

Pioneer Citizen Praises Work at Local City Park

(1) Mrs. J. W. Francis, who is visiting Ballinger relatives and friends, in the article below praises the work done at city park. Mrs. Francis was a pioneer citizen of Ballinger and remembers what the "bluff" and ground between it and Elm Creek looked like before the transformation. Here is the new improvement as she describes it:

"In ye olden times, 1889, when we first came to Ballinger, our favorite walk, especially on Sunday afternoon, was out to the 'bluff.' Gingerly we would pick our way, part way down, then find a big rock and all settle down to a good chat and to view the landscape over where it was cool. Meandering home when the shadows lengthened, and before the Santa Fe park and fair grounds were thought of, the valley between the bluff and Elm Creek was often used as picnic grounds.

"It took the genius and imagination of two of our most talented young men, Bruce Creasy and K. V. Northington, after the city built the dam and levee to control the flood waters, to make this acreage into the beautiful park it is today. They used the surface rock to outline walks, drive-ways, flower beds in an artistic jig-saw top line, leaving some for tables and seats, making some into steps up the bluff and little bridges in out of the way places.

"Many flowers and shrubs were planted where they would brighten or add, and here and there are barbecue pits, one big enough to cook a whole cow. A

Boy Scout cabin and a Camp Fire Girls hut were built from rocks taken from the bluff and the hole left looks as if it had been made for a swimming pool. The rock is lain so even it will only have to be cemented, and I hear this will be the next move. And wonder of wonders, there is a road you can drive down and up the bluff to and from this marvelous place without danger or mishap. From the top of the bluff you can see at night, the whole park lighted with electricity until 9 o'clock, when it blinks twice as a warning, then in ten minutes is off. The inlet in the bluff we

knew as 'Wild Cat Cave' is a joy to behold, the most artistic work of all, in fact, any number of groups could be fairly private in this fairyland. Also a big advantage is the fact that it is only a few blocks from the residential district.

"As for me I am coming back in the springtime when the wild plum, woodbine, buckeye and red bud, that grow wild in those boulders, are in bloom."

The hedger 1935

(1) Mrs. Francis was
a great aunt of
Mary Lynn Sykes