANUARY 16, 1904**

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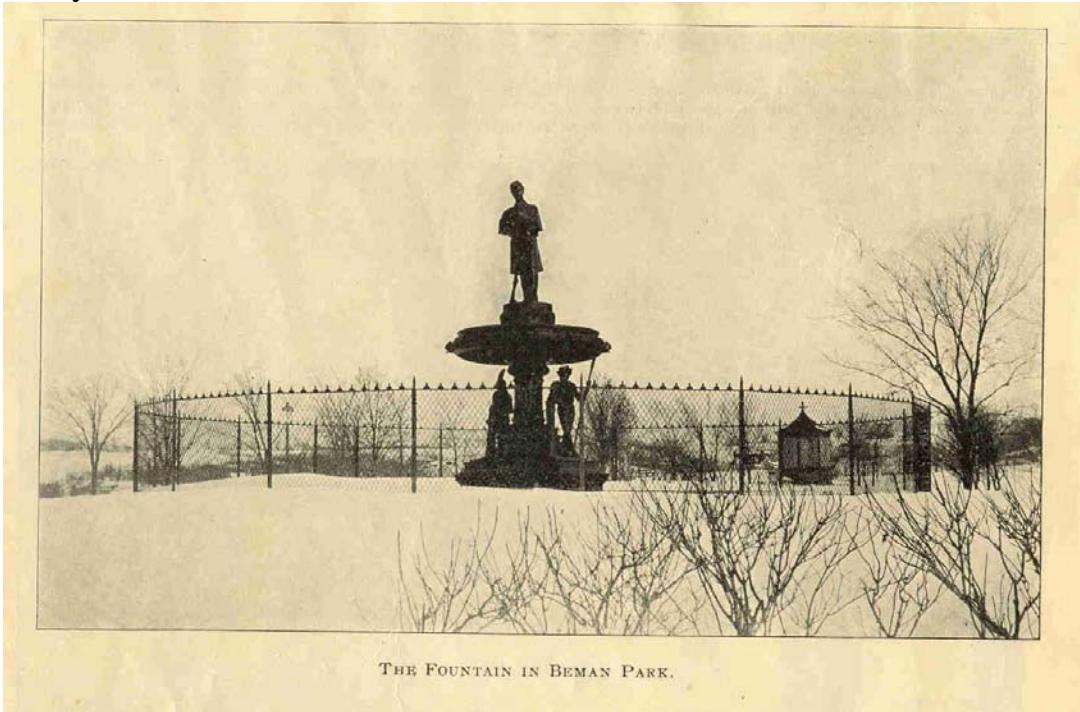
## **THE PARKS OF TROY**

### **Something of Their History and Acquisition. The Contemplated System—Last Years Stride a Long One---Prospect Park and How it Was Secured—The Work Done in Its Development—Plans of Coming Years For Breathing Spaces For Busy Persons—Those in Charge**

The acquisition of the Warren Hill property by Troy and its conversion into an already beautiful estate have given added interest to the subject of parks of Troy and have formed a long step toward an excellent park system for the city. With the waterworks property developed, a speedway constructed and the finishing touches put on by manual skill and the hand of nature, Troy will have an unusually fine, even though belated, system of playgrounds and natural recreation places for young and old. Indeed, at present, when one considers the beauties and locations of Prospect Park, Beman Park, Washington Park, Seminary Park, the Powers Memorial Park and the Lansing Park, the city is already favored beyond many in its breathing spaces within short distances from the channels of business. A park is not the product of a day or a season, and a system as contemplated will be the work of many years, but such a long stride has been taken recently that the ultimate consummation of the system seems assured.

In the village of Vanderheyden, that later became the City of Troy, there were no parks and no provision was made. However in 1802—almost 100 years ago—Seminary Park was set aside for park uses, and nearly forty years later Washington Park was enclosed for private ornamental purposes. The matter of parks then lay dormant for many years and in April 1879, the late John Sherry wrote to Edward Murphy, Jr., then Mayor of the city, offering to donate to the city about five acres of land bounded by Fifteenth, Seventeenth and Jacob and Peoples Avenue. Shortly after Mr. Sherry also wrote officially to the Mayor that Mrs. George C. Burdette and J. L. Van Schoonhoven had agreed to add to his gift the block of land to the east as far as Eighteenth Street. These gifts were accepted by the city and formed the

territory that is now Beman Park.



