

V I E W

FROM THE LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LANDSCAPE HISTORY



Village Green, Forest Hills Gardens, 2001. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

A MODERN ARCADIA Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens

When urban historian Susan L. Klaus first visited Forest Hills Gardens, she could scarcely believe her eyes. Tidy lawns, tree-lined streets, parks, and a villagelike atmosphere of Arts and Crafts buildings offered a compelling contrast to the commercial sprawl just a few blocks away. Even the cars seemed to drive more slowly, as though they too belonged to a different era. Many sections of the 142-acre



Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. plotting the 39th parallel through the Rockies, 1894. Courtesy The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted.

Queens, New York, suburb precisely echoed drawings by its designers, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870–1957) and architect Grosvenor Atterbury (1869–1956).

When Klaus discovered that Forest Hills Gardens had never been the subject of scholarly study, she approached LALH with the idea of writing a book that examined the historic subdivision in the context of the Progressive Era ideals then influencing landscape architecture. Klaus intended to focus particular attention on the role of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., son of the legendary landscape architect, whose planning career had also escaped scholarly study. Nearly ten years of research and writing have resulted in a richly informative text that interweaves several strands of planning and landscape architectural history.

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VIEW FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

This past year—our tenth—has brought change and growth to LALH. Our perceptions have been sharpened by a heightened sense of the power of place and the staggering range of human emotions that landscape can encompass and express. We have been vividly reminded that it is human nature to search for meaning in place and to honor land that bears witness to signal events, even catastrophic ones.

After a decade of spirited and generous leadership, Nancy R. Turner has retired as president of the LALH board, but will remain an active trustee. John Franklin Miller, president of Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, Grosse Pointe Shores, Mich., will succeed Nancy as the new president. Our founding president has given us an extraordinary start and we thank her deeply for it.

We also welcome three distinguished new trustees to our growing board—Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, founder of the Central Park Conservancy, Daniel J. Nadenicek, professor of landscape architecture, Clemson University, and Michael C. Jefcoat, of Laurel, Mississippi. And we proudly welcome three new LALH advisers: Dan Kiley, Witold Rybczynski, and Robert A. M. Stern. We are very pleased to announce that Molly Turner, executive director of the Viburnum Foundation, sponsor of the ASLA Centennial Reprint Series, has joined the LALH Planning Committee. Three new LALH books, a website, new collaborations with public partners, and new venues for our touring exhibition also figure among the highlights of the past year.

In November, the American Society of Landscape Architects presented LALH with a Merit Award in Communications for *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*. We congratulate our fellow recipients of this award, Charles A. Birnbaum of the Historic Landscape Initiative, National Park Service, and Catha Grace Rambusch, director of the Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States at Wave Hill.

A Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens, a new LALH monograph by Susan L. Klaus, is garnering strong reviews and wide publicity. In this richly illustrated book Klaus traces the development of the Queens, N.Y., garden suburb from its Progressive Era roots through the 1920s. The rejuvenating



effect of nature emerges as a dominant theme in two new volumes in the ASLA Centennial Reprint Series by Wilhelm Miller and H. W. S. Cleveland, which emphasize the importance of scenic resources to American culture. New introductions by leading scholars shed light on the early quest for an American style of landscape design. Charles C. McLaughlin's introduction to another reprint, Olmsted Sr.'s *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (1852 edition), examines the galvanizing impact of the English countryside on the young farmer who was to become the most influential North American landscape practitioner ever.

Through your generosity, we continue to develop and publish books that illuminate the history of significant North American landscapes. To the many contributors whose financial support makes our work possible, thank you!

Robin Karson
Executive Director



Audience attending June 2001 lectures by LALH authors Judith B. Tankard and Rebecca Warren Davidson, Longfellow National Historic Site, Cambridge, Mass.



LIBRARY OF AMERICAN LANDSCAPE HISTORY, a not-for-profit corporation, produces books and exhibitions about North American landscapes and the individuals who created them. Our mission is to educate and thereby promote thoughtful stewardship of the land.

LALH books are published in association with university and trade presses. We maintain an ongoing book series with the University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst.

View is distributed to 20,000 individuals and organizations in North America and is posted on our new website, www.LALH.org.

