

# The History of City Park



## Entrance and Gates to the new City Park

By **George R. Williams**

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director from 1970-1985  
With the City of Pueblo Parks and Recreation from 1948-1985



During my long tenure with the Pueblo Parks and Recreation Department I responded to many queries about the entrance to City Park and the gates that once were there. It is relatively easy to explain stone and steel but what I hope to convey with the following narrative is that the entrance to City Park is more than a magnificent blending of stone, steel, lighting, and statuary, be the year 1905 or 1996.

It was the final act of love for a project that Charles Dittmer put all of his hopes and dreams into for fifteen years and then saw them slip away because of factors over which he had no control.



Perhaps the next time you pass the intersection of Goodnight and Calla Avenues you will take a better look at the entrance and the basic landscape of City Park. Hopefully this will help you appreciate Charles Dittmer's efforts and his contributions to the quality of life Pueblo citizens have enjoyed over the years.

IN THE FALL OF 1889, a group of South Pueblo investors organized the C.L.W. Dittmer Land and Building Company, with Charles Ludwic Wilhem Dittmer serving as General Manager of the Company. In December of that year they purchased the 150 acre parcel that formed the northwest corner of the Uplands Park Sub-Division from the Colorado Coal and Iron Company. Earlier this area had been part of Charles Goodnight's ranch.

This 150 acre parcel was named the "Park" but some early records refer to it as Carlile's Park or Carlisle Park. Today the "Park" or Carlile's/Carlisle Park is the major portion of Pueblo's City Park. Prior to this acquisition many of these same investors had purchased an adjoining 250 acre parcel that extended east from Calla Avenue to Cleveland Avenue and named it the Carlile Park



Sub-Division.

Today most of this parcel is known as the Aberdeen area. A hotel/spa, race track, fairground and two houses were built but development of upscale housing in the Carlile Park Sub-Division faltered during the years 1887-1889 because of the partners' time and financial commitments to other projects and activities. This slight delay did not change the partners' confidence in the value of Pueblo real estate development and they had great expectations for their latest acquisition.

They planned for the 150 acre parcel to greatly enhance their adjoining Carlile Park Sub-Division by providing an elite housing area complete with large building sites, extensive landscaping, lakes, fountains, statuary and other amenities similar to exclusive suburban areas in the East. As General Manager it was Charles Dittmer's responsibility to successfully execute the development of both the 250 acre Carlile Park Sub Division and the 150 acre "Park" parcel. C.L.W. Dittmer was born in Sweden, of German parents, and became a naturalized citizen of the United States. Prior to moving from Boulder, Colorado, to Pueblo, in 1889, Dittmer experienced considerable success in the mining industry and railroad construction. During his railroad construction activities Dittmer became good friends with the South Pueblo group, especially James Neil Carlile.

Dittmer was a practical, hard working man with an appreciation for art, design and horticulture that may have resulted from his European heritage. The Carlile Park Sub-Division and the "Park" soon demonstrated these influences and Pueblo newspapers began referring to them as "Pueblo's premier building areas."

Dittmer built six fountains with statuary to accent the entrances and main roadways of both parcels. Lakes were built and over 70 varieties of trees and shrubs were planted to provide the "Park" with a mosaic of color, texture and growth habit during all four seasons. Roadways in both parcels were planted with species of trees that would provide a green canopy during the growing season and an interesting winter landscape.

The Silver Crash of 1893 affected many Pueblo area projects including the "Park" and the Carlile Park Sub Division. The partners survived this economic crisis but the Panic of 1903 forced them to cancel several projects and dispose of many of their assets, including the 150 acre "Park" parcel.

In 1898 citizens had approved a bond issue to acquire the financially troubled Colorado Mineral Palace and the land surrounding it for Pueblo's first public park. At the same time Park District #1 was established to develop and maintain the Mineral Palace Park and other parks on the north and west sides of Pueblo.

Southside residents wanted a comparable park and in 1903 approved a \$175,000 bond issue to purchase the 150 acre "Park" parcel from Dittmer and his partners. At the same time Park District #2 was formed to develop and maintain public parks on the south side of Pueblo. Later bond issues provided public parks on the east side of Pueblo and formed Park District #3 to develop and maintain them.

