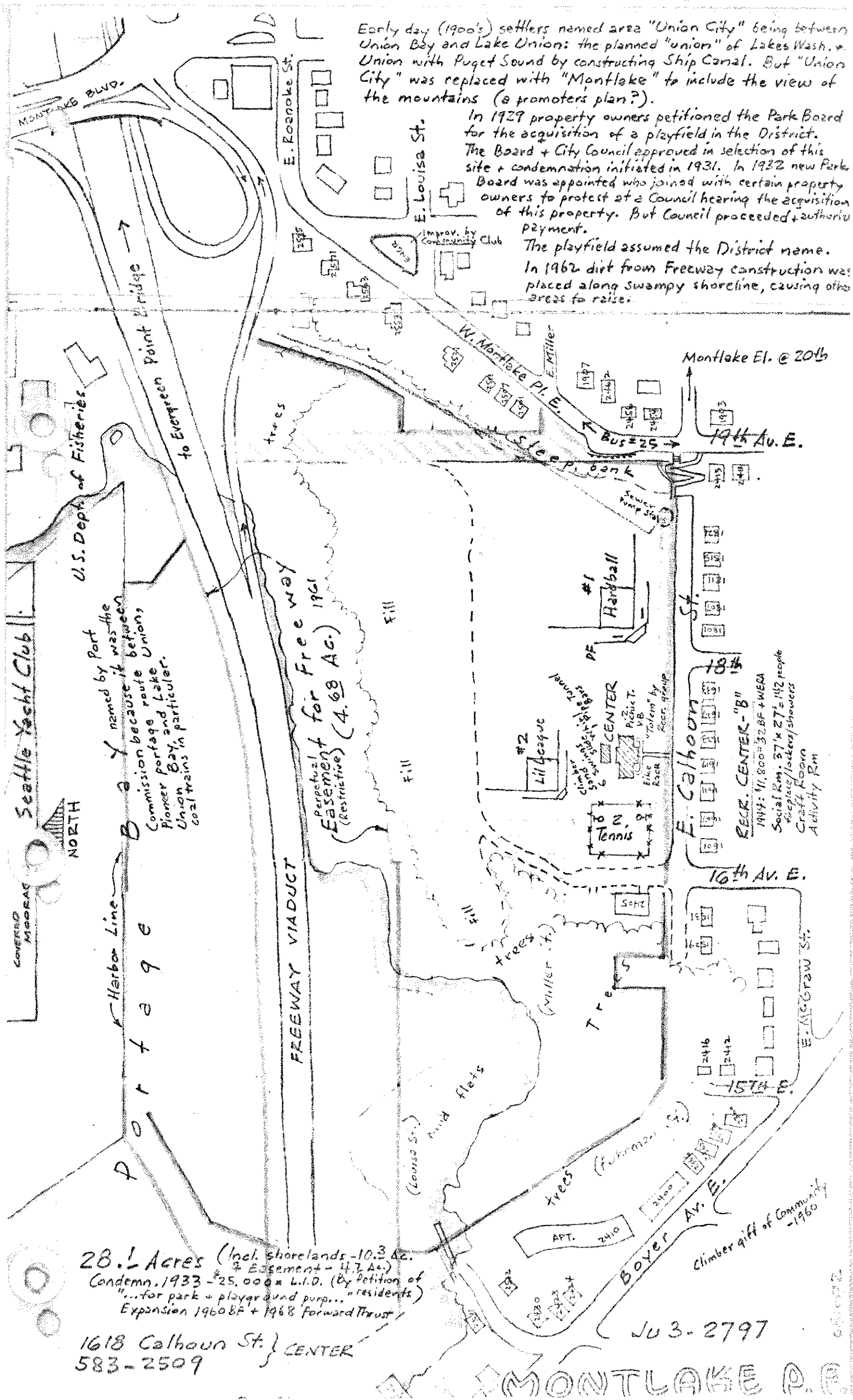


Early day (1900's) settlers named area "Union City" being between Union Bay and Lake Union; the planned "union" of Lakes Wash. & Union with Puget Sound by constructing Ship Canal. But "Union City" was replaced with "Montlake" to include the view of the mountains (a promoters plan?).

In 1929 property owners petitioned the Park Board for the acquisition of a playfield in the District. The Board + City Council approved in selection of this site + condemnation initiated in 1931. In 1932 new Park Board was appointed who joined with certain property owners to protest at a Council hearing the acquisition of this property. But Council proceeded + authorized payment.

