

Trail Trek 2021 Gives Back to the Trails

By Dena Noe



Chris Beutler Trail

In the future South Haymarket Park, the Chris Beutler Trail will connect the N Street Protected Bikeway to the Jamaica North Trail at J Street. Estimated cost for the trail and easements is \$275,000. GPTN in partnership with NTF is raising funds to support this critical trail connection. Please consider donating to this exciting project. Thanks!



Make contributions payable to: Nebraska Trails Foundation

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P.O. 82902

Lincoln, NE 68501-2902

Trail Trek 2021 is in the books! The ride was fun and raised \$24,143 to help GPTN build trails in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Over 600 riders and more than 50 volunteers came together on Sunday, June 20 to explore the trails in Lincoln. This year we had 119 kids join us with 501 adults. Riders chose from 10-mile, 20-mile, 32-mile and 44-mile routes.

A big thank you to Speedway Village for supporting the trails and providing a great venue. Riders returned to a covered deck to escape the sun with great food from Hy-Vee, beverages from Pepsi of Lincoln and the entertainment from

Cool Roots. We capped off a great morning by giving away 17 of the 20 bikes donated by Bike Rack and Cycle Works.

Trail Trek was a great event because of all our cyclists registering and coming together to ride the trails. We hope to see you back next year and will announce a date soon for Trail Trek 2022 – our 20th anniversary. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers. Page 3 provides a complete a complete list of sponsors, please give them your love and patronage because without them we wouldn't be able to give so much to continue to expand the trails in Lincoln.



Great Plains Trails Network

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dedicated to the goal of developing a network of commuter and recreational trails within Lincoln and Lancaster County

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A Note from the President



We already knew this, but you all are amazing! Give to Lincoln Day for 2021 had a record \$47,113 raised to support trails in and around Lincoln. You, as faithful members of GPTN, love our trails and it shows. Your support through this day of giving went beyond all our expectations, and we are

thankful. But beyond that, we had numerous events this spring and summer like Tour de Lincoln, Trail Trek, Lincoln Trail-A-Thon (still ongoing if you haven't joined, there's still time!), and you've shown up. Not only to participate, but to volunteer to make it all happen.

These events are critical as we continue to make connections in our city through trails. Not only do they help us raise money, but perhaps more importantly, they help us connect people to their city. Maybe by exploring trails you've never been on while doing one of the monthly trail assignments of Lincoln Trail-A-Thon. Or, by making a new connection to a fellow Lincolnite while riding one of the Trail Trek routes. Regardless, we continue to make connections.

As we look to future, there are more connections to be made. Our current fundraising project, the Beutler Trail in the West Haymarket, will close a vital gap in the Downtown / Haymarket area. The Hub and Soul Concert series (Thursdays, August 26, 2021 – September 30, 2021 | 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM) will connect us with the music arts in our city and give us the opportunity catch up with each other in the great outdoor amphitheater of Union Plaza. Look forward to connecting with you on the trails!

Jim Krieger

CAN YOU CATCH THIS GUY?
Wouldn't it be fun to try?

Homestead Trail
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May 13, 2021 - August 5, 2021

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Trail Benefactor \$250

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BICYCLINCOLN™

BicycLincoln is a community group that supports and promotes bicycling in the city of Lincoln. Our mission is to provide information and a unified voice for bicycle advocacy in an effort to make cycling in Lincoln more friendly, safe, easy, accepted, and "so that more people bike and bike more often."

Check them out at <http://bicyclincoln.org/>



Ride. Share.

That's what the Great Plains Bike Club is all about. We actively promote bicycling with rides for all levels of riders in and around Southeastern Nebraska.

Weekly rides with a leader | Show 'n go rides
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We sponsor the Spring Fling ride in April and Heatstroke 100 in August. We also promote bicycling safety through community-sponsored events. For more information and an on-line application to join the club, go to greatplainsbikeclub.org.



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Bike Walk Nebraska cultivates and supports safe and accessible active transportation across our state by leading sound policy and advocating for best practices. We work across sectors in partnership with elected officials, municipalities, and organizations to ensure that biking and walking - whether for transportation or recreation - works for all Nebraskans.

