**BRASS BAND PLAYING IN THE CITY GARDEN...**

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The primary task of the builders of Kherson was the quick construction of the fortresses and the shipyards as the future foundations of the Black Sea Fleet. The city was founded on the treeless steppe. There was a lack of funds, manpower and building material which had to be brought from far away.

However, the security of the newly founded place was not the only thing the eighteenth century high officials cared for. Grigory Potemkin, the Governor-General of the region of Novorossiysk, signed a contract with the English gardener Moffett to lay out a forest plantation outside the city. For the future City Garden the prince chose a picturesque spot on the river Verevchina. Ten thousand trees were planted in 1783. That same year a special holiday-house for Empress Catherine II was built on the grounds of the garden. The Tsaress spent some time in it, and it was even mentioned that *"Her Majesty’s Hand planted a few trees".*

According to the preserved plan of 1864, the area occupied by the garden was five to six times larger than the modern remnants and lay within the limits of the present-day Donetskaya and Verevchina streets. The young grove was one of the attractions in the steppe city and a favorite place of its citizens. However, this green oasis existed near Kherson only thanks to Prince Potemkin’s care. Funds for the maintenance of the garden ceased to be donated after his death. Within few years, the place was abandoned.

The efforts of Alexander Suvorov gave the garden a second chance. Unfortunately, it was overgrown and abandoned again when Alexander Vasilyevich departed. Hunters wandered there in winter to shoot a couple of rabbits...

In 1874, the old garden was transferred to the agricultural school. Various ancillary constructions and a school building were erected on its territory. Students got rid of dead-wood in the park and ennobled the area. A few years later, a small botanical garden with rare exotic plants and a weather station were established. Perfect order in the city garden attracted picnickers again. The place was always popular during May Day celebrations: entertaining activities were hosted here and merry music was heard…

After the revolutionary events of 1917 terrible days came for the garden. In January 1918 Kherson’s newspaper "The Native Land" reported, *‘In the garden all the willow trees have been destroyed. The residents resort to the unauthorized felling…’* When, finally, the cutting of the trees stopped, little there was left from the beauty and the grandeur of the old park. The grove was not to be restored. The town lined up and came close from all its sides to the garden.

Today, Kherson Regional Lyceum is situated on the territory of the time-worn park…

**Based on:**

***Хмель В.А. Херсонские истории, предания и были. - Херсон: Наддніпряночка, 2014.***

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