

VIEW

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NUMBER 10

VIEW from the Director's Office

Dear Friends of LALH,

It is a pleasure to write to you with news from LALH. The past year has been something of a watershed for us, a culmination of one identity-defining enterprise and the beginning of two new ones. We could not be making this progress without you. Thank you, for all you do to support LALH.

Last fall LALH completed a decade-long initiative—the ASLA Centennial Reprint Series. These ten new books are now available as a set, with introductions that put them in contemporary perspective. A foundational library for practitioners and historians in the field, the series adds substantially to the scholarship on America's early landscape practitioners. We are proud of this accomplishment and feel confident that these reprints, with their important introductory essays, will have lasting impact on the field of American landscape history.



Connecticut River, Hadley, Mass. Photo by Carol Betsch.

As the ASLA series reached completion, a generous grant from the Viburnum Trilobum Fund of the New York Community Trust helped LALH lay the groundwork for two new book series: "Designing the American Park" and "Critical Perspectives on the History of Environmental Design," edited respectively by Ethan Carr of the University of Virginia and Daniel J. Nadenicek of University of Georgia. The first volume in the environmental design series will be out next year—*The Native Landscape Reader*, edited by Robert E. Grese. Look for the inauguration of the park series in 2012 with a book about the Buffalo Parks system by Francis R. Kowsky.

If our expanding list might be likened to the spreading crown of a maturing tree, our root system is broadening, too, most visibly in the increasing number of people contributing to LALH—our deep thanks go to you for continuing to nurture the organization. Our taproot is also growing: this spring the LALH Board of Trustees added three new members—

Shannon Hackett, Susan L. Klaus, and Darrel Morrison (FASLA). These individuals come to LALH with impressive experience in landscape design, preservation, and scholarship. *VIEW* is growing, too—from twelve pages in 2000 to the present issue of thirty-six pages. Articles by an ever-widening circle of historians and practitioners bring fresh perspective to LALH books and preservation topics.

In this issue, Jane Roy Brown profiles LALH preservation hero Bob Grese. Learn how a childhood in the mountains of Tennessee helped nurture one of the field's most passionate native plants proponents. *VIEW*'s lead article spotlights *Graceland Cemetery: A Design History*, Christopher Vernon's forthcoming book on the influential Chicago landmark. Thought-provoking context to the Graceland story is provided by "Therapeutic Landscapes: America's Nineteenth-Century Rural Cemeteries and Their Legacy" by Reuben M. Rainey. Pamela Hartford presents a photo essay on the sublime work of Arthur G. Eldredge; guest commentator Hazel White profiles the Santa Barbara landscape architect Isabelle Greene, who muses on the challenges and delights of designing her own garden; I preview a new edition of Fletcher Steele's *Design in the Little Garden*.

Why should you give to LALH?

LALH is the only nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated to publishing books and organizing exhibitions about the history of American landscape design. We have been devoted to this effort since our founding in 1992, and we continue to develop LALH books and exhibitions so that we can educate wide audiences about the meaning of important American places. To learn more about our books, exhibitions, and preservation success stories, visit LALH.org.

There are many different ways you can support LALH. Sign up for *What's New*, our electronic newsletter. Tell your friends about us. Purchase our books, read them, and visit the living landscapes they illuminate and protect. And, please, contribute so that we can continue our good work.

With thanks and best wishes,

Robin Karson
Executive Director

LALH

Library of American Landscape History, a not-for-profit corporation, produces books and exhibitions about North American landscapes. Our mission is to educate and thereby promote thoughtful stewardship of the land.

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LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LANDSCAPE HISTORY

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Cover: View to Burnham Island, Graceland Cemetery. Photo by Carol Betsch.
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Layers of Invention at

GRACELAND CEMETERY

In 1900 Chicago's Graceland Cemetery won a silver medal at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris. Along with Spring Grove Cemetery—which was awarded a gold medal—Graceland was hailed as the “most perfect expression” of the “modern” or “park-like” cemetery in existence and, still more effusively, “the admiration of the world.” Horticulturist and author Wilhelm Miller (1869–1938), whose accolades appeared in a 1903 *Country Life* article titled “An American Idea in Landscape Art,” also used several views of Graceland to illustrate his landmark treatise, *The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening* (1915). Arthur G. Eldredge's luminous photographs, which illustrate both publications, capture the transcendent appeal of the cemetery, the subject of a new LALH book by Christopher Vernon.

The planting compositions in Eldredge's ethereal images were the work of Ossian Cole Simonds (1855–1931), Graceland's superintendent from 1881 to 1900, during which time the cemetery served as a design laboratory. Simonds's approach was infused with what Miller identified as the “prairie spirit,” a label he also applied to the work of Jens Jensen, Walter Burley Griffin, and even Boston-based Warren Manning. Simonds's design experiments were fostered by the cemetery's president, Bryan Lathrop, a civic-minded amateur landscape gardener. Simonds had been planning on a career in architecture, but Lathrop took the young man under his wing when Simonds became superintendent in 1881. Through readings and extensive landscape tours, Lathrop revealed to Simonds the potential for an art form that he believed superior to architecture. In the cemetery's bucolic landscapes, Simonds felt his childhood wonder at nature reawaken.

Two highly original precepts characterize Simonds's work at Graceland. The first of these involves a spatial configuration Miller termed the “long view”—an open

stretch of sinuous, tree- and shrub-bordered lawn with a disappearing focal point intended to “establish and visually control a sense of infinite space within the cemetery.” Such spaces, Vernon suggests, evoked a sense of eternal life for visitors who came to the cemetery seeking solace and a sense of peace.

The second principle Simonds pioneered was the near-exclusive use of hardy plants, arranged to provide luxuriant cascades of foliage and bloom. In this Simonds owed much to the American Picturesque of Frederick Law Olmsted, whose planting schemes were also designed to convey a sense of tropical abundance. Simonds's handling of these two variables proved influential beyond the cemetery. The Danish-born landscape architect Jens Jensen adopted similar methods in his residential projects of the 1890s and, later, throughout the Chicago park system

In the cemetery's bucolic landscapes, Simonds felt his childhood wonder at nature reawaken.

