



A. W. SMITH, SECRETARY.

## ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

### Commissioners of Cemeteries <sup>AND</sup> Public Grounds.

*To the Honorable City Council of the City of Portland: —*

The Commissioners of Cemeteries and Public Grounds have the honor to submit herewith their tenth annual report for the year ending March 31, 1896.

There was appropriated for the use of the Department of Cemeteries and Public Grounds the sum of \$8,000.

Public Grounds, . . . . .	\$4,000
Deering's Oaks, . . . . .	4,000
	<hr/>
	\$8,000

There was a special appropriation of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), for completing the work at Fort Allen Park, and it was used for that purpose.

There was also a special appropriation of five hundred dollars (\$500) for paying balance due on the new receiving tomb at Forest City Cemetery, and the amount was paid to E. G. Johnson, the contractor.

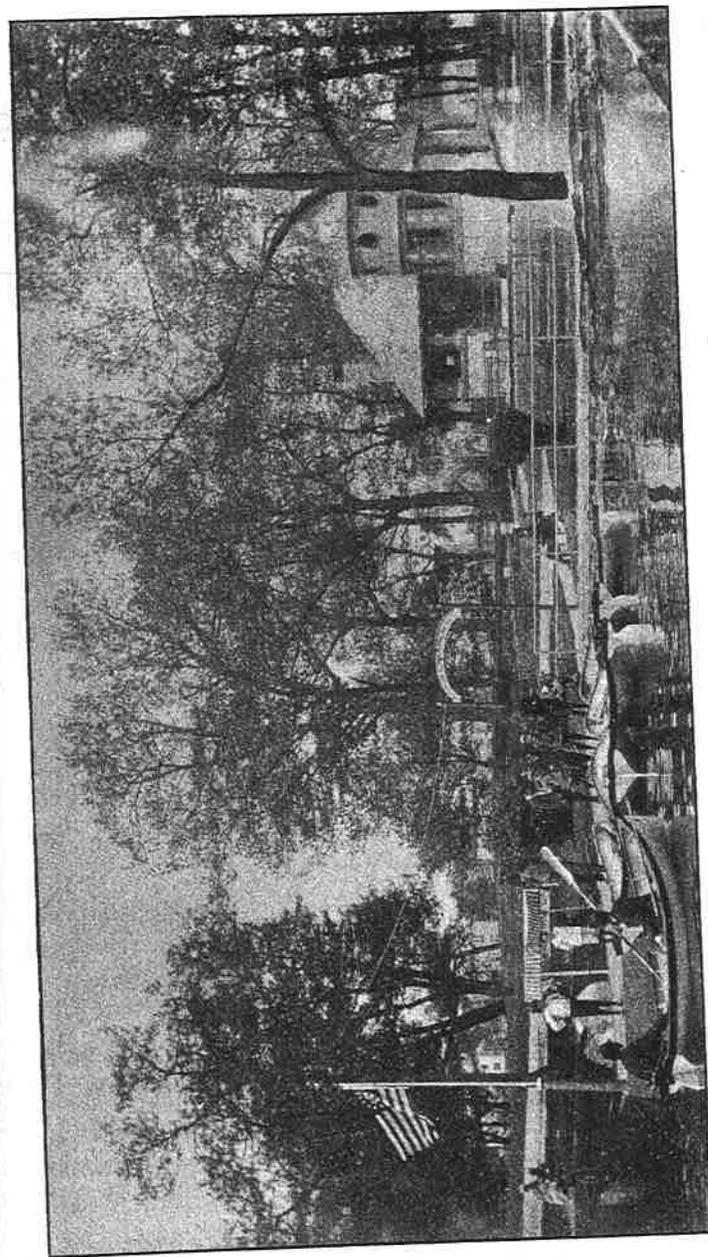
There was also a special appropriation of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for Public Grounds. This appropriation was transferred to the appropriation for Cemeteries and Public Grounds, and five hundred dollars (\$500) of it was used to build a new fence around the old Eastern Cemetery and a part of the balance was used in grading on the Western Promenade.

An itemized account of the disbursements of the appropriations placed in our hands will be found in the Auditor's report, showing the amount of work done and the cost of same.