Become a member at:

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Thank you Trail Trek 2021 Sponsors!

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We're back for our 3rd Annual Hub & Soul music series here in Lincoln, Nebraska!

Hub & Soul is a free community event designed for people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate music, local food, and Lincoln's parks. Hub & Soul will be held at the beautiful Union Plaza, home to the Jayne Snyder Trail Center and Hub Cafe on 21st and Q Streets.

The six-week music series will begin on August 26 and will run through September 30. While the event is free, local food prepared by The Hub Café, as well as local craft beer, hard cider and beverages, will be available for purchase.

This year's presenting sponsor is Cornhusker Bank and we are grateful for their generosity and dedication to making Lincoln such a great place to live. Plus, there are many more sponsors that help make this series happen. Check them out at the Hub and Soul website. Once again, GPTN is honored to be the 2021 nonprofit partner for this six-week music series

However, you choose to get to Hub & Soul, we will have the right parking options for you. Bikes can be locked up near the entrance and cars can be safely parked in the Assurity garage.

All Hub & Soul events are ADA accessible. We have accessible parking in front of the venue. Please check the Hub and Soul Facebook page for updates regarding inclement weather.

If volunteering is your jam come help us out. Volunteers received a free t-shirt and a drink ticket. Volunteer activities include set up and tear down, working the gates, and t-shirt/volunteer table, etc. Contact Shelby Robison if you would like to volunteer. Shelbs55@yahoo.com

Hub and Soul Schedule

Thursdays, Aug 26, 2021– Sept 30, 2021 | 5:30 – 8:30 PM

At Union Plaza Amphitheatre – 21st and P Streets

For more information, please go to hubandsoul.com

August 26 UNL Jazz All-Stars Featuring Jackie Allen	September 16 Wildwoods Lloyd McCarter and The Honky Tonk Revival
September 2 Bottle Tops Jack Hotel	September 23 23rd Vibration Jarana
September 9 Mesonjixx The Fey	September 30 Golden Studio A Ferocious Jungle Cat



Lincoln Track Club Membership Application

The Lincoln Track Club, Inc. was established in 1975 by an eager group of track enthusiasts. Although our title contains the reference to track, we have become a distance oriented club. Our membership includes some of the nation's finest road racers as well as a great number of fun runners.

In essence, our club is a nonprofit community service organization, established to promote running throughout this area and provide educational assistance for its runners. Our quarterly newsletter has become an informational running publication for local runners. The LTC is a member club of both the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) and USA Track and Field.

The Lincoln Track Club is not just about running. It's also about volunteering. This is the one ingredient that makes LTC work. The whole organization is made up of volunteers and we can always use more.

Please consider joining one of Nebraska's finest volunteer-run organizations. LTC members receive entry forms for all LTC races, FastTimes (our newsletter, which is e-mailed quarterly), an invitation to our annual meeting, and a discount of an entry fee for a single LTC road race. All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).

2021 LTC Calendar

Check LTC Website
for Current Status

EST. 1975

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Community Services Fund of Nebraska

www.communityservicesfund.org/

Event Calendar

AUGUST

26 —Hub & Soul

SEPTEMBER

2 —Hub & Soul

9 —Hub & Soul

16 —Hub & Soul

23 —Hub & Soul

23 —Market to Market Relay

26 —Street's Alive

30 —Hub & Soul

Trail Updates

South Beltway construction and utility relocation: The Jamaica North and Homestead Trails will remain open during construction, but temporary and periodic closures will be required in the area one-half mile south of Saltillo Road. This is a multi-year project.

Beal Slough Trail from 56th to 70th St: Design work continues on the Beal Slough Trail and construction should begin in 2022.

LOVE TO RIDE



Cycle September

THE GLOBAL BIKE CHALLENGE

For the final month of the National Bike Challenge 2021, the organizers are inviting you to take part in **Cycle September** - a global competition with individuals and organizations coming together to help more people realize the benefits of riding a bike.

