

# *BOSTON'S FRANKLIN PARK*

## *Olmsted, Recreation, and the Modern City*

ETHAN CARR

Often cited with Central and Prospect Parks as one of the three most important “large parks” Frederick Law Olmsted designed, Franklin Park was also the most mature expression of the landscape architect’s ideas about urban parks, and the most expansive and complete pastoral landscape he achieved in his career. Ethan Carr’s groundbreaking new book confirms Franklin Park as one of the great works of nineteenth-century American art. Please help us publish this engaging and transformative volume, which also sets the stage for thoughtful social change.

Illuminating the history of the park and its popularity in the early twentieth century, Carr’s book also describes its decline as demographics shifted and, in response, the city routinely failed to maintain it. Examining the patterns of institutionalized racism that led to the park’s decline, *Boston’s Franklin Park* introduces an emergent plan for the park’s renewal. An afterword by the landscape architect Gary R. Hilderbrand describes how the city, working with the people in the surrounding neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Jamaica Plain, is committing funding and expertise to assure that Franklin Park continues to enhance 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



Franklin Park. Photograph by Millicent Harvey.



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

history offers timely context for a fresh appraisal of Olmsted's mature park practice and the implications for its continued relevance for today.

Ethan Carr, FASLA, is professor of landscape architecture at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and an international authority on America's public landscapes. He is author of *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service*; *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*; *The Greatest Beach: A History of Cape Cod National Seashore*; and coauthor of *Olmsted and Yosemite: Civil War, Abolition, and the National Park Idea*.

All donations of \$250 or more received by November 1st will be acknowledged in the book.

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