

amassed one of the largest and most important private collections of Impressionist paintings in America. (In this respect, the Whittemores resembled the Popes of Hill-Stead, in nearby Farmington, who were also avidly collecting such works.) Splendid canvases by Monet, Degas, Whistler, and others were displayed throughout the house.<sup>12</sup> At a time when many wealthy Americans looked to their architects for guidance in furnishings, the unusually sophisticated taste of the Whittemores was evident throughout Tranquillity Farm, indoors as well as out.

After Harris's death in 1927, the estate was subdivided into several large parcels according to a plan commissioned from Manning. Several family members built new homes on the property to the east.<sup>13</sup> In 1985 family descendants made the unusual but effective decision to sell and disassemble the large main house, parts of which were then moved to a site in Westchester County, a

resolution that essentially privileged the landscape design over the architecture.<sup>14</sup>

Tranquillity Farm, which was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, remains a remarkably intact example of a late nineteenth–early twentieth-century landscape. The stone walls and brick paths survive, and many of the original trees have grown to great size. The pastures and meadows recorded on Manning's 1896 plan have been maintained according to their original layout. The carriage house is intact, as are the farm cottage, barn, creamery, boathouse, and several small outbuildings. The plantings in the formal garden, designed by Ellen Shipman in 1923, have been restored by Thyrza Whittemore, the great-great-granddaughter of J. H. Whittemore. Remarkably, visitors to Tranquillity Farm today are greeted by the same sense of country expanse that inspired Charles Eliot and Warren Manning when they first visited the place more than a century ago.<sup>15</sup>



Front entry gate, with stone walls constructed atop a ha-ha, which obscures the main road. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2009.



The stone walls that demarcate the meadows, lawns, and roads of Tranquillity Farm have survived. The property was subdivided in the late 1920s and is now owned by several different individuals. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2009.



In the 1960s the original McKim, Mead & White house was disassembled and moved to a site in Westchester County. The current owners of Tranquillity Farm reside in the restored carriage house and continue to maintain the core of the historic property. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2015.

## *Clement S. Houghton Estate*

CHESTNUT HILL, MASSACHUSETTS

JAMES O'DAY

In 1906 the Boston financier Clement Stevens Houghton and his wife, Martha Gilbert Houghton, began building a new house on twenty-six acres on Suffolk Road in the Chestnut Hill section of Newton, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. The site's rugged terrain, with ledge outcrops overlooking the Charles River floodplain, held dramatic possibilities. The Houghtons chose the Boston architectural firm of Chapman & Frazer to design their house and Warren Manning to design the landscape.<sup>1</sup> Warren Manning and Horace Southworth Frazer shared similar aesthetic sensibilities and frequently collaborated on residential work.

Frazer, a socially prominent architect who had been trained at MIT, was best known for his refined Tudor Revival style, which distilled fifteenth-century architectural features into a cleaner and more modern interpretation. Yet for the Houghtons he designed a somewhat exotic (by Boston standards) Spanish Mission style house with stucco walls, quatrefoil windows, a loggia, balustraded terraces, and a barrel-tile roof. In

front of the 8,200-square-foot house was a greensward, flanked by shrubs and mature trees. A circular driveway swept through the lawn, and a stucco arbor with a wide-eaved tile roof covered a walkway to the main entrance. A formal terrace and garden, classically appointed with columns and an Italian oil jar, lay to the rear of the house.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond this terrace garden, the designed landscape changed as precipitously as the topography. The house, perched on the brow of a steep slope with dramatic rock outcroppings, provided a panorama of the countryside and the surrounding marshlands, a pond, and two streams.<sup>3</sup> It was in these wooded lowlands that the Houghtons, likely with Manning's guidance, developed an extensive "wild garden." The term referred to a type of naturalistic garden (sometimes also called a nature garden) popular in this period.<sup>4</sup> The Houghtons' wild garden included flowering shrubs such as azalea, rhododendron, leucothoe, mountain laurel, and other native species, as well as meandering paths, rustic bridges, and a lagoon created by damming one of the streams.<sup>5</sup>



Scenes of ethereal beauty throughout the wild garden were created with combinations of native and introduced plants. Photograph by Herbert Wendell Gleason, 1928. Courtesy Robbins-Mills Collection of Herbert Wendell Gleason Photographic Negatives, Concord (Mass.) Free Public Library.





