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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Tift Park other names/site number

2. Location

(n/a) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:		
(x) private (x) public-local	RECEIVED	
<pre>() public-state () public-federal</pre>	NOV 1 6 1993	
Category of Property	NATIONAL REGISTER	
 () building(s) (x) district () site () structure () object 		

Number of Resources within Property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
buildings	0	4
sites	1	0
structures	3	1
objects	0	0
total	4	5

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

State/Federal Agency Certification 4.

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

9.30.93

Elizabeth A. Lyon State Historic Preservation Officer, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

ROP

5.

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

National Park Service Certification I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register () determined eligible for the National Register () determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Signature, Keeper of the National Register

Date

Historic Functions:

LANDSCAPE:park

Current Functions:

LANDSCAPE:park SOCIAL:clubhouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

No style

Materials:

foundation	n/a
walls	n/a
roof	n/a
other	n/a

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Tift Park is located in Albany, in southwest Georgia. The city owned park is a roughly 31 acre area of park land located approximately one mile north of downtown Albany. Approximately four acres of land on the east side within the original park boundaries is the privately owned Albany Boys Club.

In 1909, the city purchased the park land as part of Albany's citywide beautification efforts and established the city's first park. The land was part of a newly developing residential subdivision call "Arcadia." In 1910, a contest was held to name the park and "Tift Park" was chosen in honor of the city's founder Nelson Tift.

In 1912, a landscape design was developed by Atlanta landscape architect, Otto Katzenstein. His plan called for a "rustic character" park using native trees and shrubs, and curved sand-clay carriage drives and walks. A children's concrete wading pool with a fountain in the center was located near a c. 1890 dance pavilion. (The pavilion was part of an earlier homesite.) A baseball field and playgrounds were also constructed. Rustic park benches and drinking fountains were located throughout the park.

The plan also called for two main entrances; one along North Jefferson Street; the other, along Palmyra Road. The entrances were to feature ornamental stone posts and elaborately designed flower and foliage beds. A 1912 newspaper indicates "workman planted trees along the main entrances to the park using hackberry, six varieties of oak, black walnut, tulips, maples, etc." A large shrubbery border was also planted along 5th Avenue to "entirely enclose the park." Between 1910 - 1920, Live Oaks were planted along the carriage drives. By 1914, the park also contained a band stand located at one of the main entrances. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7

A 1918 photograph of Tift Park shows a variety of ornamental grasses, palms, pine, and circular flower beds. A late 1930s postcard shows Tift Park with mature azaleas, Live Oaks, Sago Palms, and expansive lawn areas.

Over the years, the original Katzenstein plan was altered. During the 1930s, a small zoo was established, destroying one of the original carriage trails in the northeast section of the park. The zoo moved out of the park in 1977. A swimming pool was constructed during the 1950s, eliminating one of the main entrances along North Jefferson Street. In 1963, to avoid desegregation, the city declared the swimming pool and adjacent tennis courts surplus and sold them to a private citizen. The property was later donated to the Albany Boys Club. The club erected a building next to the pool in 1966 and reopened the pool in 1971 (photograph 4).

One of the most striking landscape features remaining from this early plan is the Live Oak-lined carriage trail (photograph 2). These 70 -80 year old trees are located mainly in the south and west sides of the park. The curvilinear design of Monroe Street also remains (photograph 1). The property continues to maintain a park-like environment with 31 different species of trees and shrubs (photograph 3, 6). Sago Palm (Cycas revoluta), Cabbage Palm (Sabal palmetto), Longleaf Pine (Pinus palustris), Southern Magnolia (Magnolia grandiflora), Crape Myrtle (Lagerstromia indica), Dogwood (Cornus florida), and a variety of azaleas are widely used. The park also features jogging trails, picnic areas, baseball field, horseshoe pits, picnic shelters, and grassed areas. Historic street lamps remain along North Jefferson Street (photograph 5).

The northeast section of the park is now used as a maintenance facility and contains two nonhistoric buildings. The historic pavilion located in this section was demolished in 1986. A nonhistoric recreation office building is located in the center of the park. One nonhistoric structure, a gazebo, is located near the treelined carriage trail in the south section of the park.

The area surrounding the park is residential and institutional and consists of historic early 20th-century neighborhoods and a nonhistoric hospital complex.

