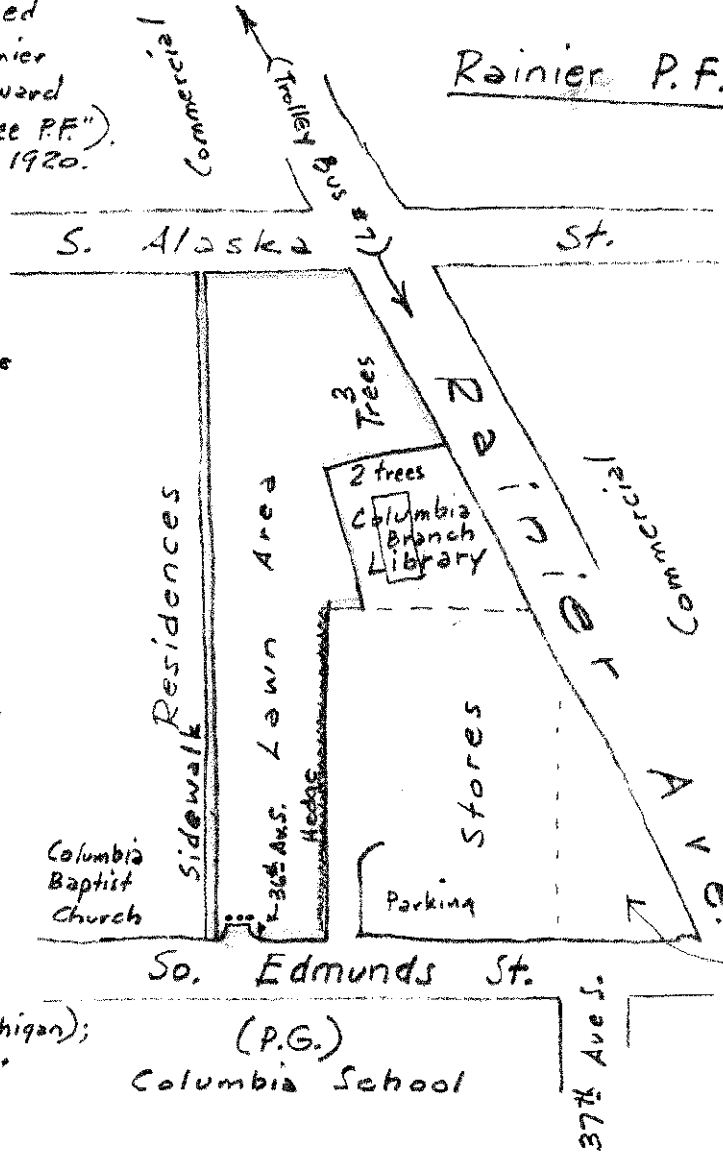




Park originally contained a brook, ran across "Rainier P.F." making its way toward Wetmore Slough ("Genesee P.F.") "Sanitary" fill completed by 1920.

Alaska St. named in honor of the new purchase of land to the north from Russia in 1867; became a Territory in 1912, the 49th State in 1959.

Rainier Ave. so named because of the views of Mt. Rainier along its length. (Mt. Rainier named in 1792 by Capt. Geo. Vancouver to honor his friend British Admiral Peter Rainier.)



Park was named on Plat by Frank Black + wf. Kate (of Michigan); partner in Seattle Hardware Co. District was Columbia City, a former sawmill town, which had planned to become a seaport by dredging Wetmore Slough (refer to Sayres Park).

Columbia was the name proposed for the state in 1889 by the Territorial Delegation, but Congress chose to honor George Washington (d. 1799).

Columbia was the name given to the river in 1792 by Capt. Robert Gray to honor the name of his ship, which he had named to honor an earlier explorer, Christopher Columbus, (who in 1492 discovered America; the name proposed for his discovery was Columbia, but the Italian navigator Americus Vesputius was so honored.) Gray claimed for U.S. all land drained by the river.

