

OLMSTED AND LANDSCAPE



Books from LALH

THE OLMSTED LEGACY

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED SR. (1822–1903) is best remembered as a landscape architect, the designer of parks and park systems, institutional grounds, planned communities, and private estates, from New York’s Central Park, Boston’s Emerald Necklace, and Buffalo’s system of parks and parkways to Riverside, Illinois, and Biltmore estate in North Carolina. The firm he founded continued for decades after his death and designed thousands of additional projects as the profession of landscape architecture expanded.

But the Olmsted legacy is not that of one person, and it is not limited to the landscapes themselves. Olmsted’s greatest accomplishment was his advocacy for a more just and sustainable society. Landscape architecture was a means to an end, and that end was to improve people’s lives. Olmsted believed—and modern science has confirmed—that access to beautiful, expansive landscapes is necessary to individual health and happiness, and therefore to the well-being of society as a whole. This was true for all people. The wealthy of course could retreat to country homes and resorts, but in an increasingly urban society, it became a duty of government to provide public parks that would extend those benefits to everyone, regardless of their background. Beginning with Central Park, Olmsted’s public landscapes did just that—and today, parks are more essential for people in cities than ever before.

Olmsted envisioned public landscapes as our national commons: places where all people could gather and find the sense of community that he knew was essential to democracy. This ideology gained urgency during the Civil War years, and it has again today. Olmsted also pioneered urban plans that worked in harmony with natural systems—hydrology, topography, and vegetation—and he built the earliest examples of what are now described as “landscape urbanism” and “green infrastructure.” The Olmsted legacy, then, is really about the future. By understanding and embracing it, we are better prepared to confront the great social and environmental challenges of our own era.

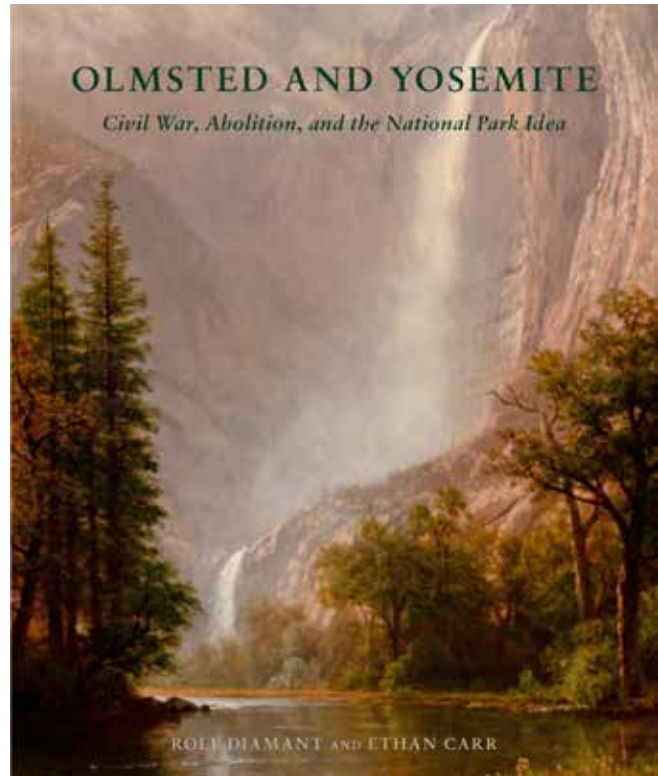
Olmsted and Yosemite

Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea

ROLF DIAMANT AND ETHAN CARR

Cloth

ISBN: 978-1-952620-34-8



During the turbulent decade the United States engaged in a civil war, abolished slavery, and remade the government, the public park emerged as a product of these dramatic changes. New York's Central Park and Yosemite in California both embodied the "new birth of freedom" that had inspired the Union during its greatest crisis, epitomizing the duty of republican government to enhance the lives and well-being of all its citizens. A central thread connecting abolition, the Civil War, and the dawn of urban and national parks is the life of Frederick Law Olmsted.

In 1864, Olmsted was asked to prepare a plan for a park in Yosemite Valley, created by Congress to expand the privileges of American citizenship associated with Union victory. His groundbreaking Yosemite Report effectively created an intellectual framework for a national park system. Here Olmsted expressed the core tenet of the national park idea: that the republic should provide its citizenry access to the restorative benefits of nature.

The National Park Service has been slow to embrace the senior Olmsted's role in this history. In the early twentieth century, a period of "reconciliation" between North and South, National Park Service administrators preferred more anodyne narratives of pristine Western landscapes discovered by rugged explorers and spontaneously reimagined as national parks. They wanted a history disassociated from urban parks and the problems of industrializing cities and unburdened by the legacies of slavery and Native American dispossession.

Published to mark the bicentennial of Olmsted's birth, *Olmsted and Yosemite* sets the historical record straight as it offers a new interpretation of how the American park—urban and national—came to figure so prominently in our cultural identity, and why telling this more complex and inclusive story is critically important.

