

## **Text and description of sound installation + images**

### **Woodlands Park: Ghost Landscape placemaking project**

501 Barton St. E., Hamilton, spring 2022

#### **Description of sound installation (4 pm to 7:15 pm approx.)**

Birdsong, fountain water sounds

The clip-clop of horses walking by

Music: Instrumental bandstand tune recorded in New Orleans: George Lewis, "When You And I Were Younger Maddie" (1944)

Bert McClure says:

"During the '46 strike, we spoke in Woodlands Park. There must have been about five thousand people there we spoke to. There used to be a lot of meetings in Woodlands Park, that's why they messed it up, so they couldn't hold meetings there. There was a lot of big trees there, like a bandstand in the centre of the thing, you know, that's where they used to speak from. They cut all the trees down. They did it real fast, so you couldn't hold meetings there. They rearranged the park so it was no good for meetings."

Wally Mack says:

"There was a fellow by name of Harris, who was in charge, and this guy was an outstanding speaker. I used to go to meetings where they would have maybe eight, nine hundred people, and I'd be watching it, and you know you learn a lot, just like music, it's not only music, but when you study music — I studied music, arranging, composition — and you study people, it gives you heart, it gives you understanding of humanity. And I used to sit in there and I used to admire this man, because he'd be standing over there, and here he's got eight, nine hundred people in the palm of his hand, you know? And I thought to myself, now that's a real accomplishment for somebody to do this. Of course when you're feeding somebody what they want to hear, this is what you're going to have. But at the same time he achieved this, and the following was there so he could project to the employees, and tell them what they wanted to hear."

The clip-clop of horses, birdsong, fountain

Music: Instrumental ragtime tune, Victor Military Band playing "Music Box Rag" (1914)

Wally Mack says:

“The government was so afraid of communism, that any time there was a gathering, they sent in some kind of force to break it up. Well, at Woodlands Park, and I guess it was May 1st, my dad went down, because he was interested in this, he went down to Woodlands Park to hear Tim Buck, and there were quite a few people, unemployed people, gathered in the park. They whaled into this crowd, drove them out of Woodlands Park, because that’s the way they handled things in those days. I don’t think of them as what they called them, jack-booted thugs, and this and that. The firemen were doing what they were told to do.”

Water, birdsong

Woman narrating:

“Bert McClure remembers that the park became an important organizing centre for the UE in the late 30s and early 40s.”

Bert McClure says:

“In the summertime, we used to be — after we kind of got things moving — we used to have a soundtrack at noon hour, hold meetings at Woodlands Park in the noon hour. A big gang used to come out and eat in the park, you see, and so they weren’t necessarily come to a meeting, but they were there, we used to have the soundtrack there, tell them ‘bout the union.”

Music: Utah Phillips singing “Solidarity Forever” (to the tune of “John Brown’s Body” / “Battle Hymn of the Republic”)

*When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run,  
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun;  
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one,  
But the union makes us strong.*

**Chorus:**

*Solidarity forever, (x3)*

*For the union makes us strong.*

*Is there aught we hold in common with the greedy parasite,  
Who would lash us into serfdom and would crush us with his might?  
Is there anything left to us but to organize and fight?  
For the union makes us strong.*

*Chorus*

*It is we who ploughed the prairies; built the cities where they trade;  
Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid;  
We stand outcast and starving midst the wonders we have made;  
But the union makes us strong.*

*Chorus*

*All the world that's owned by idle drones is ours and ours alone.  
We have laid the wide foundations; built it skyward stone by stone.  
It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to own.  
While the union makes us strong.*

*Chorus*

*They have taken untold millions that they never toiled to earn,  
But without our brain and muscle not a single wheel can turn.  
We can break their haughty power, gain our freedom when we learn  
That the union makes us strong.*

*Chorus*

*In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold,  
Greater than the might of armies, magnified a thousandfold.  
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old  
For the union makes us strong.*

*Chorus*

The clip-clop of horses, birdsong

Birdsong and fountain sounds

Water and crickets

Description for the visually impaired:

**1. FIRE HALL BRICK WALL (wraps around east corner):**

**Woodlands Park: Ghost Landscape**

**“The People’s Park” 75 Years Later**

**#GhostLandscape @Barton\_Village GhostLandscape.ca**

Commemorating the 1946 Stelco strike and 1947 Parks Board “modernization” that forever changed Woodlands Park — a beautiful public space with deep roots in labour history

**Sign & banner design:** Naomi Bower @ergosomething

**Photo credit:** Local History & Archives, Hamilton Public Library

**Photo:** Workers march through Woodlands (early 1900s); Westinghouse factory in background, fountain in foreground

**2. UTILITY BUILDING SIGNAGE (facing east towards Sanford Ave. N.)**

Large heading: **Woodlands Park: Ghost Landscape**

Left-hand column:

**Woodlands Park: Ghost Landscape** is a community-led placemaking project that speaks to **two 75th anniversaries in 2021 and 2022**: that of the **1946 Stelco strike**, and of the **1947 actions by the city’s Parks Board**, which forever changed Woodlands Park.

**Woodlands Park** was once a treed, Victorian-style park with a fountain and bandstand, known as **“The People’s Park”** for its labour gatherings. But six months after the Stelco strike, when strikers organized and assembled at Woodlands Park, the city’s Parks Board decided — against local opposition — to “modernize” the park by **removing the bandstand, fountain, and most of the trees**. This was done before May Day, 1947. With its installations throughout the park, **Ghost Landscape** evokes and commemorates the rich landscape removed by the Parks Board.

Ghost Landscape aims to bring the public space that was pre-1947 Woodlands back to life, if only in our imagination.

