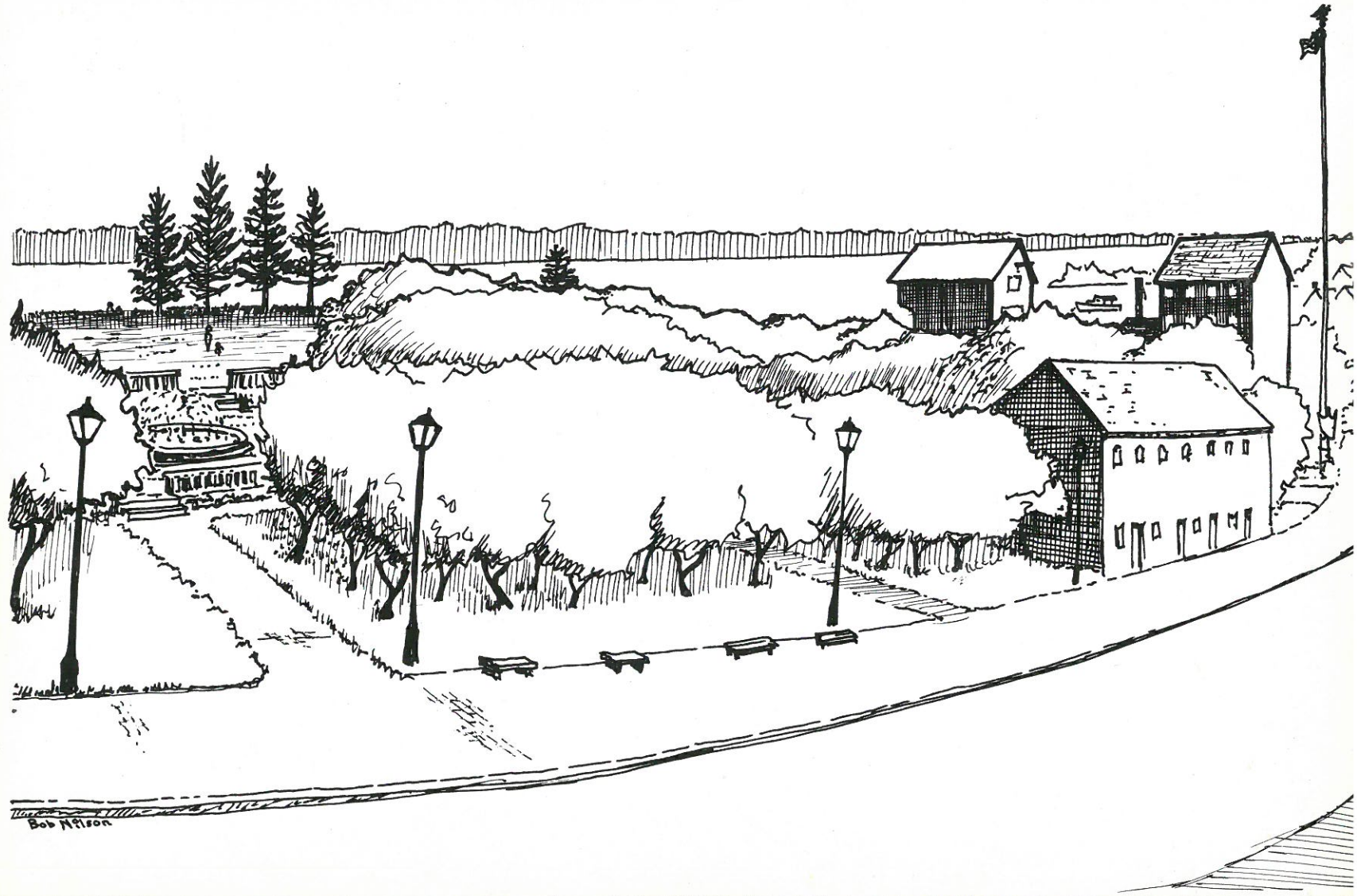


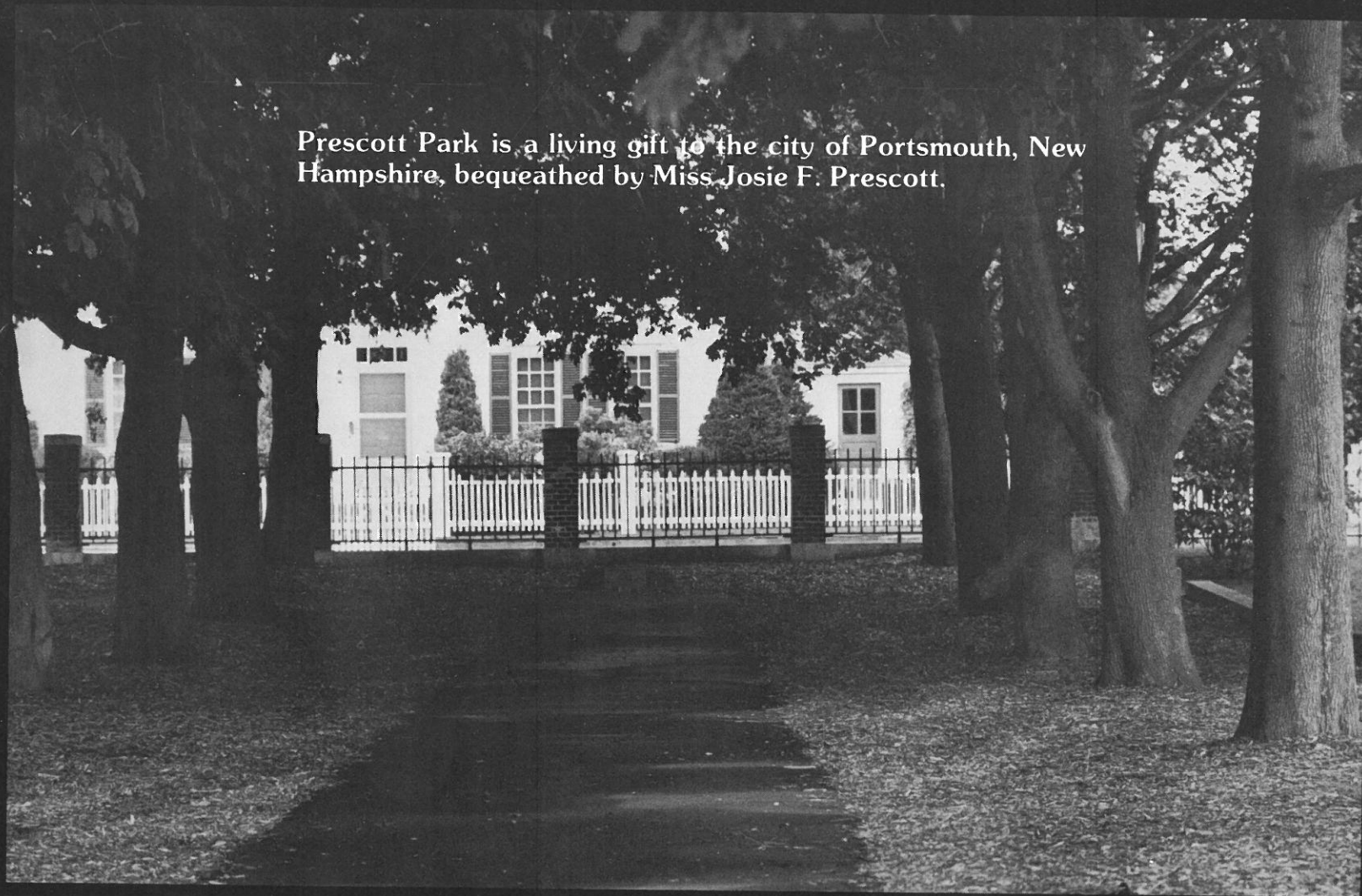
# PRESCOTT PARK





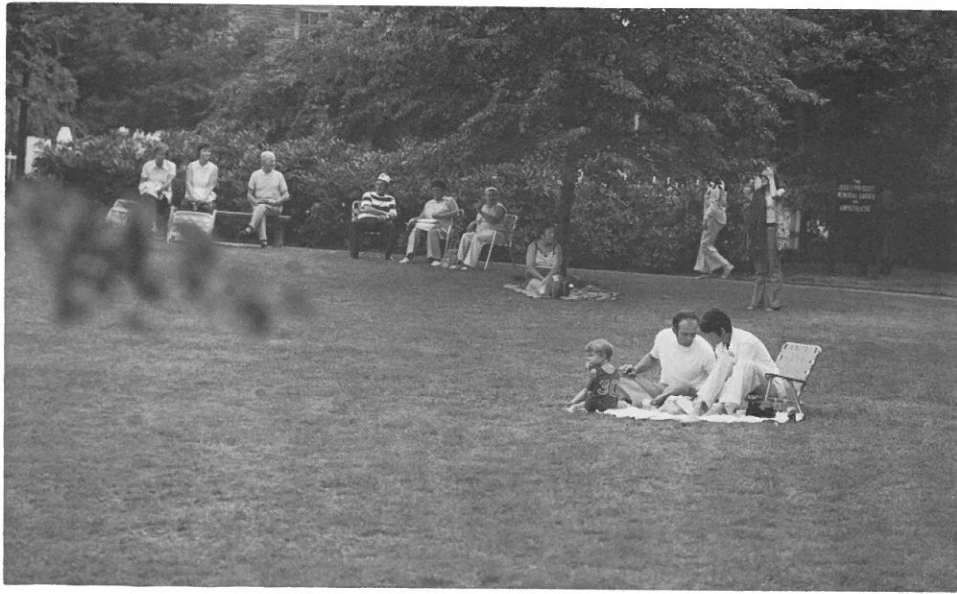
Bob Nilson

Prescott Park is a living gift to the city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, bequeathed by Miss Josie F. Prescott.





