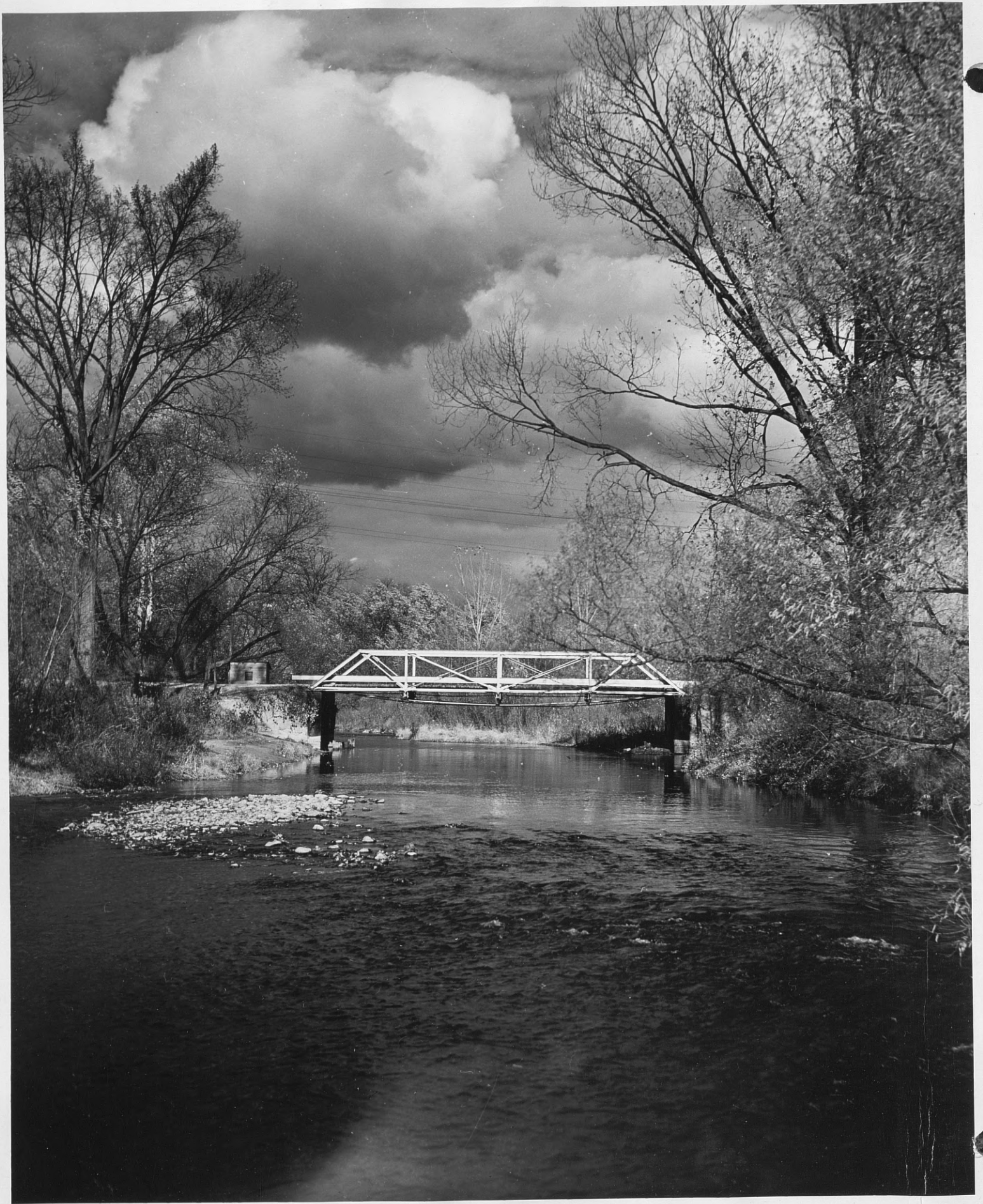


A Historical Study
of the
Huron-Clinton
Metropolitan Authority

Senne, Clifford

A HISTORICAL STUDY
of the
HURON-CLINTON METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

Clifford W. Senne



PREFACE

This thesis has been written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Forestry. It is not intended to be a lengthy and detailed writing---such a work would require many months of arduous effort, and would be for an entirely different purpose.

I have been compelled to omit certain minor details because of lack of space or poverty of data. For example, there are a few gaps in the chronology for which periods no data could be discovered. Then, too, there is little material, either published or unpublished, concerning the Clinton River valley; however, the Clinton is very similar to the Huron, and probably would have a history almost identical to the latter if such a history had ever been written.

The account, or narrative, which I have presented is justified by the data that were put at my disposal; these data are accurate, I believe, and I have tried to tell the story of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority as simply and as interestingly as possible. Whenever I depart from facts, I freely say so by using such words as "probably", "guesses", and "conjectures".

For errors in this thesis I assume complete responsibility. But without the aid of friends, it would never have come to fruition. Doctor Henry S. Curtis of Ann Arbor, a pioneer in the founding of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, has most generously given his time and assistance

in offering advice and providing data on the beginning phases of the project.

For his generosity in allowing me access to his unpublished data and ideas I am indebted to Professor H. O. Whittmore, Chairman, Department of Landscape Design, University of Michigan. Mrs. Alice H. Mulchahey, Assistant and Stenographer, College of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan, also an interested friend of the Huron-Clinton project since its beginning, has been extremely cooperative and helpful by assembling much of the published and unpublished information on the project and making this material available to me.

To Professor Shirley W. Allen, Professor of Forestry, School of Forestry and Conservation, University of Michigan, I owe a debt of gratitude for encouraging me to write on this subject, and for guiding me through the work from start to finish. Finally I wish to acknowledge the aid of various members of the staff of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority who have provided me with information which has not been published to date. Mr. Van Buskirk, Engineer, provided me with some information concerning present activities; Mr. DeTurk, Educational Director, very generously furnished me with the many fine photographs which I have used to illustrate this thesis; Mr. E. Savich, Art Draftsman, was very cooperative and helpful in providing me with the maps contained herein. Without the efforts of these Authority men and the others cited above, the writing of this thesis would have been impossible.

Clifford W. Senne

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INTRODUCTION

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority is a joint Commission, or Authority, for the five counties of Wayne, Washtenaw, Livingston, Oakland, and Macomb, in southeastern Michigan. This Authority represents the people of those counties in planning, developing and maintaining an adequate system of parks, parkways, playgrounds, bathing beaches and other recreational features. The greater part of this system will follow, and be built around, the valleys of the Huron and Clinton rivers. Insofar as possible, the parkways will probably parallel the rivers, and connecting drives will branch out to parks and other features of the system which are not located on the rivers. X

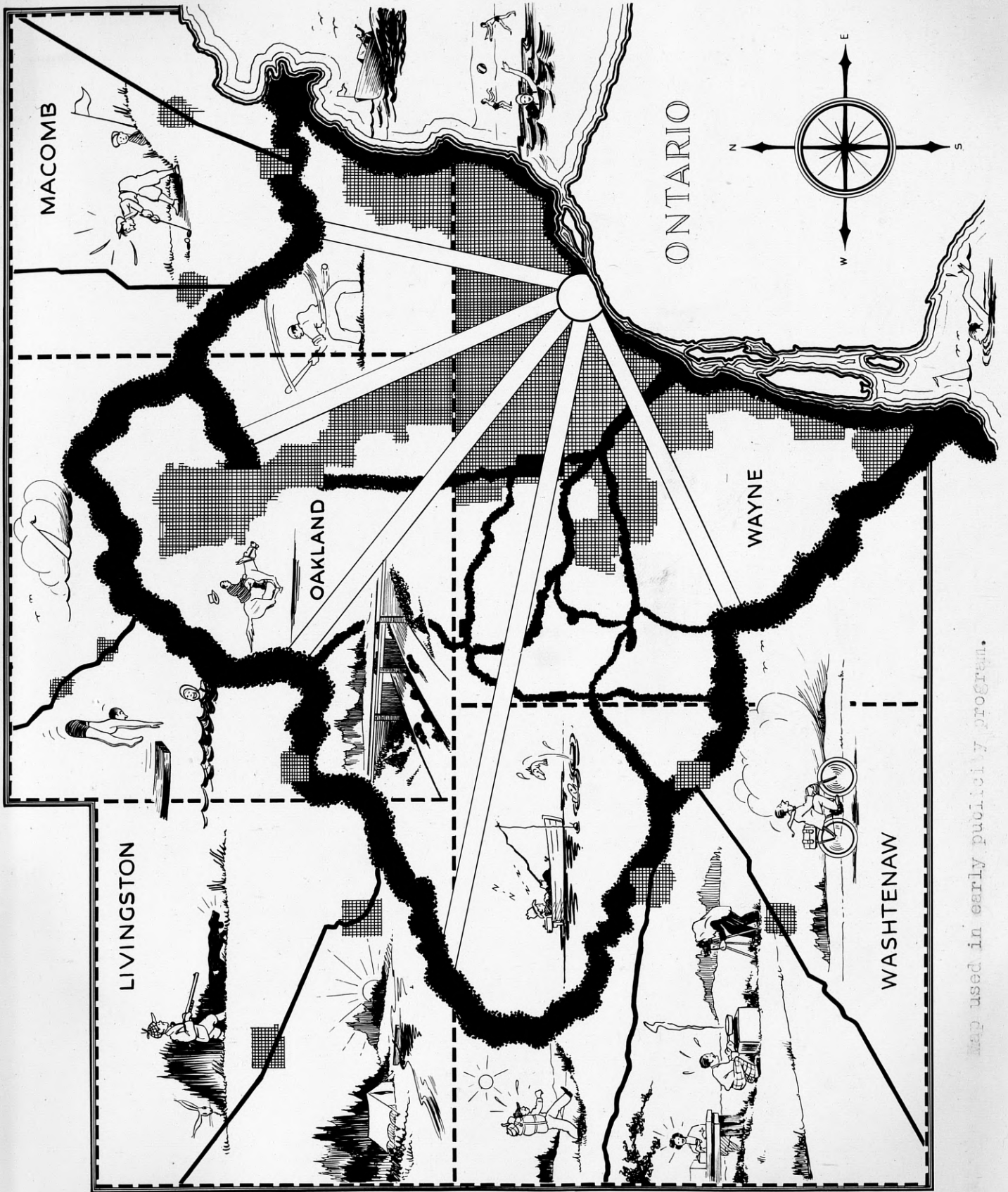
The story of the beginnings of this organization is one of public-spiritedness, hard work, sacrifice, and sheer determination. The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority did not spring into being over night - a few individuals possessed of great imagination and initiative dreamed, planned, and fostered the idea through its infant stages. X

The idea of such a project is not new; cooperating counties in other states have set up similar authorities or commissions for like purposes. New York, Boston, Chicago and Cleveland to mention just a few, have made tremendous strides in metropolitan planning and development, and

recreational facilities have multiplied rapidly as the result of the creation and functioning of these agencies.

When considering recreation needs of the people the nationally accepted standard is that there should be an acre of park or play area for every hundred people. The condition existing before the creation of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was roughly as follows: Should population trends in the Metropolitan district remain unchanged, and acreage in the district remain the same until 1950 or 1960, there would be one acre for about every 9,700 people. Until the establishment of the Authority, the Detroit metropolitan area was about the only densely populated area in the United States that had so little realized its recreational needs, or if these needs were apparent, little or nothing had been done to remedy the situation.

With the institution of The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, the future looks bright for the recreation-seekers of the metropolitan district, and a well trained and efficient commission is now diligently working toward a better and more pleasant life for all through adequate and wholesome recreational facilities.



Map used in early publicity program.

Part I

BC? ----- AD 1935

THE RIVERS

Neither the Huron nor the Clinton rivers are what could be termed "spectacular" or "unusual". They are both rather placid streams for the greater part of their extent, and they are typical of countless hundreds of unsung rivers that may be found from Maine to Florida, west across the Great Plains and throughout the western expanses of the United States. As rivers go, these two streams are quite conservative and steady in their habits and behavior. Their strongest flow usually occurs during the months of March, April and May. Floods or droughts are rare because of the stabilizing influence of the many lakes with which the rivers are connected. These lakes act as equalizing reservoirs, filling up to high levels in winter and spring, but gradually giving out their excess waters during the summer months.