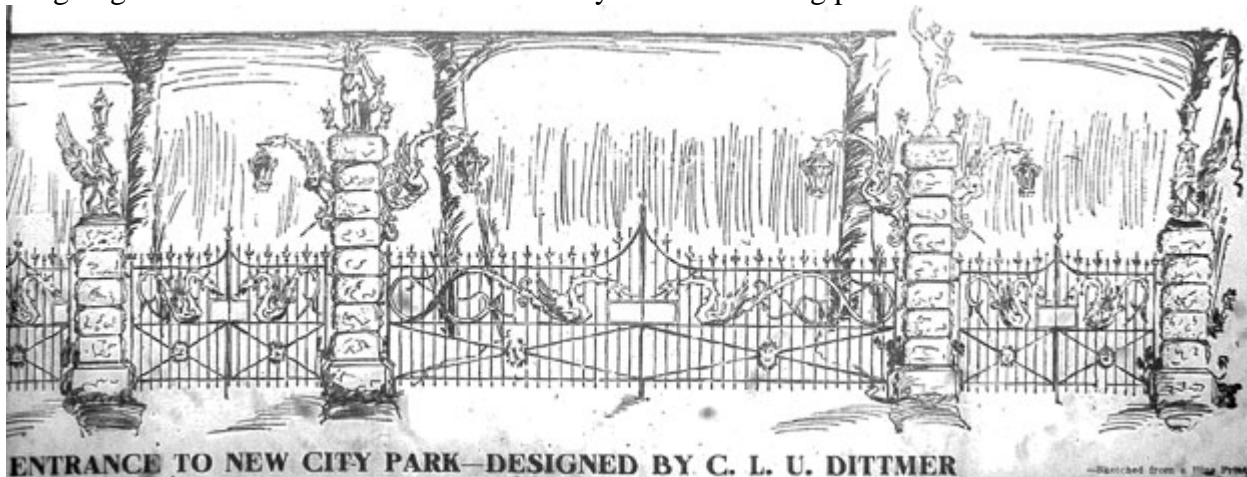
With the forced sale of the "Park," Charles Dittmer and his partners would never reap the financial rewards the elite suburban area might have provided if things had gone as planned. Dittmer retained an ongoing interest in the new City Park and his fifteen years of work and planning provided the basic needs of a public park and considerable cost savings for Park District #2.

Park District #2 was operating by early 1904 and the first Commissioners were R. J. Bruner (a large park on Beulah Avenue is named for him), F.P.Wormley (a small park on Abriendo

Avenue is named for him), and James Lewis (a small park on Lincoln Avenue was named for him and later removed).

Charles Dittmer was retained as a special agent for the Commissioners to maintain the extensive tree and shrub nursery and supervise the landscaping of the new City Park in accordance with the original landscape plan that he had developed and partially completed. It is not confirmed if Charles Dittmer and his partners had plans for an elaborate entrance for their "Park" or if this is something that developed after the "Park" was sold to the City of Pueblo. Based on Dittmer's prior use of statuary in the six small parks and fountains he built in the 1890s it is entirely possible that the entrance project was his idea.

The Park District #2 Commissioners soon expanded Dittmer's responsibilities to include designing an elaborate entrance to the new City Park and raising private funds to build it.



Pueblo newspapers reported on November 10, 1904 that the contract for the entrance and gates had been awarded and the cost would be \$4000. The names of the contractor or the actual amount expended were never found.

At various times the names of the firms and individuals that had donated to the project and the amounts they contributed were published in the Pueblo newspapers. These listings did not include the many services and supplies that were donated throughout the construction phase or explain which pieces of statuary were donated or paid for by others.

The Thatcher brothers purchased the \$175,000 worth of bonds issued by Park District #2 and supported the entrance project by having their First National Bank cashier receive all donations and distribute them quarterly to Gustav Krause, Accountant and Auditor of Park District #2.

Dittmer selected statuary cast by the firm of J. Chiurazze & Fila of Naples, Italy, for his final design. It is not known why this firm was selected. They may have been the source for the statuary he installed in the "Park" parcel and the Carlile Park Sub-Division during the 1890's.

