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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

MAY 18 1993

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pioneers Park

other names/site number NeHBS # LC00-045

2. Location

street & number West Van Dorn and Coddington Streets not for publication [N/A]

city or town Lincoln vicinity [X]

state Nebraska code NE county Lancaster code 109 zip code 68522

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility 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 [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

May 10, 1993  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
[ ] See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the  
National Register  
[ ] See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

[Signature]

6/17/93

[Signature]  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
12	13	buildings
3	2	sites
8		structures
3	1	objects
26	16	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/park  
 Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation  
 Recreation and Culture/work of art

Landscape/park  
 Recreation and Culture/outdoor recreation  
 Recreation and Culture/music facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation N/A  
 walls  
 roof  
 other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape Architecture  
Social History

**Period of Significance**

1928-1939

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Herminghaus, Ernst Herman

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department

Pioneers Park  
Name of Property

Lancaster County, Nebraska  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 601.26 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	689930	4517070	3.	14	687170	4515410
2.	14	689960	4515500	4.	14	687120	4517000

[ ] See continuation sheet.

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Anne C. Johnson, Intern/Edward F. Zimmer, Ph.D., Historic Preservation Planner

organization Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Dept. date March 1993

street & number 555 South 10th Street telephone (402) 441-7491

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68508

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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### Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Lincoln, Parks & Recreation Dept.

street & number 2740 A Street telephone (402) 441-7847

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68502

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation Sheet

Pioneers Park

Name of Property

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SUMMARY

Pioneers Park is a large designed landscape (601.26 acres) owned by the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, and located just beyond the southwestern edge of the city limits. Lincoln is the state capital (1990 population: 191,972). The park was established on land donated in 1928 and 1930 by a former Lincoln resident, and was designed by landscape architect Ernst H. Herminghaus. The park is situated on rolling terrain that was formerly prairie grassland but now is heavily planted with coniferous and some deciduous trees, maintaining prairie meadows in selected areas. A portion of the south boundary of the park is Haines Branch, a small creek. Five ponds are incorporated into the park design. Pioneers Park includes several major active and passive recreation features such as an amphitheatre, bridle paths, hiking trails, duck ponds, picnic areas, and a zoo/nature center. The park also contains several distinctive decorative elements such as a life-size bronze figure of a bison (ca. 1929) and a fifteen-foot, cast-concrete sculpture of the Native American chief Red Cloud, created as a work relief project of 1935. The most striking features of the park's design, however, are four conifer-lined allees which frame interior vistas within the park and distant views of the Nebraska State Capitol (National Historic Landmark), 2.25 miles away.

The park contains 26 contributing resources and 16 non-contributing features. Contributing resources include 12 buildings, 3 sites, 8 structures, and 3 objects. Non-contributing elements include 13 buildings, 2 sites, and one object. The original forestation of this former prairie suffered many setbacks in the droughts of the 1930's. In recent years drought and disease have again taken a toll on the park's plant materials, but an ongoing reforestation is maintaining original design characteristics. Overall, the park retains a high degree of integrity as a historic designed landscape.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT SYNOPSIS

The history of Pioneers Park, its design and its development are discussed in detail within the Statement of Significance, but a basic understanding of certain aspects is essential to describe the park's features and to evaluate its integrity.

In 1928, John F. Harris, a New York investment banker and former Lincolnite, donated 500 acres of rolling prairie grassland to the city of Lincoln as a Christmas gift. When Pioneers Park was dedicated in 1930, Harris donated an additional 100 acres. In 1929, Harris wrote "I hope it [Pioneers Park] will be the source of much pleasure to many for as long a period as one dare to prophesy."

Preliminary plans for the park were submitted by Sondereggers' Nurseries of Omaha and Beatrice; McCrary, Culley, and Carhart of Denver, Colorado; and Lawrence Holmes, P. E. McMillan and Chas. Koonts of Lincoln. The selection committee was chaired by Ernst H. Herminghaus, Nebraska's first academically trained landscape architect. All three of the submitted designs are now lost, but according to published accounts, none was selected. Instead, Herminghaus developed a master plan based on elements from all three.

The Herminghaus plan of 1929 [Photo 1, historic view] is very ambitious, with major landscape elements and activity areas indicated throughout the park. The east 80 acres were designed to create vistas both within the park and to the distant Capitol (then under construction) designed by Bertram G. Goodhue. (The Nebraska State Capitol was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1970.) The remainder of the park was to receive intensive development including an amphitheatre, 27-hole golf course, a substantial zoo with an aquarium, a swimming pool, tennis courts, boating lake, and cabin and camping areas.

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**DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT SYNOPSIS (continued)**

The onset of the Depression resulted in a substantial scaling back of the intensity of development. The revised plan implemented in the 1930's and recorded by Herminghaus in 1935 [Photos 2 & 3] closely matched the original scheme in the east 80 acres and golf course, but employed a more naturalistic design in the remainder of the park including a large picnic area, nature center, and simple zoo. The planned amphitheatre was finally developed in 1947, under Herminghaus' direction.

Between 1929 and 1932, the Lincoln Parks Department concentrated efforts on the planting of Pioneers Park. According to annual reports, 31,245 shrubs and 42,912 trees were planted throughout the park by 1932. Drought devastated the early plantings and much effort was devoted to improving water supplies for irrigation. Work relief projects continued planting in Pioneers Park through 1936.

Herminghaus' plans for the park have largely been maintained. Major developments outside the period of significance, such as the Pinewood Bowl and Pioneers Prairie Interpretive (nature) Center, are located in areas originally envisioned for those uses. Recent reforestation efforts have been respectful of Herminghaus' design elements, with some changes in materials to foster healthier growth. For instance, coniferous plantings to frame the vista allees have been maintained, but in replanting the mix of varieties has been increased, since monoculture plantings have resulted in widespread losses to disease.

**DESCRIPTION**

For the purpose of description, Pioneers Park can be divided into 6 broad areas: East Eighty Acres, Meadow Area, Golf Course, Pinewood Bowl/Indian Hill Area, Picnic Area, and Pioneers Prairie Interpretive Center. (These areas are labeled according to design and activity features, but were not all so named on original plans.) Some other aspects, such as the road and trail system, which extend throughout the park, are described as logic dictates. An inventory of all contributing and non-contributing resources follows the area descriptions. (See Section 7, Page 9.)

**East Eighty Acres [See Map #1]**

The East Eighty Acres constituted one of the first areas at Pioneers Park to be developed from 1928 to 1930 [See Area Map #2]. This passive area was designed as (and remains) the most formal portion of the landscape plan. Herminghaus' "Planting Plan for the East Eighty Acres of Pioneers Park" (dated January 1930), details Harris Circle, the allees, the circulation routes, the two ponds, and the mass plantings.

Harris Circle (more commonly called "Buffalo Circle") is the principal entrance feature and has become emblematic of the park [Photo 4]. As designed and implemented, four roads lined with Pfitzer junipers enter the circle from the northeast, northwest, southeast, and southwest. (The southwestern axis is no longer open as a road, but is maintained as a narrow allee.) The entrance road, extending 550 feet from the northeast corner of the park to Buffalo Circle, serves a dual design purpose. It frames a view of the statue upon entering the park, and defines a Capitol vista in the opposite direction. As befits its greater importance, this axis has the added emphasis of a border of spirea, in front of the junipers.

The outer perimeter of Buffalo Circle was to be outlined with blue spruce, according to a Herminghaus drawing. Upright junipers now serve that design function. Based on their size, they were an early

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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

replacement. The bronze bison statue, by the French artist M. George Gaudet, was installed in 1930 [Photo 5, historic view]. Herminghaus' scheme shows boxwood hedges and other formal plantings within the circle, but the area is currently maintained as a grass lawn.

The trees in the triangular areas east, north, and south of Buffalo Circle have been planted in a circular pattern, radiating from the statue and following gently sloping terrace lines. The initial planting in the north and east areas was exclusively American elm, with over 1,000 trees planted in each triangle by 1930. To the south, 1,700 elms, plus hundreds of pin oaks and other deciduous species were planted. As in other areas, many of the original trees did not flourish, but all three areas still display a mix of deciduous species planted in curved rows, and those features are maintained when replanting is necessary.

The most significant plantings throughout Pioneers Park are the allees which create both internal vistas centering on Buffalo Circle and external views to the Nebraska State Capitol [Photos 8,9,10]. When Pioneers Park was originally designed, the State Capitol would have been visible from nearly all areas of the park. Herminghaus highlighted the vistas by narrowing them with tree masses, leaving open 100-foot-wide grassy allees framed by Austrian pines. Two of the long Capitol vistas from the west end of the East Eighty Acres are clearly marked on Herminghaus' drawings as "Goodhue Capitol." The more northerly allee is approximately 1,400 feet in length, while the southern one stretches 2,000 feet.