There are mild differences of character of the rivers as one proceeds from their sources to their mouths. In places one may think he is looking at a mill pond, so still and calm; at other places the rivers churn over rocks creating rapids where there is a sharp drop in elevation. Lake Whittlesey, a large glacial lake, now disappeared, created the flatlands that extend roughly from Utica to Ypsilanti and southeastward to what is now Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and Lake Erie. The lower reaches of the rivers that are included in this area are slow moving, as though tired from their trip from the uplands. Whittemore calls these variations in the

rivers "phases" when he says,

The Huron River, in its course from Big Lake, northwest of Pontiac, to the marshes of Lake Erie, has three distinct phases. First, there is the intermorainal basin which it drains from Big Lake in the northeast to South Lake and Stockbridge in the west. Here is a succession of lakes and swamps, interspersed with gravel hills and outwash plains, between which the river, ever growing in size, is mostly a deep and placid stream. Here one can canoe without interruption, except for small dams at Commerce and Milford, all the way to Base Line Lake and Peach Mountain.

In the distance, giant morainal hills rise above the skyline..... At Strawberry Lake begins the delightful chain of lakes of the Lakeland region through which the river flows. Strawberry, Zukey, Bass, Whitewood, Loon, Base Line, Portage and Little Portage Lakes are all in the chain and afford unexcelled canoeing and resorting.

The gap between Peach Mountain and University Observatory Hill, permits the Huron to leave the lake country and enter its second phase, that of a swift stream pouring over a series of natural rocky rapids or old broken-down mill dams. Here the valley is narrow and deep, with steep hills or sharp wooded bluffs on either side as it cuts directly across the general line of the moraines. From Base Line Lake to Ypsilanti where it enters its third phase the river drops 171 feet.....

Below Ypsilanti, the third phase takes the form of a meandering stream in a flat valley between low bluffs--a depression through the old glacial lake bottoms. Again quietly flowing, with continuous curves, the river displays beauty of a new type between banks of tall graceful lowland trees, even if less exciting than its picturesque plunge from Base Line Lake to Ypsilanti. After many miles of seemingly aimless wandering from side to side in its shallow valley, it spreads out into the Lake Erie flats and marshes and loses itself in the great lake.....

The Clinton, like the Huron, also has its three phases: the lake swamp country of Oakland County, west and north of Pontiac; the swift falling stream from Pontiac through Rochester to Utica; and a slowly winding course from Utica to the flats of Lake St. Clair.¹

When the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was still only in the dream stage, Doctor Henry S. Curtis compiled a book which was never published. This book was called the "Huron Valley Guide," and it consisted of contributions from many sources. It makes very interesting and absorbing reading, and the temptation to include, verbatim, one of the more interesting parts is too great to resist. The part which I have reference to concerns the geology of the Huron River, and was written by Frank Leverett of the U. S. Geological Survey.

The story of the Huron is the tale of a young and vagabond river that has wandered about over its territory as few other rivers have ever done. It was less than forty thousand years ago that the stream took its rise at the edge of the ice cap which then covered the state of Michigan except for an irregular strip running up through the center of the state to where the river has its source.

It followed its present channel as far as Base Line Lake, but there it found its course to the Southward blocked by the ice sheet and turned westward, flowing across the present beds at the Grand, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Rivers to discharge into the Kankakee and thence into the Mississippi. As the stream was at this time fed by glaciers on three sides which must have been melting rapidly, it became a mighty river nearly as large as the Ohio, as the shores of its old channel indicate.

1. Harlow Olin Whittemore, "The Proposed Huron-Clinton Parkway," *The Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review*, Vol. XLIV, No. 19, April 23, 1938.

As the ice melted to the south and east, the river turned southward into its present channel and excavated a wide valley to Dexter where it made a detour to the south and east and reentered the present valley below Delhi. The western front of the glacier was now at Ann Arbor leaving a ravine along Washtenaw Avenue. This stream flowed where the Fairview Cemetery now stands, made a sweep through the city by Ferry Field and entered the Raisin and Lake Maumee at Tecumseh. From this lake its waters escaped through the Fort Wayne outlet into the Wabash and the Ohio.

As the ice continued to melt Lake Maumee extended northward along the face of the glacier beyond Ypsilanti with a branch running up to Ann Arbor. Here the Huron built a delta at the head of the estuary. The terrace along the Ann Arbor Railroad west from the Pontiac Road was made at this time. In Ypsilanti Lake Maumee formed the bar on which the water tower now stands with its beach running through Highland Cemetery.

Lake Maumee ultimately extended northward around the Thumb into the Saginaw Valley. From thence its waters were discharged through the Grand River Valley and connections into Lake Chicago, which was the lower end of what is now Lake Michigan, thence the waters of the Huron found their way again into the Mississippi.

The large lake of the Erie Basin, Lake Whittlesey, now covered the lower reaches at the Huron and formed a strong beach just below Ypsilanti with a delta extending up through the present site of the city, forming the terrace on which the business section west of the river stands.

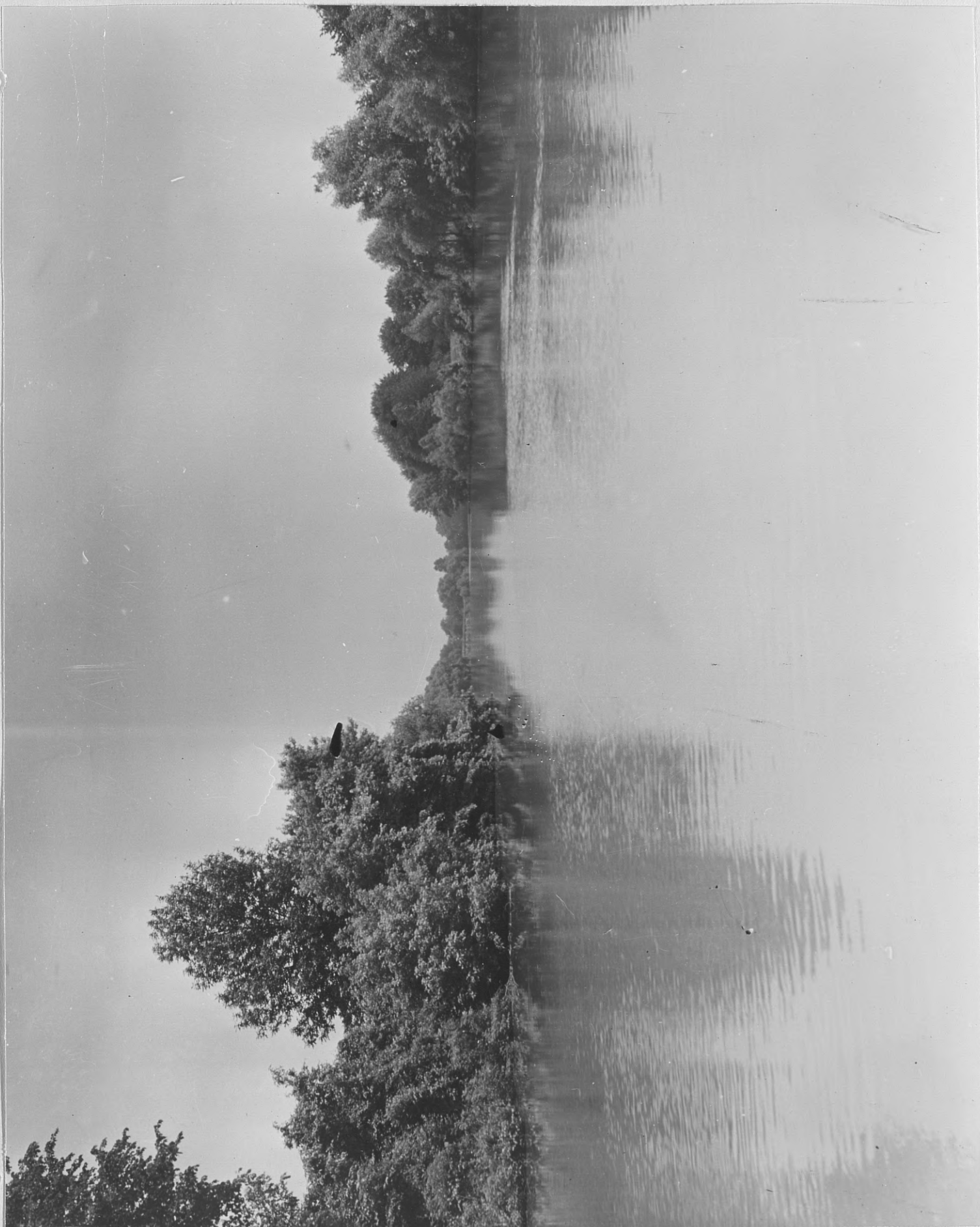
As the ice melted from the Erie basin and the waters flowed eastward, the mouth of the Huron moved eastward with the receding waters forming a series of deltas from Belleville down to and into the lake. The water now found escape through Lake Erie out along the Ontario ice cap by Syracuse and down the Mohawk and the Hudson to the Atlantic. The outlet from Lake Erie must have been lower then than now, for the waters were drawn down to a much lower level than the present, and the Huron built a delta many miles out into Lake Erie.

About eighteen thousand years ago, it is estimated, the ice was so far melted out of the Ontario basin that the waters began to flow over Niagara Falls and down the St. Lawrence.

The Huron has thus in succession discharged its waters into the Kankakee, the Wabash, the Grand, into Lake Erie and the Hudson, and into the Gulf of St. Laurence.

The only rock artery in the bed or bluff of the river are in the vicinity of Flat Rock and Rockwood, near the mouth. In places the river is at a level of 150 to 200 feet above its rock bed.¹

¹Frank Leverett, U. S. Geological Survey, "Story of the Huron River", "Huron Valley Guide," unpublished manuscript, School of Architecture and Design Library, University of Michigan.



Clinton River, Macomb County



Clinton River northeast of Pontiac

INDIANS OF THE FIVE COUNTY AREA

At one time the Huron, or Wyandotte, Indians had a temporary reservation on the Huron at a point about four miles west of Flat Rock. It was from this tribe that the Huron river derived its name. The Wyandottes were of Iroquois stock, and their villages on the Huron were spread along the river as far as Ypsilanti.

In the Huron River Park west of Flat Rock there is a stone monument marking the site of the reservation mentioned above. This monument is in the form of a wigwam and bears the following inscription:

"In memory of Chief Quoqua, a Wyandotte.
This monument marks the last reservation
of the Wyandotte Indians
Occupied 1818 to 1842"

Archaeologists have identified as many as ten Indian villages, about the same number of burial places, and five ancient mounds, in areas along, and adjacent to the river. These sites have been located on archaeological maps, but it is doubtful if they can be noticed now by a casual observer. Archaeologists are now engaged in attempting to piece together the relationships, cultural and otherwise, of the various tribes that occupied this area before the advent of the white man. A culture which has been called the Glacial Kame Culture by archaeologists, existed in the general region of Southern Michigan, Northwestern Ohio, and Northeastern Indiana, and the Indians here during historic time

may have been descendents of this ancient focus. This culture is estimated to have lasted from about 800 AD to 1000 AD, this time period being known as Burial Mound I.

Another ancient culture which flourished in this general area from about 900 AD to 1300 AD was the Hopewell Culture. Southern Ohio was the center of this culture, but subsidiary centers existed in Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin. It is also quite possible that the Indian tribes in the Michigan area during historic time were descended from early Hopewell Culture.

During the historical period the Huron Valley was occupied by various Algonquin tribes at different times. Among these tribes were the Wyandottes, Potowatomie, Sauk, Miami, Ottawa, Chippewa and Mascoutens. However, during Pontiac's campaign around Detroit this area was held, temporarily, by his allies from the western tribes. About the time that the first accounts of this part of the state were being written the Sauk, Miami, and Mascoutens disappeared from the valley.

Many of our fine highways and less important roads in Michigan closely follow old Indian trails. These trails were sometimes very long, and extended in several directions from central points or strategic locations. At one time there was a trail from Lake Erie to Dexter, following the banks of the Huron, and from Dexter this trail extended on westward. After the War of 1812 the Sauk Indians received

annual stipends from the British government for their services during the war, and in order for this tribe to collect their rewards it was necessary for them to travel from their villages in southwestern Michigan, northern Indiana, and Illinois to Fort Malden on the Detroit River. The trail followed by those Indians became known as the old Sauk trail and later became the Chicago Turnpike, which is now known as U. S. Highway 112. The Sauk trail crosses the Huron at Ypsilanti, and three other trails converged at the ford where Ann Arbor now stands.