Individuals and their workplaces will compete worldwide to see which can earn the most points by riding and encouraging others to do the same. Individuals and their workplaces will compete on local, national and global leader boards to see who can earn the most points. Points are earned for every mile and day you ride plus every person you encourage. Points mean prizes! The more points you earn the more entries you gain into the prize draws.

Learn more and register at lovetoride.net

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Learn more at www.bikelnk.com



Trail Friends

By Ken Winston



One of the best things about where I live is being able to get on the Rock Island trail about a block from my home. My dog, Dudley, and I take advantage of that by being out on the trail every day, walking and jogging through all kinds of weather; enjoying the opportunity to exercise and commune with the plants and animals along the trail.

Over the course of the last few years, we have been able to get to know other people and their dogs as a result of seeing them out on the trail. I remember getting to know Sara and her dog Tally. After they became friends, Dudley would start to wag his tail 100 yards away when he saw them coming. Zeppelin is another one of Dudley's friends. Dudley and Zeppelin start wagging their tails when they first see each other. They enjoy hanging out together while I visit with Ella, who walks Zeppelin, about her college plans.

Matthias and his dog Doreen are an example of how things evolve as animals and people change. Doreen is a German Shepherd who always used to run with Matthias. However, Doreen is aging and losing her mobility, so I don't see them together very often. The last time I saw them, Matthias had an e-bike and was using it to pull Doreen in a trailer. And Dudley is aging too, so when it's really hot, I don't take him with me. When that happens, people who know us will ask, "Where's Dudley?"

Some of my trail friends are people I've met out on the trail and visit with from time to time, people like Adam, Scott, Heather and Doug. We stop for a few minutes to talk about what's going on in our lives. So if you want another reason to enjoy the trails, you can meet people and make new friends while getting exercise and enjoying the outdoors.

Lincoln Trail-A-Thon

You can still sign up and participate in the Lincoln Trail-A-Thon 2021. The Lincoln Trail-A-Thon is a challenge to ride, run, jog or walk all the trails within the Lincoln city limits in 2021. When you finish you will have covered 78 miles of trails.

In 2021 as you complete each trail section, you'll record the accomplishment with us and receive a 2.25-inch diameter locally designed collectible trail button. This fun challenge was started to inspire individuals to be healthier with an opportunity to GIVE BACK, EXPLORE new trails and CONQUER a common goal.

Check out GPTN.org to register and see button designs.



Lied Bridge Reopening

The Lied Bridge, a key pedestrian and bicycle link between Omaha and Lincoln has officially reopened after being closed for more than two years because of damage sustained during catastrophic flooding. The Lied Bridge is the only crossing point along the Platte River that connects Lincoln and Omaha via the MoPac Trail.

Officials and trail enthusiasts from across the region celebrated the reopening of the Lied Platte River Bridge and MoPac Trail with a ribbon-cutting on July 3. The trail and bridge were damaged during the historic flooding in 2019 that caused more than \$2.6 billion in losses in the region.

The bridge was battered by trees and other debris that flowed down the swollen river which caused damage to several hundred feet of railing and some of the concrete icebreakers on its upstream side. Despite the damage, the bridge stayed intact and structurally sound.

The trail also was damaged on the Sarpy County side, with sand burying the entire half-mile of trail from the bridge to the trailhead parking lot on Nebraska 31.

The cost of the repairs totaled more than \$525,000. The Federal Emergency Management Agency covered 90% of the cost. The remaining 10% came from local entities, including the NRD and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

The project required the removal of debris and involved replacing the damaged railings and lost icebreakers, as well as reconstructing the buried segment of trail.

The Papio NRD worked closely with Game and Parks and the Lower Platte South NRD to complete the project.

Julie Harris, executive director of Bike Walk Nebraska, said she can't overstate her excitement for the reopening of the Lied Bridge.

"Not only is it a key connection for people riding locally between Omaha and Lincoln, the bridge also provides a regional connection to 120 miles of trail on the west and over 100 miles of trail on the east, creating enormous potential for bicycle tourism in eastern Nebraska," she said.