Nothing denotes the march of progress more positively than the increased attention given to the health and comfort of the masses, and happily the result is the same whether it be viewed from the standpoint of philanthropy or civic expediency. Authorities have always held that parks exert a large influence on the health of crowded communities, and there are few cities of importance in the civilized world that have not had parks and public recreation grounds for the greater part of their existence. But these larger parks are usually situated in localities of comparatively light population, and the surroundings have been absorbed by the class for which the park, theoretically, was never intended. It has been taken for granted that the attractions of the park would draw that part of the population most needing such a change to it wherever its location.

Our public parks are in a certain sense very diverse in their characteristic features, notwithstanding the fact that the chief effort in their establishment is to impart to them those qualities which like unto nature herself shall give a sense of rest, refreshment and pleasure to such as may pass within their borders. Their diversity, of course, comes from the genius in their design, the ideal worked up to, and the quality of care and management bestowed upon them in their development. It is on these lines that such success in park building is secured as to result in certain parks attaining a reputation away beyond local recognition, and becoming objects of attraction to be enjoyed by all coming within their reach from every quarter.

There are two kinds of parks, one is a luxury and the other a necessity. The paving of a business street where prior to paving the wagons would become stuck in the mud



DEERING PARK — CASINO, SWAN BOATS, MUSEUM, ETC.

is a municipal necessity. The transforming of a street into a beautiful driving boulevard is a municipal luxury. Likewise the creation of a park that will be available as a breathing spot to the residents of a crowded locality is absolutely necessary to the preservation of healthful conditions in the city, while the acquirement and improvement of large tracts of land that are not available as breathing spots to the residents of the crowded portions of a city, is not always such.

Park making, aside from the scenic effects to be accomplished, is largely a matter of ordinary municipal house furnishing, just as is the providing of suitable highways, or the planning of a sewer system, or the furnishing of sufficient protection to life and property. It is, therefore, a matter to be treated by each municipality with due regard to the local need for parks, the local facilities for procuring grounds suitable to supply that need, and the financial ability of the citizens to pay the price which must be paid for the acquirement, improvement and maintenance of such grounds.

Just as the industrial revolution of the past fifty or seventy-five years has centralized humanity into large cities, so must we now gather the beauties, advantages and blessings of inanimate nature into small portions of those cities. A park, then, must be something that will furnish to these condensations of population (in a proportionately condensed manner), the essentials of life in the country, *i. e.*, fresh air, trees, grass and flowers, and the greater this density of population the more urgent the necessity for parks.

The history of the park movement in American cities shows that civic decoration attracts culture and refinement, wealth and plenty. Park cities are cities to which money tends. Thousands of people establish their residences in such cities, because of the added pleasures of life and of the opportunities to display their wealth in finely situated houses and in rich equipages upon the park driveways.

## DEERING'S OAKS.

The work done in Deering's Oaks during the spring and summer has been such as was necessary to put it in condition for use. The Commissioners have given much thought and study to the treatment of the walks and drives in Deering's Oaks, and as the use of them becomes more each year they require more attention to keep them in good condition.

There was some permanent work done in Deering's Oaks such as the grading around the new stone building built in 1894. The grounds around this building have been completed and its appearance is thus very much improved. The Commissioners expect the coming summer to commence work on Grove street, also on Portland street, with a view of making the exterior of Deering's Oaks more attractive.

The most important work the Commissioners have in view in regard to Deering's Oaks is along Portland street from High to St. John streets, if practicable; but they would at first go to Grove street, the terminus of Deering's Oaks proper. It is hoped that Portland street might be widened thirty feet, by adding twenty feet on the northerly side taken from the Park, and ten feet from the abutting property on the southerly side.

From interviews already had with the owners of abutting land the Commissioners have reason to hope that this arrangement will be consummated.

We are often asked what about the Zoo in the Park? We now have in our collection deer, bears, monkeys, rabbits, peacocks, pheasants and tropical birds, and we are happy to say they have all wintered well and seem to be healthy and lively.

