

Playfield was named in 1928 upon petition of C.V. Stephens on behalf of the Rainier Business Men's Club, changing the original name of "Columbia P.F." name of the pioneer town in this vicinity.

Rainier Ave. follows the route of the Interurban car line from James St. to Rainier Beach (also a pioneer town). The street and town were so named because of the view of Mt. Rainier. Interurban line abandoned in 1936.

(Mt. Rainier: El. 14,408; discovered & named by Capt. Geo. Vancouver in 1792 to honor his friend, Rear Adm. Peter Rainier of the British Navy, a daring seaman who had enlisted at age 15, spending most of his service in East Indies; became full Admiral & member of Parliament. A bachelor & free patriot he willed 10% of fortune toward Britain's national debt. 1733-1808.)

Renaming of mountain was subject of great controversy in 1920's; foremost was the Indian name "Tah-ho-mah": "high snow" mountain.

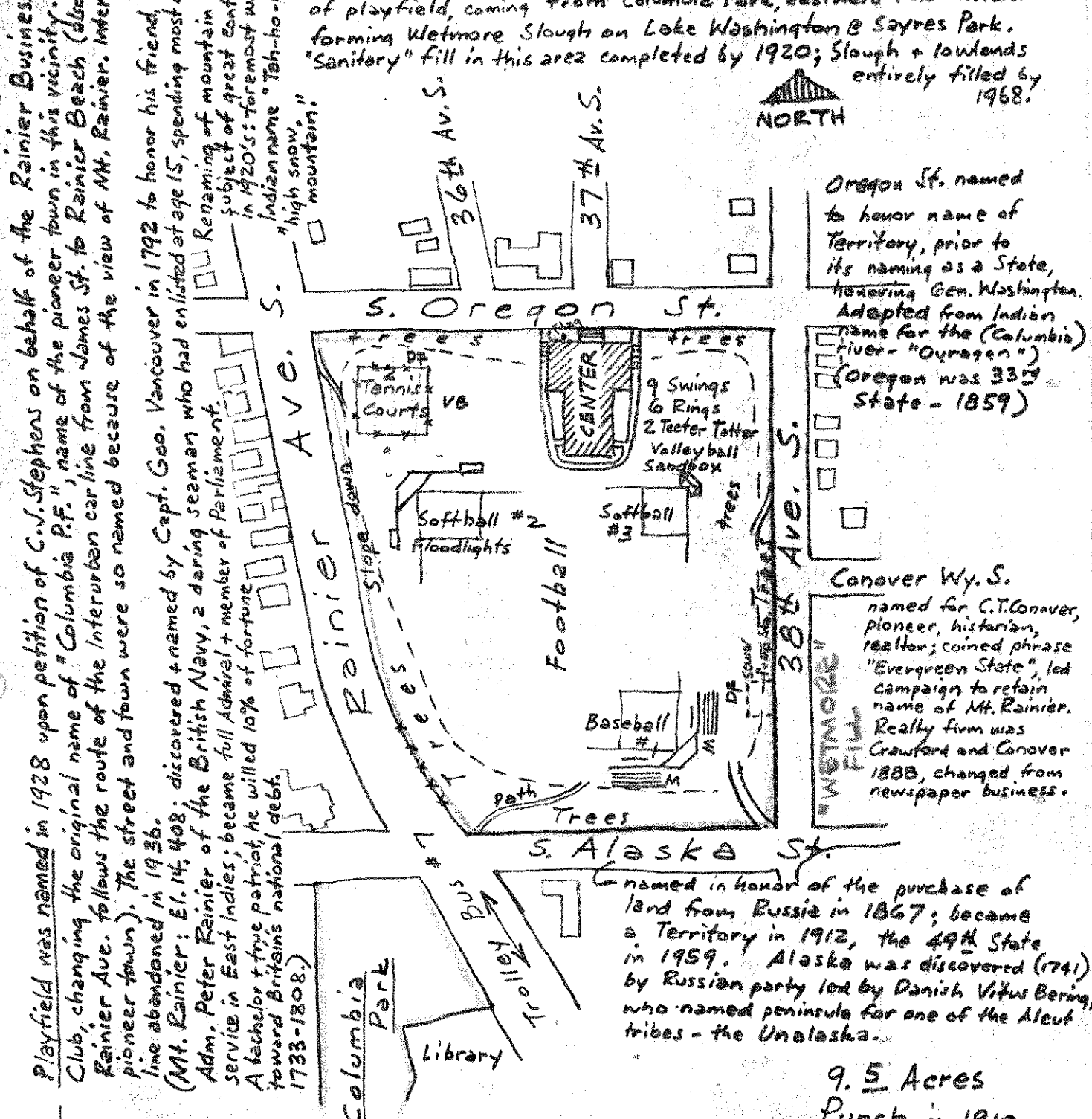
At time of purchase a ravine extended across southern portion of playfield, coming from Columbia Park, eastward & northward forming Wetmore Slough on Lake Washington @ Sayres Park. "Sanitary" fill in this area completed by 1920; Slough & lowlands entirely filled by 1968.

