May 2014

# The Ghost of Olmsted: Nature, History & Urban Park Restoration in Boston's Emerald Necklace

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**ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the nineteenth-century production, the twentieth-century deterioration, and the twenty-first century restoration of Boston's Emerald Necklace, a 1,100-acre series of parks and parkways designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903). Originally built to meet a particular set of aesthetic landscape tastes, over time this park system changed to meet the recreational needs of visitors. Throughout, the Emerald Necklace has served the interests of Boston's urban elite. It is, therefore, an appropriate case for examining the historical relationship between power and landscape. The parks of the Emerald Necklace did more than provide pretty views and space for play; they advanced the upper-class economic and cultural agendas of boosterism, real-estate speculation, and cultural assimilation.

When we look at the nineteenth-century political economic context in which Olmsted worked and compare it to the late-twentieth/early-twenty-first century political economic context associated with park restoration, an intriguing historical-geographical parallelism becomes apparent. In both moments, the Emerald Necklace operated as part a specific "spatial fix" to a variety of environmental, economic, and social problems associated with major crises of production within U.S. capitalism.

I trace the development of Olmsted's naturalistic design philosophy, beginning with his work in New York City's Central Park through to his involvement with the Emerald Necklace. His naturalistic landscape parks helped improve sanitation in Boston, and shaped the further development and growth of the city.

By the 1970s, the parks had been modernized. The original Olmsted design had been substantially modified and economic austerity measures led to neglect due to deferred maintenance. By the 1980s, they had become derelict havens of crime with degraded ecosystems in need of

restoration.

Efforts to restore the parks of the Emerald Necklace represent a new park typology: the Conservancy Park. This typology reflects the work of private park conservancies and not-for-profits as they seek to translate the entrepreneurial dimensions of neoliberal urbanism into the urban fabric. These conservancies, along with city and state officials, have relied upon the *ghost of Olmsted* to guide the restoration process. As part of an "urban sustainability fix," the restoration of this park system is based less on scientific or technical criteria than on aesthetics and the economic fetishizing of the original Olmsted vision. Park restoration, therefore, reflects a symbolic economy associated with the redevelopment and gentrification of post-industrial neoliberal cities.

This dissertation reframes the discussion about parks and urban sustainability to focus more on a progressive (future-oriented) restoration of urban parks. To date, park restoration in the Emerald Necklace, is past-oriented, conservative, and unsustainable. Instead, parks are a process, and not just as a thing. Twenty-first century American cities should focus on ecological function, rather than simply on the reification and recomposition of historic landscapes.

# THE GHOST OF OLMSTED:
# NATURE, HISTORY & URBAN PARK RESTORATION IN BOSTON'S EMERALD NECKLACE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography
in the Graduate School of Syracuse University

May 2014

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has been a long journey. It was a long time in the making—so long that in the time it took for me to write this, the Red Sox ended their 86 year drought and won three World Series titles, the Celtics won the NBA championship for the first time since 1986, and the Bruins won the Stanley Cup for the first time since 1972!

I am indebted to so many people for their support and encouragement in this journey. I would like to start by thanking my committee. Anne Mosher was the perfect advisor for this project. She offered invaluable guidance, and her knowledge of Olmsted and urban history added immensely to this work. I feel fortunate to have had her constant support and encouragement, even when others may have let me fall through the cracks. Don Mitchell, Tom Perreault, Bob Wilson, John Western and Deborah Pellow were extremely generous with their time as I asked them to read drafts years after I should have been done. I would like to thank all members of my committee for their insightful comments and constructive feedback.

The Geography Department at Syracuse University is such a supportive environment. Discussions with fellow graduate students informed my perspective and approach to this work. I'm particularly appreciative of the support I received from Jeremy Bryson, Dave Call, Karen Culcasi, Gary Van Lingen (who is sorely missed), Brendan McNeil, and Bob Ross. I am so appreciative of Chris Chapman, the heart of the department, who always offered encouragement as she helped me navigate all of the paperwork and deadlines.

I wish to thank the faculty in the Geography Department at Bridgewater State University where I began my training as a geographer. Three faculty members were especially influential in shaping my career. It was in Glenn Miller's (who is sorely missed) urban geography course where I was first introduced to Olmsted and the parks of the Emerald Necklace. Reed Stewart's

management and preservation course, as well as his senior seminar, provided valuable insights into how society manages the natural world. Vernon Domingo always encouraged me to think critically, but more importantly he exemplified the kind of person and teacher I wanted to be. I am indebted to Vernon, but also to Sandy Clark, Madhu Rao, James Hayes-Bohanan, Bob Amey, Darcy Beollstorff, and Rob Hellstrom for my development as both a geographer and a teacher.

I am especially indebted to parents. My dad, Harvey Liberman (who is sorely missed), was my first geography teacher. My mom, Mary Lou Liberman, has always been there to provide words of encouragement and whoopee pies. Mom, thanks for being a great Nana who was always there to watch the grandkids so I could get some writing done. I am thankful that my brother, Greg Liberman (a landscape architect) offered his own insights along the way. I am appreciative of the support given to me by my extended family as well. Thanks to Bob and Sue Birge, Karen Minor and Joe Ippi, and especially to T-Jo for the encouragement.

Most importantly, my heartfelt thanks go to my family. Wesley and Norah, I love being your daddy and I love that I was able to stay home with each of you while you were young. Even though it prolonged this journey, it was a great to be able to see you grow, and I wouldn't trade those memories for anything. "Daddy's book" is done! Kim, thank you for supporting me during this journey. Thank you for being a wonderful partner and fantastic mom. You have the patience of Job to be able to put up me when I was anxious, stressed, distant and selfish. It was a long (sometimes bumpy) journey, and without your love and friendship, I could not have completed this project.

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## ABBREVIATION USED IN NOTES

### Individuals and Institutions

| | |
|---|---|
| AJD | Andrew Jackson Downing |
| BRA | Boston Redevelopment Authority |
| CPC | Central Park Conservancy |
| ENC | Emerald Necklace Conservancy |
| ENPMP | *Emerald Necklace Parks Master Plan* |
| FLO | Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. |
| FLO, Jr. | Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. |
| JCO | John Charles Olmsted |

### Newspapers, Magazines, and Journals

| | |
|---|---|
| *BG* | *Boston Globe* |
| *BDG* | *Boston Daily Globe* |

### Documents

*FLOP* *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977-2013). Eight volumes, plus one in the supplemental series, have been published thus far: Vol. 1: Charles Capen McLaughlin, ed., and Charles E. Beveridge, assoc. ed., *The Formative Years: 1822-1852;* Vol. 2: McLaughlin and Beveridge, eds., and David Schuyler, asst. ed., *Slavery and the South, 1852-1857*; Vol. 3: Beveridge and Schuyler, eds., *Creating Central Park, 1857-1861*; Vol. 4: Jane Turner Censer, ed., *Defending the Union: The Civil War and the U.S. Sanitary Commission*, 1861-1863; Vol. 5: Victoria Post Ranney, ed., Gerald Rauluk, assoc. ed., and Carolyn Hoffman, asst. ed., *The California Frontier, 1863-1865*; Vol. 6: Beveridge, Schuyler, and Censer, eds., *The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Co., 1865-1874*; Vol. 7: Beveridge and Hoffman, eds., *Parks, Politics, and Patronage, 1874-1882*; Vol. 8: Ethan Carr, ed., Amanda Gagel, assoc. ed., and Michael Shapiro, asst. ed., *The Early Boston Years, 1882-1890*; Supplemental Series Vol. 1, Beveridge and Hoffman eds., and Kenneth Hawkins, assoc. ed., *Writings on Public Parks, Parkways and Park Systems*.

*FYLA* FLO, Jr. and Theodora Kimball Hubbard (eds.), *Frederick Law Olmsted Forty Years of Landscape Architecture*; vol. 1: *Early Years* (1922, reprint New York: B. Bloom 1970); vol. 2: *Central Park* (1928, reprint Cambridge: MIT Press 1973).

OP Olmsted Papers. Available from Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

OA Olmsted Associates Papers. Available from Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

# CHAPTER 1

# THE GHOST OF OLMSTED: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

> *We have to turn to Olmsted's writings as well as his plans to catch the spirit and intent of his work. To understand how to restore his parks we have to know the artistic and social conditions in which Olmsted worked, because his landscapes, although they seem to be natural, as he intended they should, are designed to be unified works of art, each unique to its own site…Being true to the genius of the place…challenged Olmsted to produce artistic and ecological miracles when he designed parks for such unpromising locations as the rocky spine of Manhattan Island, the flat and swampy lake front of Chicago, and the polluted, muddy Back Bay fens of Boston.*
>
> --Charles C. McLaughlin[1]

Urban public parks hold special meaning for city residents—as extensions of their backyards, gathering spaces, athletic and recreational facilities, and as places that represent nature. Beyond these obvious significations, parks provide benefits to society in ways that are generally hidden from view. Parks, and the vegetation and soil contained therein, help to purify air, improve water quality, cool the urban heat island, absorb carbon emissions, provide essential habitat for urban wildlife, attract businesses and tourists, and help to improve land values and the local tax base.[2] Given all of these meanings, there exists a cultural assumption within Western late-modernity that parks play an essential role in building a greener and healthier twenty-first century capitalist city.[3] It is my

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[1] Charles C. McLaughlin, "Frederick Law Olmsted's parks: Antiques or urban necessities?" *National Association for Olmsted Parks Newsletter* (Fall/Winter 1980/81), 7.

[2] Gary Moll and Sara Ebenreck, *Shading our Cities: A Resource Guide for Urban and Community Forests* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1989); E. Gregory McPherson, "Accounting for benefits and costs of urban greenspace," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 22(1992): 41-51, and "Urban forestry in North America," *Renewable Resources Journal* 24(2006): 8-12; John Crompton, "The impact of parks on property values: a review of empirical evidence," *Journal of Leisure Research* 33(2001): 1-31; Sarah Nicholls, "Measuring the impact of parks on property values," *Parks and Recreation* 39(2004): 24-32; Kathleen Wolf, "Economics and public value of urban forests," *Urban Agriculture Magazine*, 13(2004): 31-33.

[3] Anna Chiesura, "The role of urban parks for the sustainable city," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 68(2004): 129-138; Galen Cranz and Michael Boland, "Defining the sustainable park: a fifth model for urban parks," *Landscape Journal* 23(2004): 102-120; Stephanie Pincetl and Elizabeth Gearin, "The reinvention of public green space," *Urban Geography* 26(2005): 365-384; Eugenie Birch and Susan Wachter, ed., *Growing Greener Cities: Urban Sustainability in the Twenty-First*

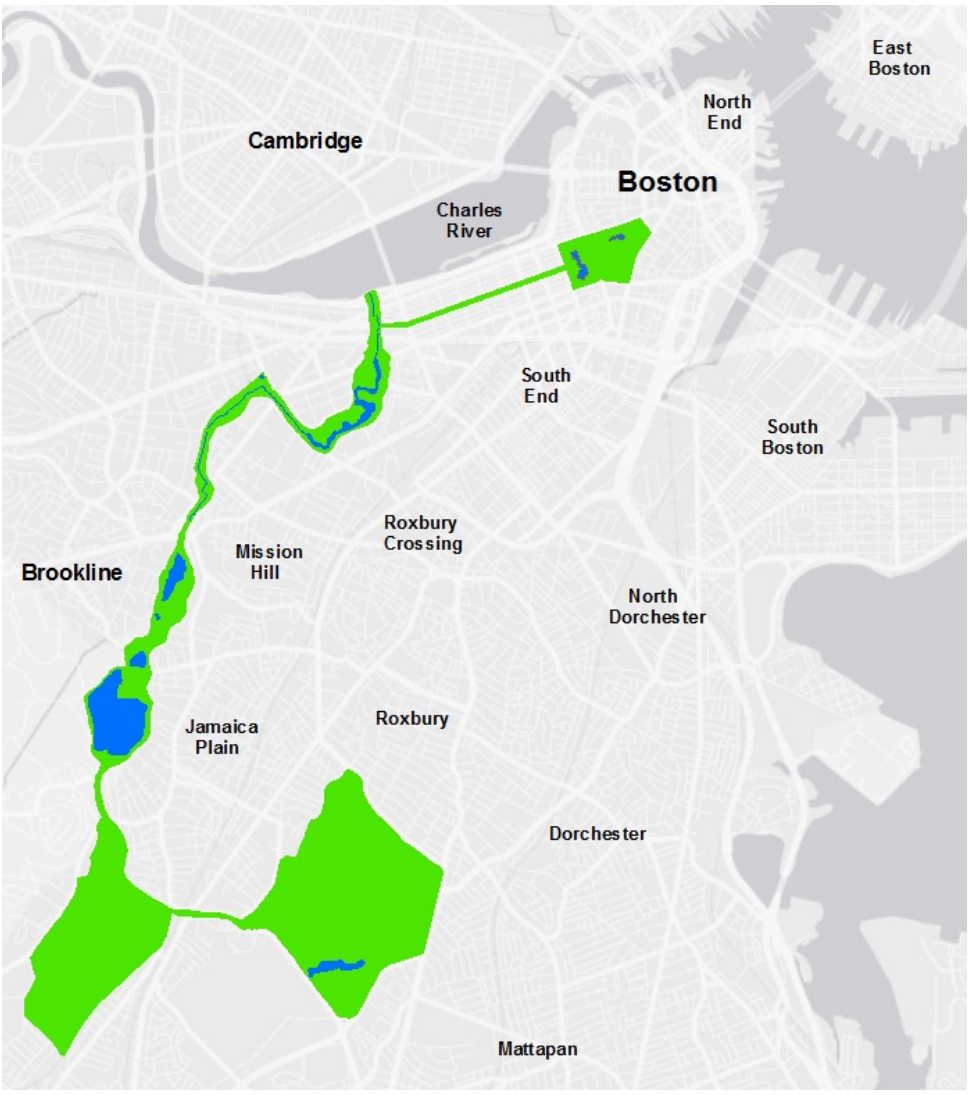


**Figure 1.1.** Map of the Emerald Necklace. From downtown Boston and moving counter-clockwise the park system begins with the three pre-Olmsted parks: Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the narrow green ribbon of the Commonwealth Avenue Mall which connects with the Olmsted-designed parks. The linear parks follow from the Back Bay Fens, which empties into the Charles River, along the Riverway and the Muddy River, which acts as a boundary between Boston and Brookline, to Olmsted Park and the park at Jamaica Pond. Two aerial parks complete the chain of green spaces: the Arnold Arboretum in the lower-left corner and Franklin Park.

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*Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Alexander Garvin, *Public Parks: The Key to Livable Communities* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010); Peter Harnik, *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2010).

contention that when considered within a political economic context, the move to revive the Olmstedian naturalistic parks is exposed as part of an elitist neoliberal agenda. This is particularly evident in Boston, Massachusetts, where private park conservancies and friends groups have become responsible for maintaining these park landscapes.

This dissertation focuses on the social production of public parks in Boston and Brookline, Massachusetts. In particular, I examine the creation, decline, and restoration of the Emerald Necklace, a 1,100-acre series of parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (Figure 1.1). Made up of nine parks connected by parkways surrounding the city of Boston, the Emerald Necklace was designed and built by Olmsted and his firm from 1878-1896.[4] The Fens and the Riverway sections of the Emerald Necklace, located in Boston's upscale Back Bay neighborhood and the town of Brookline respectively, were designed along the Muddy River and Stony Brook in an attempt to control flooding and sewage problems. Together with the Fens and the Riverway, the ponds of Jamaica Park and Olmsted Park (originally named Leverett Park but renamed in honor of its designer in 1900) formed the main water features of the landscape design. Olmsted designed the 265-acre Arnold Arboretum, with the help of Harvard botanist Charles Sprague Sargent, specifically as a didactic tool and to improve scientific forestry practices. The "jewel" of the Necklace was what Olmsted referred to at times, as the "country park" due its rural nature, or the "West Roxbury Park" for its location. The city formally recognized the park as Franklin Park in 1885 to memorialize Boston-born Benjamin Franklin.[5] At 527 acres, Franklin Park is the largest park in the Necklace.[6]

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[4] While the majority of the Emerald Necklace lies within the city of Boston, a portion of it—in the Riverway and Olmsted Park—lies within the borders of the town of Brookline. The Emerald Necklace as a whole consists of nine parks since the Boston Common, the Public Garden and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall (a ribbon of green space running down the middle of Commonwealth Avenue) are considered part of the Emerald Necklace. The six parks that Olmsted designed continue the ribbon of green space around much of the city.

[5] According to the 1888-1889 annual report of the city auditor: "Dr. Benjamin Franklin, in his will, gave the inhabitants of Boston, in 1791, £1,000 sterling…It was the estimate of Dr. Franklin that the £1,000 would increase in 100 years to £131,000, and then the managers of the fund were to lay out in public works £100,000, and the balance to

In his history of the field of landscape architecture, Norman Newton argues for including Franklin Park, along with Central Park and Prospect Park, in Olmsted's "great triad" of urban parks.[7]

Answering the call of Charles McLaughlin (the series editor of the Olmsted Papers) in the epigraph, I examine Olmsted's writings, designs, and plans to uncover both the "spirit and intent" of Olmsted's vision as well as the "artistic and social conditions" under which Olmsted designed the Emerald Necklace.[8] I trace the evolution of this Olmsted park system from its creation in the 1870s, through its demise by the 1970s, and finally to its rebirth in the 1990s and beyond to examine the ways in which cultural attitudes and economic realities shaped design choices and park aesthetics over time.

In this dissertation, I examine the social, political, and economic issues associated with urban park planning. Numerous studies have analyzed the role of parks in urban life and I draw on the theories and previous work of urban historians, environmental historians, landscape architects, and urban and historical geographers to understand the historiography of both Olmsted and the making of urban parks in America. I build on a variety of theoretical frameworks associated with urban political economy, historic preservation, and environmental history to explore the ways in which the creation, decline, and restoration of urban parks reflected the particular cultural attitudes and

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continue on interest for another hundred years, which he estimated would then amount to $4,600,000; of this amount the sum of $1,610,000 was to be at the disposal of the inhabitants of the town of Boston, and the balance to be paid the Government of the State. The Board of Aldermen, 1882, after a report in the matter of the Franklin Fund from a committee consisting of Aldermen Stebbins and Hart, passed the following: *Resolved,* that, in the opinion of this Board, comprising a majority of the Trustees of the Franklin Fund, it is expedient and highly desirable that the proportion of said fund which will be available in 1891-92 for investment in "some public work," should be devoted to the extinguishment of the debt incurred for the purchase of the West Roxbury Park. *Resolved,* that in the event of such disposition of the said portion of the Franklin Fund, the park thus purchased should be called "Franklin Park," in honor of the testator, who has so generously endowed his native town." *Annual Report of the City Auditor of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston and the County of Suffolk, State of Massachusetts for the Financial Year 1888-89* (City doc. no. 95-1889), 307.

[6] The size of Franklin Park decreased to 485 acres in 1954 after the city sold off land to the Commonwealth to build the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital.

[7] Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 295.

[8] McLaughlin, "Olmsted's parks," 7.

environmental imaginaries of the time. I argue that a set of environmental imaginaries that emphasized the *ghost of Olmsted* have guided the restoration of the Emerald Necklace.

**The Park Movement in America**

Rooted in nineteenth-century social reform, the American park movement was a reaction to the negative impacts of the rapidly industrializing city. During this period, well-meaning park advocates, who, as educated middle- and upper-middle class individuals were members of the elite "leisure class," saw it as their civic duty to raise the standards of urban life.[9] As park advocates, members of this leisure class believed that the greenspaces of urban parks could help people overcome the air and water pollution, disease, poverty, and crime associated with the industrial city. Adopting an environmentally deterministic view, members of the leisure class believed that a foul, industrialized urban environment produced an inferior and wretched urban population, and that by contrast, aesthetically pleasing naturalistic parks could serve as both a refuge and as the "lungs" of the city.[10] In his work on the production of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, geographer Terence Young cogently summarizes this belief by arguing that, "urban disorders did not arise because society was evil *by nature* but because its members were *out of touch with nature*, a source of goodness."[11]

The mid- to late-nineteenth-century development of the naturalistic landscapes typical of large pleasure grounds reflected a Jeffersonian anti-urban bias. Throughout the mid-late-nineteenth

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[9] The term leisure class is from Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007[1899]). Throughout this dissertation, I use the term leisure class instead of other similar terms (urban elite, gentry, upper class) in the traditional Veblenian sense. Since the topic at hand is the production of urban public parks, and distinctions in social class influence one's ability for leisure, it seems logical, to me, to use "leisure class" as it highlights the elite qualities of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure associated with a particular type of passive leisure, which creates the need for the pleasure ground type of park.

[10] William Allen, "Fresh Air Work," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 23(1904): 56-63.

[11] Terence Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 2-3 (emphasis in original).

century, as the center of the American population moved west and as American cities became more industrialized, the nation's vast wilderness began to disappear and the frontier began to close.[12] Landscape designers and architects like Frederick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, and Andrew Jackson Downing called for naturalistic landscapes that romanticized a rural, pastoral nature. As a design form, the environmental imaginary of the pastoral represented "the idea of a (re)turn to a less urbanized, more 'natural' state of existence."[13] By weaving elements of the pastoral with the picturesque, designers of pleasure grounds typically presented visitors with varied genteel rural elements such as open spaces, curvilinear pathways, woodlands, meadows, placid water bodies, and rustic structures. This environmental imaginary set the aesthetic experiences of a rustic, gardenesque nature in direct contrast with the industrial, gridded, and cramped spaces of the city.

As industrialization continued unabated, members of the leisure class believed that new urban landscapes, represented by pastoral and picturesque imaginaries, were needed to reconnect society with nature in the city. Parks during this period emerged out of one set of environmental imaginaries that favored the leisure class and their relationship with 'nature.' Due to rapid urbanization and industrialization, the urban leisure class felt disconnected from 'nature' and, due to the pace of change, felt they were losing essential elements of their humanity and culture, and therefore they wanted a reminder of the 'nature' they had lost.[14] They embraced the iconography of

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[12] Frederick Jackson Turner, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*, ed. John Mack Faragher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

[13] Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 31.

[14] Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975) and Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Terence Young, "Social reform through parks: the American Civic Association's program for a better America," *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (1996): 460-472.

the naturalistic landscape park since it "expressed a conviction that the modernization of the nation could continue without losing values and experiences deemed essential to human happiness."[15]

The creation of naturalistic park spaces provided a respite from the day-to-day affairs of an increasingly unhealthy urban environment and provided urban residents with a form of psychic relief.[16] With their pastoral and picturesque scenes, naturalistic landscape parks also provided spaces for a variety of passive forms of recreation (e.g., strolling, carriage rides, nature viewing, contemplation, tranquility and relaxation) typically associated with upper-class forms of leisure. These recreational activities served to highlight the "spectacle of sociability" associated with an urban elite leisure class.[17] However, by the turn of the century, the focus of park design shifted to reflect the reformist vision of the Progressive Era.

This new period of park design focused on incorporating immigrants and the working class into parks. In what sociologist Galen Cranz labeled the "reform park era," social reformers and progressive educators urged municipal governments to provide spaces for urban youth to play under adult supervision.[18] These well-intentioned individuals hoped to provide recreational spaces for urban residents living in overcrowded tenements who lacked other access to fresh air and open space. The goal of parks built during this era was to reform the urban poor and assimilate newly

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[15] Ethan Carr, "Park, forest, and wilderness," *The George Wright FORUM* 17(2000), 17.

[16] Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Park Design in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982). See also: Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision,* 159-188; Geoffrey Blodgett, "Frederick Law Olmsted: Landscape architecture as conservative reform," *The Journal of American History* 62(1976): 869-889; Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America*, 233-251; George L. Scheper, "The reformist vision of Frederick Law Olmsted and the poetics of park design," *The New England Quarterly* 62(1989): 369-402; Terence Young, "Social reform through parks."

[17] David Scobey, "Anatomy of the promenade: The politics of bourgeois sociability in nineteenth-century New York," *Social History* 17(1992), 216; Daniel Bluestone, "From promenade to park: The gregarious origins of Brooklyn's park movement," *American Quarterly* 39(1987): 529-550.

[18] Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design.*

arrived immigrants. To accomplish these goals, reformers focused on children and provided small neighborhood spaces for wholesome play and recreation.[19]

The guiding principle behind the playground movement was to prevent idleness in children by ensuring their engagement in some form of moral activity. In the minds of puritanical reformers, idle children caused trouble and were more likely to engage in criminal activity. Cities built reform parks and provided wholesome playgrounds and recreational spaces to keep children occupied, thereby reducing the number of children criminals, and lessening expenses associated with them since there would be less need for probation officers, police officers, reform schools, and jails to address problem juveniles.[20]

A major difference between the pleasure ground and the new reform park was the reform park's relationship with the city. Instead of being set in contrast to the city, the reform park blended into the gridded street patterns of urban America. These relatively small parks emphasized rectilinear pathways and were often sited within a city block. In these small spaces, reformers and educators offered equipment and structured forms of recreation, mainly supervised play, gymnastics, crafts, and Americanization classes.[21] Throughout the mid-twentieth century, the focus on play and

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[19] Jane Addams, "Public recreation and social morality," *Charities and the Commons*, 18(1907): 492-494; Luther H. Gulick, "Playground activities under the direction of the Department of Education, New York City," *Proceedings of the Second Annual Playground Congress* (1909): 398-401; George A. Bellamy, "Recreation and social progress: the settlement," *Proceedings of the National Conference on Charities and Corrections* (1914): 375-382; T.F. Chapin, "Play as a reformative agency," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction* (1914): 437-440; Clarence E. Rainwater, *The Play Movement in the United States: A Study of Community Recreation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922); Cary Goodman, *Choosing Sides: Playground and Street Life on the Lower East Side* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979); Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); Elizabeth Gagen, "Playing the part: performing gender in America's playgrounds" *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning*, eds., Sarah Holloway and Gill Valentine (London: Routledge, 2000), 213-229.

[20] Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*, 203.

[21] Addams, "Public recreation and social morality;" Gulick, "Playground activities under the direction of the Department of Education, New York City;" Bellamy, "Recreation and social progress;" Chapin, "Play as a reformative agency;" Rainwater, *The Play Movement in the United States*; Goodman, *Choosing Sides*; Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals*; and, Gagen, "Playing the part."

recreational services would continue, but on a much larger scale, as parks became large recreational facilities.

In the mid-twentieth century, during the "recreational facility era" of park design, cities abandoned the original Olmsted naturalistic landscape design in favor of highly specialized park spaces with each recreational land use occupying its own space.[22] In response to the public's call for more spaces for active forms of recreation and leisure that Olmsted and the late-nineteenth century leisure class abhorred, city planners and politicians stressed the need for scientific management of parks and focused on the segmentation, and specialization, of park space. During this rationalistic period, new parks were built, while others were redesigned, to incorporate spaces for all manner of recreational activity: baseball and football fields; basketball courts; standardized playground equipment; golf courses; zoos; swimming pools; walking areas; bicycling; tennis courts; and track and field.

Throughout the twentieth century, as cities grew and their economies became more oriented toward manufacturing, urban residents had more leisure time and the passive qualities of the genteel parks no longer satisfied them. Therefore, a new environmental imaginary emerged. The environmental imaginary of the recreational facility shifted in response as the working- and middle-classes clamored for park programming and recreational spaces. Epitomizing the efficiency-focused mindset of mid-century municipal technocrats, like Robert Moses in New York City, cities created new recreational spaces by transforming the grassy and open spaces of the pleasure ground into asphalt and concrete spaces.[23] Within this new imaginary, people, responding to the call by social

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[22] Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*. See also Terence Young, "Modern urban parks" *Geographical Review* 85(1995): 535-551.

[23] Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Knopf, 1974); Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 439-468; Marta Gutman, "Race, place, and play: Robert Moses and the WPA swimming pools in New York City,"

reformers for exercise as a way toward moral improvement, wanted to be able to play games. In seeking enjoyment they believed that these new park experiences—within a democracy—were something all citizens should have access to.[24] The elite urban leisure class went along with these transformations because they understood the logic in wholesome exercise since these forms of entertainment were meant to provide happy, docile masses, which translated into better workers and consumers.[25]

The abandonment of the Olmsted vision, in addition to a lack of municipal funding for park maintenance, led to the deterioration of the parks and prompted various efforts to restore and preserve Olmstedian parks in the 1980s. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as more of the masses using parks became lower-income and people of color, and as middle-class white flight set in, parks began to deteriorate due to the eroding tax base. By the 1970s, cities had an entire suite of crumbling physical and overstretched social infrastructures. In contrast to public safety and education, urban decision makers and technocrats considered parks to be a low budgetary priority, as they were perceived as 'fun' and social 'extras.' Moreover, they were beginning to be perceived as dangerous sites of crime and vice, and as tarnished jewels, they were to be avoided since they no longer served their aesthetic or recreative functions.[26]

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*Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67(2008): 532-561; Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* (New York: Random House, 2009).

[24] Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*; David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Terence Young, "Modern urban parks"; Robin Bachin, "Cultivating unity: the changing role of parks in urban America," *Places* 15(2003): 12-17.

[25] Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For general labor unrest see: David Ward, *Poverty, Ethnicity, and the City, 1840-1925: Changing Conceptions of the Slum and the Ghetto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Chapter 10 – "The last great chance for an American working class," of Carville Earle, *Geographical Inquiry and American Historical Problems* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (New York: United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, 1970[1955]).

[26] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People,* 469-504. See also: Caro, *The Power Broker*, 331-334; Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Rebuilding Central Park: A Management and Restoration Plan* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 16.

Beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, as an outgrowth of the social and environmental movements in America, urban residents rediscovered the parks and philosophies of Olmsted. Stemming from the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., civil rights, urban unrest, and environmental quality) people rediscovered Olmsted—the figure they believed attempted to alleviate the same problems nearly 100 years earlier. The rediscovery of Olmsted led to two new waves of park design.

Cranz identified the first new wave as the municipal "open space system" where the concern was for maintaining enough open space for citizens to get outside and enjoy fresh air and recreation. But this era also brought about a new recognition that environmental concerns were related to issues of inequality and the other social movements of the time, namely civil rights and urban unrest. Prompting an awareness of local social and environmental issues such as the degradation of urban public parks and the poor environmental quality of the city, the environmental movement of the 1970s also spawned the second new wave of park design in the 1990s—the "sustainable park."[27]

The increase of urban population globally (and the amount of resources urban residents consumed) has thrust the sustainable city into the discussions of how to better plan cities. Just as planners previously used the "city beautiful" and "garden city" as metaphors for ways to improve the city, contemporary planners employ the "sustainable city" as a guiding metaphor to address the environmental concerns brought about by cities. The goal of the sustainable city is to perpetuate itself while using less resource inputs and creating less harmful waste outputs.[28] By using green infrastructure (e.g., trees, plants, healthy soils, etc.) to remediate their environmental impact, cities

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[27] Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*; Cranz and Boland, "Defining the sustainable park"; Chiesura, "The role of urban parks for the sustainable city."

[28] Stephanie Pincetl, "Nature, urban development, and sustainability—What new elements are needed for a more comprehensive understanding?" *Cities* 29(2012): S32-S37.

have begun to regulate greenhouse gases, control erosion, improve flood protection and water quality, and improve habitats for urban animals.[29]

The belief that the restoration of existing park stock would help to create a more sustainable city serves as the guiding principle behind the sustainable park.[30] The main design elements of the *sustainable park* focus on improving urban ecologies, and therefore, stress elements such as healthy street trees and urban forests, the use of native plants, green infrastructures, permeable surfaces, and improving air and water quality.[31] This represents a clear shift in the relationship of the park to the city; the city is now considered part of nature. The main goal of the sustainable park is to help improve the ecological health of the city by encouraging public participation in revitalizing their local park.

This is where I break from park historians who view the evolution of park design as leading to the sustainable park. The reliance on public participation via private park friends groups and conservancies has brought about a major shift in the social production of urban parks. While sustainability may be a central focus of contemporary park design, the driving force behind the *conservancy park* is neoliberal urbanism. Resulting from the grassroots activism of the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s, the current era of the conservancy park relies on local citizens to act as stewards and take control of their local park, improve the landscape, and make it more ecological sustainable. In the 1970s and 1980s, cities like Boston with shrinking municipal budgets

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[29] Rutherford Platt, Rowan Rowntree, and Pamela Muick, eds., *The Ecological City: Preserving and Restoring Urban Biodiversity* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994); Rutherford Platt, ed., *The Humane Metropolis: People and Nature in the 21st-Century City* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Timothy Beatley and Kristi Manning, *The Ecology of Place: Planning for Environment, Economy, and Community* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997); Timothy Beatley, *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000); Eugenie Birch and Susan Wachter, eds., *Growing Greener Cities: Urban Sustainability in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[30] Platt, *Humane Metropolis*; Chiesura, "The role of urban parks for the sustainable city."

[31] Anthony Walmsley, "Greenways and the making of urban form," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 33(1995): 81-127; Cranz and Boland, "Defining the sustainable park"; Chiesura, "The role of urban parks for the sustainable city"; Pincetl and Gearin, "The reinvention of public green space."

imposed austerity measures and public parks became low budgetary priorities. Through deferred maintenance, public parks were neglected and the burden to maintain them fell on local members of private park friends groups and conservancies.[32] The main goal associated with the conservancy park, to restore these parks back to their original naturalistic aesthetic, highlights elements of public involvement and stewardship, where volunteering and fund raising were just as, if not more, important than hiking, nature appreciation, bird watching, and environmental education.

For all the rhetoric about public space by private park groups and conservancies, we must recognize that urban parks were produced and controlled by a hegemonic leisure class in the late-nineteenth century. To restore these parks back to some image of their nineteenth-century grandeur merely continues to symbolize their elite status. These restored parks, as forms of material culture, symbolize exclusion based upon an elite notion of a park's proper use and design. These cultural values serve as powerful tools with which to control urban space since the green images used to represent the sustainable city symbolize who belongs and who does not.

While the sustainable urbanism seeks to achieve a utopian balance between economic growth, ecological integrity, and cultural vitality, in reality something must give. In the case of park restoration, this generally means that a public park's egalitarian nature becomes compromised. The full benefits of a restored park are available for the elite leisure class, while others are marginalized. For some, high land values and rents prevent full access to, and use of, parks. For others, park rules and regulations, surveillance, an increased police presence, a lack of certain amenities, or poor public transportation limit access.[33] The public park landscape slowly becomes privatized and only

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[32] Dorecta Taylor, "Equity, influence, and access: Central Park's role in historical and contemporary urban park financing," *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy* 18(2010): 29-73.

[33] Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford, 2003); Cindi Katz, "Whose nature, whose culture? Private productions of space and the 'preservation' of nature," in *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium*, eds., Bruce Braun and Noel Castree (London: Routledge, 1998), 45-62; Jennifer Wolch, John P. Wilson, and Jed Ferhenbach, "Parks and park funding in Los Angeles: an equity-mapping analysis," *Urban Geography*

accessible by a "properly behaved public."[34] In this we see gentrification and the continued commodification of urban space, but now with a neoliberal twist. With the emergence of present-day neoliberal political systems of governance within American cities, the burden to restore and preserve these landscapes has shifted from away city government to private park groups and conservancies.

By the 1980s, the remaining members of the leisure class—who, as boosters, want their city to compete in the high-stakes race toward world class status—rediscovered the role that parks could play in enhancing real estate values and the idea that perhaps parks could help the city generate more tax revenue due to their aesthetic value.[35] Higher taxes also meant that the city would become more exclusionary with poorer residents relegated to places out of sight.

To improve the aesthetic qualities of these derelict landscapes, private park conservancies and not-for-profits revisited the old environmental imaginaries. In the case of the Emerald Necklace, these private park conservancies and friends groups, as well as city and state officials, resurrected Olmsted's vision and activated his celebrity to add aura and luster to the park system. They set out to restore his original vision by employing several twenty-first century modifications that allowed them to make use of modern, scientific, and environmentally-friendly ways of managing a completely engineered, but seemingly natural, ecosystem. To recreate their idealized vision of a park landscape, members of private park conservancies and city and state officials relied on the ghost of Olmsted.

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26(2005): 4-35; Nik Heynen, Harold A. Perkins, and Parama Roy, "The political ecology of urban green space: the impact of political economy on race and ethnicity in producing environmental inequality in Milwaukee," *Urban Affairs Review* 42(2006): 3-25

[34] Don Mitchell, "The end of public space? People's Park, definitions of the public, and democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85(1995), 115.

[35] Sarah Nicholls and John Crompton, "The impact of greenways on property values: evidence from Austin, Texas," *Journal of Leisure Research* 37(2005): 321-341; John Crompton and Sarah Nicholls, "An assessment of tax revenues generated by homes proximate to a greenway," *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* 24(2006): 103-108.

**The Ghost of Olmsted**

Considered by many to be the founder of the field of landscape architecture and the nation's preeminent park maker, Olmsted exerted great influence in shaping the American cultural landscape.[36] After he retired, his sons continued his design tradition well into the twentieth century, meaning that the Olmsted firm designed (or consulted) on nearly 1,000 parks, parkways, and recreation areas.[37] The Olmsted firm designed urban parks as pleasure grounds, which with their pastoral and picturesque scenes, provided spaces for passive forms of recreation (e.g., carriage rides, promenading, nature viewing, contemplation, and relaxation) in a naturalistic landscape. These tranquil spaces provided a respite from the day-to-day affairs of an increasingly unhealthy urban environment.

Much of the scholarly work addressing Olmsted, in general, and his park designs, specifically, is largely celebratory in nature. In praising the genius of Olmsted, urban historians, landscape architects, and environmental historians emphasize both his reformist visions and the revolutionary character of his park designs.[38] In celebrating the beginnings of the field of landscape architecture, Catherine Howett notes that, "we can take as a reasonable starting place the heroic father-figure of Frederick Law Olmsted, who like Adam in the first garden, took possession of the

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[36] Albert Fein, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition* (New York: George Braziller, 1972); Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Elizabeth Stevenson, *Park Maker: A Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (New York: Macmillan, 1977); Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Melvin Kalfus, *Frederick Law Olmsted: The Passion of a Public Artist* (New York: New York University Press, 1990); Lee Hall, *Olmsted's America: An 'Unpractical' Man and His Vision of Civilization* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1995); Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (New York: Universe, 1998); Witold Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance: Frederick Law Olmsted and America in the 19th Century* (New York: Touchstone, 1999); Justin Martin, *Genius of Place: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Cambridge: De Capo Press, 2011).

[37] Lucy Lawless, Caroline Laughlin, and Lauren Meier, eds., *The Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm, 1857-1979*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Association for Olmsted Parks, 2008), 37-81.

[38] Albert Fein, *Landscape into Cityscape: Frederick Law Olmsted's Plans for a Greater New York City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967); Charles E. Beveridge, "Toward a definition of Olmstedian principles of design," (Washington, D.C.: National Association for Olmsted Parks, 1986); Rybczynski, *A Clearing in the Distance*; David Grayson Allen, *The Olmsted National Historic Site and the Growth of Historic Landscape Preservation* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2007); Martin, *Genius of Place.*

new profession in the nineteenth century."[39] Due to the revolutionary character of his design for Central Park and his interest in land conservation in areas around Yosemite Falls, Olmsted is listed as one of the fifty key thinkers on the environment.[40] In lamenting the loss of the Olmstedian-vision for urban landscapes in an age of suburban sprawl, architect Witold Rybczynski praises the social qualities of Olmsted's parks where "the public park was to be the great outdoor living room of the city, where citizens would mingle and meet."[41] In celebrating the work and ideas of Olmsted, these works fit into a broader myth, whereby Olmsted, as a designer and planner of American cities represents an American hero, or a man from humble beginnings who struggled to find his calling, and after many false starts discovered his 'gift'—the ability to create landscapes that would allow urban residents to overcome the evils associated with the industrial city.[42]

Olmsted's landscape design career began when he was appointed superintendent of New York City's embryonic Central Park in 1857. That same year, he and his design partner, architect Calvert Vaux, submitted the winning design for the park. Olmsted was promoted to architect-in-chief and tasked with the responsibility of implementing the pair's "Greensward" design for Central Park. While primarily known as an urban park designer, Olmsted went on to design private estates, residential communities, government grounds, zoos and arboreta, as well as institutional grounds and campuses of prep schools and universities.[43]

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[39] Catherine Howett, "Ecological values in twentieth-century landscape design: A history and hermeneutics," *Landscape Journal* 17(1998), 81.

[40] Terry R. Schnadelbach, "Frederick Law Olmsted, 1822-1903," in *Fifty Key Thinkers on the Environment*, ed. Joy A. Palmer (London: Routledge, 2001), 122-130.

[41] Witold Rybczynski, "Why we need Olmsted again," *Wilson Quarterly* 23(1999), 81.

[42] Forgot in this myth is his class position. His father, a wealthy merchant, provided FLO with the resources to undertake his travels and efforts to be successful. FLO attended elite private schools like Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. His father also purchased a farm for him on Staten Island.

[43] For more detailed summary of the projects completed by the Olmsted firm, see Lawless, Laughlin, and Meier, *The Master List*. See also the new NAOP website that maps all of the projects of the Olmsted firm—http://www.olmsted.org/research/olmsted-online-mapping-project (accessed 9 Aug 2013). The NAOP created the site as an interactive web portal to provide links to maps, drawings, plans, and historic images associated with Olmsted's projects.

After Olmsted retired in 1895, his step-son, John C. Olmsted, and son, Frederick ("Rick") Law Olmsted, Jr., took on new partners and ran the day-to-day operations of the design firm well into the twentieth century.[44] This meant that for nearly a century there was an Olmsted actively shaping urban America. The Olmsted firm, in its various incarnations, worked in some capacity (e.g., consultations, site visits, plans, written reports) on more than 6,000 landscape projects, including over 1,000 projects for parks, parkways, recreation areas, and scenic reservations in the United States.[45] As cities rediscover their historic landscapes, we witness Olmsted still shaping urban America (more than a century after his death in 1903) and the ghost of Olmsted guides the restoration.

During the mid- to late-twentieth century, particularly as Olmstedian parks across the country fell into disrepair, local citizens began to recognize the original projects for their distinctive and unique qualities. Scholars and local historians began to learn more about the park designer and the nationwide Olmsted "renaissance" began. Historian Albert Fein notes that during this renaissance, Olmsted was "gradually being rediscovered and reinterpreted as a major figure in the American experience—comparable on numerous levels, to such persons as William Penn, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin."[46] The fervor with which local citizens rediscovered Olmsted spawned a neo-Olmstedian "cult" that centered on the man, his ideologies, and his landscapes.[47]

Members of this neo-Olmstedian cult recognized that "so many of his original creations, although badly in need of maintenance and repair, are still mostly intact [and] provide millions of

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[44] Susan L. Klaus, "All in the family: The Olmsted office and the business of landscape architecture," *Landscape Journal* 16(1997): 80-95; Allen, *The Olmsted Historic Site*.

[45] Lawless, Laughlin, and Meier, *The Master List*, 37-81.

[46] Fein, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition*, ix.

[47] McLaughlin, "Olmsted's parks," 7.

Americans and visitors with an emotional release analogous with music, art, and architecture."[48] The Olmsted renaissance spurred the emergence of a landscape aura associated with the symbolic qualities of the park landscape.[49] A park's aura relates to those distinctive historic or ecological qualities that affect interpretations of a park's historical significance and drive park restoration. It is not so much what parks were like that mattered, but rather the ways in which neo-Olmstedians believe that parks could be re-made in the Olmsted tradition that is most important. Further, once neo-Olmstedians highlight the historical significance of a city's parks, then these spaces become worthy of restoration. Restoration of significant landscapes would then help ensure that these parks become part of a special collection of places—places to be held up in the great urban competition to see who has the best city.

Unfortunately, in the neoliberal city, municipal governments have not been in much of a position to guide this restoration movement given all of their other responsibilities.[50] Therefore, the restoration and preservation effort was spearheaded by the formation of both national and local private, non-profit conservancies (e.g., National Association for Olmsted Parks, Central Park Conservancy, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy). While the non-profit conservancy rhetoric emphasized the egalitarian park principles they thought would justify public support, it completely downplayed both the elitist foundation upon which parks were originally built and the elitist agenda of the neoliberal city into which the restored park would be slotted. The neo-Olmstedian cult has fetishized the Olmstedian landscape, ignoring the elitism inherent in his park landscapes and hiding the ways in which restored parks were actually instruments of exclusion and products of an elite

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[48] Albert Fein, "The Olmsted renaissance: A search for national purpose," in *Art of the Olmsted Landscape*, eds., B. Kelly, G.T. Guillet, and M.E.W. Hern (New York: New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 1981), 107.

[49] Walter Benjamin, "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction," in *Media and Cultural Studies: Keyworks*, eds., M.G. Durham and D. Kellner (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 18-40.

[50] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism'," *Antipode* 34(2002): 349-379; Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing space," *Antipode* 34(2002): 380-404; Jason Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

nineteenth-century park agenda.[51]

Nationally, the canonization of "Saint Olmsted" helped to create the myth of Olmsted.[52] The renewed interest in Olmsted's work led to a national rediscovery of both his landscapes and politics, leading to a number of influential biographies, the re-issuing of his relevant writings, and the completion of dissertations and theses with a central focus on his landscape work.[53] This Olmsted renaissance helped to create the myth of Olmsted as an urban visionary who created and defined the role of landscape architects by creating a series of social institutions (e.g., parks, residential communities, academic institutions, and private estates) that would transform the public and private life of all Americans. Nationally, neo-Olmstedians have focused on three broad themes in the efforts to restore Olmsted-designed parks. First, neglected park landscapes and ecologies need to be restored. Second, the design elements that made a park an Olmstedian 'masterpiece'

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[51] For the conservative, elitist ideologies at the core of the nineteenth-century urban park, see: Blodgett, "Landscape architecture as conservative reform;" Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, 127-152; Scheper, "The reformist vision of Frederick Law Olmsted;" Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 211-259; Taylor, "Central Park as a model for social control;" Stephen Germic, *American Green: Class, Crisis, and the Deployment of Nature in Central Park, Yosemite, and Yellowstone* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001). For social exclusion generally, see: David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (London: Routledge, 1995); Chris Philo, "Social exclusion," in *Dictionary of Human Geography*, 5th eds., D. Gregory, R. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. Watts, and S. Whatmore, eds. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 691-692.

[52] The idea of referring to Olmsted as "Saint Olmsted" is attributed to Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, the founding president of the Central Park Conservancy. In the pages of *New York*, Carter Wiseman describes Rogers worship of Olmsted: "So devoted is she to the visions of Central Park's principle designer, Frederick Law Olmsted, that she occasionally refers to him as 'Saint Olmsted'" (27 Oct. 1980, pp. 20). See also: David Scobey, *Empire City: The Making of the New York City Landscape* (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 2002), 19-20. Despite this canonization, not everyone thought Olmsted was a saint. For critiques of FLO, see: Michael Pollan, "Why mow? The case against lawns," *New York Times Magazine* 28 May 1989, available from http://michaelpollan.com/articles-archives/why-mow-the-case-against-lawns (accessed on 09 Aug 2013); Tres Fromme and Michael Landers, "T.O.S.S.E.D./S.A.L.A.D. [Transgressing Our Severely Stunted Environmental Design/Secret Association of Landscape Architects Deconstructing]: Subverting today for a better tomorrow," *Landscape Journal* 16(1997): 99-107; Mark Hough, "Frederick Law Olmsted is holding us back," *Landscape Architecture* 102(2012): 136-141; Louise A. Mozingo and Linda Jewell, ed., *Women in Landscape Architecture: Essays on History and Practice* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2012).

[53] A May 2013 search of the ProQuest dissertation and thesis database revealed that since 1960 there have been 45 dissertations and theses with "Frederick Law Olmsted" in the title or abstract, and this does not include those that use the name in reference to FLO's son Rick. While most of them focus on the design philosophy and aesthetics of specific places and designs undertaken by FLO and his successor firms, some address his social and political stances on issues such as slavery.

need to be preserved and their historical significance explained. Lastly, the uniqueness of this complex of ecology, design, and history needs to be used for place-making/place-marketing.[54]

Boston's Emerald Necklace fits perfectly into this national pattern. First, the parks of the Emerald Necklace existed in the 1970s in a state of disrepair. Second, urban and landscape historians have studied this park system and pointed out its significance.[55] Finally, local citizens realized what a treasured landscape they had. They embraced the aura of the Olmstedian landscape vision, and selectively chose the parts of Olmsted scholarship to best help them win support for bringing the vision back to life. That rhetoric ended up within the *Emerald Necklace Parks Master Plan* (ENPMP).[56] This master plan represented a commitment by politicians, environmentalists, preservationists, and local citizens to restore the Olmsted legacy and vision in Boston.

In 1971, the parks of the Emerald Necklace were placed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the guidelines of the National Park Service's, this park landscape should be classified as an "historic designed landscape," since it "was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect… according to design principles, [is] associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture, [and] illustrates an important development in the theory and

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[54] For a discussion of the restoration of Olmsted parks, see: Rolf Sauer, "Master plan for renewing Louisville Kentucky's Olmsted parks and parkways: A guide to sustainable landscape management," *The George Wright FORUM* 13(1996): 64-75; Patricia M. O'Donnell, "Integrating cultural and natural landscape values in Louisville's Olmsted parks and parkways," *The George Wright FORUM* 13(1996): 76-96. For a discussion of place-making/place-marketing, see: Eugene J. McCann, "The cultural politics of local economic development: meaning-making, place-making, and the urban policy process," *Geoforum* 33(2002): 385-398; Richard M. Daley, "Revitalizing Chicago through parks and public spaces," *Places* 15(2003): 26-29.

[55] Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); Anne Whiston Spirn, *The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) and "Constructing nature: The legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 91-113; Alexander von Hoffman, "Of greater lasting consequence: Frederick Law Olmsted and the fate of Franklin Park, Boston," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47(1988): 339-350.

[56] Published in 1989 and updated in 2001, the ENPMP is concerned only with the Fens, the Riverway, Olmsted Park and Jamaica Pond. The Arnold Arboretum was not included due to its unique relationship between Harvard, which oversees and maintains the arboretum, and the city of Boston, which maintains the roads and polices the arboretum. Franklin Park was not included in the ENPMP due to its size and its own master plan was published in 1991.

practice of landscape architecture."[57] Considering that the parks met the National Register criteria, the proper preservation treatments needed to adhere to the guidelines found in the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. However, since landscapes are never static, and a significant portion of the park landscape has changed in the intervening years, the best treatment method was deemed to be restoration.

As a landscape treatment, restoration relies on in-depth historical research to inventory and document existing conditions, conduct a detailed historic plant inventory, and evaluate the landscape integrity and significance. This landscape treatment attempts to re-create or capture the original scenic views, but may use modern materials, plants, or construction methods. The guidelines recognize, however, due to changes in land-use (e.g., the construction of roads or buildings on former park land) perfect, or 'truthful,' restoration is impossible to achieve. As a consequence, the goal in re-creating a particular environmental imaginary becomes one of historical fidelity and compatibility based on an interpretation of the archival record. This means then, that the parks of the Emerald Necklace would not be restored by adhering only Olmsted's notes and plans—his *spirit* would guide and inform the process—and the ghost of Olmsted would haunt the plan.

Since the publication of the ENPMP in 1989, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the municipalities of Boston and Brookline, mainly through private conservancies and park friends groups, have actively engaged in the restoration of this park landscape. Discursive and textual interpretations of planning documents provide a unique opportunity to understand the power associated with plans, the narratives they tell, and the dreams, visions, and wishes of the

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[57] Charles A. Birnbaum, *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*. NPS Preservation Brief 36 (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1994). Available from http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief36.htm (accessed 10 Jan 2009).

narrators/planners.[58] Guided by "Olmsted precedents," the ENPMP represents what various governing bodies and private park conservancies viewed as the idealized representation of an Olmstedian park landscape.[59] This master plans relies on the ghost of Olmsted to restore and preserve the Olmsted legacy in Boston, and in doing so, it merely produces a particular environmental imaginary that *looks* and *feels* like the kind of landscape they believe Olmsted would create.

**Research Methods**

To gather the data with which to construct my theoretically informed narrative, I relied on a research design that focused primarily on archival research, as well as incorporated content analysis of historical and contemporary newspaper articles. I relied on three categories of primary documents for this study. First, materials from the Olmsted firm revealed the Olmsted park philosophy and the ways in which he implemented this philosophy in creating the park landscapes in the Emerald Necklace. Originally when I proposed my dissertation, I planned to conduct my research in the archives at *Fairsted*, Olmsted's Brookline home and office that is now part of Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site. However, beginning in January 2005, *Fairsted* underwent a major renovation to its fire detection and suppression system, as well as its security, electrical, and drainage systems, closing the site to visitors and researchers until spring 2011. Fortunately, the Olmsted Papers and the Olmsted Associates Papers collections were located at the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. These collections housed the bulk of the firm's

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[58] Seymour Mandelbaum, "Reading plans," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 56(1990): 350-356, and "Telling stories," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 10(1991): 209-214; Dvora Yanow, "Built space as story: The policy stories that buildings tell," *Policy Studies Journal* 23(1995): 407-422; Ruth Finnegan, *Tales of the City: A Study of Narrative and Urban Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Barbara Eckstein and James Throgmorton, eds., *Story and Sustainability: Planning, Practice and Possibility for American Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

[59] ENPMP, 123.

letterbooks, business records, and field reports associated with the firm's work in Boston for the years 1878-1896.[60]

Second, government reports and municipal planning documents detailed the production and reproduction of the Emerald Necklace. I focused on the annual reports from the park departments in Boston and Brookline, as well as Olmsted's advisory reports to each agency, available at the Boston and Brookline Public Libraries. Additionally, an analysis of the ecological and historical discourses found in the ENPMP helped to develop new understandings of the geographies of the social production and construction of urban nature and the role of public-private partnerships in the neoliberal city. By focusing on the restoration projects found in the ENPMP, I explored the narratives and the environmental imaginaries associated with the reproduction of this historic landscape by examining how competing concepts of urban nature and historical significance were constructed, experienced, and employed by local actors.

The last category of materials consisted of unpublished or ephemeral materials. Leaflets, historic broadsides, brochures, and website information for private park friends groups and conservancies, presented reasons and justifications for the creation, decline, and restoration of these urban parks. Sources of historical broadsides, leaflets, and unpublished reports included: the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Public Library, the Brookline Public Library, and the Francis Loeb Library at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. I also used the websites and newsletters of private park friends groups and conservancies to document their attitudes and park ideologies at specific moments in time.

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[60] Based on my exploration of the finding aids for the archival materials available at *Fairsted*, I do not think viewing any of this material would fundamentally change my arguments in this dissertation. This is especially so since during my visit to the Library of Congress, I found out that the bulk of the written correspondence and reports for the Olmsted firm's Boston years (1878-1896) were housed in the Library's Manuscript Division. The materials at *Fairsted* are mainly lithographs, photo collections, planting lists, and correspondence of the post-Olmsted Sr. era. It would simply provide more empirical evidence and detail—things that will be essential when I revise the dissertation into a book, but not provide much added value to this dissertation.

I also relied on a number of secondary source materials. In addition to selected scholarly writings by landscape/environmental historians, ecologists, historians, and geographers, I found both historic and contemporary local media reports extremely helpful. Through interpretation of historic reports in local newspapers, I developed a sense of past feelings and impressions of this park system. By following the contemporary events and projects associated with the planning process in local newspapers and staying current with the pace of restoration, I developed a better sense of what has happened to the parks over the last four decades and how the feelings of local residents have changed. This process was essential to my understanding of the re-production of this park landscape.

**Overview of Dissertation**

The chapters of this dissertation trace the ways in which the Emerald Necklace was socially produced according to particular environmental imaginaries. In the following chapters, I explore the ways in which the nineteenth-century creation of the Emerald Necklace, its twentieth-century decline, and its twenty-first-century rebirth reflect the environmental imaginaries that result from the evolution of American environmentalism. This theoretically informed narrative examines the ways in which parks, particularly the Olmstedian naturalistic landscape parks, have, and continue to, fit into urban political economy.

To craft this narrative, Chapter Two lays the groundwork as a theoretical chapter. This chapter links the production of naturalistic landscape parks in response to a variety urban crises secondary to industrial capitalism, and the ensuing creative destruction as a spatial fix. I examine the ways in which the production of naturalistic landscape parks provided a re-valuation of urban private property, a phenomenon known as the "proximate principle." By examining the processes

of gentrification under neoliberal urbanism, this chapter shows how shifting urban regimes have used the environmental imaginaries of naturalistic landscape parks as instruments of exclusions. This is based on an argument by geographer David Sibley that "power is expressed in the monopolization of space and the relegation of weaker groups in society to less desirable environments."[61] In this chapter, I explore the "greening" of cities by arguing that the manipulation of urban nature plays a vital role in the redevelopment of urban spaces. Additionally, I examine the ways in which a focus on urban sustainability reflects a form of eco-gentrification, whereby neoliberal urbanism relies on these strategies to produce aesthetically pleasing landscapes in order to attract mobile capital and urban professionals.

Chapter Three examines the elitist foundation of this park system by investigating the late-nineteenth century political, cultural, economic, and environmental concerns of Boston's Brahmin, the city's elite leisure class. I have two aims in this chapter. First, to show how, contrary to the Olmsted scholars who place much of the responsibility for park production at the feet of Olmsted, resurrecting the ghost of Olmsted fetishizes this park landscape and hides the fact that politicians, municipal employees, local merchants, social reformers, engineers, masons, horticulturalists, and laborers all played major roles in creating the Emerald Necklace. Second, to show how the parks of the Emerald Necklace did more than provide spaces for passive, genteel recreation—they advanced the economic and cultural agendas of Boston's leisure class through the interplay of three specific categories of action: boosterism, real estate speculation, and the Olmstedian landscape aesthetic.

In Chapter Four, I examine the development of Olmsted's naturalistic design philosophy. Beginning with his early childhood travels in search of the picturesque and his pre-landscape professions, I explore the ways in which his early life shaped the man behind the designs. I focus on

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[61] Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion,* ix.

his work with Calvert Vaux in Central Park to develop a model of naturalistic landscape park design. Finally, I examine his republican ideals and how they translated into the production of the specific engineered urban ecosystems in the Emerald Necklace by using the creation of the Back Bay Fens as a case study. I focus on the Fens for three reasons: 1) it was his first project in Boston, 2) the goal was to improve the sanitation of the city and required the engineering of a new urban ecosystem, and 3) his design contributed to the proximate principle by helping to shape the development and growth of Boston's elite Back Bay neighborhood. By examining his first published plan for the Fens, I highlight the ways in which Olmsted's park philosophy was represented in the material landscape.

Chapter Five examines the modernization of these parks, including the twentieth-century abandonment of the original Olmsted design and the addition of highly specialized park spaces for active forms of recreation. I study the state of the parks of the Emerald Necklace during the 1970s and 1980s, which, after decades of neglect due to deferred maintenance, had become derelict spaces, havens of crime, and degraded ecosystems in need of restoration. I focus on the role of race in shaping these park landscapes by examining the ways in which white flight and the declining tax base led to deferred maintenance. Specifically, I focus on Franklin Park to highlight the ways in which racial tensions associated with rapid demographic shifts impacted the parks in the 1960s and 1970s.

In Chapter Six, I show how efforts to restore the parks of the Emerald Necklace represented a new park typology—the conservancy park. The overriding factor in this era of park design is the reliance on private park groups and conservancies to carry out restoration objectives. I show how the work of groups like the Emerald Necklace Conservancy represents the entrepreneurial dimensions of neoliberal urbanism. I explore the ways in which private park conservancies, and city and state officials, have relied upon the ghost of Olmsted to guide the restoration process. As part

of an urban sustainability fix, the restoration of this park system has been based less on scientific or technical criteria than on aesthetics and economic interests. By fetishizing the Olmsted vision, park restoration reflects the symbolic economy associated with the redevelopment and gentrification of post-industrial neoliberal cities.

My goal for Chapter Seven is to reframe the discussion around urban sustainability to focus on a more progressive (future-oriented) restoration of urban parks. Park restoration, as carried out through the ENPMP, is past-oriented, conservative, and unsustainable. I examine the ways in which the ENPMP uses the ghost of Olmsted to improve the landscape composition and the watercourses, which results in the "museumification" of urban nature and creates static, rather then process-oriented landscapes.[62] By focusing on the park as a process, and not just as a thing, I argue that twenty-first century American cities need a progressive restoration that focuses on ecological function rather than simply the recomposition of historic landscapes or improving the aesthetics of the landscape.

Finally in Chapter Eight, I summarize my major arguments regarding the creation, decline and rebirth of Olmstedian urban parks to show how the parks of the Emerald Necklace fit into the political economy of the city. I highlight the ways in which various urban regimes utilized urban public parks as a spatial fix. I contend that the ghost of Olmsted has guided the restoration of the parks of the Emerald Necklace as carried out by private park conservancies, along with city and state officials. These park advocates use Olmsted as a guide and try to restore a park landscape back to something Olmsted might have done, and therefore, I argue that this conservative view (as opposed to a progressive, forward-looking view) of historic landscape preservation and restoration creates static, rather than process-oriented, landscapes.

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[62] Paul Gobster, "Urban park restoration and the 'museumification' of nature," *Nature and Culture* 2(2007): 95-114.

# CHAPTER 2

## LANDSCAPE AND POWER: CAPITALIST URBANIZATION AND THE NATURALISTIC PARK

> *It could be argued, therefore, that cities are places where nature and its social relations are being intensely reworked. The issues of social cohesion and exclusion are also important as the production of urban environments is interlaced by uneven power relations and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Social cohesion/exclusion become etched into the particular processes through which nature is reworked through urbanization.*
>
> --Erik Swyngedouw and Ian Cook[1]

My goal for this chapter is to weave together various concepts coming from disparate sources to form the theoretical underpinnings of this dissertation. By relying on ideas and theories from historical and economic geography, political ecology, urban history, and leisure studies, this chapter examines the ways in which, as Swyngedouw and Cook point out in the quote above, the production of an urban park landscape is "interlaced by uneven power relations and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion."

The social production of urban public parks requires a great amount of engineering and reworking of nature. In nineteenth-century American cities, a new physical environment, the naturalistic landscape park, was based on a specific environmental imaginary that privileged elite representations of both the pastoral and the picturesque. Employing this environmental imaginary, nineteenth-century urban regimes etched social exclusion into the built and natural environments of the city. Examining the uneven power relations associated with reworking nature in the city requires a method of analysis that helps explicate the ways in which cities produce (and re-produce)

[1] Erik Swyngedouw and Ian Cook, "Cities, social cohesion and the environment." Available from http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/geography/staff/documents/Cities_social_cohesion_and_environment.pdf (accessed on 17 Mar 2012).

naturalistic landscape parks within urban political economy. Recognizing that capitalist development has existed in cyclical waves of crisis and recovery, I analyze the creation and restoration of naturalistic landscape parks by combining a concern for urban socionature with a historical materialist focus on urban development.

Within capitalist development, the processes of recovery, or creative destruction, entail economic decision-making, reworking social relations, and transformations of both built and natural environments.[2] These transformations, or spatial fixes, reflect the values and ideologies of the dominant power regimes.[3] From this, then, a critical geographical-history of the production of naturalistic landscape parks allows us to "disentangle the interwoven knots of *social process*, *material metabolism*, and *spatial form* that go into the formation of contemporary urban socionatural landscapes."[4] To disentangle these socionatural relations, I focus on the connections between urban regime analysis, creative destruction and the spatial fix, gentrification and neoliberal urbanism, and a critical urban environmental history to emphasize the ways that naturalistic landscape parks represent particular environmental imaginaries.

"Environmental imaginaries," or cultural beliefs about how environments (and our relationships to them) influence human activity, are useful to understand the ways in which the socially constructed meanings of nature inform social power and material practice in relation to urban landscapes.[5] Geographers Michael Watts and Richard Peet argue that dominant cultural

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[2] Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Max Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[3] Throughout his career, David Harvey has written extensively on the urban geographies of modern capitalism. Among his work on the spatial fix, include: "The spatial fix: Hegel, von Thünen, and Marx," *Antipode* 13(1981): 1-12, *The Limits to Capital* (London: Verso, 1999), 431-445, and "Globalization and the 'spatial fix'," *Geographische Revue* 2(2001): 23-30.

[4] Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw, "Urban political ecology," 8 emphasis in original.

[5] Michael Watts and Richard Peet, "Conclusion: Towards a theory of liberation ecology," in *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements*, eds. Richard Peet and Michael Watts (London: Routledge, 1996), 260-269; Sharon Zukin, *et al.*, "From Coney Island to Las Vegas in the urban imaginary: Discursive practices of growth and

groups produce environmental imaginaries as ways of viewing and regarding nature, and include all "those forms of social and individual practice, which are ethically proper and morally right with regard to nature."[6] As such, they note that environmental imaginaries are the "prime site of contestations between normative visions" for the urban landscape.[7] Therefore, the use of the imaginary is a useful tool to demonstrate the ways in which social power has been exercised in different park eras through the creation of cultural symbols and the material transformations of the park landscape.

**Urban Regime Analysis**

From the colonial period, economic growth has been an essential goal associated with American cities and each city implemented various growth strategies to achieve it. In describing the urban growth machine, sociologist Harvey Molotch argued that:

> …the political and economic essence of virtually any given locality, in the present American context, is growth…The desire for growth provides key operative motivation towards consensus for members of politically mobilized local elites [and] that common interest in growth is the overriding commonality among people in a given locale…Further this growth imperative is the most important constraint upon available options for local initiative in social and economic reform.[8]

Urban regime theory helps to situate these growth strategies within broader political-economic contexts. As a tool to explain the public- and private-sector relationships in American cities, social

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decline," *Urban Affairs Review* 33(1998): 627-645; Matthew Gandy, "Urban nature and the ecological imaginary," in *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of the Urban Metabolism*, eds., Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw (New York: Routledge, 2006), 63-74; Matthew Huber and Timothy Currie, "The urbanization of an idea: Imagining nature through urban growth boundary policy in Portland, Oregon," *Urban Geography* 28(2007): 705-731.

[6] Watts and Peet, "Conclusion," 268.

[7] Watts and Peet, "Conclusion," 268.

[8] Harvey Molotch, "The city as growth machine: Toward a political economy of place," *The American Journal of Sociology* 82(1976), 309-310.

scientists have begun to utilize urban regime analysis to take into account the management of stakeholder interests necessary to achieve consensus strategies for urban growth.[9]

In his work on urban politics in Atlanta, political scientist Clarence Stone defines an urban regime as "an informal, yet relatively stable group, with *access to institutional resources* that enable it to have a sustained role in making governing decisions." He further explains the power held by the regime as the "power to," or the ability to act, instead of a form of "power over" others, even though the power to act can ultimately end up being construed as power over others.[10] Urban regimes thus act to influence cooperation and consensus from government and non-government actors.

To understand the patterns of creative destruction associated with park production in Boston's Emerald Necklace, I examine the urban regimes (e.g., politicians, merchants, boosters, reformers, nonprofit groups, etc.) responsible for creating and managing parks in Boston. In doing so, I interpret the political, economic, and social processes, as well as the technological innovations, embedded in the park landscape. In short, I examine the historical geography associated with the social production of park landscapes.

The key to understanding the evolution of a park landscape is recognizing that park spaces are imbued with the powerful ideologies and values of the dominant regime. To understand the changing cultural attitudes toward the social production of Boston's Emerald Necklace, I examine the "relationship between cultural production and material practice" to uncover the specific

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[9] Kevin Ward, "Rereading urban regime theory: A sympathetic critique," *Geoforum* 27(1996): 427-438; David Gibbs and Andrew E.G. Jonas, "Governance and regulation in local environmental policy: the utility of a regime approach," *Geoforum* 31(2000): 299-313; Karen Mossberger and Gerry Stoker, "The evolution of urban regime theory: The challenge of conceptualization," *Urban Affairs Review* 36(2001): 810-835.

[10] Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 4 and 229, emphasis in original.

geographical and historical processes at work in Boston.[11] Understanding the relationship between ideology and the normative dimension of the material landscape is essential since, as geographer Don Mitchell acknowledges, landscape:

> is thus ideology made solid: a produced space that does *more* than represent...[it] is a structured way of seeing, a particular (and of course contested) way of viewing and therefore interacting with the land and built environment. But as a particular, structured way of seeing, landscape has historically been established as *the* way of seeing. Landscape is didactic in that it teaches us to look in certain ways and to value aesthetics (over any number of other ways of knowing) as a means toward understanding the nature, status, and meaning of a place.[12]

Park historians and urban geographers should consider the ideological values and attitudes of the dominant power regimes, but also look at *how* those ideologies, values and attitudes materially manifest themselves in the park landscape. As artifacts of material culture, urban parks should "be seen in dialectical relation with the ideational side of cultural practices" in order to understand both why the park landscape looks like it does and how various economic, political, and cultural processes influenced its physical form.[13]

One way that park historians can unearth the ideologies and values of the dominant power regime is to interpret the landscape by uncovering the ways in which the physical landscape represents calcified values, ideologies, and social relations. In *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, geographer Denis Cosgrove claims that, "a cultural concept like the landscape idea does not emerge unprompted from the minds of individuals or human groups," but instead, he argues, the concept of

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[11] Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 2.

[12] Don Mitchell, "New axioms for reading the landscape: Paying attention to political economy and social justice," in *Political Economies of Landscape Change: Places of Integrative Power*, eds. James L. Wescoat and Douglas M. Johnson (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 44.

[13] Richard Walker, "Unseen and disbelieved: A political economist among cultural geographers," in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, eds. Paul Groth and Todd Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 172. See also: Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers in the California Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) and Anne Mosher, *Capital's Utopia: Vandergrift, Pennsylvania, 1855-1916* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

landscape should be thought of as "a way of seeing that has its own history, but a history that can understood only as a part of a wider history of economy and society."[14] Cosgrove notes that the dominant cultural group (urban regime) wields its power in the city by controlling various political, economic, and cultural institutions, and by imposing its ideologies and values onto the material form of the urban landscape.

A new approach to the study of parks is needed to move beyond the questions of what a park is, or what a park means, but to ask what a park does, or how a park works as a cultural practice. Once built, parks become embedded in the urban landscape, and over time, the social relations that produced these landscapes become hidden from view. A new approach to park research is needed to "trace the process by which the landscape effaces its own readability and naturalizes itself and must understand that process in relation to what might be called *the natural histories* of its beholders."[15] By engaging in these histories (really a form of urban regime analysis), I examine the ways in which the values, ideologies, and attitudes of the urban leisure class have helped to shape park infrastructure in Boston. In this way, I use urban parks as a lens through which to view the processes of creative destruction and changes in the city's political economy.

**Creative Destruction: Urban Parks as a Spatial Fix**

The notion of creative destruction, an ongoing cycle of destruction and reinvention within capitalist development, helps explain the rapid physical changes in American cities.[16] In his 1942 seminal work, Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter argues that creative destruction is "the essential fact

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[14] Cosgrove, *Social Formation*, 1-2.

[15] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Introduction," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 2 emphasis added.

[16] Paul Knox, "The restless urban landscape: Economic and sociocultural change and the transformation of metropolitan Washington, DC," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81(1991): 181-209; Susan Fainstein, *The City Builders: Property, Politics, and Planning in London and New York* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994); Mosher, *Capital's Utopia*.

about capitalism."[17] The processes of creative destruction bring about disruptive innovations, or new technologies or materials that improve industrial efficiency, and therefore, change the dimensions of competition:

> in capitalist reality as distinguished from its textbook picture, it is not [price] competition which counts but the competition from the new commodity, the new technology, the new source of supply, the new type of organization… competition which commands a decisive cost or quality advantage and which strikes not at the margins of the profits and outposts of the existing firms but at their foundations and their very lives.[18]

Regarding urban development, architectural historian Max Page argues that creative destruction embodies the dialectical tensions "between stability and change; between market forces and planning controls; between economic and cultural value; and between what is considered 'natural' and 'unnatural' in the growth of the city."[19] The processes of creative destruction helps to "wash away the dead weight of past investment" to create new urban forms such as new office buildings, condominiums, or naturalistic landscape parks.[20] The preservation of a historic structure, whether it's a building or a park, exemplifies the tensions between permanence and change, and the struggles over control of urban space.[21] Creative destruction is more than just an expression of the physical transformations of the urban landscape, it is also an expression of the social relations of the city.

To maintain its place in the global marketplace, a city must engage in forms of creative destruction, which as Harvey argues, is "embedded within the circulation of capital itself."[22] The disruptive nature of innovation resulting from creative destruction "exacerbates instability,

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[17] Schumpeter, *op. cit.*, 83.

[18] *Ibid*, 83-84.

[19] Page, *Creative Destruction*, 3.

[20] David Harvey, *The Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 192.

[21] James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1990); Michael Holleran, *Boston's "Changeful Times": Origins of Preservation and Planning in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its History, Principles, and Practice*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000).

[22] Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 106.

insecurity, and in the end, becomes the prime force pushing capitalism into periodic paroxysms of crisis."[23] For example, crises of overaccumulation (crises in the productive realm), occur when more capital is produced than can reasonably be employed. The "symptoms" associated with these kinds of crises include a glut of commodities, high unemployment, falling rates of profit, and a surplus of productive capacity.[24] These crises may be delayed, but never fully alleviated, by investing in new technologies, machinery, and infrastructure (even parks).

The destruction of past assets to provide space for new assets is essential for urban and economic progress.[25] Harvey contends that efforts to reinvest in creative destruction take on spatial dimensions:

> …capital flow presupposes tight temporal and spatial coordination in the midst of increasing separation and fragmentation. It is impossible to imagine such a material process without the production of some kind of urbanization as a 'rational landscape' within which the accumulation of capital can proceed. Capital accumulation and the production of urbanization go hand in hand.[26]

Capital, therefore, transforms the urban landscape in myriad ways. This includes the commodification of urban space through the replacement of older industrial districts with trendy restaurants, hip boutiques and shops, high-end lofts in converted textile mills, museums, historic districts, and other urban spectacles that incorporate historical themes and memories.[27] The preservation and restoration of historic landscapes, including urban parks, represent important sites within the processes of creative destruction.

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[23] *Ibid*, 106.

[24] Geraldine Pratt, "Reproduction, class, and the spatial structure of the city," in *New Models in Geography: The Political Economy Perspective*, vol. 2., eds. Richard Peet and Nigel Thrift (London: Unwin Hyman, Ltd., 1989), 88.

[25] Harvey, *Condition*, 230.

[26] Harvey, *Urban Experience*, 22.

[27] Harvey, *Condition;* Steve Britton, "Tourism, capital, and place: Towards a critical geography of tourism," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 9(1991): 451-478; M. Christine Boyer, "Cities for sale: Merchandising history at South Street Seaport," in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed., Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 181-204; Sharon Zukin *The Cultures of Cities* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1995).

The circulation of capital, paradoxically, requires the fixing of some capital *in situ,* and this fixed capital serves as a spatial fix. Infrastructure embodies this seeming contradiction. As the underlying physical (e.g., roads, water systems, power lines, railways, ports, phone and computer networks) and organizational (e.g., government, banking systems, emergency management systems, health care systems, education systems), foundations upon which future urban growth depends, infrastructure is a form of fixed capital.

Two different spatial fixes exist to resolve the crises of capitalism: an inner and an outer fix. The inner fix, or "immovable fixed capital," is a literal fix—one that fixes capital in a given location in a physical form.[28] Nineteenth-century American cities employed the inner fix by buying land, investing in the construction of a new urban park, and connecting these parks to the city with new roads. The outer fix, or a "metaphorical fix," focuses on geographical expansion through the "export of surplus capital or labor beyond the boundaries of the space of region in which it was generated."[29] Numerous nineteenth-century American cities that lacked the necessary space for parkland within its boundaries planned for parks via geographical expansion and the annexation of suburban land.

In describing creative destruction's impact on urban built environments, landscape architect James Corner emphasizes the process-oriented landscape by noting that "the designation *terra firma* gives way in favor of the shifting processes coursing through and across the urban field: *terra fluxus*."[30] The urban landscape is a *process* and not just a *thing.* Parks, and their value, are not static and exist in a state of flux. While some of this volatility has been linked to broader economic cycles,

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[28] Harvey, *Limits*, 232.

[29] Bob Jessop, "Spatial fixes, temporal fixes, and socio-temporal fixes," in *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, eds., Noel Castree and Derek Gregory (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 147.

[30] James Corner, "Terra fluxus," in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, ed. Charles Waldheim (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006), 30.

some if it also reflected the ways in which parks age. For example, as visitors use a park, it can become worn out—grass and flowers can get trampled, soil can erode, invasive plant species can take root, water quality can become degraded, and public bathrooms, park benches, and other elements of physical infrastructure can suffer vandalism. All of this requires maintenance or replacement, and therefore, capital must be devoted to parks on a regular basis to overcome this "normal" wear and tear.

I view the social production of urban parks (e.g., creation, abandonment, and restoration) as resting on the relationships between three variables:

1. *Entrepreneurial investment*: The goal of capital accumulation drives investment (and reinvestment) in spaces that become parks.
2. *Consumption*: These investments and improvements in urban public parks attract park users in creative upswings, and may drive some away if disinvestment and deterioration occur in a destructive downswing.
3. *Destruction of nature*: Over time parks degrade in some manner, disinterest sets in, and visitors stop using them. If the park is to persist, further investment and improvements will be needed.[31]

When naturalistic landscape parks are valued, and their landscape aesthetic maintained, their use value as an environmental amenity helps to provide surplus value by enhancing adjacent private property values.[32] But when parks are not valued, they are no longer maintained and therefore, their landscape aesthetic suffers and park visitation decreases, which negatively impacts the value of adjacent properties.

Driven by the quest for higher profits, members of the capitalist class participate in processes of investment, disinvestment, and reinvestment that give shape to the ebb and flow of

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[31] Claire Mitchell, Greg Atkinson, and Andrew Clark, "The creative destruction of Niagara-on-the-Lake," *Canadian Geographer* 45(2001): 285-299.

[32] Nicholls, "Measuring the impact of parks on property values;" Nicholls and Crompton, "The impact of greenways on property values;" Crompton and Nicholls, "An assessment of tax revenues generated by homes proximate to a greenway."

capital accumulation. Cash-strapped cities, however, hesitate to maintain parks, especially as the engineering associated with the park comes to the end of its design life. A park's design lifespan varies depending upon the original design, changes to the design in intervening years, the cost of repairs and maintenance, the general rate of technological change, and the conditions of labor power. Capital, therefore, must be expended to overcome the limitations inherent in this design-life problem. The question facing both the public- and private-sectors is: Is park restoration a political or economic priority when the time comes? If parks are highly regarded then the answer will be 'yes.' If the answer is 'yes, but other things (e.g., schools, hospitals, fire, police, or other infrastructure systems) are more critical,' then parks tend to be neglected. In order to understand why parks are highly regarded some times, but not at others, we must examine the historical geography of the urban regimes associated with the social production of parks.