Although Graceland was repeatedly hailed as Simonds's masterwork—recognized by a Medal of Honor from the Architectural League of New York in 1925—Vernon reveals that many layers of design preceded his work there. He separates these layers into design phases, likening the final result to a palimpsest. His book traces the roots of this important cemetery back to its conception, which occurred several years earlier than has commonly been assumed.

Graceland was incorporated as a profit-making venture in 1860, but the land had been acquired in secret some years before. The buyer was a Virginian named Thomas Barbour Bryan, who came to Chicago in 1852

Graceland Cemetery. Photo by Arthur G. Eldredge. Courtesy Chicago History Museum.

BY ROBIN KARSON



Graceland Cemetery. Photo by Carol Betsch.

after a move to Cincinnati. Bryan recognized the urgent need for more and better burial space in the rapidly expanding city, especially after the cholera epidemics of the 1850s, when City Cemetery was abandoned for fear of polluting the water supply in nearby Lake Michigan. Among the bodies exhumed from the old site was that of Thomas Bryan's infant son. He was the first interred at Graceland.

Bryan hired Swain Nelson (1828–1917), a local landscape gardener, to lay out the initial roads and burial sections, but soon a formal plan was required, and this was developed by William Saunders (1822–1900) of Philadelphia, a nationally known practitioner whose built works included Johns Hopkins's estate, Clifton. Saunders's plan does not survive, but Vernon cites an 1859 competition for Fairmount Park in which Saunders emphasized, first, "the preservation of the natural beauties of the ground, existing trees and other vegetation," and second, "a sufficient number of roads and walks, . . . from which the beauties of the grounds and surrounding scenery may be observed." Undoubtedly, these goals were also pursued at Graceland.

Within seven years the cemetery had doubled in size, prompting the town of Lake View, where it was located, to pass an ordinance to curtail its growth. (Legal wrangles with Lake View would dominate cemetery's records for the next decade.) By 1869 Graceland had grown to 275 acres, 86 of which were in use for burials,

and new design help was again needed. Likely as a result of an article in *American Builder*, "A Few Hints on the Arrangement of Cemeteries," the landscape architect Horace W. S. Cleveland (1814–1900) was commissioned for this work.

Cleveland's article warns of the visual chaos that would likely result if individual plot owners were allowed to pursue their own horticultural tastes. He also argues for stringent tree-thinning to avoid the crowding that

"Due regard has been paid to [the trees'] several characteristics, so as to insure varied alterations of light and shade, a harmonious growth, and permanent beauty."

he believed would give "a somber and depressing character to the place." (Cleveland accused the famous Mount Auburn Cemetery of having succumbed to this "evil.") Most important, he makes a case for a "general landscape effect." Recently relocated to Chicago from New York, where he had worked with Olmsted & Vaux on the design for Prospect Park, Cleveland was vividly aware of the artistic impact that can result when planting is undertaken with an eye to overall composition.

Strongly influenced by Adolph Strauch's work at Spring Grove, where the "lawn plan" was realized to perfection, Cleveland laid out Graceland's new sections so that "each resembles a beautiful lawn, covered with green turf, and dotted with graceful trees." The contemporary description (by Graceland's secretary) continues: "Due regard has been paid to [the trees'] several characteristics, so as to insure varied alterations of light and shade, a harmonious growth, and permanent beauty."

The most surprising chapter in Graceland's history features William Le Baron Jenney (1832–1907), a Massachusetts native best remembered as "the father of the skyscraper," who studied at the École Central des Arts et Manufactures in Paris. After working briefly with Olmsted & Vaux in New York in 1867, Jenney moved to Chicago, where he soon found work in the city's new West Park district and as superintendent of architectural construction at Riverside, Olmsted & Vaux's commuter suburb west of the city.

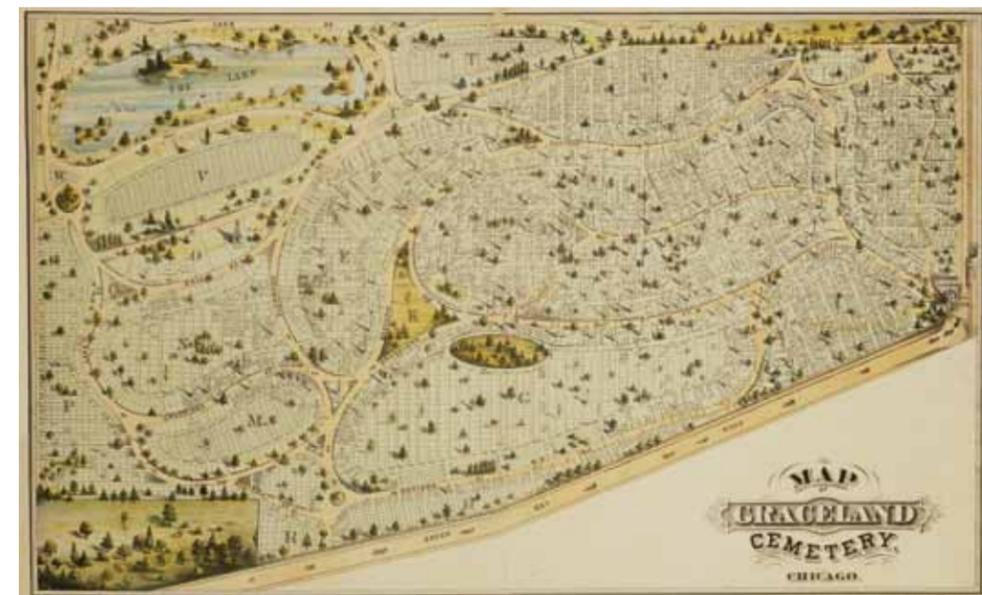
Jenney began work at Graceland in 1878 on a simple drainage project (dispatching his former student and current employee, O. C. Simonds, to assist with the project), but the cemetery's trustees soon commissioned him to draw up plans for the extensive low and marshy lands to the northeast. Here Jenney designed Lake Willowmere, configuring a sinuous outline for the lake edge and creating an island that resulted in the most celebrated of Graceland's many landscape passages. Jenney elevated the lake's surrounding land, grading the terrain to enhance views to the new feature and planting it carefully.