named in honor of the purchase of land from Russia in 1867; became a Territory in 1912, the 49th State in 1959. Alaska was discovered (1741) by Russian party led by Danish Vitus Bering, who named peninsula for one of the Aleut tribes - the Unalaska.

named for C.T. Conover, pioneer, historian, realtor; coined phrase "Evergreen State", led campaign to retain name of Mt. Rainier. Realty firm was Crawford and Conover 1888, changed from newspaper business.

named to honor name of Territory, prior to its naming as a State, honoring Gen. Washington. Adopted from Indian name for the (Columbia) river - "Oyrogen" (Oregon was 33rd State - 1859)

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L.I.D. 1926: \$7,847=

Community Center - "A" 25' flag staff on NW cor. bldg.

First unit: 1928 - \$71,935 = '24 BF

Completed: 1949 - 132,848=

upon Community petition

Gym: 60' x 90' = 750 persons

Stage

Game Room 20' x 35' = 30 persons

Social Rm. 28' x 45' = 50 persons

Craft Rm. 28' x 33' = 35 persons

9.5 Acres

Purch. in 1910 (\$58,337 = '10 BF)

Community Center 3701^{1/2} Oregon St.

PA 2-2150

Dist. Foreman:

PA 5-3204

RAINIER P.F.

021869

A sawmill town was built upon the shore of Wetmore Slough. As the forests diminished, a dream began to grow: to dredge the slough and become a seaport. So they named their town Columbia City, for "Columbia" was the name proposed for the Territory north of the Columbia River. In 1889 some Seattle investors built a trolley car line from Pioneer Square down through "Rainier Valley" all the way to the town of Rainier Beach - the first and longest electric railway (interurban) in the new state. Of course, Columbia City was a station on the car line. As intended, the trolley car promoted the sale and development of the real estate along the way. The actual and potential growth were so great that the Columbia City and Rainier Beach areas were annexed to the City of Seattle in 1907. A country road had developed along the car tracks and improvement of the road came soon after, including a dirt fill across the ravine at the head of Wetmore Slough.

Columbia Park had already been given to the townfolk in 1891, so in 1908 the Olmsted Bros. recommended acquisition of some 9 acres for "Columbia" playfield on the east side of Rainier Boulevard from Conover to Crawford Streets: "It is fairly flat and by a moderate amount of grading can be made suitable . . ." So the site was condemned in 1910 and "a portion of the ground was cleared and graded, providing a ballfield and a tennis court . . ." But the open ditch that was the remnant of the stream flowing into the slough was a nuisance to athletes and prevented full use of the field so it was put into a sewer and covered with a garbage fill. A small comfort station was built in 1913. In 1916 the improvement of streets resulted in surrounding the playfield with fills, making it into a basin that resulted in problems when the drains became clogged or unable to cope with "the unusual storms of February 1916, coupled with the extraordinary height of Lake Washington (and the slough)."

The success of the "field house (recreation center) program" spurred plans for two more "of distinctive design and appointments not ordinarily found in field houses." The sites were Columbia PF and Green Lake. Bids for construction of plans by City Architect Frank L. Baker exceeded the appropriation "by a considerable sum" so just the gym and related facilities were constructed in 1928. In preparation for the dedication, the Rainier Business Men's Club successfully petitioned for a change of name, requesting "RAINIER PLAYFIELD" for the "suburb of opportunity" had become identified as Rainier Valley, absorbing the suburb of Columbia City. There had just ended a great controversy over the renaming of "The Mountain": the Indians had named it "Tah-ho-mah - high snow mountain" and Ta-Co-ma wanted to annex it. C. T. Conover (Conover Street) led Seattle's opposing forces. The 14,408' peak was named in 1792 by Captain George Vancouver to honor his friend Rear Adm. Peter Rainier, British Navy (1733-1808), a daring youth who enlisted as a seaman at age 15, spending most of his service in the East Indies - and never saw his namesake mountain. He became a full admiral and member of Parliament; a bachelor and true patriot, he willed 10% of his fortune toward Britain's national debt. (Mount Rainier has 26 active glaciers, was established as the fourth National Park in 1899.)

Almost immediately, the community began to petition for the completion of the center, in accordance with the original plans; then requests for night lighting of the football field. WPA assistance was urged in 1933; unsuccessful; a wartime Federal Works Agency project was sought in 1944 but the City could provide only \$1,000 of the estimated \$50-80,000 cost for the addition, plus most of the "beneficiaries" would be civilians, rather than "defense workers". Funding finally came with approval of the 1948 bond fund: "one generation started the field house, the next is finishing it", commented resident C. W. Weedon who campaigned for it in 1928. The dusty/muddy streets around the playfield were paved in 1950. Floodlighting was installed in 1953, rehabilitated in 1969. The old swings and slides were replaced with a new play area in 1972; the old clay tennis court was replaced with concrete in 1932.

History: RAINIER PLAYFIELD
10/3/73