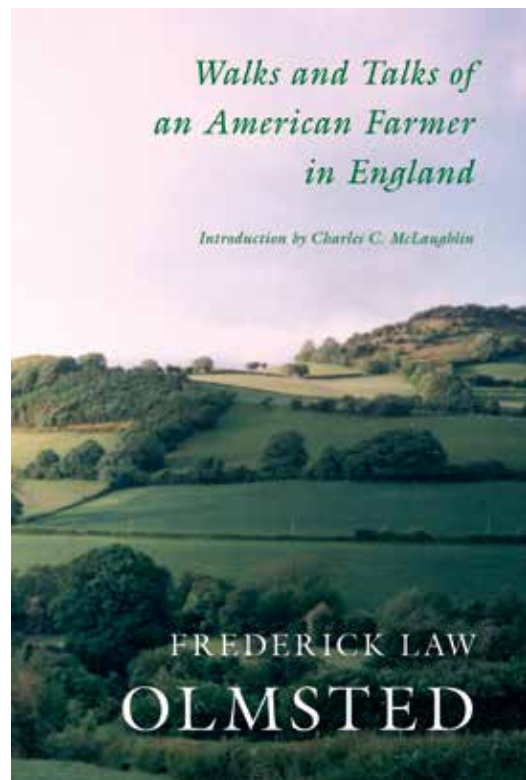
Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

INTRODUCTION BY CHARLES C. MCLAUGHLIN

Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-952620-07-2



Before he ever dreamed of becoming a landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. (1822–1903) visited southern England and Wales during a month-long walking tour. A gifted writer, he recorded his impressions of the trip in this richly detailed volume, which was long out of print.

The introduction clarifies the links between Olmsted’s developing picturesque aesthetic, social conscience, and reformer’s passion for change. Charles C. McLaughlin persuasively argues that Olmsted came to adapt many of the features of the cultivated English countryside—first seen on this trip—in designed landscapes such as New York’s Central Park.

This edition provides extensive annotations to the original text, furnishing background and context to the people and places Olmsted encountered during his journey. McLaughlin’s notes are based on his own trips through England, undertaken over two decades to retrace the author’s original route.

“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*

“It is fascinating to see Olmsted here absorbing and recording firsthand impressions of England’s rapidly changing countryside and growing industrial cities. McLaughlin’s gracefully erudite introduction to this timely republication provides a vivid portrait of a young mid-nineteenth-century traveler.”

—Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, author of *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*

The Best Planned City in the World

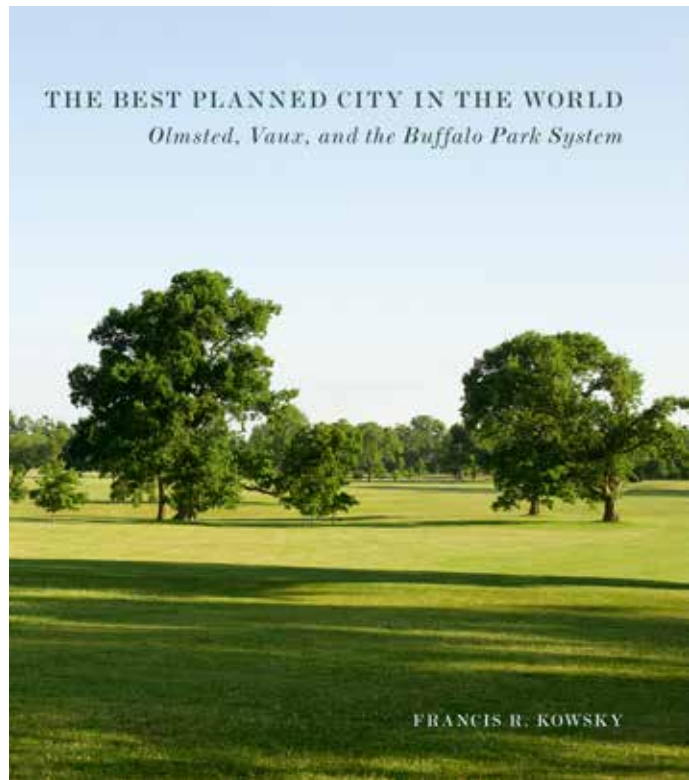
*Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo
Park System*

FRANCIS R. KOWSKY

Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-952620-27-0

**Winner, J. B. Jackson Book Prize from the
Foundation for Landscape Studies**



Beginning in 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and Calvert Vaux created a series of parks and parkways for Buffalo, New York, that drew national and international attention. The improvements augmented the city's original plan with urban design features inspired by Second Empire Paris, including the first system of "parkways" to grace an American city. Displaying the plan at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, Olmsted declared Buffalo "the best planned city, as to streets, public places, and grounds, in the United States, if not in the world."

In this book Francis R. Kowsky illuminates this remarkable constellation of projects. Utilizing original plans, drawings, photographs, and copious numbers of reports and letters, he brings new perspective to this vast undertaking, analyzing it as an expression of the visionary landscape and planning principles that Olmsted and Vaux pioneered.

Watch *The Best Planned City in the World*, winner of the SAH film prize, at lalh.org.

