

Beard of Chosen Freeholders Administrative Building. Hackensack, New Jersey

In submitting the report of its activities during 1957, the Bergen County Park Commission directs attention to the improvements made in park sites already acquired and to the additional land obtained for future development.

During the year progress in the construction of the County's first public golf course justified the intention to open the links to the public early this summer. However, weather and other situations beyond the Commission's control caused some delay.

The basic objective of the Commission is to make areas available to the public as quickly as possible without postponing the program for further land acquisition needed to meet the recreational demands of an expanding County.

A. Thornton Bishop

Respectfully submitted,

President

#### The Year in Review



TEN YEARS have passed since the Commission was activated in the Spring of 1947. The main problem then was how to make the Commission function so that future years would provide a park system for Bergen County that would keep pace with the changing times and the increasing population.

Our very first studies clearly showed that we were starting late, fifty years later than Essex County and many years later than any other New Jersey county in the metropolitan region. The problem, as we saw it, was not only to keep pace but also to catch up in providing open spaces and recreational opportunities that other counties already had. The urgency for acquiring land was apparent but the County population was less than 500,000 people and we estimated that it might be as high as 700,000 people by 1970. Surely, 5,000 acres of park lands, county, state and municipal, would do the job.

This year, ten years after our first estimate and three years ahead of our anticipations, the County population passed the 700,000 mark. Now we know our original estimates for park lands, which seemed enormous at the time, were really on the low side. Truly the year of decision is just ahead. New proposals for land and financing are being prepared for submission in 1958.

Progress in 1957 was made in many areas but the main development project was the Rockleigh Golf Course. In the winter of 1956-57 the Commission's own forces undertook the clearing and drainage work on the 18-hole course. Construction of tees, greens, fairways and traps, along with an extensive irrigation system, started in the late Spring of 1957 and was completed in October.

The Call Causes IIndex Canadaustic

In December construction of the clubhouse began. It is hoped that the clubhouse will be ready for use on July 4, 1958, the target date for opening the course. Spring contracts will be let for potable water and fire lines, fencing, a maintenance building, maintenance equipment, a new well and food service equipment.

The Van Saun Park Cerebral Palsy Horse Show was the most effective single feature to take place in a Bergen County park to date. Twenty-six thousand spectators viewed the two-day show, which was considered the most successful show ever staged by the Cerebral Palsy group.

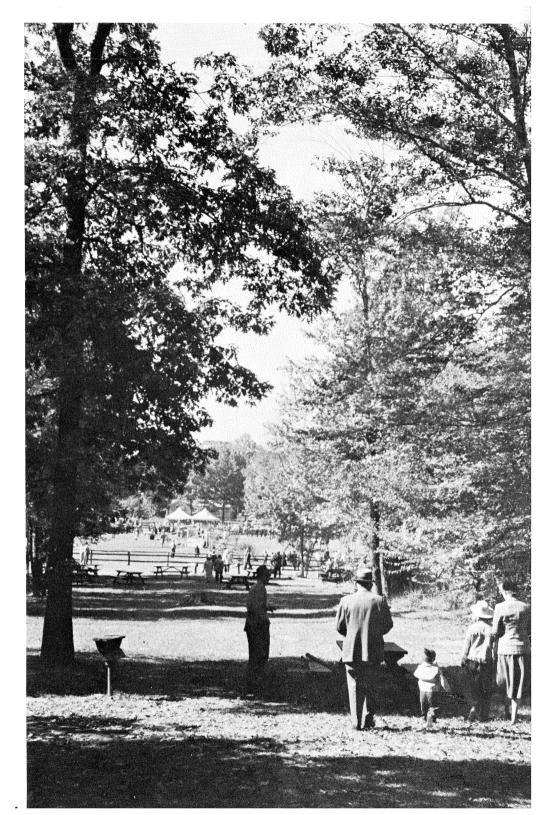
Naturally frozen ice skating rinks were installed in North Arlington and Wallington and flood lights for night skating were installed or increased in Leonia, Garfield, Wallington, Ridgewood and North Arlington.

Planning work undertaken during the year was the gigantic Overpeck Park and the Van Saun Children's Zoo. Studies were made for the golf course parking lot, land reclamation in Lyndhurst and Teaneck, and a road system for the Campgaw Mountain Reservation.

Construction of a new road in Van Saun, and comfort station in North Arlington were completed.

