

The Erie County Department of Parks and Recreation had its beginning in 1924, when in May of that year a bi-partisan Park Commission was created under Chapter 638 of the Laws of the State of New York (see Exhibit #1). The Commission was the third such park commission to be established in New York State, the other two were in the vicinity of New York City.

On the next page is a picture of the original Erie County Parks Commission taken in 1924.

The Commission served without compensation except for the actual expenses they incurred in carrying out their duties.

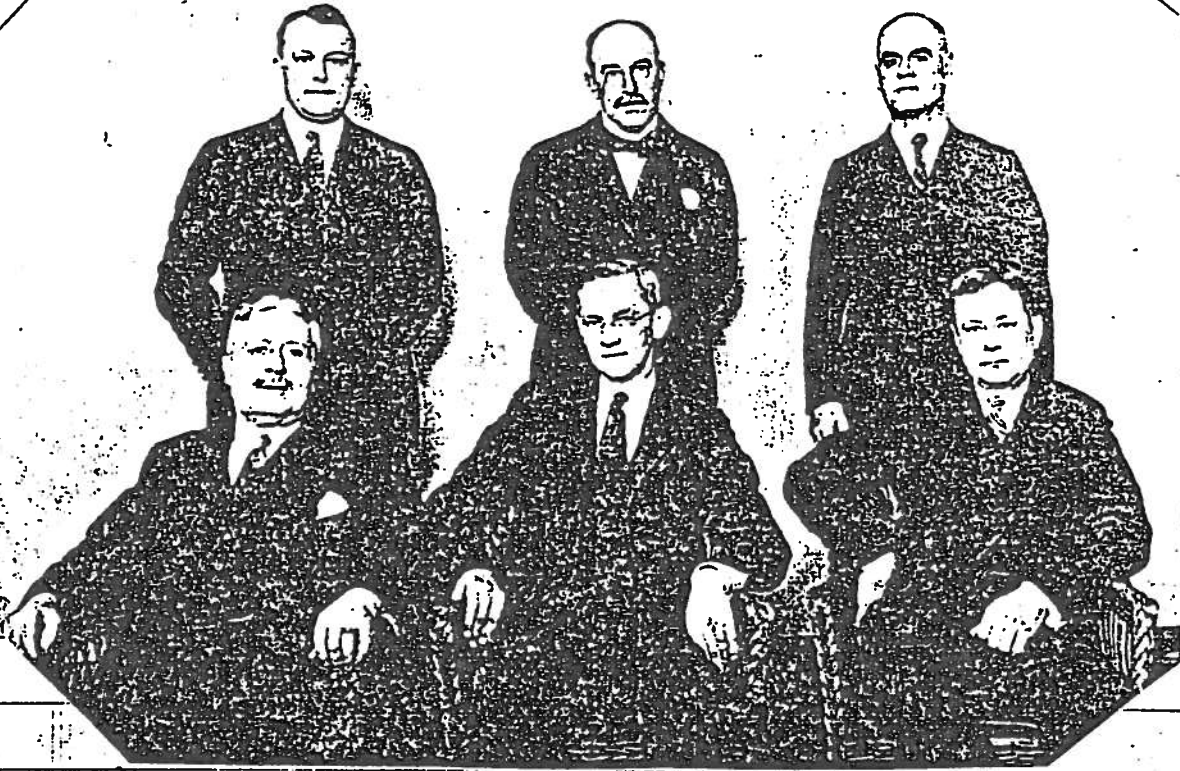
From reading through the annual reports, which the Commission was required by the 1924 law to issue, it is apparent that the first Commission devoted a great deal of time and effort into turning the desire of having a truly fine park system into reality.

The Commission commenced its work by making a thorough reconnaissance of the territory in Erie County so that its recommendation might include sites of natural beauty and advantages available to people in various parts of the county.

They visited properties in all sections of the county and listened to suggestions from organizations and citizens interested in the establishment and development of a county park system. The Commissioners then took options on thirty five sites for periods of time ranging from sixty days to one year.

To broaden their scope, the Commissioners gained further input by obtaining information from other counties both in and out of New York State, which were used in their preliminary planning.

On May 5, 1925 the Commissioners presented recommendations to the Erie County Board of Supervisors for the purchase of land in the Towns of Lancaster, Aurora, East Hamburg (Orchard Park) and Tonawanda to be used in the development of the first four County Parks. The recommendations were referred to the Committee on Finance and Parks, and on May 19, 1925 the Board passed favorably on these recommendations.



EDWIN LANG MILLER, HAMILTON WARD, FRANKLIN E. BARD
JOHN J. LENAHAN, RICHARD S. PERSONS, FRANK M. SPITZMILLER
ERIE COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION
1924

Early in September 1925, deeds were filed for the acquisition of lands creating Chestnut Ridge and Emery Parks. Closely following in 1926, land was acquired for Como Lake Park and Ellicott Creek Park.

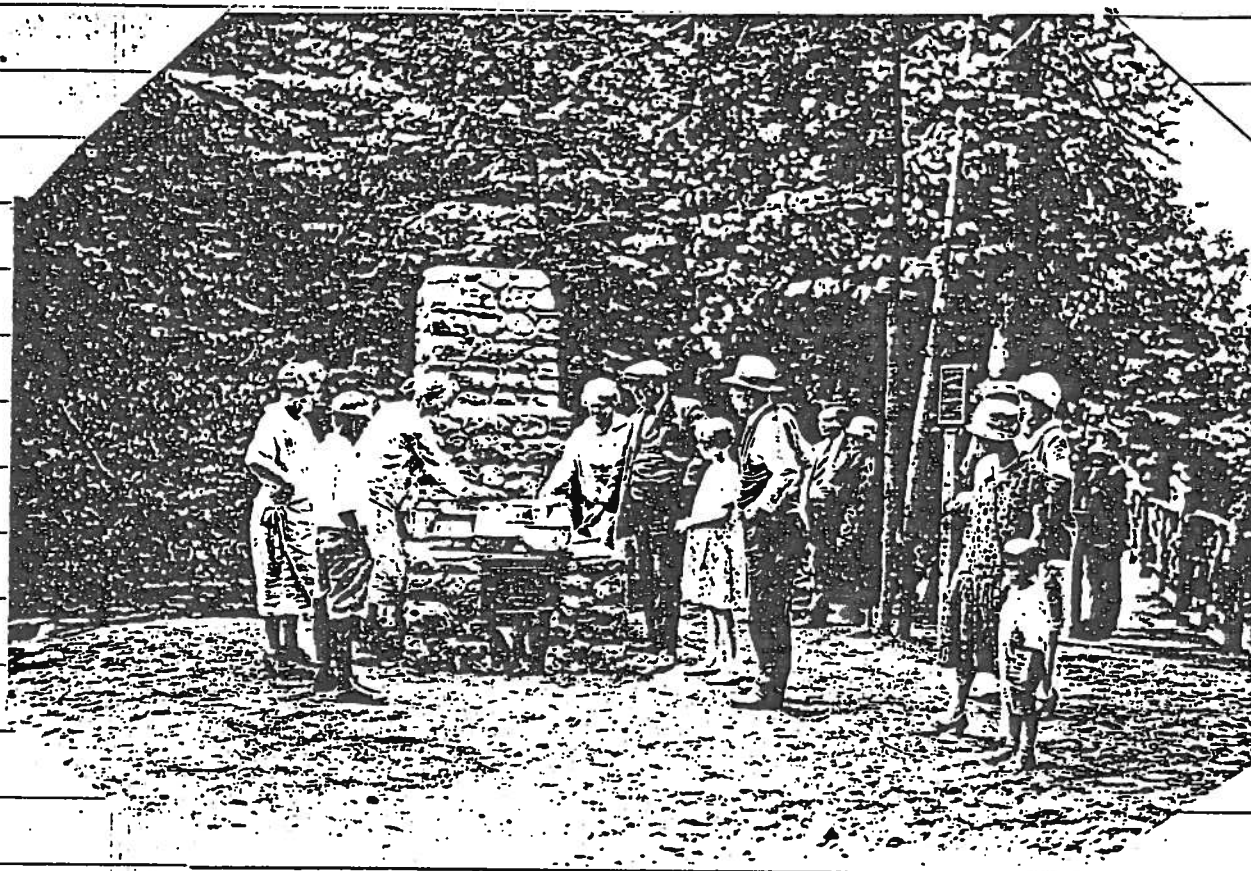
At first, these new park areas had no facilities for visitors. Picnickers were forced to park their cars along an adjacent roadway, walk into the woods to find a suitable spot, then sit on the ground to eat their lunch.

The increase in attendance soon attested to the popularity of the County Parks, and brought about the launching of a fixed and definite program of park development. It was necessary to open the area with roads to permit getting further into the property. Water was also required so pipes were laid and wells drilled; in fact, at Chestnut Ridge and Emery Parks, in the absence of any water supply for toilets and wash bowls, it was necessary to dam up streams to provide water reservoirs. Tables and benches, and of course, fireplaces (see picture on Page 4) were needed, as well as parking facilities, which as the picture on Page 5 taken around 1930, indicates were at a premium on busy Sunday afternoons.