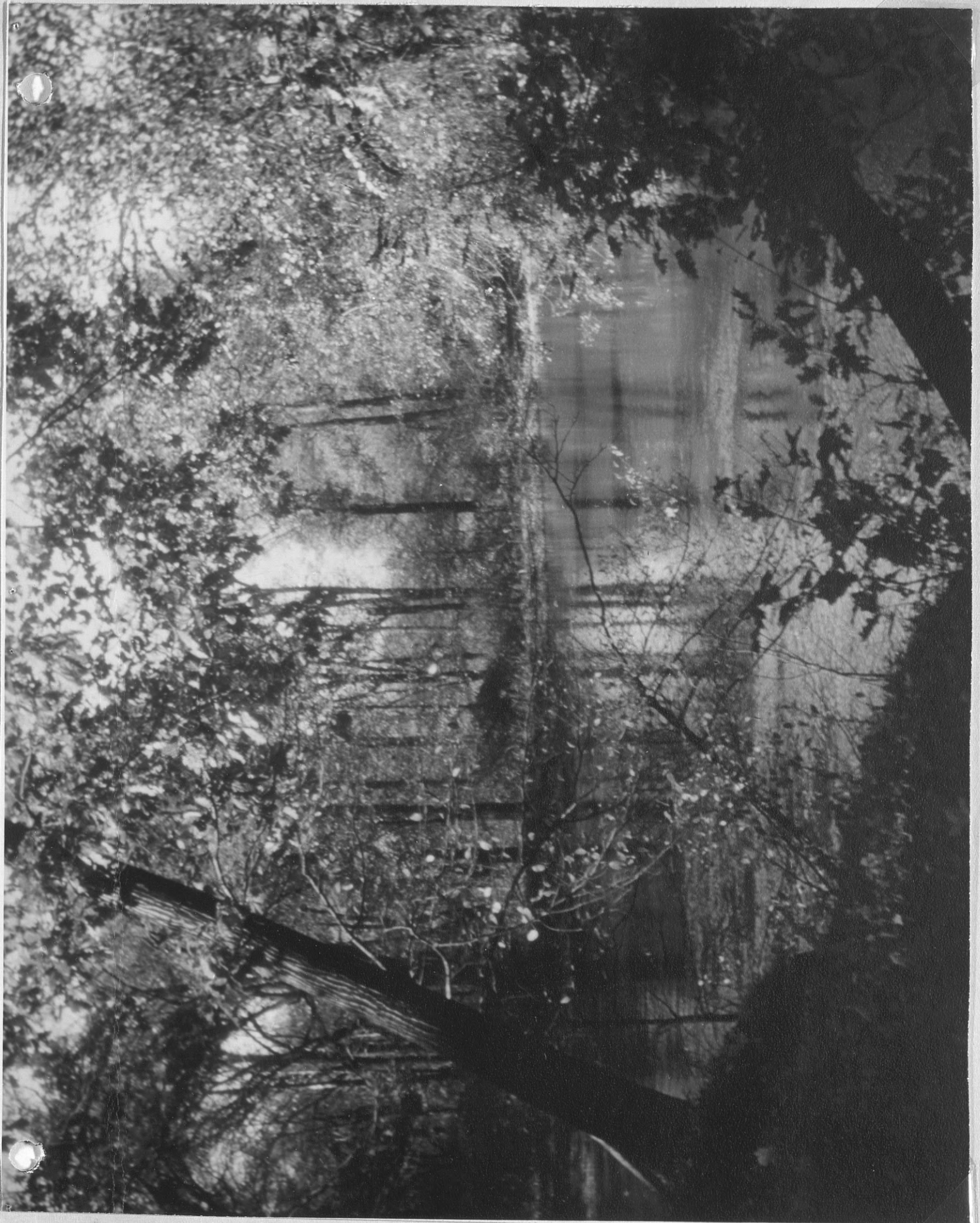
Much of the Indians' travel was done by water. The light birch bark canoes could traverse many streams and tributaries to points which are now inaccessible by such means. In discussing water travel, Hinsdale states:

When the season permitted, pirogues crossed the Lower Peninsula without unloading by way of the Huron, Little Portage and River, and the swamp waters of the Grand River and down to Lake Michigan.¹

During earlier times the Clinton river was also called the Huron, and the two rivers, with the extensively used portage between their headwaters, could almost be considered a single stream. However, so much

¹W. B. Hinsdale, "The Indians of the Valley," Huron Valley Guide, unpublished manuscript, School of Architecture and Design library, University of Michigan.

confusion resulted from the location of eastern claims that in 1824 the northern river was named Clinton River by an act of the legislature.



Scene at Kiskadden Tract near French Landing



Old structure carrying Clinton Canal over flume to Yates cider mill, Oakland County near Rochester, Michigan.

THE EARLY SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE HURON RIVER

Before the coming of the white man, the main route used by the Indians in getting from Lake Erie to Lake Michigan was by way of the Huron as far as Portage Lake, a portage of about three miles to the Grand River, and then down the Grand River to Lake Michigan. Later, many voyageurs, trappers, settlers and other white men used the same route extensively.

For more than one hundred years Detroit was the only settlement of any consequence in this part of Michigan, and it was from this point that most of the early settlers began their westward trek. Many of these pioneers first went overland via a trail cut through the forest from Detroit to Ypsilanti. From here travel was largely by water, the route described above being the most popular, if not the only logical one.

The river served the early settlers not only as a means of travel, but it also furnished power to run the grist mills, saw mills, and later on, the paper mills and woolen mills that sprang up at intervals along the stream. Thus the river had much to do with the establishment of most of the early settlements along its banks. Dams were usually built where a head of water could be built up to turn the water wheels, and the tributaries at their mouths were the most economical places to erect such works.

Small settlements grew up around those dam sites, and eventually developed into thriving towns. Dexter, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Belleville, Flat Rock and Rockwood were located also at the crossing of Indian trails.

The railroads later determined where the main growth of industry and population would be, but they had nothing to do with the early settlements, as the first railroad here was constructed in 1838, some years after the towns had been settled. These settlements also existed before the coming of the main Detroit-Chicago highways. The river, on the other hand, was determinative in the location of the railroad. Instead of taking the shorter route through Ypsilanti, Saline and Coldwater, the railroad followed the easier grade of the Huron from Ypsilanti to Dexter and thence beyond the valley to Jackson. This, together with a north and south railroad, and the establishment of the county seat here, gave Ann Arbor a headstart in becoming the greatest center of population and industry in the Huron Valley.

Beginning at the mouth of the Huron, a brief look will be taken at the early settlements, proceeding upstream in order. Silver Creek is at the mouth of the river, and is the latest of the settlements.

Next is Rockwood, one of the oldest towns in the valley. This town was settled soon after 1812, and in its earlier days it had a large sawmill. An old north

and south trail eventually became what is now U.S. highway 56, and two railways between Detroit and Toledo cross the stream at this point.

Flat Rock at different times has been called Vreeland, Smooth Rock, and Brownstone. Its present name is derived from the character of the river bed here. Flat Rock was probably the oldest settlement in the valley, but records are not always reliable. An old history mentions the village in connection with the battle of Brownstone in 1812, another speaks of the village of Vreeland, founded in 1817, while Burton¹ gives 1828 as the date of its founding. A good guess is that Burton meant that the town has been known as Flat Rock since the date assigned by him.

About six miles upstream is New Boston, a town which was settled in 1842. It is a town of about 500 people (about 1940), and is unincorporated. Since earliest days it has had good water power for a grist mill, and the Pere-Marquette railroad links it with Plymouth on the north and Toledo on the south.

In 1834 Belleville was settled, and since 1881 when the Wabash railroad was built the town has grown considerably. Rawsonville was one of the settlements developed around a damsite. It began in 1828 and still furnishes pleasant homes to a few occupants of the houses which remain after the dam has moved and industry has migrated to other centers.

¹ Clarence Monroe Burton 1853-1932, Local historian.

First among the up-river towns to be settled was Ypsilanti. In 1809 an Indian trading post was established at the present site of the Detroit Edison Company. This post was established by Colonel Gabriel Godfrey, and was located along the Potawatomie Trail. The first house was built here in 1823, and at that time the place was called Woodruff's Grove; this site was about a mile downstream from the present city. When the Detroit-Chicago Turnpike was built in 1825 the town moved to its present site. Judge Woodward founded the town, and named it after Demetrius Ypsilanti, a Greek General, who had just then been attaining renown by his military victories against Turkey. Ypsilanti grew fast; in 1826 a distillery became established there, and this was followed by a saw mill built by John Stewart. Two years later other forerunners of a long line of Ypsilanti factories were established. Among those were the Hardy and Reading Flour mill and the Mark Morris woolen mill. Later on, by 1876 the Cornwell Paper Mill was added, and the present Peninsula Mill dates from 1867.

Ann Arbor was settled in 1824 by John Allen and Elisha Ramsey. These settlers arrived here on February 6 of that year after a long trip overland on horseback. They settled on Allen's Creek, a short distance away from the river, and here they built a dam to furnish water power for a grist mill and saw mill. The two Anns, the wives of these

pioneers followed a little later, and it was the grape arbor maintained by these two women that suggested the town's name, Anns' Arbor, later shortened to Ann Arbor. By May 25, 1824 the pioneers were selling lots from the first map of Upper Ann Arbor and by 1832 Lower Ann Arbor had been plotted, with its ambitious Broadway, Wall Street and Maiden Lane. Two city blocks were reserved, one for a court house and another for a jail. The first county judge was Judge Dexter - he took office in 1826, and in 1829 he purchased the first paper, the Western Emigrant, which had been started by Thomas Simpson.

The town of Dexter was founded in 1824 by Judge Dexter, and he laid out the town with streets ninety feet wide. His large mansion soon became famous for its social and political gatherings, and the twenty-two room structure still stands. For some unknown reason Judge Dexter located the county seat, not in Dexter, but in Ann Arbor and later he purchased large tracts of land from the Indians. The Judge also became prominent, not only in the development of Washtenaw County, but in places as remote as Saginaw. Judge Dexter established his own post office in Dexter in 1826, and arranged for weekly mail delivery from Ann Arbor. He then started two saw mills, one on Mill Creek and, in partnership with Isaac Pomeroy, another on the site of the present Dover Mills. Later, he became interested in several grist mills.

All of these settlements grew out of the great western migration which began shortly after the close of the Revolutionary War, and continued until the 1890's. Some of the settlers pushed on farther westward, but others chose to remain in the valley and settle the towns described above. The location of these settlements was largely determined by Indian trails and the river, but when the railroads and highways came later, these latter transportation facilities decided which towns should thrive and prosper, and which should wither and die.

The river from Milford to Dexter was not in the line of movement, and the settlement of this part of the valley is another story. However, it was water power that led to the selection of the site of Milford at the junction of Pettibone Creek with the Huron. As early as 1832 a saw mill had been erected here, followed by a grist mill in 1836.

Part II

AD 1935 ---- AD 1948

1936

Perhaps many people in the metropolitan district of Detroit had long before this time thought of doing something to improve their recreational facilities. Nothing constructive had been done, however, along these lines other than the establishment of a few scattered parks that were inadequate for the needs of the area's tremendous population.

The first reported steps toward the creation of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority were made in Ann Arbor. During the year local river improvement commissions and other civic-minded groups of people began thinking about and working on, problems directly related to the Huron River Valley. River pollution was one of the most urgent problems that had to be solved. Sewage disposal and dumping of trash into the river and along its banks menaced the well being of all who used the river. Fish and wildlife habitats were being destroyed; improper land use created erosion problems; aesthetic values of the river valley were declining, because of the unsightly fly-by-night shanties that dotted the shores of the river, each shanty having its satellite trash heap. For anyone using the river, these conditions must have created an extremely distasteful effect, and a few decided to do something to right the wrongs that had been done to the river, its valley, its flora and fauna.

Two of the leading pioneers in improving the Huron River were Doctor Henry S. Curtis, and Professor Harlow O. Whittemore, both of Ann Arbor. These men envisioned a beautiful river valley, rich in charm, with the river sparkling and clean, its banks clothed in verdure, and parks dotting its shores for the benefit and pleasure of all. They saw inviting parkways beckoning to the motorist and inviting him to explore the beauties of the valley; they saw bridle paths, hiking trails, old historic sites restored, canoe routes; they also dreamed of game refuges and bird sanctuaries established and maintained in this system -- these and many other features would they include if it were only within their power to do so. But how could all of these things be done?

Perhaps Dr. Curtis started the ball rolling when, in this year, he began making inquiries concerning the ways and means of organizing and establishing park districts. He wrote to other cities and asked for information and advice concerning statutes, methods of procedure in organizing metropolitan districts, etc. These inquiries were all met with a fine spirit of cooperation, and help was generously given by the park districts that had been canvassed by Dr. Curtis. Little else of importance was accomplished until 1937.



Trash pile on the banks of the Huron River

1937

From January to March there probably was not much activity directed toward improving the Huron valley, but on March 5, 1937 a meeting, which proved to be very important in the history of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, was held in Ann Arbor.