Through the years, the lakeside setting attracted several high-profile tenants, such as the wealthy Chicago couple Potter and Bertha Palmer, whose monument—Graceland's grandest—was designed by McKim, Mead

& White. The ashes of architect and planner Daniel Burnham are buried, along with those of his family, on the island of Willowmere—an arrangement that brings to mind Rousseau's interment on an island at Ermenonville. Many years later, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was buried across the lake, under a simple slab of black granite.

Jenney's work continued into Graceland's eastern portion, where the land was also swampy, and there he created two smaller bodies of water, Hazel Mere and Lotus Pond (both long since filled). Other improvements he oversaw included new burial sections and new roads. Jenney's plan merged the older roads with newly built ones, creating a new, cohesive composition characterized by curves and triangular islands that also served as parklike burial grounds. One of these interstices became the site of Graceland's finest monument, the tomb Louis Sullivan designed for Carrie Eliza Getty in 1890.

In the outline of Lake Willowmere, Vernon sees evidence of the "fluid, elegant curvilinear geometries" of Jean-Charles Alphand's work at the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont in Paris, and in Graceland's roads he detects the influence of Riverside, whose layout was also characterized by rhythmic curves. He also makes a convincing case that Jenney was familiar with the drive system of the village of Le Vésinet, outside Paris, laid out by the Comte de Choulot in 1855. From Vernon's perspective, Jenney's "French-inspired aesthetic had found a compatible home, amidst, appropriately enough, a regional landscape type with a name of French origin, the prairies." By illuminating previously unexplored design layers at Graceland Cemetery, Vernon's new book reveals the complexity and artistic richness of one of America's most celebrated landscapes.



Graceland Cemetery map by Charles Rascher, c. 1878. Courtesy Graceland Cemetery.

Places to Dream

FLETCHER STEELE ON DESIGNING THE LITTLE GARDEN

Steele belonged was appalled by the appearance of much of the nation. The dearth of planning apparent on the average American's property was, in Louisa King's mind, exactly the same ill plaguing the average American town. In the paternalistic spirit that informed the efforts of many landscape architects in century's first decades, Mrs. King, an enlightened amateur, undertook her Little Garden Series to set things right.

Steele's text conjures up a chat over drinks, and its arrangement into four disparate parts seems almost improvisational, each page offering a nook of an idea, a disappearing vista of suggestion. The author turns first to the business of selecting land (admittedly, a privilege available to few), using the discussion to explore deeper truths of garden design, including freedom from artistic

Steele's text conjures up a chat over drinks, and its arrangement into four disparate parts seems almost improvisational, each page offering a nook of an idea, a disappearing vista of suggestion.

prejudice. "Never assume, 'sight unseen,'" Steele writes provocatively, "that the neighbor's laundry, waving in the wind, is of necessity objectionable. The glistening white spots may be the only relief from the hopeless monotony of landscape form or color." The arrangement of living areas—inside as well as out—is covered in superb, practical detail. Steele insists that not a foot be wasted and

BY ROBIN KARSON



Since gardening interest began to surge in the United States in the 1980s, an avalanche of richly illustrated how-to books has been published. Our knowledge of plants and a bewildering array of historical "features" has grown as a result, but the age-old mystery—what makes a garden work?—remains as elusive as ever. The more we learn about *Miscanthus sinensis*, the less we seem able to explain the peculiar charm of the grassy roadside arrangement sown by passing birds. Those who continue to wrestle with the enigma of garden charm would do well to consult Fletcher Steele's 1924 classic, *Design in the Little Garden*. No other volume offers such a pungent distillation of timeless principles, told with such seductive wit.

Tone aside, Steele wrote his book with serious, progressive goals in mind—the same ones that propelled Martha Brookes Hutcheson to publish *The Spirit of the Garden* in 1923. The profession to which Hutcheson and

that "everything is where use and common sense would have it." The old backyard is now ready "for a proper setting for our out-of-door life."

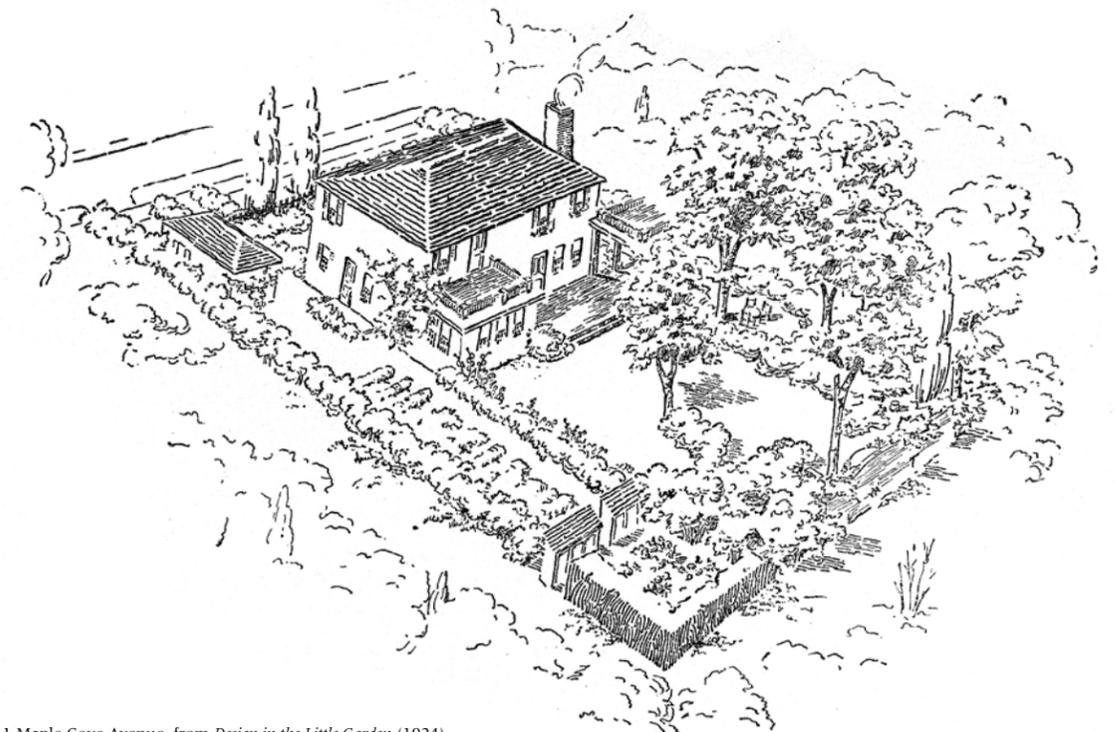
The next topic is economy of use, which begins with recent developments in urban gardens—in Steele's view, among the most interesting afoot. "City people are learning that an out-of-door room is a garden even when paved with stone, walled with brick and concrete, having only such vegetable decoration as can be grown in pots or boxes. In truth, any enclosed, sky-covered spot where one likes to live is a garden in the broad and proper sense." Steele credits American women with this development, adding, "It may well be they who carry out to their suburbs the memory of the pleasant intimacy of these city outdoor-rooms."