Although redesigned to reduce its size, the house retains an arresting presence in the landscape. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2011.



The Rhododendron Vista continues to flourish, having narrowed as the large stands of shrubs have matured. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2011.

sight of this woodland corridor of pink and white bloom once they reached the end.

Aside from these linear plantings, Manning's design responded to the ocean as the site's powerful *genius loci*. He and his clients decided to create only one formal garden near the house, a partially enclosed and intensively cultivated rose garden. The entry drive, laid out in a wide arc below the mansion's sightlines, showed off the carefully enhanced natural features of the site, culminating in the spectacle of the bay. Looping trails and bridle paths outlined irregular wooded spaces northwest of the house, including a signature Manning wild garden. Hans's account of its creation aptly described Manning's approach to the wider landscape: "The existing growth was

developed by careful trimming and enriched by new plantations such as rhododendrons, azaleas and their companions."<sup>6</sup> Rhododendrons, in particular, were planted extensively throughout the property.

A road linked the mansion grounds to an extensive farm complex south of the entry drive. Here the Stones raised Guernsey cows, pigs, and chickens. In addition to an elaborate vegetable garden, workers tended orchids, acacias, espaliered fruit trees, melons, grapes, and other tender plants in a cluster of greenhouses, which included a palm house. Galen L. Stone II, a grandson of his namesake, remembered a "battery of beehives" behind the vegetable garden. "We were almost completely self-sufficient and free of the privation



A secondary allée of azalea intersects with the rhododendrons in the woods. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2010.