The longest allee through the center of the East Eighty frames a 2,900 foot view stretching from Buffalo Circle on the east to the crest of Toboggan Hill on the west [Photo 6]. On Goodhue's drawing, this allee is labelled "Bison" with an arrow to the east-northeast, and "Red Cloud" with an arrow in the opposite direction. As discussed below, an alternate location was selected for the Red Cloud statue in 1936. In 1976, a picturesque "ruin" of four sandstone, Ionic columns was placed near the mid-point of this allee, just west of the pond, with benches, paths, and plaques. These columns were removed from the U.S. Treasury Building in Washington D.C. in 1908, and were given in 1916 by a friend of William Jennings Bryan to the city of Lincoln. They were used as part of the Antelope Park entrance at "O" Street for several decades, then were stored when that park land was sold. The columns are a noncontributing feature in relation to the original landscape design. Given the scale of the allee, and the fact that it was designed to link internal points of interest, the columns do not impact overall integrity.

Although loss of plant material is currently necessitating reforestation along some of these allees, coniferous materials are being used and the views are being retained in accord with original design intentions.

The principal circulation routes through the park all originate in the East Eighty Acres, which contained the sole park entrance (excluding the golf course) until land for the north entrance was purchased in 1949. During 1930, the circulation systems throughout Pioneers Park included those for automobiles, recreational (hiking, jogging, and biking) trails, and bridle paths [Photo 12]. Herminghaus wanted to incorporate path systems for different uses throughout the park. These path systems contribute to the historical significance of Pioneers Park in that they follow original intentions closely. There are 7 miles of winding automobile roads, several miles of bicycle/hiking paths, and approximately 4 miles of bridle trails. The principal bicycle path begins at the eastern entrance to Pioneers Park and terminates two miles later at the Nature Center. This bike path has many auxiliary branches beyond the core two miles.

North Buffalo Road is the only vehicular access point from Buffalo Circle to the spaces on the north side of the park's East Eighty Acres. The road is curvilinear, directing attention around the turn and toward

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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

Duck Pond. A feeling of enclosure is experienced on North Buffalo Road by the dense planting of Pfitzer junipers and overstory trees.

South Buffalo Road provides the main vehicular access into the park. Just beyond the Buffalo Circle, two stands of Douglas firs flank the road, forming a gateway to the park interior. Through the East Eighty Acres, this road runs very close to the southern edge of the park. As is the case along the other road and path systems, buffers of evergreen plantings provide a screen, especially from the Yankee Hill Brickyard, giving the park a sense of isolation from surrounding uses. Loss of plant material has weakened the buffer, but replanting is restoring this crucial design element.

The southern border plantings focus attention north into the interior park spaces. While on the road, a feeling of vast spaciousness is obtained. Although the road is positioned on the perimeter of the park's boundaries, there is an effort throughout Pioneers Park to direct the viewer's attention inward. This is accomplished by the manner in which trees have been planted. Trees in the southern boundary buffer are at a higher elevation, whereas the masses in the adjacent northern sections are planted on a gradually sloping hillside which directs the attention from South Buffer to the other areas where the viewer looks down upon the trees. These trees are planted in allees which direct attention through both horizontal and vertical planes of trees into the masses of trees.

Like the transportation systems, the six ponds throughout the park serve as a unifying element. The most prominent is the Duck Pond in the East Eighty, which is just west of Buffalo Circle. Like the others, this pond has gone through natural maturation through the years, but recent renovations have maintained its integrity of location and design.

**Meadow Area [See Map #1]**

The Pioneers Park Meadow Area is composed of approximately seventy acres framed by tree borders. The feeling of an open prairie is enhanced by the character of this open, central area [See Area Map #3]. The gently rolling topography covered by native grasses evidences Herminghaus' original intention to preserve a natural prairie area in Pioneers Park. It is stated in annual park reports that Herminghaus did not want to disturb nature, but to enhance its beauty. There are three large stands of mixed hardwood trees in the meadow area, which have been given the contemporary names of Pine Ridge, Black Forest, and North Horseshoe. From Pine Ridge on the west, one can view the Golf Course and other park areas. Black Forest on the south buffers the Meadow from the road and Pinewood Bowl. North Horseshoe is composed of evergreen trees and a bridle path [Photo 15]. The bridle path was an original design feature and contributes to the historical significance of the Meadow Area.

Three newer elements in the Meadow Area are a sledding ramp, a riding ring, and the North Entrance. Toboggan Hill has been providing winter sledding for decades [Photo 13]. More recently, a pair of wooden and metal ramps have been constructed near the crest of the hill, providing ten feet or so of additional elevation to those sledding. A riding ring in the Meadow valley was donated in 1965 [Photo 14]. A 4-H Club raised \$400 to cover construction costs. The ramp and the ring are of modest scale and reversible construction and therefore have little impact on the overall integrity of the park's historic character.



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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

The North Entrance was added to the park by purchase in 1946, in conjunction with the development of the Pinewood Bowl. This 144 feet by 1/4 mile tract was donated to the city by the State Journal Company, R. E. Campbell, and the late C. D. Traphagen. The North Entrance was constructed to improve access to the Pinewood Bowl and is regarded part of that non-contributing site.

A former intrusion in the Meadow Area was a steam locomotive donated to the City in 1953 and placed at the crest of Toboggan Hill. After 35 years in the park, the locomotive was removed for restoration and in 1989 was placed at its current location at the Burlington depot in downtown Lincoln.

**Golf Course [See Map #1]**

In the north central portion of Pioneers Park, approximately 170 acres are dedicated to an eighteen-hole public Golf Course [Area Map #4]. The Pioneers Park Golf Course and club house contribute to the historical integrity of the park [Photos 1,2,3,23]. On the 1929 and 1935 plans by Herminghaus, the club house and greens are denoted in their current locations. Eighteen sand greens were constructed in 1930. From 1934-35, through the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and Nebraska Emergency Relief Administration (NERA), twenty-seven holes were constructed, including several in the Meadows Area. During 1938, the Golf Course returned to an eighteen-hole course. The changes were made due to drought conditions of the Depression, just as other changes were made throughout the park, and do not detract from the historical significance of the Pioneers Park Golf Course.

The Club House was completed in 1939, within the Park's period of significance [Photo 22]. The facility cost an estimated \$25,000, of which the City of Lincoln provided approximately one-third and the WPA, the remainder. Fritz Craig, a Lincoln architect, designed the "C"-shaped building, with one-and-one-half story, gable-roofed wings at the east and west ends, linked by a large wing with enclosed veranda facing south over the course. The quarry-faced limestone for the building was obtained from the Park Department's quarry in Roca, south of Lincoln. As further economy measures, salvaged plumbing and a furnace from the Antelope Park Golf Course Club House at 39th and Normal Streets were utilized in the construction. The Club House retains a high degree of integrity. The entrance approach to the Club House from West Van Dorn Street, and the oval parking area in front of the building, retain a border planting of upright junipers indicated on early plans.

The water from the CWA-constructed reservoir at the southeast corner of the course kept the bent grass on the greens and the many newly planted trees alive during the drought of 1934 [Photos 24, 25 historic view]. Although the lake has matured, it is maintained in its original location. Two pump houses located at the base of the reservoir dam were constructed of rubble masonry in 1934. Each pump house measures approximately 27 x 21 feet.

In the Golf Course Maintenance area, there is one noncontributing service building which was constructed in 1970.

Although the Golf Course has been enlarged and reduced, and plant materials have been lost and replaced, it retains a strong image of its original design and remains a significant element of the historic character of the Park.

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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

**Pinewood Bowl and Indian Hill [See Map #1]**

The approximately thirty-five acre Pinewood Bowl Area includes Sun Pond, the caretaker's residence, Pinewood Bowl, and Indian Hill, and is located in the southeast central area of the park [Area map #3].

Sun Pond was created, along with other ponds throughout the park, for watering the plants. Today, the Sun Pond area receives a high amount of pedestrian use. Passive strolling is encouraged by the strong physical tie to the surrounding areas: a picnic area to the west, playground area to the south, bicycle path to the immediate northeast, and a rough baseball field to the north. Sun Pond is surrounded by evergreen and deciduous trees. An unusually large stand of White Poplars grow at the base of Indian Hill, and serve as a buffer for the pond.

The Pioneers Park caretaker's residence, brick garage, and small frame shed were built in 1931. These structures reflect the frugal approach to further development caused by the Depression. The construction of the one-story, 21 x 35 foot caretaker's house began on February 4, 1931 as a local work relief project. Brick was donated by Yankee Hill Brick Company. Since 1931, this house has been home to many Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department employees. Although vacant since the summer of 1992, the house should remain viable with the possibility of renting the home for youth group retreats.

The original plans for Pioneers Park indicated an outdoor amphitheater; this area, known as Pinewood Bowl, would utilize and enhance a naturally occurring "bowl" within the park. Construction of the amphitheater, including such features as the stage, dressing rooms, and the concession building, did not begin until 1947 and continued through 1951. The development of Pinewood Bowl also occasioned the construction of a north entrance into the park from West Van Dorn Street to increase accessibility and aid traffic flow to musical and theatrical events. Although included in the original park plans, Pinewood Bowl is a non-contributing site due to its later period of initial development, and even more recent modifications such as the stage roof.