8. Statement of Significance
Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
() nationally () statewide (x) locally
Applicable National Register Criteria:
(x) A () B (x) C () D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): () N/A
() A () B () C () D () E () F (x) G
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):
Community Planning and Development/Recreation Landscape Architecture Social History/Ethnic Heritage-Black
Period of Significance:
1909 - 1963
Significant Dates:
1909 1963
Significant Person(s):
n/a
Cultural Affiliation:
n/a
Architect(s)/Builder(s):
Otto Katzenstein - Landscape Architect

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

Tift Park is significant in <u>Community Planning and Development/</u> <u>Recreation</u> as an example of the city's efforts during the early 20th century to promote city beautification projects, and to develop recreational areas for its citizens. Tift Park was Albany's first city park. The park land was purchased from a neighboring Arcadia residential development in 1909 with the purpose of creating a grand public park. In 1910, a contest was held to name the park and the city commission chose "Tift Park" in honor of Nelson Tift, Albany's founder. The creation of the city's first park was part of a larger beautification plan. Other projects involved planting trees along major streets in the city. The creation of city parks and the planting of street trees was inspired by a nationwide city beautiful movement. Tift Park is an example of what local communities implemented during the early 20th-century as beautification projects.

The park is significant in Landscape Architecture for the remaining carriage drives lined with 70 - 80 year old Live Oaks. The drives were part of a larger park plan designed by Atlanta landscape architect, Otto Katzenstein in 1912. While many of the original plantings no longer remain, the park retains an overall park-like environment containing plants indigenous to the South. Katzenstein's plan utilized curved drives and walks. A children's wading pool, baseball field and a playground were also constructed. The plan called for two main entrances; one along North Jefferson Street; the other, along Palmyra Road. The entrances were to feature ornamental stone posts and elaborately designed flower and foliage beds. Between 1910-1920, Live Oaks were planted along the various drives. By 1914, the park also contained a band stand located at one of the main entrances. A 1918 photograph of Tift Park shows a variety of ornamental grasses, palms, pine, and circular flower beds. A late 1930s postcard shows Tift Park with mature azaleas, Live Oaks, Sago Palms, and open lawn areas. The park retains its overall park-like environment with its wide variety of trees and shrubs, a ball field, walking trails, historic Live Oak-lined carriage trails, and the curvilinear design of Monroe Street. The park is significant as an example of an early 20th-century landscape plan utilizing natural or rustic park features.

The park is exceptionally significant locally in <u>social history/ethnic</u> <u>heritage-black</u> for the 1963 closing and surplusing of the swimming pool and tennis courts by the city to avoid integration. The closing of this pool was the reactionary outcome by the city to the staged

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

protests from the black community calling for an end to segregation in public facilities. Although not directly related to the Albany Movement, which tested the Interstate Transportation Commission's ruling on integrated bus and train stations, the city's closing of public recreational facilities during this time period illustrates local events which reflected activities taking place across the South in the 1960s civil rights movement. The closing or selling of public facilities was a dramatic but fairly common reaction to the civil rights movement in the 1960s across Georgia.

National Register Criteria

The district meets Criteria A for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The development of the park during the early 20th-century is an example of the city's beautification efforts. This illustrates the local efforts which were part of a larger nationwide city beautiful The land was purchased by the city from the newly planned movement. Arcadia residential subdivision. Park walkways, drives, a ball field, and a playground were constructed. The park is also significant for the event that occurred in the early 1960s with the surplus sale of the swimming pool and tennis courts to a private individual. This was the result of the city's reaction to various staged protests by the black community calling for an end to segregation of public facilities.

The park meets Criteria C for what remains of the landscape plan designed by Otto Katzenstein in 1912. The park was designed using a "rustic" approach utilizing native plant materials. Ball fields, playgrounds, a wading pool, walkways, and carriage drives were incorporated. The plan called for grassed areas that could be used for recreation. "Keep off grass" signs were prohibited. He also incorporated rustic benches throughout the park. The park has lost some of the original features called for in the Katzenstein plan, such as the main entrances, and the children's wading pool. However, it still retains its overall park-like environment, with native plant materials, open lawn areas, walking trails, and a ball field. Sections of the Live Oak carriage drive remain in the south part of the park. The curvilinear design of Monroe Street also remains.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The 1963 closing of the 1950s swimming pool and tennis courts is significant for representing local level actions that helped foster the Civil Rights Movement. The closing of this pool and other recreation areas in Albany was in reaction to the organized protests by black citizens to end segregation in public facilities.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

