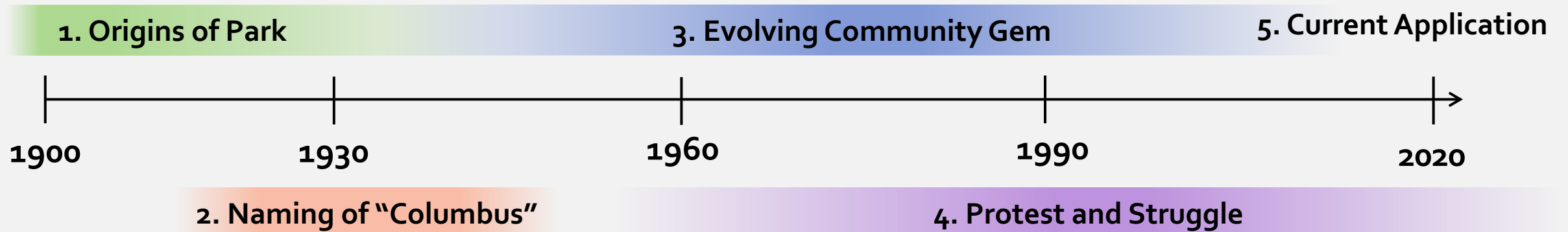




La Raza Park

History of the park,
renaming petition

Presentation Overview

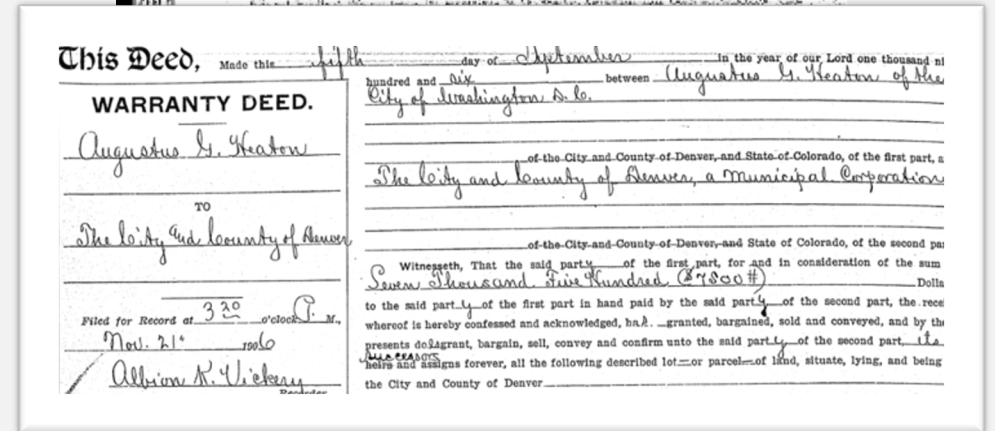