Some time prior to January 1, 1905, Dittmer sent a copy of his plans for the entrance and gates to the leading Mythological Architect of New York City and asked for an opinion about the statuary he proposed for the entrance. This person declined to render a signed opinion unless paid \$500 in cash. Dittmer then submitted his plans to both the French and Italian Masters of

Arts and the French and Italian Mythological Architects in New York and requested their opinions. (NOTE: The detailed descriptions of the entrance and gates found later in this article allows the reader to better understand why Dittmer was seeking expert opinions.)

The January 1, 1905, Pueblo Star-Journal reported that only minor changes in the lock plates for the gates had been suggested. The Pueblo Daily Chieftain on that same day ran a sketch of Dittmer's design for the entrance and gates on the bottom of the front page and pictures of the lock plates.

Importing statuary from Italy required paying special Duty Fees that could be avoided if the Pueblo City Council passed a resolution stating that the figures and statuary were to be used for a public purpose and were to be incorporated into a historical monument as a form of embellishment.



Thomas Flynn, the Pueblo saddle maker, was a south side Alderman at that time and introduced the required resolution, which passed unanimously and was sent to the Surveyor of Customs in Denver. (The ethnic make up of the City Council at that time is interesting. The members were Flynn, Colvin, Fitzpatrick, Holloran, Johnson, Sweeney and Walker. They were paid \$42.50 per month for their services.)

Page 151 of the 1904-05 Pueblo City Council minutes details the bronze statuary that was ordered from the firm of J. Chiurazzi & Fils of Naples, Italy. It included "One classical Satyr 34 inches high, less base; one classical Apollo about 36 inches high, less base; one classical Flying Mercury 5 ½ ft. high, not including stem and Medusa's face nor base; one classical Hebe 5 ½ ft high, nor including base."

During the summer of 1904 Dittmer spent considerable time selecting the granite he wanted for the entrance. A large boulder containing some 300 cubic yards of pinkish colored granite was selected seven miles above the Texas Creek railroad station; 139 holes were drilled in the boulder and it was split into the dimensions Dittmer specified.

Mr. Andrew Hughes of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad donated the freight for all the granite from Texas Creek and cement required for the project from Portland. This donation was valued at \$100.00.

Not all of Park District #2 records have survived the years. A search of the City Clerk's vault and the Finance Department's storage failed to yield the names of all the firms that were involved with construction of the entrance, which was underway by December 1904.

A few of the semi-annual reports published in the Pueblo newspapers by the Commissioners of Park District #2 were found. Several payments to the Colorado Iron and Wire Works were noted. This firm was located on Santa Fe Avenue and furnished ornamental iron to business and financial institutions for Teller/Cashier cages and other decorative barriers. They built and installed the heavily ornamented gates and supplied hardware, a cast dove and other ornamentation during the short time they were in business.

Other payments included the Pueblo & Suburban Traction and Lighting Company for underground electrical service to each section of the stone work as it was erected. The J.L Mott Iron Works supplied one statue; Alex Campbell supplied a derrick, August Schultz was paid for masonry work and donated \$5.00 for the project. Several other persons were paid for labor and rental of teams. Payments for freight bills that related to the entrance project were also noted. Not a very complete record but all that was found.

Two newspaper articles describing the entrance and gates were found. The most complete is the January 1, 1905 edition of The Pueblo Star-Journal where a full page was dedicated to descriptions of the new City Park and the entrance under a headline stating: "**CITY PARK, SOON TO BE OPENED TO THE PUBLIC, WILL HAVE THE HANDSOMEST GATES IN THE WEST.**" Unfortunately, the name of the writer was not credited.



Constructed at the intersection of Calla and Goodnight Avenues, the entrance was 250 feet east of the Grand Circle/Goodnight Park with its statuary, fountain and extensive landscaping Dittmer had installed in the 1890s. Collectively, the entrance and Grand Circle provided a very impressive welcome for visitors to the new public park.

The following is a description of the entrance and gates with selected quotes from the Pueblo Star Journal January 1, 1905 article. The original spelling and punctuation has been used. Definitions and additional information have been added to help the reader better understand the design, beauty and mythological background of all components of the entrance.

