

## MEADOWBROOK PLAYFIELD History

The mandate of the 1850 Oregon Territory Donation Land Claim Act to the Pioneers was to "clear, cultivate and occupy for four consecutive years" a tract of 320 acres per white person - and the land was yours. So the first order of business became the first industry - Henry Yesler's sawmill on the waterfront of Elliott Bay in the new town of Seattle, as well as in the entire region. The first roads were made by the loggers, usually for oxen to skid (drag) logs to the nearest mill, river or lake. The Maple Saw Mill was built near here at the mouth of Thornton Creek on Lake Washington on the north shore of a cove that is now Matthews Beach Park. A skid road was developed down to the mill, making its way in this area about where 105th is now. From here it went south toward Union Bay. After the loggers had moved on, the road was extended northward around the end of Lake Washington to Bothell and eventually on to Canada; southward it became part of Ravenna Boulevard and eventually linked with the "Great Road" to California - The Pacific Highway. This portion of the highway was a kink in the road that was eliminated by the building of Bothell Way (later renamed Victory Way and then Lake City Way).

After the loggers departed, the second phase of the mandate began: cultivating. The land was cleared of stumps and rocks and farming began. August Fisher developed a large dairy farm with the South Fork of Thornton Creek running through it - now the site of the playfield and high school. A country store was built at 34th and 110th and was named Chelsea. Fisher sold his farm land to Robert Tachell who developed the Meadowbrook Golf Course on the land in 1928. Even though it was far from town, the course was on a good road just off the main highway and he beat Jackson Golf Course opening by two years. (A neighbor girl, Ruth Jessen, spent her spare time searching for and selling lost golf balls, playing the course at dusk: shot a 78 at age 12, soon became a nationally known amateur who turned pro in 1956. Despite many serious tumors and operations, she met each with courage and a retooling of her game to become a leader in the 1962 U. S. Women's Open, winner of the Sears World Classic \$10,000 First Prize in 1971 and recipient of the Ben Hoan Award in 1972.) (N.Y. Times)

The town of Seattle was growing and so was the County's population. The Shoreline School District decided to build a school that would serve the junior and possibly senior high school needs for many years: the District bought farmland across the road from the golf course and built the Jane Addams School in 1949. The name was chosen by a District contest, won by Marlene Mondala, a student at Maple Leaf Grade School, with her essay about Jane Addams who opened a social settlement in Cordeil Hull's House in Chicago - for which she was honored with the Nobel Prize for Peace.

The growth of population brought streets and sewers, cutting off the natural drainage basin of Thornton Creek so that it was reduced to the flow of a brook. The headwaters for this South Fork were in spring-fed Square Lake a/k/a DePasqualie Lake: the Italian farm family from whom Dave Beck bought the property to sell to the Northgate Shopping Center, who filled it in for a parking lot in 1974. The Northgate Fountain was built to discharge into the Creek. Even so, the State Department of Fisheries still declares that Thornton Creek "is a game stream that has supported game fish and silver salmon for many years." In 1969, the Forward Thrust program attempted to acquire and/or preserve Thornton Creek bed but urban development and private interests too advanced for success. (Refer: Thornton Creek Parks).

In 1960 Tachell sold his golf course to the City and the School District and moved to the Carnation course. The area had been annexed to the City by 1954; the influx of population had been tremendous. Addams School was overcrowded and the community needed a playfield more than golf. So the Parks and School Boards developed a joint project in the construction of a combined recreation center and school but the cost of acquisition was far more than had been anticipated in the 1960 Park Bond for the Meadowbrook project, so the construction was delayed. The funds remaining in the bond allocation

