

# Ballinger Turns Jungle Into One Of West

## Texas' Finest Parks

IT MIGHT HAVE  
COST \$50,000  
INSTEAD \$1,233

*Creary*  
Casey, Northington And  
Shepperd, Park Com-  
missioners Did Job

### CAMP FIRE GIRLS HAVE CABIN THERE

### Hope To Get \$7,000 Pub- lic Works Money For Swimming Pool

By KARL READ  
Staff Correspondent

BALLINGER, Aug. 10.—

From a mass of native west Texas mesquites, towering oaks, pecans and elms, carpeted by an undergrowth of thick bushes and briars hiding a ground littered by debris deposited there for years, giving the appearance of a miniature jungle, Ballinger has created an outstanding park that many larger cities would be proud to boast about to visiting strangers. This present beauty spot of Runnels County capital lies on a small peninsula on Elm Creek below the dam at the northeastern edge of town.

Here men and women seek refuge from indoor heat late in the evenings, and at night while devouring an outdoor meal and watching their children play on the numerous play ground contrivances amid a setting of beautifully trimmed trees swinging majestically about a ground covering of Bermuda grass with its green color carefully blended by different hues of flowers in stone curbed beds, and cut off into sections by winding roads likewise curbed.

The merry making of the children on the peninsula overlooked by a 100-foot slanting bluff thickly covered by towering trees neatly trimmed and cleaned at the bases of undesirable growth that extends a mile down stream.

#### Electric Lighted

Even after the sun sinks behind the bluff and darkness settled down, electricity provides sufficient light for continuance of outdoor playing of the children as they see-saw, whirl around on merry-go-rounds, "skin cats" on bars, go back and forwards in swings, and younger tots build miniature mansions in sand piles. Rarely an evening passes without both young and old crowding the place.

Even throughout the day occasional diners can be viewed in one of the bluff's nooks, next to the dam, where ever convenience possible can be obtained. Heavily overcovered by trees that form an umbrella protection against the sun, as many as a hundred can find seating facilities, tables, built from wood and native rocks. A small barbecue pit rests where smoke won't bother at the back for cooking purposes. Here, as over the entire park, running water is accessible.

Attendants of conventions are brought here for barbecues where as much as a thousand pounds of meat can be cooked on the larger pit built at the extreme southeast part of the park.

#### Cost City But \$1,233.

The formation of this playground of Ballinger has been accomplished since 1930 and at an actual cash cost of only \$1,233 to the city of Ballinger, plus cash donations from individuals and much materials and labor contributions and labor provided through R. F. C. funds this year. Many knockers said the cost would prohibit a creditable park, but Bruce Creary, K. V. Northington, city secretary, E. Shepperd, park commissioner, and a few others through their interest paved the way by showing how it could be done and at a slight cash cost. Without close management \$50,000 wouldn't have built it.

The City Park as it now stands represents the efforts of numerous individuals and firms.

#### Worked Out Water Bills

The idea of a park at the location originated with Northington when the depression began to blanket Ballinger in 1930. Naturally he couldn't get many interested in spending money for reclaiming a spot that seemed so hopelessly impossible. But, the city water department having several consumers, out of employment and willing but unable to pay their water bills, he obtained permission from the city commissioners to let these delinquent consumers pay their bill by work in cleaning the peninsula. Through the winter and fall 300 men

*San Angelo Standard-Times  
1935*

*A WPA project*

ing \$2 a day for their time; \$1 being credited on their water accounts and \$1 paid in cash.

In the spring the chamber of commerce donated an old tourist cabin to the local Boy Scout troop and through the supervision of Northington it was moved and rebuilt at the foot of the sloping bluff.

The following year Creary started erecting a Camp Fire Girls' cabin out of native stone several yards north of the Scout house. When finished, through a cash cost of only \$430, plus donated labor and material, the cabin, presenting an attractive exterior appearance and finely furnished, was valued at better than \$1,800. It was also through the use of Creary's machine shop that the playground equipment was constructed and he has spent much time in supervising improvements at the park.

#### 125 Pecan Trees Planted

The nook, now serving as the daytime eating place for picnickers, was renovated from a dumping ground into a beauty spot through the supervision of A. D. Smith, city water pumper. Mike C. Boyd, nurseryman, sold 125 pecan trees and much shrubbery at cost and contributed time in landscaping.

As things first began to assume shape, full co-operation came forth and now all residents of Ballinger seem eager to make the place into a more beautiful and desirable plot for pleasure seekers.

Application has been made to the government for \$7,000 from the public works funds to build a natorium to substitute for the creek swimming pool just below the dam, which now remains unused owing to the hardness of water. Next year a municipal golf course is planned to be made on land adjoining the park. These two major projects will be supplemented by numerous other additions that are now going forward at a rapid rate.

*Could not get the funds*

through the winter and fall 300 men

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