The playfield assumed the District name.

In 1962 dirt from Freeway construction was placed along Swampy shoreline, causing other areas to raise.



28.1 Acres (Incl. shorelands - 10.3 Ac. + Easement - 4.7 Ac.)  
 Condemn. 1933 - \$25,000 = L.I.D. (By Petition of "...for park + playground purp..." residents)  
 Expansion 1960 BF + 1968 Forward Thrust

1618 Calhoun St. } CENTER  
 583-2509

JU 3-2797

MONTLAKE P.E.

In pioneer days land travel northward from the settlement on the shore of Elliott Bay was "squeezed" between Union Bay and Lake Union and Salmon Bay. So a roadway was soon cut through the wilderness - probably by loggers - making its way across the ridge here between Union Bay and Lake Union. It was necessary to ford a small stream running from Union Bay into Lake Union (but the main outlet for Lake Washington was at the south end through the Black River). Scarcely a year after the first cabin was built by the Borens on the rugged shore of Elliott Bay, a Captain in the Corps of Engineers, George B. McClelland, was recommending a canal from Lake Washington to Elliott Bay. In endorsing the concept, Thomas Mercer described it as a union of lakes and bays and so named Union Bay and Lake Union in 1854. The eastern arm of Lake Union was named at a later date by the Port Commission to honor the portage canal that was begun in 1860 but not completed until 30 years later. This canal could accommodate only logs and small boats.

The roadway became of greater importance when the Territorial University moved from its downtown site to its present location, building Denny Hall in 1894; when plans developed to celebrate the anniversary of the Gold Rush with an Expo in 1907, the site chosen was the "University Grounds": the plan being that the main Expo buildings would remain as classroom buildings. Congress endorsed the plan but requested a postponement because of plans for another Expo; so the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Expo was held in 1909. All of this activity and interest caused the realtors to make plats of their properties in this area; and the Olmsted Bros., landscape architects of Boston, had developed a Parkway plan which included this roadway as part of the system - a grand boulevard entry to the Expo, which they named University Boulevard, connecting with Washington (Park) Boulevard and, north from the Expo grounds, to Ravenna Boulevard.

This particular plat was developed by James Corner and Calvin Hagan, agents of the Estate of Alfred Adler; they abandoned the early day name for the district - "Union City" - with the name Montlake Park Addition, wanting to include the mountain views in the name (as a realtor's selling point!). But they named the road on the ridge across their plat as Montlake Boulevard and dedicated the central parkways to "park and boulevard purposes forever." But the need for public transportation to the Expo was at hand and the Olmsteds had to plan for double tracks and poles for trolley cars upon the 75' wide park strips. (Immediately to the south was the timber bridge across the Portage canal - "Old Canal Reserve".) (Hamlin Street was named for pioneer broker, Edw. H. Hamlin.)

Because of the Olmsted Parkway plan: i.e., University Boulevard and the importance to the City of the AYP Expo (and subsequent University development), the Park Department participated in the paving of the boulevard as well as construction of the timber bridge - both across the Portage canal and the 1916 one across the new canal to the north: however, Park jurisdiction was confined to the center parkways. A bill of \$2,200 for boulevard grading through the Montlake Park Addition was sent to the developers, Corner and Hagan, but they had not been able to sell any property due to incomplete utilities, so could not pay. Instead, they requested - and were denied - permission to rebuild a contractors' dock approach from East Montlake Park into Union Bay for the delivery of needed materials. Thus began a legal hassle that lasted until the 1920's, during which Corner and Hagan, opposed by Park Board members Roseleaf, Lamping et al, lost title through mortgage foreclosure suits and their subsequent attempt to gain access across the Old Canal right of way to their "remaining acre" was also lost. (The Park Board held the permit/lease to that right of way and the Yacht Club had a plan for a golf course in the area.)