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Forest Hills Gardens, ca. 1909, was the brainchild of Robert de Forest, the director of the newly formed Russell Sage Foundation. De Forest and the chief designers he selected for the project, Olmsted and Atterbury, fervently hoped to demonstrate that good design and comprehensive planning were both practical and profitable and that Forest Hills

By 1909, “Rick” Olmsted had emerged as a preeminent force in the profession his father had helped found and in the new science of city planning. Klaus’s research contrasts differences between the elder Olmsted’s approach at Riverside, Illinois, and that of his son. Klaus writes movingly of the slow decline of Olmsted Sr., who died in 1903, and his son’s coming of age as a

The public spaces at Forest Hills Gardens also contribute to the parklike ambiance. Primary among them is the 3 1/2-acre Village Green, which provides a cohesive center to the village and a setting for events such as the annual Fourth of July pageant. To establish neighborhood identity, Olmsted also laid out smaller parks throughout the suburb, providing landscape designs



Plan and elevation, Group VI-A, Forest Hills Gardens. From *Architecture*, August 1916. Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center.

Gardens could provide a model alternative to increasingly unhealthy living conditions in American cities. The burgeoning middle class desperately needed housing and, by 1909, the Country Life movement had created a widespread desire for fresh air and the social cachet that country living brought. If the experiment worked, its backers reasoned, similar projects would be built throughout the United States.

The trio decided that comprehensive planning was the key to success. At Forest Hills Gardens, the site plan, street layout, major building groups, open spaces, utilities, designs for architecture and landscape, and administrative regulations to govern future development were to be integrated from the very start. Despite high costs (nearly \$6,000 per acre, owing to the construction of the Long Island Rail Road), a large parcel of former farmland was purchased and the collaboration moved forward with speed and efficiency.

Atterbury was a passionate housing reform advocate who brought English Garden City-inspired notions to the project. His designs for its major buildings incorporated an eclectic mix of architectural styles that evoked associations with medieval European universities and feudal villages in England. Atterbury also utilized European ideas about mixing commercial and residential buildings and combining residences into row houses and semidetached units to achieve greater population density. Careful Arts and Crafts detailing and unusually rich materials and colors proved appealing to prospective buyers, and the houses sold well.

forceful and highly original landscape architect in the century’s early years.

In Klaus’s view, the most important design element at Forest Hills Gardens was Olmsted Jr.’s brilliant street plan. The City Beautiful formality that structures Station Square soon gives way, in the designer’s words, to the appearance of a “kind of accidental plan which has generally resulted from unpremeditated city growth, combining straight streets with subtle deflections, bends and variations in width.” Rather than terminating abruptly, glimpses down these streets disappear, fostering a sense of domesticity and the illusion of organic development over time. The irregularities provide visual buffers and work to calm traffic, as well.

for each of them and for the major streets, which are lined with shade trees. Narrower streets feature more floriferous species, such as dogwood, magnolia, and hawthorn. In several instances, homeowners hired Olmsted to prepare landscape plans for private lots which included detailed planting plans of flower and vegetable gardens.

By the early 1920s, Forest Hills Gardens had attracted shopkeepers, artists, doctors, and business owners. There were even a few celebrities, including author Dale Carnegie and the designer Frederic Goudy. (Later, former vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro and the fictional character Peter Parker, aka Spider-Man, would take up residence.) In the early years, village schools,

shops, and a church brought like-minded, primarily white Protestant residents together. Unwritten restrictions that prohibited Jews and African Americans from owning property in Forest Hills Gardens were abolished and an increasingly diverse population eventually settled there.

Although Forest Hills Gardens did not fulfill financial expectations (by the time the foundation sold



Climbing roses, Greenway Terrace, Forest Hills Gardens. Courtesy Rockefeller Archive Center.

LALH's books are intended for professional and general readers. They are published and distributed internationally, by the University of Massachusetts Press and other presses. The LALH publishing program is underwritten by grants from foundations, corporations, federal agencies, and contributions from individuals.

FORTHCOMING NOVEMBER 2002

Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England

Frederick Law Olmsted (reprint of 1852 edition)
Introduction by Charles C. McLaughlin

Before he ever dreamed of becoming a landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) visited England during a month-long walking tour. A gifted writer, he recorded his impressions of the trip in this richly detailed volume, which has long been out of print. Olmsted's delightful text reveals the extent to which England influenced his emerging aesthetic and reformist ideology. McLaughlin's new introduction argues convincingly that Olmsted adapted many features of the cultivated English countryside—first seen on this trip—in designed landscapes such as New York City's Central Park.