Pinewood Bowl is approached by a 15-foot walk leading through a canopy of pines. Looking down from the crest of the hill, the stage is visible below, against a backdrop of pines. The stage has a concrete platform 40 x 30 feet [Photo 17]. Pinewood Bowl is an opening within an evergreen planting intended to screen and reinforce the enclosure of events happening in the Bowl. The location of Pinewood Bowl reinforces the rolling topography of Pioneers Park. From the southwest, Pinewood Bowl appears to be located on a hill [Photo 18]; looking from the entrance to the southwest, it appears as a crescent-shaped bowl located between two rolling hills. Evergreens are planted on the hills which emphasize the depth of the bowl, and add to its sense of enclosure.

The "Smoke Signal" statue, depicting the Native American Indian Chief Red Cloud was a 1935 WPA project, sculpted of bronze-colored cast stone by Ellis Luis Burman. "Smoke Signal's" blanket measures six feet square, and six inches thick [Photos 19,21, and 20 historic view].

Although the originally intended "Smoke Signal" site was Toboggan Hill, the present site was chosen because Heringhaus wanted the statue placed at a suitable elevated location, facing west, away from the city, overlooking nearby Haines Branch. It was reported that "Red Cloud is signalling his tribesmen in formation concerning the white men in the city of Lincoln, behind the hill which he is resting." The statue is sculpted in the position of just having lifted his blanket to signal by smoke. This is where the Red Cloud

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### DESCRIPTION (continued)

statue received his name "Smoke Signal." The backdrop for the Red Cloud statue is 18 acres of pine trees which were planted through the WPA programs in Pioneers Park. The pines which provide a buffer to Pinewood Bowl also serve as a backdrop to the "Smoke Signal" statue. Concern for accessibility of the site and for erosion around the base of the statue led to the construction of a retaining wall and concrete ramp in 1990. The retaining wall is not of a size or scale to impact the overall visual and historic integrity of the statue. The plant materials are currently being replaced gradually, retaining the original design intentions by the use of conifers.

### Picnic Area [See Map #1]

The 145-acre Picnic Area is located in southwest central Pioneers Park, and is dominated by overstory deciduous trees which provide a canopy of shade [See Area Map #5]. There are several distinct spaces in the shady picnic area. The South Playfield is where the concession stand is located, and is used for organized sports. South Picnic Road is currently used as a parking lot, providing access to the west picnic areas. Wood Lot serves as a buffer between the nature center, activities at the Golf Course, and the rest of the park. It is also an access route to the nature center from the picnic area. Haines Buffer is a limited picnic area to be used by overflow from the picnic area. Near the center of the picnic area is a small, fenced maintenance yard.

There are four picnic shelters in the area; three are non-contributing. The fourth is a 20 x 30 foot stone picnic shelter that cannot be dated exactly [Photos 26, 27]. What is known is that newspaper articles and the auditor's report of 1928-30 mention the stone shelter and on the 1929 park plans, a stone shelter is indicated in approximately the same location as it is now. The picnic area also contains non-contributing features such as the concession building (1955), a restroom building (1946), and three wooden shelters. Three playground areas are furnished with modern equipment.

There are three buildings in the maintenance yard. One is built of rough limestone by WPA in the 1930s [Photos 29, 30, historic view], another of the same vintage is constructed of reused logs. These two are contributing buildings because they reflect the era of construction. The other, built in 1977, is noncontributing.

### The Pioneers Park Nature Center [See Map #1]

Pioneers Park Nature Center occupies over 100 acres on the western edge of Pioneers Park [See Area Map #6]. (The Nature Center was formerly called the Pioneers Prairie Interpretive Center; the current name was applied in the Fall of 1992.)

### Chet Ager Center

On Herminghaus' original plans of 1935, a bird sanctuary was indicated for the area which is now the Chet Ager Center. The Center was developed in 1963 as a wildlife and teaching area. It did not carry out the original landscape design, but serves similar functions. Due to date of construction, the Center is regarded as non-contributing to the park's historic integrity. Its two buildings (1963) are similarly non-contributing

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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

elements. The boardwalk is of recent construction, but is unobtrusive in the overall park landscape [Photo 32].

What is unusual about the Chet Ager Center is that the plants contribute to the historical integrity of Pioneers Park. This site was originally the Pioneers Park nursery, established on December 16, 1931. Many of the plants which exist today in the Center were planted for the Nursery. The windmill which was once used for pumping water for the plant material of Pioneers Park nursery remains in its original location, and was constructed by the WPA. It is therefore regarded as a contributing object [Photo 31].

Pioneers Park Zoo

The Pioneers Park Zoo at the westernmost end of the park retains historical significance in that it maintains an original use. Pioneers Park Zoo was established in 1929. In November of 1931, three animal shelters were constructed of salvaged paving stones [Photo 37]. One shelter was built for the elk (14 x 30 feet), one for bison and deer (20 x 40 feet), and the third for bison (16 x 3 feet). All three buildings remain in use and constitute contributing features.

Standing at the fence line of the zoo, the view looks across and down upon rolling prairie and agriculture land [Photos 34,35,36]. On the western boundary of the zoo, there is a cluster of 3 small frame service buildings. These buildings are non-contributing by date of construction, but do not detract from the integrity of the zoo. The buildings were constructed in 1946 and 1980. Portions of the existing fencing may have been constructed during the period of significance.

Prairie Center

The Prairie Center building was added in the late 1980's and is therefore non-contributing. The goal of the Center is to provide a unique educational and recreational facility, by allowing visitors to experience Nebraska's prairie heritage. The area does not detract from the park's overall integrity [Photo 33] but the building is non-contributing due to its recent construction.

**Reforestation Efforts**

At the present time, plant material in Pioneers Park is in a state of decline due to disease problems which are associated with the planting of monocultures, especially of Austrian Pines.

As stated in both the Auditor reports and in work relief reports, Pioneers Park was heavily planted between 1928-1936. It is also noted in the Auditor Reports and newspaper articles of the late 1930s that trees throughout Pioneers Park were dying because of the severe drought. In an aerial photograph dated 1941, Pioneers Park is visibly bare in many areas. The 70,000 seedlings which were planted in 1938 were not visible. The areas which had visible vegetation in the 1941 aerial photograph are those plant materials which were located near Haines Branch, and those along the allees, vistas, buffer zones, and along the roads. Although the climate was difficult, this is clear evidence that Pioneers Park was developed according to Herminghaus' original design intentions. The attention that the allees, vistas, buffers, and tree-lined drives reflect close adherence to Herminghaus' original design intentions.

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**DESCRIPTION (continued)**

The initial, persistent efforts to carry out Herminghaus' planting schemes matured into a dense, largely coniferous "forest" by mid-century. In the 1980's, effects of age and disease, especially of the monocultures of Austrian pines, were becoming devastating. A Pioneers Park Task Force was appointed in 1987 to develop a Reforestation and Management plan for the park. As the committee began its work of raising public awareness of the needs of the park, a design subcommittee was appointed to look at specific long-range developmental plans for the park.

The Reforestation and Management plan is used as a guide for Pioneers Park, and serves as the driving force to maintain the integrity for all of Herminghaus' original intention. The preservation of the allees, plant material, ponds, and the passive nature of the first 80 acres were concerns which the Task Force focused attention upon. Reforestation, screening the park and protecting views from outside intrusions, as well as parking control were other areas of concern addressed in the plan.

Although the plan is presently being implemented, and the use of smaller trees lessen the current effectiveness of Herminghaus' design, the Reforestation and Management Plan is in agreement with original design intentions.

The National Park Service bulletin #18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes states that "...in many instances, it may be possible to enhance integrity through maintenance, replanting, or other restoration or reconstruction procedures." This statement describes the Pioneers Park Reforestation and Management Plan succinctly. The historic integrity of Pioneers Park rests not in the individual plants, trees, and shrubs, but in the continuity of the original design elements, including the vistas, buffers, ponds, and statuary.