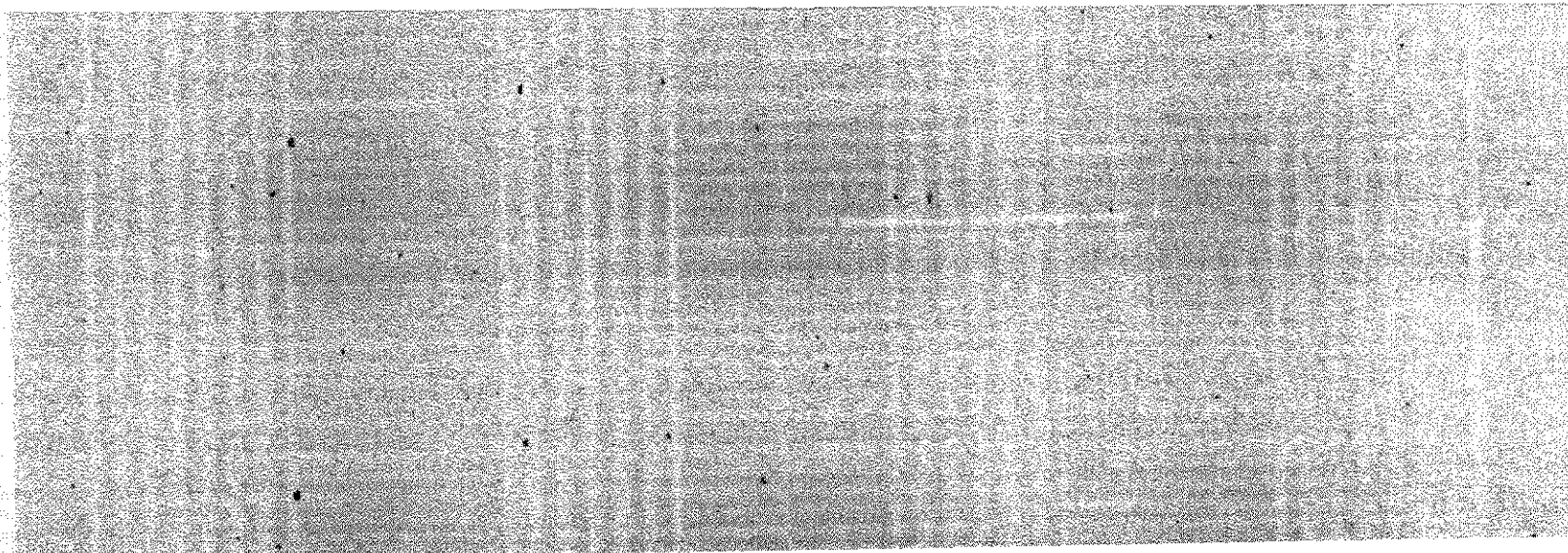
(In 1915 a planting strip through the U.W. along the west side of Montlake Boulevard came under the jurisdiction of the Park Department; returned in 1963 - file name: "Unnamed Strip.") University Boulevard was listed by the Department until 1941; the portion north of the campus (17th Avenue) was transferred to Engineering in 1951; the south portion (24th to Montlake Place) was renamed Lake Washington Blvd N, with jurisdiction remaining in Engineering. The center parkways at "Montlake Blvd" eventually were listed with

History: MONTLAKE BLVD CENTERSTRIP  
8/15/74

(over)

"Squares, Places and Triangles." The increase in automobile traffic and the replacement of trolley cars with buses caused a drastic reduction in the width and shape of the center parkways. The timber bridges: over the Portage canal was replaced with a fill and then with bridge again but over the Evergreen Bridge Freeway in 1962; the one over the new Ship Canal was replaced in 1925 but efforts to widen it are thwarted by the Montlake community. The community also opposed plans, in 1944, to completely remove the centerstrips to accommodate the increased traffic. And traffic has continued to increase, especially after construction in 1963 of the Montlake Boulevard Interchange with the new Evergreen Point bridge.

Montlake Boulevard Interchange  
Evergreen Point Bridge



MONTLAKE PLAYFIELD  
History 7/15/74 (Sherwood)

In 1854 Thomas Mercer endorsed the concept of a canal between Lake Washington and Puget Sound, which he described as a union of lakes and bays and so named Union Bay and Lake Union (which at that time included Portage Bay - yet to be named). So when the area between Union Bay and Lake Union (Portage Bay) was platted in 1869 it was named Union City, because the plat was filed by Harvey L. Pike, the man who took pick and shovel nine years earlier to start digging a ditch between Union Bay and Lake Union - one of the six channel routes proposed for the Canal. In 1891, Union City was included in an annexation to Seattle, but there were few, if any, homes in "Union City" so the name was never really used. In 1908 the area was given a new designation with a plat filed just to the north - across the proposed route of the Canal - named "Montlake", embracing the view of mountains and the lakes. The name caught on and was extended to include the proposed Union City. In that day the low basin that is now the playfield was probably inundated during spring and storm flooding. It was a peat bog, found to be 20' deep (in 1971) and destined to cause trouble when fills were dumped on it. The opening of the Canal in 1917 was so engineered that the normal level of Lake Union was not affected - but Lake Washington was lowered by 9'. Meanwhile the Port Commission had named Portage Bay because it was the portage route of the pioneers between Lakes Washington and Union.