"In 1868, an invitation was made to Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, the men who had designed Central Park, to come upstate and pass their judgments on the opportunity for Buffalo to demonstrate its civic arrival with a grand new park. This is the story that Francis Kowsky tells, and he does so virtually to perfection."
—*Landscape Journal*

"In his magnificent new book, with its lucid prose and deft organization, Kowsky follows the evolution of Olmsted and Vaux's astonishing creations in Buffalo—those 'landscapes of recreation, residence, memory, and healing,' as he so gracefully describes them. . . . An extraordinary variety and abundance of illustrations fill the book, including photographs new and old, maps, diagrams, paintings, and lithographs."

—*Site/Lines*

Community by Design

The Olmsted Firm and the Development of Brookline, Massachusetts

KEITH N. MORGAN, ELIZABETH HOPE CUSHING, AND ROGER G. REED

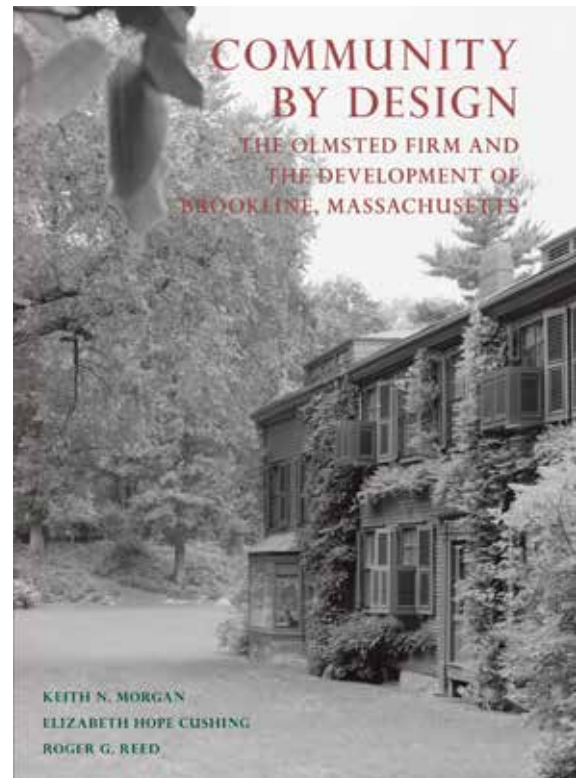
Cloth

ISBN: 978-1-952620-22-5

Winner, Ruth Emery Award from the Victorian Society in America

In 1883, Frederick Law Olmsted moved from New York City to Brookline, a Boston suburb that had anointed itself the “richest town in the world.” For the next half century, Olmsted’s firm served as the dominant force in the planned development of this community, overseeing more than 150 commissions, in some cases collaborating with other Brookline residents who were also leaders in the fields of architecture and horticulture, among them Henry Hobson Richardson and Charles Sprague Sargent. Through plans for boulevards and parkways, residential subdivisions, institutional commissions, and private gardens, the firm carefully guided the development of the town. While Olmsted Sr. used landscape architecture as his vehicle for development, his son and namesake saw Brookline as grounds for experiment in the new profession of city and regional planning, a field that he was helping to define and lead.

Little has been published on the importance of Brookline as a laboratory and model for the Olm-



sted firm’s work. This richly illustrated book provides important new perspective on the history of planning in the United States and illuminates an aspect of the Olmsted office that has not been well understood.

Watch the film *Community by Design* at lalh.org.

“Chock full of details (with hundreds of reproduced photos and plans) and meticulously researched, the book exposes the multiple webs of influence—wealth, social hierarchy, design genius and high-minded ideals—that came together to guide the development of Brookline at a time when booming population and streetcars brought rapid change. The authors trace the relationships among the leading trendsetters in architecture, municipal governance, landscape design, engineering and horticulture as they converge in Brookline at the turn of the 19th century.” —*Brookline Perspective*

A Modern Arcadia

*Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for
Forest Hills Gardens*

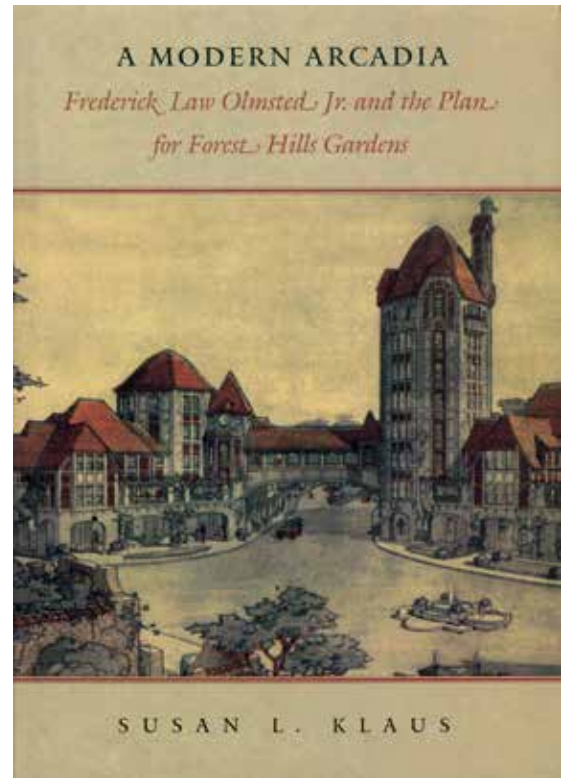
SUSAN L. KLAUS

Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-952620-08-9

Winner, Center for Historic Preservation
Book Prize

Winner, New York City Book Award for
Landscape History



Conceived as an experiment that would apply the new “science” of city planning to a suburban setting, Forest Hills Gardens was created by the Russell Sage Foundation to provide housing for middle-class commuters as an alternative to cramped flats in New York City. Although it has long been recognized as one of the most influential planned communities in the United States, this is the first time Forest Hills Gardens has been the subject of a book.