Period of significance (justification)

1909 - City purchased land for park development. 1963 - Swimming pool and tennis courts closed; sold as surplus.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

1 Contributing Site - Remaining historic landscaping.

3 Contributing Structures - Landscape plan used for Tift Park Swimming Pool Tennis Court

- 4 Noncontributing Buildings 3 Park maintenance/office buildings; 1 - Albany Boys Club
- 1 Noncontributing Structure Gazebo

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

The motivating factor in the founding of Albany was the exploitation of the fertile soils through the production of cotton. A group of businessmen headed by John Rawls planned to purchase and develop the best prospective cotton lands at the Flint River and to establish a river port for the transport of the cotton to the gulf port of Appalachicola. They expected to reap fantastic profits from both land speculation and economic development. Among the businessmen was a young entrepreneur from Connecticut, Nelson Tift, who was then a merchant in Hawkinsville.

Tift added his considerable resources to the firm of Rawls, Tift, and Company, and with his associates traveled up the Flint River from Appalachicola in October, 1836. The company store was established and a crude landing built, but there was no immediate rush to this cotton frontier. The other stockholders became discouraged and sold their stock to Tift, who had deep faith in the future of the new town that he named after Albany, New York.

From this point, the life of Nelson Tift and the history of Albany were closely entwined. His activities as a land developer, merchant, civic father, and politician-not to mention his social connectionsshaped the evolution of the city for over fifty years, and his hand was present in practically every aspect of its economic and institutional growth.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

Tift was a delegate from Baker (later Dougherty) County to several state conventions, justice of the Inferior Court, representative in the General Assembly, the publisher of Albany's first newspaper, and the prime promoter of railroad development in the area both before and after the Civil War.

Albany began to flourish during the 1850s. The general prosperity of the cotton trade encouraged the establishment and expansion of cotton plantations. The new county of Dougherty was dominated by large planters. Between 1845 and 1860, nearly 75 percent of the county's population was black, mostly slave, yet less than half of the adult white males owned slaves. Tift's tireless attempts to establish a railway connection were rewarded with a line from Americus in 1857. Horace King, a well known black contractor from Columbus, Georgia, constructed a toll bridge over the Flint River for Tift in 1858. Albany boasted five brickyards, many new buildings, and a passenger depot when the Civil War broke out. Agriculturally, the county was productive, with about 20,000 bales of cotton and 370,000 bushels of corn a year.

Albany was not threatened with military attack and became a sanctuary for refugees, and for a short time, for sick and wounded soldiers. After being treated, the soldiers were moved to Mississippi. Albany's greatest function for the Confederacy was a provider of foodstuffs.

Despite the expenditure of much wealth and resources during the Civil War and the loss of personal property, at its end, Albany rebounded rapidly. In 1866, Nelson Tift established a cotton and wool factory, and seventeen buildings were erected in the next year. In 1867, fire destroyed the principal business section, but it was quickly rebuilt. During this period, white and black volunteer fire companies were formed. The Southwestern was reopened between Albany and Savannah and the first telegraph message was received.

Between 1870 and 1915, four new railroad connections were added to Albany. The Brunswick and Western Railroad and an extension of the Savannah and Gulf (Atlantic and Gulf) Railroad were completed by 1876, and Nelson Tift donated property in Albany for stations on the west side of the Flint River. Lines west and east to Cordele were added in the 1880s.

As commercial development followed Washington Street north, residential expansion followed the Jackson, Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison Streets in the same direction. Most of the substantial residences built between 1860 and 1890 were located in the blocks bounded by these streets and running along Tift, Residence, and Society Avenues. Nelson Tift's home was located on the north side of

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

the 200 block of Society Avenue, and he owned most of the undeveloped land north of the town. By the time of Tift's death in 1891, most of the available lots were sold, and his heirs were persuaded to open the "rural" area for development.

This first "suburb" was titled the "new addition" or the "Arcadia" subdivision. It was surveyed in blocks formed by the extensions of existing streets intersecting seven new numbered avenues. The blocks from Front Street west to Jefferson Street contained twelve lots each, and the planned residential blocks west of Jefferson were comprised of eight lots, each lot equal to two of the smaller lots.

