

# Some Things

## Don't Change . . .

by Sue Zarins

Do the 1915 sketch and photo reproduced on this page look strangely familiar?

When amateur photographer Wolfe Markham visited the Zoo last Spring with fellow Syracuse Camera Club members, he casually mentioned that the bear dens didn't look much different than they had in 1915.

"Do you remember visiting the Zoo then?" I asked in surprise.

"Visit? I designed them!" answered the lively 85 year-old architect.

He is semi-retired now, but the Cornell University graduate has had a long career designing buildings in Syracuse. Oddly enough, it began with the bear dens.

"Park superintendent David Campbell explained to me what he had in mind, and I drew up the plans," remembers Mr. Markham, who was known as Wolfe Marcovitch in those early days. He produced a yellowed clipping from the old *Syracuse Herald* which announced the completion of the Zoo's first prominent structure.

The dens were rather elegant and advanced in design for their day—an era when many were housing bears in simple wire pens.

Yet apparently the Syracuse Parks Commission had even more elaborate plans in mind, for the clipping quotes Campbell as saying that the dens would soon be matched by a similar structure on their right flank, also housing carnivores. To the left of the dens, Campbell projected a large flight cage, presumably for birds of prey.

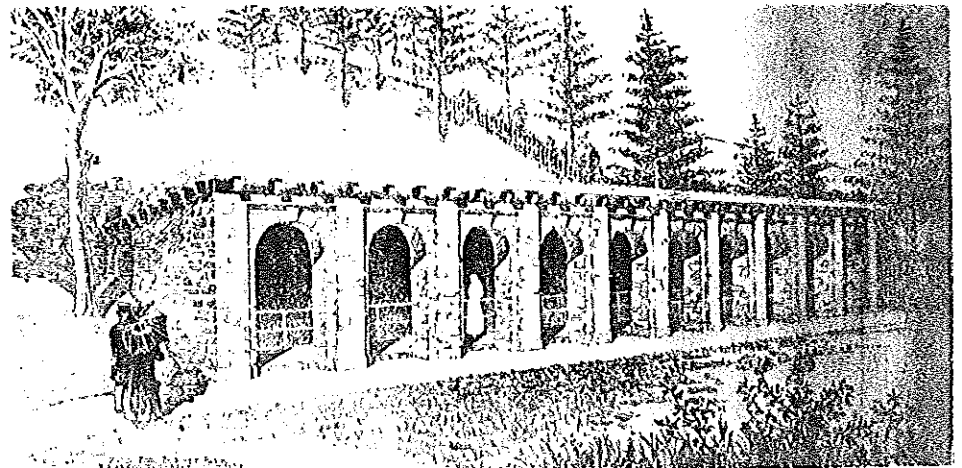
We don't know what became of Superintendent Campbell and his ambitious plans. If development had continued at his projected pace, Burnet Park Zoo might have had a very different history. It is interesting to speculate, but suffice to say that the bear dens were the last substantial structure built at the Zoo until the main building was erected in 1932. Improvements since then have been few, and slow in coming, until the federal grant this year.

The stone facade of the bear dens show little signs of its sixty-two years. However, Zoo staffers will quickly point out that the roof and interior are not well preserved. Unfortunately for the two Asiatic black bears who still live there, that's the part that counts. (Even the patches on the roof have patches!)

No one is likely to make an historic site out of the bear dens—indeed, it's insufficient space for bears. But admirers of hand-crafted stone work hope that, as the Zoo renovation continues, some exhibit will be developed that would preserve the stone arches of Wolfe Markham's bear dens.

*The drawing of the bear dens (right) and photo (above) date from 1915.*

*—Photos courtesy of Wolfe Markham*



## Meat Loan Saves Leopard

A snow leopard at Rochester's Seneca Park Zoo was operated for removal of an impacted hair ball recently. The animal's recovery was endangered by his refusal to eat his usual feline diet. The concerned staff sent out an S.O.S. for unadulterated horse-meat.

Here in Syracuse our meat locker was closing, but a staff member hurried down to the warehouse to wheedle a supply for the endangered cat. While "dinner" was being thawed, a Rochester staff member hurried over to pick up the meat. Much to everyone's delight, the snow leopard began eating and his recovery has been assured.