Susan L. Klaus’s fully illustrated history chronicles the creation of the 142-acre development from its inception in 1909 through its first two decades, offering critical insights into American planning history, landscape architecture, and the social and economic forces that shaped housing in the Progressive Era. Klaus focuses particularly on the creative genius of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (1870–1957), who served as planner and landscape architect for the project.

Drawing on his father’s visionary ideas but developing his own perspective, the younger Olmsted rede-

fined planning for the modern era and became one of the founders of the profession of city planning in the United States.

“The scholarship in this work is exceptionally thorough. . . . *A Modern Arcadia* will make a significant contribution to the fields of landscape and planning history.”

—Cynthia Zaitzevsky, author of *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System*

“*A Modern Arcadia* illuminates the fascinating intersection of social and aesthetic reform movements in the Progressive Era, as well as the early career of a prolific and influential planner and landscape architect.”

—David Glassberg, author of *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*

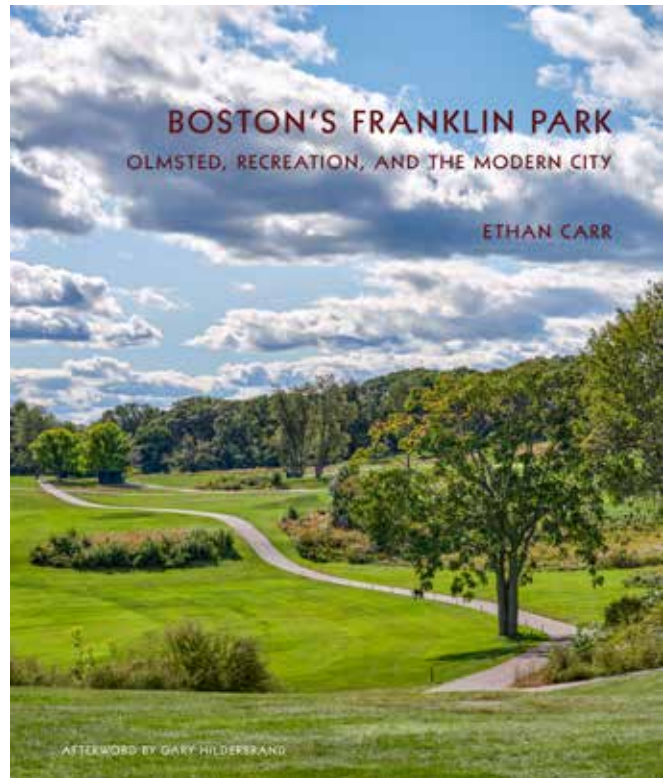
*Boston's Franklin Park**Olmsted, Recreation, and the Modern City*

ETHAN CARR

AFTERWORD BY GARY HILDERBRAND

Cloth

ISBN: 978-1-952620-38-6



Frederick Law Olmsted designed Franklin Park in 1885 as the centerpiece of the Boston park system that later became known as the Emerald Necklace. Often cited with Central Park (1858) and Prospect Park (1865) as one of the three most important “large parks” he designed, Franklin Park was also the most mature expression of Olmsted’s ideas for urban park design and the most expansive and complete pastoral landscape he was able to achieve during his career.

This book is the first full historical treatment of Franklin Park, providing the analysis that confirms its place as one of the great works of nineteenth-century American art. Illuminating the history of the park and its popularity in the early twentieth century, Ethan Carr also describes its decline and the new plans for its renewal, as the City of Boston, working with the surrounding neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain, commits funding and expertise to assure that Franklin Park continues to improve the lives of the people it was created for.

If Franklin Park is one of Olmsted’s most accomplished designs, it is also one of his least well understood and appreciated. As the park enters a new era of revival, a reconsideration of its origins and history offers timely context for a fresh appraisal of Olmsted’s mature park practice.

An afterword by the landscape architect Gary Hilderbrand chronicles the park’s more recent history as a place to gather and celebrate, and to protest social and racial injustices. He describes the goals of the Franklin Park Action Plan, which his Boston-based firm, Reed Hilderbrand, is creating in collaboration with many other consultants. The plan, Hilderbrand writes, will guide the park’s revitalization “as a democratic ground for shared exchange and peaceful engagement, in ways that Olmsted anticipated, and in ways he did not.”