Maintenance of County parks in seventeen different municipalities absorbed such a substantial portion of the Commission's budgetary funds for the year that all of us were aware future construction would have to be curtailed unless there is some financial relief in the immediate future.

Approximately fifty-six acres of land were acquired in nine different communities including the gift of 7.82 acres by the Borough of Glen Rock.



## Overpeck Park



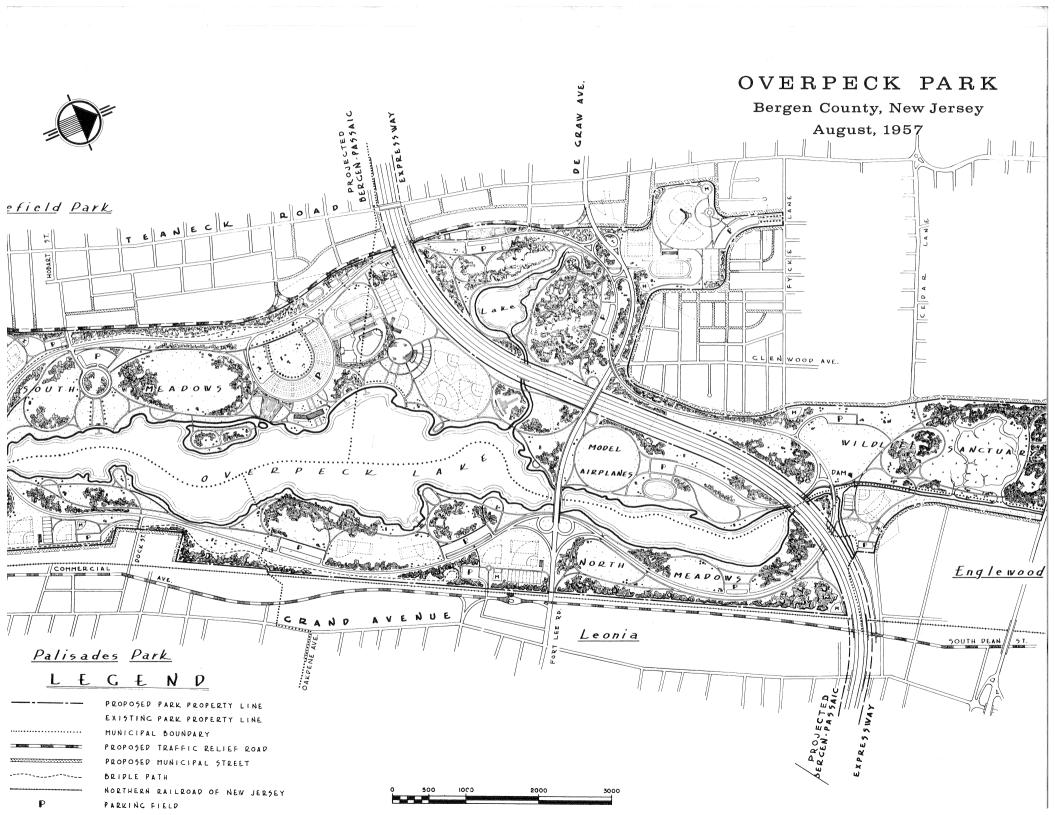
In 1956 the Commission retained a consulting firm of Landscape Architects to prepare a Master Plan to guide the development of the vast Overpeck Creek basin into the County's Overpeck Park. The concentrated efforts of the consultant's staff in more than a year's work were hampered by indecision as to the Bergen-Passaic Expressway location, conflicting engineering data on the flood potential and lake level, drainage difficulties, detailed problems on the tide gate operation and the inability of the Commission to offer a definite schedule of financing.

