

# West Park Centennial Signage Allentown, PA

**Allentown's first** official city park opened in 1908, thanks to the philanthropy of General Harry C. Trexler, an influential entrepreneur of the time. He knew that a place for recreation and fresh air would encourage development, as well as provide citizens with a pleasant escape from city life. A series of interpretive wayside panels developed by Interpretive Solutions explores West Park's significance for the city, its horticulture, monuments and the story of the park's band shell, which remains to this day a popular home for band concerts that have earned Allentown its national reputation of being "Band City, USA."



West Park, in a postcard circa 1908

- SCOPE:** Historical research, scripting, design and A/V program production
- DESIGNER:** HYDesign Wyckoff, NJ
- COMPLETED:** 2008
- CLIENT:** Department of Parks and Recreation City of Allentown, PA

**ALLENTOWN'S FIRST PARK**

**WELCOME!**

In the late 1800s, this land almost became a reservoir instead of a park. City officials thought the high ground would supply good water pressure for their firefighting system. After they changed their minds, the empty lot became a baseball field, complete with a ball diamond and bleachers.

Allentown's leading citizen, General Harry C. Trexler, looked at the ball field in 1906 -- and envisioned a park. Helped along by Trexler's handsome private gift, Allentown's first city park became reality in 1908. West Park, originally known as City Park, welcomed the first of many happy crowds on September 17 of that year.

**WEST PARK, ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA**

Exhibit panels

**A PLAN FOR THE PLANTINGS**

Allentown philanthropist Harry C. Trexler wanted only the best for West Park. He hired a famous landscape designer from Philadelphia to help fulfill his vision. J. Franklin Moeban created the park's Planting Plan in 1906. He designed the park to look like an English garden with winding pathways.

Moeban selected rare and unusual plants for the park. Many of the trees and flowers he chose are still in the park today. He planted Norway maple, Japanese cherry trees, eastern white pines and oak trees. Today those saplings are full-grown trees.

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