

ST. VINCENT PARK

PARK HISTORY

In the early 1890's the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul originally purchased 97 acres of farmland from Francis and Emma Drew for \$23,000 to build a mental hospital. The hospital was named the Castle at Mount St. Vincent. It was designed by George R. Mann and was built between 1892 and 1895 for less than \$500,000.

Surrounding the hospital was a large farm operated by nuns and patients. Milk cows, hogs, and crops were raised for food. The farm provided jobs for the patients until operations ceased in the late 1940's.

The "Castle" was closed June of 1978 and the Daughters of Charity relocated to the DePaul Community Health Center.

In June of 1978 St. Louis County purchased 120 acres of farmland from the Daughters plus another 14 acres in 1978 for a total cost of \$947,000. Two L&WCF grants totaling more than one million dollars were received in 1978 and 1979 from the National Park Service for the purchase of the acreage and the initial park development. The property is now St. Vincent Park. The Castle was not included in the park but was renovated as Castle Park Apartments. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Continental Water Company donated \$85,000 towards the development of the parksite. The Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds also contributed over \$500,000 for the acquisition and development of this parksite.

A \$30,000 joint use exercise court for disabled and abled-bodied athletes was opened in August of 1988. It was dismantled in 1999 due to poor repair and lack of use.

The Community Center was opened in June 1989 as a result of 1986 voter approved Bond Issue monies. There are supervised recreational programs, civic group meetings, and organized basketball and day camps at the facility.

The Water Park was opened in August 1994. The Water Park has numerous

water activities including a water slide and 80-foot flume ride. A food concession and lockers are available to the public.

The playground was redeveloped on the same site in 2000-2001.

A 1.36-acre parcel situated on the east side of Salerno Drive was acquired from the County Tax Assessor in 2003, completing the park's circle around Castle Park Apartments and affording an opportunity to create a loop trail.