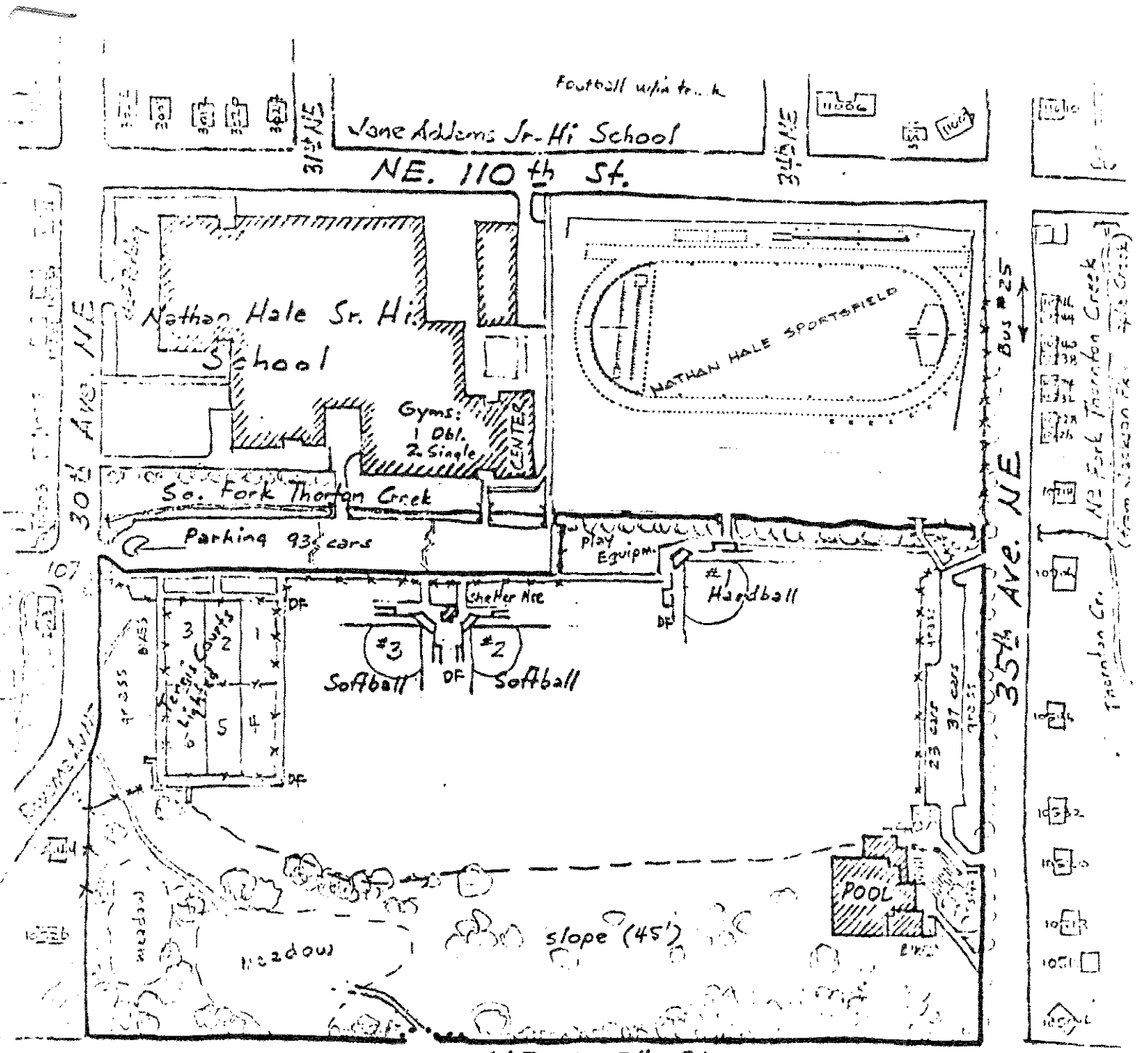
(over)

were used to deal with the problems of site development. Upon acquisition of the golf course, the Department maintained the greens for two years and then removed the sod for the new Lawn Bowling green at Woodland Park. Although the land had supported a turf for the dairy farm and then the golf course, it was underlain by peat and when the Department tried to grade the site for playfield purposes, it became necessary to remove the peat in depths of 10' in places. The presence of Thornton Creek contributed to the bog conditions. Fill material was brought in and a drainage system installed, but the remaining peat became mixed with the fill and clogged the drainage.

Meanwhile, progress on another bond fund project - "Field House Construction" - revealed that the first three units were being constructed for less than the allocations which provided funds for the recreation unit in the Nathan Hale School (named for the patriot executed as a spy by the British: 1776). The building needed to be built on piling. Attempts were made to use the playfield area but it was uneven and ponds developed during the winter rains - and school season. The community and PTA were quite agitated over the delayed development but there were no funds available. The school contract had included the installation of riprap (paving) the banks of Thornton Creek in an effort to contain and control the saturation of the playfield.