The "meaningless, useless backyard" is a target of Steele's jabs throughout his book, as is the period's preoccupation with floriculture, which he believes works against serenity and repose. He contrasts the endless demands of the flower garden with those of the green garden, whose owner, he believes, can accomplish most of his (or her) work over a cup of tea. "The *Rhododendron carolinianum* looks too like a setting hen over that boulder. A drooping *Leucothoë catesbei* would be better." Or, "The shade is too dense here where the flickering sunlight used to play on the grass. The oak will be all the better for cutting out some of the upper branches."

The green garden, Steele concludes, "may have its great moments when the hawthorn is in bloom or the

maple turns red in the autumn. Otherwise it is a cool quiet green place, rarely drawing attention to itself, but content to be, like a dim, old room full of books—a place to live and think, and perhaps at time to dream." In separate chapters on the physical components of the garden—the lawn, fences, arbors, steps, garden furnishings, and so forth—Steele mixes practical with philosophical observations, born of his experience with hundreds of clients. He emphasizes the importance of intimacy, privacy, and comfort throughout. His 1926 Colonial Revival design for the Mission House (profiled on p. 16) is practically a model for these ideals.

Chapters 12–15 follow Mr. and Mrs. Henry Brown, hypothetical home-buyers, as they visit three almost identical houses on three adjacent lots laid out with very different landscape ideas in mind. Pen-and-ink plans illustrate the layouts, and they are further illuminated by dialogue between Henry and his wife as they explore the diverse arrangements. After falling in love with No. 15 Maple Cove Avenue, Mrs. Brown is reluctantly pulled to No. 13, which she finds offers the illusion of greater space, a grape arbor, and a spot to turn the car that could double as a drying yard. Convinced she has found her dream house, she is nonetheless coaxed to No. 11, which she at first thinks "peculiar." But the advantages of putting the garage directly on the street soon become apparent, as do those of a large screened-in porch and a bench in the hedge "where the front yard ought to be." Steele's plan for No. 11, organized around the



No. 11 Maple Cove Avenue, from *Design in the Little Garden* (1924).

Opposite page: Mission House, grape arbor. Photo by Paul Weber. College of Environmental Science and Forestry, SUNY, Syracuse, N.Y.

experience of living on the place, has turned convention on its head.

These iconoclastic suggestions were noted by the profession. George Tobey, in *A History of Landscape Architecture* (1973), writes: “Four years before Stein and Wright showed their Radburn scheme, Steele advocated the reversal, in housing, of the common practice of living-room-facing-the-street, kitchen-facing-the-rear of the property. Steele recognized the change in life style from one of homecraft self-dependence to an interdependent, mass-production economy.”

The final chapters of *Design in the Little Garden* strike a poetic note as Steele explores the humble charm of old gardens in Italy, France, and England. “Nothing could be more simple or more frank,” he writes of the Italian garden, conjuring it up with a word painting that includes a shelter of grapevines, oil jars, a fig, an oleander, and strings of peppers hung under the eaves to dry. “Work and play both have their place. Use and ornament combine, then separate again, both present everywhere.” Steele muses, “An efficiency expert could learn much from the extraordinarily practical and intensive way in which the land is employed and cultivated. Its use is beautiful. Its beauty is used. Is that the cause of the perfume of romance that hangs over it all?”

The French garden, by contrast, is distinguished by elegance. Here beds of violets, English ivy, and ferns “are preferred to failing spotted grass-turf.” Steele continues, “Where [the owner] has the sun, a grapevine grows over

his door and a great rosebush fills the quiet place with perfume and color. Old shrubs soften the corners. Moss gathers under the ivy on the walls. Somewhere he sees the gray-blue sky. The parish church near by has a chime of bells.”