The Park's broad lawns, quiet tree-shaded walks, and splendid waterfront views of the Piscataqua



River provide a peaceful  
“back yard” for the citizens  
of Portsmouth and visitors  
to the city.





The area was not always so pleasant. During the lifetime of the Prescott sisters, Miss Mary and Miss Josie, the district then known as Water Street was notorious for its bawdy houses.

“ . . . At one time in her 350 years of history, Portsmouth would have to take a back seat to none . . . for the sheer viciousness and depravity of its night life . . . Because the glories of Water Street are now so distant it should be remembered that ‘wars always mean ships, and ships mean men to man them.’

“While the waterfront in Portsmouth has never been a garden of innocence, the pressure of all these additional service personnel gave new impetus to the world’s oldest profession . . . Probably few forms of human depravity went unenacted in the heyday of Water Street . . . ”

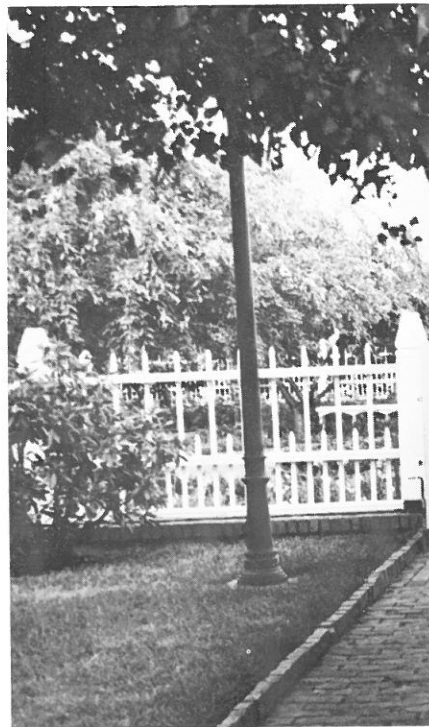
—Ray Brighton, *They Came to Fish*

When the Prescott sisters acquired their brother's estate in the 1930's, through the efforts of attorney Charles M. Dale, they began to change the character of the waterfront.

“ . . . They wanted to see the notorious Water Street area wiped from the face of the earth. They visualized a park and other general improvements along the waterfront south of Memorial Bridge . . . They began by acquiring property. . . Slowly through the middle and late 1930's, the property acquisition necessary to beautifying the old Water Street went on . . .

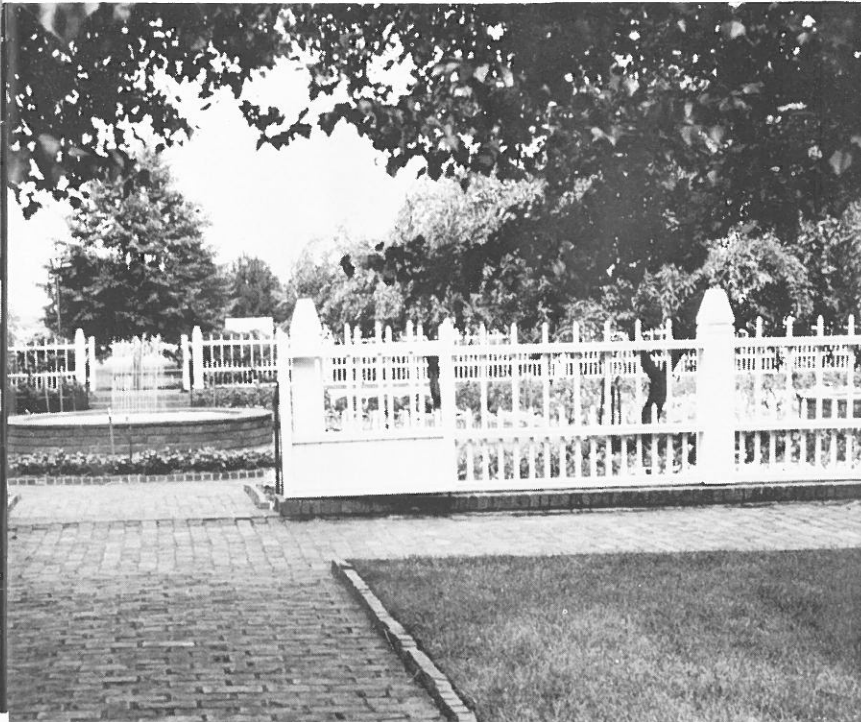
“Then lands that make up the older portion of present-day Prescott Park were acquired . . . to provide a site for the original part of the park which is dedicated to the memory of the Prescott sisters' father . . . ”

