THE MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUNDS
OF RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION

By
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Chapter I
Introduction

One of the universal characteristics of man is his desire to play, and the great majority of people like to play in groups. It is for this reason that playgrounds are so important when under efficient leadership. The playgrounds of Richmond fill an urgent need for wise guidance of the play instinct and of the use of time for which there is no definite program.

There are in Richmond a number of organizations realizing the importance of play under trained supervision. This study however deals mainly with the municipal playgrounds, their development and effectiveness in reaching the recognized need among the people of the city.

It is universally conceded that the prevention of crime and delinquency is better from every standpoint than the treatment of the resultant evil, and therefore increasing emphasis is being placed upon prevention by the use of leisure time. With children, particularly, a large part of leisure time is, or should be, playtime, organized and supervised.

The advancement made in the promotion of playgrounds with trained directors is gratifying and will doubtless be an incentive to a more extensive program of playground development.
The material for this study has been gathered chiefly from the annual reports of the Director of Public Works, as well as from the reports of the Community Recreation Association and information from the director of one of the playgrounds.

At present the need of play looms large in any program for the development of an all round life. Present day living conditions with labor saving devices and motor transportation leave so little necessity for physical exercise that many people must have a definite program of play in order to keep fit.

In industrial, professional and agricultural life along with the inventions for minimizing labor has come to each vocational field a more intensive specialization. Out of this has grown more leisure time, and the problem is to secure the right use of that time. It is hoped that eventually increased leisure will mean the higher development of each personality, and to this end recreational leaders are working.

Play is considered a recreative force to bring higher physical and cultural conditions. In an organized city playground program there are, besides games, folk dances, swimming and hikes, classes in shop work, basketry, weaving, sewing, building, mechanics, typing. These all help to relieve the monotony and tenseness of specialized urban life and lessen the pressure that comes from this machine age.
However much it may be deplored, home life today has changed. The home duties that once took much time no longer fill the day. The playground gives an opportunity to fill spare hours with organized play, to learn to make beautiful and useful things, to read wholesome and instructive books, to do helpful things, and even to find joy in sharing. Development in useful citizenship should come as a result.

Constructive recreation has as one of its greatest needs and problems the community service of meeting the competition of harmful amusement. The program must be varied enough to meet diverse needs and to stimulate the wholesome interest of the community.

An adequate recreational program would reduce the criminal population that the public now supports. It costs as much to care for one delinquent boy as for ten Boy Scouts. Crime and delinquency are often a direct result of the unwise use of leisure time. Society must recognize its responsibility for wholesome activities in leisure time.

What should young folks get from recreation? Some need emotional security; some need sympathy and understanding; some need work for their hands; some want companionship; some want to exercise leadership; some seek compensation in skill; and some want relief from the boredom of a home life not full enough to satisfy the growing mind and body.

The age during which most of our crime is first entered upon is between the ages of 16 and 20. Although 50% of the
population of our country is between 15 and 30 years of age. 73% of our criminals are in this group, according to Warden Laws of Sing Sing. Frederic M. Thrasher points out that crime and delinquency are one direct result of the unwise use of leisure time and that between the ages of 16 and 20 there is the greatest lack of recreational facilities. Various organizations and activities have been organized to meet these needs, such as the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. as well as the Boy and Girl Scouts. School playgrounds are often used after school hours; recreation halls and playgrounds have been opened, classes are conducted to interest people in such different things as sculpture and running a bookkeeping machine. Some of the urban police forces have formed baseball and basketball teams for playing with the young people instead of arresting them.

(1) Recreation, January 1934, "Leisure and Mental Hygiene"

George K. Pratt
Chapter 2
The Play Movement

Play is universal. This has always been true, but the type of play has varied with civilization, becoming more complex as civilization advances.

Primitive man expressed his personality through play, which was his outlet for love, hate, fear, courage, revenge, joy, sorrow. His emotions were expressed through pantomime, mimicry, dance and song. Emotions which he found difficult to express otherwise, or those inhibited by social custom, he could often find outlet for in play.

In his religion, primitive man played to please the gods he worshiped, to obtain their favor and to bring their spirits near for protection. Grotesque dances were performed to drive away the spirits of evil. Savage customs and practices of torture to spirit and body, not only of primitive man but of savage tribes of our own age, were and are still indulged in, either to appease the wrath of the gods or to repel the spirits of evil.

There was little organized play among the children of primitive man. Children's games consisted largely of imitation of adult everyday life. Boys became fighters as a result of imitating the real battles
in which the warriors engaged. Girls became homemakers by imitating the daily tasks of their mothers. Hunters learned to stage the chase of a catch, after the manner of their fathers.

Many of our customs are "carry-overs" from primitive days and activities. The custom of rice throwing, the bridal veil, drinking to one's health, and such things, were all at one time serious ceremonies. Gambling games come in part from old omens, superstitions and magic. It is thought that part of our present day games has a similar background. The old counting out "eeny-meeny-miny-mo" may have come from casting lots for a hostage or victim. Line games may be a modern adaption of the old ways of meeting rival groups, while circle games may indicate friendship. Blindman's Bluff may be a carry-over of ceremonies of sacrifice, and serpentine games of circling a sandtree which was worshiped. Tag and flight of various kinds may come from the desire to get to safety. Our present games without doubt express much of our past heritage.

Play was at first individual, and with purely involuntary expression. There was no conscious attempt to get all people to participate. As history has advanced, an ever increasing conception of the value of play has developed. Gradually there is coming to be a world wide recognition of organized play, to develop the individual mentally, materially and spiritually.
To-day it is found that play gives control over the body, affords mental relaxation, gives a wide range of expression and helps to adjust to practical situations in life.

"The first record of athletic contests is that given by Homer in his description of the funeral ceremonies that Achilles instituted in honor of his friend Patrochus." (1)

One of the first countries in which play activities became an integral part of the national life was Greece. Their play has become classic. It called for strength, skill and superb physical condition. It was the height of every young Greek's ambition to participate in the Olympic games, the famous national athletic event whose participants were the most perfect specimens of manhood of Greece. The first Olympic was dated 776 B.C. The young men prepared themselves for the Olympic games through years of training, and because of their sense of beauty of a perfect physical body, victory meant an honor above any other. It was not until fraud and material gratification of hopes and aspirations came into the Olympic games that they began to decline in greatness. In the words of Plato, "the mere athlete becomes too much a savage and the mere musician is mated and softened beyond what is good for him--the two therefore should (2) be blended in right proportions."

The conception of play as evidenced by the Athenians, was one of beauty. The Spartan however used physical education as a means of making warriors. The Romans followed the Spartan's idea and their games worked toward the end of making hardened, well disciplined soldiers, with rigorous training as their glory.

After the age of primitive man, play changed from the early stage of expression of individual emotions to the ceremonies and rites of a tribe. During the Middle Ages however play became recognized more universally than ever before, losing some of its localized aspects. This recognition was not one that wholly advanced play. One teacher of medieval times said that a young girl should weep and think about her sins a great deal, and never play. However it was during the time of chivalry that courtesy and respect for the opponent was first shown. Also during this time there were the famous tournaments and jousts.

After the medieval period people began again to pay greater attention to play, and to realize that it was an important part of life. Different regions developed the forms of play best suited to their climate and facilities. The Norse ancestors taught every child of noble birth to do eight things, to ride, swim, steer, skate, play chess, throw a javelin, compose verse, and play the harp.

Froebel, the great German educator, gave as the keynote of his system that the spiritual nature of the child
should be developed through play. In 1826 as a result of his stress of the educative side of play the kindergarten was first established. It was after this that the play movement really had its beginning in Germany. The first playgrounds in Berlin, as the first playgrounds in the United States, were sand piles in lots for children. Gradually however municipal authorities established playgrounds, as did also private enterprises.

"In Berlin every tenement house must provide an interior court with a playground." (1) This was a forward step in the alleviation of poverty, to provide play facilities for the multitude in the cities. The playground may not be the ideal play area, but its establishment showed that the need for play was recognized and that at least one measure had been taken to meet that need. By 1929 more playgrounds had been established, many in connection with schools. It was estimated that in Germany out of any population of 100,000 there were 12,000 to 15,000 children and each 100,000 children should have 30 to 40 acres of land for recreation facilities. An effort was made to follow these requirements in providing for playgrounds in Germany and their organizations are still working towards this goal.

Germany's interest in play activities is evidenced by the fact that she leads all other countries in the making of toys.

The play movement of England has not been as conscious and definite a development as that of Germany. The English have always had their various sports for the different times of the year. Perhaps one reason is that the English upper classes have had time to play, even after their school days were over.

In the eighteenth century the Puritans partly suppressed play, but it was soon revived. England has since then made strides toward organized play, and now has many playgrounds. Particularly are there many playgrounds in London, some in connection with the large stores. They are also provided for children in the suburbs, as well as in the congested heart of that great city.

France has been slow to develop organized play and her athletics have not been of a violent type. Rather than many playgrounds, she has developed beautiful parks like the Bois de Boulogne, the Bois de Vincennes, Versailles or Saint Germain. The contact with the British and the Americans in the World War gave France an impetus which has resulted in her beginning to emphasize the value of play. Partly as a result, in 1822 the Olympic games for women were held in Paris.
One of the pioneers in organized play was Sweden. Her Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics is the oldest of its kind in existence. Gymnastics was emphasized more in Sweden than other forms of play, and has influenced the British and the United States navies to a great extent. This is not the same type of play that we see in some countries, for the main emphasis is on drills and exercise rather than on games and dances.

Denmark is known for enlightenment and progressiveness and has an excellent school system, through which play has been developed.

"Belgium is outstanding among the smaller countries (1) of Europe as regards official provision for leisure." There are many playgrounds in the country districts as well as in the cities. The Red Cross helped to start the interest in playgrounds in Belgium, and did more perhaps than any organization in establishing them. How to start the playground was a problem for the Red Cross, but the year 1921 saw progress. The first playground was opened in Charleroi, in October 1921, at the Parc de la Garemo. By April 1922 organized play had been installed in 25 schools. The interest in the playgrounds has been sustained and unusual progress made.

Austria is like Germany in many ways, one of which is her play.

(1) "Leisure and the Use", Herbert L. May and Dorothy Petgere
P. 213
"She has a certain picturesque and graceful quality, a kind of charm which is often lacking in Germany." In Austria nothing lacks some touch of the aesthetic. In Vienna there is an Athletic Association which has class work, and the building which is its headquarters has gymnasium rooms, apparatus, and practice rooms for special sports and similar things. At the present time in Vienna there are huge playgrounds made as beautiful as possible, where children may play all day and where the public of the city gather at night. There are lighting effects and the grounds are made lovely. They have play apparatus for people of all ages, which is constantly used. At night the public gathers to hear music, to dance, to see motion pictures, and for other amusements. Classes are conducted on the playgrounds. All of this is municipally carried out, municipally supervised and municipally financed.