Published by LALH/Distributed by University of Massachusetts Press.
To order by phone: (413) 545-2219
fax: (800) 488-1144
e-mail: orders@umpress.umass.edu
\$50; paperback \$24.95



“In this book we get not only a young American's vivid impressions of mid-nineteenth-century England, but also the first glimmers of Frederick Law Olmsted the observant journalist and future landscape designer. Charles McLaughlin's erudite introduction usefully puts all this in the proper perspective.”

—Witold Rybczynski, author of *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the Nineteenth Century*

NEW *A Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens*

Susan L. Klaus



Located in Queens, fifteen minutes from Manhattan's Pennsylvania Station, Forest Hills Gardens is a leading example of England's garden city transplanted onto American soil. The suburb drew national attention when it was announced by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1909, and the community still thrives today, providing a parklike haven for more than 6,000 residents. Klaus's richly

illustrated account of the collaboration between architect Grosvenor Atterbury and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. weaves together several strands of cultural, social, and planning history. Published by University of Massachusetts Press in association with LALH. To order by phone: (413) 545-2219 / fax: (800) 488-1144 e-mail: orders@umpress.umass.edu. \$39.95

“Forest Hills Gardens...one of the finest planned communities ever, finally receives the attention it deserves in Susan L. Klaus's carefully researched and fascinating account that also sheds light on the career of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.”

—Robert A. M. Stern, dean, Yale School of Architecture

Pioneers of American Landscape Design

Edited by Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson



The first encyclopedia of American landscape architecture was written by more than 100 contributors and features 162 entries on its most influential practitioners. *Pioneers* “introduces the general public to the diverse and historic practices of landscape architects,” according to the ASLA jury that recently honored LALH with an award in communications for this book.

Pioneers covers horticulturists, educators, planners, engineers, journalists, and park superintendents as

well as landscape architects. Over 400 b/w and color photographs and 486 pages of text provide a broad-ranging look at the forces that shaped the varying landscapes of the United States, including parks, highways, cemeteries, cities, campuses, and gardens. Of special interest are the lists of publicly accessible sites that follow each entry. Published by McGraw-Hill. To order by phone: (800) 262-4729 fax: (614) 755-3644. \$59.95

“Charles Birnbaum and Robin Karson have...made an incalculable contribution to America's heritage, landscape architectural history, and the depth and diversity of the roots from which landscape architects draw their identity and pride.”

—Robert Scarfo, *Landscape Architecture*

Midwestern Landscape Architecture

Edited by William H. Tishler



This richly illustrated book about midwestern landscape architecture was based on a symposium at The Clearing Institute, school of the famous landscape architect Jens Jensen. Jensen and twelve other bold design innovators are here profiled by thirteen authors. The text and illustrations are particularly significant because they illuminate the

design and conservation contributions of many landscape architects who have long been overshadowed by their eastern colleagues. Published by University of Illinois Press in cooperation with LALH. To order by phone: (800) 545-4703 / e-mail: www.press.uillinois.edu. \$37.50

“Written by a talented cast of landscape scholars, the chapters are well researched, well documented, and well written. Highly readable, *Midwestern Landscape Architecture* will be a useful reference for students and...future researchers.”

—Heidi Hohmann, *Landscape Journal*

Recipient of the ASLA Honor Award in Communications



The Muses of Gwinn: Art and Nature in a Garden Designed by Warren H. Manning, Charles A. Platt, and Ellen Biddle Shipman

Robin Karson

The Muses of Gwinn chronicles the development of a Lake Erie estate during the early years of the twentieth century through evocative photographs, drawings, and quotes from the letters between Cleveland businessman William Mather and his

three designers. This careful examination of one of the most hauntingly beautiful estates from the American Country Place Era provides new perspective on the debate between formal and naturalistic design. Sagapress in association with LALH/Abrams. To order by phone: (800) 327-5680 / e-mail: orders@timberpress.com. \$39.95

“Karson’s examination is thorough and scholarly...[and] includes penetrating and illuminating essays.... This is a rich period...and Karson provides welcome new insight.”

—William Lake Douglas, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*

Recipient of the American Horticultural Society Book Award



The Gardens of Ellen Biddle Shipman

Judith B. Tankard

Judith Tankard’s engaging study presents the intriguing life’s story and major works of Ellen Shipman (1869–1950), a divorced mother of three who overcame enormous professional and social biases to become the “dean of American women landscape architects.” Over fifty of Shipman’s garden designs, including the English

Garden of Stan Hywet Hall in Akron, Ohio, are presented through plans, drawings, and photographs by Mattie Edwards Hewitt and others. An introduction by Leslie Rose Close places Shipman in context with her women colleagues. Appendixes include geographically organized client lists. Sagapress in association with LALH/Abrams. To order by phone: (800) 327-5680 / e-mail: orders@timberpress.com. \$39.95

“It is a handsome book, valuable not only to historians and garden designers, but also to every garden maker. The details and explanations offered by Tankard reveal much of the garden designer’s art.”