"The gate itself is one of the most beautiful and artistic to be seen in the country. The straight line of this gateway is exactly eighty feet but as mythological and classical figures are used as its ornamentation, it would not be proper nor in good taste to construct a straight entrance. The circle of the Diana circle is for that reason being used. This circle is on either side a true circle of twenty-three feet, adding materially to the space occupied for the entrance.

In line with the southwest and northwest corners of the curved walls are four granite shafts higher than the walls with statuary and lighting fixtures mounted on them. The two center shafts are the tallest and their statuary and lighting the most ornate. Six highly ornamented steel gates

eight to eleven feet high filled the five spaces between the four shafts. Four spaces were fitted with individual gates and a pair filled the center four shafts. The north and south solid granite stone walls are identical. They are four feet high on the east end and in an arc of ten feet rise to a height of eight feet. The stone was laid to provide three steps 28 inches wide and 36, 32, and 32 inches long and a top surface 28 inches wide and 80 inches long. These surfaces are where the statuary and lighting were installed."

*[The entrance measures eighty feet from the southeast and northeast corners of the stone walls. Each stone wall is a quarter circle starting on the west and curving to the east. They are twenty-three feet long on the inside arc of the quarter circle and twenty-nine feet long on the outside arc of the quarter circle. Diana: Roman goddess of the moon, of hunting and of virginity. Identified with the Greek Artemis.]*

The newspaper further described the walls. "This is of solid granite, all of dimension size. On the inside of the circle is what is known as the Romanesque masonry made of selected crystallized boulders ornamented with a large medallion boulder in the center. These boulders came from Fremont County. This work is arranged so as to make the different shades blend beautifully. That is to say, the smaller and lighter hued boulders are used in the six corners of the work. The medallion boulder is of a plum color shade, and the boulders used around the medallion are then shaded so as to merge gently with the whole. There are four steps in this circular wall; the iron fence running from Dupes will connect with this wall", the connection being about four feet tall."

*[Romanesque masonry: European architecture of the 11th and 12th centuries, characterized by thick massive walls, interior bays etc. Dupes is now spelled Dupps Avenue runs south from where Dittmer Avenue merges with Goodnight Avenue one block east of the City Park entrance. If this is correct, the block where the Park East restaurant is presently located may have originally been part of City Park. A four foot ornamental iron fence ran south along the east boundary of City Park from the stone entrance wall to Collins Avenue until Calla Avenue was opened and later paved (circa 1960).]*

On the lower step of both walls a vase ornamented with the head of the Caesar lion and floral ornamentation was installed. The lower vase on both walls was to contain the Century plant. On the second step of both walls was a five-foot vase that showed the Appian Way of Rome. When the north vase was installed it was turned slightly to provide another view of the Appian Way. These vases had a cover and the one on the south was called the Archive vase".

*[Caesar lion: could mean a hairy adult male lion. Century plant: A tropical American agave plant with fleshy leaves and green flowers mistakenly thought to bloom only every 100 years. An indoor/greenhouse plant, it would not live outside in Pueblo's winter. Appian Way of Rome: An ancient Roman military road about 365 miles long named after the Roman censor Claudius Caecus.]*

When the gateway was dedicated a planished copper vase with the names of all the subscribers written with acid on it was placed inside. Coins in use at the time, the program of the World's Fair on the Fourth of July, the original India ink drawings of the gateway and other things were

also placed inside. The newspaper stated, "This vase will then be hermetically sealed with Burton cement. It will remain sealed forever." The vases installed on the third step were copies of another vase on the Appian Way and had handles that represented the metamorphosed swan. These were planted with the Euonymus plant, an evergreen shrub that is adapted to Pueblo. On the top 28 inch wide and 80 inch long surface of the south wall the classic figure of Apollo with his harp was installed on top of a base that represented Pindus. The figure was said to have silver eyes and to be classical in every detail. Eight inches south of the top of Pindus the blue lamp of Apollo was installed.