Blocks 22, 23, 24, and 25 of the Arcadia subdivision became the site of Tift Park. These large residential lots were very near Nelson Tift's country house and farm. Jefferson Street connected that property with his town house on Society Avenue, and he had constructed a dance pavilion at what became the southwest corner of the Jefferson Street intersection with Seventh Avenue, now the northwest corner of Tift Park. The pavilion and the surrounding grounds supported an encampment of soldiers in transit during the Spanish American War. The pavilion was used as a hospital when an epidemic of meningitis struck the troops during the winter.

Pre-1900 development of the Arcadia subdivision concentrated on Washington and Jackson Streets, reaching as far north as Fifth Avenue. The actual improvements were, however, random and small concentrations of dwellings that were scattered over these blocks.

The progressive era dawned in Albany with a series of civic leaders who equated economic development with public improvements. The rise of the pecan industry and the recovery of agriculture fueled an industrial expansion, and the city prospered. Building codes limiting construction on alleys and irregular lots were enacted in 1900, thus stimulating efforts to define and beautify neighborhoods. The city undertook a planting project in 1904, placing oaks and flowering shrubs along the street right of ways throughout the residential A new industrial park was established north of Arcadia, and areas. Washington Street rerouted northwest to avoid the railroad yards which were beginning to dominate the 100 blocks north of Fourth Avenue. The consolidation of the northside and the Arcadia communities led to the proposal of additional subdivisions to the west of Madison Street.

To Mayors Tarver and Tift, as well as to other perceptive Albanians, it appeared that the fine "modern" neighborhoods of the city would arise west of the northern block of Arcadia. This conclusion was reinforced by the construction of industrial dwellings north of Seventh Street. In 1909, the city began its beautification efforts to establish the first city park by purchasing 20 acres of

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

land in Arcadia which at that point was a vacant undeveloped area between Fifth and Seventh Avenues.

In 1910, the city purchased first blocks 22, 23, and 25 and in 1911, added block 24. The right of way of Palmyra Road, which preexisted the Arcadia survey, cut through blocks 24 and 25, and the city purchased only those lots which lay east of that right of way. Tift Park was therefore bounded by Jefferson Street on the east, Palmyra Road on the west, Fifth Avenue on the south, and Seventh Avenue on the north. A park naming contest was also held sponsored by local newspaper and the city commissioners selected "Tift Park" in honor of the city's founder Nelson Tift.

In 1912, Otto Katzenstein, an Atlanta landscape architect, was hired to design a plan for the park. He utilized a "rustic" approach to the park design with native plant materials and natural materials for park benches. The right of way for Sixth Avenue through the park (which had not been graded) was replaced with looping "carriage trails" which centered on the curved northerly passage of Monroe Street through the park. The trails were lined with the same oaks and flowering shrubs that were becoming standard on residential streets and wells were drilled for fountains.

The advent of the park encouraged the construction of some very fine homes along Fifth Street, and the subdivision of adjoining lots in the Rawson Park, Palmyra Park, and during the 1920s, the Rawson Circle area. Phoebe Putney Hospital, which now dominates the area south of the park, began in Arcadia on the northwest corner of Third and Jefferson Street. The Albany Junior High School was constructed one block south of Tift Park on Jefferson Street in 1924 and, with additions, has remained in continuous use.

Albany's importance as an industrial and railroad center grew during the World War I period. Private expansion of the business district and the development of the railroad district around the new Union Passenger Depot. As the downtown grew, the expansion of railroad and, most importantly, automobile traffic chanced the character of the area around Tift Park. In the 1930s, the construction of the Jefferson Street overpass concentrated even more traffic on that street. As the city did have strict zoning requirements, a mixture of commercial and residential buildings began to appear on Jefferson Street and rental units multiplied on the east and south of Tift Park.

Despite these developments, the locations around Tift Park were extremely desirable for homes. The small lots facing the park on Seventh were thick with modest frame dwellings in the 1930s. Large homes continued to be built on Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison Streets

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8

and in the adjoining subdivisions. Tift Park became the site of playgrounds, picnic areas, a zoo, the "Wigwam" which was the c. 1890 pavilion converted to a Boy Scout meeting house, and at one point a 1913 locomotive.