—Ray Brighton, *They Came to Fish*

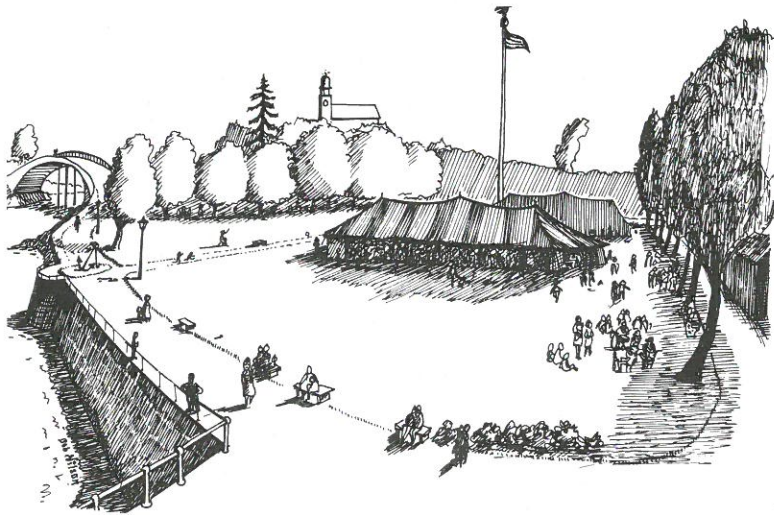




## The Josie F. Prescott Memorial Garden.



After Miss Mary's death, Miss Josie Prescott continued the projects they had begun, with the assistance of Charles M. Dale. When Miss Josie died in 1949, the property which the sisters had acquired, and a trust fund then amounting to \$500,000, were placed in the trust of Charles M. Dale and Edward Buck, to be turned over to the city of Portsmouth within five years. When Mr. Dale did so in 1954, the trust fund, intended for maintenance and development of the Park, had grown to over \$1,000,000. The Prescott Fund is administered by the Trustees of Trust Funds.



The Park from Sheafe Warehouse.

Many improvements have been made to the Park since 1954. The Park was fenced along the water side for safety and floats for boat mooring were installed. A large parking lot was built at the State Street end of the Park.

Fishing boats moored at the Park.



The charming formal gardens were dedicated in 1966. Their illuminated fountains and Colonial varieties of flowers invite strollers throughout the summer months, and in the fall the gardens are opened for one day for flower-picking.



An open amphitheatre for concerts and outdoor motion pictures was constructed in front of the pine grove at approximately the same time as the gardens. The possibility of enclosing the amphitheatre with a shell is being considered.



**Concert by the U.S. Air Force Band of the East.**



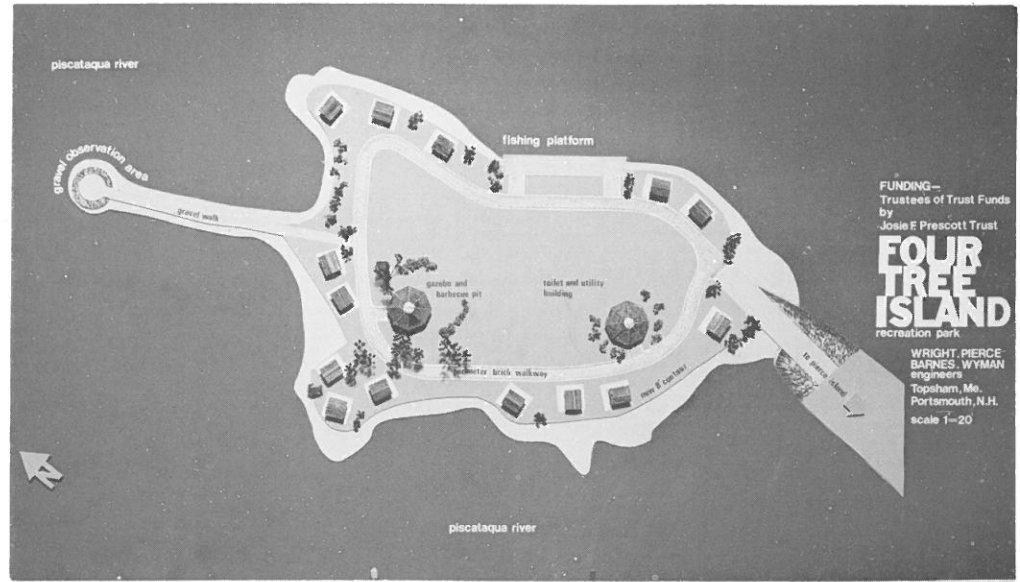
Proposed pier location.

Plans have been approved for further improvements, such as a large fenced pier for fishing behind the pine grove.

Plans for fishing pier.

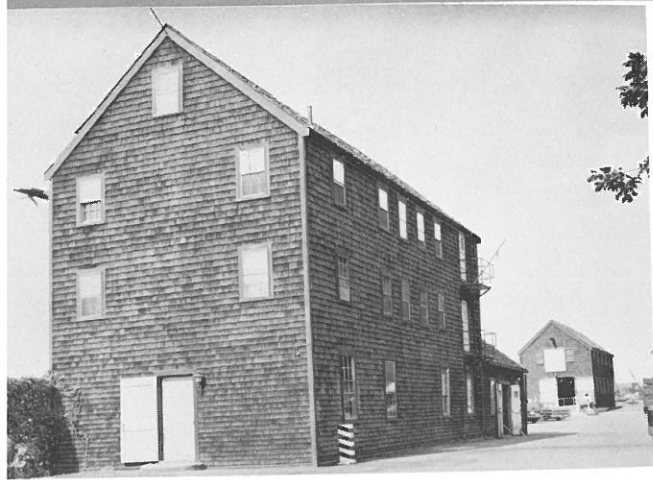






Planned picnic area on Four Tree Island.