Funds finally became available after the 1968 approval of Forward Thrust: the development of the playfield with ballfields, tennis courts, a shelterhouse and an indoor swimming pool. Construction of the pool was determined by priorities established in Forward Thrust but further delays were caused by redesign to bring construction costs down within the budget and by the weather whose wetness hampered excavation.

The Meadowbrook Swimming Pool was dedicated in October 1975, including a plaque in the lobby to the memory of Ray Lander, "a friend of the students of Hale High School and Meadowbrook Community Center." (Plaque designed and cast by Harry March, an artist in the community.) "Raider Ray" Lander (1896-1974) was affectionately known to students and faculty at Hale High School as a volunteer at the center. Born in Illinois, he played on the high school basketball and tennis teams. After service in the Infantry in WW I, he came to Seattle in 1921 to work as a shipping clerk for a national record distributor. He also volunteered at the neighboring Madrona Playground, of which Pearl Powell was supervisor. In 1963 he relocated and resumed volunteering here, and became a "numero uno" booster for Hale teams, both during practice and games, as well as assemblies, dances, etc. He was awarded an honorary letterman's jacket, was named to the esteemed Body of Patriots, and received an honorary high school graduation certificate in 1971.



Directional signs  
at NE 107th and Lake City Way

SHALTER HOUSE  
10517 - 35th Av. NE  
1974 - \$32,810 = ↑

POOL  
10515 - 35th Av. NE  
365-9933  
Pool 44' x 75' - 3' to 12' Deep  
7 competition lanes  
Bill 1975: \$825,000 = ↑  
Dedicated to memory of RAY LANDER

PLAY EQUIPMENT  
Fort  
Kiddie Swings  
Climber  
Tires (1/2 buried)  
Sand/Posts  
Climbing Bars  
Climber/Slide



COMMUNITY CENTER  
3200 NE 107th St. Bill: 1964: \$121,508 = '60 PF.  
362-2922  
Multi-purp. Rm. 40' x 74' = 430 persons  
Social Rm. 24' x 24' + kitchenette + locker Rm.  
Game Rm. 16' x 24'