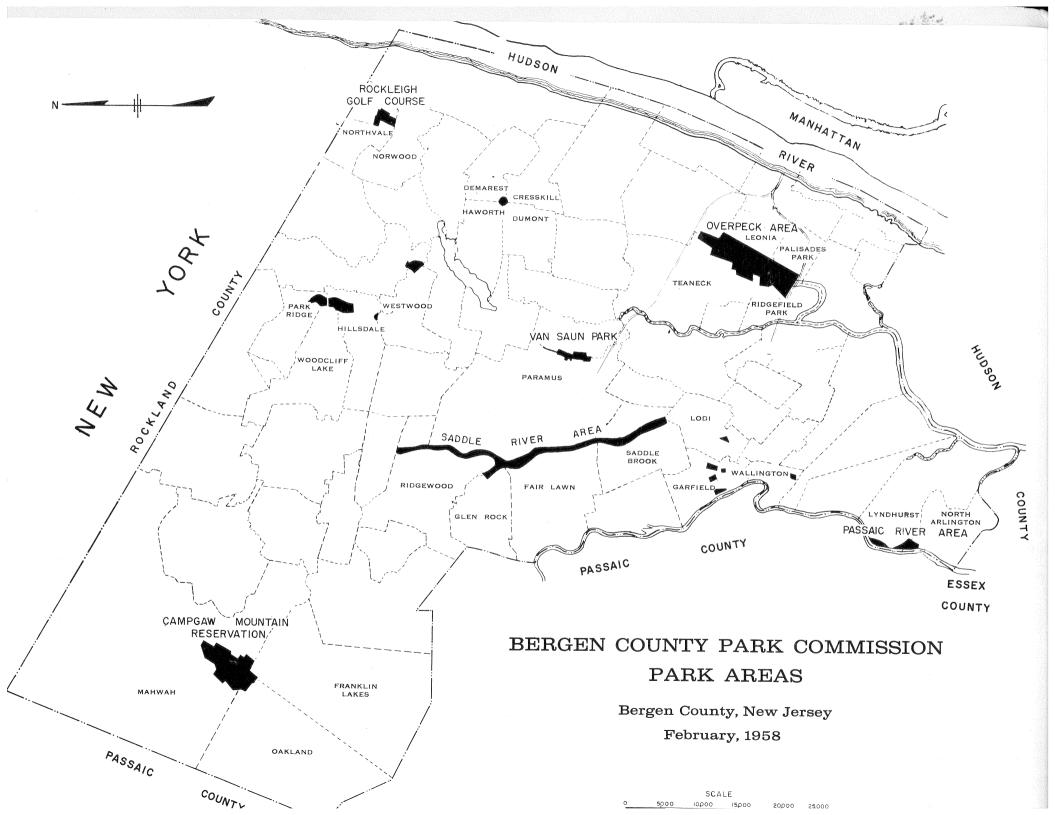
You will notice on the plan on the opposite page that recommendations for traffic relief roads are made on both the east and west sides of the park. The County-approved location of the expressway necessitates the relocation of Fort Lee Road through the park and a number of new bridges are required to adequately circulate traffic within the park.

Land reclamation in this thousand acre area will have a lasting and desirable effect on the future development and character of the entire County. All problems now facing the Commission can and will be satisfactorily solved if some means of financing this project can be found that will not materially increase the tax rate. In any event, it is impossible for the Commission to finance this project within the framework of the present legally established limit of 3/4 mill on the real estate tax dollar. It just does not provide enough funds.

Reclamation of the formerly infested, open garbage dumps has provided four landscaped park areas with skating rinks and ball fields. The Sanitary Land Fill project has reclaimed approximately 80 acres of swamp land which is not yet developed.

The State Health Department keeps a constant check on the gradual clearing of the polluted waters upstream from the tide gates, and the State Fish and Game Commission will stock the lake when the waters are healthy enough to contain fish life.





#### THE YEAR OF DECISION



A CENTURY AGO Horace Greeley made his now famous statement "Go West Young Man". The rest of the statement, not too well known, is "and adapt yourself to the land". Times change as populations increase, so that today the very reasons people formerly adapted themselves to the land have reversed. Today we must adapt the land to the people. The increasing leisure time, the increasing average age of our people, the increasing technological development and an enormous increase of psychological factors indicate that we must prepare for more and more spare time activities and recreational space for all.

All sorts of new programs and new facilities will have to be prepared to meet the demands of this changing need. Your County park system will be a major factor in preparing new programs and facilities, but we need land. The foundation on which we must plan is parks and the basis of parks is land.

If the people of the County of Bergen are to have open spaces for themselves and for future generations, a planned acquisition program must be put into effect in 1958. Each year after that it will be more costly and in a very short time prohibitively costly. The time of decision is here.

Perhaps we cannot afford to develop parks immediately but, if we are ever to have them, if we are to avoid the creation of a new massive slum in Bergen County, we must reserve the open land now.

