

VIEW



2022

THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

From the Editors

Dear Friends of LALH,

In celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.'s birth, this issue of *VIEW* explores the landscape architect's legacy. Guest edited by Olmsted scholar Ethan Carr, the special issue highlights two new LALH books that offer groundbreaking scholarship and fresh perspectives on Olmsted's contributions to landscape architecture and to American culture generally.

In "Olmsted and Yosemite," the park historians Rolf Diamant and Ethan Carr draw incisive connections among three seemingly disparate events—the Civil War, abolition, and the birth of the national park idea. They make the case that Olmsted's career as a landscape architect was rooted in a profound commitment to the ideals of the post-Civil War republic, in particular his work on municipal and national parks that mitigated social inequality, expanding the rights and benefits of citizens. Refuting the mythical "campfire tales" that credit John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt (and others) with spontaneously imagining America's national park system, the authors convincingly trace the national park idea back to Olmsted's 1865 Yosemite Report.

Next, Ethan Carr delves into Olmsted's profound ideas about the role of urban parks in American culture. In "Boston's Franklin Park," he analyzes the 1885 design of the park as a reflection of Olmsted's most evolved design principles. Gary Hilderbrand, principal at Reed Hilderbrand, the Boston firm creating the new Franklin Park Action Plan, describes the inclusive process guiding the formulation of that plan today.

William O'Brien, author of *Landscapes of Exclusion*, on the publication of the new paperback revisits several southern state parks to see how the first edition of his book, published six years ago, has affected education at these sites. He reports finding park personnel anxious to know more about the painful history of segregation during Jim Crow and to take steps to interpret it for contemporary visitors.

Sarah Allaback profiles the landscape architect Patricia O'Donnell, recipient of the LALH 2022 Preservation Hero award. O'Donnell's unswerving commitment to social justice, inspired in some measure by Olmsted's own, has motivated her vibrant, far-reaching career specializing in preservation practice.

Concluding the issue, Ethan Carr leads a roundtable discussion with Patricia O'Donnell, Dede Petri, National Association of Olmsted Parks president, and Adrian Benepe, former New York City parks commissioner and current president of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The participants discuss the continued significance of Olmsted's public landscapes and whether these designs and the principles underlying them offer solutions for today's environmental and social challenges.

LALH is celebrating its own remarkable anniversary this year—thirty years since our founding in 1992. Exciting new developments at LALH, described in this issue's Anniversary message, portend a robust future. Thank you deeply for the generous support and heartfelt encouragement you have given us along the way. We hope you will join us for the next chapter.



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Front cover: Franklin Park, photograph by Millicent Harvey. Inside back cover: Merced River, Yosemite (detail), 1861, photograph by Carleton Watkins, courtesy Billings Family Archives, The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., Woodstock, VT. Back cover: Black scouting group at Crabtree Creek, 1943, courtesy State Archives of North Carolina.

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Olmsted, Yosemite, and the National Park Idea

ROLF DIAMANT AND ETHAN CARR

Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux began working on their plan for Central Park in 1857 and won the design competition the following year. Both designers explicitly identified the initiative with the ideals of a “new republic.” In fact, Central Park was established—and became popular—against the backdrop of antislavery activism and approaching war: “the big art work of the Republic,” in Vaux’s words. At a time when republican government was assailed by monarchists in Europe and was violently rejected by Southern secessionists in the United States, Central Park demonstrated the ability of a republic to meet the needs of its citizens.

Olmsted had been an influential journalist and antislavery activist for over a decade before collaborating with Vaux (and initiating a new career) at Central Park. During his travels through the South as a reporter for the *New York Times* in the 1850s, he gave Northern readers an unusual firsthand account of Southern society and the brutal system of slavery that underpinned it. Although he was not above expressing racial stereotypes common in the North as well as the South, Olm-

sted devoted almost fifteen years of his life to eradicating slavery and aiding freedpeople in making the difficult transition from bondage to freedom.

In fall 1863, Olmsted took a new job, managing a gold mine in faraway California. Before this he had directed the U.S. Sanitary Commission, the national charitable organization that distributed medical and other aid to Union troops during the war. He was exhausted by his wartime experiences, and managing the mines of the Mariposa Estate offered financial security for his family and new prospects for work in a very different environment. But on his arrival in San Francisco, Olmsted discovered that the mines were already in decline. They would soon prove financially untenable, and his position would end in less than two years. An unexpected opportunity arose, however, which offered far better use of his time while on the West Coast.

In 1862, during the Civil War, Congress had passed the Homestead Act, the Morrill Land Grant Act, and the Transcontinental Railroad Act, initiatives that Southern Democrats had blocked for years. These

Photographs of Yosemite Valley are from a group of thirty mammoth-plate albumen prints by Carleton Watkins, 1861. Courtesy Billings Family Archives, The Woodstock Foundation, Inc., Woodstock, VT.

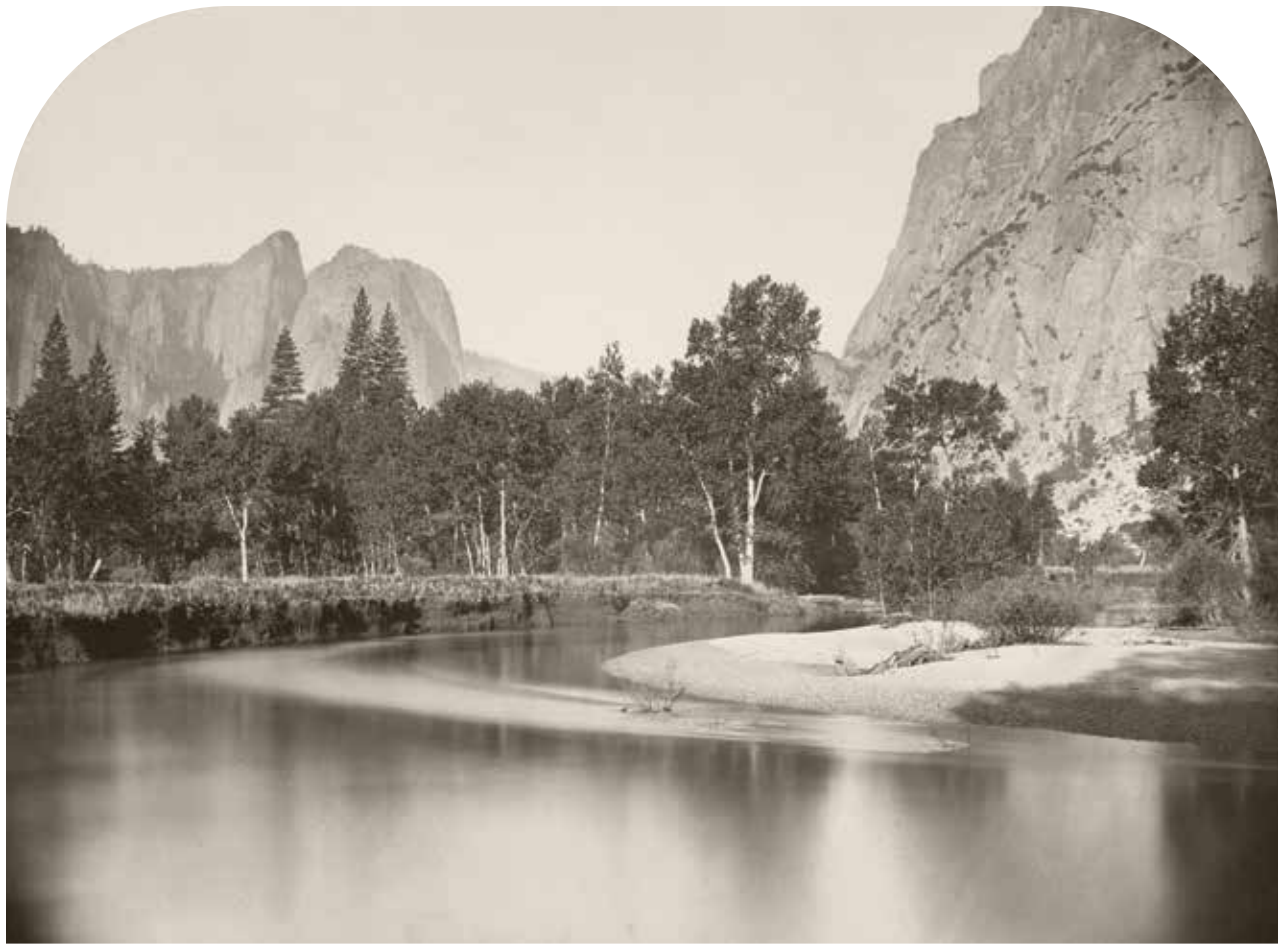
acts, intended to promote “Free-Soil” western settlement, make higher education available to all, and unite the eastern and western regions of the country, were part of the larger effort led by Republicans to remake government and abolish slavery. Before the war, slaveholders and their Democratic allies saw little incentive to invest in public infrastructure, education, or other improvements and were content with a small central government with limited responsibilities. Congress now set about replacing the weak, fatally flawed antebellum status quo that primarily served the interests of those profiting from the perpetuation and expansion of slavery with a new, more activist republic serving a much broader public constituency.

In June 1864, with the Civil War well into its third and bloodiest year, Abraham Lincoln signed an act granting Yosemite Valley—a spectacular granite gorge in the Sierra Nevada, only thirty miles from the foothills of Mariposa—to the State of California for use as a public park, “inalienable for all time.” For the first time,

Congress created a park—effectively the first national park. The action was taken not in spite of the ongoing war but because of it, an expression of an expanded and optimistic vision for government, in this case, one that assured the right of free public access to one of the continent’s most scenic landscapes.

The specific motivations behind the legislation involved various parties and interests, including a steamship company that hoped to profit by carrying tourists to the nearest port at Stockton. But the source of the idea of creating a public park at Yosemite Valley was far less obscure. Since the 1850s, reformers in New York and elsewhere had promoted the creation of public parks as mitigations of dismal environmental conditions and as sources of enhanced public health. Public landscapes such as squares and commons had long existed in American towns and cities, but in 1858, New York opened Central Park, an unprecedented public space, initiating a new era of rapid development and diversification of public park projects.





When Olmsted arrived in California, Yosemite Valley was becoming renowned as a scenic wonder, one that would eventually attract enormous numbers of visitors. He entered the valley for the first time in 1864, when he and his family camped there for three weeks that summer. Olmsted was not directly involved with the Yosemite Grant legislation, although his presence nearby in Mariposa may have helped suggest the idea to the bill's sponsors. Once it was signed, however, California's governor Frederick Low asked Olmsted to head the new state park commission that was established. The Yosemite commissioners were charged with the management of the valley, and under Olmsted's guidance they prepared recommendations for how it should become a park. In 1865, Olmsted laid out his ideas in a 7,500-word document, his Yosemite Report.

Olmsted seized the opportunity to address much more than design suggestions for the new park. He began by placing the project squarely in the context of the still-ongoing war: "It was during one of the darkest hours before Sherman had begun the march upon

Atlanta or Grant his terrible movement through the Wilderness," he wrote, that Congress had realized the value of Yosemite to the nation and "consideration was first given to the danger that such scenes might become private property." He compared the federal grant of Yosemite to other great works of civic art that had continued through the war years, including Central Park and the Capitol dome in Washington.

The most significant assertions Olmsted made in his report evoked the necessity as well as the desirability of public parks. His firm belief in the regenerative powers of nature in undoing a broad spectrum of social harms had guided him since he began his work at Central Park. Given the importance of accessibility to places such as Yosemite in fostering and supporting "public happiness," in the future "the establishment by government of great public grounds for the free enjoyment of the people" would be "justified and enforced as a political duty." Removing obstacles to the pursuit of happiness was "the main duty of government, if it is not the sole duty of government." The United States



should demonstrate to the nations of the world how an enlightened republic should fulfill its duties to its citizens.

Olmsted asserted nothing less than the “fact” that access to scenic landscapes and nature were essential to the well-being and happiness of individuals, and therefore to the future health and success of the republic. It should be remembered, however, that if public parks symbolized a commitment to public well-being, the “public” did not include everyone. The creation of Central Park entailed the displacement of free Black and immigrant communities. And later, the establishment of a park in Yosemite Valley would follow the dispossession of the Miwok, or Ahwahneechee, from their homeland.

Central Park and Yosemite both epitomized the new institution of the public park in the United States, and they both embodied the midcentury Republican ideology of improvement, progress, and union. For a variety of reasons, however, early twentieth-century his-

torians and officials obscured the links between municipal and national parks, and instead promoted a myth about the inventors of a “national park idea.” The most influential origin story was that of a legendary campfire meeting which was supposed to have taken place in Yellowstone during the 1870 Washburn-Doane expedition that explored and documented the region.

According to this tale, a group of scientists, artists, and leading citizens discussed the marvels of Yellowstone around a campfire and spontaneously decided that it should be made a national park. The fact that neither the discussion nor the resolution occurred did not lessen the appeal of the creation myth, whose appeal was untainted by the complexity of politics, the influence of corporations, and the divisive social issues of the Civil War era. The National Park Service adopted the story after 1916, because, as the historian Richard West Sellars observed, “surely the national park concept deserved a ‘virgin birth’—under a night sky in the pristine American West, on a riverbank, and around a campfire.”





In their groundbreaking book, *Olmsted and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea*, Rolf Diamant and Ethan Carr offer a new interpretation of the origins of the American park—urban and national—tracing its roots to Olmsted’s 1865 Yosemite Report. The report is also included, illustrated with period photographs by Carleton Watkins.

By the 1960s the “campfire story” was understood to be a fabrication. As one creation myth lost credibility, however, another arose, again involving a campfire, this one shared by John Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt when they met during Roosevelt’s visit to Yosemite in 1903. Animated talkers both, Muir and Roosevelt likely discussed many things over their fire. But neither man came up with the idea for national parks that evening.

Why then have these narratives persisted for so many years? The image the National Park Service promoted in the twentieth century was one of mountainous Western landscapes and pristine places devoid of Indigenous inhabitants. Owing in part to the beauty of photographs by Carleton Watkins, that imagery became engrained in public consciousness, and the national parks became the exclusive domain of white, middle-class tourists. Historical associations with urban squalor, the nineteenth-century urban parks movement, Central Park, and Frederick Law Olmsted were considered counterproductive and excluded from origin history.

There also was a political desire to distance national parks from any connection with the trauma and controversy of the Civil War and its aftermath. In the early years of the twentieth century, both the reconciliation movement and the “Lost Cause” campaign nostalgically glamorized the “Old South” and the leaders of the Confederacy. Jim Crow legislation and practices reversed hard-fought progress on civil rights that had been made during Reconstruction. This was happening as political momentum was building to establish a national park service. Supporters of that effort, seeking backing from southern congressmen, publicized a creation narrative for the national park idea that was unencumbered by references to the Civil War and the memory of an activist government working on behalf of freedom, equality, and the remaking of the republic.