In his last work, *The American Way*, the culmination of a life's work analyzing the geographical history of the United States, Carville Earle examines the interaction between American geography and political economy over a 400-year time period.[33] Though Earle does not explicitly use the term "spatial fix," he makes an argument similar to Harvey's—the state develops cyclical

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[33] Throughout his career, Earle challenged traditionally accepted historical interpretations and ways of thinking about landscape. As a geographical historian, Earle saw it as his role to teach historians about the value of geography and the spatial perspective. He accomplished this by publishing numerous articles with historians and in history journals. In his later years, Earle played a major role in advancing the subdiscipline of historical geography by serving as editor of the journal *Historical Geography* and the flagship journal of the Association of American Geographers, the *Annals*. As chair of the AAG Historical Geography Specialty Group, Earle invited distinguished non-geographers whose work had a geographical dimension, like Immanuel Wallerstein and G. William Skinner, to the present the Distinguished Lecture in the Historical Geography of Social Change. Earle tirelessly argued for the reintegration of geography and history, based not on simple chronology and description, but rather on theoretically informed explanation and interpretation. See: Carville Earle and Ron Hoffman, "Staple crops and urban development in the eighteenth-century South," *Perspectives in American History* 10(1976); Carville Earle and Ron Hoffman, "The foundation of the modern economy: Agriculture and the costs of labor in the United States and England, 1800-60," *American Historical Review* 85(1980): 1055-1094; Sari Bennett and Carville Earle, "The geography of strikes in the United States, 1881-1894," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13(1982): 63-84; Carville Earle, "The price of precocity: Technical choice and ecological constraint in the Cotton South, 1840-1890," *Agricultural History* 66(1992): 25-60; Carville Earle, "Divisions of labor: The splintered geography of labor markets and movements in industrializing America, 1790-1930," *International Review of Social History* 38(1993): 5-37; Samuel Otterstrom and Carville Earle, "The settlement of the United States from 1790 to 1990: Divergent rates of growth and the end of the frontier," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 33(2002): 59-85.

strategies to alleviate the periodic crises of capitalism. What is interesting about Earle's perspective is how he embedded these fixes within the comprehensive sweep of American history. Earle develops a model of "dialectical policy regimes" linking state decisions regarding creative destruction to historical moments in America. By using this intriguing model, which may be too mechanistic and deterministic, I hope to raise questions and issues about the ways in which urban political-economy structured, and enabled, particular spatial practices which resulted in the creation, abandonment, and restoration of parks—issues that other park historians and Olmsted scholars simply have not addressed.[34]

Earle's model of dialectical policy regimes rests on the notion that the flow of American history exists in a 40- to 60-year, alternating pattern of two ideological policy regimes based on the waxing and waning of economic supercycles.[35] Each regime arises as a response to economic crisis and recovery. Each alternating regime struggles to solve the crises spurred by the previous regime, which spearheads a moment of creative destruction, and which alleviates immediate crises but later leads to new ones.

Earle links the roots of American geography to the seventeenth-century ideologies of the capitalist societies of Europe. Specifically, he notes that the English response to crisis and recovery alternated between "two distant but not bipolar approaches to governance…namely the alternating ideologies and geographies of liberalism and republicanism."[36] In America, Earle argues, the response to crisis and recovery favored "two new and more supple alloys" of these philosophies, namely republics and democracies.[37] In describing the ways in which republics responded to crisis

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[34] Anne E. Mosher, "Earle's theory and conception of the geographical history of the United States," and "Earle's dialectical policy regimes and the Erie Canal," in *Geography, History and the American Political Economy*, eds., John Heppen and Samuel Otterstrom (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 7-17 and 99-123.

[35] Nikolai Kondratieff, "The long waves of economic life," *The Review of Economic Statistics* 17(1935): 105-115.

[36] Earle, *American Way*, 15.

[37] *Ibid*, 15.

and recovery, Earle argues that they "fused liberal preferences for elite domestic policies, regional specialization and stability, and producer revolution with republican preferences for nationalist foreign policies, expansion and demographic concentration." Conversely, Earle argues that democracies "fused republican biases of egalitarian domestic policies, diversified and volatile regions, and consumer revolution with liberal biases of internationalist (free trade) foreign policies, geographical consolidation, and demographic dispersion."[38] The regimes of the elitist republics tend to come to power to tackle crises of overaccumulation (production), while the egalitarian regimes of the democracies arise to address crises of consumption (reproduction).[39]

Crises of production occur when prices and productivity are low, and therefore the policy regime of the state favors an elitist business environment that fosters technological innovation, spatial reorganization, and changes in social relations between labor and capital. This results in the resolution of the crises and an economic upswing. The policies of elitist republics promote forms of creative destruction that favor innovation and foster capital accumulation leading to wealth disparities, which eventually lead to crises of consumption. These regimes also foster geographical expansion (outer spatial fix) in order to find new ways of appropriating nature to promote capital accumulation. While this includes doing things like opening the frontier to primary economic activities, it also includes doing things in urban areas, like creating naturalistic landscape parks.[40]

The elite qualities of the urban regime responsible for producing parks as large pleasure grounds can be found in the imposition of social control measures, such as, rules controlling behavior in the parks and the creation of park keepers to police the parks.[41] These nineteenth-

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[38] Earle, *American Way*, 15.

[39] Earle noted that there have been three republics (1780-1820s, 1880-1920s, and 1980-present) and two democracies (1820s-1880 and 1920s-1970s) in American history.

[40] Mosher, "Earle's theory," 12.

[41] Blodgett, "Frederick Law Olmsted;" Taylor, "Central Park as a model for social control;" Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 211-259. For examples of the role of the Central Park Keepers' Service, see: FLO,

century elite pleasure grounds offered the leisure class a form of psychic relief from the chaos of the industrial city. In addition to providing genteel spaces for recreation, naturalistic landscape parks improved water quality and public health. But, perhaps just as importantly, these aesthetically pleasing landscapes increased the value of private property and allowed for the concentration of wealth.

In contrast, crises of consumption occur when prices and productivity are relatively high but consumption is low due to high interest rates. During these crises, the policy regime of the state favors an egalitarian environment that made more credit and products available, fostering a rise in wages, and sparking a new focus on social services.[42] Resulting from these crises (and the excesses associated with the elitist policies of the previous regime), the egalitarian policies of the democracy promote forms of creative destruction that favor state formation and social programs, fostering the redistribution of wealth and ultimately, leading to crises of production, thus repeating the cycle. In the shuffle of public resources to make all this happen, however, cities generally have refashioned naturalistic landscape parks into mass recreational facilities and much of their naturalistic aesthetics were abandoned.[43]

Under mid-twentieth-century egalitarian urban regimes, members of the leisure class urged park departments and planners to carve out space within existing naturalistic parks to provide new recreational uses in response to the working- and middle-class call for more spaces for active forms of recreation. To be more egalitarian and accommodate the need for mass consumption of leisure

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"Regulations or the use of the Central Park," 03 Nov 1860, reprinted in *FLOP 3*, 279; FLO, "Notice posted in keepers' room, Central Park," 10 Nov 1860, reprinted in *FLOP 3*, 279-284; and, FLO, "Communication from the treasurer relative to the police and its reform," and "General order for the organization and routine of duty of the keepers' service of the Central Park." Both reports are available from City of New York, *Documents of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Public Parks for the Year Ending April 30, 1873* (New York: Evening Post Steam Presses, 1873), documents 40 and 41, respectively.

[42] Earle, *The American Way*; Mosher, "Earle's dialectical policy regimes and the Erie Canal."

[43] Young, "Modern urban parks."

and recreation new spaces were needed. Park design during this period revealed an abandonment of the elite pastoral and picturesque spaces that came to dominate Olmstedian naturalistic landscape design in favor of highly specialized recreational park spaces, including ball fields, playgrounds, golf courses, zoos, swimming pools, tennis and basketball courts, and other now common recreational elements, into the park landscape (Table 2.1).[44] The emphasis on providing recreation for the masses placed large burdens on existing park infrastructure, increasing the rate at which the park experienced wear and tear, meaning that park aesthetics and infrastructure greatly suffered.

During the twentieth-century, these waves of creative destruction, and their attendant spatial fixes fostered by urban regimes, may have ameliorated one crisis, but they also produced unintended

<table>
<tr><th>National Policy Regime Phases</th><th>Park Typology</th><th>Boston Park Timeline</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1st Republic<br>1790s-1820s/1830s</td><td rowspan="2"></td><td>1634 – Boston Common</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1831 – Mount Auburn Cemetery<br>1837 – Boston Public Garden<br>1850s-1880 – Commonwealth Ave. Mall</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1st Democracy<br>1820s/1830s-1880</td><td rowspan="2">Pleasure Ground<br>1850s-1890s</td></tr>
<tr><td>1878-1896 – Emerald Necklace by Olmsted</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">2nd Republic<br>1880-1920s/1930s</td><td rowspan="2">Reform Park<br>1890s-1920s</td><td rowspan="2">1885 – First “sand garden” at Parmenter Street Chapel in North End<br>1889 – School Department operates 21 playgrounds<br>1892 – Charlesbank Gymnasium<br>1894 – Franklin Field</td></tr>
</table>

[44] Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*; Young, “Modern urban parks;” Caro, *The Power Broker*; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 439-468; Gutman, “Race, place, and play;” Pamela Wridt, “An historical analysis of young people’s use of public space, parks and playgrounds in New York City,” *Children, Youth and Environments* 14(2004): 100-120.

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|---|---|---|
| 2nd Democracy<br>1920s/1930s-1980 | Recreational Facility<br>1930s-1965 | 1923 – Franklin Park 18-hole golf course<br>1924 – expansion of Franklin Park Zoo<br>1929 – Boston Park (baseball) League<br>1930 – 10.7 million visitors to Park Departments 34 playgrounds[45]<br>1934 – Rose Garden in Fens<br>1954 – Name change to Parks and Recreation Dept. (responsible for more than 125 playgrounds & 250 athletic facilities)[46] |
| 3rd Republic<br>1980 to present | Open Space/ Sustainable/ Conservancy Park<br>1965-present | 1979 – *Fairsted* placed on National Register<br>1980 – National Association for Olmsted Parks<br>1981 – Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks<br>1983 – *Olmsted in Massachusetts: The Public Legacy*[47]<br>1989 – Emerald Necklace Parks Master Plan<br>1996 – Emerald Necklace Conservancy |

**Table 2.1.** Policy regimes and park eras. Sources: Earle 2003 and Cranz 1982.

consequences, and sowed the seeds of the next crisis. Naturalistic landscape parks were part of the nineteenth-century bourgeois built environment that promoted social segregation and resentment by the middle and working classes, which led to the emergence of recreational parks in the twentieth century.[48] Eventually, recreational parks became just one in an expensive suite of public infrastructures that, over time, became too much for municipal governments to maintain, especially when accompanied by the massive demographic shifts to the suburbs that occurred after World War II.

By the late-1970s and early-1980s, the resulting deterioration of public parks, directly attributable to a declining tax base as residents fled to the suburbs, formed a significant part of the

[45] City of Boston, Park Department *Fifty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending December 31, 1930* (City doc. no. 19-1931), 9.
[46] City of Boston, Parks and Recreation Department, *Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Department for the Year Ending December 31, 1957* (City doc. no. 16-1958).
[47] Eleanor McPeck, Keith Morgan and Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Olmsted in Massachusetts: The Public Legacy* (Brookline: Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks, 1983).

[48] Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*, 136-140; Young, "Modern urban parks."

crises leading to the emergence of the "conservancy park." Private and non-profit actors held the belief that: 'If the city is too strapped for cash since it needs to meet other (more important) obligations, then we are going to take on the responsibility for restoring the luster to these treasures before it is too late.' The conservancy park, restored and preserved by local private park groups, exemplified the processes of gentrification associated with the entrepreneurial ideology of neoliberal urbanism.

**Gentrification**

The development of the contemporary American city is closely linked to the economic and cultural processes of gentrification. In 1964, sociologist Ruth Glass coined the term "gentrification" to refer to housing and class struggles in London. In its classical sense, gentrification represents a variety of neighborhood transformations associated with property rehabilitation and the displacement of working class residents by middle and upper-middle class newcomers.[49] Economically, the gentrification of postindustrial American cities represents a strategy by which homebuyers and real estate developers reinvested capital in areas hurt by disinvestment and neglect. Culturally, this back-to-the-city movement results in the displacement of the original working class residents by a new upwardly mobile professional class seeking a hip urban lifestyle.[50] Regardless of the factor,

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[49] Ruth Glass, *London: Aspects of Change* (London: MacKibben and Kee, 1964).

[50] Sharon Zukin *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), and *The Cultures of Cities*; David Ley, *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), and "Artists, aestheticisation and the field of gentrification," *Urban Studies* 40(2003): 2527-2544; Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class, and How Its Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Tom Slater, "Municipally managed gentrification in South Parkdale, Toronto," *Canadian Geographer* 48(2004): 303-325; Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the creative class," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Planning* 29(2005): 740-770.

economic or cultural, gentrification is rooted in class and results in the class-based displacement of urban residents.[51]

To examine the evolution of geographic research on gentrification, it helps to focus on the progression of the writings of geographer Neil Smith, who was perhaps the leading gentrification theorist. Gentrification embodies the desire by real estate developers and landlords to reinvest capital in devalued areas to overcome the "rent gap," or the disparity between the actual and the potential ground rent.[52] To explain this gap, Smith argues that growth of suburbs, and the corresponding capital investments, contributed to the abandonment of inner cities, leading directly to the physical deterioration of the urban landscape. This deterioration leads to a devaluation of urban land, and creaties a gap between actual ground rents and the potential ground rents that would likely be seen if buildings were rehabilitated. Smith notes that "when, and only when, this rent gap between actual and potential ground rent becomes sufficiently large, redevelopment and rehabilitation into new land uses becomes a profitable prospect, and capital begins to flow back into the inner city market."[53]

Interestingly, Smith attempts to distinguish between gentrification and general urban redevelopment. According to Smith, gentrification represents "the process by which working class residential neighborhoods are rehabilitated by middle class homebuyers, landlords, and professional developers." Redevelopment, he argues, "involves not rehabilitation of old structures, but the construction of new buildings on previously developed land."[54] This explanation of gentrification aligned with the original use of the term by Glass—that the processes of gentrification focused on

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[51] Elvin Wyly and Daniel Hammel, "Islands of decay in seas of renewal: Housing policy and the resurgence of gentrification," *Housing Policy Debate* 10(1999). 716; Loretta Lees, Tom Slater, and Elvin Wyly, *Gentrification* (New York: Routledge, 2008), xxii.

[52] Neil Smith, "Toward a theory of gentrification: A back to the city movement of capital, not people," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45(1979): 538-548.

[53] Neil Smith, "Gentrification and uneven development," *Economic Geography* 58(1982), 149.

[54] Smith, "Gentrification and uneven development," 139.

rehabilitating existing housing stock, raising ground rents, and displacing older working class tenants with new middle and upper-middle class urban professionals. However, over time, Smith expands his framework regarding the processes of gentrification.

Writing more than a decade later, Smith elaborates upon his previous distinction between gentrification and large-scale urban redevelopment. He acknowledges that this field of study had outgrown the "quaint and specialized language of residential rehabilitation."[55] Reflecting on his own earlier narrowly-focused definition of gentrification, Smith asks: "How, in the large context of changing social geographies, are we to distinguish adequately between the rehabilitation of nineteenth-century housing, the construction of new condominium towers [and] the construction of modern and postmodern office buildings employing thousands of professionals, all looking for a place to live?"[56] To Smith, the processes of gentrification had expanded and were "no longer about a narrow and quixotic oddity in the housing market but has become the leading residential edge of a much larger endeavour: the class remake of the central urban landscape."[57] Despite erasing the distinction between gentrification and urban redevelopment, this broader definition of gentrification still focused on urban housing markets.

By the close of the twentieth century, Smith's conceptualization of gentrification evolved to include any manner of class-based urban redevelopment. He presents a more comprehensive definition by stating that gentrification represented "the reinvestment of capital at the urban centre, which is designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than currently occupies that space."[58] This broader definition still emphasizes the class dimensions of gentrification, but now

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[55] Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996), 39.
[56] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 39.
[57] Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 39.
[58] Neil Smith, "Gentrification," in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, eds. R.J. Johnston, Derek Gregory, Geraldine Pratt, and Michael Watts (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 294. See also: Neil Smith, "New globalism, new urbanism: Gentrification as global urban strategy," *Antipode* 34(2002): 427-450.

Smith recognizes that gentrification is no longer just about housing, instead it is about overall urban improvement. This new dimension of gentrification is about creating new recreational and commercial landscapes that appealed to members of the middle and upper-middle classes. Employing this new perspective, urban researchers have begun to examine a variety of new gentrification "mutations," including: new-build gentrification; the super-gentrification of previously gentrified areas; rural gentrification; studentification; eco-gentrification; tourist gentrification; and, commercial gentrification.[59]

These new forms of gentrification represent the dynamism associated with this field of study. But these new forms also correspond to the construction of middle- and upper-middle-class landscapes of consumption in post-industrial American cities—they represent a cultural strategy of economic development for cities facing economic hardship. By crafting a narrative that focused on the city's sense of place, history, or environment, urban regimes help create a sense of place attachment associated with a symbolic economy of place.[60] However, to avoid discussing the class-based dimensions of gentrification (which could derail the redevelopment process), policy makers typically hide the idea of gentrification as an urban policy behind seemingly innocuous terms. Instead of utilizing 'gentrification,' a term loaded with class distinctions, policy makers employ class-neutral terms, like urban 'renaissance,' 'revival,' 'regeneration,' 'livability,' or 'sustainability.'[61]

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[59] For gentrification "mutations," see: Lees, Slater and Wyly, *Gentrification*. See also: Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees, "New-build gentrification: Its histories, trajectories and critical geographies," *Population, Space and Place* 16(2010): 395-411; Loretta Lees, "Super-gentrification: The case of Brooklyn Heights, New York City," *Urban Studies* 40(2003): 2487-2509; Eliza Darling, *Accommodating Wilderness: Gentrification and the Production of Nature in the Adirondack Park* (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 2002; Darren Smith, "Studentification: the gentrification factory?" in *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2005), 73-90; Sarah Dooling, "Ecological gentrification: A research agenda exploring justice in the city," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(2009): 621-639; David Gladstone and Jolie Preau, "Gentrification in tourist cities: Evidence from New Orleans before and after Hurricane Katrina," *Housing Policy Debate* 19(2008): 137-175; Sharon Zukin *et al.*, "New retail capital and neighborhood change: Boutiques and gentrification in New York City," *City and Community* 8(2009): 47-64.

[60] Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*.

[61] Lees, Slater and Wyly, *Gentrification*, xix; Smith, "Gentrification and uneven development," 153; Wyly and Hammel, "Islands of decay in seas of renewal," 716.

In drafting policies to revitalize cities, policy makers try to capitalize on dimensions of the local culture, history or environment. Using these elements, cities work to improve the look and feel of the urban landscape to attract the increasingly mobile middle and upper-middle class back to the city. By focusing on the cultural ideals of conspicuous consumption and leisure of a hip professional class, these landscapes of consumption present tourists, and a new wave of urban residents, with a series of bourgeois amenities, such as: locavore restaurants; farmers markets; historic districts; festival marketplaces; boutiques; art galleries; museums; fair trade coffee shops; and independent booksellers.[62] Postindustrial cities rely on the use of these hip and trendy environments to commodify, and brand, their urban spaces. Cities utilize their gentrified neighborhoods and trendy retail outlets to appeal to the urban leisure class, or middle and upper-middle class tourists and new residents who have the ability to spend time and money on luxuries such as leisure, travel, and culture.[63] In this way, postindustrial cities have become centers for fun and entertainment; they have become theme parks.[64] In order to continue to draw people to these spaces, cities package and present these redeveloped spaces as a cool, trendy, and fashionable.[65] Policy makers then use these images, according to David Harvey, as "a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort) in a

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[62] Boyer, "Cities for sale"; Sharon Zukin, "Consuming authenticity: From outposts of difference to means of exclusion," *Cultural Studies* 22(2008), 724-748.

[63] Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*.

[64] Michael Sorkin, eds., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992); John Hannigan, *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis* (London: Routledge, 1998); Mark Gottdiener, *The Theming of America: Dreams, Media Fantasies and Themed Environments* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001).

[65] Zukin, "Consuming authenticity." In recalling a visit to a farmers market in Manhattan's Union Square Park one summer day, Zukin described the misshapen, bumpy and red-orange and yellow-green heirloom tomatoes for sale. Even the farmer noted that they were ugly tomatoes, but Zukin commented about how these tomatoes tasted better than those mass-produced on large-scale factory farms. To Zukin, the quality of tomatoes rested in their "authenticity." These urban farmers markets, according to Zukin, "underline their images as oases of authenticity in a Wal-Mart wasteland, encouraging real estate developers to reinvest and making urban living marketable" (725).

period of intensified inter-urban competition."[66] Like hip boutiques and markets, urban parks also play an important role in the revival and sustainability of postindustrial cities.

Since the 1990s, ecological restoration has become a popular method of managing urban natural areas to provide a variety of cultural and environmental values. From brownfield redevelopment and urban stream restoration, to urban reforestation and park restoration, policy makers use the ecological restoration of urban natural areas as a way to re-brand a city as 'green' and 'sustainable.'[67] Accompanying these changes in urban rehabilitation and redevelopment has been a new area of gentrification research. This new focus on eco-gentrification, examines how policies of sustainable urban development have spurred the processes of gentrification.[68] Urban planner Sarah Dooling argues that eco-gentrification is the "implementation of an environmental planning agenda related to public green spaces that leads to the displacement or exclusion of the most economically vulnerable human population while espousing an environmental ethic."[69] The restoration of naturalistic landscape parks may represent one dimension of a sustainable urbanism, but as an environmental ethos, it glosses over some of the prickly political-economic dimensions of urban

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[66] Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 92.

[67] Christopher DeSousa, "Brownfield redevelopment in Toronto: An examination of past trends and future prospects," *Land Use Policy* 19(2002): 297-309, and "Policy performance and brownfield redevelopment in Milwaukee, Wisconsin," *The Professional Geographer* 57(2005): 312-327; Allison Purcell, Carla Friedrich and Vincent Resh, "An assessment of a small urban stream restoration project in northern California," *Restoration Ecology* 10(2002): 685-694; Harold Perkins, Nik Heynen and Joe Wilson, "Inequitable access to urban reforestation: The impact of urban political economy on housing tenure and urban forests," *Cities* 21(2004); Paul Gobster, "Visions of nature: Conflict and compatibility in urban park restoration," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 56(2001): 35-51, and "Urban park restoration and the 'museumification' of nature," *Nature and Culture* 2(2007): 95-114.

[68] Susannah Bunce, "Developing sustainability: Sustainability policy and gentrification on Toronto's waterfront," *Local Environment* 14(2009): 651–667; Ann Dale and Lenore Newman, "Sustainable development for some: Green urban development and affordability," *Local Environment* 14(2009): 669–681; Noah Quastel "Political ecologies of gentrification," *Urban Geography* 30(2009): 694–725; Hamil Pearsall, "From brown to green? Assessing social vulnerability to environmental gentrification in New York City," *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 28(2010): 872-886, and "Moving out or moving in? Resilience to environmental gentrification in New York City," *Local Environment* 17(2012): 1013–1026; Sarah Dooling, "Sustainability planning, ecological gentrification and the production of urban vulnerabilities," in *Cities, Nature and Development: The Politics and Production of Urban Vulnerabilities*, eds. Sarah Dooling and Gregory Simon Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 101–119; Noah Quastel, Markus Moos, and Nicholas Lynch, "Sustainability-as-density and the return of the social: The case of Vancouver, British Columbia," *Urban Geography* 33(2012): 1055–1084.

[69] Dooling, "Ecological gentrification," 621

redevelopment. Tourists and residents alike seek 'genuine' experiences in urban landscapes; they expect a great deal from the urban spaces in which they visit and inhabit.[70]

In Boston, like other postindustrial American cities, the naturalistic landscape parks of the nineteenth century, once seen as luxurious spaces, have undergone tremendous neglect during the twentieth century. By the 1970s, most cities had a series of crumbling park systems. Due to suburban migration by white residents, and the corresponding erosion of the tax base, cities struggled to maintain their park landscapes. Facing serious economic decisions, urban policy makers marked parks as a low priority and parks suffered due to deferred maintenance. As derelict spaces, people came to view parks as dangerous sites of crime and vice.[71] But by the 1980s, urban residents and policy makers, viewing park restoration as an important form of urban revitalization, began to restore these tarnished jewels.

Under capitalist systems of economic development, it is vital that cities periodically engage in the processes of urban investment and re-investment. Creative destruction of the built environment is essential for capitalist economic development, and as material interventions in the cycle of creative destruction spatial fixes temporarily resolve the crises of the capitalist system.[72] By investing in urban infrastructure, urban regimes re-invest in "the whole suite of physical installations that sustain and enhance the system's ability to create wealth."[73] One dimension of this re-investment is the restoration of historic landscapes and parks. Beginning in the 1980s, the restoration of naturalistic landscape parks, like Central Park, represents a form of class transformation whereby neglected and derelict urban spaces (with their homeless populations, illegal trash dumps, and illicit activity, as well

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[70] Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class,* 224.

[71] August Heckscher, *Open Spaces: The Life of American Cities* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); Rogers, *Rebuilding Central Park*; Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People,* 469-504; Caro, *The Power Broker*, 331-334; Rogers, *Rebuilding Central Park*, 16.

[72] David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, 431; also Harvey, *The Urban Experience*, 41.

[73] Erica Schoenberger, "The spatial fix revisited," *Antipode* 36(2004), 429.

as being used by the working class and people of color) are sanitized and transformed into aesthetically-pleasing green spaces for middle and upper-middle class professionals.

The environmental benefits of park design impact adjacent or nearby real estate values—a pattern identified by leisure studies researcher John Crompton as the "proximate principle."[74] The naturalistic landscape aesthetic of parks forms the basis of the proximate principle, or the commodification of urban space based on the improvements to proximate property values. However, the rate at which the engineered urban ecosystems of urban parks enhance nearby private properties depends upon a park's physical characteristics—durability, scenery and aesthetics, ecological value, and accessibility.[75] Two factors influence the attractiveness of a park. The first relates to how well the public- and private-sectors could harness and control the engineered and designed park ecosystem to keep it maintained. The second relates to how well they could create an aura, or a distinctive environmental imaginary, around parks and their designers, in order to commodify urban space.

According to the proximate principle, a range of factors influence the price people are willing to pay for a property.[76] These include structural attributes (e.g., lot size), neighborhood attributes (e.g., socio-economic characteristics), community attributes (e.g., school district), and

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[74] John Crompton, "The impact of parks on property values," and *The Proximate Principle: The Impacts of Parks, Open Space and Water Features on Residential Property Values and the Property Tax Base*, 2nd ed. (Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, 2004).

[75] J.C. Weicher and R.H. Zerbst, "The externalities of neighborhood parks: An empirical investigation," *Land Economics* 49(1973): 99-105; T.R. Hammer, R.E. Coughlin, and E.T. Horn, "The effect of a large urban park on real estate," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 40(1974): 274-277; M.R. Correll, J.H. Lillydahl, and L.D. Singell, "The effects of greenbelts on residential property values: Some findings on the political economy of open space," *Land Economics,* 54 (1978): 207-217; H.W. Lawrence, "The greening of the squares of London: Transformation of urban landscapes and ideals," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83(1993): 90-118; B. Bolitzer and N.R. Netusil, "The impact of open spaces on property values in Portland, Oregon," *Journal of Environmental Management,* 59(2000): 185-193; John Crompton, "The role of the proximate principle in the emergence of urban parks in the United Kingdom and in the United States," *Leisure Studies* 26(2007): 213-234 Nicholls, "Measuring the impact"; Nicholls and Crompton, "The impact of greenways."

[76] According Nicholls and Crompton, *op. cit.*, 328: "The hedonic model is operationalized through use of classical multiple regression techniques in which prices of the good of interest are regressed on measures of its attributes. Regression coefficients can be interpreted as implicit marginal prices of, or willingness to pay for, these attributes."

perhaps most importantly for this discussion, locational characteristics (e.g., proximity and accessibility to amenities), and environmental attributes (e.g., view from property, noise and pollution levels).[77] In light of this, the proximate principle fundamentally rests on the assumption that some people are willing to pay more for homes near urban parks and other environmental amenities. For instance, in his review of two dozen empirical studies on the role of parks in enhancing property values (including the 1873 study of the economic impact of Central Park) Crompton finds that property values near urban parks reliably increase from five percent to twenty percent or more.[78] While results vary from study to study due to regional differences and park-specific attributes, the one consistent finding of this leisure studies scholarship is that home values decrease with distance from parks and greenways.[79]

My goal in this dissertation is not to merely describe urban parks and how they have changed over time, but rather, to use a geographical-historical approach to understand changes in both the meanings and material representations of urban public space and infrastructure. This approach allows me to use the nineteenth-century creation and the twentieth-century decline of parks to help explain the present efforts to restore them. By examining the narratives associated with park creation, decline, and restoration, I explore the political, cultural, economic, and environmental processes that the city of Boston has used to understand the ways in which the parks of the Emerald Necklace have fit into the political economy of the city. I focus on park restoration as a dimension

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[77] Nicholls and Crompton, "The impact of greenways," 329.

[78] Crompton, "The impact of parks." It is important to note that, in volatile real estate markets, the park does not always work to enhance property values. Economist G.B.L. Arner noted that the panic of 1873 brought about a collapse of the real estate markets in New York City so that a parcel near Central Park "at the corner of 83rd Street which sold for $250,000 in 1872, sold again for $145,000 in 1874, and for $132,000 in 1878." See: G.B.L. Arner, "Land values," in *Urban Land Economics*, ed., R.T. Ely (Ann Arbor: Institute for Research in Land Economics, 1922), 121.

[79] Weicher and Zerbst, "The externalities of neighborhood parks;" Hammer, Coughlin, and Horn, "The effect of a large urban park on real estate value;" Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, "The effects of greenbelts on residential property values;" Bolitzer and Netusil, "The impact of open spaces on property values in Portland, Oregon."

of eco-gentrification in this dissertation, and the landscape aesthetic associated with the ecological restoration of urban parks will figure prominently in my overall narrative.

**Neoliberal Urbanism & the Urban Sustainability Fix**

Geographers Loretta Lees, Tom Slater and Elvin Wyly claim that gentrification should now be conceived of as "the leading edge of neoliberal urbanism."[80] Since the 1970s, American cities have experienced a 'neoliberal turn' whereby they engage in economic strategies that, Harvey argues, helped them "re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites."[81] Embracing neoliberal policies, urban regimes emphasize a variety of strategies, such as privatization, public-private partnerships, interurban competition, and entrepreneurialism, to reshape the urban landscape.[82] The effects of neoliberal policies have been challenging to identify since, as geographers Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore asserted, they "[do] not exist in a single, 'pure' form," and "[do] not engender identical (economic, political or spatial) outcomes in each context in which [they are] imposed." Instead, Brenner and Theodore argue, neoliberal urbanism "is always articulated through historically and geographically specific strategies… that reflect the legacies of earlier modes of regulation and forms of contestation."[83] Contemporary expressions of gentrification represent just one of the "signatures of neo-liberalism," and, therefore, the ecological

[80] Lees, Slater and Wyly, *Gentrification*, xvii.

[81] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 19.

[82] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the geographies of 'actually existing neoliberalism'," *Antipode* 34(2002): 349-379; Tim Chapin, "The entrepreneurial city: Municipal capitalism in San Diego," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24(2002): 565-581; Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*; Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City*.

[83] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Neoliberalism and the urban condition," *City* 9(2005), 102.

restoration of urban parks represents just one dimension in the complicated geographies of "actually existing neoliberalism" in the urban landscape.[84]

As a neoliberal ideology, urban entrepreneurialism figures prominently in the processes of gentrification and the transformation of the urban landscape in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. Due to interurban competition, urban regimes continually seek out new methods to attract mobile capital, residents, and tourists. The "centerpiece" of entrepreneurialism, contends Harvey, is the public-private partnership. These partnerships integrate the private dimensions of traditional boosterism with the power of local governments to attract new funding sources, investment, and employment opportunities.[85] Under neoliberal forms of urban governance, regimes focus on "investment and economic development with the speculative construction of place…as [an] immediate political and economic goal."[86] By focusing on the political economy of place, urban regimes utilize entrepreneurial strategies to engage in the processes of gentrification and transform the urban landscape, a process sometimes referred to as 'place-making'.

Place-making refers to an urban planning and redevelopment approach that emphasizes a common vision, identity, or image for a place. Place, argues geographer Deborah Martin, "provides an important mobilizing discourse and identity" around which various stakeholders can discuss the impacts of urban redevelopment on neighborhoods and residents.[87] Martin employs the idea of a "place-frame" to denote the ways in which neighborhood organizations can "articulate their issues, values, and concerns in ways that foster collective identity." In describing shared experiences among

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[84] Brenner and Theodore, "Actually existing neoliberalism"; Darren Smith, "The 'buoyancy' of 'other' geographies of gentrification: Going 'back to the water' and the commodification of marginality," *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 98 (2007): 53-67.

[85] David Harvey, "From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation of urban politics in late capitalism," *Geografiska Annaler B* 71(1989), 7.

[86] *Ibid*, 8.

[87] Deborah Martin, "'Place-framing' as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93(2003), 730.

people in a given place, these place frames shape normative expressions of identity and place, especially considering that these frames are also utilized to imagine "how the place *ought* to be."[88]

The processes of place-making generally involve both top-down and bottom-up strategies. By combining urban leadership with grassroots organizing efforts, place-making strategies typically rely on the use of public-private partnerships. Through public-private partnerships, municipal governments, local institutions (museums, schools, etc.), neighborhood organizations, and business associations collaborate to develop a unified vision for the urban landscape.[89] The processes of developing this vision, or imagining how a place *ought* to look, often reflect cultural politics, or as geographer Eugene McCann argues, the "discursive and material practices in and through which meanings are defined and struggled over, [and] where social norms and values are naturalized."[90] Under neoliberal urbanism, the vision of urban redevelopment typically rests on place-making strategies where land developers and other urban entrepreneurs are the primary beneficiaries.

A fine line exists between what might be perceived as the top-down role of urban leaders, the bottom-up efforts of grassroots groups, and the privatization of public spaces associated with late-twentieth century neoliberal entrepreneurial forms of urban governance. As cities set about restoring their historic urban parks, they rely heavily on private park conservancies to engage in the re-imaging of the city according to their environmental goals and imaginaries. In her examination of urban parks in Los Angeles, urban planner Stephanie Pincetl examines the ways in which environmental nonprofits, like park friends groups and conservancies, have become "partners in the local urban regime and in local governance arrangements."[91] Similarly in Milwaukee, geographer

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[88] Martin, "Place-framing and place-making," 733 emphasis in original.

[89] Project for Public Spaces, *Placemaking and the Future of Cities*, draft report, (PPS, 2012). Available from http://www.pps.org/references/placemaking-and-the-future-of-cities/ (accessed 10 Jan 2013).

[90] McCann, "The cultural politics of local economic development," 387.

[91] Stephanie Pincetl, "Nonprofits and park provision in Los Angeles: An exploration of the rise of governance approaches to the provision of local services," *Social Science Quarterly* 84(2003), 981.

Harold Perkins examines the ways in which "markets for park stewardship are developed by the local state as municipal parks are spun off to corporate and/or citizen regimes who act as their stewards with, or in place of, their former caretakers."[92]

Through the restoration of urban public parks, public-private partnerships help to improve the attractiveness of the urban landscape, which help to improve the "quality of life" in the city.[93] Restoring urban parks helps cities stay competitive since, as Pincetl notes, "urban regimes understood that environmental amenities like clean air, attractive waterways, and urban greenspaces, helped localities promote economic development in a competitive globalized world."[94] Increasingly, urban regimes rely on private park conservancies to carry out the restoration and preservation of urban parks.

The era of the 'conservancy park,' when private park conservancies and park friends groups have begun to take on the challenge of restoring and preserving historic urban parks, reflects the public-private strategies associated with neoliberal urbanism. Perhaps the largest and most influential private park conservancy is the Central Park Conservancy (CPC). The CPC, a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1980, has managed Central Park under a contract with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation.

According to the CPC, the organization invested nearly $700 million into the park, "making it a model for urban parks worldwide."[95] While the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation still maintains nominal responsibility for the park, the CPC has been the "official

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[92] Harold Perkins, "Turning feral spaces into trendy places: a coffee house in every park," *Environment and Planning A* 41(2009), 2616.

[93] Eugene McCann, "Best places: Interurban competition, quality of life, and popular media discourse," *Urban Studies* 41(2004): 1909-1929.

[94] Pincetl, "Nonprofits and park provision in Los Angeles," 982. See also: Jeremy Bryson, "Greening urban renewal: Expo '74, urban environmentalism, and green space on the Spokane riverfront, 1965-1974," *Journal of Urban History* 39(2013): 495-512.

[95] CPC, "The history of Central Park." Available from http://www.centralparknyc.org/visit/history (accessed on 12 Feb 2010).

manager" of the park since 1998 when the City and the Conservancy entered into its management contract.[96] Providing 90 percent of the park's $58 million annual operating budget, and employing 80 percent of the park's maintenance staff, the CPC is responsible for all basic park care as specified in their contract with New York City, including: caring for the 250 acres of lawns, 24,000 trees, 150 acres of lakes and streams and 80 acres of woodlands; installing hundreds of thousands of plantings annually, including bulbs, shrubs, flowers and trees; maintaining the 9,000 benches, 26 ballfields and 21 playgrounds; preserving the 55 sculptures and monuments, as well as 36 bridges; removing graffiti within 24 hours; collecting over 5 million pounds of trash each year; and, providing horticultural support to other parks in the city.[97]

Since 1980, the CPC has raised over $536 million in private donations, helping it transform Central Park into a "living symbol of New York's revitalization."[98] Since its inception, members of the conservancy's board of trustees included numerous executives representing a variety of businesses and corporations, including Lehman Brothers, Bank of America, Fox Business News, Barclay's Capital, Bank One, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, J.P. Morgan Chase, AOL Time Warner, Deloitte and Touche, and Bear Stearns.[99] In raising money for park restoration, the CPC focuses on the park's wealthy neighbors, with 80 percent of all donations to the CPC coming from only 20 percent of the donors—many of whom live within one block of the park.[100] In order to exploit the charitable habits of the city's elite, the CPC "reinvented the park as an elite cultural charity [and] became a player in the most exclusive social ritual in town, shrewdly capitalizing on

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[96] CPC, "About the Central Park Conservancy." Available from http://www.centralparknyc.org/about/ (accessed 12 Feb 2010).

[97] CPC, "About."

[98] CPC, "About."

[99] A list of all of the CPC's annual reports dating from 1981 can be found at www.centralparknyc.org/about/inside-the-conservancy/annual-reports/ (accessed on 09 Aug 2013).

[100] Taylor, "Equity, influence, and access"; *New York Times*, "Neighbors give Central Park a wealthy glow," 22 Nov 1999.

unwritten rules about how the rich must give to one another's pet causes or face social ostracism."[101] To donors, the restoration of the park represents a way to enhance their social status, build their business networks, and a way to protect, as well as enhance, their real estate and business investments.[102] But, these donors also have other, more altruistic (often paternalistic) reasons for funding the restoration of the park. The CPC renewed interest in Central Park by helping the city's powerful social actors to view the park as a New York City cultural institution and tourist destination on par with MoMA, the Met, and the Guggenheim. One donor summed up the reasons that donors used their civic spirit to invest in the park by noting that, "in the real estate field, it is just smart business for us to try and improve the quality of life in the city where we have our major holdings."[103] As the donations rolled in, the CPC restored the park and improved both the physical landscape and the social attributes of the park.

Olmsted, based on his observations in Liverpool's Birkenhead Park and in Central Park, recognized that a well-maintained park was a source of added value to the city. To justify the $13 million expended to create Central Park, Olmsted and the park commission analyzed property values near the park. Their report showed that from 1856, the year before construction, to 1873, the properties in the three proximate wards increased in value by more than $209 million. The report also showed that even with annual debt charges incurred by the city for land acquisition and park development amounting to slightly more than $834,000, these properties yielded almost $5.25 million in additional property tax revenue as a result of their enhanced land values.[104] As these data showed, attractive and pleasing green spaces have the potential to significantly improve property

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[101] *New York Times*, "Neighbors."

[102] Francie Ostrower, *Why the Wealthy Give: The Culture of Elite Philanthropy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[103] As cited in Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 523.

[104] City of New York, *Third General Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Public Parks for the Period of Twenty Months, from May 1st, 1872, to December 31st, 1873* (New York: William C. Bryant & Co., 1875), 15-17. See also: Tom Fox, *Urban Open Space: An Investment That Pays* (New York: Neighborhood Open Space Coalition, 1990).

values and the status of neighborhoods near the park.[105] But, the CPC wanted to know if there was still this effect in the twenty-first century.

A 2009 study commissioned by the CPC shows that the park still added value to nearby land and improved the city's tax base. This report illustrates the "Central Park Effect" by noting that the park added $17.7 billion to the market value of properties nearby. Specifically, the report states that the per-square foot sale prices of homes located within two blocks of the park were 32 to 153 percent higher than the prices of homes four blocks away. The New York City Department of Finance estimates that the value of properties in all of Manhattan is $218 billion, and that the values of properties in the Central Park area is $114 billion, therefore the park accounts for 52 percent of the market value of property Manhattan.[106]

In order to examine how proximity to Central Park impacts property values, the study grouped properties by blocks (i.e. one block away, two blocks away, etc.) and then calculated an average market value per lot square foot. For the three blocks surrounding Central Park this figure is $979, while for the whole of Manhattan it is $462. As expected, the average value of properties within one block of the park are 20 percent higher than properties two blocks away, and 44 percent higher than properties three blocks away. This study clearly shows that an attractive, pleasing, and safe Central Park has the ability to transfer surplus value to nearby properties.[107]

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[105] In an 1868 report to the Brooklyn park commissioners, FLO and Vaux were clear to point out that the influence of the park on property values was not "dependent upon mere vicinity to the sylvan and rural attractions of the Park." The enhancements of property values, they argued, came from the ability of the park's amenities and attractions to help raise the stature of the neighborhoods adjacent to the park. These spaces became neighborhoods where residents could walk to the park without the "liability of encountering the unpleasant sights and sounds which must generally accompany those who seek rest, recreation, or pleasure in the common streets." See: FLO and Vaux, "Report to the Brooklyn Park Commission," 01 Jan 1868, in *FLOP SS1*, 133.

[106] Appleseed, *Valuing Central Park's Contributions to New York City's Economy* (New York: Appleseed, 2009), 9 and 41-42. Available from http://www.appleseedinc.com/reports/centralpark-may2009.pdf (accessed 22 Oct 2011).

[107] Appleseed, *Valuing Central Park*, 43.

As parks, like Central Park, come to be managed by private conservancies with money from private donations, it becomes harder for the parks to truly remain public spaces. While the CPC claims that Central Park "will always be a public park," and that there would always be public involvement in the park improvement process, the reality is that the reliance on private groups like the CPC has tremendously impacted Central Park. Those who feel strongly that the park should be restored and maintained have the ability to display their wealth and civic spirit by endowing particular park elements. Through the CPC's Adopt-A-Bench program, a donor can endow one of the park's 9,000 benches with donations of between $7,500 and $25,000. Likewise, the Central Park Tree Trust allows individuals to endow one of the park's 24,000 trees with a donation of between $5,000 and $100,000. For a $100 annual fee, dog owners can enroll their pooch in the Central Park Paws program and receive the latest park and dog news via the eBarker newsletter.[108] The CPC also allows individuals and families to endow the park's plantings by using bulbs to commemorate significant dates (i.e., birthdays, anniversaries, deaths, etc.). When examined in aggregate these individual donations add up and contribute to the privatization of the public park. Perhaps the best example of the way that private donations can influence the public's ability to use park space can be seen in the restoration of the park's Great Lawn in the 1990s.

Due to overuse in the 1960s and 1970s, Central Park's Great Lawn was considered a dust bowl by the 1980s and early-1990s. However, between 1995 and 1997, the lawn was resodded with Kentucky Bluegrass and returned to a verdant pastoral oasis. The benefactor of this restoration was Richard Gilder, a stockbroker who lived adjacent to the park on Fifth Avenue. Gilder donated $17 million to the CPC, part of which was used to restore the Great Lawn. At the time, it was the largest donation from an individual for a municipal park. Along with his philanthropic work (he also

[108] CPC, "Central Park Paws" available at http://www.centralparknyc.org/visit/central-park-paws/ (accessed on 09 Aug 2013).

co-founded the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History), Gilder has been a driving force conservative politics—he co-founded the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, and the Club for Growth, a conservative political action committee. Additionally, Gilder has personally donated to, and used the Club for Growth to bundle money for, Republican causes and campaigns.[109] Reflecting the dilemma plaguing the park since its creation, the restoration of the Great Lawn brought the elitist (and conservative) notion of the proper use of the public park back into the public consciousness in August 2004.

In August 2004, with the Republican Party holding its national convention in New York City's Madison Square Garden, several progressive groups tried to organize rallies on the Great Lawn to protest the conservative policies of the Bush-Cheney administration. The permits of the National Council of Arab Americans (NCAA), the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism Coalition (ANSWER), and United for Peace and Justice were denied by the city, and the courts ultimately upheld these denials. The city argued that the expected turnout (200,000) was too large, and would place a burden the turf of the Great Lawn. However, the notion that Republican mayor Michael Bloomberg would not want the distractions and that the money to restore the lawn came from a wealthy Republican donor was not lost on the protesters.[110]

The battle to determine the proper use of this space underscored the disparate views on the proper use public space. A city councilman from Harlem opined that "it's a people's park: it's not the mayor's park or a park for the Central Park Conservancy…We're on a slippery slope when we start saying that the rights of grass trump the rights of the people to protest." He further added that

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[109] *New York Times*, "Central Park to receive $17 million matching gift," 08 May 1993; City of New York press release, "Mayor Giuliani unveils the 'new' Great Lawn after two-year, $18.2 million restoration project is completed." Release #604-97, 10 Oct 1997, available from http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/html/sp604-97.html (accessed on 10 Jan 2010); Michael Scherer, "About Richard Gilder, Honorary Chairman of the Club for Growth," *Mother Jones,* 5 Mar 2001, available from http://www.motherjones.com/web_exclusives/special_reports/mojo_400/145_gilder.html (accessed on 10 Jan 2010).

[110] Bloomberg was a Republican until 2007 when he became in Independent.

the park's greatness is "most revealed when [he sees] people in it—a lot of people."[111] Taking a different perspective, Gilder reinforced the elite qualities of the park that have existed since Olmsted's park keepers encouraged park visitors to 'keep off the grass.' He argued that the use of the park as a town common by large masses of people was incompatible with his (and the CPC's) vision of park usage. Gilder believed that walking, jogging, or reading the newspaper by an orderly and appropriately behaved public, were proper uses.[112] He noted that he and the CPC "have to fight so hard to keep it pristine."[113] One letter to the editor captured the angst that some users felt about the proper use of the park: "We, dog owners who use Central Park, have watched it turn into a 'grass museum.' While the rich contributors have beautified the park, they also seem to have forgotten that it's supposed to be an oasis for everyone. Manicured ballfields, off-limits lawn space and fences galore are making the park userunfriendly [*sic*] to us and our canine companions."[114]

Previously the Great Lawn hosted numerous large-scale events including concerts and film screenings—Pope John Paul II even delivered an open air mass for more than 125,000 Catholics. Despite these previous uses, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, the founding president of the CPC, noted that the conservancy has worked so hard to restore the park, and allowing people to protest and trample the grass would be too injurious to the park. The park needs to be protected from the public since, as she put it, "the landscape has rights, too."[115] And it is the responsibility of the CPC (and its wealthy donors) to protect those rights by maintaining the park and creating specific environmental imaginaries that reinforce their cultural perceptions of the proper park.

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[111] *New York Times*, "Is 'keep off the grass' elitist?" 29 Aug 2004.

[112] Don Mitchell, "The end of public space? People's Park, definitions of the public, and democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85(1995): 108-133, and *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford, 2003).

[113] *New York Times*, "Is 'keep off the grass' elitist?"

[114] *New York Times*, "Central Park for all," 23 Nov 1999.

[115] *New York Times*, "Is 'keep off the grass' elitist?"

The perceived success of the revitalization of Central Park has led other cities to employ the conservancy park approach. This form of urban entrepreneurialism implies some level of "inter-urban competition" that Harvey argues may result in "serial reproduction of certain patterns of development" such as the serial reproduction of historic districts, cultural centers, cineplexes and entertainment centers, sporting venues, and even public-private partnerships.[116] In this way, other cities with Olmsted parks replicate the CPC model, as demonstrated by the formation of Olmsted Linear Park Alliance in Atlanta, Buffalo's Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, Louisville's Olmsted Park Conservancy, the Seneca Park Alliance in Rochester, New York, and the Emerald Necklace Conservancy in Boston. The entrepreneurial strategies of these private conservancies, emphasizing the restoration and preservation of urban public parks, bring about a new focus on urban sustainability—a "sustainability fix."[117]

As part of urban sustainability discourse, successful park restoration is believed to strike a balance between economic vitality, ecological integrity, and social equity. The popular belief holds that policies that find this balance help to improve urban livability, as well as push the city towards sustainability. In describing the role of a pleasing environment in the creative city, urban planner Richard Florida argues that this kind of redevelopment "dramatically transforms the role of the environment and natural amenities from a source of raw materials and a sink for waste disposal to a key component of the total package required to attract talent [and] generate economic growth."[118]

Aesthetically pleasing green spaces, whether parks, urban creeks and streams, riverwalks, urban marshes, or simply street trees, are part of the gentrified landscape that middle and upper-middle class residents and tourists expect from their cities. Whether termed the green city, the

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[116] Harvey, "From managerialism to entrepreneurialism," 10.
[117] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city."
[118] Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 50.

ecological city, the sustainable city, or the humane metropolis, the point is the same: to produce an urban environment that is "more green, more healthy and safe and more people friendly, and more equitable."[119] While this explanation theoretically nods to the creation of an equitable city, the reality is that the manipulation of the urban environment plays a vital role in the uneven redevelopment of urban spaces. Geographers Aidan While, Andrew Jonas, and David Gibbs suggest that, "there is evidence that environmentalism…in its various forms does exert a powerful influence on urban growth politics."[120] As a gentrification strategy, the urban sustainability fix offers up a set of principles and policies that help improve the urban environment, and creates the conditions under which the improved urban quality of life can be used to promote economic growth. In this way, then, "the making of the entrepreneurial city seems to *require* the identification and incorporation of an actual politics of the urban environment."[121]

The focus on sustainability means that urban entrepreneurialism depends on selectively incorporating environmental goals into the broader urban redevelopment strategy. According to While, Jonas, and Gibbs, eco-gentrification projects such as brownfield remediation, urban stream restoration, and park restoration "have been significant, not only in re-imaging cities, but have also been important in opening up actual urban spaces for new waves of investment and bringing back the middle classes in the city."[122] Guided by neoliberal strategies, urban policy makers employ eco-gentrification strategies with the idea of making cities more sustainable. But, according to geographers Erik Swyngedouw and Nik Heynen, "there is no such thing as an unsustainable city in

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[119] Platt, *Humane Metropolis,* 18. See also: Platt, Rowntree, and Muick, *The Ecological City*; Timothy Beatley and Kristi Manning, *The Ecology of Place: Planning for Environment, Economy, and Community* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1997); Timothy Beatley, *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000); Eugenie Birch and Susan Wachter, eds., *Growing Greener Cities: Urban Sustainability in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

[120] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city," 550.

[121] *Ibid*, 565, emphasis in original.

[122] *Ibid*, 550.

general, [only] a series of urban and environmental processes that negatively affect some social groups while benefitting others."[123] The goal of these strategies is to produce aesthetically pleasing environments in order to attract mobile capital as well as new urban professionals. As urban redevelopment policies, eco-gentrification strategies physically remake urban environments and ecologies to correspond to the dominant environmental imaginary.[124]

**Urban SocioNature**

Nature, according to Marxist cultural critic Raymond Williams, is "perhaps the most complex word" in the English language.[125] Generally, people think of nature as something outside of society; it is anything that culture is not. Typical of this mindset, urban historian Lewis Mumford wrote about the ways in which the growth of cities often displaced nature. In Mumford's view (and that of others) cities, as human constructions, stand in direct opposition to 'pristine' nature, where cities were ordered and structured according to social conventions, and nature was deemed to be 'wild'.[126] This mentality has impacted our desire to protect the environment, in that we have largely focused on protecting 'pristine' environments, like rainforests, and 'wild' forms of nature, like dolphins, seal pups, or other 'cute' marine mammals.

However, since there is nothing *unnatural* about the city, human activity cannot be viewed as external to urban ecological processes. Harvey argues, therefore, that it is "inconsistent to hold that everything on the world relates to everything else, as ecologists tend to do, and then decide that the

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[123] Erik Swyngedouw and Nik Heynen, "Urban political ecology, justice, and the politics of scale," *Antipode* 35(2003), 901.

[124] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city," 550.

[125] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 219.

[126] See: Lewis Mumford, "The natural history of urbanization," in *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*, ed., William Thomas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 382-398, and William Cronon, "The trouble with wilderness: or getting back to the wrong nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed., William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 69-90.

built environment and the urban structures that go with it are somehow outside of both theoretical and practical consideration. The effect has been to evade integrating understandings of the urbanizing process into environmental-ecological analysis."[127] The neat categories of 'nature' and 'culture' get blurred when we analyze nature through a cultural lens because we tend to frame the scientific concept of ecologic function with our cultural concept of a nature aesthetic.[128]

Beginning with the Chicago School of Sociology, the city in the twentieth century was seen as an ecosystem. The Chicago School came to prominence with the 1925 publication of *The City: Suggestions for the Study of Human Nature in the Urban Environment*. In *The City,* Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Roderick McKenzie put forth the notion of using concepts from plant and animal ecology to create a human ecology through which they could examine urban processes. They used concepts from resource management and the natural sciences to develop a life cycle model of the city. Cities were seen as 'natural resources,' which affected the growth or decline of a community and therefore urban professionals and technocrats could engage in the "scientific management" of the city.[129] The application of ecological concepts acted as a metaphor to explain human actions and describe a human ecology, but did not help our understanding of the *natural* ecology of the urban landscape. However, at the close of twentieth century, scholars interested in exploring the relationships between environmental and social concerns reinvigorated urban studies by once again looking at the city as an ecosystem.

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[127] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1996), 427.

[128] Joan Nassauer, "Messy ecosystems, orderly frames," *Landscape Journal* 14(1995): 161-170, and "Culture and changing landscape structure," *Landscape Ecology* 10(1995): 229-237.

[129] Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City: Suggestions for the Study of Human Nature in the Urban Environment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925); Jennifer Light, *The Nature of Cities: Ecological Visions and the American Urban Professionals, 1920-1960* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 43-53.

By the 1980s and 1990s, scholars interested in environmental and urban issues began to look at the complexities of nature and an increasingly urbanized American society.[130] In particular, environmental historians and historical geographers explored the role nature and natural systems in the development of cities. Geographer and historian William Cronon examined the ways in which the development of Chicago depended upon the natural systems in the city's hinterland.[131] Similarly, geographer and historian Joseph Taylor highlighted the demand for salmon from the Columbia and lower Willamette rivers by the growing Oregon cities of Portland, Astoria, and Salem.[132] While Cronon and Taylor emphasized the role of resources in urban development, environmental historians Martin Melosi and Joel Tarr argued that urban infrastructures employed to address issues of waste and pollution profoundly impacted urban development.[133] Sprouting from these important works of urban environmental history, a new wave of urban environmental scholarship emerged that focused on the power dynamics of the nature-society relationship in urban areas.

No longer concerned with merely proving that nature plays a significant role in the development of cities, a new groundswell of urban environmental scholarship examines the ways that urban regimes deploy nature as a way to wield power in the city and produce particular urban

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[130] For papers advocating for a closer examination of the environmental history of cities, see: Martin Melosi, "The place of the city in environmental history," *Environmental History Review* 17(1993): 1-23; Christine Meisner and Joel Tarr, "The importance of and urban perspective in environmental history," *Journal of Urban History* 20(1994): 299-310. For research examining various dimensions of the ecosystem dynamics of cities, see: Mark McDonnell and Steward TA Pickett, "Ecosystem structure and function along urban-rural gradients: an unexploited opportunity for ecology," *Ecology* 71(1990): 1232-1237; Mathis Wackernagel, and William Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth.* (Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 1996); J. Morgan Grove and William Burch Jr., "A social ecology approach and applications of urban ecosystem and landscape analyses: a case study of Baltimore, Maryland," *Urban Ecosystems* 1(1997): 259-275; Steward TA Pickett, William Burch Jr., Shawn Dalton, Timothy Foresman, J. Morgan Grove, Rowan Rowntree, "A conceptual framework for the study of human ecosystems in urban areas," *Urban Ecosystems* 1(1997): 185-199.

[131] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

[132] Joseph Taylor, *Making Salmon: An Environmental History of the Northwest Fisheries Crisis* (Seattle; University of Washington Press, 1999).

[133] Martin Melosi, "Sanitary Services and decision making in Houston, 1876-1945," *Journal of Urban History* 20(1994): 365-406; Joel Tarr, *The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Pollution in Historic Perspective* (Akron: University of Akron Press, 1996).

landscapes. The development of the city, specifically the manipulation of the physical environment to produce urban landscapes, is the result of (and results in) inequality. In controlling the transformations of the urban landscape, urban regimes possess the ability to determine which environmental imaginaries get constructed, which informs the material appearance of the landscape. In his environment history of Seattle, historian Matthew Klingle argues that the history of urban space "emerges from how humans wield power over one another with nature as their instrument."[134] Recognizing the power embedded in the landscape, geographers Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw similarly argue that, "the material conditions that comprise the urban environment are controlled, manipulated, and serve the interests of the elite at the expense of marginalized populations."[135] These uneven urban landscapes are the result of a variety of social, political, and economic processes, which of course are often contested and struggled over.

While the discursive construction of urban nature plays an important role in the development of cities, we should not forget the material dimensions of urban nature. According to Heynen, Kaika, Swyngedouw all socio-spatial processes in the city "are invariably predicated upon the circulation and metabolism of physical, chemical, and biological components," or, the material "non-human actants" in the urban landscape.[136] Nature, and society's reaction to its material dimensions, has been a powerful agent of change in the city. In *An Unnatural Metropolis,* geographer Craig Colten highlights the role of nature's material dimensions in affecting social transformations in New Orleans. Colten examines the network of the city's physical environment—the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain, topography, swamps, rainfall, floods, and hurricanes—to show that the

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[134] Matthew Klingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 198.

[135] Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw, "Urban political ecology: Politicizing the production of urban natures," in *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Urban Metabolism*, ed., Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

[136] Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw, "Urban political ecology," 12.

city's environment "has mattered" throughout all phases of its development.[137] Based on the city's unique environmental factors, "keeping the city dry, or separating the human-made environment from its natural endowment, has been the perpetual battle for New Orleans," and therefore "the city's efforts to manage water [helped] shape the city's internal geography and the resulting urban landscape."[138] Both the discursive and material constructions of urban nature influence the transformation of urban landscapes.

Cities, socially produced through a variety of socio-ecological processes, are dynamic and require a critical historical-geographical perspective to examine the changing environmental narratives associated with the evolution of urban landscapes. Geographer Chris Philo argues that "the importance of historical geography lies in bringing a geographical sensibility to bear upon the study of all those past phenomena—economic, social, political, or [ecological]—that are the very 'stuff' of history."[139] By examining these processes we can see that "environmental transformations are not independent of class, gender, ethnicity, or other power struggles" instead these transformations "produce socio-environmental conditions that are both enabling, for powerful individuals and groups, and disabling, for marginalized individuals and groups"[140] Therefore to understand the restoration of urban parks associated with eco-gentrification and neoliberal urbanism, we need to examine both the socio-spatial processes and the environmental imaginaries associated with park production.

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[137] Craig Colten, *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wresting New Orleans from Nature* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005), 6.

[138] Colten, *Unnatural Metropolis*, 2 and 6.

[139] Chris Philo, "History, geography and the 'still greater mystery' of historical geography," in *Human Geography: Society, Space, and Social Science*, eds., Derek Gregory, Ron Martin, and Graham Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 253.

[140] Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw, "Urban political ecology," 10.

**Urban Environmental Planning**

The practice of environmental planning developed, in part, as a response to environmental problems. Environmental planning, according to planner Thomas Daniels, is the theory (and practice) of making interrelated decisions about the natural environment, the cultural landscape, and human health. Broadly, environmental planners are keenly aware of the nature-society relations associated with a given site and at a particular time. The goal of environmental planning is to unite the public and private sectors to exchange scientific and technical knowledge to engage in the problem-solving necessary to manage nature. Daniels identifies five eras of American environmentalism and planning each with its own environmental problems and social approaches to the management of the environment (Table 2.2).[141]

The first era coincided with the reform efforts of the Progressive Era. By the late-nineteenth century, continued population growth and industrialization resulted in air pollution, problems with sewage and poor water quality in American cities. Park advocates used the park movement as an attempt to physically remake cities, improving urban living and reforming society. An important feature of this era of environmental planning was a new focus on resource exploitation and the promotion of land conservation.[142]

The roots of the 'conservancy park' date back to the progressive ideas of Charles Eliot, an Olmsted colleague. The February 19, 1890 edition of *Garden and Forest* featured, perhaps, one of the most important editorials in American environmental history and land conservation. In this piece, "The Waverly Oaks," Eliot, highlighted the need for land conservation to protect a small area of

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[141] Thomas Daniels, "A trail across time: American environmental planning from city beautiful to sustainability," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 75(2009): 178-192.

[142] Samuel P. Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency: The Progressive Conservation Movement, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Jon Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840-1917* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature* (New York: Charles Scribner. 1864).

| Years | Era & Issues | Purposes | Actors |
|---|---|---|---|
| late-19th/ early-20th century | **Progressive era** | | |
| | Urban parks, playgrounds, city beautiful | Public health, social reform, aesthetics | Olmsted firm, city park commissions |
| | Suburbanization | Aesthetics, health | Olmsted firm |
| | Wilderness | Preservation of nature | John Muir, Charles Eliot |
| | Conservation of resources | Sustainable yield | Gifford Pinchot |
| 1920s-1960s | **Regional ecological planning** | | |
| | Regional ecological planning | Balance nature with built environment | Ian McHarg, Benton MacKaye, regional planning commissions |
| | Wilderness protection | Protection of nature | National Park Service |
| | Environmental impact assessment | Public health, natural resource conservation | Ian McHarg, US EPA, state environmental agencies |
| 1970s-1980s | **Modern environmental planning** | | |
| | Pollution cleanup & control | Public health, remediation | US EPA, state environmental agencies, private sector, NGOs |
| | State-level planning | Manage growth, conserve natural resources | State planning & environmental agencies, municipal government |
| 1980s-2000s | **Backlash; or a bridge to sustainability** | | |
| | Regulatory flexibility, financial incentives, cooperation | Impede environmental progress, change regulations | Federal government, US EPA, private sector |
| | Rise of land trusts & NGOs | Preserve land, environmental quality, sense of place | Nature Conservancy, Trustees of Reservations |
| 1990s-present | **Sustainability** | | |
| | Sustainability | Long-term economic, ecological, and social viability | Cities, park conservancies, private sector |
| | Global environmental health | Human survival & prosperity in the face of global eco-crises | Federal governments, land trusts, private sector |
| | Urban ecological planning | City as ecosystem, aesthetics, sense of place | Cities, park conservancies, private sector |

**Table 2.2.** American environmentalism and planning. Adapted from Daniels (2009).

twenty-three white oaks in the town of Belmont (approximately nine miles northwest of Beacon Hill) from unchecked development. Eliot referred to these trees as the "most interesting trees in eastern Massachusetts." In recognizing that other individual oaks may be larger, Eliot stressed the unique qualities of this particular stand by claiming that "a group containing so many large trees is not often seen anywhere in eastern America."[143] Estimating the age of these trees, Eliot believed that the even "after making all due allowance for differences in the rate of growth at different periods in the existence of these trees, it is safe to surmise that the youngest of them had attained to some size before the Pilgrims landed on the shores of Massachusetts Bay."[144]

Exemplifying a new land conservation ethos, Eliot proposed a park to preserve these specimens from encroaching development. He noted that the region was undergoing rapid development and "the establishment of a small public park at this place, which need not exceed three or four acres in extent...would protect the trees from the dangers which now threaten them, and would make a valuable and interesting public resort within walking or driving distance of the homes of a very large number of people."[145] Eliot's emphasis on land conservation and the protection of natural resources formed the basis upon which he created the Trustees of Public Reservations in 1891 "for the purposes of acquiring, holding, maintaining and opening to the public…beautiful and historic places…within the Commonwealth."[146] Eliot believed in the power of private groups, like the Trustees, to help municipalities and the Commonwealth "hold small and well-distributed parcels of land free of taxes, just as the Public Library holds books and the Art

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[143] Charles Eliot, "The Waverly Oaks" *Garden and Forest* 3(1890), 85.

[144] *Ibid*, 85.

[145] Eliot, "The Waverly Oaks," 85-86.

[146] Trustees of Reservations, "The Trustees of Reservations: History" http://www.thetrustees.org/about-us/history/ (Date Accessed 5 Aug 2011). Hereafter referred to as the "Trustees." According to the Trustees, as a private organization engaged in private land conservation measures, they dropped the "Public" from its name in 1954 to avoid the confusion associated with truly publicly-owned lands (e.g. municipal, state, federal government). The Trustees was the first private non-profit land trust in the world. The organization was the model by which the British National Trust was formed in 1895.

Museum pictures—for the use and enjoyment of the public."[147]

The establishment of the Trustees served, along with Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 frontier thesis, as the unofficial beginning of the conservation-minded stewardship associated with Progressive Era environmentalism.[148] This new focus on conservation and stewardship helped create some of the most important land conservation organizations and legislation in America: the legislation to protect what would become Yosemite and Sequoia national parks was created in the fall of 1890; the Forest Reserve Act was passed in 1891; John Muir helped found the Sierra Club in 1892 "to do something for the wilderness and make the mountains glad;" the Massachusetts Audubon Society was formed in 1896; President Theodore Roosevelt created the National Wildlife Refuge System in 1903; the National Audubon Society was formed in 1905; Roosevelt signed the Antiquities Act of 1906 allowing a president to designate national monuments on his own without approval from Congress; and, President Woodrow Wilson created the National Park Service in 1916.[149]

Politically, the Progressive Era fell into decline by the 1920s, but the conservation and stewardship ethos continued on, to varying degrees, throughout the twentieth century. Benton MacKaye, a forester, and Ian McHarg, a landscape architect, exemplified the modern environmental planning era (1920s-1960s) with its focus on regional ecological planning. MacKaye based his

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147 Charles Eliot, "Letter to the editor: The Waverly Oaks" *Garden and Forest* 3(1890), 118.

148 Turner, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*.

149 For the Muir quote and the development if the Sierra Club, see Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 132. For Yosemite and Sequoia, see: Alfred Runte, *Yosemite: The Embattled Wilderness* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1990) and Lary M. Dilsaver and William C. Tweed, *Challenge of the Big Trees: A Resource History of Sequoia and Kings Canyon* (Three Rivers, CA: Sequoia Natural History Association, Inc., 1990). Available from http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online-books/dilsaver-tweed/index.htm (accessed on 5 Oct 2012). The Massachusetts Audubon Society is independent of the National Audubon Society. For more on these organizations, see: http://www.massaudubon.org/ and http://www.audubon.org/. For the Antiquities Act, see: David Harmon, Francis McManamon, Dwight Pitcaithley, eds., *The Antiquities Act: A Century of American Archaeology, Historic Preservation, And Nature Conservation* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006). For the National Park Service Act, see: Richard West Sellars, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) and United States House of Representatives, 64th Congress, *National Park Service: Hearing Before the Committee on the Public Lands* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916).

regional planning approach on a technocratic approach to conservation in which he favored designing regional recreational amenities, like the Appalachian Trail, that implemented the ideas of engineers, foresters, landscape architects, agriculturalists, and government and industry officials. McHarg approached regional planning by studying human ecology, and examining the problems associated with the patterns of land use and human settlement.[150] By the 1960s and 1970s, however, environmentalists began to move away from the focus on land conservation, and focused instead on environmental reform and regulation.

In post-war America, environmentalists began to recognize that environmental problems were significantly more complex than previously thought as they often had delayed effects and had negative consequences of human health. Environmental historian Adam Rome lists three reasons why this new reform environmental movement picked up steam by the 1960s. First, environmentalists began to focus on environmental quality and reject the old argument that "pollution was the price of progress." Second, environmentalists began to reject the modernization of the nation (e.g., development of atomic energy, the increased use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture, the use of synthetic materials). Lastly, inspired by new ecological insights due in part to the bestselling books by Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, and Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*, ordinary citizens became involved in the environmental movement due to "a new appreciation of the risks of transforming nature."[151]

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[150] Benton MacKaye, "An Appalachian Trail: A project in regional planning," *American Institute of Architects Journal* 9(1921): 325-330 and *The New Exploration: A Philosophy of Regional Planning* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1928); Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969).

[151] Adam Rome, "'Give Earth a chance': The environmental movement and the sixties," *The Journal of American History* 90(2003), 526. See also: Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962); Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968); Barry Commoner, *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology* (New York: Knopf, 1971); Thomas Dunlap, ed., *DDT, Silent Spring and the Rise of Environmentalism: Classic Texts* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).

Rome also stresses that the rise of this new American environmental movement in the 1960s coincided with the growing counter-culture movements of the time. Specifically, he emphasizes the "revitalization of liberalism…the growing discontent of middle-class women and the explosion of student radicalism and counter-culture protest" as the main reasons the 1960s witnessed an increased interest in environmental issues.[152] In the 1960s, liberals became concerned for the quality of the environment as they tried to move beyond the New Deal. They looked for ways in which the federal government could work to improve the lives of Americans, and environmental historian Martin Melosi argued that these efforts to improve quality of life issues "tapped into the spirit of the Great Society," and Lady Bird Johnson's "beautification" programs epitomized these efforts. To her, beautification represented "one thread in the whole warp and weave of the tapestry" related to the environment—clean air and water, urban parks, expansion of national parks, and scenic highways.[153]

However, the growing grassroots environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s moved beyond simple aesthetic improvements. Due to the increased use of industrial chemicals and synthetic materials, as well radioactive fallout from atomic testing, "Americans no longer could take for granted the healthfulness of the milk."[154] With basic household needs no longer safe, the nation's middle-class women joined the growing environmental movement. As stewards and caretakers of the family, women took on the role of environmentalists to protect their children and their families.[155]

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[152] Rome, "Give Earth a chance," 527.

[153] Martin Melosi, "Environmental policy," in *A Companion to Lyndon B. Johnson*, ed. Mitchell Lerner (Malden: Blackwell, 2012), 192. Michael Gillette, *Lady Bird Johnson: An Oral History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 359.

[154] Rome, "Give Earth a chance," 529.

[155] Caroline Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980).

In addition to liberals and middle-class women, student radicals also played a significant role in the environmental movement. Connecting their criticism of the nation's cultural and political institutions to the growing environmental movement, students believed that the destruction of the environment was linked to the military-industrial complex. According to Rome, for many of these student radicals rebelling "against the soul-deadening artificiality of consumer culture, nature became a source of authentic values [and] the degradation of the environment became a powerful symbol of the exploitive character of capitalism."[156] To protest this war against nature, students formed environmental groups on their college campuses, which in part, led to the creation of Earth Day. On April 22, 1970, approximately 20 million Americans came together in various cities and on college campuses to demonstrate their concern about the looming environmental crisis facing the nation.[157]

In the decades following Earth Day, the technocratic conservation mindset has morphed into a burgeoning environmental justice movement as people developed a concern for environmental problems in their local communities. Based on the premise that people of color and members of the working-class are disproportionately exposed to greater environmental risk than those that are white and/or wealthy, the first environmental justice battles addressed the siting of landfills and toxic waste facilities in working-class communities and/or communities of color.[158] By the late-1990s and early-2000s, studies began to move beyond the focus on environmental burdens to examine the roles of race and class in shaping the production of environmental amenities. In her study of Los Angeles, geographer Laura Pulido examines white privilege and the processes of

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[156] Rome, "Give Earth a chance," 542.

[157] Rome, "Give Earth a chance," 550. See also: Gaylord Nelson, *Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

[158] Lois Marie Gibbs and Murray Levine, *Love Canal: My Story* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1982); United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States: A National Report on the Racial and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Communities with Hazardous Waste Sites* (New York: United Church of Christ, 1987); Robert Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class and Environmental Quality*, 3rd ed. (Boulder; Westview Press, 2000).

suburbanization to highlight the ways in which the socio-spatial processes of inequality resulted in whites occupying cleaner environments.[159] In his study of the spatial distribution of street trees in Indianapolis, Heynen finds that poor neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color had comparatively less street trees than wealthy and/or white neighborhoods. As environmental amenities, street trees (and green spaces in general) acts as "billboards" that highlight "elite spaces of wealth and power."[160]

**A New Direction for Park Scholarship**

In the following chapters I examine the ways in which the parks of the Emerald Necklace fit into the political, cultural, environmental, and economic history of Boston. My discussion of the ways in which naturalistic landscape parks fit into urban political economy does three things. First, it forces a re-evaluation of parks that expands upon the social context in which historians have placed them; this entails a movement beyond landscape designers, social reformers, and contemporary urban commentators to explore the role of regime politics and public administrators. Second, it moves the discussion of parks beyond the idea of parks being solely the nexus of culture and nature, but actually being a nexus of culture, nature, and economy. Third, it encourages us to think about the ramifications that municipal budget priorities can have on urban ecosystems. Budget cutbacks, and out and out state devolution, can open doors for private, nonprofit park groups and conservancies to tackle the restoration of the right "kinds" of nature—the kinds that will benefit the urban elite to the exclusion of other groups. This, I argue, is what happened in the Emerald Necklace.

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[159] Laura Pulido, "Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(2000); 12-40.

[160] Nik Heynen, "The scalar production of injustice within the urban forest," *Antipode* 35(2003), 983.

# CHAPTER 3

## BOSTON'S LEISURE CLASS: THE BRAHMIN AND THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARK MOVEMENT

> *From the outset, the "public" arguments for a park emphasized a search for order, a harmonious balance between nature and culture rooted in organic analogies of a healthy city as a means to facilitate greater economic prosperity and ensure social harmony. In reality, however, it was sophisticated and farsighted economic calculations on the part of powerful merchants, land speculators, and property owners that carried the day.*
>
> --Matthew Gandy[1]

Through his artistry, Olmsted created amenity landscapes designed to serve the aesthetic tastes and recreational needs of visitors. Yet the Emerald Necklace also served a more specific set of interests among Boston's urban elite, making it a prime setting to explore the historical relationships between class, power and the social production of park landscapes. This chapter examines those relationships, arguing that the parks of the Emerald Necklace did more than provide space for recreation; they advanced the economic and cultural agendas of Boston's elite leisure class through the specific interplay of boosterism, aesthetics, and real-estate speculation.

In this chapter, I explore the nineteenth-century park movement in Boston by paying attention to the city's elite leisure class: the Boston Brahmin. I examine the ways in which, similar to the Central Park argument Gandy discusses above, this leisure class—politicians, merchants, land speculators, and property owners—used their power and influence to shape the park movement in Boston by emphasizing the social and environmental benefits of parks, when in reality, land economics drove the park movement. Relying on regime theory, I examine the role of the Brahmin in shaping the city's landscape, whom as the closest thing to a "natural" aristocracy, assumed the

[1] Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, 113.

role of the urban leisure class and became the city's leading park advocates. As a coalition representing political, economic, and social reform interests, this leisure class championed the creation of public parks in order to alleviate a variety of social and environmental crises resulting from the industrialization of Boston. They used the hegemonic power associated with their political, economic, and cultural dominance to influence the future development of the city, in part, by creating parks and other cultural institutions that served to reify their dominance and status.

In this chapter, I ask the following question: What is it that creates the initial vision of this leisure class that then finds expression in the enabling park legislation and in the parks themselves? To answer this question, I examine the social history of the Brahmin and how they came to be the city's leisure class and biggest park advocates. In doing so, I illustrate how, in the face of economic and social change, this leisure class behaved in privileged ways, first, by controlling Boston politics as a means to control land development, and second, by developing self-aggrandizing, paternalist institutions including public parks to put people (read: workers, the poor, and immigrants) in their place. Parks represented another tool in the Brahmin toolbox and I examine the ability of this urban leisure class to impose a new socio-spatial order through the creation of public parks. I analyze the ways in which the Brahmin organized support for the huge economic investment in their park strategy, in part, by looking at the economics associated with the creation of Central Park and by hiring the Olmsted firm, the nation's preeminent park designers.

**The Social History of Boston's Leisure Class**

In the 1850s, park advocates in Boston emerged from the Boston Brahmin, an elite urban leisure class consisting of the city's upper crust. The writer and cultural critic Oliver Wendell Holmes coined the term when describing the New England aristocracy as the "Brahmin caste of New

England."[2] In using this term, Holmes not only highlighted the wealth of this group, but showed how collectively they displayed personal virtue and moral character, thereby equating these wealthy Bostonians to the caste of ancient Hindus who set the moral standards for society.

As old-stock New England Yankees, members of this group of prominent families could trace their roots back to the settling of the Massachusetts colony and the city of Boston.[3] A list of Brahmin families in Boston, beginning with the Adams' and Appletons and ending with the Welds and the Winthrops, reads like the city's social register.[4] In his famous toast, John Collins Bossidy succinctly summarized the traditions, power, and elitism of Brahmin families: "And this is good old Boston, the home of the bean and the cod, where the Lowells talk only to Cabots, and the Cabots talk only to God."[5] In typical 'WASP' fashion, most Brahmin belonged to Episcopal, Methodist, Congregational, or Unitarian churches.[6] As young men, they attended prestigious New England prep schools such as, St. Mark's School (Southborough, MA), St. Paul's School (Concord, NH), Groton School (Groton, MA), Phillips Academy (Andover, MA), or Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter, NH). They continued their socialization and education at Ivy League institutions, notably Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth, but, to a lesser extent, also attended the "little ivies" like Amherst,

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[2] Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Elsie Venner: A Romance of Destiny* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1861), 17.

