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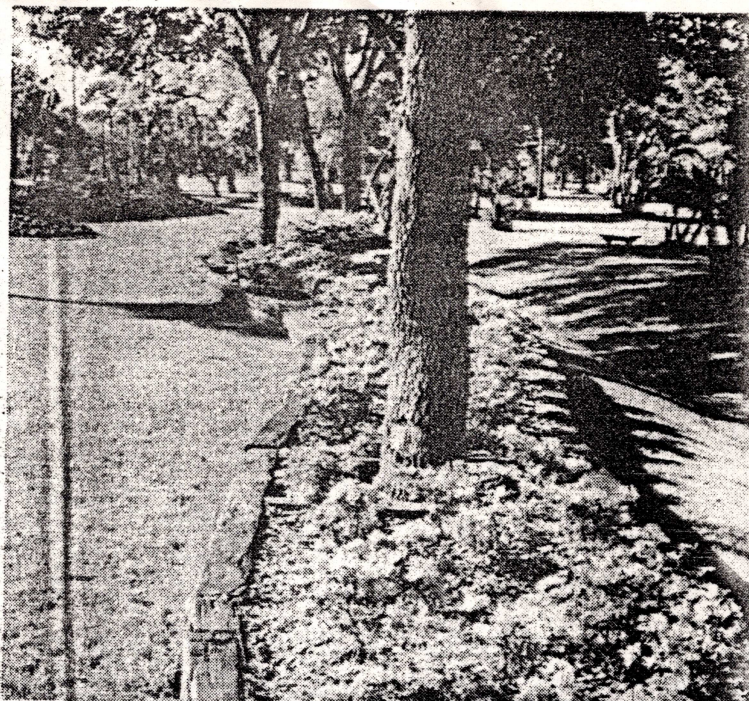
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Railroad
ties
line
azalea
bed.



Staff Photo by GEORGE TRABAN

Clymer Park's New Beauty

MARILYN EVON

Independent Correspondent

GULFPORT — Good things are worth
waiting for and Clymer Park, the city's
newest piece of beautified land, developed
slowly "like a baby," according to Bill
Holtzaepfel, Parks and Recreation Supervi-
sor. That slow and careful planning has
paid off.

It is truly a park for leisurely strolls and
lazy days.

"We planned the park to be different
things for different people," Holtzaepfel
said. "We designed sunny areas and shady
areas, clusters of seating spaces and spots
to be alone. We tried to have a part of the
park for every possible human mood," he
said.

Perhaps the most exciting thing about
Clymer Park is that between 75 and 90 per-
cent of the trees and large shrubs were
donated to the city by residents or business-
es.

Parks foreman Wayne Hefty is still
trying to total up the value of the donated
flora but he figures about \$25,000 might
cover the cost of the shared plants and the
Parks Department planning.

"It was a beautiful thing in the way it
grew," Hefty said. "Ron Strang, one of our
workers, loves azaleas. He showed me an
azalea bed in some lady's yard all banked
and the earth held back with railroad ties.
We expanded on that idea for our park us-
ing ties from an abandoned spur line."

"Bill Holtzaepfel is crazy about ferns,
the mayor (J. P. Clymer, for whom the
park is named) wanted a lot of color, and ev-
erybody wanted it to look natural, so we
sort of took it from there," Hefty said.

All of the benches in the park and two

covered bridges that span a natural drain-
age ditch were made by the Parks Depart-
ment. The ornate wind vane on top of the
pavilion was made by Clymer.

Two of the "prizes" in the park are state-
ly Rex palm and an enormous staghorn
fern. Hefty estimates the value of the palm
to be between \$1,500 and \$2,000 and hesi-
tates to place a value on the fern.

"We could never have purchased either
one of those. But all it cost us was the rental
of the 18-ton crane to move the tree," Hefty
said.