The establishment of Turner Field and other military bases around Albany as World War II approached signaled another huge economic expansion which began in the 1940s and gathered momentum for two decades following. An extraordinary jump in population from 19,055 in 1940 toward 80,000 in 1970 propelled real estate development north and west rapidly. By the mid-1950s, commerce and industry were moving to parks and "plazas" on the edge of the city, and the downtown was in steep decline. The intown neighborhoods remained convenient to the main traffic routes, which were shifted from Jefferson Street west to Slappey Boulevard, but the further expansion of the medical complex around Phoebe Putney Hospital tended to convert residential buildings to commercial use.

During the 1960s, Albany experienced protests by the black community in an effort to abolish the "separate but equal" system found in libraries, swimming pools, waiting rooms of bus and train stations, and public schools. The city reacted to these staged protests by selling its public swimming pools and removing seats in the public library to avoid integration. A major civil rights movement, known as the Albany Movement, tested the city on the ITC ruling of integrated bus and train stations. This movement brought national attention to the city of Albany.

In the last two decades, Albany's population has reached into Lee and Terrell counties on the north and toward Baker County on the south. Efforts to preserve and reclaim the historical downtown were mostly individual during the 1970s but have gradually become collective investments of time and resources. In 1977, the zoo moved to Chehaw Park outside of Albany.

Tift Park and its landscape-as well as the Boys Club and the recreational facilities-have become critical to the rebirth of these neighborhoods and the preservation of the significant architecture located there.

9. Major Bibliographic References

- Botti, Marjorie. "Tift Park." <u>Historic District Information Form</u>, March 1, 1991. On file at the Office of Historic Preservation, Atlanta, Georgia.
- Carson, Clayborne; Oates, Stephen; and Ricks, John, III. "The Civil Rights Struggle in Southwest Georgia, The Albany Movement 1961-1962: Three Perspectives." <u>The Journal of Southwest Georgia</u> <u>History</u> Volume II, Fall 1984.
- Segers, Carolynn. "Tift Park." <u>Historic District Information Form,</u> <u>Additional Information</u>. August 11, 1993. On file at the Office of Historic Preservation, Atlanta, Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (x) N/A

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- () previously listed in the National Register
- () previously determined eligible by the National Register
- () designated a National Historic Landmark
- () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- () recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

n/a

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 35 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 769260 Northing 3498900
B) Zone 16 Easting 769860 Northing 3498900
C) Zone 16 Easting 769860 Northing 3498600
D) Zone 16 Easting 769480 Northing 3498600

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary includes the remaining 35 acres historically associated with Tift Park.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for Tift Park are indicated by a heavy black line on the enclosed plat map. Approximately 31 acres are currently the city park and approximately 4 acres are privately owned by the Albany Boys Club.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Raflo, National Register Coordinator organization Office of Historic Preservation, Georgia Department of Natural Resources street & number 205 Butler Street, S.E., Suite 1462 city or town Atlanta state Georgia zip code 30334 telephone (404) 656-2840 date 9/10/93

(HPS form version 10-29-91)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Name of Property:	Tift Park
City or Vicinity:	Albany
County:	Dougherty
State:	Georgia
Photographer:	James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed:	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed:	April 1992

Description of Photograph(s):

1 of 6: View of Monroe Street; photographer facing south.