In Italy there is a movement called Dolpolavore which means "Leisure Movement". Its fate is bound up with fascism and its activities include: "Popular Teaching, Propaganda for Hygiene and Welfare, Agricultural and Forestry Propaganda, Artistic Pastime, Cinematography and Radio, Telephone, Physical Training, Economical Excursions, Dwellings, Kitchen Gardens and Flower Gardens."

(1)"Leisure and Its Use", Herbert L. May and Dorothy Petgore, p. 215.
Economical Restaurants and Provision Stores, and (1) Afterwork Industries."

The Orient has started playgrounds and is training workers. Most of the credit for this is due to the Y. M. C. A.

The play movement has spread even to Siberia, and in Irkutsk, a city of 150,000, there are two playgrounds. The movement is becoming more world wide as time goes on. In South America the Y. M. C. A. has done much to establish playgrounds.

To sum up, to-day, play is a part of life which cannot be neglected. We are beginning to consider it a duty to see that opportunities and facilities for play are provided, as well as for work. First, play was used in religious ceremonies, later it came to express race characteristics, with the Athenians, their aesthetic nature—with the Romans militarism. In the Middle Ages it was considered a sign of emancipation, and to-day it is becoming a world movement for the adequate development of personality.

(1) "Leisure and Its Use", W. L. May and Dorothy Petgore, p. 35
Chapter 3

The Playground Movement in the United States

The children of the Indians were better trained to meet and cope with life than are many of our present day children. One reason was that their play life was so directed that in play they learned life and its complications. "Childhood and Youth, these are the times for action; all the habits and reflexes which are to govern in later life must be formed during adolescence." (1)

The earliest playgrounds in the United States were opened under private auspices or under charitable or philanthropic societies. In 1872 the municipal playground movement began. It was then that the first funds to buy land for a playground were voted by a municipal authority, Brookline, Massachusetts, being the first to take this step. From then on the movement grew.

As a result of complex city life, municipal authority was forced to do something to meet the problem arising from child protection laws which gave the children more leisure in addition to their long summer vacation. For their own safety children had to be kept off the street. For their physical development and good health something had to be done. It was necessary to formulate plans to provide for their play instincts and desires. The recreation movement

(1) "Playground Technique and Playcraft", Edited by Arthur Leland B. P. E., and Lorna H. Leland, B. L. P.
came largely as a result of the effort to meet problems arising from juvenile delinquency, ill health, street accidents and the increase in leisure time.

Dr. Marie Zakrowska of Boston on her return from Berlin told of the provisions for children's play in that city. As a result the women of Boston in 1886 provided sand for three piles in the yard of the Children's Mission on Parmenter Street. This is now considered the first playground in the United States.

In 1887 the legislatures of both New York and Pennsylvania acted on bills concerning playgrounds. The first summer playground in Chicago was started in the summer of 1892; while two years later came the playground at one of the most famous of all social centers, Hull House. The South Park Playground of Chicago did such good work that President Theodore Roosevelt said that "it was the most notable civic achievement of any American city". (1) In 1896 another important development was made when Northwestern University opened a large and well equipped playground which could accommodate from 3,000 to 4,000 children. The first public funds in Chicago of $1000 plus $750 subscribed by individuals, were given for playgrounds in 1896, and six playgrounds were made possible by the Board of Education, and maintained, equipped and supervised under the direction of the Vacation School Committee of the Women's Clubs of Chicago. (1) "The Theory of Organized Play", W. P. Beven and E. D. Mitchell, p. 27.
In 1898 the John Dicksen Playground in Philadelphia opened with many new ideas incorporated in it, but for some reason it failed, which held back playground development for several years.

It was not until 1898 that New York opened its first municipal playground, and St. Paul took similiar action in 1904.

In 1902 it was reported that out of 439 cities with a population of more than 10,000 only 78 had playgrounds for children.

Playgrounds in 1904

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<td>Southern States</td>
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In Chicago, between 1904 and 1906, "juvenile delinquency increased by 12 per cent for the city as a whole, while in sections near the recreation centers it fell 17 per cent or a gain of 29 per cent for neighborhoods near the small parks. In the same length of time the stock yard districts increased in delinquency 44 per cent with reference to the city as a whole."

(1) "The American City in Democracy", Delee F. Wilcox, p. 308
The recreational facilities of Chicago have, since then, improved to a marked extent. Neighborhood parks are a reality, with civic centers where persons of all ages may find recreation. Ball games, golf courses, tennis, bathing beaches, swimming pools, bath houses and sand piles, lakes, reading rooms, most frequently in connection with branches of the Public Library, halls for public meetings, debates, and neighborhood theatricals, restaurants and lunch rooms and even savings bands are to be found in these parks.

A Massachusetts act of great significance in recent years was one that provided all cities over 10,000 should vote as to whether they would support playgrounds. Similar acts were passed by different states, New York in 1907, Ohio in 1910, Minnesota in 1910; and since then 20 other states have passed acts providing for playgrounds if the local areas desire them.

The playground and Recreation Association of America was organized in Washington, D. C. in 1906. The leaders in this movement were Theodore Roosevelt, Luther Halsey Gulick, Henry S. Curtis and others. The purpose of the organization was "That every child in America shall have an opportunity to find the best and most satisfying use of leisure time." (1)

At the time of the formation of the Playground and Recreation Association of America there were 41 cities with organized playgrounds. Twenty years later there were 780 cities with 10,123 playgrounds and 2,905 leaders for the year round.

(1) "The Child and Play", based on the Reports of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection, p. 46
In 1927 there was spent in the United States for public recreation $32,191,783. The establishment of the Community Recreation Association was an important step in the history of the American Playground movement. People were beginning to realize that play, properly directed, is one of the essential activities of man.

Cities with Playgrounds

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In 1913 the Playground and Recreation Association of America received reports from 342 cities with 2,400 playgrounds under paid supervision and over 6,000 persons, exclusive of caretakers who were making the direction of playgrounds their profession. There was an expenditure of $5,700,000, a gain of $1,500,000 over the preceding year. In the 10 years before 1923 something like $40,000 was spent in all. Supervision of playgrounds has gained in importance, and many cities have bureaus, or recreation commissions with secretaries who give their entire time to the work, while trained directors or supervisors are often employed with schools. Their importance and value being recognized more and more.

There are certain requirements that should be met by playgrounds if they are to function as intended. Some of these are: (1) activities and team games commonly included in and recognized as essential to physical education, (2) space and facilities required for activities, (3) other play interests and activities such as manual training,
music, dramatics, nature study and hand craft, (4) free play activities as group games, swimming, and wading, (5) play ground beautification, (6) space for free circulation paths and safety zones.

It will be remembered that in the beginning of the movement one of the motivating factors was the desire to do something about the delinquency problem. Therefore it is significant that Clark W. Hetherington reported to the National Education Association as early as 1910 that of 480 inmates of the juvenile reformatory, 75% to 80% might have had no institutional career if they had had normal play opportunities.

The importance of playgrounds was realized to a greater extent as the movement progressed and cities and states began taking action with regard to it. The National Women's Vocade Trade Union League, The National Federation of Labor, the Associated Charities, and other organized groups urged and fostered playgrounds. The Illinois legislature passed an act in 1921 putting the playgrounds which were on school property under the board of Education rather than under municipal control. Between 1921 and 1923 the New York legislature granted to cities and counties the power to maintain playgrounds. A West Virginia bill in 1925 authorized a system of public recreation and playgrounds. In Florida a similar law was passed, and in Alabama in 1923.

The report of the Playground and Recreation Association of America for 1926 stated that there were 790 cities owning playgrounds with a total expenditure of $19,302,123. There were also 17,090 trained workers
and 732 new playgrounds opened in that year. The report stated that "more than 500 cities containing populations of 5,000 or over now possessed playgrounds of which about 30% were maintained by voluntary contributions, 20% by boards of education and the remainder in some other way by the municipalities." (1)

The White House Conference of Child Health and Protection was called by President Hoover in November 1930. At this conference the Childrens Charter was drawn up. Its findings were far reaching but necessarily more general than specific. Mainly they were as follows:

(1) For every child spiritual and moral training to help him to stand firm under the pressure of life.
(2) For every child understanding and the guarding of personality as his most precious right.
(3) For every child from birth through adolescence, promotion of health, including health instruction and health program, wholesome physical and mental recreation, with teachers and leaders adequately trained.
(4) For every child a community which recognizes and plans for his needs, protects him from physical dangers, moral hazards and disease, provides him with safe and wholesome places for play and recreation, and makes provision for his cultural and social needs.
(5) For every child an education which through the discovery and development of his individual abilities, prepares him for life.
(6) For every rural child a satisfactory schooling and health services as for the city child, and an extension to rural families of social, recreational and cultural facilities.

(1) The Encyclopedia Americana, Americana Corporation.
(7) For every child protection against labor that stunts growth either physical or mental, that limits education, that deprives children of the right of comradeship of play and joy. (8) To supplement the home and school in the training of youth and to return to them those interest of which modern life tends to cheat children. Every stimulation and encouragement should be given to the extension and development of the voluntary youth organization."

In 1932 Chicago had no less than 80 playgrounds. New York by that time had a Recreation Commission whose duty it was to study the recreational facilities of the city and to improve them to meet the needs.

New Orleans requires her schools to have sufficient playground space and has bought land around old schools, when possible, for this purpose.

Cincinnati is also buying land around her schools.

Washington state has a law requiring all new school grounds to have a minimum of 100 square feet per child for play space.

(1) "The Child and Play, Based on the Report of the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection", p.4
Chapter 4
Development of Playgrounds in Richmond
1909 to 1934

The realization of the need of public playgrounds in the city of Richmond grew slowly in the consciousness of the people before 1909, when the first municipal playground was started. Prior to that time the few that were equipped and in operation were privately owned by organizations of either religious or benevolent character. The appropriation of $7,300,000 by the city in 1919 made possible the establishment of a municipal playground at Marshall, one at Belmont and one at Fairmont.

To each playground was allocated $100 for equipment and the responsibility for conducting them was delegated to the schools. For the sum of $200.00 land was leased between Williamsburg Avenue and Gillis Creek in 1909. This was developed into the Williamsburg Avenue Playground where two people, a man and a woman, were placed as directors. Their monthly salaries were only $50 and $30 respectively and the ground was kept open from June 1st to October 15th. A playground was also started at Clarke's Springs.

In view of the limited funds, space and supervision for the various centers, it was not possible to carry on the same activities in every playground. Williamsburg Avenue Playground was fortunate in having a baseball diamond, sand piles, swings, horizontal bars, see-saws and two sheds for rainy days. It also owned baseball outfits so that the problem of expense to individuals was solved. At Clarke's Springs there was an excellent base-
ball diamond, but little else. At Byrd Park men as well as boys used both ball field and baseball diamond.