Early National Park Service leaders were content with the national parks having had a “virgin birth,” so it is not surprising that there was little mention of Olmsted and his 1865 Yosemite Report. He was too closely identified with Central Park when the new national parks were being marketed as a concept born in the West; and, well known for writing books that forcefully condemned the “Old South,” he was too closely identified with antislavery and Union sentiment when the Civil War was being interpreted through the lens of the Lost Cause. Campfire tales, on the other hand, carried no such baggage and served as a comfortable and affirming narrative.

Connecting early national park history to the broader struggle for freedom and equity invites Black communities to see themselves as part of this history, resonating with other serious efforts to advance diversity and inclusion in national parks. Without the Union victory in the Civil War—aided by nearly 180,000 Black soldiers and sailors—legislation for Yosemite, the basis for the national parks that followed, might never have been enacted.

Rolf Diamant is a landscape architect, adjunct associate professor of historic preservation at the University of Vermont, and former superintendent of five national parks. He is coeditor and contributing author of *A Thinking Person’s Guide to America’s National Parks*. He is coauthor, with Ethan Carr, of *Olmsted and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea* (LALH, 2022).

Ethan Carr, FASLA, is professor of landscape architecture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His books published by LALH include *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, *The Greatest Beach: A History of Cape Cod National Seashore*, and, as coauthor, *Olmsted and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea*. His forthcoming book, *Boston’s Franklin Park: Olmsted, Recreation, and the Modern City*, will be released next year.



The Past and Future of Boston's Franklin Park

ETHAN CARR

When Frederick Law Olmsted relocated his family and office from New York to Massachusetts in 1881, he did so while undertaking the most complete and innovative park system he would design. Known much later as Boston's "Emerald Necklace," the connected series of public landscapes pioneered urban planning ideas that today are described as "green infrastructure" and "landscape urbanism." Olmsted had advised Boston's park commissioners since 1875, and he designed his first park for them three years later. But he hesitated to move to the area until 1881. That year the city authorized funding to acquire over five hundred acres of land for what was at first called West Roxbury Park, the largest in the new system. This commitment was the final impetus for Olmsted's move to the area and eventually to the farmhouse in Brookline that served as both family home and professional office. In 1885 the commissioners approved Olmsted's design for West Roxbury Park and also renamed it Franklin Park, in honor of native son Benjamin Franklin.

The Boston commissioners had published their first park system plan in 1876. The chair of the commission, Charles H. Dalton, had been particularly interested in

what Olmsted thought of the chosen location in West Roxbury for the city's "large park." This was an area of about two dozen small farms, orchards, and woodlots, seven miles from downtown Boston. West Roxbury had been an independent town until its annexation in 1873, and what they proposed was more of a suburban reservation than a "central" park. Olmsted had begun his career as a landscape architect almost thirty years earlier by addressing the notoriously unpropitious conditions of Central Park in the center of Manhattan. The Boston park site, however, was scenic and undeveloped: upland pastureland surrounded by higher, wooded ledges of Roxbury puddingstone. In an 1876 letter to Dalton, Olmsted wrote that "the locality seems to possess more advantages for the purpose [of a large park] than any other I have seen near Boston. . . . This is the only ground you propose to take on which it is practicable to form a park properly so called." With Olmsted's affirmation secured, Dalton published the initial park system plan, including the Franklin Park site, just weeks later.

Olmsted's 1885 plan for Franklin Park was delayed until surveyors completed a detailed topographic survey. But the existing site was already attracting thousands of

visitors in 1883, and Olmsted oversaw interim improvements to serve them. He later wrote that “little more than the removal of artificial features” (such as fences, hedges, and outbuildings) had been required “to open the pleasing landscapes” to the early crowds. “Large picnics of school-children” and “games of ball and lawn tennis” were frequent in areas prepared for them. Temporary “shelter houses” were built on high points—the future locations of Schoolmaster, Hagborne, and Scarboro Hills. The temporary wooden pavilions were designed

by Olmsted’s Brookline neighbor and frequent collaborator in the early 1880s, Henry Hobson Richardson. A plant nursery was established in the park, and a nearby house was converted for use as an on-site design office as well as a residence for William L. Fischer, Olmsted’s “assistant landscape gardener.”

Construction on permanent park structures, paths, and drives did not begin until 1887, delayed in this case by a dramatic change in Boston’s municipal government. Hugh O’Brien, who had emigrated from Ireland



View of Franklin Park looking toward Boston, n.d. Courtesy Reed Hilderbrand.



Sheep in Franklin Park, c. 1906. Detroit Publishing Company, Library of Congress.



Tennis courts, Franklin Park, c. 1906. Detroit Publishing Company, Library of Congress.

as a child in the 1830s, was elected mayor in 1884. The first Irish mayor of Boston, he appointed his Democratic supporters to various official positions after taking office the following February. The Republican park board, under Dalton, approved Olmsted's annotated "General Plan of Franklin Park" in April 1885. O'Brien installed a new board in May, however, and they would now decide the fate of the project. The election of an Irish Catholic immigrant mayor caused much trepidation among the city's "Brahmin" class, and Olmsted at first worried that his park plans would be derailed by the kinds of interference he knew all too well from New York. But Boston's new mayor proved to be the savior of Franklin Park.

The Republican-dominated board of aldermen, fearing corruption and perhaps wishing to deny their

opponents the success of a major public work, denied appropriations for construction for most of 1885 and all of 1886. O'Brien pushed ahead nevertheless and submitted a bill to the state legislature to authorize municipal bonds and bypass the appropriations process, allowing construction to begin in 1887. O'Brien also dispelled any concerns over how the money was spent. In January 1889, Olmsted remarked in a speech to the New England Club that neither patronage nor corruption had marred the work on Boston's parks under "the former republican and present democratic administration." Even after the "political revolution" three years earlier, Boston had been well served by disinterested and effective park commissioners. He added that "no other park work [had] come so nearly to be recognized and treated as a work of art" by any park commission in the country.



View from overlook on Hagborne Hill south toward the Blue Hills, n.d. Courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

By the summer of 1889, much of Franklin Park had been completed. The Playstead area, devoted to “school-boy” sports and large gatherings, was officially opened in June. The Country Park section, including the pastoral valley called the Nazingdale and the wooded promontory of the Wilderness, was also largely complete. Construction continued on drives, paths, and bridges, and when Olmsted retired in 1895, most (not all) of the 1885 plan had been implemented.

Olmsted envisioned Franklin Park as a setting for “receptive recreation,” which he defined as leisure activity “pursued socially or by a number of people together” but not as a structured sport or game. It might be “gregarious,” in which people enjoyed the spectacle of “congregated human life,” or “neighborly,” in which smaller groups and individuals gathered “under circumstances . . . favorable to a pleasurable wakefulness of the mind” for almost any “social . . . unexertive form of recreation,” such as family excursions and picnics, lovers’ walks, and children’s play. He felt that an expansive and unadorned “rural” landscape was the ideal setting for such unstruc-

tured, relaxing, friendly socializing. Other parts of the park system—including neighborhood playgrounds, smaller parks, and ballfield complexes—accommodated more “exertive recreation,” such as adult and team sports. They could also display monuments and formal gardens, serve as the settings for museums and libraries, and be located within crowded downtown neighborhoods.

But Franklin Park would be preserved as a passage of rural New England scenery—close to what had been. Improvements would be based on the existing character and features of the site, such as the valley of the Nazingdale, the “hanging woods” around it, and the outcrops of puddingstone that abounded. Paths and drives were engineered to minimize earthmoving and give sequential views of an enhanced version of the site as it had existed, unadorned by gardens, statuary, or obtrusive architecture.

The result deserves to be considered, with Central Park and Prospect Park, as one of the three greatest large parks Olmsted designed. Franklin Park was the last of

the three, and it was the more mature expression of the landscape architect's developing art and intentions. The existing West Roxbury site, and the collaborators and clients for the project, allowed Olmsted to achieve more completely a true pastoral expanse—the “pleasing rural scenery” he sought to preserve and enhance—than was possible in either the New York or Brooklyn parks.

But if Franklin Park can be considered Olmsted's most complete and successful pastoral or rural park, it also raises questions about how the park has been used since it was created, and how it has been adapted to meet the needs of the twentieth- and twenty-first-century city. Olmsted retired before the Greeting section was constructed. The Greeting was intended to be a half mile, elm-lined promenade leading into the park from Blue Hill Avenue. A large restaurant, a concert ground, playgrounds, and zoo exhibits were all to be part of this heavily programmed area, naturally separated from the Country Park by the site's glacial topography. The Greeting was essential because it was planned as the park's principal gathering place, featuring the attractions and activities that would draw people into the park and provide for the more “gregarious” aspects of

receptive recreation. Without it, the park drew fewer visitors than anticipated. The Olmsted firm's involvement mostly ended, and new management policies minimized expenses, shifting exclusively to maintenance and horticultural concerns.

Historians have interpreted the dearth of visitors at the start of the new century as a rejection of the large pastoral park. As organized recreation became increasingly popular, Boston's park policies after 1895 indeed favored playgrounds and ballfields, responding to public demand. An improvised golf course was laid out in the Nazingdale in 1896, and golf has remained popular in Franklin Park ever since. But the modern enthusiasm for more “exertive” recreation never negated the need—or the popularity—of more “receptive” activities in less-developed park landscapes. By the early twentieth century, for example, more Bostonians used trolleys, and later cars, to leave the city altogether and enjoy the new metropolitan “reservations” being created in scenic areas farther from town.

The value and benefit of an expansive and “natural” landscape accessible to all people—the core precept of Olmsted's landscape theory—should not be dis-



Golf links, Franklin Park, c. 1906. Detroit Publishing Company, Library of Congress.



Franklin Park Zoo Greeting, c. 1920s. Courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

missed as a dated or elitist idea. Social science research of the last several decades has confirmed that access to “nature” is in fact a vital factor in promoting physical and emotional well-being, especially in cities. Without the Greeting, however, Franklin Park remained unfinished, and for a period it was not used to a degree commensurate with its position as Boston’s largest park.

A new vision for adapting—really, completing—the park was needed, and after 1910, Mayor John F. “Honey Fitz” Fitzgerald provided it. He had the benefit of a new chair of the park commission, Robert Swain Peabody, who was one of the most prominent architects of the era. Earlier in his career, Peabody had collaborated with Olmsted on many significant projects, and he made the completion of Franklin Park his first priority. To do so, he revived the idea of the Greeting in a new form. The park commission hired a former Olmsted apprentice, Arthur A. Shurcliff, who designed a large new zoo on the proposed footprint of the unbuilt Greeting. The plan organized the buildings and exhibits around the half-mile promenade, thus combining the needs of a modern zoo with the functionality of a major pedestrian entrance and point of congregation for the park. First opened in 1912, the Franklin Park Zoo was unfenced and free to the public, and so served the

planned function of the original Greeting by attracting large crowds into the park. Once entering the zoo, visitors could gather and proceed down the new Greeting to the Playstead and the Country Park beyond. Franklin Park was finally finished. Adapted to the needs of the new century, it enjoyed a heyday of popularity with millions of visitors a year recorded by the 1920s.

Franklin Park did suffer an existential crisis. But the reasons for its quandary had nothing to do with changing trends in public recreation, nor did they result from any conjectured failures of the park’s original design and purpose. During the decades following World War II, the neighborhoods around the park experienced a dramatic demographic shift, often described as “white flight.” With startling rapidity, white residents moved out, usually to more distant suburbs. Black people moved in, along with groups of immigrants from the Caribbean and elsewhere. There were of course many dire implications of this period of urban history. In the case of Franklin Park, an official disinvestment occurred. Once Franklin Park was perceived as a place for Black people, city government no longer considered it worth maintaining, and the condition of the park deteriorated.

Official policies abandoned not only the park but

entire portions of the city. The root cause of the park's dilemma at midcentury was the institutional racism that affected many aspects of urban politics and government policy at the time. It would be up to the people who lived around the park and used it to determine its future.

The 1970s were a turning point, as the communities around Franklin Park organized to do what the city would not. The arts educator Elma Lewis and her students cleared an overgrown area in the Playstead and built a stage, where from 1966 through 1978 concerts and theatrical performances were held every night during the summer, drawing thousands to the park. The tradition was revived in 2003 and continues today as the Elma Lewis Playhouse in the Park. A group of local golfers, organized as the Franklin Park Golf Asso-

ciation, revived their golf course. They later successfully lobbied the city to fully rehabilitate the course and build a new clubhouse.

Lewis and Richard Heath cofounded the Franklin Park Coalition in 1971, and with Heath as executive director, the coalition of neighborhood residents would have a decisive influence on the future of Franklin Park. Local park advocates assembled volunteers to improve the condition of the landscape. They researched its history, published guides and other information, and helped secure the park's designation in 1980 as a Boston Landmark for its significance as a work of landscape architecture. The Franklin Park Coalition has continued to organize community events for the last fifty years, including its annual Kite & Bike Festival in the Playstead, charity runs, and public fit-



Franklin Park golf course. Photograph by Millicent Harvey.

ness initiatives. Through community organization and advocacy—above all, through the use and appreciation of the landscape by the people who lived around it—Franklin Park survived official neglect and continued to be a vital and beneficial part of life for Bostonians.

In recent years, city officials have also awakened to the need to support community initiatives with public spending that addresses, belatedly, the inequity of mid-twentieth-century disinvestment. In 2018 a major new source of public funding was committed to the revitalization of Franklin Park, and consultants were then selected to lead a community-based planning process to guide future management and investment in the landscape. This commitment acknowledges that the continued success of Franklin Park will require significant and sustained public spending.

Since the 1980s, many large urban parks have benefited from the establishment of “conservancies” that have raised many millions of private dollars to fund landscape rehabilitation and management. Modeled

In *Boston’s Franklin Park: Olmsted, Recreation, and the Modern City* (2023), Ethan Carr offers a transformative perspective on what was arguably the most mature expression of Olmsted Sr.’s approach to urban park design, as well as one of his least well understood. An afterword by Gary Hilderbrand describes his firm’s involvement in the Franklin Park Action Plan.

on the first, the Central Park Conservancy, these private nonprofit organizations have been vital partners in an era of rebirth for Olmsted parks in particular. Many of Franklin Park’s peers are in better condition today than they have been for decades. But the conservancy model, as successful as it has been, cannot entirely replace a municipal commitment to public park systems. Not all parks can attract enough private money to sustain them, much less rehabilitate landscapes and fund better management. Franklin Park, seven miles from downtown Boston, is not lined with



Ellicottdale, Franklin Park. Photograph by Millicent Harvey.



Aerial view, Franklin Park. Courtesy Reed Hilderbrand.

expensive residential towers or corporate headquarters and has never been the recipient of the largesse such neighbors can bestow.

In any case, partial privatization through fundraising may not be possible—or desirable—for Franklin Park. Investments in public landscapes tend to raise property values, and so can contribute to the displacement of people in adjacent neighborhoods. For the communities around Franklin Park, who for over fifty years have made the park their own and mobilized to rescue it from official indifference, such an outcome would be unacceptable. The current planning process based in community engagement will be tasked with finding a new model for future management, one that will necessarily require enhanced and sustained public funding.