*[Planished: to toughen, smooth or polish metal by hammering or rolling. Burton cement: May be a trade name. Apollo: The god of music, poetry, prophecy and medicine. Pindus: A mountain range in northwestern Greece. Blue lamp of Apollo: Nothing was found about this lamp.]*

On the 28 inch wide and 80 inch surface of the north wall an identical base representing the Pindus mountain range was installed with a dancing Satyr figure on top of it. The Satyr was said to be the classical figure similar to the one found in the ruins of Pompeii. Nearby was the red flamed light of Hades with the Athen scroll and the stem of the lamp ornamented with the tail of the Satyr. The red light was to represent that the Satyr was pleased with the entire structure and the dance is the dance of joy.

*[Satyr: A Greek woodland deity, attendant of Bacchus, usually represented as having pointed ears, short horns, the head and body of a man and legs of a goat. Pompeii: An ancient city on the Bay of Naples destroyed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Hades: Ruler of the underworld also called Pluto. The red lamp would represent the fires of Hell. Athen scroll: May relate to Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom, skills and warfare. Identified by the Romans with Minerva.]*

The six gates that closed the five openings are referred to as the exit or walk gates, the pedestrian gates and the driveway gates. From the west ends of the curved stone walls to the next granite shaft was the space for the walk/exit gates on each side of the entrance. These granite shafts are nine feet tall and formed by a base stone of 36x36x18 inches, four blocks 30x30x16 inches and a cap stone of 32x32x12 inch size. On top of each of these shafts was mounted the classic griffin as executed by the Danish sculptor Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen or Thorwaldsen. The newspaper article repeatedly refers to these figures as the Thorwaldsen griffins.

*[Griffin: A mythical animal with the body and hind legs of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen or Thorwaldsen: A Danish sculptor, he was a leading neoclassicist that executed sculptures of mythological characters including Hebe (1806) and monuments such as the Lions of Lucerne (1819).]*

The Thorwaldsen griffins act as candelabras, each having on top of its head a beautiful copper lamp, its glass base being 14x6 ½ x 11 inches, hip roofed and ornamented. Photographs show that these measurements and description relate to the top of the lamp fixture.



All the gates were made of solid steel bar stock held in a vertical position approximately ten inches apart by three pieces of similar sized steel in a horizontal position. The tops of the vertical steel pieces appear to be forged into ornate spear shapes in photographs of the gates.

Four pieces of heavier steel formed an X brace on the lower half of each gate. The point where the braces crossed was covered with a Roman War Mask casting. On the front of the top half of each gate a series of elaborate mythological figures of hammered steel were installed.

Each gate had a cast bronze bas-relief sculpture that served as a lock face plate. They were of soft bronze corrodible and set in a frame of antique bronze with one key hole. These lock face plates were donated by Charles Dittmer and each was of a different mythological scene. The lock face plates for the walk/exit gates and the pedestrian gates were 13 ½ x 11 ½ inches in size. The lock face plates for the pair of driveway gates were 16 x 12 inches in size and formed more ornately.

*[Roman War Mask: May have resembled a gargoyle. A common form of building ornamentation. Bas-relief Sculpture in which the figures project only a very small distance beyond the background.]*

Both walk/exit gates were five feet six inches wide. They were ornamented with the Neptunian spear and with the club of destruction of Janus around a large griffin acting as a brace. Both gates also had the Roman War Mask casting. The lock face plate on the south walk/exit gate was ornamented with a sculpture of Hercules' struggle with the lion in the demoniacal forest.

*[Hercules: The son of Zeus and Alemene, renowned for feats of strength particularly the twelve labors imposed by Hera.] [Demoniacal forest: A forest of demons.] [Neptunian spear: Neptune, god of the sea and of horses. His spear is the three tined Trident, a weapon favored by Mediterranean fishermen.] [The club of destruction of Janus: Janus, the two faced Roman god, was the guardian of portals (openings and doors) and patron of beginnings and endings. Many times Janus is pictured with a staff and keys which some may have interpreted as a club. Romans opened the House of Janus with a formal ceremony before a war, which may relate to the club of destruction statement.]*

The lock fence plate on the north walk/exit gate "represented Janus holding the dog by the collar and throwing the reflection of the sun by means of a concave ground steel disk, keeping him from interfering with the struggles of Hercules and the lion, his aim being to allow Hercules to tear the lion to pieces without the assistance of the dog." (PSJ 1/1/1905)

