

Zany Zilker

How did Barton Springs and the adjacent springs get their names?

Legend: Barton Springs was named after William Barton (1762-1840), an early settler of the area who once owned the springs and surrounding land. Legend has it that he named the springs after his three daughters Parthenia, Eliza, and Zenobia. It remains unclear if William Barton actually named the third spring Zenobia or if someone else gave it that name.

Fact: The legend is mostly true. William Barton did have three daughters but their names were Parthenia, Eliza and Minerva. Minerva was his oldest daughter from his first marriage and Parthenia and Eliza were from his second. He never had a daughter named Zenobia. It remains unclear if William Barton actually named the third spring Zenobia or if someone else gave it that name.

Map

Parthenia Springs

William Barton named this spring after his daughter Parthenia. It is known as Barton Springs and discharge directly into Barton Springs. Parthenia is the largest of the three primary springs.

Eliza Springs

William Barton named this spring after his daughter Eliza. It is a small spring that sits on the north east bank of Barton Springs and now serves as a protected watershed feature.

Zenobia Springs

It is not clear how this spring came to be called Zenobia Springs. It is also known as Sucker Gardens at Old Mill Springs. It lies on the south west bank of Barton Creek and serves as watershed feature.

Was There Ever an Alligator in Eliza Springs?

Rumor: There is a rumor that Eliza Springs was once an alligator pit. Many long time Austinites swear that they remember seeing alligators there in their youth. What is the truth behind this story?

Fact: After much research, we were not able to verify if there have ever been any alligators in Eliza Spring. We were able to confirm that there was once an alligator that lived just up the road. People may be remembering seeing an alligator named Charlie, who lived in a fenced in moat at a burger place called Holiday House on Barton Springs Road in the 70's and early 80's.

Of Alley the Alligator Needs a 'Dog Tag,' Too

Barton Springs Road restaurant returns to roots at old location

Later Years

Upon his death, Charlie was stuffed and put on display in a Holiday House on Airport Boulevard. His successor, Charlie II, was a fixture at the Barton Springs Road location until the restaurant closed in 1983, at which point Charlie II retired to an alligator farm in Rockport.

Were the moonlight towers built to scare off an axe murderer?

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Fact: The moonlight towers were not installed until 1894, ten years after the Servant Girl Murders occurred between 1884 and 1885. The city chose to buy the towers due to the need for better urban lighting and safety.

Origins of the Moonlight Towers

The Austin moonlight towers are the only surviving moonlight towers in the world. Austin purchased thirty-one used moonlight towers from Detroit in 1894, of which fourteen remain. Each tower originally cast light from six carbon arc lamps and brilliantly illuminated a 1,500 foot radius. The towers were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and restored by the City of Austin in 1993.

In Film

The Zilker Park moon tower features prominently in the 1993 film *Dazed and Confused* as the site of a high-school party. The scene was filmed on a set constructed in Walter E. Long Park and the set looks slightly different from the real towers.

Austin Traditions

A beloved Austin holiday tradition since 1967 is to light around beneath the Zilker Holiday Tree at the Trail of Lights in Zilker Park. The tree is created by draping 300 colored lights from a moonlight tower.

Was There Ever a Nuclear Fallout Shelter in Zilker Park?

Rumor: There is a rumor that there is a cold war nuclear fallout shelter somewhere in Zilker Park.

Fact: There is a nuclear fallout shelter in Zilker Park. In 1960 the city of Austin and the Office of Civil Defense Management and Department of Defense partnered to build a model shelter. It was used as a template for Austinites considering building one in their own yard during the cold war. It was designed to house up to six people for two weeks when fully stocked. The shelter, which is no longer open to the public, sits below the Zilker Park Cantraker's Lodge.

Radio

To learn more about the history of the Zilker Park fallout shelter check out this article from KUT 90.5 "How Austins Learned to Stop Worrying and Forget About the Bomb."

[Click Here](#)

Film

In 1960 Austin's local TV station KTEC produced a short film called "Target Austin" that depicts the fictional scenario of a nuclear missile strike on the city of Austin. The film takes place in Austin and was partially shot in the Zilker Park fallout shelter. The film can be viewed online at the Texas Archive of Moving Images.

[Click Here](#)

Why is the Zilker Park Rock Garden called a garden when it is just some old stone structures on a hillside?

In 1934, during the Great Depression, the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed the Zilker Rock Garden along with a series of other building projects in Zilker Park. The Rock Garden was a series of stone lined ponds created from a natural outcropping on the hillside across from Barton Springs. It integrated water elements with constructed rock formations and seasonal flora, including lilies, turtles, and goldfish. The ponds fell out of use and were drained in the 1960's.

Past

Rock Garden January 30, 1936

Present

The dry ponds remain an architectural feature of the park

Did you know that Zilker Park once have a reptile farm?

The Texas Reptile Institute, also referred to as the Reptile Farm or the Zilker Zoo, was open from 1933 to 1935. It was located roughly where the moontower now stands, north of the parking lot above the Rock Garden and south of Barton Springs Road. It had over sixty varieties of reptiles, including alligators, lizards, snakes, and turtles. At one point, they even had a baboon. Visitors could watch turtle races and dine upon fried rattlesnake sandwiches.

Where Was It?

The institute was located north of the upper parking lot.

What was there?

The institute had lizards, alligators, snakes, turtles, and a baboon.

Turtle Races

The institute hosted turtle races.

Fancy a Fried Rattlesnake Sandwich?

The institute served fried rattlesnake sandwiches.

What is the story behind the ruins of the old stone bridge on Barton Creek up above Barton Springs to the west?

The bridge was built 1889. The arch spanned 108 feet and was 26 feet in height. Heavy rains and floods in April, 1900 washed out the bridge. Remnants of the southern end of the bridge still exist today.

Before the Flood

1900's

After the Flood

Today

Before there was the Zilker Hillside Theater there was the Zilker Park Bandstand

The old band stand was built into the hillside across from the bathhouse in 1936 and was used for musical performances. The concrete pad with stucco exterior once had latrines for men and women underneath. It is now referred to as the bunker and is used for storage.

Two posters from concerts played on the Zilker Park Bandstand in 1968

The top of the bandstand now serves as a shady picnic spot

Tap icons to learn about the history of Zilker Park

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Main Springs



Parthenia Springs

William Barton named this spring after his daughter Parthenia. It is known Main Spring and discharges directly into Barton springs. Parthenia is the biggest of the three primary springs.

Eliza Springs



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William Barton named this spring after his daughter Eliza. It is a small spring that sits on the north east bank of Barton Springs and now serves as a protected salamander habitat.

Sunken Gardens



Zenobia Springs

It is not clear how this spring came to be called Zenobia Springs. It is also known as Sunken Gardens or Old Mill Springs. It lies on the south west bank of Barton Creek and serves as salamander habitat.

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It He's American

Ol' Alley the Alligator Needs a 'Dog Tag,' Too

By ANNE-MADE RYANS
Staff Writer

Enslaving Jim, Jim's best friend won't be the only one living a dog's life. Alligators will be getting "the same" with their own brand of dog tag.

Anyone with a pet alligator whether in the zoo or in the family backlot has until Jan. 1, 1964, better be together as couple or it is accretion with Senate Bill 120 passed by the 61st Legislature.

The act is designed to protect the American alligator, a species on the rare and endangered list maintained by the Department of Interior. Alligators which are lawfully obtained and held prior to the legislation are considered private property and may be retained, but are subject to control of the State as a protected species of wildlife, according to Howard.

Lee, director for programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Before striking the public safety, all owners of the "wild" pet must make sure their pet is a true American Alligator. Most owners will do this by juvenile capture, which are imported from Central and South America and are not regulated by statute.

The American alligator resembles the Crocodylus but has been hunted just like the latter century crocodiles around the world. The American crocodile, another species native to Florida, is completely distinct from the alligator since it has pointed jaws.

"I don't remember you'll be able to find many alligators here in Austin," said Steve Skowronek who works at Texas International, "even the crocodiles from Florida are difficult to obtain since they have to be registered there," he added.

All pet stores, these are, however, various sized and priced crocodiles.