THE FOUNTAIN IN BEMAN PARK.

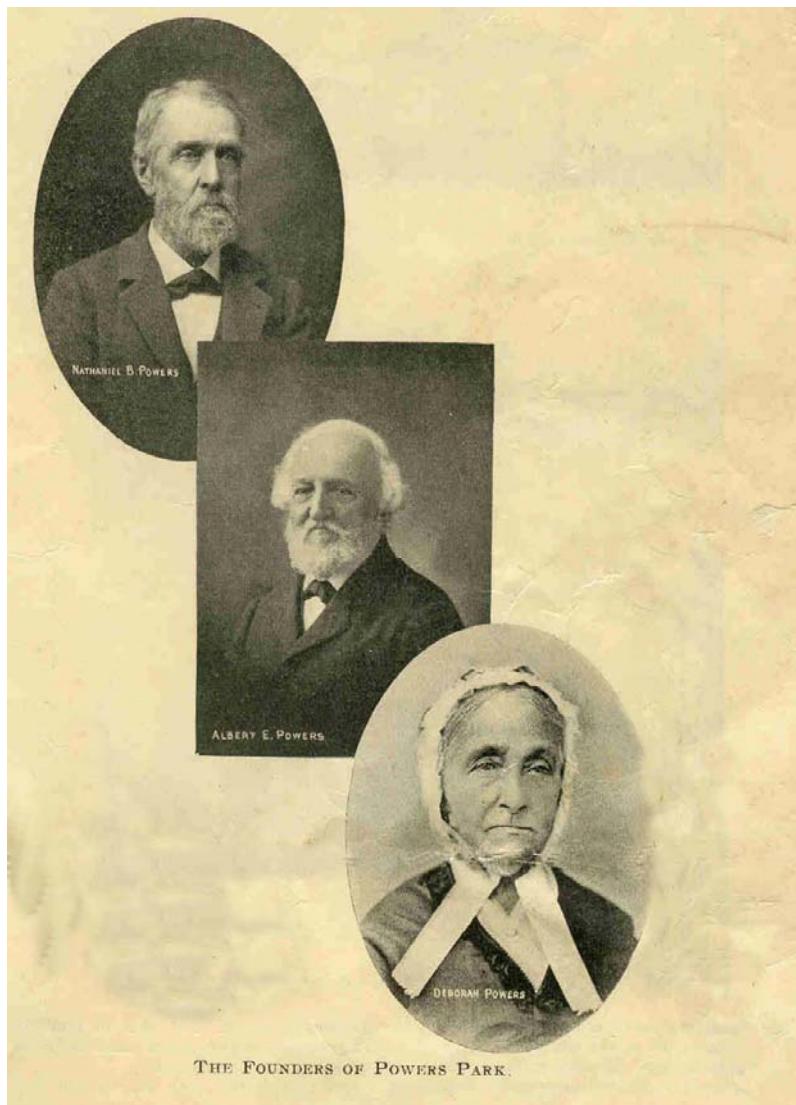
In selecting a name for the park Mr. Sherry passed with modesty any reference to his own name, suggesting that it would be well to perpetuate the name of Rev. Dr. N.S.S. Beman, who was for many years pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, and a man of ability and fame. Mr. Sherry also presented, at his own expense, the fountain with its figures and planted trees and shrubbery, thus paving the way for the improvement of the park by personal gifts from generous individuals.

At a meeting of citizens held in November, 1890, the project to improve the waterworks property and to secure land in the southern part of the city was launched, but through considerable work was done, surveys made and an the subject greatly discussed nothing ever resulted definitely from the agitation.

Four years ago, when the annexation of Lansingburgh to the Greater Troy was accomplished, there were two parks added to the city—the Powers Memorial park on Second Avenue and the Twelfth Street Park. The Twelfth Street Park is indeed the oldest in the city's history. Jacob A. Lansing, Cornelius Lansing and Levinus Lansing deeded the land to the village of Lansingburgh July 4, 1793. There was however, the provision that the Church of Lansingburgh should be permitted to build on whatever part of the site it wished and should use whatever land was needed. The church was

built, but the advances of time made it necessary to remove the structure, and now the ground is a well-kept park. It is now suggested that the park be actually designated, as it is frequently called, "Lansing Park".