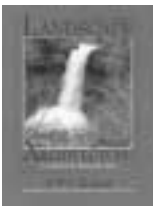
—George Waters, *Pacific Horticulture*

ASLA CENTENNIAL REPRINT SERIES

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of LALH, University of Massachusetts Press is offering the first five volumes in the ten-volume set for \$144 (20% discount from the regular price), plus shipping and handling.

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NEW *Landscape Architecture, as Applied to the Wants of the West; with an Essay on Forest Planting on the Great Plains*



H. W. S. Cleveland (reprint of 1873 edition)
New introduction by Daniel J. Nadenicek and Lance M. Neckar \$29.95

H. W. S. Cleveland’s lofty goal was to influence the design of new cities, parks, and subdivisions of the western expansion during the tumultuous decades following the Civil War. Daniel J. Nadenicek and Lance M. Neckar’s new introduction illuminates Cleveland’s distinctive “organic” approach to landscape design and his lasting impact on the profession of landscape architecture. (See page 8)

NEW *The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening*

Wilhelm Miller (reprint of 1915 edition)
New introduction by Christopher Vernon, \$34.95



Wilhelm Miller’s book promoted the prairie style in landscape design through evocative illustrations of works by Jens Jensen, O. C. Simonds, Walter Burley Griffin, and others. Christopher Vernon’s introduction sheds new light on the movement’s genesis, linking it to Frank Lloyd Wright and other Progressive Era architects of the Chicago school. (See page 9)

Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect



Charles W. Eliot (reprint of 1902 edition)
New introduction by Keith N. Morgan, \$50.00

One of the profession’s most influential practitioners, Charles Eliot (1859–1897) has received little scholarly attention prior to Keith Morgan’s penetrating study. Eliot was the partner of Olmsted Sr., an early proponent of scenery conservation, founder of The Trustees of

Reservations, and an innovator of modern resource-based planning. Morgan’s introduction provides readers with an elegant perspective from which to understand Eliot’s tragically short life. The inaugural volume in the Reprint Series includes two large, fold-out maps reproduced from the original edition.

The Spirit of the Garden



Martha Brookes Hutcheson (reprint of 1923 edition)
New introduction by Rebecca Warren Davidson, \$34.95

Martha Brookes Hutcheson left behind a rich design legacy, which is well represented in this beautifully illustrated book. Hutcheson demonstrates the underlying principles of great design using examples from well-known European gardens, as well as several she designed herself, including her own home, now Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center in Gladstone, N.J. Rebecca Davidson’s introduction places Hutcheson in the context of her profession and her time.

Landscape-Gardening



O. C. Simonds (reprint of 1920 edition)
New introduction by Robert E. Grese, \$29.95

O. C. Simonds, one of the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects, presents the principles of ecologically responsible landscape design as he addresses the layout of cities, cemeteries, parks, and gardens. An introductory essay by Robert E. Grese, director of the Nichols Arboretum designed by Simonds, examines the basis of Simonds’s approach in which nature is both a model and a partner in design.

ALH books are encouraging preservation of many sites, including gardens, arboreta, parks, cemeteries, and planned communities. Sound scholarship provides both information and inspiration for enlightened stewardship.

FOREST HILLS GARDENS, Queens, New York

The 1909 commuter suburb planned by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. presents unusually complex stewardship challenges owing to its size (142 acres), its age, and the fact that 6,000 people live there. Elizabeth Murphy, president of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation, is confident that Susan L. Klaus's *A Modern Arcadia* (featured on page 1) will have a strong impact on preservation and maintenance of the historic landscape.

According to Murphy, "Klaus's book makes it absolutely clear that it is the plan for the community *as a whole* that is critical. We certainly knew of Olmsted's involvement at Forest Hills Gardens, but none of us really grasped how absolutely comprehensive his concept was. It is now evident that no part of this plan can be changed without changing the whole. Because Klaus's book is not subjective, because it is scholarly, it will be a powerful tool in court." A homeowners' covenant written in 1923 stipulates that all exterior changes to residences and grounds at Forest Hills Gardens must be approved by the Corporation. Owners violating this covenant by erecting fences and other structures that undermine the intentions of the original design have been the target of lawsuits.