This meeting, or conference, was held under the auspices of the Huron Valley Improvement Commission and the Washtenaw County Road Commission in cooperation with the Extension Service of the University of Michigan; the purpose of the conference was "to stimulate a movement which would realize some of the possibilities of this beautiful valley."¹ During morning and afternoon sessions a distinguished group of men, prominent in political, social and industrial fields in and around the Detroit metropolitan area delivered addresses and carried on what must have been very spirited discussions. These addresses and discussions were all aimed at a thorough "face-lifting" for the valley, including formulation of an overall plan for coordinated use of the scenic, water, wildlife, forest, and other recreational resources of the valley. Other projects included the proposal that a valley guide for the use of tourists be published (such a guide was compiled later, but never published), and a proposal that the State adopt a modern water code applicable to the Huron River.

¹ "Improving the Huron Valley", Planning and Civic Comment, January-March 1937

The Ann Arbor Conference was attended by eighty delegates including faculty members of the University of Michigan, officials of the Detroit Edison Company, Michigan Central Railroad, the State Conservation Department, and a representative of Governor Frank Murphy. The conference was presided over by Professor Edwin C. Goddard of the University of Michigan, and speakers included Arthur W. Stace, editor, Ann Arbor Daily News; William C. Hoad, Professor of Sanitary and Municipal Engineering, University of Michigan; Henry E. Riggs, Honorary Curator of the Transportation Library, University of Michigan; Henry M. Bates, Dean, Law School, University of Michigan; Kenneth L. Hallenbeck, Superintendent, Washtenaw County Road Commission; Henry S. Curtis, in charge of Huron Valley Recreational Survey; Harold D. Smith, Director, Michigan Municipal League.

As a result of this conference the following resolutions were adopted:

1. That the Commission on Highways and Park Trustees in each of the counties, the State Highway Commissioner, and the mayors of the municipalities involved, be asked to improve, so far as possible, the sections of the valley within their jurisdiction, and to cooperate with each other in providing a loop parkway through the Huron and Clinton valleys.
2. That the State Department of Conservation be asked to cooperate in making the Huron a model valley through the full development of the plant, animal, scenic, and other resources that come within the range of its responsibilities.
3. That the Governor be asked to arrange, either through the State Planning Commission or a specially appointed Commission, for the preparation for consideration by the Legislature of a water code adapted to modern conditions and designed to assure the best possible use of the waters of the State.
4. That the State Planning Commission be asked to recognize the unit development of individual river valleys

as an important element in land-use planning, and to cooperate in every way practicable in the development of the Huron Valley.

5. That the cities of Ypsilanti and Flat Rock be urged to provide sanitary sewage disposal at the earliest possible moment.

6. That the members of the conference be requested to report back to the organizations which they represent on the proceedings and recommendations of the conference, and to urge their cooperation in the carrying out of these recommendations.

7. That the chairman of the conference be requested to appoint at this time a Huron Valley Committee of seven members, with power to effect such subsequent changes in composition or number as may seem to them wise, for the purpose of formulating and forwarding the execution of a coordinated plan for the development, improvement, and utilization of the resources of the valley in the best interests, both of their owners and the general public.

Shortly after the Ann Arbor Conference the Huron Valley Committee (sometimes called Huron Valley Association) was appointed as recommended at the conference, and the following members took office: Henry E. Riggs, Chairman, Ann Arbor; George C. Handy, Ypsilanti; B. L. Foresman, Pontiac; Henry B. Earhart, Ann Arbor; Edward N. Hines, Detroit; James Inglis, Ann Arbor; Mrs. Ruth Huston-Whipple, Plymouth; J. S. Gray, Monroe; A. C. Marshall, Detroit; Harry L. Pierson, Detroit. At last some organization and planning was beginning to become evident, and the Huron-Clinton project started to move.

At a meeting of the newly-appointed Huron Valley Committee in June of this year the project was thoroughly discussed; after much discussion and exchange of ideas it was finally decided that this should be not just a Washtenaw County project since the Huron flows through, or along Oakland, Livingston, Washtenaw, Wayne, and Monroe Counties. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Clinton Valley should be included with the Huron Valley project. Both of those rivers flow through

several counties, and use constantly disregards artificial boundaries; therefore it is wise that such a suggestion be made, since it would be wasteful to concentrate improvements on certain portions of the valleys, while disregarding other portions of the valleys or stretches of the rivers.

A little later on, in August of this year, the committee met again, this time at Plymouth, and with the discussion of the previous meeting in mind, the Committee adopted the name of Huron-Clinton Parkway Committee.

At the August meeting of the Committee, a budget of \$5,000 to finance the various activities of the group, was approved. Mr. Harry B. Earhart of Ann Arbor took it upon himself to underwrite this budget, and it might be of interest to mention the fact that all of the moneys used in financing the Committee's activities were obtained from contributions of members of the committee, and from donations of other interested parties. None of these contributors expected any return for the money expended by them in promoting the establishment of a metropolitan authority.

During the remainder of this year the Committee further publicized what they were trying to do by providing speakers who were well versed in the proposed project. Among some of the earlier speakers were Edwin C. Goddard (now deceased), Professor Emeritus of the Law School, University of Michigan, Professor H. O. Whittemore, of the School of Architecture and Design, University of Michigan, and Mrs. Ruth Huston-Whipple, member of the City Commission, City of Plymouth.

In addition to these, there was also Doctor Curtis, who perhaps did more speaking and missionary work for the Committee than all others combined. These speakers were available to communities and organizations all over the five-county area, and even beyond, for the purpose of explaining and propogandizing the proposed Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority.

Newspaper publicity is probably the most important means of enlightening the general public on any matters; the Committee was cognizant of this fact all throughout its period of promotional activity, and used the papers at every opportunity for the dissemination of any news or propa-ganda that would help the cause.

During this year a recreational survey of the Metropolitan District was made by the National Park Service, as a part of its state-wide survey, and this study revealed an area sadly lacking in park and recreational facilities. Other projects were simultaneously gotten underway, including a local study by the University of Michigan, and a Federal W. P.A. Writers Project having to do with the proposed park and recreation system.

Toward the close of the year a very important meeting was held in Detroit, and this meeting might well have been called "The Meeting of the Minds", since the majority of the men in attendance were representatives of organizations that

would be working in cooperation with each other throughout the five-county district, should the proposed project become a reality.

The purpose of this meeting was to assemble planners and engineers who were familiar with recreational planning problems of the Detroit metropolitan area; a second objective of the meeting was to set up a clearing house for information from counties, cities, and semi-public groups relating to recreational plans for certain areas already being considered, and potential areas that should be in public ownership for parks, parkways and recreational areas. A third, and possibly the most important purpose of the meeting, was to explore the possibility of a regional planning program which would coordinate and support the excellent work in planning which was being done by various public and semi-public agencies.

Among those taking part in the meeting were the following:

Prof. H. O. Whittemore, University of Michigan
 Mr. J. M. Bennett, Forester, Wayne County Road Commission
 Mr. Charles Boehler, State Parks Division, Conservation Dept.
 Mr. W. Cox, Engineer, St. Clair County Road Commission
 Mr. Eli A. Gallup, Ann Arbor Parks Department
 Mr. Leon Luke, Superintendent, Macomb County Road Commission
 Mr. Wilbur McGehee, Detroit City Planning Commission
 Mr. Arthur Messer, Forester, Oakland County Road Commission
 Prof. George G. Ross, Dept. of Landscape Design, U. of Mich.
 Mr. Herbert Russell, Secretary, City Planning Commission
 Mr. W. I. Slavens, Superintendent, Livingston County Road Com.
 Mr. Fred Taylor, Highway Planning Survey, State Highway Dept.
 Mr. Earl G. VanStorch, State Planning Commission, Lansing.
 Mr. Hallenbeck, Engineer, Washtenaw County Road Commission
 Mr. C. DeForest Platt, State Supervisor, Recreation Study,
 National Park Service

The meeting brought out much spirited discussion; each of the afore listed representatives presented problems and recommendations, and outlined plans of their organizations. All were strongly behind the idea of a Metropolitan Authority, especially Mr. Boshler, who stated that the Conservation Department was in hearty accord with regional planning in this area because of the Department's specialized problems due to large concentrations of population.

Professor Whittemore outlined in detail plans of the Huron Valley Improvement Association, and he felt that this same promotional organization would actively support a regional program just as strongly as a program solely for the Huron River valley.



Example of soil erosion north of Pontiac



Eroded land returning to normalcy

1938

As a result of the Ann Arbor Conference in March of 1937 the Huron-Clinton Parkway Committee was formed, and this committee began their activities for 1938 at a meeting held in Ann Arbor on January 20, 1938. Various subcommittees were organized to cover all fields of action, such as engineering, fish life, land acquisition, legislation, natural resources, parkways, wildlife, etc.; other subcommittees were formed for such public relations activities as publicity; state, county, and municipal relations; women's interests, etc. General policies and programs were outlined to serve as a guide for the activities of the various committees and subcommittees, and these committees were instructed to begin surveys, or collection and analysis of basic facts pertinent to the project. Mr. Harry B. Earhart was elected Chairman of the General Committee at this meeting.

This year was devoted largely to investigations and fact-finding by the committees described above, and at periodical meetings of the Huron-Clinton Parkway Committee, reports of progress were made and then discussed.

A regular series of radio broadcasts were made throughout the months of January, February, and March, by speakers from the Parkway Committee, including Doctor Curtis, Professor Whittemore, Professor McMurry, Geography Department,

University of Michigan, Samuel T. Dana, Dean, School of Forestry and Conservation, University of Michigan, and Professor Lee R. Schoenman.

During the year appeals were sent out to Henry Ford, The Michigan Central Railroad, and the Detroit Edison Company, requesting their cooperation in improving and beautifying their river front holdings. These appeals were met with favorable response by these industrial landowners.

The Conservation Department conducted a fish survey, investigating fish populations, distribution, food species, habitat, etc., and during this year 278 miles of the Huron and its tributaries was completed. A survey of water resources was also conducted by the National Resources Board.

In July Doctor Curtis made a trip to New York, Boston, and Cleveland to inspect the park and recreational facilities in these cities. He gathered much valuable information and many ideas which could be used in planning for the Detroit metropolitan area.

The Governor met the Committee and, at its request, he promised his cooperation with the Committee in securing the allocation of \$20,000 by the Emergency Appropriation committee for the Conservation Department to make a survey of existing recreational facilities within the Detroit metropolitan area. The Governor, at the time, expressed deep interest in the project, and said that he would immediately

order the Conservation Department to undertake the survey at once. Completion of the survey and plan would be financed by the proposed allocation of funds mentioned above.

The Huron-Clinton^{Committee} Parkway_A wound up the year's program at a meeting held at the Detroit Club on December 12. At this meeting four additional subcommittees were appointed for the purpose of special studies that the General Committee wanted made. These committees were appointed to obtain all of the information possible about Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, County cooperation, and parks and playgrounds.

In an effort to cut red tape and save time, Professor Goddard, at the final meeting, recommended that the General Committee seek a special act of the State Legislature creating a Metropolitan District around Detroit instead of waiting for the creation of such a district by a popular referendum vote. This recommendation was probably shelved, declared unconstitutional, or rejected for some other reason, since no further action was taken along the lines of the recommendation.

1939

The fourth year of activity of the group promoting the Metropolitan Authority began with another meeting of the Huron-Clinton Parkway Committee. This was on January 19, and at this time a bill creating a Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was made up and approved. Professor Goddard, Chairman of the Legislative subcommittee was given credit for a fine legal conception, and it was then decided to have Senator McCallum, of Ann Arbor, introduce the bill in the State Senate at the next session of the Legislature. Copies of this bill were then sent to all of the mayors in Wayne county for their expressions of opinion. Most of the reports received in return were favorable with the exception of Detroit and Highland Park. A conjecture here is that these two cities thought that they would have to carry too large a portion of the financial burden connected with the operation of such a project. Their objections, if for such a reason, were sound, but on the other hand, their populations were much larger than those of municipalities which would shoulder less of the financial load.

The enabling act, or Senate Enrolled Act No. 75, was introduced by Senator McCallum at the regular session of the 60th Legislature, and the Act was passed in June. This act was the final step in the first phase of the work to establish a parkway-playground area in the valleys of the

Huron and Clinton Rivers. Under the Act the Authority was empowered to build and construct parks, parkways, and connecting express highways in the five-county district. It enabled this new agency to cooperate with existing agencies in planning and completing recreational areas anywhere in the district, and even to extend beyond the district. The Act also gave the Authority the power to issue revenue bonds; accept deeds of gift; condemn property for such purposes; and it provided for a maximum of one-quarter mill tax levied in the five-county area as a working and planning fund. There was one stipulation, however, which kept the Authority from starting work immediately. The Enabling Act required a ratifying vote of the people in the five counties concerned, and such a vote would not be made until the election in the Fall of 1940. This situation gave the sponsoring group ample time to stage an effective campaign for the project before the voters went to the polls, and the Parkway Committee members, bolstered by the progress that had been made, set to work with a will once again. They gave freely of their time and money; they talked with groups all over the Detroit metropolitan area; they delivered radio addresses; circulated petitions and circulars; and appealed to one and all to help their cause. Now that their dreams were about to be realized, they spared nothing in attempting to successfully finish what they had set out to do years before. The results of a Gallup Poll taken in December showed that the

committee had indeed been quite successful with their propoganda. The poll, taken in the Metropolitan District, reported that 33% of the people were acquainted with the project, and most of these people were in favor of it.