More than thirty years ago Mrs. Deborah Powers suggested to her two sons that a suitable memorial to her husband would be a gift of a park to the village. The present site was selected, but several years were required to get possession of it. Mrs. Powers died at the age of 101 years in 1891, and thirty days later her sons transferred to the corporation of Lansingburgh the block between Second and Third Avenues and Tenth and Eleventh streets, "to be known as Memorial Park, in honor of William and Deborah Powers, deceased. The park was laid out by a competent landscape engineer, and it is one of the most beautiful in the city.



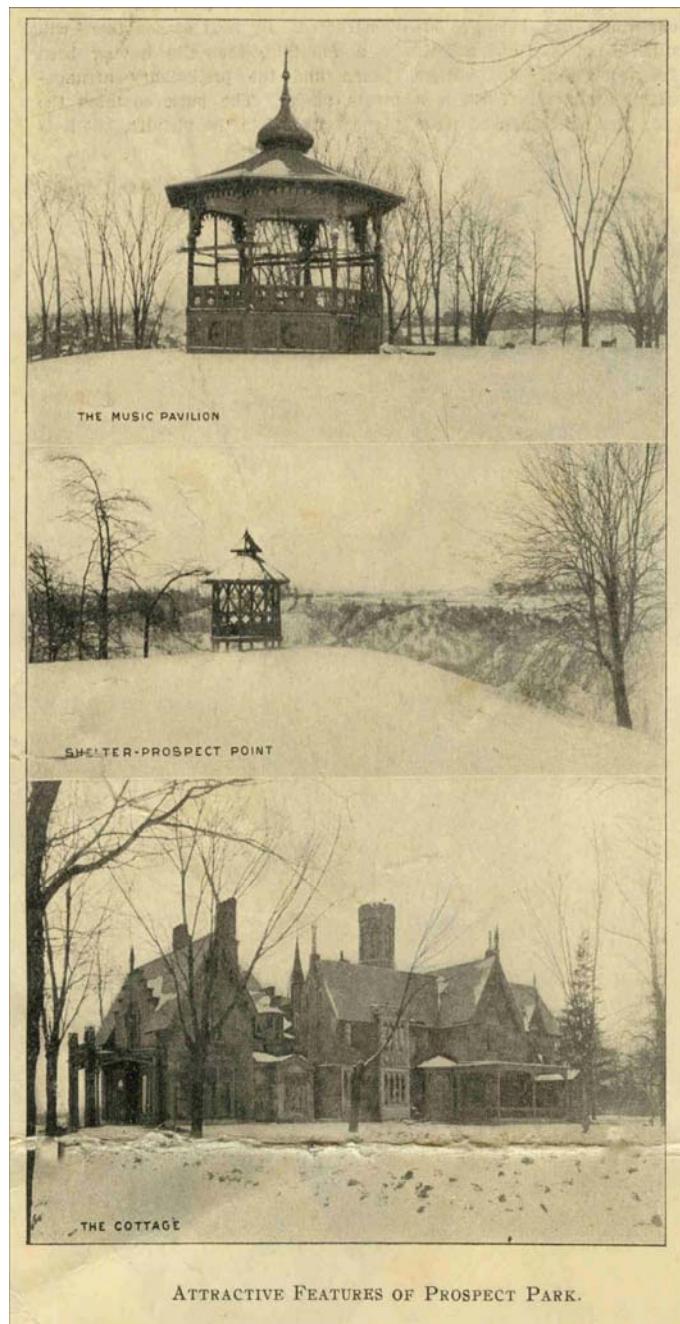
While there had been many eyes cast on the Warren property in the city with the comment that it was best fitted for a park it was not until 1901 that legislation was enacted that made the project possible. In that year a bill was passed under the fostering care of Assemblyman John F. Ahern authorizing the purchase of a suitable site and naming the Warren property. This property contains about seventy-five acres and its location affords a sweeping view of the Hudson Valley for many miles. It was purchased for \$110,000 and a large amount has already been expended on its improvement. The park formally came into the city's possession February 19 last, and work was begun the following week to put grounds in condition and to make it a ready for use during the summer.