Four Tree Island is also part of the Park. Dredging was done around the Island in the late 1960's and a family picnic area is being planned there. The Jubilee Week fireworks display takes place on Four Tree Island.



**Shaw Warehouse.**

**Sheafe Warehouse.**



Two interesting maritime structures are located in Prescott Park. Shaw's Warehouse, built in 1812, stands at its original location. It has been used as the site for the Strawberry Banke Children's Art Festival, and as the children's library during the construction of the new addition to the Portsmouth Library.

The Sheafe Warehouse, which was built in 1705, has been moved a short distance to its present location. John Paul Jones' ship,



Ranger, was outfitted from this warehouse. In 1966 the Adams Collection of Wood Carving and Folk Art was acquired by the Trustees and is housed here. The collection consists of ship models (including models of the Piscataqua gundalows), decoys, and wildlife figurines carved by Edward and Cass Adams of Durham, N.H., over an 80-year period. The Sheafe Warehouse Museum is open from June through August.





**The Air Force Band of the East.**

Beginning in 1974, an expanded schedule of summer activities was begun in Prescott Park. A Craftsmen's Fair was held, and a silent film festival was sponsored jointly by the Trustees and the Trustees of the Library. The U.S. Air Force Band of the East gave an evening concert.

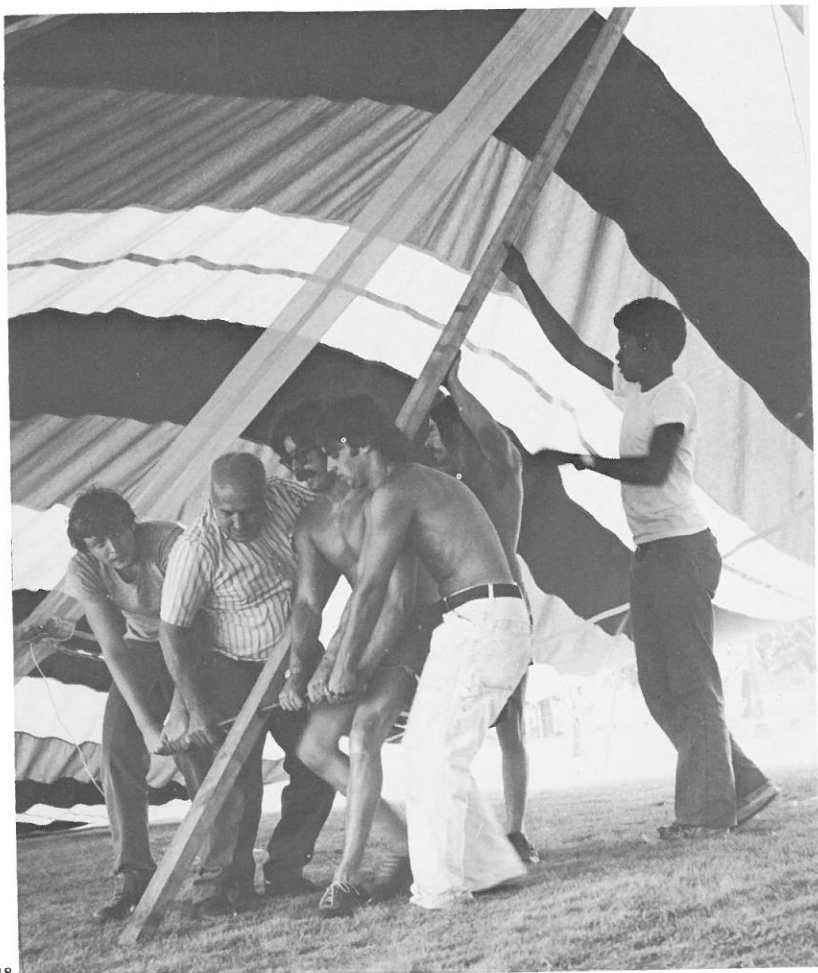


**Craft Display.**

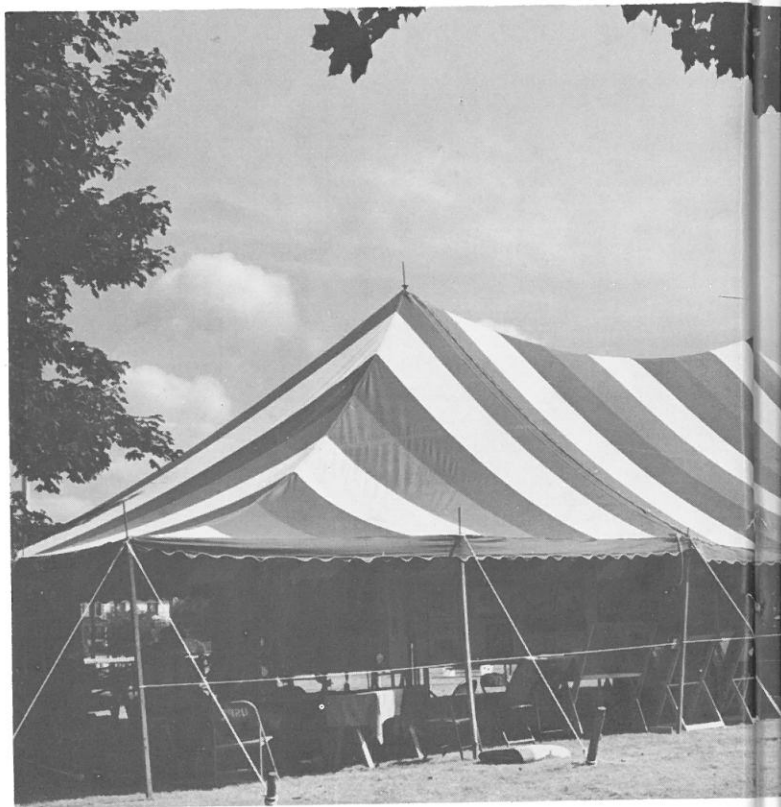


**Craftsmen's Fair.**

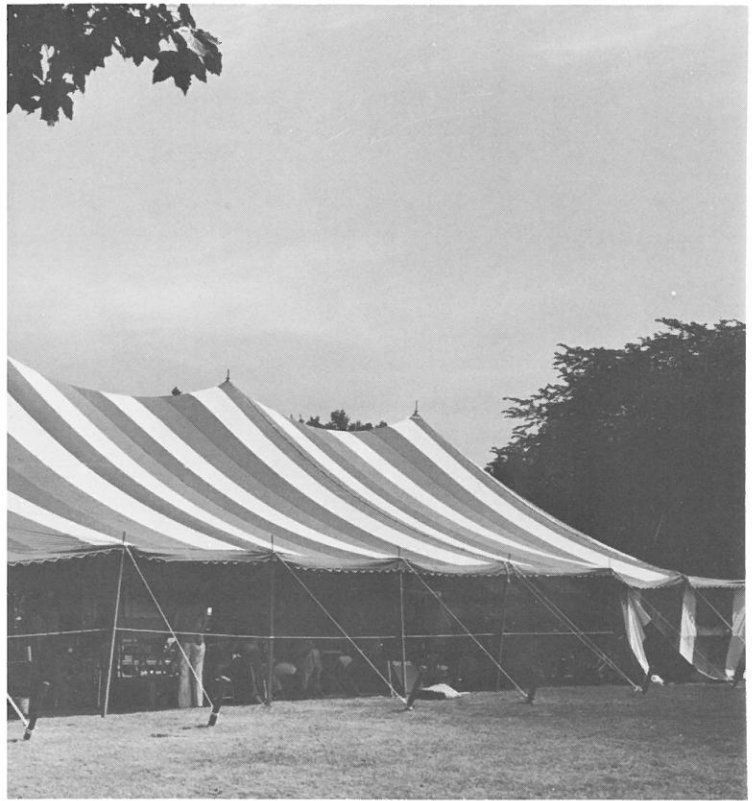
Raising the tent.



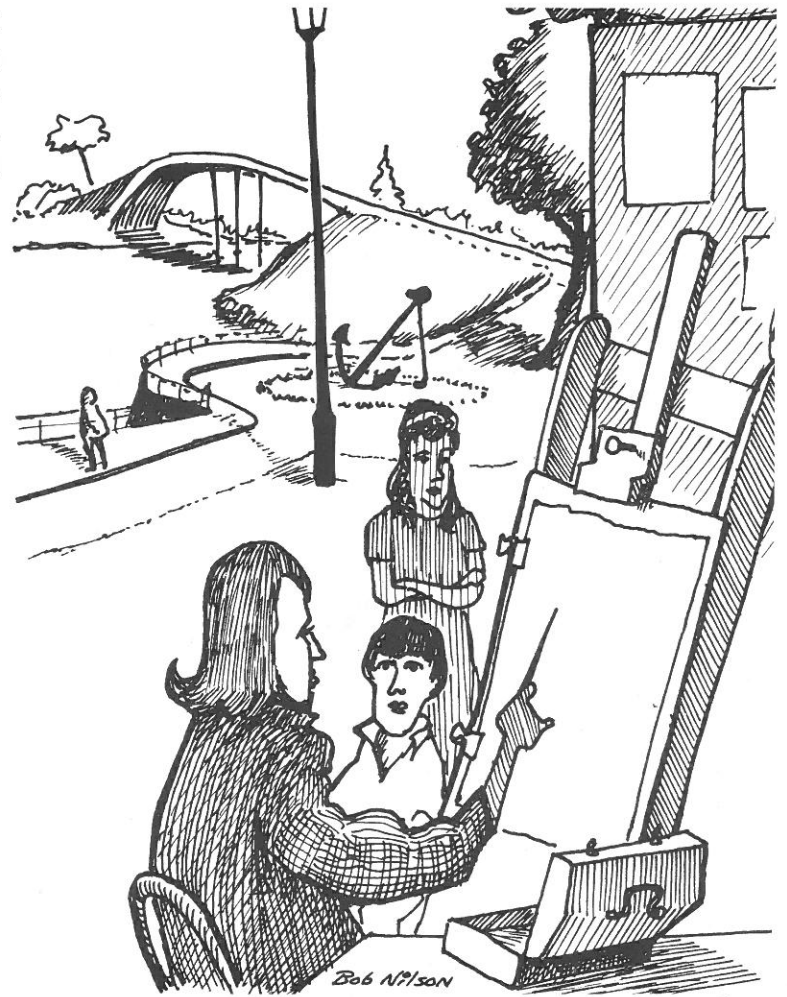
The Trustees authorized the purchase of a new, red, white, and blue tent under which a two-day Arts Festival was held in cooperation with