Going back to the summer of this year, the activities of the Parkway Committee were mostly of the same nature as preceding years--informal talks and lectures were made before such groups as Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, schools, garden clubs, etc. Newspaper publicity reached an all-time high, thanks to the efforts of Mr. George C. Handy, of the Ypsilanti Press; Mr. Arthur Stace, of the Ann Arbor News; and other sympathetic newsmen throughout the area.

During the summer a group of representatives from the promotional body made a three day trip to New York to inspect that city's metropolitan park system. Much food for thought was available there, and the group returned to Michigan richer in the knowledge of what a well-planned and laid-out recreational system should encompass. Other trips of a similar character were also made to the metropolitan districts of Cleveland, Chicago, and Milwaukee; on the Chicago-Milwaukee trip Dunes State Park, in Indiana, was included in the itinerary. As the inspecting parties returned from these tours, the general public was made more aware through newspaper reports of how lacking the Detroit Metropolitan area was in recreational facilities as compared with the other cities.



Huron River - Kiskadden Tract, Lower Huron Park & Parkway Project



Suspension footbridge over Huron River, Kiskadden Tract

1940

This was the year of the vital referendum vote which would decide the fate of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority; determined that victory should not elude them, the Huron-Clinton Parkway Committee redoubled its efforts in behalf of what had, to them now, become practically a crusade. One of the first steps they took to strengthen their opportunities for a favorable vote, was the hiring of a competent campaign manager. This course of action was decided upon at a January meeting of the Committee, and at this same meeting the sponsoring group even stooped to appeasement in the form of changing its name from Huron-Clinton Parkway Committee to Detroit-Huron-Clinton Park and Parkway Association. This was done to make the project more acceptable to Detroit and Wayne County. If the five counties, or any two adjacent counties should vote favorably for the project, a metropolitan district would be established over those counties that voted in favor of the Authority. The Committee was very desirous of swaying the Wayne county, especially Detroit, vote in a favorable manner, so no possible means of persuasion was overlooked.

During the early part of this year Doctor Curtis spoke in 57 high schools in the five counties, explaining the

advantages of the parkway project to students and teachers alike. At the conclusion of this speaking tour a high school essay contest was sponsored, with cash prizes being awarded for the best essays concerned with the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority. Winning essays were also published in most of the newspapers of the metropolitan area, and thus the attitudes of the younger element were added to the ever-swelling promotional publicity. About 5,000 students submitted essays which they wrote as part of their required work for Civics and English courses.

In the spring, The Detroit-Huron-Clinton Park and Parkway Association became incorporated, and the following members were unanimously elected as trustees:

Harry B. Earhart, Head of Earhart Foundation,
former President of Dodge Motor Company.
Howard B. Bloomer, Donor of many State Parks
Edwin C. Goddard, Emeritus Professor of Law,
University of Michigan.
James Inglis, Chairman of Board, National City
Bank, Detroit.
Leroy Smith, Wayne County Highway Engineer
Henry E. Riggs, President of the American Society
of Civil Engineers
Samuel T. Dana, Dean, School of Forestry and
Conservation, University of Michigan
Sidney D. Waldon, Michigan Automobile Association
and Packard Motor Company.

At a meeting of the Association on May 16, Mr. Earhart was elected president of this group.

After making a tour of the five counties, in which he spoke in every town, Doctor Curtis observed that there was no particular enthusiasm anywhere for the project, and no active

opposition. However, audiences usually were in favor of a Metropolitan Authority after the project had been thoroughly explained to them.

Attitudes in the five counties were generally as follows:

Washtenaw County: An educational program has been carried on here for five years, and it is gradually beginning to soak in. Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti contain the majority of the county's population, and both of these cities are strongly in favor of the project.

Livingston County: The rural group know little about the project. Livingston is in the best financial condition of any of the five counties, and has most to gain and least to pay.

Oakland County: This county is in a bad way financially. Its Board of Supervisors voted against the bill, and sent a delegation to Lansing to oppose it in the Legislature. Others objected to the project as a real estate racket. (Probably because real estate men in all the counties were beginning to offer land for sale at high prices along the prospective course of the project.)

Macomb County: Mostly in favor, except people living in the upper part of the county which is far from the Clinton River and Lake St. Clair. The residents of St. Clair Shores oppose the project because they do not wish a bathing beach in front of their homes.

Wayne County: Labor class should represent a favorable majority if the project is understood by it. The Negro vote should be unanimous, since this class has much to gain and little to pay. Poles own 15 private parks on the Clinton River, and these people may need some strong persuasion to make them sympathetic toward the parkway plan. The chief objection in Wayne County is that it is not Wayne County's project, yet Wayne will have to pay for the facilities to be located in the other counties.

Later in the year a joint Washtenaw-Livingston Speakers' Bureau was organized, and began functioning. This bureau was made up of prominent citizens of both counties, and the Bureau's function was to serve as a mouthpiece in spreading the gospel of a recreational system for the metropolitan area. Some of the more prominent speakers in the Bureau were Senator McCallum, Professor Whittemore, Doctor Curtis, Dean Dana, Professor Allen, Mr. McNamee, Mr. Stace, and Mr. Gallup. These speakers were available for lectures and talks to any groups, public or semi-public, and thus another important instrument of publicity was brought into use for the further spread of information concerning the proposed recreational system.

In November of this year the people of the five counties went to the polls to decide whether or not they wanted a metropolitan district created. The approval of the people

was gained by an almost two-to-one majority in each of the five counties, and the promoting groups' long, hard campaign was rewarded. Now that the promotional phase of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority was at an end, it would seem logical to most that the Parkway Committee should disband, relax their efforts, and sit back and watch their dream materialize. Such an idea was not true, however; after the election, the Parkway Committee decided to keep functioning, not so much in a promotional manner, but rather in a sense of custodianship. It is true that the Authority would engage engineers, draftsmen, land acquisition men, educational directors, etc., but in all of the shuffle and details of building the system, the Committee did not want to see the basic principles of the movement overlooked. The Committee desired to represent the people of the five counties, and with this in mind, they decided to keep a watchful eye on the project to see that it developed along sound lines, and to keep in close touch with developments as the planning and actual construction progressed. This committee still exists at the time of this writing, although it is nowhere near as strong an organization as it was before the Authority was created.



House and property on Labadie Road (Kent Lake Project) acquired by Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority



Outbuildings and property (Kent Lake Project) acquired by H C M A

The War Years 1941 -1945

Commission appointed: The Act provided for a representative from each of the five counties, and two additional members to be appointed by the Governor. Because the County Boards of Supervisors did not meet until the Spring of 1941 there was a delay in the appointment of the commission (County representatives on the commission were to be appointed by The County Boards). Finally, in April and May of 1941, The County Boards began meeting and choosing their representatives. Harry B. Earhart, president of the sponsoring group, and one of its most enthusiastic backers, was chosen for Washtenaw County; Oscar A. Kaufman, former corporation counsel for Wayne County was appointed by that county; Sidney D. Waldon, long interested in parkways for the Detroit metropolitan area, was Oakland County's choice; R. Bruce McPherson, of Howell, who had been very influential in obtaining a favorable vote in Livingston County, was named by that county; Macomb County's representative became John H. Nunneley, a Mt. Clemens attorney. The representatives appointed by Governor Murray D. Van Wagoner were G. Donald Kennedy, State Highway Commissioner, and George W. Trendle, of Detroit.

Shortly after the first meeting of the Board of Commissioners, in May of 1941, Wayne County's prosecuting attorney questioned the legality of the Act that created the Authority, and until this situation was cleared up, nothing could be done in the way of organizing the Authority.

The case was presented before the Michigan Supreme Court, and on January 5, 1942, a decision was handed down supporting the legality of the Act. While this legal controversy was going on the United States went to war, and progress on the project came to a virtual standstill for the duration of hostilities.

Due to the critical shortage of materials and labor, little actual construction or improvement work could be done while we were at war. On the other hand, the Authority did not go into hibernation during this period, but was actively engaged in long range planning. One of the first things done after the validity of the Act was upheld, as described previously, was to obtain a staff of workers who would begin making plans for the time when actual construction could be begun. Most of the staff consisted of engineers, draftsmen, landscape architects and other technicians. Planning experts and consulting engineers were called in for technical advice; and possible recreation area and parkway locations were considered.

Authority suffers first reverse: One of the powers granted to the Authority by the Enabling Act was the power of land acquisition by gift, or purchase through condemnation or negotiation. Much of the area that should be in public ownership is now privately owned, and one of the Authority's prime objectives is that of acquiring such land and converting it to

its highest use - that of a highly diversified recreational system for the metropolitan district of Detroit. Negotiation for the purchase of lands is the most desirable means of acquisition, excepting deeds of gift, but in some cases where this method fails, condemnation proceedings may have to be instituted. In other cases, neither method of acquisition may be successful, and then plans must be either shelved, or changed to fit the next best solution to the problem. An outstanding example of such a situation existed in the problem of the Belleville Lake area. This land is partly wooded, partly grassed, partly cultivated and partly growing wild; an artificial lake, formed by a Detroit Edison hydro-electric dam at French Landing, backs up the water of the Huron some six miles westward to Rawsonville Road. A very valuable adjunct to the park system would be made if this land could be acquired by the Authority; condemnation proceedings were begun in October of 1942, but property owners, in and around the Belleville Lake area, had other ideas concerning the disposition of their lands. The condemnation proceedings were met with fierce resistance from the Belleville Lake Protective Association, and the above-mentioned property owners and nearby residents. This resistance was human, and the motives of opposition were understandable - there was the attachment for one's home; there was the desire for more money (the price offered by the Authority was too low); there was distaste for



Photograph of relief map of proposed St. Clair
Beach at Huron Point near Mt. Clemens.

having one's neighborhood "cluttered up" with visitors from other parts of the five-county area.

The campaign of resistance included personal protestations to parkway officials; circulation of petitions throughout the neighborhood, and word-of-mouth gossip; malicious propaganda, and some genuine arguments; much misinformation, and some facts.

When the condemnation proceedings were first instituted, the proceedings were dismissed by Circuit Judge Clyde I. Webster. The State Supreme Court reversed Judge Webster's decision in an appeal from the Authority, and the case was reopened after five weeks' deliberation. The Circuit Court jury set a price of \$779,490 for approximately 779 acres for park purposes. This was more than the Authority cared to pay for the land, so Judge Webster was asked to dismiss proceedings on the Belleville Lake Project, and the project was abandoned.

Although the war years were spent by the Authority mostly on planning, some land acquisitions were being made, and the most important additions made to the system during this period were the sites for the proposed St. Clair Beach; Kent Lake Park; and Marshbank Park.

St. Clair Beach

St. Clair Beach, which will be very similar to Jones Beach of the Long Island State Park System, is located at Huron Point, about four miles southeast of Mt. Clemens, and



Clinton River



Scene at Huron Point before reclamation work was done

includes an area of 550 acres on Lake St. Clair. When purchased, much of this land was submarginal for all uses but muskrat and shore bird refuges; plans are made for reclaiming the land by pumping in sand from the lake, and developing a very elaborate beach development on the site.

Kent Lake Park

Kent Lake Park (since renamed Kensington Metropolitan Park), located a few miles east of Brighton on U. S. Highway 16, contains about 3600 acres. This park is ideally suited for practically every type of outdoor recreation. The general topography is rolling, with wooded hillsides and open meadows covering the area not occupied by the lake. During the war the Authority obtained approximately 2600 acres of this area by negotiation, and began condemnation proceedings to acquire the remainder.

Marshbank Park

Marshbank Park, donated by Mr. Howard Bloomer to the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, is 115 acres in extent, and the tract includes Mr. Bloomer's country home. This park lies between Cass and Orchard Lakes, and has frontages on both lakes; it will not be joined to the proposed parkway network with a connecting drive, but may be reached by Michigan Highway 218 out of Pontiac. The main recreational features of this area will be picnic grounds and playgrounds.