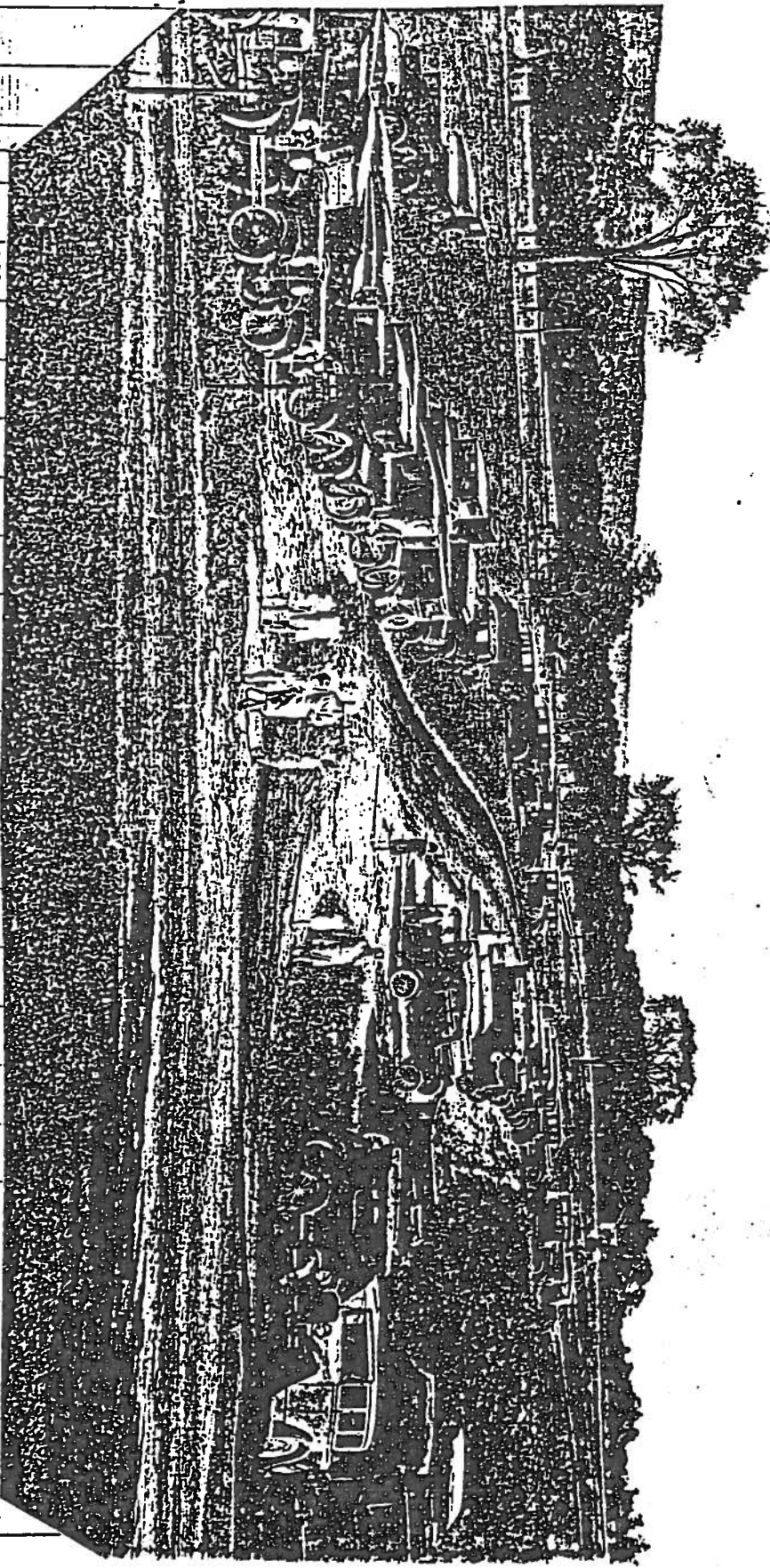
In addition to its responsibilities of establishing and developing county parks in Erie County, the Commission also had the additional authority, under Chapter 198 of the Laws of 1925 (see Page 421 of Exhibit #2) to: establish, acquire, control and manage State Parks and Parkways in Erie County with monies appropriated by the State.

Acting in its role as agent for the State (officially known as a Regional Park Commission) the Commission, with a \$100,000 State appropriation, started negotiations in 1927 and purchased in 1928 a total of 390 acres of land situated on the northern end of Grand Island, adjacent to what was known as Buckhorn Island. After its purchase, it became known as Buckhorn State Park.

In cooperation with the Allegany State Park Commission, which had authority over the land on the Cattaraugus County side of Cattaraugus Creek, the Erie County Parks Commission paved the way for the State to take control of Zoar Valley and turn it into a State Forest Preserve thus saving its natural beauty for future generations.



TYPICAL FIREPLACE AT CHESTNUT RIDGE



PARKING

AREA

BT

~~EMERY~~

PARK

AROUND

~~1930~~ 1927

The 1925 law also provided that the president of the Erie County Parks Commission is a member of the State Council of Parks (see Pages 419 and 420 of Exhibit #2).

The first Erie County Parks Commission was not only concerned with just the purchasing of land and setting up park equipment, they also were concerned with what today would be considered the ecology. Their concern was manifested in the regulations they set up for the parks. Among the ecologically oriented regulations were the following which made it unlawful for any person to:

- 1.) Deposit in any part of any park any garbage, sewerage, refuse, waste or other obnoxious material except in receptacles or pits provided for such purposes.
- 2.) Place eatables, dishes, or other utensils in the streams of any County Park for the purpose of cleaning the same or to pollute said streams in any manner.
- 3.) Injure, deface, disturb or befoul any part of any park or any building, sign, equipment, or other property found therein, or remove, injure or destroy any tree, flower, shrub, rock or other minerals.

The maximum penalty for violating the above rules or any of the other 11 Park Regulations was a fine of \$100.00 and imprisonment of up to 30 days.

The Erie County Parks Commission remained in existence until 1947 when it was abolished by the New York State Legislature. In the same act, the Erie County Board of Supervisors was given the authority to place the operation of the parks system under the Superintendent of Highways or under such county office or department as the Board may direct (see Exhibit #3). The Supervisors placed the control of the parks under the Superintendent of Highways. While the parks system was under the Highways Department, Akron Falls Park was added to bring the total number of parks to 5.

In 1951 the Board of Supervisors removed control of the parks from the Superintendent of Highways and created the new post of Superintendent of Parks (see Exhibit #4).

When the new County Charter came into effect in 1961, the department was combined with Recreation and became known as the Department of Parks and Recreation. The new department was made up of the Division of Parks, Division of Recreation and Bureau of Forestry. The department head is known as the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation (see Exhibit #5).

As was mentioned above, Chestnut Ridge, Emery, Como and Ellicott Creek Parks were the first four parks established by the original Erie County Parks Commission. In the following section, the four parks will be discussed with special emphasis on the historical highlights of each park.

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK

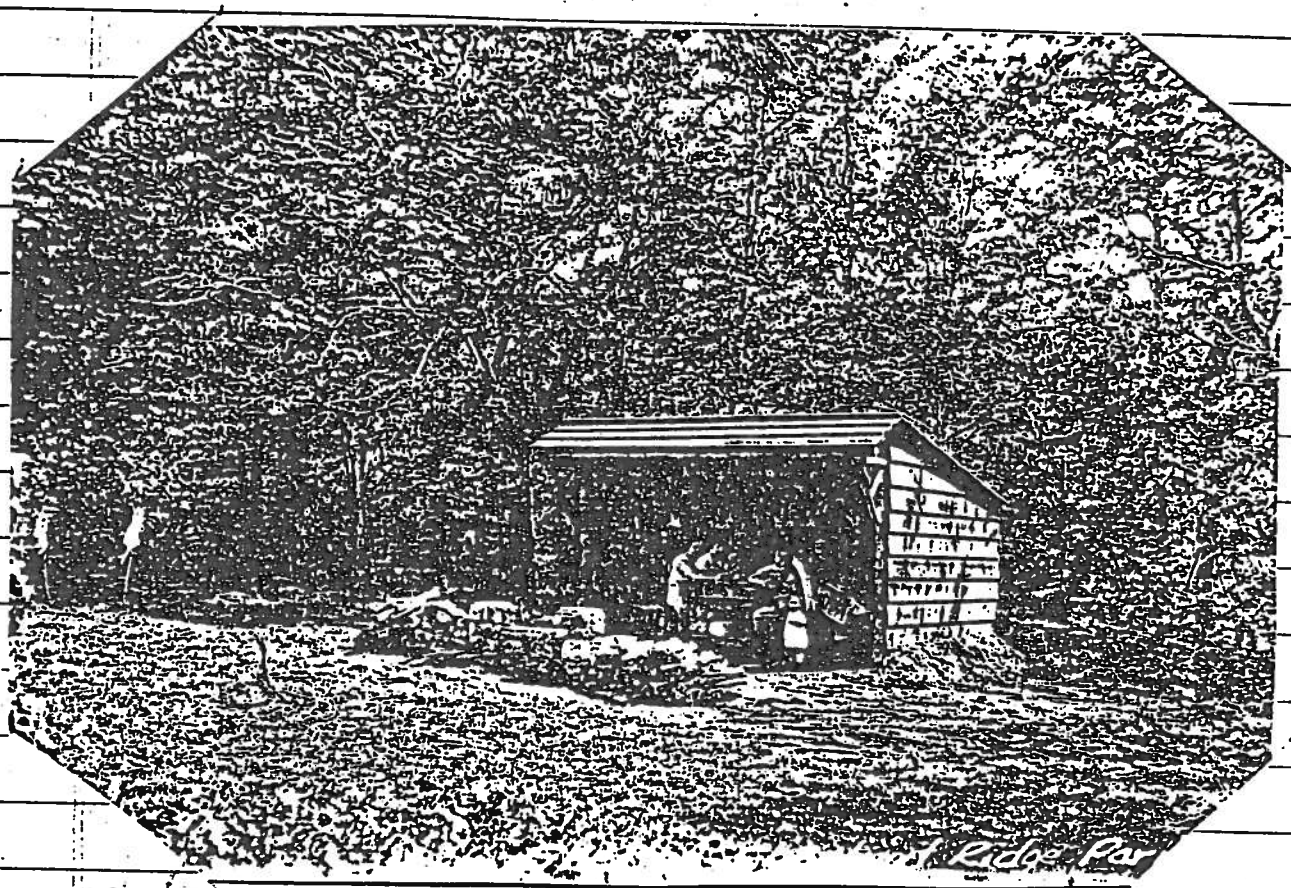
Chestnut Ridge Park is composed of 1231 acres of land in the vicinity of Chestnut Ridge Road and Newton Road approximately 15 miles south from downtown Buffalo.