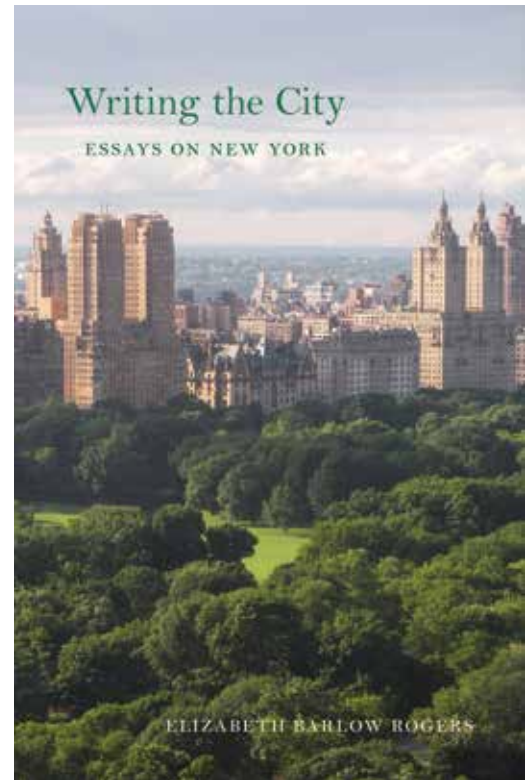
Writing the City

Essays on New York

ELIZABETH BARLOW ROGERS

Cloth

ISBN: 978-1-952620-36-2



The eminent preservationist, author, and landscape historian Elizabeth Barlow Rogers is an adopted New Yorker who has celebrated the place she calls home in much of her writing over the past fifty years. *Writing the City* reveals her passion for the great metropolis and her lifelong efforts to conserve and improve it. At the top of the list of her accomplishments is the founding of the Central Park Conservancy, the public-private partnership that restored the nineteenth-century masterpiece of landscape design after it had reached its nadir in the 1970s, a victim of financial decline and urban blight.

The first section of *Writing the City*, “Below and Above the Ground,” explores New York’s geological foundations and natural history as well as the origins of two great institutions, the New York Botanical Garden and the American Museum of Natural History. “Along the Shoreline” features an insightful review of Phillip Lopate’s *Waterfront: A Journey around Manhattan* and two other essays about the

city’s edges, focusing on Brooklyn Bridge Park and South Street Seaport.

In the last section, “In and About the Parks,” Rogers’s understanding of culture, architecture, urban planning history, and landscape architecture coalesces in five illuminating essays. Subjects range from Greenwood Cemetery and Prospect Park in Brooklyn to “Thirty-three New Ways You Can Help Central Park’s Renaissance,” published in *New York* magazine in 1983. The concluding piece, “Jane and Me,” offers new perspectives on the urban theorist and activist Jane Jacobs, whose writings catalyzed Rogers’s own interest in urban planning in the 1960s.

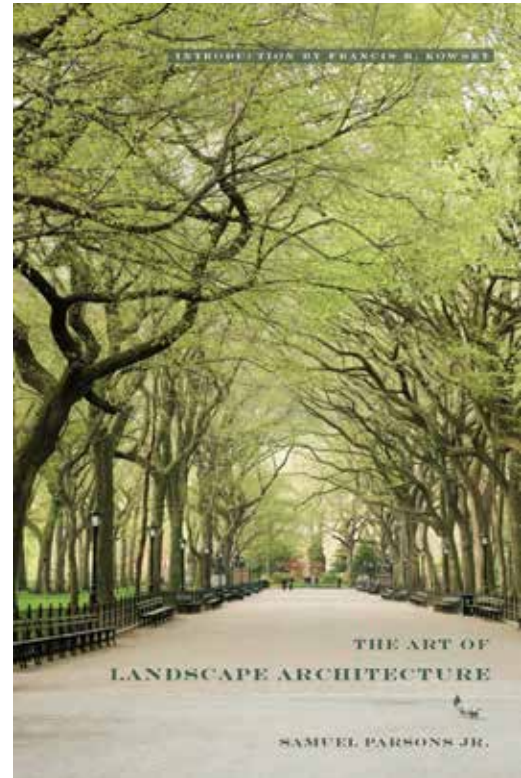
The Art of Landscape Architecture

SAMUEL PARSONS JR.

INTRODUCTION BY FRANCIS R. KOWSKY

Cloth

ISBN: 978-1-952620-17-1



One of founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Samuel Parsons was a leader in the early profession, which his writings helped shape. *The Art of Landscape Architecture*, published in 1915, his sixth and final book, emphasized a Romantic landscape tradition founded in a naturalistic approach to design. As an independent practitioner, Parsons took on projects as varied as Balboa Park in San Diego and Glen Iris Park in Birmingham, Alabama. He also designed several vest pocket parks in New York City and revised designs for Union Square and City Hall Park. Among his most original park designs was St. Nicholas Park, in Upper Manhattan.

The most widely read of Parsons's books, *The Art of Landscape Architecture* was an affectionate summing up of the theories and built work that had inspired America's first generation of landscape architects. Parsons's introduction offers a history of the art conveyed through quotations from theorists, poets, novelists, and landscape architects, illustrated with photographs

depicting a wide range of landscapes, including several of the park designed by the German landscape gardener Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, whom both Parsons and his mentor Calvert Vaux held in high regard.