As a rule from the pet store owners, the alligator of the true North American type — even his Latin name checks — was discovered at the Holiday House Restaurant in Barton Springs Rd.

Howard's Charlie has been shown for about six or seven years. The story goes that he was discovered in the University of Texas grounds, and when an eye witness saw and in one really weird film, he was given to the restaurant.

The people has to own little pet and walking around. Although at this time of year he can't manage to make actively beyond speaking, the reporter really searched for a number to tag the "sleepy fellow."

Any other persons having alligators in their possession and wishing to keep them should apply for a special approved permit from the Department. The application, which must be in the form of an affidavit, should show the number of specimens, when and how each was obtained, present length and weight and a brief description of the facility where the animal is to be kept.

The application should also contain an agreement that the specimen will be kept in healthy condition and that the owner will make an annual report on the condition of the alligator.

The new State law says "No person may take, catch, kill, buy, or sell, or attempt to take, catch, kill, buy, or sell alligators or alligator hides or any portion of any alligator or its hide, in this State, except that nothing in this law shall prohibit the possession of such alligator hide in the form of a final processed and manufactured product."

Section two of the new law makes provisions for the taking and possession of alligators with permits issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Alligators are only 11 more days old Jan. 1.

WHO'S GOING TO TAG THIS FELLOW?
Leroy F. Four and Charlie. (Staff Photo)



Origins of Charlie
According to several Austin American Statesman articles, Charlie was rescued from a fountain at the University of Texas in 1964, possible an escaped pet. When he was not claimed he ended up being given to the restaurant.

AUSTIN American Statesman/Neighbor Thursday, June 16, 1988

Charlie, an 8-foot alligator, used to live in a moat behind the Holiday House on Barton Springs Road.

Barton Springs Road restaurant returns to roots at old location

Both the menu and the mascot have undergone a metamorphosis at the recently reopened Holiday House restaurant at 1033 Barton Springs Road. The restaurant which has not opened as a Holiday House since the mid-70s, now offers a seafood platter, and the mascot, an alligator named Charlie, is now stuffed.

"We got Charlie from the University of Texas," said Ralph Mereland, Holiday House owner. "Some university students threw him in the Littlefield Fountain. I heard about it and got the Chief of Police to give him to me. He lived in a moat area at the restaurant that used to be there," said Mereland.

"He stayed with us, I guess, about 12 years. He started out about four feet long and he got up to eight feet long before he died," said Mereland. "People come in that knew Charlie as a child and say 'Where's Charlie?' and we say 'There he is' and point above the bar."

Holiday House originally opened in 1947. Mereland bought it in 1981. "It went through a stage of being Peducles but that started playing out as a concept," said Mereland of Peducles specialty of half-pound hamburgers. "I saw this new concept coming down the pike but it didn't have a chance in the long haul to make it," he said. "You know, the big about people eating down on red meat."

Mereland then tried Doc's, which offered an array of spicy chicken wings — cold, garden

Mary Howard

Barton Creek

Later Years
Upon his death, Charlie was stuffed and put on display in a Holiday House on Airport Boulevard. His successor, Charlie II, was a fixture at the Barton Springs Road location until the restaurant closed in 1983, at which point Charlie II retired to an alligator farm in Rockport.



If He's American

Ol' Alley the Alligator Needs a 'Dog Tag,' Too

By ANNE-MARIE EVANS
EVANS
Staff Writer

Beginning Jan. 1, man's best friend won't be the only one living a dog's life!

Alligators will be joining "the scene" with their own brand of dog tag.

Anyone with a pet alligator whether in the zoo or in the family bathtub has until Jan. 1, 1970 either to register or dispose of it, in accordance with Senate Bill 170 passed by the 61st Legislature.

The act is designed to protect the American alligator, a species on the rare and endangered list maintained by the Department of Interior.

Alligators which are lawfully obtained and held prior to the legislation are considered private property and may be retained, but are subject to control of the State as a protected species of wildlife, according to Howard

Lee, director for programs of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Before striking the panic button, all owners of the "affected" reptile should make sure their pet is a true American alligator. Most specimens sold as pets are juvenile caimans, which are imported from Central and South America and are not regulated by State law.

The American alligator resembles the Caiman in that both have rounded jaws but the latter features spectacles around his eyes. The American crocodile, another species known in this area and native to Florida, is completely distinct from the alligator since it has pointed jaws.

"I doubt seriously you'll be able to find many alligators here in Austin," said Steve Shoemake who works at Pets International. "even the crocodiles from Florida are

difficult to obtain since they have to be registered there," he added.

At the pet store, there are, however, various sized and prized caimans.

On a clue from the pet store employe, one alligator, of the true North American type — even his latin name checks, — was discovered at the Holiday House Restaurant on Barton Springs Rd.

Seven-foot Charlie has been there for about six or seven years. The story goes that he was discovered in the University of Texas fountain, and when no one claimed him and no one really wanted him, he was given to the restaurant.

The reptile has his own little pool and walking area. Although at this time of year he doesn't engage in much activity beyond sleeping, this reporter vainly searched for a volunteer to tag the "sleepy fellow."

Any other persons having alligators in their possession and desiring to keep them should apply for a special zoological permit from the Department. The application, which must be in the form of an affidavit, should show the number of specimens, when and how each was obtained, present length and weight and a brief description of the facility where the animal is to be kept.

The application should also contain an agreement that the specimen will be kept in healthy condition and that the owner will make an annual report on the condition of the alligator.

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Alligator-owners! Only 11 more days till Jan. 1!



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Leroy Foster and Charlie. (Staff Photo)

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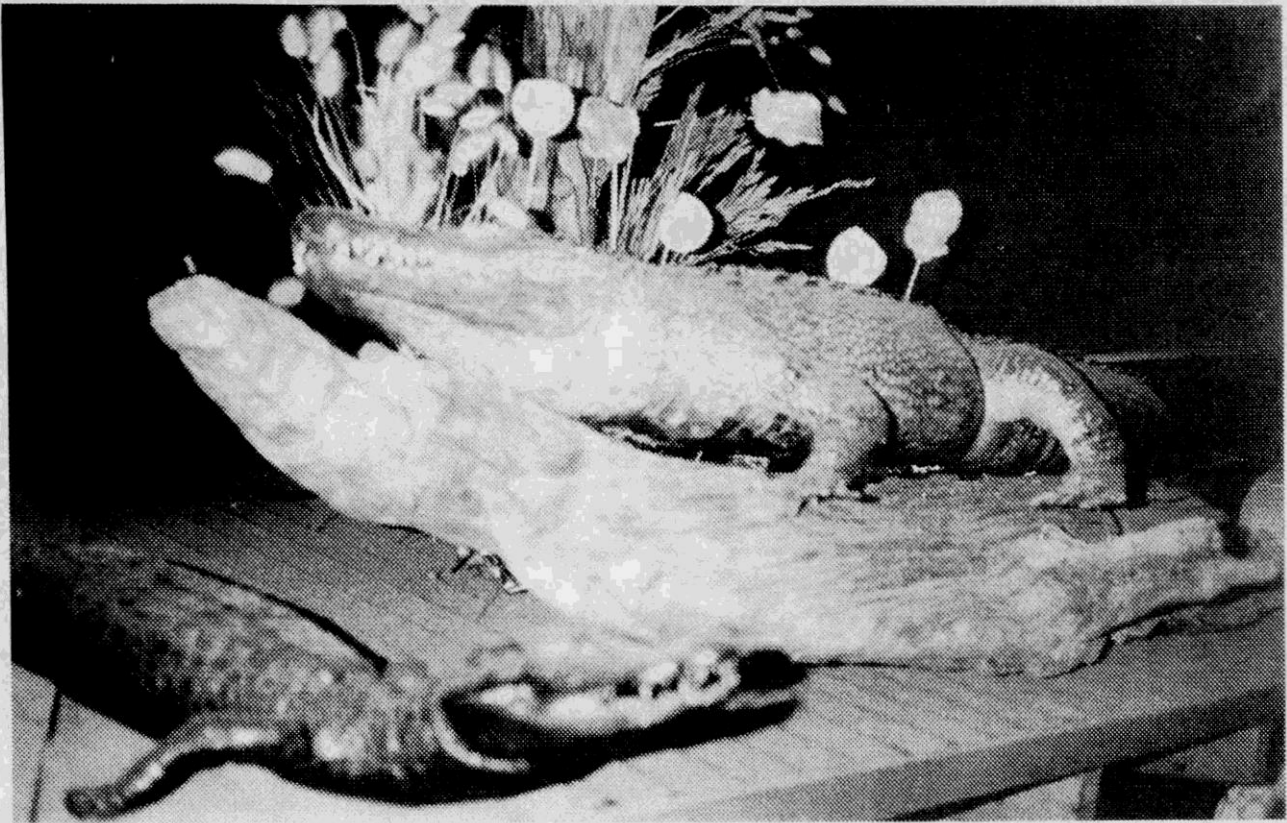


Photo by Mary Howard

Charlie, an 8-foot alligator, used to live in a moat behind the Holiday House on Barton Springs Road.

