

Olmsted Brothers Timeline

1851

November 13 - Schooner Exact drops off the 22 people of the Denny party, considered to be the founders of Seattle.

1876

City purchases 40 acres on top of what becomes Capitol Hill for a cemetery.

1884

David Denny gives 5 acres of land for first city park. Surrounded by woods on the outskirts of town. Still in same location.

1888

Leschi amusement park, privately owned, established at terminus of Yesler Way trolley line. Includes pavilion, casino, dance hall.

1890

John McGilvra establishes Madison Park, another amusement grounds at the end of trolley terminus. Includes 500-seat pavilion, ball park, and horse track. Likened to a public carnival or Coney Island.

1900

City buys Woodland Park for \$100,000 from the Guy Phinney estate. With the purchase, Seattle gains over 100 acres of mostly cleared land, along with Phinney's personal zoo, including herds of wild deer, elk, and buffalo. That same year, assistant City Engineer George Cotterill produces a plan for a 25-mile system of bicycle paths around the city.

1901

City Park, the former Lake View Park, is renamed Volunteer Park, to honor veterans of Spanish-American War.

1902

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners decides it wants a more elaborate park system and contacts Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. The senior partner of the Olmsted Brothers firm, John Charles Olmsted, is available. September 21 of this year, a full-page article in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer urges the city to acquire more land and to develop an elaborate park system. The story is called, "Let Us Make a Beautiful City of Seattle."

1903

April 30 - John Charles Olmsted and assistant Percy Jones arrive in Seattle from Portland. They spend month of May surveying the city by horse, trolley, foot, and boat.

October 19 - Seattle City Council approves the Olmsted Brothers' "A Comprehensive System of Parks and Parkways." The central feature of the Olmsted plan was a twenty mile-long parkway that ran from Bailey Peninsula (Seward Park) to Fort Lawton (Discovery Park).

1907

Ferdinand Schmitz donates 30 acres, some of last old growth in city, to Seattle.

1909

Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition held on grounds of University of Washington. AYP is designed by Olmsted Brothers.

1920

February 24 - John Charles Olmsted dies in Brookline, Massachusetts.

1936

Olmsted Brothers' employee James Dawson designs Arboretum in Washington Park