When asked about the greatest threat to the historic fabric of the Gardens today, Murphy replied, "Loss of greenery." Even a casual walk through the neighborhood reveals that the automobile is the main culprit. Olmsted and Atterbury did not foresee either the size or quantity of cars that most households now maintain. Conflict has arisen with homeowners who have paved lawns to create additional parking and with those who park cars on lawns.



Burns Street, Forest Hills Gardens, 2001. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

Klaus's book may prove influential on two fronts. We believe that it will help encourage respect for the original design by educating residents about the cultural and aesthetic values in the landscape. *A Modern Arcadia* also offers the basis for a cultural landscape report and comprehensive master plan which could guide long-term maintenance and preservation decisions throughout the suburb.

Klaus's book was celebrated at Forest Hills Gardens on Saturday, June 22, 2002, with a book signing, lecture, and house and garden

tours. The author will present a lecture in conjunction with the publication of *A Modern Arcadia* at the National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., on August 14, 2002.

OLDFIELDS, Indianapolis, Indiana

The same year that Forest Hills Gardens was conceived, 1909, the country suburb of Woodstock was developed along the new interurban railroad outside Indianapolis. One of the project partners, Hugh McKennon Landon, retained three contiguous lots comprising 42 acres and commissioned his brother-in-law, Lewis Ketcham Davis, to design a large house for the site. The estate also included broad lawns, formal rose garden, greenhouses, vegetable gardens, barn, and workers' cottages. In 1920, Landon and his second wife visited North Haven, Maine,



Oldfields. Historic photo.

where they saw a seaside garden designed by Percival Gallagher (1874–1934), an associate in the well-known firm of Olmsted Brothers. Gallagher's understated design included vegetable gardens, drifts of shrubs, and a large ravine garden. Immediately upon returning to Indianapolis, the Landons contacted Olmsted Brothers and arranged to hire Gallagher for a new plan for their country place.

During the 1920s, Gallagher came to know the Landons well, and he designed the landscape to accommodate their contradictory tastes and needs. As did many wealthy

members of the cultural elite, the Landons wanted to impress visitors, and Gallagher responded by laying out a monumental vista to a 30-foot water jet and sculpture group. The owners also coveted the look and feel of the American countryside. Consequently, the other side of property preserved rural outlooks and views to a nearby canal. Linking the two scenic extremes—one inspired by France, the other American—were parklike lawns and a ravine garden, similar to the one that Gallagher had designed for the Maine property.

In 1932, Oldfields was purchased by the J. K. Lilly family, who enlarged the house but continued to maintain the grounds according to the Gallagher plan. In 1967, the estate was bequeathed to the Art Association of Indianapolis to serve as the site for a new art museum. In time, the Lilly house became the new museum's pavilion of decorative arts and the adjacent 26 acres of lawns, gardens, and outbuildings became the Eli Lilly Botanical Garden.

In the early 1990s, growing interest in historical landscape architecture prompted museum officials to commission a research report on Gallagher. The new scholarship revealed that Gallagher was an exceptionally fine designer of estates, parks, and park systems and that Oldfields was a significant example of his work.

In 1993, a group of consultants was invited to the Indianapolis Museum of Art to discuss the future of Oldfields. Acting on compelling information in the report that argued for Gallagher's national significance and the fine quality of his landscape design—barely discernible in the somewhat deteriorated state of the grounds—the committee recommended restoring both the landscape and the house as a prime example

of an American country place.

After almost a decade of research, rehabilitation of the landscape (overseen by the firm of Landscapes, Charlotte, Vt.) has renewed Gallagher's design, and the first floor of the Lilly house has been restored to its appearance during the family's residence in the 1930s. A permanent exhibition that comprehensively interprets the house and grounds in the context of the Country Place Era now fills the second floor. The exhibit features a documentary video about the origins of the estate's design and includes a segment on Gallagher. On June 8, 2002, the refurbished estate—mansion and landscape—was opened to the public.

From dawn until dusk, visitors are now invited to explore the grounds of Oldfields free of charge. Gallagher's vision, shaped by time and the involvement of many members of the Landon and Lilly families, has reached fruition in the maturely robust landscape. As



Oldfields. Rehabilitation of historic landscape during and following construction.

is true for an increasing number of American country places, private resources have been successfully transformed for public benefit.