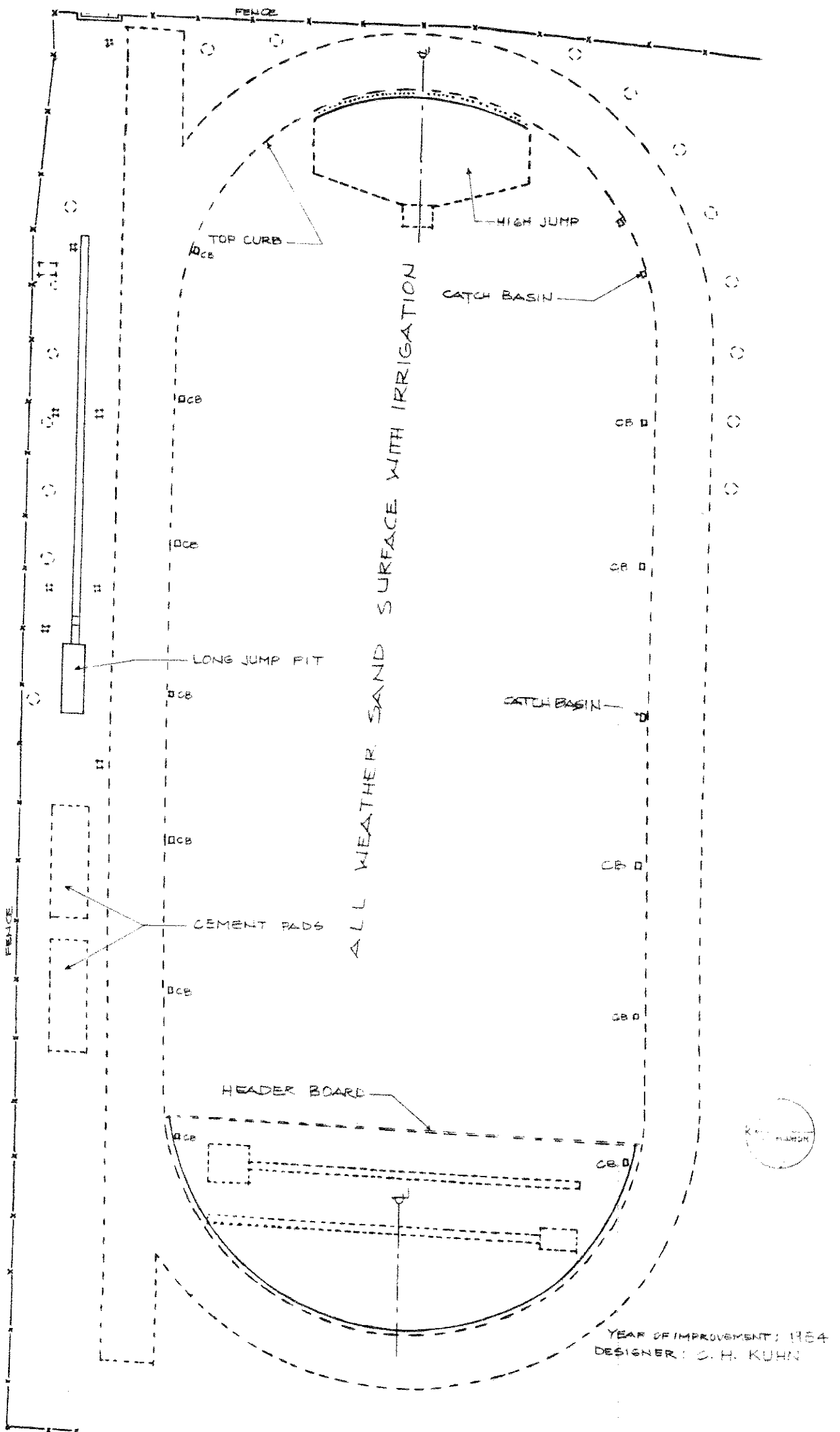
NATHAN HALE - By Permit  
2 School Gyms - 100' x 135' = 2200 persons (471, 1000)  
1 School Gym = 225 persons  
Wrestling Rm.  
Weight Lift Rm.  
Lunchroom  
Lockerroom

125

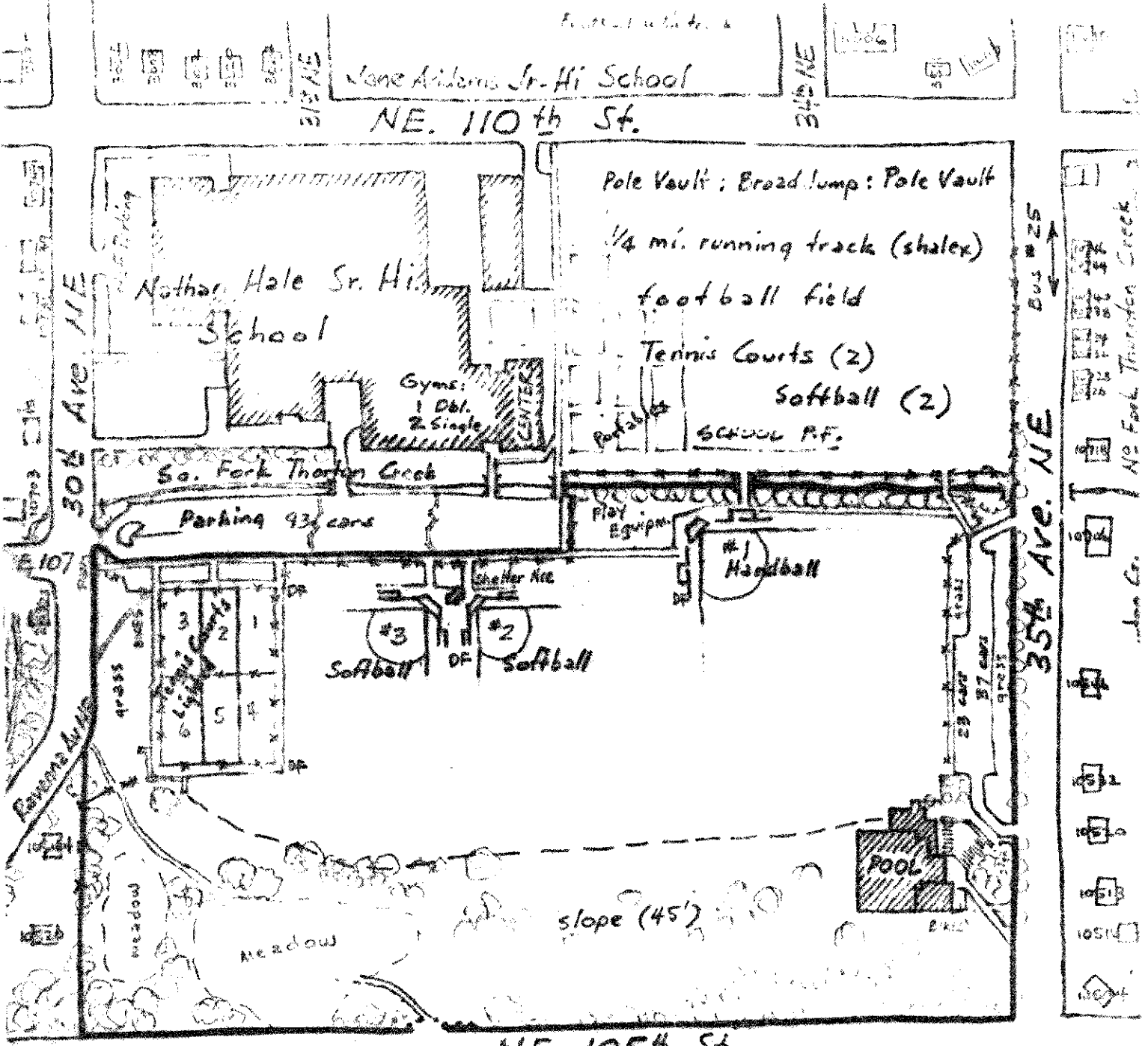
18.5 Acres  
Purch. 1960: \$195,267 = '60 BF