The new introduction by Francis R. Kowsky explores Parsons's contributions to the nascent profession of landscape architecture, his championing of the work of Pückler-Muskau, and his defense, as superintendent of planting in Central Park, of Olmsted and Vaux's vision, which was under almost constant siege. Kowsky also discusses many of Parsons's own designs, most of which have not been well studied. Among these are Albemarle Park in Asheville, North Carolina (1897); Pine Lawn Cemetery in Syosset, New York (1902); and the Colonial Garden at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx (1903).

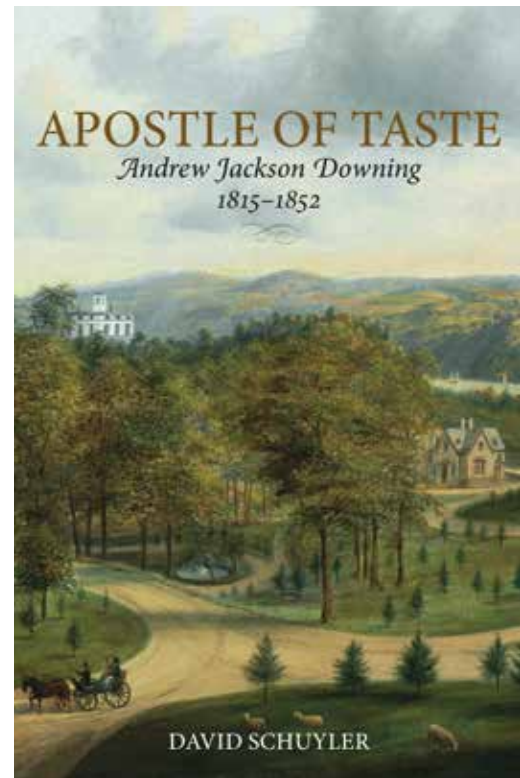
Apostle of Taste

Andrew Jackson Downing, 1815–1852

DAVID SCHUYLER

Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-952620-25-6



The LALH edition of *Apostle of Taste* features a new preface by David Schuyler chronicling the history of scholarship on A. J. Downing—the horticulturalist, landscape gardener, and prolific writer who, more than any other individual, shaped middle-class taste in the United States in the two decades before the Civil War.

Through his books and the pages of *The Horticulturalist*, Downing preached a gospel of taste that promoted the natural style of landscape design over the formal and geometric arrangements that were the hallmark of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century gardens. Together with his longtime collaborator, the architect Alexander Jackson Davis, Downing contributed to the revolution in American architectural taste from the classical revival to the Gothic, Italianate, bracketed, and other picturesque styles. Downing celebrated this progression from classic to romantic not simply as a change in stylistic preference but also as a reflection of the nation’s evo-

lution from a pioneer condition to a more advanced state of civilization.

In this compelling text, illustrated with more than 100 drawings, plans, and photographs, Schuyler explores the origins of Downing’s ideas in English aesthetic theory and his efforts to “adapt” English designs to the different climate and republican social institutions of the United States. He traces the impulse toward an American architectural style in Downing’s work, demonstrates the influence of his ideas on the design of homes and gardens, and analyzes the complications of class implicit in Downing’s prescriptions for American society.

Landscapes of Exclusion

State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South

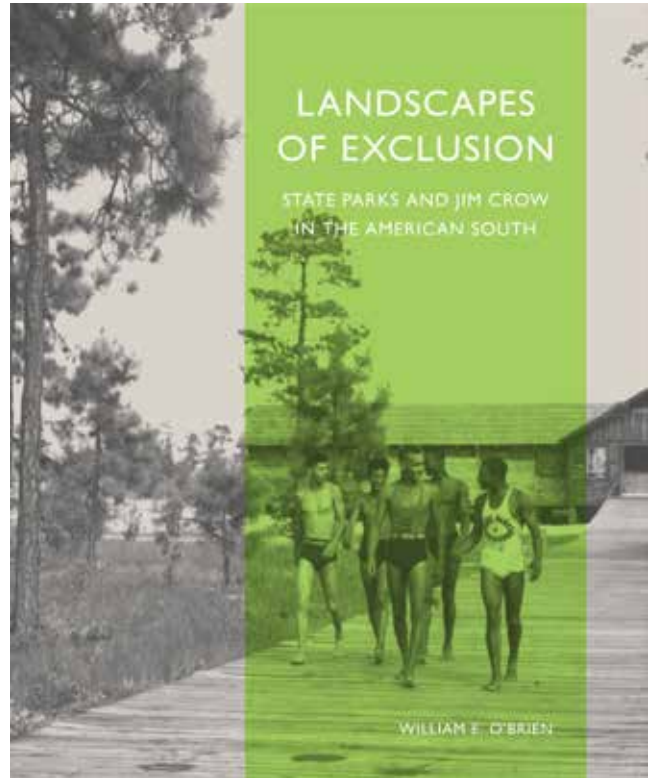
WILLIAM E. O'BRIEN

Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-952620-35-5

Winner, J. B. Jackson Book Prize from the Foundation for Landscape Studies

Winner, American Association for State and Local History Award of Merit



During the 1930s, the state park movement and the National Park Service expanded public access to scenic American places, especially during the era of the New Deal. In some measure, all this activity can be traced to Olmsted Sr.'s Yosemite Report of 1865, which established access to nature as a right of American citizens. However, under severe Jim Crow restrictions in the South, Black Americans were routinely and officially denied entrance to these supposedly shared sites. Pressure on the National Park Service to provide facilities for Black visitors resulted in substandard parks in relation to “white only” areas.