**Contributing and Noncontributing Elements**

**Contributing Resources**

**Contributing Buildings (12)**

- 1) Golf Course Club House (stone), 1939
- 2,3) Two stone pump houses, golf course area, 1934
- 4-6) Caretaker's house, garage (brick) & shed (frame) east of Pinewood Bowl, 1931
- 7) Stone picnic shelter, Picnic Area, ca. 1930
- 8,9) Maintenance bldgs (one stone, one log), Picnic Area, ca. 1935
- 10-12) Stone animal shelters, Zoo Area, west end of nature center, 1931

**Contributing Sites (3)**

- 1) Golf Course
- 2) Buffalo Circle
- 3) Park Zoo

**Contributing Structures (8)**

- 1) Park roadway system
- 2) Bridle path & hiking trail system
- 3) Allee system
- 4) Duck Pond (East Eighty Acres)
- 5) "Columns" Pond (East Eighty Acres)
- 6) Sun Pond (Pinewood Bowl Area)
- 7) Golf Course Lake
- 8) Nature Center Ponds

**Contributing Objects (3)**

- 1) Bison statue (East Eighty Acres)
- 2) "Smoke Signal" statue (south of Pinewood Bowl)
- 3) WPA windmill (Chet Ager Nature Center area)

**Noncontributing Resources**

**Noncontributing Buildings (13)**

- 1) Maintenance building, Golf Course (1970)
- 2) Maintenance building, Picnic area (1977)
- 3) Concession building, Picnic area (1955)
- 4) Restrooms, Picnic area (1946)
- 5-7) Picnic shelters, Picnic area
- 8-10) Frame zoo service bldgs, Nature Center (1946, 1946, 1980)
- 11,12) Frame buildings, Chet Ager Nature Center (1963)

- 13) Pioneer Prairie Interpretive Center (ca. 1988)

**Noncontributing Sites (2)**

- 1) Chet Ager Nature Center (1963)
- 2) Pinewood Bowl (1949-51)

**Noncontributing Object (1)**

- 1) Columns, East Eighty Acres (1976)

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### DESCRIPTION (continued)

#### Conclusion

Although many of Herminghaus' ideas were implemented gradually, his intentions have guided the park from initial development through current reforestation. Because monocultures were planted through the WPA in the early 1930s, many of the trees are in a state of decline. Through the Reforestation Plan, trees will be replaced, and the park will be maintained according to Herminghaus' original intentions to preserve the integrity of the Park. Pioneers Park was a gift to the city which has provided decades of enjoyment to Lincolnites. Pioneers Park retains the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling which were instilled by Ernst H. Herminghaus.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### Summary

Pioneers Park is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A for its association with local and federal unemployment relief programs of the 1930's such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the National Youth Administration (NYA), and the Civil Works Administration (CWA). These programs were established during the Great Depression to provide employment in public works of lasting value. The park also benefitted from local unemployment relief programs, implemented in the late 1920's. Pioneers Park is also being nominated under Criterion C as an excellent example of a large scale park with distinctive designed features such as allees, vistas, winding roads, path systems, and sculptural focal points. The period of significance, 1928-1939, encompasses the establishment of the park through the year in which the final historically significant components of the original plan were implemented, within the 50-year criterion.

#### Introduction

Pioneers Park is historically significant to Lincoln and Nebraska for many reasons. First, the landscape architect responsible for the design and implementation was Ernst H. Herminghaus, the first landscape architect to establish a practice in Nebraska. Herminghaus received a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from Harvard, where he was influenced by the Beaux Arts style and teachings of Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., Henry Vincent Hubbard, and Theodora Kimball. Secondly, much of the work done in Pioneers Park was accomplished through federal and local work relief programs. The WPA, NYA, and the CWA were established by the federal government during the Great Depression, and had a great social impact on the welfare of citizens throughout Lincoln, Lancaster County, and the nation. Prior to the establishment of these federal programs, local work relief provided employment in Pioneers Park. Pioneers Park also filled a recreational void in the community: during 1920-30, Lincoln was the 110th largest city in the United States, with a population of 80,000. Between 1920 and 1930, several nearby communities were annexed to Lincoln and the city's population increased by 25,000 residents. This growth prompted a greater need for outdoor recreation space in Lincoln. It is also noted in the Parks and Recreation files that Lincoln was in desperate need for play spaces and playgrounds for children at this time.

During the Depression, the value of public recreation was high. Economic hardships were evident by the decline in attendance at existing commercial recreation attractions while the demand for use of municipal

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

and voluntary agency facilities grew. The federal work relief programs which employed thousands of people on recreation projects, gave local agencies the opportunity to expand their existing recreation programs. Although Lincoln and Lancaster County had several established parks by the Depression, Pioneers Park was the largest, and benefitted greatly from the federal relief programs. Pioneers Park served as a catalyst for employment and development of park land. During this time in Lincoln's history, Pioneers Park also served as a recreation source which gave people the opportunity to leave the city and relax in the countryside. Doell and Fitzgerald noted that the kind of recreation "that these large parks supply, near a city, is that which man insensibly obtains when he puts the city behind him and out of his sight and goes where he will be under the undisturbed influence of pleasing, natural scenery." There was also a great need in Lincoln for more children's playgrounds, and Pioneers Park helped to fill this void.

The period of significance for Pioneers Park is from 1928-1939. During this eleven-year period, principal design features were implemented. The first 500 acres were donated in December 1928, with an additional 100 acres donated on July 24, 1930. During 1929, Herminghaus was creating his design plans for Pioneers Park, and six miles of roads were constructed. On May 17, 1930, Pioneers Park was dedicated to the city of Lincoln. At this same time, a life-sized bronze sculpture of a bison was commissioned from a prominent wildlife artist, M. George Gaudet of France. During 1930, two wells were drilled for water, a rough limestone park maintenance building was built, and the buffalo sculpture was placed in Harris Circle. In 1931, six wells were drilled for water, and electricity was installed throughout the park and golf course, the caretaker's residence was built, and three animal shelters were constructed. On December 16, 1931, the Pioneers Park Nursery was established in the area which is now the Chet Ager Center. Planting throughout the park had begun in 1929, and continued through 1936. In 1930, Pioneers Park Golf Course was constructed with sand greens, then in 1934 it was upgraded. The Zoo was completed in 1934, along with pump houses for the golf course lake. The next year, the "Smoke Signal" statue was installed. Picnic and playground areas were implemented in 1935. The Club House at the Golf Course was completed in 1939.

Later phases of Pioneers Park development do not meet the 50-year rule, but nevertheless were quite faithful to original design intentions. These elements include Pinewood Memorial Bowl (an outdoor amphitheatre, 1947-51); Chet Ager Center (1963); and the Prairie Center (1980s).

### Landscape Architecture: Criterion C

Pioneers Park is significant under Criterion C as a fine Midwestern example of the Beaux Arts style of landscape architecture, applied to a large municipal park. Fredrick Law Olmstead, Sr., H.W.S., Cleveland, Charles Eliot, and other 19th century American landscape architects evolved an eclectic style which borrowed heavily from the English Garden school of Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton. This Beaux Arts style (also called Modern American Landscape style) used strongly formal elements to direct views and organize high traffic areas in conjunction with structures. These forms are readily seen in New York's Central Park, San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and Boston's Franklin Park.

Ernst H. Herminghaus was very influential on Lincoln's park design from 1915-1948. His educational background brought national design elements to Lincoln and Nebraska. Herminghaus was born in Lincoln on December 31, 1890. He graduated from the University of Nebraska with a degree in horticulture in 1913. He received a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from Harvard in 1915 where he studied under Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., Henry Vincent Hubbard, and Theodora Kimball. Upon graduation,

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Herminghaus returned to Lincoln to set up his practice. Upon the outbreak of World War I, Herminghaus served as a civilian planner in Washington, D.C. from 1917- 1920.

The design principles of Herminghaus' teachers as reflected in Hubbard's Landscape Design (1917), are clearly reflected in Pioneers Park. Features of the park typical of their approach include: 1) internal, formal allees of conifers, such as those which focus on the statue in Buffalo Circle; 2) an external visual link to the city, carried out by the allees focused on Goodhue's Nebraska State Capitol; 3) the internal circulation by a curvilinear roadway connecting the various activities in the park, allowing the viewer to glimpse several carefully designed spaces and ponds.

Frederick Law Olmstead also influenced Herminghaus through his son, Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. According to Doell and Fitzgerald, Olmstead, Sr., believed in preserving the natural scenery, and if necessary, restoring and emphasizing it. The Olmstead principle best reflected in the design of Pioneers Park is his belief that formal design in park planning should be kept to a minimum, except in very limited areas. The East Eighty Acres are the most formal area in the 600 acre park; open lawns and meadows are kept in large central areas in Pioneers Park, and even there the trees are assembled in naturalistic masses. Native trees and shrubs in mass plantings were designed throughout the park. Olmstead preferred circulation paths which were laid in wide sweeping curves. The circulation routes throughout Pioneers Park echo Olmstead's designs. Lastly, Olmstead's seventh principle of landscape design was to place the principal road to circumscribe the whole area. The main road in Pioneers Park takes the visitor from the eastern entrance to the Zoo through wide sweeping curves and a variation of vegetation.

Herminghaus has left a strong mark on the development of Lincoln's park system. He was especially influential from 1920-1948. During this time, Herminghaus designed Pioneers Park, as well as the "O" Street entrance to Antelope Park, Havelock Park, Antelope Quadrangle, the State Capitol Grounds, and the Antelope Park Extension, which is now known as the Jim Ager Memorial Junior Golf Course.

Herminghaus died in 1965. As requested, his remains were cremated and the ashes were scattered in Pioneers Park.

### Work-Relief Efforts in Pioneers Park: Criterion A

Pioneers Park is significant under Criterion A for its association with both local and federal work relief programs. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), and the National Youth Administration (NYA) contributed to the development of Pioneers Park.