This park originally consisted of 320 acres purchased from the Grace, Graves, Zell and Benning families at a total cost of \$24,050.00 or approximately \$75.00 per acre. Through acquisition and donation by such people as Hamilton Ward, (one of the original Parks Commissioners), who willed 240 acres and George Schoemacker (first Superintendent of Chestnut), who donated 39 acres, the park grew to its present size of 1231 acres.

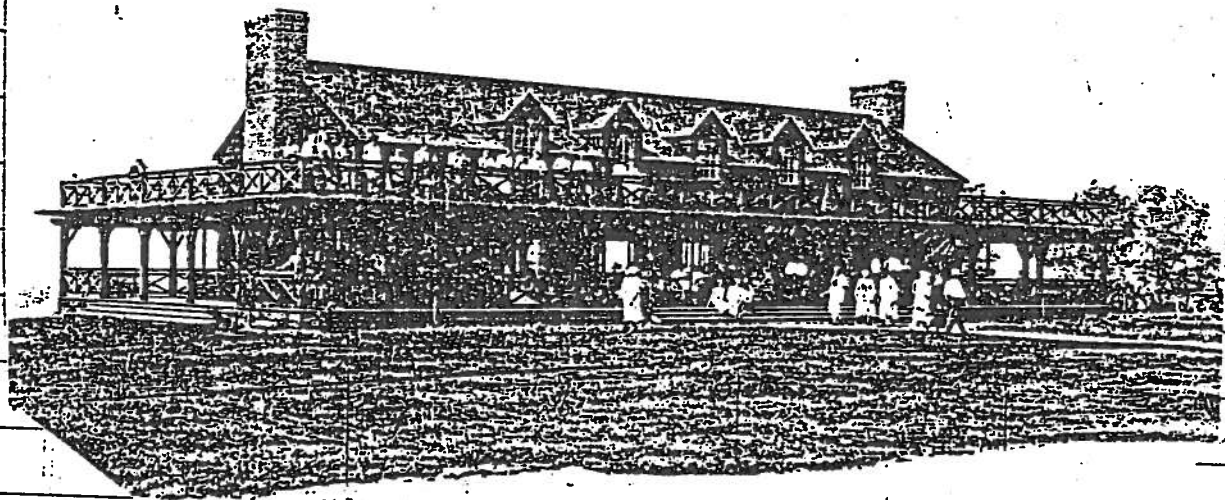
Chestnut Ridge was christened by the earliest settlers in the region who took the name from the abundance of Great American Chestnut trees on its hills. The trees were ravaged by a blight around 1906, which originated in Asia, and swept across the United States from the eastern seaboard. During the first years of the park, the diseased trees were cut down and converted into timber, the boards being used for the sides of Adirondack shelters (see picture on Page 8).

Chestnut Ridge Park was first opened to the public in 1925 for limited use by roadside picnickers.

In 1925 a large Casino was erected providing an assembly area with fireplace, concession stand and other conveniences for the public (see picture on Page 9).



TYPICAL ADIRONDACK SHELTER
MADE FROM CHESTNUT TREE TIMBER



THE FIRST CASINO AT CHESTNUT RIDGE
CONSTRUCTED 1925

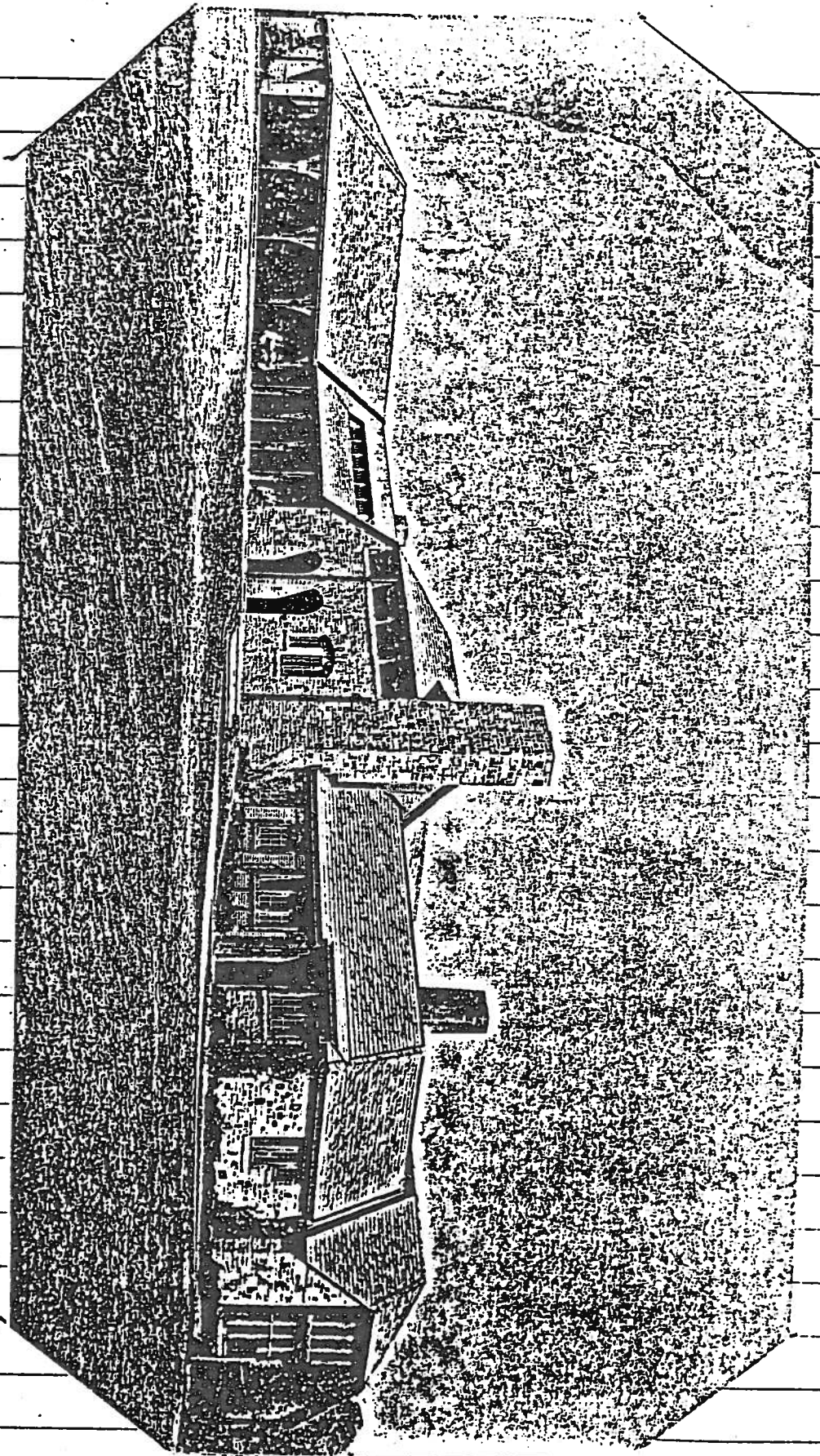
The upper floor of the Casino was in the form of an observation deck, which on a clear day, offered the spectator an amazing panorama of metropolitan Buffalo, Lake Erie, Western New York and the Canadian shore. The frame Casino was destroyed by fire in 1932 and was replaced by a masonry and timber structure in 1938 which is still in service today (see picture on Page 11).

The first Erie County Parks Commission was quite resourceful. One of the prime examples of their resourcefulness was the new Casino at Chestnut Ridge Park which opened in 1938. The stone for the structure was secured, at no cost to the Commission from a variety of sources. One supply came from the streets of the City of Buffalo. As city streets were renovated, the stone from the street itself as well as the curbs was transported to Chestnut and used in the construction of the Casino, and other structures such as comfort stations. Another supply came from the rip-rap of the old Erie Barge Canal (rip-rap is the lining of the canal walls with stone to prevent erosion).

