Thistle Mill Ford—South Mountain Reservation.

A Wood Road—Eagle Rock Reservation.

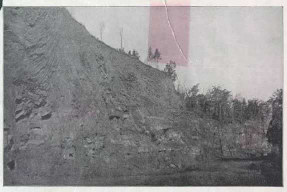
appointed for five years each. The act conferred on them full power to acquire property in fee, either by purchase, gift, bequest or eminent domain, for park purposes, to condemn property where necessary, to connect existing streets with such parks, to open new boulevards and to improve and construct the parks. It was provided that in the case of existing streets and avenues the consent of the municipal body, or other body having control of the streets, must be obtained by a formal transfer of the "care, custody and control" of the streets to the Park Commission. The Board of Chosen Freeholders was directed to issue bonds to an amount not exceeding $2,500,000, at four per cent., to provide the funds for the carrying out of the objects of the act.

THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED.

Judge Depue at once made the appointments under the act as follows: Cyrus Peck, one year; Frederick W. Kelsey, two years; Frederick M. Shepard, three years; Stephen J. Meeker, four years; Franklin Murphy, five years. A year later, in 1896, Mr. Peck's term expired and he was re-appointed by Judge Depue. Last year the term of Mr. Kelsey expired and George W. Bramhall was appointed to succeed him. This year the term of Mr. Shepard will expire.

Alonzo Church was appointed the Secretary of the original preliminary commission, a position which he has filled ever since, and he is now the oldest official of the Commission.

Brookside Drive—South Mountain Reservation.

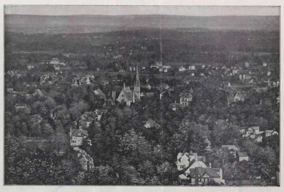

Basaltic Formation on Eagle Rock Avenue.

Typical Wood Scene—Eagle Rock Reservation.

THE GENERAL SCHEME.

A glance at the map published herewith, which is reduced from the map issued by the Park Commission with its second annual report, shows to the reader the general features of the scheme, which may be briefly summarized as providing in the territory embraced in the city of Newark and the Oranges two large parks on the easterly side of the territory, two on the westerly side, with three smaller parks, and all these connected by a system of parkways.

That any person of intelligence can look over the general plan without sectional bias and not come to the conclusion that the Commission has acted with rare good judgment, in the location of these different parks where they will be of the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people, is hardly to be questioned. Of course, that each locality in any such scheme as this, of as wide spreading a character, will always feel that perhaps it should have been favored more, goes without saying, but when one divests himself of all local prejudice, the conclusion is inevitable that the interests of the county as a whole have been studied, and that the parks are located where they will be ultimately of the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people.


View from Eastern Crest—Eagle Rock Reservation.

SPECIAL LOCAL BENEFITS.

Newark, which is to pay from seventy-five to eighty per cent. of the cost of the system, should, as a matter of course, be given proper consideration, and for Newark a glance at the map will show that its needs have been studied. The great Branch Brook Park, reaching from just north of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad to the old Bloomfield road and Franklin street in the township of Belleville, a distance of about two miles, and with a width of from 1,000 to 2,000 feet, affords ample facilities for the population in the northerly section of the city, while in the southern section of the city the Weequahic Reservation, which is about a mile and a-half long and from 2,000 to 3,000 feet wide, gives all the park room that is needed in the southerly portion of the city. For the residents on the "Hill" the West Side Park is provided, with a quarter of a mile as its length and 750 feet as its width. For the residents in the easterly part of Newark, East Side Park is provided. This is not shown on the map, but it occupies the block bounded by Adams, Van Buren, Oliver and Walnut streets, and contains about thirteen acres.

Leaving Newark, and coming to the consideration of the facilities that are to be directly afforded to the Oranges, there is the Orange Park in the triangle formed by Harrison and Center streets and Central avenue. Here is a park of fifty acres centrally located and easily accessible. Beyond this and connected with it by a boulevard are two tentative parks that are proposed. One of these is between Tremont avenue and Sterling avenue, and the other is near to South Orange avenue.

In East Orange there is the Elmwood Park, a wide boulevard running north and south through the entire township, and at the northerly end of the township the disposal works property, which the Park Commission stands ready to accept and incorporate into its system as soon as the property is turned over to it.

Then for the westerly side of the territory there are two magnificent reservations, that of Eagle Rock, with about 500 acres, and the great South Mountain Reservation, with some 1,800 acres.

All these are connected by a series of parkways or boulevards, affording ample means of intercommunication, and a superb series of fine drives all over the county. A little study of the map will make all these points clear.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

The most important and complete work has been done on the Branch Brook Park. This comprises about 280 acres. About one-third, and this the most expensive third, has been practically completed. In order to get the proper surrounding approaches it was necessary for the Commission to purchase two blocks of houses, one on Eighth avenue and one on Clifton avenue. The lake has been enlarged and connected with the old abandoned reservoir, making a fine sheet of water of about thirteen acres. A stone bridge is to span the narrow part of the lake. The ground has been graded, underdrained, seats placed in suitable positions, flower beds laid out, trees planted and the whole landscape effect brought into harmony. The northern end has been cleared up of underbrush, but little beyond this has been done. An infinite amount of trouble has been caused by the inability to find the owners of some of the land in the westerly part of this park, but the condemnation proceedings have progressed steadily and in from three to four months the titles will be clear.