[3] Betty Farrell, *Elite Families: Class and Power in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).

[4] Among the other Brahmin family names are: Armory, Bacon, Cabot, Chaffee, Choate, Codman, Coolidge, Cushing, Crowningshield, Dana, Dudley, Dwight, Eliot, Emerson, Endicott, Forbes, Gardner, Holmes, Jackson, Lawrence, Lodge, Lowell, Otis, Parkman, Peabody, Perkins, Phillips, Putnam, Quincy, Rice, Saltonstall, Sears, and Tudor.

[5] As cited in Robert Sobel, *The Entrepreneurs: Explorations within the American Business Tradition* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1974), 1.

[6] The term WASP (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) may appear to some to be a pejorative. However in the context of the sentence and the specific types of Protestant churches the Brahmin attended, I believe it to be apt. Using another term, such as Yankee, might bring other less derogatory connotations, but does not speak directly to the aspects of ethnicity and religion. In *Language and Woman's Place: Text and Commentaries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004[1973]) Robin Lakoff derides the idea of WASP as a pejorative: "The term WASP, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant, may occur to the reader as a possible derogatory term which has no parallel euphemism. But in fact, WASP is not parallel in usage to *nigger*, *polack*, or *yid*. One can refer to himself as a WASP, as one cannot refer to himself as a *nigger* without either a total lack of self-pride or bitter sarcasm. Thus one can say 'Sure I'm a WASP, and proud of it!' but probably not 'Sure I'm a nigger, and proud of it!' without special sarcastic inflection in the voice suggesting that it is an imitation of the addressee" (pp. 52-53 emphasis in original).

Middlebury, Wesleyan, and Williams.[7] As the city's old money aristocracy, the Brahmin largely accumulated their wealth through real estate speculation, as well as shipping enterprises including trading in illicit items.[8]

Prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, members of the Brahmin worked collaboratively to develop an elite enclave on the south slope of Beacon Hill along Beacon Street which faced the Common. Holmes, a member of this Brahmin caste who resided at 296 Beacon Street, described his street as "the sunny street that holds the sifted few."[9] Similarly, an anonymous poet compared Beacon Street to the Garden of Eden:

> There is a region, lovelier far
> than Eden's vales and vistas are,
> Serene and sheltered in repose
> from every stormy wind that blows,
> A place than all besides more sweet:
> At once you know it! Beacon Street.[10]

The Brahmin kept their Beacon Hill enclave closed-off from the rest of society, in part, through marriage. As a strategic alliance, marriage acted as the social glue that structured the Brahmin social order by creating obligations through familial associations and by allowing for the integration of business patterns.

In 1795, Harrison Gray Otis organized a collective group of real estate investors known as the Mount Vernon Proprietors.[11] That same year, Otis was appointed to the commission charged

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[7] Frederic Cople Jaher, *The Urban Establishment: Upper Strata in Boston, New York, Charleston, Chicago, and Los Angeles* (Urban: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 265.

[8] In *The Urban Establishment,* Jaher discussed the will of Brahmin merchants to engage deal in disreputable goods as long as there was a significant financial benefit to be gained (39): "Scruples, however, were not entirely absent in proper Boston enterprise…Moral impulses, as well as regional specialization, may account for reluctance to enter the slave trade. Overseas merchants, however, did not reject opium dealing. Perkins & Co. embarked on this venture with misgivings, but resolved its doubts in the usual outcome of struggles between conscience and cashbook."

[9] Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Urania," *The Poems of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), 153.

[10] The poem, simply titled "Boston," is from an anonymously written book of urban poetry—*Four Cities: Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston and Brooklyn* (N.P., 1908). The full text of the poem is available from http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101068163680;view=1up;seq=23 (accessed on 9 Jul 2012).

with selecting and acquiring the land upon which the new State House was to be built. The commission purchased part of John Hancock's Beacon Hill estate and designated the pastureland as the site of the new State House. Collectively, the Proprietors saw opportunities for profitable real estate ventures by creating a luxurious and elegant residential district facing the Common, and Otis, on behalf of the Proprietors, acquired 18.5 acres of farmland adjacent to the grounds of the Hancock estate.

The dignified look and classical style of Beacon Hill reflects the influence of Charles Bulfinch, a member of the Proprietors and the city's leading architect. Bulfinch, not only designed the State House, but also formalized Boston Common by defining the boundaries with row houses (Figure 3.1).[12] Designed by Bulfinch in 1826, Louisburg Square (a private square on Beacon Hill) has long been one of the most exclusive residential districts in Boston. For nearly two centuries, Boston's cultural elite (e.g., the Cabots, the Appletons, Louisa May Alcott, Henry James, William

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[11] Mount Vernon Proprietors takes its name from one of the hills found in the area; it's also the name of a street on Beacon Hill. The peninsula upon which Boston stands was originally called Shawmut by local Native Americans. The colonists referred to the peninsula as Trimountaine, due to its three hills, Copp's Hill and Fort Hill, which were leveled for land making as the city expanded, and Beacon Hill, the most central and largest of three. Beacon Hill itself had three peaks, including the central peak which lends its name to the entire hill, Pemberton Hill, and Mount Vernon. The latter two peaks were lowered over the years for land making and filling in the Back Bay. For more information on the historical development of Boston see: Edwin M. Bacon, *Boston Illustrated* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1886); Walter Muir Whitehill, *Boston: A Topographical History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); Alex Kreiger and David Cobb, *Mapping Boston* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999); Nancy S. Seasholes, *Gaining Ground: A History of Landmaking in Boston* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). Otis, a graduate of Harvard, would later go on to become a state legislator, the U.S. district attorney for Massachusetts appointed by presidents Washington and Adams, a U.S. congressman and senator, and mayor of Boston. Otis also served as a Massachusetts representative to the 1814 Hartford Convention where a small, but vocal, minority suggested the secession of New England from the United States. For more on Otis, see: Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913).

[12] Jane Holtz Kay, *Lost Boston* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006 [1980]), 100. For interpretations of the ways in which Boston's upper-class residents identified with Boston Common, see: the first chapter of Michael Rawson, *Eden on the Charles: The Making of Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); and, Mona Domosh, *Invented Cities: The Creation of Landscape in Nineteenth-Century New York and Boston* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 127-154.

**Figure 3.1.** Park Street and Boston Common, c. 1858. Looking down Park Street from the lawn of the Massachusetts State House, with the Thomas Amory house built (1803-04) by Bulfinch on the corner. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department.

**Figure 3.2.** Louisburg Square, c. 1880s. Source: The Bostonian Society.

Dean Howells, and John Kerry) have called this neighborhood of Greek Revival-style row houses home (Figure 3.2).[13]

Like merchants in other seaport cities, the Brahmin accumulated a large part of their wealth by engaging in a variety of sea trade activities. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Boston shipping firms of Perkins and Company, Russell and Company, and Bryant and Sturgis controlled much of the American China trade. In 1789, Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins, with his brother James, established trade relations with China and by the early-1800s controlled half of the American tea, fur, and opium trade with China.[14] By investing this wealth in new ventures such as banking, the Brahmin solidified their commercial holdings. Historian Frederic Cople Jaher claimed that their banking and financial enterprises, like the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company and the Massachusetts Bank, helped to serve the maritime interests of the Brahmin by providing a steady "source of funds and profits, a mechanism of exchange, and a force to stabilize

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[13] Harold Kirker, *The Architecture of Charles Bulfinch* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); Moying Li-Marcus, *Beacon Hill: The Life and Times of a Neighborhood* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002), 10-18. Interest in the Brahmin was revived leading up to the 2004 presidential election. The presidential aspirations of John Forbes Kerry renewed society's interest in this elite group. In February 2004, NPR interviewed writer Andy Bowers as he explained the term 'Brahmin." Available from http://www.npr.org/ templates/story/story.php?storyId=1703587 (accessed on 9 Jul 2012).

[14] T. H. Perkins was the archetypical Boston Brahmin. Perkins was so influential in the sea trade, historian Moying Li-Marcus (*op. cit.*, 21) notes, that when President Washington requested his service as Secretary of the Navy, Perkins declined so that he could attend to his own shipping fleet, which was larger than that of the U. S. Navy. A wealthy merchant, he later became an industrialist by investing in the Boston Manufacturing Company in Waltham, Massachusetts, and other textile mills in Newton, Holyoke, and Lowell, Massachusetts. He also owned the Granite Railway, the first commercial railway in America built to haul granite from the quarries in Quincy for the construction of the Bunker Hill Monument. Perkins was also a politician and served twelve years in the state legislature. Finally, Perkins, like other Brahmin, felt it was his duty to contribute philanthropically to causes and institutions that would help reify Brahmin cultural dominance. In 1826, he and his brother James donated half of the funds necessary to start the Boston Athenaeum. Perkins also acted as a benefactor of McLean Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the Museum of Fine Arts. But, perhaps his most lasting legacy came in 1832 when he donated his Boston estate to the Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, which was later renamed the Perkins School for the Blind. For more on Perkins see: Thomas Graeves Cary (ed.), *Memoirs of Thomas Handasyd Perkins, Containing Extracts from his Diaries and Letters* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856); Carl Seaberg and Stanley Paterson, *Merchant Prince of Boston: Colonel T. H. Perkins, 1764-1854* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

the supply and value of credit and currency."[15] By the early- to mid-nineteenth century the Brahmin became captains of industry as they began investing in manufacturing, financial, and transportation enterprises.[16] In moving beyond the sea trade and into manufacturing, their commercial activities existed in what historian Thomas O'Connor called a marriage between the "wharf and waterfall."[17]

The British blockades of American ports during the War of 1812, forced the United States to begin manufacturing cotton textiles, and the Brahmin led the way. In 1813, the Boston Manufacturing Company, in partnership with a consortium of enterprising Boston Brahmin dubbed, the "Boston Associates," built the first water-powered loom in Massachusetts approximately twelve miles west of Boston on the Charles River in Waltham, Massachusetts.[18] The core of the Boston Associates consisted of Francis Cabot Lowell, Amos and Abbott Lawrence, Nathan Appleton, and Lowell's brother-in-law, Patrick Tracy Jackson, with other Brahmin families (e.g., Perkins, Dwight, Armory, Lyman, and Coolidge) acting as investors. In 1821, the Boston Associates moved their operations to the Merrimack River in Lowell, Massachusetts, and to the rest of New England by mid-century.

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[15] Frederic Cople Jaher, "The politics of the Boston Brahmins: 1800-1860," in *Boston 1700-1980: The Evolution of Urban Politics*, ed. Ronald P. Formisano and Constance K. Burns (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 60.
The Brahmin were part of America's original *one percent.* The Massachusetts Bank, the first bank in Boston and the second oldest bank in the United States, opened in 1784. It claimed Paul Revere, John Hancock, and Samuel Adams among its clients. The history of the Massachusetts Bank is representative of the consolidation of money and power into the hands of a smaller and smaller portion of society. Through a variety of mergers, acquisitions, and name changes, the bank merged with Fleet Bank in 1999, which was later acquired by Bank of America in 2004. For more information on the history of banking in Boston, see: N.S.B. Gras, *The Massachusetts First National Bank, 1784-1934* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), and Ben Ames Williams, *Bank of Boston 200: A History of New England's Leading Bank, 1784-1984* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984).

[16] Paul Goodman, "Ethics and enterprise: the values of a Boston elite, 1800-1860," *American Quarterly* 18(1966): 437-451; Farrell, *Elite Families*.

[17] Thomas O'Connor, *The Athens of America: Boston, 1825-1845* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 17.

[18] Vera Schlakmen, *Economic History of a Factory Town: A Study of Chicopee, Massachusetts* (Northampton: Smith College Department of History, 1935). See also, Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., *Enterprising Elite: The Boston Associates and the World They Made* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

By 1850, the Boston Associates had controlling interests in more than 30 textile companies and controlled 20 percent of all textiles produced in the United States.[19] By serving on the boards of dozens of textile companies, banks, and insurance companies, as well as railroad and canals, members of the Boston Associates controlled manufacturing, banking capital, and transportation in New England and throughout the United States.[20] With the implementation of the "Waltham system" of textile mills throughout New England, and the reliance on slave labor in the southern states, there was a union between "the lords of the lash and the lords of the loom."[21] Throughout the nineteenth century, the Brahmin assumed the role of the city's ruling elite and wielded their power through a multi-dimensional hegemony of political, economic, and cultural dominance, and influenced the most important public and private activities in the city.[22]

In the face of tremendous economic and social change, the Brahmin welcomed urbanization insofar as the growth of the city helped their business enterprises. They relied heavily on a "disposable industrial reserve army" of labor—voluntary immigrants from Europe and the New England hinterland, as well as forced African migrants in the American South.[23] With their reliance on southern slaves and immigrants, the Brahmin acquired their wealth through the

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[19] Dalzell, *Enterprising Elite*, 79.

[20] *Ibid,* 79-80 and 233-238. As an example of the breadth of Brahmin leadership, see T. Jefferson Coolidge, the great-grandson of Thomas Jefferson. According to the *Directory of Directors in the City of Boston* (Boston: The Banker's Service Co., 1906), Coolidge served on the Board of Overseers of Harvard University, as a delegate to the Pan-American Congress, and as U.S. Minister to France. He also served as president of the Amory Manufacturing Company, the Cocheco Manufacturing Company, the Dwight Manufacturing Company, the Lawrence Manufacturing Company, the Boott Cotton Mills in Lowell, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company. Coolidge also served on the boards of the following: Amoskeag Manufacturing Company, Great Falls Manufacturing Company, Boston and Lowell Railroad, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, the Central and South America Telegraph Company, Bay State Trust Company, the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company, Merchants National Bank, New England Trust Company, Old Colony Trust Company, State Line Improvement Company, and State Street Exchange. In 1875, Coolidge accepted an appointment to the first Boston Park Commission.

[21] Li-Marcus, *Beacon Hill*, 32.

[22] Jaher, "The politics of the Boston Brahmins," 59-60.

[23] Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production* (New York: International Publishers, 1992), 592.

"impoverishment, debasement, [and] brutalization" of workers.[24] While they generally welcomed the growth of the city, they feared the rapid social changes brought about by immigration, urbanization, and industrialization. To slow these changes, the Brahmin relied on the power of kinship and marriage to provide their families with more cohesion, continuity, and stability allowing them to isolate themselves as well as perpetuate their way of life, prominence, and power in industry and in the political arena.[25]

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Boston Brahmin wielded considerable influence in the city. As Boston's upper crust, the Brahmin held conservative ideologies that emphasized industrialization and protectionism. Their conservatism aligned them with the Federalist, Whig, National Republican, "Know-Nothing," and Republican parties. At the federal level, members of this elite group went on to serve as President, U.S. representatives, U.S. senators, secretaries of state, federal judges, and ambassadors to Spain, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France.[26] At the state level, members of this upper-class went to serve as state representatives and senators, as well as governor. But, more importantly for the issue at hand, the Brahmin influenced city politics (as money often does).[27]

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[24] Martin Green, *The Problem of Boston: Some Readings in Cultural History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1966), 45.

[25] Goodman, "Ethics and enterprise," 437.

[26] Highlighting the Brahmin call to civic duty, John Quincy Adams served as minister to the Netherlands (1794-1797), minister to Prussia (1797-1801), U.S. Senator (1803-1808), minister to Russia (1809-1814), minister to the Court of St. James (1814-1817), U.S. Secretary of State (1817-1825), President of the United States (1825-1829), and in the U.S. House of Representatives (1831-1848).

[27] Boston was incorporated as a city in 1822. In the 62 years between 1822 through 1884, mayors from conservative parties (Federalist, Whig, Native American-Know Nothing, and Republican) held office for 46 of those years, while Democrats held office for 14 years, and 2 non-partisan candidates combined to run the office for nearly 3 years. But, by the 1880s, the Brahmin were slowly losing their grip on city politics. With the election of the first Irish mayor, Hugh O'Brien in 1885, Democrats gained control of city politics. In the 129 years between 1885 and 2014, Republicans mayors have only controlled the City Hall for 11 years, with the Democrats running City Hall for the rest and continually holding the office since 1930.

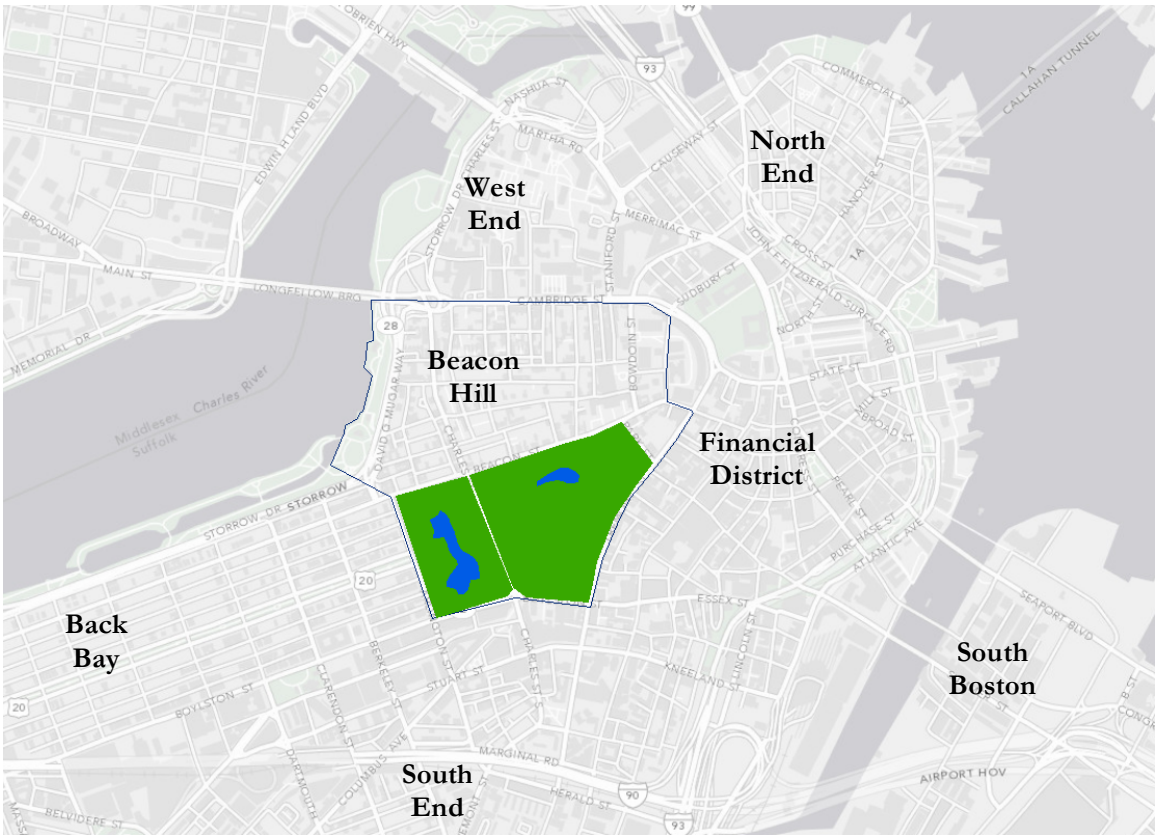


**Figure 3.3.** Map of Boston's Beacon Hill and surrounding neighborhoods.

Their control of both city hall and the common council greatly influenced their ability to develop property as they wished.[28] To enhance the elite nature of their Beacon Hill neighborhood, they pushed for new zoning laws preventing the invasion of commercial enterprise and outsiders into their enclave (Figure 3.3). Their land values rose, while friendly tax assessors kept them undervalued on the tax rolls. They also exerted political pressure on the police to step up patrols on

[28] Prior to the city's incorporation in 1822, it was governed by town meeting and a group of selectmen. After 1822, the city was governed by a combination of the mayor, a board of aldermen, and the common council. In 1909, the board of aldermen and the common council were replaced by the city council.

Beacon Hill and to push criminals out to other neighborhoods.[29] These public policies reflected the collective interests and values of the urban regime dominating local government.

In many ways, the Brahmin involved themselves in local government out of self-preservation. By controlling city politics, the Brahmin could bring order to the growing city, improve the business district as well as nearby elite neighborhoods, and rationalize public services in order to maintain low taxes, since they "had the most to lose from lower class violence, deficient fire and police organizations, and high taxes, and the most to gain from a better business district, a House of Industry, a formidable jail house, and a beautiful Common that would raise property values."[30] While the Brahmin had commercial and political interests, they also saw themselves as philanthropists and agents of moral improvement, who used their wealth and knowledge to create a variety of cultural, educational, and philanthropic institutions.

Boston's elite leisure class recognized that institution building was essential to their class interests. The Brahmin believed that industrialization, immigration, and the ills of the city they spawned could destroy their "proper" city, and therefore they pressed to create institutions that would act to cement their cultural values: personal responsibility; character; and, virtue. In doing so, the city created two classes of civic institutions—one for the city's poor and working class, and another for the city's elite. In his 1882 history of the city's cultural institutions, historian James Stark revealed the ways in which these institutions contrasted the "want, misery and crime" of the city's poor with the "silks, satins and broadcloths" of the city's elite.[31] Since Boston, like other great cities, could not escape its share of crime and misery, Stark noted that the city addressed the issues of its working poor by constructing the House of Correction and the House of Industry. The House of

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[29] Mark Abrahamson, *Urban Enclaves: Identity and Place in the World* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2006), 24; Jaher, "The politics of the Boston Brahmins," 69.

[30] Jaher "The politics of the Boston Brahmins," 78.

[31] James K. Stark, *Antique Views of Ye Towne of Boston* (Boston: Photo-Electrotype Engraving Co., 1882), 337.

Correction opened in 1821 for the confinement of the indolent and "vicious poor," while the House of Industry opened two years later as a workhouse for the able-bodied and "virtuous poor."[32]

While the Brahmin-led regime used their wealth, power, and influence to provide poor houses and jails for the less fortunate, they created institutions like the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Boston Athenaeum, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the Lowell Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Boston Society of Natural History, the Museum of Fine Arts, the American Historical Society, the Boston Public Library, and the Boston Symphony Orchestra to display their elite status and discriminating taste.[33] Perhaps most importantly for the topic at hand, the Brahmin, assuming the role of urban leisure class and the city's leading park advocates, formed the city's park commission in 1875. The production of public parks was just another in a long list of ways that the Brahmin used their wealth and influence to wield power and shape urban space.

With few exceptions, historians have privileged the social and environmental reform motivations for urban public parks. According to the standard park narrative, in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, American cities became increasingly overcrowded, dirty, and unhealthy from the pressures associated with urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Boston's leisure class, as social reformers, responded to such pressures, in part, by adopting an environmentally deterministic view of the foul industrial landscape and advocating for the creation of public parks, playgrounds, and other spaces of recreation. According to the standard park narrative, the naturalistic landscapes found in urban parks would help to improve prosperity and public health by acting as the 'lungs' of

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[32] *Ibid*, 337.

[33] Ronald Story, "Harvard and the Boston Brahmins: a study in institutional and class development, 1800-1865," *Journal of Social History* 8(1975), 94.

the city, as well as promote social morals and social cohesion.[34] It is my hope to move the park discussion beyond these accepted narratives of social and environmental reform. To subvert the standard narratives, I pay more attention to the social history of parks by analyzing the elite qualities of their environmental imaginaries. In the next section, I augment the argument of parks as spaces for social reform measures and public health improvements with examples from the Boston park movement, in order to later argue that these narratives helped to create the landscape aesthetic around which this park system enhance properties nearby.

**The Boston Park Movement**

Based upon the real and perceived needs of city residents, members of Boston's leisure class pushed for the production of urban public parks to improve living conditions in the industrial city. As this leisure class prospered, the quality of life in the city suffered greatly as slums developed, diseases like small pox, cholera, and tuberculosis became dangerous, infant mortality figures rose sharply, and pauperism, drunkenness, prostitution, crime, all spread enormously.[35] In their environmentally deterministic view, the leisure class believed that parks could ameliorate the growing environmental and social problems in the city and would provide moral spaces for recreation and leisure. By limiting the activities on park grounds to only those behaviors they deemed moral and acceptable, the Brahmin leisure class strove to maintain a park aesthetic that reinforced their class-based and culturally-based conceptions of recreation, park landscapes, and land use. In doing so, their actions remind us that any landscape—urban park or otherwise—signifies the power relations inherent in a

[34] Newton, *Design on the Land*; Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*; Schuyler, *New Urban Landscape*; Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*.

[35] Green, *The Problem of Boston*, 45.

given society while also serving as, what visual and critical studies theorist W. J. T. Mitchell calls, "an instrument of cultural power."[36]

As descendants of the ostentatious royal hunting grounds and private gardens in Europe, American urban public parks have a history of being elite cultural institutions. Having the time, money, and power to pursue a range of leisure activities, many members of Boston's upper class engaged in what nineteenth-century economist Thorstein Veblen called "conspicuous leisure." Veblen defined conspicuous leisure as the "non-productive consumption of time" in which members of the leisure class engaged in visible forms of leisure to display their social status, which revealed evidence of their "pecuniary ability to afford a life of idleness."[37] Parks, like the other institutions spawned by the Brahmin, were ways for Boston's leisure class to display their wealth and status, as well as model appropriate public manners.

The elite leisure class pushed for the creation of promenades and public parks, where they might publicly display their adherence to decorum, manners, and style, thus engaging in what historian David Scobey refers to as the "spectacle of sociability."[38] The spectacle associated with the formal promenade came from the desire of members of the leisure class to stroll in the park solely to engage conspicuous leisure where their wealth and status would be on display (Figure 3.4). Walt Whitman visited Central Park often and sought to capture the experience of being on the Mall in Central Park. He highlighted the genteel quality of the promenade:

> Ten thousand vehicles careering through the Park this perfect afternoon. Such a show!...Private barouches, cabs, and coupes, come fine horseflesh—lapdogs, footmen, fashions, foreigners, cockades on hats, crests on panels—the full oceanic

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[36] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Introduction," 1-2.

[37] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007[1899]), 53.

[38] David Scobey, "Anatomy of the promenade: The politics of bourgeois sociability in nineteenth-century New York City," *Social History* 17(1992), 216.

**Figure 3.4.** Sunday afternoon on the Central Park Mall, c. 1892. Source: The New York Public Library.

> tide of New York's wealth and 'gentility.' It was an impressive, rich, interminable circus on a grand scale, full of action and color in the beauty of the day, under the clear sun and moderate breeze…I suppose, as a proof of limitless wealth, leisure and the aforesaid 'gentility,' it was tremendous.[39]

Architectural historian Daniel Bluestone characterizes the class-based qualities of the promenade as a form of "fashionable entertainment." Bluestone describes the activity on the promenade where, "on warm evenings after dinner and on Sundays after church, many well-dressed city residents with parasols and walking sticks in hand...departed home and congregation for the broader world of the promenade. There, the heterogeneous urban crowd, with its tenuous social connections was

[39] Walt Whitman, *Specimen Days in America* (London: Walter Scott, 1887), 209.

transformed into a unifying body of leisure, enjoyment, and refinement."[40]

In his 1842 history of Boston Common, Unitarian minister Nehemiah Adams expressed a similar sentiment as he highlighted the predilection of the genteel leisure class to promenade separately on the borders of the Common, leaving the inner pathways for the common elements of society. In particular, the new brick sidewalk on the perimeter of the Common was more fashionable than the tree-lined promenade crossing through the Common. According to Adams, promenading on the periphery of the Common simultaneously displayed the gentility of the leisure class, while maintaining a, "separateness" from ordinary workers and immigrants.[41] In this way, Boston's leisure class used the promenade and formal public spaces as stages in which they engaged in a variety of public performances of collective civic and cultural identity (Figure 3.5).

Embodying the cultural ideals, values, and practices of the urban leisure class, the promenade helped spawn the public park movement in mid-nineteenth century America. Park design played an important role in perpetuating this elite spectacle by providing pleasing spaces for proper, genteel leisure activities, such as, strolling, carriage rides, and the contemplation of natural beauty. Parks, like other cultural institutions, provided a means for the leisure class to reify their own standards of taste, sophistication, and class.

Long before Olmsted was called upon to put pen to paper to design a park landscape in Boston, members of the leisure class struggled to create public parks. As early as the 1840s, Boston politicians and residents began calling for the creation of public gardens and parks. In 1844, Robert Fleming Gourlay, a Scottish farmer and political reformer, designed an elaborate, but unrealistic, plan for a series of regional parks around the city of Boston connected by radial boulevards. In

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[40] Daniel Bluestone, "From promenade to park: The gregarious origins of Brooklyn's park movement," *American Quarterly* 39(1987), 529 and 530.

[41] Nehemiah Adams, *Boston Common* (Boston: William D. Ticknor and H.B. Williams, 1842), 44.

**Figure 3.5.** View of the Tremont Street mall on the southeast border of Boston Common, c. 1880. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department.

1869, landscape designer Horace W. S. Cleveland also supported the notion of regional parks that took advantage of the distinctive natural features found in the suburban landscape. That same year, Uriel H. Crocker, a Boston lawyer, proposed a linear park system with embankments along the Boston and Cambridge sides of the Charles River out to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir in suburban Brighton.[42]

The city made one of its first official moves to establish a public park on October 21, 1869, with a motion in the Common Council calling for a joint special committee, "to consider and report what action should be taken by the City Government to purchase and lay out a public park for the

[42] For early park plans, see: Robert Fleming Gourlay, *Plans for Beautifying New York and for Enlarging and Improving Boston* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1844), H.W.S. Cleveland, *The Public Grounds of Chicago: How to Give Them Character and Expression* (Chicago: Charles D. Lackey, 1869), Uriel H. Crocker to Joint Special Committee in City doc. no. 123-1869 and *Map and Description of Proposed Metropolitan Park for Boston* (Boston, 1870). The idea of a metropolitan park system would ultimately come to fruition in the 1890s due to the work of Olmsted associate Charles Eliot.

use of the people."[43] Citing the need for parks, Marshall Wilder, a prosperous dry-goods merchant, politician, and horticulturalist, stated that city needed, "…a public park, planted with the proper trees…set apart for the re-creation of that class in the community who have not the means of riding round the suburbs of this city—the poor, or common class, who should have access to this park at a very small charge of fare."[44] The motion passed the Common Council with a strong vote in favor, prompting a bill to be sent to the public for a vote on May 27, 1870. However, due to parochial struggles over the location of the parks, as well as financing the acquisition of land and park construction, the bill failed to get the necessary votes in support.[45]

The park movement in Boston continued to pick up steam between November 1869 and January 1870, and, during this period, Olmsted received a series of letters from prominent Bostonians seeking guidance on the subject of parks for the city. James T. Fields, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, wrote to inform Olmsted that the subject of parks was "being widely agitated" in the city. In the same letter, Fields inquired about the prospect of Olmsted writing an essay for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "on the general subject of parks, their great importance to the people, and also the importance on choosing the right locality."[46] Similarly, orator, essayist, and Unitarian minister Edward Everett Hale requested an article from Olmsted for the *New Examiner*.[47] On December 8, 1869, Olmsted received a letter from Henry Villard, secretary of the American Social Science Association (ASSA), requesting a series of lectures on parks: "In view of the active local interest

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[43] City of Boston, *Public Parks in the City of Boston: A Compilation of Papers, Reports, and Arguments Relating to the Subject* (City doc. no. 125-1880), 1.

[44] City of Boston, *Report and Accompanying Statements and Communications Relating to a Public Park for the City of Boston* (City doc. no. 123-1869), 7-8. Wilder exemplified the institution-building qualities of the Brahmin. According to the biographical notes associated with the collection of his papers at the W. E. B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (http://www.library.umass.edu/spcoll/ead/murg2_3_w55.html), Wilder served as a trustee of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and co-founded Massachusetts Agricultural College, now the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Due to his work in the agricultural education, Wilder was influential in the passage of the Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862.

[45] City doc. no. 123-1869, 9.

[46] J. T. Fields to FLO, 15 Nov 1869. Available from OP, Box 12.

[47] E. E. Hale to FLO, 24 Nov 1869. Available from OP, Box 12.

now excited in the subject, we beg to invite you to favor us with a lecture on Public Parks in a course which is to be given under the auspices of our Association, at the Lowell Institute in the city."[48] This lecture, "Public Parks and the Enlargement of Towns," became one of Olmsted's most publicized talks and was later published in the Journal of the ASSA.[49]

In this lecture, Olmsted relayed his experiences at Central Park and Prospect Park, as well as those from his travels in Europe, to lay out a series of justifications for public parks. Upon hearing of his commitment to lecture at the Lowell Institute, James Haughton, a prosperous merchant who, believing that Olmsted's extensive knowledge on the planning of parks would impress politicians and others still unsure of the need or value of parks for Boston, wrote to inform him that his lecture "will undoubtedly do good in this city." Haughton explained that some residents believed that the city, with its surrounding green spaces in the suburbs, did not need new parks: "We are constantly met with the remark that 'Boston does not need a park,' that 'we are environed with parks,' 'the whole country is a park,' etc. etc. We have something to do, to bring the popular sentiment up to demand it."[50] The plan to bring Olmsted to Boston and discuss the need for parks worked just as the leisure class had hoped since it provided the vital link missing from earlier attempts at park creation—professional and technical information from the nation's foremost park designer.

While it would take eight more years to begin park construction, his "Public Parks" lecture provided expert information that allowed park advocates to continue the park campaign throughout the early- and mid-1870s. Re-energized, park advocates made every effort to convince the public and politicians of the need for urban parks as a way to improve urban life. Public parks were such a priority for Boston Mayor Samuel Cobb that he declared in his 1874 inaugural speech that favored

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[48] H. Villard to FLO, 8 Dec 1869. Available from OP, Box 12.
[49] FLO, "Public parks and the enlargement of towns," *Journal of Social Science* 3(1871): 1-36.
[50] J. Haughton to FLO, 28 Jan 1870. Available from OP, Box 12.

"the establishment of several public will squares in different sections of the city, to be connected together if practicable, and which shall be easily accessible to the people."[51]

The standard historical narrative associated with the need for parks in Boston, like other cities, was based on the claims made by members of the city's elite leisure class that parks would help ameliorate a variety of social and environmental crises facing the city as the processes of immigration and industrialization continued. Throughout the 1870s the rhetoric of the leisure class emphasized the democratic possibilities as parks brought various groups of people together in public spaces. Additionally, it emphasized the improvements to the urban environment and living conditions that would come from the construction of new green spaces.

*Parks and Social Reform*

As the immigrant population in nineteenth-century Boston continued to rise, native-born members of the leisure class believed that immigrants arriving seeking a new life symbolized a threat to the republicanism favored by the Brahmin. However, the success of the industrial city depended on the continued arrival of new immigrants that formed its reserve army of labor. By 1870, the foreign-born population in the United States represented 14 percent of the total population, but according to Oscar Handlin's 1941 classic study, *Boston's Immigrants*, the foreign-born population Boston represented more than 27 percent of the city's population, with the Irish alone accounting for nearly 80 percent of all of the city's immigrants, by 1870.[52]

The large number of immigrants so "violently upset the process of physical adjustment," that the city could not undertake the necessary actions to accommodate such increases in

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[51] City doc. no. 125-1880, 17.

[52] Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991), 246; Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 125.

population.[53] This adversely affected the quality of life in the city and some neighborhoods underwent tremendous physical, economic, and social changes. The increase in the number of unskilled immigrants on public relief placed a tremendous burden on the city, particularly the Overseers of the Poor. As expenditures on poor relief in Boston increased by more than 500 percent, from $21,500 in 1826 to $131,702 by 1866, the Brahmin felt that immigrants, as well as transients, vagrants, and drunkards, were significant burdens on the city.[54]

An 1846 report by the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor argued that the Boston's poor immigrants residents lived in conditions considerably worse than the foulest and most crowded districts they left behind in Europe. The report noted that the city's population density (140 people/acre) was significantly denser than that of Birmingham and Manchester, while roughly equal to that of London and Liverpool."[55] To highlight the living conditions within residential areas where new immigrants and workers lived, the committee explored the city's Fort Hill district, paying close attention to Broad Street, which was sandwiched between the wharves and the commercial district (Figure 3.6). The report stated that the heavily Irish tenements on Broad Street housed a total of 3,131 residents, with an average of 37 people per residence and an average area of 7 square yards per person. For the sake of comparison, residents of

[53] Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 89.

[54] Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 240.

[55] *Report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor* (Boston: Eastburn's Press, 1846), 4. Available from http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/7238616 (accessed 26 Aug 2011).

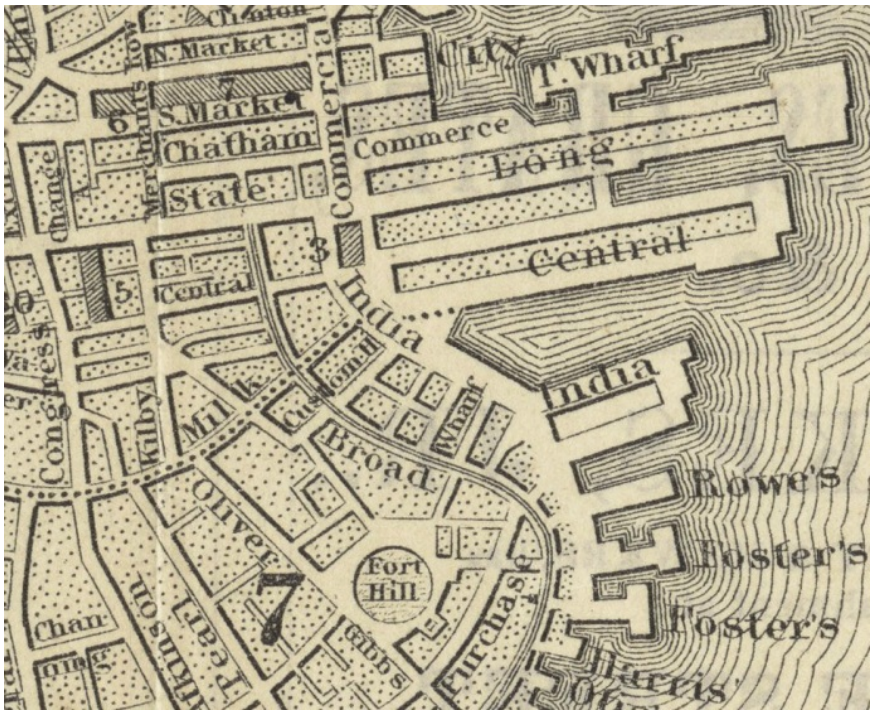


**Figure 3.6.** Map of Boston (detail), by George W. Boynton, 1859. Source: Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.

Beacon Hill averaged a luxurious 48 square yards per person.[56] In the report, the committee explained that it,

> …looked in vain through the records of different parishes in London for any crowd like this [and] there is not any average per house equal to that of the whole city of Boston, much less anything else approaching this number of thirty-seven persons average to the house; and as for the proportion of persons to the acre, we find no whole parish in London which shows one half the crowd of this Broad Street section.[57]

[56] *Report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor*, 10. See also: Massachusetts Sanitary Commission, *Report of a General Plan for the Promotion of Public and Personal Health* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1850), 164-167.

[57] *Report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor*, 6.

These kinds of living conditions, and the potential for the spread of infectious diseases, caused great concern for the city. In 1849, the city's Internal Health Department began investigating the spread of cholera in the Irish tenements along Broad Street.

In describing the living conditions of the Irish living along Broad Street, the Internal Health Department reported that, "this whole district is a perfect hive of human beings, without comforts and mostly without common necessaries; in many cases, huddled together like brutes, without regard to sex, or age, or sense of decency; grown men and women sleeping together in the same apartment, and sometimes wife and husband, brothers and sisters, in the same bed." The department concluded that "self-respect, forethought, all high and noble virtues soon die out, and sullen indifference and despair, or disorder, intemperance and utter degradation reign supreme."[58]

Between June 3, and September 30, 1849, there were 611 deaths due to cholera in Boston. Three-quarters of those were immigrants, and the first person to succumb to this disease was an Irishman. The department sent inspectors to examine the Broad Street area and reported that they "were witnesses of scenes too painful to be forgotten and yet too disgusting to be related here."[59] While Broad Street developed into a highly dense area of tenements due, in part, to its proximity to the waterfront and industrial sections of the city, Boston's South End best illustrates the ways in which the need for labor could transform a previously elite neighborhood into a district of tenements and lodging houses.

Once home to wealthy merchants, by the 1860s and 1870s, the South End became a less-than-fashionable place to reside due to its proximity to the expanding commercial and industrial

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[58] City of Boston, Internal Health Department, *Report of the Committee of Internal Health on the Asiatic cholera, together with a report of the city physician on the Cholera Hospital* (City doc. no. 66-1850), 13.

[59] City doc. no. 66-1850, 9.


**Figure 3.7.** Map of Boston (detail) by John Grove Hales, 1819. Source: Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.

districts, as well as rail yards associated with South Station.[60] A part of the city's major land making project, the South End received its name due to its location at the south end of the city on the old Boston Neck—the narrow strip of land that connected the mainland with the original Shawmut Peninsula (Figure 3.7). By the 1840s, the city began developing the new spaces of the South End to, in part, encourage the city's middle- and upper-middle-class residents to remain in the city to counter the influx of Irish immigrants. It became an elegant neighborhood, with brownstones and bow-front red brick row houses detailed with ornate cast iron railings. The central features of the neighborhoods in the South End were the gardens and squares around which its neighborhoods

[60] Robert A. Woods, *The City Wilderness: A Settlement Study by Residents and Associates of the South End House* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1898).

**Figure 3.8.** Corner of Washington and E. Brookline streets, photograph by Josiah Johnson Hawes, c. 1860. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department.

developed. The gardens and squares helped to "lend character" to the neighborhood, which, along with the row houses, helped to define the space as one that represented the Victorian tastes of the middle- and upper-middle-class (Figure 3.8).[61] But the elite qualities of the South End did not last long and the exodus out of the neighborhood began soon after the Panic of 1873 as homes were repossessed and sold at cheap prices.

The great tenement homes that housed multiple families were a rare occurrence prior to the 1830s, but by the 1860s and 1870s, as wealthy South End residents relocated to the suburbs or to the city's more fashionable neighborhoods, the single-family row houses were transformed into lodging houses for workers.[62] As the city became more industrialized, and more immigrants came to

[61] Phoebe S. Goodman, *The Garden Squares of Boston* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2003), 20.

[62] Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants*, 16; Goodman, *The Garden Squares of Boston*, 20.

become a regular sight, the South End developed into a district of tenement living that mirrored other parts of the city. In his description of the South End's transformation, progressive economist Albert Wolfe noted that before the panic of 1873, luxurious parks, gardens, squares, and street after street of row houses designed with "swell fronts," "high stoops" with granite steps, and "an oppressive amount of ironwork in balustrades and the fences with which the little six by ten front grass-plots were religiously enclosed," occupied the spaces of the South End. Once home to a genteel life, Wolfe observed that from the 1870s through the 1890s the district became a "wilderness of factories, tenements, and lodging-houses" where over 80 percent of the old residences became rooming houses. By the close of the nineteenth-century, the South End became notorious for being the largest rooming-house district in America.[63]

With the 1892 publication of *A Tenement House Census of Boston*, city and state officials cited the evidence of this transformation in the form of the "extremely filthy" conditions typically found in the "usual partly neglected conditions" of the South End. This included: the dumping of refuse, ashes, swill, and other debris onto vacant lots and alleyways; the dark and dank hallways; the poor ventilation; the noxious smells emanating from homes; the chickens often kept in basements; the poor plumbing; the poor drainage; and, the poor condition of water closets.[64] By becoming a series of "neglected dreary tenement houses into which the families of the low-paid and poverty smitten and miserably poor crowd by the dozens in a single room, and hundreds under a single roof," the

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[63] Albert B. Wolfe, *The Lodging-House Problem in Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1906), 13-14, 20 and 22. For more discussion of the lodging-houses of the South End, see: Robert A. Woods, *The City Wilderness: A Settlement Study by Residents and Associates of the South End House* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1898) and Esther G. Barrows, *Neighbors All: A Settlement Notebook* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929).

[64] Horace G. Wadlin, *A Tenement House Census of Boston: Section I—Tenements, Rooms, and Rents* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1892), 92-105.

South End typified the physical and social transformations of the city associated with increased industrial activity and its corresponding need for immigration.[65]

The growth of the city, both physically and demographically, led to challenges to the cultural authority of Boston's elite. Shortly after settling in Boston, Bronson Alcott (the Transcendentalist and father of Louisa May Alcott) recorded his view of his new home into his diary:

> There is a city in our world upon which the light of the sun of righteousness has risen…Its influences are quickening, invigorating the souls which dwell within it. It is the source whence every pure stream of thought and purpose and performance emanates. It is the city set on high; it cannot be hid. It is Boston, whose morality is of a purer and more elevated kind than that of any other city in America.[66]

Alcott's belief in the superiority of Boston reflected the Brahmin emphasis on morality and social reform. But the arrival of waves of immigrants, particularly the Irish, altered the urban social fabric.

As a result of the Great Famine, millions of Irish immigrants arrived on American shores in the late-1840s via two main ports of entry: New York City and Boston. As the Irish population of Boston grew in the late-1840s and 1850s, the distrust and animosity of the Irish by the city's Brahmin and Yankee residents reached its peak, but its roots go back much farther. This distrust and animosity was the result of the complex political, economic, and social tensions between the English and the Irish. Perhaps the first expression of the hatred of the Irish in Boston came from Cotton Mather in 1654. Upon hearing the news of the ship the "Goodfellow" arriving in Boston Harbor carrying a large number of Irish indentured servants, Mather remarked that this represented a "formidable attempt by Satan and his sons to unsettle us."[67] Other events, including the hanging

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[65] *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor of Massachusetts, Embracing the Account of Its Operations and Inquiries from March 1, 1871, to March 1, 1872, Massachusetts Senate Documents no. 180-1872 (Boston: Wright and Potter, State Printers, 1872), 437.*

[66] A. Bronson Alcott, *The Journals of Bronson Alcott*, ed. Odell Shepard (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1938), 15.

[67] As cited in James B. Cullen, *The Story of the Irish in Boston* (Boston: James B. Cullen and Company, 1889), 23.

of Goody Ann Glover (the "Irish witch") in 1688 and the "Broad Street Riot" in 1837 exemplified the contentious relationship between the Brahmin and the Irish in Boston.[68]

Waves of Irish Catholic immigrants disrupted the existing social order, and fearing these changes, the WASP Brahmin leaders of Boston reacted in a hostile manner. Controlling many of the city's (and the state's) institutions, the Brahmin reacted in a manner best-suited to their role as civic leaders—they took over elected offices and enacted legislation to try to suppress the growth of the immigrant population. The American Party, also known as the 'Know-Nothing' Party, rose to prominence during the elections of 1854. Membership in the party was restricted to "native born" Americans of "Protestant parentage."[69] Members of the party met secretly and all members were instructed to respond to inquiries about its membership and organization by saying 'I know nothing.' In Massachusetts, the elections of 1854 were a boon for the Know-Nothings as they won all forty seats in the state senate and all but four seats in the house.[70] Additionally, Know-Nothing candidates, Henry Gardner and Jerome Crowningshield Smith were elected governor of Massachusetts and mayor of Boston, respectively. These officials sought to suppress the influence of Irish immigrants and enacted a variety of legislation, such as mandating the reading of the King James Bible in all public schools and the "Twenty-one Year Law," which prevented male immigrants from voting until they had been in the country for twenty-one years.[71]

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[68] For the "Irish witch" see Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; Or The Ecclesiastical History of New England, vol. 2* (Hartford: Silas Arnold and Son, 1858), 456-465. For the 1837 Broad Street Riot, see: *The Boston Almanac for the Year 1838* (Boston: S.N. Dickinson, 1838), 39. The *Almanac* reported that: "The tumult increased to such a degree, that nearly a thousand persons, at one time, were supposed to be engaged in a brawl, the most desperate that ever occurred in this city. Several houses were broken into, furniture shattered inside, and cast into the street. Beds were ripped open and their contents given to the winds. Sticks, stones, bricks, and all manner of missiles, were discharged by the combatants at each other, with the utmost ferocity and yet, strange to tell, no one was killed in the affray. The military was called out, and in a strong body marched to the scene of action, and in a short time the rioters were dispensed or captured."

[69] Thomas O'Connor, *Boston Catholics: A History of the Church and Its People* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 93.

[70] *Ibid*, 95.

[71] O'Connor, *Boston Catholics*, 95.

In his *Hidden History of the Boston Irish*, Peter Stevens exposes the prejudices of Boston members of the Know-Nothing Party. According to the minutes of an October 13, 1854 meeting of Republican Liberty Guard, Boston's nativists and members of the Know-Nothing Party believed that no immigrant, particularly a Catholic, could be a "real" American. The minutes of this meeting highlight the xenophobia of the Brahmin and exposed their perceived need to, "defend [their] Republican Institutions against encroachments of the Church of Rome, its Popes, Cardinals, Priests, and its ignorant and deluded followers."[72] Boston's Brahmin leisure class believed that urban public parks could serve as cultural institutions through which they could showcase their refined life of leisure, and transform the Irish, as well as other immigrants, into responsible and acceptable American citizens.

Boston's leisure class held the paternalistic belief that the naturalistic landscape of urban parks would serve as educational tools for immigrants and the urban poor. The city's 1874 *Report on the Establishment of a Public Park* expressed this belief by claiming that the naturalistic beauty of a park,

> with its trees and running waters, its grass and plants and flowers, its variegated surfaces and changing views…supplements the labor of the church and school in educating, refining and elevating the community. There will be less gambling, drinking and quarreling in Boston, when the mass of its inhabitants shall be allowed to partake of the blessing and beauty of a public park.[73]

The Brahmin believed that parks could be used as educational tools to teach immigrants to be cooperative and work for the city's common good. While parks functioned as an elite tool to acculturate and Americanize recently arrived immigrants, immigrants were not the only group of people targeted by the leisure class, who set its sights on the working-class.

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[72] Peter F. Stevens, *Hidden History of the Boston Irish: Little-Known Stories from Ireland's 'Next Parish Over'* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008), 22, 24, and 25.

[73] City of Boston, *Report on the Establishment of a Public Park* (City doc. no. 105-1874), 7.

In order for the industrial city to continue to grow and prosper, workers needed to reproduce their labor power. The leisure class recognized the need for parks to provide spaces for social reproduction by observing proper genteel behaviors in the park, through contact with nature, and by engaging in passive forms of recreation. The social reproduction of the working class involved all the physical and social activities necessary for the work to continue day after day: cooking, cleaning, sleeping, recreation, etc. Spaces for social reproduction were generally gendered and classed with workingmen socializing in spaces associated with the perceived ills of the city—cigar shops, taverns, saloons, and lodges.[74]

Members of the leisure class believed that the industrial worker needed idyllic pastoral and picturesque landscape parks and their attendant moral forms of leisure and entertainment. The rural qualities of naturalistic landscapes would serve as a necessary calming influence, which helped to keep workers pacified and less likely to strike.[75] In order to best present and maintain the rural qualities of the naturalistic landscape, parks (ironically) needed to be protected from those groups that the leisure class claimed parks were for—workers, immigrants, and the urban poor.

While Olmsted did not explicitly intend to exclude any specific groups of people, his park ideology epitomized the paternalistic perspective of the leisure class, essentially making parks elite spaces. Less well-heeled visitors to these social spaces were socialized to conform their behaviors and spatial practices to those of the leisure class. Olmsted believed that a combination of education and park regulations were essential to allow parks to fulfill their objective of developing a public spirit and instilling a sense of community between all classes of society. Olmsted viewed Central Park as a "melting pot" of sorts, with all classes of citizens represented including the "poor and rich,

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[74] Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

[75] Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*.

young and old, Jew and Gentile."[76] However, he also held the paternalistic belief that workers, immigrants, and the urban poor needed to be educated in the *proper* use of the park. In 1857, even before park construction began, Olmsted reported to the commissioners of Central Park that "a large part of the people of New York are ignorant of a park [and] will need to be trained to the proper use of it, to be restrained in the abuse of it."[77] According to Olmsted, acts of park "abuse" included picking flowers, leaves, twigs, or nuts from trees, driving coaches too fast, walking on the grass, throwing stones, defacing or marking park benches, annoying birds, using indecent language, gambling, peddling goods, fortune-telling, and drinking beer.[78]

Workers, immigrants, and the urban poor were allowed to use the park for rejuvenation, but only if they followed the rules and emulated the bourgeois manners of the leisure class. In order to prevent abuses of the park, Olmsted established "park keepers" to police parks and maintain order, but also to educate park visitors on the proper use of the space. By 1860, Central Park's police force totaled fifty-five and consisted of: one Inspector, two Sergeants, two assistant Sergeants, forty Park Keepers, eight Gate Keepers, and two Station Men.[79] Over time, and due to the influence of the Tweed Ring, the rank and file of the keepers were filled via patronage appointments, which accomplished two things. First, patronage allowed the park keepers force to swell to 149 by 1872.[80] Second, and more importantly, patronage resulted in a diminution of the keepers' professionalism and commitment to the park. Olmsted noted that:

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[76] FLO, "Public parks," 18.

[77] FLO, "Monthly report to the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park," 13 Oct 1857. Reprinted in *FYLA* 2, 58.

[78] FLO, "Regulations for the use of the Central Park," reprinted in *FLOP* 3, 279.

[79] FLO to A.H. Green, 29 Apr 1860. Reprinted in *FLOP* 3, 253.

[80] Henry Koster, "Report of the Captain of Police," in *Third General Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the Period of Twenty Months from May 1st, 1872 to December 31st, 1873* (New York: William C. Bryant & Co., 1875), 244.

> the selection of many of the men now on the force has unquestionably been made less with a consideration of their qualifications than with 'view to the gratification of persons having not the smallest accountability' for the character of the park, and neither interest in or knowledge of the kind of service desirable to be secured in its police. Many of those thus appointed have been of irregular life and improvident habits, unwilling to work as laborers, and unable to gain a livelihood in any regular trade.[81]

By 1872, with the fall of the Tweed machine, Olmsted regained control over the Park Keepers and he set about reorganizing the force.[82]

In reorganizing the park keepers, Olmsted focused on the primary duty of the park keepers—to educate the public in the proper use of the park. He believed that park keepers should provide "timely instruction, caution and warning to prevent disorderly and unseemly practices in the Park, and thus as far as practicable avoid occasions for arrests."[83] Olmsted reduced the number of park keepers from 149 to 84. He felt that even with a reduction in numbers, the introduction of the "round duty" would provide the necessary structure for this refocused force, which was now re-committed to patrolling their "beats," and help preserve the conditions of the park.[84] Regular patrols along the pathways were essential in maintaining the naturalistic qualities he designed, and providing an overall clean appearance. As increasing numbers of visitors used the park, Olmsted noted that:

> By noon on any fine day in summer the floors of the arbors and shelters, and the walks near most of the seats, are generally rendered uninviting by the tobacco quids

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[81] FLO, "Communication from the treasurer," 6.
[82] FLO, "General order," 6.
[83] FLO to A.H. Green, 29 Apr 1860.
[84] FLO, "General order," 4-5

> and spittle, cigar stumps, nut shells, papers, and offal of fruit and other food, which visitors have cast away. Sometimes they become not merely uninviting but filthy, so that a tidy woman approaching to take a seat draws back in disgust.[85]

Under the spell of the neo-Olmstedian cult, people often celebrate the democratic qualities of parks like Central Park, and those of the Emerald Necklace, but as Rosenzweig and Blackmar point out, it was the park's "lack of democracy" that aided it in becoming a product of the urban elite leisure class and instrument of discipline and social exclusion.[86]

In designing naturalistic park landscapes, Olmsted created spaces that exerted control over park visitors. In examining issues of social and environmental justice in Central Park, Dorceta Taylor argues that members of the leisure class "used their social location as elite, middle class white males entrusted with enormous power and discretion to implement their moral, cultural and social agenda."[87] When viewed through a Foucauldian lens, Olmsted and his parks employed a combination of design elements and park ordinances to discipline the behavior of visitors. For example, of the 228 arrests made in 1859, nearly one half of them were for vague "violations of the ordinances of the Commission" (e.g., using offensive language, picking flowers, walking on the grass, throwing stones, and defacing property), while one third were for public drunkenness.[88] The stationing of gate-keepers at park entrances and the regular patrols on park pathways resembled elements of Foucault's panopticon, or a "functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion." Likewise, Foucault's discussion of the aim of surveillance, in part, "to strengthen the social forces…spread

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[85] FLO, "Communication from the treasurer," 12.
[86] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 258.
[87] Taylor, "Central Park as a model for social control," 450.
[88] FLO to A.H. Green, 29 Apr 1860.

education [and] raise the level of public morality," resembled Olmsted's goals for the park keepers, specifically, and for parks, in general.[89]

Social reform and control were essential elements of Olmstedian-parks. Olmsted, ever the practical urbanist, also believed that naturalistic landscape parks also helped to improve public health.

*Parks and Public Health*

In Boston, efforts to improve public health pre-date the creation of the Emerald Necklace by more than fifty years. In 1823, Boston Mayor Josiah Quincy III implemented a street cleaning system. Quincy harnessed the popular support for his broad political agenda, in part, by improving living conditions in the city. His vigorous street cleaning program helped to improve the quality of life for city residents. By May 1824, the program was so successful that Quincy reported that, "at an expense of four thousand dollars between six and seven thousand tons of filth and dirt have been removed from the surface of the streets." The City sold this as fertilizer, and therefore, Quincy argued, "there can be no question, that, in these improvements, the city will receive the full value of the whole expense."[90] The street cleaning program not only improved the aesthetics of the street and provided a cleaner and healthier environment for city residents and businesses, but it also reduced noxious smells and decreased the opportunities for the spread of diseases.

The cleansing of the city helped to reduce the number of deaths associated with contagious illnesses. While cholera impacted tenement areas like Broad Street, overall the city suffered significantly fewer deaths associated with the cholera outbreak of 1849 than other cities—Boston

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[89] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1977), 208.

[90] Josiah Quincy, *A Municipal History of the Town and City of Boston During Two Centuries, from September 17, 1630 to September 17, 1830* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1852), 381.

experienced 611 deaths compared to 4,378 deaths in St. Louis.[91] Despite Boston's relatively low number of deaths to cholera, it concerned city and state health officials, and the leisure class capitalized on the use of parks to help purify the city of this and other scourges. The city's 1874 *Report on the Establishment of a Public Park* emphasized these priorities, declaring that: "Nothing is so costly as sickness and disease; nothing so cheap as health...whatever increases disease is a heavier tax than any other resources of a city; whatever prevents it, and brings in health, yields a larger return than any other investment." This report stressed the importance of creating a public park by announcing that, "unless open spaces of sufficient extent are provided and properly located, we shall create and shut up in this city the conditions, of which disease, pestilence and death will be the natural offspring."[92]

The rhetoric of social reform and public health served the interests of the Boston's leisure class as it helped garner public support for the creation of parks in the city. On June 9, 1875, "An Act for the Laying out of Public Parks in or Near the City of Boston" passed and on July 6, 1875, Mayor Cobb appointed three prominent Brahmin businessmen, T. Jefferson Coolidge, Charles H. Dalton, and William Gray, Jr., as the city's first park commissioners.[93] In 1876, Dr. Edward H. Clarke of Harvard Medical School presented a letter at a public meeting inside Faneuil Hall advocating the creation of parks. In his letter he emphasized his belief that the naturalistic landscapes of public parks would improve public health:

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[91] Nahum Capen, ed., *The Massachusetts State Record: New England Register, and Year Book of General Information, Vol. 4* (Boston: James French, 1850), 299-300. See also: City of Boston, Internal Health Department, *Report of the Committee of Internal Health on the Asiatic Cholera*, 9.

[92] City doc. no. 105-1874, 7 and 8.

[93] City of Boston, *Report of Special Committee on Subject of Parks for Boston* (City doc. no. 44-1877), 8. Henry Lee replaced Coolidge, who resigned in 1876, presumably to tend to his business interests. According to *Clark's Blue Book: The Elite Private Address, Carriage and Club Directory* (Boston: Edward E. Clark, 1893), it should be noted, Lee was a neighbor of both Olmsted and Charles Sprague Sargent—all lived on Warren Street in Brookline. Both Dalton and Gray stayed on until the next mayor, Hugh O'Brien, appointed a new commission in 1885. In 1886, after resigning from the Park Commission, Gray was indicted for embezzling more than $500,000 from the Atlantic Cotton, the Indian Orchard, and the Ocean mills where he was treasurer to finance his yachting interests. For the Gray scandal see: *New York Times,* 18 August 1886.

> Foul air prompts to vice, and oxygen to virtue, as surely as sunlight paints the flowers, and ripens the fruits, of our gardens. The tired workman, who, after a day's labor, needs the repose and relaxation of home, is apt to be driven from it by the close atmosphere of the street and house in which he lives. He would, if he could, get into the fresh air of the country; but, as he cannot do this, he seeks the relief which drink or other excitement yields. If there were a park accessible to him, he with his family, would seek it as instinctively as a plant stretches towards the light. The varied opportunities of a park would educate him and his family into the enjoyment of innocent amusements and open-air pleasures. Deprived of these, he and his are educated into the ways of disease and vice by the character of their surroundings.[94]

The industrial city needed the well-ventilated spaces of naturalistic landscape parks to purify foul air since its "poisoned air" was "sure to be followed by a ghastly train of diseases."[95]

Like Dr. Clarke, Oliver Wendell Holmes (who was also a physician) appreciated the positive impact that parks could have on urban life. In the same public meeting in Faneuil Hall, Holmes noted that the death rate in the city was higher than that of both London and Philadelphia, and was quickly "approaching that of our two unhealthiest cities, New York and New Orleans."[96] Holmes argued that if the city could "submit the dwellings of our citizens to inspection and sanitary regulations, provide our city with proper drainage [and] inspect the food in our market and condemn it unfit for use, [then] we can and must secure for our citizens the influences of unroofed and unwalled Nature—air, light, space for exercise and recreation, the natural birthright of mankind [*sic*]."[97] In the opinions of the medical professionals, reformers, and park advocates attending this meeting, urban residents would benefit from spending time relaxing in the naturalistic landscape of a park, basking in the sunlight and breathing fresh air. This was especially true for children afflicted with cholera, scarlet fever, or other illness, where "a few hours' exposure of a child on a mother's

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[94] City of Boston, *Parks for the People: Proceedings of a Public Meeting Held at Faneuil Hall, June 7, 1876* (Boston: Franklin Press: Rand, Avery, and Co., 1876), 41-42.

[95] City of Boston, *Report of Committee on Common, etc., on Establishment of Public Parks, 1876* (City doc. no. 72-1876), 2.

[96] City of Boston, *Parks for the People*, 20.

[97] City of Boston, *Parks for the People*, 21.

lap, or in a basket or carriage, to the freshness of a park...will yield a chance for health that no drug can give."[98]

To provide these breathing spaces, the newly appointed park commissioners set their agenda and, as their first order of business, requested proposals for the new park system. In examining the submissions, the park commissioners sought advice from Olmsted. Finding none of them adequate, the commissioners requested that he take on the responsibility of designing and constructing a series of connected parks that would form jewels of the Emerald Necklace.

While Olmsted's elite qualities, his leisure class lifestyle, and his republican ideologies allowed him to be politically and socially connected to the Boston Brahmin, his outsider status as a designer, engineer, and technocrat provided an objective perspective regarding the future growth of the city. His input contributed the distinctive qualities of the Olmstedian vision that the city could capitalize on in much the same way that contemporary cities rely on the recognition associated with sports franchises, waterfront/riverfront developments, shopping malls, historic districts, and even park landscapes designed by the likes of Michael Van Valkenburgh, George Hargreaves, or James Corner.[99] Boston's elite leisure class relied, in part, on the economic qualities of the associated with the Olmstedian vision to help justify the large public capital expenditures for parks. The justification for urban parks is like a three-legged stool, with social, environmental, and economic benefits doing their part to support the park movement. By emphasizing the social and environmental benefits available to city residents, the leisure class crafted a narrative that parks would benefit the greater

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[98] City of Boston, *Report of Joint Special Committee Appointed to Confer with Park Commissioners, in Relation to Public Parks* (City doc. no. 105-1876), 6.

[99] For parks by Van Valkenburgh, see: Brooklyn Bridge Park, Teardrop Park, and Hudson River Park in New York City, and Allegheny Riverfront Park in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For parks designed by Hargreaves, in addition to Olympic Plaza in Sydney, Australia and the William J. Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, see: Byxbee Park on a reclaimed landfill in Palo Alto, California and Guadalupe River Park a modern-day Back Bay Fens in San Jose, California. For parks by James Corner, see: the High Line, a park built on abandoned elevated railway in New York City and Fresh Kills Park on the world's largest landfill located on Staten Island.

good in order to generate the much-needed public support for the park system. This allowed the leisure class, newspaper editors, and politicians to publicly address the social benefits of parks writ large, while the real argument lay relatively hidden from view: The naturalistic landscape park aesthetic enhanced the prosperity of the city through boosterism and real estate speculation.

**Boosterism, Real Estate Speculation, and Prosperity in the Emerald Necklace**

Nineteenth-century cities, both in the United States and abroad, competed for status, recognition, and economic growth, and parks became one tool for achieving distinction. By mid-century, Boston's leisure class recognized that European cities could claim a greater distinction in creating urban parks and pleasure grounds. As a group, this urban regime of boosters, politicians and other members of the leisure class represented what political scientist Alan Harding termed "parochial capital." As property owners and merchants seeking to maximize wealth, the urban leisure class represented "the most place-bound elements of capital."[100] In order to keep pace with other cities, a coalition of boosters, politicians, park advocates, and social reformers sought to transform the urban landscape according to the contemporary dictates of popular design. The Emerald Necklace served as a platform upon which boosters strove to refashion the city as a modern metropolis, thereby serving the twin goals of attracting capital and increasing nearby property values. For the city's leisure class, material outcomes like these served to enhance their class status and reify their power.

In Boston, boosters and members of the leisure class recognized that their city lagged behind other cities in terms of public park development. By 1859, London had set aside 6,000 acres of space for pleasure grounds including Hyde Park, St. James Park, and Kensington Gardens, Dublin created the 2,000-acre Phoenix Park, Liverpool's Birkenhead Park contained 500 acres of pastoral

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[100] Alan Harding, "The history of community power," in *Theories of Urban Politics*, 2nd ed., eds., Jonathan S. Davies and David L. Imbroscio (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009), 35.

scenery, the Bois de Boulogne in Paris comprised over 2,000 acres, and Vienna boasted of the Wiener Prater at nearly 1,500 acres.[101] Park advocates in Boston also witnessed the park trend take hold in American cities. The city's Park Commission noted that "other American cities, some inferior in population and wealth to Boston," have begun producing park systems that "have greatly increased [their] fame."[102] By 1874, New York City contained nearly 1,400 acres of parks and pleasure grounds, including Central Park. Brooklyn claimed nearly 600 acres of open space in Prospect Park. Philadelphia possessed more than 3,000 acres of public grounds. Residents of Baltimore enjoyed nearly 800 acres of parkland. Chicago boasted almost 1,900 acres of park space. By comparison, Boston could only claim a meager 115 acres.[103]

From the city's beginnings in 1630, Bostonians considered their city to be a "city upon a hill," a beacon shining for the world to follow.[104] In an 1857-58 series of essays for the *Atlantic Monthly*, Holmes stated that "Boston is just like other places of its size; only perhaps considering its excellent fish-market, paid fire department, superior monthly publications, and correct habit of spelling the English language, it has some right to look down upon the mobs of cities."[105] Boston's elite residents saw their city as the nineteenth-century cultural center of America, and Boston earned its the nickname—the Hub—due to this provincial mind-set.[106] Holmes provided the city's nickname when he stated that to Bostonians, the "Boston State House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man, if you had the tire of all creation straightened

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[101] City of Boston, *Report of the Committee on the Improvement of the Public Garden* (City doc. no. 63-1859), 4.

[102] City of Boston, *Second Report of Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks* (City doc. no. 42-1876), 15.

[103] City doc. no. 105-1874, 3.

[104] In 1630, while still aboard the *Arbella*, John Winthrop (the future colonial governor) delivered his sermon "A model of Christian charity," in which he preached to his fellow Massachusetts Bay colonists, "For we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us." Source: John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*, eds., Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10.

[105] Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Autocrat at the Breakfast-Table*, (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1858), 145.

[106] Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural entrepreneurship in nineteenth-century Boston: the creation of an organizational base for high culture in America," *Media, Culture, and Society* 4(1982): 33-50.

out for a crowbar."[107] With its position in the universe presumed secure, the city's position on the national and international stage was less certain, however. This prompted some boosters to fear a loss in status and wealth should their city fall behind.

Members of the leisure class raised their fears associated with a decline in the city's status due to the parochial values held by many Bostonians. For instance, in a meeting of a Joint Special Committee appointed by the Board of Aldermen to consider the purchase of land for a public park, George Upton, a shipping merchant and treasurer of the Michigan Central Railroad, noted that "with some people it would seem that if a new map of the world was to be made, it would include Europe, Asia, and Boston Common; that would seem to include all the land there is."[108] In that same meeting, Marshall Wilder framed the city's status and its lack of park space by arguing that, "Boston has been the leader in all the great educational and benevolent and progressive movements of the age; and I confess to a little mortification, that [with regard to parks] we are now not up to the mark in comparison with other cities."[109] Citing Boston's lack of park space, boosters asserted that producing a world-class park system would help improve the fame, recognition, and the overall prosperity of the city. Conversely, they felt that *not* producing a world-class park system would be detrimental to the future success of the city:

> While other cities have expended, and are now expending, large sums of money for the improvements of public grounds, Boston has done little in this direction…While other cities are expending fabulous amounts in the improvement of parks, squares, gardens, and promenades, what should we do? To be behind in these matters would

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[107] Holmes, *The Autocrat at the Breakfast-Table*, 143-144.

[108] City of Boston, *Report and Accompanying Statements and Communications Relating to a Public Park for the City of* Boston (City Doc. no. 123-1869), 13.

[109] City doc. no. 123-1869, 8.

> not only be discreditable to our city, but positively injurious to our commercial prosperity.[110]

As environmental amenities, naturalistic landscape parks like those in the Emerald Necklace provided clear benefits to the quality of life in Boston. They improved the air quality of the immediate area, protected water quality, and provided visual and physical access to urban nature. Naturalistic landscape parks designed according to the Olmstedian vision also acted as regional commodities that created a sense of place, promoted tourism, attracted capital, and enhanced private property values.

As the leisure class and other park advocates pressed for parks, they looked to other cities as models of how to proceed and in doing so they saw the economic benefit in creating parks.[111] In the 1874 *Report on the Establishment of a Public Park*, Boston park advocates stated that they believed that money spent on parks, would be "well invested, and quickly returned, by betterments, and by the increase in taxable value of all surrounding property." To understand the connections between capital investments, park creation and tax revenues, members of Boston leisure class argued that "it will not be out of place to see what has been done elsewhere, and what have been the results."[112] The report highlighted substantial increases in real estate values and tax revenues associated with the creation of parks in both New York City and Brooklyn as justification for public expenditures for parks in Boston. Finally, the report concluded that while overall property values throughout each

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[110] City doc. no. 63-1859, 3 and 7.

[111] In "The role of the proximate principle in the emergence of urban parks in the United Kingdom and in the United States," *Leisure Studies* 26(2007): 213-234, a review of the connections between parks and the proximate principle in the United States, John Crompton stated that in the late nineteenth century, "there was an insistent almost inviolate conviction among park and open space advocates of the legitimacy of the proximate principle. It was conventional wisdom among them, and it was also espoused by elected officials" (214).

[112] City doc. no. 105-1874, 4.

city increased incrementally, the increase in property values in neighborhoods adjacent to the parks ranged from 117 percent near Brooklyn's Prospect Park to 768 percent near Central Park.[113]

In Boston, the leisure class understood how the naturalistic landscapes of the Olmstedian vision at Central Park influenced land economics and they hoped to capture similar economic benefits in their city. Whether these data were an accurate reflection of the value of parks in New York or Brooklyn is not as important as the Boston leisure class *believing* their accuracy and using these data to justify the production of public parks in Boston. Therefore, Boston did the most logical and rational thing—the city hired Olmsted in the hope of capitalizing on the recognition associated with his fame and the economic benefits that came from a world class park system. Their decision to hire Olmsted paid off. According to an 1886 Park Commission report, property values in areas adjacent to the parks increased by nearly $12 million during the first seven years of construction of the Emerald Necklace (Table 3.1). During the same period the city gained nearly $1.5 million in tax revenues on the increased land and building values near the parks.[114]

In their 1876 report, the Park Commissioners stated that a major consideration in determining the location of any new parks was the economic value of the land: "The selection, so far as practicable, of such lands as are not at present income-producing property, and would least disturb the natural growth of the city in its business and domestic life, and of those which would become relatively nearer the center of population in future years."[115] As such, these parks

| Year | Land Valuation ($) | Land Value Increase Attributed to the Parks ($) | Aggregate Land Value Increase Attributed to the Parks ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1877 | 11,143,751 | na | na |
| 1878 | 12,290,392 | 1,146,641 | 1,146,641 |

[113] City doc. no. 105-1874, 4.
[114] City of Boston, *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston, for the Year 1885* (City doc. no. 26-1886), 13.
[115] City doc. no. 42-1876, 1.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1879 | 12,855,644 | 565,272 | 1,711,913 |
| 1880 | 16,529,900 | 3,674,236 | 5,386,149 |
| 1881 | 19,957400 | 3,427,500 | 8,813,649 |
| 1882 | 20,847,500 | 890,100 | 9,703,799 |
| 1883 | 22,068,600 | 1,221,100 | 10,924,849 |
| 1884 | 22,794,800 | 726,700 | 11,651,049 |
| 1885 | 23,079,200 | 284,400 | 11,935,445 |

**Table 3.1.** Parks and proximate property value increases in Boston, 1877-1885. Source: City of Boston, *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston, for the Year 1885* (City doc. no. 26-1886), 13.

represented a spatial fix. For the most part, the low-lying areas that were taken by the city for parks had problems with flooding, were used as a dumping ground for untreated sewage or garbage, or in the case of Jamaica Pond, had water quality issues associated with its ice harvesting industry.[116] To the leisure class, parks were more than ornamental; they were part of a broad attempt to improve the living conditions of the city and sanitize the urban environment. This last point was critical. As Boston grew physically, demographically, and economically, so too did the amount of waste its residents and industries produced which negatively impacted the city's environment. Perhaps no place in Boston exemplified this more than the Back Bay Fens—a central landscape in Olmsted's plan for the Emerald Necklace.

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[116] According to the Jamaica Plain Historical Society, ice harvesting on Jamaica Pond dates to as early as 1855 when the E.M. Stoddard Ice Company began operating a series of ice houses on the southern shore of the pond. By 1874, Stoddard's company, renamed the Jamaica Pond Ice Company employed 350 men who averaged $1.75 per day. At the peak of the harvesting season the company the number of employees almost doubled. By 1880, the company operated 22 ice houses each capable of storing up to 30,000 tons of ice. The Jamaica Pond Ice Company harvested up to 5,000 tons of ice each day to serve their wholesale and retail customers including the more than 20 breweries in the local neighborhood. The Stony Brook area of Jamaica Plain was the heart of the industrial and brewery activity. The last brewery in operation, the Haffenreffer Brewery closed in the 1960s after operating for over 90 years. It is now the home of the Boston Beer Company, known for its Samuel Adams line of beer. The late-1880s and early-1890s, saw conflict over the use of the pond. Ultimately, the city's need for a recreational use of the pond, as well as the serious impact on quality caused by the teams of horses used to haul ice caused destroyed ice harvesting on the pond. The ice industry came to a stop in 1893 when the Jamaica Pond Ice Company sold its land to the city for the park. For more information see the Jamaica Pond Historical Society, "Harvesting Ice on Jamaica Pond," http://www.jphs.org/locales/2004/6/2/ harvesting-ice-on-jamaica-pond.html (date accessed 12 Oct 2007) and "History of Beer Making in Jamaica Plain," http://www.jphs.org/victorian/history-of-beer-making-in-jamaica-plain.html (date accessed 12 Oct 2007).

Begun in 1857, the filling of the Back Bay was a significant public improvement spawned by public health concerns and real estate speculation.[117] Like new districts in other cities, the Back Bay was seen as the most fashionable and luxurious residential district in the city. Running down the middle of the Back Bay like a spine, Commonwealth Avenue reflected an attempt to emulate the grand boulevards of Paris. The Great Fire of 1872 played a significant role in the development of the Back Bay when, on Saturday, September 9, the fire gutted 65 acres of the central business district causing nearly $75 million in damage.[118] The fire hastened an already existing exodus from downtown Boston to the Back Bay, as seen in the movement of the congregations of the Old South Church and Trinity Church, which opened their new churches in their current Copley Square locations in 1875 and 1877 respectively.[119] The placement of a major part of the Emerald Necklace in this new fashionable neighborhood exemplified the ways in which private interests promoted an enlightened public policy, which not so coincidentally financially benefited members of the leisure class by allowing for the appreciation of land values through the improvements made in urban life. As a linear greenway, the Fens was created in the midst of a rapidly expanding area, and people would benefit by living close to this amenity (Figure 3.9).

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[117] For general histories of the Back Bay see: Walter Muir Whitehill, *Boston: A Topographical History* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1968); Bainbridge Bunting, *Houses of the Back Bay: An Architectural History* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1967); Nancy S. Seasholes, *Gaining Ground: A History of Landmaking in Boston* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003); William A. Newman and Wilfred E. Holton, *Boston's Back Bay: The Story of the Greatest Nineteenth-Century Landfill Project* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2006).

[118] Christine Rosen, *The Limits of Power: Great Fires and the Process of City Growth in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 179.

[119] Holleran, *Boston's 'Changeful Times'*, 16.

**Figure 3.9.** Fenway Court and the Fens, c. 1920. Fenway Court, formerly the home of John and Isabella Stuart Gardner, is now the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department.

For some members of Boston's leisure class, the Back Bay replaced Beacon Hill and the South End as the trendy and fashionable residential district. In his cultural history of the Back Bay, architectural historian Bainbridge Bunting detailed the property owners in the Back Bay, a list that included the names of many of Boston's prominent Brahmin families including: Appleton, Crowningshield, Cushing, Dwight, Frotheringham, Lawrence, Lowell, Otis, Perkins, Saltonstall, and Weld.[120] Like other members of the leisure class, Samuel C. Cobb, a three-term mayor of Boston, and the three members of the first Park Commission, Dalton, Coolidge, and Gray, all saw the value

[120] Bunting, *Houses of the Back Bay*, 400-458.

of their Back Bay properties rise in the wake of Olmsted's work.[121] The Back Bay, specifically the areas adjacent to Copley Square and the Fens, became the home to many of Boston's elite institutions. The Boston Public Library, the YMCA, the Boston Art Club, the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Natural History, the National Academy of Sciences, MIT, and Harvard Medical School all had Back Bay addresses (Figure 3.10).