As the NAACP filed federal lawsuits that demanded park integration, southern park agencies reacted with attempts to expand segregated facilities, hoping they could demonstrate that these parks achieved the “separate but equal” standard. But the courts consistently ruled in favor of integration, leading to the end of segregated state parks by the middle of the 1960s. Even though the stories behind these

largely inferior facilities faded from public awareness, the imprint of segregated state park design remains visible throughout the South.

William E. O'Brien's book underscores the profound disparity that persisted for decades in the number, size, and quality of state parks provided for Black visitors in the Jim Crow South—a reminder of the injustices that Frederick Law Olmsted documented in his book *The Cotton Kingdom* a century before. A new preface by the author chronicles recent efforts by several parks to take responsibility for their segregated pasts and to educate contemporary visitors about this history.

“O'Brien's close study of policy, planning, and design processes offers an unparalleled perspective on how architects, landscape architects, and planners, serving at the behest of local and state officials, designed racially exclusive parks, which in turn created segregated state park systems.”

—*Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*

Mission 66

Modernism and the National Park Dilemma

ETHAN CARR

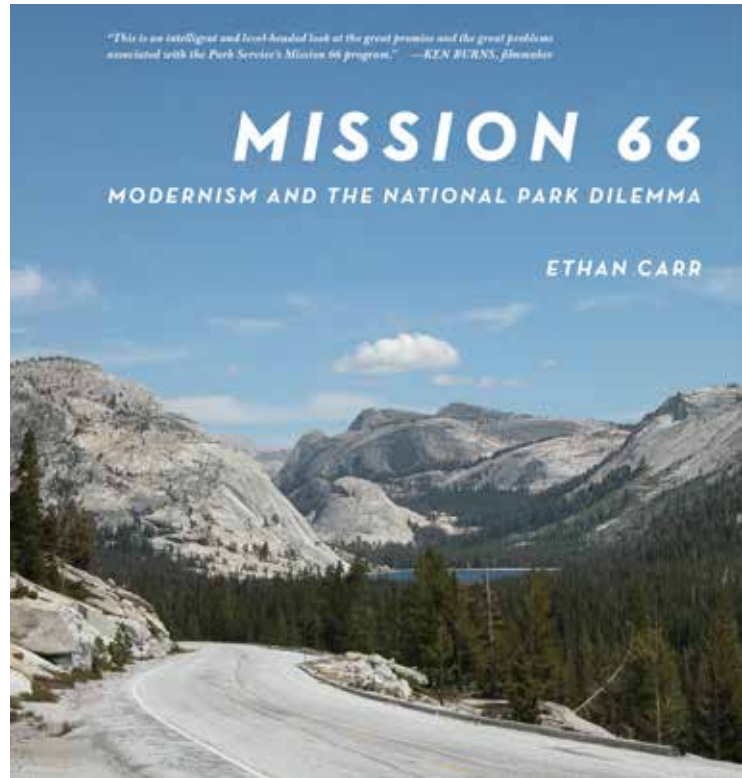
Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-952620-33-1

Winner, J. B. Jackson Book Prize from the Foundation for Landscape Studies

Winner, Elisabeth Blair MacDougall Book Award from the Society of Architectural Historians

A *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title



In the years following World War II, Americans visited the national parks in unprecedented numbers, yet Congress held funding at prewar levels and park conditions steadily declined. To address the problem, in 1956 a ten-year billion-dollar initiative titled “Mission 66” was launched, timed to be completed in 1966, the fiftieth anniversary of the National Park Service. The program covered more than one hundred visitor centers (a building type invented by Mission 66 planners), expanded campgrounds, innumerable public facilities, new roads, parking lots, maintenance buildings, and employee housing. Though the national park idea was the brainchild of Frederick Law Olmsted, the national park system as we know it today is very much a product of the Mission 66 era.

Controversial at the time, the program continues to incite debate over the policies it represented. Hastening the advent of the modern environmental movement, it transformed the Sierra Club from a regional mountaineering club into a national advocacy organi-

zation. But Mission 66 was also the last system-wide, planned development campaign to accommodate increased numbers of automotive tourists. Whatever our judgment of Mission 66, we still use the roads, visitor centers, and other facilities the program built. Environmental and park historians, architectural and landscape historians, and all who care about our national parks will enjoy this copiously illustrated history of a critical period in the development of the national park system.

“This is an intelligent and level-headed look at the great promise and the great problems associated with the Park Service’s Mission 66 program. Embedded in it—and in this fascinating book as well—is the age-old dilemma that has plagued our National Parks since their inception, namely, how to make them accessible to everyone while at the same time saving them from those who too often end up ‘loving them to death.’”