Barton Springs Road restaurant returns to roots at old location

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"We got Charlie from the University of Texas," said Ralph Moreland, Holiday House owner. "Some university students threw him in the Littlefield Fountain. I heard about it and got the Chief of Police to give him to me. He lived in a moat area at the restaurant that used to be there," said Moreland.

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Holiday House originally opened in 1947; Moreland bought it in 1952. "It went through a stage of being Peduncles, but that started playing out as a concept," said Moreland of Peduncles specialty of half-pound hamburgers. "I saw this new concept coming down the pike but it didn't have a chance in the long haul to make it," he said. "You know, the bit about people cutting down on red meat."

Moreland then tried Doobie's, which offered an array of spicy chicken wings — mild, medium

and hot. "The idea was the more chicken you ate, the more beer you drank," said Moreland. "I could see it wasn't a very good concept for Austin, Texas at this time. People were really waking up to the fact that the good times were out," said Moreland. People were pulling back on their discretionary money."

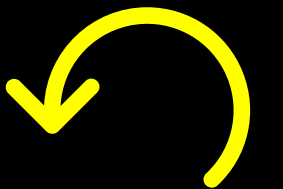
"I knew a Holiday House would fly, and it's been doing better than ever. It seems like the same kind of customers as before, only more of 'em," said Moreland. "Commitment to taking care of customers is the key. Even if they don't consciously think that, their subconscious does. People listen more to their subconscious when they choose a restaurant," he said.

Reward

A sizeable monetary reward is being offered by neighbors in the Horseshoe Bend area for information on the persons responsible for deliberately killing the three caged rabbits of a child in the neighborhood on Wednesday, June 8. If you

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Past



P CA 01003, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



Ponds in Rock Garden January 30, 1936

Zilker Park Has Pretty Rock Garden
 By ELIZABETH A. RENDALL
 (Austin American Statesman)

No need to pack bag and baggage and travel to distant shores, to visit some of the most beautiful and interesting places in the world, is a new series of scenic spots, recently developed, just across the street from the city center.

THE ZILKER PARK ROCK GARDEN, a series of stone-lined ponds, is a new series of scenic spots, recently developed, just across the street from the city center.

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Article about the Zilker Park Rock Garden The Austin American Statesman Jun 24, 1934

Present



The dry ponds remain an architectural feature of the park



Zilker Park Has Pretty Rock Garden

By **ELIZABETH A. KENDALL**
American-Statesman Staff

No need to pack bag and baggage and travel to distant climes, no need even to motor to Brackenridge park in San Antonio, or "oh" and "ah" over handsome and refreshing public garden spots where cooling rivulets and ferns join hands with clear pools and lily pads. Right here at home in Austin there is a rock garden of enchanting similarity to those you have always dreamed of and those you no doubt thought existed either miles away or only in romantic wisps of poetry.

And this joyful place was created all for you. The city of Austin has done and is doing its best to make of the tract given by Col. A. J. Zilker a park of charm as well as of usefulness. One area of perhaps four acres has been set aside as a terrace and rock garden in Zilker park, and, with expert planning and CWA labor, the park board and the CWA park department have made here one of the most attractive nooks in Central Texas.

How to Reach Rock Garden

There are two ways of approach. One may drive down into the Barton Springs inclosure proper and walk up the hill behind the bandstand, or drive up to a point near the Texas Reptile institute higher on the bluff and walk down to the

rock garden. Either approach affords a pleasing first view.

A few days ago the clumps of shasta daisies bordering the pools were at the height of their beauty and their whiteness enhanced the jewel colors of the blooming water lilies. Mark A. Murray, landscape gardener in charge of the rock garden, has planted and is planting with a view to having there continuous bloom. He has stated that his plans for fall flowers include as the dominant note chrysanthemums and that he will welcome any chrysanthemum cuttings or roots that local gardeners may have in larger quantities than they themselves need.

Goldfish and Turtles

In sun or shade the lily pools have a certain appeal and the calm of the wide spread, round green pads is only a curtain for the constant activity of the gleaming gold fish and the shy, tiny Japanese turtles, not to mention the more minute forms of life in water and in air. Moreover, there is one pool devoted to frogs and turtles, large and small.

From the gardens of Dr. T. S. Painter at his home, 506 West 33rd, came the majority of the water lilies. Cooperating with Charles Page of the city park board and F. A. Dale of the CWA park department, he supervised their placement in the rock "circles" that were made when the pools were made. Wooden boxes or tubs hold the cubic foot or more of earth soil in which each lily plant rests. About a third of the boxful is rich barnyard fertilizer and the rest black soil. On top there is a layer of sand to hold the soil so that it will not mix with the water and to keep the gold fish from disturbing the

mixture.

The water lilies at the rock garden are divided into two classes: tropical, those that presumably are not able to stand freezing but which have, incidentally, stood a number of winters in Dr. Painter's garden; and hardy, those that stand all weather, even that which freezes the water, just so that the roots are not frozen.

The tropical water lilies may be divided into two classes. The day blooming lilies awake at sunrise and continue in full bloom until about dusk, depending on the variety. The night blooming types open at dusk and close about 11 a. m. or noon, next day.

Of the night blooming lilies at the garden are the red one, Rubra Rosea, and the white, Juno.

Day blooming ones are: purple, Panama Pacific; orchid pink, Mrs. C. W. Ward, and blue, Pennsylvania.

The hardy ones are more numerous than the tropical kinds. The hardy double white one is the Gonnere. Others are: Sunrise, large yellow with flaring bloom; Chromatella, small yellow cupshaped; James Brydon, watermelon red; Escarboucle, ruby red; Rose Arey, cerise pink which floats on the surface; Venusta, cerise pink which stands three or four inches out of the water; Masaniello, light red cupshaped. The variegated apricot, peach and red lilies are termed Sunset lilies and they are named according to shape. The largest is Comanche, the smaller, Aurora and the cupshaped, Paul Harriot.

Later in the summer the double Chinese pink lotus will be blooming in the bog garden. This lotus, considered the finest of all varieties of the water lotus, is from Dr. Painter's garden.

No need to pack bag and baggage and travel to distance climes, no need even to motor to Brackenridge park in San Antonio, or "oh" and "ah" over handsome and refreshing public gardens spots where cooling rivulets and ferns join hands with clear pools and lily pads. Right here at home in Austin there is a rock garden of enchanting similarity to those you have always dreamed of and those you no doubt thought existed either miles away or only in romantic wisps of poetry.

And this joyful place was created all for you. The city of Austin has done and is doing its best to make of the tract given by Cal. A. J. Zilker a park of charm as well as of usefulness. One area of perhaps four acres has been set aside as a terrace and rock garden in Zilker Park, and with expert planning and CWA labor, the park board and the CWA park department have made here one of the most attractive nooks in Central Texas....

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Was There Ever a Nuclear Fallout Shelter in Zilker Park?



Rumor: There is a rumor that there is a cold war nuclear fallout shelter somewhere in Zilker Park.