The need for a playground in Madison Ward resulted in an appropriation of $3,100, which after all was not used for that purpose, as the only suitable available place necessitated so much grading that it was not considered practical. All of the appropriation not used was turned back into the treasury.

In 1909 also at a colored church on Moore Street, there was established a playground with a man and a woman in charge. $200 was paid for the lease and the salaries of the caretakers were $40 and $20 respectively. Even though the church itself was badly in need of repair, money was raised not only for repairs but also for much equipment for the playground.

Even after municipal playground work was begun the uncertainty of appropriations made the development of the projects difficult. With pioneer spirit, however, the workers continued to "carry-on", facing uncertainty but confident of ultimate achievement. However, an appropriation was made each year, until in 1917 there were in Richmond three playgrounds for young children, five for young people as well as children, an athletic field and a swimming pool. The athletic field at Byrd Park was open all the year and the others from June 15th to September 15th. There were tennis courts and volley ball courts and play apparatus of various kinds. In the evening folk dancing and simple entertainments conducted by directors provided recreation for all ages. The directors were trained recreational leaders, and were
paid from $20 to $80 per month according to the time spent on the playground.

The playgrounds were open in the morning from 9 o'clock to 12 noon and in the afternoon from 4 to 7. While this was true of the white playgrounds, the need for greater facilities for colored children was realized, but was not met, for several years.

In 1920 $23,285 was appropriated for recreation, primarily for playgrounds. In Byrd Park the swimming pool at Shields Lake was improved and life savers with boats were employed. Then the city began to turn its attention to the condition at Clarke's Springs, a property owned by the city and well located to serve a large number of people. It was much needed and of value as a playground in the southwest section where the city was building up so rapidly that an attendance of 100,000 children made it necessary to make great improvements.

In 1920 there was located in South Richmond only one playground, which was at Ferry and 13th Streets on land rented by the city, the only available playground space in that section except for areas around schools. A piece of property owned by Mr. Fred Gather was leased free of rent to the city for playground activities. Owing to the rapid growth of that section however a new school was built and a playground in connection with it took the place of this one, which had been known as the Fulton Playground.

One of the best things done during the year 1920 for the play activities of the city was a playground built on the site of the old Seabrook warehouse, in the midst of a densely populated section. The Seabrook playground
is at 18th and Grace Streets.

The only colored playground at that time was at Baker School, though there was great need for more, especially near Moore School, because of the dense population and its need for recreational facilities. The playground at Church Hill between Rogers and Twentieth streets had been established in 1916, when it was bought and equipped.

Mr. Calder, the superintendent of playgrounds, said at the end of 1920; "the department and behavior in all the playgrounds had been excellent. I wish to recommend to you the directors and employees of the playgrounds for their efficiency and faithful service."

The year 1921 saw many tournaments on the several playgrounds of the city. Match games in the various ball grounds were held in addition to a track meet at both Fulton and Chimborazo, as well as an exhibit of the handwork done at Clark's Springs. All of these events and play festivals served to create more interest than ever before.

This same year for the first time, one of the schools was used as a night center. The basement of Fairmont was converted into a recreational center for the children and working girls of that section. This was a step forward, as a recognition of the recreation need of working girls, as well as children.

Byrd Park took care of the West End district schools and practically all the preparatory schools of the city, providing for four of the leagues of the Amateur

(1) Annual Report, Director of Public Works, Richmond, Va., P.15
Association of Baseball. By this time the suggestion of years before had been taken and Clarke’s Spring Playground was the “largest model playground in the city and furnished amusement and recreation to a very large territory.”

The South Richmond playground during 1921 paid taxes to meet its rent and was considered to be in the best location to serve that part of the city, Perry and 13th Streets. In that year the Fulton Playground was moved to land owned by the C. and O. Railroad. Seabrook playground was in a strategic location, it being said that it was the most wonderful and lasting improvement for the children and people of that neighborhood that had ever been seen.

The summer session of the playgrounds for 1922 opened June 1st with a varied program of supervised plays, sport, story-telling, folk dancing and industrial work, on five model playgrounds, two school yards and one park. Two playgrounds, Elba School and Highland Park, were for small children, and nearly all the playgrounds had new equipment. During July and August there were band concerts every Sunday afternoon. This meant a great deal to many people, for large crowds attended.

The playground activities for 1923 were about the same for 1922, keeping up the supervised play, the athletic fields, night recreation, and also having the Play Festival at Byrd Park in September.

One thing accomplished in 1924 was the addition of
four new playgrounds for the colored population of
the city. This was one of the most needed steps to be
taken. These playgrounds were established at South
Richmond, Fulton, Sidney, Valley School.

The feeling had been growing for several years that
there should be more playground area. In hot weather the
children were allowed to wade in the fountains, and they
had sports of all kinds, volley ball, baseball, basket-
ball, tennis, hand craft, storytelling, folk dancing and
etc. The children exhibited what they had made in hand
craft and had a final display of them.

During the three winter months of 1924 there were
seven centers, five white and two colored.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Colored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John B. Cary School Center</td>
<td>Baker School Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highland Park School Center</td>
<td>Moore School Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairmont Park School Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. E. B. Stuart School Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert E. Lee School Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The girls' centers had folk dancing and dramatics
and indoor sports and games, while the boys had dodge
ball, basket ball, corner ball, etc.

The next year, 1925, there were fifteen playgrounds,
two athletic fields, two baseball diamonds and seventeen
tennis courts. The season was opened with a medal
airplane contest at Byrd Park, and during the summer
there were dell shows, bubble contests, pet shows, tennis
tournaments, track meets and patriotic celebrations. The
playgrounds were opened for three months that summer.
except South Side and Clarke's Springs which were fortunate enough to be used for four months. The annual play festival at the close of the season was a pageant including 500 children, and called "A Day in Nottingham". Later a Hallowe'en celebration was sponsored on Bread and Jefferson Streets and ribbons awarded for the best costumes.

The city appropriated $200 to maintain Buchanan School Playground and funds for four new playgrounds and another special appropriation for two new Winter centers, Robert Fulton School and Fountaine Maury School. The winter centers were open for three nights a week for three months, featured by supervised indoor games and dramatics.

The summer playgrounds of 1926 were in operation from June 15th to September 15th and closed with an Indian pageant at Byrd Park. The white playgrounds of this year were:

Brockland Boulevard
William Fox
John B. Cary
Clarke Springs
Oak Grove
Seabrook
Chimborazo
South Richmond
Madison
Hilltop
The colored playgrounds were:
Viaduct
Hovey Playground
Southside
Baker School Yard
Buchanan School Yard

The activities in 1926 included various tennis and inter-playground tournaments, both Junior and Senior. The Clarke's Springs boys won the Municipal Playground Tennis Championship. There was also an inter-playground Volley-ball League which played two nights each week. The Seabrook Playground boys won this.

At the end of the season an exhibit of the handwork of all the children was on display in various stores of the city. Dramatics was taught and the final production, the Indian Pageant, was a fitting tribute to the efforts of the dramatic teacher. International Pictures made a reel of it, in which there were 400 children and 5,000 spectators.

When it came time to open the Winter Centers in 1926 the two boys centers were moved, being at the Richmond Normal and Northside Junior High School. The other winter centers were:
R. B. Lee, for boys
John B. Cary, for boys and girls
Highland Park, for boys and girls
Robert Fulton, for boys and girls
Helen Dickinson, for girls
Stuart, for girls
Maury, for girls
The Hallowe'en festival was held again in Broad and Jefferson Streets. There were also other festivals such as Pet Shows, Bubble Contests, a Flower Parade and a Croquet Tournament. That year there was an institute in Richmond that all workers attended, an Institute of Games and Folk Dances, conducted by John Martin of the Recreation Association of America.

There were 15 playgrounds in operation in 1926, 10 white and 5 colored.

**White**
- Brookland Boulevard
- John B. Cary School Yard
- Seabrook Playground
- South Richmond Playground
- Madison

**White**
- Oak Grove
- Clarke Springs
- Hilltop Fulton Hill
- William Fox School Yard
- Chimborazo

**Colored**
- The Viaduct
- Mossey Field

**Southside**
- Buchanan School Yard
- Baker School Yard

Winter play centers in 1927—

- John B. Cary School—Girls and Boys
- Robert Fulton School—Girls and Boys
- Highland Park School—Girls and Boys
- Helen Dickinson School—Girls and Boys
- Northside Jr. High School, Girls and Boys
- City Normal School—Girls and Boys
- Matthew Maury School—Girls and Boys
- J. B. Stuart School—Girls and Boys
Total attendance for all centers was 25,000.

Festivals of the Year

Armistice Day Celebrations
Thanksgiving Plays
Christmas Carol Singing
Pet Shows
Bubble Parties
Charleston Contests
Croquet Tournaments

Flower Shows and Parades
Doll Shows
Bathing Beauty Contest
Airplane Contest
Candy Pulls
Tacky Parties
Jack Rock Contests

The City Council made a special appropriation of $8,000 for Carter Jones Park and Athletic Field. The old bathing plant was wired for electricity and was used as a Boy’s Club of South Richmond in 1927.

The money appropriated for Madison, Buchanan and John Cary Playgrounds was used for improving both the grounds and equipment of Buchanan and John Cary.

The objectives of 1927 were: more playgrounds, supervised all the year, with the usual three months of summer playground, after school playgrounds in the spring and fall, and three months of winter play centers, and wading pools on all playgrounds.

The same white and colored grounds were operated as in 1927. The white attendance that year was 26,409 and the colored 81,741.

The three after school playgrounds of 1928 were:

Brookland Park Boulevard Playground
William Fox Playground
J. E. B. Stuart Playground
In 1929 two new playgrounds were added, Luck's Field and George Mason School Yard. Luck's Field was to have supervised play and the apparatus consisted of one six swing set, one giant stride, one four board see-saw set, a slide, a sand box and shed. At the George Mason School Yard for the colored children the apparatus consisted of a six swing set, a giant stride, four board see-saw set, a slide, etc. The total attendance for the three school months was 549,556.

The after school playgrounds were very popular and by a special appropriation of $5,000, it was possible to operate 13 after school playgrounds for 2 1/2 months. All regular playgrounds were operated as after school playgrounds, and in addition one was operated on Stuart School Yard. The total attendance for the after school playgrounds was 25,802.