Several events are planned to celebrate the opening of Oldfields. On November 12, 2002, Robin Karson will present a lecture, "A Genius for Place," at the Indianapolis Museum of Art as part of a series of lectures on American country places sponsored by the museum.

LONGFELLOW NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE National Park Service, Cambridge, Massachusetts

In 1904, Alice Longfellow, daughter of the famous poet, commissioned Martha Brookes Hutcheson to elaborate on an earlier garden adjacent to her family's distinguished 1759 Brattle Street residence. Hutcheson's plan included a box-bordered parterre and large pergola, which Hutcheson featured in her 1923 book, *The Spirit of the Garden* (reprinted by LALH and UMass Press last year). In 1925, Miss Longfellow hired the well-known landscape architect Ellen Biddle Shipman to renew the plantings in the aging Hutcheson garden. The subsequent design achieved national prominence both as an example of the Colonial Revival style and a compelling new garden design. After Alice's death in 1928, the garden declined. The pergola fell into disrepair and was dismantled.



J. Peter Spang purchasing multiple copies of *The Spirit of the Garden*, Longfellow National Historic Site, Cambridge, Mass. Spang, with his brother and sister-in-law, owns and manages the care of a significant landscape designed by Martha Brookes Hutcheson.

The National Park Service is undertaking a project that will reestablish the richness and diversity of the historic grounds and recover important elements from both the



Garden arbor, Longfellow House, Cambridge, Mass. From *The Spirit of the Garden*.

Hutcheson and Shipman designs. The project relies on a comprehensive treatment plan and is being carried out in concert with the Friends of the Longfellow House, who have recently launched a major fundraising campaign in support of it. According to C. Sue Rigney, chief of planning, the initial phase will involve garden archeology and the reconstruction of the large pergola, which will be based on archival drawings, photographs, and surviving remnants. "We plan to revive one of the most important urban gardens in America," said Ms. Rigney, "and honor those landscape stewards who played such an influential role in the 245-year history of Longfellow House." Work is scheduled to begin this summer, and completion of all phases of the restoration is anticipated by 2005.



Val Verde, Santa Barbara, Calif. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

VAL VERDE Montecito, California

Visitors are now able to make reservations to see the estate designed by Bertram Goodhue, ca. 1915, with later landscape additions by Lockwood de Forest. For more information, call the Austin Val Verde Foundation at (805) 969-9852. To learn more about the history of this landscape design, read about *A Genius for Place* at www.LALH.org or visit the Val Verde website at www.AustinValVerdeFoundation.com.

In addition to rescuing several out-of-print classics from obscurity, LALH reprints are fostering important research. Each volume is introduced by an engaging, illustrated essay that brings new perspective to the historical text. These essays and the classic works they introduce educate both professional and general readers.



H. W. S. Cleveland, 1882.
Courtesy William H. Tishler Collection.

Landscape Architecture, as Applied to the Wants of the West

HORACE WILLIAM SHALER CLEVELAND (1814–1900) was the first American landscape practitioner to include the words “landscape architecture” in the title of a book. (The term had been coined by Olmsted and Vaux for their entry in the Central Park competition.) Despite its small size, Cleveland’s 1873 book packed a big message: how the emerging profession should guide landscape development in the rapidly expanding West. Cleveland was attempting to influence the civic leaders and businessmen who were laying out American cities along the new railroads.

Dismayed by the barren appearance of the new towns, Cleveland promoted an alternative to the grid plan which featured linked open spaces—green armatures in the form of parkways and park systems—that radiated from urban centers. As did many of his colleagues (including Olmsted, with whom Cleveland worked briefly at Prospect Park), Cleveland believed that contact with nature could improve moral character and thus influence emerging American civilization.

Cleveland’s book demonstrated how an “organic” approach to landscape design could be applied at every scale, from backyards and estates to parks, subdivisions, cities, and entire regions.

A substantial new introduction weaves Cleveland’s ideas and career into social and philosophical context. Authors Daniel J. Nadenicek and Lance M. Neckar discern the origins of Cleveland’s ideas in his Unitarian roots, which emphasized the role of individual effort in improving the general human condition. This notion also formed the nexus of an elite literary group, The Five of Clubs, to which Cleveland’s brother, Henry, belonged, along with the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and the abolitionist Charles Sumner.