—Ken Burns, filmmaker

Warren H. Manning

Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner

EDITED BY ROBIN KARSON, JANE ROY BROWN, AND SARAH ALLABACK

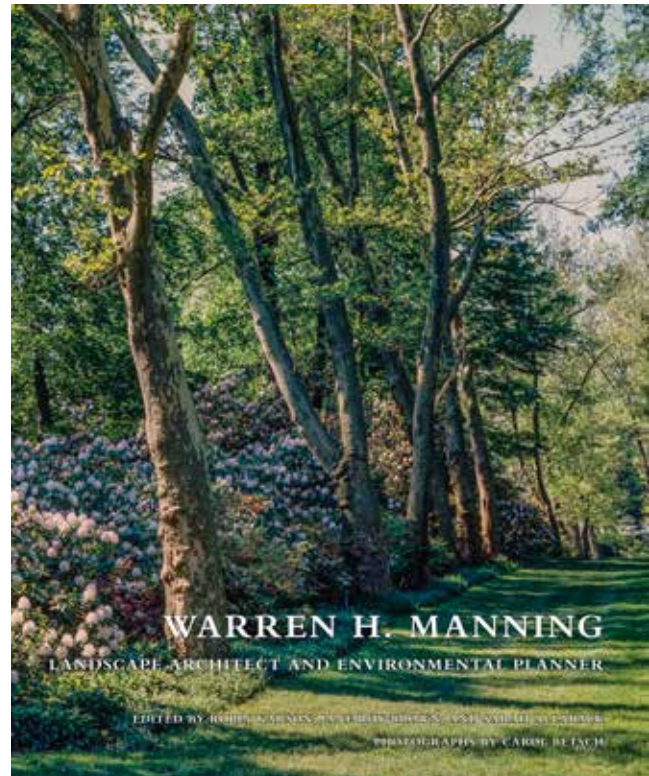
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROL BETSCH

Cloth

ISBN: 978-0-8203-5066-0

Winner, J. B. Jackson Book Prize from the Foundation for Landscape Studies

A *Choice* Outstanding Academic Title



Warren H. Manning's (1860–1938) national practice comprised more than 1,600 landscape design and planning projects throughout North America, from small home grounds to estates, cemeteries, college campuses, parks and park systems, and new industrial towns. Manning approached his design and planning projects from an environmental perspective, conceptualizing projects as components of larger regional (in some cases, national) systems, a method that contrasted sharply with those of his stylistically oriented colleagues. In this regard, as in many others, Manning had been influenced by his years with the Olmsted firm, where the foundations of his resource-based approach to design were forged. Manning's overlay map methods, later adopted by the renowned landscape architect Ian McHarg, provided the basis for computer mapping software in widespread use today.

One of the eleven founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Manning also ran one of the nation's largest offices, where he trained sev-

eral influential designers, including Fletcher Steele, A. D. Taylor, Charles Gillette, and Dan Kiley. After Manning's death, his reputation slipped into obscurity. Contributors to the Warren H. Manning Research Project have worked more than a decade to assess current conditions of his built projects and to compile a richly illustrated compendium of site essays that illuminate the range, scope, and significance of Manning's notable career.

“Manning's importance comes across in his dedication to understanding the environment of particular areas and regions and thinking about broader environmental planning objectives in his projects. . . . [F]uture scholars and historians can immerse themselves in Manning's built work and continue to elucidate various aspects of his career, expanding our understanding of this significant figure for American landscape and planning history.”

—*Landscape Architecture Magazine*

THE OLMSTED FUND

LALH is creating a fund to underwrite publications and films that address the importance of Frederick Law Olmsted's legacy and its potential to make today's urban environments more socially equitable and environmentally sound.

Since its founding in 1992, Library of American Landscape History has been publishing books that delve into the history of landscape architecture in America. In some measure, most of these volumes address the influence of Frederick Law Olmsted and the web of practitioners associated with the firm he founded. In the broadest sense, LALH publications have been a means of instilling and reinforcing understanding of the social and environmental mission of Olmsted's parks.

If this legacy is not understood as vital and relevant to the future sustainability of cities and the well-being of their inhabitants, it will not survive. Without continued and increasingly diverse scholarship that considers and reconsiders our legacy of historic urban parks, it becomes all too easy to dismiss or misunderstand their essential benefits. If we lose sight of Olmsted's intentions in creating these places, we cannot realize their potential to serve the always evolving needs of the people who use them. The Olmsted legacy, then, is much more than a historical interest.

Maintaining and expanding an understanding of this legacy should be one of the primary goals of future Olmsted scholarship—and LALH is the organization to lead the effort. The need is significant. Today's students in landscape architecture are ready to dismiss Olmsted's park-making principles as irrelevant to the challenges of climate change and social inequity they will face in their careers. LALH aspires to be a center for the publication of scholarship that will revive the Olmsted legacy in the most meaningful way possible, through the enlightenment of those who will someday be its stewards, thereby assuring that the future of Olmsted parks is worthy of their past.

Please visit lalh.org to learn more.

COVER: Delaware Park meadow by Andy Olenick

Library of American Landscape History is the leading publisher of books that advance the study and practice of American landscape architecture—from gardens and parks to city plans. LALH books educate the public, motivating stewardship of significant places and the environment, and they inspire new designs that connect people with nature.

PO Box 1323
Amherst, MA 01004

lalh.org

LALH books are distributed by National Book Network
nbnbooks.com

© 2022