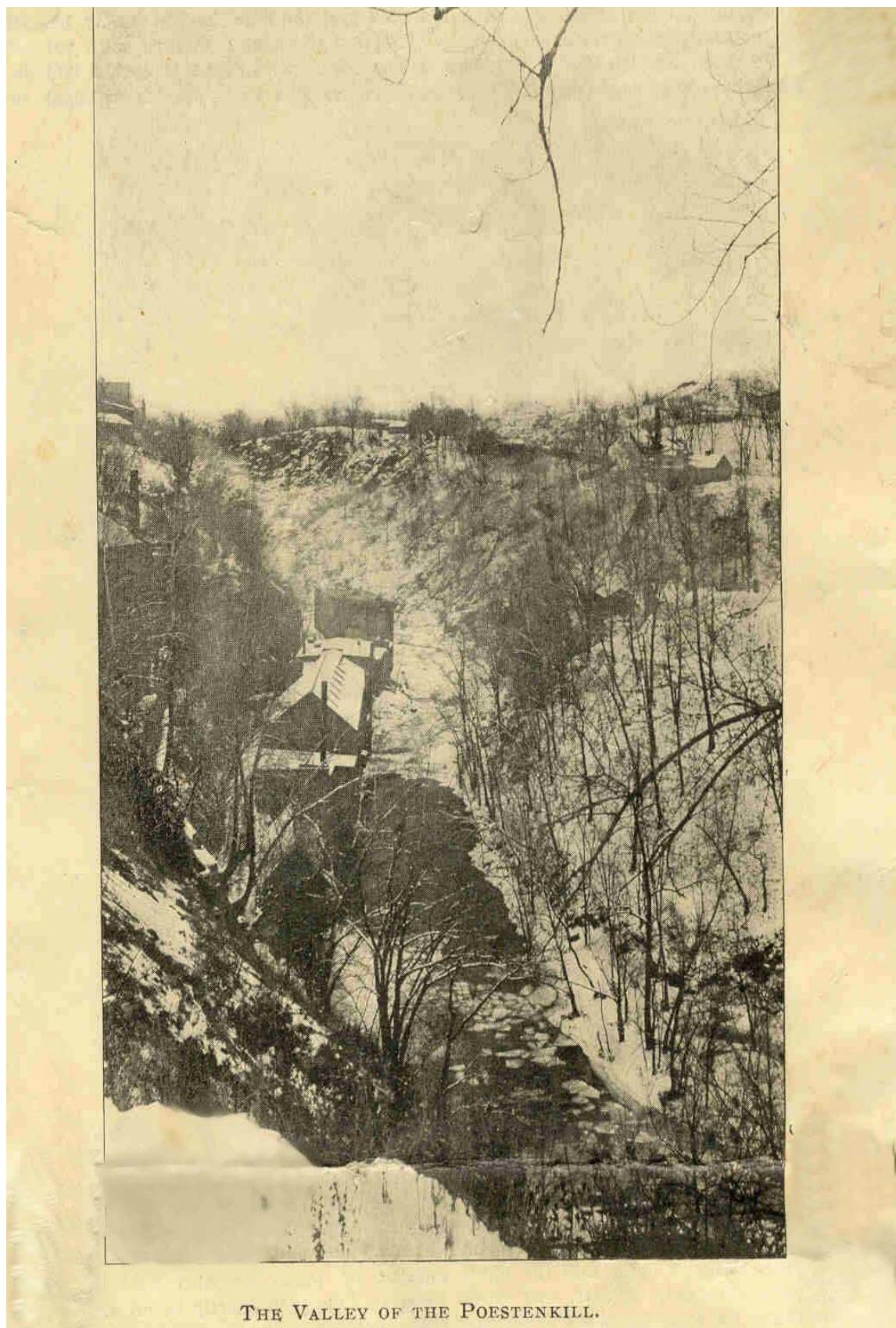
Prospect Park is of course the main recreation ground of its kind in the city, and interest is centered in every step of its progress toward the beautiful part of the system that it will surely be. About 500 trees and stumps were cut down, roads were located, drains laid and excavations made for an artificial lake. The width of all roads were fixed at twenty-five feet, while the paths are eight, ten and sixteen feet in width, dependant upon their location. The roads are macadamized and make about one mile has already been completed. About the same amount of walk has also been laid. Prospect Lake will shortly be an actual water handling body, the construction of a dam and the removal of a few additional yards of earth only remaining to be done.