The impetus of the gold rush and the following celebration - the Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition in 1909 on the University grounds just north of Montlake, plus the construction of trolley car lines "all the way from town" and the new road from town via Interlaken Boulevard to Lake Washington: all this brought suburbia to Montlake and surrounding areas. Montlake became a classic urban residential area: single family dwellings owned by their occupants who take extreme pride in their neat uniformity. The land use is almost entirely residential. And the residents banded together to form a tightly organized, politically sophisticated, upper income lobby to protect and achieve its distinctive character.

In the late 1920s, the principal of Garfield High School talked with the Montlake PTA about petty crime and juvenile delinquency in the community: the conclusion was that Montlake needed a playfield and recreation center. Mrs. Russell Brackett told her realtor husband and he picked a 30-acre site on the shore of Portage Bay and they collected a massive district petition to the Park Board for its acquisition. But most of the site was a dahlia garden to supply Mrs. J. W. Wheeler's flower shop on Boyer Avenue. She objected to the low price offered by the City. Objections came from houseboat owners facing eviction and from several Park Board members. Emotional hearings were held in Council chambers resulting in an appeal to the State Supreme Court. But the Court held that it had no jurisdiction over location, size or development of a playfield - but "reasonable minds may differ" on these matters. So the District proceeded to assess itself to buy the "dahlia garden" and the City budgeted funds for improvement. The date was 1933, the depths of the Great Depression. But the undaunted District secured a WRPA project and City funds bought materials for construction of a recreation/community center and development of the playfield. It was dedicated in 1935. Playfield improvements included the first public archery range. It was several years before all the houseboats were removed - and then only by District action.

Some filling had been done to develop the playfield area but the shoreline remained in its natural condition - "low, swampy ground covered with swamp grass and rushes . . . an ideal breeding place for mosquitoes and vermin . . . decidedly a very unhealthful location." (1937 letter from City Engineer.) But the highly viscous peat was an ominous obstacle to further filling. Then came the Grand Plan for shoreline development in 1947: The Portage Bay (568) Boat Basin. Endorsement of this proposal was city-wide. But the cost estimates went up to \$268,000; development by concession was questioned by the Corporation Counsel. Plans and studies were rampant, including a City-wide

(over)



study in 1950 by the Planning Commission. "Long range planning" continued, but with a new direction in 1957 when the state replatted the Harbor Lines, increasing the amount of shoreland. The District endorsed Board plans to acquire shorelands abutting the playfield and expand the facilities. But the state was making plans for a new floating bridge, the access highway to cross the new shorelands. This, together with the "saturation" development of private moorages in Portage Bay, tabled plans for the boat basin. An immediate improvement requested was to raise the level of the playfield to eliminate the frequent flooding and soil saturation by the bay. So in 1960 the entire field was filled - which put it out of service. Then work commenced on the bridge access highway and the resultant excavation became available for shoreland fill. Huge truckloads of earth dumped in piles for future spreading exerted uneven pressures on the viscous peat below, causing upheavals in the playfield area and shorelands. So, use of the playfield was on a very temporary basis, depending upon mud or the latest upheaval. The soil being hauled in was unsegregated, not necessarily suitable for proper drainage and growing conditions for an athletic field. Also, the contractor building the highway viaduct was permitted to locate a work staging area on an "unused" portion of the field.

By 1966, the community had grown tired of waiting. Sand and gravel was beginning to come from Metro's "Ravenna Sewer Tunnel". So the District went to Court again with a list of interrogatories re: the filling process - fill materials, related operations (i.e., dust, house-shaking trucks), and work schedules. Two ballfields with backstops were put into service while the hauling and spreading continued.

The filling and resultant heaving had caused problems beyond the playfield area - on the east side. Homeowners had developed gardens and lagoons adjacent to the Bay. The construction of a sewer main along the slope above these gardens did not help. Some owners held out, hoping for restoration - finally giving up and selling to the City. The area west of the playfield - some 30 lots - was a semi-swamp, wild area, with only two or three homes on it. This area was proposed for expansion in 1960 but funds were not available until the huge Forward Thrust bond issue was approved in 1968 and acquisition began. But new concerns had evolved: Ecology: no longer were the marshes with their swamp grass and weeds and sheltering trees considered as a waste land to be "reclaimed". Now they were recognized as an important wildlife refuge, with the new Development Plan retaining this area as such.

