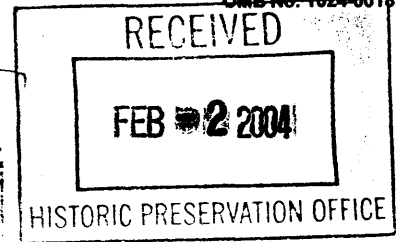
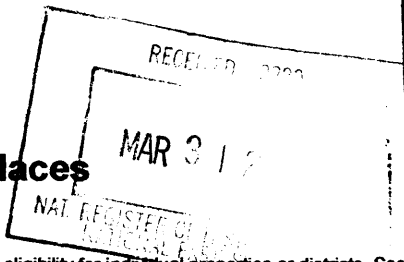


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 *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 an 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 listed in 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 Green Brook Park

Other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number All parkland from Clinton Ave. to e. of West End Ave., & intersection of Lawrence & Parkview Aves., Fisk & Townsend Pls. not for publication
N/A

city or town City of Plainfield & Borough of North Plainfield vicinity N/A

State New Jersey code NJ county Union + Somersset code 039 zip code 07060/035

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title John S. Watson, Jr., Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
Date 3/8/04
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:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper <u>Patricia Anderson</u>	Date of Action <u>5/14/2004</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____	_____	_____

Green Brook Park Historic District
Name of Property

Union & Somerset Counties, NJ
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	2	structures
0	0	objects
1	2	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE Sub: Union County Park

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE Sub: Union County Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Early twentieth-century "City Beautiful Movement"

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

Green Brook Park Historic District
Name of Property

Union & Somerset Counties, NJ
County and State

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 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1919 - 1939

Significant Dates

1919 - 1923

1926

1931 - 1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Olmsted, John Charles and Fredrick Law Jr. (Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects Firm)

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

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, Elizabeth, New Jersey 07207

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property 100 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	547766	4496003	3	18	546694	4495739
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	547263	4495749	4	18	546404	4495211

 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.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title April M. Stefel, Certified Landscape ArchitectOrganization _____ date October, 2003street & number 935 Madison Avenue telephone (908) 754 - 8918city or town Plainfield state New Jersey zip code 07060**Additional Documentation**

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)

Property Owner

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

name Union County Department of Parks and Recreationstreet & number Elizabethtown Plaza, Administration Building telephone (908) 527 - 4912city or town Elizabeth state New Jersey zip code 07207

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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Description

Green Brook Park is the westernmost park in the Union County Park System. It is maintained and operated by the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, successor agency to the Union County Park Commission (Berger 1999) (Map 1). Most of the park is situated in Plainfield City in Union County; a small portion is situated in North Plainfield Borough in Somerset County. The park includes the Green Brook and adjacent land between Parkview, Tappan, and Myrtle avenues on the north; rear yards of residential development along Myrtle Avenue and West Front Street on the south; Clinton Avenue on the west; and Brookside Place to the east (Map 2). In addition, the park includes the West End Avenue and Clinton Avenue bridges, and Clinton Avenue proper to the present intersection with Lawrence and Parkview avenues and Fisk and Townsend places. The northern boundary of Green Brook Park is located in the Borough of North Plainfield, Somerset County, and on its eastern, western, and southern boundaries in the City of Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey. The park currently comprises approximately 100 acres of land and is bisected by the Green Brook. Approximately 14.6 acres of the park on its northern side are leased by Union County from the Borough of North Plainfield for 99 years with the lease ending in year 2022 (Union County Park Commission 1923b).

In 1922, the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects of Brookline, Massachusetts, designed the original section of Green Brook Park (Plainfield Park) for the City of Plainfield and included the area between Clinton and West End avenues. In addition, that same year studies were developed by the Olmsted Brothers for Green Brook Park No.2 that later became known as the Green Brook Park Extension. By 1940, the Union County Park Commission in conjunction with the Olmsted Brothers firm had acquired and designed all of the parkland area between West End Avenue and Brookside Place.

The resources identified in the study area are described in more detail below. Green Brook Park is discussed in two sections: the section between Clinton and West End avenues (Green Brook Park), and the section east of West End Avenue (Green Brook Park Extension) (Map 2). Green Brook Park is analyzed as two areas for the purpose of understanding the successive enlargements of the park; however, one area is not more significant than the other. Both areas have equal significance in terms of their overall design and contribution to the Union County Park System. The bridges and their associated approaches then follow.

a. Green Brook Park

1) Description and Background

The topography within the Green Brook Park between Clinton and West End avenues is characterized by a valley, steeply sloping from Myrtle Avenue in Plainfield toward Park Drive. From Park Drive to the Green Brook and north to Parkview and Tappan Avenues, the grade is gentler. At present, the Clinton Avenue and West End Avenue bridges are the only means of connecting the northern and southern sections of the park; however, remnants of a footbridge west of the bowling green are present. In this locale, the Olmsted Brothers

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took full advantage of the dramatic topography. Terrace gardens run the southern length of the park from Melrose Avenue to just east of Clinton Avenue. These natural garden rooms are connected through the use of curvilinear pedestrian strolling paths. Where there is a significant change in grade, the paths are linked through the use of grand bluestone staircases punctuated at their intersection by Taxus plantings (English yew) (Photo 9). Bluestone retaining walls are used to maintain the steep slope along Myrtle Avenue (Photo 10). The four main pedestrian entrances to the park planned by the Olmsted Brothers are located at Albert Street and Compton, Myrtle, and Melrose avenues. The Compton Avenue and Albert Street entrances have been closed and the grand staircases are somewhat derelict (Photo 9 and 11). All of these pedestrian entrances lead park users through a series of small well-defined spaces, enabling them to experience the natural surroundings on an intimate scale.

The use of water, either occurring naturally or manipulated in a natural fashion, is typical of the design theories prevalent at this time. Between Melrose and Compton avenues there is a designed water garden with two small-scale footbridges (Berger 1999) (Plate 4). The small pond and the adjacent water feeds are extant; however, they are in need of attention (Photo 12). The series of pedestrian paths are also linked to the skating pond located in the western section of the park (Berger 1999) (Photo 13 and Plate 5).

Atop the slope, east of Albert Street, is an intended designed view (Photo 14). From this superior position, pedestrians have views framed by "mature trees" of the skating pond. The topography within this location also provides the park user with the ability to view the park in its entirety without having to cross Park Drive. This separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic is reminiscent of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s design for Central Park. Paralleling the southern side of the brook for the entire length of the park is a bridle path. Some remnants of it still exist, especially in the vicinity of the Clinton Avenue Bridge.

The western area of Green Brook Park from the brook north to Parkview Avenue is heavily wooded and not used for recreational purposes; however, the area adjacent to West End Avenue in the vicinity of Tappan Avenue is in use. These flat spaces north of the Green Brook lend themselves to more active forms of recreation, such as lawn bowling, football, baseball, and soccer. These are the designed fields intended by the Olmsted Brothers for this form of recreation (Photo 15). The ribbon of flat land paralleling Park Drive and the Green Brook between Clinton and West End avenues is more pastoral in feel, intent, and design. The overall impression is that of the British countryside that so influenced the Olmsteds. The large areas of green space are defined by the water course, Park Drive, and the southern boundaries of the park. The flat topography and a water course intentionally devoid of large trees offer the park user sweeping unobstructed views of the pastoral landscape.

The Olmsted Brothers Planting Plans for this section of Green Brook Park have remained essentially intact (Union County Park Commission 1923a, 1927a, 1927b, 1927c). Most of the major shade tree and large shrub plantings included within these plans for Green Brook Park and those along Clinton Avenue have survived and flourished. Notable exceptions are the perennial beds and specialty plantings in the area of the small water garden. This is not unexpected, since the natural life expectancy of this material is approximately is 25 to 30 years if left unattended.

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It is unclear whether lighting was an integral part of the Olmsted Brothers' original design for this section of Green Brook Park. However, a lighting plan was completed for this section of the park by the Union County Park Commission in December 1930 (Union County Park Commission 1930b). A total of 26 lighting units were proposed. The lights were to parallel Park Drive on the southern side and surround the skating pond. This lighting still exists. In addition, lighting has been added to the area of the athletic fields north of the Green Brook. No record of the date of this installation was available through research in the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation.