The WPA, created during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide employment in public works, aided greatly in the development of Pioneers Park, where over one-half of all Lincoln's WPA monies and labor were spent. During 1937, a total of \$645.69 in WPA monies were spent in Pioneers Park, aiding in the transformation of the 600 acres into Pioneers Park. This transformation could have only been accomplished so extensively through the WPA, for the availability of money was scarce, but the availability of laborers was enormous. In The Politics of Park Design (1982), Galen Cranz stated that the transformation of acreage into parks was "an economic stimulant" accomplished through the public works projects of the 1930's.



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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Doell and Fitzgerald highlight the major national contributors of the WPA in their book, A Brief History of Parks and Recreation in the United States (1954) as those projects which included an "increased participation by laymen in the recreation affairs of their communities, as well as closer cooperation between public and voluntary agencies. The principles of recreation as a community responsibility was greatly advanced as recreation was brought to communities which previously had not experienced organized programs under leadership." The responsiveness to these work relief programs throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County aided in the development of parks. As stated above, the development of Pioneers Park could not have been accomplished without the aid of work relief projects.

Although some planting had started in 1929, the majority of the planting was accomplished from 1934-36 through the WPA. Because Herminghaus wanted to provide a large variety of plant material, he incorporated a large mixture of different species of plant material into the overall park design, as well as an Arboretum. But, the WPA planted pine trees in Pioneers Park instead of the specified hardwood trees of Herminghaus' plans. Perhaps officials had been reading popular literature which, according to Doell and Fitzgerald, during this period of landscape history, noted that Pine forests were valued because many felt that the "turpentine" pine trees transpired would purify the air by destroying harmful gasses. Another important landscape practice during this time period was to cluster pine trees into forests for their aesthetically pleasing "Sylvan effects and luxuriant foliage."

Although these practices were popular during the time in which Pioneers Park was being designed, implemented, and planted, another possible reason that pine trees were almost exclusively planted instead of a variety of hardwoods as specified on original design may have been economics: Nebraska Nurseries sold 6,000 Austrian pine trees in 1934 for \$2 each. At this price, the WPA designated pine trees instead of the specified deciduous trees because the pines were less expensive.

Other developments occurred through the Works Progress Administration. According to Prosser's "The New Deal Builds" (1992), the WPA had the purpose of quick construction and employing "vast numbers of unskilled workers" in jobs such as park development that would benefit society as a whole. Examples of WPA construction can be seen in Pioneers Park. A 28 x 50 foot rough limestone tool house and a small tool shed were constructed for the Park Maintenance area. The flat side of the stone was placed on the interior, which gave the exterior wall a rustic finish. It is noted that on February 2, 1931, the largest number of men were working to accomplish many goals, including the planting of 24 large Austrian pines, constructing fenced pens for the animals, two brick pump houses, and the planting of a flower garden. In 1937, a total of \$645.69 was spent on WPA projects in Pioneers Park.

The windmill which exists today in the Chet Ager Bird and Wildlife Study Center was also built through the WPA. The windmill rests on its original site used for pumping water in the Pioneers Park Nursery (established in 1931). The windmill was in operation for a very short time, for there was an ever present problem of pumping water which was free of salt. In 1940, the WPA also spent \$56,109.95 on improvements to Haines Branch in hopes of alleviating the flooding which had been occurring in the park.

The WPA fostered innovative experiments, according to Prosser. One such experiment was a response to the grasshopper invasion of 1939--a "Hopper Dozer" created by a park employee for \$25. This wood and galvanized steel attachment fit onto the front of a tractor. The grasshoppers would hit a backboard and fall into one of five trays filled with water and kerosene.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

A local unemployment relief project was the construction of the one-story brick caretaker's house, shed, and garage which began on February 4, 1931. This construction gave 73 men 3-1/2 months of employment. The house was built at a cost of \$24,905, using downed Lincoln trees as well as tile and brick which were donated by Yankee Hill Brick Company.

The CWA and NERA also played key roles in Pioneers Park. The NERA was the state agency which administered the WPA and other federal relief funds throughout Nebraska. According to the "Report of the Work Division of the NERA" of November, 1935, one of Lancaster County's most popular work projects was the improvement of 21 parks in the City of Lincoln. This work was started as a CWA activity. Approximately half of the work done was in Pioneers Park. It was noted that the City of Lincoln furnished, through its Parks Department, the funds necessary for the purchase of materials, supervision and equipment rental.

From April 1, 1934, until July 1, 1935, the NERA was active in Pioneers Park development. Through the NERA, several dead trees were cut down and removed, and approximately 6,000 pounds of grass seed was also planted. The fifteen foot, five ton Smoke Signal statue, created by Ellis Luis Burman (a WPA artist), depicts the Indian Chief Red Cloud. Financial aid from the NERA totaled \$423.46, and financial aid from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) totaled \$2,000. On the hill, eighteen acres of pine trees, planted by the WPA, provided a background for the statue. In 1935, \$510.15 was spent on the dedication of Ellis Luis Burman's bronze-colored stone sculpture. One hundred Native Americans were present at the unveiling Pow Wow including chiefs from the Ponca, Winnebago, Sioux, and Omaha tribes. Native Americans camped on park grounds for a week during the ceremonies, and gave Lincolmites a chance to see traditional tribal dances and rituals [Historic Photo 20].

Under the CWA and NERA, extensive improvements were made in Pioneers Park. The golf course was rebuilt into a 27 hole course, eighteen of which were surfaced with ten tons of cinders, ten tons of fertilizer and planted to bent grass. Water was a very important issue in Pioneers Park. The greens were supplied with water by pipes laid by CWA workers from a CWA-constructed lake. The water from this reservoir was responsible for keeping the bent grass on the greens and the many newly planted trees alive during the drought of 1934. A pump house was also constructed and a pump was installed that was able to lift 10,500 gallons of water a minute from the creek into the reservoir. The pump house and well cost Lincoln \$640.54 in 1937, and aided in the watering of the 25,000 trees and shrubs planted over the rough grass lands. Because of the drought and the Depression, dams were also constructed during this time. Two were built for \$4,691.90 and could impound approximately forty-acre foot of water and cover thirteen and one-half acres of surface area. Three reservoirs were also built in the park, with a total surface of approximately eighteen acres. A water main was installed in 1936 for \$12,797.44.

Other improvements which were made through the CWA and NERA included the construction of four pools near the creek, so that the water could be supplied easily. The pools were protected from high water by a four-foot dike.

Another reason Pioneers Park is of historical significance is that the building, designing, and implementation occurred during the Depression. Administrators were very frugal and creative with their resources. Examples of this frugality include recycling materials. For example, scrub trees and brush removed from Pioneers Park provided firewood for other city parks. In 1930, stone removed from Pioneers Park was used in Sunken Garden Park at 27th and D Streets. In November, 1931, three animal shelters were constructed at Pioneers of salvaged cobblestone which was once alley paving. Some of the park land was used

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (continued)**

to raise crops for the animals at Pioneers Park Zoo and at Antelope Zoo. For instance, in 1931, 10 acres of corn were planted, and 100 acres of hay yielded 50 tons. In 1932, 2 acres of alfalfa and 10 acres of corn was harvested.

In 1936, the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department purchased a \$200 portable saw mill in response to the overwhelming number (6,000) of fallen trees killed by the drought. The largest tree came from Pioneers Park, and weighed 5,900 pounds. Chet Ager, Parks Superintendent, worked with the WPA and the NYA for assistance. More than 30,000 feet of lumber was salvaged from the fallen trees. One hundred and five WPA workers were engaged in the activities of the saw mill, along with NYA young men who stripped bark from the trees. It was noted that barking the trees was not always necessary, because of the extreme drought, the bark would often fall off the trees voluntarily, and the inner bark was often eaten by borers.

The NYA built feed bins at Pioneers Park Zoo, saving the city \$240 in lumber costs. Sawdust was sold to a Lincolnite who wanted to fill cracks between the walls of an old house he was remodeling. Parking posts, scaffolding, and the interiors of picnic shelters were constructed with this lumber.

According to Melvin, the NYA was established within the WPA on June 26, 1935 and provided part-time employment for needy school, college, and graduate students between the 16-25 years of age so that they could continue their education, while benefitting the communities in which they lived. Job training, counseling, and placement services of youth was also provided. Through assistance of the NYA, the development and extensive construction of recreational facilities was encouraged.

**Conclusion**

Pioneers Park is being nominated to the National Register for its association with local and federal unemployment relief programs of the 1930's such as the WPA and the NYA and as an excellent example of a large scale park which exhibits both formal and naturalistic design features.

Other areas of research relating to this property could include a study of 1930's Nebraska parks which were work-relief related, and other landscapes designed by Ernst H. Herminghaus. Such research and documentation might establish broader significance for Pioneers Park, but given available information it is being nominated on a local level of significance.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Pioneers Park is located in southwestern Lincoln. It is bordered by Yankee Hill Brick Company to the south (Industrial); farmland to the west, east, and north (Agricultural); and low-density "acreage-type" residential development to the north. The legal description of Pioneers Park is as follows:

A tract of approximately 80.76 acres in the south one-half of the northeast one-fourth of Section 4, Township 9 North, Range 6 East.