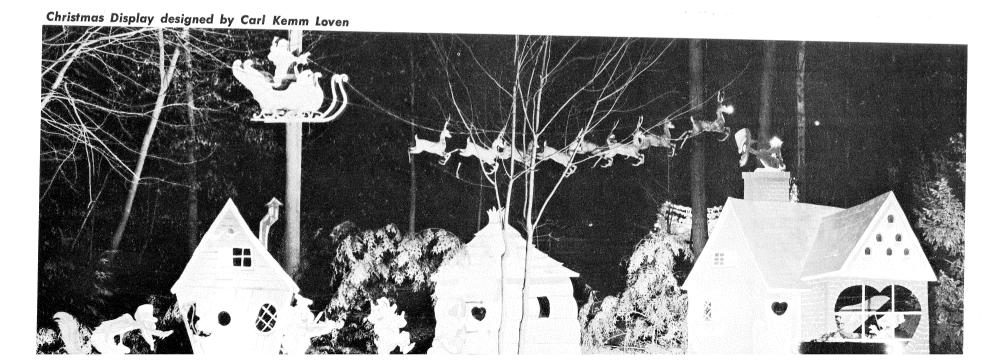
How many acres should be in the County park system and what will they cost? At any given point the answer can be exact but, with a population increase of 100,000 people every four years and a comparable increase in land costs, the answer obviously depends upon the exact moment of reply. Nonetheless, using our best judgment, we believe we should nearly double our present holdings within the next four years. We must, or we will be priced out of the market forever. The additional acres needed will amount to perhaps three and a half million dollars. But the time is now, a few years from now will be too late.

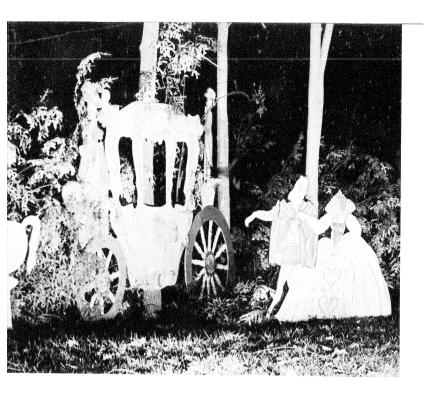
On the opposite page you will notice the vast open areas in the north and southeast that are in need of recreational facilities. If we are to provide a reasonable degree of recreation, breathing space and a good life for the people of our country, we must acquire land in these areas now.

## VAN SAUN PARK

Development continued as fast as our funds would permit during the year. A connecting road between Forest and Continental Avenues was completed in time for use by the heavy traffic of the Cerebral Palsy Horse Show. The road construction made it necessary for excavations over four feet deep and filling in a fairly large swamp area of almost six feet deep. A new bridge was constructed over the Van Saun Mill Brook some sixty feet in width and several hundred feet of the Brook was relocated by excavation of a new stream bed. Forty large trees were removed for road alignment and dozens of smaller trees were cut or transplanted. Basic grading operations for the coming Children's Zoo and parking lot were started.

Two new potable wells were installed. One at the Children's Zoo area and the other in the newly opened picnic area. Both wells are electrically operated.





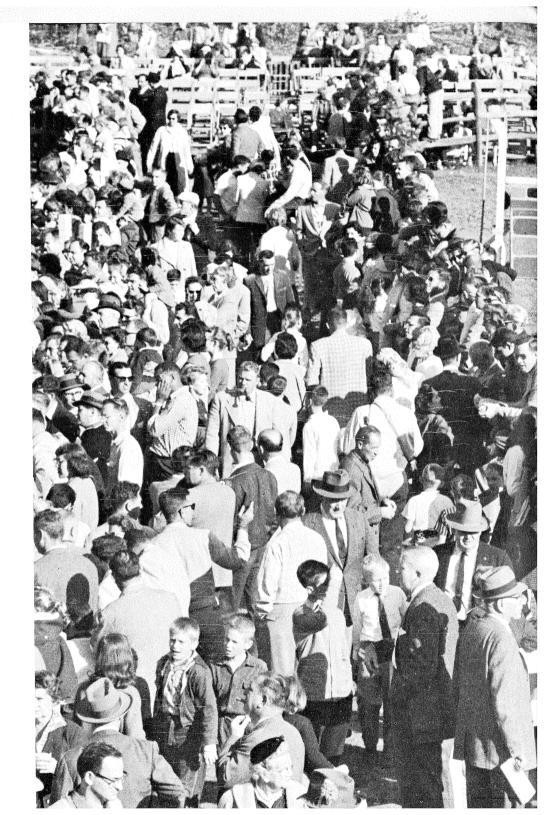
Installation of the electric lines for the wells made it possible to install and light the noted Carl Kemm Loven Christmas display of over eighty individual cut-outs dealing with the Christmas story. This exhibit, which opened two days before Christmas, remained open and popular until the twelfth day after Christmas when it was removed. An average of four people in each car brought a total viewing audience of over 25,000 people during the fifteen day exhibit.