Among the buildings on the park at present are the Casino, formally the Vail mansion, which has been remodeled; a Moorish bandstand and a little shelter at Prospect Point. The cottage is also an attractive point. There is a sand court for the children, and more than a mile of rustic fence has been constructed. By next season there will be a fountain, the site having been chosen and the preliminary arrangements made. The park contains' the highest ground in the vicinity, but it is easily reached by trolley and a gradually ascending road.

While briefly the view from the park may be said to be sweeping and embracing the Hudson Valley for miles in extent it would be well to note some of the places in direct proximity to the park. Almost at the spectator's feet lies the greater part of the city of Troy, and the eyes may be turned to include practically the entire city. Beyond the Hudson which flows silently toward the south, are Watervliet, Green Island and Cohoes with Waterford,

Mechanicville and the Adirondacks on the north and Albany, Rensselaer and the Catskill Mountains on the south. The Overlook, where the best view is obtained, is fifteen feet in diameter and twenty feet high. The Overlook is constructed of red cedar and is a building of attractive design. On the eastern extremity of the plateau on Prospect Point is the Shelter, a rustic resting place, from which the beauties of the Poestenkill gorge and surrounding scenery may be viewed.





THE VALLEY OF THE POESTENKILL.

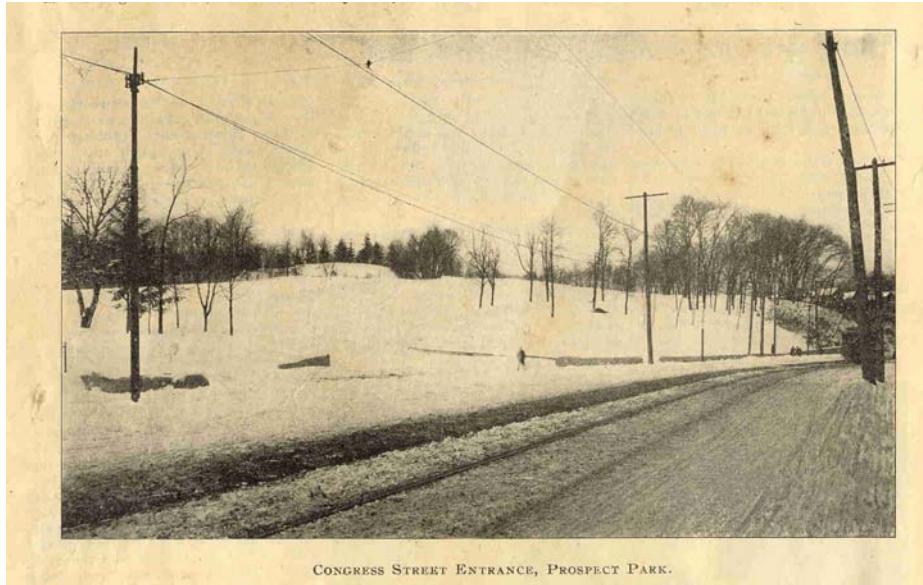


If the interest of everyone is aroused in the park the patronage and enjoyment and the resulting satisfaction will be all the greater. For this reason it has been suggested through the Bureau of Parks that the fountain be erected through a popular subscription, and undoubtedly the suggestion will be discussed at some future time. It is also designed that the fountain shall be representative of the story of Paris and the golden apple because of the tradition of ancient Troy and the modern city. These matters, however, are still in embryo, and another season must come before a decision shall be reached.