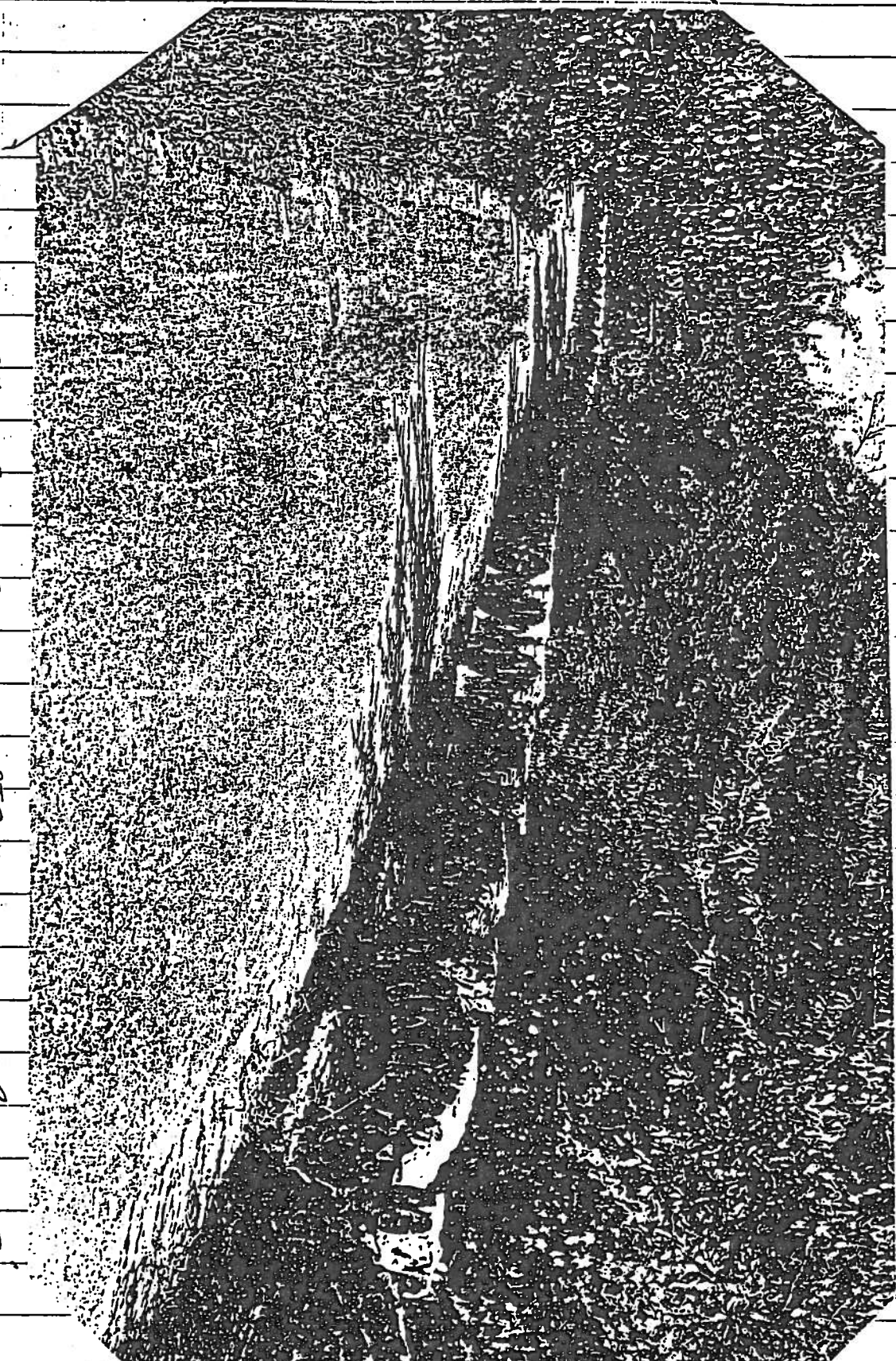
The timber for the new Casino as well as other park structures was obtained from the saw mill set up at Chestnut Ridge to mill timber using storm-downed trees and trees that were removed to make room for the expansion of the park. The saw milling process, along with a similar one at Emery Park, also provided timber for the other parks in the system, thus saving the County a substantial sum of money. The saw mill at Chestnut Ridge is still in service today and continues to provide rough timber for the parks.

Another way the Parks Commission saved the County money was by taking advantage of a large talented pool of workers whose wages were paid by the W.P.A. Program. Their services were employed on the Casino construction at Chestnut Ridge and on projects in other parks (see photo on Page 12).

Another example of the bargain hunting of the Parks Commission was the salvaging of a steel bridge that was part of a trolley line which crossed Cayuga Creek flowing through Lancaster Town Park. The trolley line was abandoned by the International Railway Company and the bridge presented to the Parks Commission. It was dismantled by parks employees and removed to Chestnut Ridge where it spanned



MASONRY AND TIMBER CASINO AT CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK
CONSTRUCTED 1938



STONE WORK CONSTRUCTION AT CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK
BUILT BY WARR WARRERS

one of the numerous gullies. The bridge is now called Grace Glen Bridge. Although the work was completed in 1934, it is still in service today, after recently undergoing some major reconstruction.

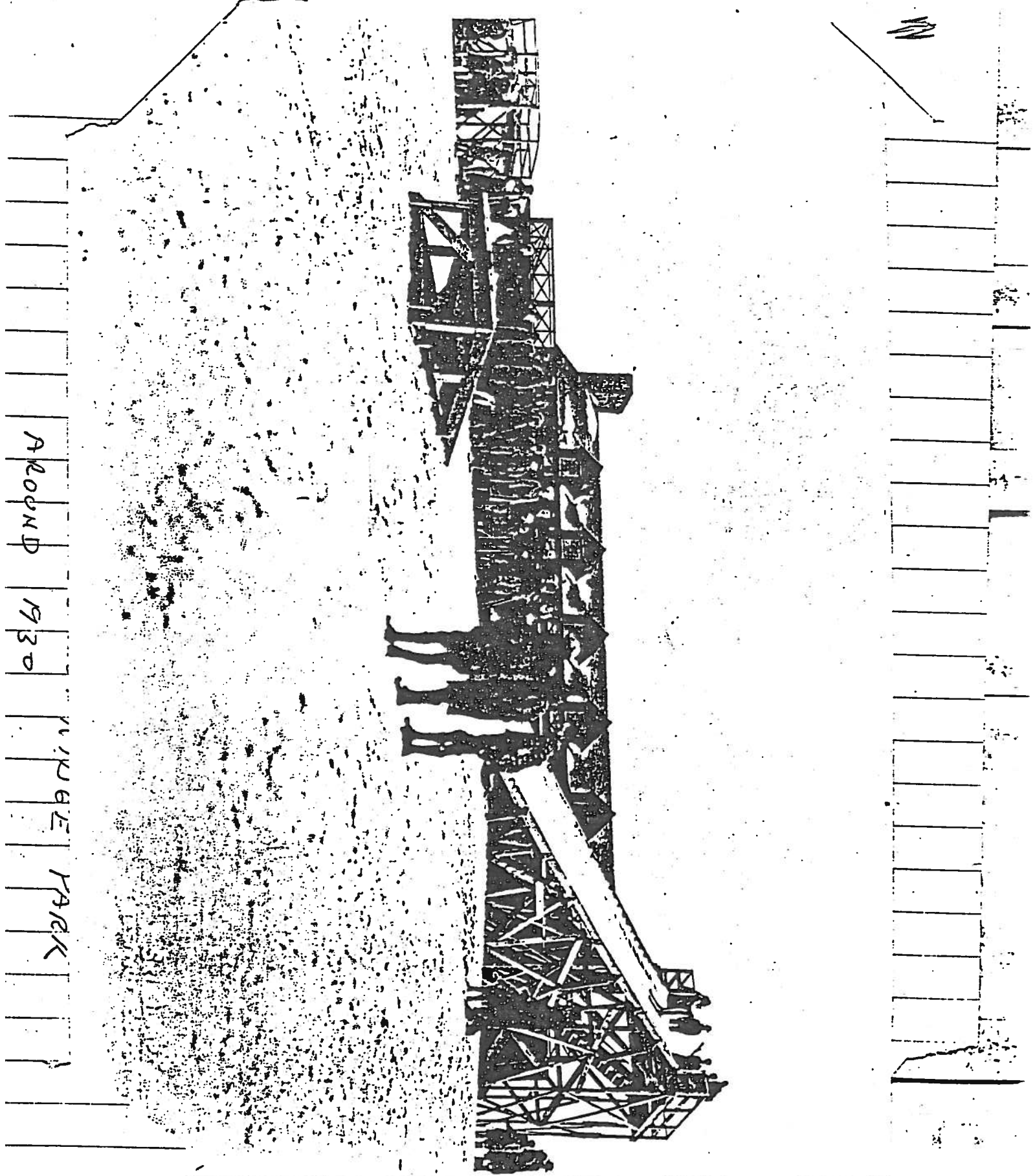
When the name Chestnut Ridge Park is brought up, most people automatically think of winter sports and recreation, but as early as 1925 Chestnut Ridge was recognized as having natural advantages which made winter activities such as snowshoeing, tobogganing and skiing most attractive. The photo on Page 14 taken between 1925 and 1932 shows one of the early attractions at Chestnut, a ski jump. The jump was razed a few years later due to the large number of injuries suffered by inexperienced jumpers. But winter sports still play a major part of the recreational activities at Chestnut Ridge where well designed and safe toboggan runs are available and the natural terrain is conducive to downhill skiing, ski touring, sledding and other winter oriented activities.

As mentioned above, the original Parks Commission was a bit ahead of their time when it came to dealing with the environment and conservation. One way they exhibited their concern was to erect a Pheasant house and start a Pheasant colony in 1927 at Chestnut Ridge Park. Their aim was to raise Pheasants in cooperation with the New York State Department of Conservation, Division of Fish and Game. The Pheasant house and colony, still in existence today, is used to shelter newly hatched chicks received from the State Department of Conservation in April and raised until they are liberated throughout the County, about 6 weeks before the Pheasant open hunting season begins. The entire operation is supervised by the State Conservation Department.

A more recent contribution to this conservation cause was started in 1965 when the Buffalo Museum of Science cooperated with the Parks Department in the establishment of the Shale Creek Nature Center. With naturalists from the Museum acting as instructors, groups investigate the many interesting wildlife and environmental areas within the Nature Center.

EMERY PARK

Emery Park straddles Emery Road in the Town of Aurora, approximately 16 miles southeast of downtown Buffalo. The park originated with the purchase of 195 acres



AROUND

1930

WILSON PARK

of land from the Emery family for \$23,000 or about \$118.00 per acre. The 195 acres was the homestead of the Emery family since 1834. It was sold by Helen B. Emery after the death of her husband, Asher Emery and the surviving family had no desire to continue in farming. The Emery family gave two distinguished jurists to State service, Edward and Asher Emery who were justices of the State Supreme Court.