Portage Bay



Lake Washington

of Washington  
(Bridge was entry to 1909 A-7-1 converted to W.)  
Ship Canal

CANAL LEASE (#154)  
4.8 acres (incl. 0.8 water)  
Leased 1961 for 30 yrs.  
from Port of Seattle  
for park and museum...  
... purposes.

"ARBORETUM WATERFRONT TRAIL"

Ship lift

STEEP SLOPE

(An alternate route for the canal - route of Freeway betw. Union + Portage Bays - was given by King Co. to U.S. Govt. but in construction the canal was realigned.)

(In 1908 - "Casino Grounds" occupied site of present Yacht Club.)

U.S. Dept. of Interior  
Fish + Wildlife Service  
Bur. of Com'l Fisheries  
Lab.

Plat Dedication: 1909 - "... parks + blvd. forever..."

Estate of Alfred Adler by Calvin H. Hogan (Financial Agent) + James Corner.

PARKS + BLVD. named on plat; subdivision named Montlake Park

Until 1917 Montlake Park fronted on Union Bay; Ship Canal lowered Lake level by 9 ft., making possible a Sanitary Fill in W. Montlake Park.

1918 - Army Engr. issued Permit for Use of Harbor Area to Yacht Club, terminating in 1953. In '62 State Land Comm. platted new Harbor Line in Portage Bay. Because City was unable to purchase shorelands abutting Park, the Park Board made an Agreement for the Yacht Club to purchase shorelands in 1962 with conveyance to park purposes in 2002, the Club contributing \$200,000/year toward maintenance of W. Montlake Park. Covering of the moorages was a controversy settled by City Council approval.

"CANAL LEASE"  
W. MONTLAKE PARK  
& CENTERSTRIP  
(BUD) CENTERSTRIP  
= 21,780' ±  
MONTLAKE PARK:  
EAST = 2.4 AC.  
WEST = 2.0  
122370

E. Shelby St.

E. Hamlin St.  
named for pioneer broker  
Edward H. Hamlin.

("Canal Reserve")  
Arboretum (U.W.)  
trees grass slope

STATE ROUTE 520

MC CURDY PARK

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

(Bldg. + Grounds Maint. - JU3-2797)

MUSEUM: 2161 E. Hamlin St.

Sun. 12-5  
M. Closed  
T-F 11-5  
S. 10-5

E. Naval Gun  
MK 7 1915

Evergreen Pt. Bridge

E. MONTLAKE BLVD.  
BUS #4, 25

When the pioneer settlers founded Seattle on the shore of Elliott Bay it was easy to circumnavigate the townsite by canoe. Until 1917, Lake Washington emptied at the south end through the Black River into the Green River forming the Duwamish, and there was a stream from Lake Union flowing into Salmon Bay and a small stream flowed from Lake Washington into Lake Union. But this latter stream often became a portage when the level of Lake Washington was low. A Captain of Army Engineers, George B. McClellan, was quick to recommend that a canal be dug from Lake Washington along the route of these streams to Salmon Bay. The concept was endorsed in 1854 by Thomas Mercer who saw in the canal a union of lakes and bays and so named Union Bay and Lake Union. Then began a series of arguments over the proper location of a canal. In 1860 Harvey L. Pike, the man who owned acreage in this area, grew tired of the bickering and took pick and shovel and began to dig "the Ditch" but he soon grew tired of digging. Federal surveys were authorized but supporting legislation failed to pass. Judge Thomas Burke formed a company which did open a channel between Lakes Union and Washington in 1885 and then Wa Chong completed the cut with locks from Lake Union to Salmon Bay. The entire canal was suitable only for log rafts and small boats and became known as Portage Canal. (A remnant of this "Old (Portage) Canal" may still be seen (1974) along the south side of the Museum of History and Industry (the windows of the Bass Memorial Library look into it) - the Old Ditch became an appropriate part of the Museum design.) So in 1898 King County deeded a Canal Right of Way to the Federal Government following the Portage Canal route.

Although this canal was most useful for purposes like Henry Yesler's sawmill (relocated after the 1889 fire to the north side of Union Bay), there was a growing demand for a canal for seagoing vessels. The final result was the opening of the ship canal in a new route between Lakes Union and Washington, lowering the level of Lake Washington by 9', causing the old Portage Canal to go dry.