As a visitor, you’re invited to experience:

- Evocative **photo displays** here and on the Fire Hall wall and north fence
- A **soundscape** with spoken word, nature sounds, and music from the lost Edwardian bandstand (*active afternoon to early evening*)

Speaking to this placemaking project's themes of **change, loss, renewal, and the mutability of our public space over time**, construction of the Woodlands Spray Pad means the return of a central water feature, 75 years later.

*Right-hand column:*

This is a temporary project made possible by the **City of Hamilton's Placemaking Grant Pilot Program** with support from the **Patrick J. McNally Charitable Foundation**.

Projects funded through the Placemaking Grant Pilot Program will help to enliven our public spaces as the city recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. This community-led project was inspired in part by Workers' City, an initiative of Workers Arts & Heritage Centre (WAHC), and motivated by a desire to see renewal at Woodlands Park, especially the return of lost trees and to its status as a gathering place.

Additional support is generously provided by the **Ward 3 Office** and **USW Local 1005**.

Sponsored by the **Barton Village BIA** with support from **GALA**. Project lead: **Sarah Sheehan**. Special thanks to **WAHC, Lance Darren Cole, Tracing Green Canada, Steady Canoe, Morse & Associates, McMaster University Library, and Hamilton Public Library**.

Woodlands Park is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

**Sign & banner design:** Naomi Bower [Twitter bird] @ergosomething

**Sound:** Steady Canoe

**Printing & layout:** Morse & Associates

***Photo:** Woodlands Park looking east, with Sanford Avenue North and Westinghouse headquarters in the background (spring 1947)*

***Photo credits:** Local History & Archives, Hamilton Public Library; Workers' City / The William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library*

***Banner quotation credits:** "Will Continue Improving Park, Board Decides," Hamilton Spectator, April 22, 1947; Hamilton Spectator, V-E Day, May 8, 1945; Workers' City / Workers Arts & Heritage Centre*

*Timeline at bottom:*

**"The People's Park": a timeline of Woodlands Park, 1895 - 1947**

**1895:** City purchases land from the settler Land family for Woodlands Park

**1898:** Memorial fountain added, a gift of the Land family

**1905:** Westinghouse factory opens (located on the north side of Woodlands Park)

**1914:** Bandstand added to the park, creating a venue for music and speakers, including Emmeline Pankhurst, George Harris, Tim Buck, and Mayor Samuel Lawrence

**1915:** Baseball diamond enlarged at northwest corner of Woodlands Park

**1917:** Canadian Westinghouse headquarters built, on the east side of Woodlands Park

**1932:** Violence by police constables at May Day workers' rally held at the park

**1945, V-E DAY (MAY 8):** Hamiltonians celebrate Victory in Europe Day in huge numbers with parades and festivities at Victoria Park, the Civic Stadium, and Woodlands Park

**1946, JULY - OCTOBER:** Stelco Strike (81 days) wins a landmark victory for the labour movement; United Electrical Workers hold their strike vote at Woodlands; 10,000 workers gather here to march to Stelco

**1947:** Against protests from local leaders, residents, and the United Steelworkers' Union, the Parks Board razes Woodlands, cutting down trees and removing the bandstand and fountain

### **3. EAST FENCE – 5 horizontal mesh banners with 2 images each, left to right**

#### **Banner 1:**

Quote (lower left): "The only 'spot of green' in a congested area" — Cllr. Peter Dunlop, 1947

Photo caption (L): Canadian Westinghouse headquarters, seen through Woodlands Park trees (1928 or later)

Photo caption (R): Visitors relax in Woodlands Park, near the Victorian fountain (1912)

#### **Banner 2:**

Quote (upper left): "AS ALL HAMILTON CHEERED THE ALLIED VICTORY — Mayor Samuel Lawrence, with happy youngsters crowding about him, addresses the huge crowd at Woodlands Park."

Photo caption (L): Children with Mayor Samuel Lawrence in the Woodlands bandstand on V-E Day (May 8, 1945)

Photo caption (R): Hamiltonians in Woodlands Park on V-E Day

Text (bottom right): Victory in Europe Day, 1945

#### **Banner 3:**

Photo (L): Large headline reading STEEL STRIKE NOW IN FORCE. Caption: Front page of The Hamilton Spectator announcing the Stelco strike (July 15, 1946)

Photo caption (R): Picketers in front of Westinghouse factory, next to Woodlands Park (1946)

Quote (lower right): "Woodlands Park has become the traditional meeting place for workmen. Trade unionism in the city has its roots there. It has a historical background." — Controller Helen Anderson, 1947

#### **Banner 4:**

Quote (lower left): "That place is a scraggly looking park" — Parks Board member, April 1947

Photo caption (R): Members of UE Local 504 gather at Woodlands Park (likely 1946)

Quote (upper right): "K.C., chairman, assured the delegation there would be seats for labour meetings. He said it had not been the intention of the board to 'throttle free speech'" — Hamilton Spectator, April 1947

Photo caption (L): People observing the Parks Board's work in progress, razing Woodlands Park (1947)

**Banner 5:**

Quote (top left) "There used to be a lot of meetings in Woodlands Park, that's why they messed it up. There was a lot of big trees, bandstand in the centre, that's where they used to speak from. They cut all the trees down. They did it real fast, so they couldn't hold meetings there. They rearranged the park so it was no good for meetings." — Bert McClure, labour organizer, oral history told to Workers Arts & Heritage Centre (WAHC)

Photo caption (L): Woodlands bandstand and fountain still standing, amid felled trees; they are later removed (1947)

Photo caption (R): View of Woodlands Park towards Barton and Wentworth, showing felled trees (1947)

Quote (bottom right): "We can make a very nice place if we're let alone" — Parks Board member T.B. McQuesten (1947)