THE ORANGE PARK.

The land for the Orange Park has all been acquired and a vast amount of preliminary work has been done. The ground has been thoroughly underdrained, some of the excavation for the pond and lakes has been done and it is confidently expected that the entire park will be completed this summer and a large part of it be fully developed by the early fall so that residents will have an opportunity of enjoying it.

The two smaller parks, one between Tremont avenue and Sterling avenue and the other near the line of South Orange avenue, are at present merely suggestive of what the Commission would like to do.

EAGLE ROCK PARK.

At Eagle Rock all the land has been acquired except a tract of about a quarter of an acre right in the center of the property. Condemnation proceedings are now on foot to acquire this. No elaborate development has been attempted here as yet, the Commission having confined itself to the opening of some of the woodland roads, the cleaning out of the nuisances in the park and the clearing up of the underbrush.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN RESERVATION.

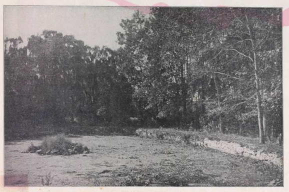
In the great South Mountain Reservation about one-half of the needed property has been secured and this mostly toward the northern end. The reservation surrounds the Orange reservoir, and when it is complete it will afford the best possible protection to the water supply. There are a number of nuisances now surrounding the reservoir that will be absolutely wiped out as soon as the Park Commission secures control of the land. A good part of the southern end of the reservation has also been secured. It is believed that the Orange Common Council will turn over to the Park Commission the property owned by it around the reservoir as the best possible way of keeping the surroundings clean and wholesome.

THE OTHER PARKS.

The Weequahic Reservation has been all acquired but no development to speak of has been done there. This, as well as the South Mountain Reservation, will be retained, for the present, at least, simply as reservations, and no attempt made to bring them into a high state of park development.

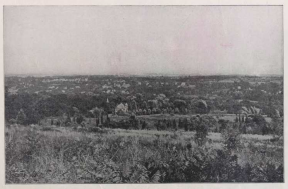
The entire property for the West Side Park and the East Side Park has been secured, and in the latter considerable work has been done that will show in the summer in the shape of redeeming the land from low, marshy ground, with unsightly shanties on it, and bringing it into the condition of a finished park that each year will grow more and more attractive. In the former the land has but recently been acquired, and no special plans for its elaboration have yet been made.

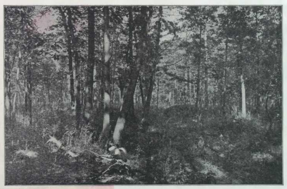
Chestnut Hollow—South Mountain Reservation.


Interior View—Orange Park.

Campbell's Pond—South Mountain Reservation.

Falls of Second River.


View from South Orange Avenue and Cedar Lane—South Mountain Reservation.


General Character of Wood Growth on First Mountain—South Mountain Reservation.

THE BOULEVARDS.

Little has been done in the direction of the boulevards, the lines laid out by the Commission being largely tentative and subject to variation as the system is developed. The boulevard running from the Weequahic Reservation in a northeasterly direction to the West Side Park, and thence through the Orange Poor Farm to the Elmwood Park, crossing Central avenue, and thence through to Main street and under the Delaware, Lackawanna railroad to Park avenue, has been surveyed the entire distance and will be laid out on the line indicated. All the other boulevards are at present merely suggestive of what in the judgment of the Commission will be an advantageous system. Changes may be made in these as occasion requires. The section of this north and south boulevard running through East Orange, from Central to Park avenue, is now under contract, and will be finished as a sort of "sample brick" and to give the people of the Oranges an opportunity of judging for themselves what beautiful drives these boulevards will be when completed.

Central and Park avenues have been turned over to the Park Commission in East Orange and in West Orange. Orange has not so turned them over. The improvement of these will not be made until such time as the Park Commission acquires power over them throughout their entire length.

The extension of Central avenue from Valley road to the top of the mountain, there to connect with the South Mountain Reservation, has been determined on, but the lines may have to be changed as the exigencies of the case may require, when the property is sought to be acquired.

HOW THE MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT.

The following table gives the exact cost of all the work done up to the time of the issuance of the report of the Commission, and shows the amount spent at each park for the purchase of land, as well as the amount spent in improvement or construction:

Locality.	Land bought.	Construction.
Branch Brook Park	$1,129,086.48	$126,519.79
East Side Park	124,447.65	29,886.25
West Side Park	172,234.50	10.00
Orange Park	93,366.77	3,810.57
Weequahic Reservation	102,811.01	173.94
Eagle Rock Reservation	185,204.88	3,114.55
South Mountain Reservation	78,614.07	4,031.55
Park Ways	38,285 00	158.77
Totals	$1,924,050.36	$167,705.42

These totals foot up, as the amount expended for land and construction, $2,091,755.78, to which add the office account of engineering, surveying, legal expenses, searches and guarantees of titles, rents and office expenses of $119,132.71, and the grand total of expenditures at date of the issuance of the report was $2,210,888.49.