

A World of her own Making: Katharine Smith Reynolds and the Landscape of Reynolda, by Catherine Howett, University of Massachusetts Press with Library of American Landscape History, 2007; 416 pages, 150 illustrations; \$39.95 cloth; ISBN 978-1-55849-520-3



It was only a few years after marrying tobacco magnate R. J. Reynolds that young Katharine Smith Reynolds (1880–1924) began to plan a new home for her family. Not many young women of the day found themselves with almost unlimited wealth to construct their dream home, but Katharine's sense of purpose for her vast resources was even more unusual. She envisioned the

founding of a model community that would emphasize health, modern technology, mixed-crop scientific farming, education, and rural beauty. To realize this dream, she drew on the liveliest and most progressive ideas of her era.

Catherine Howett, a longtime SGHS member, begins her analysis of Katharine's unusual achievement with her childhood in Mount Airy, North Carolina, and the defining southern values that framed her experiences there. Howett follows Katharine through her transformative education at the state Normal School, founded and run by Charles Duncan McIver and his ardently feminist wife, Lula. The values instilled in Katharine during these early years guided her, a new woman of the New South, in all that followed.

In 1904, when Katharine embarked on her estate project in Winston (now Winston-Salem), North Carolina, the South was still feeling the effects of the Civil War and a century of single-crop farming. After conducting exhaustive research, which included wide-ranging reading in agricultural journals and trips to other American estates and model farms, she began to lay out her property, Reynolda. Her plan was inspired, in part, by the rural landscapes of England that had captured the imagination of Frederick Law Olmsted.

A welcoming bungalow for her family was surrounded by a landscaped park, set amid thriving farm fields and pastures, with a village of homes and gardens, a church, and a school for farm employees. Beginning in 1915, Thomas W. Sears, a highly regarded Philadelphia-based landscape architect, aided Katharine. The estate eventually expanded to cover more than 1,000 acres. The process of planning Reynolda paralleled similar efforts in other parts of the United States, as new towns, parks, campuses, and

country estates were laid out during the century's first decades.

Illustrated with 150 photographs, plans, and drawings, Howett's study analyzes the singular convergence of influences that occurred in the imagination of a highly unusual woman. The book provides welcome insight into the culture of the New South and into a richly inventive period in the history of American landscape architecture.

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