In his 1870 "Public Parks" lecture at the Lowell Institute, Olmsted addressed the inevitable growth of cities and the role parks could play in alleviating the social and environmental problems associated with urban growth. He remarked that, "it is practically certain that the Boston of today is the mere nucleus of the Boston that is to be. It is practically certain that it is to extend over many miles of country now thoroughly rural in character." Olmsted recognized that the main role of the city was commerce, which necessitated a particular pattern of buildings and streets, even if typical patterns of urban industrial land use, "establish[ed] conditions of corruption and of irritation, physical and mental."[122]

Boston's new park commission was the first citywide planning agency and its creation brought about an end to haphazard and uncontrolled urban growth. The ability of the park commissioners to take land by eminent domain represented public interventions into the private land market. This is not to suggest that this institutional function worked against the interests of private capital. Rather, the creation of public parks "altered the relationship between municipal government and private capital under the guise of a newly defined 'public interest' within which the prospects for real estate speculation were greatly enhanced."[123]

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[121] City of Boston, *Schedule of Assessments made by the Board of Park Commissioners upon the Estates Benefited by the Locating and Laying out of a Public Park or Parks in the City, as passed Dec. 27, 1879*, (Boston: Park Commission, 1880).

[122] FLO, "Public parks," 13 and 14.

[123] Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, 85.

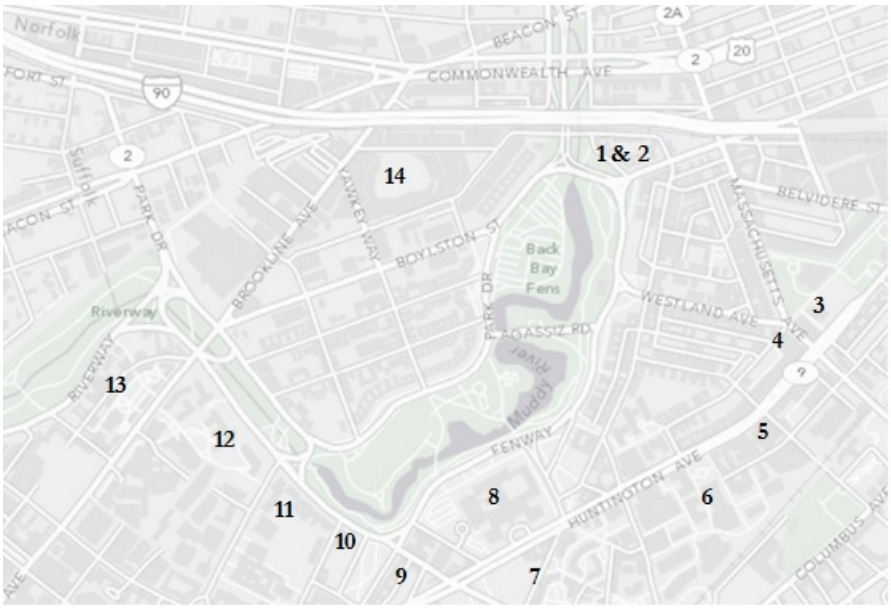


**Figure 3.10.** The cultural institutions near the Back Bay Fens.
1.Boston Conservatory (est. 1867)
2.Massachusetts Historical Society (est. 1791, this location 1899)
3.Horticultural Hall of Massachusetts Horticultural Society (est. 1901)
4.Symphony Hall of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (est. 1881)
5.New England Conservatory (est. 1867)
6.Northeastern University (est. 1898)
7.Wentworth Institute of Technology (est. 1904)
8.Museum of Fine Arts (est. 1870, this location 1909)
9.Massachusetts College of Art and Design (est. 1873)
10.Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (est. 1896)
11.Simmons College (est. 1899)
12.Emmanuel College (est. 1919)
13.Wheelock College (est. 1888)
14.Fenway Park (est. 1912), home of the Boston Red Sox

By occupying positions of power, members of Boston's leisure class could exert influence over, and personally benefit from, the development of public projects, including naturalistic landscape parks. The appearance of impropriety associated with the financial exchanges for the taking of private land was a subject of the Board of Aldermen's 1900 investigation into the Boston Park Department. Specifically limiting their scope to the post-Olmsted period from 1896 to 1899, the Aldermen investigated the department's hiring practices and salaries, changes in park design and

landscaping practices, and assessments of land takings for the parks. During the investigation, witnesses testified that in at least three instances, disputes over private land takings were heard before a jury and the awards were 252 percent in excess of the assessed valuation.[124]

Two specific examples highlight the trend of members of the leisure class receiving friendly rates of exchange for their land. In the first case, the city paid Edward Perkins, a great-nephew of T. H. Perkins, $28,900 more than the assessed value of his Pinebank estate overlooking Jamaica Pond.[125] In the second case, Thomas Hart, serving in his second term as Mayor of Boston during the investigation, acted as the trustee of a land company seeking a settlement of a land taking before an auditor, rather than a jury.[126] The auditor's award was 1050 percent in excess of the assessed valuation—the auditor awarded $6,642.07 for the land assessed at $577.50, plus $2,411 in interest, for a total award of $9,053.07.[127] As these examples show, members of Boston's elite leisure class benefitted financially from the creation of public parks in specific parts of the city.

The Brahmin leisure class understood the need for the city to grow and used their power and influence to shape, and personally benefit from, the development of public development projects. Unlike the Fens or the Riverway that were created after urban development, Arnold Arboretum and Franklin Park were antecedent parks that were created before urban development specifically to be engulfed by capitalist development. These parks could help solve moral and environmental problems while generating higher land prices as land is developed nearby.

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[124] *BDG*, "Land for Parks, values set very high by juries and auditors," 26 Apr 1900, 14.

[125] The data from the Perkins assessment can be found in "Cost of Park Lands Compared with Assessed Values." An undated copy of a newspaper clipping of unknown origin (most likely April 1900 around the time of the Park Department investigation). Available from OAP, Box F10.

[126] Thomas N. Hart served as mayor from 1889 to 1890 and from 1900 to 1902. Additionally, he served three terms both in the Common Council and on the Board of Aldermen. In his pre- and post-political life, Hart served as the president of the Mount Vernon National Bank. Source: Samuel Atkins Eliot, *Biographical History of Massachusetts: Biographies and Autobiographies of the Leading Men in the State, Volume 2* (Boston: Massachusetts Biographical Society, 1909).

[127] *BDG*, "Land for Parks."

Olmsted believed that it was the role of municipal government to provide public spaces for recreation. Left to their own devices, private land owners would seek to maximize the value of their land and disregard the public need for green spaces in the city:

> If the great city to arise here is to be laid out little by little, and chiefly to suit the needs of land-owners, acting only individually, and thinking only of how what they do is to affect the value in the next week or the next year of the few lots that each may hold at the time, the opportunities of so obeying this inclination as at the same time to give the lungs a bath of pure sunny air, to give the mind a suggestion of rest from the devouring eagerness and intellectual strife of town life, will always be few to any, to many will amount to nothing.[128]

As a result, Boston began annexing nearby suburbs in order to acquire land for these antecedent parks, which would serve as an environmental amenity around which future development could take place. In 1867, the town of Roxbury voted for annexation, followed by Dorchester in 1869, and West Roxbury in 1873. Urban historian Sam Bass Warner noted that the three newly annexed towns experienced a housing boom in the 1880s and 1890s with the construction of nearly 22,500 detached one-, two-, and three-family homes for the middle-class residents. He further noted that the new construction of Franklin Park, Arnold Arboretum and the park at Jamaica Pond added a feeling of space, fresh air, and a "pervading sense of newness" that prompted the influx of 167,000 new residents to these three former suburbs.[129]

Olmsted understood that urban growth and commercial activity did not require the same land use conditions to be maintained in all parts of the city. Some valuable portions of the city needed to be reserved for residential and commercial activities, while other less-valuable portions could be used for antecedent parks, such as those found in Franklin Park and the Arnold

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[128] FLO, "Public parks," 21.

[129] Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 35 and 43. Warner also noted that the population of Roxbury, Dorchester, and West Roxbury increased by 278 percent from 1860 (60,000) to 1900 (227,000), p. 35.

Arboretum, in order to relieve city residents of their physical and mental irritation. Large institutions, such as the Boston Park Department and the Metropolitan Street Railway, assisted in the development of Roxbury, Dorchester and West Roxbury. This reflected a larger belief that the state should "assist private undertakings."[130] For example, new streetcar service encouraged private development in further outlying areas. The terminal stations in Dorchester and Roxbury, situated on the edge of the hinterland, allowed residents to live out in the country surrounded by rural, pastoral spaces, and still work in the city. These streetcar lines experienced the most ridership on Sundays as city residents left the city and headed out to the country where they experienced the soothing charm and rural refreshment offered by Franklin Park, the arboretum, and the park at Jamaica Pond.[131]

The park commission helped to establish middle class neighborhoods in these new suburbs as they avoided taking land better suited for private development. Instead, they took land in low-lying areas, like marshes, or in upland areas not suitable for residences. Essentially, the Boston Park Department created an environmental amenity, which helped to "landscape the margins of private developments."[132] These new residential districts near Franklin Park, Arnold Arboretum, and Jamaica Pond, as well as the Fens, served to reinforce the notion of the proximate principle and the elite qualities of public parks in Boston.

**Conclusions**

From the beginning of the American park movement the elite urban leisure class accepted the notion of the proximate principle. And, from this, they believed that general prosperity followed

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[130] Warner, *op cit*, 155.
[131] *Ibid*, 60.
[132] *Ibid*, 155.

from the creation of naturalistic landscape parks. The city's reports analyzing the property values near Central Park reinforced this notion. The Boston Park Commission and park advocates based their understanding of the potential economic benefits of naturalistic landscape parks, in part, on reports like the assessment of the property values adjacent to parks in New York City and Brooklyn.

The rhetoric of the park movement emphasized the idealistic visions of social reform and improving public health through transformations of the natural environmental. But cities like New York and Boston had very real practical motivations and justifications for the creation of public parks—investment in the city. This accepted belief carried over into the twentieth-century. In their 1903 report to the park commissioners in Portland, Oregon, the Olmsted Brothers firm explained that with some engineering effort marshes and other land ill-suited for commercial or residential development could be transformed into "delightful local pleasure grounds" that had the ability to "add greatly to the values of adjoining properties."[133] John and Rick Olmsted used Olmsted Park's Leverett Pond as an example when they stated their belief that "only the poorest class of houses, stables and the like would otherwise have been built," had the low-lying marsh not been transformed into a picturesque lake.

The physical design of the parks within Olmsted's Emerald Necklace reinforced the cultural power of the leisure class by embedding it in the landscape itself. The parks of the Emerald Necklace represented the city's quest for urban order and sanitation. The engineering of urban nature in the Emerald Necklace represented a sophisticated relationship between nature and culture based on an environmental imaginary held by members of the elite leisure class. That Boston's leisure class relied on the Olmstedian vision and landscape aesthetic reveals their ability to see the value of these naturalistic spaces to the city's economic development. By linking the landscape

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[133] Olmsted Brothers, "Report outlining a system of parkways, boulevards, and parks for the city of Portland," in *Report of the Park Board, Portland, Oregon, 1903* (Portland: The Park Board), 20.

aesthetic to boosterism and real estate speculation, the parks of the Emerald Necklace acted as a spatial fix to the economic downturn resulting from the Panic of 1873. In order to convince the general public, powerful merchants, and politicians of the value of parks, the leisure class needed to devise a strategy that appealed to all stakeholders by "invent[ing] an imaginary sufficient to achieve some level of social cohesion, solidarity, and institutional order."[134] The Olmstedian vision of a naturalistic landscape park was just the imaginary the urban regime needed.

Based upon the real and perceived needs of city residents, the imaginary was grounded in the notion that aesthetically pleasing naturalistic public landscapes made healthy cities. Ultimately, however, the main driver in the campaign for large public expenditures for parks was the practical economic calculations by members of the leisure class. The city's leisure class accepted the Olmstedian vision of the naturalistic landscape park because of the proven ability of the Olmstedian design philosophy to inflate land values. In the next chapter, I explore the origins of the Olmsted model of park design and how it influenced the engineering of environmental imaginaries in the park landscapes of the Emerald Necklace.

[134] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*, 321.

# CHAPTER 4

# GREENING THE CITY: OLMSTED AND THE PRODUCTION OF THE EMERALD NECKLACE

> *Parks have plainly not come as the direct result of any great inventions or discoveries of the century. They are not, with us, simply an improvement on what we had before, growing out of a general advance of the arts applicable to them. It is not evident that the movement was not taken up in any country from any other, however it may have been influenced or accelerated. It did not run like a fashion. It would seem rather to have been a common, spontaneous movement of that sort which we conveniently refer to the 'Genius of Civilization.'…Considering that it has occurred simultaneously with a great enlargement of towns and the development of bad habits, is it not reasonable to regard it as a self-preserving instinct of civilization?*
>
> --Frederick Law Olmsted[1]

> *On the one hand, [Olmsted] understood physical and biological processes and applied that knowledge inventively. On the other, he disguised the artifice, so that ultimately the built landscapes were not recognized and valued as human constructs. He planted trees to look like "natural scenery" and then felt frustrated when people, accepting the scene as "natural," objected to cutting the trees he planned to cull. His concealment of the art was so successful that it backfired. His notion of the social utility of natural scenery was lost; ultimately, it was viewed as decorative, not functional. Ironically, it was the "natural" appearance that prevented people from appreciating how it fulfilled a broad range of functions.*
>
> --Anne Whiston Spirn[2]

The nineteenth century was a period of rapid physical and social change for the city of Boston. The city's population grew by 1600 percent from 1810 to 1900 (Table 4.1). As the city's population grew rapidly, the number of immigrants, particularly the Irish, who made up 65 percent of the foreign-born population and 23 percent of the total population, concerned the Brahmin.[3] To accommodate this growing population, city leaders emphasized the process of landmaking to provide the space

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[1] FLO, *A Consideration of the Justifying Value of a Public Park* (Boston: Tolman and White, 1881), 8 and 19.

[2] Spirn, "Constructed nature," 111.

[3] United State Census Bureau, *Population of the 46 Urban Places: 1810*. Available from www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab04.txt (accessed 10 Jan 2012). See also: City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Registry Department of the City of Boston for the Year 1904* (City doc. no. 34-1904), 306 and 326.

| Year | Population | Year | Population |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1810 | 33,787 | 1860 | 177,840 |
| 1820 | 43,298 | 1870 | 250,526 |
| 1830 | 61,392 | 1880 | 362,839 |
| 1840 | 93,383 | 1890 | 448,477 |
| 1850 | 136,881 | 1900 | 560,892 |

**Table 4.1.** Boston population, 1810-1900. Source: US Census Bureau.

necessary to house and employ large numbers of people. At 783 acres, the original Shawmut Peninsula no longer afforded the city with enough space, and therefore, the nineteenth-century was a century of landmaking for Boston. The city filled areas in the West Cove, the Mill Pond, the South Cove, the East Cove, South Boston, the South Bay, the Back Bay, the Fenway, Charlestown, and East Boston to increase the land area to 23,661 acres by 1880 (Figure 4.1-4.3).[4] The rapid pace of urban change, both demographically and physically, as well as the social and environmental issues these changes brought about, forced the Brahmin leisure class to begin advocating for public parks.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Brahmin, the city's elite leisure class, played an influential role in the movement to produce a park system for Boston in the mid-nineteenth century. While they were influential in generating public support for parks, they lacked the professional, technical, and artistic vision to actually shape the landscape. Therefore, they called upon Olmsted, with his years of practical experience and his artistic landscape vision, as well as his upper-middle class background and republican ideologies, to create a world-class park system that would bring their city the recognition they felt it deserved. American cities engaged in interurban competition for capital and often clamored for Olmstedian parks; his park landscapes were unique commodities.

[4] Thomas W. Davis, *Outline Plan Showing the Growth of Boston, 1880*. Available from the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library. For more information on the landmaking process, see: Seasholes, *Gaining Ground*.


**Figure 4.1.** A new and correct plan of the town of Boston, by Thomas Hyde Page, 1775. The developed areas of the Boston of 1775 were confined to the North End, the commercial area near the waterfront and Long Wharf, and along Washington Street leading to Boston Neck. Source: Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.


**Figure 4.2.** A map of Boston (detail) by Abel Bowen, 1830. The Boston of the early-nineteenth century was a densely-packed, pedestrian city with new development spreading out into the West End and South End as numerous coves and bays were filled in. Source: Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.

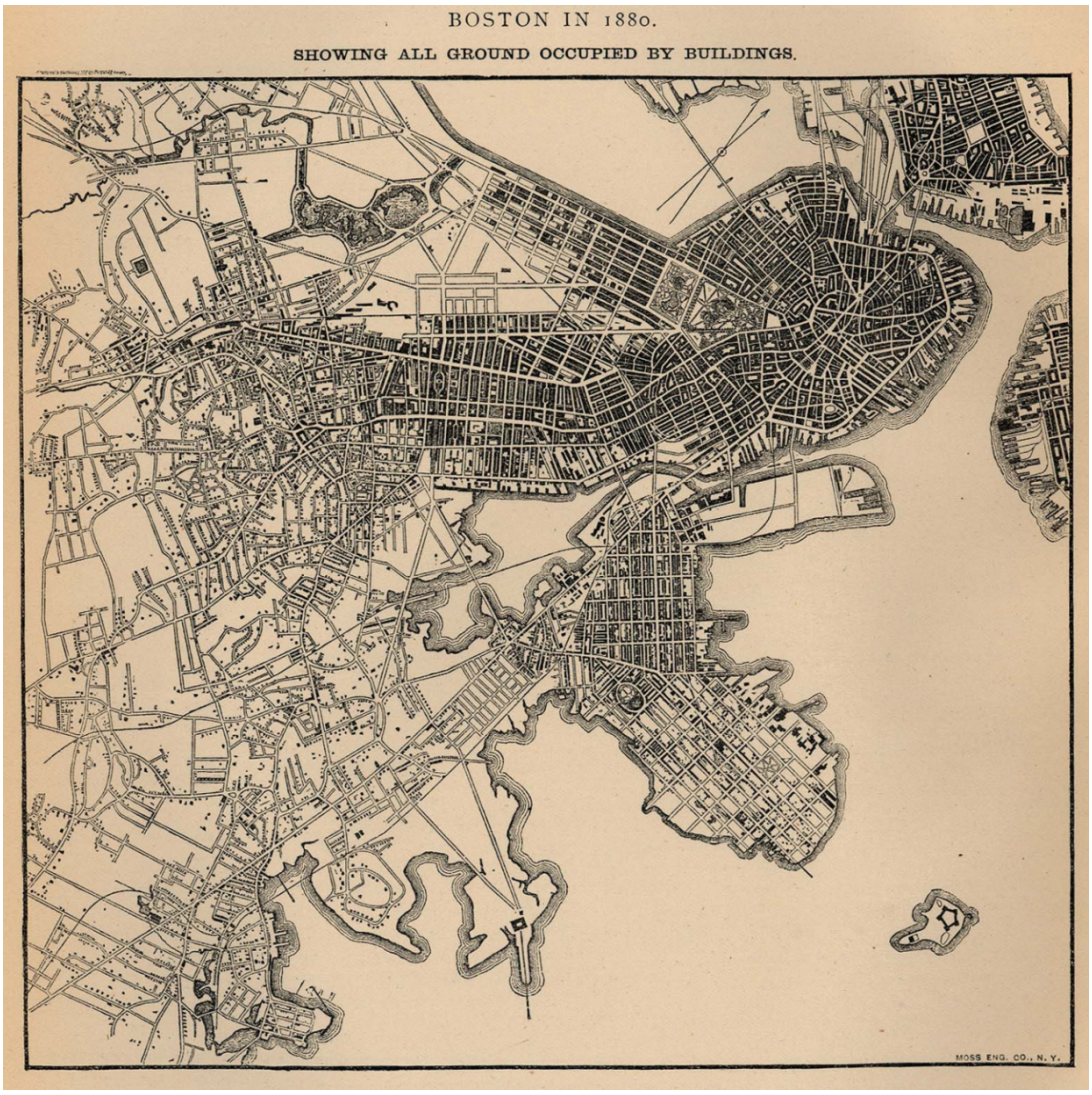


**Figure 4.3.** Map of Boston, Massachusetts, 1880. The Boston of the late-nineteenth century does not resemble its former self as development spread out into the West End, South End, South Boston, and the Back Bay. In the Fenway the Olmsted plan for the Fens can be seen. Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas.

Not all cities in the United States could boast about their Olmstedian park, and the Boston's leisure class believed that a cohesive park system, with a distinctly Olmstedian feel, would provide an opportunity for growth that no other American city could compete with.

The atmosphere associated with Olmstedian parks emanated from the unique qualities shared by all of Olmsted's naturalistic landscape parks. While there were interchangeable elements in all of his parks, he worked to create naturalistic landscapes that were specific to particular places and regions, so that no two landscapes were the same. As an artist his landscape works shared common qualities (e.g., curvilinear paths that open to broad views, indefinite boundaries, and the perspective effect whereby he contrasted dark foreground elements with lighter, less distinct elements further away) in much the same way that the landscape paintings of the Hudson River School shared common traits (e.g., luminance, high contrast, dramatic skies, and shadows).[5] As a result, Olmsted created unique pastoral and picturesque environments in which park visitors could immerse their senses in the harmony of his engineered naturalistic landscape. The combination of pastoral and picturesque scenes, set in contrast to the industrial city, provided the basis for the unique atmosphere that surrounded an Olmstedian park.

In this chapter, I examine the ways in which the production of Olmsted's specific environmental imaginary represented an elitist hegemony. In the previous chapter, I showed how the city's leisure class viewed the proximate principle and how it enhanced the values of properties adjacent to these park landscapes. This represented a spatial fix based on the landscape aesthetics of the Olmstedian park model. In this chapter, I trace the development of Olmsted's Romantic park philosophy. In doing so, I examine how this influenced his work at Central Park and helped to develop a model of Olmstedian-park design based on this park philosophy and his republican

[5] Beveridge, "Toward a definition of Olmstedian principles of design"; Judith H. O'Toole, *Different View in Hudson River School Painting* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

ideology. I show how the landscape in each park of the Emerald Necklace reflected this Romantic park philosophy. Finally, while all the parks of the Emerald Necklace contained design elements based on this model of park design, I apply this model to the creation of the Back Bay Fens as a case study. By critically analyzing Olmsted's first published plan for the Fens, I illustrate the ways in which Olmsted designed environmental imaginaries based on a Romantic park philosophy. This study of Olmsted's engineered nature in the Fens is important for three reasons: it was his first project in the Emerald Necklace; it was a heavily polluted landscape desperately in need of sanitation; and, the environmental imaginaries found in the naturalistic landscapes Olmsted designed acted as environmental amenities which shaped the growth of Boston's elite Back Bay neighborhood.

**Olmsted: Early Life and Pre-Landscape Architecture Career**

On April 26, 1822, Frederick Law Olmsted was born into a prosperous family in Hartford, Connecticut. His father, John Olmsted, was a well-respected dry-goods merchant, and his mother, Charlotte Law (Hull) Olmsted, passed away shortly before his fourth birthday. A year later, his father married Mary Ann (Bull) Olmsted, and together they cultivated a love of nature and place in Olmsted and his younger brother John Hull Olmsted.

The family often took leisurely drives in the Connecticut River Valley, as well as longer vacations to picturesque places like Niagara Falls, the Adirondacks, the Maine coast, and the White Mountains of New Hampshire to discover scenic beauty. He learned early in life to appreciate the appeal of regional scenery and "the silent happiness that it evoked."[6] Olmsted later recalled these trips in his 1873 memoir:

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[6] Roper, *FLO*, 6.

> The happiest recollections of my early life are the walks and rides I had with my father and the drives with my father and mother in the woods and fields. Sometimes these were quite extended, and really tours in search of the picturesque. Thus before I was twelve years old I had been driven over the most charming roads of the Connecticut Valley and its confluents, through the White Hills and along most of the New England coast from the Kennebeck to the Naugatuck…We rested long in pleasant places [where] my father, brother and I would often wander far looking for a bathing place and an addition of fresh wild berries for the picnic dinner which my mother would have set out in some well-selected shady place.[7]

In his search for pleasing landscapes, Olmsted also engaged in solo wanderings to visit family members scattered around the Hartford region. At the homes of his uncles or grandparents he would often plant in the gardens, but he was just as likely to sit and read books containing landscape and garden prints. His reading of Sir Uvedale Price's *Essay on the Picturesque* and William Gilpin's *Remarks on Forest Scenery* helped spark his interest and education in nature, landscape, and place.[8]

Olmsted received both a formal education in classrooms, and a practical education as a traveler and apprentice. His early education occurred in private elementary schools in the rural portions of Connecticut, and he furthered his education by boarding with various "ministerial caretakers," who undertook the responsibility of preparing him for entrance at Yale by teaching advanced writing, arithmetic, Latin, and Greek.[9] In 1838, Olmsted graduated from Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, but due to a severe case of sumac poisoning that weakened his eyes, he, and his father, let go of the dream of attending Yale.

Rather than enrolling in college, Olmsted continued to engage in travels and explorations in search of the pastoral and picturesque. He first worked as a surveyor's apprentice, but without any professional training in any field he struggled to find a career path. After serving as a clerk for a dry-

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[7] FLO, "Passages in the life of an unpractical man," in *FYLA 1*, 46-47.

[8] FLO, "Hints aidful to elementary self-education in design in the common fields of landscape gardening proper," in *FYLA 1*, 61. See also: Roper, *FLO*, 9-11; Stevenson, *Park Maker*, 1-9.

[9] FLO, "Passages in the life of an unpractical man," 48-57; Roper, *FLO*, 7.

goods importer in New York City, he set out for China as a seaman. Finding neither of these professions worthwhile, he engaged in the first of his career choices that would influence his lasting legacy as a park planner and landscape architect—he became a farmer. In this role he began a social and professional relationship with horticulturist Andrew Jackson Downing, which profoundly influenced his perspective on the rural landscape. Later, farming would lead him to a career in journalism, where he was first exposed to the formal parks of England.

Following from his love of the pastoral, Olmsted eagerly embraced the notion of farming as a profession. Beginning in 1844, he set out on a series of farm apprenticeships, first on uncle's farm in the Connecticut hills, and later in 1846 as an apprentice to George Geddes on his farm, *Fairmont,* near Syracuse, New York. In both locations, he connected with his passion for exploring the hills, rivers, and forests of the local landscape. After the harvest he left the Geddes farm and decided to set out on his own and try his hand at farming for himself. Olmsted settled first on a small farm at Sachem's Head, near Guilford, Connecticut, before landing on the south shore of Staten Island where his father had purchased a 130-acre farm for him. Naming his farm *Tosomock*, Olmsted farmed the land and operated a nursery business selling fruit trees, mainly his award-winning pears, until 1854.[10] Living off the land, working the soil, and exploring the local countryside shaped his perspectives on nature and landscape. His experiences as a farmer also established the basis for his next career path as a journalist, when he traveled through the United Kingdom and continental Europe studying agriculture and landscape, and writing his observations for *The Horticulturist*.

On April 30, 1850, Olmsted, with his brother John and their friend Charles Loring Brace, set sail from New York City on the *Henry Clay*. Arriving in Liverpool in May, the three set out on a tour of the UK as well as parts of France, Germany and Belgium. Originally his father planned to send

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[10] *FYLA 1*, 75-87; Lee Hall, *Olmsted's America: An "Unpractical" Man and his Vision of Civilization* (Boston: Bulfinch Press, 1995), 29.

only John to Europe with Brace, but the twenty-eight year old Olmsted convinced his father to send him as well by arguing that he could learn a great deal about farming by observing the agricultural practices in England and Scotland.[11] Due to their limited funds, the trio chose to travel on foot, which lent itself to deeper, more intimate, observations of the British rural landscape including parks, gardens and farms.

Olmsted's detailed observations of park landscapes resulted in two influential publications: an 1851 article, "The People's Park at Birkenhead, near Liverpool," published in Downing's journal *The Horticulturist*, and the 1852 book, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England.*[12] Readers warmly received *Walks and Talks*. An 1853 review of the book published in *The Horticulturist*, noted an appreciation for Olmsted's ability to notice and describe the details of the rural English landscape:

> To be a good traveler, a man need possess…an inquiring, curious, investigating mind, that he may see everything, hear everything, understand everything, and be able to describe and criticize whatever he may meet. There are, it must be confessed, few such travelers [and] Mr. Olmsted is of the few…His sketches of landscape, and of particular scenes and objects in the landscape exhibit such glowing warmth of feeling, such a practical knowledge, as we would only expect in one exclusively devoted to the study of nature. He comes to a farm house, and with the same earnestness, the same keenness of observation and knowledge of detail, he gives a graphic description of all inside and out.[13]

His attention to detail, as well the intimate level of understanding found in his observations of the intricacies of the landscape and scenery, became the hallmark of Olmsted's park design.

Olmsted's journalism career continued as he published newspaper articles, books, and helped to found the magazine, *The Nation*. As a journalist, Olmsted traveled the American south where he refined his personal ideologies regarding slavery, commerce, and the future of the republic.

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[11] FLO, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1852), 2.
[12] FLO, "The people's park at Birkenhead, near Liverpool," *The Horticulturalist* 6(1851): 224-228.
[13] Unsigned (presumably AJD) review of *Walks and Talks*, in *The Horticulturalist* 8(1853), 43.

From 1852 to 1857, he worked as a journalistic correspondent for the *New York Daily Times* researching and analyzing the American South in the pre-war period. During this time Olmsted sent letters back to New York giving his impressions of life in the southern states. He compiled these letters into a series of books detailing the life, the landscape, and the slave economy of the southern states.[14]

In these works, Olmsted came out against the institution of slavery, but not out of moral outrage. Instead, he took an analytical stance and examined the economic inefficiencies of slavery by analyzing the costs of slave labor to the plantation owner. He determined that the costs to feed, house, clothe, and nurse a slave outweighed the wages paid to a free laborer.[15] These works on the south helped to strengthen anti-slavery sentiment in the north, particularly in New England. A political moderate, Olmsted held republican values and used both his pre-park professions and his landscape design career to espouse them. He believed that the moral spaces provided by parks, with their awe-inspiring naturalistic scenes, helped to improve society—he "intended his parks to be institutions of recreation and popular education that would demonstrate the viability of the republican experiment in America."[16]

**Urban Space, the Romantic Landscape, and the American Park**

The desire of nineteenth-century social reformers to create naturalistic spaces in the city reflected a Jeffersonian anti-urban ideology. In his 1781 *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson outlined his beliefs regarding a variety of matters including political principles, the role of government, the

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[14] FLO, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, 1853-1854: With Remarks on their Economy* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1856), *A Journey Through Texas; Or a Saddle-Trip on the South-Western Frontier* (New York: Dix, Edwards, and Co., 1857), *A Journey in the Back Country* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1860), and *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States, 1853-1861* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1861).

[15] FLO, *Cotton Kingdom*, 115-118.

[16] Beveridge and Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted*, 41.

relationship between church and state, slavery, individual liberty, and what he perceived as a virtuous life—the life of a farmer.

Farmers, according to Jefferson, embodied the egalitarian ideals of the republic and democratic citizenship. In describing the self-sufficiency, hard work, and morality of the yeoman farmer, Jefferson stated: "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue... Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example."[17] Jefferson believed that the rural life associated with farming, rather than the urban life associated with commercialization and industrialization, provided the best economic course of action for the United States: "While we have land to labor then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a workbench, or twirling a distaff...for the general operations of manufacture, let our work-shops remain in Europe."[18] Jefferson's agrarian sensibilities sprang up from his contempt of urban life, particularly the problems associated with capitalism and industrialization, as well as the technologies they spawned.

Nineteenth-century social reformers recognized that American cities were becoming overcrowded, cluttered, dirty, and unhealthy as the process of industrialization and immigration continued. Urban residents faced a variety of social problems such as poverty, tenement living, abuse of alcohol, and crime.[19] Reformers believed that a variety of new institutions—public schools, asylums, philanthropic and charitable organizations, and parks, playgrounds, and other spaces of

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[17] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia: With Related Documents*, ed. David Waldstreicher (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002), 197.

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] For a discussion of social problems facing the nineteenth century city see: Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*; Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America*; Raymond A. Mohl, *The New City: Urban America in the Industrial Age, 1860-1920* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1985); Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (New York: Dover Publications, 1890).

recreation—would provide the necessary moral uplift for residents of the city.[20] With an environmentally deterministic view in mind, park advocates, such as Olmsted and Andrew Jackson Downing, pressed for producing pleasure grounds that adhered to the English landscape tradition—large, picturesque landscapes with a number of relatively open, pastoral spaces that were meant to provide a genteel respite from the day-to-day affairs of the unhealthy city. Reformers believed that, nature, in the form of urban public parks, would act as the civilizing and sanitizing force the city desperately needed.

As a Romantic landscape, the nineteenth-century naturalistic landscape park stressed the aesthetic experiences and wild grandeur of a uniquely urban and engineered nature. As a reaction against the Enlightenment, Romanticism rejected the notions of stability, order, balance, and rationality in nature. An artistic and literary movement, Romanticism stressed an untamed, wild, pure, and awe-inspiring nature, which, ironically, required a great deal of order and rationality to produce. Transcendentalism, a religious and philosophical branch of the Romantic movement, stressed intuition and experience over reason and rationality. As an environmental movement, transcendentalism emphasized the emotive aspects of nature—it was only through a connection with nature that individuals gained hope and realized their connection with God.[21] According to art historian Barbara Novak, the "unity of nature bespoke the unity of God [and] the unity of man with nature assumed an optimist attitude toward human perfectibility."[22] In his 1844 essay "Nature," (not to be confused with his 1836 book of the same title), Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed this unity:

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[20] For the creation of public schools see Joel Spring, *The American School, 1642-1996* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997). For the role of asylums see Bender 1975 and Boyer 1978. For charitable organizations see Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, 1880). For the role of parks, playgrounds, and other recreation areas see: Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*; Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*; Goodman, *Choosing Sides*.

[21] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, reprinted in *The Writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House, 1950[1836]), 3-42.

[22] Barbara Novak, *Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting, 1825-1875* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 17.

"Man is fallen; nature is erect, and serves as a differential thermometer, detecting the presence or absence of the divine sentiment in man."[23] It was this desire to live deliberately and mindfully, to live close to nature, and therefore closer to the divine, that prompted Henry David Thoreau to live for more than two years in a state of contemplation and quasi-solitude at Walden.[24] The creation of this new environmental movement coincided with the increasing destruction of America's wilderness. As industrialization continued unabated, new urban landscapes—first, garden cemeteries, and later public parks—were needed to reconnect society with nature in the city.

As an ideology, the "rural cemetery" movement in America gave meaning to residents of the growing nineteenth-century city. It spawned the public interest in rural scenery, the wonder of nature, and the belief that nature could purify the city, all philosophical approaches that the nascent urban park movement would later embrace.[25] The cemetery movement began in 1825, when Jacob Bigelow planned to create a new type of burial ground in Cambridge, Massachusetts, one that was unlike the typical church burial grounds common at the time. Bigelow hoped to construct a cemetery that would not only soothe the souls of the interred, but would also provide a soothing retreat for family members and other urban residents. His effort gained momentum in 1829 when the newly formed Massachusetts Horticultural Society agreed to help him construct the cemetery provided it also included an experimental garden and arboretum.[26] Their efforts resulted in the 1831 creation of Mount Auburn Cemetery.

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[23] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," reprinted in *The Writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson (New York: Random House, 1950[1844]), 411.

[24] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, and Other Writings* (New York: Modern Library 1950[1854]).

[25] Thomas Bender, "The 'rural' cemetery movement: urban travail and the appeal of nature," *The New England Quarterly* 47(1974): 196-211. See also, Schuyler, *New Urban Landscape*, 37-56,

[26] Massachusetts Horticultural Society, "Report of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society upon the establishment of an experimental garden and rural cemetery," in *The North American Review* 33(1831): 397-407; Stanley French, "The cemetery as cultural institution: the establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'rural cemetery' movement" *American Quarterly* 26(1974): 37-59; John W. Reps, *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 326; Schuyler, *New Urban Landscape*, 37-56; Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by*

The spaces of Mount Auburn honored the dearly departed, but also sought to enhance the lives of the living through the design of a naturalistic landscape. In consecrating the site, Joseph Story, an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and the first president of the Mount Auburn Association, remarked: "All around us there breathes a solemn calm, as if we were in the bosom of a wilderness, broken only by the breeze as it murmurs through the tops of the forest, or by the notes of the warbler pouring forth his matin or his evening song."[27] The creation of Mount Auburn brought about a transformation in social attitudes toward death and nature. Cemeteries were no longer just places for the interment of the dead—they became cultural institutions for the living. Mount Auburn's naturalistic design provided a space for escape and solitude for Boston's elite (Figure 4.4). It was a place of inspiration where urban residents could go for relaxation, contemplation, tranquility, and renewal. Individual visitors engaged in reflective acts of solitude, while others escaped the city in groups and picnicked.

The rural cemetery quickly became a tourist destination for the leisure class, who, with guidebooks in hand, took to the cemetery for sightseeing. But as more people visited rural cemeteries, cemetery trustees remained vigilant in preserving the aesthetic qualities in the face of increased recreational usage. Visitors using these idyllic spaces for recreational uses, not for reflection, clearly frustrated some, including landscape gardener and horticulturist Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing commented that, "the only drawback to these beautiful and highly kept cemeteries…is the gala-day air of recreation they present. People seem to go there to enjoy

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*Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 17; Blanche M.G. Linden, *Silent City on a Hill: Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

[27] Joseph Story, *An Address Delivered on the Dedication of the Cemetery at Mount Auburn, September 24, 1831* (Boston: Joseph T. and Edwin Buckingham, 1831), 17.

**Figure 4.4.** Mount Auburn Cemetery with view of Washington Tower, c. 1890s. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection.

themselves, and not to indulge in any serious recollections or regrets."[28]

From the beginning, a visitor to Mount Auburn witnessed all of the physical features of the Romantic landscape movement including, winding drives, naturalistic pools, and natural-looking woodlands. The refined, yet rustic, qualities of the landscape made Mount Auburn a popular destination, which further spurred the development of similar cemeteries in other cities, particularly

[28] AJD, "A talk about public parks and gardens," *The Horticulturalist* 3(1848), 157. *The Picturesque Pocket Companion, and Visitor's Guide, through Mount Auburn* (Boston: Otis, Broaders and Company, 1839).

Laurel Hill Cemetery (1836) in Philadelphia and Greenwood Cemetery (1838) in Brooklyn.[29] In comparing Mount Auburn to these newer cemeteries, Downing remarked:

> *Greenwood,* the largest, and unquestionably the finest, is grand, dignified, and park-like. It is laid out in a broad and simple style, commands noble ocean views, and is admirably kept. *Mount Auburn* is richly picturesque, in its varied hill and dale, and owes its charm mainly to this variety and intricacy of sylvan features. *Laurel Hill* is a charming pleasure ground, filled with beautiful and rare shrubs and flowers; at this season, a wilderness of roses, as well as fine trees and monuments.[30]

The popularity of rural cemeteries, in part, spawned the public park movement in the United States and led to park design based on Romantic qualities of naturalistic landscapes. In addressing the need for public parks in American cities, Downing commented that,

> cemeteries are the only places in the country that can give an untraveled American any idea of the beauty of many of the public parks and gardens abroad…Let our people once see for themselves the influence for good which it would effect, no less than the healthful enjoyment it will afford, and I feel confident that the taste for public pleasure grounds, in the United States, will spread as rapidly as that for cemeteries has done.[31]

Just as Romanticism rejected the Enlightenment notions of rationality and order, the Romantic park rejected the formality of rationally ordered designs in favor of more informal and natural-looking landscapes.

A prime mover of the American park movement, Downing was inspired by the eighteenth-century English landscape traditions of Humphry Repton, John Nash, and Lancelot "Capability" Brown. In 1841, Downing published his seminal work *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape*

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[29] The rural cemetery movement ran through many northern cities including: Mount Hope Cemetery (1838) in Rochester; Green Mount Cemetery (1839) in Baltimore; Lowell Cemetery (1841) in Lowell; Allegheny Cemetery (1844) in Pittsburgh; Elmwood Cemetery (1846) in Detroit; Forest Lawn Cemetery (1849) in Buffalo; Riverside Cemetery (1853) in Waterbury, Conn.; Oakwood Cemetery (1859) in Syracuse; Woodlawn Cemetery (1863) in the Bronx; and, Cedar Hill Cemetery (1866) in Hartford.

[30] AJD, "Public cemeteries and public gardens," *The Horticulturalist* 4(1849), 10.

[31] AJD, "A talk about public parks and gardens," 157 and 158.

*Gardening,* in which he juxtaposed two Romantic landscape forms—the Beautiful and the Picturesque. He characterized the idea of the former as one of, "beauty calmly and harmoniously expressed," represented by its "curved and flowing lines—lines expressive of infinity, of grace, and willing obedience."[32] Downing characterized the idea of the latter as one of, "power, strongly and irregularly expressed," represented by its "irregular and broken lines—lines expressive of violence, abrupt actions, and partial disobedience, a struggling of the idea with the substance or the condition of its being."[33]

Downing further provided an example of the environmental imaginary for each landscape form. In illustrating the Beautiful (or the pastoral), he described a scene with a gently undulating plain that was:

> covered with emerald turf, partially or entirely encompassed by rich, rolling outlines of forest canopy—its wildest expanse here broken occasionally, by noble groups of round-headed trees, or there interspersed with single specimens whose trunks support heads of foliage flowing in outline, or drooping in masses to the very turf beneath them. In such a scene we often behold the azure of heaven, and its silvery clouds, as well as the deep verdure of the luxuriant and shadowy branches, reflected in the placid bosom of a sylvan lake; the shores of the latter swelling out, and receding, in gentle curved lines; the banks, sometimes covered with soft turf sprinkled with flowers, and in other portions clothed with luxuriant masses of verdant shrubs.[34]

To illustrate the Picturesque, Downing described the scene of a untamed valley that was:

> half shut in on two or more sides by steep rocky banks, partially concealed and overhung by clustering vines, and tangled thickets of deep foliage. Against the sky outline breaks the wild and irregular form of some old, half decayed tree nearby, or the horizontal and unique branches of the larch or the pine, with their strongly marked forms. Rough and irregular stems and trunks, rocks half covered with mosses and flowering plants, open glades of bright verdure opposed to dark masses

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[32] AJD, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America*, 6th ed. (New York: A.O. Moore & Co., 1859), 54.

[33] *Ibid*, 54.

[34] *Ibid*, 48.

> of shadowy foliage, form prominent objects in the foreground. If water enlivens the scene, we shall hear the murmur of the noisy brook, or the cool dashing of the cascade, as it leaps over the rocky barrier.[35]

In terms of park design, both the peaceful and rustic environmental imaginary of the pastoral and the powerful and wild environmental imaginary of the picturesque stood in stark contrast to the industrial image of the city. Downing advocated for both elements in the design of an urban public park in New York City. With the creation of Central Park, Olmsted translated Downing's characterizations into the naturalistic landscape park. These Romantic notions of landscape guided Olmsted's design philosophy as he began his distinguished career as the foremost park designer in America.

**Central Park and the Olmsted Park Model**

The beginning of Olmsted's prolific career as the nation's first landscape architect began with the New York City plan to construct a centrally located park on the island of Manhattan. Prominent New Yorkers, including William Cullen Bryant and Downing, used the power of their positions to voice support for a park in New York. While the main thrust of park discussions and proposals occurred in the early-1850s, Bryant penned the first editorial calling for a park in New York City in 1844. Bryant, poet and editor of the *New York Evening Post*, published an editorial entitled, "A New Public Park," in which he appealed for a grand park in New York City modeled after the parks and gardens of Europe to provide fresh air and recreation for the growing population of the city.

Bryant described the proposed park site at Jones Woods, a 150-acre parcel located between 66th and 75th streets and Third Avenue and the East River, as "a tract of beautiful woodland...thickly covered with old trees, intermingled with a variety of shrubs. The surface is varied in a very striking

[35] AJD, *Treatise*, 49.

and picturesque manner, with craggy eminences, and hollows, and a little stream runs through its midst." The possibilities of the site led Bryant to declare that, "there never was a finer situation for the public gardens of a great city."[36]

Just as Bryant made use of his editorial position, Downing used his position as editor of *The Horticulturist* to advocate for the creation of public parks and gardens in New York. The majority of Downing's writings on parks and gardens for New York compared the city to various European cities to show the benefits of public green space. In Europe, the public spaces offered by parks and gardens provided a form of "social freedom," based on the "agreeable intercourse of all classes," that was unseen in America.[37] Therefore, he implored cities in America to establish "spacious parks in your cities and unloose their gates as wide as the gate of morning to the whole people."[38] Downing felt that New York City needed the "salubrious and wholesome breathing places" associated with public parks and gardens.[39] Based on his experiences in parks and gardens in Europe, Downing believed that public grounds in American cities would help provide a stage for performances of morality, and therefore, would "be better preachers of temperance than temperance societies."[40]

Despite his insistence on a park for New York City, Downing criticized the Jones Woods. He felt that the 150-acre site was inadequate, and could not compare to the grandeur and scale of European parks, which provided hundreds, even thousands, of acres of public space. Therefore, Downing argued that a park of at least 500 acres should "be reserved for the future wants of such a

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[36] William Cullen Bryant, "A new public park," reprinted in *Reading the Roots: American Nature Writing Before Walden*, ed. Michael P. Branch (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 337.

[37] AJD, "A talk about public parks and gardens," 155.

[38] AJD, "The New York park," *The Horticulturalist* 6(1851), 345.

[39] AJD, "A talk about public parks and gardens," 154.

[40] *Ibid*, 158.

city, *now*, while it may be obtained."[41] A park of this size, he suggested, would provide a, "real feeling of the breadth and beauty of green fields [as well as] the perfume and freshness of nature." Downing believed that a well-designed large public park should supply a series of tree-lined roads and rural scenery to allow visitors to, "forget for a time the rattle of the pavements and the glare of brick walls." Due to their size, large parks furnished opportunities for park visitors to engage in quiet solitude and, "converse with the whispering trees," while at the same time, provided gregarious spaces for other visitors to, "enjoy an hour of happiness mingling in the open space" with other city residents.[42] Unfortunately, Downing died suddenly in 1852, drowning after a steamboat explosion on the Hudson River, never seeing his dream of a grand American park realized.

In 1853, the New York state legislature authorized the City of New York, through the power of eminent domain, to acquire 778 acres of land in the center of Manhattan for the Central Park.[43] Politics played a major role in the production of Central Park. With Tammany Democrats controlling city politics and Republicans controlling the state legislature, whomever controlled the creation and appointment of the new park commission controlled the patronage jobs associated with park construction. Fernando Wood, the Democratic mayor of New York, struggled to appoint a park commission without oversight by the legislature, while the Republicans in the legislature attempted to gain control of the park commission. In 1857, the Republicans finally succeeded in removing the park from city control and appointed an eleven-person Board of Commissioners of the Central Park that consisted of seven Republicans and four Democrats.[44]

In August 1857, Charles Elliott, an Olmsted family friend from Connecticut and a member of the park board, persuaded Olmsted to apply for the newly created position of park

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[41] AJD, "The New York park," 347 emphasis in original.
[42] *Ibid*, 347.
[43] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 37-58.
[44] Charles E. Beveridge, "Introduction" in *FLOP 3*, 14; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 97.

superintendent. Elliott cited Olmsted's experiences as a farmer, his writings on economy of agricultural labor, his writings on the English landscape, and his social connections as qualifications for the post. While Olmsted's position on slavery and his writings on the American south established him as a Republican in the minds of many, his limited identification with the state and local Republican parties proved acceptable to the Democrats on the Board.[45] An assemblage of influential publishers, writers, politicians, and scientists including newspaper editor Horace Greeley, writer Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, newspaper editor Whitelaw Reid, architect Russell Sturgis, and Harvard botany professor Asa Gray all wrote letters of support on behalf of Olmsted. On September 11, 1857, the Board appointed him superintendent of Central Park.[46]

One month later, the Board announced a public design competition for the park. Calvert Vaux, a British-born architect and former design partner with Downing, approached Olmsted about collaborating on a plan for the competition.[47] Vaux's strategic choice of Olmsted as a collaborator—as park superintendent Olmsted brought an extensive knowledge of the site's topography (and connections to the Board who would determine the winner), while Vaux brought essential drafting technical skills and experience—paid off as their "Greensward" plan was selected by the Board on April 28, 1858 (Figure 4.5).[48]

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[45] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 128.

[46] *FYLA 1*, 120.

[47] While FLO is generally credited with the design of Central Park, it was Vaux who suggested the collaboration to FLO (who had no previous experience in landscape design). It was a strategic and political move on the part of Vaux. First, by teaming up with FLO, Vaux had insight into site-specific details, like topography, vegetation, hydrology, and soil type, that the superintendent could provide. Second, since FLO worked for the park commissioners, he was known to those responsible for choosing the winning design. In their history of the social production of Central Park, urban historians Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar (1992, 119) note that the "winning contestants knew and were known by the commissioners. To view the awards in a positive light, the park board had already established trust and confidence in these contestants and could expect to work effectively with them in implementing the design. From a more cynical viewpoint, the commissioners may simply have taken the opportunity to give their own employees a bonus."

[48] Beveridge, "Introduction," *FLOP 3*, 12-13.

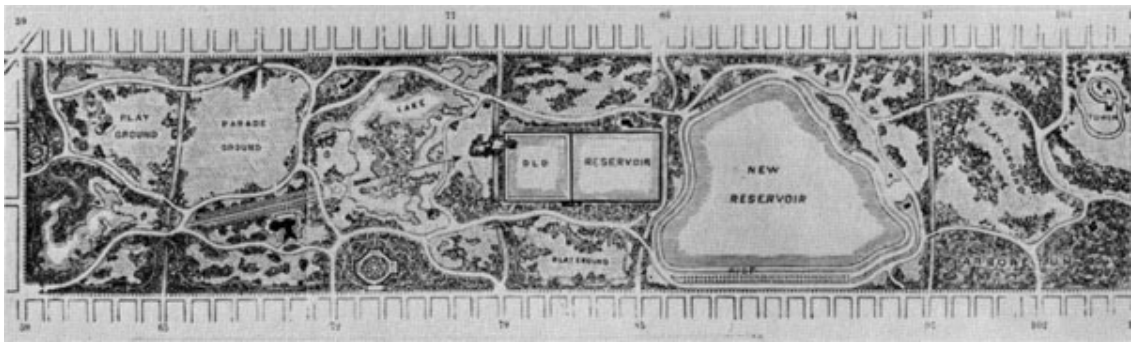


**Figure 4.5.** The "Greensward" Plan by Olmsted and Vaux, 1858. Source: New York Public Library.

The Greensward plan drafted by Olmsted and Vaux called for the creation of a pastoral oasis in the middle of the city, which the designers accomplished with two major design elements that distinguished their plan from the other entries. First, they called for constructing a green barrier that was "planted out" with trees and shrubs to exclude the sights and sounds of the city.[49] Second, the competition guidelines required at least four major road crossings, and Olmsted and Vaux arranged their transverse roads below grade.[50] Taken together these two design elements allowed them to construct pastoral and picturesque scenery inside the park that offered park visitors refreshment and rejuvenation without being disturbed by outside elements or crosstown traffic. This offered park visitors "unconscious and indirect recreation," and helped immerse visitors in rural scenery.[51] Their Greensward plan contained a variety of design elements emblematic of the naturalistic landscape park model that Olmsted first began devising on his tours of the English countryside. He would follow this model throughout his career, culminating in the creation of Boston's Emerald Necklace.

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[49] FLO, "Description of the Central Park," in *FLOP 3*, 215.

[50] FLO and Vaux, "Description of a plan for the improvement of the Central Park 'Greensward'," in *FLOP 3*, 121-122.

[51] FLO, "Trees in streets and in parks," *The Sanitarian* 10(1882), 517.

In 1850, on his trip to England, a serendipitous suggestion by a baker led Olmsted to visit the recently opened park at Birkenhead, which laid the foundation for his park ideology.[52] Created in 1847 by Joseph Paxton, Birkenhead made an immediate impact on Olmsted; he admired the way that Paxton, rather than creating an ornamental park typical of the gardenesque style of mid-nineteenth century Britain, replicated the look of the English countryside with ponds, random clumps of trees, meadows, and footpaths. The park impressed Olmsted from the first moment:

> Five minutes of admiration, and a few more spent studying the manner in which art had been employed to obtain from nature so much beauty, and I was ready to admit that in democratic America there was nothing to be thought of as comparable with this People's Garden...I cannot undertake to describe the effect of so much taste and skill as had evidently been employed.[53]

His experiences at Birkenhead and Central Park helped Olmsted create a three-pronged model of naturalistic park design (Figure 4.6).

First, in designing urban public parks, his naturalistic designs enhanced the local natural features of the site. The fact that Paxton's work at Birkenhead was thoroughly designed and constructed by human labor impressed Olmsted. He admired Paxton's efforts in transforming a flat, barren landscape into a pastoral and picturesque landscape: "The excavation for a pond was also made and the earth obtained from these sources used for making the mounds and to vary the surface, which has been done with much *naturalness* and taste."[54] In engineering nature in this park—a human-made pond that measured twenty to forty feet across and three feet deep, the undulating topography, graceful winding paths, the creation of open meadows, the placement of shady groves of trees, the placement of attractive flowers beds and shrubs, the placement of buildings so as not to interfere with the naturalistic scenery, belts of green closely-cropped turf, and

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[52] FLO, *Walks and Talks*, 78.
[53] FLO, "The people's park at Birkenhead," 225.
[54] FLO, *Walks and Talks*, 80 emphasis in original.

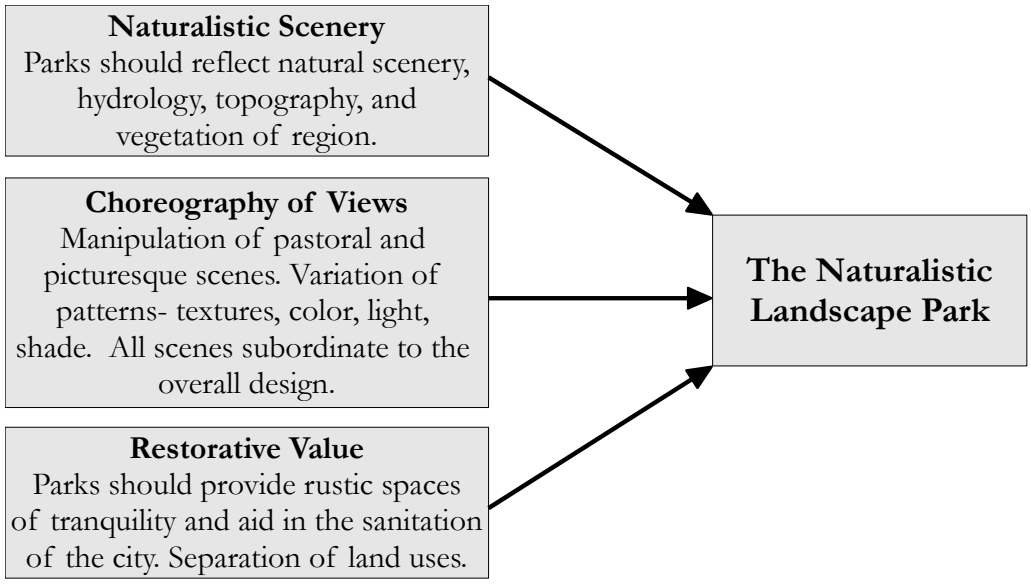


**Figure 4.6.** The Olmsted naturalistic landscape park model. Adapted from Beveridge (1986) and Crow, Brown, and De Young (2006).

tree-lined carriage roads—Paxton, "reached a perfection" that Olmsted admitted he "had never dreamed of," but would later come to emulate.[55]

Olmsted believed that naturalistic park design should reflect the natural scenery, vegetation, hydrology, and topography of the region. His parks, while designed and constructed by humans, were designed to look completely *natural* (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). Olmsted was so skillful in re-creating local natural scenes, so skillful in hiding his design, that many times people are blind to the fact that these landscapes were actually produced through human action.[56] Naturalistic scenes were essential elements of the Olmsted park model, where he relied upon the manipulation of scenery, through a choreography of landscape views, in order to immerse park visitors in the landscape experience.

[55] FLO, "The people's park at Birkenhead," 225.

[56] Charles McLaughlin, "The environment: Olmsted's odyssey," *The Wilson Quarterly* 6(1982): 78-87; Spirn "Constructing nature."

**Figure 4.7.** The Muddy River Improvement Project, c. 1890, showing the construction and grading of the Riverway. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Figure 4.8.** Recreation along the improved Muddy River, c. 1920, showing the completed naturalistic landscape in which urban residents enjoyed passive forms of recreational activities in the Riverway. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

Second, the Olmstedian park model stressed the manipulation and arrangement of scenery to produce an idealized naturalistic landscape. Olmsted believed that the single greatest benefit a large urban park offered visitors was the immersion in naturalistic scenery. All design elements were subordinate to the particular pastoral and picturesque scenes Olmsted strove to achieve. Scenery was more than decorative—it provided an emotional response in the viewer:

> Now as to this term scenery, it is to be borne in mind that we do not speak of what may be observed in the flower and foliage decorations of a dinner table, window-sill, or dooryard…as scenery. Scenery is more than an object or a series of objects...there is no beautiful scenery that does not give the mind an emotional impulse different from that resulting from whatever beauty may be found in a room, courtyard, or garden, within which vision is obviously confined by walls or other surrounding artificial constructions.[57]

Olmsted's awareness of how the small details fit into the broader landscape experience was evident in the architectural elements located within his parks.

The ways in which Olmsted designed the architectural elements complemented the rustic scenes he strove to achieve. At the core of the Olmstedian park model was his practice of "landscape obscurity," in which he blended formal architectural elements into the naturalistic landscape, and often even hid the developed spaces from the naturalistic spaces of the park.[58] Olmsted described how, by paying careful attention to natural textures, colors, and topography, one could use more architectural elements to enhance the naturalistic design:

> If the constructions are of the natural materials of the locality…if they are of the texture and the grain and the hues that such materials will naturally become if no effort to hide or disguise them is made, if the lines of the roads and walks are adapted to curves of the natural surface, and if the trees and plants are of a natural character naturally disposed, the result will be congruous with the general natural

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[57] FLO, *Notes on the Plan for Franklin Park and Related Matters* (Boston: Park Dept., 1886), 43.
[58] FLO, *Notes*, 61.

> rural scenery of the locality, its rural quality being, perhaps, enhanced by these unobtrusive artificial elements.[59]

By paying close attention to the naturalistic details, just as he did when writing about the rural English landscape, and subjecting individual design elements to the overall design, Olmsted's comprehensive vision of the park produced a rustic, naturalistic landscape experience that had restorative value for urban residents and workers.

Third, he believed as rural spaces, parks emphasized the tranquility of rural living, therefore he stressed the restorative value of parks for urban residents. Olmsted described the primary motivation behind the creation of parks as one "to provide the best practicable means of healthful recreation for the inhabitants of the city…It should present an aspect of spaciousness and tranquility with variety and intricacy of arrangement, thereby affording the most agreeable contrast to the confinement, bustle, and monotonous street-division of the city."[60] In order to utilize parks to their full restorative potential, urban residents needed access. Therefore, he advocated for weaving parks into the fabric of the city by creating parkways, bridle paths, and walking paths to allow public access at selected places. By arranging pathways and streets as he did, Olmsted not only subjected the street design to the larger park design, but he also ensured that the park would help to improve the mental and physical health of urban residents since they provided spaces for passive recreation, contemplation, relaxation, and "soothing charm."[61]

In addition to providing spaces for people to escape the drudgery of the industrial city, parks also acted to purify the urban environment. Olmsted believed that:

> Air is disinfected by sunlight and foliage. Foliage also acts mechanically to purify the air by screening it. Opportunity and inducement to escape at frequent intervals from

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[59] FLO, *Notes*, 44.
[60] FLO, "Description of the Central Park," 212.
[61] FLO, *Notes*, 46.

> the confined and vitiated air of the commercial quarter, and to supply the lungs with air screened and purified by trees, and recently acted upon by sunlight, therefore with opportunity and inducement to escape from condition requiring vigilance, wariness, and activity toward other men—if these could be supplied economically, our problem would be solved.[62]

As a form of urban infrastructure, Olmsted recognized that parks served the valuable purpose of improving urban life. In an article on the importance of urban trees and parks, he noted that "parks are now as much a part of the sanitary apparatus of a large town as aqueducts and sewers. Their management should be seen as…a matter of sanitary economy."[63] As an artist, Olmsted's goal in designing urban public parks was to unite two seemingly disparate entities—the country and the city—by creating:

> A ground to which people may easily go after their day's work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bustle and the jar of the streets, where they shall, in effect, find the city put far away from them. We want the greatest possible contrast with the streets and shops and the rooms of the town which will be consistent with convenience and the preservation of good order and neatness. We want, especially, the greatest possible contrast with the restraining and confining conditions of the town…We want a depth of wood enough about it not only for comfort in hot weather, but to completely shut out the city from our landscapes.[64]

Based on his experiences and observations at Birkenhead, Olmsted believed that large, aesthetically pleasing pleasure grounds served as hubs of recreation, and helped to promote social interaction by encouraging the middle and upper classes to mix with the urban working classes. Visiting the park at Birkenhead profoundly shaped Olmsted's attitudes toward the city and nature, and therefore, the American landscape. There can be no denying that his visit to Birkenhead influenced his park design philosophy in general, and, more specifically, his park work in Central Park and later in

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[62] FLO, "Public parks," 15.
[63] FLO, "Trees in the streets and in parks," 514.
[64] FLO, "Public parks," 22.

Boston's Emerald Necklace.

**Greening Boston: Franklin Park**

As a 527-acre large pastoral pleasure ground, Franklin Park served as the 'pendant' of the Emerald Necklace. Landscape historians have generally accepted the plan and original design of Franklin Park as one of Olmsted's three greatest master works, alongside Central Park and Prospect Park.[65] Olmsted designed parks to accommodate two forms of recreation. The first he labeled *exertive* recreation, which consisted of games of intellectual skill like chess, as well as sports like baseball and tennis. The second form, consisting of activities like music, fine arts, nature viewing, and promenading, he labeled *receptive* recreation. In planning for receptive recreation, he designated two further categories—*gregarious* recreation for social interactions in large crowds, and *neighborly* recreation for smaller crowds.[66] Olmsted believed that the latter was important for the close relations of friends and families, while the former, with its larger groups of people and their activities, added to the vitality of urban life. As an open pleasure ground, Olmsted's plan for Franklin Park provided space for people to come together in the fresh air for both gregarious and neighborly forms of recreation.

To accommodate these forms of recreation, he designed the park in two sections: the Country Park and the Ante-Park (Figure 4.9). Olmsted's design for the Country Park provided wide-open spaces for quiet contemplation in more neighborly activities with families and small groups. In the Ante-Park, Olmsted utilized a more formal design than in the Country Park, including the following spaces for gregarious interactions: the Playstead, a 30-acre expanse of turf designed for boys' athletics and recreation and for civic ceremonies; the Greeting, a formal

[65] Newton, *Design on the Land*, 295.
[66] FLO, "Public parks," 17-18.

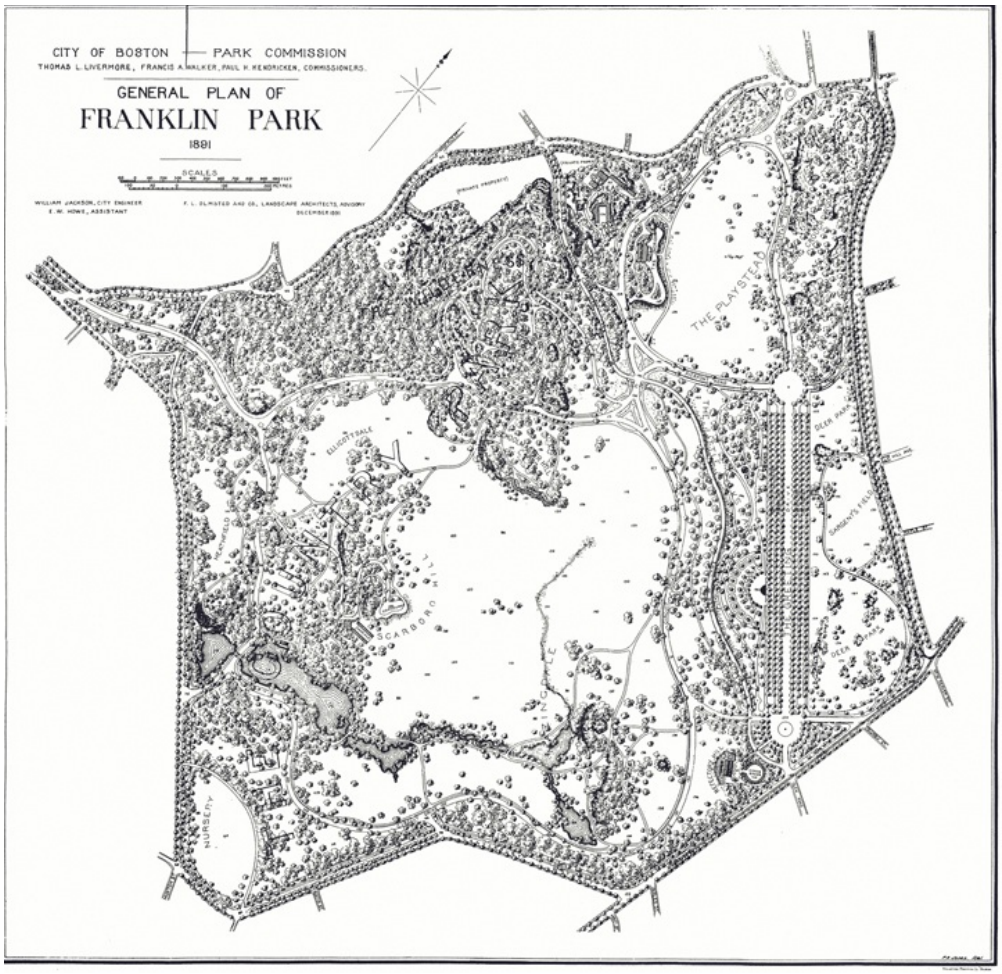


**Figure 4.9.** General Plan of Franklin Park, 1885. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

promenade as well as carriages drives; the Music Court, an outdoor amphitheater; and the Little Folks' Fair, a children's play space with toys, rides, and exhibitions run by local purveyors.[67]

Franklin Park, as an antecedent park, was selected for its pre-existing landscape qualities around which Olmsted adapted his design. Olmsted's description of the site conditions of the land for the Country Park showed how the site exemplified the Romantic ideal almost right from the start, and therefore, deserves to be quoted at length:

[67] FLO, *Notes*, 57-58.

> [The site] has in its larger part the usual characteristics of the stony upland pasture, and the rocky divides between streams commonly found in New England, covered by what are called 'second growth' woods, the trees slow growing from the stumps of previous woods, crowded, somewhat stunted, spindling; not beautiful individually, but, in combination forming impressive masses of foliage. It not only contains no lake, permanent pool or stream of water, but it commands no distant water view. It includes no single natural feature of distinguished beauty or popular interest. It is in all parts underlaid by ledges which break out at some points in a bold and picturesque way, at others in such a manner as to make barren patches, with scanty vegetation that wilts and becomes quickly shabby in dry, hot weather. It is thickly strewn with boulders; even in parts where the surface appears smooth and clear, their presence just below it generally becomes obvious in dry weather, and they are turned out by the plough in great numbers. Any fine cultivation of the ground will be comparatively costly. It is not generally adaptable at moderate expense for lawn-like treatment, nor to the development of what are commonly, though perhaps not accurately, regarded as the beauties of landscape gardening…there is not within or near the city any other equal extent of ground of as simple, and pleasingly simple, rural aspect.[68]

Olmsted arranged the Country Park in the space where Ellicottdale and Nazingdale meadows met midway between Schoolmaster and Abbotswood hills.[69]

In designing the Country Park, he took advantage of the simplicity offered by the broad, open views of the pastoral landscape (Figure 4.10).[70] He arranged the scenery so that its meadows lay "between simple bodies of forest, the foliage growing upon the ground higher than that on and near the center [of the meadows]. From wherever these larger prospects open the middle distances will be quiet, slightly hollowed surfaces of turf or buskets, bracken, sweet-fern, or mosses, the backgrounds formed by woodsides of a soft, even subdued tone, with long, graceful, undulating sky lines."[71] By confining the park's more formal architectural features to the Ante-Park, Olmsted hoped to minimize their impact on the tranquility of the Country Park.

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[68] FLO, *Notes*, 40.

[69] In naming Schoolmaster Hill, FLO honored Ralph Waldo Emerson who, in the mid-1820s, lived in a farmhouse on the east side of the hill while he taught school in Roxbury.

[70] FLO, *Notes*, 62.

[71] *Ibid*, 62-63

**Figure 4.10.** View of the Country Park, c. 1894. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Greening Boston: The Arboretum**

With the creation of the Arnold Arboretum, Olmsted stressed scientific forestry and forest conservation. In providing these elements, its design, while ordered by tree family, genus, and species, still emphasized rural nature and tranquility. The roots of the arboretum date from the 1871 creation of Harvard's Bussey Institute. In his will, Benjamin Bussey, a merchant and farmer, left "Woodland Hill," a parcel of more than 200 acres in Jamaica Plain to Harvard in order to "establish a course of instruction in practical agriculture, in useful and ornamental gardening, in botany," and in select branches of the natural sciences that might aid in the instruction of agriculture. Additionally in 1872, James Arnold, a New Bedford, merchant, bequeathed a portion of his estate to

Harvard for the "promotion of agricultural or horticultural improvements."[72] Together, the combination of the Bussey Institute and the endowment by Arnold helped create the arboretum, and in 1873 Charles Sprague Sargent was appointed its first director, a position he would hold for more than fifty years.

In 1874, Sargent contacted Olmsted to suggest the idea of joining forces by combining Sargent's work at the arboretum with Olmsted's work on the Boston park system. Working under the conditions of these trusts meant that Sargent had money to fund the acquisition and propagation of trees, but had little money to build roads or other infrastructural elements needed to provide future visitors with an enjoyable experience. In contacting Olmsted, Sargent took advantage of the timing of Boston's public hearings on the topic of parks. In a letter to Olmsted, Sargent wrote:

> In the general agitation into which the popular mind has now fallen in regard to a public park or parks I think I can see some hope for our arboretum. It has occurred to me that an arrangement could be made by which the ground could be handed over to the city of Boston on the condition that the city should spend a certain sum of money in laying out the grounds and should agree to leave the planting in my hands in order that the scientific objects of the trust could be carried out.[73]

Olmsted eventually warmed to the idea, and the two of them teamed up to draft the "Proposition as to a Public Ground to include the Harvard Arboretum" in 1880 (Figure 4.11).

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[72] Charles Sprague Sargent, "The first fifty years of the Arnold Arboretum," *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum* 3(1922), 128. See also JCO, "Boston park system", 52. Bussey purchased this land in Jamaica Plain from Elezear Weld. The Weld family is a Brahmin family that can trace it roots to the settling and the establishment of the colony of Massachusetts. In 1632, Captain Joseph Weld and his brother, Rev. Thomas Weld, arrived in Boston. As a result of his efforts in the Pequot War of 1637, colonial governor John Winthrop granted Capt. Weld nearly 300 acres of land in what would become Jamaica Plain. This is the land that Bussey later purchased and donated to Harvard. For more on the Weld family connections to the Arnold Arboretum, see: Charlotte Weld Fowler, *History of the Weld Family, 1632 to 1878* (Middletown, Conn.: Pelton & King, 1879), and State Street Trust Company, "Williams F. Weld and Co." in *Other Merchants and Sea Captains of Old Boston* (Boston: Walton Advertising & Printing, 1919), pp. 60-62. William Weld, the former Republican Massachusetts Governor from 1991 to 1997, is descended from this Brahmin family.

[73] Sargent to FLO, 26 June 1874. Available from OP, Box 15.

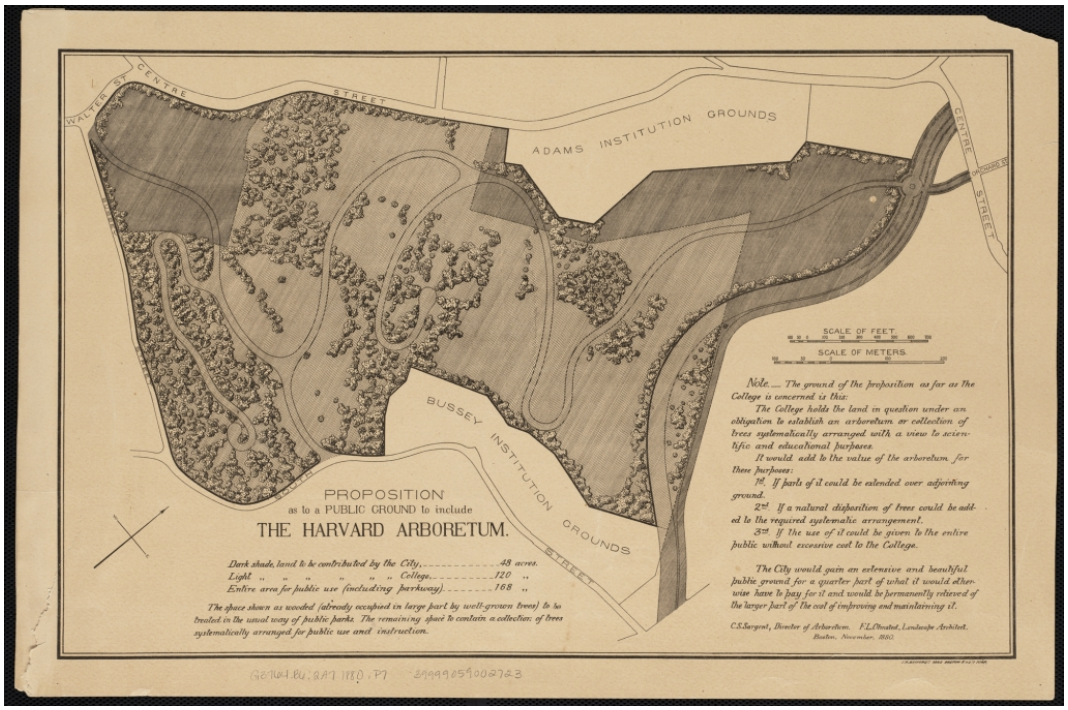


**Figure 4.11.** Proposition as to a Public Ground to include the Harvard Arboretum, 1880. Source: Boston Public Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center.

According to Sargent, only he and Olmsted saw the potential of such a match as this proposal was "met with little favor" by both Harvard and the Boston Park Commission.[74] Finally near the end of 1882, only after years of politicking by Sargent and Olmsted, did Harvard and the City reach an agreement on a 1,000-year lease essentially making the Arnold Arboretum part of the Emerald Necklace.[75] Through a creative public-private partnership each party took on a portion of the responsibility for the arboretum. On one hand, Harvard agreed to pay for the cost of maintaining the grounds, while it was relieved of its tax obligation for the duration of the lease.

[74] Sargent, "First fifty years," 131.

[75] Ida Hay, *Science in the Pleasure Ground: A History of the Arnold Arboretum* (Boston: Northeastern University Press); Sheila Connor, "The Arnold Arboretum: An historic park partnership," *Arnoldia* 48(1998): 26-28.

Boston, on the other hand, agreed to pay the cost of policing the arboretum, while its citizens received the benefit of free access to a beautiful park and garden.[76]

Sargent planned for each tree species to be represented by a "half-a-dozen specimens…planted in immediate connection with its varieties making with its allies, native and foreign, loose generic groups in which each individual will find sufficient space for full development."[77] He arranged each of these groupings along the main avenue so that,

> a visitor driving through the Arboretum will be able to obtain a general idea of the arborescent vegetation of the north temperate zone without even leaving his carriage. It is hoped that such an arrangement, while avoiding the stiff and formal lines of the conventional botanic garden, will facilitate the comprehensive study of the collections, both in their scientific and picturesque aspects.[78]

Writing in 1885 to comment on the progress of the arboretum construction, the overall plan for the naturalistic landscape, and Sargent's plan for the tree collections, Olmsted noted that "this plan, will, both in respect to beauty and to instructive utility, be of unrivalled value."[79]

Unlike other parks in the Emerald Necklace, the arboretum was not structured solely by the Olmstedian vision that incorporated pastoral and picturesque elements. Instead, it was organized in a manner reminiscent of rock, mineral, and animal samples in a natural history museum. Sargent systematically arranged the collections of trees according to the taxonomy of each. Just as in a natural history museum, the collections in this tree museum used labels for visitor identification. Upon a branch of each major tree, a small metal label with the specimen's name, origin, and catalogue number stamped onto the label was attached. Additionally, both the English and Latin

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[76] Connor, *op. cit.* See also Sargent, "First fifty years," 134.

[77] Charles Sprague Sargent, "Report," in *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston for the Year 1879* (City doc. no. 15-1880), 22.

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," in *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year 1885* (Boston: Department of Parks, 1886), 34.

names of each tree, as well as the specimen's country of origin were printed on a six inch by four inch signs and affixed to the tree at eye height with copper nails. In front of shrub collections, Sargent placed the same six-inch by four-inch signs.[80] Despite the rigid structure and organization of the arboretum's collections, as a park, the arboretum possessed the unique pastoral park qualities typical of Olmsted's naturalistic landscape design.