It should be noted that at time of the inception of the Union County Park Commission, the City of Plainfield did not wish to participate in the development of a county-wide park system; in fact, the city was developing its own municipal parks. In the 1915 Annual Report of the City of Plainfield, Mayor Leighton Calkins stressed the need for improvements as to parks and "some permanent organization with facilities for keeping records, for studying the development of the city and for the formulating plans to care for its growth" (City of Plainfield 1915:7-8). This ultimately became the City of Plainfield Planning Board. The report further stated that the acquisition of land for parks should move swiftly while prices of parcels were still affordable. Mayor Calkins realized that cooperation would be necessary from the Borough of North Plainfield to bring the park envisioned by the Plainfield forefathers to fruition.

By 1919, the Olmsted Brothers firm of Brookline, Massachusetts, had begun to do preliminary landscape surveys for the City of Plainfield and by 1922 had completed a preliminary design for 42 acres in Green Brook Park. In 1922, Green Brook Park consisted of the area between Clinton and West End Avenues south of the Green Brook. Studies were also developed by the Olmsteds for Green Brook Park No.2 that was proposed east of West End Avenue to Geraud Avenue. Only a portion of this land was acquired by the Union County Park Commission and became known as the Green Brook Park Extension.

By 1923, the City of Plainfield under the direction of Mayor Charles E. Loizeaux secured approximately 14 acres through a lease agreement with the Borough of North Plainfield to be developed into athletic fields north of the Green Brook. At this same time, improvements within the park included a "memorial drive" honoring war dead (Park Drive), a skating pond, an extensive path system, terrace gardens, a bowling green, a shelter, a wading pool, and a proposal for a bandstand (City of Plainfield 1923:11-12, 1924:6). In addition, the Olmsted Brothers firm proposed a pavilion and service building on the southern side of Park Drive between Compton Avenue and Albert Street in the vicinity of the present location of the children's recreation area, as well as a swimming pool located along Clinton Avenue north of Park Drive in the vicinity of the elementary school (Union County Park Commission 1922b). Neither the pavilion nor the pool were ever constructed. A footbridge was also included in the design that would link the northern and southern sections of Green Brook Park. The bridge was located west of the bowling green near the site of the proposed pavilion. This bridge was indeed constructed and is shown on subsequent plans for Green Brook Park; however, there is no bridge presently at this location. It is possible that it was removed during the channelization of this section of the Green Brook. The exact dating of the

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channelization could not be ascertained through a document search at the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation.

In February 1926, the City of Plainfield donated Green Brook Park (approximately 56-60 acres) to the newly formed Union County Park Commission. Recorded recreational facilities included a bowling green, children's playground, wading pool, skating pond, baseball, and football and soccer fields (Union County Park Commission 1928:21-24b; (Berger 1999) (Plates 1, 2, and 3). In addition, a bronze plaque was erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution commemorating the site of an old fort (the militia post of Blue Hills) within Green Brook Park that played a prominent role in the American Revolution (Union County Park Commission 1928:21) (Photo 1).

2) *Integrity*

The section of Green Brook Park between Clinton and West End Avenues possesses integrity of location. Integrity of materials and workmanship is also present, exemplified by the presence of the mature shade trees and other plantings, the preserved wooded slopes, the terrace and water garden, pedestrian paths with associated bluestone staircases and retaining walls, the pedestrian entrances from Albert Street and Compton, Myrtle, and Melrose avenues, Park Drive, the shelter, the bowling green, and the athletic fields in the northern side of the park. Integrity of design has also been maintained. The primary exceptions are the disappearance of the bridle path (volunteer plant material), the removal of the bandstand (due to fire), and the loss of the footbridge in the vicinity of the bowling green resulting from the channelization of a small portion of the Green Brook. The park also retains integrity of setting. No development has encroached into this section of the park. Integrity of feeling and association is also present, since the major infrastructure of the design of the green spaces, structures, paths, staircases, retaining walls, entrances, and plantings remains to convey the naturalistic environment the park was intended to convey.

b. *Green Brook Park Extension*

1) *Description and Background*

The Green Brook Park Extension is located east of West End Avenue on both sides of the Green Brook. To the north it is bounded by the rear yards of residential properties along Myrtle Avenue, to the south by rear yards along West Front Street, and to the east by the side yards of residential development along Brookside Place. The topography within the locale is the reverse of what occurs in Green Brook Park. In the Extension the land slopes gradually toward the brook from the rear yards at West Front Street, then rises steeply to meet Myrtle Avenue in North Plainfield. The majority of the tract of land was acquired through donation beginning in the early 1930s and ending by 1940.

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Although this tract was not designed by the Olmsted Brothers firm directly, it is not less significant in its design or intent. As stated previously, the relationship between the Olmsted Brothers firm and the Union County Park Commission was longstanding. During the 1930s the Union County Park Commission was still in the process of locating and purchasing large tracts of land to complete its park system. The grand scheme for the acquisition of parkland is and continues to be a long and arduous task. The idea of the system is continuous and fluid in its intent and continues to be an ongoing process.

Between 1931 and 1939, extensive plans for the future development of the Union County Park System, including those for the Green Brook Park Extension, were developed under government relief programs. On September 8, 1932, under the Civilian Work Administration (CWA) program, a development plan for the Green Brook Park Extension was drawn by Ralph C. Porter Jr., landscape architect. The design for the pool house was also accomplished through the CWA program, by architect Joseph Anderson of Westfield, New Jersey (Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1999b). This 40-acre tract plan included a proposal for the extension of Brookside Place to West End Avenue. A swimming pool, bathhouse, and sand beach were proposed adjacent to the Brookside Place extension between the Green Brook and West Front Street. A lake and path system with associated footbridges was also proposed, linking the northern and southern sections of the proposed Green Brook Park Extension. An entrance to the park from Myrtle Avenue in North Plainfield was also envisioned. In addition, a staircase was located just north of the West End Avenue Bridge, designed to link the extension with existing Green Brook Park (Union County Park Commission 1932).

Given the state of the economy at that time, the grand plan envisioned by Mr. Porter and architect Joseph Anderson may have been considered too large in scale to accomplish. By February 26, 1936, the plan designed by Ralph C. Porter, Jr., had been redesigned and scaled back by Evert J. Rebell. In this version, the Brookside Place Extension had been eliminated, as well as the plans for the swimming pool, bath house, sand beach, and entrance to the extension from Myrtle Avenue in North Plainfield (Union County Park Commission 1936b). The lake, path system, footbridge, picnic area, lawn areas providing space for softball and football fields and the staircase linking the extension with Green Brook Park did survive in this design scheme and all except the footbridge still existed at the time of this study.

In the Green Brook Extension, like Green Brook Park, the use of water, occurring naturally or manipulated in a natural fashion, is typical of design theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In the Green Brook Park Extension two water features exist, the natural course of the Green Brook and the designed lake in the northwest section of the park (Photo 8 and 16). Both Porter and Rebell foresaw the need to include this designed feature as a means of providing passive (strolling) and active (fishing) recreational uses, as well as a means of visually linking the two sections of the greater Green Brook Park.

The existing path system designed by Rebell still exists in the Extension today, although lack of maintenance has resulted in portions being overtaken by grass (Photo 17). The footbridge (east of the lake over the Green Brook) that connected the northern side of the park with the southern has been removed. It is interesting to note that the

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use of Taxus (English yew) has been used to mark the intersection of the path and the footbridge, mirroring the design of the Olmsted Brothers in Green Brook Park. The staircase north of the West End Avenue Bridge is intact, linking the two northern sections of Green Brook Park and the Green Brook Park Extension both physically and visually (Photo 18). The path system around the lake is also intact, although heavily overgrown.

