WPA History
Signs at Parks’ Olympic Swimming Pools

March 2022
Bronx

Crotona
173rd Street & Fulton Avenue
Brooklyn

Betsy Head
Boyland, Livonia & Dumont Aves.
Brooklyn

McCarren
Lorimer & Bayard Streets
Brooklyn

Red Hook
Bay & Henry Streets
Brooklyn

Sunset

7th Ave. between 41st & 44th Sts.
Manhattan

Hamilton Fish
Pitt & Houston Streets

Hamilton Fish Pool

What was the site before?
A former ten-acre baseball park, opened in 1930 to serve the densely populated Lower East Side community. A landscaped basin-a-kite ballhouse, designed by the renowned architectural firm of Charles F. Girard and Harris, was later used as the site of Charles Gruel's Petit Poisson in Paris.

How did this site become a pool?
The summer of 1930, seen in the Street Department's Pools and Playgrounds Project, showed New Yorkers how to use the Pool Department's pools. The Pool Department opened the summer's season on May 1. The Pool Department's Piscine project, designed by Leser and Protas, was part of a series of improvements that transformed the park into a civic center in a period of rapidly growing street-level conditions.

The pools were not just large bathe; they were used for baseball and soccer games. The pool had the largest diamond, with a playground and baseball fields. The pool was also used for swimming, sailing, and water sports, including scuba diving and synchronized swimming. The pool was an important part of the neighborhood's social life, with events such as concerts, picnics, and dances held across the park.

Who is the pool named for?
The pool and park take their name from a prominent family of public officials who served New York City. Hamilton Fish was a U.S. Senator from New York and served as Secretary of State under President Grover Cleveland. He was a strong advocate for the improvement of public spaces and played a key role in the development of Central Park. His father, Silas Fish, was a judge and later served as the mayor of New York City. His son, Charles Fish, also served as a U.S. Senator and was instrumental in the development of many public parks and recreational areas in New York City. The pool is a fitting tribute to the family's dedication to public service and commitment to creating beautiful spaces for the community to enjoy.
Manhattan

Highbridge
Amsterdam Ave. & W. 173rd St.
Manhattan

Jackie Robinson

Bradhurst Ave. & W. 146th St.
Manhattan

Thomas Jefferson
E. 112th St. & First Avenue
Queens

Astoria
19th Street & 23rd Drive
Staten Island

Lyons
Pier 6 & Victory Boulevard