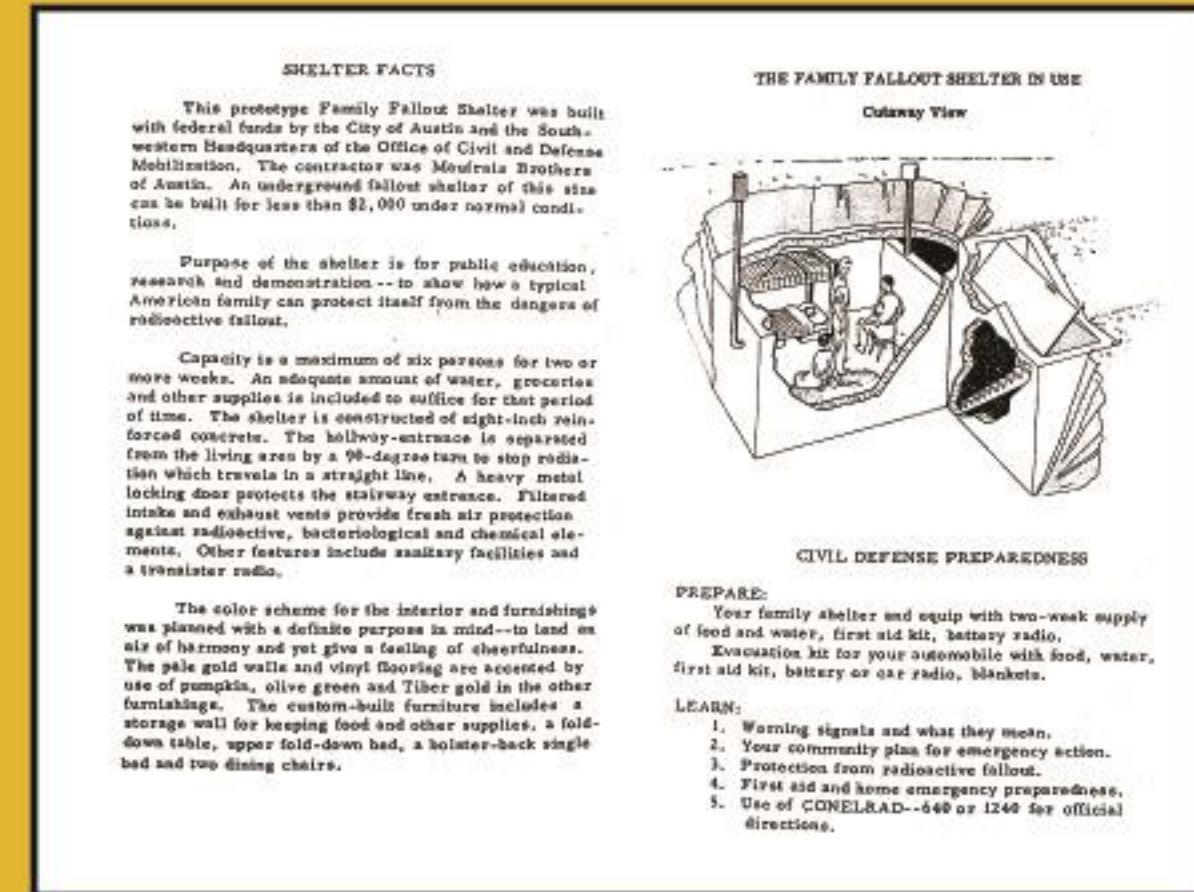
Fact: There is a nuclear fallout shelter in Zilker Park. In 1960 the city of Austin and the Office of Civil Defense Management and Department of Defense partnered to build a model shelter. It was used as a template for Austinites considering building one in their own yard during the cold war. It was designed to house up to six people for two weeks when fully stocked. The shelter, which is no longer open to the public, sits behind the Zilker Park Caretaker's Lodge.



Outside of Zilker Fall Out Shelter
(Courtesy of MARTIN DO NASCIMENTO / KUT)



Interior shot of the Zilker Fall Out Shelter
(Courtesy of Ben Abzug & The Civil Defense Museum)



Original Informational Pamphlet (Courtesy of City of Austin)

Film



Image From Film "Target Austin" Courtesy of Texas Archive of Moving Pictures)

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Radio

To learn more about the history of the Zilker Park fallout shelter check out this article from KUT 90.5 "How Austin Learned to Stop Worrying and Forget About the Bomb."

[Click Here](#)

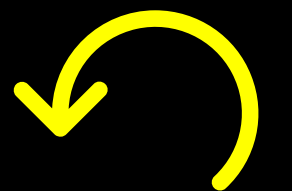
In 1960 Austin's local TV station KTBC produced a short film called "Target Austin" that depicts the fictional scenario of a nuclear missile strike on the city of Austin. The film takes place in Austin and was partially shot in the Zilker Park fallout shelter. The film can be viewed online at the Texas Archive of Moving Images.

[Click Here](#)

Target Austin



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How Austin Learned To Stop Worrying And Forget About The Bomb



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SHELTER FACTS

This prototype Family Fallout Shelter was built with federal funds by the City of Austin and the Southwestern Headquarters of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization. The contractor was Maufrais Brothers of Austin. An underground fallout shelter of this size can be built for less than \$2,000 under normal conditions.

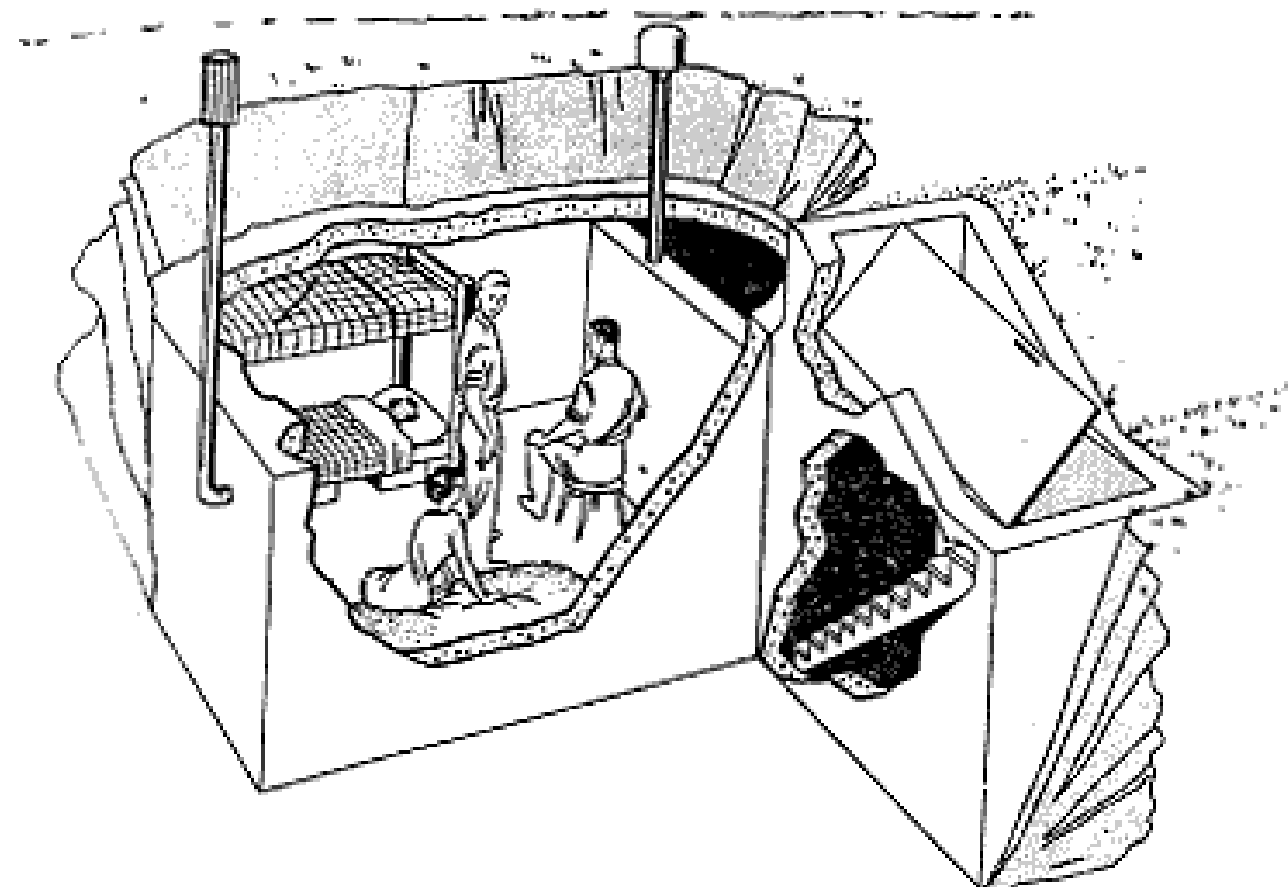
Purpose of the shelter is for public education, research and demonstration -- to show how a typical American family can protect itself from the dangers of radioactive fallout.

