

A 1910 Reflection on Changes in Plaster Creek

... That stream was my playground. ...We knew the individuality of a great many trees, the location particularly of the sycamore that had been eaten out by decay and provided a safe retreat for us on every occasion when it rained. We knew the deep hole which was afterward turned into a swimming place in summer and a skating rink in winter; we knew the kinds of fish that made their home in that creek. We even had a boat a paddled up the stream for miles and enjoyed each summer the beauties of that most delightful natural playground.

[Plaster Creek] has almost nothing now in the way of tree growth from its source to its confluence with the Grand River, and instead of being the beautiful even-flowing stream throughout the year, as in my childhood, it is now a most fitful affair, full to the brim and running over at times, yet most of the year it is only a trickling rill.

The playground is gone. Where there was one child then to enjoy that playground there are now eight thousand children who ought to have a playground like this, but a near sighted utilitarianism has snatched it away. We have stolen their rightful heritage from them.

-Charles W. Garfield, "The Peoples Play Grounds," Fortieth Annual Report of the Secretary of the State Horticultural Society of Michigan, 1910.