1. Origins of Park – 1910s



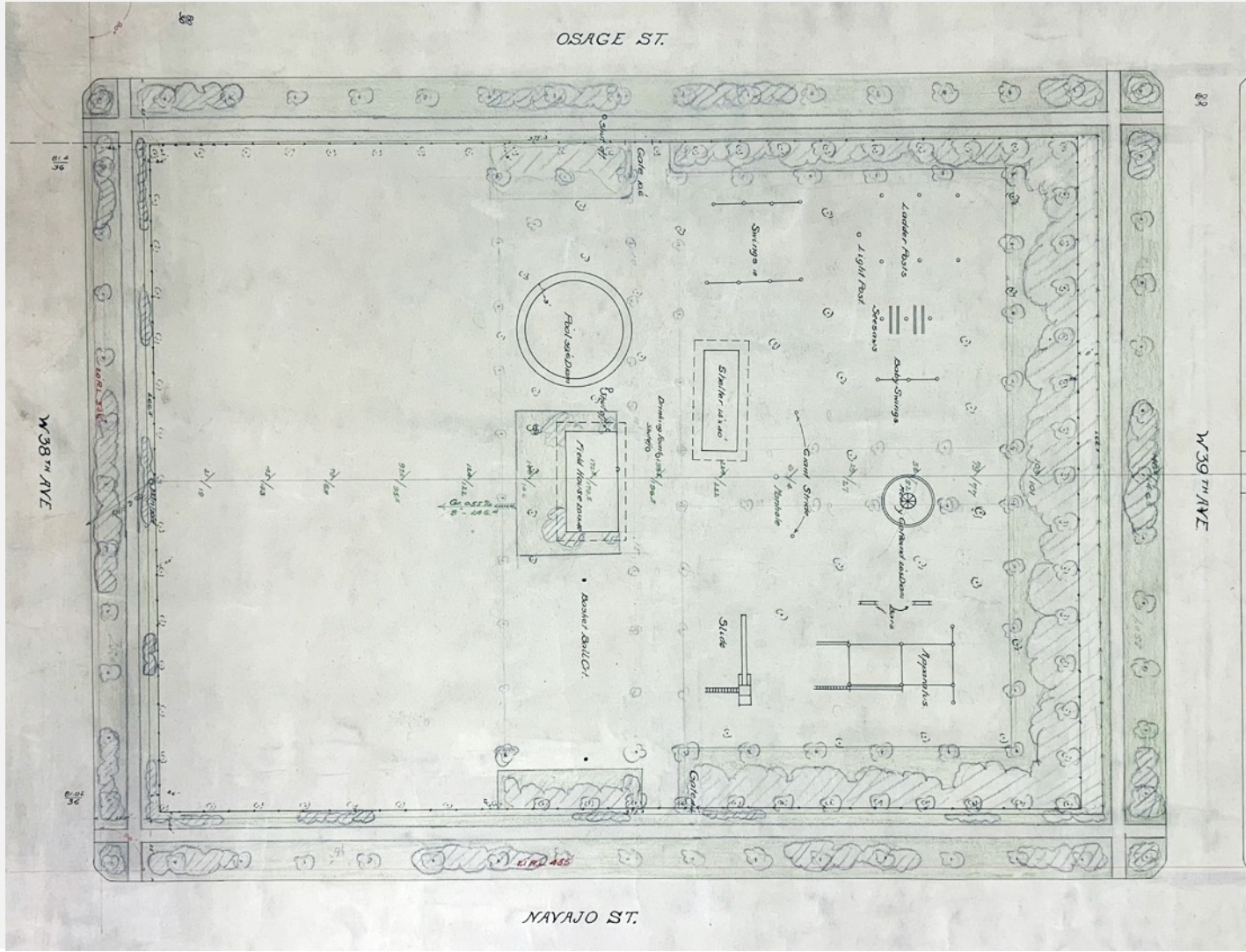
Sanborn Map, 1903-1925

Empty block set aside for park in "Downing's Addition"