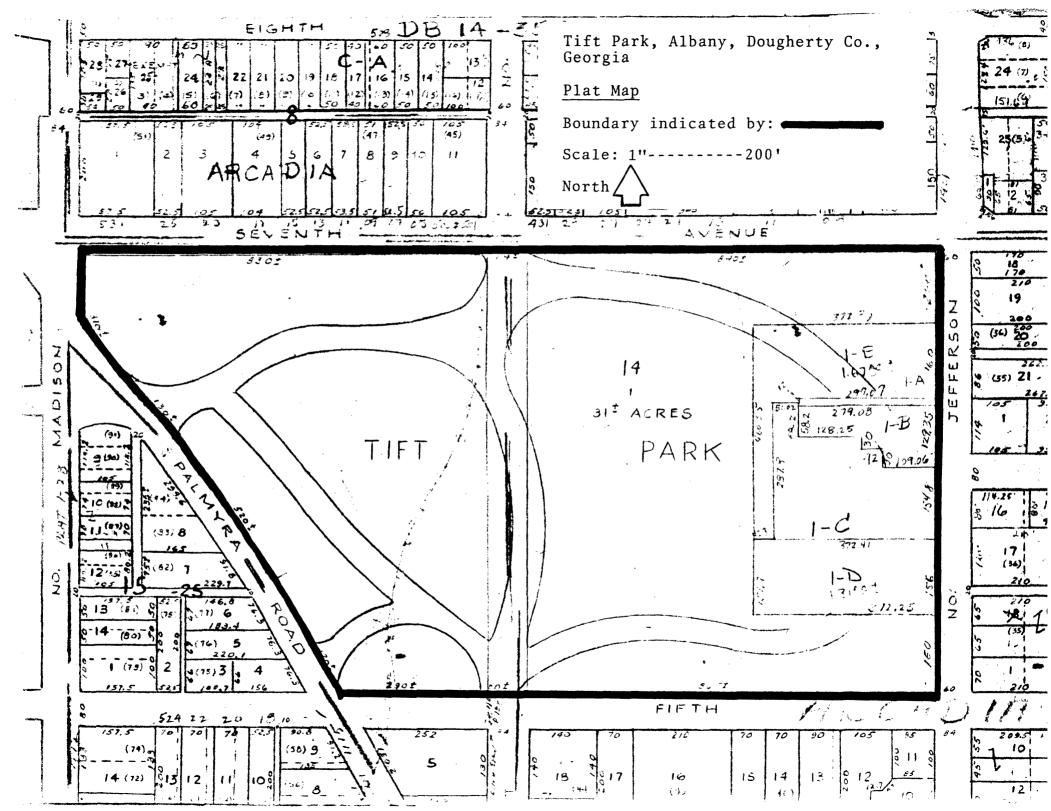
2 of 6: View of carriage trail with Live Oaks; photographer facing northwest.

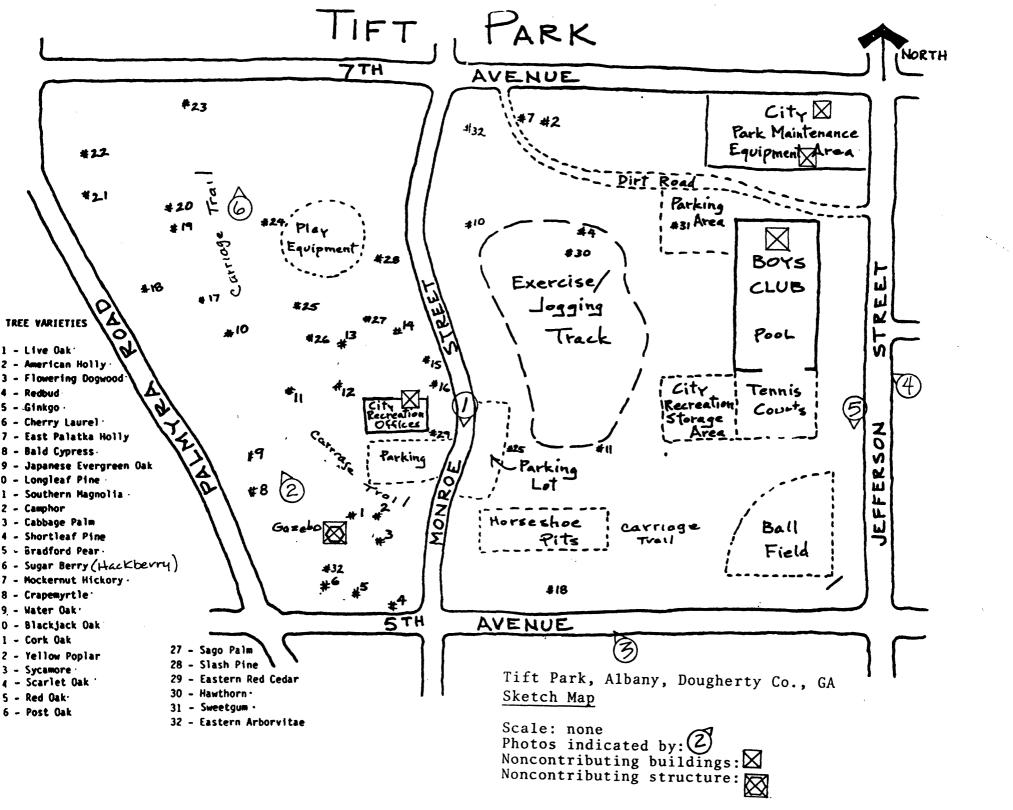
3 of 6: View of park along 5th Avenue; photographer facing northwest.