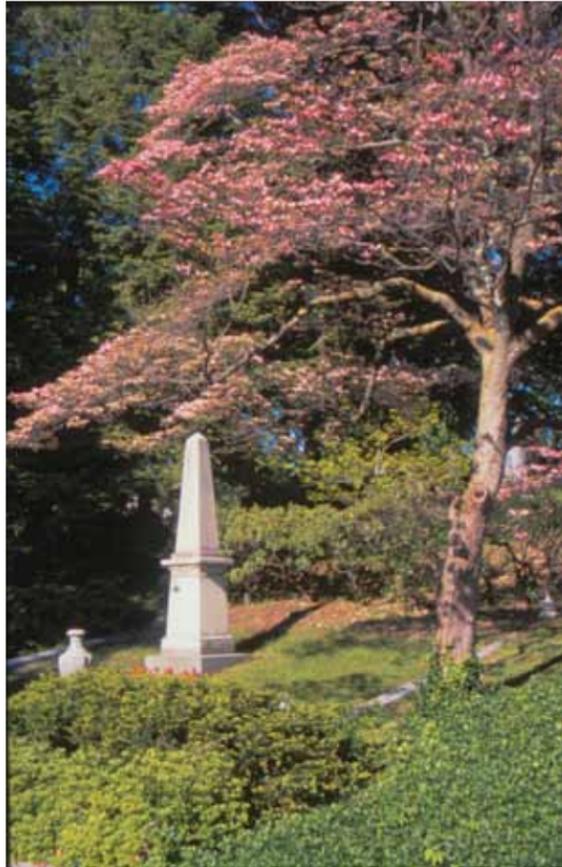
Finally, Steele praises the English garden, where “withdrawal from the outer world—seclusion—is the first and most important of garden qualities.” He traces the superb quality of the typical English garden to the assured handling of plants, developed through generations of avid gardeners—and to the fact that men are no less disciples of gardening in England than women. “Tiger-hunter, warrior, and statesman return home to add a new rose-bed and discuss cutworms, in happy anticipation of a future time when all their days can be devoted to gardening.”

Steele’s notion of the garden as a private haven also informed his practice, beginning with one of his earliest commissions, a tiny, suburban garden begun in 1915 for Charlotte Whitney Allen (Rochester, N.Y.), which was practically flowerless. Steele continued his quest to provide his clients with quiet places to dream until his final otherworldly commission, begun in 1963 for Richard and Nancy Turner (in Pittsford, N.Y.). Among the many younger landscape architects influenced by Steele was Dan Kiley, who also created many sublime retreats, including a serene—and largely green—garden for the J. Irwin Miller family (profiled on p. 14).



Turner garden, Pittsford, N.Y. Photo by Felice Frankel.

THERAPEUTIC LANDSCAPES:



Judge Story monument, Mount Auburn Cemetery.
Photo by Reuben M. Rainey.

Greenwood, Cedar Hill, Oakwood, Spring Grove, Hollywood, Mount Auburn—their names celebrate the tranquil beauty and restorative power of their landscapes, landscapes designed to teach, to inspire, and to assuage grief. Although for the Chicagoans naming Graceland cemetery, biblical theology trumped a description of the setting, the quality of the landscape was just as central to its purpose. The success of the first of these rural cemeteries, Mount Auburn, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, founded in 1831, was so great that other versions with very similar strains of design DNA soon appeared in major cities throughout the young American republic.

These cemetery landscapes, shaped by local terrain and climate, varied in design, but they were usually some version of forest and clearing or, somewhat later, great sweeps of lawn dotted with trees. Both expressions

America's Nineteenth- Century Rural Cemeteries

tended to include calm, reflective bodies of water, and both were studded with a plethora of memorials, mostly in the Gothic, classical, or Egyptian style, accessed by sinuous carriage drives and footpaths. Some included displays of ornamental shrubs and others, a collection of exotic and native trees, giving them a gardenlike appearance that soothed mourners but also appealed to the horticultural enthusiast. The embellishment of their predominantly family grave plots was often left to the personal tastes of the owners.

These remarkable places have been called many things by their nineteenth-century contemporaries as well as historians of today: “didactic landscapes,” “schools of religion and philosophy,” “beautiful dormitories,” “schools of morality,” “museums of fine art,” “grounds of repose for the dead,” and “places of melancholy reflection.” All of these terms are valid and bear witness to cemeteries’ many functions. “Beautiful dormitories” may seem a bit strange, or at least too collegiate, but *cemetery* is derived from a Greek word that means “place of repose or sleeping.” The founders of rural “cemeteries” deliberately chose the term to avoid the negative associations of older Puritan “graveyards” designed to admonish and terrify with messages of hellfire and eternal damnation delivered by somber gray slate tombstones adorned with death’s-heads and terse epitaphs.

The origins of these cemeteries have been traced with trenchant thoroughness by Blanche M. G. Linden;

BY REUBEN M. RAINEY

they include eighteenth-century Parisian initiatives to deal with the noxious overcrowding of Saints-Innocents Cemetery in the heart of the city, the aesthetics and modes of commemoration of eighteenth-century English landscape gardens, the penchant for “the pleasure of melancholy” in British and American eighteenth- and nineteenth-century poetry and prose, and France’s post-revolution policies to deal with issues of public health as well as the expression of a new national identity, culminating in the design of the cemetery of Père Lachaise in 1804 and after. Add to this rich bouillabaisse of origins nineteenth-century Americans’ need to create, in David Schuyler’s apt term, “a new urban landscape” combining the cultural and economic advantages of the city with the restorative qualities of the rural landscape in the form of cemeteries, parks, and suburbs. Include in the mix the movement to rid the densely populated cores of American cities of the perceived danger to health of the vapors or “miasmas” from decaying bodies by relocating cemeteries to their peripheries. Stir in momentous shifts in nineteenth-century theology (primarily Protestant and Unitarian) from Calvinistic threats of eternal damnation to belief in universal salvation in God’s heavenly realm in the company of the souls of one’s deceased loved ones. Complete the recipe with the desire of the young American republic to define and celebrate its values through art, architecture, and landscape design, and one begins to arrive at an understanding of what motivated the creation of these important spaces—spaces brought into being not by state or federal initiatives but by voluntary, private, nonprofit corporations in the singularly American way that so fascinated Alexis de Tocqueville.

These new American cemeteries effectively met the needs of mourners and satisfied advocates of public health, but they also surprised their founders by becoming major tourist attractions in America’s larger cities. As Andrew Jackson Downing aptly observed, they “took the public mind by storm.” In many cases they drew so many non-mourning visitors on weekends that special regulations were established to allow entrance only to plot owners on Saturday and Sunday. What was their attraction? Primarily a serene landscape providing respite from the pressures of urban living in industrial cities devoid of large parks, and the added pleasure of viewing the artistry of grave monuments and being uplifted by their didactic messages.