The center pair of granite shafts were 13 feet five inches high and held the most ornate statuary and lighting. They were made of the same sizes of stone as the shafts that held the Thorwaldson griffins. The shaft on the south was surmounted by a flying Mercury figure on a base and had four copper lamps around the top. The base for these lamps was 11 ½ x 7 ½ x 5 ½ inches on a brass bracket. The lamps were hip-roofed, ornamented with the Roman scroll and made of antique copper. "The glass for the lamps is imported from Paris, France and is what is known as the agafized transparent, translucent and opaque antique glass. No two glasses will be

alike but will be gently shaded so as to make a beautiful color combination and produce, as it were, a quaking light." (PSJ 1/1/1905)

*[Mercury: Messenger of the gods, god of commerce, manual skill, eloquence, cleverness, travel and thievery. Roman scroll: Scroll is to decorate with circular designs. Roman scroll may be larger scrolls. Agafized glass: Presence of color banding in curved or irregular patterns. May be of brownish red and white. Similar to the chalcedonic quartz called agate.]*

On the north and south sides of both center shafts a black iron bracket in the form of a griffin was installed. Suspended from the tongues of the griffins were Caligula lamps. All of these lamps were glazed with antique Roman green blistered glass. The north center shaft was surmounted with the same lighting fixtures on top, Caligula lamps on the tongues of the griffins and the figure of Hebe on a base of some sort.

*[Caligula lamps: Caligula was a Roman emperor. The lamps represent the golden hay crib of Caligula at the time he made his horse the high priest. Hebe: The goddess of youth, daughter of Hera and Zeus, she was the cupbearer of the gods until succeeded by Ganymede.]*

The two pedestrian gates were ten feet wide and also ornamented with the Neptunian spear and the club of destruction of Janus. The Roman War Mask covered the center point of the X bracing. The lock face plate on the south pedestrian gate represented the extended legend of the Diana chase. "The lock plate face on the north pedestrian gate represented the start of the Diana chase showing the horse of the hunt, the hunters with their spears and the dog of the chase, and in bas-relief are the slave and the philosopher." (PSJ 1/1/1905)

The pair of gates for the driveway were larger and made slightly different than the other four gates. The last four vertical pieces progressively were longer and formed an impressive high center when the gates were closed. The driveway gates were ornamented with larger but identical figures of the Neptunian spear and the club of destruction of Janus.

The lock face place on the north driveway gate represented Amphion playing his harp to Zeus. Diana appears on the heavenly mantle. In the background was the colossal oak and the dog charmed. Bellerophon and his winged horse Pegasus are also shown leaving the court of Diana.

*[Amphion: The son of Zeus and Antiope. With a lyre that Harnes gave him Amphion built a wall around Thebes by charming the stones into place. Zeus: The supreme deity of the ancient Greeks. In Greek mythology the hero who killed the monster Chimera, aided by the winged horse Pegasus. Pegasus: A winged horse who sprang from the body of Medusa at her death.]*

The lock face on the south driveway gate represented the return of the Diana chase showing the wild boar killed, his head stuck up in the oak tree, the offering to Diana, Victory sounding her trumpet and the fatigued hunter on the lower edge of the plate.

THUS ENDS a long and involved description of the entrance and gates Charles Dittmer designed and raised the money to build in 1905.

During the late 1930s W.P.A. crews built a very large entrance and gateway of native stone at the west end of City Park where Goodnight Avenue joins Park Drive. This entrance was destroyed when Goodnight Avenue was paved but portions of the stone fence still remain.

Now that the reader knows how the City Park entrance and gates looked in 1905, logical questions might be: what happened to make the entrance look so different today, and why did this take place? The first part is the easiest to answer.

When automobiles became more popular than horse drawn carriages in Pueblo, the space between the two shafts with the Thorwaldsen griffins on them was used to convert the former roadway into two traffic lanes on Goodnight Avenue. This caused the removal of the Mercury and Hebe shafts and their statuary. The four ornamental gates attached to these shafts would have been removed at the same time.