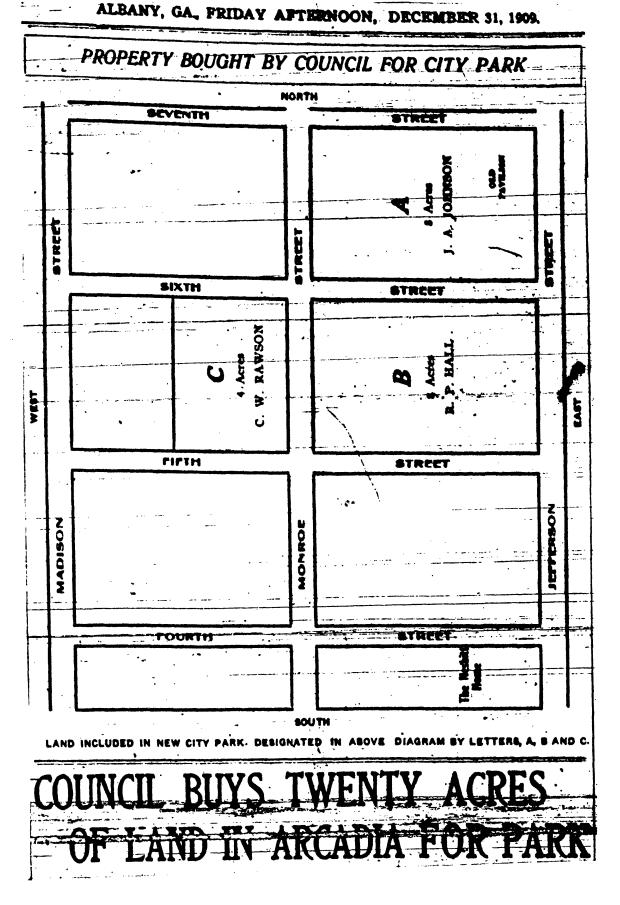
4 of 6: View of Boys Club/swimming pool; photographer facing northwest.

5 of 6: View of ball field; photographer facing southwest.

6 of 6: View of azaleas; photographer facing north.



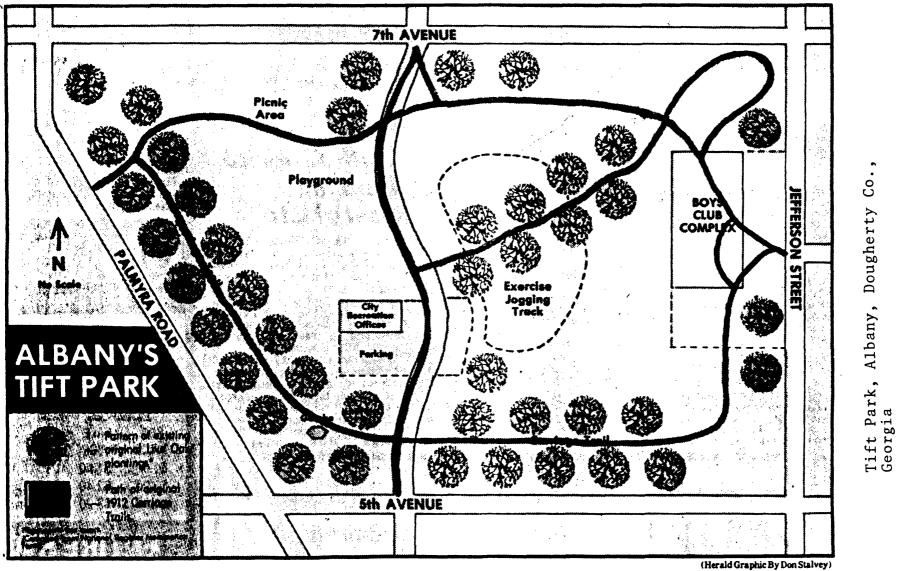




Tift Park, Albany, Dougherty Co., Georgia

1909 Newspaper article

With Stroll Through Park 1912 Carriage Trail Visible



Georgia 1992 Newspaper article