Planning for the future of Franklin Park offers

an opportunity to develop a new model for the management of large urban parks. The time and the place demand moving beyond the conservancy model, even as nonprofit partnership remains essential to community engagement and park programming. The “action plan” under way for Franklin Park can be as influential as the Central Park Conservancy’s “management and restoration” plan, which began a new era for municipal parks over thirty years ago. Guided by community involvement and facilitated by a historic commitment of public funding, the revival of Franklin Park should be a similarly important beginning. The last of Olmsted’s three greatest urban park designs is poised, in this bicentennial year, to reclaim and amplify its position as one of the masterworks of American landscape architecture.

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and Paul's earlier work at *Avon*, she says, had a better fit. *Longevity*, she says, were her obvious forte in the business underground, and again, "I thought they will share with me *Longevity*, and *La Concrete*, *Transcendence*, to be reminded of *Baron*, *Topophilia*, *Bliss*, other well-known executives and recent past projects.

And now the *Longevity*. "May be a *Transcendence* is little bit out of focus, under a *Longevity* is another of the *Transcendence* projects from the *Transcendence*."

transformational change. In a *Journal of American Studies* article, Lawrence Buell argues that the American novel is a "transformative" genre, one that has the power to change the way we see the world. He argues that the American novel is a "transformative" genre, one that has the power to change the way we see the world. He argues that the American novel is a "transformative" genre, one that has the power to change the way we see the world.

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Commissioners
Benjamin Deane, Patrick Maguire, Alan Forrester, Andrew

First Line (Lasting, Unusual, Memento)
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THE FUTURE IS NEARLY AT HAND

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An Action Plan for Franklin Park

GARY HILDERBRAND

In *Notes on the Plan of Franklin Park and Related Matters*, published in 1886, Frederick Law Olmsted articulated his fundamental belief that the experience of nature, “receptive recreation,” was essential to the well-being of city dwellers. For Olmsted, a public park was a place where all people could go to have that experience.

For Boston’s “large park,” he designed the Country Park section, which, by emphasizing the land’s geological features and extensive vistas, provided an expansive and contemplative experience for park visitors. Acknowledging the need to accommodate “exertive” activities as well, he created the smaller Ante-Park, a place for sports and play and urban promenading. The efficacy of Olmsted’s juxtaposition of receptive and exertive activity (later conceptually flatlined by parks advocates into the far less useful “passive and active” dichotomy) is still clear. Franklin Park is beloved by those who enjoy programmed events and sports, and by those who seek the calm of its long vistas and rugged woodlands.

Particularly during the second half of the twentieth century, however, political and social shifts dramatically altered the way the park was maintained and used.

Today, Franklin Park is on the threshold of significant city investment in its renewal. As we envision what Franklin Park can and should be in the twenty-first century, chronicling these shifts helps us see how it has sustained Olmsted’s vision of public parks as democratic ground—in ways Olmsted anticipated, and in ways he did not.

In 1888, after significant progress on construction, Olmsted advised the Boston park commissioners against granting permits for “open air meetings” in the park. Olmsted felt that large gatherings among “workingmen” or evangelicals or angry mobs were likely to damage the grounds and intrude on the purpose of the park. He reasoned that there were other, more appropriate places for political rallies. How is it, then, that 150 years later, Franklin Park has become an acceptable—even obligatory—site of choice for political demonstrations?

For a hundred years, the City of Boston’s storied identity as a parochial stronghold of powerful white men of Irish and Italian descent held fast. But the city’s mid- and late-twentieth-century demographics tell a different story. Even if the leadership did not visibly reflect it, the reality of everyday life was changing. Since



Franklin Park. Photograph by Millicent Harvey.

the 2000 U.S. Census, Boston has been a majority-minority city, and in 2021 the sudden departure of Mayor Marty Walsh to a cabinet post in Washington resulted in the appointment of a Black female city councilor as acting mayor. In the September primary that year, the city's two-thirds-majority Democrats fielded five candidates of color, with no white contender. In November, Boston elected a Taiwanese American woman in her mid-thirties as mayor, making nationwide headlines in part owing to her remarkable landslide victory: she won 64 percent of the vote and carried 19 of the city's 22 wards.

Mayor Michelle Wu reflects a striking contrast with the past, but the change did not happen overnight. In the neighborhoods, it's been that way for a long time. What does this mean for the city's great legacy of Olmsted parks? Surely today's demands for social and economic justice, locally and nationwide, require a significant change in the way we approach renewal of these landscapes.

During the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in the spring of 2020, Franklin Park surfaced as Boston's natural place of witness—the place to be heard and

seen in mutual anger and grief. People of all ages and identities joined in solidarity with Black Americans in their revulsion of systemic racial injustice. It could only be seen now as a shared cause, and the park became the common ground for collective action. Although Olmsted had initially warned against it, this was indeed his democratic space serving all the people.

Why did these demonstrations occur in Franklin Park and not downtown at City Hall Plaza or on Boston Common? Because systemic injustices toward Black people are more pervasively felt in the communities surrounding the park. Demographic shifts are central to this story. In 1884 the roughly square boundaries of the 518-acre original West Roxbury Park (the park today comprises 485 acres) were carved inside the edges of four distinct rural enclaves—Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and Jamaica Plain. When the park was created, these precincts, newly annexed to Boston, were villages with their own small commercial centers and large tracts of former agricultural land awaiting further development.

As populations surged in the city center, concentrations of immigrants from Northern Europe, Italy,

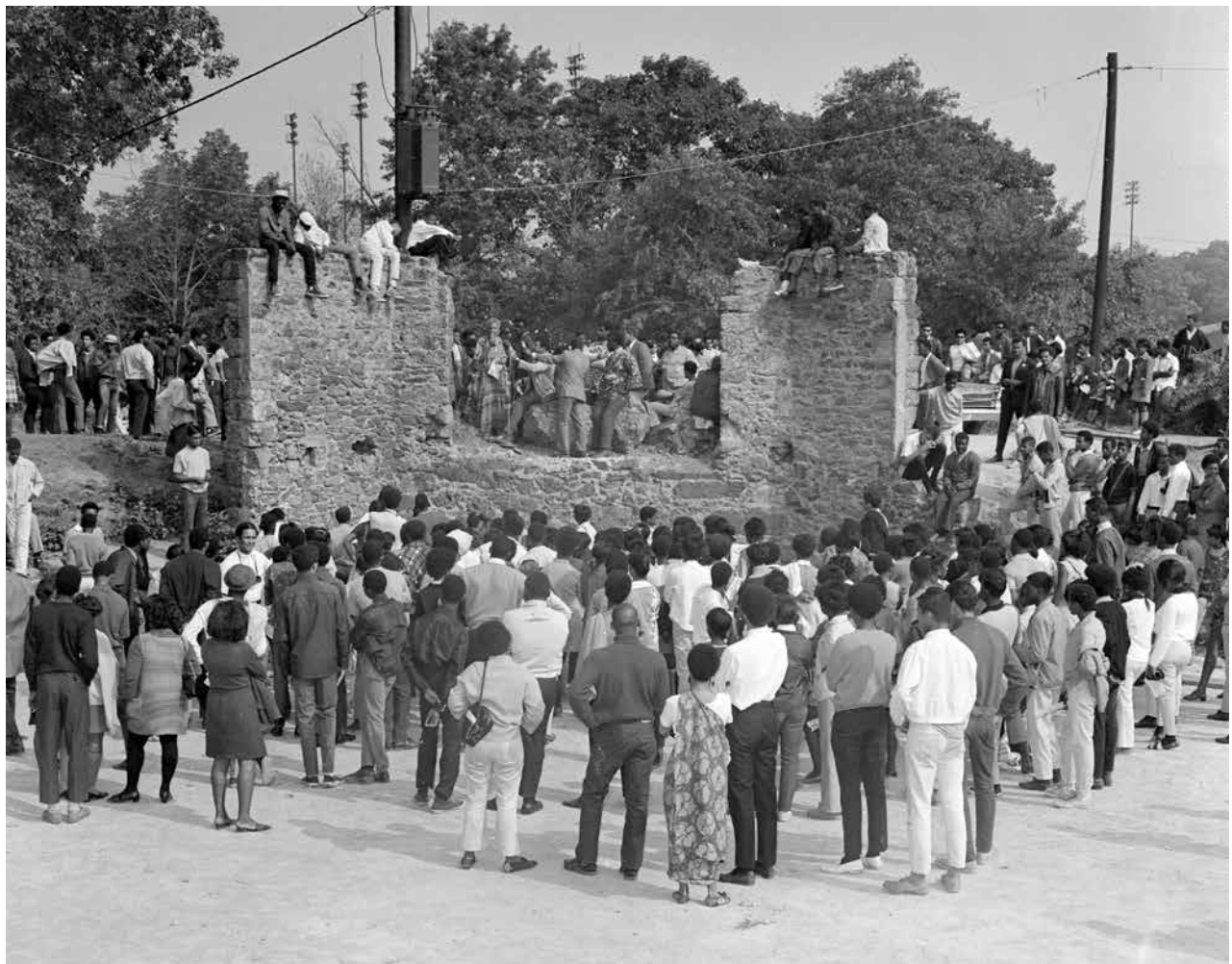
Latvia, and Canada fueled expansion to these farther enclaves, and developers responded by increasing densities with small-lot triple-decker houses and larger apartment buildings. In the early and mid-twentieth century, the upwardly mobile among this population moved in staggering numbers even farther out to suburban towns. Black Americans and Dominican, Cape Verdean, and Haitian populations moved in to the emptying neighborhoods surrounding the park. By the 1960s, Roxbury identified as one of the prominent urban Black communities in the northeastern United States. Institutionalized segregation reigned in Boston.

In Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, persistent economic and social inequity disproportionately affected these neighborhoods, including gradual but ultimately severe disinvestment in city services and city-owned properties. Intergenerational poverty, deteriorating housing stock, discriminatory lending practices, a public school system drained of its original innovative strengths, and

overpolicing have prevailed. Until recently, Boston failed Franklin Park and its adjacent residents.

But even as Franklin Park deteriorated because of lack of maintenance and the impact of commuter traffic, it began to center community life for people of color. In 1966, Elma Lewis, whose parents had emigrated to Roxbury from Barbados (and who, in 1981, was one of the first recipients of a MacArthur Foundation “genius” grant), founded the Playhouse in the Park, offering performances and events aimed at providing cultural programming for Boston’s Black youth. She also founded, two years later, the National Center of Afro-American Artists to support the arts heritage of Black American and African diasporic cultures. (Both programs continue today.) In 1969 the Black Panther Party of Boston convened a rally in Franklin Park’s White Stadium, seeking broader community affiliation and endorsement.

Having no voice at City Hall, neighborhood residents organized against elected leaders who either



Black student rally, Elma Lewis Playhouse, Franklin Park, 1968. Digital Commonwealth.

ignored their constituents' needs and rights or actively eroded any protections they might have. In Roxbury, Mothers for Adequate Welfare repeatedly confronted the administration of Mayor John Collins and effectively forced his retirement in 1967, bringing widespread attention to the city's racial tensions. Elma Lewis helped form the Franklin Park Coalition in 1971, demonstrating the necessity for grassroots action when a city government so utterly fails its citizens. As mayors slashed parks budgets, the coalition organized volunteers and raised funds, eventually authoring cooperative agreements with the city to manage a share of the park's operations themselves. This new reality of the community shaping the park's very existence holds strong today: Franklin Park belongs to its community.

This history makes abundantly clear why any plan to revive Franklin Park must be rooted in the plurality of voices of those who use the park and live near it. If indeed the park centers the life of a Black and multi-ethnic population with diverse needs and aspirations, then a renewal plan must reflect those. What principles, then, should guide the park's renewal?

First, that Franklin Park is a living collection of myriad historical narratives which must remain present and be tangibly expressed—from what we know about pre-colonial practices on the land to the power of com-

munity advocacy today. Second, that the park is a legacy work of great cultural, social, and ecological significance, and that the design intentions of Olmsted's original plan are even more relevant for today's users. Third, that the park and its linked system of public spaces, including the Arnold Arboretum, the Muddy River Improvement, and the Back Bay Fens, were aimed squarely at reforming political, economic, and public health crises—crises that parallel today's challenges. And finally, that the park and the actions we take to rebuild it are integral to Boston's broad-based and coordinated efforts—envisioned in *Imagine Boston 2030*, the first citywide plan in fifty years—to achieve environmental equity, racial justice, public health, and climate responsiveness: policy in action.

Editor's note

The Franklin Park Action Plan is being developed for the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, in close collaboration with the local community, by a team of fifteen consultants led by Reed Hilderbrand, Agency Landscape and Planning, and MASS Design Group.

Gary Hilderbrand, FASLA, is founding principal and partner of Reed Hilderbrand LCC in Cambridge, MA, and the Peter Louis Hornbeck Professor in Practice at Harvard Graduate School of Design.



Youth summer event at Elma Lewis Playhouse in the Park. Courtesy Franklin Park Coalition.



TOP: Kite & Bike Festival on the Playstead. ABOVE: autumn walk through the park. Courtesy Franklin Park Coalition.