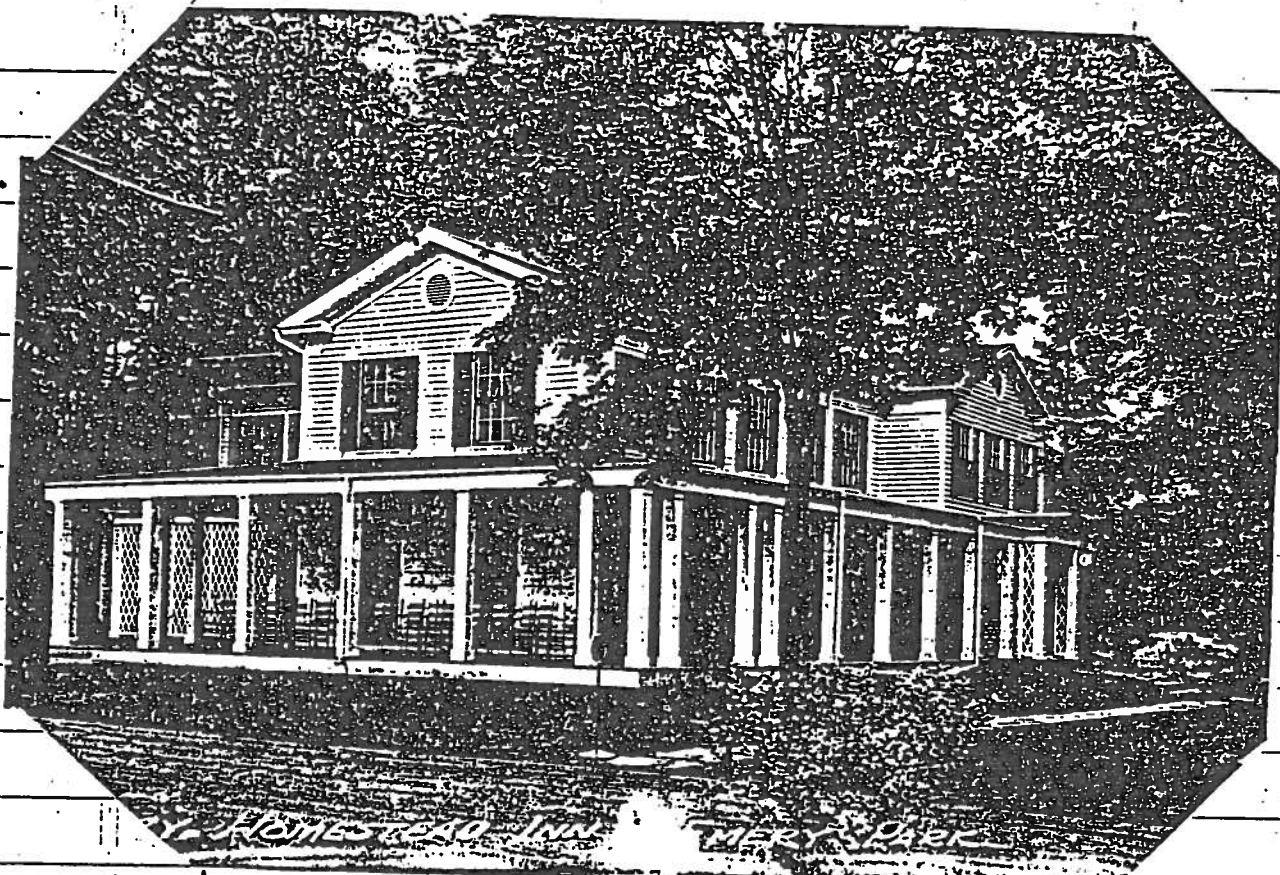
In 1928 the old Emery Homestead was named Emery Inn and converted into a family restaurant where light refreshments and full meals were available (see pictures on Page 16). On the second floor of the Inn a museum was created featuring an array of relics of rural colonial and civil war days. Many of the relics were personal possessions of the Emery family and were loaned through the courtesy of Mrs. Asher Emery.

The Inn continued to be used as a restaurant until 1974 when it was converted into one of the Parks and Recreation Department's four Friendship Centers. These Friendship Centers are used frequently by Senior Citizen groups for meetings, parties or other special occasions.

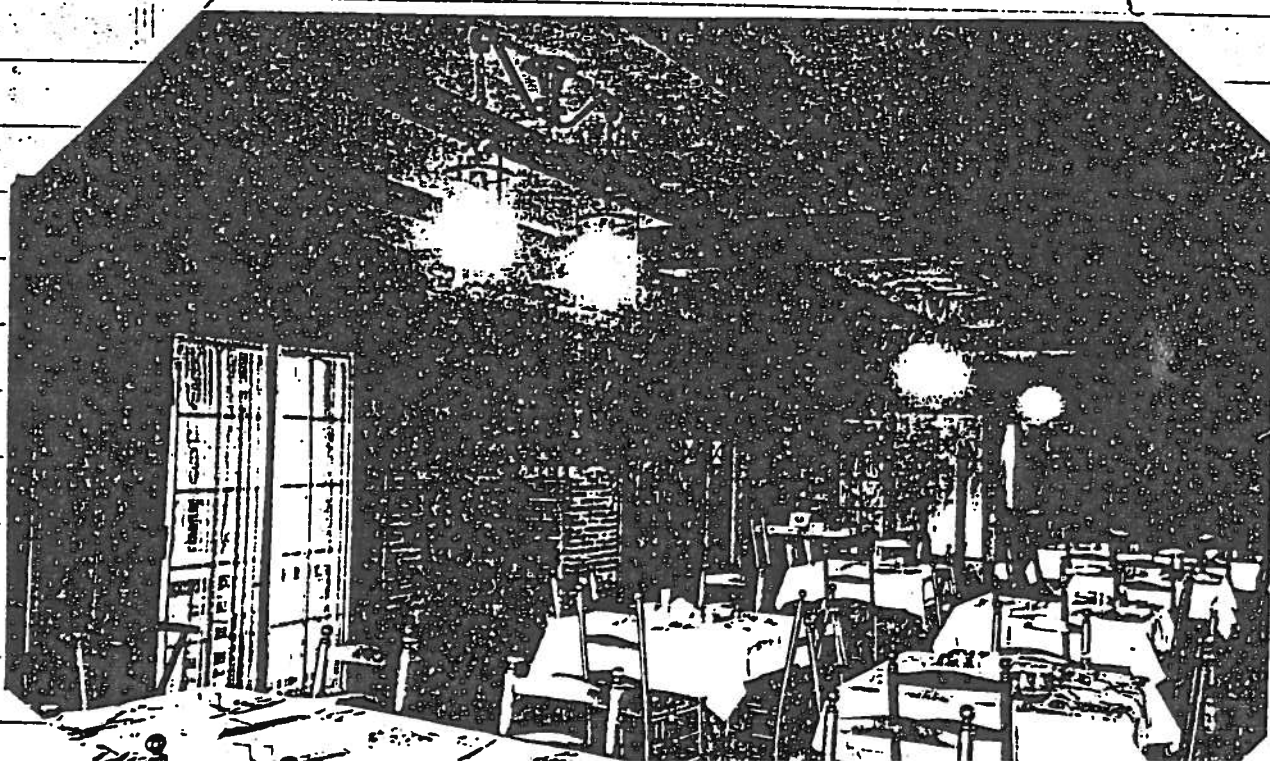
In 1935 a saw mill was purchased and erected at Emery. It was used to produce timber for all construction in the park as well as furnishing a quantity of timber for the other parks in the system.

Another example of the resourcefulness of the Parks Commission is the using of a bridge which previously was used to carry Knight Road traffic. It was donated by the Town of Aurora and removed to Emery Park where it was used to construct the first steel toboggan run in the Erie County Parks. It was later removed to Chestnut Ridge where it was used until 1972.

A unique feature of Emery Park was the construction of an amphitheater designed to accommodate 600 people and situated within a wooded natural bowl in the northern section of the park. An elevated covered stage was built at the lower end of the slope which was backed by a thick bank of various stately trees. The entrance was through a rustic shelter of stone and log construction. The amphitheater was used to present plays, concerts and other productions. The area was abandoned and the shelter rebuilt in 1961.



EMERY INN 1928



Due to its natural terrain, Emery is also quite popular with winter sports enthusiasts. Skiers have access to ski tows free of charge and can warm themselves in a modern ski chalet. Snowmobile trails, ski touring trails, an ice skating rink and a bicycle route on a scenic road are also available.

COMO LAKE PARK

Como Lake Park is located in the Town of Lancaster at the end of Como Lake Boulevard. 81 acres of the original 122 acres of the park were donated free of charge by the Village of Lancaster to be used by the County for park purposes only. Part of the remaining 41 acres were donated by former Village of Lancaster Supervisor John L. Staerber and the rest was purchased for approximately \$8,000. Through the purchase of additional land, Como Lake Park grew to its present size of 534 acres.

Cayuga Creek flows through the Park and was formerly dammed to create a lake. At the time the County took control of the property, the dam had deteriorated and it was necessary for the County to re-establish the dam in order to recreate the 6 acre lake. The lake was used for boating and canoeing during the summer and ice skating during the winter.

Due to the action of the wind and current of the creek on the ice, it was very difficult to maintain a smooth surface for ice skating so the creek was abandoned for ice skating and was replaced by a natural rink on shore. Because of the deteriorating action of the ice on the dam and the increased pollution of the creek, boating and canoeing were also terminated.

Although Cayuga Creek is not presently used for active participation activities, it still offers passive pleasure to picnickers, hikers, bicycle enthusiasts and others who might be taking a time out from using the tennis courts, basketball courts, or other facilities available at Como Lake Park.

ELLICOTT CREEK PARK

Ellicott Creek Park is located in the vicinity of Ellicott Creek Road, Niagara Falls Boulevard and Tonawanda Creek.

In 1926 part of the original 40 acres of the park was purchased for \$20,000 and the remainder was given to the County by the Buffalo Farm Exchange (a real

estate speculating company) to develop a park. The present acreage of the park is 165 acres with much of this land coming into county possession through tax foreclosure during and after the Depression.

In Ellicott Creek Park we have a unique situation where Erie County actually operates a park that is partially in Niagara County.

Tonawanda Creek forms the boundary between Erie and Niagara Counties. Prior to 1930, the State of New York (who has authority over navigable waterways in the State) purchased land from private owners in Niagara County to be used in the construction of a new channel for the Creek, thus making it more navigable. The new channel was dug west of the original creek bed resulting in an island being formed between the new channel and the original creek (see Exhibit 6). The resulting island was owned by the State but was given to Erie County to develop for park purposes.

Since the boundary between the two counties was the middle of the original creek bed, Erie County was in the position of developing a park that was partly in Niagara County. The Erie County Parks Commission did not have authority to operate outside of Erie County so it was necessary to have the State Legislature legally move the boundary to the center of the new channel.

