



Park is named in honor of donor John M. Frink, born in Pennsylvania in 1855, went to work as a farm hand at an early age, attending college and, as eldest son, supporting his family as well. Came to Seattle by way of California in 1874 and taught in schools in Seattle. Then worked in a coal bunker and at carpentry, returned to teaching and became principal of Belltown + Port Gamble schools. Went into partnership with L.H. Tenny to form important Washington Iron Works; established Seattle Electric Co. (first on Pacific NW coast) and Central Railway + Traction Co. Was State Senator for 8 years; Park Commissioner + pres. in 1913; School Board + City Councilman. Frink had named this Washington Park but Board renamed it + boulevard; Frink Blvd. was absorbed by "Lake Washington Blvd." by 1920.

Clay Tennis Ct. 1911-1930; "meadow" @ 31st + King - petition of community  
 L.I.D 1929-31 \$7,423 =

Paths - Leschi/Frink = 1.5 mi.

19.5 Acres  
 Gift 1907 + Purch. (\$5,875 = '06 BF)  
 322 - 34th AVE. S.  
 (Address of former residence)  
 PA 5-3204  
**FRINK PARK**



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John M. Frink was born in Pennsylvania in 1855, eldest son of Rev. Prentiss and Damadia Frink, of French Hyguenot ancestry, who had migrated to the Roanoke River country in 1664. Rev. Frink, a Baptist preacher, moved his family to Madison Co., N.Y., where John attended school. When his father died in 1861, they were living in Topeka, Kansas and John went to work as a farm hand to support the family of eight. He saved enough to attend Washington College in Topeka and began teaching at age 21 in Kansas. John Frink went to California in 1874 and thence to Seattle that fall. He worked for a time in a coal bunker, then as a carpenter, until he became a teacher in the city schools. He became principal of the new (1876) Belltown School (replaced in 1884 with the Denny School whose cupola was placed in Denny Park after the 1930 Regrade). In 1877 John Frink married Abbie Hawkins and went to Port Gamble to teach for two years. Back to Seattle in 1880 to form a partnership with L. H. Tenny in the foundry business, quickly adding a machine shop. In 1882 they incorporated the Washington Iron Works, first manufacturing company in Seattle. The Frinks soon built a suitable mansion at the corner of Jackson and 31st, at the top of a steep slope with a view of Lake Washington. The steep slope had been platted as "Washington Park" by Judge Thomas Burke in 1883, but was not dedicated to public use. Instead it was reserved for any private use of whoever bought the tract. But the "park" had to wait a few more years for a buyer. Meanwhile, Mr. Frink was establishing the Seattle Electric Co. - another "first" - which bought into the trolley and cable car (and trolley park) business. He invested in property and became a director of the Seattle Savings Bank. Frink was elected to the city's Board of Aldermen and in 1890 was on the Board of Education. He served 8 years in the State Senate. In 1906 he became a member of the Park Board where he served until 1914. In 1906 the Frinks bought the "20 acre tract" known as "Washington Park" and immediately gave it as a public park. The City already had a Washington Park (1900) so the Board immediately renamed this new one in honor of the FRINKS and the Leary Land Co.'s exaggeration of "20 acres" crept into the 1909 Annual Report, which was corrected the following year: 15.5 acres. The Frinks were members of the First Presbyterian Church (a bronze bust of the Minister, Dr. M. A. Matthews, was placed in Denny Park near his "Belltown Parish"), the Rainier Club, Arctic Club, Commercial Club, Seattle and Earlington Golf Clubs. The Washington Iron Works remained in the family control until 1969 when bought by an Indiana investment group.

When the Olmsted Bros. of Brookline, Mass. prepared their "Comprehensive Plan of Parks and Parkways" for Seattle in 1903, one section of parkway (boulevard) was proposed along the "crest" from Colman Park to Leschi, the crest being above a huge landslide section between these two parks: ". . . it would be a wise policy for the city to acquire the whole of this landslide." Improvement would only be cheap housing and maintenance of streets and utilities would be a never-ending expense due to disturbance of the slide material by foundation construction, utility pipe trenching and the like, which would activate more slides, breaking pipes, causing washouts . . . The Crest Parkway would be along stable ground - 31st and 32nd. Upon Frink's gift in 1906, J. C. Olmsted visited Frink Park and repeated the recommendation to extend the park down to the lake, affording a magnificent outlook from 31st and Jackson and an extremely attractive and secluded woodland. Failing to acquire the land between the park and the lakeshore would necessitate a "curved" roadway, partly through the park, somewhat like "the little wood road now in use . . . any drives would be out of proportion in so small a park, unless it were an essential part of a long parkway drive, not the case until the proposed Lake Washington Parkway is laid out along the shore." But the pressure to prepare the city for the big 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Expo on the University Grounds was at hand and the Lakeshore Parkway was to be an important feature of the city, so a curved roadway was designed, a concrete bridge built across the ravine, and a roadbed graded, even though it wasn't macadamized until the year after the Expo. But dams with pools, paths with rustic benches, and a footbridge offered magnificent views or secluded retreats to those who visited the park.

A sample of spring water was tested in 1911 and found to "possess no distinct mineral properties." That same year a large petition resulted in the "construction" of a clay-surfaced tennis court at the corner adjacent to 31st and King Street. The problem with clay courts was weeds and their affection for bare earth. Rain brings aid and comfort to

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weed but not player, so continuous maintenance was demanded. By 1935 the court was either omitted from a list of course or else it was in the weed league. Tennis players' demands must have been sufficient for it to be restored to use by a WPA project in 1941; it was identified as a clay court on a 1949 list. But by then most tennis courts were either asphalt or concrete, so the weeds won the match and by 1956 the court had become a pleasant meadow.

At an early date it was decided that compensation for a foreman would include a rent-free residence located within a park area. Frink Park became such a site and about 1910 a residence, garage and storage shed were built in the vicinity of South Jackson Street, Lake Washington Boulevard and Frink Place. It remained in service until 1964, the death of the Building Maintenance Supervisor, R. E. Arthur. Two years later the Family Life Cooperative Pre-School Group sought a more home-like setting for the children, requesting use of the old residence. But upon examination by the Building Department it was recommended for demolition - which was done immediately. However, a portion of the garage was left as a rain shelter for picnickers.

The Civil Rights Revolution of the '60's resulted in the enactment of the Federal Model City Program in 1966 and the creation of the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) to implement the MCP (REFER: LANGSTON HUGHES CULTURAL ARTS CENTER and MADRONA PLAYGROUND). Frink Park was one of several sites selected for CAMP projects: a day camp on the site of the old residence and a play area on the site of the former tennis court; but the project "dried up" when the flow of Model City funds was diverted into other channels of CAMP programs.