Landscapes of Exclusion Revisited

WILLIAM E. O'BRIEN

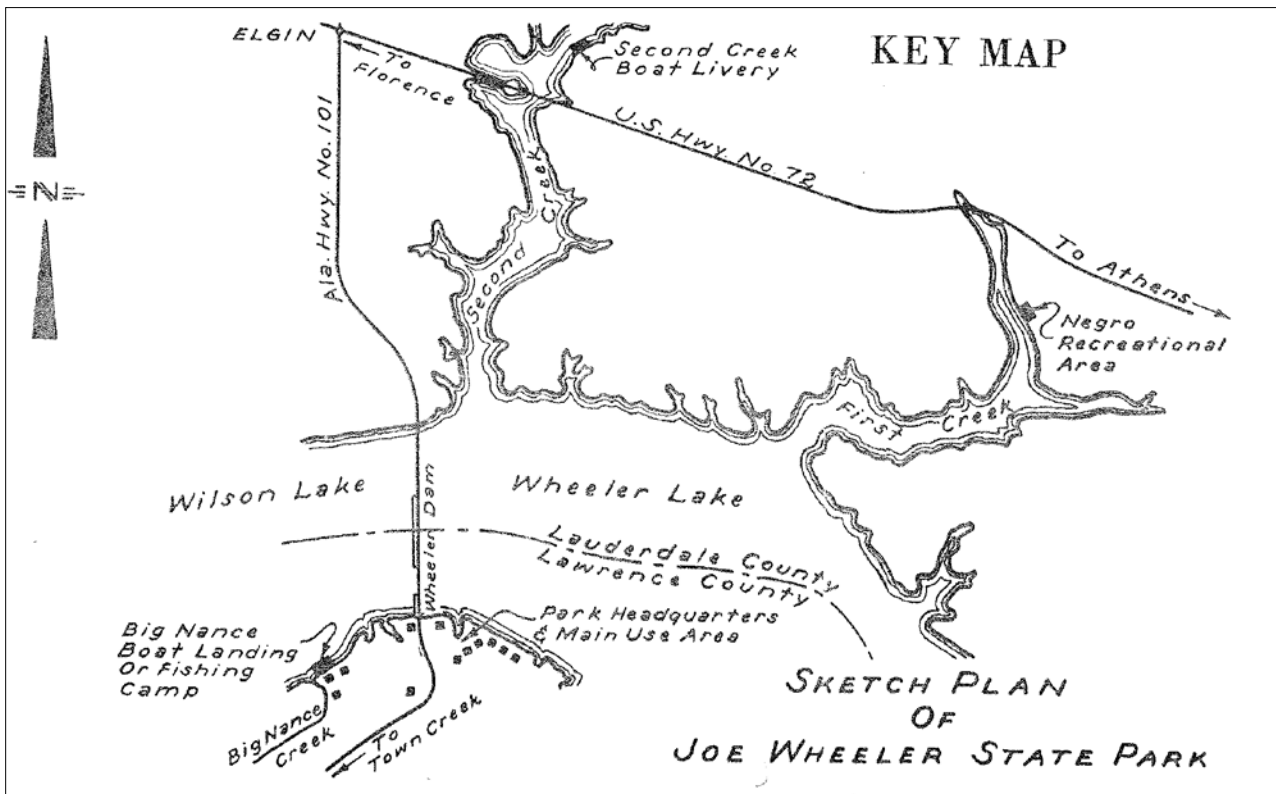
In the concluding chapter of *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South*, I raised the issue of remembrance, asking whether and how the memories of racial segregation might be addressed going forward in these landscapes. Six years later, the publication of a paperback edition has given me the opportunity to reflect on recent trends regarding race and memory and consider to what extent optimism about addressing the past in a more honest and inclusive way remains warranted.

I have been encouraged by the overwhelmingly positive response from employees of state parks and park systems who have seen the book's practical value in their work. It was my sincere hope in helping bring to light the hidden history of the separate and unequal design of southern state parks to inspire such efforts. Indeed, the book emerged as part a broader trend of reconsidering familiar historical narratives, including the "heritage" claims about many southern memorials and monuments and unspoken assumptions about whom parks, particularly scenic reserves, are designed for.

On the other hand, in the years since publication we have also witnessed what is a national truism of race

and racial progress: that steps forward are reliably met with a backlash intended to impede movement. The predictability of reaction, both in and beyond the South, is detailed, for instance, by the historian Carol Anderson in *White Rage*. She recounts how hopes of Reconstruction after the Civil War were dashed by the descent into Jim Crow; how the dreams of more secure lives through the Great Migration out of the South, the largest exodus of American refugees in history, were met with ghettoization in cities of the North and Midwest; and how the success of the civil rights movement that formally overturned Jim Crow was followed by an era of mass incarceration, a widening wealth gap, and white flight to the suburbs, along with a presumption among many white Americans that the problems of race were now "solved." For many, the jarring presidential transition in 2017 pushed hope into despair as America's first Black president was followed by what the author Ta-Nehisi Coates referred to as "the first white president," elected through backlash politics by white majorities of all social classes, male and female alike. The force of this backlash was vividly illustrated later that year by the horror of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville and the

Black campers at Camp Whispering Pines, 1943. State Archives of North Carolina.



TOP: Formerly segregated Black beach, Hunting Island State Park, SC. Photograph by William O'Brien. ABOVE: Map of Joe Wheeler State Park indicating "Negro Recreational Area," park brochure, n.d. Alabama Archives.



Scene of the white mob massacre in Tulsa, 1921. Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division.

presidential pronouncement that its emboldened neo-Nazi participants were “very good people.”

The past two years stood out for what seemed like an acceleration of these trends, both forward and backward. The year 2020 was extraordinary for the nationwide racial reckoning that followed the police and vigilante killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery which symbolized the brutality endured by so many others before and since. The notable and hopeful change amid the Black Lives Matter protests that summer was their highly diverse participation, including large numbers of white Americans, who, in 9 minutes and 29 seconds of video, came to see more clearly and willingly what Black Americans had known and experienced through history. But then, 2020 was followed by 2021, a year that began with an invasion of the Capitol Building by Confederate flag-waving insurgents organized with the help of known white nationalist groups. That event was followed by a nationwide campaign to reverse the momentum of anti-racism awareness and education, which had emphasized refocusing America’s founding narrative on 1619, the year of the first landing of enslaved Africans brought from Angola to North America. Coalescing around an attack

on critical race theory, the backlash has fomented anger about racial “indoctrination” in schools, leading some states and school districts to ban lessons about slavery and race in K–12 classrooms.

In 1967 in his final book, *Where Do We Go from Here? Chaos or Community*, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described white America’s “schizophrenic personality on the question of race.” Since the nation’s founding, it has been caught in a “tragic duality”—at once professing “the great principles of democracy” and practicing “the antithesis of democracy”—which “has produced a strange indecisiveness and ambivalence toward the Negro, causing America to take a step backward simultaneously with every step forward on the question of racial justice.” Many white Americans presume that the ensuing fifty-five years have been a time of significant racial progress, but contemporary events should provoke reflection on our continuing national ambivalence.

I do, however, remain cautiously encouraged despite our collective “strange indecisiveness.” One promising sign is related to trends in public memorialization which acknowledge and attempt to counteract historic racism. But even this trend is contested, as symbolized by the struggle over historical markers dedicated to the



TOP: Black Lives Matter Black Friday demonstration, New York City, 2014. Wikimedia. ABOVE: Rally at Robert E. Lee statue to counter pro-Confederate statue demonstrators, Richmond, 2017. Wikimedia.



LEFT: Marker placed by the Emmett Till Memorial Commission of Tallahatchie County. Photograph by Dr. Pablo Correa, courtesy Emmett Till Interpretive Center. RIGHT: Mass Burial Site marker, West Palm Beach, FL. Wikimedia.



memory of Emmett Till. As the architectural historian Mabel O. Wilson recounts in her review of *Landscapes of Exclusion*, since their installation over a decade ago the memorial markers dedicated to Till have endured theft and vandalism, including gunshots. But in spite of this hateful response, they have been continually repaired and replaced and remain standing. In fact, in 2021 a bullet-riddled marker was put on display in the most prominent location at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, sharing space with the Star-Spangled Banner exhibit. This determined effort to foreground histories of injustice represents a clear trend, and this effort toward recasting America's racial narratives is further illustrated at two cemeteries not far from my home.

In 2017, the City of West Palm Beach removed from Woodlawn Cemetery a Confederate monument, installed in 1941 by the Daughters of the Confederacy at a prominent site near the main gate, visible to all who entered. Like many Confederate monuments and statues, it was erected in this formerly white-only cemetery to impart the "Lost Cause" narrative of the South's defeat in the Civil War, mythologized as a losing but noble effort to defend a cherished way of life. Now well over a hundred Confederate memorials have been taken down nationwide, including, in 2021, one of the most significant, the statue of Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue in Richmond, one of the largest such statues in the nation. This narrative reckoning has extended beyond monuments to renaming buildings and places. One prominent example is Princeton University's removing Woodrow Wilson's name from its famous School of Public and International Affairs.

The other cemetery in West Palm Beach exemplifies the related trend of memorializing neglected stories of racial tragedy and injustice. In the city's north end, its historically segregated Black section, is a mass grave containing the remains of hundreds of bodies which for many decades were unmarked and unrecognized. In 1928 a powerful hurricane struck South Florida, passing through the Lake Okeechobee area and collapsing a weak levee along its southern rim. Floodwaters inundated the Glades communities, killing more than 2,500 people, most of whom were Black farmworkers. White flood victims were buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, but 674 of its Black victims were left in this mass grave and largely forgotten. Through the work of local activists, however, the site was transformed into a memorial park, the Hurricane of 1928 Mass Burial Site, today included in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

The need to acknowledge and redress racial inequities has influenced state parks as well, including those discussed in *Landscapes of Exclusion*. In several southern states, park staff and officials have reached out to express their enthusiasm in supporting such efforts in their own work. In Tennessee, for instance, agency staff have enhanced existing interpretive programs and have pursued Historic Place designations for Booker T. Washington and T.O. Fuller State Parks. In Virginia's Twin Lakes State Park (which includes the former Prince Edward State Park), staff have updated interpretive displays, adding history about segregation at its two lakes and the Black workers of the Civilian Conservation Corps who constructed their dams. In Maryland, staff are uncovering material to aid interpretation

at Sandy Point State Park, which was featured in the federal lawsuit that led to the end of legal public park segregation in 1955.

Texas Parks & Wildlife has installed interpretative signage at Tyler State Park, its sole park designed as a segregated facility in the early 1950s. A marker titled “Road to Equality” has been installed at the head of a hiking trail. It reveals that the trail is a repurposed truck road that had been the segregated entrance to the park’s African American section. Visitors are asked to contemplate the experience of being discriminated against in public facilities that their taxes had funded: “Imagine paying for something and not being able to use it due to the color of your skin.” The marker includes an image and description of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who at the time of the photo was an NAACP attorney involved in a lawsuit about the park. It also includes a remarkable 1950s-era image of the segregated park facilities, displaying the stark contrast between the well-developed white amenities and the meager ones available to Black visitors. The text ends with the positive declaration: “Today, Tyler State Park is proud to invite everyone to enjoy the outdoors.”

Remarkably, the Texas agency has gone even further, adding signage in other parks which recognizes the state system’s racial exclusion policy under Jim Crow. Bastrop and Garner State Parks, which allowed no Black access at all, include interpretive displays pointing out that historical fact. At Bastrop, a sign titled “Path to Justice” declares that today the park “is here for all, but is wasn’t always welcoming to everyone.” Under the heading “No Admittance,” it recalls that under Jim Crow, African Americans “were simply excluded” from all parks in the area.

The trend toward retelling stories of race has also impacted the Florida Park Service. In 2016 the John U. Lloyd State Park, located in Hollywood, was renamed the Dr. Von D. Mizell–Eula Johnson State Park, after the civil rights activists credited with organizing “wade-ins” as acts of civil disobedience aimed at white-only Broward County beaches. Their names and story displace that of a long-time county attorney who resisted desegregation and purportedly worked to enforce Black exclusion from its beaches. Another effort has been catalyzed by the one hundredth anniversary of the Ocoee Election Day Massacre of 1920. Identified as the deadliest election day in American history, the massacre was



Swimming pool, Booker T. Washington State Park, 1950. Tennessee State Library and Archives.



Fort Lauderdale wade-in, 1961. State Library and Archives of Florida.

perpetrated by a white mob in retaliation for the defiant exercise of Black voting rights. An unknown number—estimates are as high as sixty—of Black residents were murdered, including the public lynching of Julius “July” Perry. The Black section of Ocoee was burned to the ground and its residents fled the area, vacating properties that were appropriated by whites. The Florida Park Service has convened a committee to consider renaming opportunities at state parks in the Ocoee vicinity, not far from Orlando. A decision is still pending.

These steps that connect parks, race, and memory are important to making such spaces more relevant to diverse communities. Seeing one’s history acknowledged helps transform scenic parks from exclusionary “white spaces” into more inviting places where all feel recognized and welcome. Those pressing for this change are numerous civic organizations, particularly among Black

Americans, which have emerged to address minority underrepresentation in park visitation. The National Park Service, partly motivated by national demographic trends regarding race and ethnicity (a factor closely tied to contemporary racial backlash), has also been promoting such efforts through media campaigns, research, interpretation, and hiring.

While this forward movement is encouraging, the path forward is not always clear. There is still much work to do in rewriting the racial narratives that have shaped our present. For instance, there remains in Tennessee a state park named for Nathan Bedford Forrest, infamous both as a Confederate general and as the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Despite backlash politics, I can imagine a time in the not-too-distant future when this name, too, will disappear from the landscape, like so many other monuments to the Confederacy. Perhaps the park will be renamed for a state or local leader in the fight for civil rights or in memory of a tragic episode of racial injustice. Time will tell.

In *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (paperback, spring 2022), William O’Brien lays bare the profound disparity in the number, size, and quality of state parks provided for Black citizens under the “separate but equal” standard that characterized Jim Crow laws.

William E. O’Brien is professor of environmental studies at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University. He is author of *Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South* (LALH, 2016, 2022).

Patricia M. O'Donnell

SARAH ALLABACK

In any given week, the landscape architect and urban planner Patricia O'Donnell might be working with team members on community park research, preparing historically grounded plans for a significant civic landscape, and speaking at an international conference on heritage and climate change. Among the most vocal landscape architects of her generation, for more than four decades O'Donnell has made improving the world's chances of fighting its deterioration her career goal. Breaching the traditional boundaries that limit what landscape architects generally can accomplish, O'Donnell has engaged challenging global problems through fervent activism.

O'Donnell was born in Buffalo, New York, into what she describes as a competitive family. Her father was a surgeon, her mother a nurse and a gardener. O'Donnell tended her own garden plot as a child and recalls the leafy green landscape of Delaware Park, as well as the devastating effects of Dutch Elm disease. But she remembers her youth as shaped by attending a rigorous Catholic high school, meeting high academic expectations, and rising early to practice ice skating before classes began. After graduating from high school, she sought a less regimented path, enrolling at the State University College of New York at Buffalo to study fine art.

It was the 1960s and social mores called for relishing freedom. O'Donnell married a fellow student at eighteen, gave birth to a daughter, then left an unstable relationship to support her child. Many years later she recalled motherhood, rather than college, as the “formational factor” in her life. Becoming a parent brought out her inherent drive to succeed. She found a job as one of several coordinators of Lexington Co-op in Buffalo, doling out locally grown food. At the time, she lived in the Elmwood neighborhood, known as the “edgy” side of Delaware Park. Having grown up on the other side, she had a native's understanding of the social dynamics of the park and took pride in this shared space. In 1975 she led a group of volunteers in a two-year project to replant and restore the park's 1904 rose garden, an addition to Olmsted and Vaux's 1870 design. During the late seventies, she directed the Buffalo Youth Conservation Corps summer program, teaching participants about the Olmsted and Vaux park and parkway system, native plants, and the importance of public space.

O'Donnell's interest in public parks led her to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she earned a master's in landscape architecture with a concentration in applied behavioral research and a master's in urban planning, emphasizing historic preservation—

courses of study she shaped herself. Her skills were put to good use as a research associate for the university's Housing Research and Development Program, and as a consultant for the Houghton Park User Survey sponsored by the City of Buffalo. Here she learned about the spatial conception of private and public realms, how sequencing space from shared to increasingly more personal, separate areas increased the user's sense of ownership, and the importance of the perception of safety, managing landscapes to provide open views.