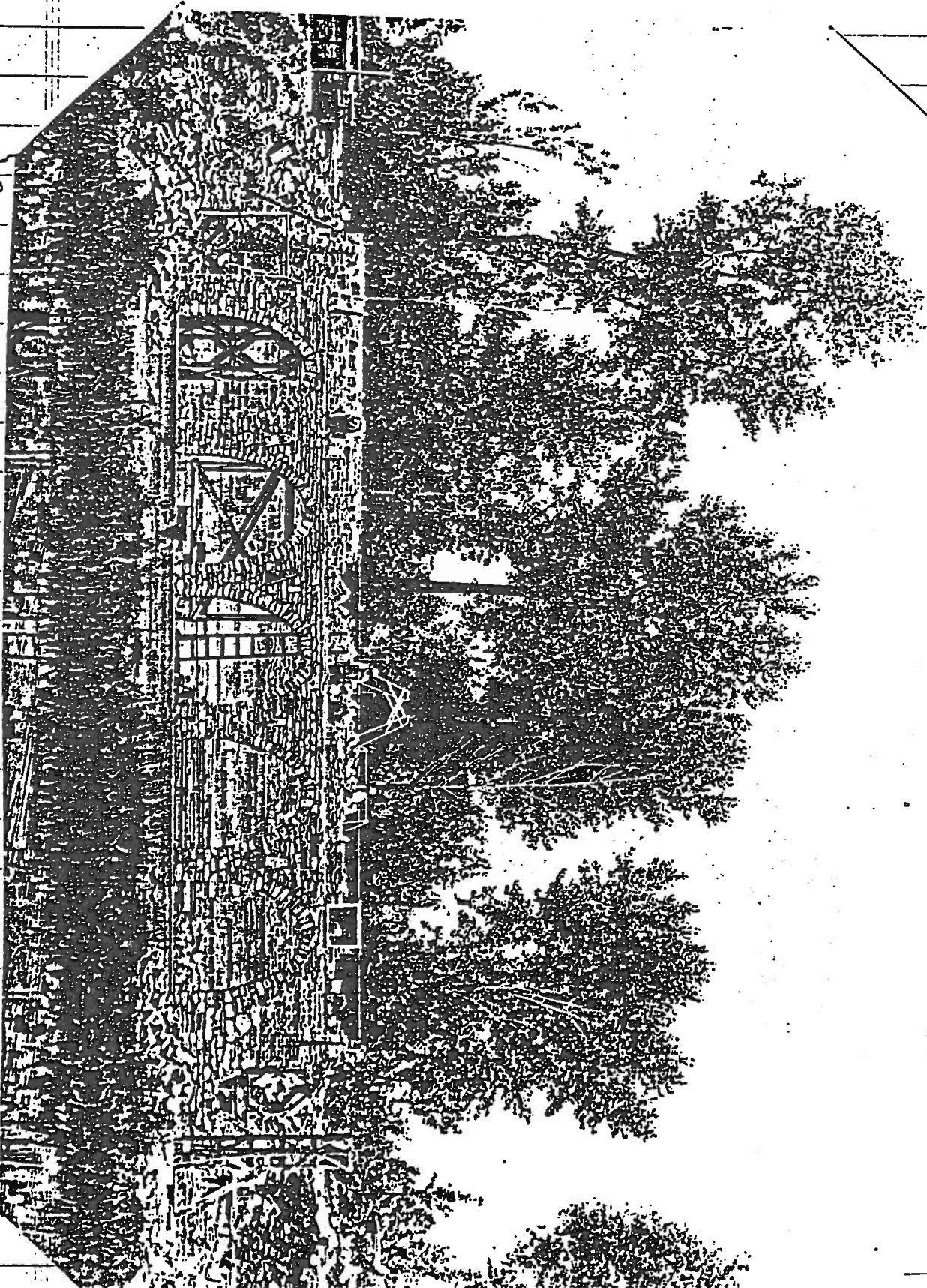
Through an oversight, the State Legislature designated the State right of way line and not the center line of the creek as the boundary between the two counties. As exhibit 6 indicates, the right of way line cuts through the western edge of the island (known as Ellicott Island) thus resulting in Erie County operating a park that is partly in Niagara County.

Due to its nearness to the waters of Ellicott and Tonawanda Creek boating and canoeing became the major attraction of the park and facilities were constructed to handle the water oriented equipment (see photo on Page 19).

AKRON FALLS PARK

Akron Falls Park, located in the Town of Newstead and the Village of Akron, was incorporated into the Erie County Parks system in July, 1947.

The park's original 137 acres were given to the County by the Village of Akron. The Village initially had intended to develop the park using its own resources.



BOAT HOUSE AT ELLICOTT CREEK PARK UNDER
CONSTRUCTION BY W.P.A. WORKERS 1935

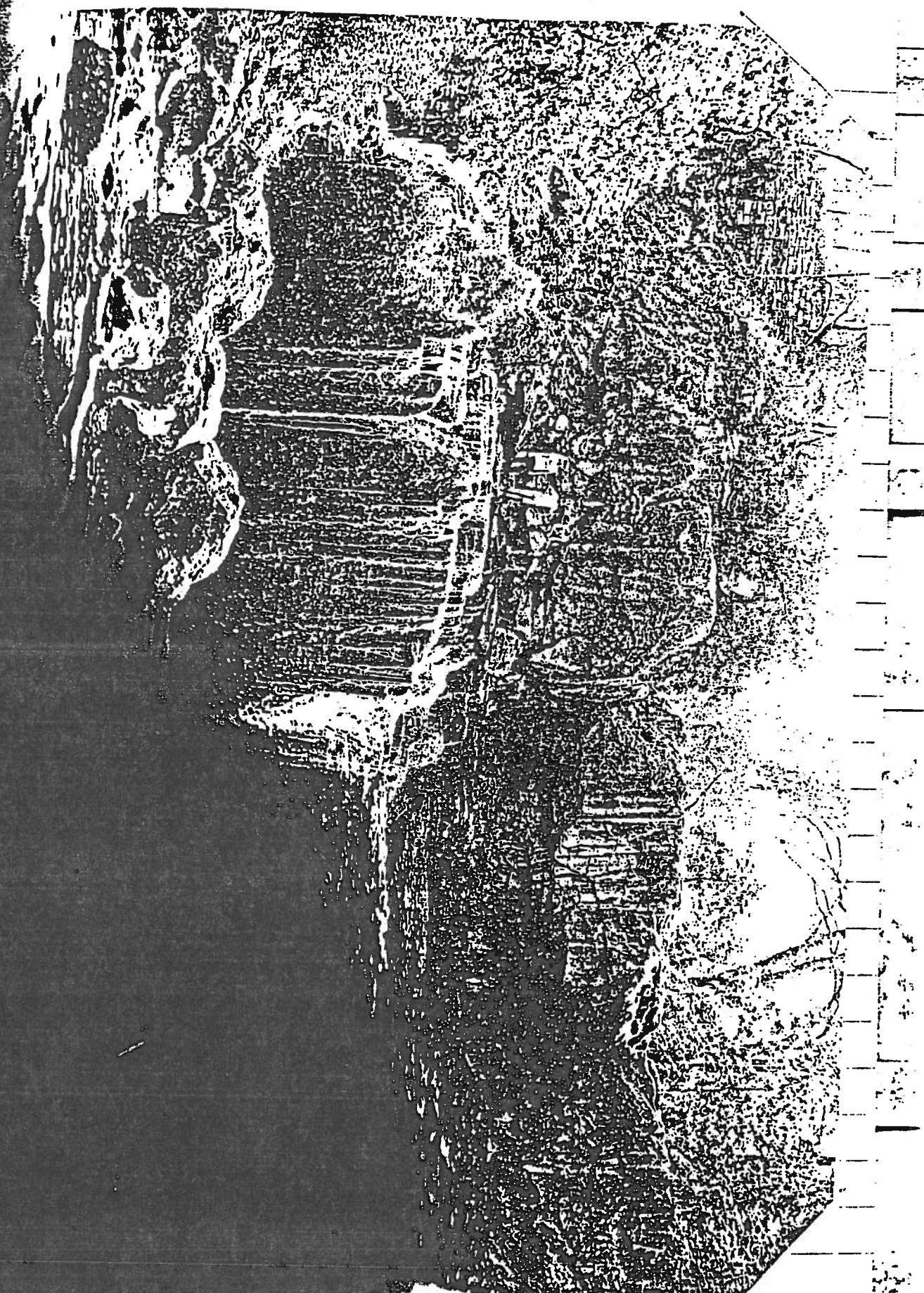
However, the Village of Akron did not have an experienced Parks Department that could cope with the numerous problems associated with the total acquisition and design of a new park, so it was decided to transfer the property to the County Parks Department for development and maintenance.

Since taking it over, the County has expanded the Park so that it presently consists of 284 acres. 139 of the 284 acres, located on the south side of Skyline Drive, are undeveloped and waiting adequate funding to implement the master plan.

Such scenic wonders as a 6 acre artificial lake, hiking trails along Murder Creek and, of course, the falls makes this park especially inviting to the lover of nature.

The falls is rather unique in that during dry months, such as in summer, the flow of water is reduced and the water flows through the crevices in the rock thus resulting in a water falls about $\frac{2}{3}$ up the face of the rock formation (see picture on next page). During the spring and after heavy rains, the crevices in the rock become filled to capacity and the water flows over the top of the rock formation resulting in a magnificent cascade.