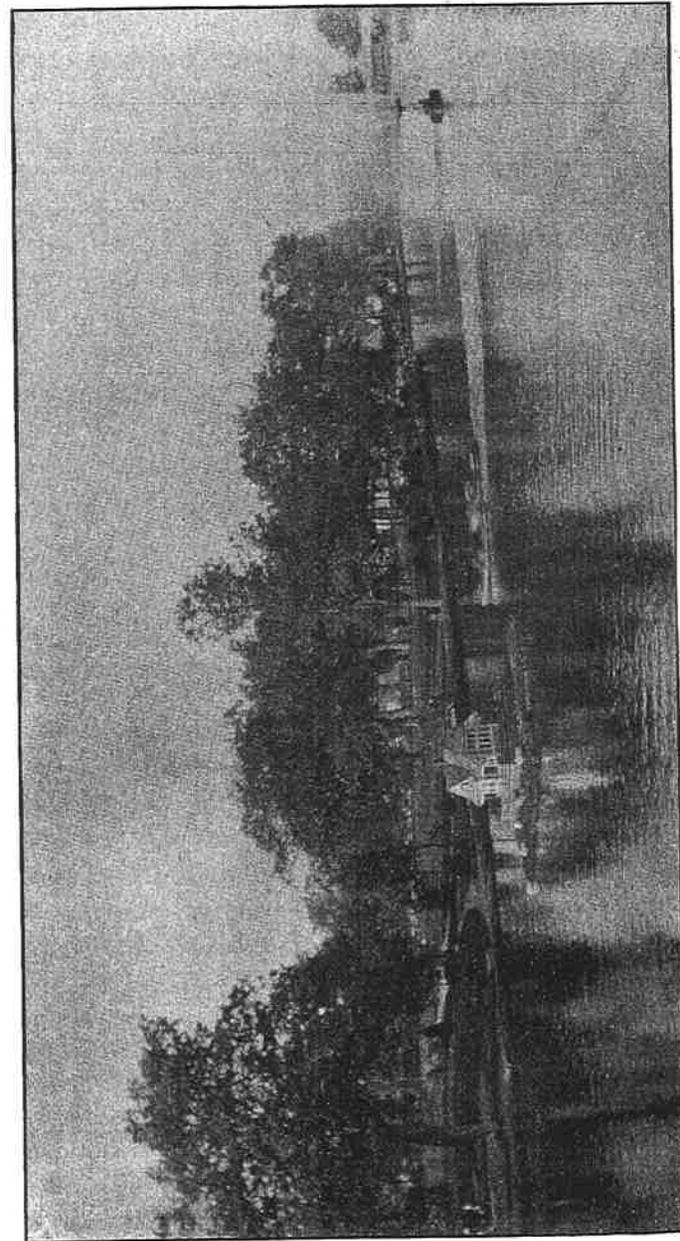
An important addition was made to Deering's Oaks the past year, by the City Government, authorizing the purchase of the Larrabee property, adjoining the Oaks on the

easterly side. This property contains more than two acres, and is situated at the foot of High street, and will be a large and most important addition to the Oaks.

#### FORT ALLEN PARK.

To continue the work that was begun in 1893, and provide for the large number of citizens and tourists who visit this park during the summer months, plans were made to utilize and make accessible to the public the unimproved lower portion.

In pursuance of these plans a contract to do the work, amounting to \$692.00, was made with John H. Flannagan, October 24, 1895. Work was begun at once by building a new or lower terrace. This terrace begins at the embankment of the upper terrace and drive, and slopes toward the cliff formed by the railway cut, near the edge of which it ends, forming an embankment averaging about five feet in height. By arrangement with the Street Department the material for this terrace was furnished by the surplus material from the grading of Morning and Congress streets, and deposited on the ground without cost to the Park Department. After the slopes of the terrace were trimmed carefully to subgrade they were covered with a six-inch layer of loam, over which was laid turf from the city farm, amounting to about 520 square yards. A walk ten feet in width was built around the top of the embankment at the railroad cut, by excavating 18 inches below finished grade, and refilling with about 160 cubic yards of clean coarse gravel. This gravel was subdrained by lines of tile laid with open joints, and affords a suitable foundation for the surface of cement concrete which it is proposed to put upon the walk. The remaining part of the terrace, after being brought to subgrade, was covered with loam roughly graded to six inches in depth when cold weather necessitated stopping the work about November 27, 1895. The contract



POND AND DUCK HOUSE IN DEERING PARK.

will be completed in the spring by raking and rolling this loam to the true grade and sowing it with grass-seed, and laying a few square yards of turf on the easterly slope of the terrace.

On January 14, 1896, a contract, amounting to \$395.00, to build an iron fence and place the same in position around the southerly edge of the new terrace was made with The Thomas Laughlin Co. The fence is of upright pickets on angle iron with iron posts, and is to be braced on stone posts every eight feet. It is already completed at the works of the contracting company, and will be placed in position early in the spring.