Road grading, cutting and filling resulted in the creation of new and large lawn areas throughout the entire northerly section of the park. Drainage, even in the newly opened areas, remains a problem. The steep banks on the easterly section of the park create a vast drainage area that formerly ended in the clay based swamps of the park. Elimination of these swamps created a major drainage problem that will take time to solve.

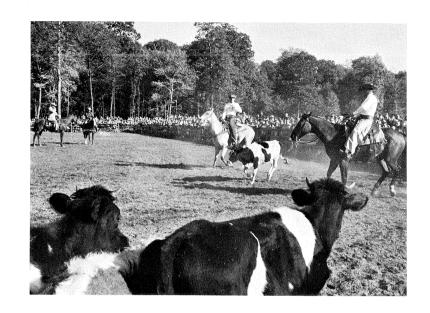


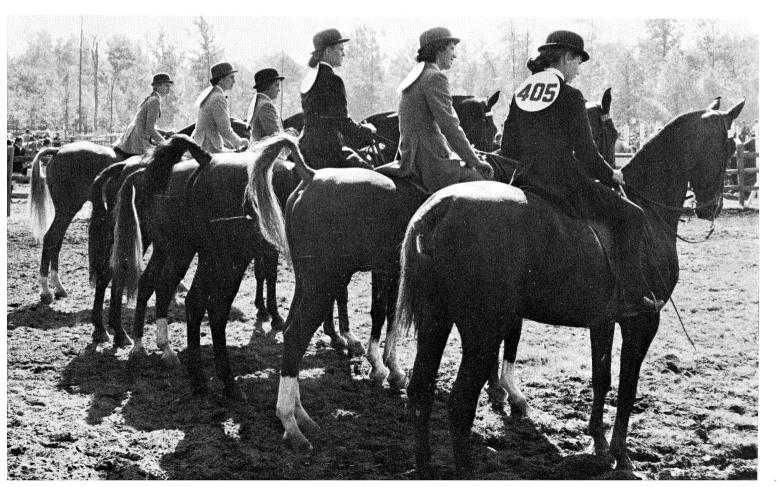


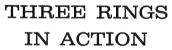
BERGEN COUNTY for many years has been an important center for developing, training and showing horses. Interest in horses has never slackened in the County but, as land became expensive, places to train and show horses gradually disappeared. Cooperation between the Park Commission and the Cerebral Palsy Horse Show group made it possible to hold the 8th Annual Show in Van Saun Park in the Fall of this year. Press sources have informed us that the two-day show with its 26,000 visitors was the largest assemblage of people that ever took place in the County minus the visit of the Vice President of the United States. In any case, it was the most concentrated use of a Bergen County Park.

