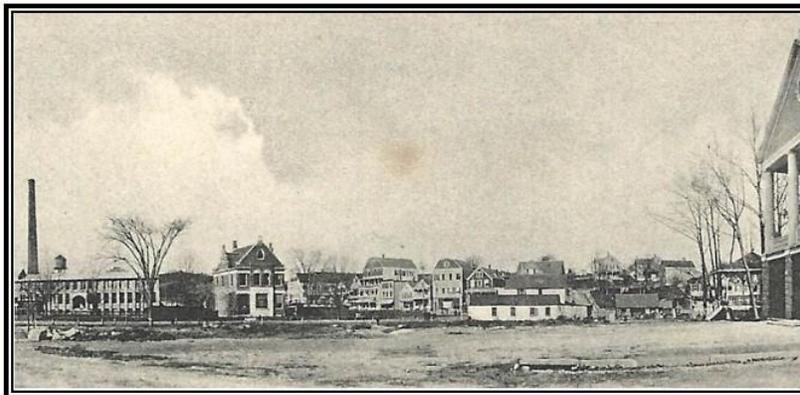


Butler Borough Park

By Tom Riley



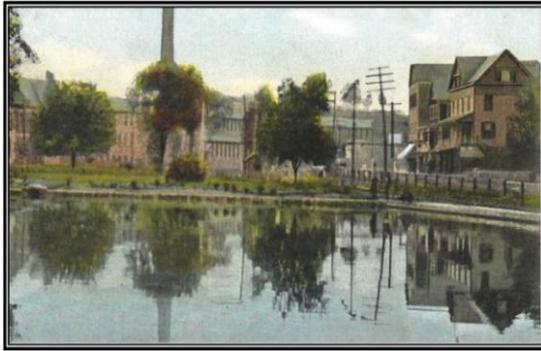
Prior to 1903, Stone House Brook (Kikeout Brook) often overflowed its banks and flooded the area of the current park. It would sometimes reach within a few feet of the front door of the American Hard Rubber Company office. The result was a low, marshy, unsightly area that extended from High Street to Park Place. When Mayor William Kiel was dumped head-first into a mud hole by a run-away horse, he convinced the Town Council to purchase the property from Mrs. W.A. Robinson for \$300 for a park. American Hard was expanding its factory at the time, so the site across the street was a convenient dumping place for the soil from the excavation.



There was a large barn where the police station (old Municipal Building/Firehouse) now stands and two buildings, Goldstein's Grocery Store and Delimo's Photography Studio, were located on the east end of the site near the railroad tracks. The Goldstein building was moved to Main Street and became the Mystic Movie Theater, then Post's Radio & TV, and now the Post Office. The other smaller building was demolished.

The pond for Cox's Mill, which was owned by American Hard, occupied the south end of the site. When the 1903 flood washed out Cox's dam, the area of the pond also became part of the park. It remained in possession of the rubber company for many years and was rented by the

Borough for \$1 per year. Control of the brook was accomplished by straightening its course and constructing stone walls on each side of the stream to keep the water in the channel.



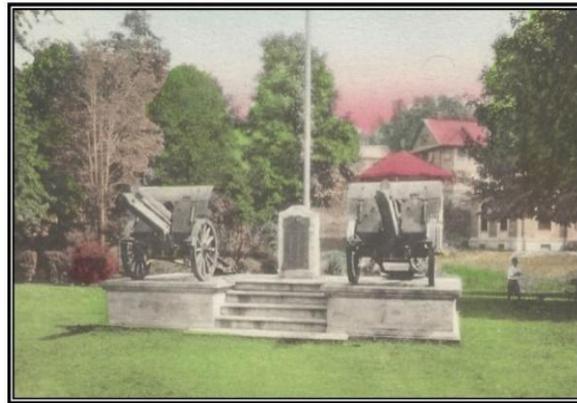
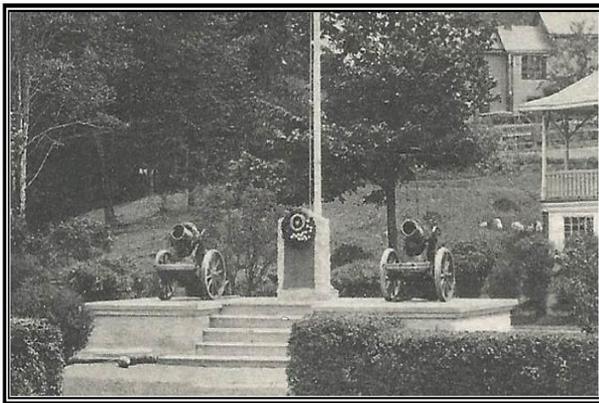
The park band stand has a traveled past. Built by the American Hard Rubber Company, it was originally located next to the old baseball field on the hill behind the railroad station (today's Museum). It was then moved to the site of the Kiel House next to the High School. It finally found its way to the park on the spot where the Spanish-American War Memorial was placed. From there it was moved to its present location. Friday evening concerts were a tradition.



The construction of the old Municipal Building/Firehouse that overlooks the park was completed on July 6, 1903 at a cost of about \$4,500. The Borough Clerk's Office was built in 1927 with funds from the electric light department. Three foot bridges have crossed Stone House Brook connecting the municipal buildings with the park. The first was a wooden structure; the second one, made of concrete, was built in 1929 and was replaced recently by a modern one made of steel. Many a thirsty horse was refreshed by a decorative iron fountain located at the west end of the park.



A visitor to the park today will find memorials to veterans of the Spanish–American War, the Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The World War I memorial was dedicated in 1924 and originally included two German trench mortars. When the army asked for them back, they were replaced with two large German cannons. These two cannons were also returned to the government as scrap iron to support the war effort during World War II.



Any discussion about Butler Park has to include the beautiful annual holiday display that for generations has delighted area children and adults alike. I remember being amazed by the hundreds of lights and decorations that seemed to hang from every tree and bush in the park. Even today, I'm sure I'm not the only person that makes a special trip past the park when the lights come on.



Sources: *Suburban Trends* Sept. 28, 2017, *Butler In Story and Pictures* 2001, *Butler Museum Postcard Collection*, *Riley Postcard Collection*, *Paterson Morning Call* July 14, 1948, *Butler Museum Files of R. Kennedy Carpenter*.