In the near future it is proposed to complete this improvement by connecting the upper and lower terraces by a flight of stone steps at the center of the upper terrace, and laying a concrete walk from the foot of the steps to the walk around the southern embankment.

#### LINCOLN PARK.

The work in this park has been chiefly maintenance.

The six large flower beds were planted with hundreds of bright, flowering plants and formed a bright spot of color all summer, attracting a great deal of attention and admiration from visitors.

In the fall all of the trees in Lincoln Park were carefully pruned and a large amount of dead wood removed; and as the trees of Lincoln Park give it a distinctive character every effort will be made to preserve them.

#### WESTERN PROMENADE.

A Portland gentleman while gazing on one of the magnificent views for which Switzerland is famous, exclaimed to a fellow traveler who stood near, "Is not that the most beautiful scene your eyes ever beheld?" "Yes," said the stranger, "with one exception; the view from the Western Promenade in Portland, Maine."

The Park Commissioners in improving this portion of the Public Grounds of this city feel that they are doing a work that is receiving the commendation of every citizen of Portland and making it attractive for our summer tourists.

The work done last year on this Promenade was but the beginning of a contemplated line of improvements of the whole slope, which when completed, will lend additional charms to this magnificent outlook.

The planting of hardy, low-growing shrubs will be a feature of the work on this Promenade, and with that end in view, the Commissioners purchased three hundred hardy shrubs and last spring they were planted in the large bed next to the band stand and made a fine show.

#### EASTERN PROMENADE.

The work on this Promenade has been chiefly maintenance. The walks and drives have had their usual care and the lawns have been kept in their usual good order.

#### FORT SUMNER PARK.

The work of caring for Fort Sumner Park has been much as in former years; some repairs have been done and the band stand repainted; the walks and driveway kept in good repair and the lawns looked after. This park has been more thronged than usual with visitors, especially in the afternoon, which shows that this beauty spot of our park system is appreciated by our citizens.

#### EASTERN CEMETERY.

This old cemetery is especially notable for a number of eminent individuals whose mortal remains are buried there. A few of these have a national reputation, but there will also be found a large list of names of the dead who in life were among our most prominent business men. Some of the gravestones erected in the early history of this cemetery were found to be in poor condition, so last spring the

Commissioners had these stones righted and the grass cut and kept down with lawn mowers, thereby improving the looks of this old landmark very much. They also had a new fence built around the Congress and Mountfort street sides, expending in all about eight hundred dollars for improvements in and around this cemetery.

#### OUR PUBLIC SHADE TREES.

During the last year the City Government placed the shade trees of our city under the care of the Commissioners of Cemeteries and Public Grounds, and the work was proceeded with haltingly because of inadequate means at the disposal of our Department. Some work has been done but much that is necessary is left undone. It will be necessary for the new City Government to make a special appropriation for this work.

The Commissioners wish to extend thanks to the Commissioner of Public Works, Mr. Fernald, also to Mr. Staples, Superintendent of Streets, for their valuable assistance in the discharge of our duties, and it is with their help that the Park Board have been able to do some of their best work.

J. P. JORDAN,	} <i>Commissioners of</i>
A. W. SMITH,	
GEORGE E. RAYMOND,	
	<i>Cemeteries and</i>
	<i>Public Grounds.</i>

## ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

### PORTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY.

#### REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT.

*To the Trustees of the Portland Public Library.*

GENTLEMEN:—In former annual reports I have been able to testify to the constantly increasing usefulness of the Library, and I am happy to find upon reviewing the statistics of the year past that this has been no exception to former years.

By the Librarian's report you will see that we have added to the Library 1,350 volumes, and that the circulation of books for home use has considerably increased. The great value of the Reference Room to our citizens is shown by the largely increased number of visitors to it during the year, namely 19,822, which is 3,771 more than the previous year.

Our per capita circulation of volumes is nearly up to that of the Public Library of Minneapolis, which claims to have the largest per capita circulation of any library in the country. Two years ago I recommended that when subjects of general interest were before the public, special bulletins referring to books relating to such subjects should be posted in the rooms of the Library. This has been done the past year, and I am informed has been of great advantage to students interested in studying current events.

I recently visited the Boston Public Library, and carefully inquired into the working of its various departments. I was particularly interested in the children's reading-room,