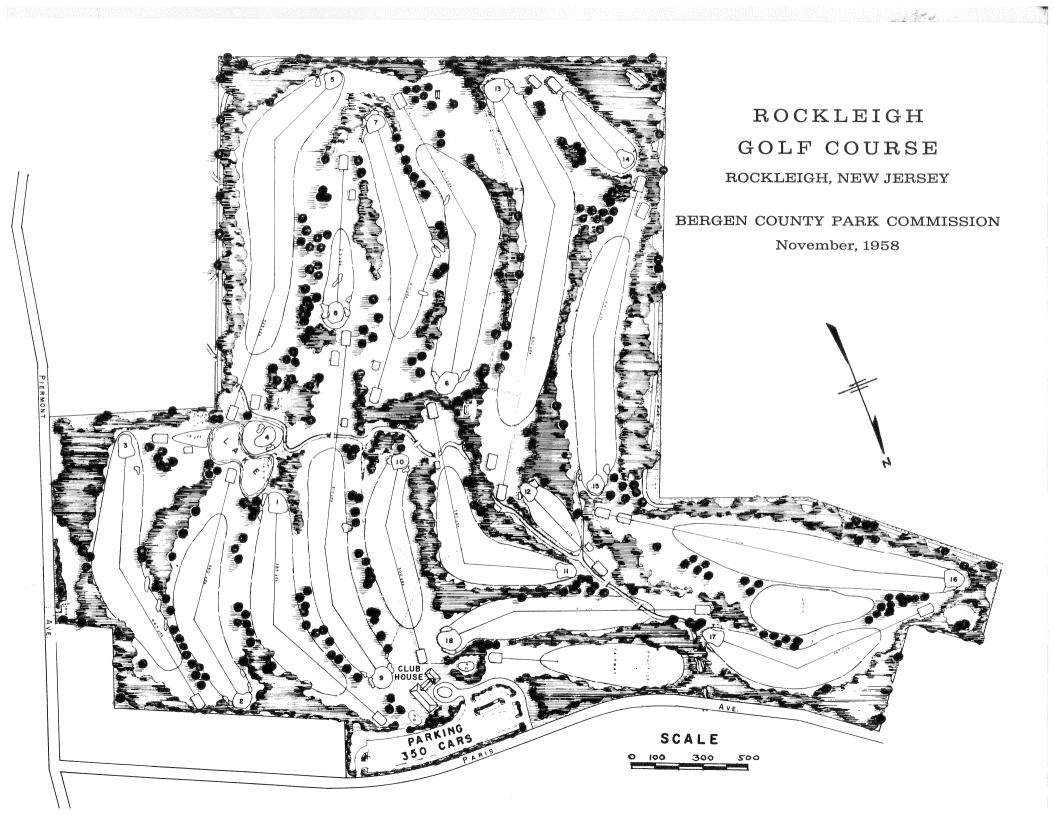












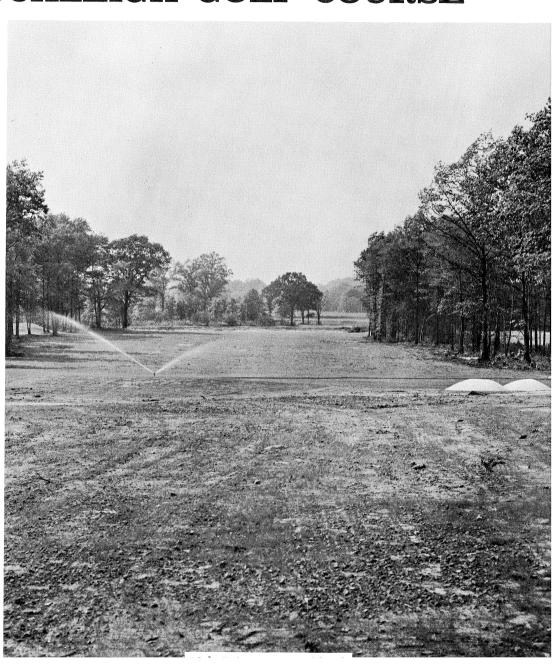
#### THE ROCKLEIGH GOLF COURSE

THE DATE for the opening of the Rockleigh eighteen hole golf course to public play is July 4, 1958, weather conditions permitting. However, the clubhouse will not be ready until later.

The actual construction of the course started in June of 1957. Since then eighteen complete holes, two practice greens and a practice fairway have been graded and seeded. During the course of this work, twenty-three tees were built, twenty greens were constructed, nineteen traps were excavated and sand installed. By Fall a greensward of 110 acres of fine young grass had been established.

A pump house, an artificial hazard lake and a complete irrigation system were installed. The north flowing brook that diagonally traversed the course was cleared, straightened and partially relocated. New bridges were constructed and thousands of feet of drainage ditches and pipe lines installed.

In December the first work on the new \$200,000 clubhouse was started. It was hoped that the building would be ready for the target date but temporary structures will be installed until it is ready. With the best of our estimates we recognize that the exact date cannot be determined by the Commission.





