

## **Stadacona Circle / Park**

The question could be asked: Do we know why Fred B. and Ella Grinnell gave Stadacona Circle (on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue East between Ivory and Arthur) to the city of Spokane? Many people remember the park, but very few remember the name. "Some of Spokane's first 'suburban' neighborhoods were those planned and developed in East Central Spokane, beginning as early as 1900....East Central Spokane is a term applied to a large residential and commercial area which is roughly bounded by Sprague Avenue to the north, Fourteenth Avenue to the south, Division Street to the west, and Havana Street to the east (the city limit). Numerous multiple-block subdivisions were platted within the large East Central area and were called 'additions,' such as Stadacona Park Addition indicated how public greenspace was used and it is now a part of Grant Park." <sup>1</sup> In 1901 Stadacona Circle was given to the city of Spokane by Citizens National Bank and Fred B. and Ella Grinnell. Later it was known as Stadacona Park. In 1901 there were no homes yet built in this area.

"In the 'Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, 1891-1913,' it was noted that Stadacona Circle was a nice little spot nicely planted with trees and shrubbery, making a small breathing spot for the neighborhood....If the Park Commission in accepting this little park agreed to build and maintain the surrounding street, about 25 or 30 feet wide, it made, in our opinion, a bad bargain for the city. If there was no such agreement, what should be done would be best determined by conditions as to which we are not posted. If the surrounding lots for the most part face on the regular streets, it would probably be best to get the assent of owners of the few lots facing on the park to some arrangement of alleys at the rear of their lots for delivery of coal, removal of ashes, etc., and to having a sidewalk only around the margin of the oval. If this is not feasible, it would be cheaper in the long run for the Park Commission to buy the few lots facing on the oval and requiring street frontage, and to add them to the park, and so save the cost of building and maintaining boundary roads." <sup>2</sup>

"The shape of this little park being symmetrical, its design should be a formal one. In the center there may be a little summerhouse, with high-backed benches surrounding a small, oblong or circular tool room where the man in charge can retire in case of storm and to eat his lunch in during cold weather. In addition to the elliptical marginal walk, there would have to be two straight walks, one on the long and the other on the short axis. These may have rows of ornamental shrubs, small flowering trees and flowerbeds. There might be small fountain basins interrupting the long axis walk, situated about on the foci of the ellipse. If the surrounding landowners should agree to pay half the cost, a uniform design of fence could desirably be built about the park to accentuate its formal shape, and in that case ornamental lich gates might be built at each entrance." <sup>2</sup>

We, as former Grant School students, remember driving on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue going west from Ivory to Arthur and we went to the right when we came to Stadacona Park to reach Arthur and when we drove from Arthur to Ivory we again went right around the Park. Many of us did not see that as we drove from Ivory to Arthur there was a roadway about halfway around on the right that went north to 10<sup>th</sup>. In a previous quotation it stated that this roadway was Laura Street aka The Alley, and it intersected with 11<sup>th</sup> at Stadacona Park. This same street continued on the South side of Stadacona Park from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, although the records state that that part of the roadway from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> was vacated in 1933.

If you drive west on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Perry Street today, the original Stadacona Park appears only as a southerly bulge in Grant Park (so that we must drive on the left side of the old Stadacona Park) between Ivory and Arthur streets. Park your car by the bulge and walk up the grass and notice the addresses of two houses on the south side of 11<sup>th</sup> (1104 and 1032) and notice the driveway that is between them. This would be where the old road (called Laura Street) was. Today there are two

garages built on the old roadway. If you walk over to the north side of the land that was called Stadacona Park, you will see a dip in the ground that is where the road was that we drove on when we drove from east to west on 11<sup>th</sup>. That was also the road in front of the home of Vivian Smith Johnson, Grant 1950, and Eunice Smith Newburn, Grant 1951. As you walk around the area you will notice the stately trees that were planted there over 100 years ago which made Stadacona Park a very special place. The old trees still mark the outline of the old park, but Stadacona Park is now integrated in the larger Grant Park.

A map of the Stadacona Circle / Park area from Arthur to Ivory (on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue) is included for visual reference. This circle / park no longer exists as shown on the map. It was "a small oval, cut out of the four corners of blocks at what would have been the intersection of Laura Street with 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Southeast. It was only about 140 feet by 300 feet, or eight-tenths of an acre, or including border street 1.5 acres." <sup>2</sup>

Vivian who lived at 1019 East 11<sup>th</sup> facing Stadacona Park, remembers the roadway as just a dirt/gravel roadway. It was known as "The Alley." Her sister, Eunice remembers cars traveling on "The Alley." Neither Vivian nor Eunice ever heard that "The Alley" was called "Laura Street", nor did they see a sign for Laura Street. "The Alley" was halfway between Ivory Street and Arthur Street which is where Laura Street is located. Albin Fogelquist, Grant 1961, remembers leaving Grant School after the last day of school in June through the doors near the office with his sister Ann Fogelquist Kukuk, Grant 1963, and their mother, Helen Fogelquist, Grant 1925, walking south across 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue to a path, not a roadway, that went to Stadacona Park for a picnic.

"Perhaps more interesting still is the name Stadacona, which is the name of a 16<sup>th</sup> century St. Lawrence Iroquoian village near where Quebec City now stands, a place where French navigator Jacques Cartier moored his vessels in 1534. The name Stadacona goes back to the naming of Canada itself. 'Canada' is derived from the Iroquoian word 'kanata,' meaning village. It first appears in Cartier's narratives describing the Stadacona community, so when he wrote of kanata, he was referring to Stadacona. Eventually, kanata was expanded from this original place name usage to refer to the lands north of the St. Lawrence River – and eventually becoming Canada, the world's second-largest country (at 4 million square miles). That's quite a big hunk of namesake history for a tiny little circle of land in Spokane." <sup>3</sup>

At the time of the earlier report (1891-1913), "the 2.97-acre Grant Playground was termed the city's most complete, with improvements including grading and paving, play apparatus, tennis courts, a restroom, and weather shelter. In the 1960s it was decided to enlarge Grant Park because of the loss of a significant piece of the nearby Liberty Park due to freeway construction, according to Taylor Bressler, division manager in charge of park planning for the city (and resident parks historian). About 1968 the homes on 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue north of Stadacona Park were demolished as well as all the homes on the north side of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Arthur to Perry and also on the south side of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue the homes were removed from Arthur to Perry. Thus, Stadacona Park was joined to Grant Park, with entire remodeling project expanding Grant as a neighborhood park to its present 13.6 acres." <sup>3</sup>

1 Historic Resources Inventory, Grant Park/Liberty Park Neighborhood 2006

2 Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, 1891-1913

3 *Stadacona Circle became part of Grant Park in 1960s* by Stefanie Pettit, The Spokesman-Review, April 3, 2008, updated June 30, 2010

This information was collected from the NW room at the downtown Spokane Public Library and the Parks Dept. at City Hall by a former Grant Grade School student and organizer of Grant School functions for former students, James Nyborg.