**MEADOWBROOK P.F.**  
(NATHAN HALE SPORTSFIELD)

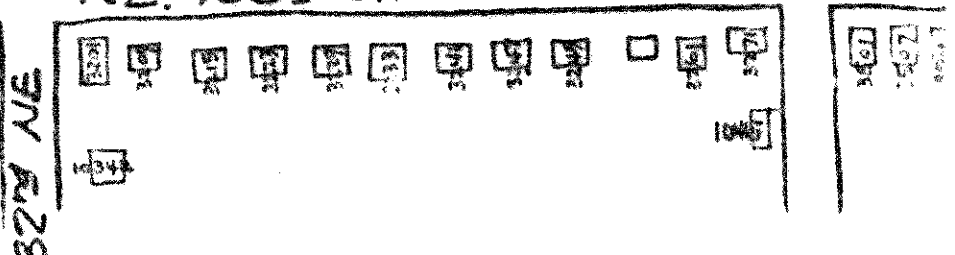
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Directional sign  
at NE 107th and Lake City Way



**SHELTER HOUSE**  
10517 - 354th AV. NE  
1974 - \$22,810 = P

**POOL**  
10515 - 354th AV. NE  
365-9923

Pool: 45' x 75' - 3' to 12' Deep  
2 lanes  
1970, 1970, 1970 = P  
Credited to memory of RAY LANDEK

**POOL EQUIPMENT**  
Pool  
Pool's Surface  
Clamber  
vinyl  
Tires (1/2 buried)  
Sand/Posts  
Chinning Bars  
Clamber/Slide

125



18.5 Acres  
Purch. 1960: \$195,267. '60 BF

**COMMUNITY CENTER**  
3200 NE 107th ST. Bilt: 1964: \$121,505 = 50 BF.  
362-2922  
Multi-purp. Rm. 40' x 74' = 430 persons  
Social Rm. 24' x 24' + Kitchenette + Lounge 2nd  
Game Rm. 16' x 24'

**NATHAN HALE - By Permit**  
2 School Gyms - 100' x 135' = 2200 persons (111' x 111')  
1 School Gym = 2285 persons  
Wrestling Rm.  
Weight Lifting Rm.  
Lunchroom  
Locker room

**MEADOWBROOK P.F.**

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