Winter Playground Centers in 1929

John B. Cary School Basement--Boys and Girls
Robert Fulton School Basement--Boys and Girls
Helen Dickinson School Basement--Girls
City Normal School Gymnasium---- Boys
Northside Jr. School Gymnasium----Boys
Matthew Fountain Maury School--Girls

Festivals for 1929

Pageants
Bubble Parties
Kite Contest

Pet Shows
Dell Shows
Flower Parades
Croquet Tournament  Tacky Parties
Thanksgiving Day Plays  Tennis Tournaments
Stories Dramatized  Horse Shoe Contest
Armistice Day Celebrations

Each playground had a pageant and display of handwork. The pennant for the inter-playground tennis tournament went to the Brookland Boulevard Playground. The one for the Senior Volley Ball League to Perry Street Playground.

The objectives as stated at the end of that year were: more playgrounds, all year round recreation under supervision, wading pools in every playground, and a swimming pool in each district.

In 1930 all the playgrounds, 11 white and 6 colored, operated for 7 1/2 months. There were also 7 play centers and school buildings which were open for two hours, three nights a week. This was for the 2 1/2 months from November 1, 1930 to January 15th 1931. As for improvements and increased operations it was recorded that the "city authorized a lease with the R., F., and P. railroad whereby the city took possession of a plot of ground bounded by Thompson Street, the Belt Line, Stuart and Hanover Avenues, which ground is to be used as a playground." (1) With an appropriation, it was fenced and graded for the 1931 season.

This playground was called the Humphrey Calder Playground. It was much needed in the western section of the city.

(1) Annual Report, Director of Public Works, Richmond, Va.
Another change made, well worth the time and money, was the transferrance of the Hevey Field Playground to Moore School. The former place was larger but too far from the section needing it, and so did not have as good an attendance as it should. The new site is in a densely populated section of the City and has a large, and increased attendance.

There were in the year 1930 several new facilities. Two new white playgrounds were added that year, Humphrey Calder and Carter Jones. Humphrey Calder was named for the former Chief of Parks. The Carter Jones Playground is considered one of the best in the City, because of the fine shade trees.

In 1931, for the first time an inter-playground tournament was conducted on both white and colored playgrounds. All playgrounds and athletic events were entered in the tournament and much interest was shown by the playground youngsters. It was valuable training in sportsmanship. The children also gave a series of radio programs which were both good for them and also good advertising. The playgrounds had plays, and pageants with sometimes an attendance of from 500 to 1,000. There was horse shoe pitching, tennis, volley ball, basketball, croquet, hop scotch, jack rakes, other games, picnics, basketball, croquet, and hikes.

During 1932, though there was a cut in the appropriation, three new after school playgrounds were
conducted. At the same time the cut in appropriations made it necessary to cut the time on all the playgrounds from 7 1/2 months to 4 1/2 months. Old and damaged equipment was replaced or repaired. Men working under the Public Welfare Administration under the direction of the Keeper of Monroe Park, improved the grounds, buildings, and equipment. "Later in the year the Council appropriated $600.00 for the purpose of opening 4 play centers in school buildings, one in each ward. These were conducted from December first to February first, 1933. They were well attended and did much towards constructive use of leisure time and preventing delinquence." (1)

In 1933 the C. W. A. Funds did a great deal for recreation in Richmond. They provided facilities that could not possibly have been secured otherwise. The Annual Report of the Director of Public Works describes this work. "On December 15th fifteen recreation centers were opened in public school buildings with Federal relief funds, known as C. W. A. Project C-53. On the payroll were 100 recreational leaders, and it was the first time that such a program was ever undertaken in Richmond. Heretofore all city playgrounds and night centers in the schools were opened only for children. Under the Federal project we are catering to all over 15 years of age, and have been especially interested in adults. The first month was spent in organization, registration, publicity, (1) Annual Report, Director of Public Works, Richmond, Va. p.123.
etc., and since that time the centers have been running very smoothly and are being largely attended. Classes are being conducted in various educational and recreational activities, such as dramatics, sewing, modeling, dietion, games and dancing. In addition, another Federal project was secured known as "The Music Project", which enabled us to have free musical concerts at these centers, as well as at other public places, and on Sunday afternoons we have been having band and symphony concerts at The Mosque, all at this free to the public. Dances have been offered at each of the centers one night a week.

On the large school yard at Randolph School a new colored playground was opened and proved very successful. In 1931 additional land for the 14th and Stockton Streets colored playground was acquired. The City also bought land to enlarge Pewhatam Hill Playground.

These centers are furnishing much pleasure and education to the public and are being largely attended.

The School Board furnished the light and heat and this Bureau is paying the regular school custodians for their overtime services, since they are not eligible for the Federal payroll.

With C. W. A. Funds important improvements were started on Shields Lake and Pewhatam Hill Playground." (1)

(1) Annual Report, 1933, Director of Public Works, Richmond, Virginia, 19 p. 125
The playgrounds are of various sizes because of local conditions. Small tracts of land only were available in some sections of the City, in others, there was no need for a large playground, and sometimes the city had more money to pay for more space. As far as possible lots in connection with schools were used and when there was no land adjacent, nearby space was purchased if practical.

In establishing the playgrounds an effort was made to have them in sections of the City in which they were most needed. They are not all grouped around one place but fairly well distributed so that the largest number of children and adults have access to them. Even now there are not as many as the Bureau of Parks would like.

The playgrounds are at present well equipped, having sand piles, swings, horizontal bars, see-saws, slides, croquet, places where they can have quiet games, and those large enough, baseball diamonds, and handcraft. Some have a volley ball field and swimming pool, while one has a wading pool for the small children. New equipment is added each year and the old repaired or replaced. The activities of the play grounds are very varied. There are different kinds of apparatus for the children and young people and the leaders teach quiet games.

There is frequently a story-telling hour which has proved popular, as well as folk dancing, the group getting together for singing, for picnics and hikes. The City owns five athletic fields where there is opportunity for baseball, soccer, football, hockey, tennis, etc. The
City also owns Shield's Lake which hundreds use each summer.

All the playgrounds in operation at the time of this writing in 1934 had been established by 1931. They are:

**White**
- Brookland Boulevard
- Luck's Field
- William Fox
- Madison
- Powhatan Hill
- Oak Grove
- Chimborazo
- Seabrook
- Perry Street
- Humphrey Calder
- Clarke's Springs
- Carter Jones

**Colored**
- Southside
- Fulton
- Baker School
- Moore School
- George Madison School
- Buchanan School
- Randolph School
Chapter 5

The Community Recreation Association of Richmond

The Community Recreation Association of Richmond, Virginia has since its formation worked cooperatively with the Municipal Bureau of Parks and Recreation. The Bureau of Parks and Recreation of the Department of Public Works is supported by tax funds while the Community Recreation Association is a private agency and supported by the Richmond Community Fund. This association supplements the work of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

The Community Recreation Association is a planning, organizing and promoting organization and in its' effort to develop and broaden a recreational system for Richmond sponsors city-wide recreational projects. These projects are designed to meet the neighborhood needs that have presented themselves after community studies. These demonstrations are undertaken with an understanding that if they prove to be of value to the community they will be incorporated in the permanent plan of the Municipal Department of Recreation or under some permanent plan.

The Community Recreation Association was begun in April 1922. The policies of the association are governed by a board of directors. The purpose of the organization is stated by its records—"The purpose for which said
organization is formed is to develop and encourage recreation of all kinds, both indoor and outdoor, among children and adults of the city of Richmond; to operate community clubs, playhouses, playgrounds, swimming pools, to produce dramatic entertainments, and to aid and assist individuals and organizations in the promotion of the physical mental or moral betterment of citizens of Richmond and vicinity."

An outline of the most important work of the Community Recreation Association will be reviewed:

In an effort to demonstrate and promote playground activities on a city wide basis it was necessary to recruit and train volunteer leaders. A Play Institute was conducted by the Community Recreation Association in 1924 and 125 volunteers attended the Institute.

This training institute created a demand for playground leaders. Requests were received from J. E. B. Stuart, Fulton, Highland Park, Bainbridge and George Thorpe schools. Volunteer leaders from the institute were supplied to each of the schools and their work directed by the Community Recreation Association.

In an effort to make the community conscious of the need for playground activities the Community Recreation Association opened playgrounds at Fulton, Bainbridge Jr. High, and Highland Park Schools one day a week for after-school play, using students from the School of Social Work and Volunteer leaders from the churches.

In July 1924 several new playgrounds were opened under the direction of the Community Recreation Association.
It was at this time that the churches became more interested in developing recreational facilities in and around their neighborhoods. Emanuel Episcopal Church raised funds for leadership and equipment on the grounds of the church, which became known as Brook Hill Playground. Grace Covenant Church sponsored a playground in the West End by appropriating funds and securing volunteers from their church groups. These two grounds were under the general supervision of the Community Recreation Association.

During the following summer the volunteers continued their training at the Work Shop of the association at 1110 Capitol Street. At that time the association became interested in developing vacant lots as playgrounds throughout the city.

In the fall of 1925 the Superintendent of City Playgrounds had to close activities for after-school play because of the lack of funds. The officers of the Community Recreation Association assisted this department in raising funds by securing as additional appropriation from the City Council for the continuation of their work until December.

In order to coordinate all past efforts for the promotion of a permanent city-wide playground system a Play Day was held at Byrd Park which included activities of all city playgrounds, all agencies working in the field of recreation, civic and social clubs, Parent-Teacher Association, church groups, Retail Merchants, and
industrial organizations. Activities and contests between all of these groups brought out thousands of people who participated in the feature of the day.

This effort was largely responsible for the City Recreation Department taking over all playground work of the city which was being conducted by the Community Recreation Association—leaving this organization free to demonstrate other recreational activities.

Five Neighborhood Councils were organized in the city by the Community Recreation Association to study the relationship of the misuse of spare time to delinquency and to promote recreational activities in their neighborhoods. These councils secured additional appropriations from the City Council for the continuation of playground activities; secured school buildings for community center activities; and coordinated the leadership in the community such as civic and social clubs, P. T. A., and church groups to meet the recreational needs of children, youths, and adults of their communities.

Neighborhood Councils were also instrumental in securing a Crime Prevention Officer from the Department of Public Safety to handle semi-delinquents without the official aid of the court. This officer, with a thorough understanding of the leadership and recreational facilities available in the city, used these and other social agencies in the adjustment of his clients.
One of the greatest problems of the Crime Prevention Officer was the adjustment of gangs of older boys. Lack of employment and economic stress made it impossible for these boys to find wholesome activities for their idle time.