For a summer consultation, O'Donnell took on a survey of Buffalo's 1,700-acre Olmsted Park and Parkway System. Research led her to the Olmsted Associates office, where she was given free rein to explore the firm's archives. On one unforgettable day, she discovered sheets of notes, recognized Olmsted Sr.'s hand, and realized she was looking at cut-and-fill calculations for the unbuilt lakeshore boating canals and landforms of South Park. Among the treasure trove, she came upon an exquisite watercolor of the Olmsted and Vaux proposal for that park and identified a Vaux sketch of Front Park, overlooking Lake Erie. That experience left a lasting impression about the importance of primary source research—and the loss of the watercolor (and Olmsted's

death mask) when the artifacts were transferred to the Fairsted archives served as a reminder of the fragility of the historical record.

When she was a graduate student, O'Donnell became a founding member of the National Association of Olmsted Parks, dedicating herself to career-long "professional volunteer work." In the early eighties, when the concept of a cultural landscape was still being defined, she set about shaping the field that became her life's work, heading the ASLA's Historic Preservation Committee. She was hired as an associate by Anthony Walmsley, and appointed project manager on the firm's historic landscape reports for the Ravine, Lake, and Perimeter of Prospect Park. While at Walmsley, she also served as a project manager on the Emerald Necklace Master Plan.

Guiding the Prospect Park and Emerald Necklace projects gave O'Donnell insight into dealing with clients' multiple voices—from state to local officials, citizen advocacy groups, and the general public—and a sense of the "carefully articulated steps" necessary to manage a comprehensive preservation plan. A 1987 article for *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, "A Process for Parks," expressed her sense that collaboration was



Patricia O'Donnell at Shelburne Farms with Lake Champlain in the background. Photograph by Hitesh Metha.



Niagara Falls Riverway, Niagara Falls, NY. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes LLC.

a critical component in managing these projects. It was her call to action to bring diverse disciplines, audiences, and perspectives to the table when analyzing places of shared value. Such collective voices, she believes, provide the community necessary to restore our inherited public landscapes. Through shared understanding, mutual respect, and collaboration, common heritage agendas can be advanced.

In the mid-eighties there were mounting efforts to further recognize Frederick Law Olmsted and his legacy. An informal public-private group, including O'Donnell, Charles Beveridge, and Jerry Rogers, head of the National Park Service's Cultural Resources Department, resurrected the concept of HALS, the Historic American Landscape Survey, and launched the field of landscape heritage by developing NPS guidelines, sample National Register nominations, professional standards for fieldwork, and, ultimately, a cultural landscapes program. Although HALS was not officially implemented until 2000, O'Donnell's office advanced its principles with a growing tribe of historic landscape peers.

In 1987, with a landscape architecture license newly in hand, O'Donnell founded Heritage Landscapes LLC, Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners, at the time the only firm dedicated solely to the preservation and revitalization of historic landscapes. O'Donnell was already thinking of places holistically, beyond static "historic designed landscapes," as functional, communal spaces with the potential of bringing people of all economic and social backgrounds together. Her firm developed a comprehensive approach to analyzing historic landscape character, integrity, and significance that would integrate the cultural experiences of a diverse public.

The firm's first project was a historic landscape master plan report for Andrew Jackson Downing Memorial Park in Newburgh, New York. Working with David Schuyler, O'Donnell gained background in American landscape gardening antecedents, Downing's role as a national tastemaker, and his partnership with Calvert Vaux, who then went on to join forces with Olmsted on Central and Prospect Parks. This early report laid the foundation for a lifetime of work on more than fifty Olmsted-firm projects.



TOP: National Mall, Washington, DC. ABOVE: Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, VT. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes LLC.

Heritage Landscapes published the first National Park Service cultural landscape report for the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. By instituting the use of “Landscape Character Areas,” experimenting with tree dating to reveal historical timelines, and engaging deeply in primary source archival research, the report set a high standard that established Heritage Landscapes as a leader in the field. Only eight years after launching her firm, O'Donnell was elected an ASLA Fellow.

In a desire to contribute on a global level, in 1998, O'Donnell participated in a US/ICOMOS workshop in Ghana, which in contrast to the typical conference and tours, challenged members to work on an actual community project with dedicated, diverse local participants. This experience of effectively collaborating with locals, tribal chiefs, government officers, and public organizations to solve problems and build consensus initiated O'Donnell's four decades of international work contributing to projects in Cuba, Puerto Rico, India, Bhutan, and the Philippines.

A turning point in O'Donnell's global work came in 2005, when she was invited by the International Federation of Landscape Architects to serve as a delegate to

the UNESCO Culture Sector International Conference “World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape” in Vienna. The meeting focused on issues of development in historic cities, and at a moment when the floor was open, O'Donnell took the opportunity to insert landscape into the conversation. Noting that landscape comprised more than 50 percent of the urban areas of Washington, DC, and Vienna, she outlined the characteristic features of an urban landscape and the tools necessary to proceed in the dialogue. Her remarks became integral to further discussions, which resulted in the “Vienna Memorandum.” Over the next six years she participated in international gatherings that catalyzed the passage of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) in 2011. Francesco Bandarin, then Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Culture, named O'Donnell one of the “mothers of HUL.”

A review of O'Donnell's work reads like a list of America's most revered historic places. Heritage Landscapes has received ninety-eight awards for contributions to a wide range of projects, among them the revitalization of park systems in Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Rochester,



Longue Vue House & Gardens, New Orleans. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes LLC.



Oldfields, Indianapolis, IN. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes LLC.

and Louisville and team commissions for the US Capitol Grounds and the National Mall, Dumbarton Oaks and Tudor Place in Georgetown, The Alamo, and the Virginia Capitol and Capitol Square in Richmond.

In 2019 the ASLA honored Heritage Landscapes with its Landscape Architecture Firm Award, and in 2021, O'Donnell became the first landscape architect to receive the Louise du Pont Crowninshield Award, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's highest honor for lifetime achievement. Collaboration remains paramount, however. For O'Donnell, it's the team effort to "make the landscape heard" that furthers the mission. As founder of Heritage Landscapes, she has trained and mentored a generation of preservation landscape architects to advance the challenging work.

Over the last decade, as climate change and global awareness of the environment have heightened, O'Donnell has increased her efforts to collaborate on international heritage preservation and management. In a presentation at the Summit on Landscape Architecture and the Future held by the Landscape Architecture Foundation in 2016, she spoke to the LAF's "New Landscape Declaration," challenging her peers to join together to achieve the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development

Goals of its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Efforts toward "culture-based sustainable development," she explains, must take economic and social, as well as environmental, factors into consideration. Heritage is marginalized when landscape architects narrow their engagement to form and aesthetics. It is essential that practitioners find ways of collaborating across disciplines and with all stakeholders. For those who might still associate historic preservation with living in the past, O'Donnell gives the work new meaning—as an environmental, social, and economic asset contributing to global well-being.

Note: A telephone interview by the author and an oral history interview by Cari Goetcheus, transcribed by Erika Schroeder (Cultural Landscape Leaders Project, NPS, National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, 2015), were principal sources for this article.

Sarah Allaback is senior manuscript editor at LALH. She is author of *The First American Women Architects* and coeditor of *Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner*. Her forthcoming book, *Marjorie Sewell Cautley, Landscape Architect for the Motor Age*, will be released this fall.



ROUNDTABLE

Olmsted Landscapes Now

ADRIAN BENEPE, PATRICIA O'DONNELL,

AND DEDE PETRI

MODERATOR: ETHAN CARR

Ethan Carr: *Society faces challenges today that seem far from the concerns of nineteenth-century urban reformers. Climate change, structural racism, and environmental justice all command the attention of those seeking to make cities more socially and environmentally sustainable. Do the public landscapes that Frederick Law Olmsted designed still have any significant role in solutions for environmental and societal conditions he could not have foreseen?*

Dede Petri: To tackle today's challenges, we can certainly be guided by Frederick Law Olmsted. In the late nineteenth century, America faced conditions eerily similar to those we face today—pandemics, crowded living conditions, environmental degradation, and a deeply divided country. Olmsted got it: The environments in which we live, learn, work, and play significantly impact our well-being. Olmsted saw the connection between public health and a thoughtfully built environment. That is something we need to keep relearning.

Parks are not luxuries. They are not empty space. They are critical to mental and physical well-being, something that modern medical research, and the pandemic, have confirmed. Olmsted's parks were conceived

of as democratic landscapes, designed to provide access to beneficial fresh air, recreational opportunities, and encounters with nature for all citizens of crowded industrial cities. They continue to serve that function today.

When Leland Stanford asked Olmsted to design the campus of his new university in Palo Alto, Olmsted balked at his desire to re-create an eastern landscape: "The absurdity of seeking for good pastoral beauty in the far west is more & more manifest." So in terms of environmental issues, too, we can follow Olmsted's lead. That means using plant materials that thrive and require less upkeep, promoting natural features, and working with the ecology of the site. Think of Boston. Faced with raw sewage and fetid swamps, Olmsted effectively constructed a wetland, now known as the Back Bay Fens, using green infrastructure to address major sanitation and flooding issues. It's not just serendipity that in the face of Hurricane Ida this area responded so well.

Adrian Benepe: It is true that some people working in urban design and planning, or in parks and recreation, question the utility of Olmsted's landscapes in the twenty-first century. But when we look at issues of racism and

environmental needs with twenty-first-century eyes, we see problems that, as Dede said, are not vastly different from those confronting Americans in the nineteenth century. Racism was deeply engrained in a society still dependent on slave labor in the South, and poor immigrants and free Black people lived in squalid conditions in New York and other cities. The New York Draft Riots of 1863 underscored the all-encompassing forces of structural racism, and life expectancy was very short for poor people beset by epidemics that swept through cities. Olmsted's parks were intended to provide the restorative powers of nature to people from "all walks of life," including working people—although providing these resources for Black people was never considered.

We have learned in restoring Central, Prospect, and Riverside Parks, as well as the innovative, multimodal parkways of Brooklyn, that these landscapes are just as vital today as they were in the nineteenth century. In particular, the open meadows and greenswards can serve

multiple purposes, from sports, to large events, family gatherings, and picnics. The trees and other plants and water bodies play important roles providing nature-based solutions to the impacts of climate change. Central and Prospect Parks can be as much as 30 degrees cooler on hot days than surrounding treeless streets. Trees and plants absorb CO₂, converting it to oxygen, and storm-water runoff can be captured, held, and treated in water bodies. The parkways, with restored and protected bike and pedestrian paths, are crucial elements in a multimodal transit system.

But for these historic landscapes to be fully embraced and relevant today, some reconsiderations are in order. One important environmental issue to be addressed, for example, is the waste of drinking water which occurs in the design of Olmsted's water features. Also, and this is critical today, we cannot accept as a given that all people feel comfortable in these landscapes. We must make them welcoming, through flexible use and a variety of



Schoolmaster Hill, Franklin Park. Photograph by Millicent Harvey.

programming, with purposeful community outreach and hiring so that the workforce leading and managing these parks reflects the diversity of those who use—or should be using—them.

Patricia O'Donnell: This complex question raises some important issues. First, the definition of sustainability reflects a balance among social, environmental, *and* economic factors to be achieved. The Olmsted parks and parkway systems have had sustainable development impacts on all three fronts—society, the environment, and the economy—and have influenced non-Olmsted-legacy cities as well.

Based in democratic ideals, the Olmsted legacy of public open spaces shared by all begins in 1856 with Central Park and continues through the work of the firm to the death of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. in 1957. As Adrian noted, we cannot ignore that while these parks were created from a desire to improve urban life, they are not flawless in this regard—in some cities the firm designed separate segregated parks, reinforcing inequalities.

From a contemporary viewpoint, the Olmsted legacy of public parks continues to have a significant role in urban quality of life. Cities are using historic parks as building blocks to improve connectivity in transportation systems, to upgrade water management, and to enhance soils, plants, and habitat as elements of new blue-green infrastructure. Parks foster positive social, environmental, and economic interchanges, but it is critical to recognize that today we must give extended focus to enhancing inclusion and fostering justice.

EC: To say that the legacy of Olmsted's public landscapes is a "living" one implies that his parks continue to change over time and adapt to new demands and purposes. What level and type of change in Olmsted's landscapes would you describe as successful and appropriate?

AB: This is a very rich topic, as there have been so many changes in Olmsted landscapes, and so many changes in the use of those landscapes even when the landscapes themselves were not heavily altered. In Central and Prospect Parks, for example, park drives, originally intended for recreational use by horse-drawn carriages, were transformed into automobile thoroughfares to become part of the street traffic grid. By the 1960s, the once-bucolic soft-surface carriage drives had been con-

verted to three-lane expressways, forcing park visitors to cross with traffic lights or run across to avoid being hit. The drives were also not engineered for vehicles traveling up to sixty mph, and the result was many serious accidents with fatal injuries and major damage done to the park landscapes and infrastructure. (I remember a car engine lying for years in the Pool in Central Park after a speeding vehicle had plunged off a stone bridge and into the waterfall below.)

Fortunately, citizen advocates and activists began fighting and staging protests in 1966 for the occasional dedication of the park drives to bicyclists. Swiftly, then-mayor Lindsay began closing Central and Prospect Park drives on Sundays in the summer so they could be used by cyclists and by an entirely new species of recreational user—the jogger. Over the next fifty years, various park commissioners and mayors gradually added more car-free hours, until in 2018 the city and Central Park Conservancy proudly celebrated “the last private car in Central Park” as the drives were closed completely to private vehicles, and a similar victory was achieved in Prospect Park.

Another major change in the Olmsted landscape was the transformation in the 1920s and 1930s of greenswards into dedicated sports fields, with infields and backstops and in some cases grandstands for spectators. Other areas, such as the Sheep Meadow in Central Park, were used as major event spaces and for informal sports, and they were rarely if ever maintained, restored, or protected. The result by the 1970s was that all the lawns, whether designated for sports or not, had been reduced to bare dirt strewn with rocks and broken glass.

One of the very first restoration projects of the newly created Central Park Conservancy was the resodding of the Sheep Meadow, along with a new policy that it would be the city's first “passive use only” lawn—sixteen acres of pristine grass with no sports, no events, no dogs, and eventually no amplified music. I was assigned as a park ranger to explain to hard-bitten New York weekend athletes why they could no longer play sports on this lawn, so that there would be one beautiful, soft, litter-free carpet of grass where babies could learn to crawl, children could play, and adults could lie out in the sun. Eventually, all the lawns that had dedicated sports fields on them in both Central and Prospect Parks were restored, but this time with maintenance regimens and closures over the winter and during inclement weather to protect them. Most important, there was an under-



Franklin Park. Photograph by Millicent Harvey.

standing that if they were not being used by permitted sports teams, they could be used for passive activities—which accommodated many hundreds more users than if they were always being used for sports. In effect, the all-purpose greenswards of Olmsted & Vaux’s original conception had been reinvented.

A final major change in the Olmsted landscape in many parks was the installation of refrigerated skating rinks. Two rinks were added to Central Park in the 1950s and 1960s, and a third was added to Prospect Park. Built on the verge of or directly in carefully designed Olmstedian water bodies—where ice skating first became popular—these three concrete edifices not only destroyed naturalized habitats but also interfered with water flow, and though they only served users for a few months a year, they were hulking eyesores in formerly bucolic areas.