Imagine yourself as a tourist in Mount Auburn Cemetery in the late 1840s. Following the route prescribed by your pocket guide—perhaps *The Picturesque Pocket Companion, and Visitor’s Guide, through Mount Auburn, Illustrated with Upwards of 60 Engravings on Wood*—you would walk from plot to plot of noteworthy individuals, reading brief, morally inspiring biographies of the honored dead. This combination of the literary and the visual renders the modest marble monuments “sermons in stone,” giving presence to the dead much as

an ancient Greek temple evoked the presence of a god. Philosophers, statesmen, artists, poets, military heroes, literary figures, jurists, and the like confront you with a wide range of achievements, nurturing your pride in the new republic and inviting you to reflect on the course of your own life.

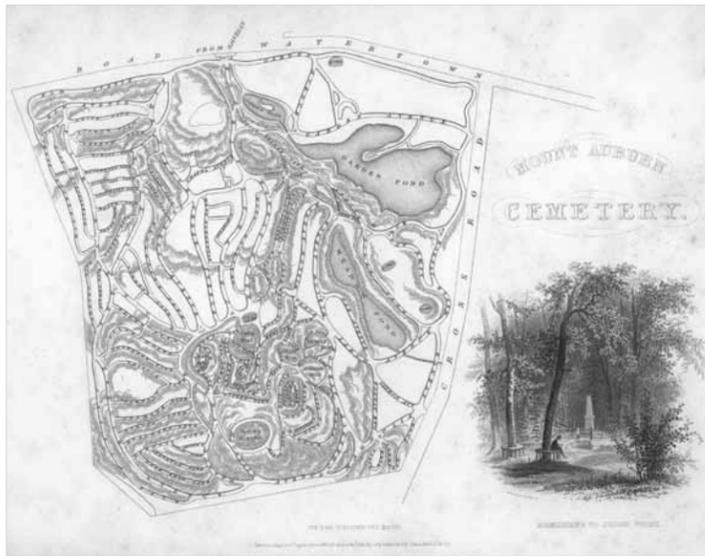
Gazing at the “elegant but plain” sarcophagus of Gaspar Spurzheim, a philosopher and medical theorist (the originator of phrenology, among other things), you read of his praiseworthy “spirit as a philosophical inquirer,” “his liberal views of education,” and his “kindness and wide-embracing benevolence.” Many more discoveries of Boston’s distinguished citizens await you along the way.

The success of the first of these rural cemeteries, Mount Auburn, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, founded in 1831, was so great that other versions with very similar strains of design DNA soon appeared in major cities throughout the young American republic.

After departing the cemetery in an inspired and contemplative mood, upon returning home you might well purchase from your local bookstore a large, leather-bound tome with handsome steel engravings, such as James Smillie’s *Green-Wood and Mount Auburn Illustrated*, to share with your family for their moral edification.

So pleasurable and engaging were the serene landscapes of rural cemeteries and so effective were they in providing relief from urban stress that they became catalysts for the creation of America’s first large urban parks. Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, Horace Cleveland, and other nineteenth-century park designers continued the rural cemetery legacy of therapeutic landscapes in urban settings. Olmsted turned to the “pastoral” landscape of eighteenth-century English landscape gardening theory as the most effective one to soothe the psyches of city-dwellers. Long vistas of undulating lawn studded with trees “standing singly or in groups,” along with large, still bodies of water, with their boundaries obscured to make them appear even larger, were for Olmsted in “the highest degree tranquilizing” in their ability to “unbend the nerves” hounded by the clamor and pace of the city. Most other urban park designers agreed.

This same preference for the pastoral—or the “beautiful,” as it was sometimes called—eventually prevailed in cemetery design as well. The more “picturesque” forested landscapes of early rural cemeteries were soon



Engraving of Mount Auburn map by James Smillie, 1847. Courtesy Mount Auburn Cemetery.

superseded by Prussian immigrant Adolph Strauch's dramatic redesign of Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery in 1854. Strauch's "landscape lawn plan," limiting the number of large memorials to one per family and emphasizing long vistas across vast lawns dotted with trees and punctuated with reflective lakes, became the precedent for the majority of rural cemeteries in the nineteenth century. Olmsted, who avoided cemetery commissions like the flu, admired Strauch's work. Strauch's influence was also felt at Graceland, where Lake Willowmere was created under the direction of the cemetery's superintendent, O. C. Simonds, according to a design by William Le Baron Jenney.

Rural cemeteries promoted patriotism, elevated moral consciousness, and helped spawn a national movement for urban parks, but they were also powerful therapeutic landscapes. The dappled forest glades of the picturesque or the serene sunlit lawns of the pastoral were healing agents for the grief-stricken. In the era before the germ theory of disease, when hospitals were deathtraps and

These new American cemeteries effectively met the needs of mourners and satisfied advocates of public health, but they also surprised their founders by becoming major tourist attractions in America's larger cities.

much medical practice a hit-or-miss endeavor, death was a frequent and very visible presence in the lives of individuals and their families. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, the mortality rate for infants,

children, and women in childbirth was especially high by today's standards.

The founders of rural cemeteries, as well as contemporary commentators, emphasized time and again how much these landscapes provided solace for the bereaved and helped them work through the process of grieving to recovery. Joseph Story, an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, in his address at the dedication of Mount Auburn in 1831, spoke of the "solitary desolation of the mourner" and "the burning tears of agony" that are transformed into "pleasing though melancholy memories of loved ones through revisiting their graves" in the "magnificence of nature," which administers "comfort to human sorrow." Story's observations were echoed in the numerous pocket guides and histories of the cemeteries.

Author George Ticknor Curtis noted how the natural beauty of Mount Auburn helped to lessen the "passionate expressions of affliction" and promote a state of serene meditation. Wilson Flagg, who wrote a history of Mount Auburn, observed that the beauty of its landscape and frequent visits to grave sites helped mourners to overcome the initial devastation of loss and develop over time the "agreeable emotion" of "melancholy pleasure," "a quiet state of mind" blending sadness and fond memories of the deceased. Lest one think this is more sentiment than science, research by psychologists conducted during the past twenty years has established beyond a doubt that experiences of landscapes similar to those of early rural cemeteries relieve stress, dissipate grief, and strengthen the immune system. In the nineteenth century, however, recognition of the restorative power of nature was rooted not in social science, which was virtually nonexistent, but in the poetry, literature, painting, and sculpture of English and American Romanticism.