In order to meet this situation Neighborhood Councils assisted the Community Recreation Association in securing vacant lots for these young boys to use as athletic fields. The association again recruited volunteers who were capable of handling such groups. Twenty-eight volunteers responded from the East End, twenty-seven from the Northside and eighteen from South Richmond. The location of these vacant lots were as follows:

Northside - Overbrook Road
Fulton Hill - Methodist Church grounds
East End - Springfield School grounds
Fulton Hill - St. Paul's Methodist Church grounds
Fulton Hill - Home for Insurables
West End - Kindergarten Methodist Church grounds
South Richmond - 2 vacant lots—4000 Forest Hill Avenue

Besides the work of promoting playgrounds, athletic fields, and swimming pools in Richmond, the Community Recreation Association has also had a large part in the organization and promotion of the following: Adventure Days; Academy of Arts; Tournament of Arts; Beaux Arts Ball; George Washington Bicentennial Celebration;
Richmond Theatre Guild; Annual City-Wide Christmas Celebration; Neighborhood Halloween Celebrations; Annual Easter Egg Hunt; Special Radio Programs; and the Old English Fair.

Appropriations from the Richmond Community Fund to the Community Recreation Association for past years:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Appropriation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>$7,964.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>7,704.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7,200.00</td>
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<td>1932</td>
<td>7,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>6,480.00</td>
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Actual and estimated expenditure for the playgrounds of the City and Shields Lake, Richmond Virginia from tax funds:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Actual</th>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
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<td>3,500.00</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>7,000.00</td>
<td>6,500.00</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>7,000.00</td>
<td>6,500.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18,000.00</td>
<td>15,000.00</td>
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</tbody>
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Excluding fixed charges of $4,960.00 per year.
Chapter 9

Operation of Richmond Playgrounds,
Shown by Graphs and Tables

The value of the playgrounds of the city of Richmond depends on the number of people reached, the hours and seasons they are opened, and similar points which are statistical in nature. These are most usefully shown by tables and graphs.

This chapter records such information. It gives the location of the playgrounds, the years and the months the playgrounds have been open, facts about the attendance, the sections of the city which are served, the growth of the playgrounds, and the appropriations made for them.

The following list gives the city playgrounds, white and colored, in 1934, and their location.
White

Brookland Boulevard
Lucks Field
William Fox
Madison
Pewhatai Hill
John B. Cary School
Oak Grove

Chimborazo
Seabrook
Perry Street
Humphrey Calder
Clarke's Springs
Carter Jones

Colored
Southside
Fulton
Baker School
Moore School
George Mason School
Buchanan School
Randolph School

Brookland Park Boulevard and Napoleon Streets
Rogers and "T" Streets
Hanover Avenue and Addison Street and Belvidere Canal Streets
Powhatan Hill (Fulton)
Grayland Avenue and Holand Street
22nd and Gordon Streets (South Richmond)
Foot of Chimborazo Park
18th and Grace Streets
13th and Perry Streets
Thompson or "B" Streets and Hanover Avenue and Harrison Dance Streets
Carter Jones Park-28th Bainbridges

14th and Stockton Streets
Viaduct and Lewis Streets
Baker and St. James Streets
1115 West Moore Street
29th and "D" Streets
Buchanan and Cedar Streets
Randolph Street and Grayland Avenue
The Night Playgrounds in 1934

Time  4-9:30 P.M.

Brookland Boulevard- Brookland Park Boulevard and Napoleon Streets

Luck's Field- Rogers and "T" Streets
Madison- Belvidere and Canal Streets
Oak Grove- 22nd and Gordon Streets (South Richmond)
Chimborazo- Foot of Chimborazo Park
Seabrook- 18th and Grace Streets
Perry Street- 15th and Perry Streets
Clarke's Springs- Harrison and Dance Streets
Annual Total Attendance

Table I and the accompanying graph I show the interesting fluctuations in the attendance at the municipal playgrounds from 1917 through 1933. As is seen, the three years having the highest attendance were 1923, 1921 and 1930, this being the order of high attendance. The increase was good from 1917 with 290,000, through 1920, with 656,183. Then the next year there came a sudden increase to 934,347, but a decline the following year (1922). However 1923 saw the largest attendance of all, 963,473, again followed by a smaller number. The year 1925 registered a slump in attendance which continued at about the same number for four years until 1930, when a striking and unusual increase was made, the figures going to 920,155. Since that time it has been decreasing steadily. The increase in the number of playgrounds and the consequent greater opportunities would seem to account for the irregular attendance chart. Playgrounds were added in 1925, 1926 and 1929 and still there was a decided decrease in attendance during these years; while only one playground was added in 1930, one of the years in which there was an exceptional increase.

The weather has very decidedly influenced the fluctuations in attendance. Other seasonal attractions have drawn the people away from the playgrounds more in some years than in others.

Appropriations and the length of time the playgrounds were open have also been contributing factors in the fluctuation of attendance.
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>1921</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>920,155</td>
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<td>1931</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>870,998</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>824,972</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GRAPH I
ANNUAL TOTAL ATTENDANCE
Attendance on White Playgrounds

During the Summers of 1933 and 1934

Graph II of attendance on the white playgrounds during the summer of 1933 and 1934 showed the normal differences. There was not a great jump either up or down on any of the playgrounds except for Cary and William Fox and Seabrook. These lost about a third of their attendance in 1934. Five others lost but not so heavily, while six gained. The changes that occurred seem to be in most cases due to the usual fluctuations in attendance owing to weather conditions and to summer activities. The total attendance for the year lacked however only a few of being equal to that of 1933, being 35,460 as opposed to 357,663 in 1933. The greatest change was not in the total attendance at playgrounds, but in the distribution of attendance between the various ones.
GRAPH II
ATTENDANCE ON WHITE PLAYGROUNDS DURING SUMMERS OF 1933 AND 1934.
Attendance on Colored Playgrounds

During Summers of 1933 and 1934

The attendance on the colored playgrounds is shown by graph III and had no great or unusual change from 1933 to 1934. There was, as can be seen, an increase at Randolph, Mason and Viaduct. Moore was practically the same, but Baker, Stockton and Buchanan lost somewhat. The changes were probably due to the seasonal variations that are found on any playground or in any activity. The grand total was larger for 1934 than for 1933. This is very good evidence that the colored playgrounds are not only badly needed but are being used and are therefore helping to meet the needs of the colored people.
GRAPH III
ATTENDANCE ON COLORED PLAYGROUNDS DURING SUMMERS OF 1933 AND 1934
White Attendance on the After-School
Playgrounds During the Spring and Fall of
1933 and 1934

Graph IV presents the after-school play attendance
and shows that the playgrounds were used to a much
greater extent in the Spring than in the Fall of 1933.
There was a decided decrease in the Fall months for
every playground, not one having as large an attendance
as in the Spring. Six playgrounds had half or less than
half the attendance of the Spring and all had a decided
decrease. The total was markedly lower in the Fall,
being 52,027 against 96,901 in the Spring.

The record for 1934 is not so consistent. Several
playgrounds sustained decided or great drops, but three
playgrounds had an attendance larger than in the Fall.
In eight instances the decrease was as great as two
thirds or more, while at Madison it dropped from 6,670
to 600. The increases were not large enough to affect
the numbers of the decreases. The total attendance for
1934 was 68,218 in the Spring but only 13,544 in the
Fall.

Weather conditions, appropriations, other recreational
facilities and the length of time the playgrounds were
open help to account for the variations in attendance.
GRAPH II
WHITE ATTENDANCE ON THE
AFTER-SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS
DURING THE SPRING AND FALL
OF 1933 AND 1934

Spring 1933  Fall 1933  Spring 1934  Fall 1934

1: 5,000
Colored Attendance in the After-School Playgrounds During the Spring and Fall of 1933 and 1934

The drop in attendance as seen by the accompanying graph is very great. There was a much larger attendance during the spring of 1933 than during the fall. In neither year did the fall attendance equal the spring and in only one did it even approach it closely. That one case was Mason Playground. The total attendance was only half as great in the fall as in the spring being 21,918 in the fall as compared to the spring total of 44,333.

The spring and fall attendance for 1934 was similar in trend to that for 1933. The attendance was at least two thirds lower in the fall than in the spring and in Moore, Viaduct, Buchanan and Southside Playgrounds lower even than that. The total fall attendance was only a fourth of the spring number. It would seem from these that the attendance was steadily and permanently decreasing.
GRAPH V

COLORED ATTENDANCE ON THE AFTER-SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS DURING THE SPRING AND FALL OF 1933 AND 1934
Average Daily Attendance in
White Playgrounds for 1934

Graph 6 shows the approximate number daily
attendance for 1934 on white playgrounds. There
are various reasons for the difference in attendance
on the playgrounds. Some are larger than others and
some able to accommodate more, as Brookland Boulevard.
Others are situated in sections of the city where there
is a greater need than others and so reach more people.
One of those very well attended is the Madison Playground
which is for only small children, and so has a very large
attendance even though it covers a small acreage. The
daily attendance varies each day being influenced by
the weather, the health and other activities of the
children.
Average Daily Attendance on Colored
Playgrounds for 1934

The colored playgrounds do not vary so widely in attendance as the white ones. Perhaps one reason is that they are all nearer a uniform size than the white playgrounds. Most of them are on school playgrounds and so are within reach of many of the people.
GRAPH VII

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE ON COLORED PLAYGROUNDS FOR 1934

George Wilson School
Baker School
Bucktown School
Southside
Fulton
Moore School
Randolph School

| 1 = 25 |
Relation of White to Negro Attendance in After-School Playgrounds in 1933 and 1934

It is seen from the accompanying graph that more of the colored population attended the after-school playgrounds in proportion to the population than the white people, during 1933. In 1934, however, they did not attend in as great numbers or proportions.

This chart was drawn from population figures of the 1930 census but playgrounds figures are for 1933 and 1934.
RELATION OF WHITE TO NEGRO ATTENDANCE ON AFTER-SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS IN 1933 AND 1934

GRAPH III

- White Attendance
- Colored Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance in Winter Playgrounds

The attendance on the Winter Playgrounds had only normal fluctuations until 1930. Then owing to Federal government help through C. W. A., the attendance jumped. This accounts for most of the sudden increase from 2,500 to 297,000 as seen from the graph.
GRAPH II
ATTENDANCE ON WINTER PLAYGROUNDS
Months in Operation of Playgrounds
1923-1933

From the foregoing graphs it is seen that the playgrounds were open different lengths of time. Sometimes this was due to smaller appropriations, sometimes to extra equipment that took a great deal of money, sometimes to opening new playgrounds and cutting down the time on all, and sometimes it was due to the season.
GRAPH IX
MONTHS IN OPERATION
1924 - 1933

1924 1925 1926 1927 1928 1929 1930 1931 1932 1933

| = 1/2 month
Graph XII

Number of Months Winter Playgrounds Were Open 1924-1933

1 = ½ month
It is significant to note the changes in the daily hours the playgrounds are open. In 1927 they were open every day except Sunday from 9 A.M. to 12 M. and from 4 P.M. to 7 P.M. In 1921 the afternoon hours were changed, the morning hours staying the same. During vacation they were from 9 A.M. to 12 M. and from 4 P.M. to 9:30 P.M., but during school they were open only from 3 P.M. to dark. Two years later there were changes, and the hours were adapted to different playgrounds as seemed advisable for each. The regular hours were from 9:30 A.M. to 12 M. and from 4:30 P.M. to 9 P.M.; but in Highland Park, although the hours were the same for the morning, the afternoon period was from 3 to 6. In Baker School the playground was open from 4 P.M. until dark.

