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Hometown History

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Goodrich Park History

Elizabeth Goodrich donated the first twenty acres to Winchester in August of 1915. This amount of land that she donated was a part of the original Goodrich farm, which was a fruit orchard that had its own irrigation system. Over the past seventy years, many acres have been donated to the park. The park now has a total of ninety-seven acres.¹ Elizabeth did so much more than donate land; without her, there would not be a park.

In October of 1872, Elizabeth's husband, John B. Goodrich, left the family to travel south in hopes to cure his tuberculosis. Unfortunately, he was too late, and Elizabeth became widowed on November 2, 1872 when her husband died at forty-one years old. She was then left at thirty-two to raise their five sons: eleven year-old Percy Edgar, eight year-old James Putnam, six year-old John Baldwin, four year-old Edward Shields, and sixteen month-old William Wallace.² The family slowly gained wealth and influence as the boys were very successful due to the many businesses they owned and how they played major roles in the development of Winchester. In 1917, however, Elizabeth passed of heart failure, but not before she

¹ "Goodrich Park." City of Winchester Indiana. 22 November 2022.
<https://www.winchester-in.gov/community/goodrich-park/>.

² Starbuck, Dane. *The Goodriches: An American Family*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001

“...donated twenty acres of land to Winchester. In consideration of the gift the town was to maintain the land as a park in the name of Mrs. Goodrich’s deceased husband, John B. Goodrich. ... The gift was bequeathed on the condition that alcohol would not be sold on the parkland and that no activities would be allowed on Sundays with the exception of religious, charitable, or educational entertainments.”³

The formal opening of the Goodrich Park was on June 6th, 1937, which held many activities, including baseball tournaments, band concerts, and even marble tournaments where winners could advance all the way to national championships.⁴

A new pool for the park was set to cost 32,500 as of July 18, 1937.⁵ Around \$21,000 was donated to help with the construction, and “On June 12, 1937, the pool in Goodrich Park was planned to be 140 inches in diameter with a 25-foot white sand beach, with a pool that size that can hold around 1,700 people.”⁶ A few months later, people could not wait for the pool to open, for on August 16, 1937, “Mr. James Re.Champlin’s wife dived fully clothed, shoes and all right into nine feet of water to save a eight year old girl from drowning. She saved the girl....”⁷ In 1943, the Goodrich Park began charging a small fee of \$5 to take swimming lessons. After a few unfortunate incidents, July 31, 1939 marked the day that swimming lessons were free for

³ Starbuck, Dane. *The Goodriches: An American Family*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001

⁴ “Goodrich Park to open officially on June 6; Plan many Activities.” May. 15, 1927.

⁵ Randolph County Historical Society ”Newspaper from Goodrich Park Binder”1976. American Revolution Bicentennial

⁶ Randolph County Historical Society ”Newspaper from Goodrich Park Binder” February 25, 1936, Richmond Item.

⁷ Randolph County Historical Society ”Newspaper from goodrich park Binder” Wife of manager dives in, fully clothes to save 8 year old girl, June 17, 1953.

around 3 years.

In 1975, the city came together to build a go-kart track. The track was twenty miles long and all asphalt. However, over time, people keep getting angered at how loud the go-karts were. They got mad at the park and wanted to take it down. The park closed and took it down for good.⁸

The Pierce Memorial Home was a cabin moved to Goodrich Park in memory of Jefferson and Ellen Pierce, in the fall of 1932. It was later given to the park by Mrs. Irvin Allen. Built in 1874, originally one and a half stories, but it was cut down when relocating, and was originally located on a piece of land north of Winchester, one mile east of State Road 32. William and Rachel Moffitt inhabited the building until they passed.⁹

In 1938, the north end of the park was donated and consisted of fifty acres which was donated by James P. Goodrich, who also set up the trust fund agreement with the city. For Goodrich to go through with the donation, the city had to agree that the highway running through the park was to no longer be in operation, the trust funds were to only be used for permanent park improvements, and the city and industrial sewage and waste be diverted away from the White River to the eastern bounds to keep from polluting the park.¹⁰

In conclusion, the Goodrich Park is a place full of history that benefits the people in the community. The park is still open to take a jog, watch baseball and softball games, take children to play at the park, have a picnic with your family, and even walk the nature trail.

⁸Randolph County Historical Society “Newspaper from Goodrich Park Binder” November 18 1975, Go-Kart Track.

⁹ Myers, Robert. “Winchester Parks have an Interesting History.” *News-Gazette* (Winchester, IN) Nov. 18, 1975.

¹⁰ Citation- Myers, Robert. “Winchester Parks have an Interesting History.” *News-Gazette* (Winchester, IN) Nov. 18, 1975.