
Bryant Park – www.bryantpark.org

Bounded by 5th Ave, 6th Ave, 40th St and 42nd Street
Manhattan, NY

Facts:

- 20,000 Visitors per day
- Amenities
 - French-style carousel, a boule board, chess tables, gardens, Bryant Park Grill, free wireless internet
- 9.6 acre privately-managed public park
- Designated as public space in 1686 by the New York Governor

History

1686

New York's colonial governor Thomas Dongan designated as public property the land that is now Bryant Park. The area was still wilderness, and the hunting grounds of Native Americans.

1776 General Washington's troops, after being routed by the British in the Battle of Long Island, raced across Manhattan, traversing the future site of Bryant Park.

1823

The city established a potter's field on the site

1840

The city decommissioned the potter's field, when it was apparent that this countryside would soon be consumed by "urban sprawl."

1847

Following the construction of one of the city's most imposing edifices, the Croton Distributing Reservoir, on the present site of the New York Public Library, the city designated the former potter's field to its west as a public park called Reservoir Square, a simple Victorian greensward.

1839-43

The reservoir itself, built in, was a man-made lake four acres in area, surrounded by massive, fifty-foot-high, twenty-five-foot-thick granite walls designed in a vaguely Egyptian style. Along the tops of the walls were public promenades, offering breathtaking views. It was an integral part of the first supply of fresh water carried by aqueducts into the city from upstate New York.

1853-54

New York's first "world's fair," the Crystal Palace Exhibition, took place on the site of Bryant Park. The remarkable iron and glass structure erected to house the fair remained standing until 1858, when it burned down.

1884

Reservoir Square was renamed Bryant Park, to honor the recently deceased poet and editor William Cullen Bryant.

1878

The Sixth Avenue Elevated Railway was constructed and cast a shadow over the park until it was closed in 1938.

1934

Architecture magazine noted that Bryant Park had "become one of the most disreputable parks in the city."

1979

New York seemed to have given up Bryant Park for lost as an urban amenity, as well as an historic site

1980

Andrew Heiskell and Daniel A. Biederman created a master plan for turning around the park.

1986-1991

Bryant Park was redesigned by Laurie D. Olin from the OLIN firm.

1992

Bryant Park reopens to lavish praise from citizens and visitors, the media, and urbanists.

1998

City approved designs by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates for two restaurant pavilions and four concession kiosks

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