Accomplishments of the Authority from 1946 to the Present

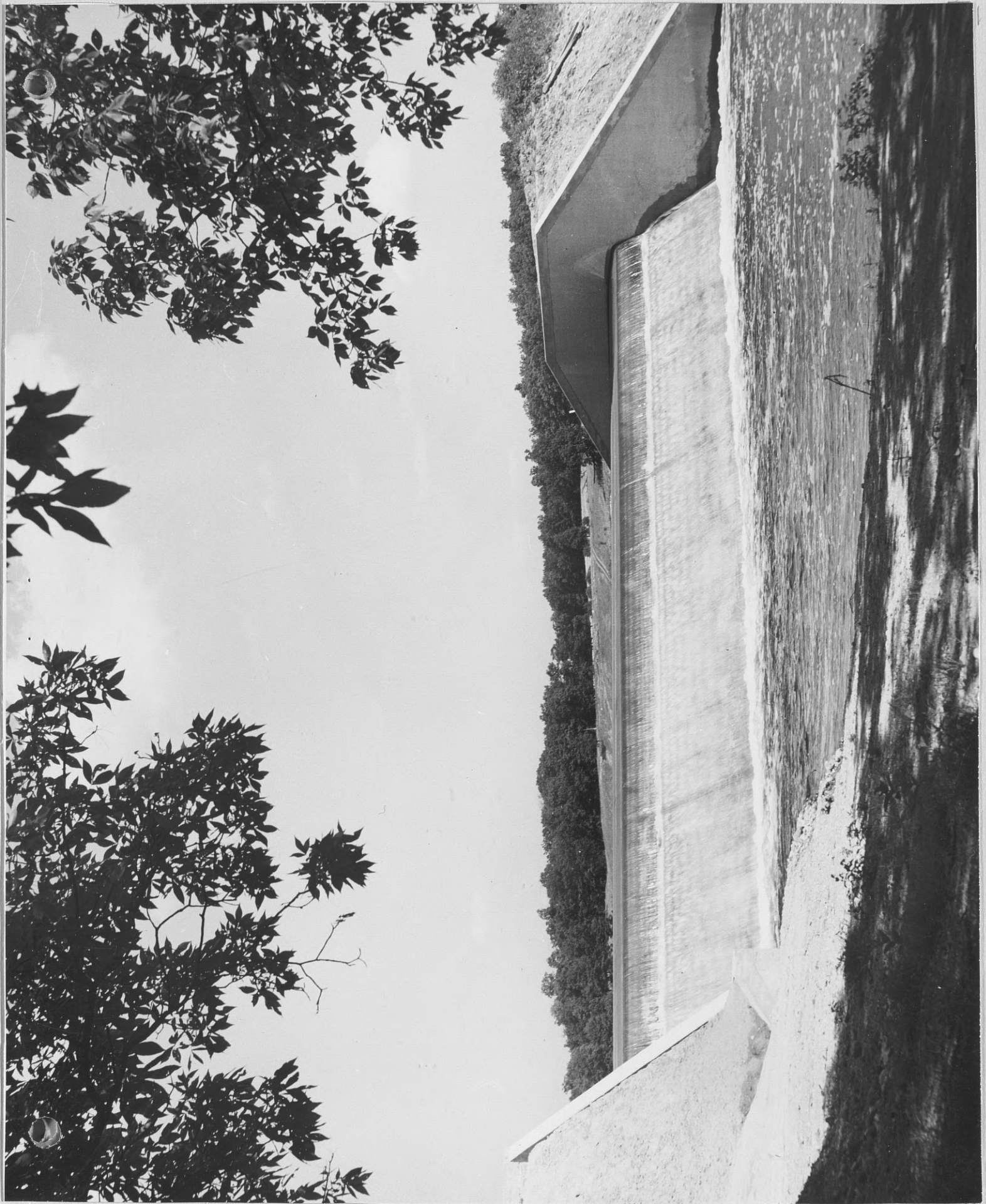
Actual construction and improvement work on the project got under way in 1946. With the war ended, labor became plentiful, and construction materials once more were available. Since the winter of 1945 the Authority has made fine progress, and though completion of the project is still far in the future, a commendable start has been made.

St. Clair Beach

At St. Clair Beach, 97% of the fill required to raise the elevation of the entire area and to construct the beach, has been put in place. This represents a tremendous amount of sand--it has been computed to be an amount equal to a pile 2.3 miles high on a 50 x 150 lot. A water main, to furnish water to the St. Clair Beach project, has been laid from the Mt. Clemens Water Works system. Architectural and engineering plans for the beach walk, bath house and restaurant are practically completed at the time of this writing, and plans for the sewage plant, parking areas, service roads and other utilities are in progress. It is expected that contracts for the construction of the beach walk, bath house and restaurant will be let in 1948. If the present construction schedule can be maintained it is expected that the beach, together with its necessary structures and services, will be ready for public use in 1950.



Dam under construction at south end of Kent Lake



Completed Kent Lake dam



Old Buno Road bridge across northern part of Kent Lake before raising the lake level



New Buno Road bridge which has replaced the bridge shown on page 51a

Kensington Metropolitan Park

A great deal of development has been made at Kensington Metropolitan Park since 1946. Originally this park contained a lake of but sixty acres, but with the construction of a dam across the Huron River south of Grand River road the Lake has deepened 13 feet in the process. Before raising the level of the lake, extensive clearing operations, around the edge of the lake, were carried out. This was done to avoid an unsightly shore line marred with dead snags, and to minimize dangerous underwater obstacles for boats and canoes. At present Kent Lake is the second largest lake in the area, and boasts a shoreline of 22 miles in public ownership.

Kensington Park was first opened to limited public use in 1947. A few picnic areas have been selected and cleared for use, and minimum drinking water and toilet facilities have been provided; two bathing beaches have been constructed; foot and bridle trails are being constructed at present, with two underpasses to separate these trails from automobile traffic on the main roads. At the time of this writing approximately 16 miles of roads are nearly completed within the park, and a new and larger bridge has replaced the old narrow bridge at the north end of the park where Buno Road crosses the upper end of the lake. The State Highway Department began raising and widening Grand River Road at the Huron River in 1946, and at present this work is practically completed. This project includes the construction of a higher and wider bridge



Scene at Marshbank Metropolitan Park. This park is not joined to the rest of the Huron-Clinton park system with a connecting drive.

at this point; this permits all trails, canoes and boats to go under U.S. 16, thus doing away with what had formerly been a dangerous portage and crossing.

Marshbank Metropolitan Park

Marshbank Park development, to date, has been rather sketchy. Because of the character and planned use of this park for chiefly picnicking and general play, it has been planned to limit development to tree planting, parking facilities, entrance drive and picnic areas. The park is not yet open for public use, but it will probably be ready for recreational enjoyment of the public by 1949.

Lower Huron Park and Parkway - Kiskadden Tract.

This area, nearly 1000 acres in extent, has been acquired by the Authority since the war. At present it is undeveloped, with the exception of a few marked trails, a parking space off of Hannan Road, and a suspension foot bridge. This bridge, crossing the river, is very picturesque, and gives access to the main part of the area from the parking area.

In general, the Kiskadden Tract is quite wild, and its charm lies in its natural untouched appearance. Here there are wooded hill sides, some small streams, open meadows, and scenic views from a few points along the river at the north end of the area.

All of this unit is within Wayne County, halfway between New Boston and French Landing, and is within easy reach of



Clearing with a bulldozer



Felling a tree with a power saw.

Clearing operations at Kent Lake before the lake level was raised.

the downriver communities and Detroit. Although there are no facilities, at present, other than those previously described, plans have been completed for the construction of picnic and playfield areas; drives and parking areas; and water supply and sanitary facilities. It is planned on opening the area for full use in 1949.

Dexter-Huron Metropolitan Park

To date, this park is the first acquisition on the Huron River between Belleville and Kensington Metropolitan Park. Dexter-Huron Park has existed since pre-Authority days, and has been operated and maintained by the Washtenaw County Road Commission under lease from the Ford Motor Company. Little improvement or new construction is required in this area, as the park is already equipped with picnic tables, outdoor fireplaces, sanitary facilities and other utilities. Plans have been made for some improvement of the picnic areas, roads and parking facilities, and new tables and benches are being added. This park is being fully used at the present time, and until it is incorporated into the general Parkway plan, it will continue to be under the supervision of the Washtenaw County Road Commission.

Parkways and Connecting Drives

The master Parkway plan of the Authority calls for a parkway within the valleys of the Huron and Clinton rivers. The main parkway will begin at the mouth of the Huron at Lake Erie, follow the Huron to its headwaters, across the chain of

lakes to the headwaters of the Clinton, and down that river to the terminus at St. Clair Beach. This means a parkway approximately 158 miles in length, and with a right-of-way 330 feet wide, 8,500 acres of land will have to be acquired. However, 41 miles of this runs through State Recreational lands, and the State will provide the right-of-way in these areas; therefore the Authority must purchase only about 117 miles of right-of-way lands.

A very small proportion of actual roadway has been completed; at the St. Clair Beach project, a 4.4 miles from Gratiot Avenue to the beach is now under construction; within Kensington Park 4.5 miles of parkway have been graded, and surfacing is being done at this writing. The 4.5 mile stretch mentioned here is part of the Huron-Clinton Parkway; in addition to this, 16 miles of park drives within Kensington Park are almost completed. No other parkway or connecting drive construction is under way, although detailed plans have already been drawn up for such construction through lands already acquired, and for lands "earmarked" for future acquisition.

Land Acquisition

The lands acquired so far by the Authority total approximately 4,865 acres. Of this area, 115 acres (Marshbank Park) were a gift of Mr. Howard Bloomer. The remainder were purchased; 3,600 acres for Kensington Metropolitan Park; 400 acres for the Kiskadden Tract; 550 acres for St. Clair Beach; and 200 acres

for Dexter-Huron Park. A few other parcels of unknown size have also been acquired throughout the metropolitan district. An addition to Kensington Park will be 1500 acres of land between the north end of the park and the Ford property at Milford. This land is all along the Huron River, and abuts on the park. The Authority proposes to acquire this addition as soon as possible.

The State is helping the Authority in its land acquisition program by means of a special appropriation of one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) which was granted by the legislature in 1944. These funds are to be matched by the Authority, and are to be available between July 1, 1945, and June 30, 1949.

The Future

A promising beginning has been made by the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, and much has yet to be done. It will take years before the project will be anywhere near completed; a tremendous land acquisition program is tentatively planned and all will not be smooth sailing, as manifested previously in the Belleville Lake acquisition attempt. Undoubtedly the Authority will be confronted by many similar stumbling blocks before the system is completed.

Present plans of the Authority will probably have to be changed from time to time to fit changing conceptions; perhaps when the parkway-playground system is finished, it may retain only a slight semblance of the recreational system dreamed of

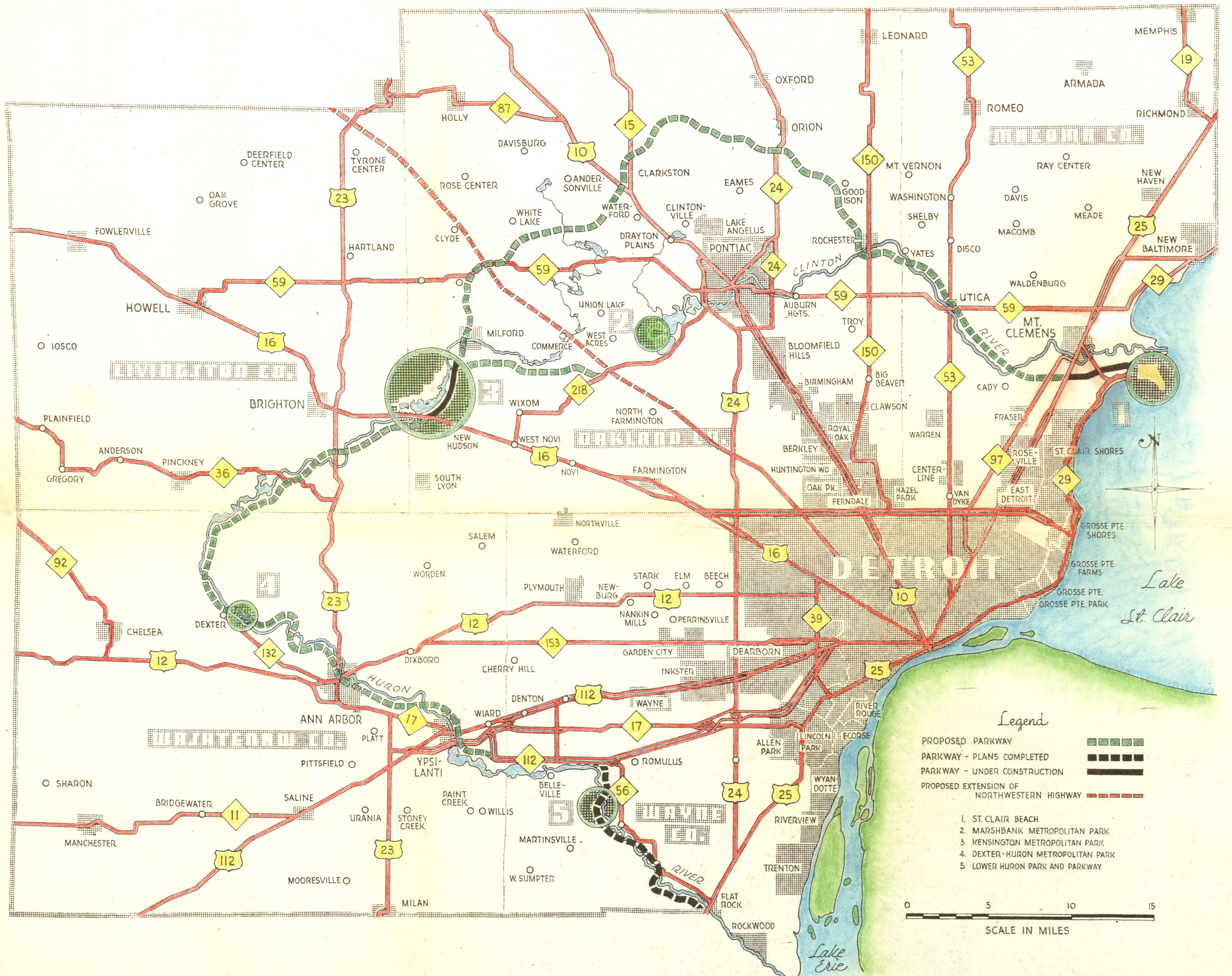
by Curtis, Whittemore, Dana, and the other pioneers years before. The Authority is a modern, streamlined organization, and it is taken for granted that it will keep its planning program flexible. Keen foresight will be needed, and no possibilities for improvement should be overlooked.