So. Edmunds St.
(P.G.)
Columbia School

L.I.D. 1926-'29: \$3,065=

2.5 Acres

Plat Dedic. 1891 (As platted, was considerably larger, extending northeasterly across Rainier Av., which was vacated in 1892 by King County; in 1911 property owners Waived rights for vacating streets on the east + west sides [the unrecorded Waivers were found among correspondence in 1964 in time to "save" the park from development of streets + effectively "destroying" park area.] In 1912 a large portion was Deeded by Blacks to Library Board.)

1907: Jurisd. + control to Park Dept. by Annexation to City of Seattle

PA 5-3204

COLUMBIA PARK

041209

1894

HISTORY: COLUMBIA PARK

Park was named in 1891 on a plat filed by Frank and Kate Black as an Addition to the Town of Columbia City. The Blacks came here from Michigan and he became a partner in Seattle Hardware.

Columbia City originated as a sawmill on the shore of Wetmore Slough; an ample supply of water was available from the stream flowing down through Rainier Valley and emptying into the Slough. The 1889 trolley car line closely followed the stream bed. About 1853 settlers in the Puget Sound region proposed splitting that part of Oregon Territory north of the Columbia River into a separate Territory which they asked to be named Columbia. The River had been named in 1792 by a Boston trader, Capt. Robert Gray, in honor of his ship, Columbia Rediviva (Columbia Reborn which was in honor

of explorer Christopher Columbus). The sawmill town was named Columbia City (but Congress chose the revered name of Washington for the new state in 1889).

As the forests diminished under the loggers' axes, a dream of the townsfolk grew - to dredge the Slough and become a seaport city! So the town grew, especially after the trolley car line hastened the sales of real estate.

Columbia Park was evidently the first park in Columbia City. Following annexation to Seattle in 1907 a playfield was planned adjacent to the park - "Columbia PF" (now Rainier PF). The stream crossing through the park had cut a ravine about 40' deep, according to the Park Engineer (in 1916). In 1911 the Department cleared away underbrush, opened up paths and cleared out the brook, making it attractive as a small neighborhood park. As platted, the park was considerably larger, crossing to the east side of Rainier Avenue, but in 1892, the eastern portion was vacated by King County and Rainier Avenue realigned; soon a fill was put across the ravine and a plank road laid down. As platted, the park was also cut up by other intended streets; in 1911 all affected property owners waived their rights to these streets for purposes of the park. These waivers were properly recorded in 1912 and filed. By 1964 all trace of them had vanished and a meticulous search of old files requested by Corporation Counsel found the originals "buried" among unsorted correspondence. They were significant in saving the park from the development of the platted streets.

In 1912 a portion of the park not in the ravine was deeded to the Library - with the approval of the donors, the Blacks. Andrew Carnegie was passing out millions for public library buildings and Washington Received \$1,046,000 from 1901-1916; 38 buildings of which this is one.

Urban development was diverting many streams into sewers and in 1916 the park ravine was partially filled and "in an insanitary condition". The filling of the park was urged by Citizens of Columbia City. Then the Lake Washington Ship Canal was opened, lowering the lake level by 9', draining the Slough - and the dream of a seaport. By the mid-1920's the stream was in a sewer and the park ravine filled in. Part of a WPA project in 1939 to install a sprinkler system was the filling of a "large hole . . . surrounded by a wood rail". (The community raised \$63 for this work.)

Street improvements created a "triangle" at Edmunds, Rainier and 37th; upon the petition of the Rainier Business Men's Club and Lions Club, it was transferred to the Department for improvement with maintenance by the Lions (1931). The Club placed there a plaque to the memory of Simeon T. Tobey, the "father of Columbian Way". By 1956 the triangle had become neglected and the property was vacated and sold.

In 1964 Attorney P. S. Malone of the Rainier Avenue Corporation "discovered" that the platted streets through the park had not been vacated and mounted a court fight to have them improved, thereby "destroying" the park, making it available for commercial development. On the basis of waivers and other evidence, the Superior Court dismissed the suit in 1966. In 1968 the Seattle/King County Boys Club petitioned through a sympathetic Mayor to build a gym on the park.