Deed of sale, 1906

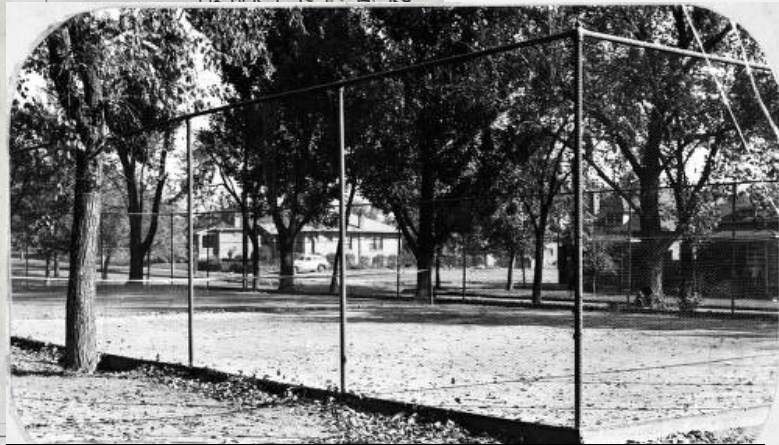
1. Origins of Park – 1910s



Park plans showing pool, shelter and playground, 1912



Pavilion at park, 1930-1940



Tennis court at park, 1930-1940

2. Naming "Columbus" Park – 1930s

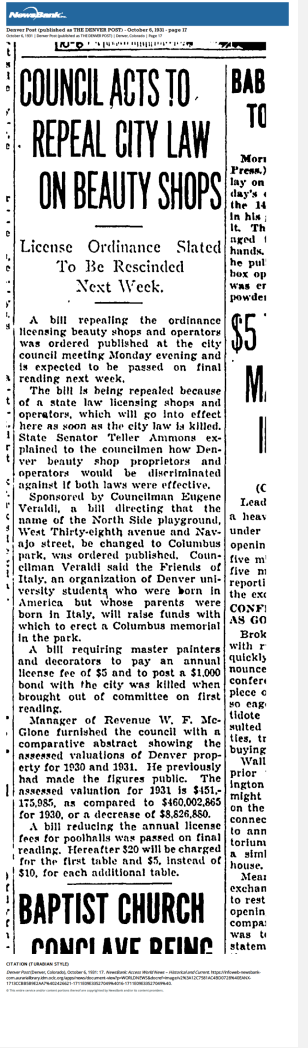
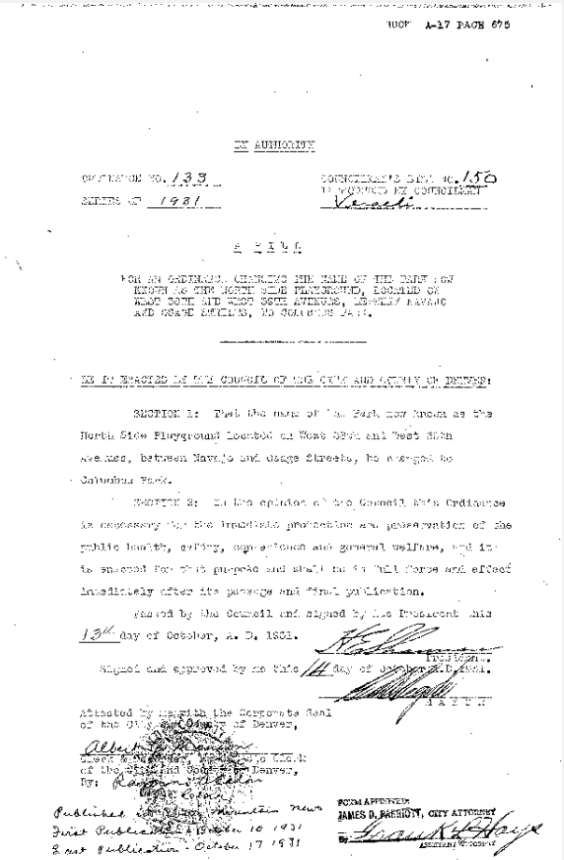
"Sponsored by Councilman Eugene Veraldi, a bill directing that the name of the North Side playground be changed to **Columbus park**. Councilman Veraldi said the Friends of Italy, an organization of Denver university students who were born in America but whose parents were born in Italy, will raise funds with which to erect a Columbus memorial in the park."

Denver Post, October 6, 1931

"An ordinance repealing the city law regarding beauty parlors was approved by council, as was another bill changing the name of a northside playground to **Columbus park**."

Denver Post, October 14, 1931

Renaming Bill, 1931



3. Beloved Community Asset Through the Decades

NewsBank

Denver Post (published as THE DENVER POST) - July 24, 1940 - page 30
 July 24, 1940 | Denver Post (published as THE DENVER POST) | Denver, Colorado | Page 30

go on all purchases starting Aug. 1.

SWIMMING POOL TO BE DEDICATED AT COLUMBUS PARK

Dedication ceremonies for the Columbus park swimming pool recently completed by WPA labor at West thirty-eighth avenue and Osage street will be held Saturday.

Included on the program will be a swimming and diving exhibition and speeches by Mayor Benjamin F. Stapleton, Paul Shriver, regional director of the WPA; Willard Greim, director of recreation in the Denver public schools; Manager of Improvements and Parks George E. Cranmer, City Councilman Michael Marrancino and Frank Mancini, president of the Federated societies.

Dominic Coloroso is in charge of arrangements and Joseph N. Lilly will act as master of ceremonies. The invocation will be given by the Rev. Gaetano Del Brusco, pastor of Mount Carmel church.

CITATION (TURABIAN STYLE)
 Denver Post (Denver, Colorado), July 24, 1940: 30. NewsBank: Access World News - Historical and Current. [https://infoweb-newsbank.com/aurariaLibrary/itm.ock.org/apps/news/document-view?WORLDNEWS&docref=ImageV2%3A12C7581AC48D0728%40EANX-17704K775E4840242835-176202CEB8C712%40S-176202CEB8C712%40S-176202CEB8C712%40S](https://infoweb-newsbank.com/aurariaLibrary/itm.ock.org/apps/news/document-view?WORLDNEWS&docref=ImageV2%3A12C7581AC48D0728%40EANX-17704K775E4840242835-176202CEB8C712%40S-176202CEB8C712%40S)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS-38
 Denver, Colo.