Capacity is a maximum of six persons for two or more weeks. An adequate amount of water, groceries and other supplies is included to suffice for that period of time. The shelter is constructed of eight-inch reinforced concrete. The hallway-entrance is separated from the living area by a 90-degree turn to stop radiation which travels in a straight line. A heavy metal locking door protects the stairway entrance. Filtered intake and exhaust vents provide fresh air protection against radioactive, bacteriological and chemical elements. Other features include sanitary facilities and a transistor radio.

The color scheme for the interior and furnishings was planned with a definite purpose in mind--to lend an air of harmony and yet give a feeling of cheerfulness. The pale gold walls and vinyl flooring are accented by use of pumpkin, olive green and Tiber gold in the other furnishings. The custom-built furniture includes a storage wall for keeping food and other supplies, a fold-down table, upper fold-down bed, a bolster-back single bed and two dining chairs.

THE FAMILY FALLOUT SHELTER IN USE

Cutaway View



CIVIL DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS

PREPARE:

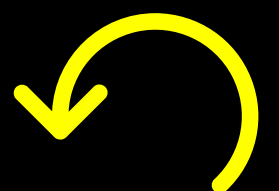
Your family shelter and equip with two-week supply of food and water, first aid kit, battery radio.

Evacuation kit for your automobile with food, water, first aid kit, battery or car radio, blankets.

LEARN:

1. Warning signals and what they mean.
2. Your community plan for emergency action.
3. Protection from radioactive fallout.
4. First aid and home emergency preparedness.
5. Use of CONELRAD--640 or 1240 for official directions.

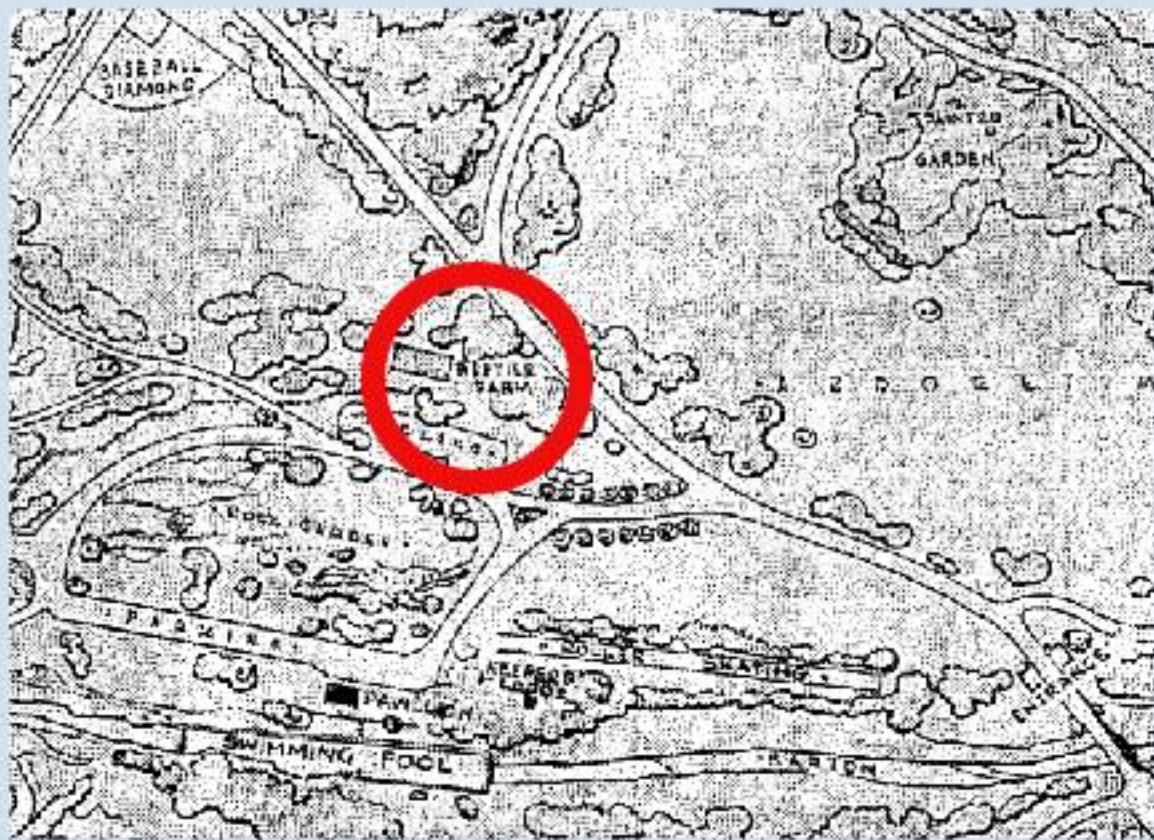
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Did you know that Zilker Park once have a reptile farm?

The Texas Reptile Institute, also referred to as the Reptile Farm or the Zilker Zoo, was open from 1933 to 1935. It was located roughly where the moontower now stands, north of the parking lot above the Rock Garden and south of Barton Springs Road. It had over sixty varieties of reptiles, including alligators, lizards, snakes, and turtles. At one point, they even had a baboon. Visitors could watch turtle races and dine upon fried rattlesnake sandwiches.

Where Was it?



The institute was located north of the upper parking lot.

Austin American Statesman May 4, 1934

What was there?

60 VARIETIES OF REPTILES TO BE IN ZILKER ZOO

Snakes, lizards, alligators, turtles — 60 varieties of the reptiles will be on exhibition at Zilker park daily beginning Sunday, according to G. E. S. Tordt, in charge of the Texas Reptile Institute, which is placing the exhibit here.

The institute had lizards, alligators, snakes, turtles, and a baboon.

Austin American Statesman July 15, 1934

Turtle Races



Terrapin Races Will Be Held at Reptile Farm

The latest thing in sports with which Austin folk may beguile themselves will be the terrapin races to be inaugurated Sunday at the Texas Reptile Institute at Zilker park. G. E. S. Tordt, manager, will turn loose eight or 10 of the liveliest turtles in his collection in a marked circle, and the one reaching the outside line soonest will be acclaimed winner. These races, which promise to be hilarious, will start at 10:30 a. m., and 4:30 and 7:30 p. m., according to Mr. Tordt.

The institute hosted turtle races.

Austin American Statesman September 16, 1934

Fancy a Fried Rattlesnake Sandwich?



Tordt hopes to be able to meet the growing local demand for rattlesnake meat Sunday at the institute. "It's surprising how the Austin public has come to appreciate this delectable food," Mr. Tordt said, "but the fact remains that we have a mighty hard time frying up enough of it to last more than a few minutes."

The institute served fried rattlesnake sandwiches.

Austin American Statesman July 15, 1934

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Zilker Park's 350 Acres To Be Ready For Use in Summer
 L E HARWOOD American-Statesman Staff
 The Austin American (1914-1973); Mar 4, 1934;
 ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Austin American Statesman
 pg. 1

Zilker Park's 350 Acres To Be Ready For Use in Summer

By L. E. HARWOOD
 American-Statesman Staff

No sooner does Austin's weather turn spring-like than our citizens begin wondering how Barton Springs park has stood the winter and what the city is doing to improve it.

Each year there have been betterments, and 1934 provides the exception—the place is being rebuilt, this time under supervision of the Civil Works Administration and the city park board, operating independently but entirely cooperatively. Several thousand Austin residents already have visited the playground, which this year will

take in the 350 acres of Zilker Park the first time. They have marvelled and wondered. Many thousand others will be out there this week, as long as the sunny weather lasts.