Perhaps, in its eagerness to produce something tangible in the form of parkways, parks and other recreational features, some of the more basic ideas of the project will be overshadowed. The project is for the recreational enjoyment of the people - all of the people, young and old alike. It is just as important to have hiking trails, canoe trails, youth hostels and camping areas for the younger generation as it is to have velvet-smooth parkways and limited access highways for the older people. Recreational features should be decentralized insofar as possible, in order that people throughout the area will have as short a distance as possible to go for their recreation. The little people, as well as the big, should be considered, but selfish interests and politics may exert a detrimental influence.

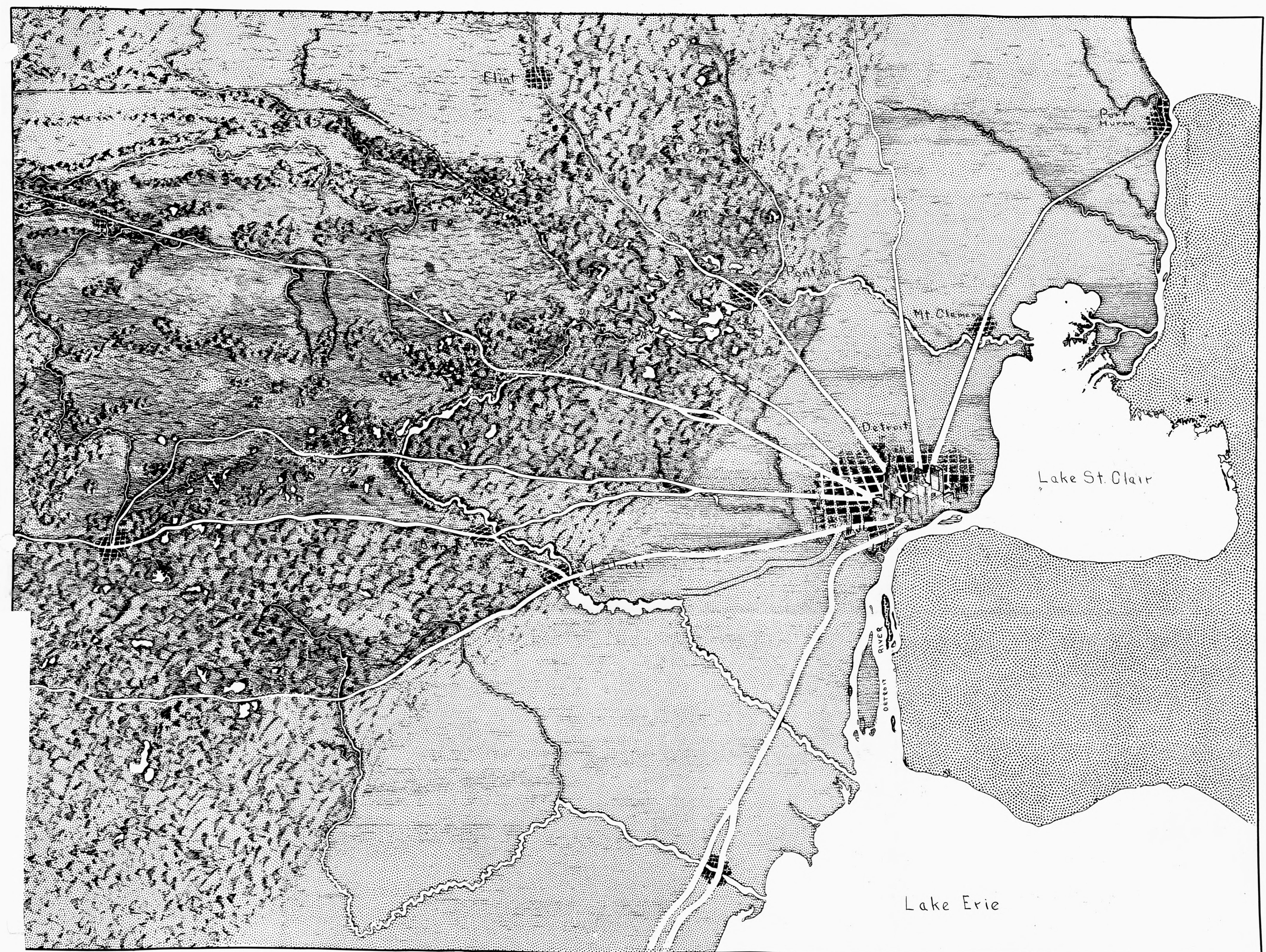
A complete loop may be made of the system some day, after present plans and construction are completed. This will involve a shore front drive for Detroit along Lake St. Clair from St. Clair Beach, out into the Detroit River on "made" land, along the lower river to Grosse Isle, and then along a chain of "made" islands to the mouth of the Huron River. This would be a very expensive undertaking, and it probably will

not be done in the near future.

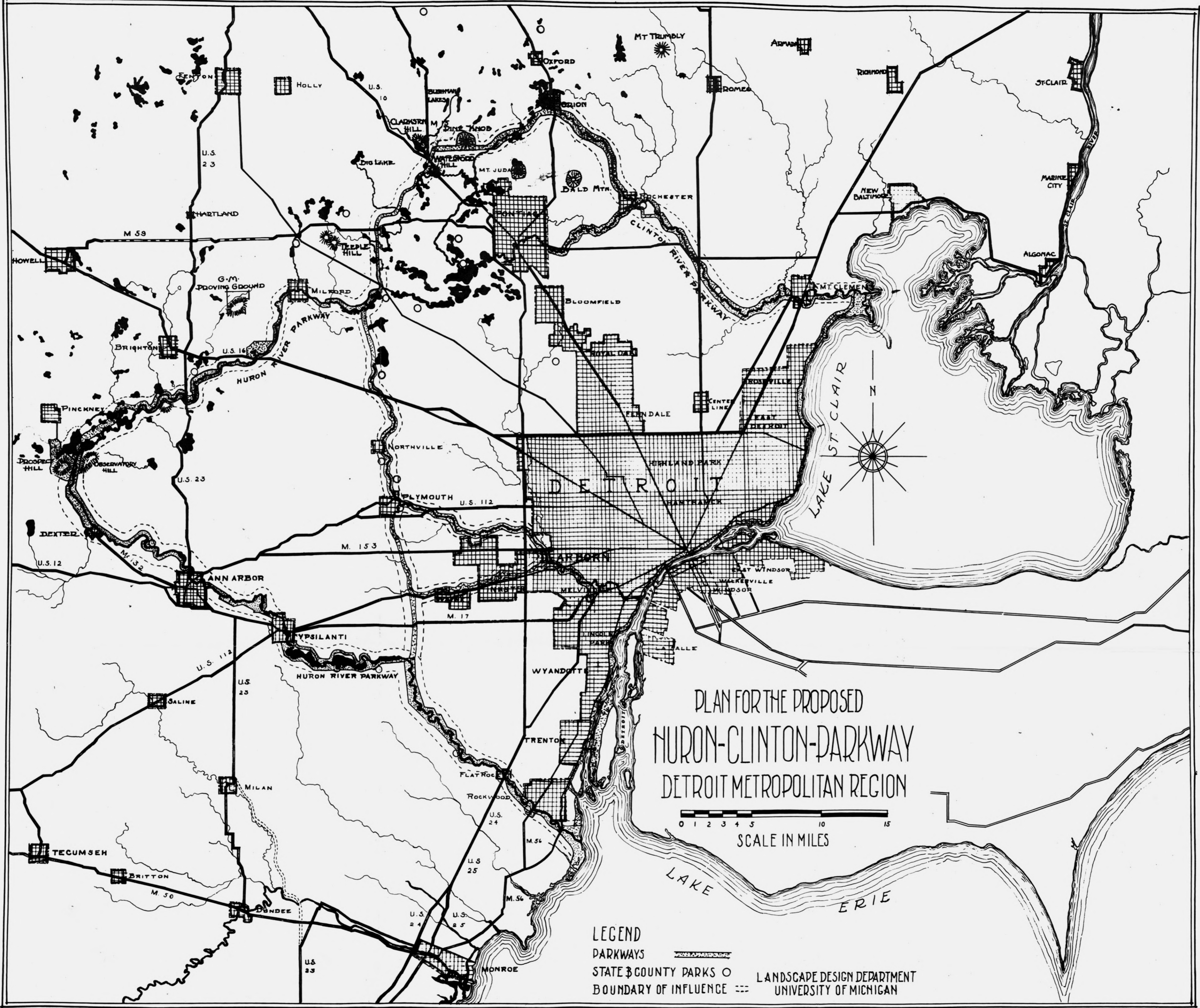
Man is essentially an outdoor animal. Until comparatively recent times, he has always been found in an open country environment, and such an environment must be maintained for the benefit of all. When the recreational system of the Detroit metropolitan area is completed, the people of this area will probably benefit from it in many ways; the people will better be able to maintain good health and physical condition when they are able to get more sunshine and fresh air; city life, with its many ugly structures and smoke-filled air, has taken the place of winding paths and roads through woods and fields - many people have almost forgotten of the beauty of forest and field. The Authority will provide areas wherein these almost-forgotten gifts of nature will be available for the benefit and recreational enjoyment of all.