Another interesting historical aspect of Akron Falls Park is the legend behind the name of Murder Creek. The legend of Murder Creek concerns itself with the love affair between a Seneca Indian maiden named Ah-weh-hah (Wild Rose) and a Seneca brave Toh-hoh-ne (Gray Wolf). Wild Rose and Gray Wolf were supposed to be married, but a white man named Sanders objected to the marriage because he wanted to marry Wild Rose himself. He told Wild Rose that he would rather see her, and anyone else who stood in his way, murdered rather than see her married to a Seneca. The legend further states that in order to prevent Sanders from interfering with the wedding plans, Wild Rose's father, who was a Chief of the Senecas, planned to escort her to the Cattaraugus Nation where Gray Wolf would meet her and the ceremony would take place. On the way to the Cattaraugus Nation, Sanders caught up with them and slaughtered the old Chief and attempted to kill the daughter. Wild Rose managed to escape and was concealed by a white family who lived near what is now called Murder Creek. When Gray Wolf learned of the old Chief's murder and the attempt on the girl's life, he rushed to her side to comfort her.



While Wild Rose and Gray Wolf were praying over the Chief's grave, Sanders again appeared, this time attacking Gray Wolf. During the ensuing confrontation, with ax and hunting knives, both opponents lost their lives.

Often Wild Rose would visit the grave of her father and lover to weep and chant her grief. One day Wild Rose was found in the graveyard lying upon the grave of Gray Wolf. Lying cold and lifeless, dead of overexposure and a broken heart. Beside the grave of her beloved, she was buried.

As the legend goes; now, as in former days, the lovers of midnight who stroll along Murder Creek may hear the voices of the two lovers as they wander over the modern dust of the ancient trail.

ELMA MEADOWS GOLF COURSE

Responding to the lack of golf facilities in the Elma-Marilla area, the Parks Department in 1957 purchased 204.6 acres of land in the Town of Elma, between Girdle Road and Buffalo Creek for the establishment of Elma Meadows Golf Course which officially opened on May 14, 1960. This particular site was chosen because of its thick, rich top soil and natural terrain which makes it an ideal location for a professional course. The course is an 18 hole, par 75 for women and par 70 for men.

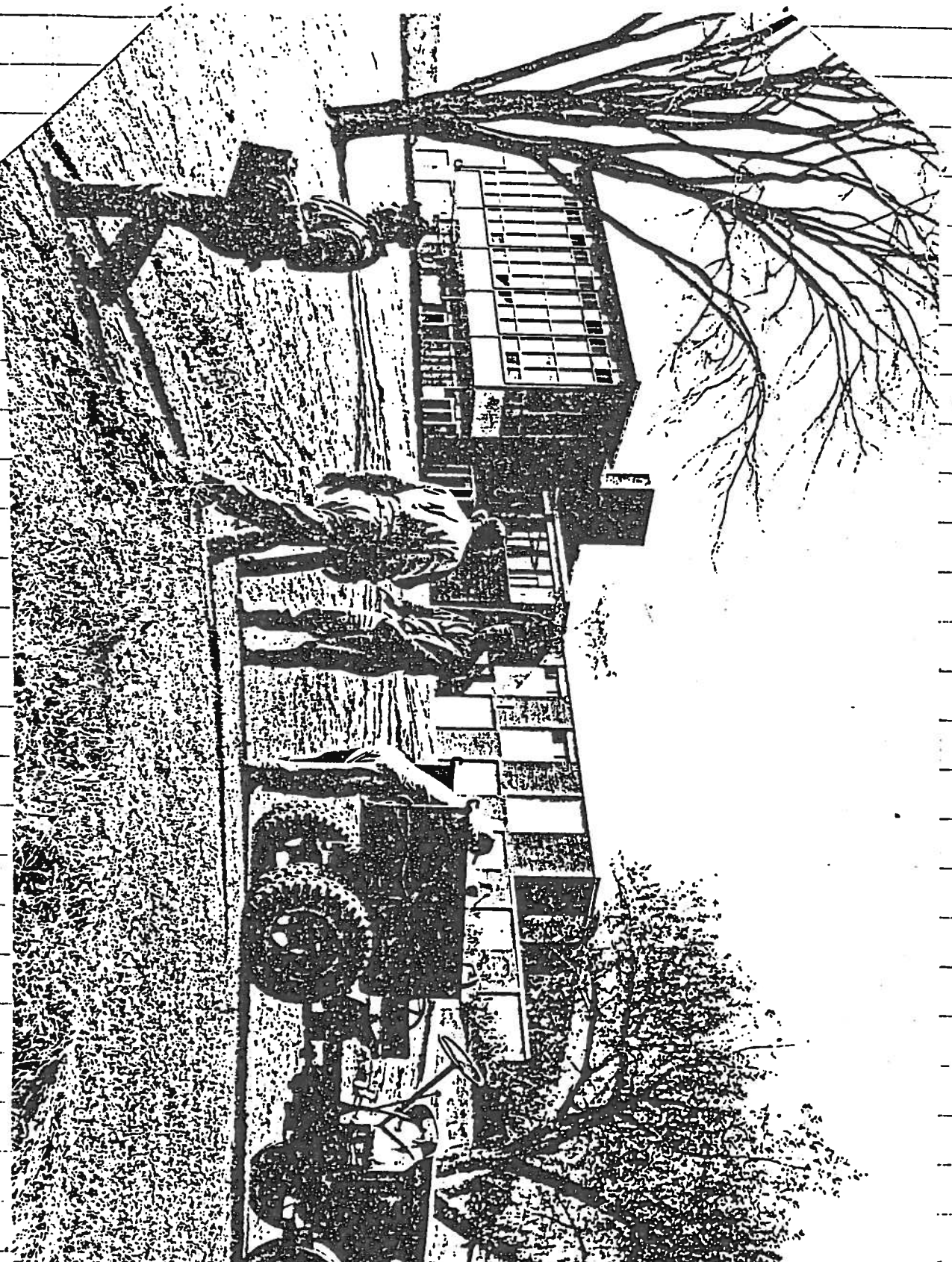
In addition to the course itself, there is a modern well-equipped club house (see photo on next page) and a large wooded area that has been fenced in and groomed into a picnic area.

ISLE VIEW PARK

Isle View Park was opened to the public in 1961 on a limited basis. Although it is one of our newer parks, Isle View is rich in heritage. The area that Isle View occupies was once part of the Erie Barge Canal. With the advent of the motorized tug boat, it was no longer necessary to use the section of the canal that paralleled the Niagara River. The barges could be towed along the river by a tug boat and no longer had to depend on being towed by a team of mules.

As was mentioned above, the Erie County Parks Commission became an agent for

10/2



ELMA

MEDDOWS

CLUB HOUSE

the State in 1925 with authority to acquire and develop park lands for the State in Erie County. Being an agent for the State, the State relinquished authority over a portion of the canal, from the Buffalo City Line to Tonawanda Creek, to the Parks Commission. The plans called for the development of a parkway from the City of Buffalo to Tonawanda which would offer the traveler a pleasant view of the River. For reasons that are not clear, the parkway was never constructed. The Commission also had responsibility to see to it that the canal bed was filled with suitable material.

When the Thruway Authority built the Niagara Section of the Thruway, it took control of a section of the former canal bed from the Buffalo City Line to the South Grand Island bridge and left in the bonds of the County the section from the bridge to Two Mile Creek. Isle View was established on the section from the bridge to Two Mile Creek.

Before the canal was filled in, the rip-rap (rocks layed on the banks of the canal to prevent erosion) was removed and used in the construction of structures throughout the parks system, such as the Casino at Chestnut Ridge Park.

Only about one-third of the Isle View Park acreage is currently developed. The plans for the remaining two-thirds call for:

- 1.) Making the area accessible for fishing, thus taking advantage of an area that a New York State Survey indicates is an exceptionally good area for fishing,
- 2.) Preserve a piece of early Western New York history and a section of the tow path that ran along the canal,
- 3.) Preserve the naturalistic aspects of the park.

There is currently a wide variety of animal and plant life in the area. Future development will attempt to maintain this wildlife and make it accessible to the public through the laying out of hiking and biking trails and cross country skiing trails for the winter.

The major feature of Isle View and for which it was specifically designed is the small boat launching facilities. As the picture on the following page indicates,

Isle View is quite popular, especially when special events are held.

The County, in cooperation with the City and the Town of Tonawanda, are working to develop a linear park to start at Isle View and run along Two Mile Creek to Sheridan Park, thus creating a park complex starting at the Grand Island Bridge running north beyond Two Mile Creek and east along Two Mile Creek to Sheridan Park.

In 1958, the Planning Division of Erie County, under the direction of H. Dale Bossert started looking into the adequacy of the parks system and researching new areas that could be purchased for park purposes. In 1960, they issued a report in conjunction with Niagara County, on the park facilities in the Erie-Niagara Region. Based on comparisons with county park systems, such as Cook County Illinois and Milwaukee County Wisconsin, it was apparent that Erie County did not have sufficient park acreage to adequately serve the residents of the County.

