

TOWN OF BROOKLINE

PRESERVATION COMMISSION



HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD BROCHURE

BROOKLINE VILLAGE- CYPRESS STREET COMMON

2005

Cypress Field and the Brookline Avenue Playground are considered to be the first sites in the country acquired for municipal playground purposes. At the adjourned Town Meeting on April 10, 1871, the Town voted "that a committee of seven be appointed by the Moderator, to take into consideration the subject of procuring one or more lots of land for Public Commons, and suitable for playgrounds, in situations convenient to the schools of the Town." The Moderator appointed Amos A. Lawrence, Thomas Parsons, John W. Candler, Edward Atkinson, Alanson W. Beard, Willard A. Humphery and Edward I. Thomas to serve on the committee. By the May 2nd Town Meeting, this committee made a report requesting additional time to investigate Longwood and the South Part of Town. They did

however recommend two parcels for consideration: Brookline Avenue Playground and the Clark and Howe's lot, bounded by Cypress and Tappan Streets. Town Meeting voted to buy these two lots for Public Grounds at the same meeting.

At the meeting of the Board of Selectmen, on May 22, 1871, the deed for Cypress Street lot was presented and accepted with special provisions in relation to its use. The land originally named Cypress Street Common was deeded to the town for \$45,878.00 by William B. Craft, Samuel Clark and James Murry Howe with the restriction that the premises "are to be used, improved, maintained for public use forever, as and for a Public Square, Common or Play Ground and not otherwise."

In 1876, the new property was filled with loam from the

Fairmount Street gravel pit, thirty young maples were planted and a spruce flagpole was erected. By 1880, the Brookline Athletic Club had built a track and seats for sports exhibitions. The playground was enlarged in 1886 with an additional 67,179 square feet. At some point a bandstand had been erected but it was removed in 1897. Over the years, it has been the site of many activities, including ice skating, track meets, town celebrations, graduations, baseball and football.



Cypress Field c. 2000

Across from Cypress field is the original site of the Brookline Public Baths. Designed by Joseph Untersee, the first public baths in the country opened on January 1, 1897. Known as “the tank,” it was replaced with the current structure in 1958.



Brookline Avenue Playground c. 2000



Cypress Playground



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333 Washington Street

Brookline, MA 02445

Designed by Andrew A. Ghobrial