Lied Bridge after flooding in March 2019—Picture courtesy of LPSNRD



Lied Bridge reopening on July 3—Picture courtesy of Corey Godfrey

"This beautiful refuge in the heart of our city is in need of repairs," said Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird. "It has suffered its own damage from weather and severe storms. Bridges are in need of upgrading. We need to invest in this beautiful place that gives us such an incredible quality of life. Whether you are a cyclist, a hiker, a runner, or a family member who likes to come here seeking refuge and moments of contemplation and peace, away from the hubbub of the city, this park is here, for all of us."

This summer, Lincoln Parks Foundation is partnering with the City and the Friends of Wilderness Park to lead a \$2.1 million campaign to enhance the public's access, usage, enjoyment, and appreciation of Wilderness Park, now and in the future.

"Few cities have an accessible wilderness expanse that provides opportunities for recreation and flood control," said Bradley Brandt, president of Lincoln Parks Foundation, the nonprofit organization that provides private funds for the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department. "Wilderness Park is also an added attraction for families seeking to live and work in Lincoln, providing year-round activities. Lincoln Parks Foundation is excited to lead this effort."

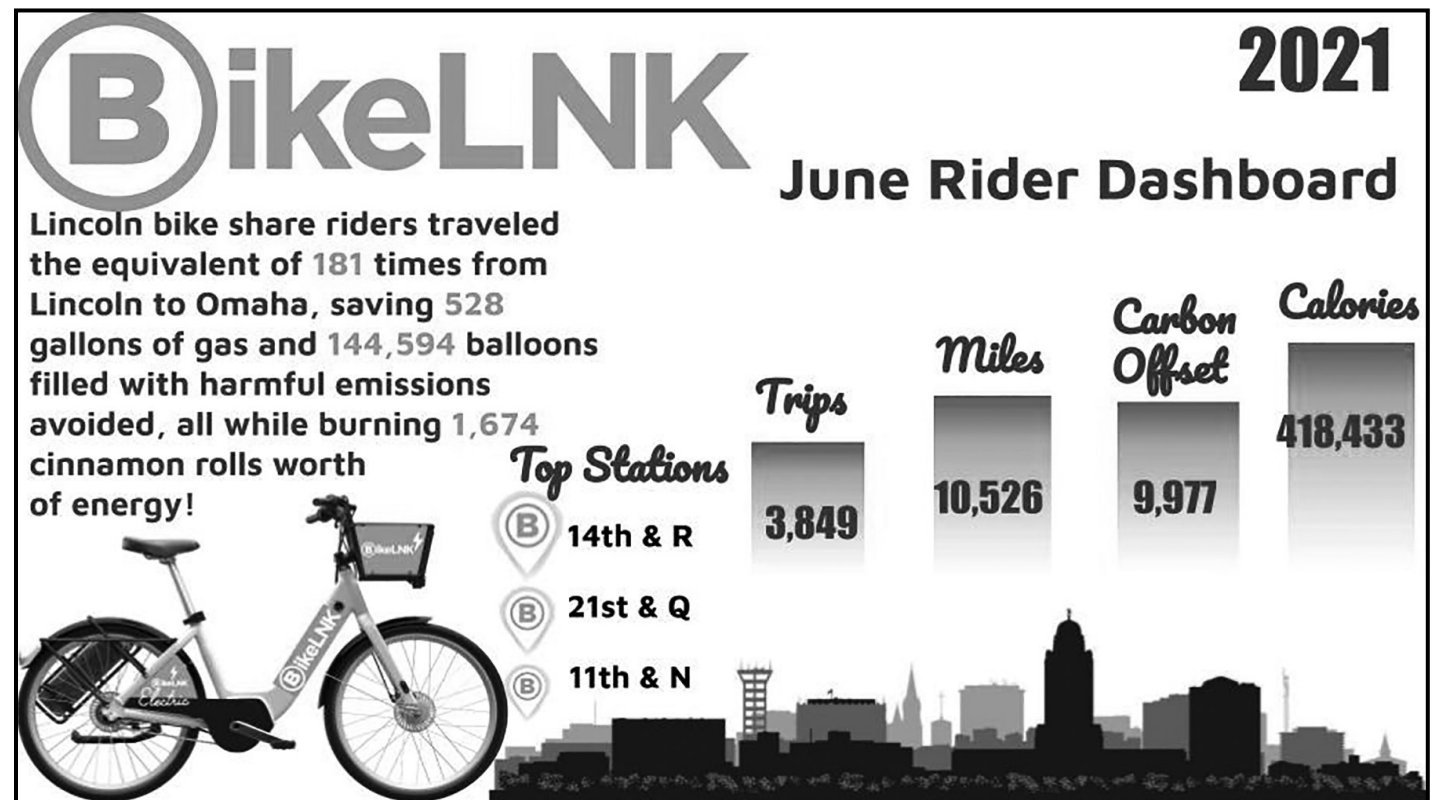
The project will fund improvements at seven of the park's trailheads, including kiosks (with maps, trail etiquette, history,