Large Entrance

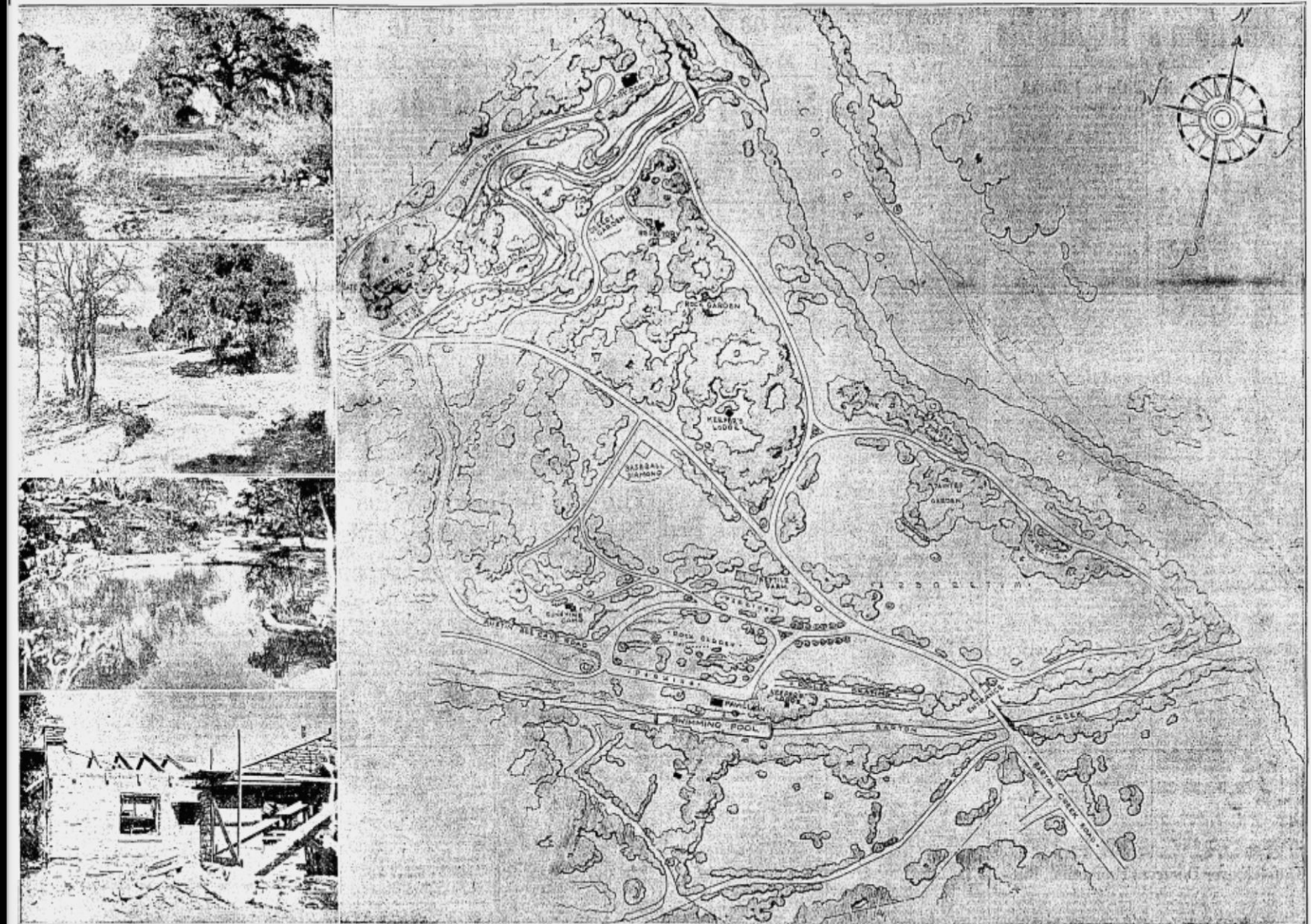
F. A. Dale, engineer for parks work of the Civil Works Administration, has prepared a map of the park development for the Sunday American-Statesman, and this is published this morning on page eight, along with four views of some of the work being done by CWA forces and by the city park board, with Charles Page, a member, as the active leader.

By late spring you will ride into Zilker park through a monumental entrance, under construction by CWA workers. This entrance is the most formal note in the city's new recreation center, which, while being constructed, is providing relief in the form of jobs to between 400 and 500 men formerly on unemployed rolls. The national government has invested about \$75,000 in Zilker Park, more here than in any other state park project.

The entrance, being erected 150 feet beyond the bridge over Barton

(Continued on page 7, col. 1)

Zilker Park and Barton Springs Complete Plans



The large map at the right, prepared by F. A. Dale of the Civil Works Administration, shows how Zilker Park's 350 acres is being put to work for the benefit of the citizens of Austin. The Barton Creek road is shown in the lower right corner, the entrance now being constructed is marked, and the roads show the layout of the project. The old trolley stretch along the barbed wire fence around Barton Springs is being dug up, save a part to be used for roller skating, and traffic routed so the entrance to the swimming pool park. The four pictures, taken by L. E. Harwood of the Sunday American-Statesman staff, show scenes within the park. At the top is a leafy horseback trail. Second is shown a roadway, winding between the trees. Third is a rock pool, around which is built a walk, with seats under the trees. At the bottom is a rest house, now under construction.

Zilker Park Place of Beauty Many Developments Are Carried On

(Continued from page 3)

work, is designed to frame the view of Austin's hills to the west. It is

being built for a 40-foot roadway, indicating that the city may someday increase the bridge to that width. Foundations have already been laid for the small pier on the right side part of the entrance and concrete foundations of a "paved" bus-from Texas Quarries at Cedar Park will be used as materials for the walk. Hedges of shrubs will line the approaches between bridge and entrance.

The old asphalt road from the bridge to the entrance of the swimming pool will be abandoned as a roadway. Cars headed for the pool in the future will enter the park than have to the left over a hill by the gravelled road, then through the old gravel pit and into the pool's parking area at the present site of the swimming pool. Intersecting with the road will be a new road built from the old entrance to the county road. Traffic there will be moved to a loop with competition at the point of entrance to the pool eliminated.

No More Vegetables
 The old road will not be torn up, Dale said, but will be used down for use as a horseback trail. It will be cut away to give a view from the position of Charlie Park's rock garden.

The area to the right of the new entrance has been the site, according to a vegetable farm, Mr. Dale said. The new construction will use it, according to all the various species of trees that will grow here.

This arborhouse, Mr. Dale explained, will be placed so that the view will be left open of the hills. It will be built in collaboration with Fred. H. C. Thayer of the university department of botany in the selection. Dr. Thayer believes this section

of the park will be of value to his department in practical study of various shrubs and trees.

The section between the rock cliff and the river in the area will be a planted garden. A drive will circle the arborhouse and along the river side, near the planted garden, there will be loop roads for those wishing to park. The entire area will be covered with an underground irrigation system, pipes for which already are being laid.

Provide Ample Water
 A new three-acre field of blueberries will be placed between the main road and the road leading to the swimming pool. Most water for irrigation are being hand-pumped from the new park. The old small ledge will be built southwest of Barton Springs in the new main road recently donated to the city by Col. A. J. Bitter, who also presented the city with the original 100-acre area.

Big House at Phoenix
 The big house at Phoenix, situated on the highest point in the north will soon be completed. It will be another fine structure here over before had the good fortune to hold their meeting in 1874 a red brick, with a 48 by 24 foot assembly room with windows at one long side that permit a perfect view toward Austin's skyline. The four in of Phoenix and the room has a large fireplace at either end. A side porch over the brink of the hill clearing from the Colorado river will be the scene of most social meetings and on this also is being constructed an outdoor fireproof-for seats like to gather around a campfire.

The refinery, a refreshment place for visitors occupies the day in the park, also is nearing completion. Its walls already are built on the roof is on, and workmen are

including the interior. It will have a commodious room, keeper's room, a kitchen, dining room and public tables. The refinery is situated east of the new planned for the arborhouse.