In 1931 we find that the after-school playgrounds were open from 3 to 5:30 P.M. On school days and on Saturdays from (X A.M. to 12 M. During the summer of 1934 the hours were 8 A.M. to 12 M. and from 7 P.M. to 9:30 P.M. except in the case of Carter Jones Playgrounds, John B. Cary School Playground, Humphrey Calder Playground and the colored playground which were open from 9 P.M. to 12 M. and from 4 P.M. to 6:30 P.M.

It is significant that the hours are changed from time to time, indicating that this playground plan is not stereotyped but is flexible and changing to meet the new situations.
# Chart I

**Changes in Hours Playgrounds Were Open**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P.M.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
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<td>4:00</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Table II

Sections of the City of Richmond which have had playgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Number of Playgrounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bellevue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woodville</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>East Highland Park</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highland Park</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>East Highland Park</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highland Park</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Number of Playgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>South Richmond</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>West End</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
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<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
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<td>West End</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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<td>West End</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Number of Playgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
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<td>West End</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woodville</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woodville</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woodville</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>The same as for 1931</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
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</table>
Table III

Municipal Playgrounds of Richmond
Listed According to the Years in Which They Were Conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summer Playgrounds</th>
<th>Winter Playgrounds</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Marshall School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairmont School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Williamsburg Avenue School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moore Street (Colored)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seabrook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Clarke's Springs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chimborazo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seabrook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker School (colored)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Church Hill (1916)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Clarke's Springs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chimborazo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton—moved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seabrook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker School (colored)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Elba School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highland Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond—13th and Perry Streets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke's Springs &amp; Chimborazo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Year | Summer Playgrounds | Winter Playgrounds
---|---|---
1923 | Seabrook | The playgrounds were not listed for this year but were essentially the same
1924 | Elba School | John B. Cary School
     | Highland Park | Highland Park
     | South Richmond | Fairmont Park
     | Clarke's Springs | J.E.B. Stuart School
     | Chimborezo | Robert E. Lee School
     | Seabrook | Baker School Center
     | Baker School (Colored) | Moore School Center
     | South Richmond (Colored) | 
     | Fulton (Colored) | Valley School (Colored) soon discontinued
     | Sidney (Colored) | 
1925 | Elba School | The same plus:
     | Highland Park | Robert Fulton
     | South Richmond | Fountaine Maury School
<pre><code> | Clarke's Springs | 
 | Chimborezo | 
 | Seabrook | 
 | Baker (Colored) | 
 | South Richmond (Colored) | 
 | Bushanom (Colored) | 
 | Fulton (Colored) | 
 | Sidney (Colored) | 
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summer Playgrounds</th>
<th>Winter Playgrounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Richmond Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brookland Boulevard</td>
<td>Northside Jr. High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John B. Cary</td>
<td>R. E. Lee School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke's Springs</td>
<td>John B. Cary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oak Grove</td>
<td>Highland Park School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seabrook</td>
<td>Robert Fulton School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chimborazo</td>
<td>Helen Dickerson School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Fox</td>
<td>Stuart School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td>Maury School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&quot;Hilltop&quot;) Fulton Hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colored</td>
<td>Same except did not have R. E. Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viaduct</td>
<td>John B. Cary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hovey</td>
<td>Robert Fulton School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southside</td>
<td>Helen Dickerson School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker School Yard</td>
<td>Maury School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buchanan School Yard</td>
<td>City Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Northside Jr. High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1927: Same as the year before.

1928: Same
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summer Playgrounds</th>
<th>Winter Playgrounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>White</td>
<td>The same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brookland Boulevard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John B. Cary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke's Springs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oak Grove</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seabrook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chimborazo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Fox</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>South Richmond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Madison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fulton Hill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack's Field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colored</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viaduct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hovey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baker School Yard</td>
<td>The same as the year before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buchanan School Yard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George Mason School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Humphrey Calder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carter Jones</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Boulevard Boulevard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jack's Field</td>
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<td></td>
<td>William Fox</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Madison</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Powhatan Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Summer Playgrounds</td>
<td>Winter Playgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John B. Cary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oak Grove</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chimborazo</td>
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<td>Seabrook</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Perry Street</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarke's Springs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Colored</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Southside</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fulton</td>
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<td>Baker School</td>
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<td>Moore School</td>
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<td>George Mason</td>
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<td>Buchanan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Randolph</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Same as the year before</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Same as for 1931</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Same as for 1931</td>
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Table IV

Municipal Playgrounds of Richmond Listed,
Their Average Attendance per day, the Acreage,
and Staff, in 1934

Brookland Boulevard
Average Att. per day 650
7 acres
1 Director per day and a caretaker—night, 1 Director,
1 Associate Director, 1 boy director, pianist, 1 caretaker.

Luck's Field
Ave. Att. 500
5 A.

Same staff as Brookland Park Boulevard

William Fox
Ave. Att. 200
1/4 A.
This playground is limited to small children.

Madison
Ave. Att. 600
1/2 A.
Same staff as Brookland Park Boulevard

Powhatan Hill
Ave. Att. 400
5 A.
Same staff as Brookland Park Boulevard

John B. Cary School
Ave. Att. 200
3/4 A; 1 Director, 1 caretaker
Seabrook
Ave. Att. 150
1 A.
Staff as Brooklyn Park Boulevard
Perry Street
Ave. Att. 600
1/2 A.
Staff as Brooklyn Park Boulevard
Humphrey Calder

Clarke's Springs
Ave. Att. 100
2 A.
Staff same as Brooklyn Park Boulevard
Carter Jones
Ave. Att. 300
4 A.
Staff—1 Director, 1 Caretaker

Colored
Southside (18th and Stockton)  
Baker School
Ave. Att. 225  
Ave. Att. 250
1/2 A.  
1/2 A.
1 Director, 1 caretaker  
1 Director, 1 caretaker
Fulton
Ave. Att. 200
1 A.
1 Director, 1 caretaker
Moore School
Ave. Att. 200
1/4 A.
1 Director, 1 caretaker

George Mason School
Ave. Att. 300
1/2 A.
1 Director, 1 caretaker

Buchanan School
Ave. Att. 250
1 A.
1 Director, 1 caretaker

Randolph School
Ave. Att. 200
1 A.
1 Director, 1 caretaker
### Table V

**Yearly Appropriations for City Playgrounds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount Appropriated</th>
<th>Special Appropriations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>5,331.250</td>
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<td>1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1932</td>
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<td>1933</td>
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<td>1,400.00</td>
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<td>1,000</td>
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The foregoing tables and graphs show that many changes have taken place in the playground functioning since its beginning. The attendance has greatly varied due to a number of factors, from appropriations to weather. Seventeen playgrounds have been added since the first three municipal playgrounds were opened in 1909.

The number of months playgrounds could be maintained has varied with the amount of money appropriated for this purpose. The hours of the playgrounds has also changed.

It is gratifying to note that there are now both as many playgrounds and as many sections of the city served by playgrounds as at any time since they were started.

Perhaps one of the most striking things revealed is that a larger proportion of the colored population used their playgrounds than of the white population.
Program of the Richmond Playgrounds

The activities on the playgrounds have been somewhat similar since their beginning, but they have increased and expanded. On one of the first playgrounds, the Williamsburg Avenue Playground, there was a baseball diamond, for baseball is a game liked by boys and girls all over the United States. Then gradually there have been added football fields, volleyball courts and tennis courts. The small children had sand piles and see-saws, sliding boards, and horizontal and parallel bars to play on.

By 1917 there was an enlarged program to take care of the older youth. In the evening the play directors conducted folk dancing and entertainments. This has given those young people who wish something for the evening interesting entertainment and has enabled them to get to-gether in groups under well trained and wholesome leadership.

Gradually there have grown up tournaments and inter-playground games of volley ball, tennis, baseball and basketball. There was a volley ball League and a Harris Flippin trophy in 1921. There were also track meets that year. In 1921 Clarke's Springs, Fulton, South Richmond, Seabrook and Chimborazo began holding play festivals. Another activity of the playgrounds that year was an exhibit of handwork done on the playgrounds, which was held at Clarke's Springs.

On the playgrounds from 1922 on, there were various activities including supervised play, sports, story-telling,
folk dancing and industrial work. By 1923 there was basketball and baseball at night as well as during the day. The different clubs of a playground played each other, and afterwards there were inter-playground tournaments. These inter-playground tournaments especially helped to draw the city playgrounds together and helped the young people in the different sections to know each other.

The first mention of a definite program for winter centers is in 1924. "Indoor sports and games, folk dancing and dramatics were the program for the girls centers" and for the boys "basketball, dodge ball, corner ball etc.". Robert E. Lee Playground was then the only winter center with a basketball floor and it was very popular.

In 1925 there was a Halloween celebration on Broad and Jefferson Streets. Ribbons were given for the best costumes. This observance of the Halloween celebration was kept up for a number of years.

With the beginning of the 1925 summer season, opening with a model aeroplane contest at Byrd Park, there were more celebrations, contests, and activities than in previous years. During the summer there were:

- Doll Shows
- Bubble Contests
- Pet Shows
- Patriotic Celebrations
- Tennis Tournaments
- Track Meets

Since 1921 play festivals have been held at the end of the summer. That year the play festival included 500 children
from the various playgrounds of the city and was in the form of a pageant called "A Day in Nottingham". In 1926 it was an Indian Pageant at Byrd Park with an attendance of 500,257. This was the culmination of a course in dramatics taught on the playgrounds. An exhibition of handwork was held in 1921 and has been repeated each year since. For the first time, in 1926, an Institute was held in the city for the city recreational workers on "Games and Folk Dances" which was conducted by John Martin of the Recreation Association of America.

In 1927 instead of having one big play festival or general closing exercise for all of the playgrounds of the city, each playground held its own program.

Each year there has been additional equipment on the play grounds, providing new activities for the children and adults who attend. In 1927 an asphalt volley ball court was made on the Seabrook Playground, and on the Madison Playground basketball goals were put up.

In 1929 a number of festivals were again held including:

Armistice Day Celebration
Thanksgiving Plays
Pet Shows
Bubble Parties
Charleston Contests (dance)
Croquet Tournaments
Horse shoe Tournaments
Again there were inter-playground tournaments, tennis and volleyball, and again each playground had its own closing exercises and display of handwork.