and descriptions of each area), wayfinding signage, seasonal portable restrooms where possible, additional picnic tables, programmable solar lighting, parking lot grading, parking bollards and concrete pads for ADA parking. Also included are improved or replaced bridges and channel crossings, a new fitness loop, and restoration of the historic Epworth Lake Park arches.

"We want to make sure that people have a comfortable and safe experience in the park, and part of that means having understandable signage, safe bridges, and kiosks at the trailheads that will have the information you'll need to visit the park," Hintz said. "We want people to discover Wilderness Park and fall in love with this place so they keep coming back. It's that natural legacy that we are responsible for now so future generations can enjoy it and keep the fabric of the community together."

"Wilderness Park has been protecting the City of Lincoln from floods for years," said Gaylor Baird. "Now it's our turn to protect Wilderness Park."

For more information about the "It's Your Wilderness" campaign, contact Lincoln Parks Foundation at 402-441-8258 or see LincolnParks.org.



“It’s Your Wilderness”

Continued from page 9

That same year, the Cornhusker Council of Boy Scouts began leasing the former Electric Park land and converted the park into its permanent camp. The council and volunteers built a swimming pool and longhouse while the Lion’s Club built a dining hall. The new facility was dubbed Camp Minis-Kuya, which some sources say can be translated from the Sioux as “salt water.” The camp closed in 1966.

In 1972, Camp Minis-Kuya, the former Epworth Lake Park, and other parcels were combined into what we know today as Wilderness Park.

Improvements needed

For many years, the City of Lincoln has acknowledged the need to make improvements to Wilderness Park to ease accessibility and support the primary purpose of the park, which is to provide protection from major floods. In 2020, more than 250 people responded to community surveys conducted by the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department regarding the improvements and priorities of Wilderness Park. A committee representing nine user groups worked through suggestions and ideas to update the park’s master plan.



Co-author Maggie Stuckey-Ross standing at the Epworth Park Arches in Wilderness Park.

Streets Alive!

Come join us for this year’s Streets Alive! This free event showcases a host neighborhood with a nearly 2-mile traffic free festival route which often includes parks, walking and biking trails, community gardens, and other areas of interest. Streets Alive! makes health, wellness, and fitness resources easily accessible to the host neighborhood and the thousands of visitors from across the city who attend each year.

The 2021 Streets Alive! festival will be in the South Salt Creek/Cooper Park neighborhood on Sunday, September 26th from 1:00 - 4:30 PM.

Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln brought the Streets Alive! concept to Lincoln starting in 2010 as an annual event. To leave a further impact on the neighborhoods that host the festival, Partnership for Healthy Lincoln collaborates with neighborhood partners to implement a project that improves neighborhood health, safety and vitality.

Partnership for a Healthy Lincoln, collaborating with the South Salt Creek Community Organization, Lincoln Parks & Recreation, Park Middle School, neighborhood residents, and Burlington Northern Railroad, has identified the F Street Tunnel as a project that can improve the safety and walkability of the South Salt Creek neighborhood.

For the South Salt Creek neighborhood, the F Street Tunnel offers one of the only safe passages across train tracks on 3rd Street. Lighting in the tunnel is insufficient; the ceiling is peeling and leaking; the mural inside is faded and the landscaping around it is overgrown and not maintained. All these factors make for an unsafe passage for kids walking to Park Middle School and for residents walking in the neighborhood.