A tract of approximately 80 acres in the south one-half of the northeast one-fourth of Section 5, Township 9 North, Range 6 East.

Lot 10, an irregular tract of approximately 129 acres in Section 5, Township 9 North, Range 6 East.

Lot 12, an irregular tract of approximately 104.3 acres in Section 5, Township 9 North, Range 6 East.

Lot 11, an irregular tract of approximately 107.2 acres in Section 5, Township 9 North, Range 6 East.

Lot 16, an irregular tract of approximately 39.02 acres in Section 5, Township 9 North, Range 6 East, and Lot 8, an irregular tract of approximately 60.98 acres in Section 6, Township 9 North, Range 6 East.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries include all the property historically and currently associated with Pioneers Park.

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SUPPORTING MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

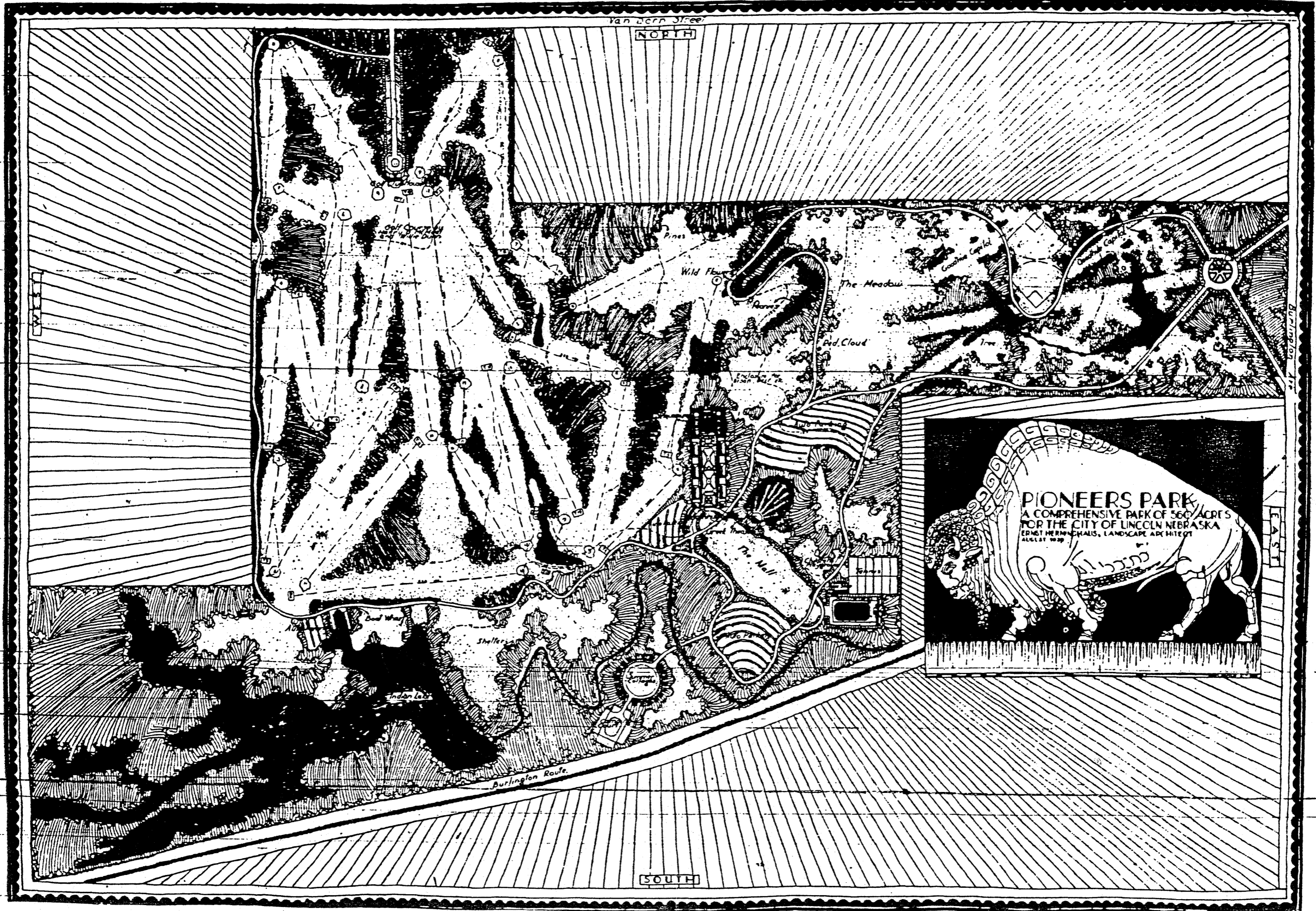
Maps

1. "Pioneers Park, Area Map #1: Boundary Map"
2. Historic Plan of Pioneers Park: 1929. "Great Panoramas feature completed plans for park." Lincoln Sunday Star, August 4, 1929
3. "Pioneers Park, Area Map #2: East Eighty Acres"
4. "Pioneers Park, Area Map #3: Meadow and Pinewood Bowl"
5. "Pioneers Park, Area Map #4: Golf Course"
6. "Pioneers Park, Area Map #5: Picnic"
7. "Pioneers Park, Area Map #6: Pioneers Prairie Interpretive Center"

Photographs

1. Photo of 1929 "Planting Plan for the East Eighty Acres of Pioneers Park"
2. Photo of 1935 Plan for the eastern half of Pioneers Park
3. Photo of 1935 Plan for the western half of Pioneers Park
4. Photo of East Entry Vista, looking west into the Buffalo Circle terminus
5. Historical photo of Buffalo sculpture in Buffalo Circle (1936), looking northwest
6. Columns vista looking west onto the buffalo statue with columns and Toboggan Hill crest in background
7. Buffalo vista south, looking northwest toward buffalo sculpture
8. Goodhue Capitol Vista I looking northeast to the Nebraska State Capitol Building
9. Goodhue Capitol Vista II looking northeast to the Nebraska State Capitol Building
10. Columns Vista looking east to Buffalo Circle
11. Duck Pond looking northeast from park road
12. Recreational path, located in alley/vista plantings between Goodhue Capitol Vista I and Columns Vista, looking east
13. Photo of Meadows Area, looking east to Toboggan Hill and the toboggan run
14. Meadows area, looking northeast to evergreen plantings and riding ring
15. Meadows area, looking northeast to evergreen plantings and road
16. Historical photo of newly planted evergreen trees, looking southwest from the Indian Hill area (1933)
17. Pinewood Bowl stage and shell area, looking southwest
18. Pinewood Bowl area, looking east toward benches and newer plantings
19. Indian Hill area, looking northeast toward the "Smoke Signal" statue
20. Historic Photo of "Smoke Signal" dedication (1935)
21. "Smoke Signal" statue, looking northeast
22. Pioneers Park Golf Course club house, looking northwest
23. Pioneers Park Golf Course, looking southwest from the Meadows area
24. Historic Photo of "Enlarging and Rip-Rapping Canal" (1934)
25. West pump house, looking northeast
26. Stone picnic shelter, looking west
27. Interior of stone picnic shelter, looking southwest
28. "Four Crosses" picnic table area, looking west
29. Historic Photo of "Tool House" in the park maintenance area, looking southwest (1935)
30. Park Maintenance area, Tool House, looking northwest
31. WPA constructed windmill in Chet Ager Center, looking northeast
32. Wetlands bridge in the Chet Ager Center, looking southwest
33. Pioneers Prairie Center, looking west
34. Western drive to the Pioneers Park Zoo, looking west
35. Western drive to the Pioneers Park Zoo, looking northeast into a crescent of trees in median loop
36. Pioneers Park Zoo area, looking southeast onto stone shelter and prairie view
37. Photo of stone shelter in Pioneers Park Zoo, looking northeast from the Chet Ager Center