During World War I the Pueblo newspapers were full of information about the critical need for scrap metal to keep the war effort going. Scrap metal districts were set up throughout Pueblo County with volunteer chairpersons to conduct ongoing scrap metal drives and to search for scrap metal. Former employees of Park District #2 stated that the gates from the City Park entrance were donated to the war effort during a scrap metal drive.

Traffic improvements and scrap metal drives may explain the fate of the larger gates but what happened to the south walk gate is more questionable. The north walk gate was still attached to the granite shaft with the Thorwaldsen griffin on it until the early 1950s and it seems unlikely that the Park District would not leave matching gates intact. Regardless of what events prompted its demise the south walk gate was gone when this writer became associated with City Park in the late 1940s.

Both of the walk gates had 2x2 inch solid square steel rods set in concrete that served as stops and limited opening the gates only to the east. The surviving north walk gate was popular for both kids and adults to swing on and through the years the repeated impacts of this gate hitting the stop bent the steel and increased the arc to well over 180 degrees.

The kids loved it this way but someone was injured playing on the gate in 1954. At that time I and others removed the concrete and stops for both walk gates and cut the walk gate hinge brackets off of both granite shafts with an acetylene torch. The north walk gate was removed to the City Park storage where it remained for years until it was scrapped during a clean up operation supervised by Marion Walters.

The ornate lighting fixtures with their specialized glass lens on the two walls and four shafts of the entrance probably provided the atmosphere that Charles Dittmer wanted out of his design. They were very fragile for exterior use at an isolated public park and it would be interesting to know how long these lens and fixtures lasted. As fancy as they were, some of the lighting fixtures and attaching brackets may have been salvaged and could still be in Pueblo.

The same can be said for the statuary that once graced the entrance. The figures of the Satyr, Apollo, Mercury and Hebe disappeared long ago. One of the first level vases has also

disappeared. Local residents have stated that when the two granite shafts with the figures of Mercury and Hebe on them were removed to widen Goodnight Avenue, the statuary was sent to the Mineral Palace. And that in 1940 when the Mineral Palace was razed the figures may have been sent to the Masonic Lodge since Pueblo did not have any other museum.

Others report seeing a Flying Mercury figure in the lobby of the Scottish Rites Temple on North Elizabeth Street but nothing more is known about the final fate of the four mythological figures or the first level vase. It will be interesting to see if this article produced additional information or if someone knows where particular items might be. We would like to hear from anyone that can help.

There is no means to determine if part of the statuary was bronze or if it was all cast iron with a metallic glaze or finish. At some point in time the wing of the cast iron Thorwaldsen griffin on the north shaft was broken off and other damage done to the figure. In the late 1980s the griffin on the south shaft was removed by vandals. The Pueblo newspapers reported the theft and when a box full of small pieces of the casting was offered for sale at a local metals dealer, the owner called the police.

It's safe to assume that the vandals thought they were selling bronze and had demolished the griffin to keep it from being identified. The pieces were recovered and brought to the City Park Weld Shop but they were so small it was determined that they could not be welded together. Since that time the only surviving small vase from the first step on the walls has been equipped with a steel base and installed on the south Thorwaldsen griffin shaft. Members of local service clubs have expressed interest in replacing the griffin but nothing has been done to date.

During the late 1980s the Pueblo Parks and Police Departments decided that closing the entrances of both City Park and Mineral Palace Park was the way to eliminate the practice of "cruising" by young adults during the week ends. That is why you see gates made of livestock panels in the 1996 photograph of the City Park entrance.

Throughout the past century, many citizens of Pueblo have been actively involved with the welfare of their Parks and Recreation System to ensure the quality of life values these facilities provide for all citizens. Not only have their efforts provided successful projects but they have generated positive "can do" attitudes and a sense of personal and community pride. Success is contagious.

For many years the reverse side of the stationary used by all departments of the City of Pueblo was devoted to photographs of parks and recreation activities/improvements and the official letterhead boldly stated in large green letters "Pueblo's Parks, Pueblo's Pride." This is not the situation now and public involvement is badly needed!

The cleaning repair and restoration of the City Park entrance would be a powerful message to our community and surely provide the same satisfaction for those that might undertake such a task as Charles Dittmer must have experienced when he presented the entrance to the citizens of Pueblo in 1905. Why don't we give it a try?

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