

History of Lancaster Park

In the late 1800's workers accidentally dug into a vast underground river of mineral water while constructing Jackson's first modern water works. Stopping the plum of water meant plugging the opening and creating a well. Those who drank from the well noticed a slight electric charge in the water. It is believed this electric charge contributed miracle curative powers. Thousands visited this artesian well in the early 1900's to drink the electric charged iron water or electro chalybeate well water. The water is believed to cure stomach, liver and kidney ailments plus a whole lot more. Today it is the world's only public electro chalybeate well.

Lancaster Park built 1905 was named after Sam Lancaster. He was the Secretary for Internal Improvements for Jackson. As a local engineer he built Jackson's first modern water system. \$4,000 was raised by a street fair to beautify the 54 acres of grounds and they also ask the railroads to help. The park was the main recreational area of Jackson for almost 40 years. The slogan of the day "meet me at the park". When it was open 5,000 – 8,000 people per day came to the park which was located in what was known as Irish town. Some of the finest people in Jackson lived there, mostly railroad people. There was much to do at the park. One of the most talked about is Mr. Johnnie Hudson's popcorn and peanut stand. Popcorn Johnny held his place in the park for almost 40 years with the best Sno-Balls, ice cream and popcorn you ever tasted. Some say the reason the gold fish grow so big in the large figure-eight pond was all that good popcorn. The park had 4 lakes, one large lake with sandy beaches on the east side for swimming and rowing boats for rent. The lake on the north side of the old power plant was dug in 1888 by a railroad construction crew, so the workmen did not have to go so far away to fish. The park also had a bandstand in the middle of the lake for concerts, children's play ground, ball fields, and a zoo with animals such as a 400 pound turtle, 6 foot long alligator, a black bear, birds snakes and monkeys.

By the late 30's and early 40's the parks hay day was winding down. Time erased one lake after another, pavilions were dismantled, and property was sold. Today a small park and the electro chalybeate well along with fond memory is all that survived the age of time. The "miracle" spring stills flows, so "meet me at the park" and we will drink our ailments away.

Information obtained from various sources