And A Real Waste
 The extreme western end of the park is being left entirely primitive and to the final spot for those who prefer quiet, secluded spots for their outings," Dale said.

Plans for the planting of small trees and the making of a desert garden out of the city gravel pit west of the refinery have been made. A horseback and foot trails also are being cut out along the cliff on the west end.

Dry Creek in the west end of the park is being dammed at two points to provide pools of water for that section.

The rapids there will be moved from the east side of the new road to Barton Springs in the west side. In addition to the above named points of interest the park will have a baseball diamond, the function

camp, the street light and other plant range. The latter two already have been completed.

Shoal Creek Project
 A second important city project to be turned over to the CWA, park engineer is the Shoal Creek development north of the bridge at 24th street.

The boulevard begins on the north end at 24th street and Shoal Creek avenue. It will cross the creek twice, crossing the creek twice.

The 10-foot span to be known as the park is being dammed at two points to provide pools of water for that section.

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ing the improvements at Camp Mabey. Here, a new road is being constructed to wind about the reservoir in a looped path, where a creek runs through the rear section will be dammed, bridged, and picnic grounds will be open for the public use.

A new rock entrance and road to the site house will change the appearance of the national guard some considerably.

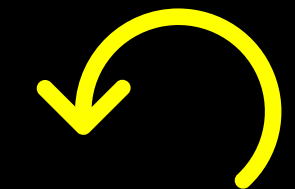
Golf Course Work
 Finally, the park office is improving the municipal golf course to the extent of about 14th. A new road into the place is being constructed along straight lines. workers are planting around the club house and space is being cleared to provide more parking space.

The most interesting part of the work to notice, however, is the fact that rough along the course are being cleared, making it possible to find many golf balls otherwise lost.

Mr. Dale's office also is supervising

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S. Tordt, in charge of the Texas
Reptile Institute, which is placing
the exhibit here.

The reptile exhibition will be a
permanent one, and officials will
work in co-operation with the Uni-
versity of Texas zoology department
and the state Pasteur Institute, Mr.
Tordt said. The city council recent-
ly gave permission to Tordt to place
the exhibit here.

No Snake Show

Only two other zoos in the United
States have collections of reptiles
to compare with the one to be dis-
played at the local zoo, Tordt
claimed.

"This will not be a snake show
in any sense of the word," the rep-
tile institute manager said. "It will
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tiles of the Southwest and of other
sections. At all times there will be
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pabilities of the reptiles."

Workmen have been busy for the
past several days installing enclo-
sures—described as safe lodging
places for the snakes and other
reptiles. The exhibition will be lo-
cated on the hill in Zilker park,
near where the old Zilker home
was located.

Seven Rattle Varieties

Among the poisonous snakes list-
ed to be displayed are seven vari-
eties of rattle snakes: The bleach-
ed rattlesnake, the desert rattles-
nake, the diamond back rattler,
and the green, timber, and horned
rattlesnakes.

Other poisonous snakes in the
display are the coral, the cotton
mouth moccasin, the tropical moc-
casin, and the copper head. A gila
monster, also poisonous, will be in-
cluded.

Some Harmless Types

Harmless snakes to be displayed
are the coachwhips, chicken snakes,
gopher or indigo, yellow bull, hog-
nose or spreading adder, black
snake, blue racer, corn snake, thun-
der snake, salt-and-pepper king
snake, chain king snake, scarlet
snake, grass snake, California strip-
ed racer, desert gopher snake, faded
snake and the Girardi racer.

Lizards will include Yarrow's
scaly lizard, the Sororan whip-tail-
ed lizard, western collared, desert
iguana, chuckwalla, a Texas vari-
ety of collard lizard, a five-foot-
long black iguana, and a green
iguana, six feet long.

Six varieties of water snakes na-
tive to Texas will be shown.

Also included in the exhibit will
be two varieties of boas from Mex-
ico, Mr. Tordt said.

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Workmen have been busy for the past several days installing enclosures—describes as safe lodging places for the snakes and other reptiles. The exhibit will be located on the hill in Zilker park, near where the old Zilker home was located.

Seven Rattlesnake Varieties

Among the poisonous snakes listed to be displayed are seven varieties of rattle snake: the bleached rattlesnake, the desert rattlesnake, the diamond back rattler, and the green, timber, and horned rattlesnakes.

Other poisonous snakes on the display are the coral, the cotton mouth moccasin, the tropical moccasin, and the copper head. A gila monster, also poisonous, will be included.

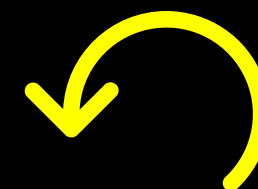
Some Harmless Types

Harmless Snakes to be displayed are coachwhips, chicken snakes, gopher or indigo, yellow bull, hognose or spreading adder, black snake, salt-and-pepper king snake, chain king snake, scarlet snake, grass snake, California stripped racer, desert gopher snake, faded snake and the Girardi racer.

Lizards will include Yarrow's scaly lizard, the Sororan whip-tailed lizard, western collared desert iguana, chuckwalla, a Texas variety of collard lizard, a five-foot-long black iguana, a and a green iguana, six feet long.

Six varieties of water snake native to Texas will be shown. Also included in the exhibit will be two varieties of boas from Mexico, Mr. Tordt said.

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Terrapin Races Will Be Held at Reptile Farm

The Austin American (1914-1973); Sep 16, 1934;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Austin American Statesman

pg. 14

Terrapin Races Will Be Held at Reptile Farm

The latest thing in sports with which Austin folk may beguile themselves will be the terrapin races to be inaugurated Sunday at the Texas Reptile Institute at Zillker park. G. E. S. Tordt, manager, will turn loose eight or 10 of the liveliest turtles in his collection in a marked circle, and the one reaching the outside line soonest will be acclaimed winner. These races, which promise to be hilarious, will start at 10:30 a. m., and 4:30 and 7:30 p. m., according to Mr. Tordt.

Mr. Tordt returned this week after a collecting expedition to Edna bringing back, among other snakes, a 30-inch coral. This coral snake,

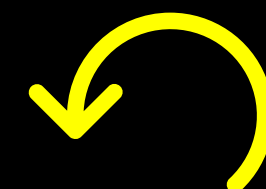
one of the most poisonous species in the country, was being kept as a household pet by an Edna family, unaware of its qualities. The two small boys of the family had harbored it inside their shirts. That no one was harmed proves, Mr. Tordt said, that a snake will not bite unless it is mistreated.

TO ENTER TEXAS WESLEYAN,

Miss Helen Judy of Briggs has arrived in Austin to enroll at Texas Wesleyan college Monday. She will reside at 704 West 23½ street.

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Lizards Added to Tordt's Reptile Institute G

The Austin American (1914-1973); Jul 15, 1934;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Austin American S
pg. 11

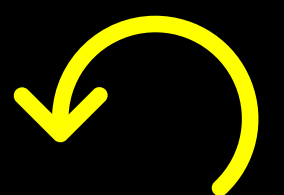
Lizards Added to Tordt's Reptile Institute Group

A rare and poisonous Mexican headed lizard, five other Mexican lizards, a seven and a half foot gopher snake and a family of large South Texas bull snakes will be introduced to the Austin public Sunday at the Reptile Institute at Zilker park, G. E. S. Tordt said Saturday.

Tordt hopes to be able to meet the growing local demand for rattlesnake meat Sunday at the institute. "It's surprising how the Austin public has come to appreciate this delectable food," Mr. Tordt said, "but the fact remains that we have a mighty hard time frying up enough of it to last more than a few minutes."

The snakes will be fed Sunday at 10:30 a. m., 4:30 p. m. and 8 p. m.

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What is the story behind the ruins of the old stone bridge on Barton Creek up above Barton Springs to the west?

The bridge was built 1889. The arch spanned 108 feet and was 26 feet in height. Heavy rains and floods in April, 1900 washed out the bridge. Remnants of the southern end of the bridge still exist today.