The distinctive natural features of the arboretum helped guide Olmsted in his design. As a designer, Olmsted did not work from a blank canvas. To enhance the natural features of the local landscape, took advantage of the pastoral and picturesque qualities of the arboretum's existing landscape including, the "rocky hillsides, partly wooded with numerous great trees, and a hanging-wood of hemlocks of great beauty. Eminences commanding distant prospects, in one directions seaward over the city, in the other across charming country-side to blue distant hills" (Figure 4.12).[81] Olmsted took advantage of the natural beauty of Hemlock Hill, of which Sargent noted that no other public park possessed "a more beautiful remnant coniferous forest." As the most striking natural feature within the borders of the arboretum, Hemlock Hill with its high steep cliffs was "covered so thickly with Hemlock trees that the rays of the sun rarely penetrate to the ground between them."[82] Small pockets of majestic oaks, maples and other native deciduous trees, some up to 200 years old, occupied other portions of the site. Olmsted's engineering and design connected these beautiful natural features by creating curvilinear drives and "grass-covered paths several miles in length [to] reach every part of the arboretum" allowing visitors to examine the specimens.[83] The public-private partnership that created the Arnold Arboretum exemplified Olmsted's republican

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[80] Sargent, "First fifty years," 136-162.

[81] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," in *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston for the Year 1881* (City doc. no. 16-1882), 27.

[82] Sargent, "First fifty years," 135.

[83] *Ibid*, 136.

**Figure 4.12.** View from Bussey Hill in the Arboretum, c. 1906. Source: City of Boston Park Department, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the Year Ending January 31, 1906*.

belief that in order to improve the nation, the state needed engage in the important work of educating its citizens, and public parks served this vital role.

**Greening Boston: The Riverway, Olmsted Park, and Jamaica Pond**

By 1880, flooding, sewage, and diseases along Stony Brook and Muddy River caused major health problems and threatened property values for residents in Boston and Brookline along Stony Brook and the Muddy River. Population pressures in the areas adjacent to the Muddy River changed the river from an "inoffensive little stream" into a "source of disease," which had "the potential to transform the area into slum."[84] With the foul stench of sewage and the perceived threat of miasmas, local residents demanded improvements to the environmental conditions in the Back Bay.

[84] Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted*, 82.

Members of Boston's leisure class complained about the fouling of their first-class residential neighborhood and in a public broadside endorsed the creation of a park in the Back Bay. The notice, endorsed by Dr. George Krans Sabine, a Brookline physician and a member of the town's Board of Health, addressed the potential health impacts of the Muddy River:

> To the foul condition of Muddy River between Boston and Brookline, the filth of which flows down to the Back Bay and West End of the city, may be traced an epidemic of typhoid fever now prevailing in…Boston, and in Brookline village...A very large proportion of the cases have occurred in the immediate vicinity of the brook, and nearly all on the low ground through which it runs. The stream is *filthy beyond description, and the stench arising from it at times almost unbearable*.[85]

On the reverse of the notice, members of the leisure class signed a petition urging the Boston Park Commissioners to begin working with the Brookline Park Commissioners to carry out Olmsted's plan to improve the Muddy River and the Fens:

> Population is rapidly increasing on the shores of this filthy stream. If adequate measures are not soon adopted to improve and purify the condition of Muddy River, is it not likely to be a constant source of epidemics liable to spread through the city and be largely fatal beyond its borders? As a *sanitary* measure the improvement of Muddy River is of vital necessity. Over one hundred of the heaviest taxpayers in the city have already endorsed the movement to improve Muddy River. Proof of this is found in the strong list of signers to the annexed petition.[86]

In this climate of fear regarding illness, disease, and the future of the city, the Park Commissioners began the process of acquiring the land upon which to create a park in the Back Bay.

In the Longwood section of Brookline bordering the Muddy River, the pestilential river and

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[85] G.K. Sabine, "The Muddy River improvement." Available from Massachusetts Historical Society, printed material, Bdses 1881 Oct 3, emphasis in original.

[86] *Ibid*, emphasis in original. Among those who signed this petition were: T.H. Perkins, Jr., Samuel Cobb (former Boston Mayor), Oliver Ames (state senator), Frederick Ames (Vice President of the Old Colony Railroad, a Director of Western Union Telegraph Company, and a Director of the Union Pacific Railroad, his obituary in the 14 Sept 1893 of the *New York Times* hailed him as the "wealthiest man in Massachusetts"), William W. Greenough (member of Common Council and Trustee of the Boston Public Library), Francis Parkman (historian and horticultural professor at Harvard), and H.H. Hunnewell (horticulturalist and benefactor of Arnold Arboretum).

the tracks of the Boston and Albany Railroad contributed to a marred appearance of one of the town's most attractive residential neighborhoods. Olmsted recognized the need for pastoral scenery in order to improve the Muddy River. First, he recognized that uncontrolled growth was defiling the landscape: "Private enterprise is filling up and building over the marsh [and adjacent to the river]," which acted as "a serious check and disturbance to what would otherwise be the natural growth of the city."[87] Second, he recognized that if the river and marsh stayed in their present condition, the "sanitary and other disadvantages of the low-lying ground," would continue to be "damaging to the value of the adjoining properties."[88]

Olmsted designed the Riverway as a linear greenway by using the Muddy River to connect the Fens with the ponds in Olmsted and Jamaica Parks and form, what Olmsted called, a "chain of pleasant waters."[89] Olmsted believed that this pastoral riparian landscape would improve public health by providing spaces for passive recreation, but more importantly, they would provided aesthetically pleasing scenes which could help prevent a decline in property values (Figure 4.13). He described the distinctive landscape character of the Muddy River in which, "the natural sequence upon slightly higher ground to the last in following up a fresh-water course bordered by passages of rushy meadows and varied slopes from the adjoining uplands; trees in groups, diversified by thickets and open glades."[90] Olmsted continued illustrating the landscape qualities by describing the "a chain of picturesque freshwater ponds, alternating with attractive natural groves and meads" of Olmsted Park and Jamaica Pond in the upper stretches of the Muddy River.[91]

To accomplish his goal of producing an idyllic riparian landscape, Olmsted relied on feats of

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[87] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 6-7.

[88] FLO, "Suggestions for the improvement of Muddy River," in *Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston for the Year 1880* (City doc. no. 12-1881), 14.

[89] FLO, "Suggestions," 14.

[90] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," in City doc. no. 12-1881, 26.

[91] City Doc. no. 16-1882, 26.

**Figure 4.13.** Ward's Pond, Olmsted Park, c. 1921. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leon Abdalian Collection.

civil engineering to carry part of the Muddy River flow (and its sewage) directly to the Charles River, and through tidal action, out to sea. The original plan for the Muddy River improvement was to carry the salt marsh aesthetic of the Fens further upstream, but by 1882, Olmsted decided on making the Riverway a pleasing freshwater park. The flood- and tidal-mechanisms originally proposed functioned as intended until the damming of the Charles River in 1910. The plan for the parks of the Emerald Necklace, but especially the plan for the improvement of the Muddy River and the creation of the Fens, represented what geographer Maria Kaika identifies as "the modernist quest to tame, control, and discipline nature."[92] The main goal of the plan was to prevent sewage from entering the river. Olmsted, along with city engineers, designed a series of intercepting sewers

[92] Maria Kaika, "Dams as symbols of modernization: The urbanization of nature between geographical imagination and materiality," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 96(2006), 276.

to carry off wastes before they could empty into the basin. In an effort to control nature, the plan called for diverting much of the flow of the Muddy River underground through a conduit to the Charles River.

While Olmsted emphasized the use of native species, he was not averse to using exotic species when they suited the design. As a general rule with his park model, Olmsted tried to model and emulate the natural scenery of the New England, and therefore, he relied on the use of plants that were native to New England. Occasionally, when his desired scenery dictated, Olmsted utilized exotic trees and shrubs. Among some of the non-New England plants that he used in select locations were: dyer's greenwood (*Genista tinctoria*), sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), black locust (*Robinia psuedoacacia*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thurnbergii*), and Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*).

This use of exotic plants in the Riverway became a point of contention between Olmsted and Sargent. In 1888, the two exchanged their perspectives within the pages of *Garden and Forest.* In an editorial, Sargent wrote:

> It is not easy to explain why certain plants look distinctly in place in certain situations and why other plants look as distinctly out of place in the same situations. This is a matter which nature perhaps has settled for us…We have become accustomed to see certain plants adapted by nature to fill certain positions in combination with certain other plants in a given region; and that all attempts to force nature, so to speak, by bringing in alien elements from remote continents and climates, must inevitably produce inharmonious results. Landscape gardeners have rarely paid attention to this subject, or sufficiently studied nature with reference to the harmonious combination of plants in the construction of scenery, and especially of scenery intended to produce upon the mind the idea of repose.[93]

To which, Olmsted replied:

> The law seems to me to have been laid down that the introduction of foreign plants

[93] Charles Sprague Sargent, "Editorial," *Garden and Forest* 1(1888), 266.

> in our scenery is destructive of landscape repose and harmony. No exception was suggested…That a fashion of planting far-fetched trees with little discrimination has led to deplorable results, no good observer can doubt. That these results are of such a character that we should, from horror of them, be led, as a rule, in our landscape planting, to taboo all trees coming from overseas, many of your readers will not, I am sure, be ready to admit, and if no one else has yet offered to say why, I will ask you to let me assume that duty.[94]

Only the discerned eye of a botanist or landscape professional, according to Olmsted, could notice the incongruity between native and exotic species, if exotics were selectively and judiciously planted. But this conflict between Sargent and Olmsted went so far as to influence the planting of the Riverway. On the Boston side, Olmsted occasionally utilized trees and shrubs of foreign origin. But on the Brookline side, Sargent, who served on that town's park commission, ordered his own plants and even deleted about one third of Olmsted's planting list while the senior Olmsted was in Europe.[95]

**Greening Boston: The Fens**

The Back Bay Fens (the Fens) was the first park developed under the guidance of the newly formed Boston Park Commission. In planning for a park in the Fens, the commissioners hoped to improve the area's drainage and sanitation problems by providing storage for floodwaters (Figure 4.14). This 115-acre irregular tract of land and water lies approximately 1.5 miles west of downtown Boston. The Fens is perhaps Olmsted's most revolutionary and innovative landscape work. Not only did his design improve the drainage and sanitation issues facing the Back Bay, but Olmsted accomplished this feat by engineering the first human-made wetland landscape.[96] But the development of this

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[94] FLO, "Letter to the editor," *Garden and Forest* 1(24 Oct 1888), 418-419.

[95] Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law* Olmsted, 196-197. For detailed plant lists of the Olmsted firm's work in Boston, see pp. 215-220.

[96] Spirn, "Constructing nature," 104.

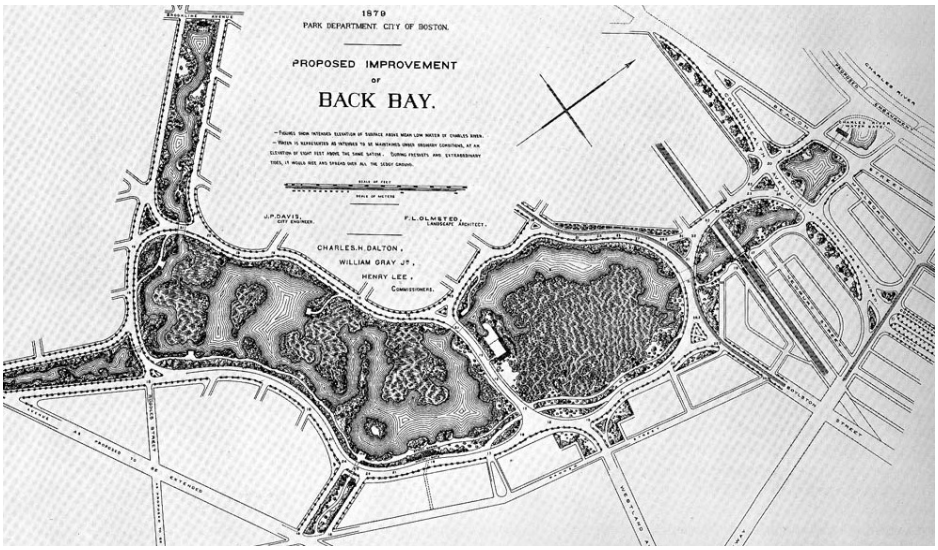


**Figure 4.14.** Proposed improvement of Back Bay, 1879. Source: NPS, FLONHS.

engineered urban wetland coincided with one of the city's greatest landmaking ventures—the filling of the Back Bay.

Boston's Back Bay received its name due it location west of the Shawmut Peninsula, the land upon which the city was located—with the Back Bay located on the western, or "back," side of Boston with Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay on the "front."[97] As part of the Charles River tidal estuary, the bay flooded twice daily when saltwater from the harbor poured into the Charles River, the Muddy River and Stony Brook. When the tides receded, the bay became a series of channels as the Charles River, Muddy River, and Stony Brook flowed across the exposed mudflat in broad, shallow channels that were cut one to eight feet below the surface of the mud.[98]

Begun in 1857, the filling of the Back Bay was one of the largest "landmaking" projects in the history of Boston.[99] The landmaking project in the Back Bay dates to the 1821 construction of a

[97] See Figure 4.2 on page 137 for a map showing the city's relationship to the Back Bay and the harbor.
[98] Newman and Holton, *Boston's Back Bay*, 11.
[99] Whitehill, *Boston: A Topographical History*; Seasholes, *Gaining Ground.*

**Figure 4.15.** The development of the Back Bay and Commonwealth Avenue, c. 1877. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department.

1.5-mile long mill dam by the Boston and Roxbury Mill Company in order to provide energy for textile mills, lumber mills, and gristmills.[100] The growth of the city's population led to the need for more space, increasing the need to gradually fill in the Back Bay and the millpond. In 1839, on 24 acres of newly made land, construction began on the Boston Public Garden.[101] The filling of the bay continued incrementally until the 1850s when the city prioritized the landmaking process to create an exclusive neighborhood for Boston's elite leisure class (Figure 4.15).

As the city grew, Boston's elite sought out new places to live in order to escape the crowds of workers, immigrants, and the pollution associated with industrialization. In doing so, however, they sought to establish a new district that would highlight both their wealth and their city's status. Members of the leisure class relocating to the Back Bay treasured the exclusivity and homogeneity of

[100] The mill dam was built under present-day Beacon Street from Boston Common to Kenmore Square. Much of the dam is still buried under the street (Newman and Holton 2006, ix).

[101] Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, *A Topographical and Historical Description of Boston* (Boston: Boston City Council, 1871), 360.

their neighborhood. Bunting notes that had the Fens not been created, "the Back Bay residential district would have lacked a clear-cut stopping point, and eventually...would have had to merge with less aristocratic neighborhoods."[102] As the western edge of the Back Bay's residential district, the material and discursive landscapes of the Fens provided a visual and imaginary boundary, both of which contributed to the exclusivity of the neighborhood, which helped to enhance property values in the Back Bay.

On July 23, 1877, the Common Council, with approval from the Mayor, authorized an initial outlay of $450,000 for the Park Commissioners to purchase "not less than one hundred acres of land or flats on the Back Bay."[103] In 1878, after acquiring 106 acres, the commissioners held a design competition, with a $500 prize for the winning design, and inquired as to whether Olmsted would serve as a judge.[104] Olmsted declined the offer to judge the competition, and twenty-three designers submitted park plans.[105] In a letter to the Charles Dalton, chairman of the park commission, Olmsted explained his reasons for refusing to judge the competition. Drawing on his difficult experiences in attending to the New York parks, he claimed that he was "able to trace to causes having their root in the jealousies, disappointments and animosities bred in a competition in which Mr. Vaux and I were successful twenty years ago...Advising your choice I should place myself in a leaky boat with you. Keeping out of it I retain a professional position in which it is possible I may yet be of service to you."[106] Unimpressed by all of the entries, including the winning design by local florist, Hermann Grundel, the commissioners called on Olmsted to review the winning design.

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[102] Bunting, *Houses of the Back Bay*, 382.

[103] City of Boston, *Sixth Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston* (City doc. no. 104-1877), 5.

[104] Dalton to FLO, 6 May 1878. Available from OP, Box 18.

[105] FLO to Dalton, 8 May 1878. Available from OP, Box 18.

[106] FLO to Dalton, 13 May 1878. Available from OP, Box 18.

Olmsted determined that the design failed since Grundel neglected the two major goals of the park—to solve the drainage issues and to develop a flood control plan.[107] On December 10, 1878, left with few options after the unsuccessful competition, the commissioners agreed to pay Olmsted a sum of $6,000 for which he was to design a preliminary plan for the improvement of what the commissioners were calling the "Back Bay Park."[108] Joseph Davis, the city's engineer agreed with Olmsted's assessment of the Grundel plan's shortcomings and proposed a large rectangular masonry storage basin with a tidal gate to control the water level. Not wanting such an obviously industrial element visible in his naturalistic landscape, Olmsted proposed a pioneering two-part solution. First, he proposed an engineered salt marsh that reflected the distinctive landscape character of coastal New England. This salt marsh would act as the storage basin. Second, he recommended using a system of underground conduits to divert water from the Muddy River and Stony Brook to the Charles River. By hiding the infrastructure from view, much like he hid the roads traversing Central Park, Olmsted, understood that when the *natural* infrastructure was insufficient in meeting the needs of society, his responsibility was to create a new *civic* infrastructure. Following his design model and emphasizing naturalistic scenery, the manipulation of views, and the restorative value of parks, Olmsted designed a salt marsh environment that effectively transformed the Back Bay Fens from a cesspool into, what is acknowledged to be, the first designed wetland.

*Engineering Naturalistic Scenery*

Work on the Fens began in 1880 and the park was completed by the time Olmsted retired in 1895. In January 1880, the commissioners published their annual report for 1879, which included Olmsted's first published plan for the Back Bay and his first landscape architect advisory report for

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[107] Newton, *Design on the Land*, 291.

[108] City of Boston, Park Department, "Articles of Agreement." Available from OP, Box 29.

Boston. The plan entitled, "The Proposed Improvement of Back Bay," showed a snake-like waterway typical of meandering channels found in naturally occurring salt marshes and called for the creation of a naturalistic storage basin to control flooding by capturing storm runoff. At the outset of his first landscape architect advisory report, Olmsted described the degraded site conditions:

> When the tide is in, it is a broad pool; when the tide is out, a narrow creek between broad, deep, and fetid mud-banks, in parts of which soundings have been made to a depth of thirty feet without reaching firm bottom. Offensive exudations arise from the mud when exposed by a falling tide to the summer's sun, which are perceptible at a great distance.[109]

Before he could attempt to create his salt marsh landscape, Olmsted needed to solve the massive engineering problems associated with flooding and sewerage.

His first step required two related components: the installation of tidal gates through which the water from the Fens basin emptied into the Charles River and the introduction of a sewer interceptor in the basin to control runoff from Stony Brook. Excavation for this interceptor began in 1881 and 1,200 feet of the conduit to carry the flow of Stony Brook to the Charles River was completed that same year.[110] By 1882, the tidal gates and the conduit were operational. The area surrounding this interceptor would be filled to provide the land upon which he planned to construct this marsh landscape.

In 1883, the conduit allowing part of the Muddy River to flow into the Charles River was completed. This lessened the pollutant load in the basin since the basin would no longer be used as flood retention area except at periods of excessively high tides and run off periods when,

> the proposed Roxbury storm sewer was to empty into the Fens only at rare intervals, and then only for two hours or so during extreme high water. It was acknowledged

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[109] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," in City of Boston, *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston for the Year 1879* (City doc. no. 15-1880), 6.

[110] City of Boston, *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston for the Year 1881* (City doc. no. 16-1882), 11.

> that even diluted as it would be with rain water, it would be somewhat foul [and therefore] the basin was to be kept salt water because salt marsh flooded twice daily and would not be a breeding place for mosquitoes, malarial or otherwise.[111]

By laying out the conduits for Stony Brook and Muddy River, Olmsted solved the most pressing problems of flooding and sewerage, thus allowing him to engineer a salt marsh in place of the pestilential landscape that previously occupied the land.

In designing the landscape of the Fens, Olmsted engineered, what appeared to be, a *naturalistic* salt marsh. Just as he did in previous park work, he adapted pastoral and the picturesque elements to suit his needs in this particular landscape. He modeled the Fens on the salt marshes typically found in coastal New England—the same landscapes that he explored on his early travels with his father. Olmsted believed that mimicking a natural salt marsh, the landscape of the Fens, with its "wavy fenny verdure," the winding waterway, the islands of marsh grasses, and the border of trees and shrubs that followed the slope of the rim of the basin, would create "compositions of a pleasing character."[112] Through his artistry and practical engineering, Olmsted transformed the Fens and the Muddy River into a picturesque landscape by creating a seemingly natural wetland in which its banks were "shaped and planted in a natural and more or less picturesque way" (Figure 4.16 and 4.17).[113]

In engineering the naturalistic landscapes in the Fens, Olmsted took salt marsh ecology into consideration. In particular, he addressed the breeding and nesting needs of song birds, wading birds, and water fowl as he designed "rushy glades and bushy islands [to] supply well-guarded seclusions" in which birds could nest.[114] He also stressed biodiversity by assuring that the water

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[111] Olmsted Brothers, "Report of Olmsted Brothers," in City of Boston, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1911* (City doc. No. 25-1911), 53.

[112] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 11-12.

[113] *Ibid*, 8.

[114] *Ibid*, 13

**Figure 4.16.** Salt hay (*Spartina patens*) in the Fens, c. 1887. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Figure 4.17.** Landscape view in the Fens, c. 1887. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

birds found in the Fens "should not be confined, as it usually has been in parks, to a few sorts of swans, ducks, and geese, but include as many varieties of these as practicable, but also pelicans, cormorants, cranes, and other waders, and fishers"—all species of birds typically found in salt marshes.[115]

Essentially, Olmsted's plan for the Fens called for the improvement of a less-than-functional marsh landscape. Unfortunately, the horticultural dimension of Olmsted's work in the Fens was not as clearly documented as other dimensions since, after his retirement, the plantings underwent an extensive revision in 1897, and the whole Fens was turned into a fresh water system with the damming of the Charles River in 1910.[116] Zaitzevsky notes that, unlike other aspects of park design, the documentation regarding the original plantings of the Fens is limited to "isolated crises and controversies" and "there simply is no information about what happened, horticulturally speaking, on an ordinary day."[117] Despite this, however, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the general effect of Olmsted's design attempted to replicate a unique form of nature found in the region. In representing the distinctive landscape character of a salt marsh, he relied heavily (but not exclusively) on native plant species for two reasons. First, his environmental imaginary re-created a specific representation of nature and, second, he did not want exotic plants distracting park visitors from enjoying the naturalistic rural scenery.

Olmsted's goal was to design a naturalistic park landscape that helped to fulfill the environmental and social needs of the industrial city. He rejected formal garden-style plantings in favor of design treatments that reflected the natural scenery. Olmsted had a vision in mind for the desired outcome of the landscape, and even though he lacked the knowledge of specific scientific

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115 FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 13.
116 Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted*, 185.
117 *Ibid*, 185.

names, he knew which plants would help him to achieve the exact scenery he wanted. Colleagues with more formal botany training, particularly Charles Sprague Sargent, John Olmsted, Warren Manning, Charles Eliot, and William Fischer, helped him identify the specific plant species that allowed him to choreograph his landscape scenes.[118] As Olmsted discussed the ideal landscape composition of salt-meadow cordgrass, or salt hay (*Spartina patens*), and salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) in a letter to Sargent, his lack of knowledge of the scientific names is clear:

> There are two broad dimensions of beauty of vegetation in tidal lands:
>
> 1. That of which I know as salt meadows, the beauty of which is in the complete occupation of nearly level surfaces by a short fine grass—in lawnlike breadth and repose. This is a salt hay grass. I don't know its botanical names.
> 2. That of a taller, graceful moving reeds, rushes, and sedges, in which interest may lie much in the variety and contrast of forms and tints.[119]

While his plantings made park landscapes appear to be natural, they certainly were anything but. As an artist, Olmsted made sure that his designs hid the efforts of the necessary labor that produced them. Exemplifying the difference between *naturalistic* and *natural* landscapes, John Olmsted later recalled that the Fens was typical of "park designing in the naturalistic style," whereby "more variety of scenery was compressed into the design than would ordinarily be found in nature."[120]

Olmsted divided the Fens into four landscape classes, and carefully utilized naturalistic plantings based on particular site conditions: salt marsh, water's edge, dry slopes, and high ground (Table 4.2). As expected, in the intertidal zone he utilized native, salt-tolerant grasses, mainly salt hay and cordgrass (*Spartina* sp.). Along the water's edge, where plants would be above the common flood level, yet still exposed to salt spray, Olmsted's design called for a variety of salt-tolerant

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[118] Manning, the son of a horticulturalist, was the planting supervisor for the Olmsted firm from 1888 to 1896. Fischer had worked for the New York City Parks Department as superintendent gardener before leaving to join the Olmsted firm. Eliot completed horticultural courses at Harvard's Bussey Institute before becoming an apprentice in the Olmsted firm, and later a partner in Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot.

[119] FLO to Sargent, 27 Jan 1879. Available from OP, Box 18.

[120] JCO, "The Boston park system," *Transactions of the American Society of Landscape Architects* 1(1905), 48.

| **Salt-tolerant grasses – intertidal zone** | |
|---|---|
| Salt hay (*Spartina patens*) | Salt marsh cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) |
| **Salt-tolerant wildflowers and shrubs – water's edge** | |
| Sea lavender (*Linonium* Mill.)<br>Golden rod (*Solidago* sp.)<br>Asters (*Aster tenuifolius*)<br>Beach peas (*Lathyrus maritimus*) | Beach plum (*Prunus maritimus*)<br>Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)<br>Tamarix (*Tamarix* L.)<br>Virginia rose (*Rosa virginiana*) |
| **Wildflowers, shrubs, vines, and ground-cover plants – exposed, dry slopes** | |
| Bayberry (*Morella* sp.)<br>Sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*)<br>Dyer's greenwood (*Glenista tinctoria*)<br>Oregon holly grape (*Mohania aquifloium*)<br>Bearberry (*Arctostaphylus uva-ursi*)<br>Mountain cranberry (*Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) | Raspberry and blackberry (*Rubus* spp.)<br>Swamp dewberry (*Rubus hispidus*)<br>Dwarf gray willow (*Salix tristis*)<br>Periwinkle (*Vinca* sp.)<br>Clematis (*Clematis* sp.)<br>Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) |
| **Upland shade trees – border zone** | |
| American yellow wood (*Cladrastis lutea*);<br>European birch (*Betula pendula*);<br>Paper birch (*B. papyrifera*);<br>River birch (*B. nigra*);<br>Sweet birch (*B. lenta*);<br>Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*);<br>Common honey locust (*Gledista triacanthos)*<br>Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)<br>Red maple (*A. rubrum*)<br>Silver maple (*A. saccharinum*)<br>Sugar maple (*A. saccharum*)<br>Black oak (*Quercus velutina*) | Burr oak (*Q. macrocarpa*)<br>Chestnut oak (*Q. prinus*)<br>Northern red oak (*Q. rubra*)<br>Scarlet oak (*Q. coccinea*)<br>White oak (*Q. alba*)<br>Willow oak (*Q. phellus*)<br>Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*)<br>Red pine (*P. resinosa*)<br>Swiss stone pine (*P. cembra*)<br>Tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissisma*)<br>White ash (*Faxinus americana*)<br>White willow (*Salix alba*) |

**Table 4.2.** List of plants used in the design of the Fens. Source: Zaitzevsky (1982), pp. 188 and 190.

wildflowers and shrubs, such as beach plum, tamarix, sea lavender, and aster. On the exposed dry slopes, the plan emphasized a variety of native and exotic wildflowers, shrubs, vines, and ground cover plants, including bayberry, raspberry, periwinkle, clematis, and Japanese honeysuckle. Finally on the high ground, he relied on a variety of shrubs and shade trees, mainly birches, oaks, and maples to form a boundary between the formal urban residential districts neighboring the Fens and the informal naturalistic scenery within the Fens.

This separation between the residential areas bordering on naturalistic landscapes typified the Olmsted park model whereby he engaged in choreographing the landscape views. He manipulated and arranged scenery to achieve the environmental imaginary he sought. By choreographing the scenes, Olmsted's design ensured that there were no incongruous elements to distract from his naturalistic landscape.

*Choreography of Views*

In the Fens, Olmsted fulfilled his goal of engineering a naturalistic salt-marsh landscape that appeared to have the city growing right up around it. Taking a long-term view of the landscape, his goal in designing the Fens was for the salt marsh to look like the city evolved and expanded around a remnant of a lost salt marsh. The effect of seemingly *preserving* this salt marsh in the city, Olmsted proclaimed,

> would be novel, certainly, in labored urban grounds, and there may be a momentary question of its dignity and appropriateness; but this question will, I think, be satisfactorily answered when it is reflected that it represents no affectation or caprice of taste, but is a direct development of the original conditions of the locality in adaptation to the needs of a dense community. So regarded, it will be found to be, in the artistic sense of the word, natural, and possibly to suggest a modest poetic sentiment more grateful to town-weary minds than an elaborate and elegant garden-like work would have yielded.[121]

In choreographing the views within the landscape of the Fens, Olmsted arranged and manipulated the structures, trees, shrubs, plants, ponds, streams, walking paths, and carriage roads to create his representation of a naturalistic salt marsh.

Clearly Olmsted choreographed the scenes and viewscapes by carefully considering the arrangement and design of park elements, colors, and textures so that all individual scenic views

[121] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 12.

conformed to, and supported, the overarching landscape scenery goals of the design. In planning his overall scenic objective in the Fens, Olmsted first required that "a continuous embankment...be formed on the boundary of the city property, reducing and defining the outlines of the bay."[122] Establishing the boundaries of the landscape allowed him to organize the spatial dimensions of the visual scenery appropriately. On the eastern border of the park Olmsted designed a promenade that contained three parallel pathways including a "commodious" walking path along the shoreline, a "well-appointed" forty foot wide pleasure drive, and a twenty-five foot wide bridle path "for speeding saddle-horses without danger of collisions."[123] By locating the parkways on the embankments, what are now the Fenway on the eastern and southern borders and Park Drive on the western border, he limited the movement of traffic to the park borders, ensuring little disturbance for park visitors taking in the beauty of this naturalistic salt marsh.

In designing this naturalistic landscape, Olmsted took great care to ensure that even the tiniest details conformed to his naturalistic sensibilities. He responded to critics of his Fens plan who questioned whether it was possible "to avoid an offensive incongruity of character between the basins and the structures presumably to be built in the neighborhood in extension of the Back Bay residence quarter of the city."[124] In assuring the Park Commissioners that any future residences and the basins of the salt marsh would blend harmoniously, Olmsted noted that, "by means of formal trees on the roadsides and an informal disposition of trees, copses, and thickets on the slopes falling away toward the basins…the two things will be so far separated by an intermediate element,

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[122] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 9.

[123] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 9 and 14.

[124] FLO, "Report on Back Bay," in City of Boston, *Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the City of Boston, for the Year 1884* (City doc. no. 7-1885), 14. See Figure 3.9 (page 131) for Fenway Court, the site of the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, an example of the ways in which the landscape complemented the construction of elite residences.

agreeable in itself, and markedly inharmonious with neither, that the incongruity will be little felt."[125] Furthermore, he emphasized that if views of pleasing character were to be obtained over the basins, they would not be based on the formality typically associated with parks and gardens:

> It will necessarily be an interest dependent on conditions of unmitigated rusticity, not at all of the affectation of rusticity, sometimes playfully introduced in close association with polished and elegant conditions. It must depend on elements of scenery and largely on forms of vegetation that may be associated—as they often are by nature with most agreeable effect—with the margins of salt creeks and harsh, weather-beaten headlands. I have an increasing confidence that pleasing results may, in time, be thus obtained…and, it is to be hoped, will not plainly manifest their artificial origin.[126]

To blend the Fens with the residences of the Back Bay, Olmsted effectively manipulated, arranged, and choreographed the scenes to suit his design. In his 1880 landscape architect advisory report to the Park Commissioners, Olmsted highlighted two ways this was to be accomplished: by focusing on the details associated with the park furnishings (e.g., benches, light fixtures, bridges, picnic areas, shelters, etc.) within the park, and by concentrating on the effects of light, shade, and texture on the landscape composition.

As discussed previously, Olmsted's goal was to immerse the park visitor in the landscape experience, and to do so he ensured that the architectural elements of the park blended with the naturalistic scenery. To this end, buildings in the park were to be built "as low as practicable," so as not to hinder the visitor's ability to take in the salt marsh scenery.[127] Additionally, all buildings were to be "mainly overgrown with creepers" allowing the buildings to look as if nature had reclaimed the site of the buildings.[128] The design of all architectural elements within the Fens needed to fit into the

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[125] FLO, "Report on Back Bay," in City doc. no. 7-1885, 14.
[126] *Ibid*, 14.
[127] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 15.
[128] *Ibid*, 15.

**Figure 4.18.** View of Boylston Street Bridge looking south, c. 1890. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Detroit Publishing Co. Collection.

overall design and bridges, like buildings, needed to functionally and artistically blend into the salt marsh.

Due to its location near the Beacon Entrance of the Fens, the Boylston Street Bridge was one of the most important structures in the Emerald Necklace (Figure 4.18). The bridge, designed by famed architect H. H. Richardson in 1884, was one of the Olmsted firm's first major structures built in the Fens.[129] In a letter to the city's engineer, Olmsted emphasized that the Boylston Street Bridge "will be the most conspicuous object" built in the Fens. Rising twenty-three feet above the

[129] FLO and Richardson were frequent collaborators, working together on both the Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane and the New York state capitol. A school, H.H. Richardson/F.L. Olmsted Intermediate School, in the small southeastern Massachusetts town of Easton, immortalizes their partnership, and its importance to the cultural landscape of the community, especially their collaborations on the private estates of, members of the Ames family, including Oliver Ames, Jr., who served as Governor of Massachusetts (1887-1890) and president of the Union Pacific Railroad.

water, the bridge would "dominate" the landscape, and park visitors will "look at it more closely than anything else on the bay."[130] Olmsted highlighted the ways in which the elevation of the bridge helped to frame the scenic views of the Fens: "This elevation will give it a commanding view over the fens on one side, over the Charles River on the other, and its arch will be the frame of a quiet, distant, rural scene from the bridge on Commonwealth Avenue, which, to make the most of this opportunity should have no greater height than is necessary."[131] Therefore, in choreographing the scenes associated with the bridge, he emphasized that the bridge "must, if possible, have a rustic quality and be picturesque in materials."[132] In keeping with the desired rustic qualities, he stated his preference for "an arch of [local] Roxbury Puddingstone or an arch of boulders or of rough fieldstones."[133] Ultimately the park commissioners and the city engineer decided upon seam-faced Cape Ann granite, giving the bridge a more refined character than boulders or field stones, but still retaining some of the natural elements that Olmsted hoped for. The goal of the Fens plan was to engineer a naturalistic landscape that resembled a natural salt marsh, and while the construction of Boylston Street Bridge was a necessity to move traffic through the city, it did not necessarily need to stand in opposition to the rural and picturesque landscape aesthetic of the marsh.

Olmsted's designs emphasized the effects of light, shade, and texture to best reflect the grace of, and a reverence for, the pastoral and picturesque. In the design for the Fens, he focused on the elements of light and shade in order to set his naturalistic landscape design apart from the commonly-held associations of marshes as "dreary" since marshes were generally found in expanses of "low, damp and bleak ground."[134] In contrast to the dreariness of the marsh, his plan for the

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[130] FLO to Davis, 24 Jan 1880. Available from OP, Box 18.
[131] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 15.
[132] *Ibid.*
[133] *Ibid.*
[134] *Ibid*, 12.

Fens emphasized the pleasing qualities of a salt marsh when designed with textures, light, and aesthetics in mind: "The tints, lights and shadows and movement of salt-marsh vegetation when seen in close connection with upland scenery, are nearly always pleasing, and sometimes charming."[135] Olmsted carefully designed the appearance of the water's edge to look *natural* despite his engineering. In his 1880 report to the commissioners, he described the visual quality of shoreline: "Except at a few points, where beaches are designed, and others which will be made rocky, the shore at the water's edge is intended to have a long, sedgy slope...generally overhung by foliage, and its character entirely natural."[136]

Part of the choreography of scenic views rested on Olmsted's ability to see the colors and textures of the landscape compositions, as they would be in its mature state. For example, he noted that the use of stones along the banks of the conduit outlet in the Charles River would be necessary to prevent damage from drifting ice. In accepting this abruptness as necessary, while not exactly harmonious with the naturalistic qualities he desired, Olmsted argued that, "it is better to make a decided feature of it, and let it control the character of the scenery of the outlet."[137] By collecting large fieldstones and piling them together, he obtained a bold projection of a headland to protect the outlet. Olmsted recognized that the "offensively conspicuous" stones were "unhappy in color," and provided "too much repetition of character."[138] But by imagining the mature landscape, Olmsted recognized that "they will not only, in time, lose their present rawness of color, but will all, in a great measure, soon disappear under leafage, while, through the difference in the forms of vegetation growing out from between the stones and upon their flanks, their similarity of aspect will be lost."[139]

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[135] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 12.
[136] *Ibid*, 15.
[137] FLO, "Report on Back Bay," in City doc. no. 7-1885, 15.
[138] *Ibid*, 15.
[139] *Ibid*, 15.

By focusing on the intricacies and details of the naturalistic landscape composition, like how the arch of the Boylston Street Bridge framed the salt marsh, Olmsted engineered a complete vision for the landscape. Each scenic element blended together to create the whole scene. Paths and drives curved gently, where around the bend Olmsted presented beautiful naturalistic scenes to park visitors. Where paths and drives were straight, they seemed to blend into the horizon, giving park visitors a sense of immersion in the landscape experience. In Olmsted's mind, only when park visitors immersed themselves in the sensual experience of the sights, sounds, and smells of the landscape could parks live up to their role to restore souls, refresh bodies, and soothe minds.

*Restorative Value of the Fens*

Olmsted believed parks could act as spaces of tranquility and he emphasized the restorative value of parks by focusing on a separation of uses. A major goal of the Olmstedian park model was to create pleasing rural scenes to alleviate immoral urban problems since "a man's eyes cannot be as much occupied as they are in large cities by artificial things or by natural things seen under obviously artificial conditions, without a harmful effect, first on his entire mental and nervous system and ultimately on his entire constitutional organization."[140] The pleasing character of the park's pathways provided tranquil avenues for park visitors, which aided in the restorative value of the park. In order for park visitors to view the naturalistic scenes in this engineered wetland, Olmsted designed a meandering walking path to allow for circulation through the park. This gravel walking path, winding its way through trees and shrubs and along the shoreline, had the appearance of a nature trail that developed organically, rather than through conscious design.

[140] FLO, *Notes*, 42.

The path created a sequence of carefully framed landscape experiences for park visitors in two ways. First, the elevation of the walking path at the base of the embankment on the park border ranged from six to ten feet below street level. This effectively offered park visitors seclusion, providing an escape from the audible and visible disruptions of the street, and allowed for a more pleasurable park experience. Second, at select places in a stroll visitors were brought closer to the water and immersed in the experiential dimensions of the landscape—the smell of the marsh, the dampness of the water, the calls of birds, the feel of the wind, the rustle of the marsh grasses (Figure 4.19). At other places, visitors would be directed away from the water to experience the landscape associated with upland vegetation. This kind of variety was a crucial feature in Olmsted's landscape design, not just in the Fens, but in all Olmstedian parks.

Olmsted believed that in planning for urban growth we should "never fail to have a refreshing counter interest to the inner parts of the city," and a park's water features would be enough to supply a "tonic of change" that surpasses the benefits of churches, libraries, art museums, gardens, and soldiers' monuments.[141] In describing the recently completed landscape in the Fens, Sylvester Baxter, a journalist and park advocate, noted that

> From Boylston [Street], near the bridge, a footpath begins the line of the main walk, or stroll, through the Parkway. It follows the fenside, embowered in trees and shrubbery, with diversified views over the water, coming close to the shore here and there, in pleasant little intervals of sandy beach. In the borders are flowering shrubs in great variety, together with a profusion of herbaceous perennials, affording an uninterrupted procession of bloom from the earliest spring to late autumn, and suggesting that the rich and varied growths of neighboring gardens had run wild and naturally established themselves here.[142]

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[141] FLO, "A healthy change in the tone of the human heart," *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 32(1886), 964.

[142] Sylvester Baxter, *The Boston Park Guide: Including the Municipal and Metropolitan Systems of Greater Boston,* 3rd ed. (Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1898), 6. Baxter later teamed up with Charles Eliot in developing the Metropolitan Park System in the Boston suburbs. See: Baxter, "The Metropolitan Park System," *Transactions of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society* (1894): 152-169.

**Figure 4.19.** Landscape view of Fens with Boylston Street Bridge in the distance, c. 1887. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

While providing pleasing walks for visitors was an essential part of his design, Olmsted's main objective was to improve public health by lessening the impacts of flooding, by reducing pestilential diseases associated with floods, and by reducing the noxious impact of sewage in the waterways. In his 1880 landscape architect advisory report, Olmsted noted that the commissioners consulted with doctors from the state Board of Health who, according to the report, confirmed his belief that:

> so far as the proposed body of salt water, and the salt vegetation within the basin, would have any influence upon the air of the neighborhood, that influence would be purifying and salutary, and that the occasional floods of fresh water, being rapidly drained off, would be harmless. The conditions would be more rather than less favorable to the health of the neighborhood than those of an ordinary park.[143]

To accomplish this major objective, Olmsted relied on ecological engineering to create a naturalistic

[143] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 11.

landscape.

To control flooding and improve public health, Olmsted's 1880 plan called for diverting flood water, via underground conduits, to the Charles River. The flow of the Muddy River was to be permanently reduced, and through the conduit, sent to the Charles. Stony Brook, however, was more problematic requiring the construction of a gatehouse in order to control the flow of water from the brook. The flow of the brook was to be diverted into the conduit when the tide was not above the high-water level in the Charles. But when the tide rose higher than the outlet of the conduit, the design called for the conduit to be self-closing. On those occasions, the flow of the brook would be diverted into a naturalistic basin, engineered to resemble a salt marsh, storing the excess water until the tide fell below the outlet of the conduit.[144] Olmsted described the 30-acre basin as

> tide-water but with no more ebb and flow than is necessary to avoid stagnation, the efflux and reflux being regulated by a self-acting water-gate [whose] surface elevation, under ordinary circumstances, is to correspond with that of Charles River at mean high-water. When freshets occur in Stony Brook coincidently with easterly winds and spring tides, which temporarily prevent an outflow into Charles River, the water of the brook is to be turned into the basin, and the creek, rising, will overflow this level ground. Usually such an occurrence could be anticipated and, by drawing down the water of the creek at the preceding ebb of the tide, a rise of more than a foot above the ordinary level avoided.[145]

To Olmsted, the priority of the design of the Fens was the need to address issues of sanitation and public health. The new basin and conduit system controlled flooding related to exceptionally high tides, heavy rains, or spring thaws. The design also controlled the amount of sewage exposed in the basin. As long as the water level in the Charles River was lower than the outlet of the conduit,

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[144] FLO, "Report," in City doc. no. 15-1880, 10.
[145] *Ibid.*

sewage in the basin could flow out of the basin. This allowed for more control of the water level in the basin resulting in less pestilence, illness, and offensive odors.

**Conclusion: Improving the Back Bay**

Olmsted's work in the Back Bay helped to improve public health in the city. In applying his Romantic notions of the pastoral and the picturesque to the creation of a salt marsh landscape in the Fens, he engineered the first-human constructed wetland. While it fulfilled the very practical roles of improving flood control and sewage disposal, this form of ecological infrastructure also served larger civic goals by creating a beautiful space around which the city could place public buildings and cultural institutions.

This aesthetics of the naturalistic landscape resulted in dramatic positive spillover effects in the Back Bay. The distinguished environment associated with Olmsted's naturalistic landscapes positively impacted the nearby properties in the Back Bay—between 1857 and 1886 the Commonwealth's land sales experienced a 400 percent increase. The Commonwealth's properties sold for: $1.05 per square foot in 1857; $1.70 in 1860; $2.39 in 1865; $2.79 in 1870; $3.14 in 1879; and $4.35 in 1886. The net proceeds received by the Commonwealth from the sale of its Back Bay lands through the end of 1878 amounted to $3,936,431.[146]

The aesthetics of Olmstedian naturalistic parks also helped to create a distinguished environment in the Back Bay that people wanted to be a part of, as evidenced by the number of cultural institutions that either relocated to, or sprouted up in, the Back Bay. The Back Bay became known as the fashionable district for the city's educational institutions (e.g., the Boston Public

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[146] Massachusetts Harbor and Land Commission, *First Annual Report of the Harbor and Land Commission for the Year 1879* (Public doc. no. 11-1880), 37; Massachusetts Land Commission, *Second Annual Report of the Board of Land Commissioners for the Year 1878* (Public doc. no. 11-1879), 15; Bunting, *Houses of the Back Bay*, 368.

Library, the Chauncy Hall and Winsor schools, Emmanuel College, Wheelock College, MIT, and Northeastern University), museums (e.g., Museum of Fine Arts, Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, the Boston Society of Natural History), churches (e.g., Trinity Church, New Old South Church, Christian Science Mother Church), and music (e.g., Boston Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Hall, New England Conservatory).

The parks of the Emerald Necklace were jewels surrounding the city of Boston. At the time of their creation, they were admired as engineering and scientific, as much as artistic, works. Today people generally assume they are "natural" spaces in the city since, much of Olmsted's park work possesses an "always been there" quality. His mature designs appear so natural that "one thinks of them as something not *put there* by artifice but merely *preserved* by happenstance."[147]

While people today show their appreciation for the Emerald Necklace, there have been times in the recent past when city residents and politicians neglected them. Soon after Olmsted's death in 1903, his parks in Boston, and other cities in the United States, began to suffer as cultural attitudes toward parks began to change. With parks no longer satisfying the needs of a public that was not interested in naturalistic landscape, cities began to convert and modernize parks to allow for more spaces for active recreation. In the early- to mid-twentieth century, city park departments nationwide transformed Olmsted's pastoral open meadows into golf courses, baseball fields, football fields, and other space for athletic events. By the 1970s, with city budgets slashed due to the economic crisis, parks became social 'extras,' and suffered neglect due to park department layoffs and deferred maintenance. In the next chapter, I examine how Boston's connected chain of public parks went from being a set of luxurious breathing spaces and one of the world's wonders, to being degraded landscapes and dens of crime that people avoided in less than a century.

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[147] McLaughlin, "Olmsted's odyssey," 79 emphasis added.

# CHAPTER 5

## SPACES OF NEGLECT: MODERNIZATION, RACE AND THE DECLINE OF THE EMERALD NECKLACE

*Maintenance—or lack of it—has long been an annoying problem in Franklin Park; it has varied greatly, markedly worse in some years than others. Emphasis, clearly enough, is on maintaining not a park but a golf course. The so-called Club House on the slopes of Refectory Hill is well treated, whereas buildings elsewhere in the park have been neglected... Admittedly the fault is largely one of public apathy.*

--Norman Newton[1]

*Franklin Park was perceived to be black turf and white residents' fears and misunderstandings of the new black residents led many to feel that Franklin Park was lost—worthless to anyone but them.*

--Richard Heath[2]

Growing up in a white, predominantly middle-class, Boston suburb, my friends and I heard stories on the radio and television news, as well as the inner-city gossip that filtered through to our school, that the parks of the Emerald Necklace were sites of illegal drug use, sexual assaults, muggings, and murder. Franklin Park's reputation stood out in particular. As noted in the epigraph by Richard Heath, a founding member of the Franklin Park Coalition, Franklin Park became known as the 'black park' due to its location between Roxbury and Dorchester, neighborhoods that had flipped from majority white to majority black occupancy between the 1950s to the 1980s. Examining the changing demographics of Boston, economists Barry Bluestone and Mary Huff Stevenson note that white flight resulted in a 55 percent decrease in the city's white population and a nearly 250 percent increase in the black population. They also note that by 1990, Roxbury was more than 80 percent

[1] Newton, *Design on the Land*, 298.
[2] Richard Heath, *Franklin Park: A Century's Appraisal* (Boston: Franklin Park Coalition, 1985), 42.

black, while Dorchester was more than 60 percent black, and together both communities had populations that were 90 percent people of color.[3] These changes in demographics negatively affected the city's tax base and its budget. As the city's budget for park maintenance shrunk through the 1970s and 1980s, Franklin Park became a neglected space and a den of crime. It was not uncommon to hear of drug raids, rapes, stabbings, or shootings taking place in the park or on Blue Hill Avenue, one of its bordering arterial streets (Figure 5.1). In October 1981, for example, the newspapers warned those who might dare visit Franklin Park to be on the lookout for a pair of "masked marauders" wearing military fatigues and gas masks, who had robbed and raped three women, shot and wounded a couple, and robbed others in ten separate early-morning attacks since August in the vicinity of the park and on Blue Hill Avenue.[4]

The general perception of Franklin Park in the 1980s was that it was unsafe, and therefore, white, middle-class teenagers (like myself), wanted nothing to do with Franklin Park or—by extension—any of the remainder of the Emerald Necklace. Nor, for that matter, did the City of Boston. In 1981, newly-appointed park commissioner John Vitagliano acknowledged that that prior to his tenure "the distribution of park resources was unequal and Franklin Park suffered because of it."[5] In explaining the city's lack of attention to Franklin Park, assistant park commissioner Robert McCoy suggested that "the general attitude had been that [the park] was situated in the minority community and it just wasn't looked at [in] the same [way]" as other city parks.[6]

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[3] Barry Bluestone and Mary Huff Stevenson, *The Boston Renaissance: Race, Space, and Economic Change in an American Metropolis* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 26.

[4] *BG*, "Violence in the street, in the park: Masked men strike again," 5 Oct. 1981, and "Franklin Park suspects elude police after chase," 8 Oct 1981.

[5] *BG,* "Franklin Park seeks better image," 19 Oct 1981.

[6] *Ibid.*

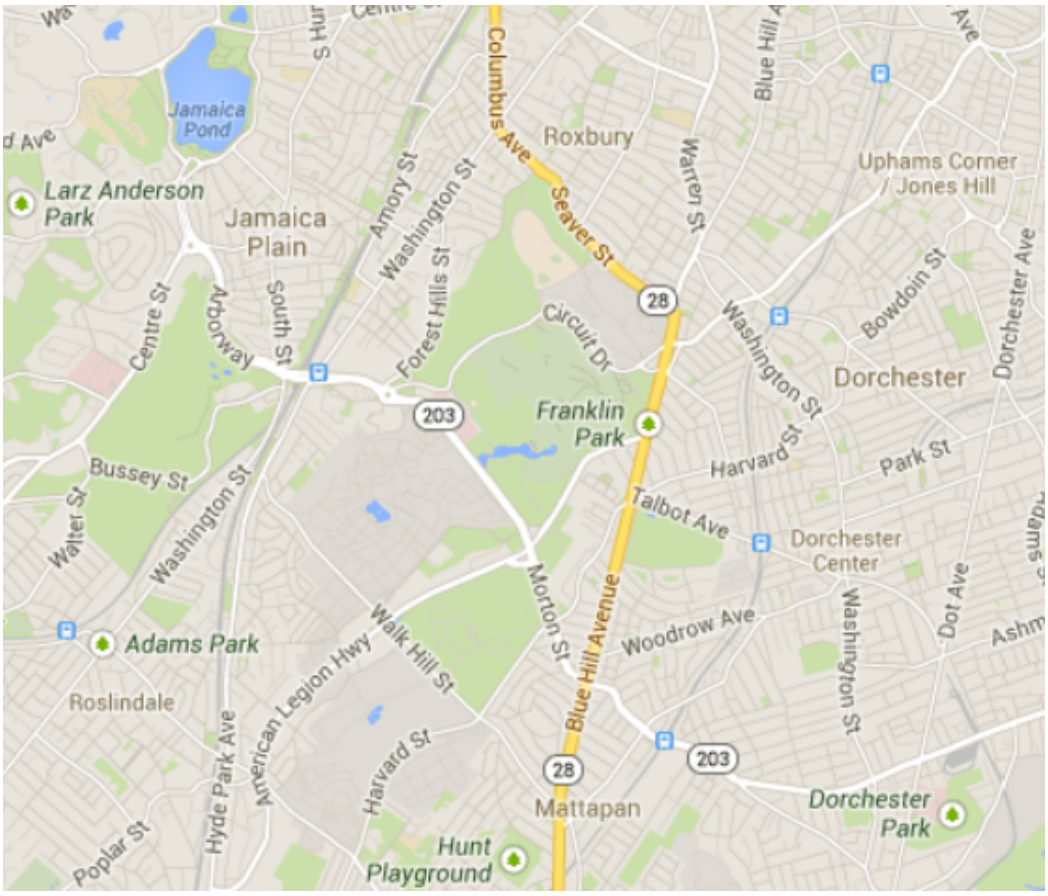


**Figure 5.1.** Map of the area surrounding Franklin Park.

Later in college as I took urban and environmental geography courses, I was introduced to Olmsted and learned that at the time of its creation, commentators hailed Boston's Emerald Necklace as a set of luxurious breathing spaces and one of the "world's wonders."[7] A century later, however, many Bostonians hardly viewed the Emerald Necklace as an asset—it was more like a liability. Instead of serving as a monument to America's greatest landscape architect, the parks became sites of drug trafficking, illegal dumping, sexual assaults, muggings, and murders. I often wondered: How could a park system, so widely praised and admired, go from a wonder of the world to a haven of crime in less than a century? This chapter answers this question by examining the

[7] *BDG*, "Boston's beauty spots: report of the commissioners on the city's parks," 7 Jul 1894.

major shifts in cultural attitudes and values towards urban life in America and the role of the naturalistic landscape park in the twentieth century.

Boston was not unique in its destruction of its naturalistic landscape parks. Parks in other American cities like St. Louis, New York City, and San Francisco faced similar fates.[8] The transformation of naturalistic landscape parks represented a fundamental shift from romantic relationships between the city and nature to a more rationalistic and utilitarian relationship.[9] In explaining the deterioration of nineteenth-century pleasure grounds, park historians typically point to a shift in park management away from the nineteenth-century Olmstedian vision to twentieth-century park vision that focused more on athletics, zoos, museums, and other attractions. Park historians generally place the blame for this shift at the feet of the working class, whose efforts to gain access to spaces for active recreation weakened the Olmstedian vision.[10] While this certainly played a role, in reality, the transformation of these landscapes began well before the recreational facility era of American park planning in the mid-twentieth century.

Olmsted spent his entire career incessantly fighting off incongruous uses within his naturalistic landscapes.[11] He engaged in heated debates with politicians, philanthropists, and social reformers who demanded that bits of park space be given over for city buildings, golf, tennis, zoos, museums, and memorials. Ironically, the Olmstedian vision that emphasized open pastoral scenery, helped to bring about the conditions responsible for the destruction the naturalistic landscapes of the Emerald Necklace. In this chapter, I examine the shifting cultural values and attitudes towards urban life and the role of naturalistic landscape parks in twentieth-century Boston.

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[8] Heckscher, *Open Spaces*; Rogers, *Rebuilding Central Park*; Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks*.

[9] Young, "Modern urban parks," 538-539.

[10] 214-215; Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*; Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours*.

[11] FLO and Vaux, "Report of committee on statues in the park," in *FYLA* 2, 488-493; FLO and Vaux, "Proposition to place a colossal statue at the south end of the Mall," *FYLA* 2, 494-498; FLO, "The purpose and site of the zoo–a catechism," in *FYLA* 2, 511-517; FLO to P. Dana, 22 Dec 1890, in *FYLA* 2, 525-529.

Under some park commissions, parks had been valued for the scenery, aesthetics, and economic impact they provide.[12] At other times, other park commissions believed that economic efficiency needed to be regarded as paramount and any public expenditure carefully scrutinized as to its necessity. For much of the twentieth century, municipal governments did not value parks; parks were looked at as social extras, not only unworthy of budgetary increases, but often had their budgets slashed during hard economic times. In Boston, what followed was that from the 1870s to the 1910s under elitist policy regimes, parks were valued for their naturalistic scenery since they still provided positive spillover effects in the form of increased property values and tax revenue. However, from the 1910s to the 1950s under egalitarian policy regimes, parks were valued not for their aesthetic qualities, but for their efficiency to supply recreation, broadly defined, for the masses.

In the shuffle to transform the park landscape into an egalitarian park for mass recreation, the park commission repurposed and refashioned the naturalistic landscape, with its artistic flourishes, with new efficient materials such as concrete and pavement. One of the biggest transformations was due to new forms of transportation and the increased use of the automobile. Motorized transport meant that old macadam parkways and roads, full of patched areas, were extremely bumpy and uncomfortable. The park commissioners believed that it was "desirable that the main parkways should all be treated with a permanent surface as the cost of upkeep is very

[12] I have chosen to use the general terms "park commission" and "park commissioners" throughout this chapter. This is due the changes in the official name of the city department responsible for the parks in Boston. Currently it is officially known as the Parks and Recreation Department, but casually known as the Parks Department. From the 1880s through the early-1950s, the department has been known as Department of Parks, Park and Recreation Department, and Park Department. Finally in 1954 the name was changed to its current designation. Additional naming problems arise when using titles like Commissioner and Superintendent, which have specific meaning in particular historic contexts. The current head of the Boston Parks Department, Antonia Pollack, is the Park Commissioner. In FLO's day, and through much of the twentieth-century, a park commissioner was a person who served on the board of the department of parks, while the Superintendent was a city employee responsible for working with the board to maintain the parks. Therefore, to avoid the confusion that results from different department names and official titles, I have chosen to use "park commission/ers" unless specificity is warranted.

considerable, and the results obtained by patching are far from satisfactory."[13] Therefore the city recommended a new bituminous pavement (asphalt), and the city used this as they opened a new motor road through Franklin Park in 1925.[14]

Each park of the Emerald Necklace underwent tremendous changes as Olmsted's aesthetic landscapes were remodeled into recreation facilities. By 1914, both the Fens and Olmsted Park each had two baseball fields, each drawing thousands of players on Saturday afternoons and holidays during the baseball season.[15] At Jamaica Pond, a new baseball field and new tennis courts were built adjacent to Pinebank, the former Perkins estate overlooking the pond. Additionally, in 1913 the city added two new structures, a boathouse and bandstand, to the shores of Jamaica Pond.[16] The city transformed Pinebank into the city's first children's museum in the same year and it continued to serve the city's schoolchildren until 1936 when the museum moved to a different location in Jamaica Plain.[17] People continued to use Jamaica Pond in large numbers, either for skating in the winter or for fishing in the summer, through the 1950s. In the early 1940s, hundreds of young Red Sox fans turned out for a chance to fish with Red Sox slugger and avid fisherman, Ted Williams (Figure 5.2). These kinds of changes, ones meant to attract more middle- and working-class park visitors, were indicative of the changes the parks of the Emerald Necklace underwent in the first half of the twentieth-century.

In this chapter, I focus on two periods of park design to examine these shifting attitudes towards the role of naturalistic landscape parks in twentieth-century Boston. First, I look at the

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[13] City of Boston, *Forty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1918* (City doc. no. 22-1918), 3.

[14] City of Boston, *Fifty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending December 31, 1926* (City doc. no. 20-1927), 3.

[15] City of Boston, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1914*, 50.

[16] *Ibid*, 7.

[17] Boston Children's Museum, "About us." Available from http://www.bostonkids.orgs/about/history.html (accessed 18 Apr 2012).

**Figure 5.2.** Ted Williams talks fishing with a young girl at Jamaica Pond, c. 1940. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leslie Jones Collection.

egalitarian parks of the 1910s-1950s. I examine the ways in which the modernization of this park system represented a physical and discursive transformation of the park landscape to reflect the cultural shift away from the elitist naturalistic landscapes in favor of more spaces to meet the middle- and working-class demand for active recreation and tourist attractions. To do this, I examine the park commission's 'centers of attraction' solution to increase park attendance, where, for example, they added monuments and a formal rose garden to the Fens as well as a zoo in Franklin Park. I also examine the creation of modern recreational spaces by examining the creation of athletic stadiums in the Fens and Franklin Park, as well as a golf course in Franklin Park. The quest to make parks more efficient actually created parks that were expensive to maintain and by the

1960s, as the city's budget shrunk, parks suffered deferred maintenance and became neglected spaces.

Second, I look at the parks associated with the urban retrenchment of the 1960s and 1970s to examine the ways in which parks were neglected. Boston, like other American cities during this time suffering from high inflation and high unemployment due to the loss of industrial jobs, had its budget stretched thin. With many demands for a shrinking budget, parks, compared to education and public safety, were seen as social extras. This, I argue, was especially true considering that by this time parks were increasingly being used by poor people of color. Therefore, I examine the ways in which racial tensions associated with a rapid demographic shift changed the local meanings of the parks, and Franklin Park in particular.

Finally, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the environmental and class politics of this twentieth-century park landscape. In particular, I argue that racial tensions changed the local meanings of Franklin Park as the city neglected the park.

**The "Centers of Attraction" Solution**

The Olmsted firm completed its work on the Emerald Necklace in 1896, therefore its advisory role for the Boston parks came to an end as well. In 1895, with his memory failing and in the throes of senile dementia, Olmsted retired, and in September, 1898, went to live at the McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts. Previously, in the early 1870s, he had conducted site surveys and reported on suitable sites for the relocation of McLean Asylum from Somerville to Belmont. While his involvement after 1875 cannot be documented, the effect of Olmsted's therapeutic landscape was similar to his park landscapes. He suggested a 'cottage plan,' whereby a number of small cottages faced south to maximize sunlight and were constructed around a central administration building.

Olmsted felt that this kind of environment would provide a residential effect, rather than an institutional one, for those seeking treatment; this meant people could get the best treatment that both medicine *and* nature could provide.[18] However, shortly after arriving at McLean and noticing the cottages were clustered closely together and faced west to take advantage of the setting sun, he grumbled "They didn't follow my plan, confound them!"[19] In August 1903, Olmsted died at the age of eighty-one, but the work in the Emerald Necklace continued without its mastermind and his firm.[20] With their father's retirement, John and Rick Olmsted faced significant hurdles as they tried to continue the firm's practice in Boston as the parks of the Emerald Necklace slowly underwent changes.

The parks of the Emerald Necklace faced competition from a variety of other forms of recreation. Attendance began to decline in this park system as residents began to utilize other public recreational landscapes. A newly constructed and expanding Olmsted-influenced metropolitan park system, and its unique and awesome forms of nature, athletic fields, playgrounds, and beaches all drew visitors away from the Emerald Necklace.[21] The Emerald Necklace, while tranquil, no longer served the public needs and desires. Residents seeking recreation no longer wanted passive forms of recreation. They no longer wanted to just view urban nature, they either wanted more activity, or they wanted spectacular forms of nature not found in the city.

The new metropolitan park system offered visitors access to parks like the Blue Hills

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[18] Alex Beam, *Gracefully Insane: Life and Death Inside America's Premier Mental Hospital* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).

[19] Roper, *FLO,* 474.

[20] *BDG,* "Frederick Law Olmsted Dead," 28 Aug 1903, and "Park system his monument: Frederick Law Olmsted, America's greatest landscape architect, dies at Waverly," 29 Aug 1903.

[21] Charles Eliot, "The Waverly Oaks," *Garden and Forest* 3(1890): 85-86; Sylvester Baxter, "The Metropolitan Park System," *Transactions of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society for the Year 1894, Part 1*: 152-174; Charles Eliot, "The Boston Metropolitan Reservation," *New England Magazine* 21(1896): 117-122.

Reservation lying approximately 11 miles south of Boston, and connected to the city by railway.[22] This 22-hill public forest, including the 635-foot Great Blue Hill, offered visitors "remarkable far-reaching and varied" views that embraced "a great extent of coast and inland scenery: the blue sea indenting the shores, meandering rivers, wide meadows and plains, clustering towns, forest expanses, hilly undulations, and the lofty peaks of far-away mountains" (Figure 5.3).[23] The landscape views in this park presented visitors with picturesque scenes reminiscent of Downing's descriptions: "The notches or passes between the hills are often deep or steep-sided, and the views down the side valleys to the sea, or out over the seeming plain of Massachusetts are surprising and grand."[24] With the original forest long lost to timber harvesting and various quarry enterprises, the hilly landscape contained a variety of hearty trees, namely scrub oaks, cedars, and pines (Figure 5.4). But the shady glens and rich soiled wetlands, also provided prime habitat for a variety of laurels, rhododendrons, birches, walnuts, hickories, and willows.[25] The forests of the Blue Hills offered park visitors "a recreation ground far surpassing in its refreshing value even London's Epping Forest."[26] Whether visitors went to the Blue Hills by rail or any of the other reservations by carriage or eventually by car, the ease of transport and the attraction to the more unique forms of nature found in these public reservations encouraged visitors to use these new parks at the expense of the (not so much) older parks of the Emerald Necklace

The Boston park commissioners were concerned about a decrease in park usage. Recognizing that the parks of the Emerald Necklace offered a form of recreation that may not

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[22] Baxter, "The Metropolitan Park System," 165.

[23] Sylvester Baxter, "A Massachusetts forest," *Garden and Forest* 4(180), 362.

[24] Charles Eliot, "Report of the landscape architect," in Massachusetts Metropolitan Park Commission, *Report of the Board Metropolitan Park Commissioners* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1893), 97.

[25] Walter Deane, *Flora of the Blue Hills, Middlesex Fells, Stony Brook and Beaver Brook Reservations of the Metropolitan Park Commission, Massachusetts* (Boston: C.M. Barrows and Co, 1896); Charles Eliot, *Vegetation and Scenery in the Metropolitan Reservations of Boston* (Boston: Lamson, Wolff and Company, 1898).

[26] Eliot, "Report of the landscape architect," 97.

**Figure 5.3.** View of Boston Harbor from Blue Hills Reservation, 2008.

**Figure 5.4.** Pine trees in Blue Hills Reservation, c. 1893. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

appeal to some potential visitors, the Boston park commissioners felt "an increasing need of some centers of attraction to interest those to whom the loveliness of the landscape is not an adequate lure."[27] In their quest to attract more visitors to the Emerald Necklace, the park commissioners discussed adding fresh and salt water aquaria, an aviary, flower gardens, and an open-air amphitheater.[28] In a letter to park commission chairman Robert Peabody, landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff recognized the steadily declining attendance as people visited other spaces of recreation, including parks of the metropolitan park system, playgrounds, athletic facilities, and local beaches:

> Time has proven in Boston and in other cities that extensive pastoral and wooded parks, which make their appeal through the enjoyment of great landscapes, require secondary amusements of just that kind offered by a zoological garden to enable them to hold their places in competition with seashore reservations, bathing beaches and the modern highly-developed playground. The disappointing attendance at Franklin Park shows clearly that the moment has arrived when the development of the secondary attractions of this plan must be accomplished if Franklin Park is to hold its recreative pre-eminence in the park system.[29]

The park commissioners began actively seeking out other methods of drawing park visitors. Their 'centers of attraction' solution emphasized athletic, educational, and entertaining forms of recreation including the addition of statues, memorials, ornamental gardens, zoos, and athletic fields to the naturalistic landscapes of the park system, all of which Olmsted vehemently opposed over the course of his career.

The transformation of naturalistic landscape parks represented a fundamental shift from the romantic relationship between the city and nature to a more rationalistic and utilitarian relationship.

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[27] City of Boston, *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks of the Year Ending January 31, 1910* (City doc. no. 25-1910), 7.

[28] City Doc. no. 25-1910, 7.

[29] Arthur Shurcliff to Robert S. Peabody 29 Sept 1910, reprinted in Franklin Park Coalition Bulletin, *The Franklin Park Zoo: Selected Reports,* (Boston: Franklin Park Coalition, Nov 1981), 16.

From the 1890s through the 1920s, this shift represented an encroachment upon naturalistic spaces by more formal recreational spaces and attractions. A study by August Heckscher, former Park Commissioner of New York City, revealed this transformation in St. Louis' Forest Park. In the twenty years after the park's dedication in 1876, Heckscher notes, the open meadows, woodlands, and gently curving drives were gradually transformed to accommodate ball fields, a zoo, restaurants, a horse track, and other attractions. The park served as the site for the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, and with the naturalistic landscape already transformed with exhibition buildings taking the place of naturalistic scenery, "every time a new institution was created or a new entertainment devised, Forest Park seemed the natural place to put it."[30]

In his historical geography of San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, Young pointed out that the park was designed in the romantic mode of the 1870s to provide psychic renewal by immersing park visitors in naturalistic scenery. But, by the 1880s and 1890s, a new rationalistic city-nature relationship emphasized the park's pleasing aesthetics *while* providing for utilitarian uses; rationalistic park advocates did not consider the romantic parks to be unacceptable, just "underdeveloped."[31] The pastoral and picturesque scenes in Golden Gate Park, like similar scenes in other parks, were transformed reflecting the modern need for recreation and park attractions full of ornamental plantings in formal, geometric arrangements, as well as playgrounds for children, and athletic fields for adolescents and adults.

Perhaps one of the greatest ironies in park planning, the destruction of the Olmstedian vision for the Emerald Necklace was, in part, brought about by Olmsted's park philosophy. In a paper presented at the 1880 meeting of the American Social Science Association in Saratoga, New York, Olmsted stated his belief that the economic and urban growth of modern society, particularly

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[30] Heckscher, *Open Spaces*, 176.
[31] Young, "Modern urban parks," 539.

"the growth of town ways of living [had] grave drawbacks," namely "vital exhaustion, nervous irritation, constitutional depression... excessive materialism, loss of faith, and lowless of spirit."[32] To cure these social ills, he designed pastoral scenes to provide spaces of tranquility. A central feature of large parks designed by Olmsted included "a simple, broad, open space of clean greensward, with sufficient play of surface and a sufficient number of trees about it to supply a variety of light and shade."[33] While the pastoral and rural scenes designed by Olmsted were no longer a significant draw on their own, they provided beautiful landscapes within which to engage in various forms of recreation not envisioned by its designer.

The openness of the Country Park left Franklin Park vulnerable to alternative uses.[34] Despite efforts by Olmsted to preserve his idyllic landscapes, the park commissioners needed to address their reality that Bostonians were choosing not to visit the parks of the Emerald Necklace and admire the rural scenery, however beautifully designed, to help relieve their exhaustion. Instead, as the 'centers of attraction' solution showed, people wanted to go to park to engage in a variety of activities: to *see* new attractions in parks (e.g., monuments, formal gardens, and zoos) and to *do* things (e.g., play golf).

*Monuments and Memorials*

Almost from the completion of the new landscape in the Fens, Bostonians viewed it as a site for civic expression. From the late-1890s through the 1970s the Fens became a prime location for a variety of statues, monument, memorials, and other landmarks that held some historical or cultural

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[32] FLO, *A Consideration of the Justifying Value of a Public Park,* 19.
[33] FLO, "Public parks," 22.
[34] von Hoffman, "Of greater lasting consequence," 341.

significance.[35] The Westland Gate (formerly the Johnson Memorial), designed by Guy Lowell and erected in 1905, consisted of two marble pillars, each with four copper lions to spout water, flanking the Westland Avenue entrance to the Fens (Figure 5.5).[36] Overlooking the Muddy River as it flows through the Fens, a memorial to Katherine Lee Bates, the local poet, Wellesley professor, and writer of "America the Beautiful," was erected in 1909. Some memorials, such as the John Boyle O'Reilly Memorial, simply memorialized individuals and ideas important to Bostonians.[37] Erected in 1896 near the Boylston Street entrance to the Fens, the O'Reilly memorial commemorated the life of the Irish-born Boston poet who zealously supported Irish causes, both in Boston and across the Atlantic.[38] One side of the memorial featured a bust of O'Reilly, while the reverse featured allegorical representations of Patriotism, Erin (Ireland), and Poetry (Figure 5.6). In his 1903 survey of American sculpture, Lorado Taft described the O'Reilly memorial as "most happily situated" in

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[35] Monuments and memorials were added to the Fens throughout the twentieth century. The construction of the victory gardens in 1942 replaced Shurcliff's small playing field in the upper part of the Fens. The victory gardens in the Fens are still active. Now called the Richard D. Parker Memorial Victory Gardens, or simply the Fenway Victory Gardens, they are last remaining WWII era victory gardens in the United States (Source: Fenway Victory Gardens http://www.fenwayvictorygardens.com/history.html, Date Accessed 5 Aug 2011). See also Sam Bass Warner, *To Dwell Is to Garden: A History of Boston's Community Gardens* (Boston : Northeastern University Press, 1987). Erected in 1949, the WWII Memorial, with its polished granite, bronze angel, and bronze tablets lists the names of Bostonians who gave their lives in the war. In 1989, the WWII Memorial became an area known as Veterans Memorial Park with the addition of the Korean and Vietnam War Memorials. These memorials reflected feelings of local pride and nationalism associated with particular historical moments. Other memorials, like the Japanese Temple Bell and the Roberto Clemente Field and Memorial reflected the cultural values and hopes and wishes for the future. In 1953, Japanese officials presented an historic bell, cast in 1675, from a Buddhist temple to the City of Boston as a symbol of peace. According to the Smithsonian Institutions Research Information System: "The bell was originally located at the Manpukuji Temple in Sendai, Japan. Sailors from the U.S.S. Boston salvaged the bell, which had been appropriated for the Japanese war effort, from a scrap heap in Yokosuka, Japan. The officers and men presented it to the City of Boston in 1945. In 1953, Japan officially presented the bell to Boston as a symbol of the attainment of peace." Source: http://siris-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?&term=%22Magoemon,+Suzuki%22&index=AW&limit=Lo01+%3D+ias (Date Accessed: 5 Aug 2011). The dedication of Clemente Field in 1973 honored the humanitarian work of baseball star Roberto Clemente. Clemente, the Puerto Rican star right-fielder for the Pittsburgh Pirates from 1955-1972, died in a plane crash on December 31, 1972 while trying to deliver aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

[36] Guy Lowell, the prominent Boston architect, was the great-grandson of Francis Cabot Lowell, the textile magnate and scion of the Lowell family. Guy Lowell also designed the new (1909) Museum of Fine Arts situated along the Fens.

[37] The O'Reilly Memorial was sculpted by Daniel Chester French, who is perhaps best known for his seated Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial, the Statue of the Republic at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and the statue of the Minute Man commemorating the centenary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

[38] City of Boston, *A Memorial for John Boyle O'Reilly* (Boston: Board of Aldermen, 1891).


**Figure 5.5.** The Westland Gate (Johnson Memorial) at the Westland Avenue entrance to the Fens, c. 1906. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection.

**Figure 5.6.** The John Boyle O'Reilly Memorial, c. 1906. Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection.

the Fens, and added that it was "well worthy of a special pilgrimage."[39]

As a general rule, Olmsted believed in not placing statuary inside his naturalistic park landscapes. He thought it would be "a wise policy for a park commissioner to discourage, rather than encourage, the introduction into the landscapes of a beautiful rural or semi-rural park of such architectural and sculptural decorations."[40] Olmsted believed that statues and monuments served a valuable civic function. But he disagreed with park commissions over how to determine their suitable locations. Instead of using naturalistic parks, he believed that more appropriate sites for statuary could be found "in the public squares and small parks of the city, where they would appear [to] enrich formal or garden-like grounds, and would not injure broad landscapes."[41]

He followed this philosophy in Boston, but, ever the pragmatist, he began to design parks with spaces set aside for the accommodation of statues and memorials. In *Notes on the Plan of Franklin Park,* Olmsted acknowledged that newspaper "columns will necessarily be given to the introduction of statue, or a new piece of masonry, or a novelty in horticulture." In order to head-off this sort of criticism, he designated the Greeting in the Ante-Park as a formal promenade where "monumental, architectural, and various decorative adjuncts" would be "admissible, but not essential." He summed up his belief that the more formal spaces of a park were the most "suitable positions for statues, water-jets, baskets of flowers, bird cages, etc."[42]

The problems associated with allowing statuary into a park was that park commissions tended to continue erecting monuments and statues, and Olmsted had the foresight to see a time "when the beautiful, quiet, rural landscape of the park will be to a great extent marred, and the park

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[39] Lorado Taft, *The History of American Sculpture* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1903), 325.

[40] FLO letter to Prospect Park Commissioner Frank Squier, reprinted in *The Sun* "A protest from Mr. Olmsted: He sounds a warning against disfiguring Prospect Park with statues" 29 Jul 1885.

[41] FLO to Frank Squier.

[42] FLO, *Notes*, 11 and 58.

made to resemble a confused and fussy-looking garden, or the best of our rural cemeteries."[43] When park commissioners, politicians, philanthropists, and park designers discussed adding statues and other elements to a park, Olmsted preferred that they try to keep the *essence* of the park in view, and not necessarily view a park as a space simply for *adornment* since this might interfere with the *character* of the park landscape. I suspect that Olmsted may not have raised a monumental objection in the case of the O'Reilly memorial, since the statue was located a formal entrance, and therefore did not adversely impact the naturalistic landscape of the Fens.[44] However, of all the new additions to the Fens the most significant, and the one that stood in starkest contrast with the Olmsted vision for the landscape, was the addition of the Rose Garden in the 1930s.

*The Fenway Rose Garden*

The damming of the Charles River in 1910 dramatically altered the conditions of the Fens by changing the water flowing into the Fens from salt to fresh water, thus rendering Olmsted's design obsolete.[45] Gradually, the salt marsh vegetation began to die out and was replaced by wetland vegetation better suited to freshwater. The filling of the marshes began in 1911 and continued through the decade as money became available. These changes forced the park commission to create a new sense of what constituted beauty in the Fens, and the commission hired landscape architect Arthur Shurcliff to redesign significant portions of the Fens.

After conversations with Olmsted, Shurcliff decided to enroll at Harvard to study horticulture, design, art history, and surveying. Upon graduation in 1896, he joined the Olmsted

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[43] *Ibid*, 58.

[44] FLO viewed entrances a bit differently than the interior sections of a park—entrances were liminal spaces that were acceptable sites for civic expressions. For example, in 1869, the Prospect Park main entrance (what became Grand Army Plaza) was furnished with a fountain and a monument to Lincoln.

[45] City of Boston, *Back Bay Fens Study Report no. 56* (Boston: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1983), 12. Available from http://www.cityofboston.gov/Images_Documents/Back%20Bay%20Fens%20Study%20Report%20%2356_tcm3-20783.pdf (accessed on 5 Aug 2011).

firm and worked on a variety of projects before leaving in 1904 to establish his own practice.[46] In transforming the Fens, Shurcliff relied on the original Olmstedian vision to guide his reinvention of the space. For instance, in 1921 he wrote to John and Rick Olmsted and suggested transforming the marshes "into undulating meadows with knolls of appropriate shape and carefully placed near the water-line having in mind knolls forming a part of the original design." He also suggested adding significant plantings to these new meadows in order "to prevent their use for large athletic fields."[47]

Since starting his own practice, Shurcliff's design outlook matured in a different era, one that emphasized a more practical and utilitarian approach to design. Therefore, Shurcliff also proposed the "creation of an athletic field in the upper portion of the Fens where the ground should be kept flat."[48] But, remaining true to his training, his vision for this new athletic field incorporated "marginal plantings of trees and shrubbery" to allow for the field to be "somewhat hidden."[49] In a way, Shurcliff personified the tensions associated with the transition from the romantic park to the rationalistic park since he saw the value in providing recreational facilities, while at the same time recognizing the importance of naturalistic landscape aesthetics.