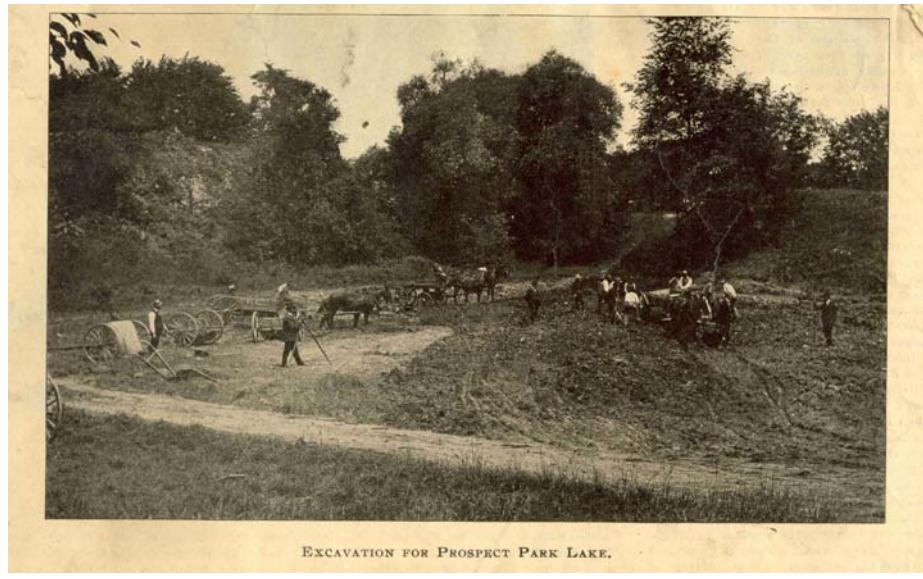


PROSPECT PARK - LOOKING TOWARD FOUNTAIN SITE.

The site of the park was chosen not only because of its own fitness but because of contemplated and probable extensions. It is probable that in time the old Mount Ida Cemetery will be included in this large park. There are natural advantages and sentimental reasons. It is also probable that additional land will be acquired so that the park may be entirely bounded by streets, thus avoiding the unsightly views and the consequent disappointment of old buildings and rear yards. In planning for the work next year the Park Bureau contemplates the completion of the lake and the children's court. Approaches on the southerly and westerly sides, the planting of trees and shrubs; the installation of swings, merry-go-rounds for the children and the proper lighting facilities are all to be considered.

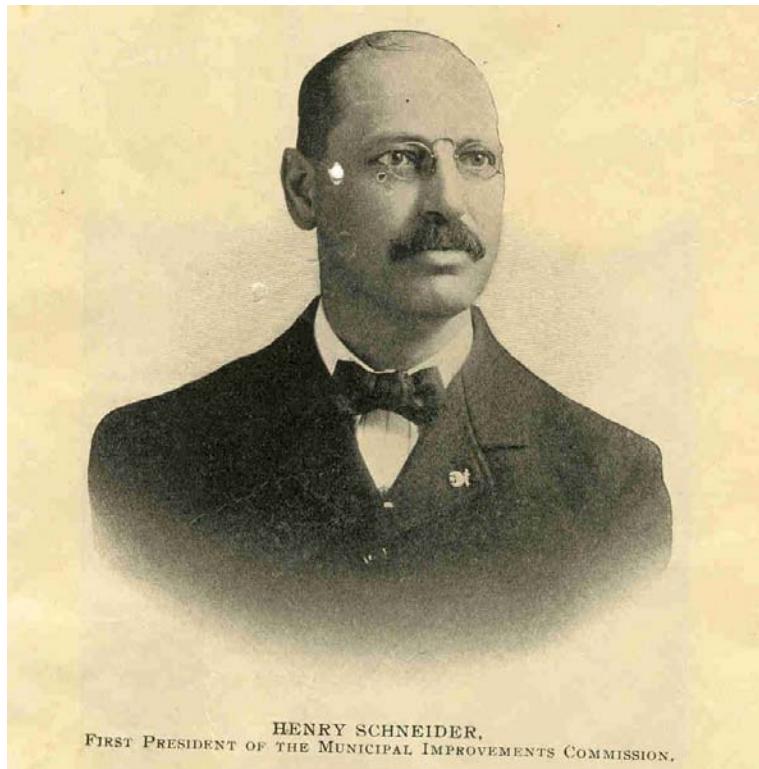


CONGRESS STREET ENTRANCE, PROSPECT PARK.