Spring Grove Cemetery. Photo by Reuben M. Rainey.

In the nineteenth century, however, recognition of the restorative power of nature was rooted not in social science, which was virtually nonexistent, but in the poetry, literature, painting, and sculpture of English and American Romanticism.

The cemetery's landscape worked in concert with other supportive cultural practices. Except for the most destitute, people usually died at home, surrounded by family. It was traditional to direct one's last words to family members, to comfort them and assure them that you would meet again in the afterlife. A funeral was a communal event, not a private affair of the immediate family. The decay of the body was considered a natural process not to be feared; it would replenish the soil and contribute to the beauty of the cemetery landscape, a beauty bearing testimony to God's benevolence. Mourning dress codes registered the stages of recovery from grief: for a widow, this was a two-and-a-half-year process, progressing from full mourning (black crepe) to half mourning (gray with touches of lavender) to normal dress.

One might be tempted to dismiss these beliefs and practices as naïve or, even worse, as morbid senti-

mentality, but even today, despite the efforts of theorists such as Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, talk of death remains about as taboo as talk of sex was in the Victorian era. We mostly die alone, sheathed in the privacy of hospitals, and our surviving friends and family often lack the social support and meaningful rituals to channel and alleviate their grief. For many, grief endures and can lead to deep, prolonged depression, with devastating effects on physical health. The rituals and social support systems associated with rural cemeteries hold a mirror to our twenty-first-century cultural pathology.

Today, these cemeteries present us with much more than pleasant green infrastructure, lovely arboreta, quaint historical fragments, or useful bird sanctuaries. These eloquent didactic landscapes of the nineteenth century continue to instruct us. They speak of the value of monuments to celebrate our history and foster reflection on our ethical commitments. They both invite and challenge us as members of a complex, multicultural society to speak of death with candor, provide compassionate communal support for the bereaved, and create places of commemoration for the dead that assuage the grief of the living through the therapeutic beauty of their landscapes—landscapes that may be pastoral, picturesque, or new expressions of our creativity.

Reuben M. Rainey is professor emeritus of landscape architecture and codirector of the Center for Design and Health in the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia.



Spring Grove Cemetery. Photo by Reuben M. Rainey.



Isabelle Greene, on Small Gardens

Lovelace Garden, Santa Barbara. Photo by Ines Roberts.

Honored as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Isabelle Greene has built more than five hundred gardens during her forty-five-year career, mostly large gardens, which have illustrated many international books and magazines. But it's a small garden that suits her personally and perhaps best suits all human beings, she says: "A large garden, you can march through it, view it from afar, and feel as if you are a master of nature. But a little space, like my own quarter-acre in Santa Barbara, with no smashing pool or grand view—it's a call to personal involvement. The smaller it is, the more it gives back; you're forced to attach yourself to it."

Places to Sit

In Greene's design lexicon, which she developed not so much by educating herself as by exploring her personal experience of landscape, sitting places rank high. Years ago, at a loss for ideas at the beginning of the garden she designed for Jon and Lillian Lovelace in Santa Barbara, she settled herself on a rock, and as she watched birds streak through a clearing she had the notion to build a (now iconically famous) moss- and boulder-edged swimming pool there in the woods. "I don't get a hit from a space unless I'm still," she says. "Moving stimulates an intellectual part of my brain that organizes and masters,

but the minute I sit still, that floats away, thankfully, and my soul takes over."

Greene's mission is to build spaces that give such moments of joy and insight to her clients; hence the many places to sit in her small gardens. During our interview, she spoke of an intimate view of her own garden afforded from a seat indoors: "I'm looking beyond blue anemones into a mass of groundcover, and it has sprouted above it teeny threadlike stalks, and each one has a knob at the top, which I know is going to pop into a pink pompom. It's funny and delightful, looking through plants. If I were standing up or moving by, I couldn't see that."

Farther into the garden, there's a bench against a fence, another against a hedge, one under an apricot tree—and "each one has its own character and its own sense of plenty," she says. "Under the loquat tree, I lie on a cushioned bench, look up into the tree, and watch crows come to take the yellow fruit away in their beaks."

Back at the house, an arbor made from repurposed antique French gates arches over a dining patio. Three carefully trained apple trees grow over the arbor, providing shade in summer, reminiscent of an early design

BY HAZEL WHITE

for the arbor at Greene's most famous project, Carol Valentine's garden in Montecito. (Greene was married under the Valentine arbor six years ago.) A window looking onto her patio is shaded by a white wisteria—wisteria clothed an arbor in the garden of her grandfather, the Arts and Crafts architect Henry Mather Greene (1870–1954), and it has always been a favorite of hers.

Water, Terraces, Topography

Greene favors a sense of topography in many of her gardens. A signature Greene landscape includes water, often in the form of a dry creekbed, gravel, or markings in concrete, flowing over the land, descending among boulders, seeping across a miniaturized alluvial plain, bringing to mind the topography of the Santa Barbara region. In her own garden, she raised the soil level by four and a half feet next to the house, so she could walk directly out of doors into the garden. On this prow-shaped knoll sits a busy birdbath and a pond that attracts all kinds of wildlife for viewing from indoors.

The variety of gardening spaces at different elevations on the knoll reminds her, she says, of the series of descending terraces at the Valentine garden: "Retaining walls give me an opportunity to create different-shaped planes and to grow the garden at different levels. I like lifting one plane above another, and it's nice descending over horizontal planes."

Organization by Height and Color

A small garden, according to Greene, should be full of nuances to slow you down—nuances of color and texture, light and shadow, enclosure, views into, through, and under things, little surprises and recollections, or what Greene calls "soul-memories." Her own garden is "nothing but nuances," she says, "very intensely and thoughtfully organized."