In 1946 the Union County Park Commission stated simply "that the Green Brook Park Extension was suitably landscaped" (Union County Park Commission 1946:23). The 1936 planting plan for the Green Brook Park Extension indicates that this was indeed the fact (Union County Park Commission 1936a). Most of the major shade tree plantings, secondary understory plantings, and some of shrubs in designed beds have survived and flourished. It is assumed that the lake area was planted with plant material similar to that found in the Olmsted water garden in Green Brook Park, and indeed some remnants were identified. Because no plant list was provided either on the planting sheet or recorded in the files of the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, it is difficult to ascertain the exact plant material that was proposed and/or planted. However, though observation and experience, the landscape architect for this study was able to identify plant material within this locale that had indeed been planted and that mirrored selections made by the Olmsted Brothers in Green Brook Park. Unfortunately, many of the perennial beds surrounding the lake have not survived. No lighting is currently provided in the Green Brook Park Extension, and no lighting plan was found in the files of the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation.

With the design for the Green Brook Park Extension completed, the park had grown to its present size of 100 acres by the 1940s (Union County Park Commission 1946:23). It should be noted that the Olmsted Brothers firm continued their relationship as consultants to the Union County Park Commission and through the successive enlargements of Green Brook Park.

2) Integrity

The section of Green Brook Park known as the Green Brook Park Extension possesses integrity of location. Integrity of materials and workmanship is also present, exemplified by the presence of the mature shade trees and other plantings, pedestrian paths, lake, and wooded picnic area. Integrity of design has also been maintained. The primary exceptions are the disappearance of the footpath paralleling the Green Brook and the loss of the footbridge east of the lake. The park also retains integrity of setting. No development has encroached into the this section of the park. Integrity of feeling and association is also present, since the major infrastructure of the design of the green spaces, paths, staircase, and plantings remains to convey the naturalistic environment the park was intended to convey.

The boundaries of Green Brook Park today mirror the boundaries that were finally established by 1940. The design intent of the Olmsted Brothers, and ultimately of the Union County Park Commission, was to provide open space and relief from the heat, congestion, and burden of urban life through the design of pastoral landscapes linked with other parks inside and outside of Union County through a series of parkways. This intent

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was successfully executed in the design of Green Brook Park, the Clinton Avenue and West End Avenue bridges, and Clinton and West End avenues.

c. Bridges

The Clinton Avenue Bridge was built in 1921 as a joint venture between Somerset and Union counties. This aesthetically sensitive concrete three-arch bridge is low in profile and was built to carry pedestrian and vehicular traffic over the Green Brook. The bridge railing is low, affording unobstructed views into the park. Although there is no documentation indicating the participation of the Olmsted Brothers firm in the design of the Clinton Avenue Bridge, evidence of their influence is present in the sidewalks remaining from the former circle north of the structure. At one time, Lawrence and Parkview avenues, as well as Fisk and Townsend places, emptied into a circle and onto Clinton Avenue (Photo 2). The circle collected the traffic from the radiating streets and directed it onto Clinton Avenue and finally over the bridge into Green Brook Park. This directional theme is further emphasized by the existing Olmsted Brothers street tree planting on either side of Clinton Avenue south of the bridge (Photo 3). This design of radiating/diagonal streets marked by a large open space (circle) is reminiscent of the Pierre L'Enfant design for Washington, D.C., and later the revised McMillan Commission's Plan of Washington, of which Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was a member. The bridge as it exists complements the park in terms of its form and graceful line. When viewed from the park the bridge does not dominate the visual field; rather, it blends into the adjacent landscape setting because of its graceful proportions and human scale (Photo 4). The existing Clinton Avenue Bridge is slated for replacement by the County of Somerset in 2003. While not individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places the Clinton Avenue Bridge it is a contributing element to the Green Brook Park (Berger 1999:56; Grubb 2000:1-1).

The current West End Avenue Bridge [non-contributing] is a replacement bridge constructed by the County of Somerset in 2002-2003 (Photo 5). Like the Clinton Avenue Bridge, the former West End Avenue Bridge had a high degree of aesthetic appeal. Originally constructed in 1906, the concrete three-arch bridge included curved walls located on the northern side of the bridge (Photo 6). It should be noted, that the original design intent for West End Avenue was to create a tree-lined boulevard linking Green Brook Park to the Watchung Reservation (Photo 7).

While not individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places the former West End Avenue Bridge was a contributing element to the Green Brook Park (Berger 1999:56; Grubb 2000 1-1). Consultation with the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office and the Plainfield Historic Preservation Commission was required regarding the design of the proposed replacement bridge in order to mitigate the adverse effect. The mitigation required that the width of the new structure remain the same as the old, a new twin-barrel arch bridge that in configuration, shape, and mass, would correspond visually to the former bridge and blend in with the historic nature of the surrounding parkland. In addition, the parapet, spandrel, and wing walls received architectural treatment that utilized features of elongated sunken panels and pilasters, similar to that of the original 1922

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design. The decorative curved walls on the north side of the former bridge were maintained and rehabilitated (Berger 2003).

It is possible that the design intent of the curved walls (retained) may have been to mirror, in flavor, the circle design of Clinton Avenue, as well as to punctuate the main entrance to Green Brook Park at Park Drive from the boulevard (West End Avenue). The curved walls, as well as the height of the bridge in relation to the park, are important design features. The curved walls and the resulting space provide pedestrians with a superior viewing position of the natural beauty of the park, the brook, and the lake on the eastern side of the bridge (Photo 8). The West End Avenue Bridge and the Clinton Avenue Bridge are integral design elements of Green Brook Park and link together the park's physical and visual environment.

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Statement of Significance

Green Brook Park is a well-preserved Olmsted Brothers-designed scenic and recreational park that is a key element of the Union County Park System. The Union County Parks Commission was established in 1921 and hired the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, to design a park system plan for the county. Green Brook Park was originally conceived by the City of Plainfield as a city-owned park, and Plainfield acquired the first land for it. In 1926, Plainfield donated to the county the original 54 to 60-acre portion of the park, the section between Clinton and West End Avenues. This portion of the park was designed by the Olmsted Brothers and was constructed from the 1920s through the 1930s. The park meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the emergence of the Union County park system, and Criterion C for the quality of its landscape design.

Historic Overview for the Union County Park System

Development of parks on a county-wide basis was rooted in the late nineteenth-century urban parks movement in which Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903), played a vital role (Newton 1971). The idea of large expanses of open space set aside for the benefit of urban centers was not a new concept. In the mid-1850s, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., traveled extensively through Britain and saw public parkland specifically designed to serve the working classes for respite and relief from the overpopulated and polluted urban centers. Scenes of the British countryside and/or country estates with their gracious pastoral settings, as opposed to the formal designs of private estates such as Versailles, were in vogue. Through his experiences abroad, Olmsted became a champion of social reform. This revolutionary concept won Olmsted numerous urban park commissions, including Central and Prospect Parks in New York; the Fens, Back Bay, and Franklin Park ("emerald necklace") in Boston, and the position of chief landscape architect of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Before the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., had established himself as the foremost landscape architect in the United States.

The ideas and concepts for the establishment and development of open space/parkland articulated by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., were carried on by his firm. His stepson/nephew, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920), joined him in practice in 1875, and in 1884 was made a full partner in the firm, now called F.L. and J.C. Olmsted of Brookline, Massachusetts. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., retired from the firm in 1895 and died in 1903. John Charles Olmsted became the firm's senior partner, and with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), established the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects (1898-1961) (Berger 1999). By the early years of the twentieth century the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects had become by far the largest landscape architectural firm in the country. At that time, the practice of landscape architecture began to meld with other disciplines, such as city and regional planning. The "City Beautiful Movement," which resulted from the enormous success of the 1893

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World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, placed a high priority on the integration of city planning (architectural) with the provisions of open space and parkland preservation for the enjoyment and psychological health benefits provided to its inhabitants (Newton 1971:413-426).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, states and municipalities of all sizes acquired and developed parkland for their citizens. In intensively developed metropolitan areas, however, the parks movement confronted problems arising from the presence of numerous political jurisdictions. One of the first innovative solutions occurred in Boston, Massachusetts, where the Metropolitan Park Commission was established in 1893. From this commission and through the work of its advisor, Charles Eliot (of the firm Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, 1893-1897), the concept of linking large expanses of parkland with tree-lined boulevards or parkways began. Two years later, the New Jersey legislature passed the Park Act of 1895. Through this legislation, the first county-wide park commission was established in Essex County, New Jersey. In New Jersey alone, the Park Act of 1895 encouraged the creation of county park commissions not only in Essex County, but in the counties of Union, Hudson, Passaic, Bergen, Morris, Camden, Middlesex, and, to a lesser degree, Somerset and Monmouth.