Before the Flood



1900's

After the Flood



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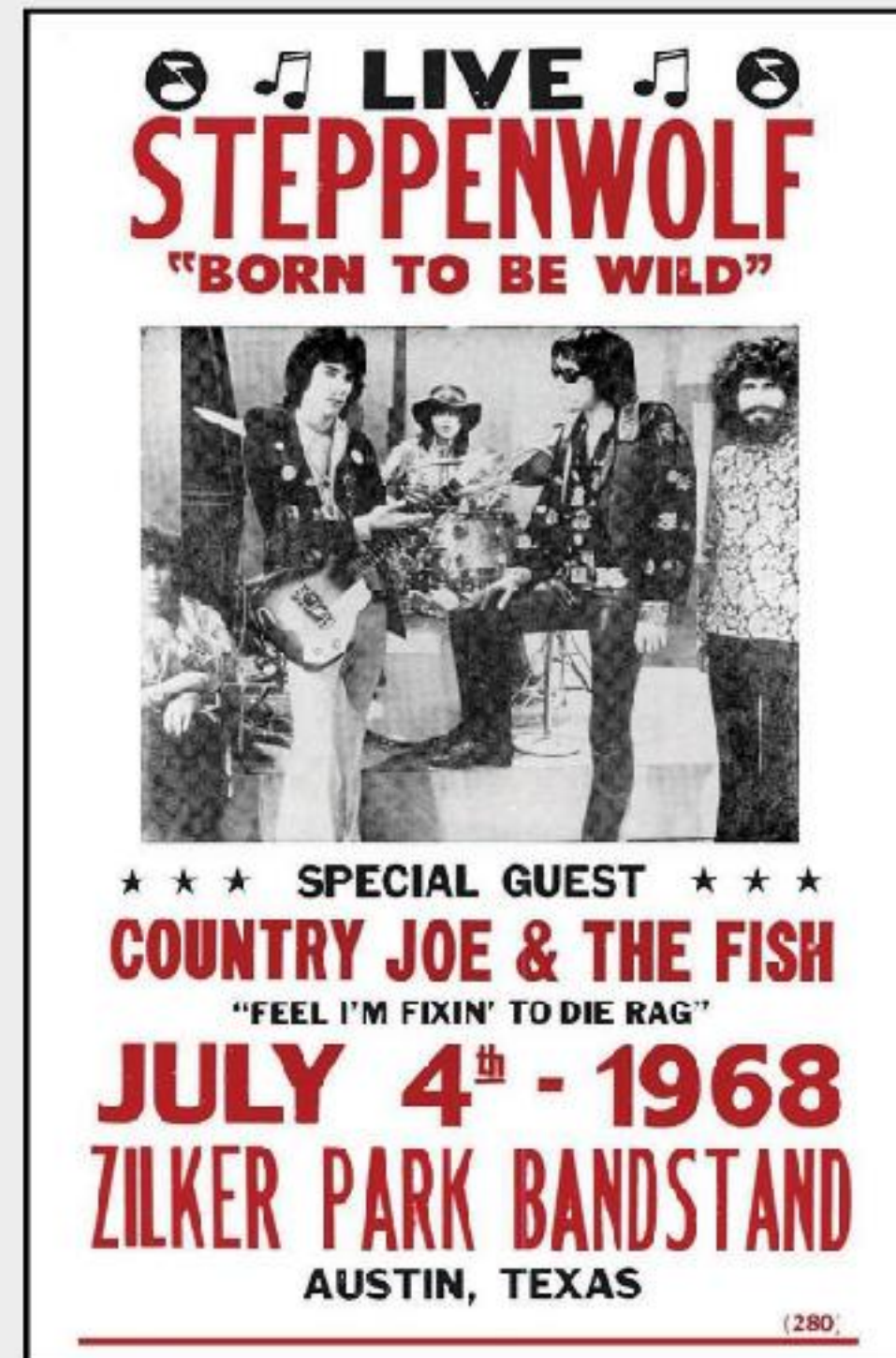
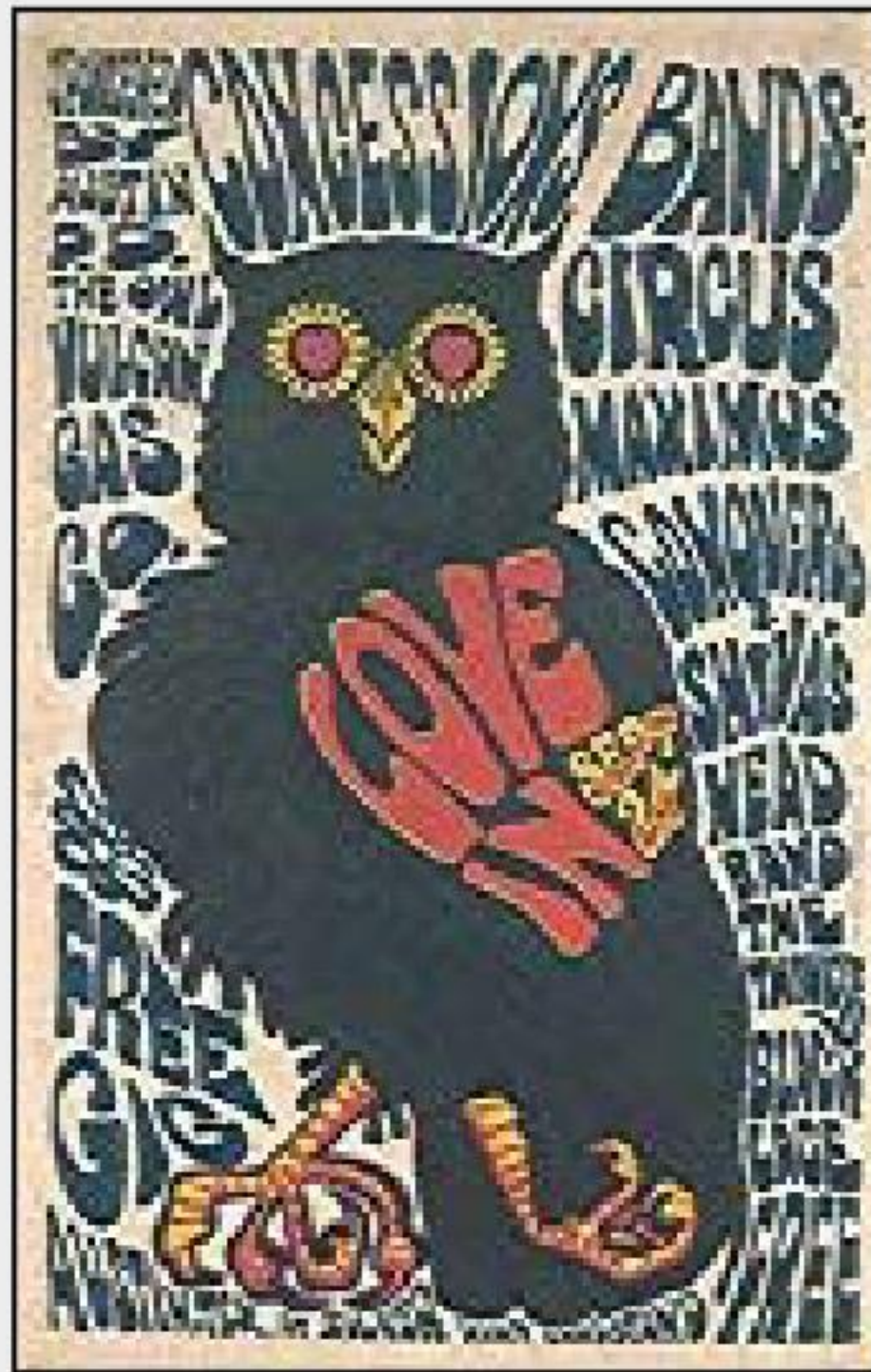


Today



Before there was the Zilker Hillside Theater there was the Zilker Park Bandstand

The old band stand was built into the hillside across from the bathhouse in 1936 and was used for musical performances. The concrete pad with stucco exterior once had latrines for men and women underneath. It is now referred to as the bunker and is used for storage.



Two posters from concerts played on the Zilker Park Bandstand in 1968

The top of the bandstand now serves as a shady picnic space

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