In 1931 for the first time an inter-playground tournament was conducted on both white and colored playgrounds. All playground and athletic events were represented in the tournament and much interest was shown by the playground youngsters. Each playground held its own final contests to determine who should represent it in the various events of the general tournament. This was held during the last week in August. The finals for the white grounds were held at the Brookland Boulevard Field, and Perry Street was the winner. The colored finals were held at Hovey Field, with Southside winning. This was valuable training and a useful lesson in sportsmanship for the children. The children also gave a series of radio programs called "Play Time" which was both good training for the children and also good advertising. There was also special coaching in tennis and other sports. Many availed themselves of this opportunity. The playgrounds also had plays and pageants to which they had attendances of from 500 to 1,500. There was horse-shoe pitching, tennis, volleyball, hopscotch, jack-rocks, other games, picnics, hikes, etc. These activities have been kept up with various changes made to meet needs that arise.
Activities of the Playgrounds

The following are some of the special features of the programs of the various years. On all grounds each year there were the regular playground activities with the equipment.

1917-
Tennis - volley ball
Play apparatus
Folk dancing
Simple entertainments

1921-
Tournaments
Exhibit of handwork of the playgrounds
First school used as a night center

1922-
Supervised plays
Sports
Story-telling
Folk dancing
Industrial work

1925-
Airplane contest at Byrd Park
Doll shows
Bubble contest
Pet shows
Tennis tournaments
Track meets
Patriotic celebrations
Halloween celebration
At night, indoor games and dramatics

1926-

Indian pageant at Byrd Park
At the end of the season an exhibit of handwork
Pet shows
Bubble contests
Flower Parade
Croquet tournament

1927-

Armistice Day celebration
Thanksgiving plays
Christmas carol singing
Pet shows
Bubble contests
Croquet tournaments
Flower shows and parades
Doll shows
Bathing beauty contest
Airplane contest
Candy pulls
Tacky parties
Jack rock contests

1928-

Pageants
Bubble parties
Kite contests
Croquet tournament
Thanksgiving Day plays
Stories dramatised
Armistice Day celebrations
Pet shows
Doll shows
Flower parade
Tacky parties
Tennis tournaments
Horse show contests
Display of handwork

1930-
First inter-playground tournament conducted on both white and colored playgrounds
A series of radio programs by children
Plays
Pageants
Horse shoe pitching contests
Tennis
Volley ball, basket ball
Croquet
Hop scotch
Jack rocks
Picnics, hikes

1935-
Inter-playground tournaments
Plays
Pageants
Horseshoe pitching
Tennis
Ball games
Story-telling
Folk dancing
Group sings
Picnics, hikes
THE INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS FOR
THE GUIDANCE OF THE CITY PLAYGROUNDS,
ISSUED BY THE BUREAU OF PARKS AND
RECREATION, ARE AS FOLLOWS. THEY ARE
GIVEN TO SHOW IN FURTHER DETAIL THE
OPERATION OF THE PLAYGROUNDS.
YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Your responsibility to serve as a Playleader is a large one. The best you can give of yourself is the least you can give. If you cannot give of that best do not consider taking up this work.

Your influence upon the hundreds of children with whom you will have contact will be in direct proportions to the efforts you make, to know, to interest, and to guide these children as individuals—individuals with greatly varying personalities; each one with an innate desire to do and be something.

It is your job to make that something count for personal and community enrichment.

One of the most NECESSARY REQUIREMENTS of a Playleader is INTEREST in your work. The success of your playground depends very largely on the interest YOU take in your work. A Playleader who goes on the grounds with just the idea of waiting for the time to pass cannot make a success of their work.
TO PLAYGROUND EMPLOYEES:

The success of your playground is up to you. We are counting on you to put forth your best efforts and will certainly appreciate your co-operation.

Please remember that you are conducting a public place and it will be necessary that you be prompt and regular in your attendance.

It is hoped that everyone will work in harmony and prevent petty disagreements, etc. Each one of you should understand your particular duties and co-operate with each other.

Special attention is called to the Boy Directors, Pianists, and Caretakers, that they MUST be on time. Boy Directors are reminded that they are not to allow certain groups to play each night but it is their duty to teach ALL boys how to play games and give them all a chance.

Caretakers should never send anyone from the grounds for misbehavior unless they consult the director. Caretakers must be very careful not to overstep their authority.

Directors are urged to do everything they can to make children behave and only as a last resort should they make anyone leave the grounds. However, no child should be allowed to disrupt the activities on the grounds, and if the Director thinks it necessary, they shall order any undesirables from the grounds. The Director is hereby given authority to use his own judgment in such cases.
Thanking you all for your cooperation,

ASSISTANT CHIEF OF BUREAU.
GENERAL DUTIES

1. Organize and develop such activities on your playground as will give the children the opportunity needed to develop physically, mentally and morally. Keep clear of entangling social, factional, sectarian, partisan, and institutional alliances in the community. Organize your groups so that they can, in part, operate themselves, allowing time for personal acquaintance and supervision over all activities. Give child leaders an opportunity to assume some degree of responsibility.

2. Encourage all persons attending the playground to enter into the various activities.

3. Develop teams in competitive events, giving instructions when necessary. Instill in the minds of all contestants ideals of loyalty, fair play and good sportsmanship by the example of your own behavior.

4. Plan events ahead of time and see that all children know about these events ahead of time and encourage them to advertise the fact in the neighborhood to both youngsters and adults. Let the community know what you are doing. Also, keep the office advised as to the various activities and submit information to the office for the newspapers.

5. See that weekly attendance reports, accident reports, and other required reports, together with full report of any special event, are submitted ON TIME to the office.

6. Apply "First Aid" to the injured. See that every person hurt
is given the best possible care, calling the City Ambulance when necessary. See that the family is immediately informed of the circumstances surrounding the accident and what has been done. Inspect First Aid supplies frequently and see that all necessary supplies are on hand.

7. THE DIRECTOR IS IN ABSOLUTE CHARGE OF THE PLAYGROUND. The Assistant Director, Caretaker, and others on the grounds are to thoroughly understand that they must take orders from the Director and the Director is authorized to send to the office anyone who fails to obey instructions. In such cases, the one so failing to obey instructions will be liable to dismissal. The Directors are expected to assert this authority and will be held responsible for the conduct and efficiency or inefficiency of their subordinates. The Supervisor does not have the time to give instructions to the Caretakers and others working under the Director and the Director MUST do it.

8. See that light is not wasted. Keep everything on the playground in the best possible condition in order that the efficiency of the work may not be hampered or retarded. Have a place for everything and everything in its place.

9. Supervise carefully lavatories and dark corners. DO NOT PERMIT MARKING WALLS OF BUILDINGS OR FENCES. Break up gambling games, and eliminate all smoking, swearing, and general rowdiness.

10. Discourage promiscuous acquaintance between certain types of boys and girls, and offer friendly advice where needed.
11. Do not get involved in a fight yourself. Do not strike a person unless in a serious act of self-defense. Call the nearest police station for assistance if persons refuse to leave the grounds when so ordered.

**OPENING**

1. Be present on the playground TEN MINUTES before official time for opening.
2. Hoist flag on all playgrounds where there is a flag pole, immediately upon arrival on playground.
3. Inspect all apparatus (chain links, bolt connections, slide board, etc.). This is very important and no excuse will be accepted for faulty or dangerous equipment. IT SHOULD AND MUST BE INSPECTED AT LEAST ONCE DAILY, particularly during "heavy attendance" periods.
4. The matter of promptness is important. You are conducting a public place and you MUST BE ON time. Tardiness on the part of the Directors, Assistants, or Caretaker will positively not be excused except in a rare and unusual case.

**CONDUCT ON PLAYGROUND**

1. Permit no fence climbing.
2. Permit no bicycle riding on playground.
3. Allow no climbing on buildings.
4. Allow no one to enter rooms other than those provided for their use. DO NOT PERMIT CHILDREN IN PIANO HOUSE WITHOUT PERMISSION OF DIRECTOR.
5. Permit no HARD baseball to be used in playing on the playground.
6. Do not permit loafing in the toilets. INSPECT FREQUENTLY.

7. Do not permit smoking or chewing tobacco, vulgar language, or quarreling on the playground.

8. Report immediately to the office any defect in plumbing or other damage to equipment or apparatus.

**SUBSTITUTES**

Playground Directors, Assistants, or Caretakers are NOT expected to be absent from their grounds. If they cannot be on the job regularly the playground will not be a success. A careful record will be kept on your attendance and only occasional and necessary absence will be permitted. All substitutes must be paid by the one for whom he or she is substituting and at a regular rate as designated by the office. PERMISSION MUST BE OBTAINED FROM THE OFFICE before you turn your grounds over to the substitute.

**SUPPLIES**

All requests for supplies must be made to the office and you are expected to keep all supplies in usable condition. All balls must be kept inflated at all times. The supplies are bought to be played with and it is YOUR duty to see that they are kept in proper condition.

**CARETAKERS**

1. All caretakers must remember that they are to take instructions from the Director on the grounds. In cases where the opinion of the Caretaker and the opinion of the Director
differ, the Caretaker MUST abide by what the Director says.

2. The Caretaker must keep the grounds clean at all times. Keep the grounds in good condition, free from low places where water would stand, and do whatever work within reason necessary to keep the equipment and grounds in good and safe condition.

3. Caretakers are reminded that their duty is to keep the grounds in good condition, keep order on the grounds, and cooperate with the Director in every way. The Caretakers are NOT play leaders.

4. The Caretaker is to avoid unpleasantness on the grounds as much as possible. Treat the public kindly as far as possible and be courteous at all times.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Growth is always a sign of healthy life. Do not remain content with your present knowledge of playground work. Learn new games. Experiment with new methods.

2. Aim to have the boys and girls get more "fun" out of the game. Strive to inculcate in them the greater and deeper lessons - the lessons they may carry over into their daily adult life; lessons in truthfulness, courage, unselfishness, cooperation, fairness, quick decision, and self-reliance.

   ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT CHILDREN DO AS YOU DO, NOT AS YOU SAY.

3. When teaching a game, give its name first to the children.
Explain to them the meaning of the game as clearly as possible. Make your description and details of the game graphic and interesting. Show them how it is played in as concise and lucid a manner as is compatible with the average intelligence of the group to which you are teaching the game. Do not proceed to play the game until the majority of your group thoroughly understand the rules of the game.

4. Emphasize the fact that the sport of the game is in playing joyously — merely winning is secondary where brawn or wits have been pitted.

5. Players should learn to take the referee's decision without dispute. This is not humanly possible until they are convinced of the referee's sense of fairness and impartiality.

6. In most games, penalty is better than elimination.

7. In games in which sides are counted out or numbers given, do not take an active part.

8. Your mission as Playground Leader is not so much to play with the children as it is to teach them HOW to play and WHAT to play.