In 1919, Union County Sheriff James Warner observed the effects of pollution on the Rahway River and contacted D.C.N. Collins, an engineer and Cranford Township Committeeman. Mr. Collins, a visionary in his own right, was moved by the pleas of Sheriff Warner and took up the cause of the preservation of a portion of the Rahway River and environs in Cranford as a memorial parkway in tribute to World War I veterans (Foley 1990:3). In an article appearing in the *Elizabeth Journal*, Mr. Collins wrote, "Union County possesses natural advantages beyond comparison with any other county by its numerous rivers, streams and mountains which can be formed into continuous parks and drives, affording a great variety of attractions and ultimately connecting to every municipality in the county for convenient amusement and recreation" (Collins 1919). Mr. Collins, like Charles Eliot and the Olmsted Brothers firm, envisioned the linkage of large county parks through the use of greenways and/or parkways that would provide contiguous open space for the benefit of the county, not just the individual municipality. He also saw this movement as a means to preserve the scenic quality and topographical diversity contained within the county's boundaries. In response to public outcry and the dedication of Mr. Collins, the Union County Park Association was formed, its purpose being to establish a park commission (Brown 1941:2).

New Jersey state law mandated that a minimum population of 200,000 residents within any given county was required to form a permanent park commission. Union County fell short of this number. Residents of Cranford canvassed their municipality to locate residents that had not been recorded in the 1920 census. Through the efforts of these diligent townspeople, the 200,000 mark was surpassed by 157 (Foley 1990:3).

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New Jersey Supreme Court Justice James Bergen was petitioned in April 1920 to appoint a temporary survey commission to study the feasibility of a permanent park commission. On April 30 of the same year, a temporary five-member commission was in place. The members included Henry S. Chatfield of Elizabeth, Charles Hansel of Cranford, Caxton Brown of Summit, Arthur R. Wendell of Rahway, and Percy H. Stewart of Plainfield. Business obligations abroad prevented Percy H. Stewart from serving on the commission. Working with a two-year time limit and a slim budget, the remaining four-member commission began a long and arduous task of identifying lands desirable for county parks. In September 1921 the commission hired the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects of Brookline, Massachusetts (Union County Park Commission 1922a:25), already known for their successful work in neighboring Essex County.

Of particular interest to the commissioners were the large areas of wooded, farm, or wasteland such as ash dumps available throughout the county. In addition, the water supply was of the utmost concern. These men envisioned the parks and their associated watercourses as being natural purifiers for the county's water supply, and as such they needed to be preserved and protected. The commissioners foresaw the future growth within the county boundaries and deemed it critical to preserve the overall quality of the natural landscape while providing land for the enjoyment and recreation of both the existing population and future generations. Using Essex County's South Mountain Reservation as their model, they perceived the need for large areas of natural beauty, such as the Watchung Reservation. These primary reservations and secondary large county parks would be connected by a series of parkways. Furthermore, these visionaries proposed that the Essex County and Union County systems be forever linked, not only through proximity but through the proposed parkway system.

After six months of work, the four-man commission established by Justice Bergen reported its findings. On November 8, 1921, a public referendum to establish a permanent park commission appeared on the ballot in Union County (Foley 1990:3). Streams of voters turned out for the election, especially women, who had just recently won their struggle for the right to vote in the state. It should be noted that not all the county's residents approved of the concept of forming a county-wide park system: the City of Plainfield was a notable exception. Plainfield, one of the wealthier communities in the county, wanted to establish its *own* municipal park program and began doing so with the design for Plainfield Park (now known as Green Brook Park) and Library Park (located behind the Plainfield Public Library). Plainfield's corporate counsel, Charles A. Reed, doubted the wisdom of putting "so much power in the hands of five men at this time" (Cunningham 1971). Despite these heavy objections, however, the referendum passed by a vote of 15,475 to 11,462 (Cunningham 1971). On November 19, 1921, Justice Bergen appointed a five-member commission that formed the Union County Park Commission, the second county park system in the state of New Jersey.

The Union County Park Commission included four of the original members appointed by Justice Bergen (Henry S. Chatfield, Charles Hansel, Caxton Brown, and Arthur R. Wendell). The fifth member was Charles A. Reed,

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the outspoken opponent and corporate counsel from Plainfield (Berger 1999) (Figure 1). Ironically, Mr. Reed became one of the most ardent supporters of the Union County Park System and served as a commissioner for 19 years.

With Mr. Percival Gallagher of the Olmsted Brothers firm in place, the Union County Park Commission now needed an engineer to work with the landscape architects. They chose W. Richmond Tracy, a Princeton University graduate, who was lured away from his position as chief bridge builder for the Bronx River Parkway Commission. Mr. Tracy remained at the Union County Park Commission for 35 years and retired in 1957. The success of projects such as the Bronx River Parkway, the Metropolitan Park Commission, and the Essex County Park System were not lost on the Union County Park Commission or their engineer, Mr. Tracy. They saw progress in social reform and improvement in environmental conditions and tax rates as results of these major park projects. They wanted these kinds of improvements for their county. They also knew that their location in the New York metropolitan area would bring the pressures of development and that they needed to move swiftly in the acquisition of land before the purchases of large expanses of land became prohibitive. In 1922, 2,200 acres of land for the Union County Park System was in the process of being acquired (Union County Park Commission 1922a:13). That same year, five fully improved acres of land were donated to the Park Commission by the Wheatena Company of Rahway. In 1923, the four main projects of utmost concern were Warinanco, Cedar Brook, and Echo Lake parks, as well as the Watchung Reservation (Union County Park Commission 1928:7). By September 1925, either through acquisition or donation, the Union County Park System consisted of seven main units of parkland totaling over 3,100 acres (Union County Park Commission 1925:8)

In 1922, the City of Plainfield was paying one-fifth of the cost for the Union County Park System, in addition to the cost burden put on its residents by the development of its own municipal park program (City of Plainfield 1922:13). Therefore, in 1926 the City of Plainfield, once a staunch opponent of the county park system, donated the 54 acres of Green Brook Park to the Union County Park Commission. By 1928, land under the control of the Union County Park Commission had reached 4,000 acres. Three new parks — Green Brook, Nomahegan, and Galloping Hill — were now included within the 10 main projects under the control of the Union County Parks Commission. Monies to operate the facilities within the Union County Park System were collected from two sources, tax revenues levied from the residents of the county and revenue-producing facilities within the park system, such as permits for special events.

The city and regional planning concept that provided open space for preservation and recreation and the linkage of these areas through parkways was now in full swing in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. In the 1928 General Plan of the New York Park System, which was included in the Regional Plan of New York and its environs, the existing and proposed parks and parkways of Union and Essex counties, as well as that of the

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Palisades Interstate Park Commission, were considered an *integral* part of this *regional* plan (Zapatka 1995:133; Berger 1999) (Map 3).

By 1930, the Union County Park Commission had amassed 4,160 acres and now had its own Department of Police, headed by Lyman L. Parks, and Department of Recreation, headed by F. S. Mathewson (Union County Park Commission 1928:12; Berger 1999) (Figure 2). Ironically, Mr. Mathewson, the Superintendent of Recreation, like Mr. Reed, came to the Union County Park System from the City of Plainfield. The park commissioners foresaw the need to hire these two men for both the safety and pleasure concerns resulting from an ever-growing population and its more intensive recreational use of the parks.