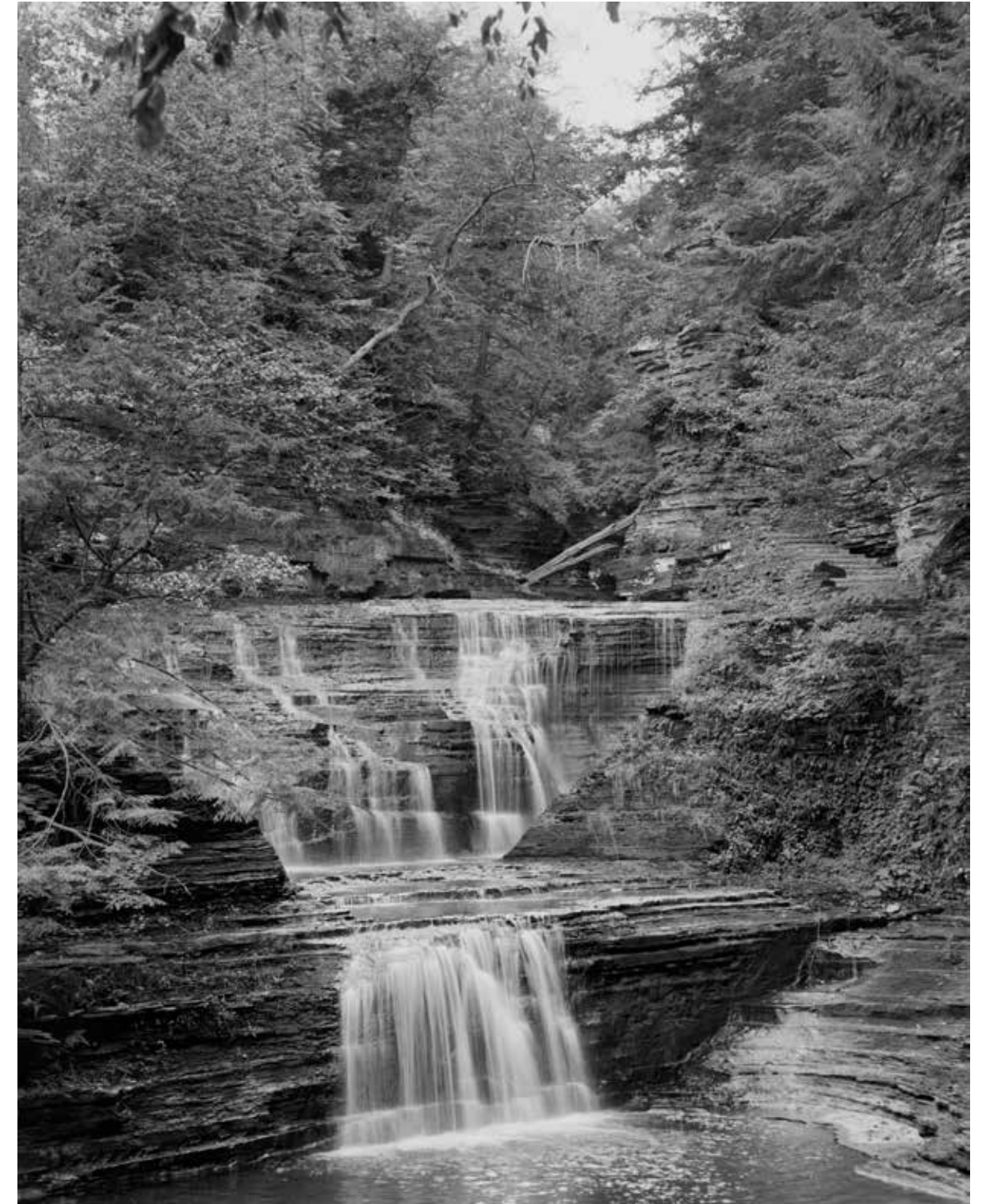




Prospects from the bluff tops still provide spectacular views. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2014.



Steep gorge walls shelter a wide variety of rare plants; the concentration of rare species was of particular interest to Manning. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2014.



Complex rock formations, rushing water, and delicate foliage combine to create settings of great poetic force. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2014.





Taughannock Falls, in Ulysses, N.Y., is also part of the Finger Lakes State Parks system. Undated stereopticon card from The Artistic Series, No. 95, E. & H. T. Anthony & Co. Courtesy William C. Hecht, [http://nytopmki.org/hecht\\_index.htm#3](http://nytopmki.org/hecht_index.htm#3).



The falls were a popular tour destination even in the nineteenth century, but poor planning and the threat of industrial development had put them at risk by the time of Manning's 1916 involvement. Undated stereopticon card from The Artistic Series, No. 14, E. & H. T. Anthony & Co. Courtesy William C. Hecht, [http://nytopmki.org/hecht\\_index.htm#3](http://nytopmki.org/hecht_index.htm#3).



Many of the trails in Enfield Falls Reservation (now Robert H. Treman State Park) suggested in Manning's report were later constructed by CCC workers. Photograph, n.d. Courtesy New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Finger Lakes Region.



Taughannock Falls today is accessible via a trail system that accommodates wheelchairs and strollers. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 2014.





The lagoons were the scenic centerpiece of Manning's design, but they also were a setting for active recreation. Photograph, 1920s. Courtesy Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens.



The walled English Garden, designed collaboratively by Manning and Schneider, was the setting for many family gatherings, including Virginia Seiberling's 1919 wedding. Photograph, 1919. Courtesy Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens.



The old stone quarry was the setting for the lagoons Manning created by damming natural springs. The edges were planted with a wide range of native and imported plants. Photograph by Arthur G. Eldredge, c. 1928. LALH Collection.



The scale of the house terrace was a source of disagreement between Manning and Schneider, who prevailed in the somewhat grand scheme. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 1997.



A sycamore allée underplanted with rhododendron stretches from the south end of the house to a woodland glade. Photograph by Carol Betsch, 1997.