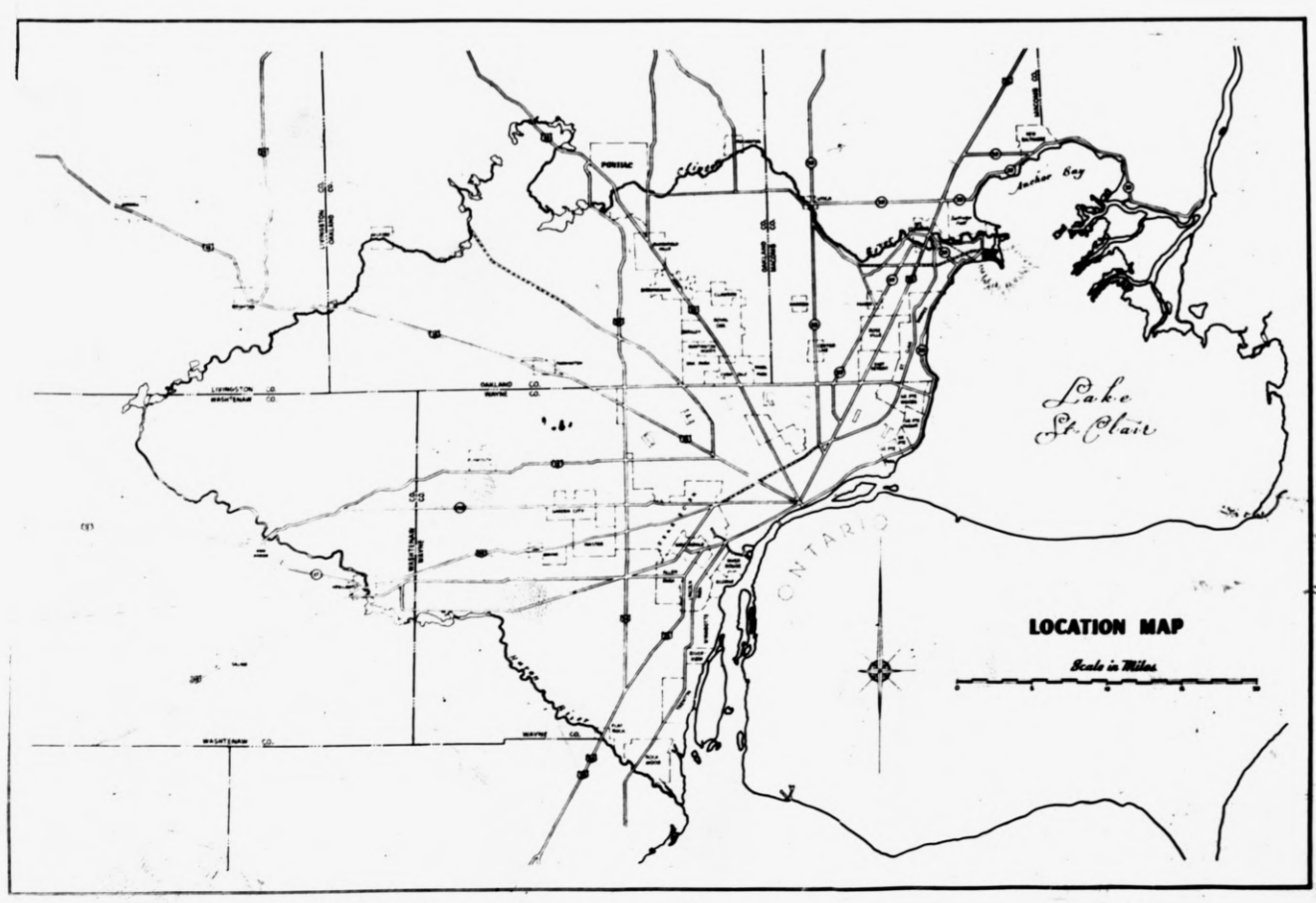
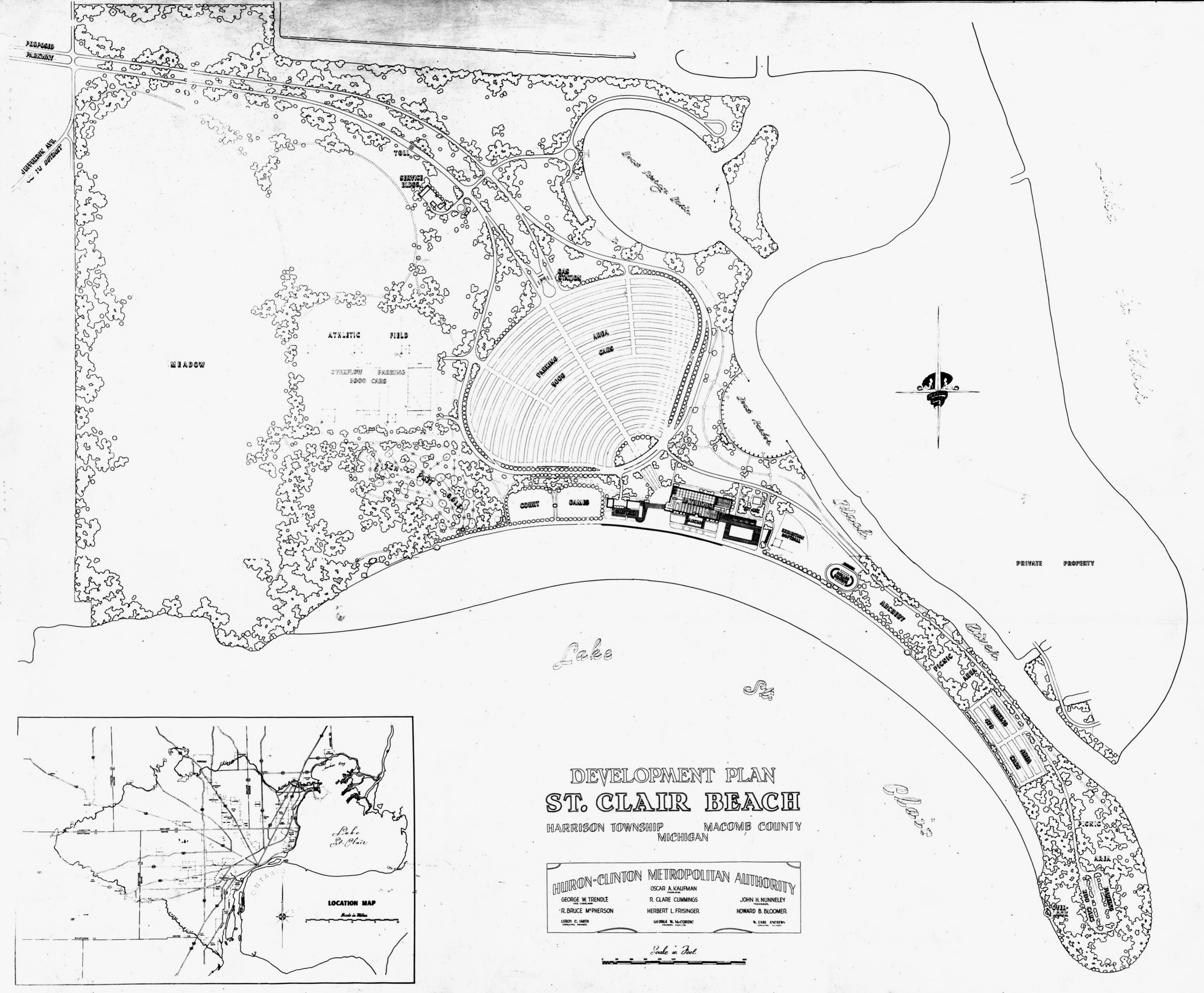
Proposed System of Parks and Parkways - H C M A



Map of Matropolitan Area Showing Relief



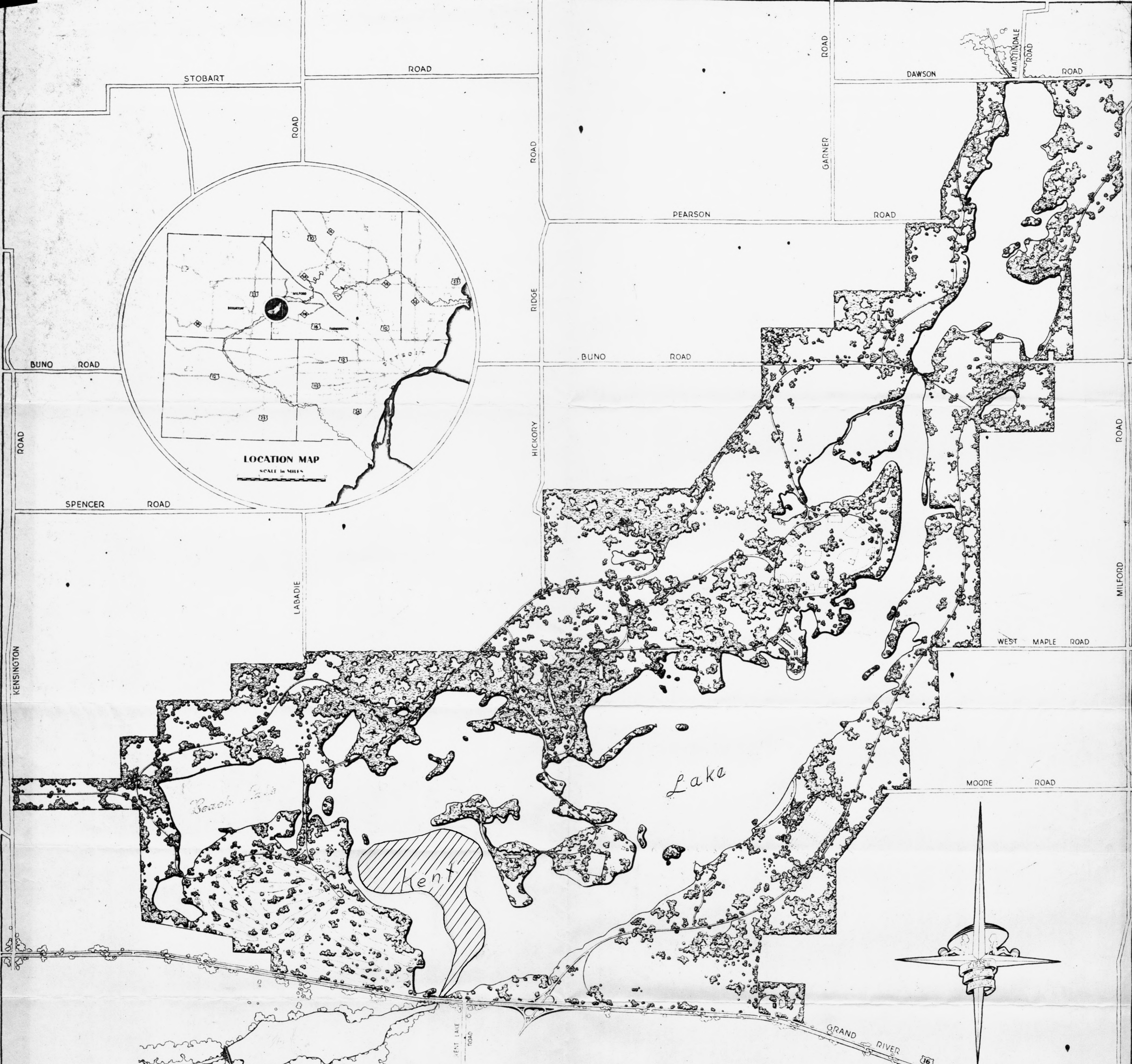
One of the Earliest Maps Made For The Huron-Clinton Project



DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ST. CLAIR BEACH
 HARRISON TOWNSHIP MACOMB COUNTY
 MICHIGAN

HURON-CLINTON METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY		
GEORGE W. TRENDLE	OSCAR A. KAUFMAN	JOHN H. NUNNELEY
R. BRUCE McPHERSON	R. CLARE CUMMINGS	HOWARD B. BLOOMER
LEROY C. SMITH	HERBERT L. FRISINGER	
	GEORGE W. McCORD	W. EARL ANDERS

Scale in Feet



LOCATION MAP
SCALE IN MILES

HURON-CLINTON
METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

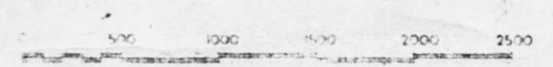
Board of Commissioners

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| OSCAR A. KAUFMAN | JOHN W. NUNNELLY |
| D. BRUCE McPHERSON | HERBERT FRISCH, JR. |
| GEORGE W. TRENDELE | |
| HOWARD B. BLOOMER | |

Preliminary
DEVELOPMENT PLAN
KENT LAKE PARK

MILFORD & LYON TOWNSHIPS, OAKLAND COUNTY
BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP, LIVINGSTON COUNTY
MICHIGAN

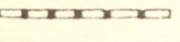
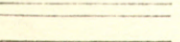
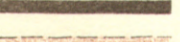

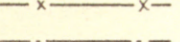


SCALE
IN
FEET



Cross-hatched area indicates size of original Kent Lake.

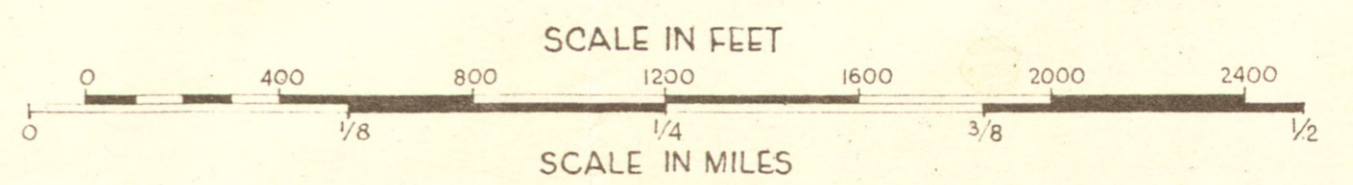


Legend

-  FOOT TRAIL
-  GRAVEL ROAD
-  PAVED ROAD
-  STAKED FOR FUTURE ROAD
-  FENCE LINE
-  PROPERTY LINE
-  VIEW

HIKING GUIDE

KISKADIEE METROPOLITAN PARK



HURON-CLINTON METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY
 1100 CADILLAC SQUARE BUILDING
 DETROIT, MICHIGAN

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