Between 1931 and 1939, the Union County Park System suffered the effects of the Great Depression, and the employee ranks shrank from 12 to two department heads with two employees (Union County Park Commission 1946:35). Through various government relief programs, such as the Civilian Work Administration (CWA), Work Projects Administration (WPA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Union County Park Commission was able to continue its work on the design, development, and construction of the park system. Many experienced landscape architects and architects worked for the Union County Park Commission through the WPA program, and many of the plans for the future development of the park system were developed, including those for the Green Brook Park Extension. The CCC built many of the dams within the Union County Park System, along with scenic overlooks, paths, roadways, and shelters. The Union County Park System provided its residents with numerous types of active and passive recreational activities, including band concerts, archery, baseball, canoeing, fishing, football, golf, horseback riding, ice skating, lawn bowling, softball, tennis, children's playgrounds, and soccer.

During World War II, work in the park system progressed at a slow pace. During the 1940s and 1950s, outside pressure from projects of the State Highway Department (New Jersey Department of Transportation), the New Jersey Highway Authority (Garden State Parkway), New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and municipal road networks infringed on the parkland of Union County. Approximately 58 acres for new or improved roadway facilities were turned over to the state or local municipalities (Union County Park Commission 1957:11). Despite the loss of 58 acres, the Union County Park System had grown to 4,804 acres with 18 main project units under its control (Union County Park Commission 1957:13). Development pressures, improved roadway facilities, and the rising cost of land resulted in the chipping away of the proposed parkway system designed by the Olmsted Brothers. The tree-lined boulevards/parkways designed to link the elements of the Union County Park System with each other as well as with other park systems (such as Essex County's) began to become disjointed and never truly materialized as originally envisioned by the Olmsted Brothers.

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By the 1960s, the parkland under the control of the Union County Park Commission had increased to 4,881 acres with 868 acres yet to be acquired (Union County Park Commission 1963). In 1978, the once autonomous Union County Park Commission was disbanded and reorganized into the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation.

To date, the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation boasts 26 parks with 5,574.3 acres under its jurisdiction (Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1999a; Berger 1999) (Map 4). In the coming months, a new master plan for the Union County Park System will be completed, which will carry the parklands into the new millennium. New lands to increase the existing holdings, as well as upgrading and maintenance of existing facilities, are planned. The legacy established by the diligent work and foresight of the original Union County Park Commissioners, W. Richmond Tracy, and the Olmsted Brothers is one of good planning for the benefit of future generations.

National Register Criteria

The designed historic landscape collectively known as Green Brook Park meets National Register Criteria A and C, as interpreted in National Register Bulletin 18, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (National Park Service 1992). Criterion A refers to association with events that have significant contributions to the broad pattern of our history. In response to increasingly crowded and polluted conditions in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, city officials in the Northeast foresaw the need for the preservation of large open space. These preserved areas would provide relief from the polluted and congested urban areas as well as improve the overall visual and physical environment. Parks became the logical solution. The incorporation of parks into the cities became known as the City Beautiful Movement. Out of this idea was born the Essex County Park System (1895), started by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., and continued by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. In 1921, through public referendum, the Union County Park Commission was formed, using the Essex County Park System as its guide. The Union County Park Commission became the second park county commission in the state of New Jersey. In 1926, the City of Plainfield donated the original 54-60 acres of Green Brook Park (Plainfield Park) to the newly formed Union County Park Commission providing one of the earliest land holdings within the county park system.

Under Criterion C, Green Brook Park embodies distinctive characteristics of a type and period, and represents the work of a master. The section of Green Brook Park between Clinton and West End Avenues was designed in the 1920s by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, considered to be one of the most prominent and highly respected landscape architectural firms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During their long association with the Union County Park Commission (from 1921 to the 1960s), the Olmsted Brothers firm continued to consult and provide guidance on such topics as proposed land acquisition and losses due to

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development pressures, structures (including bridge design), and improvements within the parks (plantings, recreational facilities, path systems, and maintenance). This relationship ensured that the concept envisioned by the original park commissioners and the Olmsted Brothers firm would continue to prosper and grow. The portion of Green Brook Park east of West End Avenue was designed by Ralph C. Porter and Evert J. Rebell, both landscape architects employed by the Union County Park Commission through the government CWA program. Through the benefits of this government program and others such as the WPA, CCC, and PWA, the Union County Park Commission was able to continue its work on the design, development, and construction of their county-wide park system.

Though Mr. Porter and Mr. Rebell may not be considered masters in the profession of landscape architecture, the portion of Green Brook Park they designed, though simpler in execution, complements that of the Olmsted Brothers design in intent, theory, and concept. The Green Brook Park Extension was clearly intended to extend the scenic and pastoral landscape designed by the Olmsteds and as such should be considered to contribute to the significance of the Olmsted-designed park.

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UTM Coordinates:

Zone 18

5. 546648
4494987
6. 547049
4495388
7. 547384
4495418
8. 547892
4495916

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Geographical Data

UTM REFERENCES

Green Brook Park

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
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Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries for the property/historic district are shown on the site map of the district, labeled Map 2.

The district boundaries are the Green Brook and adjacent land between Parkview, Tappan, and Myrtle avenues on the north; rear yards of residential development along Myrtle Avenue and West Front Street on the south; Clinton Avenue on the west; and Brookside Place to the east. The land within these boundaries continues to be utilized as public parkland under the jurisdiction of the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation. In addition, this application includes the West End Avenue and Clinton Avenue bridges, and Clinton Avenue proper to the present intersection with Lawrence and Parkview avenues and Fisk and Townsend places.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the land currently occupied by Green Brook Park, Clinton Avenue and West End Avenue bridges and Clinton Avenue proper to the present intersection with Lawrence and Parkview avenues and Fisk and Townsend places. This boundary includes the parkland, brook crossings and entrances to Green Brook Park.

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- Plate 3: View of Skating Pond in Green Brook Park
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- Plate 5: Postcards of Skating Pond in Green Brook Park

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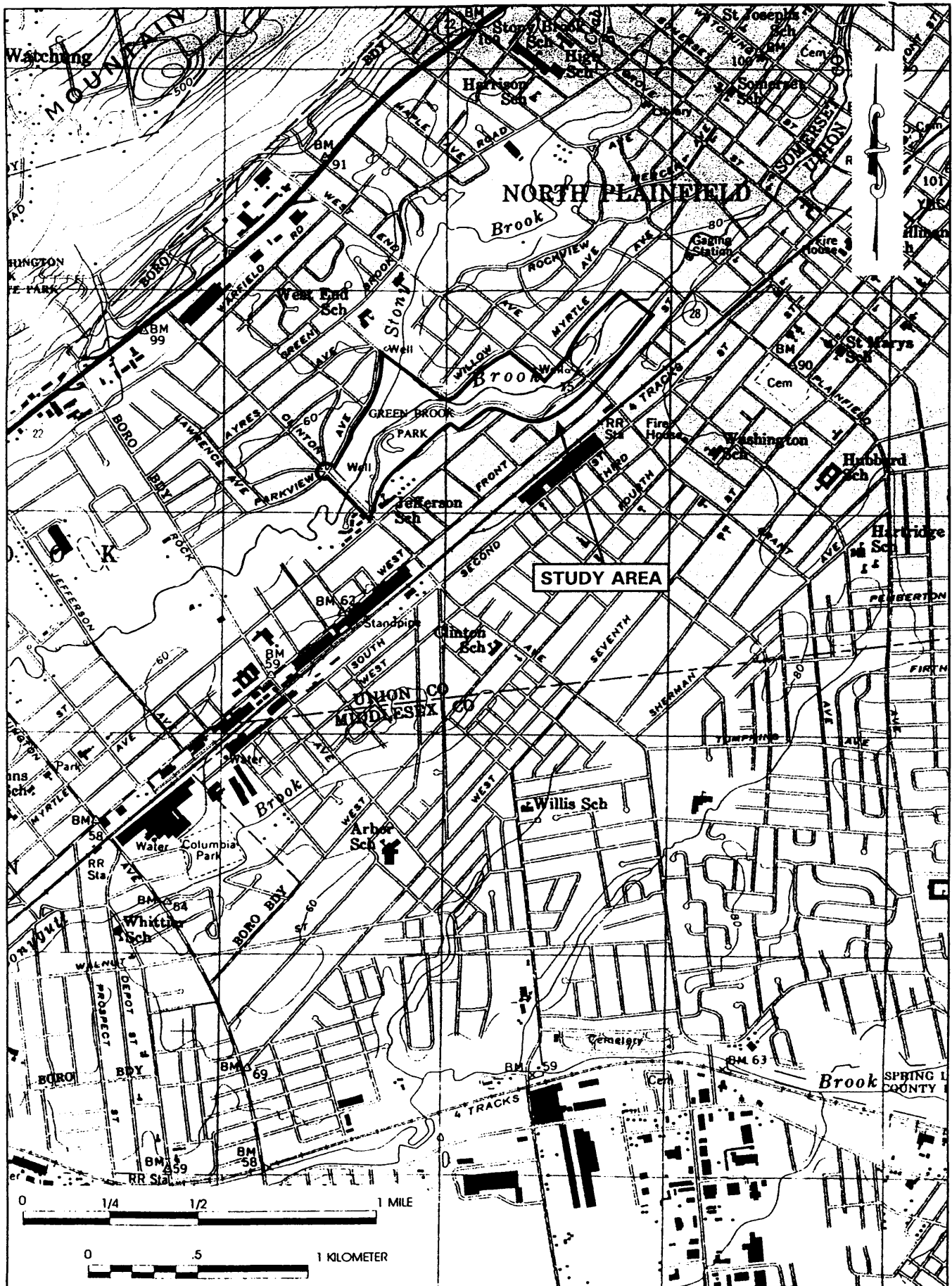
The following items apply to all current black-and-white photographs, numbered 1 through 18:

Photographer: April M. Stefel
Date of Photographs: 1999 and 2003
Location of Negatives: April M. Stefel, 935 Madison Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey 07060
Photograph 5, taken in 2003

The Louis Berger Group, Inc., East Orange, New Jersey 07019
Photographs 1-4 and Photographs 6-18, taken in 1999

Individual Photograph Identifications:

- Photograph 1: Daughters of the American Revolution Historical Marker
- Photograph 2: Looking Northwest at Remnants of the Sidewalk once Surrounding the Circle at Clinton Avenue, Lawrence and Parkview Avenues, and Fisk and Townsend Places
- Photograph 3: Looking North Along Clinton Avenue Toward the Clinton Avenue Bridge and Circle Area
- Photograph 4: Looking West From Green Brook Park Toward the Clinton Avenue Bridge
- Photograph 5: New West End Avenue Bridge
- Photograph 6: Former West End Avenue Bridge
- Photograph 7: Looking North Along West End Avenue From the Former Bridge and Tree-lined Boulevard
- Photograph 8: Looking East From the Curved Wall on the Former West End Avenue Bridge Toward the Lake in Green Brook Park
- Photograph 9: Bluestone Staircase at Myrtle Avenue in Green Brook Park
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- Photograph 17: Looking East at the Footpath System in Green Brook Park East of West End Avenue
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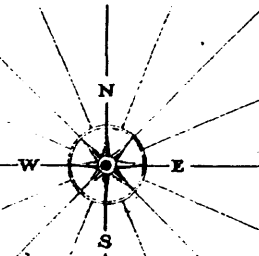


Map 1: Reproduction of USGS Map Showing Extent of Green Brook Park Historic District

Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle, Plainfield, New Jersey 1995 & Berger 1999

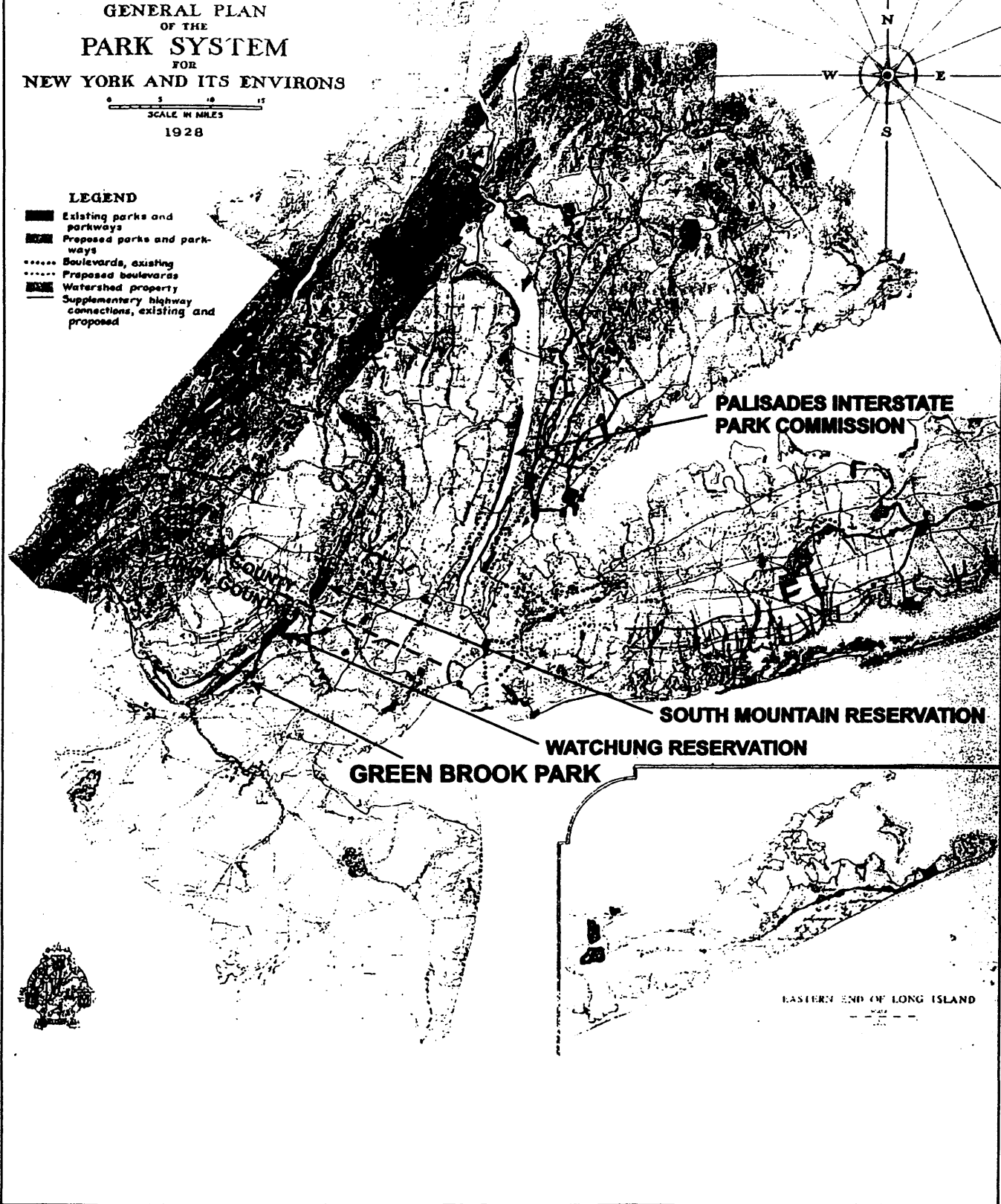
**GENERAL PLAN
OF THE
PARK SYSTEM
FOR
NEW YORK AND ITS ENVIRONS**

0 5 10 15
SCALE IN MILES
1928



LEGEND

- Existing parks and parkways
- ▨ Proposed parks and parkways
- Boulevards, existing
- Proposed boulevards
- ▨ Watershed property
- Supplementary highway connections, existing and proposed