Horace became a scientific farmer in the 1840s, interested in new mulching techniques, drainage methods, and woodlot

management strategies. He published articles about his discoveries in A. J. Downing’s *Horticulturist* and other journals aimed at improving rural life. The impulse toward civic betterment gradually led Cleveland to become a landscape gardener. In 1854, he founded a partnership with Robert Morris Copeland, with whom he collaborated on several projects, including the Samuel Colt estate in Hartford, Connecticut, and a plan for Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, Massachusetts, where he worked out some of his most lasting landscape ideas.

Cleveland’s design for Sleepy Hollow was strongly influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson, by then a close associate, who emphatically believed that American landscape design should avoid European influence and instead spring from the essential qualities and forms of nature. Cleveland soon adapted the idea as the basis of his emerging aesthetic. With its links to neighboring open spaces, Sleepy Hollow also foreshadowed the centerpiece of Cleveland’s message in *Landscape Architecture, as Applied to the Wants of the West*.

Before the Civil War, Cleveland and Copeland amicably separated and Cleveland



Minnehaha Falls, ca. 1880. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

went on to realize aspects of his vision more fully in Chicago, where he maintained a practice through the 1870s, laying out sections of Graceland Cemetery, Drexel Boulevard, South (now Washington) Park, and the ravine-crossed suburb of Highland Park. After all his papers were burned in the devastating fire of 1878, Cleveland moved to Minneapolis.

Cleveland's career culminated in a masterful plan for the Minneapolis park system, which included Minnehaha Falls, a popular pilgrimage site for tourists who arrived with Longfellow's poem in hand to bask in their mist. When the falls were almost tapped for industrial use, Cleveland helped secure their protection by integrating them into the park system. By the early 1880s, he clearly believed that conservation lay within the realm of the expanding profession. This message and the broad purposes Cleveland envisioned for landscape architecture were extraordinary for their day.

The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening

WILHELM MILLER (1869–1938), a prominent author and horticulturist, also saw scenic conservation as a vital source of improvement of American civilization. Miller's 1915 book was published by the Illinois Agricultural Experiment Station and distributed free to anyone in the state who signed a promise to do some "permanent ornamental planting." The richly illustrated circular promoted a new style of landscape gardening that not only conserved but emulated the native midwestern landscape, largely through the use of native plants. Sumptuous period photographs of work by Jens Jensen, O. C. Simonds, and others fill the pages of this magazine-like publication. Miller was particularly stirred by the beauty of Graceland Cemetery and the Chicago parks, and he used several images of these sites to demonstrate the basic tenets of his design approach.

Christopher Vernon's introductory essay offers intriguing new perspectives on Miller's purposes in publishing the strangely emphatic manifesto and a sense of the larger context in which these ideas were occurring. Miller's stylistic recommendations were grounded in the broad-based Country Life movement which had arisen in counterpoint to the accelerating urban migration then taking place in the United States—the very same Progressive Era agenda that led to the creation of Forest Hills



Prairie river, Humboldt Park, Chicago, Ill. Courtesy Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

Gardens. (The roots of this movement, in turn, can be traced to the same nineteenth-century conviction that inspired Horace Cleveland's book—that individuals could be improved through contact with the land and American civilization would flourish as a result.)

By Miller's day a strong nationalist agenda had arisen in response to a burgeoning immigrant population. This agenda, intensified by the pace of land development, had led to the quest for a truly national American landscape style. Miller believed that the "prairie spirit" could form the basis of such a style because he considered the Midwest the most American (and least European) part of the United States. In Miller's view, "the very flatness of the land," Vernon writes, "with its omnipresent stretch to the horizon, was conducive to the development of democracy to its full potential. This flatness made the region the 'runway of winds and ideas.'"

Miller's version of the prairie style had few direct implications for spatial design, although he heartily recommended open lawns (as evocations of the prairie), framed by masses of horizontally branching trees and low-growing shrubs. He devotes considerable space to warning readers away from exotics and hybrids, which he denigrates as "effeminate" and "foreign," in favor of long-lived

oaks, hawthorns, and roadside wildflowers.

Students of American landscape history will find Miller's circular a significant early example of ecological writing. His references to plant associations were strongly influenced by Henry C. Cowles, author of *The Plant Societies of Chicago and Vicinity*. Miller's book is also a historic expression of an emerging conservation ethic. The author was one of the first writers of national note to urge readers to plant wisely, save trees, protect watercourses, and preserve historic buildings—themes that are repeated throughout his text. The urgent tone of *The Prairie Spirit* testifies to the drama of a watershed moment in landscape architectural history and the clash of cultural values that were defining it. The prairie was made suddenly distinctive because it was disappearing.