The community development project will include these improvements:

- Updating the lights to be brighter and better protected.
- Scraping, repainting and sealing leaks in the ceiling.
- Repainting the inside walls of the tunnel with a mural that reflects the heart and diversity of the neighborhood done by a local artist, Micah Mullins.
- Tearing out overgrown landscaping around the tunnel and planting new full-sun, low-water plants.

For more information on Streets Alive! and how to support the F Street Tunnel project, go to: <https://www.healthylincoln.org/>



Pedestrian tunnel at F and 3rd Street —Picture courtesy of Partnership for Healthy Lincoln

“It’s Your Wilderness”

By Susan Larson Rodenburg and Maggie Stuckey-Ross



A beckoning footpath in Wilderness Park.

Imagine strolling on what may have been trails forged by Native Americans, experiencing the golden light from a Nebraska sunrise through the treetops of massive bur oaks and cottonwoods bordering the rushing waters of Salt Creek. You hear the call of a red-tailed hawk, the splashing of beavers, and see the flash of a red fox or a fawn chasing its mother.

This is the beauty of Wilderness Park, Lincoln’s largest public park. The seven-mile, linear, 1,472-acre woodland is nestled just west of the Jamaica North Trail along Salt Creek from Van Dorn Street to Saltillo Road. The park features 31 miles of hiking, cycling, and horse trails within its naturally wooded landscape. The hiking trail was designated part of the National Recreation Trails Program in 1977.

Lincoln’s wildest park does not fit neatly into conventional definitions of parks and wilderness areas, but its uniqueness is what makes it special. For years, Wilderness Park’s dense forest, meadows, and creek beds have protected Lincoln from serious flooding. Hikers, cyclists, bird watchers, horseback

riders, and other park visitors find solace and peace among the big bluestem, Dutchman’s breeches, trout lilies, and a wide variety of flora, fauna, insects, birds, and critters.

Lincolnites are fortunate to have such a unique opportunity to enjoy and appreciate a natural area so close to home.

“Wilderness Park has a very interesting history – it was the land of the Otoe-Missouria and the Pawnee,” said Adam Hintz, president of Friends of Wilderness Park. “The trails are actually on top of the same hunting trails the Pawnee used. You see a lot of remnants of the past here, all part of a lowland forest that has been intact and undisturbed for many years.”

The parks of Lincoln’s early days

From the founding of Lincoln (1856) through the mid-20th century, the Wilderness Park area was home to multiple attractions and parks. For many, memories of Epworth Lake Park, Lincoln Park, and