Map 3: General Plan of the Park System for New York and its Environs, 1928

Source: Zapatka 1995 & Berger 1999



COMMISSIONER HENRY S. CHATFIELD
of Elizabeth



COMMISSIONER CAXTON BROWN
of Summit



COMMISSIONER CHARLES A. REED
of Plainfield



COMMISSIONER CHARLES HANSEL
of Cranford



COMMISSIONER ARTHUR R. WENDELL
of Summit and Rahway

**Figure 1: Five Original Members of the Union County
Park Commission**

*Source: Union County Park Commission 1928 &
Berger 1999*

TESTIMONIAL DINNER



To

F. S. Mathewson

SUPERINTENDENT OF RECREATION

UNION COUNTY PARK SYSTEM

Saturday evening, March 7th, 1936

ELIZABETH CARTERET HOTEL,

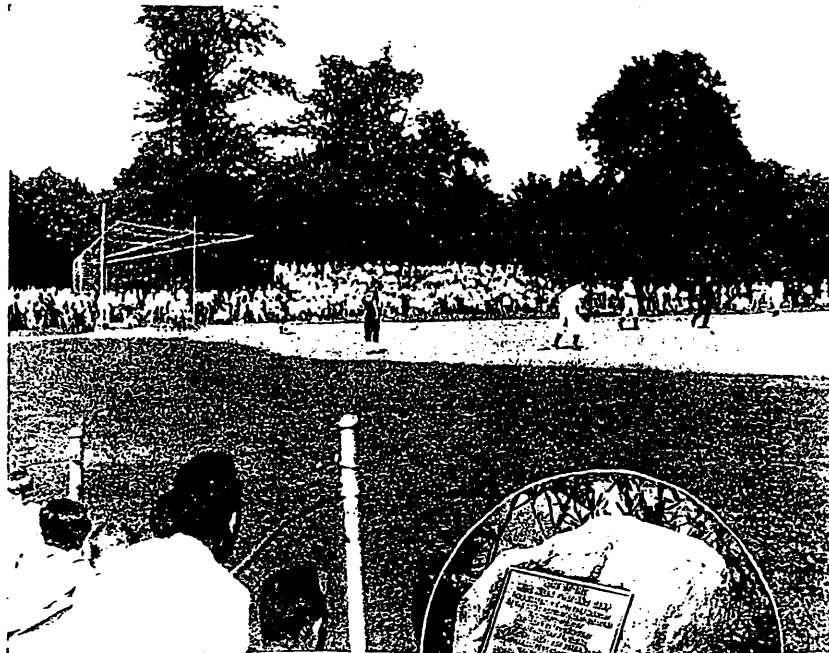
ELIZABETH, N. J.

Figure 2: F. S. Mathewson, Superintendent of Recreation

Source: Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1936 & Berger 1999



Lawn Bowling—Green Brook Park



Baseball—Green Brook Park

Historical Marker—Green Brook Park

**Plate 1: Bowling Green, Baseball Field,
and Historical Marker in Green Brook
Park**

*Source: Union County Park
Commission 1946 &
Berger 1999*



Plate 2: Former Location of Children's Playground · *Source: Union County Park Commission 1930a & Berger 1999*
in Green Brook Park

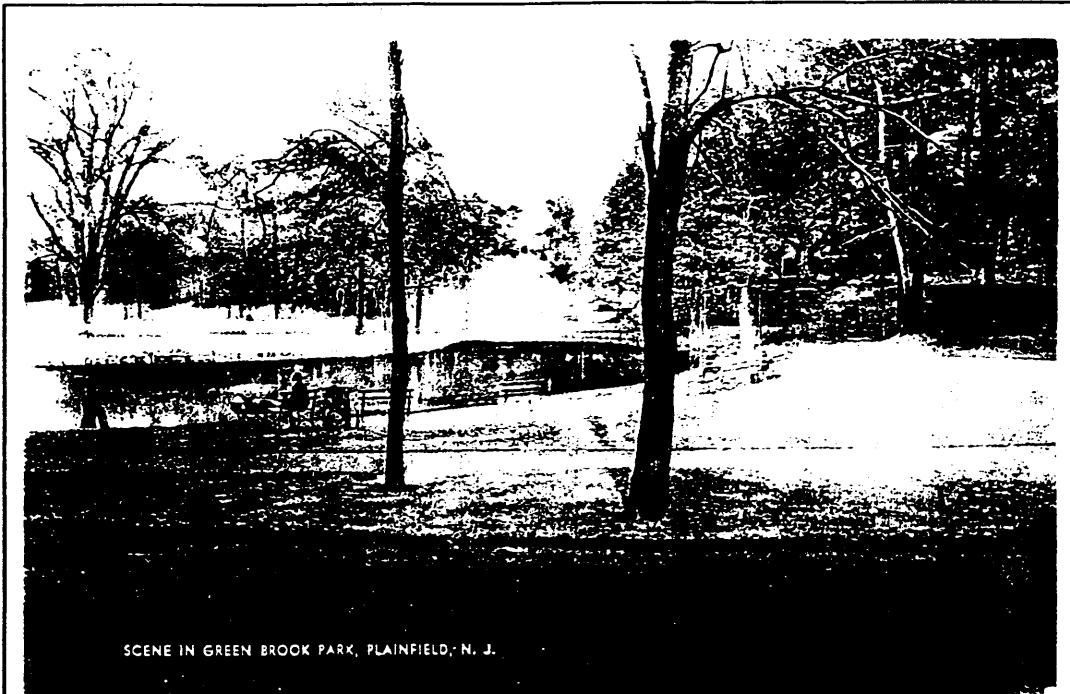


Plate 3: View of Skating Pond in Green Brook Park · *Source: Union County Park Commission 1930a & Berger 1999*