the New Hampshire Art Association  
and the New Hampshire Ballet Com-  
pany.

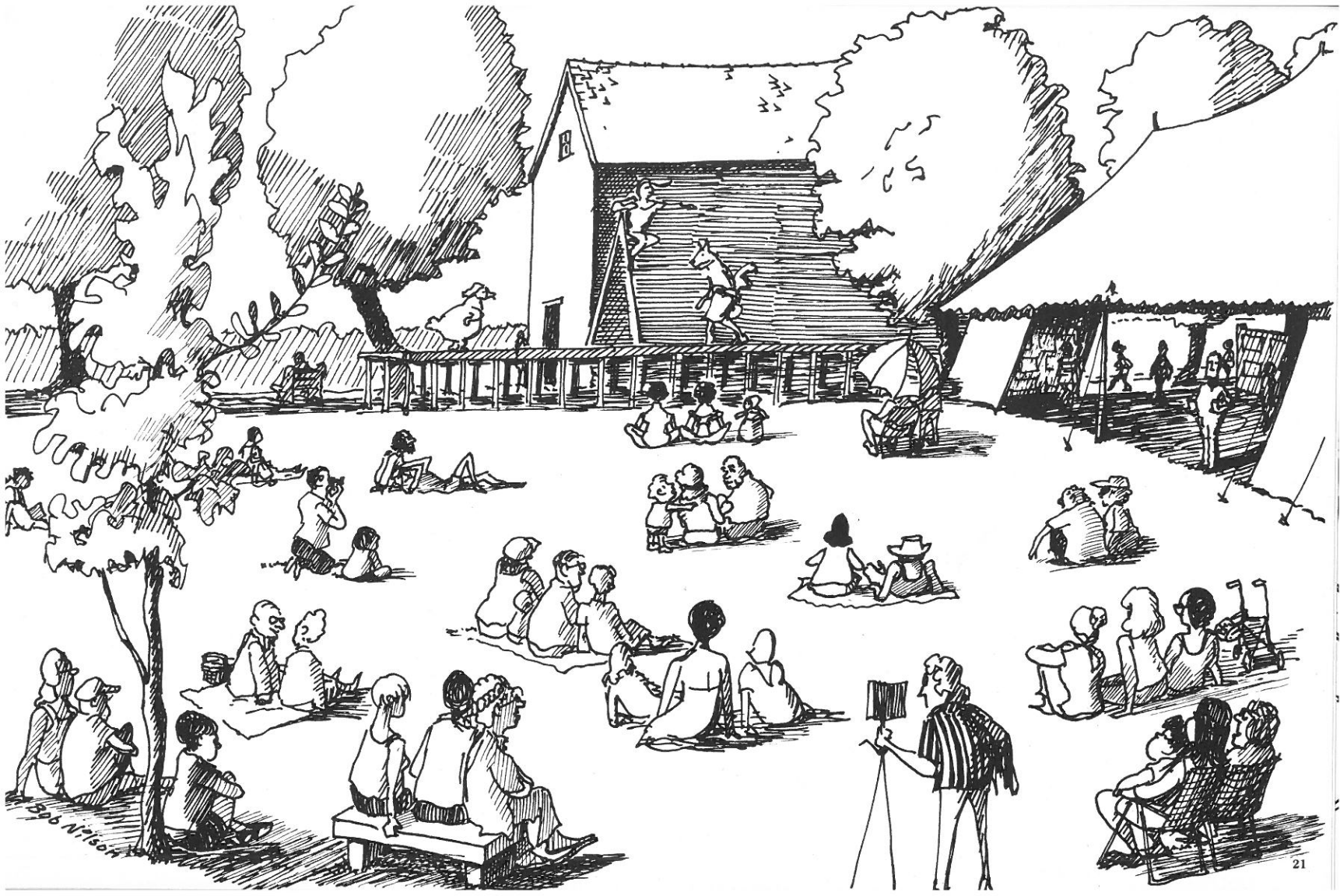


Portrait  
artist  
at the  
Arts  
Festival





A temporary stage was erected for a performance of Peter and the Wolf by the New Hampshire Ballet. The Park will soon acquire its own moveable stage and permanent theatrical lighting for future dance and dramatic performances.