Olmsted avoided the use of the formality typically associated with the ordered arrangements found in gardens, preferring instead the informal and natural qualities found in the open rustic pastoral landscapes he created. However, by the 1920s, the American Rose Society (ARS) claimed that since the rose was a plant that "ministered to man's [*sic*] necessities and comfort," the creation

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[46] Arthur Shurtleff changed his last name to Shurcliff in 1930 to reflect the original Old English spelling. For consistency I have chosen to use Shurcliff, even when his reports were written under his former last name. After studying engineering at MIT, then surveying, horticulture and design at Harvard's Bussey Institute, Shurcliff, became an apprentice in the Olmsted firm in 1896 before starting his own career later. An accomplished landscape architect, he worked with Rick Olmsted to begin the nation's first four-year training program in landscape architecture at Harvard. For more on Shurcliff, see: Elizabeth Hope Cushing, "The fading landscape: Arthur A. Shurcliff's evolving perceptions of landscape preservation," in *Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage*, ed. Charles Birnbaum and Mary Hughes (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 83-102.

[47] Shurcliff to Olmsted Brothers, 20 May 1921. Available from OAP, Box B69.

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*

of "municipal rose-gardens was entirely justified."[50] In 1930, the Boston park commission, following the lead of the ARS and other American cities, authorized Shurcliff to construct a rose garden in the Fens.[51]

Shurcliff placed the garden opposite the Beaux-Arts style Museum of Fine Arts. He constructed his formal rose garden in two phases. The design of the first phase featured a water fountain surrounded by two concentric walking paths with rows of rose bushes on either side. The second phase, completed in 1933, featured a simple rectangular walking path with roses on either side. With the two segments connected, the finished garden resembled a keyhole (Figure 5.7). Unfortunately, the annual reports of the park commission did not provide detailed information regarding the appearance of, or attendance records for, the rose garden. Fortunately, the ARS held their 1933 annual meeting in Boston and its report on the meeting provided valuable insight into appearance of the rose garden after Shurcliff completed the second phase. The ARS described the "very charming" garden as a "model of its kind" especially in the evening, when "the gardens were illuminated with variously colored lamps and made a very attractive picture."[52] While the Olmsted park model utilized a choreography of views emphasizing the use of different lighting and shading, this kind of mechanical lighting arrangement stood in direct opposition to the Olmsted vision for this landscape.

The Olmstedian vision for park design was to create a landscape that did not just simply reflect the local environment—his landscapes *distilled* the entire local environment down to a few awe-inspiring scenes, hopefully leaving park visitors relaxed, rejuvenated, and inspired by the

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[50] J. Horace MacFarland, "Preface," *The American Rose Annual: The 1916 Yearbook of Rose Progress* (Harrisburg: American Rose Society, 1916), 5.

[51] Many American cities had botanic gardens, but several specifically constructed rose gardens from 1900 through the early 1930s including: Hartford, Connecticut (1904); Portland, Oregon (1917); Santa Barbara, California (1926); San Jose, California (1927); Kansas City, Missouri (1931); and Oakland, California (1932).

[52] J.H. MacFarland, and G.A. Stevens, "Editorial," *American Rose Magazine* 1(1933): 2.

**Figure 5.7.** The Fenway rose garden and the Museum of Fine Arts, c. 1934. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Division, Leslie Jones Collection.

pleasing scenes. And while Shurcliff's formal rose garden may have been attractive, and some visitors may have been inspired to take up rose gardening as a hobby, in no way could Shurcliff claim that its formal arrangements inspired the same sense of wonder in nature as the original salt marsh design.

Nearly seventy years earlier, when Olmsted consulted on the state of California's plan to construct the university campus at Berkeley, he expressed his distaste with formal gardens and reiterated his preference for open green space by stating that a garden, "whether a scientific garden or an ornamental flower garden, would be even more expensive to maintain than good turf, while it would add nothing like as much to the beauty and interest of the neighborhood."[53] To Olmsted, a

[53] FLO, *Report Upon a Projected Improvement of the Estate of the College of California at Berkeley, Near Oakland* (New York: Wm. C. Bryant and Co., Printers, 1866), 23.

simple field of grass, or, in the case of the Fens, a human-produced representation of New England salt marsh, provided so much more in terms of beauty than any rose garden could ever provide. Regrettably, the Rose Garden was not the only attraction thrust into the naturalistic landscapes of the Emerald Necklace. In Franklin Park, carefully designed sections both the Ante-Park and the Country Park were irrevocably transformed when the park commissioners, in an attempt to draw more visitors, authorized the creation of a zoo and golf course for Franklin Park.

*The Zoological Park at Franklin Park*

As discussed in the previous chapter, Franklin Park served as the pendant of the Emerald Necklace. Olmsted designed Franklin Park as a large pleasure ground to encourage both gregarious and neighborly forms of recreation in the fresh air. To accommodate these forms of recreation, he designed the park in two sections: the 193-acre Ante-Park and the 334-acre Country Park.[54] The Ante-Park, more formally designed than the Country Park, included the spaces for active and gregarious interactions. While the Ante-Park was designed with formal spaces for active forms of recreation, the Country Park was designed to provide wide-open spaces for quiet contemplation.

Olmsted located the Country Park in the space where Ellicott Dale and Nazing Dale meadows met. In designing this pastoral landscape, he emphasized the simplicity of the broad, open views typical of rural landscapes (Figure 5.8). In a letter to commissioner Dalton, Olmsted emphasized the almost perfect qualities found at the site:

> The all-important feature of the site is a gentle valley nearly a mile in length and of an average breadth between the steeper slopes of the bordering hills of less than a quarter of a mile. Relieved of a few houses, causeways and fences, left with unbroken surface of turf and secluded by woods on the hillsides, this would at once

[54] For Olmsted's plan for Franklin Park, see Figure 4.9, page 164.

**Figure 5.8.** View of the Ellicott Dale, c. 1894. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

> supply a singularly complete and perfect though limited example of a type of scenery which is perhaps the most soothing in its influence on mankind of any presented by nature.[55]

By confining structures and other intrusions to the Ante-Park, Olmsted hoped to minimize their impact on the tranquility of the Country Park. However, in the late-1880s, the Boston park commission began discussions with the Boston Society of Natural History for the placement of a zoo in Franklin Park.[56]

Olmsted had long been opposed to alternative uses that intruded on his carefully designed pastoral parks, zoos in particular. In their Greensward plan, he and Vaux never intended for any form of animal display since such an attraction would disrupt the quiet and solitude of their landscape design. When an impromptu and ramshackle menagerie appeared during the 1860s in

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[55] FLO to Dalton, 17 May 1881. Available from OP, Box 19.

[56] City of Boston, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the Year 1886* (City doc. no. 24-1887), 33-44.

Central Park, Olmsted began a life-long battle against the intrusion of zoos. Olmsted and Vaux went as far as to produce a plan for a park-like zoological garden to be located in Manhattan Square, a tract of land between Central Park West and Amsterdam Avenue that had been acquired by the park commission.[57] He objected to the manner in which the Tweed-appointed park commissioners, without consulting he or Vaux, created the zoo in Central Park. The intrusion of the zoo upset Olmsted on principle, since it continued to serve as "a major point of attack on the integrity of the park landscape."[58]

In spite of his disregard for zoos in his park landscape, Olmsted never disagreed with the desire for cities to have zoos. On the contrary, he believed they served a valuable educational function, he merely objected to their placement in the tranquility and serenity of the park's pastoral scenery. By the 1880s, Olmsted, ever the practical designer, and realizing that he could not keep cities from placing zoos and other attractions inside his parks, began to designate certain park spaces for alternative uses. In doing so, he attempted to ensure that the park and the zoo would be physically separate entities with distinct spaces.

Despite a general objection to zoological attractions in his idyllic rural landscapes, Olmsted conceded and designed two sections of the Franklin Park's Ante-Park for the inclusion of such attractions. His design and description of both the "Deer Park" and "Long Crouch Woods" stressed naturalistic sites for native animals. Primarily due to poor site conditions (e.g., rocky and thin soil), he planned the 18-acre "Deer Park" as a "range for a small herd to be seen from the Greeting." In planning "Long Crouch Woods," Olmsted called for a 20-acre, "rambling ground...to

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[57] FLO and Vaux, "Report on the provision for zoological collections in Manhattan Square," original from *Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Central Park*, reprinted in *FYLA 2*, 500-503; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 340-349. Manhattan Square is the current site of the American Museum of Natural History.

[58] *FYLA 2*, 85.

be held to lease to a suitable organization for a Zoological Garden."[59] He believed that the displaying animals of the local environment would better serve the public than displaying more exotic animals that were circus cast-offs confined to cages. In a letter to the curator of the Museum of the Boston Society of Natural History, he claimed that, "a child would enjoy more peeping into an old rabbit warren than staring into a cage of sulky lions."[60] Olmsted's insistence on native animals may seem boring when compared to the possibility of viewing lions, tigers, and bears, but in a strange way it complements the Olmsted park model, whereby, he emphasized the beauty and interesting qualities of the local environment. Despite Olmsted's best efforts to minimize the intrusion, the park commissioners hired Shurcliff in 1910 to reinvent portions of the Ante-Park by constructing a traditional zoological park in its place.

By the early twentieth-century the Boston park commissioners were anxious to increase attendance in the parks of the Emerald Necklace, especially Franklin Park. At 527 acres, Franklin Park represented a substantial amount of valuable real estate that was being underutilized despite its beauty. In 1910, the quest to increase park attendance led the park commissioners to propose the idea of developing alternative recreative attractions to the passive recreation offered at Franklin Park. The commissioners discussed adding an aquarium, gardens, aviaries, or other animal attractions.[61] The commissioners settled on the creation of a zoological park and garden in Franklin Park, and hired Dr. William T. Hornady, director of the New York Zoological Park, to advise the commissioners and review the plans for the zoo.[62] Shurcliff's 1910 plan for the zoo occupied a significant amount of Olmsted's Ante-Park and featured the Bears' Dens, the Bird House and Flying

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[59] FLO, *Notes*, 59 and 65.

[60] FLO as cited in Zaitzevsky *Frederick Law Olmsted*, p. 234, n. 50.

[61] City doc. no. 25-1910, 7.

[62] City of Boston, *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks of the Year Ending January 31, 1911* (City doc. no. 25-1911), 10-11. Coincidentally, Hornady was one of three individuals who came come together in 1889 to lay out the plans for the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C. He was joined by Samuel Langley, Secretary of the Smithsonian, and FLO.

Cage, the Elephant House, the Lion House, and collections of deer, bison and elk, ducks, camels, and various other animals (Figure 5.9-5.12).[63] Shurcliff's plan, with its focus on attractions and entertainment, stood in stark contrast to Olmsted's plan for the Ante-Park.

In his 1910 plan, Shurcliff confined all zoo construction to the Ante-Park, thus keeping the Country Park for passive recreation just as Olmsted's design intended. In 1911, the first year of zoo construction, Olmsted's Refectory building was transformed into a temporary holding area with thirteen cages for newly arrived animals waiting for enclosures to be completed. During this first year of construction, Shurcliff emphasized the completion of the deer park, the bear dens, and the aquatic birdhouse. The deer park simply housed a variety of ungulates, including deer, elk, and bison, suited to the environment and not needing accommodations in the winter months. Shurcliff's plan called for the construction of five bear dens of "an imposing character," each with a pool in Long Crouch Woods.[64] Beeches and oaks were planted among the openings of older trees to provide shade for the concourse in front of the bear dens. When the zoo opened in October 4, 1912, the dens housed a collection of four polar bears, four Russian brown bears, three grizzly bears, three black bears, two brown bears, and was awaiting the arrival of four moon bears from Asia.[65] Shurcliff designed an expansive flying cage, 190 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 60 feet high for the aquatic birds.[66] Shurcliff's designed all animal cages to be viewed only from the front with the "sides and rear being planted to form a background suitable to display the animals to the best advantage."[67]

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[63] City doc. no. 25-1911, 10-11; City of Boston, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks of the Year Ending January 31, 1913* (City doc. no. 25-1913), 27-28; City of Boston, *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks of the Year Ending January 31, 1913* (City doc. no. 25-1914), 7-9; Arthur Shurcliff, "The Boston Park System" reprinted in *Two Special Reports of the Park Department, 1924 and 1925,* Franklin Park Coalition Bulletin (Sept 1981), 6-7.

[64] City of Boston, *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks for the Year Ending January 31, 1912* (City doc. no. 25-1912), 12.

[65] City doc. no. 25-1913, 27.

[66] City doc. no. 25-1912, 12.

[67] Shurcliff to Peabody, 17.

**Figure 5.9.** Zoo visitors peering into a bear's den, c. 1914. Source: Library of Congress.

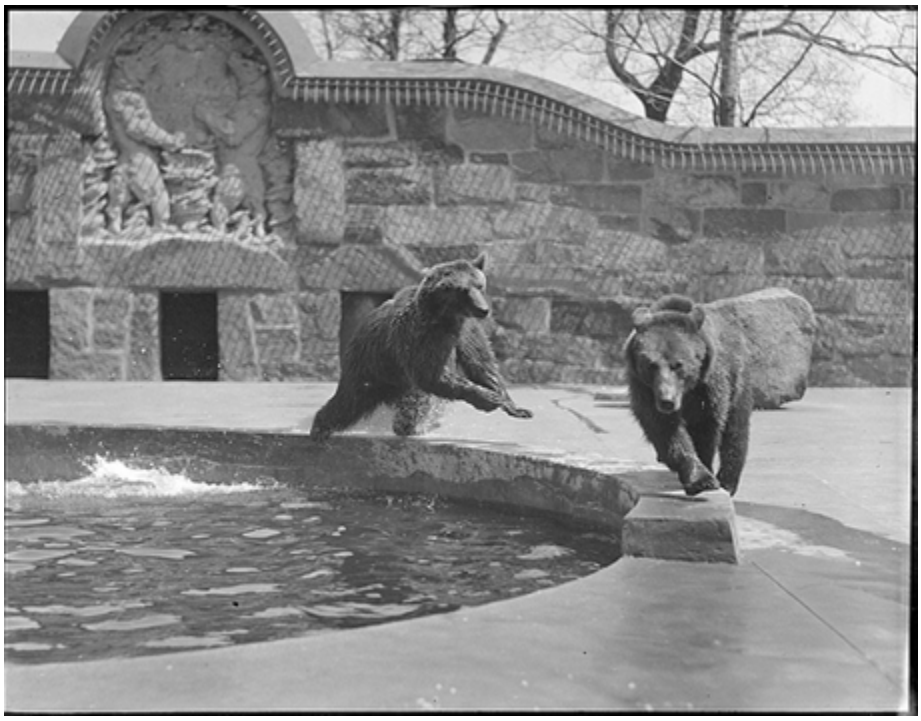

**Figure 5.10.** Grizzly bears in the Franklin Park Zoo, c. 1929. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leslie Jones Collection.

**Figure 5.11.** Entrance to the birdhouse, Franklin Park Zoo, no date. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Division.


**Figure 5.12.** Postcard representation of the aquatic flying cage in Franklin Park Zoo, c. 1915. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Division.

The zoo was an immediate, and a tremendous, success. On Monday, October 27, 1912, the attendants at each entrance counted a total of 27,445 visitors between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00 pm.[68] The success of the bear dens prompted John T. Benson, director of the zoo to comment that "the interest which [the bear dens have] aroused in the public and the great hold which a 'zoo' has on the popular mind are made clearly evident by the immense crowds which are daily attracted to Franklin Park." Furthermore, Benson argued, "unless all signs fail, we may well expect with further development of the Zoological Garden, that Franklin Park will once again come into its own."[69] The success of the native animal collections, prompted zoo officials to add exotic animals to its collections, and the zoo acquired animals typically found in a zoo: camels, elephants, kangaroos, lions, tigers, leopards, zebras, sable antelope, primates, and numerous exotic birds.[70] By 1920, the zoo housed 424 individual bird specimens from 157 different species, as well as 111 individual mammal specimens from 41 different species.[71] In 1925, park keepers estimated that 50,000 people visited the zoo on Sunday, April 26, the first day of daylight saving.[72] The park commissioners reported on the efficacy of their 'centers of attraction' approach by stating that the zoo proved to be the "main attraction" in Franklin Park, and that "the enormous crowds of visitors show [an] ever-increasing public interest in the institution."[73] In 1928, they noted that the zoo "still draws more than its quota of the visitors to Franklin Park. The unending stream of people attending these

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[68] City doc. no. 25-1913, 27.

[69] City doc. no. 25-1913, 12-13.

[70] In 1914, a circus offered to sell the city three retired elephants for the zoo. During the 1914 "Pennies for Elephants" campaign, schoolchildren collected pennies and spare change and raised the $6,000 necessary to purchase the elephants—Mollie, Waddy, and Tony. Boys and girls held "elephant parties," and movie theaters held "elephant days" to help raise the funds. On June 6, 1914, the city presented the elephants to 50,000 children at Fenway Park. See: *Boston Post*, "50,000 children shriek welcome to elephants," 7 Jun 1914.

[71] City of Boston, *Forty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Department of Parks of the Year Ending January 31, 1920* (City doc. no. 22-1920), 18.

[72] City of Boston—Park Department, *Fifty-First Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Eleven Months Ending December 31, 1925* (City doc. no. 20-1926), 3.

[73] City of Boston—Park Department, *Fifty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending December 31, 1926* (City doc. no. 20-1927), 4.

attractions in good weather offers great encouragement to us who direct and promote this feature of the department."[74]

Through the 1920s the park commission expanded the zoo to keep attracting more visitors. However, the zoo was not the only successful center of attraction in Franklin Park; the golf course laid out in the Country Park drew a significant number of visitors as well.

*The Franklin Park Golf Course*

By insisting that the serene landscape of the Country Park be left open and without intrusion, Olmsted broke with design tradition when he declined to use architectural or ornamental features with which to draw the visitor's visual interest.[75] He knew his vision for the Country Park might be characterized as "tame and homely" since it included "no elements of scenery...that would induce sensational effects."[76] In the Country Park, Olmsted banished all forms of ornamentation insisting that, "nothing shall be built, nothing set up, nothing planted, as a decorative feature; nothing for the gratification of curiosity, nothing for the advancement or popularization of science. These objects are provided for suitably in the Public Garden, the Arboretum, and other grounds of the city. No other city in America has as good arrangements for them."[77]

Olmsted designed the Country Park as a peaceful meadow into which park visitors could immerse themselves in serene and tranquil pastoral scenes. He eschewed any element that might "interrupt or disturb the unity, breadth, quiet, and harmony" of the broader open meadows.[78] Most importantly "cheap, tawdry, cockneyfied garden toys" that were sometimes "placed in parks

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[74] City of Boston—Park Department, *Fifty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending December 31, 1927* (City doc. no. 19-1927), 3.

[75] von Hoffman, "Of greater lasting consequence."

[76] FLO, *Notes*, 46.

[77] *Ibid*, 53.

[78] *Ibid*, 63.

incongruously with all their rural character" were to be avoided at all costs.[79] Even going so far as to believe that lawn mowers represented a kind of urban elegance unfit for the Country Park, he insisted that the turf be kept short by flocks of sheep (Figure 5.13). The openness served the fundamental purpose of providing quietness for all visitors since "a grateful serenity may be enjoyed in it by many thousand people at a time, if they are not drawn into throngs by spectacular attractions, but allowed to distribute themselves as they are otherwise likely to do."[80] However, the openness and the lack of attractions ultimately proved to be the downfall of the naturalistic design as Bostonians began to appropriate this space for other uses—mainly golf.

The introduction of golf into the Country Park had a drastic impact on the pastoral landscape of Franklin Park (Figure 5.14). Golfers began using the meadows of Franklin Park as early as the 1890s. In 1890, George Wright, a local baseball hero turned sporting goods merchant, received permission to set up an informal golf course in the Country Park for the purpose of offering golf lessons.[81] Only after several instances of "near-combat" between golfers and park visitors did the park commission approve the construction of formal 9-hole course and assume municipal control of the course in 1896.[82] Writing in a popular sporting magazine in 1899, George Sargent suggested that part of the reason the park commission capitulated to the demand for golf

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[79] *Ibid*, 53.

[80] *Ibid*, 54.

[81] Stephen Hardy, *How Boston Played: Sport, Recreation, and Community, 1865-1915* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1982), 181. A baseball Hall-of-Famer, George Wright was the captain of the Boston Red Stockings during the 1870s. As charter members of the National League in 1876, the Red Stockings should not be confused with the Boston Red Sox, an American League team. After a series of name changes (Beaneaters and Braves) and moves to other cities, the Red Stockings became the Atlanta Braves in 1966. While Wright played for Boston the team won six championships. Wright, a career .302 hitter, was part of the second induction-class into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1937 along with Connie Mack, Tris Speaker, and Cy Young (Source: http://baseballhall.org/hof/wright-george, Date Accessed 5 Aug 2011). Currently, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department operates the George Wright Golf Course in the Hyde Park section of Boston. The course opened in 1938 and was built using WPA funds. Source: http://www.cityofbostongolf.com/golf/proto/cityofboston/ (accessed 5 Aug 2011).

[82] Hardy, *How Boston Played*, 181.

**Figure 5.13.** Sheep bound for home in Franklin Park, c. 1930. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leon H. Abdalian Collection.

**Figure 5.14.** Golf links in Franklin Park, c. 1903. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

was that two of the members of the board were golfers.[83] While baseball was the most popular sport played in the city, golf, at only fifteen cents per round, quickly became a popular activity in Franklin Park. In 1904, eight years after creating the 9-hole course, 32,000 golfers had played the course.[84]

As golf increased in popularity so did disagreements between golfers and the park's other users. One notable critic of golf in the serenity of the Country Park was John Olmsted, who made his feelings known in a paper delivered at the 1905 summer meeting of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in Boston.[85] John having had "a more or less responsible share in, and at all times took part in the designing of [the Boston municipal parks]" read his paper the day before leading a field trip through them. His presentation allowed him to highlight some essential points of design, which would have likely helped those on the field trip understand what they would see in the parks.[86] John eloquently stated his opposition to the golf course:

> The introduction of golf-playing is an unwise sacrifice of the pleasure and comfort of many in the quiet enjoyment of the park. Not only are the attractive and harmless sheep driven out, but the gently rolling slope, with the picturesque slight roughness incident to sheep pasturage, and so appropriately suggestive, to the nerve-wearied visitor, of the peace and quiet of the real country, is replaced by the hard, artificially smooth surface made by constant clipping and rolling, and, what is worse, the nerves of the visitor are still further irritated by the anxiety as to being hit by the hard and swiftly driven balls. It seems too bad that a few scores of people should be allowed practically to monopolize a hundred acres, or perhaps two hundred acres, of the most beautiful park pastures, excluding, or at any rate causing discomfort to, thousands of other visitors.[87]

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[83] George H. Sargent, "Golfing around the hub," *Outing: An Illustrated Monthly Magazine of Sport, Travel and Recreation* 34(1899), 131.

[84] City of Boston—Department of Parks, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1906* (City doc. no. 28-1906), 20.

[85] In 1899, the ASLA was formed with John and Rick Olmsted being two of the founding members. Both brothers went on to serve as President of the organization.

[86] JCO, "The Boston park system," 42.

[87] JCO, "The Boston park system," 53-54.

Writer and golfer George Sargent presented a humorous account of such an interaction:

> One golfer who played at the Park tells of a choleric old gentleman who persisted in walking directly in the line of play on the long hole. "Fore!" shouted in stentorian tones, had no effect upon him. So the player waited until the old gentleman was well ahead, and then, with a cry of "Look out!" he drove the ball, which landed almost at the visitor's feet. The old man walked on, and, after another wait, the player repeated the experience. On the third stroke the old gentleman turned, and declared he would have the golfer arrested if he persisted in driving that ball at his head. The golfer explained, as well as he could, that he was trying to make that hole in five, and he merely wished his rights. "That's all right," exclaimed the old man fiercely, "but don't you dare hit me!"[88]

Since park visitors wishing to use Franklin Park as Olmsted envisioned tended to visit the park in greater numbers on weekends and public holidays, the commissioners decided to close the course on those days to avoid these kinds of interactions.[89]

Despite these kinds of interactions, the popularity of the sport grew and its popularity began to create congestion on the course. In 1901, the number of golfers decreased by 22.5 percent from 40,000 to slightly more than 31,000 due, in part, to the slow moving crowds of novice golfers. Therefore, the park commission decided to build a 6-hole course for beginners while reserving the 9-hole course for more experienced players, in part to alleviate the congestion on the links.[90] After completing the second course, the total attendance rose to 47,469, a 35 percent increase.[91] But, by 1915, even this system began to fail and golfers experience significant congestion at the tees as more experienced golfers turned out to play. The commissioners deemed that in future it would be

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[88] Sargent, "Golfing around the hub," 132.

[89] City of Boston—Park Department, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1901* (City doc. no. 27-1901), 8.

[90] City of Boston—Park Department, *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1902* (City doc. no. 28-1902), 11; City of Boston—Park Department, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1903* (City doc. no. 28-1903), 19.

[91] City Doc. no. 28-1903, 19.

necessary to expand the 9-hole course to 18-holes while retaining the beginner's course.[92] Except for a short stint when the commission closed the course from 1917 to 1919 to allow space for victory gardens, and from 1919 to 1921 while the turf was reseeded, the golf course flourished.[93] Increasing attendance and demand encouraged the park commissioners to finally authorize the construction of a new 18-hole course and clubhouse, which opened on April 24, 1923.[94] The construction of this new 18-hole course signified the transition from the golf course as a 'center of attraction' to more of a recreational facility, representative of the mid-twentieth efforts to modernize urban parks.

The success of the zoo and the golf course reassured the park commissioners about their 'centers of attraction' solution. However, the increases in zoo visitors and golfers necessitated a new approach to park planning. The centers of attraction solution worked to draw in visitors, but the new approach focused on providing recreation and entertainment on a large scale. The steady encroachment of recreation on the serenity of Olmsted's naturalistic design meant tremendous changes in coming decades as the parks of the Emerald Necklace were transformed into recreational facilities.

**Modernization, Recreation and the Technocratic Park**

Beginning in the 1930s and continuing through the 1960s, older American parks were transformed and new parks built to provide facilities needed in the modern park—swimming pools, baseball and

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[92] City of Boston—Park Department, *Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1915* (City doc. no. 22-1915), 10.

[93] City of Boston—Park Department, *Forty-Forth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1919* (City doc. no. 22-1919), 3; *Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1921* (City doc. no. 19-1921), 5; *Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1923* (City doc. no. 19-1923), 3.

[94] City of Boston—Park Department, *Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending January 31, 1924* (City doc. no. 19-1924), 57.

football fields, golf course, running tracks, basketball courts, hard tennis courts, playground and exercise equipment, field houses and other indoor facilities, picnic tables, bleachers, paved walking paths, and roads and parking areas. Attractions such as zoos, arboretums, museums, gardens, and art centers were built, updated, and expanded to attract visitors to parks. In the modern park era, the landscape architect no longer held the influential role in shaping the park landscape. Instead, they became heavily programmed spaces administered by park technocrats and recreation professionals.

In post-WWII America, the population shifted to the suburbs where people owned their own patches of green space. Therefore parks required large-scale facilities to meet public's recreational needs. Sociologist Galen Cranz noted that "recreation" became the buzzword of this era of park design. Since "recreation" was inclusive of all forms of activity, park commissioners began to acquire land for "recreational purposes" and not just for a playground or a small park, but for any form of recreational use they deemed necessary.[95] Parks became highly utilitarian entities, with the sole purpose of providing spaces for all forms of recreational activities. Park programming became more professionalized, technocratic, and structured during this period. Nowhere was this shift to professional park planning more evident than in New York City under the planning leadership of Robert Moses.

As New York City's "master builder," Robert Moses was one America's most polarizing public figures. While never elected to public office, as the head of numerous New York City and state public authorities, he was perhaps the single most influential person in shaping the landscape of modern New York City.[96] Moses began his public service career as an assistant to New York

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[95] Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*, 103.

[96] I am limiting my discussion of Moses primarily to the issue of modernization and parks. While certainly insightful, his impact on transportation and housing do not belong in this work. For a discussion of Moses' work

Governor Al Smith in the 1920s. During his long career (he served under five mayors and six governors) Moses headed up a variety of public agencies including the Long Island State Park Commission, New York City Parks Department, New York City Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority (TBTA).[97] Under the New Deal, Moses secured funding from the Works Progress Administration and Civilian Conservation Corps with which he constructed large-scale public recreation facilities, like eleven enormous swimming pools each capable of accommodating 5,000 swimmers, and drawing nearly 1.8 million visitors during the summer of 1936.[98]

During the 1930s, while the cash-strapped city and state struggled to engage in large public works projects, tolls from the TBTA provided Moses with access to tens of millions of dollars to continue to fund his large-scale projects.[99] As the city's "master builder," Moses was responsible for thirteen bridges, two tunnels, 637 miles of parkways and expressways, 658 playgrounds, eleven giant swimming pools, seventeen state parks, dozens of new and renovated city parks, two world's fairs, and clearing over 300 acres of city land to construct towers containing more than 28,000 new apartments (à la LeCorbusier). He oversaw the construction of Lincoln Center, the United Nations, Shea Stadium, Jones Beach, and the zoos in Central Park and Prospect Park, as well as those on Staten Island and in Queens.[100] In describing the reach of Moses, journalist and urban planner Anthony Flint notes that "any New Yorker or visitor to the city has at one time or another driven

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unrelated to parks, see: Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Knopf, 1974); Alice Sparberg Alexiou, *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* (New York: Random House, 2009); Roberta Brandes Gratz, *The Battle for Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs* (Philadelphia: Nation Books, 2010).

[97] In *Wrestling with Moses*, Flint noted that Moses once simultaneously held twelve different city and state jobs (xvi).

[98] Marta Gutman, "Race, place, and play," 532.

[99] Caro, *The Power Broker*.

[100] Flint, *Wrestling with Moses*, xv.

down, walked through, sat in, or sailed into something that Moses created."[101]

The ideological shift in park design, and the influence of Moses on the direction of the future of public parks, is most visible in Central Park. Central Park suffered from neglect almost once it was completed. There was no one singular reason for the decline of the park, but rather its decline resulted from a general lack of interest, care, maintenance, and funding. In 1934, New York City Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, impressed with Moses' ability to secure federal funding for city projects, hired him to begin the task of cleaning up the park.[102]

Moses did more than just clean up Central Park; he redesigned parts of the park to fit with his modern emphasis on active recreation, order, and efficiency. By 1940, under his watch, the city created 13 new baseball fields and 19 new playgrounds in Central Park. Moses also employed over 30 staff members dedicated to meeting the recreational needs of park visitors. They provided a bustling schedule of activities, including: folk dancing, kite flying, ping pong, softball, baseball, football, field hockey, horseshoes, shuffleboard, volleyball, lawn bowling, tennis, croquet, and roller and ice skating. In providing and improving the recreational spaces in Central Park, Moses emphasized order, efficiency, and standardization to help build more recreational spaces and to keep construction and maintenance costs down.[103]

Where Olmsted went to great lengths to hide the presence of the human influence in creating Central Park, Moses, indicative of the urban technocratic approach of the era, went in the opposite direction.[104] Moses employed the most efficient materials and methods possible, generally relying on the use of industrial materials rather than hand-made or artisan ones. For example, where

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[101] Flint, *Wrestling with Moses*, xvi.
[102] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 448.
[103] *Ibid*, 451.
[104] For a discussion of the technocratic approach of urban professionals, such as planners, real estate developers, and politicians, see: Light, *The Nature of Cities*.

Olmsted may have used a rock wall or iron fence to separate spaces, Moses used a concrete wall and had a "chain-link fence mentality."[105] The new playgrounds in Central Park had asphalt and concrete surfaces, which Moses claimed were easier and cheaper to maintain. He realigned and straightened existing park roads to better accommodate cars. Under his leadership, the park department painted its equipment a uniform color, employees wore matching uniforms, and the department standardized the design of ancillary features like fences, signage, wastebaskets, and most significantly—park benches.[106] Cranz claimed that during this time the park bench came to symbolize the modern urban park. Through standardization and industrialization, rustic wooden benches were replaced with ones combining concrete supports with wooden seats, making these benches easily reproducible in large quantities and easily installed "wherever a place needed to be defined as a park" (Figures 5.15 and 5.16)[107]

Moses, while singular in his reach, power, and influence, was not unique in his focus on recreation and technocratic approaches to park planning. Just as Moses' park department embraced the utilitarian use of space at the expense of the Olmsted vision for Central Park, so too, did the park commissioners in Boston as they renovated the Franklin Park Zoo and implemented a new programmatic emphasis on mass recreation.

Through the 1920s the Boston park commission expanded the Franklin Park Zoo to keep attracting more visitors, and in doing so relied on the mid-century triad of recreation planning—order, efficiency, and standardization—to accommodate the increasing crowds. As the crowds in the zoo and other parts of the Emerald Necklace increased so, too, did the damage to zoo and park grounds, which necessitated increases in park maintenance.

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[105] Kalfus, *Frederick Law Olmsted*, 327.
[106] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 452-453.
[107] Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*, 125.

**Figure 5.15.** Rustic park benches on Hagbourne Hill, Franklin Park c. 1894. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Figure 5.16.** Modern park benches in Boston Common, c. 1930. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leslie Jones Collection.

Vandals killed a kangaroo. Four raccoons were stoned to death. A drunken man beat an ostrich to death. These events prompted the park commissioners to declare "the death of animals after dark by vandals is serious enough to warrant the enclosing of the entire Zoo with a permanent fence."[108]

In addition to protecting the animals in the collection, the use of boundary fencing was essential in creating "desirable controls" by reducing the amount of cross-cutting and funneling visitors in and out at turnstiles.[109] To keep costs down, the park commission paved formal walkways, replaced wood with concrete, and used fencing in much the same manner that Moses did in New York City. In 1927, the crushed stone macadam parallel walkways in the Greeting, each measuring 2000 feet long by 25 feet wide, were resurfaced with concrete. The park commissioners called this new concrete walkway "a great improvement for the throngs who traverse the Greeting to visit the Zoo."[110] Likewise, walkways in the Fens, Olmsted Park, the Riverway, the Common, and the Arboretum were resurfaced with concrete in the hopes that people would stay on the walkways, preventing "thousands of visitors from roaming over the grass areas."[111] Additionally, the park commission placed permanent seating at the zoo entrances at the Greeting and at Blue Hill Avenue primarily for resting, but with a secondary purpose of preventing short-cuts which "very much disfigure the appearance of the park."[112] As wooden fixtures, like planters and benches, rotted and decayed, they were replaced with more "permanent and indestructible" concrete ones.[113] The concrete floors of the bear dens and other animal enclosures were designed with a "naturalistic

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[108] City doc. no. 19-1927, 4; City doc. no 22-1920, 17.

[109] Shurcliff to Peabody, 20.

[110] City doc. no. 19-1928, 3-4.

[111] City doc. no. 22-1920, 13; City of Boston—Park Department, *Fifty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners for the Year Ending December 31, 1929* (City doc. no. 19-1930), 2-5.

[112] City doc. no. 22-1920, 13.

[113] City doc. no. 19-1928, 4.

**Figure 5.17.** Rock garden, with rose garden in background in Sargent's Field section of Franklin Park, c. 1936. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leon H. Abdalian Collection.

surface."[114] Shurcliff, in ways similar to the design of the Fenway Rose Garden, also brought ornamentation to the sylvan avenue of the Greeting by placing new features, like water fountains, to help create new civic spaces for congregation.

As part of the zoo expansion in the 1920s, Shurcliff designed significant plantings adjacent to the Greeting. In particular, he planned for 3 ornamental gardens: a rock garden flanked by an herbaceous garden and a rose garden (Figure 5.17). In the herbaceous garden, he simply continued a planting scheme the park commissioners had already begun, one that arranged herbaceous plants in a "naturalistic way" and relied on shrubbery and trees to provide the background.[115] The rose garden in Sargent's Field materialized due to a decision Boston Mayor James Michael Curley to

[114] Shurcliff to Peabody, 17.

[115] City of Boston, "Municipal rose garden," *City Record: Official Publication of the City of Boston* 14(12 Aug 1922), 908.

reject a $300,000 proposal for a rose garden in the Arnold Arboretum in favor of a $100,000 proposal for one in Franklin Park.[116] Shurcliff designed an oval-shaped rose garden with a trellis at the "margins to display climbing and pillar roses." The center of the garden was to be sunken with the outer margins "raised about three feet higher than the central portion to give visitors a good view of the interior."[117] But the efficiency of planning in the modern, rationalistic park era crept into the design, and in 1924 Shurcliff described the details of the oval, trellises, and the outer margins in a report for the park commission. According to Shurcliff, visitors were to approach the central, sunken part of the oval by four concrete flights of stairs. The trellises, "resting on a curtain wall of concrete, and interrupted by massive concrete piers," enclosed the garden. Artful "concrete niches and arches" were built to "give points of ascent and provide gateways" at the four cardinal points of the oval. Above all else, Shurcliff emphasized the efficiency, standardization, and modernization of the rationalistic park era by ensuring that since "permanent construction [was] used throughout the garden…it cannot fall into ruin."[118]

By reserving the Country Park as the rustic space Olmsted intended and confining the zoo to the Ante-Park, once again, Shurcliff personified the shift in cultural attitudes associated with the transition between from the romantic to rationalistic park. He seemed aware of the conflict between his zoo and the Olmstedian landscape park:

> Everyone who is interested in the design of Franklin Park as a work of art should study the park itself at all seasons of the year and should read the special report upon it by its designer Frederick Law Olmsted, and published as a city document in 1886. A very heavy responsibility rests upon anyone who may propose to modify the

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[116] City of Boston, "Municipal rose garden." James Michael Curley served four terms as mayor of Boston (1914-1918, 1922-1926, 1930-1934, and 1946-1950). With the support of the Irish community, Curley was elected to his last term while facing two federal indictments for bribery and mail fraud. In 1947, Curley served a five-month sentence in federal prison.

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] Shurcliff, "The Boston park system," reprinted in *Two Special Reports of the Park Department, 1924 and 1925*, Franklin Park Coalition Bulletin (Sept 1981), 7-8.

> design of this park, which was planned after devoted study by the greatest master which our country has produced in the field of landscape architecture.[119]

Shurcliff argued that any future expansion of the zoo must be confined to the "topographical and landscape bounds" that he defined in his 1924 zoo expansion plan. Otherwise, future expansion of the zoo might encroach upon the Country Park and "if amusements which are appropriate to the Zoo were allowed to find a place in the heart of Franklin Park, very serious harm would result." His 1924 design included heavy and high screening plantations "to protect the landscape of the Country Park from the irrelevant and, therefore disturbing attractions" of the zoo.[120] Regardless of the attempts to honor Olmsted's design, one thing was certainly clear, the scale of the zoo and the intensified land use went beyond anything Olmsted intended or envisioned for the space.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Boston's park department emphasized the recreative dimensions of the Emerald Necklace and the rest of the city's parks. The emphasis was important enough that the department officially changed its name in May 1954 to the "Parks and Recreation Department."[121] By the close of the 1950s, the department was responsible for the maintenance of 2,725 acres of park and playground space, 128 playgrounds, 47 field houses, 20 parks of varying size, 73 baseball fields, 102 tennis courts, 24 football fields, skating rinks that accommodated more than 250,000 skaters, 13 indoor recreation centers, 16 public bath houses, 2 eighteen-hole public golf courses, 3 public bathing beaches, 2 indoor and 2 outdoor swimming pools, 85 public squares, 14 greenhouses, 108 miles of parkways, 131 acres of ponds and rivers, and the care of all trees on city

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[119] Arthur A. Shurcliff, "The future development of the park and playground system of the city," reprinted in *Two Special Reports of the Park Department, 1924 and 1925,* Franklin Park Coalition Bulletin (Sept 1981), 14.

[120] Shurcliff, "The Boston park system," 6.

[121] City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Department for the Year Ending December 31, 1954* (City doc. no. 16-1955). Also see City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Department for the Year Ending December 31, 1958* (City doc. no. 16-1959), 2, for a history of the Parks and Recreation Department.

streets.[122] In these spaces, the department organized citywide baseball, basketball, and football programs of varying athletic ability. Each season the Senior Park Football League had hundreds of thousands spectators and held its championship at the Boston College stadium.[123] Additionally, the department organized Swimming competitions, a water ballet program for synchronized swimming, learn to swim programs, folk dancing for a variety of ethnic groups, and Junior Olympics track meets.[124] During the summers, the department ran a 10-week program in which they staffed 125 play spaces with college students of "leadership" quality to direct sports, games, crafts, and music programs.[125]

As recreation became a major focus in the twentieth century, the popularity of baseball grew. In her examination of the history of the American playground movement, geographer Elizabeth Gagen notes that gendered play in park spaces, with boys and girls playing in their designated spaces, amounted to normative performances of gender and sexuality. As an example, she highlighted the spaces used by older boys for baseball to show how the promotion of the proper notions of male and female behaviors through regulated activities had socio-spatial consequences.[126] The sport of baseball, according to Gagen, promoted teamwork, loyalty, conformity, and obedience to rules and the coaches. Baseball, not only helped to prevent crime and truancy, but, as historian Dominick Cavallo argued, it produced moral Americans: "The ideal team player was the blueprint for the ideal citizen."[127]

The park commissioners recognized that baseball was the most popular sport in the city, and

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[122] City doc. no. 16-1959, 2

[123] *Ibid*, 3.

[124] City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Department for the Year Ending December 31, 1957* (City doc. no. 16-1958), 5-6.

[125] City doc. no. 16-1959, 5.

[126] Elizabeth Gagen, "Playing the part: performing gender in America's playgrounds" in *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, Learning,* eds., Sarah Holloway and Gill Valentine *(*London: Routledge), 213-229.

[127] Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 89.

that popularity only grew after the construction of Fenway Park and the Red Sox first World Series victory in 1912.[128] In 1929, the city's parks and recreation department used the ball fields in the parks throughout the city to form the Boston Park League to provide an high quality amateur baseball league.[129] Local individuals, businesses, and churches sponsored teams, and the city hoped that the teams would represent most of the city's neighborhoods. Tremendously successful in the 1930s and 1940s, the league drew 3,000 to 5,000 spectators to watch regular season games, and up to 12,000 for playoff games.[130] While baseball may have been the most popular sport being played in the city parks, the fact that it could be played in almost any neighborhood park that met the spatial requirements, meant that baseball didn't have the dramatic impact on Olmsted's landscape that the expansion of the Franklin Park golf course did.

The expansion of the Franklin Park golf course typified the recreational facility of this modern park era. The popularity of golf in Franklin Park was partly due to the notion that golf was typically associated with wealthy recreation. As the second public course built in the United States, golfing in the beautifully designed Country Park allowed anyone who could afford the greens fee the opportunity to participate in this activity typically reserved for the well-heeled members of Boston's leisure class playing in The Country Club at Brookline.[131] While playing this elitist game on the public course in Franklin Park, a duffer could "cut divots to his heart's content."[132] In constructing the new 18-hole facility in 1923, the park commission implemented a new fee structure allowing

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[128] Glenn Stout, *Fenway 1912: The Birth of a Ballpark, a Championship Season, and Fenway's Remarkable First Year* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011).

[129] City doc. no. 28-1906, 20.

[130] Boston Park League, "Park league information." Available from: http://www.bostonparkleague.org/about.shtml (accessed 5 Aug 2011).

[131] The first public golf course appeared one year earlier in Van Cortland Park in the Bronx. Note the name of the golf club in Brookline—The Country Club at Brookline—for it represents the elitism of its members. As the nation's first country club it is *The* Country Club, which signifies its exclusivity. Even the Club's application of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, the state's first African-American to occupy the State House, was rejected and "blackballed." See: Deval Patrick, *A Reason to Believe: Lessons from an Improbable Life* (New York: Random House, 2011), 176.

[132] Sargent, "Golfing around the hub," 131.

people to purchase an annual membership permit for ten dollars, or choose a daily permit for just one dollar. In its first season, the course, which had cost $11,206 to construct, generated $19,676 in revenue from the fees associated with 8,695 annual permits, 10,367 daily permits, and 614 locker rentals.[133]

While these golf facilities marred Olmsted's broad open meadows, in one respect they did fulfill his larger goals of exertive recreation and social cohesion. Due to a variety of factors, attendance at the facility waxed and waned through the 1950s. While nearly 75,000 people used the facility in 1929, the number dropped steadily due to the Depression, the opening of the George Wright golf course in 1938, and WWII. However, after the war, attendance began to rebound, in part, due the inclusivity of the facility. In the 1940s and 1950s, when other courses were segregated, people of all races and ethnicities were welcome to play at Franklin Park. In 1939, of the 5,209 golf facilities in existence in America, only twenty, including the course at Franklin Park, were open to blacks.[134] In their history of golf in Franklin Park, Brian DeLacey and Maxwell Carey highlighted the case of a young black man who, in 1941, relocated from Florida, where he could only caddy, to Boston, where he could now golf: "It was like a United Nations. We had blacks, whites, Chinese, Indians, you name it, all in the same club...we played together for years with no problems."[135]

Due to its inclusivity, golf attendance rose steadily through the 1950s, so that by 1959 attendance nearly reached 53,000—more than double the attendance at the start of the decade.[136] The increases in attendance led to increases in golf-associated revenues. In 1959, golf in Franklin

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[133] City doc. no. 19-1923, 3; City doc. no. 19-1924, 33 and 57.

[134] Pete McDaniel, *Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf* (Greenwich, CT: American Golfer, 2000), 59

[135] Brian DeLacey and Maxwell Carey, "America's Public Links Cradle: Boston's Franklin Park" *MassGolfer* (Fall 2000), 20.

[136] City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Park Department for the Year Ending December 31, 1951* (City doc. no. 19-1952), 8; City of Boston, *Annual Report of the Parks and Recreation Department for the Year Ending December 31, 1959* (City doc. no. 16-1960), 13.

Park and the George Wright golf course generated $32,795.50 and $44,061.50, respectively, in revenue associated with the sale of annual permits, daily greens fees, and locker rentals.[137] The city completed major infrastructure improvements in 1967 and re-named the facility the William J. Devine Memorial Golf Course in memory of the recently deceased park commissioner. While golf gradually took over the landscape of the Country Park, and destroyed the serenity of the Olmsted vision, in a strange way, the fact that golfers needed large expanses of open space managed to keep it somewhat rustic in nature. However, the addition of a recreational facility in Franklin Park totally eradicated the rustic Olmstedian qualities of the Playstead and Overlook.

The opening of the 10,000-seat George Robert White Schoolboy Stadium in 1949 forever changed the rustic qualities of Olmsted's thirty-acre playspace. Although Olmsted designed the Playstead specifically to accommodate "schoolboy" sports, he did not plan for any specific games, sports, or equipment; he left it as an open space where children, or their coaches or teachers, could arrange games as needed. Instead of bleachers, Olmsted designed the Overlook, an 800-foot long elevated terrace made from the boulders cleared from the field (Figures 5.18 & 5.19). In typical Olmsted style, these boulders were covered with vines and other vegetation in order to "harmonize it with the natural scenery" and make it "unobtrusive."[138] The existing trees provided much-needed afternoon shade to spectators.

In accommodating the conditions of the site, Olmsted strategically positioned the Overlook on a "barren ledge which would otherwise be disagreeably prominent" so that it faced northeast, meaning that spectators would not have to look directly into the sun.[139] In designing with a particular choreography of views in mind, Olmsted recognized that "it is not an easy matter, in the

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[137] City Doc. no. 16-1960, 13.
[138] FLO, *Notes*, 57.
[139] *Ibid*, 57.

**Figure 5.18.** The Playstead and Overlook, c. 1894. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

**Figure 5.19.** The Overlook in the Playstead, c. 1894. Source: Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University.

immediate outskirts of a great city, to make a provision of scenery which shall be so far rural in character and pleasing in effect," therefore, he capitalized on the sylvan views of the Blue Hills that the Overlook provided.[140]

He designed a building upon the terrace to provide spectators an escape from rain showers. The basement housed restrooms, a coatroom, and the park keeper's station. An arched passage in the boulder terrace provided access to the basement from the field. Interestingly, Olmsted incorporated electric lighting into the design for night use as well as day.[141] By 1920, the building upon the Overlook, coincidentally the only building Olmsted ever personally designed, was being used as a police substation, and was destroyed by fire in 1946. Even with the loss of the Overlook, the construction of the White Stadium permanently erased the rustic charm of Olmsted's Playstead.[142]

On September 28, 1949, the city's newest recreational facility opened with a capacity crowd to watch a football game between Roxbury Memorial and Boston Latin high schools.[143] Over the years the facility—its 10,000 seat stadium, track, four baseball fields, two tennis courts, basketball court, green space, and parking lots—has been used by local schools, summer camps, and community groups for track and field, volleyball, soccer, rugby, softball, baseball, basketball, and football on Friday nights. However, as a product of the modern park design era when efficiency, order, and standardization were paramount, White Stadium lacked a sense of character (Figure 5.20). Nothing about the physical appearance, neither its concrete and aluminum bleachers, nor its

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[140] *Ibid*, 46.

[141] *Ibid*, 57-58.

[142] The inclusion of "Schoolboy" in the name of the stadium was surely added to reflect FLO's desire to designate the space as a youth space.

[143] Julie Arrison, *Images of America: Franklin Park* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 50.

**Figure 5.20.** George Robert White Schoolboy Stadium, Franklin Park, 2007.

basketball court in the middle of the asphalt parking lot, made this facility special or unique.[144] In his critique of this period of park design, landscape architect Norman Newton highlighted this facility of "little distinction" as an exemplar of the poor design representative of this period. Mourning the loss of a peaceful meadow and its "quiet" Overlook that had been "pre-empted by a stadium and parking lots," Newton stated that the "area is completely lost in terms of park value, nor has the new work any of the distinction that such a municipal installation deserves, even when built in the wrong place."[145]

[144] This critique is focused solely on the *design* of the space and the structure itself, and is meant to provide a contrast between rationalistic and romantic park design. I recognize that to those using White Stadium it might be a special place since it can be the site of important memories.

[145] Newton, *Design on the Land*, 298.

**Spaces of Neglect**

With a focus on standardization and mass recreation, the recreational facility era of park design profoundly transformed American cities. The standards typical of the recreational facility expressed themselves in a basic municipal park "package" (e.g., athletic fields with concrete and aluminum bleachers, expansive parking lots, pavement or concrete for roadways, bicycle paths, basketball courts, etc., and brick or concrete recreational buildings) that was repeated in city after city.[146] At the height of this park era, landscape architect Garrett Eckbo declared "American park design is more limited, conventional, stereotyped, repetitive, and resistant to innovation in form than any other area of design."[147] To critics such as Newton and Eckbo, the result of simply following convention and resisting innovation was the creation of parks full of White Stadiums, concrete bathrooms, or parking lots—boring, repetitive, and uninteresting park landscapes. Ultimately, the "resulting banality of urban parks from this era...dulled our ability to think of [parks] as potentially interesting, amusing, engaging, stimulating, or exciting," and parks became neglected spaces.[148]

Contrary to a common misconception regarding the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of modern urban parks, the municipal park package may have made for more efficient decision-making (and possibly boring park landscapes) but it actually increased the cost of maintaining park landscapes. The naturalistic landscape parks designed and created by Olmsted came with a significant investment of capital to acquire land and produce a park, but once completed they cost relatively little to maintain. The costs to produce the Fens and the Riverway were high due to the extensive engineering necessary to address the flooding and sewage issues along the Muddy River. The cost to produce Franklin Park was also a relatively large amount due mainly to its size, but since

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146 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 122.
147 Garrett Eckbo as cited in Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 122.
148 Galen Cranz, "Changing roles of urban parks: From pleasure ground to open space," *Landscape* 22(1978), 16.

the design required relatively little engineering (because of Olmsted's site selection), the cost per acre was significantly lower than in the Fens or the Riverway. Under the Olmsted model, the cost to maintain the parks of the Emerald Necklace was low, relative to the acquisition and construction costs. For example the total cost to maintain Franklin Park for the year 1901 was $56,389, or $107 per acre, compared to $4,507 per acre to construct the park. But as the parks became more efficient and standardized in the 1940s and 1950s, the cost to maintain these parks rose significantly—due in part to the age of the parks and the changes that had been made to the original Olmsted designs (Tables 5.1 and 5.2).

| Park | No. of Acres | Construction Costs, 1875-1903 ($) | Cost/Acre ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fens | 115 | 2,248,674 | 19,554 |
| Riverway | 40 | 667,371 | 16,684 |
| Olmsted Park[149] | 180 | 726,783 | 4,038 |
| Arnold Arboretum | 223 | 380,352 | 1,706 |
| Franklin Park | 527 | 2,375,143 | 4,507 |

**Table 5.1.** Construction costs from October 8, 1875, to January 31, 1903. Source: City doc. no. 28-1903, 54-55.

| | Maintenance costs per acre ($) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Park** | **1895** | **1896** | **1897** | **1898** | **1899** | **1900** | **1901** | **1950** |
| Fens | 122 | 121 | 125 | 98 | 119 | 126 | 142 | 429 |
| Riverway | 155 | 212 | 201 | 207 | 177 | 247 | 266 | 239 |
| Olmsted Park | 51 | 94 | 97 | 72 | 71 | 110 | 112 | 10 |
| Arnold Arboretum | 27 | 23 | 19 | 26 | 24 | 19 | 33 | 10 |
| Franklin Park | 44 | 55 | 65 | 62 | 75 | 115 | 107 | 1001 |

**Table 5.2.** Maintenance costs per acre, 1895-1901 and 1950.[150] Sources: City doc. no. 28-1902, 32 and City doc. no. 19-1951, 2-4.

[149] These data for Olmsted Park in these tables reflect the fact that when Olmsted Park was originally created, Jamaica Pond was included and was not thought of as its own separate park as it is today.

[150] The maintenance costs for the arboretum are relatively low since Harvard maintained the trees and landscapes, while the city maintained the roads within the park.

As these parks aged they required more maintenance in order to preserve the integrity of the design, but when the focus on parks shifted to mass recreation, the city encouraged more park visitors, placing a heavy burden the already aging infrastructure. By the 1950s, even some of the post-Olmsted changes, like the zoo, were beginning to age and show signs of wear and tear, which contributed to increasing maintenance costs. For example in 1940, the maintenance costs for the entire park department, including the non-Emerald Necklace parks, playgrounds, gardens, and gymnasia, was $1.3 million, but by 1950 it had increased to $2.5 million and by 1959 it was $3.9 million.[151] These maintenance costs are more striking when we look at the maintenance costs per acre and compare them to the immediate post-Olmsted time period. When we look specifically at the Fens and Franklin Park, we see the results of some intriguing choices. In the Fens, the city spent $16,432 to maintain the rose garden, while in Franklin Park the city spent $134,952 to maintain the zoo and $80,290 to maintain and supply the park's repair shop.[152]

Boston, like other American cities, faced serious cultural, economic, and political challenges from the 1940s to the 1970s. As these major changes unfolded, cultural attitudes towards urban parks began to change as well. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s the emphasis of park planning was standardized recreational facilities and centers of attraction. By the mid-1960s, however, after decades of post-war suburban growth, highway development, and urban renewal, the cultural attitudes toward urban parks reflected people's attitudes towards the city in general. White flight, suburbanization, and urban renewal left cities financially strapped, therefore cities took action by reducing expenditures on items perceived to be unnecessary, like parks.[153] It's difficult to discern the

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[151] City doc. no. 19-1941, 6; City doc. no. 19-1951, 7; City doc. no. 16-1960, 12.

[152] City doc. no. 19-1951, 2-4.

[153] According to the U.S. Census, the white population of Boston decreased by 50 percent from 1950 through 1980. The 1950s saw a decrease of 135,954 whites and similar decreases occurred in the 1960s (99,165) and the 1970s (142,865).

root cause of the decline of urban parks since it is almost impossible to determine with any amount of certainty which came first: Did the disinterest lead to a decline in park usage, which then led to disinvestment, or, did disinvestment happen first, only to result in a lack of maintenance, and therefore disinterest and a decline in park usage? Either way, the parks of the Emerald Necklace suffered greatly during the 1960s and 1970s, due, in part, to race relations in the city, economics, and a lack of care in general.

In his 1905 paper at the ASLA, John wrote: "As an illustration of park designing, Franklin Park is probably the best piece of work...done by its designer Frederick Law Olmsted."[154] Unfortunately, in post-WWII Boston, Franklin Park faced serious threats largely to a lack of funding by the city. Throughout the 1930s, the Great Depression affected the zoo's infrastructure. For example, the amount spent on zoo maintenance steadily declined from $108,000 in 1930, to a low of $47,001.20 in 1941 leaving the zoo's buildings, cages, and other infrastructure in extremely poor condition.[155] In her historic landscape report of the park, Zaitzevsky identifies the Franklin Park Zoo as "probably the most inadequate in America for a city with a population equal to that of Greater Boston."[156] Due to the lack of investment during the 1930s and 1940s, and white flight in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the corresponding decreases in the tax base, the park budget was stretched thin as the city tried to maintain a decaying park system.

In its run-down condition, maintenance costs began to steadily rise so that by 1957 the park commission spent nearly $222,000 to manage the zoo's infrastructure.[157] Finally in 1958, the park commission could no longer justify the expenses and transferred control of the zoo to the

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[154] JCO, "The Boston park system," 52.

[155] City doc. no. 19-1931, 4; City doc. no. 19-1942, 4.

[156] Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Franklin Park: Historic Landscape Report* (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, 1992), 164.

[157] City doc. no. 16-1958, 10.

Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) who began charging admission in an effort to offset costs. As the zoo continued to deteriorate, new master plans were drafted in the 1950s to try and revitalize the zoo, but none were implemented.[158] Attendance declined sharply as the zoo continued to degrade through the 1960s and 1970s. Determining the cost-effectiveness of the bear dens not worthwhile, the MDC decided to close the bear dens in 1971. The zoo, which entertained an estimated 2 million visitors in 1920, welcomed 750,000 by 1960, and a paltry 100,000 by 1970.[159] The MDC commissioned a new master plan in 1973, but renovations did not begin in 1978. Despite the opening of the newly renovated portions in 1984, the zoo continued to rank among the ten worst zoos in America.[160] The curator of the zoo commented at the time that attendance was so low that "we could have closed the whole zoo, and nobody would have noticed."[161] Attendance through the 1970s and 1980s stayed low due mainly to the racial implications associated with the negative image of Franklin Park as the city's "black" park.

**Racial Tensions and Franklin Park**

By the 1980s, racial tensions came to play a critical role in Franklin Park's deterioration, but they certainly were not anything new for the neighborhoods near the park. Racial and ethnic conflict in and around Franklin Park dated from the 1940s when there were tensions between Jewish and Catholic residents. Writing in the July 1944 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Wallace Stegner brought these tensions to the surface for all the country to see. He noted that Blue Hill Avenue bordered on Franklin Park and acted as the spine of the largely Jewish section of Boston, which encompassed

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[158] Arthur A. and Sydney N. Shurcliff, *Franklin Park Zoo: A Plan for the Future* (Boston: City of Boston, Park Dept., 1954).

[159] City doc. no. 19-1921, 10; Rod C. McKenzie, "American zoological gardens: Elements of metropolitan landscapes," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 6(1986): 1-18.

[160] Elizabeth Levitan Spaid, "Boston zoo builds a better image," *Christian Science Monitor* 17 Jul 1990, 6.

[161] Scott Allen, "Trouble at Franklin Park," *Boston Globe Magazine* 28 Apr 1996, 15.

sections of the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan.[162] The Jewish population in these neighborhoods lived surrounded by high numbers of Irish-Catholics, some of whom referred to the main thoroughfare as "Jew" Hill Avenue.[163] Stegner describes the ways in which gangs "laid [waiting] for Jewish boys coming out of Hecht Neighborhood House [and] roamed Franklin Field and Franklin Park in search of cross-lot walkers. Sometimes they appeared in cars, which pulled beside Jewish youth to disgorge half a dozen attackers."[164]

By the 1960s, Boston, like other American cities, began to experience social unrest associated with conflicts between white and black residents. The relatively small black population in Boston began to grow during the 1950s and 1960s as more southern African-Americans and West Indians migrated to the city seeking work and better opportunities. The black population of the city, approximately 11,000 by 1910, jumped to 20,000 by 1930, 23,000 by 1940, and over 40,000 by 1950.[165] The steady increase of black residents continued so that the black population of Boston was 67,000 by 1960, 104,000 by 1970, and 126,000 by 1980.[166] As Jews left the city for the suburban middle-class life, the neighborhoods along Blue Hill Avenue, east of Franklin Park, that had been 85 to 100 percent Jewish in the 1940s became 75 to 100 percent black by the 1970s.[167] These rapid

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[162] These neighborhoods became home to thousands of Jews displaced by the Chelsea Fire in 1908. See: Jonathan Sarna, Ellen Smith, Scott-Martin Kosofsky, ed., *The Jews of Boston* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon, *The Death of an American Jewish Neighborhood: A Tragedy with Good Intentions* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), BRA, *Mattapan: 2000 Census of Population and Housing* (Boston: BRA, 2003). Available from http://www.bostonredevelopmentauthority.org/pdf/ResearchPublications/583Mattapan.pdf (accessed on 5 Aug 2011).

[163] Wallace Stegner, "Who Persecutes Boston?" *The Atlantic Monthly* 174(July 1944), 46.

[164] *Ibid*, 45-46.

[165] Violet Johnson, "Black immigrants in the United States" in *We Are a People: Narrative and Multiplicity in Constructing Ethnic Identity*, eds., P. Spickard and W.J. Burroughs (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 67, n.9.

[166] Bluestone and Stevenson, *Boston Renaissance*, 26. According to historian Violet Johnson, the increases in Boston's black population in the 1960s and 1970s come from two main sources: Haitian migrants escaping the brutal dictatorship of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier; and the 1965 removal of annual quotas of 100 immigrants coming British West Indies. See: Violet Johnson, "Culture, Economic Stability, and Entrepreneurship: The Case of British West Indians in Boston," in *New Migrants in the Marketplace: Boston's Ethnic Entrepreneurs*, ed. Marilyn Halter (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press), 59-80, and *The Other Black Bostonians: West Indians in Boston, 1900-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[167] Gerald H. Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jew Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 155.

demographic changes, as well as economic inequality, contributed to the racial tensions of associated with the riots of the late-1960s, and caused both social and physical disturbances in these neighborhoods. Furthermore, in a city dominated by white Irish-Catholics, blacks in Boston lacked any real political power. Feeling powerless and taking cues from events in other cities, blacks in Boston began to organize and use what forms of power they had available to them

For three nights in June 1967, the city erupted in race riots in the Grove Hall neighborhood of Roxbury at the corner of Blue Hill Avenue and Washington Street.[168] On Friday, June 2, a group of women called Mothers for Adequate Welfare (MAW), upset about welfare checks being cut off without warning and frustrated by hostile treatment by social workers, staged a peaceful sit-in at the Grove Hall division of the city's welfare department at 515 Blue Hill Avenue. The protesters tried similar actions in May, but nobody, not even the media, paid attention. On this evening, MAW decided to draw some attention to their situation and chained the doors from the inside before office workers could close for the weekend. The police arrived on the scene and a large group of local residents protested outside. As the police eventually broke windows to force their way in to arrest the protesters inside, the protesters outside, claiming police brutality, began clashing with police. The police department occupied White Stadium in Franklin Park both to mobilize their 1,700 officers and to serve as a temporary detention center.[169] For three nights rocks, bricks, and bottles were thrown, store windows broken, stores looted, cars overturned, and fires set. Mayor John Collins called the events "the worst manifestation of disrespect for the rights of others that the city has ever seen."[170] By Monday, June 5, as tensions calmed, the city tried to pick up the pieces,

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[168] For a map of the Franklin Park area, see Figure 5.1, page 201.

[169] *BG,* "From Quiet Vigil to Melee," 3 Jun 1967, "What Mothers Sought in Grove Hall Protest," 3 Jun 1967, "Riot-Torn Roxbury Peaceful," 3 Jun 1967, "Shooting of Fireman Disrupts Efforts to Ease Boston Tension," 4 Jun 1967, "Police, Mothers Tell Different Stories on Riot's Start," 4 Jun 1967.

[170] *BG,* "Riot-Torn Roxbury Peaceful." Less than one year later the city took the unrest in the black community a bit more seriously. On Friday April 5, 1968, the day after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis,

and then Stokely Carmichael came to town stirring the pot again.

On Sunday, June 25, 1967, Stokely Carmichael, formerly of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and now an Honorary Prime Minister of the Black Panther Party, spoke at a rally in Franklin Park. His speech, sponsored by the Roxbury People's Movement, focused on the militant struggle for self-determination in black communities. Carmichael used the MAW riots to remind the 2,000 people in attendance that the only way to stop the "racial aggression" of the police is through "armed resistance." By emphasizing the need for black ownership of property in predominantly black communities, even if taken by physical force, Carmichael highlighted the radical nature of the struggle and the class politics involved with self-determination in neighborhoods of color:

> In this country property rights mean more than human rights…We don't give a damn about law and order. We have law and order in this country, but we have no justice. We're going to make them talk about justice…We will control things in our communities by any means necessary...If honky gets his store bombed out every Friday or Saturday, he's going to have to sell it to us...Our fight is a fight for land—nothing else."[171]

In the 1940s and 1950s, Franklin Park used to be a place for people of all races, ethnicities, and religions to come together to play baseball or golf. But now it came to symbolize the city's uneasy race relations, and as the decline in the number of golfers show, 33,000 in 1967 to 17,000 in

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the city proactively tried to calm the tensions. James Brown was scheduled to perform that night at the Boston Garden to a crowd of more than 10,000. The city's first reaction was to cancel the show, but Mayor Kevin White proposed an alternative. Hoping to keep people at home instead of out rioting and looting, he convinced the local PBS station to air the concert live. City Councilman Tom Atkins (arrested in the MAW riots) and White spoke to the audience before the show. Brown later recalled the event in his autobiography, *James Brown: The Godfather of Soul* (New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2002 reprint): "Let's not do anything to dishonor Dr. King. Stay home. You kids, especially, I want you to think about what you're doing. Think about what Dr. King stood for. Don't just react in a way that's going to destroy your community" (p. 187). Two videos exist showing the event. The first shows the speeches made by Atkins and White on stage with Brown (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3tG3ymhqoY, accessed on 5 Aug 2011). The second shows highlights of the performance with modern commentary by attendees, African-American scholars like Dr. Cornell West, and Tom Atkins who notes that police reports came in through the evening stating that the streets of Boston were quieter than a normal Friday night (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ylC0vdGz27g&feature=related, accessed on 5 Aug 2011).

[171] *BG,* "Carmichael's hub cry: Profits, not handouts," 26 June 1967.

1968, people began staying away from Franklin Park.[172] By the 1970s, the commonly held view of Franklin Park as the "black" park had a pernicious effect on the park and the neighborhood. In 1975, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) chronicled the demographic change in specific districts (e.g., Columbia-Blue Hill, Franklin Hill-Harvard, and Franklin Field South) in the Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan neighborhoods lying just east of the park (Figure 5.21). The BRA noted that from 1960 to 1970 the black population increased from 24 percent to 95 percent in the Columbia-Blue Hill district, from 4 percent to 59 percent in the Franklin Hill-Harvard district, and from 1.7 percent to 73 percent in the Franklin Field South district (Table 5.3).[173] In addition to the social and demographic transitions, Franklin Park suffered greatly due the economic recession of the 1970s.

Urban renewal, redlining, blockbusting, and gentrification all contributed to pushing poor black migrants into these neighborhoods along Blue Hill Avenue. The demographic transition of these neighborhoods, coupled with a fledgling economy, led to the deterioration of buildings near Franklin Park. The dense housing stock of two- and three-family homes was built during the turn of the century housing boom after streetcar service was brought to Blue Hill Avenue in the 1890s.[174] With the racial tensions of the 1960s and 1970s, white homeowners often abandoned the homes, let their homes deteriorate, defaulted on mortgages, or allowed their property to be taken for back taxes.[175]

In 1968, the Boston Mayor Kevin White and local lenders formed Boston Banks Urban

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[172] Center for Urban and Regional Policy—Heart of the City, "Franklin Park Golf Course," http://ksgaccman.harvard.edu/hotc/DisplayPlace.asp?id=11392 (accessed 5 Aug 2011).

[173] BRA, *Franklin Field: Background Information, Planning Issues and Preliminary Neighborhood Improvement Strategies* (Boston: BRA District Planning Program, 1975), 7.

[174] Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

[175] BRA, *Franklin Field*, 3.

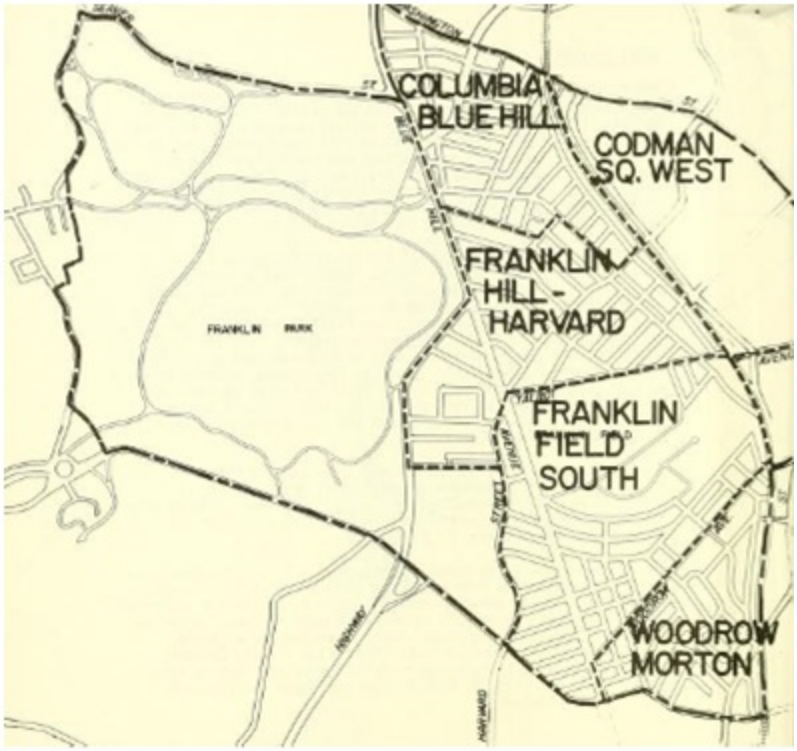


**Figure 5.21.** The Boston Redevelopment Authority's neighborhood districts east of Franklin Park. Source: BRA 1975, 4.

| | Columbia-Blue Hill | Franklin Field-Harvard | Franklin Field South |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1960 BLACK population** | 1,605 | 309 | 102 |
| **1960 TOTAL population** | 6,632 | 7,783 | 5,806 |
| **Percent BLACK** | 24% | 4% | 18% |
| **1970 BLACK population** | 6,036 | 4,424 | 5,583 |
| **1970 TOTAL population** | 6,377 | 7,484 | 7,623 |
| **Percent BLACK** | 97% | 59% | 73% |

**Table 5.3.** Changes in racial composition of three neighborhoods near Franklin Park. Source: BRA 1975, 7.

Renewal Group (B-BURG) in an effort to support low-income home ownership.[176] In *The Death of an American Jewish Neighborhood*, Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon chronicled the changes to the neighborhoods along Blue Hill Avenue. They noted the creation of B-BURG:

> Under the guise of expanding homeownership opportunities for the city's black community, the heads of twenty-two Boston savings banks were complicit in establishing a carefully limited and well-defined inner-city district within which, and only within which, blacks could obtain attractive, federally insured housing loans…Falling exclusively within the B-BURG line, however, was almost the entirety of Boston's Jewish community, an unprofitable neighborhood for the city's banker because so many of the residents had paid off their mortgages."[177]

Limited to black families, and to a very specific spatial extent, mainly the sections of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan bordering on Franklin Park, banks found B-BURG's ability to destabilize neighborhoods extremely profitable. Levine and Harmon noted that, "More than fifty years of Jewish settlement were overturned during a two-year period from 1968 to 1970. Jews sold their homes to unscrupulous speculators for less that market value, while blacks, eager to participate in the 'American Dream,' were forced to pay inflated prices." An anonymous realtor described the tactics used to scare citizens to sell:

> We were told, you get the listings any way you can. It's pretty easy to do: just scare the hell out of them!...We were not only making money, we were having fun doing what we were doing…we would try to outdo each other with the most outlandish threats that people would believe…Some of the milder things were: property values are going down, you're going to get a thousand dollars less next month than this....We weren't subtle about it. You'd say, how would you like it if they rape your daughter, and you've got a mulatto grandchild?... There were instances of housebreaks that were arranged only to scare people out.[178]

Panicking, white home owners sold their homes at less than market value; the banks then turned

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[176] Lawrence J. Vale, *Reclaiming Public Housing: A Half-Century of Struggle in Three Public Neighborhoods* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 198-206.

[177] Levine and Harmon, *The Death of an American Jewish Neighborhood*, 5-6.

[178] *Ibid*, 3-4.

around and sold the homes to black families at market value or higher. Banks felt secure in financing black families moving into these neighborhoods, since the Federal Housing Administration backed the mortgages. B-BURG was so successful that by 1970 the black population of Mattapan was over 19,000, up from only 473 in 1960.[179] White homeowners who did not sell would often relocate to the suburbs and rent these properties as absentee landlords. Often landlords would "milk" the properties by charging maximum rents and providing little to no maintenance and upkeep.[180] This led to further deterioration and eventually abandonment of the housing stock. In his study of public housing in Boston, urban planner Lawrence Vale noted that in the 1970s the areas of Dorchester and Mattapan near Franklin Field lost 17 percent of its housing stock, and in one small, three-block area, abandoned buildings and vacant lots outnumbered occupied structures.[181]

America, still reeling from racial unrest, social turbulence, and the war in Vietnam, entered a period of stagflation in the 1970s. The spikes in gas prices due to the oil-shocks of 1973 and 1979 added to the instability of the national and local economy. Boston, like other cities, implemented a series of economic austerity measures—one of which was to cut funding for urban parks. As the city abandoned Franklin Park (as well as the other parks of the Emerald Necklace), the neighborhoods in the surrounding area, already on hard times, fell further into disrepair. The BRA noted that there was a "very high rate of vacancy, business failure, vandalism, and general deterioration" along much of Blue Hill Avenue since "its stores and business have been seriously affected by the racial transition, by competition with suburban shopping centers, and by the

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[179] Bluestone and Stevenson, *Boston Renaissance*, 89.
[180] BRA, *Franklin Field*, 3.
[181] Vale, *Reclaiming Public Housing*, 218.

recession."[182]

In 1972, the recently formed Franklin Park Advisory Committee (FPAC) critiqued the city's maintenance of Franklin Park by noting that, "it has become increasingly apparent that there is no substantial amount of money allocated for the upkeep of Franklin Park." The FPAC highlighted the city's disinterest in Franklin Park by noting that despite Franklin Park representing more than 20 percent of the city's parkland, it received less than 1 percent of the park department's $7,249,204 budget in 1970.[183] This lack of funding directly led to the decay of Franklin Park, as well as other parks in the Emerald Necklace. The lack of regular maintenance transformed it into a neglected space, which reinforced the park's negative image as a black space, particularly after the racial conflicts in the city over school desegregation in the 1970s.

Racial tensions continued throughout the 1970s, resulting in a federal court case over school segregation and creating the city's infamous school desegregation/busing crisis as black families objecting to the city's uneven educational system.[184] In a sense, this problem began more than 100 years earlier, when Horace Mann, as leader of the state board of education, created the state's public school system—schools in districts that represented wealthy neighborhoods or towns were able to hire more qualified instructors and provide better resources, resulting in students from poor neighborhoods and towns receiving an inferior education. But in Boston with the racial tensions at the surface during the 1960s and 1970s, white residents dismissed such claims out of hand, especially in the largely white, Irish-Catholic neighborhoods of South Boston, which played a starring role in the city's racial crisis. Historian Thomas O'Connor grew up in South Boston and commented that

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[182] BRA, *Franklin Field,* 3.

[183] Franklin Park Advisory Committee, *A Study and Report on the Establishment of Management Plans for the Operation of Franklin Park* (Boston: FPAC, 1972), 2.

[184] The term used to describe the events of the mid-1970s depends upon perspective. Working-class, conservative whites still prefer to use "busing," while African-Americans and progressive whites prefer "desegregation."

residents of South Boston insisted that there was nothing wrong with the city's schools, and resisted the work of 'outsiders' coming in to change things. A white school committee member from South Boston exemplified the institutional racism of the South Boston perspective: "We have no inferior education in our schools...what we have is an inferior type of student."[185]

On June 21, 1974, federal judge W. Arthur Garrity concluded that the Boston School committee "knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation...and have intentionally brought about and maintained a dual system. Therefore the entire school system of Boston is unconstitutionally segregated."[186] The prevailing idea at the time was that Boston had a "neighborhood school policy," whereby children attended schools located in their own neighborhoods. In his decision, Garrity noted the spatial distribution of the city's elementary schools and ruled that the districting was not "consistent with a neighborhood school policy: schools are not located near the center of regular, compact districts, but rather near the edges of irregular districts requiring some students to attend a relatively distant school when there is another school within one or two blocks."[187] In declaring the school system segregated, Garrity highlighted the racial composition of the city's student body: 96,000 students were enrolled in the school system; 59,300 (61%) were white; 30,600 (32%) were black; and 6,500 (7%) were other students of color.[188] The racial composition of the city's schools was "sharply out of line" with the racial composition of the city's student population:

- 84% of white students attended schools that were more than 80% white;
- 62% of black students attended schools that were more than 70% black;
- 8 high schools were more than 85% white;

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[185] As quoted in Thomas H. O'Connor, *South Boston, My Home Town: The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994).214.

[186] Morgan v. Hennigan, 379 F. Supp. 410 (D.C. Mass., June 21, 1974). Available from http://scholar.google.com/scholar_case?case=12934995075082416602&hl=en&as_sdt=2,22 (accessed 5 Aug 2011).

[187] Morgan v. Hennigan.