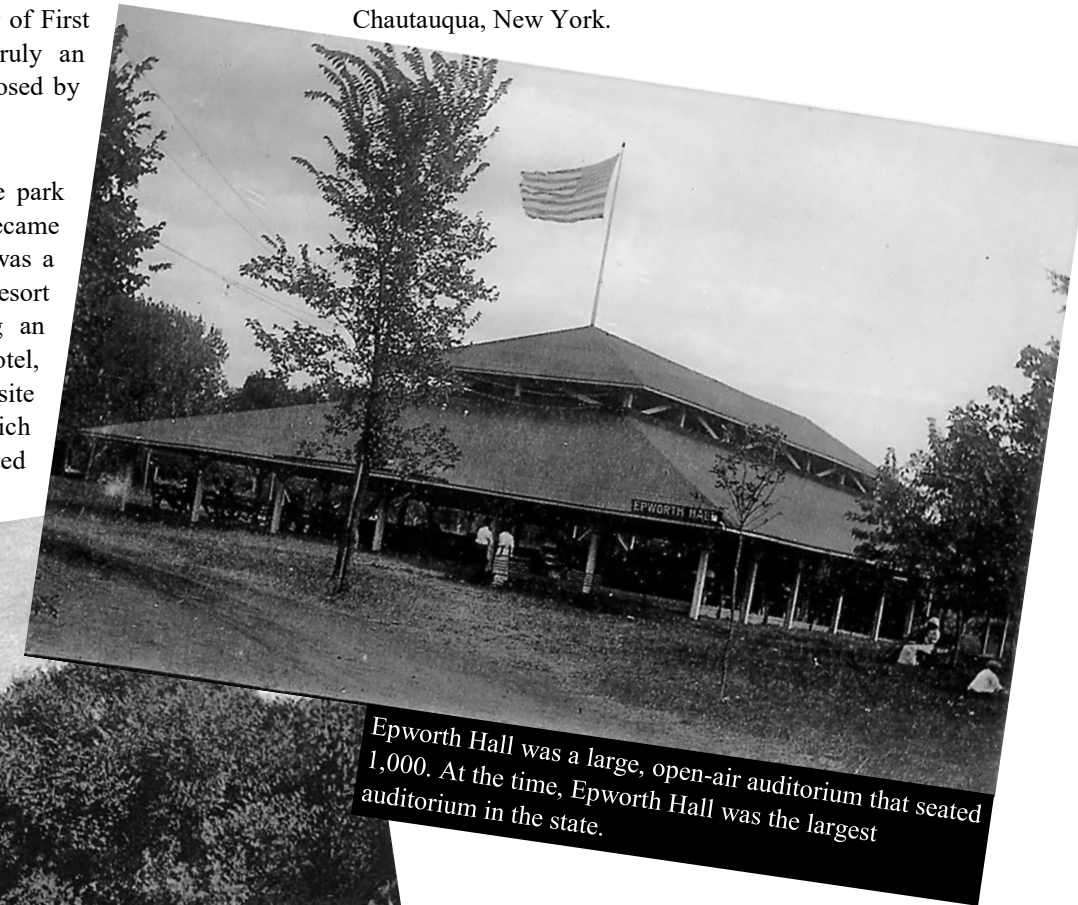
Electric Park are scrambled. But each location plays a part in the history of this area.

Lincoln Park was a private recreational enterprise established by local businessmen in 1894. Lincoln Park was bound by Van Dorn Street on the north, Calvert Street on the south, First Street on the east, and what would be Southwest Sixth Street on the west. An article in the Nebraska State Journal on Nov. 22, 1895, stated: “(Lincoln Park) is throughout a picturesque landscape of wooded hills, winding streams and grassy meadows that has from time to time been provided with magnificent drives, football and baseball fields, tennis courts, bathing and boating pavilions, swings, etc. Then there is the zoological department ... and last, but not least, a race track.”

By 1915, Lincoln Park had a new owner and billed itself as Lincoln’s newest amusement resort, Electric Park. Attractions included operetta, acrobatics, live comedy, motion pictures, concerts, boating, vaudeville, and cabarets. Admission was 10 cents per person. In 1916, 450 incandescent lights and 12 arc lights were added at the corner of First and Van Dorn streets, making it truly an “Electric Park.” The attraction was closed by 1927.

In the early 1900s, the portion of the park southeast of First and Calvert streets became known as Epworth Lake Park. This was a popular gathering spot and summer resort for the Methodist Church, featuring an open-air auditorium, campground, hotel, grocery store, and Epworth Lake, the site of the park’s “Venetian Nights,” in which families could rent ornately decorated rafts and rowboats. Epworth Lake Park

attracted thousands of visitors by train, streetcars, and trolley. The park also featured animal shows, musical acts, magicians and hosted popular speakers such as Theodore Roosevelt, William Jennings Bryan, Howard Taft, Booker T. Washington, and Billy Sunday – reminiscent of those held in Chautauqua, New York.



Epworth Hall was a large, open-air auditorium that seated 1,000. At the time, Epworth Hall was the largest auditorium in the state.



In 1935, 14 inches of rain fell over the course of one week, causing flooding that destroyed most of the buildings in the park. Unsuccessful efforts were made to reopen the park, but American culture had changed with the advent of cars and mass communication. Families no longer needed to physically attend major speeches or concerts as they could now listen to them on the radio. Similarly, automobiles meant that families could quickly drive wherever they pleased for relatively low cost, and they no longer relied on the trains and streetcars that helped to make Epworth Lake Park thrive.

Continued on page 10