# GREAT PANORAMAS FEATURE COMPLETED PLANS FOR PARK



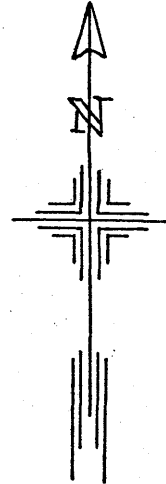
# PIONEERS PARK

Lincoln, Nebraska

Area Map #2: East Eighty Acres

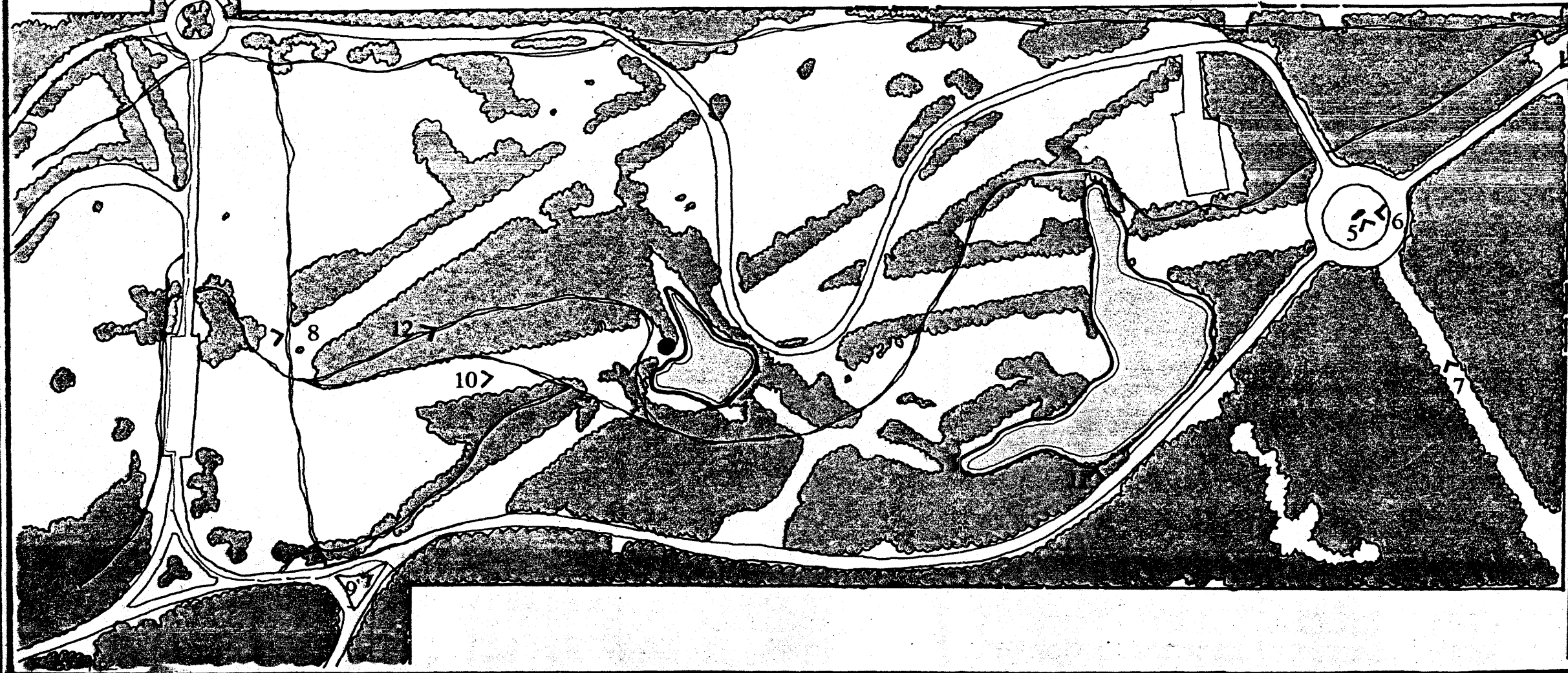
Approximate Scale: 1" = 250'

West Van Dorn Street



Key:			
	Park Boundary		Pond
	Area Boundary		Road
	Forested Area		Recreational Path

Photo Key:			
4	East Entry Vista	9	Capitol Vista-South
5	Bison Sculpture	10	Columns
6	Bison Vista-West	11	Duck Pond
7	Bison Sculpture	12	Recreational Path
8	Capitol Vista-North		



Coddington Avenue



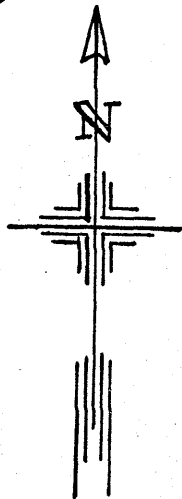


# PIONEERS PARK

Lincoln, Nebraska

Area Map #3: Meadow and Pinewood Bowl

Approximate Scale: 1" = 250'



**Key:**

	Park Boundary		Pond
	Area Boundary		Road
	Forested Area		Recreational Path
	Haines Branch		

**Photo Key:**

13	Meadow	18	Pinewood Bowl
14	Meadow	19	Indian Hill
15	Road	20	Red Cloud Statue Dedication
16	Historical Overview	21	Red Cloud Statue






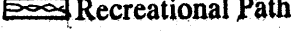

# PIONEERS PARK

Lincoln, Nebraska

Area Map #4: Golf Course

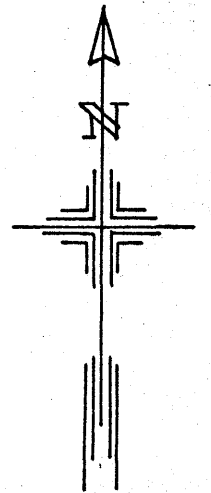
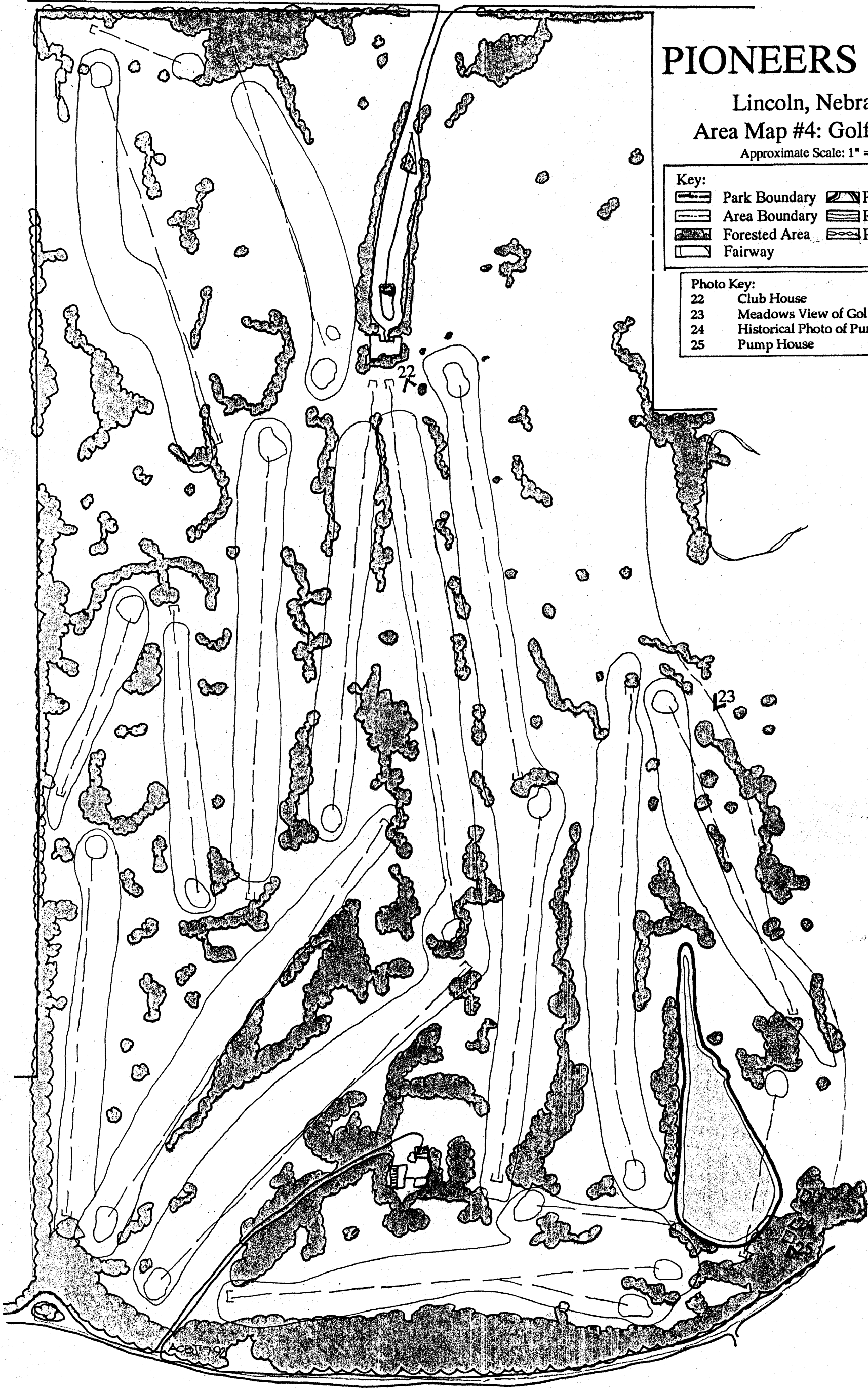
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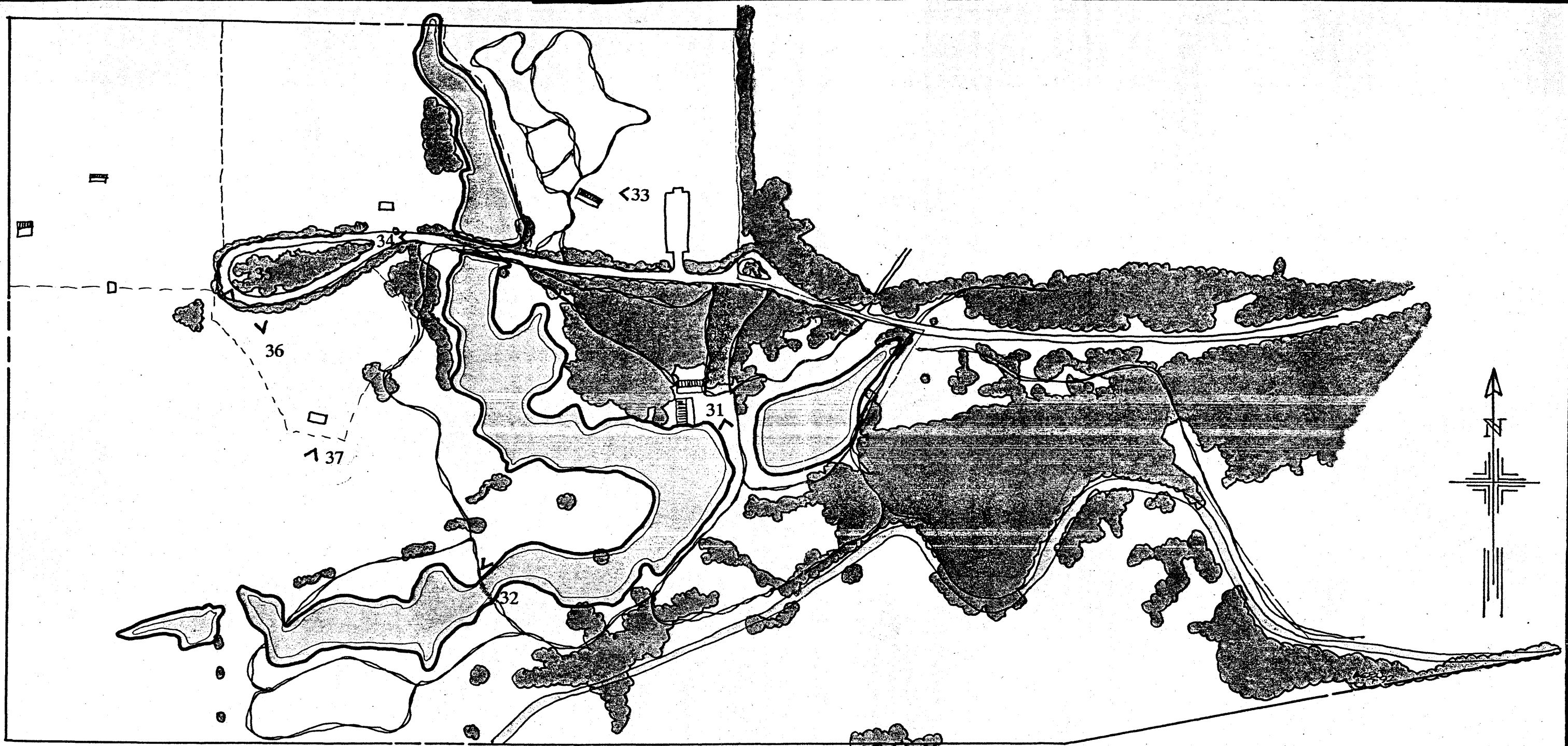
**Key:**