9. Be a leader, not merely a custodian. Regard yourself as host or hostess of your playground. Make everybody feel at home. Be courteous to adults who pass thru the grounds or stop to watch the games.

10. Teach the children your name. Cultivate comradeship but
do not permit familiarity in your relationship with the children. Make an effort to learn the children's names as well as their disposition, home conditions, etc. Get the confidence of the children. Your free play periods are partially intended for "visiting" with the boys and girls.

11. Keep your playground free from rubbish, large stones, etc. Devote a few minutes each day to an "Everybody Pick Up" period.

12. When your playground is visited by a Staff Member, DO NOT DISCONTINUE YOUR WORK.

13. GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD. Take different streets when going to and coming from the playground. Invite the children whom you meet to come to the playground. SPEAK TO THE PARENTS.

14. Children are the best kind of advertisers, if reminded. Encourage them to tell others about the playground. Watch for new children and give them a word of welcome. Keep this up during the entire season.

15. Remember the great power of suggestion. It works wonders on the playground. Your interest, energy and attitude are sure to be reflected in the children.

CARE OF APPARATUS

1. The proper use of playground apparatus should be insisted upon by the Director.
2. Do not permit dangerous feats. The Director is to be the judge of which is considered a dangerous feat.

3. Do not permit small children on apparatus other than that which is intended for them.

4. Allow no pushing of each other on giant stride ropes.

5. Prevent extreme high swinging.

6. DO NOT ALLOW THE CHILDREN TO STAND IN THE SWINGS OR TO JUMP UP.

7. ALLOW ONLY ONE CHILD IN EACH SWING AT A TIME.

8. Permit no running or climbing on slide boards; insist on the use of the steps.

9. Insist on children taking their turns.

10. Permit no use of faulty apparatus; report same immediately to Office.

SUPPLIES

1. Athletic supplies, games, etc. are liable to be lost unless a careful check is kept on each article. In giving out material, note the name of the receiver and hold that person responsible for same. Be sure to check name when article is returned. This will be a little trouble but you can then place the name on the proper party if anything is lost. Also, check up on all supplies each day and see that everything is put away promptly after using.

2. Urge the children to exercise special care in the use of all material which is loaned to them. Present to them the necessity for being careful that his is for their own
interest, and it is up to them to take care of the material if they expect to have the use of it. Tell them about the actual cost of materials. It is well to study the cases where certain children display marked proclivities for destroying property, particularly that of others. When such cases are found the child or children should be approached sympathetically and intelligently.

3. ALLOW NO GOOD MATERIAL TO GO OUT ON DAMP OR RAINY DAYS.

4. See that all large balls are well inflated as this insures them against damage. Special care should be taken to see that the tongue which protects the bladder from the lacing is in proper condition.

5. Do not permit children to sit on or kick volley balls or basket balls.

6. Use the rainy days and rainy hours to repair equipment, such as sewing baseballs and basketballs. Teach the children to assist in the work and show them that their best efforts are appreciated. Do not flatter them - just thank them and let them know that they have been of help to you and to themselves.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance shall be taken by actual count, three times a day - (morning, afternoon, twilight hours) - at the greatest density periods. No addition to these counts are to be made. Detail the three general counts in your report sheet and add them for the day’s total.
RAIN

Workers must report to their grounds every day, regardless of weather conditions. There has always been a certain amount of confusion as to whether or not playgrounds should be opened on account of weather conditions. To avoid this confusion the workers will please go to their grounds. Often the density of rainfall is different in various sections of the City, while at other times it may be raining in one section of the City and not in another section. Even if it is raining there are many things that can be accomplished if the grounds are not in good condition just after it stops. Such occasions give the workers an opportunity to check over general conditions, examine equipment and supplies on the grounds, have talks with the few children who might be present and in general, take stock of what has been accomplished during the preceding week or so. If children do come during rainy weather play games with them or gather them around you and tell them stories.

Of course, there will be cases, after the workers have gone to the grounds, that they will deem it necessary, or rather wise, to close the playground and leave. In such cases, use your own judgment.
Chapter 8

A Typical Playground

To show the work of the playgrounds in detail, one typical playground is selected to be described. Perry Street Playground is given here, because it is one that deals with a representative group, including children, young people, and adults. It has a fairly large attendance, has the average equipment, and a program similar to the others.
Perry Street Playground

Until 1935 the Perry Street Playground had only one Director during the entire time of its existence. It began back of the Jefferson High School on a lot where there was no shade, little apparatus, and a great deal of work needed to make it into a playground. There were many foreigners in that section of the city and the group that gathered on the playground was very heterogeneous. Later the playground was moved to Fulton and was then known as Fulton Playground. Still later it was moved to the present site on Perry Street. For a time it was called the South Richmond Playground and then finally the present name, Perry Street Playground, was adopted.

When it became a playground a German owned the land and gave the city free use of it. One day the owner came to the Director and excitedly told her to close the grounds at one o'clock and never to return. He was tired of the noise and activity on the property. Talking to him did no good, so at one o'clock the grounds were closed and the Director went to the City office to see if there was anything that could be done. She later interviewed the owner, and after much persuasion he allowed the grounds to open next day as usual, but with a changed agreement that the City would pay the taxes of the property for the use of it.

There was some difficulty about the owner selling
this property when he wanted, so he traded it for land on Grove Avenue. The new owner, a Mr. Moore, finally sold the property to the City which has since then owned Povery Street Playground property.

All on the playground take part in the opening exercises of raising and saluting the flag. During the time the playground is open in the day there are many kinds of games, but no fixed program until evening. There are see saws, horizontal bars, sand piles, swings and similar equipment which the children enjoy. About seven-thirty in the evening all have a drill and march around, finally making a circle. Then they play circle games of some kind, singing games, folk dancing and other things. About fifteen minutes before closing every one gets together and sings. The older children are allowed social dancing from eight forty-five to nine-thirty.

There is a story-telling period during which time the Director tells perhaps one story and then encourages the children to tell others. There is also handicraft. All costumes for plays and entertainments are made by those on the playground, and all costumes for the fete at the closing of the playground at the end of the summer are made by the children.

An effort is made to teach the people how to play, since many do not know, and the teaching process is a gradual one. One man in his sixties came every day to the
playground. He went to one particular swing, where he sat and swung for hours. When it was mentioned that he seemed to like it a great deal, he said "yes" he did, that he liked that particular one better than any others, was in fact that/the only one he did like. The swings were one of the most popular pieces of apparatus on the playground. Another old man used to come often and want to play volleyball. The Director encouraged him to play with the boys, but he always wanted to play with the girls. They consented and laughed, joked and had a delightful time with him. All ages come to the playground and all are welcome. Some play there, grow up, marry and come back bringing their children. Others go away and come back just to see it again. One man said he had just a little time in Richmond but he wanted to come back to see the Director of the playground he had enjoyed so much in other years.

Since there has been a great deal of unemployment the Director has felt that if there was anything the playground could offer the people it should be provided. She arranged tables so that men could come and play bridge. The city Director of Parks and Playgrounds felt that it was better for those men to be under her supervision playing bridge than to be loafing somewhere else. This became a great success and there were often as many as 32 men playing at one time.
At the close of the playground at the end of the summer, there is always a fete. There have been many different programs depicting various events, a Dolly Madison Tea, Betsy Ross and the Flag, Japanese Gardens, and many others. This gives a climax to the work, an occasion toward which all the activities and interests are directed during the entire season.

This playground has served a great many people during the time of its existence. In 1934 there was an attendance of 39,916, and the grounds were kept open from 9 A. M. until 12 M. and in the evening from 7 P. M. until 9:30 P.M. They were open few five months from May first until October first, and two months for after-school play in the afternoons. The average daily attendance was 600. The playground serves a rather large community, drawing its people from at least four or five blocks on all four sides, covering sixteen or twenty blocks all together.

Without this playground the children in this area would have had no place to play except the streets, they would have had nothing to do except what they "picked up" from the various gangs that would have formed. There would have been no play apparatus for the younger children and no place for games for the older ones. In the evenings the playground has given the young people and adults an entertaining way of using their time and has also afforded
recreation for those who were out of work, when time seemed a liability and they did not know what to do with it. Besides filling hours with pleasure that would perhaps have been empty otherwise, the playground has helped to make a greater community feeling and pride. It has drawn the older people together, as it draws the children. In the evenings the older people have gathered to sing together, to play together, or to watch a program of entertaining features together. Where interplayground tournaments were held this feeling grew stronger and at the same time new sections of the city have become known and a greater city consciousness has begun.
Chapter 9

General Summary

Play is a universal characteristic and in many civilizations has been a vital part of their culture. Savages considered it important, the Greeks put great emphasis upon it and the Romans used it to develop soldiers. Each of the European countries has developed recreation in a different way, suited to its needs and circumstances, but each has developed it in some way. In some countries it takes an aesthetic form, in others it is used to develop physical power, and in others for military development. Today in the United States it is receiving recognition as being important to the physical, mental and moral development of the individual.

In the United States the development of playgrounds commenced in Boston in 1886, and by 1926 there were 500 cities of a population of over 5,000 having playgrounds. The legislatures of the various states and the governing bodies of cities have passed laws and ordinances providing for playgrounds and recreational facilities.

In 1906 the Playground and Recreation Association of America was organized in Washington, D. C. In 1930 President Hoover called a White House Conference of Child Health and Protection which drew up the Children's Charter, emphasizing among other essentials recreation in each child's life.
It was in 1909 that the first municipal playground was opened in Richmond, three being opened that year. Now in 1936 there are twenty playgrounds, thirteen for white people and seven for the colored population. These playgrounds are not for the children only but also for adults.

There is play apparatus. There are play areas for volleyball, tennis and other such games. There are storytelling hours, courses in dramatics, and at the end of the summer a great fete for the entire city or a smaller one on each playground. During the year there are festivals, exhibits, contests, inter-playground tournaments, doll and flower shows, celebration of special holidays, hikes, parties and picnics. In 1935 C. W. A. funds were available for recreation and a great deal was accomplished in the way of additional centers, leaders, and courses offered at these centers.

The attendance on the playgrounds has varied greatly during the years they have been maintained. Weather has affected them and appropriations have varied. The different sections of the city are fairly well represented, and it is one of the goals of the Department of Recreation to have a playground accessible to each child in the city. This, however, will not be possible without a larger city appropriation.

The Community Recreation Association has cooperated closely with the municipal recreation. Its work and that
of the Department of Recreation have run parallel, the one supplementing the work of the other. The Community Recreation has been able to try more new things than the City Department could. It has helped to coordinate the recreational activities of various organizations, and has played an important part in the recreational life of the city.

The playgrounds of Richmond have influenced the lives of many children, young people and adults. It is a work which the city should develop to an even greater extent, and of which it may well be proud.
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