When Wollman Rink at Central Park’s south end was restored in the 1970s, they never implemented a plan to have the rink flood in from the rest of the pond during the summer. So it still has one season of use and

is a four-season eyesore. Fortunately, the rink in Prospect Park was completely redesigned under the leadership of the Prospect Park Alliance, with four-season use and a beautifully restored lake edge. Central Park’s huge old Lasker Rink and Pool, which was built on the shore of the Harlem Meer, blocking the flow of a stream, will be demolished this year and replaced by a somewhat smaller facility nestled into the side of the hill, restoring the stream area that flows into the Meer.

The lesson of all this, I suppose, is that while an Olmsted park landscape can evolve over the years, making dramatic changes to the landscape in the service of single-purpose recreation facilities rarely results in a better, more beautiful, more functional park. However, careful reconsideration of existing Olmsted landscapes can result in maintaining the aesthetic function while allowing new or different uses.

PO’D: We recognize that landscapes mature, improve, or degrade over time, as there is no static state. The

Olmsted firm knew how to envision maturation in their design process to gain a complete landscape effect. In our work with Olmsted public landscapes, we begin by understanding that design intent and vision for maturation, establishing a baseline to measure interventions. Proceeding from there, we collaborate with stewards and communities to reinforce historic landscape character while addressing current needs. For example, a topic of continual interest is accessibility. Universal access reinforces welcome for everyone. Where destinations or routes in parks are partially inaccessible, intervention to provide equivalent experience for people of all abilities can be well designed and integrated into the landscape.

There are Olmsted park landscapes that fail to provide perceived security. Grades, plantings, and structures can combine to isolate park users from views, creating fear or simply lack of comfort in a visually enclosed space, counteracting the desired effect of mental and

emotional respite through immersion in nature. In specific parks we have dropped the overall height of plantings, by substituting lower plant selections, to broaden views, improving perceived security without dramatic changes to the designed character of those plantings.

Another important Olmsted design failure was the use of new hardy plants that have over time become invasive species. Once again, the intervention to remove invasives relies on understanding character, of overall scenic passages and of individual plants. Substitutions are made based on plant character and related factors of maintainability and habitat benefit. We have even used sedges instead of lawn to create a green, low ground plane while improving habitat and perhaps even replicating historic rough-mown appearance.

Parks are generally biodiverse, and that diversity and habitat value can be enhanced, within the original design vocabulary, by area character. Biocultural diver-



Sheep Meadow, Central Park. Photograph by Sara Cedar Miller / Central Park Conservancy.



Willow Cove, Central Park. Photograph by Sara Cedar Miller / Central Park Conservancy.

sity—diversity of all life forms, humanity included—is an objective to focus on for urban parks going forward. In hundreds of parks the Olmsted firm provided the basis for the biocultural diversity and climate action that we need to uplift and reinforce going forward.

DP: As Patricia said, we know that landscapes are dynamic and that change is inherent in the natural world. There is no question that Olmsted landscapes have to adapt to evolving cultural and environmental needs. Respect for these historic spaces cannot mean some procrustean notion of preservation. *And yet*—and that is an emphatic *and yet*—that does not mean anything goes.

As we look to the future of Olmsted landscapes, sensitive change and adaptation are going to be the central questions for all of us. To survive and thrive, our Olmsted parks must respond to the needs of the neighborhoods that adjoin them—communities that are often quite different demographically from when the parks were built. Without community ownership,

these parks will fail. So, how do we renew, sustain, and advance these places without pickling them? How do we determine appropriate change, where the answers are place-based and evolutionary, not adversarial?

For starters, maintaining the ecological health of Olmsted parks is critical. Thoughtful managers are going to need to experiment with noninvasive plant material that will ensure the health of these places and require less maintenance at a time when the resources simply aren't there for immense grounds crews. At Yerkes Observatory, an Olmsted Brothers–designed landscape in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, for example, they are experimenting with supplanting vast expenses of turf with prairies. The Plainfield, New Jersey, Garden Club is working on a plant palette for the Olmsted firm's Shakespeare Garden which is beautiful in all seasons but does not require labor-intensive maintenance.

In other places, change is actually restoring the Olmsted vision. Campus planners at Stanford are going back to the original Olmsted plans to find more thoughtful circulation patterns lost over time. At Prospect Park,

as Adrian mentioned, designers of the new Lakeside ice skating facility sited the building on an existing parking lot, seizing the opportunity to restore parts of the original lake lost to development.

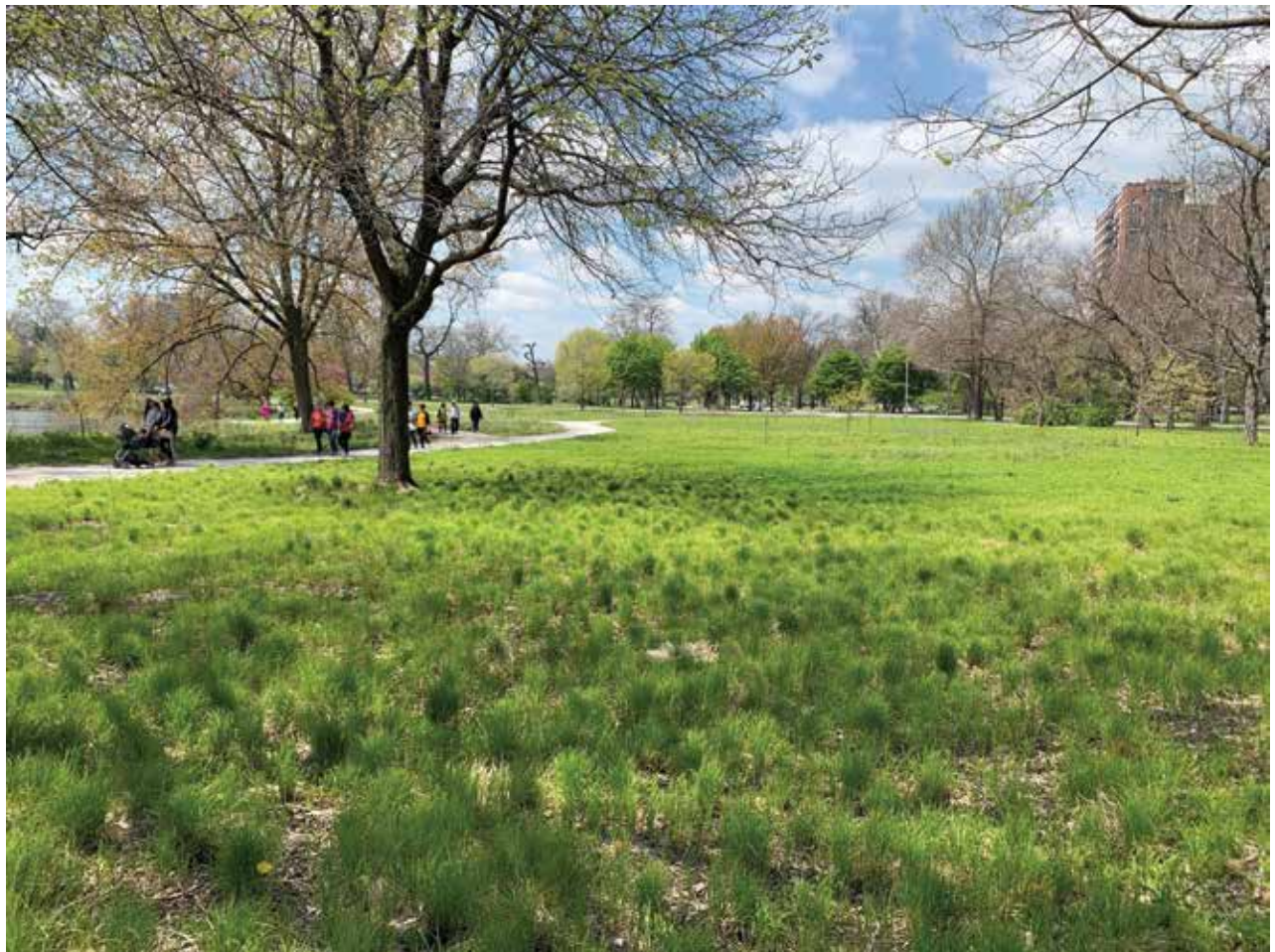
By contrast, when change entails the proliferation of structures and more and more areas of a park are given over to private, single, or restricted uses—as has happened in Chicago’s Jackson Park with the Obama Presidential Center—then you lose the open, restorative, and democratic aspects of the Olmsted design. One of the great challenges going forward is educating city leaders and communities about the principles behind these parks to ensure that those fundamental values are not lost.

These efforts are happening in Boston around revitalizing Franklin Park, as Ethan and Gary Hildebrand write about in this issue. In Atlanta a program called Future Places aims to be sensitive to historic assets while responding to changing demands. Another current effort, through a partnership of the Seattle Friends

of Olmsted Parks and the city’s Parks and Recreation department, is the creation of the Olmsted Legacy Task Force, whose recommendations “explore and develop strategies that enhance and preserve the Olmsted parks system through core principles based on equity, access and inclusion.”

EC: Do you consider Olmsted’s ideas and designed landscapes to be relevant precedents or potential influences on landscape architects today? How much attention should design students today invest in the study of nineteenth-century park designs, considering the conditions under which they will practice in the future?

PO’D: We need to bear in mind that the Olmstedian approach to parks and civic landscapes varied, based on the site and the project objectives. For example, the Olmsted Sr. design at the U.S. Capitol sought to create balance and grace on a tight property. There he and his team designed the formal marble terraces on the west



Sedge planting, Jackson Park, Chicago. Courtesy Heritage Landscapes LLC.

facade to support the expanded Capitol with its two new wings and to integrate them with a symmetrical, sloping landscape. In contrast, the design of small neighborhood parks was often quite simple—walks for access and a perimeter planted with trees. The point is that there is not one Olmsted design; there are harmonies across varied Olmsted landscapes which can be instructive.

As a group, the nineteenth-century urban parks offer a multiplicity of lessons: about history, about society, about biodiversity, about adaptation to climate change, about diversity and inclusion, and more. Unfortunately, most university programs are not likely to dig deep into this topic. But actual projects can provide opportunities for learning. In our office, we always begin with documentation and gaining a historical understanding of a park, then proceed to itemize the project needs and objectives that include welcome and inclusion, access, landscape resilience, habitat, urban cooling, maintainability, diverse recreation, and more.

DP: The principles that defined thoughtful design for Olmsted absolutely continue to have relevance and should instruct us today. Olmsted’s number one principle—respect for the land, preserving the natural topography as much as possible—should be a paramount component of all landscape design. In public spaces, there should be a separation of functions: for a place to provide a recuperative experience, the “unbending” of stress caused by urban life, Olmsted believed its design

must eliminate distractions and dangers—demands on the conscious mind. We all know places where bicycles are threatening walkers and automobiles are threatening both. Olmsted got it right by providing separate pathways for carriage, horse, and pedestrian. As we approach Olmsted 200, it is heartening to see that Boston is revitalizing the Arborway, as Olmsted intended, by reinstating separate transportation ways lost over time.

Olmsted didn’t use terms like “sustainable design” and “environmental conservation,” but he surely applied the principles. He believed that thoughtful design should allow for the perpetuation of the design intent over the long term—maturation, as Patricia said. Plant materials should be selected with care, to thrive without labor- and resource-intensive maintenance—and today, to be noninvasive. The design should conserve the site’s natural features and provide for its continued ecological health.

Privatization of park space—creation of programs that are accessible only at a fee—will fundamentally undermine the important democratic values that were a bedrock principle of Olmsted’s design. In the same regard, too much programming in too many places creates competition between uses, impinging on accessibility and restorative value. Access and equity were central Olmsted values. They should remain touchpoints for landscape architecture in the future.

Think at the scale of problem. This is a phrase



LeFrak Center at Lakeside, Prospect Park. Photograph by Michael Moran, courtesy Prospect Park Alliance.



Long Meadow, Prospect Park. Photograph by Elizabeth Keegin Colley, courtesy Prospect Park Alliance.

Laurie Olin used to describe Olmsted's genius. Design and management of public spaces must be inclusive, collaborative, and systemwide. Landscape design should look beyond its boundaries. It must take into consideration what surrounds it, and when possible it should connect spaces through greenways and boulevards to maximize park space, expand natural corridors, and connect communities. To create healthy communities, landscape architecture benefits from collaboration—starting with the neighboring communities and extending to horticulturists, engineers, and architects as well as the healthcare and planning communities. Olmsted understood collaboration to be essential to a successful practice—we can see that writ large in projects like the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition.

AB: The ideas and designed landscapes of Olmsted & Vaux are as relevant as ever—if not more relevant—today as precedents for contemporary park design and influences on landscape architects. We have seen the Olmsted parks in cities across the country play outsize roles as places of refuge and physical, mental, and spiritual relief during the pandemic, especially with their ability to provide wide open, flexible-use spaces as well as intimate places for reflection and solitude. In fact, Prospect Park and Riverside Park reported their largest crowds ever, despite having no foreign or domestic tourism. Similar reports of historic use came from other cities as well.

With the advent of Modernist and Brutalist parks such as Parc André Citroën and Parc de la Villette, in



Shelby White and Leon Levy Water Garden. Photograph by Alvina Lai, courtesy Brooklyn Botanic Garden. OPPOSITE: The Pool, Central Park. Photograph by Sara Cedar Miller / Central Park Conservancy.

Paris, or adaptively reused industrial landscapes such as Seattle's Gas Works Park or Germany's Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, it seemed like the days of the urban Romantic landscape were over—but, fortunately, far from it. Landscape architects such as Michael Van Valkenburgh, Thomas Woltz, and Kathryn Gustafson, among many others, have demonstrated an unabashed enthusiasm for beauty and romance in their landscapes.

However, contemporary landscape architects must also make their landscapes more resilient and sustainable than those of Olmsted & Vaux. For example, as I mentioned earlier, the water systems of Central and Prospect Parks, and many others across the country, are fed by municipal drinking water supplies, and hundreds of millions of gallons of potable water annually exit those ponds and lakes into sewer systems, contributing to combined sewer overflows. Current designs must take into account both saving water at its source and recycling it at the end of the system, as was recently done in a renovation of the 1910 Olmsted Brothers pond and stream at Brooklyn Botanic Garden in a redesign by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates.

We must also adapt our designs for ever-changing recreational and social needs and design landscapes that can survive the formidable challenges of climate change and waxing and waning municipal parks budgets. The Olmstedian ideals are still very relevant to urban park design, but with approaches that take into account the vastly different challenges 150 years after the peak of the Olmsted movement.

Adrian Benepe, former commissioner of the New York City Parks Department, is president and CEO of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Patricia M. O'Donnell, FASLA, is founder and principal of Heritage Landscapes LLC, Preservation Landscape Architects and Planners, with offices in Vermont and Connecticut.