Denve

A LOT of water has been splashed around Columbus Park Pool, the capital city's new swimming hole, since the opening of the pool on August 1, 1940.

Denver mothers are taking lessons in the fine art of the Australian crawl, scissor kick and belly-flopper from Swim-master Bill Weidenbacher.

The mothers first came to the city's cement swimming hole at W. 38th ave. and Navajo st. to chaperone their youngsters to the free morning lessons.

But the combination of Denver's unreasonably warm weather and giddy shouts of "Hey, Mom, the water's fine!" worked wonders.

Housewives from 18 to 50 became the plunge in droves.

Mrs. Sylvia Lovato of 2525 18th st., barely managing to keep her head out of water, spouted merrily: "I just found out how much fun it could be."

represented by the 17 giggling, churning mothers interviewed during one of the four 30-minute classes.

Weidenbacher, chesty, bronzed and blond, led his "girls" to the city championships for student swimmers a week ago at Lincoln Park Pool. It was the seventh annual victory for Columbus Pool maters.

Weidenbacher coaches football at Randall School in off seasons; has been pool manager and chief lifeguard at Columbus since 1941.

He and a team of three instructors supervise the hectic Red Cross-City Recreation Department lessons for beginning, intermediate and lifesaving students. They run 12 separate classes six mornings a week.

1960-1970 – The Hispanic population of the neighborhood doubles from 1960 to 1970, and many younger Italian residents leave the area for the Northern and Western suburbs.

3. Community Pride



Teaching 'danza' at the park, 1970s



Kids at the pool, undated



Band playing at the pool, undated

Increasing tension over care of the park



4. Struggle for Justice

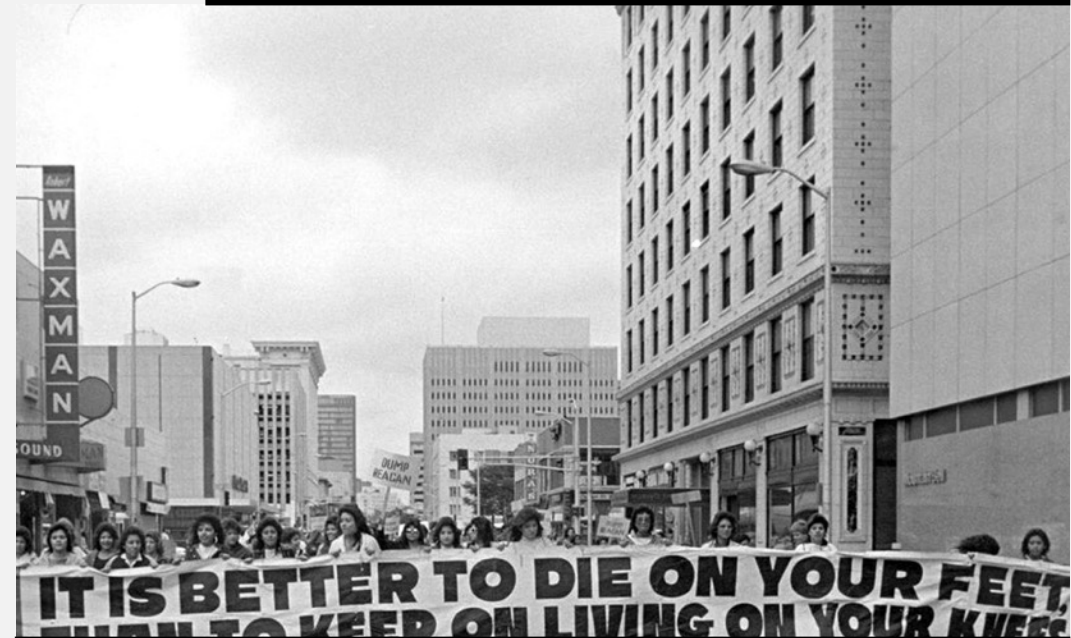
Park becomes focal point for growing Chicano rights movement in Denver.