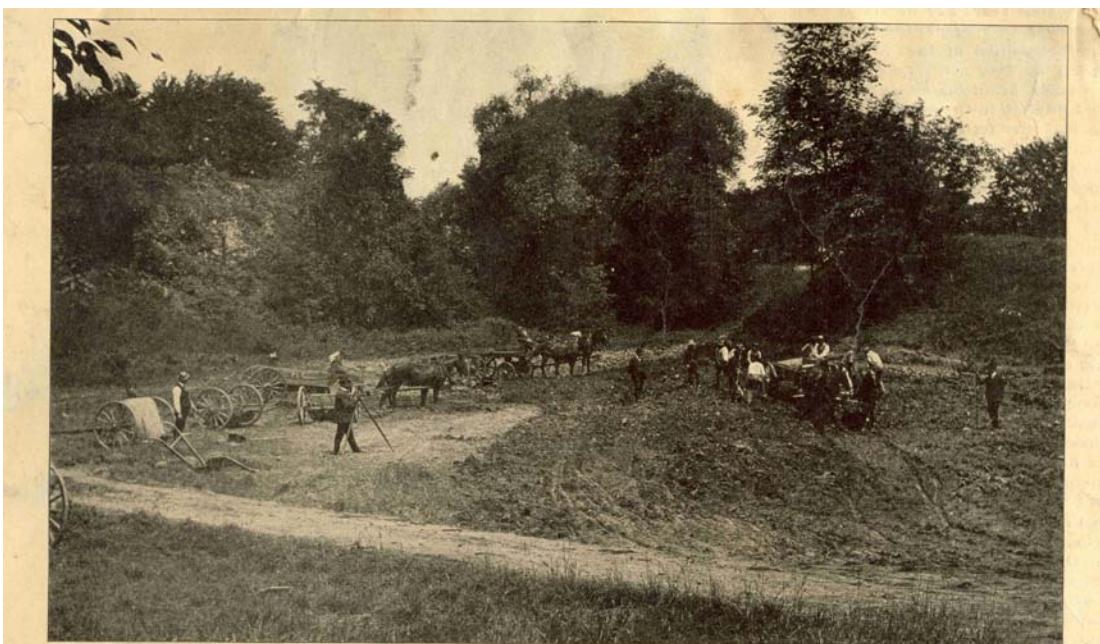
EXCAVATION FOR PROSPECT PARK LAKE.

Prospect Park is the greatest stride ever taken in this city toward a proper system. The bill was introduced by Hon. John F. Ahern of this city. The Municipal Improvements Commission, the members of which were Henry Schneider, President of the Common Council; Comptroller Le Roy Rickerson and Commissioner of Public Works Phelan, and Clerk Charles Hagen, has had practical charge of the work. Garnet D. Baltimore, the landscape engineer who has had the work in direct charge, has made an enviable record. William H. Cahill has been the efficient Superintendent, and altogether the outlook for the system another year is very encouraging.