Dede Petri is a past president of the Garden Club of America and currently president and CEO of the National Association for Olmsted Parks in Washington, DC.

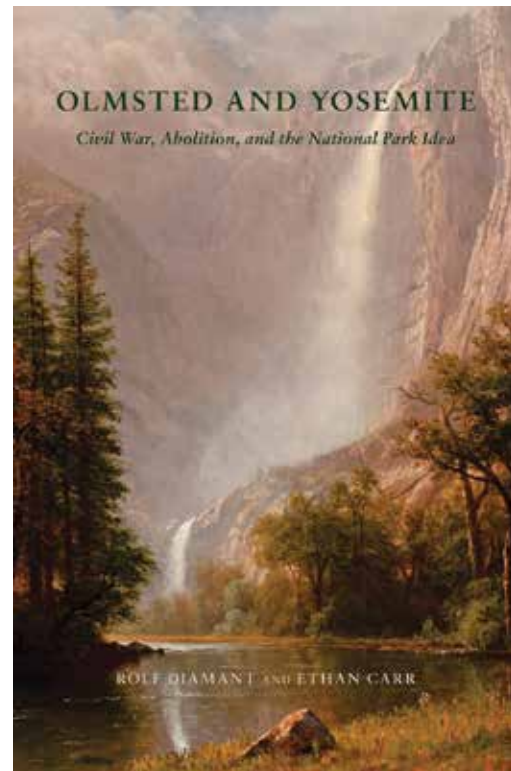


NEW

Olmsted and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea

ROLF DIAMANT AND ETHAN CARR

Published by Library of American Landscape History



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.

Marking 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.

NEW IN PAPERBACK

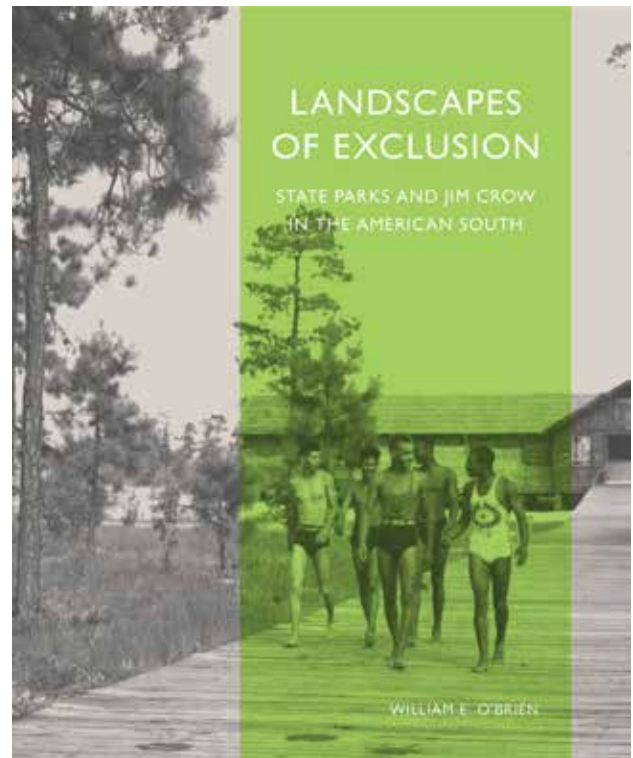
Landscapes of Exclusion: State Parks and Jim Crow in the American South

WILLIAM E. O'BRIEN

Published by Library of American Landscape History

2017 J. B. Jackson Book Prize, Foundation for
Landscape Studies

2017 Award of Merit, American Association for State
and Local History



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. 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 “whites 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.

“The inclusion of Jim Crow in the public histories of state parks—much like the Equal Justice Initiative’s effort to place a marker at every lynching site in the US—will serve as a reminder, especially to white park visitors, of a history of exclusion and ostracism written onto the natural landscape that continues to shape notions of race, understandings of nature, and encounters with the natural world.”

—Andrew W. Kahrl, author of *The Land Was Ours: How Black Beaches Became White Wealth in the Coastal South*

“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*

NEW IN PAPERBACK

Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma

ETHAN CARR

Published by Library of American Landscape History

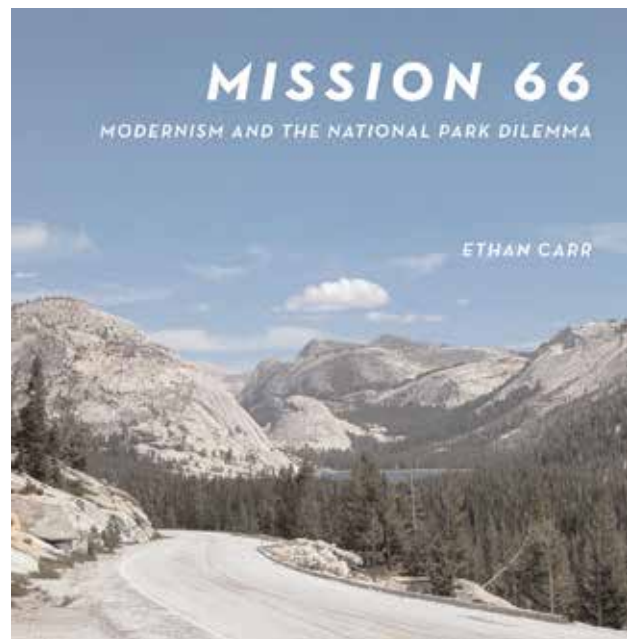
2007 Elisabeth Blair MacDougall Book Award, Society of Architectural Historians

2007 Outstanding Academic Title, Choice

2008 J. B. Jackson Book Prize, Foundation for Landscape Studies

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 organization. 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.

“Ethan Carr is an erudite and thorough chronicler of landscapes past. *Mission 66* . . . surely establishes him as our leading scholar of American national park architecture and landscape design. . . . *Mission 66* is . . . a work of first-rate scholarship and will be an indispensable text for anyone interested in the history of American parks.”

—*Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*

“This book explains how the US national parks became what they are and provides a basis for looking at their future. . . . Carr focuses on landscape architecture, integrating the economic, sociological, and geographic aspects of the changing national park landscape. This volume should be part of every library supporting planning, recreation, land economics, and geography. Summing Up: Essential.”

—*Choice*

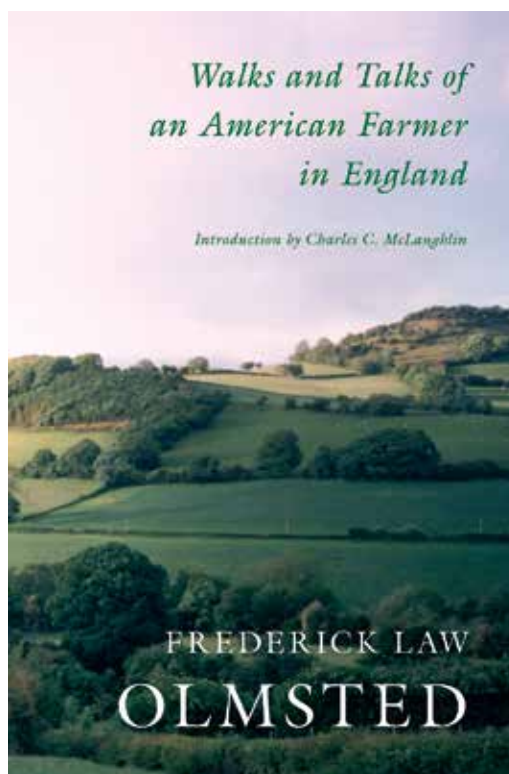
BACK IN PRINT

Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

INTRODUCTION BY CHARLES C. MCLAUGHLIN

Published by Library of American Landscape History



Before he ever dreamed of becoming a landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted (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.

Olmsted was also profoundly moved by the example of Birkenhead Park in Liverpool, England, which was open to all classes regardless of social standing or wealth. He would embrace the principles of democracy and equity underlying this novel public space and they would guide him through his work during the Civil War as director of the U.S. Sanitation Commission. They would also provide the bases of Olmsted’s later career as a landscape architect and designer of the nation’s first public parks and park systems, including Yosemite, where his “national park idea” was formulated.

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.”

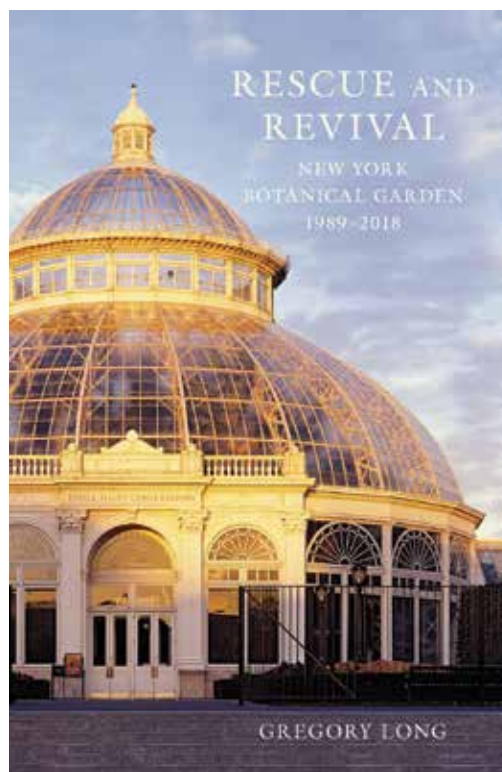
—Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, author of *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*

NEW

Rescue and Revival: New York Botanical Garden, 1989–2018

GREGORY LONG

Published by Library of American Landscape History



By the late 1980s, the New York Botanical Garden was in serious trouble. The staff was poorly paid and balkanized, endowments were depleted, fundraising was inadequate, and visitation had dwindled to an embarrassing level. The grounds were seedy, many of the historic buildings decrepit, and the great conservatory in need of total rehabilitation. The fundamental concept of a botanical garden as an educational institution and museum of plants had been forgotten. The once distinguished place, founded in 1891, had reached its nadir. Enter Gregory Long, a new CEO brought in from outside the botanical world with a mandate to rescue it. This is the story of how he did.

Twenty years' experience at four major New York cultural institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, together with an extraordinary energy and imagination, equipped Long with a vision for how to turn things around. He set about recruiting new senior staff, rebuilding the board, reengaging employees, and fundraising on a vast scale. The massive billion-dollar program of renewal, modernization, and expansion he and his staff implemented was realized through four successive strategic plans, resulting in the restoration of the historic landscape, creation of new programming, and construction of many new facilities and gardens. By 2018, NYBG had

been reestablished as one of the city's major cultural institutions and was recognized as the most important privately funded botanical garden in the world.

The account of this decades-long, painstaking process is engagingly told here through dozens of episodes and many protagonists. As diverse as New York City itself, this cast of characters includes the biologists Edward O. Wilson and Thomas Lovejoy, philanthropists Brooke Astor and David Rockefeller, author Oliver Sacks, Karen Washington and the urban farmers of Bronx Green-Up, Senator Patrick Moynihan, and performing artists Sigourney Weaver and Jessye Norman. The efforts of these and hundreds of others, staff and volunteers, were critical in the rebuilding of this international institution during what now seems a golden age in New York City history.

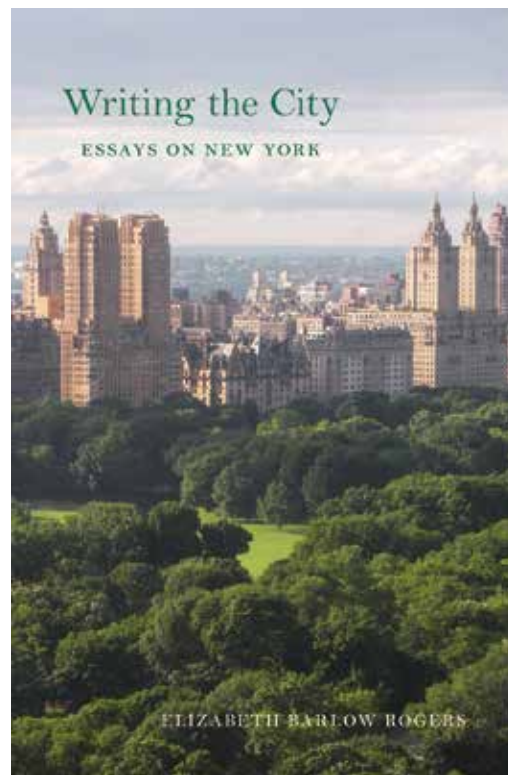
The renaissance of the New York Botanical Garden is a success story that will inspire readers everywhere, from those who steward their own nonprofit organizations to those whose lives have been enriched by the beauty and educational impact of this remarkable place.

NEW

Writing the City: Essays on New York

ELIZABETH BARLOW ROGERS

Published by Library of American Landscape History



The eminent preservationist, author, and landscape historian Elizabeth Barlow Rogers is also a committed New Yorker. *Writing the City* reveals the many facets of her passion as a citizen of the great metropolis and her lifelong efforts to protect and improve it. These include, most importantly, the creation of the Central Park Conservancy, the organization that transformed Central Park from one of the city's most degraded amenities into its most valuable. Many of Rogers's essays relate to this remarkable achievement, and the insight and administrative acumen that propelled it.

The first section of *Writing the City*, "Below and Above the Ground," explores New York's physical makeup, especially its geology, as well as the origins of another of New York's world-class landscapes, the New York Botanical Garden. "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, one of which focuses on Brooklyn Bridge Park.

In the last section of the collection, "In and About the Parks," Rogers's understanding of culture, architecture, urban planning history, and landscape architecture come together in five insightful essays. Subjects range from Green-Wood Cemetery and Prospect Park

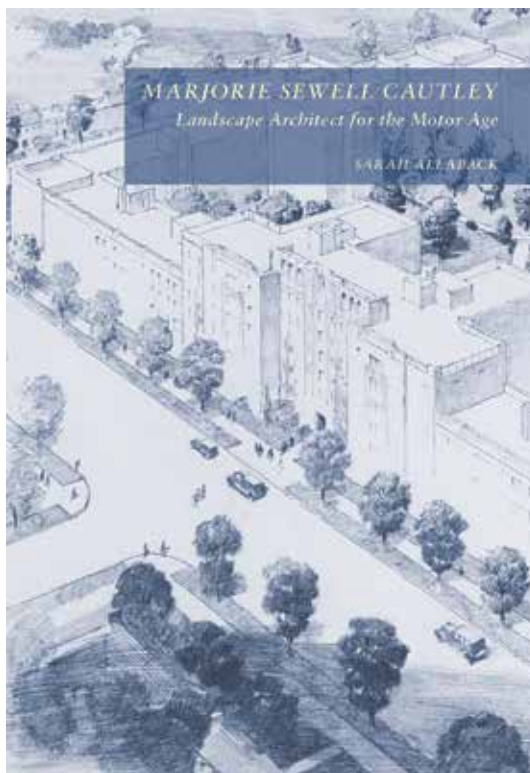
in Brooklyn to "Thirty-three New Ways You Can Help Central Park's Renaissance," published in *New York Magazine* in 1983. The concluding essay, "Jane and Me," offers new perspectives on the urban theorist and activist Jane Jacobs, whose writings catalyzed Rogers's own interest in urban planning in the 1960s.