1972 - Ann Gutierrez speaks to community about police harassment and pool conditions, RMNPC



César Chávez and Corky Gonzalez



Crusade for Justice on 15th St., 1966-1970

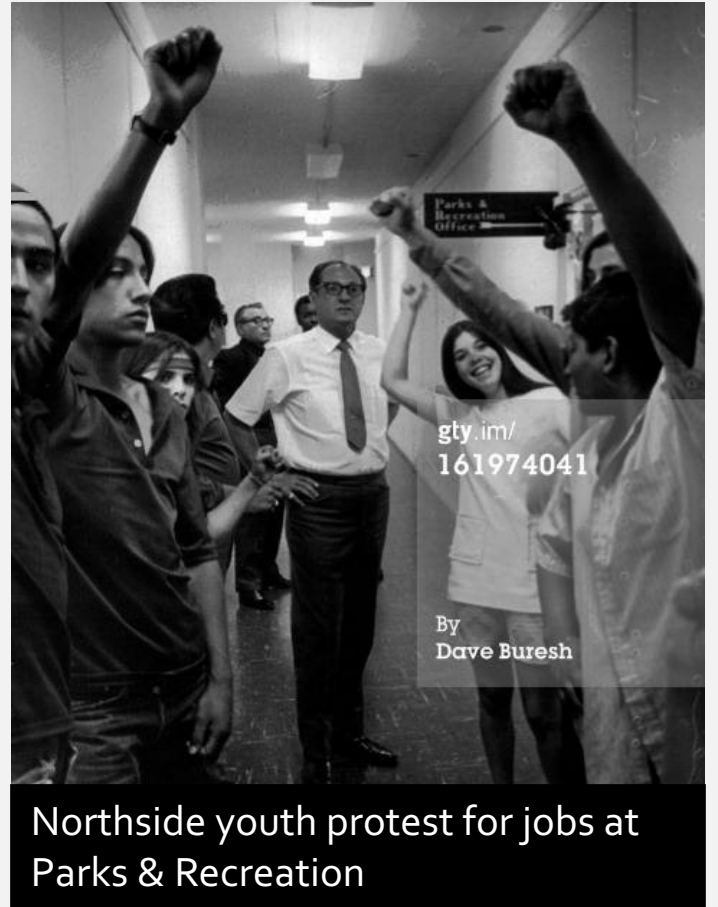
4. Struggle for Justice



1970 – Pool takeover



1972 – "La Raza" park rededication and celebration



Northside youth protest for jobs at Parks & Recreation

4. Struggle for Justice -1981 Police conflict



1980s – Official re-name attempt



Plaza de la Raza
Built in 1989
This kiosko (pyramid structure)
is dedicated to all people of
Denver's Northside
past, present and future in honor
of their continued fight for
peace, justice and equality.
¡Viva La Raza!



Continued
importance
to a vibrant
Latinx
community



Cultural celebrations



Motorcycle/car events



Dia de los Muertos



Activism

5. “La Raza,” not “Columbus”

- Atrocities against the indigenous Taíno people of Hispaniola – mass murder and enslavement.
- Brutality towards fellow Europeans – hangings and mutilation of settlers for minor offenses.
- Columbus eventually arrested, brought back to Spain in chains, and stripped of his governorship.
- The narrative of Columbus “discovering” America is offensive to indigenous peoples.
- Government recognition of Columbus represents government-sanctioned oppression and violence.

5. Current Application - Parks & Rec Naming Policy

Sec. 4.5.3 Naming for Persons

“DPR reserves the right to rename any Park, Building, or Major Feature if the person for whom it is named turns out to be disreputable or subsequently acts in a disreputable way.”

5. Current Application - Parks & Rec Naming Policy

Section 4.3.2

“Priority for naming parks and recreational facilities after deceased persons should be given in the following order to those who have significant and lasting contributions 1) to the Denver parks and recreation system, 2) to the City; or 3) to the nation. ”

“Naming Parks and Buildings after national or international figures should be rare and only upon a substantial demonstration of the figure's connection to or special importance in the Denver community or the State of Colorado”

5. Current Application – Re-naming petition



Over 700 signatures



Support from other elected officials



100-years-old, "waited half his life for this name change."

In-person petition signing, July 2020



Why “La Raza”?



Thank You |

Image Sources

- <https://sunnysidedenver.org/community/history/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/DenversLaRazaParkLegacyProject>
 - Arturo Rodriguez
 - Paco Lucero
- KRMA, Denver Post
- Denver Public Library
- "8-29-18 La Raza Park ColoAztlan," Daniel Salas
- "Aztec Dancers," Bernadette Villalobos
- Getty Images, David Buresh
- CBS4
- Chicano Pride Ride
- <https://denverite.com/2016/07/21/la-raza-park-denver-columbus-park/>