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ACRES OF SAND CONVERTED INTO BEAUTIFUL CITY PARK

Gift of Frederick Roeding Becomes One of Fresno's Show Places

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About seven-years ago F. Roeding donated to the city of Fresno 70 acres of land for park purposes. This land appeared to be mere sand. Today this sand heap has been transformed into an up-to-date park and is a veritable Garden of Eden. The park commissioners of Fresno are willing to match this 70 acre park against any other park in the state. Last year Mr. Roeding gave the city an additional 50 acres adjoining the present improved portion of Roeding Park, all or most of which, has been planted and in a short time will attain the beauty of the original 70 acres.

In Roeding Park many of the trees when planted were not more than two feet high; today many of these trees are 40 feet high. This goes to show what good care and water will do. The park has a splendid water system, the trees have been irrigated from open ditches and the water has been donated by the Fresno canal and irrigation company. In addition, the commissioners have installed a gas engine pumping plant for an emergency and this has been the secret of success in making this park a beauty spot.

The park is situated alongside of the Southern Pacific railroad and all incoming passengers from both north and south comment on its beauty and express surprise and admiration.

In addition to the good attention given this park by the superintendent in charge, W.M. Harrah, the great improvement and wonderful growth attained are due to constant fertilizing.

In the park is a chain of lakes, five in number, dotted with islands. Later on the park commissioners intend to make bridges in rustic form to connect the inlands with the mainland. Later on boat features will be installed. Already the lakes have been stocked with black bass and other valuable fish. The park has become a home for all wild birds and they consider it a natural home where they are not molested. The lakes contain a number of varieties of water lilies donated by W.S. Tevis, the capitalist of Bakersfield and San Francisco. Many odd varieties out of his wonderful collection obtained from all parts of the world are growing and thriving. Mr. Tevis spent at least \$10,000 in getting together an assortment of water growing flora and in Roeding Park there are several specimens of his large collection.

Roeding Park was laid out and planned by Johannes Reimers, a botanist of worldwide reputation. Reimers is in the employ of the Santa Fe railway system and was the originator of the plan of embellishing all railroad depots of this vast system with small parks. The Santa Fe has parks around each depot from Ashcroft, Ariz., to Point Richmond, Cal. and it was due to the persistency of Reimers that these beauty spots were installed.

Fresno engaged Reimers to plan and plant its park for the reason that he was so well informed as to just what would do well in the hot and dry climate, and also for his artistic ability in the way of arranging and grouping. He has planned the 70 acres in such a manner that it gives the impression of a 200 acre tract.

Reimers is a firm believer in nature. All of his plantings are done in a natural way. He does not believe in pruning ornamental trees but leaves them to grow in the natural state. All of his plantings and plans give one the idea that the park which he has installed just grew spontaneously.

Every year, the park commissioners of Fresno take photographs of the park to show the growth during the preceding 12 months, and one would hardly believe after examining the photographs that they were looking at the same plot of ground 12 months afterward. Roeding Park must be seen to be appreciated. It has picnic groves, open air sections which can be utilized for bandstands, open air theater and other, amusement features. One portion of the park has a natural bed of clay. This is being used to embellish all roadways and make them firm and suitable for both foot and vehicle travel.

This summer it is the intention of the board of park commissioners to label all trees and plants, to enable all visitors to distinguish the varieties.

The United States Department of Agriculture has made arrangements with the secretary of the board of park commissioners to use Roeding Park as an experiment station. All of their importations gathered by agricultural explorers visiting foreign countries, rare trees and shrubs, have been sent for trial, and as a consequence the Fresno park has valuable trees from Africa, Asia and the Pacific islands, all thriving and doing well.

Fresno has in Chester Rowell a mayor who takes an active part in park work. He has been a leading spirit in every movement looking to the adornment of the city.