**Progress** 

Saddle

River



## **Progress in Land Acquisition**

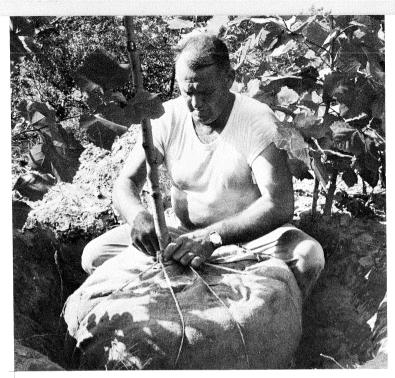
# LAND ACQUISITION STATEMENT PROPERTIES COMMITTED OR ACQUIRED BOND & BUDGET ACCOUNTS

Close December 31, 1957

Description	SUB-TOTALS		TOTALS			SUB-TOTALS		TOTALS	
	Acres	Cost	Acres	Cost	Acres	Acres	Cost	Acres	Cost
PRIVATE PROPERTIES COM- MITTED OR ACQUIRED Reported close of Dec. 31, 1956	1,881.74	\$1,267,434.30			OVERPECK CREEK AREA Purchased or committed for Municipal properties donated Riparian Rights	125.45 957.06 - 0 -	\$180,274.00 - o - 45,311.19	1,082.51 \$	225.585.1
ments 1957Acreage Adjust- ments 1957		+ 34,834.77			PASSAIC RIVER Purchased or committed for Municipal properties donated	50.46 80.16	121,321.00 - o -	130.62	121,321.0
COMMITTED OR ACQUIRED 1957 Overpeck Creek Area Saddle River Area	11.78 12.06	11,400.00 40,925.00	,	\$1,302,269.07	SADDLE RIVER Purchased or committed for Municipal properties donated Private properties donated	487.45 46.02 6.12	556,931.00 - o - - o -	539.59	556,931.00
Northeast Bergen Area Pascack Brook Area Pascack Valley Area	4.37 4.98 15.12	16,000.00 17,001.00 29,980.00			Southwest Bergen Purchased or committed for Municipal properties donated	0.12 90.00	2,200.00	90.12	2,200.0
MUNICIPAL PROPERTIES. ACQUIRED			48.31	115,306.00	Van Saun Purchased or committed for Private properties donated	138.09 1.25	194,561.73 - o -	139.34	194,561.7
Reported close Dec. 31, 1956 Adjustments made in 1957	1,275.42 - o -				Northwest Bergen Purchased or committed for			927.63	181,594.2
Municipal Properties donated 1957	1,275.42				Northeast Bergen Purchased or committed for Private properties donated	160.51 13.08	126,806.75 - o -	173.59	126,806.7
Borough of Glen Rock	7.82		1,283.24		PASCACK BROOK Purchased or committed for Municipal properties donated	7.24 110.00	23,896.38 - o -		
RIPARIAN RIGHTS					PASCACK VALLEY	*****		117.24	23,896.3
Reported close Dec. 31, 1956			- O -		Purchased or committed for HACKENSACK RIVER			15.12	29,980.0
45,311.19 Linear feet Grand Total of all Properties		· _	- O -	45,311.19	Purchased or committed for			.08	10.00
			3,215.84	\$1,462,886.26	GRAND TOTAL			3,215.84 \$	1,462,886.26



Children Love Animals



Transplanting — Rockleigh

#### Holiday Parking



### **Auditor's Report**

March 4, 1958

BERGEN COUNTY PARK COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING HACKENSACK, NEW JERSEY Gentlemen:

I have examined the financial records of the Commission for the year ending December 31, 1957 and, as a result of this examination, I submit the following:

BUDGET FUNDS							
Surplus, January 1, 1957							
Adjusted Surplus, January 1, 1957 Budget Appropriation — 1957							
F.,		\$	510,495.42				
EXPENDITURES:       \$ 158,556.96         Salaries and Wages       \$ 158,556.96         Office Operating Expenses       18,102.78         Engineering, Drafting and Design       7,976.39         Land Acquisition Expenses       5,545.42         Legal Expenses       21,000.00         Field Operating Expenses       28,443.24         New Field Equipment       32,191.81         Park Maintenance Materials       19,192.80         Capital Improvements       155,571.16							
			446,580.56				
Less: Funds Restricted for Future Capital Improvements		\$	63,914.86 46,996.81				
Surplus, December 31, 1957		\$	16,918.05				
BOND ISSUES							
COUNTY PARK BONDS AUTHORIZED, INCLUDING PAYMENT		\$2	,212,500.00				
Disbursed for Land Acquisition and Improvement  Committed for Land Acquisition and Improvement	\$1,461,185.15 406,589.13						
	1	,867,774.28					
Balance Available, December 31, 1957		\$	344,725.72				

All vouchers were examined and found to be properly approved. Checks issued in payment of these vouchers were compared with both the voucher and the entry in the financial records. These were found to be correct.

Cash in banks was reconciled with the book figures.

Respectfully submitted,

Certified Public Accountant