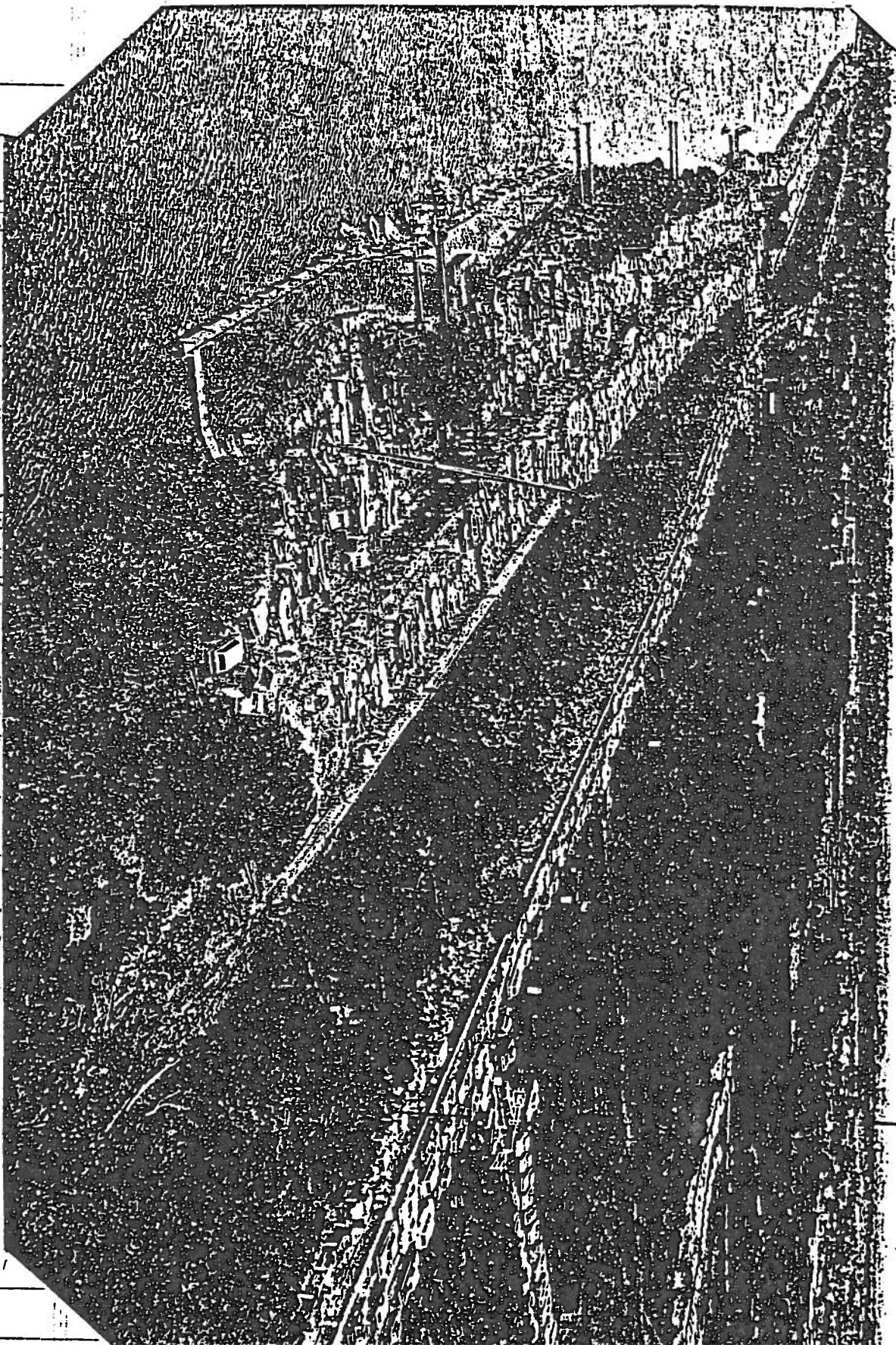
The study concluded that because of the following reasons, more park land was needed:

- 1.) Increase in county population.
- 2.) Rising Income - the county parks are used mostly by those people who have moderate incomes. It follows that with more people entering the middle income class, more people will be using park facilities.
- 3.) More leisure time is becoming available. With people working shorter days, shorter weeks and entitled to longer vacations, a greater part of a person's time can be spent pursuing leisure activities.
- 4.) Increase in mobility. Primarily through the increased dependence on the automobile, man has greater access to areas that were previously out of reach.

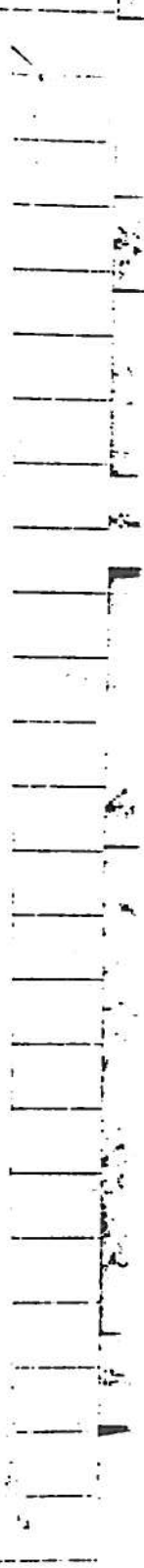
After determining that more park land was needed, a search was instituted to locate land that would be suitable for park purposes.

The aims of the search were to:

- 1.) Locate adequate acreage to produce a ratio of 10 acres of park land for every 1000 people.



USLE
VIEW
PARK
REGATTA
DORING
RECENT
BOAT



- 2.) Locate land in such a pattern that would insure there would be a regional park within 10 miles of every county resident.

After researching a variety of sites, the planners used the following criteria to select those sites they felt should finally be acquired:

- 1.) Locating suitable park sites in or near the fastest growing urban areas, especially in the first ring suburbs to the North and East of the City of Buffalo.
- 2.) Preserving the most notable geographic features of the county, such as the bed of 18 Mile Creek and Zoar Valley.
- 3.) Choosing a variety of sites representative of all kinds of scenery and recreational potential available in the county.
- 4.) Providing sites suitable for the most popular types of active recreation, especially those not presently available.

After reviewing many different sites, the searchers decided that the following 13 sites should be acquired. Listed in order of priority the sites were:

- 1.) 18 Mile Creek
- 2.) Como Park Extension
- 3.) Amherst-Clarence (Beeman Creek)
- 4.) West Seneca
- 5.) Sprague Brook
- 6.) Larkin Woods (Franklin Gulf)
- 7.) Tonawanda Creek Parks
- 8.) Chestnut Ridge Extension
- 9.) Akron Falls Extension
- 10.) Emery Park Extension
- 11.) Hunters Creek Wilderness
- 12.) Boston Forest Park
- 13.) Sturgeon Point

In 1960, the County Legislature approved the report and during the 1960's they authorized the purchase of all the above sites except West Seneca, Sturgeon

Point and Tonawanda Creek Parks and added Wendt Beach. Due to prolonged court proceedings brought about by county condemnation actions, some of the land is still not acquired and so the total cost is not yet tabulated.

Up to 87% of the acquisition costs of some of the parcels were paid for by Federal and State Grants. The county's share of the cost was financed through the issuance of land acquisition bonds.

The following is a discussion of those parcels of land that were purchased for the purpose of creating new parks. Some of the land that was acquired, under the plan, was used to extend existing parks.

18 MILE CREEK

The 463 acres of 18 Mile Creek Park are located just south of Lake View Road in the Town of Hamburg. It was originally proposed that sufficient land be purchased to provide for a park running from the mouth of the creek on Lake Erie to the junction of the two branches. Because of local opposition, the park was not continued to the lake but stopped four miles short. However, there are still strong feelings about extending it to the lake shore so as to provide a truly unique hiking experience and take advantage of the natural beach on the lake front.

The bed of 18 Mile Creek is notable for both its scenery and geology. Dr. Austin C. McTigue, in recommending the preservation of 18 Mile Creek Valley, states that it is internationally famous, that, in fact, European geologists have been known to refer to Buffalo as "the City near 18 Mile Creek." The 300 or so acres of wooded upland at the juncture of the two streams provide a possible site for group picnicking only a dozen or so miles from downtown Buffalo.

18 Mile Creek Park is not intended to be a highly developed park. The only capital facilities planned for the park (which may be years away due to budget constraints) are a small parking area, comfort station and perhaps a picnic shelter so as to make it accessible to that portion of the public who enjoy a truly picturesque area.

The park is presently considered a land bank and not open to general use because of a lack of adequate facilities for the public.

BEEAMAN CREEK

Located on 391 acres in the vicinity of Lapp and Salt Roads in Clarence, Beeman Creek Park was purchased in 1966 with the intent to relieve overcrowding in two of our most used parks - Ellicott Creek Park and Akron Falls Park. With the development of the new University of Buffalo and the UDC Audubon Community, there is a great demand for more park lands in this area.

The preliminary plans for Beeman Creek Park call for the development of the park in 3 major areas. The first is a family sports area to include: baseball, tennis, natural ice rink and other kindred activities. Another area will be set aside for picnicking and over half of the park is designated for use as a nature sanctuary and study area.

SPRAGUE BROOK PARK

Located in the Towns of Concord and Sardinia, Sprague Brook was opened to the public in 1972.

Sprague Brook was purchased primarily to be used for overnight family camping. It opened with 27 camp sites and currently has approximately 100 sites.

The Park consists of 950 acres of second growth woodland and upland meadows traversed by a gravel-bed brook geologically different from the shale streams of Franklin Gulf, Hunters Creek and 18 Mile Creek. The area also offers a pleasant view of the rolling hills.

In addition to the development of the 100 camp sites, 3 man-made, spring-fed ponds have been constructed to help control surface drainage and provide a fishing area for children. Also available are marked trails for snowmobiling, hiking and cross country skiing.

The development of Sprague Brook has been carried out with a B.O.R. (Bureau of Outdoor Recreation) Grant from the State which paid 50% of the developmental cost.

WENDT BEACH PARK

Wendt is located in the Town of Evans on the shore of Lake Erie just south of Sturgeon Point. The Wendt property was purchased entirely with county funds from the Wendt family whose main house was converted into a Friendship Center used

extensively during the summer months by Senior Citizen organizations and other groups.

Although the master plan for the Park is still in the planning and development stage, Wendt is open to the public for limited use. Since opening in 1973, the popularity of the natural beach has grown to the point where the limited sanitary, parking and picnicking facilities are already being overcrowded on summer weekends.

Future plans call for providing adequate picnicking facilities, expanded parking and a sports area. However, it must be emphasized that due to budget constraints, this work may take several years to complete.

HUNTERS CREEK WILDERNESS

Hunters Creek Wilderness located in the Town of Wales, was purchased primarily in 1965 from Howard Kellogg, a partner in the Spencer Kellogg Corporation.

When the area was purchased from Mr. Kellogg, there was an understanding between Mr. Kellogg and the County that the area would not be turned into a park but rather would be kept a wilderness area. When funding arrangements were made with the State for the purchase of the site, it was reaffirmed that the site would remain a wilderness type area.

Current long range plans call for the construction of only limited facilities such as a parking area, comfort station and perhaps a picnic shelter at the main entrance and establishing a network of trails so as to permit access to those people who find pleasure exploring nature in protected surroundings.