[188] These data are from the 1970-71 school year since that was the year when the original suit was filed.

- 2 high schools were more than 90% black (while the white population of those schools was less than 2%); and,
- only 5 of the city's 140 elementary schools had a racial composition within 10% of the citywide 61:32 ratio of white to black students.

Furthermore, Garrity added that the notion of the neighborhood school had been "a reality only in areas of the city where residential segregation is firmly entrenched. Thus students in South Boston or Roxbury have been assured of attending a neighborhood school, all white or all black."[189]

Judge Garrity showed how this segregation affected the disparate educations black and white student received. Schools that had more than 80 percent black enrollment had an average of four provisional teachers per school, while schools that had less than 20 percent black enrollment had an average of less than one.[190] Additionally, teachers at schools with more than 80 percent black enrollment averaged 5.3 years of service, while teachers at schools with less than 20 percent black enrollment averaged 11.9 years.[191] The city had a segregated system whereby, students attending predominantly black schools were taught by less qualified and less experienced teachers when compared to students attending predominantly white schools.

In his haste to implement a plan before the start of school, Garrity adopted a preliminary proposal by the State Board of Education. The plan was perceived as being "objective" since professional educators, technocrats removed from the situation, devised it. Unfortunately, their professional distance also created a situation in which they had no real-world understanding of the social dynamics of the city. Local journalist Alan Lupo later commented that "to mix Southie and Roxbury, to bus students from each into the other, was not to ask for war, for the war was

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[189] Morgan v. Hennigan.
[190] Provisional teachers are full-time teachers with college degrees, but lack state teaching certificates.
[191] Morgan v. Hennigan

**Figure 5.22.** "The Soiling of Old Glory," the Pulitzer Prize-winning photography by Stanley Forman for the *Boston Herald American*, 5 Apr 1976.[192]

inevitable, but it was to insure that the war would be bloody."[193]

The animosity that surfaced during the late 1970s was fueled by deep-seated resentment.[194] Those white families that could afford to leave the city, continuing the trend of white flight. But the majority of the white working-class families in South Boston, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Roslindale and Charlestown sensed a lack of opportunity in an unstable economy. They viewed busing as an injustice, whereby white families with little opportunity struggled to make ends meet, while the city and Garrity, in particular, 'bent over backwards' to come to the aid of the city's black population.

Throughout 1975 and 1976, riots and fighting erupted in various parts of the city, although most were confined to South Boston (Figure 5.22). Boston police cruisers raced through the city.

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[192] Louis Masur, *The Soiling of Old Glory: The Story of a Photograph that Shocked America* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008).

[193] Alan Lupo as cited in Vale, *Reclaiming Public Housing*, 95.

[194] I am relying on my own sense of the events of the era. Some of neighbors and friends left the city and moved to my suburban community in the mid-1970s.

State troopers were installed at South Boston High School from 1975 to 1978 to address the tensions and respond to almost daily violence. In May 1975, as 250 members of the Progressive Labor Party marched to protest racism, 100 youths from South Boston marched along with "baseball bats, hockey sticks, and rocks" in an attempt to stop the march.[195] In July 1975, several black visitors, "unaware of the invisible lines separating the black and white neighborhoods in Boston" attempted to swim at Carson Beach in South Boston.[196] The visitors were taunted by hundreds of whites on the beach, and the visitors fled on foot after their rental car was destroyed. Boston School Committee member Louise Day Hicks organized opponents of desegregation and formed a citizen's groups called ROAR—Restoring Our Alienated Rights—to help organize their efforts. Before the 1975 school year, ROAR held a rally in front of 10,000 at City Hall Plaza to encourage their supporters to boycott school the next day. It worked at Charlestown High School where only 314 of the 883 registered students attended. After more violence at South Boston High School, Judge Garrity placed the school under federal receivership on December 9, 1975. In retaliation, a group firebombed the Boston headquarters of the NAACP later that night.[197]

The racial tensions of the 1960s and 1970s resulted in poor relations between local African-American communities and the Boston police, to the extent that the police practiced a hands-off approach to Franklin Park. Throughout the 1970s, and into the 1980s, the city faced an increase in violent crime. From 1966 to 1976, violent offenses (e.g., murder, rape, aggravated assault, etc.) rose by 170 percent from 30,445 cases to 82,451 respectively.[198] According to the FBI, Boston's crime

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[195] Zebulon V. Miletsky, "Boston (Massachusetts) Race Riots of 1975 and 1976," in *Encyclopedia of Race Riots, vol. 1: A-M*, ed. W.C. Rucker and J.N. Upton (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 71.

[196] Miletsky, "Boston (Massachusetts) Race Riots of 1975 and 1976," 71-72.

[197] Miletsky, "Boston Race Riots of 1975 and 1976," 72.

[198] City of Boston, *Sixty-First Annual Report of the Police Commissioner for the City of Boston for the Year Ending December 31, 1966* (City doc. no. 28-1967), 42; City of Boston, *Annual Report: Boston Police, July 1, 1975 to June 30, 1976* (City doc. no. 28-1976), 45.

index ranked as the fifth worst among American cities in 1978, while in 1981 it ranked the worst.[199]

With its crumbling infrastructure and neglected state due to a lack of funding, Franklin Park became an attractive location for criminal activity. The city's police district in the area of Franklin Park, encompassing the sections of Roxbury and North Dorchester lying north and east of the park, experienced a 250 percent increase in violent crime from 3,562 cases in 1966 to 12,495 cases in 1976, including 32 murders, 109 rapes, 1,721, robberies, 812 aggravated assaults, and 3,065 burglaries.[200] The Boston Police claimed that more street-corner drug sales occurred in a three-block area adjacent to the northeast corner of Franklin Park than anywhere else in the city.[201] A police deputy superintendent, whose command included Roxbury, North Dorchester, and Mattapan, claimed that more than 60 percent of all the crime in the area is drug-related: "car thefts, muggings, handbag snatches, armed robbery—all to get that money for drugs."[202]

Due to the unstable nature of the relationship between the police and the neighborhood, community activists believed that the "city's white power structure allowed drugs and the crimes they spawn to fester in the black community so long as it was contained there."[203] A Roxbury woman reported that, due to the high levels of drug sales and criminal activity, the neighborhood was unsafe: "I used to love walking through Franklin Park in the early '70s; now try relaxing there...there's nowhere that's really safe."[204] Former Park Superintendent George Boutelier described activities in Franklin Park during the 1970s as having a "wild west" quality: "The back roads [of Franklin Park] had been filled with gangsters, Cadillacs spewing out heroin and prostitutes. [It was the worst] before we blocked off the road by the birdcage...Cars would pull in, you could get

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[199] *BG,* "Fear of crime: nowhere to run, nowhere to hide," 5 Sep 1982.

[200] City doc. no. 28-1967, 42; City doc. no. 28-1976, 45.

[201] *BG*, "Where crime prevails," 25 Mar 1982.

[202] *BG*, "A Boston neighborhood: Everyday, people's everyday lives must bend to the will of Roxbury, dealers," 09 Nov 1986.

[203] *Ibid.*

[204] *BG*, "Fear of crime."

anything—booze, beer, dope. If the trunk was open—it was beer or whiskey. If the hood was open—dope. If the side doors were open, you name it."[205]

Illegal dumping in Franklin Park throughout the 1970s was especially common. Former superintendent Boutelier commented that the park "was the great dumping-off place—hot cars, safes, crates...anyone with a load of plaster who wants to dump, drives into the park."[206] He described clearing out Scarboro Pond in 1978 for the "first time in fifty years...we took a lot of stuff from the bottom—washing machines, refrigerators, TV sets, a complete set of burglary tools, sunken boats, dozens of sewer covers, golf balls by the thousands."[207] In the early-1980s, the police certainly prioritized crime prevention in the areas surrounding the park. However, their focus was on rehiring forty officers that had been laid off, on campaigning proactively against drunk driving, speeding, illegal parking, and on establishing new beats in high-crime business districts like Blue Hill Avenue, not necessarily improving the spaces of Franklin Park, or the other parks of the Emerald Necklace for that matter.[208]

Rapes and sexual assaults were particularly problematic due to the lack of a police presence and access to the park by automobiles. Within four days of each other in June 1978, a Roxbury woman talking on the phone at a phone booth on Blue Hill Avenue and a Dorchester woman walking down Columbia Road were abducted, forced into cars at knife-point, driven to Franklin Park, and beaten, kicked and raped.[209] According to the Boston Police, the areas of Roxbury, North Dorchester, and Mattapan bordering on Franklin Park ranked higher than any other part of the city in the number of rapes from 1981 to 1983. In 1983, this area experienced 161 cases of rape, while

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[205] As quoted in Mark Jay Mirsky, "Who lost the Emerald Necklace? In search of Franklin Park," *Boston Globe Magazine* 30 Sep 1979, 21.

[206] *Ibid*, 24.

[207] *Ibid*, 21.

[208] *BG*, "Police shift priority to crime prevention," 03 Mar 1982.

[209] *BG*, "A Mattapan man pleaded guilty in Suffolk Superior Court," 11 Jul 1980.

the area with the next highest amount, an area that included parts of the South End and the Back Bay, had only 69.[210]

In December, 1984, the headlines told a story of fear in the park: "Couple Terrorized in Rape by Five at Franklin Park: Woman is Abducted, Car Set on Fire." Five assailants forced a couple from their car after smashing several windows with bricks. Armed with golf clubs, bats and at least one handgun, the assailants forced the male victim to lie down and covered him with a blanket, while they raped his girlfriend. They then forced the woman back into the car, drove to White Stadium, where they raped the victim again before setting fire to the car and leaving the victim to wander through the park, where she was found by police who saw the flames from the burning car.[211] Almost casually, most likely due to the number of sexual assaults in the park, former superintendent Boutelier commented in 1979 that, "it was nothing to find a girl dazed, raped, wandering around all night or tied to a tree."[212]

These criminal acts profoundly impacted the image of Franklin Park. Due to increased maintenance costs and budget cuts the park infrastructure and naturalistic aesthetic suffered greatly. Soon after the park landscape began to degrade, the park became the site for unseemly behavior ranging from illegal dumping to murder and rape. Already perceived of as the black park, in the minds of white residents, potential park users now viewed Franklin Park as extremely unsafe. The BRA noted that as the park lost municipal support the park fell into disrepair and was avoided, further contributing to the negative image. Residents near Franklin Park viewed it as an area of high criminal activity and did not feel safe. Residents in other parts of the city, and the suburbs, viewed it the same way. The BRA claimed that the park was "underutilized" and that a "major deterrent to

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[210] City of Boston, *Annual Report: Boston Police Department, July 1982 to June 1983*, 20
[211] *BG*, "Couple terrorized in rape by five at Franklin Park; woman is abducted, car set on fire," 2 Dec 1984.
[212] Mirsky, "Who lost the Emerald Necklace?" 21.

the use of the park [was] its shoddy appearance and lack of maintenance, particularly along the public drives and peripheral roads where trash and debris have accumulated." The BRA noted that Franklin Park due to its "reputation for poor security, coupled with lack of maintenance and activity...acquired a stigma."[213] The FPAC succinctly commented on the park's negative image: "people stay away from the park because they are afraid of being mugged, of the drug dealers, and possibly of being murdered."[214]

**Conclusion: Environmental Politics and the Call for Restoration**

The transformations made to the parks of the Emerald Necklace during the twentieth-century did more than simply create new spaces for recreation—they transformed the Olmstedian environmental imaginaries of these once naturalistic-designed landscapes. In designing these landscapes, Olmsted understood that with a judicious amount of maintenance (e.g., pruning trees, etc.) his park landscapes would evolve in ways similar to 'wild' ecosystems.[215] Olmsted spent his life trying to understand the processes of nature and he worked tirelessly to replicate those processes in his park landscapes. To transform these landscapes and alter these processes was to interrupt the site-specific flows of energy and matter that Olmsted designed and built into his urban ecosystems.

Unlike the Olmsted-designed landscapes, these new park landscapes created by Shurcliff and other landscape architects and administrators required large amounts of new inputs. Despite many of the plants dying in their first year, Olmsted's plan for the Fens worked until the construction of the Charles River Dam in 1910. Excepting the basic maintenance of mechanical elements, once the plants firmly took root, the engineered salt marsh ecosystem functioned in ways similar to other

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213 BRA, *Franklin Field*, 16-17.

214 FPAC, *A Study and Report*, 2.

215 FLO and J.B. Harrison, *Observation on the Treatment of Public Plantations, More Especially Related to the Use of the Axe* (Boston: T.R Marvin & Sons, Printers, 1889).

naturally-occurring salt marshes: the semi-diurnal tides ebbed and flowed, plants and animals took advantage of the few hours of water to feed, make small-scale migrations to safer environments, and when the tides went out animals took shelter to avoid desiccation. But unless there was something wrong with the mechanical gates or the conduits, there was nothing humans needed to do to help the ecosystem function properly. Instead, these mid-twentieth century park landscapes, particularly areas of turf, like the golf course, and the rose gardens, required the input of vast quantities of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides.[216]

While Olmsted engineered diverse ecosystems, the naturalistic landscape parks of the Emerald Necklace were replaced with monocultures. Diverse ecosystems are generally accepted as the ideal since they have the ability to withstand diseases, pests, and abrupt changes better than a monoculture. Monocultures, like a lawn or a rose garden, are susceptible to diseases and pests since they lack other species to perpetuate the ecosystem. Because monocultures are susceptible to disease and pests, they require vast quantities of resource inputs for them to function as intended. Applications of broad-spectrum herbicides like glyphosate and 2,4-D are used to control weeds and brush in open fields and lawns, along roadways, and in golf courses.[217] These herbicides are moderately to highly toxic to birds, fish, and insects.

New landscape amenities, like the Fenway Rose Garden, required insecticides in addition to weed killers. One of the most commonly used insecticides, carbaryl, is a broad-spectrum pesticide used in turfgrass management and ornamental flower production. It is highly toxic on acute

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[216] Paul Robbins and Julie Sharp, "The lawn chemical economy and its discontents," *Antipode* 35(2003): 955-979; Paul Robbins and Julie Sharp, "Producing and consuming chemicals: The moral economy of the American lawn," *Economic Geography* 79(2003): 425-451; Paul Robbins and Trevor Birkenholtz, "Turfgrass revolution: Measuring the expansion of the American lawn," *Land Use Policy* 20(2003): 181-194.

[217] United States Environmental Protection Agency, "RED Facts—Glyphosate." Available from http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDs/factsheets/0178fact.pdf (accessed on 5 Aug 2011); United States Environmental Protection Agency, "2,4-D RED Facts." Available from http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/factsheets/24d_fs.htm (accessed on 5 Aug 2011).

exposure to honey bees.[218] These kinds of chemical inputs are indicative of the modernist, technocratic, science-oriented park approach of the mid-twentieth century, whereby society is led to believe these transformations are better then what had previously been accomplished.

Franklin Park, once the pendant of the Emerald Necklace, fell into a state of disrepair due to decisions by an urban regime of park commissioners, urban technocrats, and politicians. Urban regimes must always make decisions regarding the use, and value, of urban parks. In doing so, these decisions (to invest, or not, in parks for example) have generally resulted in an "unequal distribution of benefits and burdens."[219] This uneven distribution of municipal resources for park maintenance resulted in the transformation of Franklin Park into a derelict space.

Two factors worked in tandem to help shape Franklin Park as a marginalized space. The first was the transformation of Franklin Park from a naturalistic park landscape to a generic modernist landscape. By building White Stadium and erasing Olmsted's design for the Playstead and Overlook, by allowing for an 18-hole golf course instead of leaving the pastoral setting alone, and by allowing the zoo to take over all of the Greeting instead of Olmsted's naturalistic promenade, the egalitarian urban regime of the mid-twentieth century helped create the environment that would lead to marginalization. The second was related to the city's race relations. The fact that Franklin Park had become expensive to maintain coupled with the perception that Franklin Park had became the 'black park,' the city neglected to invest its money in this park.

By the late-1970s and early-1980s, a renewed interest in the parks of the Emerald Necklace led to the creation of a variety of private park conservancies. These groups, like the Franklin Park Coalition and the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, attempted to clean up the parks. But these

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[218] United States Environmental Protection Agency, "Carbaryl RED Facts." Available from http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDs/factshets/carbaryl_factsheet.pdf (accessed on 5 Aug 2011).

[219] Maureen Flanagan, "Environmental justice in the city: A theme for environmental history," *Environmental History* 5(2000), 161.

grassroots efforts could only do so much. For the city's part, things did not improve much after the passage of Proposition 2½. The passage of a 1980 referendum in Massachusetts, Proposition 2½, limited a community's ability to raise property taxes by more than 2.5 percent without a citizen override. This left cities and towns without the necessary money for public services, which severely impacting local parks and recreation departments. In both Boston and Brookline, this meant a significant reduction in park staff, which, coupled with the lack of funding and the general disinterest of the previous decades led to the continued deterioration of the Emerald Necklace.[220]

Overall the lack of adequate municipal funding led to deferred maintenance, pollution, graffiti, and other forms of vandalism, and ultimately led park advocates to form private park conservancies to push for the restoration and preservation of Olmsted parks. The publication of the ENPMP in 1989 was the culmination of a decade of grassroots efforts by these private groups and began a more than 30-year process of ecological restoration. In the next chapter, I examine the efforts to reinvent the Emerald Necklace in the age of the conservancy park.

[220] Mirsky, "Who lost the Emerald Necklace?" 24; *Brookline TAB*, "Scraping by; Brookline residents: our parks need help," 11 Apr 1989.

# CHAPTER 6

## RE-GREENING THE CITY: THE GHOST OF OLMSTED & THE RISE OF THE CONSERVANCY PARK

> *Local states recently have retrenched their direct commitment to parks in conjunction with reductions in tax revenues…Local states now take a different approach to regulating urban open spaces…in order to continue to utilize parks as guides for social reproduction even in times of fiscal austerity. Solutions to these challenges are increasingly formulated by providing access to parks provision to a variety of nonstate actors. From New York to San Francisco, and even in places like Milwaukee, citizens formerly excluded from parks and their management are becoming new green space stewards. Outwardly altruistic and empowering opportunities for citizen participation result while the local state is absolved from fiscal responsibility for urban open spaces.*
>
> --Harold Perkins[1]

At the dawning of the twenty-first century, members of the cult of Olmsted called for a return to Olmsted-style urban planning, claiming that Olmsted would be appalled at the deplorable state of American cities and public parks. Philosopher Carol Nicholson attempts to summarize the Olmstedian vision, but unfortunately falls into the trap that befalls many neo-Olmstedians—uncritical praise of the Olmsted genius of place. She claims that Olmsted's greatest achievement was not a specific park or residential development, instead, she argues that his "wisdom" derived from the his ability to integrate nature into urban spaces to create democratic spaces that provided the opportunity for people from all socio-economic classes to mingle.[2]

Based on her experiences in Olmsted's parks and suburban developments in Trenton, New Jersey—Cadwalader Park and Cadwalader Heights—Nicholson claims that Olmsted's park "philosophy works exactly in the ways he intended it to do." Which begs the question: What kind

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[1] Perkins, "Turning feral spaces into trendy places," 2616.

[2] Carol Nicholson, "Elegance and grass roots: The neglected philosophy of Frederick Law Olmsted," *Transactions of the Charles S. Pierce Society* 40(2004), 345.

of work did Olmsted intend for his parks? Nicholson's selective reading of Olmsted's writings and her interpretation of the landscape, leads her to the conclusion that "[Cadwalader] Park gives healing and restorative powers to *those who have access to it*." With that statement Nicholson glosses over the inherent contradiction in the neo-Olmstedian argument—that Olmsted's parks have not been the open, democratic public spaces that neo-Olmstedians claim them to be. Rather, they were highly restrictive, conservative spaces.[3]

When Nicholson does question the accessibility of Cadwalader Park she finds that the elite and conservative Olmstedian vision is alive and well. Nicholson acknowledges the racial divisions in Trenton, and that the city lacked adequate public transportation, thereby limiting access to the park for many residents. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 85 percent of Trenton residents were black and/or Latino, and the median household income for the city was $36,601, compared to $69,811 for the state of New Jersey. Considering that the working-class and people of color comprise the majority of public transit riders in American cities, a lack of public transport reinforced the conservative (read: white, affluent) nature of Olmstedian urban parks in Trenton.[4] In a way, Nicholson does prove that Cadwalader Park functions as Olmsted intended, just not in the manner she intended.

In claiming that the Olmsted vision was more relevant today than during his own lifetime, Nicholson echoes the work of architect Witold Rybczynski, who claims that in order to improve urban life, we needed to rediscover Olmsted. Rybczynski argued that the most striking aspect of Olmsted's parks was their endurance. Unfortunately, like Nicholson, he does more to discredit his

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[3] Nicholson, "Elegance and grass roots," 345 emphasis added; Blodgett, "Landscape architecture as conservative reform"; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*, 238-259; Taylor, "Central Park as a model for social control"; Germic, *American Green*; Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, 77-101.

[4] Nicholson, "Elegance and grass roots," 345; United States Census Bureau, "Trenton (city) QuickFacts." Available from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/34/3474000.html (accessed on 26 Aug 2011); Mark Garrett and Brian Taylor, "Reconsidering social equity in public transit," *Berkeley Planning Journal* 13(1999): 6-27.

claim of Olmsted's endurance than to support it. He acknowledges that Central Park has "experienced periods of neglect," and that encroachments, like the zoo and the skating rink, have transformed the original Olmsted design. Additionally, he points out that there was "too much automobile traffic for what were originally conceived as pleasure drives for horse-drawn carriages," while "rollerbladers and joggers have replaced promenading ladies and gentlemen." Despite these changes in park activity, Rybczynski claims that the fundamental role of Central Park "as a place of retreat and renewal" remained intact.[5] However, that people still used Central Park does not necessarily speak to the endurance of the Olmsted vision since, based on the variety of park uses, the enduring vision of Central Park could be more related to the work of Robert Moses.

Rybczynski further claims that Olmsted would be disappointed at the state of our urban spaces. In an interesting exercise, Rybczynski engages in an imaginary dialogue with Olmsted, who comments on the state of the contemporary urban landscape:

> As a 19th century gentleman, he would probably be appalled at our consumer society. "More barbarism and less civilization," he would say. But the practical planner was never one to despair. "So, you have Wal-Marts and strip malls and cineplexes. Very well, there is a place for everything. But that is not sufficient. You are obliged to create public places among all this private expansion. Places for all people to mix. You must think big you know. And you must think far ahead. What is it that you want the metropolis to become in 40 years? Because you'll have to start working on it now."[6]

American cities, according to neo-Olmstedians like Rybczynski and Nicholson, have simultaneously lost and retained the enduring Olmsted vision. Rybczynski's imaginary dialogue is an interesting exercise, but offers no real insight into how Olmsted would address the problems facing the post-industrial and neoliberal cities of America.

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[5] Rybczynski, "Why we need Olmsted again," 19 and 20.
[6] *Ibid*, 21.

I have two goals for this chapter, which assesses the *Emerald Necklace Parks Master Plan* (ENPMP) to examine the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace. First, I show how efforts to restore parks of the Emerald Necklace represented a new park typology—the Conservancy Park—since the overriding quality of this era of park design has been the reliance on private park conservancies and not-for-profits to carry out the restoration objectives.[7] Representing the entrepreneurial dimensions of neoliberal urbanism, private park conservancies have increasingly carried out the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace. Second, I examine the ways in which the ghost of Olmsted has guided the restoration of the Emerald Necklace. The restoration of this park system has been part of an urban sustainability fix, based less on scientific or technical criteria than on aesthetics and economic interests. By fetishizing Olmsted and his landscapes, park restoration reflects a symbolic economy associated with the redevelopment and gentrification of post-industrial and neoliberal cities. The restoration of historic park landscapes represents the "museumification" of urban nature—a static, rather than dynamic, approach to the urban environment.[8]

**The Rise of the Conservancy Park**

In the contemporary city, neoliberal urbanism exists in the form of tendencies toward privatization, public-private partnership, interurban competition, and entrepreneurialism, all of which help reshape the urban landscape.[9] Entrepreneurial by design, the neoliberal city strives to compete for mobile capital, as well as draw tourists and new residents to the city. Post-industrial and neoliberal cities

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[7] Due to the variety of names associated with private park groups (e.g., alliances, coalitions, conservancies, friends) I've chosen to use the general term "conservancy" unless specificity warrants the use of a particular group name.

[8] Paul Gobster, "Urban park restoration and the 'museumification' of nature."

[9] Brenner and Theodore, "Actually existing neoliberalism"; Chapin, "The entrepreneurial city"; Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, and "Managerialism to entrepreneurialism"; Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City*.

accomplish this by crafting narratives that focus on a city's sense of history, culture and place, which gets commodified to aid in developing a symbolic economy of place.[10] The production of space, therefore, reflects the ideologies of the city's elite leisure class, and these ideologies get imprinted onto the urban landscape and commodified through various aspects associated with the city's quality of life.

A city's quality of life, in part, relates to its perceived livability. Entrepreneurial cities engage in interurban competition as they compete to score higher in the *Places Rated Almanac*, which serves as a resource that ranks cities on a variety of criteria to arrive at a place rating, or a measure of how livable a place is.[11] Cities, even neighborhoods, able to capitalize on their high ranking and perceived livability get commodified at a greater rate. One factor that helps improve the perception of livability is the amount of environmental amenities—green space, parks, urban forests, and urban rivers. Tourists and residents alike seek authentic urban landscapes; they expect a great deal from the landscape.[12] In particular they expect an abundance of green spaces—they want parks, forests, gardens, arboreta, and waterways—from the cities that they visit and inhabit. In this way, then, "urban entrepreneurialism itself might depend on the active remaking of urban environments and ecologies" in order to produce the expected landscapes.[13]

The reliance on private park conservancies and groups to restore and preserve urban public parks brought about a new emphasis on urban sustainability—a sustainability fix. At the start of the

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[10] Boyer, "Cities for sale"; Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*; Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*.

[11] McCann, "Best places"; David Savageau, *Places Rated Almanac* (Washington, D.C.: Places Rated Books, 2007); Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*.

[12] David Gibbs and Rob Krueger, "Containing the contradictions of rapid development? New economy spaces and sustainable urban development," in *The Sustainable Development Paradox: Political Economy in the United States and Europe*, eds., Rob Krueger and David Gibbs (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 95-122; Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*.

[13] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city," 550.

twenty-first century, the "restoration economy" played a major role in the sustainability fix.[14] Maintaining and conserving the built environment has given way to restoring the built environment by focusing on re-wilding urban rivers, wetland restoration, brownfield redevelopment, rebuilding public infrastructure, and heritage site restoration. Globally, the restoration economy is a trillion dollar a year industry with private investment in American restoration projects reaching $2.3 billion by the end of the twentieth-century.[15] Where the funding comes from—private sources, the state, or public-private partnerships—mattered little, since the larger goal of the restoration economy has been to improve some aspect of the built environment in order to reap economic gain.

As part of urban sustainability discourse, successful park restoration strikes a balance between economic vitality, ecological integrity, and social equity. The popular belief holds that policies that find this balance help to improve urban livability, as well as push the city towards sustainability. According to geographers Aidan While, Andrew Jonas and David Gibbs the intention of the urban sustainability fix is "to capture some of the governance dilemmas, compromises and opportunities created by the current era of state restructuring and ecological modernization."[16] The focus on sustainability means that urban entrepreneurialism depends on selectively incorporating the "environmental goals, determined by the balance of pressures for and against environmental policy within and across the city."[17] As cities go about restoring their historic urban parks, they rely on private park conservancies to engage in the re-imaging of the city according to their environmental goals and imaginaries.[18]

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[14] Storm Cunningham, *The Restoration Economy: The Greatest New Growth Frontier* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002), 7.

[15] *Ibid*, 2 and 192.

[16] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city," 551.

[17] *Ibid*, 552.

[18] Gibbs and Kruger, "New economy spaces and sustainable development."

In this section, I examine the development of the Olmsted "renaissance" and trace the evolution of the conservancy park back to the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Previously, Cranz and Boland labeled this era of park design and restoration the "Sustainable Park" since a fundamental principle of this park type is self-sufficiency with regard to material resources.[19] But, the "Conservancy Park" is more appropriate, as geographer Harold Perkins pointed out at the start of this chapter, municipal governments, struggling with social and economic crises, have shifted the burden to maintain urban public parks onto the shoulders of private park conservancies and local residents. While the goal may be a sustainable park (however defined), the manner in which these parks are produced is the most important characteristic of this era of park design. As urban residents rediscovered their connections to their city's Olmstedian parks, and municipalities lacked the necessary resources, they formed private park friends groups and conservancies to restore these tarnished jewels.

In Boston, the quest to restore the parks of the Emerald Necklace helped to spur the creation of a variety of private park conservancies. The renewed focus on urban public parks in the late-1970s and early-1980s emerged from the environmentalism of the 1960s and 1970s. The environmental and social values embodied in the park landscape resonated with those in the environmental movement and people began to rediscover Olmsted, the man whom they believed attempted to solve the similar problems a century earlier. In a period of economic austerity and decreased park funding, the park restoration movement of the 1980s combined Eliot's focus on the role of private groups with a growing concern for the local environment. As local citizens began advocating for their park, they often formed private park friends groups and conservancies to address quality of life issues associated with their local green spaces. In Boston, a decade of

[19] Cranz and Boland, "Defining the sustainable park."

grassroots efforts by neo-Olmstedians, aided by various state, municipal, and institutional organizations, culminated in the publication of the ENPMP in 1989, and its update in 2001.[20]

The genesis of the ENPMP began with the gathering of sixty-five park advocates in Buffalo, resulting in the creation of the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP). In January 1980, park advocate Joan Bozer, who was fighting to prevent the park commissioner and mayor from placing a school in Buffalo's Delaware Park, contacted various people in other cities with documented Olmsted parks to inquire as to the state of their parks. In a personal interview, Betsy Shure Gross, a longtime activist with over 30 years of historic landscape preservation experience as a founding member of the NAOP, the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks (MAOP), and the Emerald Necklace Conservancy (ENC), recalled that meeting and its effects on the Olmsted renaissance.[21]

Bozer succeeded in convincing park advocates from Seattle, San Francisco, Boston, Atlanta, New York City, and Detroit, to travel to Buffalo (in mid-winter!) to meet and discuss their experiences with their city's Olmsted parks. According to Shure Gross: "We spent three days talking only to discover that we all had the same problem: that we were living in municipalities that hadn't taken care of their historic landscapes because they didn't see them as valuable resources in the community anymore...During that weekend we created the NAOP."[22] The NAOP is "a coalition of design and preservation professionals, historic property and park managers, scholars, municipal officials, citizen activists and representatives of numerous Olmsted organizations around the United States [whose] concern is the legacy of landscape work left by Olmsted and the firm

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[20] All references to the ENPMP refer to pages in the 2001 edition.

[21] Betsy Shure Gross also served as Special Assistant for Community Preservation at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs before becoming the Executive Director of the Office of Public-Private Partnerships at the EEA.

[22] Shure Gross, personal interview, 30 July 2007.

founded by his sons, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects."[23] Based on their experiences at that meeting in Buffalo, the founding members of the NAOP felt the "need to proselytize" for Olmsted parks and the mission of the NAOP echoes this need: to "advance Olmsted principles and the legacy of irreplaceable parks and landscapes that revitalize communities and enrich people's lives."[24]

Following that Buffalo meeting, Shure Gross and others committed to the appreciation and preservation of the Olmsted legacy in Massachusetts formed the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks (MAOP). In 1981, the MAOP hosted the first annual NAOP conference to highlight the need to rehabilitate the parks of the Emerald Necklace.[25] At that meeting in Boston and Brookline, NAOP and MAOP members discovered "that there really was an interest in the restoration of historic landscapes and that what was beginning to happen in Central Park was a model" that could be used elsewhere."[26] As a result of this conference, the MAOP focused on three main issues: to find a way to make the national register criteria more applicable to historic landscapes; to develop a park ranger program for Boston to address security issues system-wide, including Franklin Park; and, to do an inventory of Olmsted landscapes in Massachusetts.[27]

As one of its first major tasks, the MAOP conducted an assessment of ten Olmsted parks in Massachusetts, resulting in the publication of *Olmsted in Massachusetts: The Public Legacy*. The Beacon Hill Garden Club, with matching funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, funded this park assessment. A collaborative effort, *Olmsted in Massachusetts* brought together faculty and students from the Radcliffe College Seminars Program in Landscape Design, the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the Boston University Preservation Studies Program, the landscape architecture

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[23] NAOP, "About." Available from http://www.olmsted.org/naop-about/about (accessed on 29 July 2010).

[24] Shure Gross, interview; NAOP, "About."

[25] In 1989, the MAOP was incorporated into Preservation Massachusetts to strengthen its advocacy for the state's historic landscapes.

[26] Shure Gross, interview.

[27] *Ibid.*

program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and the Rhode Island School of Design.[28] The MAOP used *Olmsted in Massachusetts* to "proselytize to our legislators in the communities where we had done the major inventories to say that the guy who created Central Park, the man about whom there are now books being written, created your park and we need your help in getting some funding" to preserve and restore it.[29]

*Olmsted in Massachusetts* provided a framework to conduct a cultural landscape inventory by describing the existing conditions of ten Olmsted parks in Massachusetts. As a result of this effort, the MAOP reported that the Olmsted legacy was substantially intact even though each park experienced both major and minor modifications over the course of a century. Ultimately, the report determined that all ten parks "would benefit from either partial or full-scale landscape rehabilitation."[30] More important than these findings, however, was the impact the inventory had on politicians; the timing associated with the reelection of Governor Michael Dukakis in 1983, a Brookline native and an admirer of this park system, could not have been more perfect.

With support of the governor and the publication of *Olmsted in Massachusetts*, the state legislature issued a $15 million open space bond bill in 1983 for feasibility studies and plans associated with the rehabilitation and restoration of the Olmsted parks in the Commonwealth.[31] This initial outlay of funds helped to create the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management's Olmsted Historic Landscape Preservation Program (OHLPP) in 1984 with the following five principle objectives:

1. Preserve, rehabilitate and provide a framework for ongoing maintenance of historic features, furniture and structures which have been determined through

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[28] Eleanor McPeck, Keith Morgan, and Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Olmsted in Massachusetts: The Public Legacy* (Brookline: Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks, 1983).

[29] Shure Gross, interview.

[30] McPeck, Morgan, and Zaitzevsky, *Olmsted in Massachusetts*, iv.

[31] ENPMP, ix.

research and documentation to be integral components of the original design intent, use and appearance;
2. Promote community participation, advocacy, stewardship and awareness of historic landscapes, open space heritage, recreational and economic benefits of each park;
3. Encourage design solutions which provide for efficient maintenance, enhanced public safety and handicapped accessibility, and improve circulation and separation of pedestrian and vehicular systems;
4. Reorganize alterations and additions which represent significant inconsistencies divergent from the original design intent, use and appearance while recognizing community priorities and contemporary recreational needs; and,
5. Develop procedures for protection of abutting lands critical to the character and context of the park to minimize visual and environmental incongruities and intrusions.[32]

The OHLPP, as well as the infusion of an additional $17 million in 1987 through an open space and environmental bond bill, provided a framework that private park friends groups could use to protect their local Olmsted park at the grassroots level. However, beginning with the end Dukakis' term and the election of William Weld in 1991, Republicans controlled the State House throughout the 1990s until 2007. This change in administration, coupled with the recession of the late-1980s/early-1990s, dramatically slowed the planning and restoration process. However, as Shure Gross recalled, there was "enough interest at the local level so that some of the projects continued [before] it got real quiet."[33]

The preservation and restoration of Olmsted landscapes progressed slowly until three days of heavy rains in 1996 led to tremendous flooding along the Muddy River and Fens causing $100 million in damages, 60 percent of which was in the Kenmore Square T station (under Commonwealth Avenue). The flooding affected the Museum of Fine Arts, nearby Wheelock College, and residences in Brookline. There was the realization that:

[32] ENPMP, 3.
[33] Shure Gross, interview.

> if [the Muddy River] was not dredged we were going to continue to landscape the land and it would be destroyed every time there was a major flood. There were people at the municipal level, people at the state level, and enough activity of understanding the landscape restoration that we were able to get Boston and Brookline, the Commonwealth, and the Army Corps of Engineers to come together as a team and say "How are we going to address what is a very destructive element in a metropolitan area?" Because the damage had been done to the Commonwealth's resource, the T station, it made it possible for the Commonwealth to participate in a funding program on land which it didn't own. The Army Corps was very interested for several reasons: because they had been involved for years in the Emerald Necklace issues, and here was an opportunity to do an urban restoration the size of which and the likes of which they had not done.[34]

Resulting from the work of private park conservancies, as well as municipal, state, and federal agencies, the ENPMP represents "one of the most comprehensive programs in this country in terms of restoring an Olmsted landscape."[35] This kind of public-private partnership represents the entrepreneurial dimensions of the neoliberal city, which employs the processes of gentrification to produce better-looking environmental amenities.[36]

As environmental amenities, parks help to create attractive cities and improve urban livability. Attractiveness and livability helped cities draw investment allowing them to remain competitive as a growth machine.[37] The restoration of urban public parks through public-private partnerships, helps cities stay competitive since, urban regimes rely on parks, open space, clean urban streams to promote local economic development, attract mobile capital, and attract tourists and new upper-middle-class residents.[38]

While some may generally view these partnerships as "win-win" situations, they can have the chilling effect of privatizing public space. Private park conservancies and friends groups often

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[34] Shure Gross, interview.

[35] Shure Gross, interview.

[36] Dooling, "Ecological gentrification" and "Sustainability planning"; Bunce, "Developing sustainability"; Dale and Newman, "Sustainable development for some"; Pearsall, "From brown to green"; Quastel, "Political ecologies of gentrification"; Quastel, Moos, and Lynch, "Sustainability-as-density".

[37] McCann, "Best Places."

[38] Pincetl, "Nonprofits and park provision in Los Angeles," 982.

undertake park improvements and upgrades that the city never would have implemented if they were solely responsible for park maintenance and restoration.[39] These conservancies perform park restoration and maintenance projects to serve the needs of the public, and municipal budgets are not strained further to carry out the projects, while private donors receive some (social or financial) benefit.

As shown in the case of the CPC, private park conservancies work to generate funding and bolster support for local parks. These private groups tend to work closely with cities and help determine the restoration objectives.[40] Even where cities still fund large portions of the park budget, private park conservancies play an important role in park production through the use of large volunteer networks to perform general cleanup and park maintenance. Private park conservancies also work to promote their parks by hosting outreach and community events, including, but not limited to, seasonal park walks, movies (or music) in the park events, and fundraising events. In Boston, the most important of the private park conservancies responsible for maintaining the wellbeing of the Emerald Necklace is the Emerald Necklace Conservancy (ENC).

Formed in 1996, the ENC created an umbrella organization to unite the diverse private park groups focusing on individual parks to work together to "protect, restore, maintain and promote the landscape, waterways and parkways of the Emerald Necklace park system as special places for people to visit and enjoy."[41] The mission of the ENC is to promote programs that focus on park restoration and maintenance, public education, constituency building and park advocacy, organizing volunteers and park stewardship activities, and improving public access to the park system.

The ENC promotes the parks of the Emerald Necklace by hosting several annual

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[39] Sam Newberg, "Urban parks helped by conservancies," *Urban Land* (May 2007), 150.
[40] Newberg, "Urban parks helped by conservancies."
[41] ENC, "About." Available from http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/about-us/ (accessed on 12 Feb 2010).

fundraising events including the Mayor's Rose Garden Party and the Party in the Park. The Party in the Park is the ENC's largest fundraiser and between 1994 and 2013 has generated a $3 million endowment fund for the parks of the Emerald Necklace.[42] One of the city's most anticipated social events of the spring the Party in the Park raises money for the Justine Mee Liff Fund for the Emerald Necklace. The Liff Fund was established to honor the legacy of the former Boston Parks Commissioner, whose "vision, leadership, and dedication have encouraged continual restoration and enhancement of these celebrated parks."[43] The Liff Fund supports the renewal of this park system by helping to employ seasonal park staff dedicated to these parks, by hiring contractors specializing in historic landscapes, and by purchasing tools, equipment, and park amenities such as trees, lighting, signage, park benches, etc. Money from the fund helped the ENC renovate the historic Stony Brook Gatehouse (designed by H.H. Richardson) to create the park system's first visitor center, which also serves as the conservancy's home.

For the tenth annual Party in the Park in 2013, held at the rose garden in the Fens, the ENC established the Olmsted Tree Society to support and care for the trees of the Emerald Necklace. The ENC raised $1 million for this new venture. A variety of sponsorship levels, ranging from $450 to $25,000, existed for the Party in the Park:

- Back Bay Fens $25,000
- Franklin Park $15,000
- Olmsted Park $10,000
- Jamaica Park $5,000
- Arnold Arboretum $2,500
- Riverway $1,500
- Individual sponsor $750
- Individual ticket $450

[42] ENC, "Party in the park." Available from http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/party-in-the-park/ (accessed 09 Aug 2013).

[43] ENC, "Justine Mee Liff Fund for the Emerald Necklace." Available from http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/liff-fund/ (accessed 5 Aug 2011).

Regardless of the sponsorship level, all donors became founding members of the Olmsted Tree Society. However, during the lunch there was an opportunity for sponsors to make additional contributions. These founding members tree society could also adopt a heritage tree for an additional $5,000, plant a new trees for $2,500, restore a tree for $1,000, maintain a tree for $500, or provide 12-month and 6-month supplies of water for $250 and $125, respectively.[44] The ENC planned to use the Olmsted Tree Society to complete a tree inventory and create a plan to replace diseased and lost trees, which will help "make Boston a livable and sustainable city."[45] Much like the work by the CPC in Central Park, the ENC succeeded in shaping the landscapes of the Emerald Necklace, particularly the trees, as part of the city's cultural institutions. Using their civic spirit, Boston's leisure class could endow particular trees with which serves to reify their wealth and status. Through these private donations, the ENC essentially lets the city off the hook, since private individuals have now become responsible for the maintenance and management of the public's trees in the Emerald Necklace.

Modeled after the CPC, the ENC has a different agenda. While the CPC controlled the day-to-day park business and most of the park's $58 million operating budget, the ENC, with total assets of $3.8 million and programmatic expenses in 2012 of $900,000, plays a smaller role in the day-to-day park affairs.[46] Instead of addressing routine park operations, the ENC finances a small number of park amenities, but mainly serves as a "watchdog" for the parks and advocates for the Emerald Necklace by garnering public support of their parks agenda.[47] Therefore, according to ENC President Julie Crockford, the organization works to bring together different stakeholders—

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[44] The ENC defined a "heritage" tree as a "century old specimen tree." ENC, "Party in the park invitation." Available from http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Party-in-the-Park-Invite1.pdf (accessed on 09 Aug 2013).

[45] ENC, "Part in the park invitation."

[46] ENC 2008 IRS Form 999. Available from http://www.guidestar.org (accessed on 12 Feb 2010).

[47] *BG,* "Polishing the Emerald Necklace," 31 Mar 1998.

individuals from government and business, area residents, abutting institutional representatives, environmental and park advocates, and community leaders and organizations—to support "the Olmsted legacy."[48]

To restore the Olmsted vision, the ENC played a major role in updating the ENPMP in 2001. The ENPMP stressed the open, transparent, and public nature of the planning process. In this master planning process, proposals for the Fens, the Riverway, Olmsted Park, and Jamaica Pond were drafted "as an initial set of ideas designed to generate a full discussion among all interested parties" at a series on community meetings in 1987 and 1988.[49] Through these public meetings, the Citizens Advisory Committees mandated by the OHLPP, "acted as the conduits to bring in their neighbors and colleagues. The meetings were public and very well managed. There was a lot of money in the master plan process for public meetings and one of the reasons that it was developed that way is those of us who worked so long to help create the conduit were adamant that it had to be inclusive."[50] Through those community meetings, the plan represented "a product of the public's participation and spirit of cooperation in reaching consensus."[51]

Many of those that took an active role in this master planning process were involved in the process of restoring of the parks and parkways of the Emerald Necklace from the early days. Jurisdictional issues complicated the restoration process in the beginning. The Emerald Necklace held meaning to Shure Gross "on a personal level" because:

> I was one of those who made the phone calls in the mid 1970s to the town of Brookline after I lived there for several years and was on the board of my neighborhood association...As I walked [my dogs] I discovered that very near my home there was extraordinary amount of urban open space [in Olmsted park] but it was in dreadful condition...So I called the town of Brookline and said "to whom

[48] Julie Crockford, personal interview, 5 Mar 2010.
[49] ENPMP, 4
[50] Shure Gross, interview.
[51] ENPMP, 209.

> does this land belong and why is it in this miserable shape?" They said "Oh that belongs to Boston." So I called the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and said, "Could you tell me why you're allowing this land to be so unkempt?" And they said "Oh that belongs to Brookline."[52]

Another Brookline resident, Arlene Mattison, President of the Brookline Greenspace Alliance and an ENC Park Overseer, also described the jurisdictional confusion associated with Olmsted Park: "if you called the [Brookline] police about crime in the park, they'd say 'that's Boston'."[53] Since the municipal boundary ran through the middle of the Muddy River, it was relatively easy for each municipality to not claim ownership.

While Brookline and Boston bickered about who owned which portions of Olmsted Park, issues along the Arborway highlighted the complicated management issues even when the park is solely in Boston. Constructed in the early-1890s to connect the Arnold Arboretum and Jamaica Pond, the Arborway typified Olmsted's approach to parks and their parkways. Like other parkways, the Arborway was designed as a linear greenway that provided distinct travel lanes for different modes of travel (carriages, horses, bicycles, and pedestrians). Throughout the twentieth century, as the automobile gained popularity, the design of the Arborway changed to accommodate higher volumes and speeds. The new design features four center lanes for through traffic with green medians lined with red oaks on either side to separate two local traffic lanes. Pedestrian access to the Jamaica Pond or the arboretum often requires either crossing these six lanes of traffic or at one of two rotaries.

With safety in mind, the Arborway Coalition works "to improve access to the parks of the Emerald Necklace and promote public safety on the parkways." Sarah Freeman, a member of the coalition and an ENC board member, noted that her organization began with "just a few residents

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[52] Shure Gross, interview.
[53] Arlene Mattison, personal interview, 23 Oct 2005.

who realized that we had to take our lives into our hands just to get to Jamaica Pond or Arnold Arboretum, even though each was less than a block away."[54] In the beginning, Freeman noted:

> We realized there were no speed limits signs posted [along the Arborway]. It was kind of a free for all, and over the years we found that there [were] separate state police jurisdictions, with one barracks responsible for the Arborway and another for the Jamaicaway. But [since] the Arborway sign was located in the front of the Arboretum they were only policing a small section of the Arborway, and not the section between the Pond and the Arboretum. We got them to figure out who would be responsible, [and] to put up speed limit signs.[55]

These grassroots efforts of civic-minded individuals ultimately led to the creation of various neighborhood organizations and private park conservancies. However, by the late-1980s and 1990s, grassroots activism coincided with a new, more entrepreneurial neoliberal state.

In addition to the various arms of the state apparatus, private park conservancies are responsible for the welfare of particular parks under this planning process.[56] Private park conservancies represent the kind of "local determinism" generally associated with postmodernism.[57] Rather than have plans and designs expressly pressed upon them in a top-down fashion from the state, these groups use their voice to help play a part in determining the future of the parks. But some groups, like the CPC and ENC, have the ability to speak louder, be heard, and play a larger role in determining the future shape of the urban landscape.

While Central Park is larger than any one park in the Emerald Necklace, in some ways, the job of the CPC is a simpler task than the one facing the ENC. As a linear greenway park system, the Emerald Necklace winds it through two municipalities and a dozen neighborhoods each with their

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[54] Sarah Freeman, personal interview, 24 Oct 2005.

[55] Freeman, interview.

[56] A complete list of state and municipal officials as well as the individuals, organizations, and institutions that provided assistance, guidance, expertise, and direction in drafting the ENPMP is listed in Appendix B.

[57] Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*, 47.

own special interests.[58] The ENC accommodated this unique condition by creating a four-branched governance structure: a small full-time staff; the Board of Directors; the Stewardship Council; and, the Park Overseers.

The Board of Directors consists of people typically found on a corporate board—politicians, bankers, lawyers, and people with real estate interests. But, the Board also includes representatives from nearby colleges and universities, the Boston Red Sox, and park friends groups. *Ex officio* members of the Board include a representative from the DCR and the park, water, and sewer commissioners from Boston and Brookline.

The Stewardship Council consists of individuals primarily associated with cultural, political, and environmental institutions to assist in advocating for the Olmsted legacy in Boston. Those serving on the Stewardship Council, for example, includes: Eugenie Beal, of the Boston Natural Areas Network an affiliate of the Trustees; Charles Beveridge, series editor of *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*; Myra Harrison, superintendent of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site of the National Park Service; Arleyn Levee, Past President of NAOP; Whitney Hatch, regional director of the Trust for Public Land; Frank Keefe, CEO of the Boston Museum Project; and, Jody Dow, a Republican National Committeewoman.[59] While the Board and the Stewardship Council serve important functions within the ENC, the most important aspect of the ENC governance structure is the use of Park Overseers.

Park Overseers represent the varied private park groups within the Emerald Necklace, and this is where the ENC unites the parks from Boston Common to Franklin Park under one umbrella. As the municipal parks budgets in Brookline and Boston were slashed in the 1970s and 1980s, the

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[58] The parks themselves are owned by Boston and Brookline, but the parkways are owned by the Commonwealth's Department of Conservation and Recreation.

[59] ENC, "Governance." Available from http://www.emeraldnecklace.org/governance/ (accessed on 5 Aug 2011).

burden to restore the Emerald Necklace fell on individuals living closest to the parks. In addition to the creation of statewide groups, like the MAOP, this period witnessed the growth of groups invested in, and committed to, protecting their local parks. Until the creation of the ENC, these groups struggled on their own, piecing together the resources to do park cleanup projects. But, as a group, the Overseers represent a wide variety of cultural, commercial, educational, and environmental groups seeking to protect their local park. The Park Overseers, according to Crockford, are "the eyes and ears in the parks are more active in setting the actual parks projects agenda than the full Board, which is more interested in the 'big picture' and strategic planning. The Overseers really look at both the long-term preservation projects that need to happen, but also specific projects that need to happen right now, things like 'these trees are failing' or 'that bridge is out'."[60] The Overseers are also committed to working with other groups to enhance the whole Emerald Necklace park system.[61]

In addition to this governance structure, the ENC also utilized a Project Review Committee whose membership consisted of the President of the ENC, and two members each from the Board, the Stewardship Council, and the Park Overseers. Its function is to "review projects that are proposed on property adjacent to or near the Emerald Necklace and assess the potential impacts they may have on the park system."[62]

The reliance on groups like the ENC may seem like the only way for municipalities to move forward and protect this park system. But in reality, it is the same old mode of park production. We must remember that urban nature in the form of parks, as engineered urban ecosystems, has always

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[60] Crockford, interview.

[61] For a full list of all organization and institutions associated with the drafting of the ENPMP in 1989 and its revision in 2001, see Appendix B.

[62] ENC, "Governance." Additionally, the ENC has a 3-person Rose Garden Advisory Committee for the Fens.

acted as an accumulation strategy—parks have always been investments in the future of the city. In order for the city to profit from this investment, "nature has been commodified and privatized at all scales."[63] The use of private park conservancies like the ENC, or any of the other smaller park and neighborhood groups, represents the continued commodification and privatization of urban parks.

Members associated with private park conservancies merely want to restore their local park in order to improve the livability of their neighborhood. In discussing the CPC, Cindi Katz notes that the organization was comprised of, "capitalists with a mission—saving and protecting nature." Katz further notes that, "like religious missionaries, [members of the CPC] presume that the larger 'good' of their endeavor will immunize them from charges of self-interest."[64] But if we look critically at the reproduction of the Emerald Necklace we will see that as part of a sustainability fix, the privatization and commodification of nature in this park system results in eco-gentrification, or the marginalization and exclusion of park uses and users that do not fit the park ideals of the private groups.[65] Along with city and state officials, these park conservancies utilize the *ghost of Olmsted* as an environmental imaginary and narrative around which to plan the restoration of the Emerald Necklace.

**Re-Greening the City: Historical Significance & Environmental Imaginaries**

City plans, and the built environments they produce, tell stories. The *reading* of plans, and their stories embedded in the material landscape, enables urban historians and cultural geographers to examine the power relations inherent in the planning process, and to understand the ways in which this process utilizes the power of symbols to impose order onto urban space, implement public

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[63] Katz, "Whose nature, whose culture?" 48.

[64] *Ibid*, 58.

[65] Dooling, "Ecological gentrification" and "Sustainability planning"; Bunce, "Developing sustainability"; Dale and Newman, "Sustainable development for some"; Pearsall, "From brown to green"; Quastel, "Political ecologies of gentrification"; Quastel, Moos, and Lynch, "Sustainability-as-density".

policy, and legitimize state power.[66] The planning process privileges certain narratives and environmental imaginaries in order to "mobilize a dominant coalition with a vision" who help steer the action in the directions they desire.[67] During the planning process, the urban planners attempt to convince local actors that the plan is in the public interest and in doing so planners, as storytellers, engage a narrative "to control the actions of others" and, therefore, will "select certain event to tell and others to ignore."[68]

A perception exists about the planning process that the planner is simply an objective technician who implements public policy measures in a value-free and factual manner. If we accept this premise, then the plan, as a policy measure, must also be objective and value-free. Believing that the plan is objective and value-free allows citizens to reach the conclusion that the planners intended and, in this way, the plan helps to craft the narrative and vision around which to organize support for the plan. But if we view the plan as a social construct that is struggled over, and reject this premise, then we must conclude that the plan is subjective, value-laden, and biased. The struggles over the interpretation of plans are struggles over trying to reconcile competing stories and imaginaries, and work through differences in ideology.

The preservation of historic landscapes has become an increasingly integral component of urban planning since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.[69] As part of the planning process, historic preservation relies on the use of historical narratives. Increasingly these

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[66] David Harvey, "Monument and myth," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69(1979): 362-381; Mandelbaum, "Reading plans" and "Telling stories"; Yanow, "Built space as story"; Finnegan, *Tales of the City* Eckstein and Throgmorton, *Story and Sustainability*.

[67] Mandelbaum, "Reading plans," 350.

[68] Barbara Eckstein, "Making space: stories in the practice of planning," in *Story and Sustainability: Planning, Practice, and Possibility for American Cities*, eds., B. Eckstein and J.A. Throgmorton (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003), 20 and 24.

[69] Eric Allison and Lauren Peters, *Historic Preservation and the Livable City* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2011); Richard Longstreth, ed., *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and Heritage in Preservation Practice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); William Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2006).

narratives hinge on the historic significance of a place, or what urban planner Randall Mason calls a "mission statement about why a place should be preserved."[70] Preserving historic landscapes allows us to protect significant and lasting features of our shared or idiosyncratic pasts.[71] In framing a historic landscape, like the Emerald Necklace, as historically designed, the act of restoration privileges one particular environmental imaginary and one historical moment—creating a static, rather than process-oriented, landscape. This raises several questions: Whose past is important? Who decides which stories get told? Which environmental imaginary is most important? How do the processes of interpretation and selection affect the preservation process? When we critically examine the preservation process, we find that private elite groups have generally determined the significance of historic landscapes.[72]

From its beginnings with the creation of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association to preserve Mount Vernon in the 1850s, through Rockefeller's work to reconstruct Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920s, the preservation movement has been a private and conservative enterprise. As technological innovation, immigration, and urban growth changed the social and built environments of nineteenth- and twentieth-century cities, the urban elite resisted these changes by preserving their history and trying to maintain the status quo, which merely served to reify their power and privilege. Historian Michael Wallace notes that during periods of intense cultural and technological change, "the bourgeoisie buckled history around themselves like moral armor. The more they felt

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[70] Randall Mason, "Fixing historic preservation: a constructive critique of 'significance'," *Places* 16(2003), 65.

[71] Robert Z. Melnick, "Considering nature and culture in historic landscape preservation," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, eds., Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnick (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 22-43.

[72] Roy Rosenzweig, "Marketing the past: *American Heritage* and popular history in the United States," in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds., Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 21-49; Michael Holleran, *Boston's Changeful Times: Origins of Preservation and Planning in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Michael Wallace, "Visiting the past: history and museums in the United States," in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed., Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 137-161.

threatened, the more they grew convinced in their inherent, because inherited, legitimacy."[73] The focus on nostalgia, and the preservation of the familiar, helped the urban elite feel comfortable with the ever-changing present, and an uncertain future.

The significance of a building or landscape, according to Mason, provides the "raison d'être" of historic preservation and helped fix memories in place.[74] The criteria for evaluating the significance of historic designed landscapes, established by the National Register of Historic Places, revealed that the parks of the Emerald Necklace were significant since they "embod[ied] the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master."[75] In recognizing the significance associated with the distinctive character of park landscapes and acknowledging Olmsted as a master designer who created significant landscapes, we can begin to see connections between the conservative measures embodied in the production of nineteenth century park landscapes and those embodied in the twenty-first century park restoration process. It is in significance, after all, where preservationists "pack all their theory, ideology and politics."[76]

The processes of preservation depend on determining historical significance, and once significance is "found" in the landscape, the possibilities are reduced for that landscape. Mason argues that the notion of significance is accepted "as a matter of faith, [with] a priesthood (historians, architects, and preservation professionals) and a group of the faithful (preservationists) who interpret the results for the public." He further notes that this view of significance implies the presumption that, in this case, a park landscape, will always mean the same thing to everyone and

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[73] Wallace, "Visiting the past," 141.

[74] Mason, "Fixing historic preservation," 65.

[75] J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve Keller, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes,* National Register Bulletin 18, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division. Available from http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/pdfs/nrb18.pdf (accessed Mar 10, 2009).

[76] Mason, "Fixing historic preservation," 64.

"that there is only one kind of significance."[77]

Finding historical significance within a landscape implies a sort of commodity fetishism. By definition, a commodity is an object produced though human labor that, through its inherent qualities, can satisfy humans needs or wants. In this way, commodities possess use value, and therefore also, exchange value. In considering the social and economic relations behind the production of landscape, Mitchell argued that

> In many respects [landscape] is much like a commodity: it actively hides (or fetishizes) the labour that goes into its making…those who study landscape representations—such as landscape paintings, photographs, and gardens—are repeatedly struck by how effectively they erase or neutralize images of work. More particularly, landscape representations are exceptionally effective in erasing the social struggle that defines relations of work… [the] landscape is made to appear as if fully *natural*. The things that landscape tries to hide, in its insistent fetishisation, are the relationships that go into its making.[78]

In this case, fetishizing Olmsted's Emerald Necklace means that this park landscape once held intrinsic power and value—that the historical significance is an inherent characteristic of the landscape rather than a quality imposed on it by society. By asserting significance, private park conservancies aid city and state officials in naturalizing Olmsted's naturalistic landscapes, which help to create the landscape exceptionalism associated with the myth of Olmsted.[79] By re-planting the Olmsted legacy in the Emerald Necklace, the restoration of this park landscape serves to reify the significance of Olmsted.[80] However, significance cannot be *found*, but rather is *made*—it is socially constructed and reflects the ideologies and values of those determining significance rather than

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[77] Mason, "Fixing historic preservation," 66.

[78] Mitchell, *Cultural Geography*, 103-104.

[79] It's the aura of Olmsted that has people canonizing him as a saint and placing on the level of a god (Scobey 2002, 15-54). As a child growing up in New Haven, Connecticut, Betsy Shure Gross (2007) often fed the ducks in Edgewood Park. Later, as an adult she discovered that the park was designed by the Olmsted Brothers, and "began to understand things that I thought God had created, Olmsted had."

[80] Katz, "Whose nature, whose culture?"; Gandy *Concrete and Clay*, 102-109.

qualities of the actual site.[81]

Assigning historical significance to the Emerald Necklace helps to create the particular environmental imaginaries associated with this Olmstedian naturalistic landscape. In making significance, preservationists manipulate history and environmental imaginaries to fit into their predetermined narrative by relying explicitly on selection, bias, and myth. History, according to British historian Edward Hallett Carr, may be "a series accepted judgments" about the past.[82] But, according to geographer David Lowenthal, it is cultural heritage, and its manipulation and distortion of the past, that provides authenticity and significance, the fundamental components associated with historic preservation:

> Heritage is sometimes equated with reliving the past; more often, it improves the past to suit present needs. For such purposes, we contrive a heritage exclusive to and biased in favor of ourselves. Exclusion and bias are supported by error and mystification. We dwell on mythic fables rather than specifics, consolidate history into a generalized past, and revamp a legacy in line with what we think the present is or want it to be.[83]

The preservation of Olmstedian naturalistic landscape parks requires using the ghost of Olmsted to create historical significance. In this way, neo-Olmstedians privilege certain environmental imaginaries (as well as mythic narratives and rhetoric) that represent what they perceive as the ideal version of the Olmstedian pastoral and picturesque landscape park. By focusing on the Olmsted

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[81] Page and Mason, *Giving Preservation a History*; Howard Green, "The social construction of historical significance," in *Preservation of What, for Whom?: A Critical Look at Historical Significance*, ed., Michael Tomlan (Ithaca, NY: The National Council for Preservation Education, 1998), 85-94.

[82] Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Random House, 1961), 13.

[83] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 142-143. For discussions of authenticity and significance, see: Steven Hoelscher, "Tourism, ethnic memory, and the other-directed place," *Ecumene* 5(1998): 369-398; Dydia DeLyser, "Authenticity on the ground: engaging the past in a California ghost town," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89(1999): 602-632; Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton, "Bavarian Leavenworth and the symbolic economy of theme town," *Geographical Review* 90(2000): 559-584; Gordon Waitt, "Consuming heritage: perceived historical authenticity," *Annals of Tourism Research* 27(2000): 835-862; David Grazian, *Blue Chicago: The Search for Authenticity in Urban Blues Clubs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Athinodoro Chronis and Ronald Hampton, "Consuming the authentic Gettysburg: how a tourist landscape becomes an authentic experience," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 7(2008): 111–126.

legacy, emphasizing the improvement of urban streams, or replacing invasive plant species with natives, the process of ecological restoration privileges one particular representation of the landscape.

The ENPMP addressed the ecological restoration of the four parks that make up the main water features of the Emerald Necklace: the Back Bay Fens, Riverway Park, Olmsted Park, and Jamaica Pond.[84] The ecological restoration and historic preservation projects proposed in the master plan reflected the tensions and conflicts associated with assigning historical significance to the park landscape. In drafting these plans, members of the urban leisure class manufactured significance; by asserting that the plans represented the reproduction of an idealized Olmstedian landscape, neo-Olmstedians determined which environmental imaginaries and landscape features should be calcified in the landscape. Despite claims of historic significance, the proposed ecological restoration projects in the plan clearly indicated that tensions and conflicts existed in the processes of preserving and restoring a nineteenth-century landscape in a twenty-first-century city.

The definition of ecological restoration has evolved since the 1990s. In 1990, the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) first defined it as "the process of intentionally altering a site to establish a defined, indigenous, historic ecosystem [and] the goal of this process is to emulate the structure, function, diversity, and dynamics of a specified ecosystem." By 1995, the SER produced a short, but more problematic, definition that was too general: "Ecological restoration is the process of renewing and maintaining ecosystem health."[85] In the twenty-first century, the SER explained that ecological restoration was "the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been

[84] For the restoration plans, see Appendix A.
[85] As cited in Eric Higgs, "What is good ecological restoration?" *Conservation Biology* 11(1997), 340.

degraded, damaged, or destroyed."[86] Implied throughout the evolution of this definition is the idea that the ecosystems under consideration were "natural" ecosystems.

The rise of ecological restoration as a way to address social impacts on the environment presents opportunities to examine just what exactly successful restoration looks like. The SER notes the attributes of successful restoration:

> An ecosystem has recovered—and is restored—when it contains sufficient biotic and abiotic resources to continue its development without further assistance or subsidy…The restored ecosystem is sufficiently resilient to endure the normal periodic stress events in the local environment that serve to maintain the integrity of the ecosystem…The restored ecosystem is self-sustaining to the same degree as its reference ecosystem, and has the potential to persist indefinitely under existing environmental conditions.[87]

Eric Higgs, a philosopher and environmental planner who served as chair of the SER, notes that the definition of good restoration requires a broad view of restoration; good restoration must address ecological, but also the historical, cultural, political, aesthetic, and moral, contexts of the site. Even after considering this broader perspective, however, the goal of restoration is ecological fidelity.

Determining the ultimate goal for the landscape must be determined before undertaking any restoration work. Geographers Sally Eden, Sylvia Tunstall and Susan Tapsell argue that in an ideal world, perfect restoration "seeks a return to the original (predisturbance) conditions and functioning of the natural ecosystem…A restored ecosystem would thus ideally be indistinguishable from the predisturbance ecosystem."[88] But, returning a degraded ecosystem back to some previous state

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[86] SER, *The SER International Primer on Ecological Restoration*. Available from http://www.ser.org/resources/resources-detail-view/ser-international-primer-on-ecological-restoration#4 (accessed on 9 Jul 2009).

[87] SER, *Primer on Ecological Restoration*.

[88] Sally Eden, Sylvia Tunstall, and Susan Tapsell, "Environmental restoration: environmental management or environmental threat?" *Area* 31(1999), 152.

allows us to "fake nature" as part of the "big lie" of ecological restoration.[89]

Environmental philosopher Eric Katz argues that when we engage in the restoration of nature, in any of its forms, we do not restore nature. Instead, he claimed, we engage in the process of creating new human artifacts.[90] In making this ontological argument, Katz claims that "natural individuals were not designed for a purpose. They lack intrinsic functions, and so they are different from human-created artifacts [which] are created for human use…Depending on the adequacy of our technology, these restored and redesigned natural areas will appear more or less natural, but they will never be natural—they will be anthropocentrically designed human artifacts."[91] Since the goal of park restoration is not to restore a park landscape back to its predisturbed state, but rather to a predetermined historical state, this ontological argument does not help us determine the effectiveness of park restoration. After all, according to Katz, a park is simply a human artifact, designed to serve a human purpose.

Like all human interventions in the landscape, ecological restoration is a political act.[92] Using an example of mining company restoring a landscape after completing its operations, Eden, Tunstall and Tapsell highlight the ways in which restoration "can be used to obscure or justify environmentally damaging practices."[93] Due to the political dimensions of restoration, we must critically examine park restoration projects and ask the following: Who stands to benefit from restoration? Which time period should a park be restored back to? Who determines the time period for restoration? What counts as proper representation of nature? Who determines the

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[89] Robert Elliot, "Faking nature," *Inquiry* 25(1982): 82-93; Eric Katz, "The big lie: human restoration of nature," *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 12(1992): 231-241.

[90] Eric Katz "Another look at restoration," in *Restoring Nature: Perspectives from the Social Sciences and Humanities*, eds., Paul Gobster and Bruce Hall (Covelo: Island Press, 2000), pp. 37–48.

[91] Eric Katz, "The ethical significance of human intervention in nature," *Restoration and Management Notes* 9(1992), 92.

[92] Andrew Light and Eric Higgs, "The politics of ecological restoration," *Environmental Ethics* 18(1996): 227-247.

[93] Eden, Tunstall and Tapsell, "Environmental restoration," 152.

environmental imaginary used to guide restoration? How will successful restoration be measured? This last question is vital to the restoration process to ensure that municipalities effectively use their limited financial resources.

The parks of the Emerald Necklace were naturalistic landscapes that represented what Olmsted believed to be the best of the local environment. Over time, however, these neglected parks became derelict spaces of crime, invasive species, declining forests, and poor water quality. Based on more than a century of park transformations and deferred maintenance, it is unlikely that these newly restored landscapes will be maintained sufficiently to allow them to cope with future stresses. Are we to expect that once the invasive plant species have been removed, when the park landscape has been restored to correspond to an Olmstedian-inspired environmental imaginary, that future invasives will not take root? Urban naturalistic landscape parks are not self-sufficient, durable and resilient landscapes—they need constant maintenance and interference by humans.

As a series of naturalistic landscapes, the parks of the Emerald Necklace have complex histories. The Olmsted firm began construction of the Fens in 1878 and completed Franklin Park in 1896. Almost since their completion, the landscapes of this park system experienced significant changes to their design. Whether these changes were natural (e.g., lack of vegetative growth) or cultural (e.g., construction of new buildings and roads), change has been constant. The park landscape is not a thing as much as it is a process, and 'true' park restoration is not possible. In her 1987 book *Rebuilding Central Park*, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, the founding president of the CPC, acknowledges the shortcomings of the restoration movement. Rogers notes that restoration is not necessarily about being historically accurate 100 percent of the time, since the intervening changes to Central Park meant it could not be "literally restored, like a Renaissance painting or classic sculpture." Instead, Rogers argues, the goal of restoration should be to provide an "extended life

for a noble old organism."[94] In restoring parks, like those in the Emerald Necklace, the crucial problem lies in determining the manner through which a park's life should be extended. But, the fact that Olmsted designed these park landscapes meant that private park conservancies found significance in the Olmsted legacy and used the ghost of Olmsted to extend the life of this park system.

The goal of park restoration cannot be a return to its original predisturbed state since all urban parks have been socially produced. Instead, we tend to use some arbitrary measure of ecological fidelity (at a particular point in time) to determine the effectiveness of ecological restoration. Higgs argued that the foundations of this fidelity, and therefore successful restoration, rest on three principles: the compositional and structural replication of the ecosystem; the functional success of the newly restored ecosystem; and, the durability of this new landscape.[95] Ultimately, however, the success associated with restoring a naturalistic landscape park (a previously engineered urban ecosystem) depends upon the landscape's resilience and the ability of society to continually manage the landscape. Using these criteria to determine the effectiveness of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace in Boston, I argue that the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace has not been successful.

First, the goal of the ENPMP was to reproduce a landscape that captured the Olmsted 'vision' and protected the Olmsted 'legacy.' The plan focused on utilizing historically sensitive planting, or Olmsted's historic palette of planting materials, to replicate the historic composition of the original landscape. Despite these admirable goals, in some sections of the Emerald Necklace the restoration did not adhere to the original Olmsted design intent, while in other sections the restoration strictly adhered to the composition and structure of Olmsted's design, but not his intent.

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[94] Rogers, *Rebuilding Central Park*, 8.
[95] Higgs, "What is good ecological restoration?" 343.

Second, the newly restored park landscapes did not function successfully. In his discussion of good restoration, Higgs claims that the functional success of a restored landscape depended upon its continued maintenance. Higgs uses prairie restoration as an example of a hybridized *socionature* that combines a natural ecosystem with cultural practices, and notes that prairie restoration could not be deemed functionally successful if humans suppress natural fires or fail to utilize prescribed burns.[96] In the case of the restoration of the Emerald Necklace, a look at the history of the park shows that the city has routinely neglected to maintain the parks as they were designed. Based on the city's track record throughout the twentieth century, from constructing the Charles River dam in 1910 and destroying Olmsted's salt marsh in the Fens, to practicing a hands-off approach Franklin Park, the city has failed to maintain the landscapes of the Emerald Necklace.

Finally, the plan to restore the Emerald Necklace did not produce durable park landscapes. For restoration to be considered successful, the restored landscape "must hold up over a significant period of time."[97] Durability, according to Higgs, reflects the resilience of a restored landscape, or its ability to withstand change. Resilience reflects the ability of an ecosystem, or park landscape, to absorb changes and still persist as a system.[98] In other words, the resiliency of an urban ecosystem lies in its about to "bounce back" from changes, like a lack of maintenance. But there is a limit to ecological resilience and once urban ecosystems passes this limit, "they collapse into a qualitatively

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[96] Higgs, "What is good ecological restoration?" 343.

[97] Eric Higgs, *Nature by Design: People, Natural Process, and Ecological Restoration* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 128.

[98] C.S. Holling, "Resilience and stability of ecological systems," *Annual Review of Ecological Systems* 4(1973): 1-23; Garry Peterson, "Political ecology and ecological resilience: an integration of human and ecological dynamics," *Ecological Economics* 35(2000): 325-336; W. Neil Adger, "Social and ecological resilience: are they related?" *Progress in Human Geography* 24(2000): 347-364. Recent scholarship on resiliency and the city reflects an approach to predict which cities will be resilient in the face of the changes associated with climate change and terrorism. See: Lawrence Vale, "The politics of resilient cities: whose resilience and whose city?" *Building Research and Information* 42(2014): 191-201; Jon Coaffee, "Risk, resilience, and environmentally sustainable cities," *Energy Policy* 36(2008): 4633-4638; Jack Ahern, "From *fail-safe* to *safe-to-fail*: sustainability and resilience in the new urban world," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 100(2011): 341-343.

different state."[99] My examination of the 130-year history of the Emerald Necklace shows that the park landscapes have not been resilient and have not been able to cope with various stresses and disturbances in ways that were in line with the accepted environmental imaginaries of how the landscape should look. Had the parks of the Emerald Necklace been resilient and self-sufficient they would not have needed restoration! If the parks of the Emerald Necklace could not be restored back to their original design, and the restored parks cannot be resilient and durable landscape, why spend hundreds of millions of dollars, not to mention time and energy, restoring them? The answer lies in the symbolic economy of place.

**A Spatial Fix: Parks and Private Property Values**

Despite the lack of functional success, park restoration is part of the revival and regeneration of the neoliberal city. Using dimensions of the local culture, history and environment, the ENC, as well as city and state officials, has worked to improve the look and feel of the park landscapes to attract the leisure class back to the city. In the same way that urban regimes have utilized hip boutiques, trendy restaurants, festival marketplaces, and historic districts, urban parks also play an important role in the revival of the postindustrial city. To appeal to the urban leisure class, private park conservancies like the ENC, and to some extent various arms of the state apparatus, use the Olmsted legacy as the narrative around which to plan the revitalization of the Emerald Necklace, and the future sustainability of the city. But, these park landscapes do more than provide naturalistic spaces for recreation. They provide aesthetically pleasing environmental amenities that, at various times, positively impacted property values adjacent and near the parks of the Emerald Necklace.

[99] Vale, "The politics of resilient cities," 192.

In their seminal 1978 paper, economists Mark Correll, Jane Lillydahl, and Larry Singell use the hedonic pricing method (multiple regression) to determine the impact of greenways on the sale price of adjacent and nearby residential properties.[100] Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell recognize that the purchase price of a home was a function of its unique characteristics such as number of rooms, finished square footage, lot size, neighborhood, etc. They examine the individual characteristics of homes within 3,200 walking feet of three greenways in Boulder, Colorado to determine people's willingness to pay for environmental amenities. Their study reveals that, all things being equal, residential property values rose $4.20 for every foot one moves closer to a greenway, so that the average price of a home adjacent to a greenway was $54,379, while it was only $41,206 at a distance of 3,200 feet.[101] Following from Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, I utilize the hedonic pricing method to analyze the relationship between sale prices of residential properties adjacent and near Olmsted Park and the Riverway. In what follows, I present the hedonic model used in this analysis and present the empirical results of the multiple regression.

*The Hedonic Pricing Model*

In utilizing the hedonic pricing method, I make several assumptions. First, the naturalistic landscapes associated with the urban public parks of the Emerald Necklace serve the public good by providing recreational spaces and visually appealing landscapes. Second, specific green spaces, in this case Olmsted Park and the Riverway, are a specific benefit to those living nearby. In this way, Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell state that urban green spaces are really "quasi-public goods" since there is "some exclusion from benefit due primarily to distance."[102] Third, the price of land adjacent

[100] Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, *op. cit.,* 207-217.
[101] *Ibid*, 211.
[102] *Ibid*, 209.

and near these quasi-public goods reflects the value of this externality. Finally, over time due to competition in the marketplace, the sale of residential properties functions in accordance with maximum exchange and use value.[103]

For this analysis, I chose to examine the sale prices of homes in the Brookline's High Street Hill neighborhood, adjacent and near Olmsted Park, and the Longwood/Central Village neighborhood, adjacent and near the Riverway. This was done for two reasons. First, data on real estate transactions were readily available from the town assessor's office.[104] Second, these Brookline neighborhoods represented an operational spatial sample for analysis since the town of Brookline was responsible for only 13 acres in Olmsted Park and 8 acres along the Riverway.[105] In these neighborhoods, I collected real estate data for a sample of single-family residence sold during a six-year period between 2004 and 2010. At first, this amounted to a sample size of 97 single-family residences within 1 mile of these two parks. After eliminating duplexes, triple-deckers, and row homes to achieve a sample consisting only of single-family detached homes, I eventually pared down the sample to 57 homes within 3,200 walking feet from a park entrance (Table 6.1and Figures 6.1. and 6.2).[106] Additionally, several studies note that public-access distance was a superior measure than as-the-crow-flies distance in explaining variations in residential property sale prices.[107]

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[103] *Ibid*, 209.

[104] Town of Brookline, Assessor's Department. Available from http://www.brooklinema.gov/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=414 (accessed 3 Mar 2012).

[105] Residents in these neighborhoods obviously have full access to the whole area in each park. But due to the small nature of the Brookline-owned land, these neighborhoods seemed like they would provide a manageable sample size.

[106] I chose single-family detached homes for the sake of simplicity. I did not plan to have my analysis speak for all properties adjacent to the parks, but to act as a sample to explore the relationship between property values and proximity to these park landscapes. Adding other variables such as rental properties, triple-deckers, and duplexes added layers of analysis that would certainly be useful, but is better suited for a later project.

[107] T. Hammer, R. Coughlin and E. Horn, "The effect of a large urban park on real estate value," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 40(1974): 274-277; Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, *op. cit.*, 209.

| Neighborhood | No. of Observations | Mean Sale Price, 2004-2010 | Mean Age of Home at Time of Sale | Mean Home Finished Living Area | Mean Distance to Park Entrance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High Street Hill | 27 | $1,312,117 | 103 | 3069 sq. ft. | 1248 ft. |
| Longwood/ Central Village | 30 | $1,340,207 | 104 | 3282 sq. ft. | 1583 ft. |

**Table 6.1.** Characteristics of property samples in the neighborhoods adjacent and near Olmsted Park and the Riverway. Source: Town of Brookline, Assessor's Office.

I constructed a model that related home sale prices to property characteristics, particularly the distance to public park entrances. The variable definitions and sources were as follows:

*P* = Sales price of single-family detached homes sold between 2004 and 2010 as recorded by the Assessor.
*DIST* = Walking distance in feet to the most direct public entrance, estimated by using Google Maps.[108]
*ROOM* = The number of rooms as determined by the Assessor.
*SQFT* = The finished living area of the home as determined by the Assessor.
*LOT* = Area of the housing lot as determined by the Assessor.
*AGE* = The age of the home at the time of the sale as determined by the Assessor.
*TAX* = Property taxes for the year 2012, as determined by the Assessor.