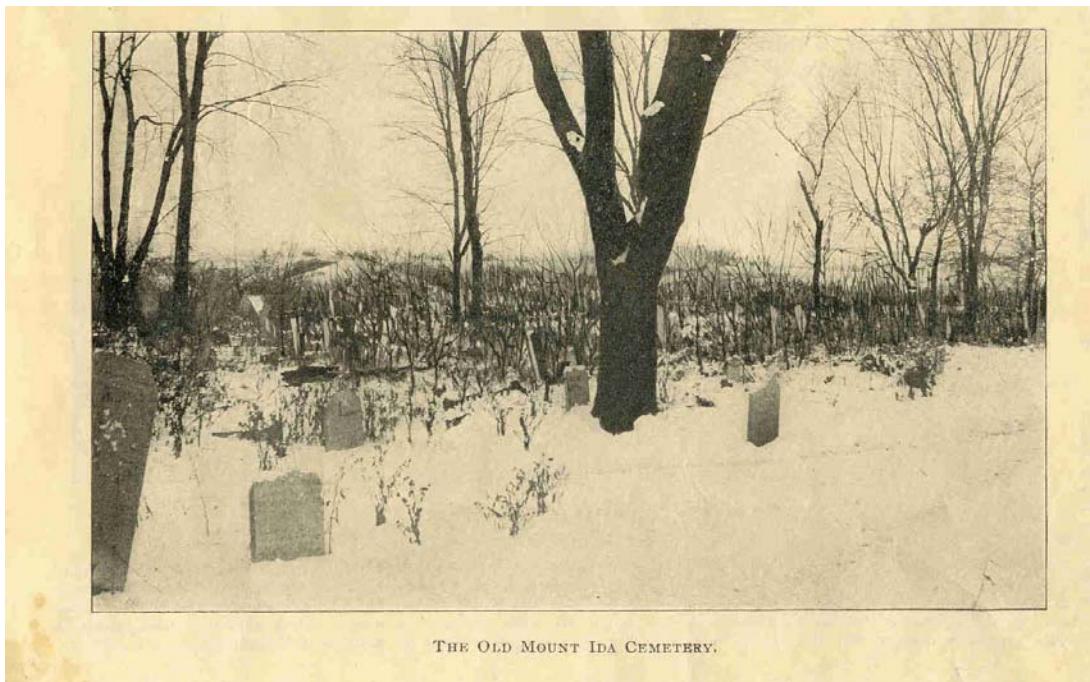


HENRY SCHNEIDER,  
FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION.

Accompanying these remarks on parks today are several half-tone pictures that will explain the location and the beauties of the partially completed park system of Troy.



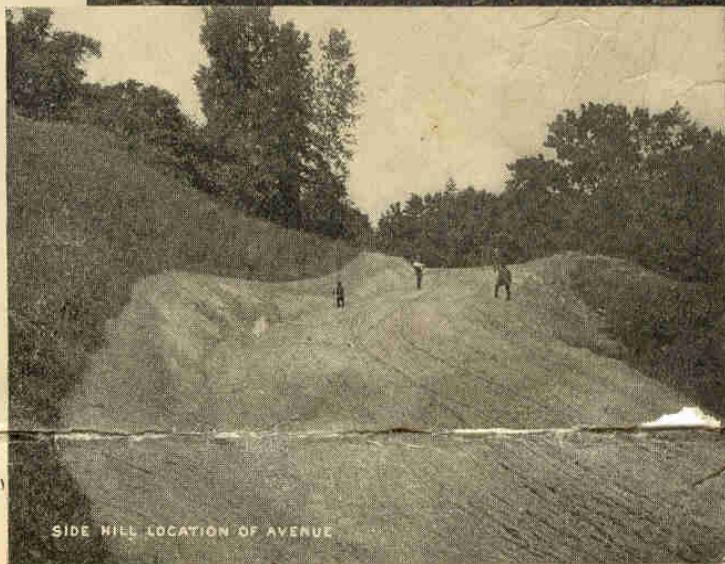
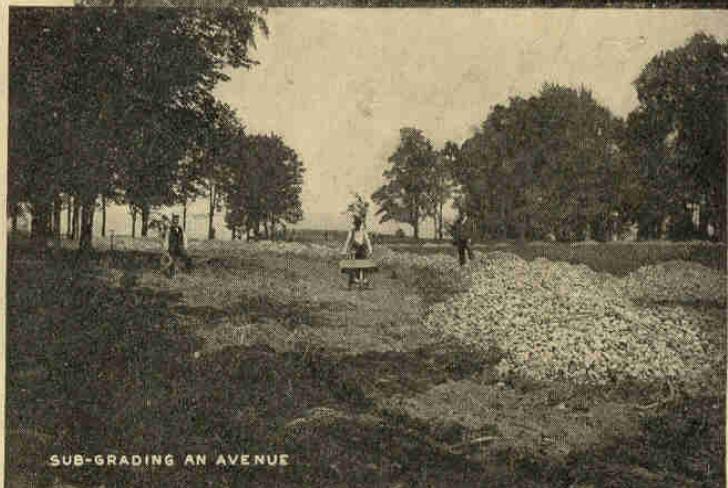
EXCAVATION FOR PROSPECT PARK LAKE.



THE OLD MOUNT IDA CEMETERY.



VIEW IN OLD MOUNT IDA CEMETERY.



PROSPECT PARK IMPROVEMENTS.



RUSTIC FENCE, PROSPECT PARK.



THE PLAYSTEAD, PROSPECT PARK.



THE FOUNTAIN WALK



REMODELING THE CASINO

SCENES IN PROSPECT PARK.

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Richard C. Herrick of Troy re-typed the article and scanned the pictures from  
an original copy of the newspaper.

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