Bob Wilson



The success of the two-day Festival in 1974, which included children's art workshops, artists demonstrating techniques in various media, and a display of work by N.H.A.A. members, as well as the ballet, encouraged the formation of a summer-long Festival for the years to come. The Festival, jointly sponsored by the New Hampshire Art Association and the Trustees, maintains its office in the Shaw Warehouse.







All activities in Prescott Park are free and open to the public. The Trustees hope to encourage greater use and appreciation of the Park through expansion of its facilities, both physical and cultural. Through their efforts, the Prescott sisters' dream is becoming a reality.



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administering the Prescott Fund**

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**Drawings:** Bob Nilson

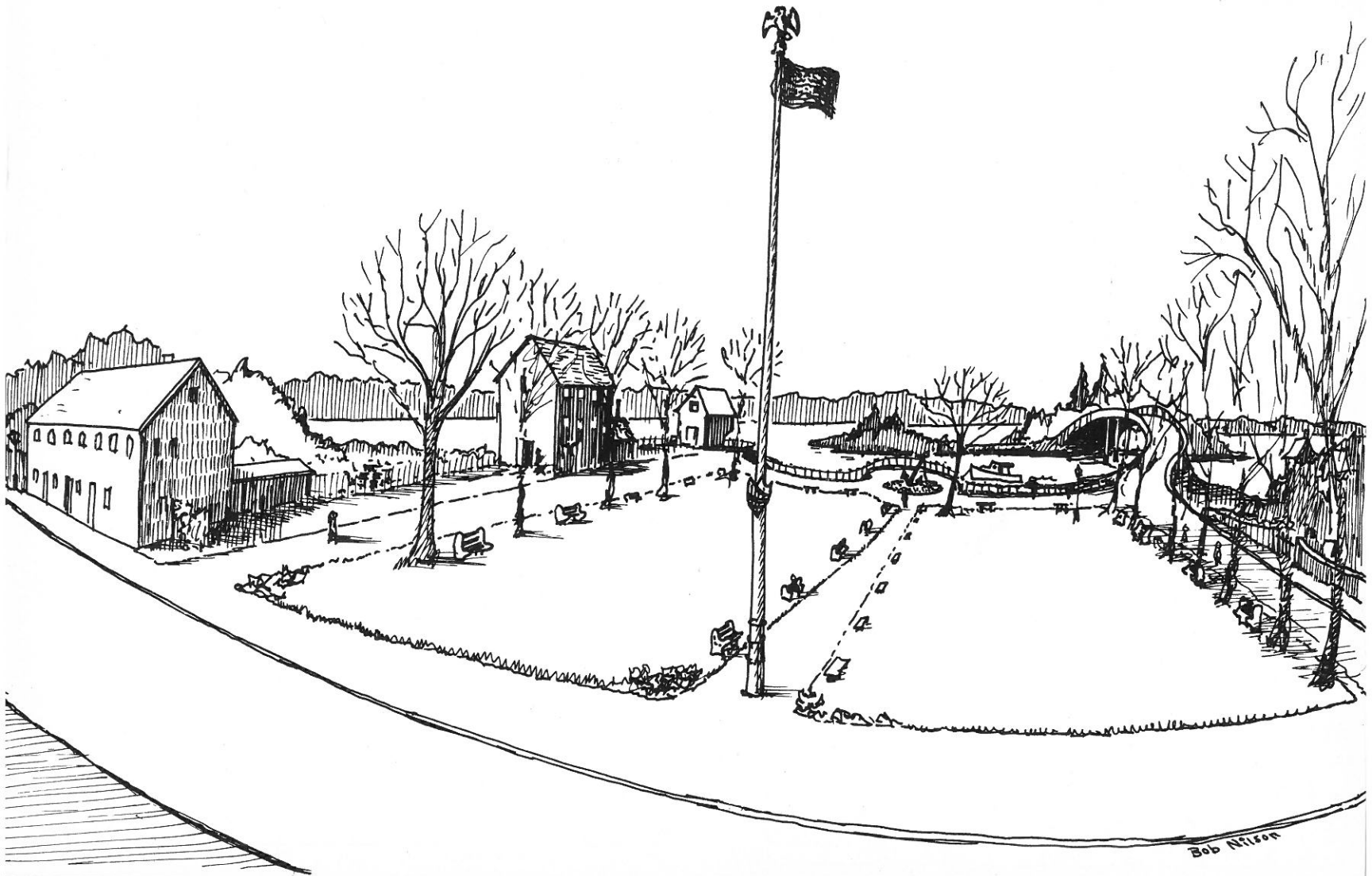
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Bob Nilson