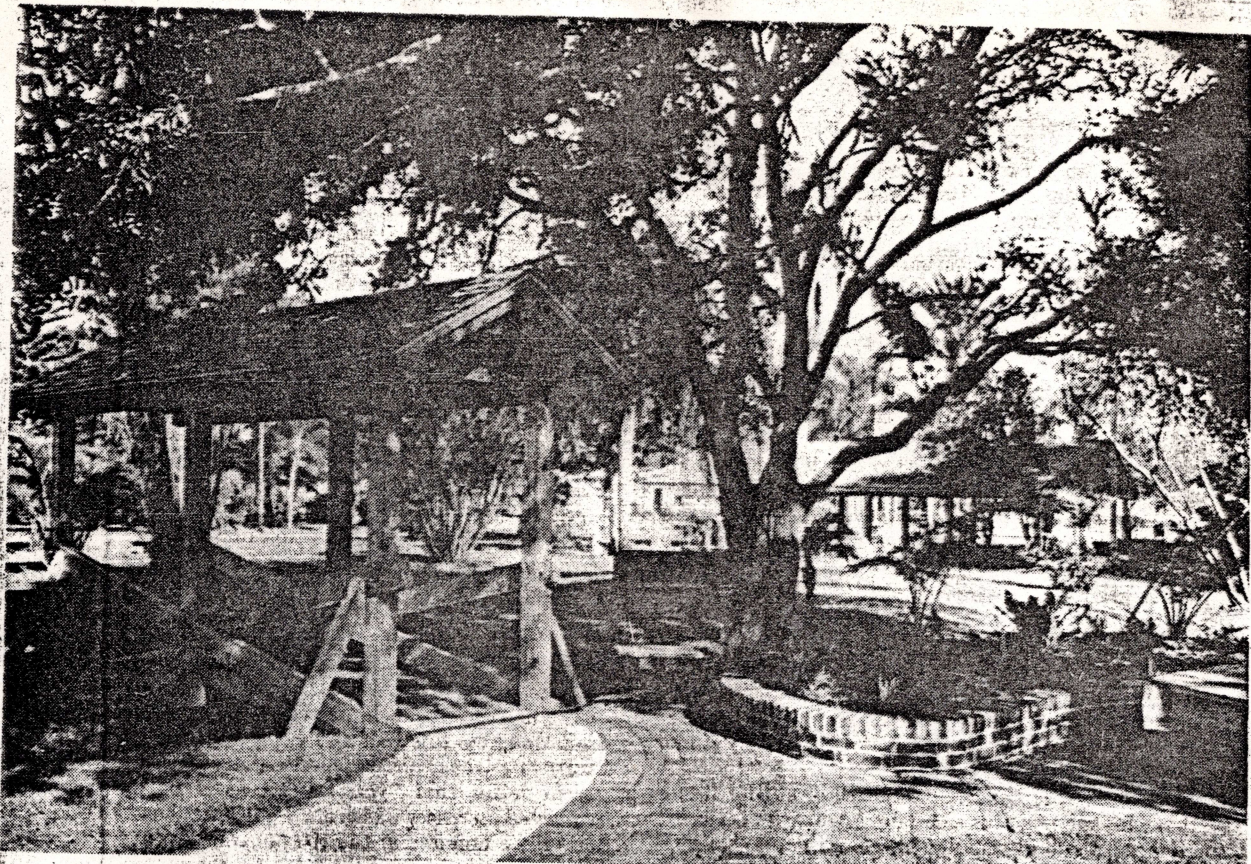
Aside from the artistic plantings, there
are some interestingly designed paths and
decorative borders in used brick.

Almost all of the 6,000 antique bricks
used in the park were scrounged from old
city streets and other projects.

Holtzaepfel says the city would eventu-
ally like to develop the rest of the old street-
car strip, of which Clymer Park, at Gulfport
Boulevard and Beach Boulevard, is a part.
The Parks Department crew envisions the
block south of the new park as a nature trail
area, the one south of that as a recreation
area and the third one in line as a monu-
ment to the streetcars that helped build
Gulfport.

"We'd like to get some track and an old
streetcar for that last stretch of park to car-
ry out the theme," Hefty said.

"It used to be that a year ago when we
first were hired to beautify the city and do
the mowing, people would stop and ask us
what we thought we were doing on city
property. Now they stop and compliment
us on this park," said Hefty, a self-taught
gardner. "We really feel up about it and the
best compliment you can pay us is to come
out and just wander through here."



Rustic bridge crosses drainage ditch.

Staff Photos by GEORGE TRABANT



Bill Holtzaepfel
supervisor.



Wayne Hefty
foreman.

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