- |   |               |   |                   |
|---|---------------|---|-------------------|
|  | Park Boundary |  | Pond              |
|  | Area Boundary |  | Road              |
|  | Forested Area |  | Recreational Path |
|  | Fairway       |   |                   |

**Photo Key:**

- |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 22 | Club House                     |
| 23 | Meadows View of Golf Course    |
| 24 | Historical Photo of Pump House |
| 25 | Pump House                     |





# PIONEERS PARK

Lincoln, Nebraska

Area Map #6: Pioneers Prairie Interpretive Center

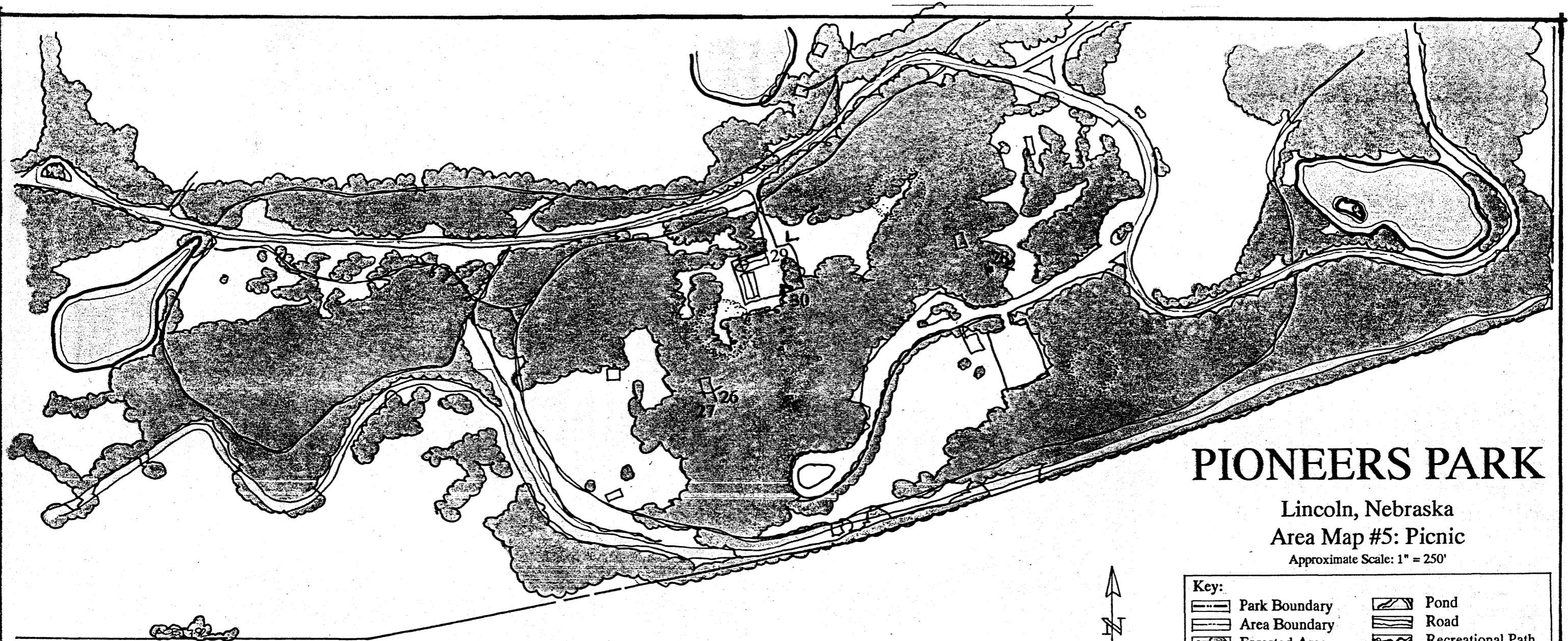
Approximate Scale: 1" = 250'

**Photo Key:**

31	Windmill	35	Crescent of Trees
32	Wetlands Bridge	36	Prairie View
33	Interpretive Center	37	Stone Shelter
34	Final Loop of Road		

**Key:**

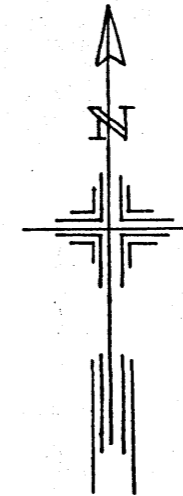
	Park Boundary		Pond
	Area Boundary		Road
	Forested Area		Recreational Path
	Haines Branch		Fence



# PIONEERS PARK

Lincoln, Nebraska  
 Area Map #5: Picnic

Approximate Scale: 1" = 250'

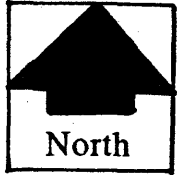


Key:			
	Park Boundary		Pond
	Area Boundary		Road
	Forested Area		Recreational Path
	Haines Branch		Playground

Photo Key:	
26	Stone Shelter
27	Stone Shelter-Interior
28	Picnic Tables
29	Historical Photo of Stone Maintenance Building
30	Maintenance Building

West Van Dorn Street

Coddington Avenue



3: Golf Course  
See Map #4

Rural Residential

Rural Residential

1: East Eighty Acres  
See Map #2

2: Meadow  
See Map #3

Yankee Hill Brick Company

Agriculture

4: Pinewood Bowl  
See Map #3

6: Pioneers Prairie  
Interpretive Center  
See Map #6

5: Picnic  
See Map #5

Haines Branch

Burlington Northern





# PIONEERS PARK

Lincoln, Nebraska

Area Map #1: Boundary Map

Approximate Scale : 1" = 1,000'

Key:

-  Park Boundary
-  Area Boundary
-  Rail Road
-  Stream