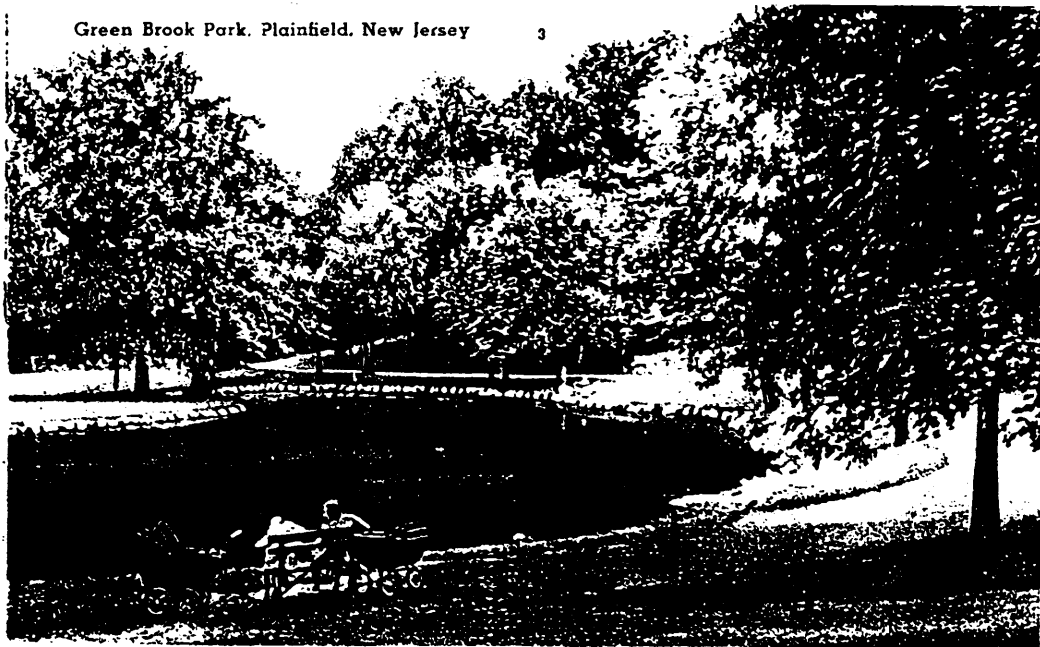


**Plate 4: Looking West at the Bluestone Retaining
Wall and Water Garden in Green Brook Park**

*Source: Union County Park Commission 1928 &
Berger 1999*

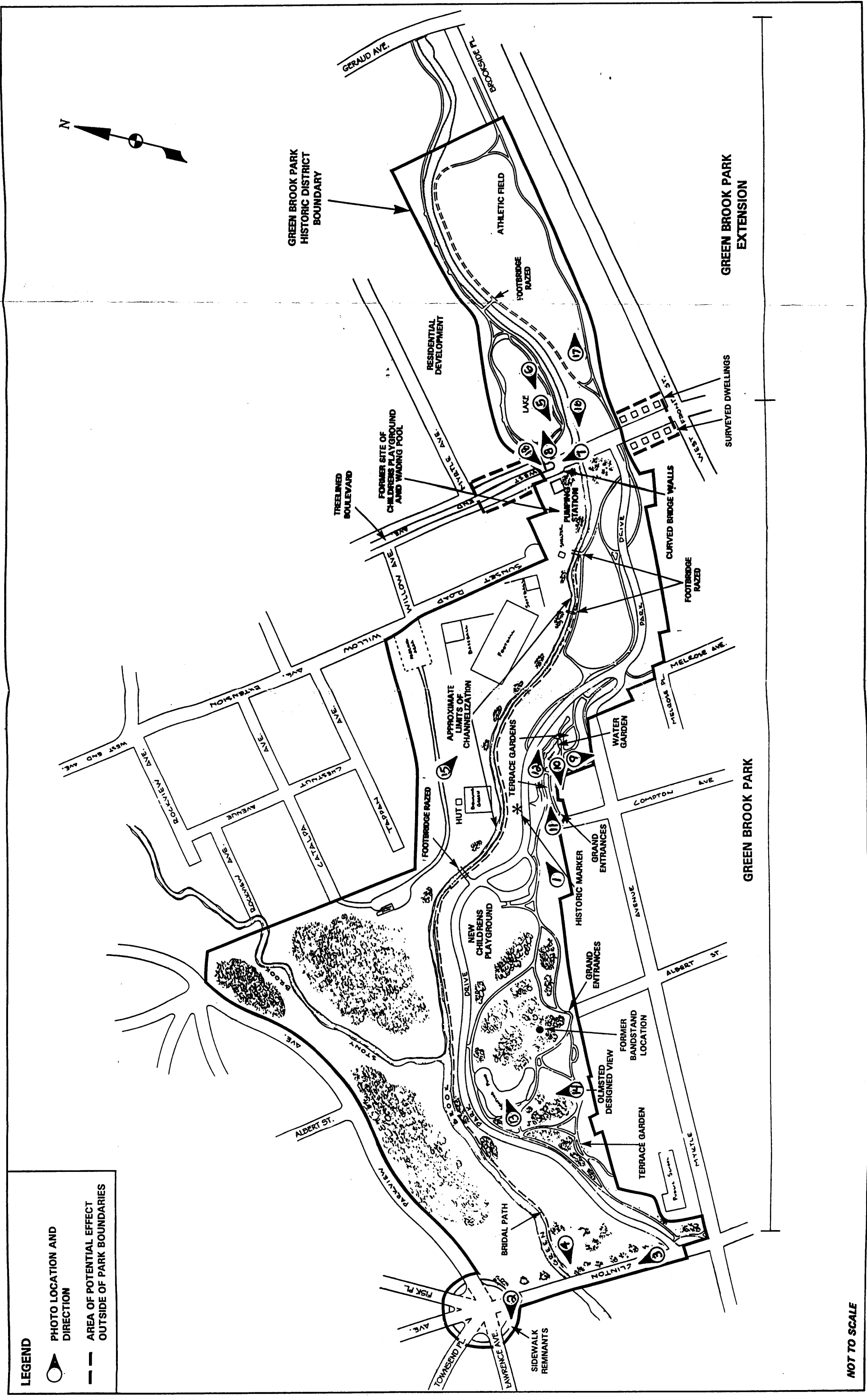


TEH Mayrose Co. Publishers, New York



Tichnor Brothers, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts

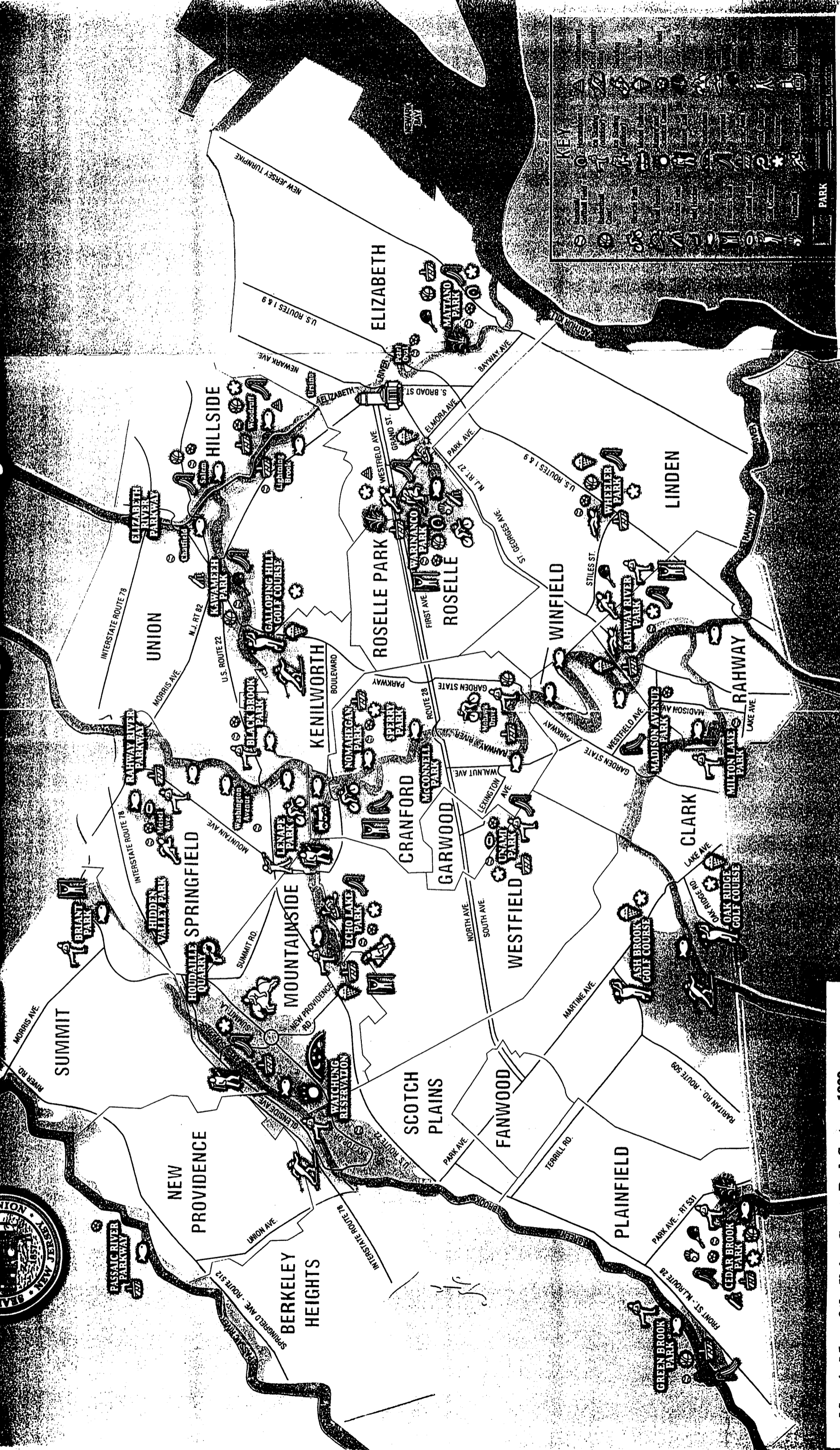
Plate 5: Postcards of Skating Pond in Green Brook Park *Source: Nancy Piwowar 1999 & Berger 1999*



NOT TO SCALE

Map 2: Site Map of Green Brook Park

The Union County Park System



KEY

[Icon]	PARK
[Icon]	GOLF COURSE
[Icon]	RESERVATION
[Icon]	QUARRY
[Icon]	WATERWAY
[Icon]	RAILROAD
[Icon]	STATE HIGHWAY
[Icon]	LOCAL ROAD
[Icon]	TURNPIKE
[Icon]	UNION COUNTY
[Icon]	MUNICIPALITY
[Icon]	WATERWAY
[Icon]	RAILROAD
[Icon]	STATE HIGHWAY
[Icon]	LOCAL ROAD
[Icon]	TURNPIKE
[Icon]	UNION COUNTY
[Icon]	MUNICIPALITY

Map 4: Map of the Union County Park System, 1999

Source: Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1999a & Berger 1999