



6.3 Acres
 Condemn. 1960 *...for park, playg. and rec. purposes...*
 \$ 89,945 = '60 BF
 Expen. w/ F 1970
 Development 1975 ↑

9536 Ashworth Ave. E.

LICTON SPRINGS PARK

090876

P. Devereaux & R. O. Sylvester:
The Puget Sound region was formed during and after the most recent (Vashon) Ice Sheet--50,000 years ago--extending down between the Cascade and Olympic Mountains. During the melt-off period a huge "Lake Russell" formed in this vicinity creating a drainage basin extending from north of Bitter and Haller Lake, both of which are of this glacial origin, down through Green Lake and cutting a drainage valley through (Ravenna Blvd.) and Ravenna Park ravine into Lake Washington. The glacially laid soils are mixed with sands and gravel with some rock: the soil is dark brown and tends to be slightly acidic. The lush vegetation is typically Northwest, except for the *Chamaecyperis pisifera* "filifera" noted in 1970. The development of streets and sewers and homes in the area has resulted in a ponding condition in the park which has introduced marsh plants. Wildlife remaining in the park area include grouse, mallards, coots, robins and several species of song birds.

P. Devereaux:
This "Green Lake Drainage Basin" collected waters from run-off from the lush forest floor (annual rainfall = 34 inches), from ground water and many springs. Even the reduced flow of 1930 was estimated at 300,000 gals. per day. As "early" as 1912 there was concern over the dwindling flow of the "Licton Springs Stream" because it was becoming the only supply to Green Lake, since all other brooks and springs were diverted into sewers: "The result in all probability," wrote Chas. V. E. Dove, Consulting Engineer, "will be the gradual shrinking and drying up of the Lake." (By natural evolution the Lake was maturing into extinction--re: Green Lake Park.) So, in 1919 the Park Board authorized a Report by engineer Dove, resulting in the enclosure of the stream in pipe from "as far north as 100th Street to the Lake to insure fullest possible protection of the supply." Of course the work was done upon--and with owner approval of--private property: there were citizen objections. In spite of the protection afforded by the pipe enclosure, the "stream" became polluted by the increasing numbers of septic tanks in the drainage basin: several attempts to clean it up failed and by 1931 the stream was diverted into a sewer.

T. Wadsworth:
P.I. (1910):
Among the many springs that had existed in the original forested drainage basin were several known mineral springs: two in this area and several in the Ravenna Park Ravine. Apparently these two were the most significant in the area, for they had long been the camp site of Indians of the Puget Sound area. They had discovered not only the medicinal qualities of the iron, sulphur and magnesium waters and resultant mud but also that the color was useful as war-paint on face and body, hence the name LICTON--"red/painted waters." Paying homage to the gods of health and led by their Shaman, the braves and squaws chanted and danced to the beat of the tom-tom applying the water and mud and found themselves healed by mineral and faith. The settlers soon learned of the Licton Springs and David T. Denny soon built "the first cabin north of Seattle." After several years he obtained a "Homestead," granted in 1870 by Pres. Grant and it was the Denny summer home until his death in 1902. They told stories of mother bears bringing their cubs to the springs. In 1903 his daughter offered to sell 81 acres around the Spring for \$45,000=, but City Council declined. Four years later an Aberdeen syndicate, headed by C. R. Harold, W. M. Elliott and Dr. I. R. Watkins, bought the property and planned a sanitarium. But their plans went awry and in 1909 the firm of Calhoun, Denny and Ewing took over the site, copyrighted the name "Licton" and platted a subdivision, developing a small park around the springs--spending "thousands of dollars" to build rustic shelters over the two spring basins, bridges, paths and clearing the "oval-shaped evergreen reserve": the "quaint, old (Denny Homestead) cabins were still preserved." The Big Promotion in 1910 offered 600 "choice" lots: "get away from the roar and dust of down-town toil! Take the Green Lake (trolley) car to Denny Station where you will be met by autos which will take you on the new Wallingford Avenue highway to Licton Springs Park. Bring your lunch and come early. Those coming on Opening Day and signing the Guest Book will receive

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The Licton Springs became a favorite site of SEattleites, too, for the fame of the healing waters and mud grew. People drove their buggies for miles to get barrels and barrels of water and/or containers of mud. Some brought their teams of work horses to stand with their swollen, aching legs knee deep in the mineral mud. Others came to enjoy a picnic lunch and a refreshing drink of the "painted water".

In 1935 E. A. Jensen had bought the 5½ acre Licton Springs tract and built a two-story spa, offering thermal baths and selling bottled mineral water: "relief for rheumatism, neuritis, arthritis and asthma." It is recorded that "thousands of patients patronized the spa, praising the benefits they received . . ." and further that Jensen had not completed the sanitarium when he died in 1951. A. R. Patterson and Assoc. bought the property in 1954 and applied for a rezoning to permit construction of a "luxurious 67 room" Health Center and Spa to cost \$500,000. The rezoning was approved "as a logical and compatible use of . . . a unique natural resource" but construction was delayed. In 1953 the "Planning for Recreation" study inventoried existing facilities for active and passive recreation in Seattle and identified and defined areas of deficiency from which a Capital Improvement Program was developed and became the basis for a Park Bond issue in 1954 - included was a proposal for the acquisition of a park in the Licton Springs area. But the voters defeated the issue that year and twice in 1958, approving it in 1960 with the "Licton Springs area" included. By then Patterson had shifted his emphasis to a "nursing and retirement home . . . making use of the unique mineral springs . . . and but for the impending taking . . . for park purposes, my plans would be proceeding." By petition the North District Council of Clubs urged that the proposed park must include two "historic" springs. So the site was condemned and became Licton Springs Park.

The 1960 bond issue contained funds for the acquisition only, so the only "improvements" were the removal of the old Jensen building and spring shed at the Iron Spring in the north portion of the park and the removal of the concrete bulkhead around the large spring to the south. ". . . development of Licton Springs Park is not in a top priority position . . ." (1963) The presence of the marsh was considered undesirable for habitation, so the availability of the Youth Development and Conservation Corps Program and free fill from the nearby Interstate 5 freeway excavation resulted in cutting "weed" trees and filling in the southwest portion with the intent to channel the stream flow and develop meadows, paths and picnic areas.

Funds for the design and development of Licton Springs Park were included in the massive 1968 Forward Thrust Bond issue. Planning began in 1974. The development of Licton Springs Park with \$455,000 in Forward Thrust and State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) funds was completed in 1975.

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