She organizes plants primarily according to height: "Down the view corridor to the loquat tree, first everything is low and flat, mossy, and attractive, to make you

want to go forward; then, on both sides, plants begin to build up, to the tallest most vertical ones." With the change in scale comes a childlike immersion in the garden. "I prune so the plantings keep doing that, embrace as you descend. I meld every single plant into one type of engagement," she says. "Do I want it tall, do I want it low, do I want it soft? I build space exactly the way I want it."

Each part of the garden is also organized by color. "The front garden is divided straight down the middle by the path. I decided to play with the predictable dullness of that and make a surprise of the asymmetry of color: whites are on the right; pinks on the left." At the back of the house, blue violets, blue iris, purple sages, and pink poppies and geraniums continue outdoors the colors of the "pale gray-lilac-blue walls" of the bedroom. A pink rose splashed with red eases the pink section into the red; scarlet-orange-red flowers make the transition to the orange section.

Out-of-Control Fecundity

Disorder runs through the rigorously designed spaces, purposefully. Beet seedlings sprout all over the flower garden, snow peas open into surprising pink and maroon blossoms, fruit of perhaps two dozen kinds ripens and spills in every part of the garden from the front driveway to the back fences. The uncontrolled abundance "is so nourishing to the soul," says Greene. "There's such a juicy greenness out there. The garden makes joy for us—forces joy onto us."

Greene packs this quality into all her gardens, large and small. "I imagine that my clients get it, and that's why they love their gardens," she says. "It's a continuing exploration for me, how to get it in there—the cohesiveness, the sense of the life force that's so strong it captures and holds you, takes care of you."

Hazel White has written eleven gardening books and is also a poet. She lives in San Francisco and writes a blog at hazelwhitegarden.com.



Valentine Garden, Santa Barbara. Photo by Marion Brenner.



Isabelle Greene. Photo by Claire Takacs.



Isabelle Green's garden. Photo by Claire Takacs.

ARTHUR G. ELDREDGE

Poet behind the Lens

In July 1927 and again in June of the following year, landscape architect Warren Manning commissioned Arthur Grenville Eldredge (1880–1972) to photograph about thirty of his most important projects. These transportingly beautiful images are now preserved in the University of Massachusetts Lowell History Collection, as are many of the fragile 8 x 10 glass plate negatives from which these remarkable photographs were printed. Eldredge's images capture both the look and the spirit of Manning's designs. Both men were masters of composition—Manning with plants and Eldredge with light and shadow—and both also embraced an approach to landscape design inspired by the lay of the land and the beauty of native and common plants.

Eldredge grew up in Falmouth, Massachusetts, on the farm his father turned to after retiring from whaling. He studied botany, chemistry, and German in high school, knowledge that he channeled into mastering the rapidly advancing technology of photography. He spent several years becoming proficient in camera work and in the darkroom, establishing a professional base in New York by 1903. He learned portrait photography, working with individuals in their home settings rather than in a studio, and developed an expertise in photographing paintings for reproduction in books, creating art history books for John La Farge and Booth Tarkington and photographing J. P. Morgan's extensive sculpture collection.

In 1904 Eldredge was hired by Doubleday, Page & Company to photograph plants and gardens for *Country Calendar* magazine, which merged the next year into *Country Life in America*. Rather than specialize in garden and landscape photography, Eldredge kept a broad portfolio. He regularly wrote about his professional techniques in trade magazines, and he also wrote articles on plant cultivation and garden design. In a 1913 article titled "A Nature Garden by the Sea," for *Country Life*, he described a Cape Cod garden's ecosystem, natural design, and positive effects: "The real satisfaction and pleasure of this natural garden are beyond reckoning. Here you may feel relaxed and free, no lines or patterns

of color to command your attention—no gravel walks to rake each day, no edges to clip, no lawns to mow." Advancing to director of photography at Doubleday, he also worked on book-length projects, including *The Book of Grasses: An Illustrated Guide to the Common Grasses, and the Most Common of the Rushes and Sedges* by Mary Francis Dorrance (1912), and he wrote and photographed for another Doubleday publication, *Garden Magazine*.

Of singular importance was Eldredge's association with both publications' horticulture editor, Wilhelm Miller, a relationship that proved pivotal for both men. For eight years they teamed up to provide articles on all aspects of garden design and horticulture. Miller, a horticulturist by training, wanted to help define an "American" style of landscape design, and he promoted the work of Jens Jensen, O. C. Simonds, and Warren Manning.

In 1914 Miller was given an opportunity to influence the public's taste in landscape design more directly when he was appointed head of the newly created



John Gates Williams Estate, St. Louis, Mo.

Opposite page: Gwinn, William G. Mather, Cleveland, Ohio. Gwinn Archives.

BY PAMELA HARTFORD



Tranquillity Farm, J. H. Whittemore, Middlebury, Conn.



E. S. Burke Estate, Chagrin Falls, Ohio.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are from the Warren H. Manning Collection, University of Massachusetts Lowell.

E. S. Burke Estate, Chagrin Falls, Ohio.



Division of Landscape Extension at the University of Illinois in Urbana. There he aggressively expanded the scope of the extension services with free design consultations and circulars that promoted beautification of rural and suburban landscapes according to what Miller termed “prairie spirit” principles. For this important publishing effort Miller tapped Eldredge, who had left Doubleday to become the director of the University of Illinois photography lab in October 1913. In short order Miller and Eldredge produced a number of bulletins and circulars for the extension service, the most important of which was the influential *Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening* (1915).

Eldredge continued to teach long after Miller left the university, thriving in an environment that encour-

aged both intellectual inquiry and creative freedom. He used his camera to support many university activities, from architectural education to genetic research. In a career that encompassed landscape, portrait, scientific, fine art, and even animal photography, Eldredge also helped promote public appreciation of the value and beauty of native plants and the conservation of native landscapes. Through his inspired photography for Manning, Eldredge contributed vitally to an appreciation of the landscape architect’s philosophy as well as his design legacy.

Pamela Hartford holds a B.A. in architecture from Columbia University and is completing a Landscape Design Certificate at the Landscape Institute of the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University.

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