

Where in The World is Langer Park?

Tales of Earlier Days

By Bob Dewel

There's an old saying sometimes used when giving directions: "You can't get there from here". In Baraboo this is true when giving directions to Langer Park. Unless you know the ropes, the entrances are shrouded in mystery—and in history.

Actually, for those who know there are two approaches from the West. Though Fourth Street appears to dead-end at Camp St., a seemingly private driveway next to a building there leads to a small parking lot, also dead end, but barely within Langer Park at least. Three grand white oaks, probably a century and a half or more old, gracefully anchor that southwest corner of the park.

A hundred feet or so to the North on Camp Street is a narrow alley, though well paved. If you enter there, the Northwest corner of Langer Park appears, and a complete vista of the park appears before you. The only feature, however, seems to be a modest shelter, with both interior and exterior space.

There is however a more normal approach to the park. Bordering the mostly house-bound park on the East is Remington Street, but even that is hard to find, as it dead ends somewhat to the North of its park entrance. Remington is only 3 blocks long, hardly fitting considering the pioneer lawyer after whom it was named, and of whom we have written. Remington can be accessed from Mound Street near Water Street.

From the East, finally, is a fairly normal approach to Langer Park, on the Eastern continuation of Fourth Street. Fourth then ends abruptly on Lincoln. Thus, except for Langer park interruption, Fourth Street is a through street from Park on the West to Lincoln on the East.

So, you CAN "get there from here", if you know the ropes. Why would you want to go there? In summer it offers merely space for an impromptu ball game or family gathering, but in winter the land is flooded, and the frozen pond is a great draw for skaters young and old. The shelter becomes a warming house!

The problem and the History

Langer Park appears on the earliest plat maps as "City of Baraboo" property, somewhat smaller than it is today. Developers were and even now are required to set aside some land for public use. Perhaps this area was swampy and without modern drainage, so the developer gave it to the city.

The Park was named after Harold Langer, a prominent attorney in Baraboo in the early to middle twentieth century. When this occurred is not known, but the first reference we could find was in a letter on March 8, 1986 written by City Attorney James Bohl, in which he refers to the area as "Langer Park, formerly known as Second Ward Park"



Barabo Parks and Recreation

Off the beaten path in summer, Langer Park sees its greatest use in winter, but only in very cold weather, when the ground is sufficiently frozen to keep the ice from melting. There is a shelter house.

There's more to the Langer Park story in that letter, including its significance. In addition, there is controversy as to its very existence in the past, and probably in the future. This will be addressed in a follow up story in a few days.