In 1909 a plat named Montlake Park Addition dedicated Park areas along the east and west edges, both on the shoreline and including shorelands. "These will prove to be very valuable adjuncts to the system, in time . . ." says the Annual Report in 1911. But upon the lowering of Lake Washington in 1917, this park became landlocked by a low, somewhat marshy area that soon grew up with natural vegetation. For the interest and concerns in this area were related to the "Old Canal" Right of Way. Efforts were made by the City to acquire it as an extension of Washington Park but the Feds would only grant a revocable license to use the area for park purposes - no permanent structures: 1926. An attempt had been made in 1920 to extent 25th Avenue across the old right of way but the Board succeeded in preserving the whole strip intact for a park area. (Until 1962 when a new canal was dug - this one for the flow of vehicles to the Evergreen Floating Bridge and 24th was extended across it on a bridge, a new entry to the Museum.)

In 1945 the Park Board renewed efforts to acquire the right of way to allow a more extensive development by the Arboretum. And the Seattle Historical Society had acquired funds sufficient to build a museum - the site had been reserved in Carkeek Park, because Emily G. Carkeek was a "history buff". But the Society was seeking a different location, like Volunteer Park or Roanoke Park. So it all came together in a series of deeds to the Old Canal right of way, from the Federal Government to King County to Seattle to the Arboretum and Historical Society. The site for the museum, agreed upon by all parties, was on the south edge of East Montlake Park and included the Old Canal "which runs right through the tract." It almost wiped out the last bit of the canal, for the architect's first sketches indicated a fill in this area. So the main entry to the museum became a decorative bridge with vehicular access from Lake Washington Boulevard. Ten years later this bridge became a welcome used access to the buffer provided by the old canal wall and the new Freeway "Canal" - a new vehicle bridge provided access to the museum's new entry on Hamlin Street.

The relocation of the entrance to the museum, caused by the Freeway canal in 1962, plus the extension of 24th on a bridge, created some traffic and parking problems that were awkward to solve. So it was proposed that 24th be extended straight across from the new

History: E. MONTLAKE/MCCURDY PARK  
8/1/74

(over)



bridge to Shelby Street, a plan that would condemn three homes, providing more park (or parking) area at the new entrance to the museum. But the Superior Court ruled that the condemnation was not justifiable for the purposes. One of the homes was identified (unofficially) as a landmark: a brick mansion built in 1915, of Georgian style architecture, unusual because it predates Seattle's founding. It was designed by Bebb and Gould for the widow and three daughters and three sons of one of the first "brick men" to come to Seattle, his arrival prompted by the news that Seattle intended to rebuild with fireproof (brick) buildings after the 1889 fire. He was Daniel J. Houlahan, noted for his work in building the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City. After Mrs. Houlahan's death, some of the children continued to live in the house until 1951, selling it to the U.W. medical fraternity, Alpha Kappa Kappa. Ten years later it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Eli Rashkov and their two children and a cat. When the City tried condemnation, the Rashkov children and cat had left. The spacious rooms, entrance and upstairs hallways, five bedroom and sleeping porch, breakfast room, dining room and butler's pantry were too "empty", so they reluctantly sold to the City in 1968. But the court decision had voided the City's plan, so the Houlahan/Rashkov mansion was turned over to the Building Department and rented. Suggested uses were to house a collection of 18th century antiques, or as a wing of the museum; also a studio for a resident Department artist; but these proposals met community opposition on the basis of "social uses" in an area zoned for single family residences.

In 1967 the marshy areas, cattails and reeds along the shore of Union Bay (including East Montlake Park) were recognized as a "valuable natural resource" and the U.W. Arboretum Society and Park Department, together with funding from the U. S. Department of Interior through the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) constructed the "Arboretum Waterfront Trail" from Foster Island in Washington Park across Bamboo Island to the shoreland adjacent to the Museum and East Montlake Park by means of footbridges and pontoon pathways. (The Park and Arboretum funds came from a portion of the sale of land for the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge.) The Trail was envisioned as a first phase of a 15-year plan that would ultimately extend to the Chittenden Locks: Commodore Park was acquired as part of the implementation of that plan in 1969.

The Arboretum Trail was extended in 1971 with the development by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and the Seattle Garden Club of "The Canal Waterside Trail" from the museum area along the edge of the canal to West Montlake Park, with fishing and observation decks, landscaping by the gardeners.

Plans to preserve the shoreline of Montlake PF will provide another link in the Waterside Trail.