FORTHCOMING

Marjorie Sewell Cautley: Landscape Architect for the Motor Age

SARAH ALLABACK

Published by Library of American Landscape History



Marjorie Sewell Cautley (1891–1954) was the first woman landscape architect to design state parks, the first to plan the landscape of a federally funded housing project, and the first to lecture in a university city planning department. In her absorbing biography, Sarah Allaback illuminates the life and work of this remarkable practitioner. Delving into diaries, scrapbooks, correspondence, and Cautley’s wide-ranging writings and analyzing the projects—including unprecedented work on New Hampshire state parks—Allaback weaves the story of a woman who transcended both social and professional boundaries to create humane living spaces at one of the most transformative times in American history—the introduction of the automobile into mainstream public life.

The eldest of three daughters in a peripatetic naval family, Cautley experienced an unusually unfettered life as a child. A year living in Guam left her with lifelong memories of great natural beauty and respect for the inexplicable forces of nature. The death of her mother when she was ten and of her father three years later deepened her sense of self-reliance. Exceptionally creative, Cautley found in the profession of landscape architecture more than a means to support herself.

Launching her practice in 1920, Cautley envisioned

engaging landscapes to suit postwar “affordable” housing, and spaces for enjoying the outdoors. As a teenager, Cautley had witnessed the first mass-produced automobiles being driven down the streets of Brooklyn; less than two decades later, she designed the landscape of Radburn, New Jersey, a “town for the motor age.” Later in her career, Cautley designed parks to accommodate the increase in recreational travel and public gardens intended to improve middle-class American life. Raised in the Progressive Era, she approached all of her projects with a sense of profound social responsibility.

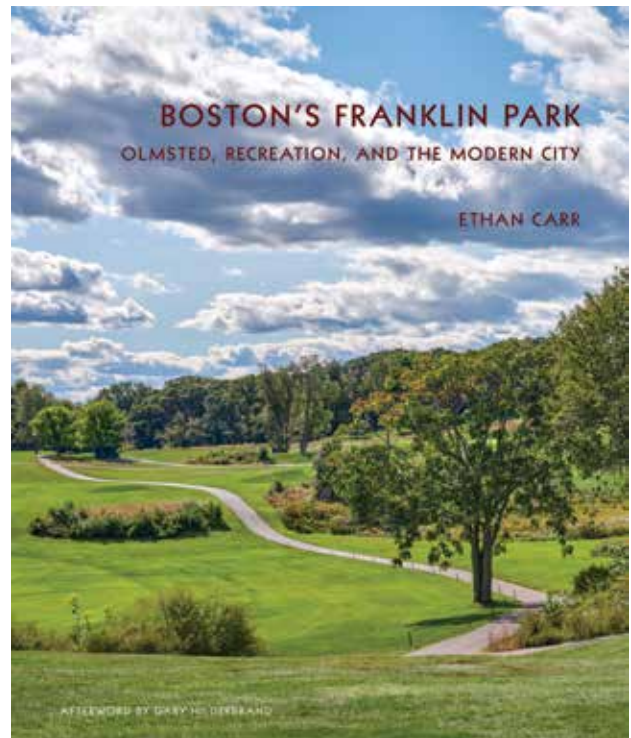
The hundreds of snapshots Cautley took of her commissions help identify the fragments of her projects that remain, from residential gardens to affordable housing projects to state parks—places that reflect the environmentally sensitive design practices landscape practitioners strive for today.

FORTHCOMING

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

ETHAN CARR

Published by Library of American Landscape History

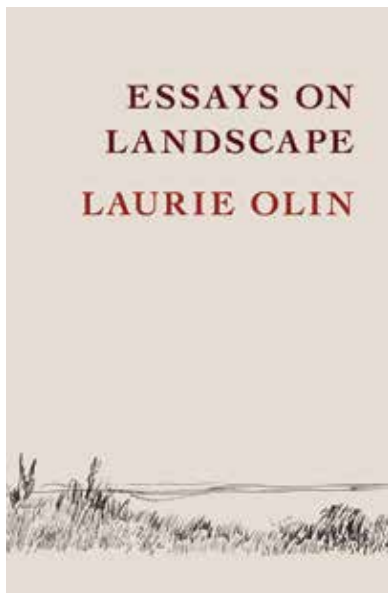


Frederick Law Olmsted designed Franklin Park in 1885 as the centerpiece of the Boston park system that later became known as the Emerald Necklace. Often cited with Central Park (1858) and Prospect Park (1865) as one of the three most important “large parks” he designed, Franklin Park was also the most 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.

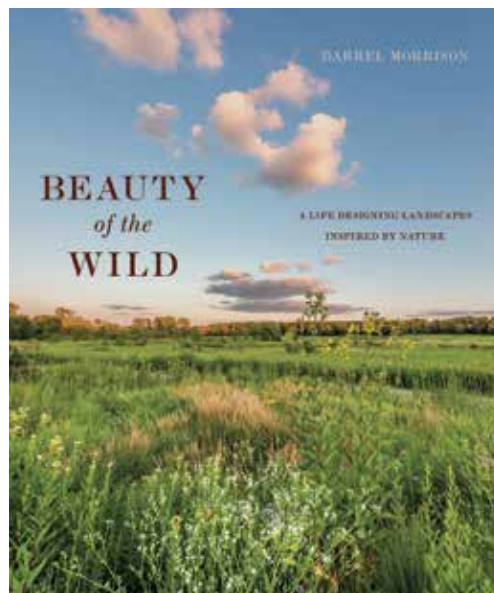
If Franklin Park is one of Olmsted’s most accomplished designs, it is also one of his least well understood and appreciated. As the park enters a new era of revival, a reconsideration of its origins and history offers timely context for a fresh appraisal of Olmsted’s mature park practice.

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.”



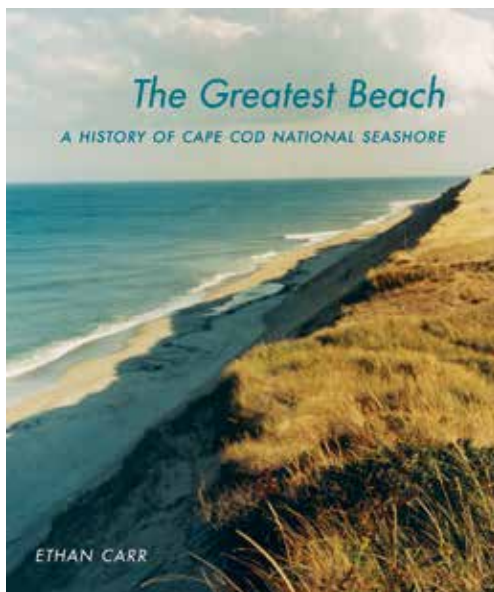
Essays on Landscape

LAURIE OLIN



Beauty of the Wild: A Life Designing Landscapes Inspired by Nature

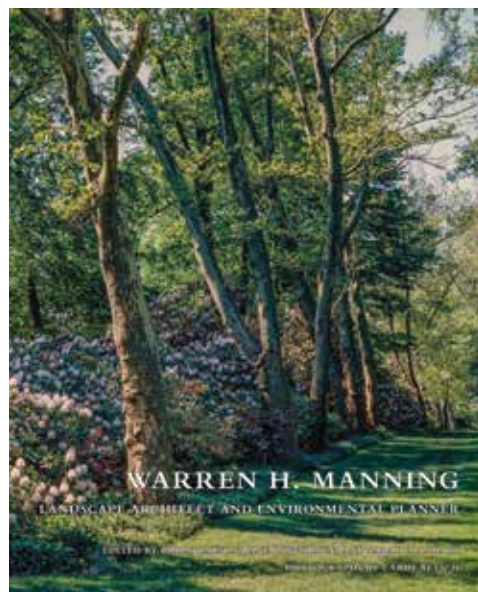
DARREL MORRISON



The Greatest Beach: A History of Cape Cod National Seashore

ETHAN CARR

2019 Smithsonian Book List Selection



Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner

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

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROL BETSCH

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

A Choice Outstanding Academic Title

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Apostle of Taste (new edition) by David Schuyler

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The Art of Landscape Architecture by Samuel Parsons Jr.
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The Best Planned City in the World by Francis R. Kowsky

Book of Landscape Gardening by Frank A. Waugh
New introduction by Linda Flint McClelland

Beauty of the Wild by Darrel Morrison

Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect by Charles W. Eliot
New introduction by Keith N. Morgan

Community by Design by Keith N. Morgan, Elizabeth Hope Cushing, and Roger G. Reed

Country Life by Robert Morris Copeland
New introduction by William H. Tishler

Design in the Little Garden by Fletcher Steele
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Mission 66 by Ethan Carr

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The Muses of Gwinn by Robin Karson

The Native Landscape Reader edited by Robert E. Grese

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Pioneers of American Landscape Design
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Silent City on a Hill by Blanche M. G. Linden

The Spirit of the Garden by Martha Brookes Hutcheson
New introduction by Rebecca Warren Davidson

Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England
by Frederick Law Olmsted
New introduction by Charles C. McLaughlin

Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect and Environmental Planner edited by Robin Karson, Jane Roy Brown, and Sarah Allaback

A World of Her Own Making by Catherine Howett

FILMS

The Best Planned City in the World: Olmsted, Vaux, and the Buffalo Park System

Community by Design: The Olmsted Firm and the Development of Brookline, Massachusetts

Designing in the Prairie Spirit: A Conversation with Darrel Morrison

Fletcher Steele and Naumkeag: A Playground of the Imagination

Ruth Shellborn: Midcentury Landscape Design in Southern California

Visit lalh.org for more information

WHO WE ARE

Since 1992, LALH books, exhibitions, and films have been funded by people who care deeply about landscape, history, and American culture. By educating the public, LALH encourages preservation of beloved landscapes and inspires new designs that connect people with nature.

Please join LALH in its important mission. Become a member today. All LALH members receive *VIEW*, our annual full-color magazine, devoted exclusively to North American landscape architecture.

LALH is a publicly supported, charitable organization with 501(c)(3) status.



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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.



Delaware Park, Buffalo. Photograph by Andy Olenick.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, LALH!

Founded in 1992, Library of American Landscape History turns thirty this year. Over the course of three decades, the field of American landscape studies has changed, and so has LALH.

Initially, the organization operated with a board of five stalwart supporters and one full-time employee; our goal was to create a foundational library in the nascent field of American landscape studies. Working in association with other presses, we began by publishing reprints of classic works and tightly focused monographs based on new research. Over the years, our books acquired broader editorial scope and expanded audiences, as a result of our touring exhibition program, documentary film series, and the magazine *VIEW*, first published in 2001.

We began from the belief that educating the public about the history of landscape design could motivate informed stewardship of significant places and the environment, and inspire new designs that connect people with nature. That faith continues to guide our work.

Now, as we enter our fourth decade with a bigger board, a roster of nationally distinguished advisers, and an expanded staff, we are embarking on a new initiative—publishing our books independently. This means that in addition to research, writing, editing, indexing, and design, LALH also oversees production, distribution, and marketing. Consequently, Jonathan D. Lippincott, formerly LALH associate director, has assumed a new position as Publisher. Jonathan brings to the post twenty-five years' experience at the distinguished publishing house Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Robin Karson, LALH's founding director, is now Editorial Director, continuing her role overseeing content.

Last fall LALH released *Essays on Landscape* by the landscape architect Laurie Olin, the first title supported by the Ann Douglass Wilhite Nature and Design Fund. In this issue of *VIEW*, we announce a new fund to support books and films about the work and legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted. LALH aspires to be a center for the publication of scholarship that will engage the Olmsted legacy in the most meaningful way possible, with the goal of making today's urban environments more socially equitable and environmentally sound.

Measured, strategic growth balanced with a steadfast commitment to our founding mission has helped LALH stay the course through decades of dramatic change in scholarship, publishing, and the profession itself. We move forward into the new era confident that our recent evolution will foster vitality and growth while keeping LALH grounded in its core principles. This expanded vision would not be possible without the support of our members, some of whom have been with us since the beginning. Thank you for believing in LALH. We hope you will continue with us on the journey.



Ann Wilhite, Nancy Turner,
and Robin Karson at the James
Rose Center, 2003.

LETTER FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

In the early 1990s, my Penn State colleagues in landscape architecture and I hosted a symposium titled “What Do We Expect to Learn from Our History?” It was there that I first met Robin Karson. During the course of writing *Fletcher Steele, Landscape Architect: An Account of the Gardenmaker’s Life, 1885–1971* in the late 1980s, Robin had discovered the dearth of published source material in the field of American landscape history. She had just founded LALH to fill the void.

I was doubtful at first that she could achieve such an ambitious goal but watched as one new, consequential publication after another emerged from LALH. I was a convert and subsequently published in the ASLA Centennial Reprint Series, joined the board of directors, and eventually agreed to serve as board president.

In looking back on those years, I can state unequivocally that LALH has succeeded not only in filling the research and publication gaps that hindered early study but also in charting the evolutionary course of the field. For example, to the long list of reprints, biographies, and books on important landscapes, LALH has developed series on American parks, environmental design, and modernism. The scholarship in these publications is authoritative, setting landscape design into cultural context and also revealing oversights, omissions, and biases.

As a former dean and professor of landscape architecture, I can speak to the significant difference LALH has made to the field. Scholars hope to publish under the LALH banner; undergraduate and graduate students in landscape architecture, historic preservation, and planning use the long list of LALH publications in their coursework and research; LALH’s curated exhibitions have enhanced instruction; and its documentary films are viewed in classrooms as well as by wide general audiences.

Having achieved all this, however, LALH is not nearly finished its work. On the solid foundation that has been built over these three decades, new books and films will expand the field of view, exploring the myriad connections among landscape and place, design and people, well-being and nature. Looking back is gratifying. Looking forward is exciting.

—Daniel J. Nadenicek, FASLA



LALH board and advisers visiting Chicago’s Washington Park. Left to right: Keith Morgan, Dan Nadenicek, Barbara Shear, Jonathan Lippincott, Robin Karson, Darrel Morrison, Sally and Mark Zelonis, Janis Notz, Bill Tishler, John Notz.

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"After a long career in legal education and decades of research on Federal Indian Law, I departed academia in 2013 with the goal of exploring new interests: horticultural, garden, and landscape history. I visited legendary landscapes and gardens around the world, studied garden history in summer courses at Oxford University, and began a reading program. Close to home, I began exploring untold stories about Southern California gardens, horticulturists, and the makers of San Diego's Balboa Park. Immersion in my new avocation inevitably led to the work of Robin Karson and the Library of American Landscape History. The LALH publications list is a treasure trove of expert specialization and scholarly excellence. Yet, with the realities of the book trade, these valuable, carefully researched works might not have been published, absent the existence of LALH. This realization convinced me to become an LALH supporter. I continue to donate with gratitude and expectation."



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