



## #13: Hirsch Memorial Park

Humble has a city park of about four acres, with a recreation center, a swimming pool, basketball courts, tennis courts and a playground. At the front of the park is a sign that identifies it as Hirsch Memorial Park, and that is opened in 1944. Immediately, there are questions: Who was Hirsch? What was there before 1944? As it turns out, that land actually has a pretty interesting history.

**WATER WORKS** - The park was originally the location of the Humble Water Works, owned by Nick Lambrecht. Lambrecht, at one time a county judge in our area. More affluent customer could afford to have pipes run from the Water Works to their home, while other customers could go to the facility to have barrels filled with water to take back to their homes. Lambrecht ran the Water Works until it was taken over by the City of Humble in 1933. The city moved the water works closer to the railroad tracks and left the land for others to use.

**ATHLETIC FIELDS** - In 1933, Harris County constructed community athletic fields on the land. When ground was broken on the fields, a ceremony was held with speeches by Harris County Judge W. H. Ward, Harris County Commissioner W. P. Tautenhan, Jack Rafferty (head of the Houston Sports Conference), Humble School Board President W. H. Bennett, and Humble School Superintendent Frank W. Allenson. The sports field included a football field, baseball diamond, tennis and volleyball courts, a playground, a circular track and a grandstand. Use of the field was supervised by the Humble ISD School Board.

**RECREATION HALL** - In 1940, a large white recreation hall was constructed on the land. It had a large banquet room (for dinner or dancing), a small stage, and kitchen facilities. It was used for dances, town meetings and recitals. The Recreation Hall was damaged by a fire in March 1960 and demolished shortly after. A new recreation center was built (still there) and named after former Humble Mayor Phillip Cezeaux. Cezeaux had been mayor from 1953 to 1963. His family owned Cezeaux Motors, later bought by Frontier Ford.

**CITY PARK** - In 1944, the Humble P. T. A. started a campaign to turn the area into a city park. To pay for landscaping and playground equipment, funds were collected by community members and by children at school. R. W. Condon drew plans for the landscaping. The children of Jules Hirsch deeded the land to the city for use as a park, in honor of their father. JULES HIRSCH (1854-1926) served as an alderman for the city of Houston from 1894 to 1898, and held the position of Houston Assessor and Tax Collector. He also served as a Harris County Commissioner from 1896 to 1900 and again from 1905 to 1909. The committee for planning and expenditures was composed of Floyd Burton, Miss Louise Cezeaux, Ellis Herron, Walker Griffith, Lloyd Martin, and Lee Fields. The finance committee was headed by Mrs. Harvey Bender and included Mrs. Lloyd Martin, Mrs. Let Fields, Mrs. Ellis Herron, and Miss Dorothy Snyder. Still a nice playground for children to play, there were many days growing up when I looked forward to my parents taking me to the park.

**SWIMMING POOL** - Built by the Humble Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) in 1956. For months, volunteers worked every night until 10:00 to build the pool. Most of the materials were donated. The Jayce-ettes paid for the fence around the pool and the two diving boards. They built a pool that was 92 feet long, 35 feet wide at the deep end, and 50 feet wide at the shallow end. Underwater lights were installed to allow for night swimming. The volunteers managed to build a \$70,000 pool for \$5,330. This was where I learned to swim, taking lessons during the summer while staying at my aunt's daycare (Clark's Happy Time).

The City of Humble has done a nice job of keeping the park maintained, and after all these years, Hirsch Memorial Park is still a good destination for local families.

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