Lectures in association with these new reprint editions have been presented at the Arnold Arboretum, The Arts Club of Chicago, and the Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois. The ASLA Centennial Reprint Series is funded by the Viburnum Foundation, Rochester, New York.

A GENIUS FOR PLACE: *American Landscapes of the Country Place Era*

An LALH touring exhibition features new photography of seven artistically significant American country place landscapes designed between 1905 and the 1950s.



Comments from the visitors' book

National Building Museum, Washington, D.C.,
October 6, 2001, to February 18, 2002:

"It's like taking a vacation to visit this exhibition!"

"Refreshing images of not too frequently seen American landscapes. Really nice!"

"Really enjoyed this exhibit. Knew little about landscape architecture, but now have a much better and greater understanding of what this phrase means...Great stuff! Thanks."

"Pictures are beautiful and they are for all ages!" (Lucy, 5th grade)

"These pictures are sooo beautiful! I wish I were really there." (Nancy, 5th grade)

"Great show! More shows like this on landscape architecture and gardens, please."

"Superb. There should be much more of this—you've revealed an unappreciated aspect of American genius."

"A wonderful reminder of forgotten moments in American landscape history, combining both the familiar and unfamiliar ... Photographs extraordinary."

"Just lovely! The black & white photographs capture a true timelessness of the subject."

"The pictures were so awesome and cool. I'll come again! Definitely."

"Kudos for a beautiful exhibit that renews the renown of landscape architects of note!"

A Genius for Place appears at Longue Vue House and Gardens, New Orleans, through 2002.

For more information, please visit our website, www.LALH.org.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

its interest in 1922, it had lost \$380,000), Robert de Forest claimed in a letter to the eminent city planner John Nolen that the project had "accomplished what the Sage Foundation intended." The model was not widely emulated, largely because it was so expensive, but the idea of the comprehensively planned suburban community has continued to engender experiment.

Today, despite conflicts—about maintenance of public areas, architectural and landscape restrictions, and rising automobile use—most of the 6,000 current residents of Forest Hills Gardens would agree with de Forest's claim. Many still take the Long Island Rail Road into Manhattan, just as their predecessors did almost a century ago. And, at the end of the day, they return to a green enclave that is distinguished by the same sense of quality and permanence that attracted the first inhabitants.

As buildings and grounds age, residents are increasingly aware that steps will be necessary to ensure the continued vitality of their village. In the tradition of other monographs in the LALH Designers and Places Series, Klaus's book offers a foundation on which a comprehensive plan can be built. We believe that Klaus's study will also add valuable



Mature street plantings, Forest Hills Gardens, 2001. Photograph by Carol Betsch.

historical perspective to the ongoing dialogue among planners, landscape architects, architects, and homeowners about what constitutes a good place to live.

"Journalists lauded Forest Hills Gardens for giving the country a vision of suburban living 'the like of which is not to be found in all America.' They deemed it a modern Arcadia, a place that 'smashes all the conventions of commonplace suburban building.'"

—From *A Modern Arcadia*

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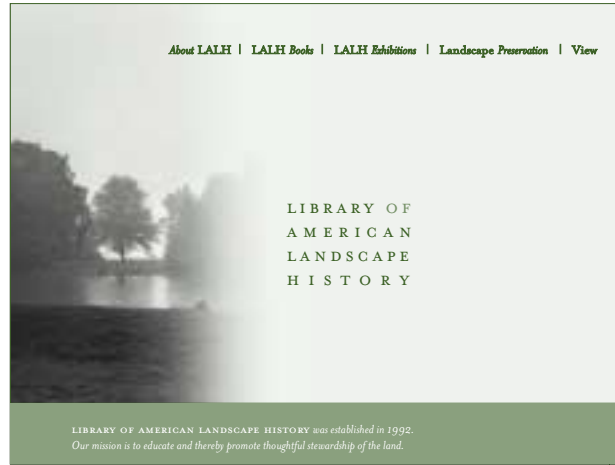
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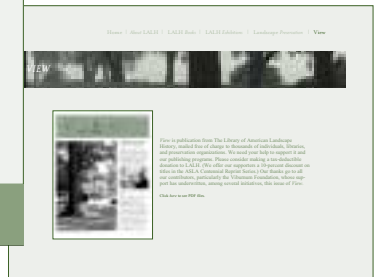
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The home page from LALH's new website.



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