In the regression model, the sale price was the dependent variable while all others were the independent variables.

*Empirical Results*

The results of the regression analysis show that proximity to the naturalistic spaces of Olmsted

[108] Using the walking distance feature of Google Maps, I determined the walking distance to park entrances by using the home address and the address of the home adjacent to the nearest park entrance.


**Figure 6.1.** High Street Hill neighborhood and Olmsted Park. Each dot represents one residential property included in the sample.


**Figure 6.2.** The Longwood and Central Village neighborhoods and the Riverway. Each dot represents one residential property included in the sample.

Park and the Riverway had a statistically significant positive impact on the price of residential property. The regression results for the sample were as follows (with standard error in parentheses).

$$P = 765416.65 - \underset{(55.33)}{105.59}DIST^{*} - \underset{(21352.44)}{40327.78}ROOM^{*} + \underset{(67.82)}{214.03}SQFT^{*}$$

$$- \underset{(9.03)}{5.49}LOT - \underset{(1721.30)}{1097.54}AGE + \underset{(11.09)}{40.87}TAX^{*}$$

$n = 57$; Adjusted $R^2 = .87$; $F = 64$
* significant at the .10 level

These results are consistent with my expectations. Holding all else constant, the price of property increases $105.59 for every foot one moves closer to a park entrance. This result is consistent with my expectations that people would be willing to pay a premium for properties located adjacent to or near naturalistic landscape parks. Logically and empirically, the benefit of the parks is greatest to those living closest to them and therefore, the values of those properties were higher. Due to the "quasi-public good" that comes from green spaces, the sale prices of homes adjacent to park entrances are 27 percent higher than those 3,000 feet away (Table 6.2). Following from Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, these property values were calculated using the coefficient on *DIST* and by assuming that the sample's average value property was located at the average distance for the sample.[109]

Other variables were significant as well; some others were not. Logically, and empirically, homes that have more rooms and a larger area cost more. The number of rooms impacts home prices as the price increased $40,328 for each additional room. For each additional square foot of finished living area, the sale price increased $214, holding all else constant. Unfortunately lot size and the age of the home at the time of the sale were insignificant. By way of explanation, one supposition relating to lot size may be that people did not place the same premium on the size of the

[109] Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, *op. cit.*, 211.

| Walking Distance to Park Entrance | Mean Value of Residential Property |
|---|---|
| 20 feet | $1,473,460 |
| 500 | 1,422,777 |
| 1,000 | 1,369,982 |
| 1,500 | 1,317,187 |
| 2,000 | 1,264,392 |
| 2,500 | 1,211,597 |
| 3,000 | 1,158,802 |

**Table 6.2.** Park proximity and the value of the average residential property. Adapted from Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell (1978).

lot as they placed on location or the interior features of the home. Lot sizes ranged from 734 to 24,000 square feet and the mean lot size was 7834 square feet, or nearly 0.20 acres. Twenty homes in the sample were located on a lot size of 0.10 acres or less, while only two homes in the sample had lot sizes larger than 21,780 square feet, or 0.50 acres.

I expected the age of the home to have a statistically significant negative impact on sale prices since older homes could require more upkeep and maintenance than a newer home. But I neglected to recognize that in these neighborhoods many of the older home were classics—they were relatively large, distinguished homes that fulfilled the leisure class' need for conspicuous consumption. This was not unusual for neighborhoods such as these, as Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell also found that "some of the housing units…appear to be more luxurious, individually

designed and of higher quality as proximity to the greenbelt increases."[110]

Some of the most expensive homes in this small sample were among the oldest and the closest to the parks. The sample included nine homes at least 90 years old at the time that they sold, and one was 130 years old. These homes sold for between $2,000,000 and $3,300,000. The sizes of these homes ranged from 9 to 14 rooms (the mean number of rooms was 9.25), and from 4,449 to 7,603 square feet. All of these homes were located within a quarter-mile of a park entrance, the standard in public park research.[111] Conversely, the newest home in the sample was 54 years old when it was sold. This 1,696 square foot, seven-room home was located 1,529 walking feet away from the nearest park entrance, just outside the quarter-mile standard. But property owners living near Olmsted Park and the Riverway were not the only ones to benefit from the restoration of these parks.

In addition to those residents of the High Street Hill and the Longwood/Central Village neighborhoods living near the entrances to Olmsted Park and the Riverway, the town of Brookline also a benefited from these property enhancements. Only 12 of the properties in the sample failed to appreciate in value from 2004 to 2010. The remaining 45 properties increased their value by more than $8.5 million in aggregate, resulting in an additional $212,599 in tax revenues for the town of Brookline. This small sample shows that the proximate principle, with its expected increases in property values and tax revenues, still operates within these sections of the Emerald Necklace.

While some of these data support my initial thoughts, this small sample in a relatively affluent town might overstate the impact of naturalistic park landscapes on residential property

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[110] Correll, Lillydahl, and Singell, *op. cit.*, 214.

[111] Wolch, Wilson, and Fehrenbach (2005, 14) argue that the quarter-mile standard "is a reasonable distance for parents taking toddlers and small children to a park for everyday outings and playground opportunities, and given the reduction in children's independent mobility." They further state that "trips of more than a quarter-mile (especially in high-traffic areas or neighborhoods where parents have safety concerns) are unlikely to be acceptable to parents."

values. A larger sample that included Boston residential properties might haven proven to be more useful in the long run. I initially chose not to include Boston in the sample simply because of the complexity of determining property values amongst Boston's abundant triple-deckers as well as the commercial, industrial, and institutional properties near the parks. Regardless, that the park landscapes of the Emerald Necklace have positively impacted adjacent and nearby residential properties reinforced my assertion that the social production of parks acted as a spatial fix.

This analysis showed that urban naturalistic landscape parks have had a significant impact on residential properties adjacent and near these green spaces. In his presidential address at the 1919 National Conference on City Planning, Rick Olmsted stated that "it has been fully established that…a large park of suitable size, location, and character, and for which the proper public maintenance is reasonably assured, adds more to the value of the remaining land in the residential area which it serves, than the value of the land withdrawn to create it."[112] While the overall value to the city is nearly impossible to determine, we can measure elements of the 'quasi-public good.'

The increases in property values adjacent to the Riverway and Olmsted Park raise issues relating to future planning policies and preserving the integrity and value of these neighborhoods. The material conditions of the homes adjacent to these green spaces "are increasingly subordinated to their symbolic potential, especially their roles as gatekeepers to positions in the social world."[113] With many of the large, older homes adjacent or near Olmsted Park and the Riverway appreciating in value, the distinction and status of the neighborhood is inferred. Park restoration becomes a "vehicle for consumers to virtuously display their knowledge and adoption of the latest [green] values while also perpetuating social distinction and increased demand for products with a limited

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[112] FLO, Jr. "Planned residential subdivision," *Proceedings of the Eleventh National Conference on City Planning* (1919), 14.

[113] Caroline Mills, "'Life on the upslope': The postmodern landscape of gentrification," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 6(1988), 170.

supply."[114] In the Veblenian sense, the restoration of naturalistic landscape parks allows members of the leisure class to engage in forms of conspicuous consumption and leisure that help to reify their status and reinforce the exclusivity of these neighborhoods.

**Conclusions**

In this chapter I have suggested that urban re-greening efforts do not necessarily lead to more sustainable cities. Re-greening the city, especially through the ecological restoration of urban parks, does not always produce ecological functional or successful landscapes. Instead, the economic dimensions of sustainability discourse take precedence. The designed ecologies used to re-green the city merely produced a set of naturalistic landscapes based on the environmental imaginaries set forth in the ENPMP. Private park conservancies use these landscapes and imaginaries as the basis upon which they improve *their* park. In a distorted sort of 'sweat equity,' local citizens volunteer to clean up their local park, remove invasive plant species, re-plant native species, and stabilize stream banks and pond edges in order to be more environmentally friendly, but also with the hope to reap financial gain from these restored environmental amenities. I have sought to describe how a simple model—the hedonic pricing method—is a useful empirical tool to show what Olmsted knew intuitively, that parks have a positive impact on property values. Neighborhoods adjacent to parks, with their relatively large distinguished home, become spaces representing upper-middle-class values and these citizens will work tirelessly to preserve the integrity of their elite neighborhood.

[114] Noah Questal, "Political ecologies of gentrification," *Urban Geography* 30(2009), 705.

# CHAPTER 7

# RE-GREENING THE CITY: URBAN SUSTAINABILITY & PROGRESSIVE RESTORATION

*The ecology of the city is defined not only by the cultivated plants that require ongoing maintenance and the native species that are restricted to protect natural areas, but also by the plants that dominate the neglected interstices of the urban environment.*

--Peter Del Tredici[1]

*Our paradigm of ecological restoration needs to be redefined with functional rehabilitations for the future, not nostalgic recompositions of the past.*

--Young D. Choi[2]

*The capacity of ecosystems to deliver services defines their 'health' from the perspective of human need. Healthy ecosystem function depends on interactions among species and their abiotic environment that may be compromised by the unpredictable impacts of climate change. Consequently there has been a call for the development of adaption strategies to buffer ecosystems against uncertainty…[A]ny discussion of ecological design in the urban environment must consider the use of non-native species in planting designs, a subject of contention among designers and ecologists for practical and ecological reasons.*

--MaryCarol Hunter[3]

Broadly, my goal for this chapter is to reframe the discussion around urban sustainability to focus on a progressive form of park restoration. As landscape architects Peter Del Tredici and MaryCarol Hunter, and restoration ecologist Young Choi, highlight in the quotes above, the push for a more sustainable urbanism means that urban regimes must begin to question not just what to restore, but also *how* best to engage in the restoration process. The current restoration paradigm is past-oriented and conservative; cities in the twenty-first century need a future-oriented (progressive) restoration

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[1] Peter Del Tredici, *Urban Wild Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 1.

[2] Young D. Choi, "Restoration ecology for the future: a call for a new paradigm," *Restoration Ecology* 15(2007), 352.

[3] MaryCarol Hunter, "Using ecological theory to guide urban planting design: an adaption strategy for climate change," *Landscape Journal* 30(2011), 173 and 175.

that focuses on ecological function rather than simply reifying and recomposing historic landscapes. Specifically in this chapter, I argue that the park restoration projects called for in the ENPMP have been conservative and not practical. To examine these issues, I broadly explore the ways in which the ghost of Olmsted haunts the ENPMP to show that historical and ecological fidelity are incompatible goals for the restoration process. More specifically, I examine the specific improvements to the landscape composition and the watercourse, as well as focus on efforts to remove invasive herbaceous material. I argue that a more progressive restoration, one that acknowledges the ecological functions provided by the "spontaneous" vegetation that has taken root in neglected and disturbed parkland, would be more suitably called sustainable.

**Re-Greening the City: "Historically Appropriate" Park Restoration**

The work to restore the parks of the Emerald Necklace, each listed on the National Register of Historic Places, requires the application of the *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Places*. Developed in 1976, the Standards apply to historic buildings as well as historic landscapes. The four treatments emphasized in the Standards aid in making decisions regarding the best manner with which to treat historic buildings and landscapes:

- Preservation—the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property.
- Restoration—the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.
- Rehabilitation—the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.
- Reconstruction—the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building,

> structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.[4]

These interpretive treatments helped guide the restoration of the parks of the Emerald Necklace by focusing on the "original design intent," and "requiring close adherence to period style, materials, vegetation and construction."[5]

According to the ENPMP, abundant historic documents and photographs expressing Olmsted's intentions existed making it possible to remain true to the designer's intentions, while still accommodating a variety of contemporary uses. Restoration, along with rehabilitation and reconstruction, were used to try to re-create or capture the original scenic views, but may have used modern materials, plants, or construction methods. Due to a variety of changes within the parks, such as new traffic patterns or hospitals located on parkland, there were sections of the park system where it was not feasible to be historically accurate in the restoration process. In those cases, the plan called for working with the *spirit* of the Olmsted design to achieve the preservation objectives.[6] Finally, when the landscape was radically different from the original design, or there was little documentation to support historic restoration, the plan called for a restoration treatment that maintained the landscape character by preserving the *look* and *feel* typical of Olmsted landscape scene.[7]

The 2001 update to the ENPMP documented existing conditions within the Fens, the Riverway, Olmsted Park, and Jamaica Pond to examine contemporary uses as well as existing management and maintenance practices. To contextualize the restoration projects, the plan

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[4] National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services. Available from: http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm (accessed 5 Aug 2011).

[5] ENPMP, 14.

[6] *Ibid*, 15.

[7] *Ibid*, 17.

presented an extensive account of the physical conditions of both the "natural" and "built" elements of the Emerald Necklace.[8] However, in a naturalistic landscape park, designed and constructed through human labor, it is difficult to distinguish the "natural" and the "built" elements. The ENPMP defined the "natural" elements as soils, water, and vegetation, and the "built" elements as structures, pavement, and furnishings.[9] But since much of the soil, rocks, vegetation, and even the watercourses, were produced through human labor, the nature found in naturalistic landscape parks represented a hybrid of nature and culture since, "social relations operate in and through metabolizing the 'natural' environment through which both society and nature are transformed, changed, or altered and new *socio-natural* forms are produced."[10]

The ENPMP attempted to reclaim Olmsted's original vision by applying the following system-wide recommendations to each park:

- Reconnecting the watercourse;
- Mitigating the adverse impact of physical barriers or, better, eventually eliminating them;
- Removing breaks in the parks' circulation and function;
- Improving and diversifying park landscapes;
- Relocating or reorienting incongruous recreational activities;
- Coordinating consistent management practices; and,
- Increasing and enhancing regular maintenance.[11]

The ENPMP focused on creating a new park philosophy that fostered a greater respect for the natural environment of the park system as well as a greater appreciation of the historic nature of the parks. By valuing the natural environment, restoring the ecology of the parks and preserving the history associated with Olmsted, city and state officials, as well as private park conservancies

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[8] ENPMP, 43-94.

[9] *Ibid*, 43.

[10] Erik Swyngedouw, "Modernity and hybridity: Nature, regeneracimismo, and the production of the Spanish waterscapes, 1890-1930," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89(1999), 446 emphasis added.

[11] ENPMP, xii.

employed the ghost of Olmsted to construct environmental imaginaries with which to frame these landscapes and aid in placemaking.

The 2001 plan opened with a message from Bob Durand, who, at the time, served as the Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The bulk of Durand's message reflected the neo-Olmstedian rhetoric as he praised the Olmsted genius and vision. Durand claimed that, as a unified park system, the Emerald Necklace, "reflects the genius of Olmsted as landscape artist, pragmatic planner, and social visionary...[and] is one of the most significant achievements of Frederick Law Olmsted's long and distinguished career." He claimed that as part of the cultural landscape, this park system was "shaped by Olmsted's social and political ethic." He noted that the ENPMP represented "an extraordinary commitment to the preservation and protection of the Olmsted legacy" not only in Boston, but in Brookline as well. Finally, Durand ended his message by stating that, "as stewards of the Olmsted legacy, it is both our duty and privilege to preserve the Olmsted legacy for the 21st century."[12]

Due to the stated exceptionalism of the Emerald Necklace, the recommendations in the ENPMP "intended to reinforce Olmsted's original concept" of a unified park system.[13] The ENPMP laid out several broad goals for the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace. The plan called for strengthening the connections between individual parks, reintegrating the parkways as scenic pleasure routes, and coordinating the efforts of the various institutions, park conservancies, and city, state, and federal agencies. Using elements of the Olmsted vernacular, the plan sought to

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[12] ENPMP, iii.

[13] ENPMP, 95. Prior to his work in Boston, Olmsted proposed park systems for other cities, most notably in Buffalo (1868-1876). While Buffalo may contain the oldest Olmsted park system in America, with only three parks (a large naturalistic park, a small formal ceremonial space, and military drill and parade ground) connected by parkways, its system was not as extensive as the Emerald Necklace. For more information on Olmsted's work in Buffalo, see: FLO and JCO, *The Projected Parks and Parkways on the South Side of Buffalo: Two Reports by the Landscape Architects* (Buffalo: Buffalo Park Commission, 1888); Francis Kowsky, "Municipal parks and city planning: Frederick Law Olmsted's Buffalo park and parkway system," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 46(1987): 49-64; The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, http://www.bfloparks.org/.

"re-establish the visible continuity of the watercourse, to restore the character of the original intent of a *chain of pleasant waters*," and "reinforce unity, variety, and health of vegetation. Express *distinctive* landscapes of upland forests, *alternating groves and meads* of the middle section and the lowland landscapes of the Fens, which were once a marsh but, now, a landscape bordering a *winding, meandering watercourse*."[14] To accomplish these goals, the ENPMP declared that "the principles of historically appropriate and sensitive design" would frame all landscape decisions.[15]

The ENPMP established a system-wide focus on six restoration elements: the watercourse; internal circulation; parkways; landscape composition; uses, structures and facilities; and, management and maintenance. For each park, the ENPMP detailed the ways in which each park-specific restoration treatment adhered to larger system-wide goals. However, contradictions between maintaining historical consistency while addressing contemporary issues permeated the plan. As Elizabeth Barlow Rogers indicates, historically truthful and perfect park restoration cannot be possible, and therefore the goal of the ENPMP was really to extend the life of the park system. But, extending the life of the Emerald Necklace, while maintaining the historical integrity of the landscape, could not be reconciled with the modern intrusions into Olmsted's naturalistic landscape. Therefore, I chose to focus primarily on those system-wide goals where the ghost of Olmsted would most likely haunt the plan, specifically improvements to the landscape composition and the watercourse.

*Re-Greening the City: Improving the Landscape Composition*

Due to a variety of factors previously described, including a lack of funding and maintenance, the landscape character of the Emerald Necklace suffered greatly during the mid- to late-twentieth

[14] ENPMP, 95 emphasis in original.
[15] *Ibid*, 96.

century. In recognizing the deplorable state of the park system, the ENPMP declared that, "the richness and diversity of the park landscapes have been impaired over time."[16] In addition, the ENPMP noted that the visual separation between the park and the city that Olmsted planned had disappeared as new buildings, parking lots, and other land uses encroached upon the park boundaries. To restore the landscape composition of the Emerald Necklace the ENPMP did not recommend eliminating these incongruous buildings or land uses, but instead recommended the following system-wide treatments:

- Reinstate scenic qualities of the parks as originally intended, using a historic palette of plant materials;
- Stabilize and enrich soils on eroded hillsides;
- Control and eradicate invasive species throughout the park system;
- Initiate a systematic forestry management program with a mission to increase forest health and ecological diversity; and,
- Strengthen formal parkway planting along the urban edge and informal plantings at the park edge.[17]

To restore the landscape composition and the scenic qualities of the parks as Olmsted originally intended, the plan suggested relying on "a historic palette of plant materials" in order to engage in "historically sensitive replanting."[18]

The ENPMP advised making use of historic plant species "to the greatest extent feasible," but the plan also recognized that under some conditions the use of historical species might prove to be impractical. In those instances, the plan called for respecting the "original scenic qualities…by using contemporary materials that are compatible."[19] To improve the landscape composition and aesthetics of the Emerald Necklace, the plan centered on the neo-Olmstedian belief that all of the

[16] ENPMP, 106.
[17] ENPMP, 106-108.
[18] ENPMP, 106.
[19] ENPMP, 106.

new plantings must be installed so as "to achieve Olmsted's intended *effect*."[20] In the rest of this section, I examine the various park-specific attempts to improve the park's landscape composition and restore the Olmsted park vision.

Olmsted's original vision for the Back Bay Fens, the oldest park in the Emerald Necklace, no longer exists except in the form of planning documents, written descriptions, and historic photographs. The damming of the Charles River in 1910 prevented the tides from inundating Olmsted's salt marshes, and much of the existing plantings date from 1920s and 1930s (or later) when the city called upon Shurcliff to reconfigure a new freshwater landscape. Therefore, the ENPMP recommended a general approach for the former saltmarsh focusing on a restoration treatment that attempted "to recreate a riverside landscape based on the same scenic ideas as the Riverway and Olmsted Park."[21] The ENPMP asserted that if a "consistent landscape character, scale, special definition, views and vistas [could] be maintained to the fullest extent possible," then the resulting landscape of the Fens "will be consonant with the upstream sections in the other parks."[22] This approach led to the implementation of restoration treatments that were "guided by Olmsted precedents" where the river edge scenery was planted in "the Olmstedian manner."[23]

While a restored Back Bay Fens cannot resemble the original Olmsted intent for the landscape, the ENPMP adopted Olmsted's architectural and landscape vocabularies in an attempt to bring new life to the Fens.[24] To improve the scenery along the water's edge in the Fens, the ENPMP recommended employing "plant massings similar to that utilized by the Olmsted firm in the Riverway and Olmsted Park."[25] The plan also called for creating "historic beaches where paths

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[20] ENPMP, 106-107, emphasis added.
[21] ENPMP, 123.
[22] ENPMP, 126.
[23] ENPMP, 123.
[24] ENPMP, 124.
[25] ENPMP, 131.

extend to the water's edge."[26] By utilizing walking paths and plantings to frame the water views and re-create historic beaches, the ENPMP echoed the Olmstedian choreography of views. In recognizing that the existing river edge landscape in the Fens was "inconsistent with treatments elsewhere in the park system," the plan argued "the river edge treatments will require adaptation emphasizing the Olmsted technique for providing cross views, framed by vegetation masses, revealing the '*few, necessary structures, strong but unobtrusive'* of Boylston, Agassiz and Fen bridges."[27]

The goal of the ENPMP—to extend the life of this park system by creating an Olmsted-inspired riparian landscape in the former salt marshes of the Fens—accentuates the inherent conflict associated with maintaining historical consistency while addressing contemporary issues and land uses. As a rationale for the restoration of the Fens, the ENPMP highlighted the incongruence of land uses and noted that:

> There is no consistent approach to the park landscape, a confusion that has existed since the construction of the Charles River Dam eliminated the salt marsh park early in the twentieth century. Formal areas sit uncomfortably within the broader landscape, sports facilities are harshly placed and spoil the naturalistic character of whole sections of the park, and many plant massings and views are missing today.[28]

No consistent landscape composition existed because the Commonwealth and the City both chose to neglect the Olmsted design before the park systems was complete.[29] The damming of the Charles River in 1910 transformed the Fens from a salt marsh into a freshwater landscape and caused the city to hire Shurcliff to redesign the park landscape in the 1920s and 1930s (Figure 7.1). From the

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[26] ENPMP, 131.

[27] ENPMP, 131 emphasis in original. The emphasized portions in the quote are from Olmsted's 1881 description of the Fens. See, FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," City doc. no. 16-1882, 26.

[28] ENPMP, 125.

[29] Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Report of the Committee of the Charles River Dam, Appointed Under the Resolves of 1901, Chapter 105* (Boston: Wright and Potter, 1903). Charles Eliot, FLO's protégé and associate in the Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot firm, was a member of the Massachusetts Metropolitan Park Commission, which advocated for the damming of the Charles River and the construction of the park that would become Boston's Esplanade along the river. As early as 1893, Eliot wrote extensively on the need to dam the river, see chapter 30, "Charles River—1891-1896," of *Charles Eliot: Landscape Architect*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1902), 557-592.

**Figure 7.1.** Freshwater lagoon in the Fens with the Prudential Tower, locally known as the "Pru," in the background, 2007.

1910s through the 1950s, the city radically transformed the landscape of the Fens by adding a municipal stadium, a war memorial and other monuments, the rose garden, and the Victory Gardens.

To bring a sense of consistency to the landscape, the ENPMP advised following a "vigorous historically appropriate planting program" to improve the landscape composition, but did not call for the removal of the incongruous land uses. As shown previously, Olmsted objecting to placing formal gardens within his naturalistic landscape parks. He believed that formal plantings such as flower gardens, sports facilities, and memorials served valuable civic purposes, but naturalistic landscape parks were not the proper location for those spaces.[30] The conflict associated with

[30] FLO, *Estate of the College of California at Berkeley*, 23.

restoration of the Emerald Necklace lies in the stated goals of the plan to restore "preserve the Olmsted legacy for the twenty-first century," while not fully following the vision and designs laid out by Olmsted and restoring the incongruent land uses back to the Olmsted intention.[31] Therefore, the main thrust of the plan to restore the landscape composition of the Fens, relied on using aesthetic fixes such as "naturalistic plantings" to "screen views" of land uses inconsistent with the Olmsted design and vision.[32] A restored landscape in the Fens cannot preserve the Olmsted legacy while retaining incongruous land uses; this new landscape in the Fens cannot live up to the Olmsted vision without removing the Shurcliff rose garden, the Victory Gardens, the sports facilities, and memorials. This is one example of where the incompatible values of historic preservation and ecological restoration bump up against each other.

In the Riverway, like the Fens, the ENPMP emphasized reinstating Olmsted's vision by adopting elements of Olmsted's design philosophy to improve the derelict park landscape. In restoring the landscape composition along the Muddy River, the plan called for reinstating the naturalistic plantings according to the Olmsted design philosophy by adhering to the historic palette of plant materials and by emphasizing Olmsted's choreography of views.[33] The ENPMP recommended, "recreating ornamental shrub massing and meadow scenery at the water's edge and islands [by] utilizing historic views and planting plans."[34] Since Olmsted's original "lush landscape character of the river's edge and islands" had not been maintained and was subsequently replaced by invasive species, the plan suggested the removal of invasives and that, "the original plant masses and scenery should be re-created, using the original plans and historic photographs as a guide."[35] By

[31] ENPMP, iii.
[32] ENPMP, 131.
[33] ENPMP, 147.
[34] ENPMP, 147.
[35] ENPMP, 148.

trying to recreate the Olmsted design and vision, the ENPMP argued "this restoration will contribute significantly to the historic quality of the park landscape, and will help screen unattractive views."[36] The plan's emphasis on recreating the historic qualities of the park landscape was evident in the restoration treatments suggested in Olmsted Park as well.

In an 1881 report to the Boston Park Commissioners, Olmsted described the upper valley of the Muddy River, or what would later become Olmsted Park, as "a chain of picturesque fresh-water ponds, alternating with attractive natural groves and meads."[37] To provide a "return of much of the historic character of the park," the ENPMP recommended that, "the picturesque landscape will be recalled through the recreation of grassy banks and historic plantings on the slopes of Ward's Pond and through the reinstatement of plantings on the banks and islands of Leverett Pond. Scenic views planned by Olmsted will be recaptured throughout the park."[38] The ENPMP suggested, "utilizing historic views" to reshape the slopes adjacent to Ward's Pond.[39] The plan noted that these slopes "have lost their historic treatment" resulting in a loss of the pond's "scenic quality." To create a "much more picturesque environment for Ward's Pond," the plan suggested "following the advice of J.C. Olmsted" from nearly 100 years ago to plant "grassy banks" along the pond edge."[40] These banks, along with the planting of rhododendrons, would help in "framing pleasant views and screening less appealing vistas" which would result in "a much more picturesque environment for Ward's Pond and a return of its original scenic character."[41]

To Olmsted, the relationship between water and forest represented the most important scenic quality of Jamaica Pond (Figure 7.2). In his report to the Boston Park Commission he

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[36] ENPMP, 148.
[37] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," City doc. no. 16-1882, 26.
[38] ENPMP, 153.
[39] ENPMP, 162.
[40] ENPMP, 161.
[41] ENPMP, 162.

**Figure 7.2.** Jamaica Pond, c. 1916. Source: Boston Public Library, Print Department, Leon Abdelian Collection.

described the qualities that he envisioned for the pond: "a natural sheet of water, with quiet, graceful shores, rear banks of varied elevation and contour, for the most part shaded by a fine natural forest-growth to be brought out over-hangingly, darkening the water's edge and favoring great beauty in reflections and flickering half-lights."[42] Recognizing the importance of this historic relationship, the ENPMP argued that many of the recommendations for Jamaica Pond were "intended to restore the rich scenic character Olmsted achieved there a century ago. The scenic mix of woodland, glade, formal promenades, informally planted hillsides and banks, and the highly varied waterside landscape must be carefully restored through a combination of selective removal, replanting, and

[42] FLO, "Report of the landscape architect advisory," City doc. no. 16-1882, 27.

management."[43] The plan suggested that the reinvented Jamaica Pond "will be very similar to the park that Frederick Law Olmsted envisioned."[44]

In restoring the Olmsted vision at Jamaica Pond, the ENPMP emphasized the reclamation of the water views Olmsted intended. Over the last century, the alteration of the park's water edges meant that the "scenic *framing* of water views that Olmsted planned have been obscured." Therefore, to restore the original Olmsted choreography of views, the ENPMP called for the restoration of "Olmsted's highly varied and articulated water edges" in order to enhance the "visual quality" of the park. Like the restoration of the water bodies in other park sections, the primary goal behind the restoration of Jamaica Pond focused on "the historic *framing* of water views, where walks come to the water at overlooks and beaches shall be carefully considered in replanting water edges."[45]

With his penchant for using vegetation to guide scenic views at Jamaica Pond, Olmsted emphasized the picturesque effects of the forest along the banks of the pond. Olmsted's use of trees and understory shrubs immersed park visitors in the scenery. Along the shore, Olmsted used trees to either open or close views of the pond to bring elements of light and shade to the water's edge. To reinstate the historic plantings and views Olmsted intended, the ENPMP echoed Olmsted's choreography of views when it stressed the need to have "trees that overhang the water for scenic effect."[46] The master plan recommended that "*framed* views should be restored, with careful reference to the historic plans in order to recreate the historic character of the pond-side environment" to regain the intended openings along the pond.[47] Even though the plan did not

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[43] ENPMP, 169.
[44] ENPMP, 169.
[45] ENPMP, 100 emphasis added.
[46] ENPMP, 174.
[47] ENPMP, 175 emphasis added.

indicate which species would be used in the restoration along the shore, it fully illustrated and described the rhythm of opening and closing views to immerse park visitors in the landscape experience.

The restoration of the shores of Jamaica Pond highlighted the conflict associated with the restoring the ecology of a historic landscape. The ENPMP stressed a desire to adhere as close as possible to the Olmsted design and intention. But unfortunately the conflicts between modern land uses and social goals often prevented a restoration that adhered to Olmsted's intentions. For example, Olmsted insisted on understory shrubs to provide a sense of enclosure and immersion in the landscape. However, the ENPMP abandoned this fundamental design element in favor of visibility and safety concerns.[48] With respect to the restoration of the landscape composition along the shores of Jamaica Pond, Olmsted intended for the pond edges to be "soft," but the ENPMP stated that "in practice [pond edges] need to be subtly reinforced [and] may require a highly durable edge treatment" as an erosion control measure.[49] More specifically, the removal of river birch along the shores of the pond highlighted the conflict between restoring the landscape composition so that it was in line with the historic planting, but not in line with the Olmsted overall intention for landscape.

To frame the views along the shores of the pond, the ENPMP suggested that the river birch (*Betula nigra*) growing along the shores of the pond be viewed as an invasive species and removed. The problem with the classifying river birch as an invasive species was that, unlike other plants listed as invasive species (garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, Phragmites), river birch is *native* to Massachusetts. The ENPMP recognized this and stated that it was "worth noting some

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[48] ENPMP, 101.

[49] ENPMP, 100. Currently, heavily-used portions of the shoreline have been reinforced with rip-rap.

differences between this and other invasive species described" in the plan, namely that "it is a native species."[50]

Due to its hardiness and its "tolerance to the urban environment" the Society of Municipal Arborists named river birch the 2002 Urban Tree of the Year.[51] In addition to its hardiness, river birch also provided an aesthetic quality that came, like other birch species, from its bark. In *The Urban Tree Book*, Arthur Plotnik describes the aesthetics of river birch and its bark which "is naturally platy or flaky…it peels in colorful flakes of brown, salmon, peach, orange, and lavender—as if some child had gone wild with crepe paper."[52] Despite its beauty and its ability to tolerate the urban environment, the ENPMP stated that it was necessary to remove the river birch found along the shores of Jamaica Pond to fully restore the pond's landscape composition according to Olmsted's intention for the landscape.

By calling for its removal and grouping it with 'invasive' species, the plan implied that river birch was not historically significant—that it was not part of historic planting palette for Jamaica Pond. Despite stating the "Olmsted called for a few river birch" in his designs for the Emerald Necklace, the ENPMP implied that river birch was not "consistent with the Olmsted plant lists" for Jamaica Pond.[53] According to the ENPMP, river birch was dislodging the stone edge that protects the pond from bank erosion, and was also "obstructing intended scenic views."[54] The plan further stated that, "these trees in no sense represent a native occurrence, and have no ecological

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[50] ENPMP, 231 emphasis in original.

[51] Len Phillips, "Heritage river birch named SMA urban tree of the year," *Arbor Age* 22(2002): 8-9.

[52] Arthur Plotnik, *The Urban Tree Book: An Uncommon Field Guide* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000), 176.

[53] ENPMP, 55.

[54] ENPMP, 55 emphasis added. The ENPMP also made no mention of the fact that removing these tress will further disturb the soil at the water's edge, thus creating prime habitat for future invasions by truly invasive species like purple loosestrife and Japanese knotweed.

significance."[55] By that logic, any tree, shrub, or flower that was planted, either by Olmsted or as part of the restoration, cannot represent a native occurrence, and has no ecological significance.

In an ironic twist, while the ENPMP identified river birch as an ersatz species for Jamaica Pond, it also acknowledged that it was "an attractive tree that fits naturally with the *aesthetics* of the pond."[56] In calling for the reinstatement of the historic plantings around Jamaica Pond, the ENPMP specifically stated that this included those trees that overhang the water for scenic effect in order to bring about the "return to the shady, tree-lined Jamaica Pond Olmsted described in his writings."[57] For decades, river birch has thrived along the shores of the pond and provided the very shady, tree-lined effect the plan struggled to replicate (Figure 7.3). Had neo-Olmstedians considered the hybridized condition of the naturalistic landscape, and the larger Olmsted planting palette, they would have found that Olmsted utilized river birch in other sections of the park system, particularly Franklin Park and along the Muddy River.[58] So while neither a natural occurrence, nor specifically called for along the shores of Jamaica Pond by Olmsted, river birch provided tree-lined shoreline that fulfilled Olmsted's intention for the landscape.

*Re-Greening the City: Restoring the Watercourse*

In order to restore the Emerald Necklace and remake it as the nation's pre-eminent park system, the ENPMP recognized that "improving water quality and re-establishing a clean, visibly continuous watercourse from Jamaica Pond to the Charles River" needed to be its prime objective.[59] System-wide, the ENPMP recommended the following measures to improve the system's watercourse:

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[55] ENPMP, 231.
[56] ENPMP, 231 emphasis added.
[57] ENPMP, 174.
[58] Zaitzevsky, *Frederick Law Olmsted*, 216-220.
[59] ENPMP, 97.

**Figure 7.3.** River birch, Jamaica Pond, 2007. Growing along the shores of Jamaica Pond, river birch helps contribute to the creation of tree-lined walking paths.

- Stabilize slopes and areas that drain into water bodies to reduce erosion and siltation;
- Increase water depth and remove contaminated deposits by dredging;
- Identify and resolve all point source pollution;
- Improve flow throughout the parks by reconnecting water systems from Jamaica Pond to the Back Bay Fens for continuous water flow; and,
- Reinstate historic water edge treatment, regaining intended scenic qualities by removing invasive plants, particularly knotweed and Phragmites.[60]

In highlighting those projects associated with the riparian restoration, I emphasize the ways in which the ENPMP relied on the ghost of Olmsted to implement these measures and bring this park system into the twenty-first century. In particular, I examine the efforts to restore the "Babbling Brook" in

[60] ENPMP, 97-101.

Olmsted Park, the dredging and daylighting of the Muddy River in the Riverway, and the effort to reinstate the historic water edge plantings.

In keeping with his desire for pastoral scenery, Olmsted described his vision for the upper portion of the Muddy River to the Brookline Park Commission as a site where "the water widens out into pools and ponds, connected by a rapid brook, and besides the usual slopes, there are here meadows and higher banks, giving the scenery a more varied, secluded, and rural aspect."[61] The brook, to which Olmsted referred, later came to be known as the "Babbling Brook." In Olmsted Park, the ENPMP recommended the restoration of the string of small pools and ponds, as well as the brooks and waterfalls downstream from Wards Pond. The plan stated the "Babbling Brook" between Wards and Willow ponds has been dramatically altered so as to make the channel indistinguishable, and therefore, "it should be cleared of vegetation and debris [and] have [its] edges defined to enhance both water-flow and *scenic quality*." Ultimately, the restoration of the brook "should be based on historic plans and photographs."[62]

As urban population pressures continued to subject urban streams and rivers to significant changes, such as erosion, siltation, and decreases in water quality, restoration of these waterways is an essential part of improving making Boston more livable and sustainable.[63] Stream and river restoration includes bank stabilization, regrading stream channels, stormwater management, and riparian plantings, and all were essential aspects of the restoration of the idyllic babbling brook in Olmsted Park. Completed in 2006, the stream improvement treatments included sediment removal, slope stabilization, invasive vegetation removal, and landscape improvements through new

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[61] FLO, "Landscape architect advisory" in Town of Brookline, *Town Records and Reports of the Town Office of Brookline, Massachusetts for the Year Ending January 31, 1890—Report of the Park Commissioners* (Brookline: Chronicle Press, 1890), 259.

[62] ENPMP, 153 and 156 emphasis added.

[63] Sharon Moran, "Stream restoration projects: A critical analysis of urban greening," *Local Environment* 12(2007): 111-128.

plantings.[64] According to Brookline's High Street Hill Association and Friends of Leverett Pond, the project, funded in part by a $300,000 U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant, opened up the stream by re-establishing the channel.[65] In his 1905 address to the ASLA in Boston, John Olmsted described how he and his father altered the natural flow of the brook: "It is not quite natural in appearance, because it was thought preferable to introduce into it a series of little boulder dams, so as to hold back enough water to show."[66] To restore the brook's "babble," volunteers strategically placed stones to create a turbulent flow, which produced the quintessential tranquil sounds of the continuous low murmur of flowing water.

A major component of this restoration was slope stabilization by regrading the streambed and using structural materials, like coconut fiber bio-logs, to minimize further erosion along the streambanks (Figure 7.4).[67] These bio-logs function by holding the streambank in place as new plantings on the bare soil took root and worked to stabilize the bank. Over time, as new plantings establish themselves, the bio-logs will decompose and leave a stabilized streambank. Just as a restored painting can inspire new viewers, members of the High Street Hill Association and Friends of Leverett Pond argued that in completing this project according to Olmsted's intent "the Babbling Brook has been reborn to once again inspire those who walk along its banks."[68]

But simply restoring the streambank along the babbling brook does not equate with improving the functionality and durability of the riparian landscape. How will durability and resilience be determined? If, in 5 (or 10, 20, or 30) years, the vegetation has shown a lack of

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[64] *301th Annual Report of the Town Officers of Brookline for the year ending December 31, 2006* (Brookline: Board of Selectmen, 2006), 88.

[65] High Street Hill Association/Friends of Leverett Pond, "Babbling Brook restoration." Available from http://www.highstreethill.org/folp/brook06.html (accessed 9 Jul 2009).

[66] JCO, "Boston park system," 50.

[67] Emily Bernhardt and Margaret Palmer, "Restoring streams in an urbanizing world," *Freshwater Biology* 52 (2007): 738-751.

[68] High Street Hill Association/Friends of Leverett Pond, "Babbling Brook restoration."

**Figure 7.4.** Restoration of the 'Babbling Brook,' Olmsted Park, 2008. The bio-log can be seen staked onto the streambank, while the slope shows recently planting efforts.

vigorous growth and had not been able to fully establish itself, will the project be deemed successful? If the town of Brookline fails to monitor and maintain this restored landscape and invasives plant species take root, will it be deemed successful? What happens if park visitors do not stay on the paved pathways and trample the vegetation, will the project be deemed successful? The resiliency and durability of a restored landscape such as the Babbling Brook requires constant maintenance, as Olmsted was keenly aware, and if the municipality does not allocate financial resources for maintenance, then the restored landscapes will likely not be able to cope with changes and interventions.[69] That is, unless private park conservancies and friends groups seek donations to preserve these investments, use their network of volunteers to perform routine maintenance, and

[69] FLO and Harrison, *Observations on the Treatment of Public Plantations*.

maintain (or improve) their property values. The ghost of Olmsted served as a guide for the restoration of the babbling brook, just as it did in the dredging and daylighting of the Muddy River.

In his poem "A Brook in the City," Robert Frost highlights the intersection of natural and social systems as a once rural area became modernized. He illustrates the subjugation and imprisonment of nature, as "the meadow grass could be cemented down," and "the brook was thrown deep in a sewer dungeon under stone." Once sent underground into a "fetid darkness" of culverts and pipes, the brook is erased from the landscape so that no one would know the brook existed "except for ancient maps."[70] To Frost, the underground brook represents the threat of modernity in urban America: the threat of being removed from nature. Today, there is a movement to unearth and restore urban streams, and thus re-connect urban residents with nature. Cities implement daylighting, the act of recovering and re-exposing buried urban streams, to liberate waterways and re-establish riparian habitat, restore ecological integrity, improve property values, build community, as well as create recreational, educational and aesthetic values.[71]

From the beginning, managing water in the Emerald Necklace proved to be a difficult proposition. First, historic attitudes towards water in the city led urban residents to use rivers as a waste disposal system. Second, heavy use of the parks through the years led to soil compaction and erosion along pond edges, streambanks, and pathways, thus increasing siltation and reducing infiltration. Third, changes in land use created more impervious surfaces, which in turn led to more erosion, flooding, and non-point source pollution. Lastly, the diversion of waterways into underground culverts impeded natural hydrologic processes. The ENPMP called for improvements

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[70] Robert Frost, "A brook in the city," in *Early Poems*, edited and introduction by Robert Faggen (New York: Penguin, 1998), 254.

[71] Richard Pinkham, *Daylighting: New Life for Buried Streams* (Boulder, CO: Rocky Mountain Institute, 2000); Ron Love, "Bankside: Salt Lake City," in *Rivertown: Rethinking Urban Rivers*, ed. Paul Stanton Kibel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 85-110; John Gallagher, *Reimagining Detroit: Opportunities for Redefining an American City* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 85-96.

to the waterways by improving water quality, removing invasive plant species, reducing point and non-point source pollution, stabilizing pond edges, and controlling flooding. The ENPMP claimed that daylighting three sections of the Muddy River would do all of this, plus help to restore the lost Olmsted link connecting the Muddy River and the Fens.

The ENPMP asserted that the restoration of the Muddy River, by dredging to remove sediments and deepen the channel and daylighting, would help to reduce flooding. In an interview, Hugh Mattison, a Brookline resident, environmental activist, and former ENC Park Overseer, argued that the dredging and daylighting of the Muddy River served a very practical purpose: "If we go back to Olmsted's time [parks are] important because they have a function in terms of stormwater management...The beauty of Olmsted was he could perceive this 100 years into the future...he knew there would be more development."[72] Echoing this sentiment, the ENPMP claimed that, "re-creations of lost landscape elements are to be as close to the originals as possible, with special regard for scenic views, spatial organization and the rhythmic sequences Olmsted intended."[73] The plan argued that if carried out with historical sensitivity, the "restored Riverway will resemble Olmsted's original intent" since it would once again "be a naturalistic corridor park, focused on its curving watercourse and verdantly distinct from the dense urban fabric around it."[74]

The decision to restore the naturalistic riparian landscapes of the Muddy River was "predicated on [its] historic importance as a vital link in the Emerald Necklace."[75] In 1954, when the city of Boston sold a small parcel to Sears and Roebuck for a parking lot, the city lost the last remnant of its original Olmsted connection between the Muddy River and the Back Bay Fens (Figure 7.5). In 1988, Sears closed the store at this location, and in 1989 the ENPMP recommended

[72] Hugh Mattison personal interview, 23 Oct 2005.
[73] ENPMP, 140.
[74] ENPMP, 140.
[75] ENPMP, xiii.

**Figure 7.5.** The Muddy River and the Sears parking lot, c. 1980. Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District.

that, "the Sears lot be reclaimed as parkland and the open watercourse restored."[76] A decade later, the city made a step in this direction after Sears returned the land to the city of Boston, and the city transformed the parking lot into green space. The final steps of the stream restoration, the dredging and daylighting of the river, began in the fall of 2012.

The restoration of the Muddy River provided an opportunity to combine flood damage reduction with ecosystem restoration in a highly urbanized environment. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers broke ground on Phase I of $93 million Muddy River restoration on October 10, 2012. Their plan described the necessary improvements to protect against a 20-year flood event including: the removal of undersized culverts and the installation of two new culverts; daylighting three sections (about 700 linear feet) of the Muddy River; dredging approximately 200,000 cubic yards of

[76] ENPMP, 142.

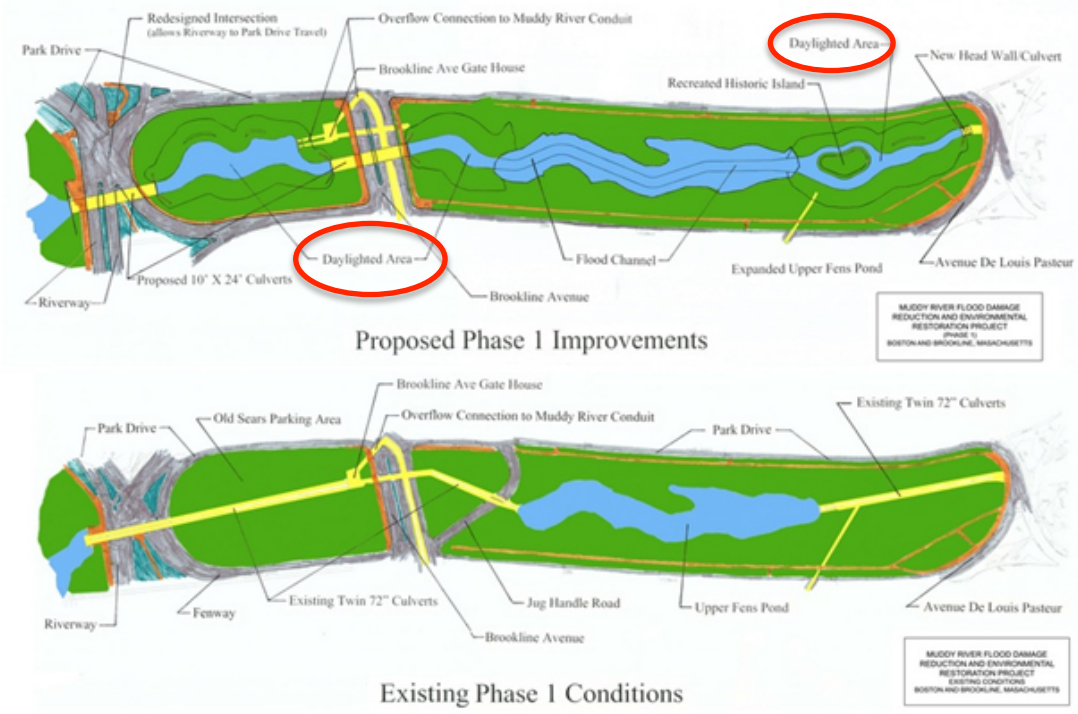


**Figure 7.6.** Muddy River flood damage reduction and environmental restoration project. Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England Division.

sediment from the Fens, Riverway, Leverett, Willow and Wards Ponds; the eradication of Phragmites from wetland and riparian areas; and, preservation and restoration of the historic park shoreline and vegetation in construction areas (Figure 7.6).[77]

For all the rhetoric about restoring the ecology of the Muddy River, the dredging and daylighting of the Muddy River can never re-create a wild landscape—Olmsted first altered this riparian habitat in the 1880s. Instead, once complete it will represent a hybridized form of nature. We should not think of nature and culture as separate entities, instead we should think of them as

[77] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, *Muddy River Flood Risk Management and Environmental Restoration Project Boston, Massachusetts*. Available at http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/projects/muddyRiver.htm (accessed 31 Oct 2012).

deeply intertwined.[78] Geographer Erik Swyngedouw argues that as the number of hybrids grows it has become difficult to disentangle the social and environmental histories of these objects.[79] Since the urban landscape itself results from the transformation of nature through the social production of space, restoration projects like daylighting the Muddy River dissolve socio-natural boundaries. To this point, landscape architect Anne Whiston Spirn argues that, "calling some landscape 'natural' and others 'artificial' or 'cultural' ignores the fact that landscapes are never wholly one or the other."[80] Guided by the ghost of Olmsted, daylighting the Muddy River and restoring the Babbling Brook represent the restoration of a particular environmental imaginary in much the same way as the reliance on Olmsted's historic plantings affected the restoration of the historic water edges.

**Urban Parks: Sustainability in the Spaces of Spontaneous Vegetation**

Ecologists have generally agreed that biodiversity improves the quality of ecosystems, and that introduced species pose threats to the health of ecosystems around the globe. But in recent years, ecologists have begun to question the negative reputation of invasives. In critiquing the language associated with invasive species, geographer Charles Warren describes native species as those species that have "autocolonized an area since a selected time in the past," while alien species were those that were "introduced by humans, intentionally or otherwise."[81] Political ecologists Jennifer Foster and L. Anders Sandberg present the distinction between native and invasive species as a binary where natives were 'good', invasives were 'bad', and these distinctions were mutually exclusive.

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**78** Erik Swyngedouw, "The city as a hybrid: On nature, society and cyborg urbanization," *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism* 7(1996): 65-80, and "Modernity and hybridity: Nature, regeneracionismo, and the production of the Spanish waterscape, 1890-1930," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89(1999): 443-465; Sally Eden, "Faking it? The multiple meanings of environmental restoration near Twyford Down," *Cultural Geographies* 9(2002): 313-333.

[79] Swyngedouw, "The city as hybrid," 68.

[80] Spirn, "Constructing nature," 111.

[81] Charles Warren, "Perspectives on the 'alien' versus 'native' species debate: a critique of concepts, language, and practice," *Progress in Human Geography* 31(2007), 428.

Similarly, geographer Paul Robbins argues that the terms we use to describe introduced species (e.g., invasive, exotic, weeds, non-native) have been heavily influenced by culture and politics.[82]

The application of the 'native,' 'alien,' or 'weed' label to describe the flora of found in urban parks reflect specific spatial and temporal scales.[83] Take the ubiquitous dandelion as an example of the ways in which the cultural perception of plants can change. Now considered a weed and a nuisance, the mid-nineteenth century cultural attitudes toward the dandelion were very different. An 1869 guidebook to Central Park noted that the "blessed dandelions [were] in such beautiful profusion as we have never seen elsewhere, making the lawns, in places, like green lakes reflecting a heaven sown with stars."[84] Additionally, when a cultural group comes, over time, to associate an introduced species as characteristic of a place, introduced species may become 'functional natives' or 'cultural natives,' in the way that cypress and olive trees, introduced by the Romans, reflected that regional identity of Tuscany.[85]

Undercurrents of xenophobia run through the social dislike of invasives. Biologist Daniel Simberloff argues that, by classifying introduced species as a threat to native habitats, ecologists bring cultural politics into ecology.[86] He notes that even as policymakers and scientists grapple with the threats of introduced species, critics have attacked the hostility toward foreign plants as "a covert form of nativism, racism, xenophobia, or worse."[87] German landscape designers Gert Gröning and

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[82] Jennifer Foster and L. Ander Sandberg, "Friend or foe? Invasive species and public green space in Toronto," *Geographical Review* 94(2004): 178-198; Paul Robbins, "Comparing invasive networks: Cultural and political biographies of invasive species," *Geographical Review* 94(2004): 139-156; Mark Sagoff, "Do non-native species threaten the natural environment?" *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 18(2005): 215-236, and "Environmental harm: Political not biological," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 22(2009): 81-88; Harold Mooney and Richard Hobbs (eds.), *Invasive Species in a Changing World* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2000); Philip Hulme, "Biological invasions: Winning the science battles but losing the conservation war," *Oryx* 37(2003): 178-193.

[83] Warren, *op. cit.*, 430-431.

[84] Clarence Cook, *A Description of the New York Central Park* (New York: F.J. Huntington and Co., 1869), 107.

[85] Warren, *op. cit.*, 434.

[86] Daniel Simberloff, "Confronting introduced species: a form of xenophobia?" *Biological Invasions* 5(2003): 179-192.

[87] *Ibid*, 181.

Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn interpret the German desire to eradicate non-native species within the context of the Nazi campaign to cleanse the landscape of foreigners.[88] They trace the connections between Nazi attitudes and the desire for native landscapes back to the environmentally deterministic, nationalistic, racist, and anti-Semitic attitudes of German landscape architect Willy Lange.

In the early-twentieth century, Lange's political ideology was shaped by the environmental determinism prevalent in the work of German geographer Friedrich Ratzel, who believed that aspects of physical geography, particularly climate, affected the psychology, behavior, and culture of people. Lange's nativist ideology shaped his landscape design philosophy. Lange favored the use of native plants since he felt that particular plants were most suited for the temperament of the native people in the region.[89] Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn note that to sidestep these uncomfortable connections, some designers and ecologists preferred to "use words like 'ecology' and 'ecological'" to describe their preferences for native landscapes as if these terms "conferred moral authority."[90]

Our cultural dislike of invasives emerges from the environmental imaginaries we create that privilege particular representations of nature. Environmental philosopher Neil Evernden argues that the spread of non-native species threatened our environmental imaginaries, since it was "not the environment at risk, but the very idea of the environment, the social *idea* of proper order."[91] Land use changes and human disturbed ecosystems provide welcoming conditions and habitats in which

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[88] Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Some notes on the mania for native plants in Germany," *Landscape Journal* 11(1992): 116-126.

[89] Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "The 'wild garden' and the 'nature garden': aspects of the garden ideology of William Robinson and Willy Lange," *Journal of Garden History* 12(1992): 183-206 and "The nationalization of nature and the naturalization of the German nation: 'Teutonic' trends in early-twentieth century landscape design," in *Nature and Ideology: Natural Garden Design in the Twentieth Century*, (ed.) Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1997), 187-219; Richard Peet, "The social origins of environmental determinism," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75(1985): 309-333.

[90] Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *op. cit.*, 116.

[91] Neil Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 6 emphasis in original.

invasions can take root. Due to our species' status as the world's most damaging invasive species and our significant influence in spreading invasive plant species, Foster and Sandberg argue that, "we are not entitled to govern what should exist, particularly given human responsibility for the spread of non-natives in the first place."[92]

While popular belief may hold that invasive species harm the world's ecosystems, relatively little is known about invasive species or their impact on ecosystems.[93] Biologists James Brown and Dov Sax explore the complexity associated with invasive species and draw six conclusions:

1. Many places have experienced extinctions of native fish, plants, and birds.
2. Alien species have undoubtedly contributed to the extinction of some of these species. The ultimate cause of extinction is often ambiguous, however, because other human activities have had substantial environmental impacts.
3. Despite the extinction of some native species, the total number of species usually increased or remained the same in local areas.
4. Although we often accuse invading species of damaging the structure and function of ecosystems, there is usually little hard scientific evidence of such negative impacts.
5. The fact that islands show such different capacities to absorb immigrating birds and plants suggests that there is no single definitive explanation as to how alien species impact *local* biodiversity.
6. The net effect, however, is still a loss of *global* biodiversity. Many of the invading alien species are common and widely distributed. By contrast, many of the native species that have gone extinct were endemics and have thus been lost forever.[94]

It has certainly been true that humans have, intentionally and unintentionally, introduced alien species into new areas, and globally this has caused a loss of biodiversity. But despite the perception that invasive species always contribute to a loss of biodiversity, it may not be true in many locations.[95] Warren cites the "tens rule," which states that, "about 10% of introduced species appear in the wild, some 10% of these become established, and, of these, roughly 10% (i.e., 0.1% of all

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[92] Foster and Sandberg, *op. cit.*, 181.

[93] James Brown and Dov Sax, "Do biological invasions decrease biodiversity?" *Conservation Magazine* 8(2007). Available from http://www.conservationmagazine.org/2008/07/aliens-among-us/ (accessed on 21 Aug 2012).

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Ibid.*

imports) become pests."[96] According Brown and Sax, local scale data for the United States show that, "on average, there is locally fewer than one extinction of a native species for every successful colonization of an alien species," and these data serve to highlight the misconceptions about biodiversity and invasive species.[97]

As Brown and Sax suggest, it has been difficult to predict the ecological impacts and benefits of introduced species. In researching the impact of exotic vegetation on breeding habits of birds in Arizona, wildlife biologists Mark Sogge, Susan Sfferra and Eben Paxton note that 49 bird species used *Tamarix* as breeding habitat. They cited a study on the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher that showed no negative effects from breeding in these habitats.[98] The work by Sogge, Sferra and Paxton highlight the problem with assuming that all introduced species are ecologically unfit for the local environment:

The structure of vegetation, native or exotic, may be more important to birds than the actual species composition, and different species of birds will respond differently. The complexity of responses by bird communities to exotics in different ecosystems around the world suggests that negative impacts by exotics cannot be universally assumed; rather, evaluation of impacts should be conducted species by species with attention to geographic differences.[99] Sogge, Sferra and Paxton conclude by noting that any restoration of riparian habitats that involved *Tamarix* removal without assuring its replacement by suitable native habitats had the potential to reduce the ecological value of the habitat for local, and regional, bird populations.[100]

The native/alien dichotomy grew out of modernism, and through globalization we brought

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[96] Warren, *op. cit.*, 430.

[97] Brown and Sax, *op. cit.*

[98] Mark Sogge, Susan Sfrerra, and Eben Paxton, "*Tamarix* as habitat for birds: implications for riparian restoration in the southwestern United States," *Restoration Ecology* 16(2008): 146-154.

[99] *Ibid*, 146-147.

[100] *Ibid.*

about the "McDonaldization" of the biosphere.[101] Warren argues that in a postmodern world, we should rethink our perceptions of species and accept that species from across the spectrum reside in our cities. Similarly, environmental philosopher Dale Jamieson argues that "a celebration of alien plants and surprising biological juxtapositions may be more in tune with the postmodern world than attempts to protect native species."[102] Warren argues that, "the native/alien dualism thus appears antiquated (if appealing) in its naïve simplicity and certainty, and it clashes violently with contemporary social ethics. It has little hope of surviving when the old, bipolar dogmas on which it rests are themselves collapsing amid these conceptual reconfigurations."[103] In line with this logic, we need to rethink our perspectives on the notion of urban ecosystem restoration and the role of invasive species.

Cities need a new approach to assess the sustainability of urban park landscapes, one that recognizes that the naturalistic landscape park is not necessarily a thing, but a process. Reframing the park as a process necessitates rethinking about park budgets and maintenance, landscape composition, ecological functions, and urban sustainability. In June 2011, *Nature* published an editorial by 19 ecologists urging conservationists and land managers to expand their definition of sustainability in order to move beyond the native/alien labels and "to organize priorities around whether species are producing benefits or harm to biodiversity, human health, ecological services and economies."[104] One of those ecologists, senior research scientist at the Arnold Arboretum Peter Del Tredici, argues that sustainability in cities and other human-dominated ecosystems rests not merely on the use of native vegetation, but on a newer formulation that calculates the sustainability of an ecosystem by

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[101] Warren, *op. cit.*, 427.
[102] Dale Jamieson, "Ecosystem heath: some preventative medicine," *Environmental Values* 4(1995), 340.
[103] Warren, *op. cit.*, 440.
[104] Mark Davis *et al.*, "Don't judge species on their origins," *Nature* 474 (9 Jun 2011), 154.

$$\text{Sustainability of Urban Parks} = \frac{\text{Ecological Functions}}{\text{Maintenance Costs}}$$

**Figure 7.7.** New restoration and urban sustainability paradigm. Adapted from Del Tredici (2010).

examining the relationship between the role of the landscape's ecosystem functions and the cost required to maintain that ecosystem (Figure 7.7). Unlike other scholarly work that has tried to develop economic tools to assess the value of ecological services, in this new calculation, ecosystem functions refers to the "habitat, biological or system properties or process of an ecosystem."[105] These functions represent the direct and indirect benefits to society in the form of ecosystem goods (e.g., food) and services (e.g., waste assimilation). By focusing on the physical ecological process in the landscape, and the need for humans to maintain a restored park, the notion of sustainability in this new calculation rests on the important functions provided by the landscape, like the long-term durability and resilience of the landscape and its vegetation, as well as a measurement of the energy and resources society needs to maintain them—regardless of whether the vegetation is native or not. When we reframe invasive species and weeds as 'spontaneous', 'disturbance-adapted', or 'urban-adapted' vegetation (i.e., plants that have been able to thrive in urban environments, are functional in a disturbed environment, and require little human maintenance), we can begin to reframe the

[105] Robert Costanza, Ralph d'Arga, Rudolf de Groot, Stephan Farber, Monica Grasso, Bruce Hannon, Karin Limburg, Shahid Naeem, Robert O'Neill, Jose Paruelo, Robert Raskin, Paul Sutton, and Marjan van den Belt, "The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital," *Nature* 387(1995): 253-260; Per Bound and Sven Hunhammar, " Ecosystem services in urban areas," *Ecological Economics* 29(1999): 293-301; R.S. de Groot, M.A. Wilson and R.M.J. Boumans, "A typology for the classification, description, and valuation of ecosystem functions, goods and services," *Ecological Economics* 41(2002): 393-408; Markus Peterson, Damon Hall, Andrea Feldpausch-Parker, and Tarla Rai Peterson, "Obscuring ecosystem function with application of ecosystem services concept," *Conservation Biology* 24(2010): 113-119.

notions of urban sustainability.[106]

This new perspective of urban sustainability brings a practical dimension to the typical discussions of sustainability that strive for balance between economic growth, ecological health, and social equity. Those goals, while admirable, are, for practical purposes, hard to measure, and this new perspective provides a concrete way to measure the success of long-term durability, resilience and sustainability efforts like park restoration.

In order for urban parks to be more sustainable, urban regimes must begin to rethink park designs and move on from an expensive restoration model based on nostalgic representations of the past, and focus more on ecological functions and maintenance costs (Table 7.1).[107] According to Del Tredici, spontaneous vegetation is "a cosmopolitan mix of species that grows and reproduces without human care or intent," that requires little to no maintenance.[108] Spontaneous vegetation fits this new perspective of urban sustainability since it is already adapted to the site conditions, requires minimal maintenance, is ecologically and socially functional, and is cost-effective. Unless policy makers and the private park conservancies begin to take park maintenance costs into account, restoration will be unsuccessful and unsustainable. What good is it to restore the historic landscape composition (or improve the waterways) of an Olmstedian park, if the park landscape will not be maintained for the long-term. Unless urban regimes begin to view naturalistic landscape parks as process-oriented landscapes, rather than just viewing them as things, parks will continue to go through phases of deterioration and reinvestment.

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[106] Peter Del Tredici, "Spontaneous urban vegetation: reflections of change in a globalized world," *Nature and Culture* 5(2010): 299-315.

[107] Del Tredici, "Spontaneous urban vegetation," 310. See also: Norbert Kühn, "Intentions for the unintentional: spontaneous vegetation as the basis for innovative planting design in urban areas," *Journal of Landscape Architecture* 1(2006): 46-53.

[108] Del Tredici, "Spontaneous urban vegetation," 300.

| | managed horticultural landscapes | remnant native landscape | abandoned ruderal landscapes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **land use category** | large & small parks<br>cemeteries, lawns<br>ballfields, street trees<br>residential gardens<br>commercial landscapes | minimally disturbed woodlands, wetlands & coastal habitats | postindustrial land,<br>vacant lots, railroad edges<br>river corridors<br>degraded wetlands<br>abandoned parks<br>successional woodlands |
| **primary vegetation** | cultivated plants and associated weeds | native plants and associated invasive species | spontaneous native and exotic species |
| **soil characteristics** | nutrient rich & highly manipulated; often manufactured or relocated from off-site | native soils with minimally disturbed profiles | disturbed and/or compacted; often mixed with subsoil or construction rubble |
| **maintenance requirements** | moderate to intensive | low to moderate | none to low |
| **sustainability quotient (based on resiliency, durability & self-sufficiency)** | low → high | | |

**Table 7.1.** Taxonomy of urban landscapes. Adapted from: Del Tredici (2010).

Erosion along the edges of the water bodies located within the Emerald Necklace, particularly, the Fens, the Riverway, Olmsted Park, and Jamaica Pond, caused dramatic changes to the naturalistic character of the water bodies. In many places along these water bodies, the original Olmsted plantings have been lost, replaced by annoying weeds in some cases and by invasive plant species in others (Figure 7.8). Therefore, the ENPMP called for the removal of invasive plants, particularly Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and buckthorn (*Rhamnus spp.*), throughout the park system. In ways similar to the manner in which the Boston Brahmin sought to control the spread of the working class and newly arrived Irish immigrants, the

**Figure 7.8.** Japanese knotweed along the Muddy River, 2007.

ENPMP's quest to control invasives was due to the adaptability, ability to aggressively reproduce, and vigorous growth of these plant species. In the Fens and the Riverway, the ENPMP emphasized restoration treatments that removed Phragmites and other water edge vegetation and stabilized the banks with "appropriate plant materials."[109] The plan also declared that, "reference to the original plans and plant lists should be a starting point in the redesign. The historic landscape character, scale, space definition, views, and vistas must be maintained to the greatest extent possible."[110]

The ENPMP proposed the removal of more than 12 acres of invasive plant species while restoring the historical planting schemes along the waterways. While the plan addressed a variety of invasive plant species, it focused primarily on Phragmites. Known as the common reed, Phragmites is a grass that grows along the edges of disturbed wetlands (Figure 7.9). To determine the success

[109] ENPMP, 126 and 142.
[110] ENPMP, 142.

**Figure 7.9.** Phragmites along the Muddy River, 2007.

of the restoration process, especially the removal of invasives like Phragmites, we must determine whether its removal improves the functional success of this human-produced ecosystem.

Originally native to the northeastern United States, genetic testing indicates that the European variety has displaced the native types while expanding into regions previously without Phragmites.[111] According to the city's 2008 *Muddy River Flood Damage Reduction and Environmental Restoration Project* report, the robust growth of Phragmites in the Fens and Riverway has allowed it to occupy nearly 7 acres of streambank and shoreline. In the Fens, Phragmites occupied nearly 90 percent of the northern basin shoreline and 50 percent of the southern basin shoreline, which has the greatest potential for expansion due its shallow depth (less than three feet).[112]

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[111] Kristin Saltonstall, "Cryptic invasion by a non-native genotype of common reed, *Phragmites australis*, into North America," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 99(2002): 2445-2449.

[112] City of Boston, *Notice of Intent: Muddy River Flood Damage Reduction and Environmental Restoration Project, Phase I*, 18-19. Available from http://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/pdfs/muddy_river_noi.pdf (accessed 22 Oct 2009).

The invasives species rhetoric found in the city's 2008 Muddy River report echoed that found in the ENPMP. The city's report noted that the stands of Phragmites eliminated the "scenic vistas envisioned by Olmsted and strongly detracts from the aesthetics of the area." In the Riverway, Phragmites occupied nearly 30 percent of the streambank. Some stands of Phragmites in the Riverway stretched up to 7 meters in height and constricted the channel of the Muddy River in several locations causing flooding upstream in 1996 and 1998, causing $100 million in damages. The city reported that a stand of Phragmites "extends nearly across the entire river for about 130 feet, within which the average width of the open channel is about 10 feet. The edge of the stand appears to be semi-floating in about 4 feet of water." Erosion and siltation have decreased the depth of the Muddy River—in one section of the Muddy River the maximum water depth of decreased from 6 feet when it was last dredged in 1963 to about 1 foot in 1996. Due to shallow water, nutrient rich sediments, slow currents, and lack of shade trees, conditions in the Fens and Riverway were favorable for the rapid expansion of Phragmites.[113]

While the ENPMP labeled Phragmites as an invasive plant species that destroyed the ecology of the Emerald Necklace, the plan largely failed to balance the ecological functions provided by the plant with its potential harm as an invasive. In the Emerald Necklace, Phragmites flourished under a variety of cultural, political, ecological, and spatial contexts. In spite of its status as an invasive, the plant served important functions for local ecosystems and human communities.

First, despite the invasive rhetoric, the ENPMP acknowledged that Phragmites did provide "some ecological value." This notion, that Phragmites offered ecological benefit, echoed the work of environmental scientists Judith and Peddrick Weis, who note that in salt marshes invaded by

[113] City of Boston, *Muddy River*, 18 and 19.

Phragmites, its detritus served as a valuable component of the estuarine food web.[114] The ENPMP stated that Phragmites served as a "nectaring source for bees and butterflies, and as nesting habitat and food (seeds) for a few bird species…[I]t has recently been found that a relatively rare and local butterfly species, broad-winged skipper, seems to occur regularly where Phragmites and purple loosestrife occur together."[115]

Second, Phragmites, like other wetland plant species that act as nutrient sinks, is useful as a phytoremediation tool since it can absorb large concentrations of harmful chemicals, such heavy metals, PCBs, and petro-chemicals in sediments.[116] According to the city's *Muddy River Flood Damage Reduction and Environmental Restoration Project*, sediments found in the Fens and the Riverway had significantly higher concentrations of PCBs than the sediments upstream in Leverett, Willow, and Wards ponds. Elevated levels of PCBs found in 7 of 14 fish species tested forced a public health advisory recommending that people not consume carp, brown bullhead, and American eel, while limiting their intake of others to two meals per month.[117] Additionally, PCB levels found in fish from the Fens and Muddy River posed a risk to birds such as the belted kingfisher, double crested cormorant, black crowned night heron, and green heron. The ENPMP calls for removal of Phragmites for ecological reasons, but its removal has the potential to negatively impact a different dimension of the ecology of the Emerald Necklace.

Finally, Phragmites also provided a benefit to some human communities. The ENPMP called for the removal of the tall, dense stands of this reed to help improve public safety. However,

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[114] Judith Weis and Peddrick Weis, "Is the invasion of the common reed, *Phragmites australis*, into tidal marshes of the eastern U.S. an ecological disaster?" *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 46(2003); 816-820.

[115] ENPMP, 231.

[116] Craig Campbell and Michael Ogden, *Constructed Wetlands in the Sustainable Landscape* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1999), 14-16; Howard Odum, *Heavy Metals in the Environment: Using Wetlands for Their Removal* (Boca Raton, FL: Lewis Publishers, 2000); Mary Ghobrial, "Pigments and Moisture Contents in *Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. Ex Steudel, would be engine for monitoring biodegradation of petroleum contaminants in constructed wetlands," *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences* 2(2008): 1068-1075.

[117] City of Boston, *Muddy River*, 16-17.

since violent acts and robberies were not limited to Phragmites and could have occurred anywhere in the city, a more likely reason was to eradicate gay cruising in the area. The tall dense reeds near the Victory Gardens and the War Memorial offered gay men a sense of seclusion, as well as an expectation of privacy, within which to engage in sexual activity.[118] The cultural politics of invasive species, like the cultural politics of homosexuality, has been largely based upon fear. The existence of Phragmites upsets our environmental norms in the same manner that homosexuality can upset our cultural norms.

The prevalence of Phragmites in the Fens and Riverway is consistent with its preference for disturbed and polluted sites, and the lack of maintenance over the last century has contributed significantly to the dominance of this species. Mowing and pulling are not recommended means for eliminating Phragmites because the plant can regrow if small pieces of rhizome remain in the soil. Likewise, dredging is not recommended as a control method since it can have adverse side effects by releasing toxins embedded in soil. In many places, the growth of Phragmites is promoted by the Muddy River's high salinity due to run-off from salted roads. The treatment options laid out in the ENPMP included:

- Covering stands following cutting with sheet of clear plastic which raises the temperature under the sheets as high as 169 degrees Fahrenheit and kills all vegetation with 3-4 days.
- Cutting near the end of July for a number of years in a row, may contain stands of Phragmites. This reduces the plant's vigor by removing most of their food reserves in the upper portions of the plant. Cutting at the wrong time, however, may increase the density of the stand and cut shoots may sprout if not removed properly.
- The use of glyphosate herbicide (Monsanto's Rodeo) has proven effective in controlling Phragmites. It is applied after the flower "tassles" so that the herbicide is transported

[118] *Bay Windows*, "Boston P.D. cracking down on cruising in Fens," 9 Sep 2009. Available from http://www.baywindows.com/boston-pd-cracking-down-on-cruising-in-the-fens-96121 (accessed 5 Aug 2011); *BG*, "Reaction mixed to police focus on Fens; some feel it puts civil rights at risk," 21 Sep 2009. See also: John Paul Catungal and Eugene McCann, "Governing sexuality and park space: acts of regulation in Vancouver, BC," *Social and Cultural Geography* 11(2010): 75-94.

from the foliage to the roots.[119]

Conventional wisdom holds that glyphosate is the best method to eradicate Phragmites. However, one study notes that after three years, and two cycles of herbicidal treatment, Phragmites clearly returned and even expanded its range.[120] So, while it may not actually be the most effective method for the long-term removal of Phragmites, but it is the most common. Using risk-benefit analysis, neo-Olmstedians, quick to use chemicals to eradicate Phragmites, should consider the potential ecological benefits the plant provides and the potential risk to water quality and wildlife.

The underlying assumption associated with the removal of invasive plant species like Phragmites is that the native vegetation will dominate once the invasives are removed. However, since maintenance and constant human intervention are the keys to the functional success of restoration, the city's track record of park maintenance indicates otherwise. Del Tredici argues that unless cities rethink their approach to invasives plants, specifically, and urban sustainability, in general, they will never solve the problems associated with urban nature:

> To assert that planting native species will restore the balance of nature is just another way of ignoring the problem. Native plants are great, but without ongoing care and maintenance, they will die just like all the other plants we try to cultivate. The concept of implementing ecological restoration in an urban…context is particularly problematic. With all that pavement, road salt, heat buildup, air pollution, and soil compaction, the urban landscape can be an inhospitable place for plants. The critical question facing landscape architects in these situations is not what plants grew there in the past but which plants will grow there in the future.[121]

Instead of a native-only form of restoration, Del Tredici recommends using sustainability to determine the course of action. He defines the sustainable urban landscape as one in which, "plants

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[119] ENPMP, 230.

[120] Elizabeth Farnsworth and Lauren Meyerson, "Species composition and Inter-annual dynamics of a freshwater tidal plant community following the removal of the invasive grass, *Phragmites australis*," *Biological Invasions* 1(1999): 115-127.

[121] Peter Del Tredici, "Neocreationism and illusion of ecological restoration," in *Nature, Landscape and Building for Sustainability*, ed. William S. Saunders (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 180 and 181.

can tolerate the conditions that prevail on the site, require minimal applications of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers to look good, have greater drought tolerance and winter hardiness than other plants, and do not spread aggressively into surrounding natural areas."[122]

The call the removal of invasives represents a faith in the unquestioned assumption that native ecosystems are better than those altered by society. Ecologist Emma Marris, claims that the notion of a native-only ecosystem served a normative function by informing us about "what ought to count as nature."[123] The environmental imaginaries used in the ENPMP that tried to erase river birch from the shores of Jamaica Pond or the Phragmites from the Fens indicated a focus on the native qualities of the vegetation to determine the legitimacy of the restoration process and the restored landscape. However, like historical significance, the *legitimacy* of ecological restoration was not simply found—it was actively produced to reflect a particular social environmental imaginary.

In order for cities and private park conservancies to engage in the ecological restoration of parks and make the city more sustainable, urban regimes may need to rethink the definition of 'ecology.' Only when they begin to focus on the natural laws and principles of ecology (as well as the resources needed to maintain the new landscape) will restoration be successful. Nature, according to British ecologist Nigel Dudley, is function best when it contains a complex web of species that interact with each other and the inorganic environment to provide ecosystem functions and services. Instead of focusing on restoring pristine nature or the concept of wilderness, Dudley suggests that we focus on trying to make nature more functional.[124] Approaching ecological park restoration with progressive restoration in mind, and producing an operational urban ecosystem, regardless of the whether plant species are native or included in the historical planting palette, can

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[122] Del Tredici, "Neocreationism," 183.

[123] Emma Marris, *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 56.

[124] Nigel Dudley, *Authenticity in Nature: Making Choices about the Naturalness of Ecosystems* (New York: Earthscan, 2011).

provide urban regimes with more choices—more choices in plant materials can allow cities to recreate a landscape that does not require significant energy or resources to maintain. This is not to say that we should not try to conserve native or endemic species where and when we can, but rather we should also add 'unnatural' forms of nature to our environmental imaginaries.

Rather than looking at restoration simply as either reinstating the historical plantings, or from the native/alien perspective, successful restoration needs to be based on a realistic evaluation of site conditions and future maintenance requirements, rather than on some "romantic notion" past histories and ecologies.[125] Unfortunately, by not following this advice, the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace sold out both the historical and ecological integrity of the landscape for the sake of aesthetics.

In re-designing the ecologies of this park landscape, the ENPMP attempted to re-create a neo-Olmstedian landscape composition by eradicating invasive plant species. According to the ENPMP:

> Olmsted showed a preference for using species native to the region in which he was working, and installed a remarkable variety of native trees and shrubs in the Emerald Necklace. However, he also used a number of alien species which tend to reduce diversity by "taking over" in forest understory and open land and reducing the prevalence of native species. Several species of alien honeysuckles, Japanese barberry and buckthorn are in this category and in many cases were planted in large number…Any effort to remove alien [plants], especially where they have become dominant, is also desirable ecologically.[126]

The ENPMP acknowledged that Olmsted relied, at least to some degree, on introduced species. It seems then, that the dual goals of both reinstating Olmsted's historic plantings *and* removing invasive plant species might be incompatible.

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[125] Dudley, *op. cit.*
[126] ENPMP, 222.

**Conclusions**

The ENPMP recommended a unified approach to park management. Multiple jurisdictions and institutions (Boston, Brookline, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the various private park conservancies) are responsible park management. The plan suggested creating a "jointly-appointed management advisory organization" to make policy decisions to "direct funds to needed areas, augment equipment (such as the joint purchases of specialized equipment for Phragmites removal), expand management staff, and train specialized horticultural crews in woodland and waterside management of naturalistic landscapes." According to the plan, implementing such a measure should reduce operating costs for all parties, but more importantly this advisory organization could result in a more consistent maintenance program for the parks.[127]

As shown previously, there has been confusion over jurisdictional boundaries, which "do not always match agency capabilities." The ENPMP claimed that the success of the joint management program required the clarification of boundaries and responsibilities. This division of responsibilities, according to the plan, should allow for a more efficient maintenance operation by making the best use of the skills of each state and municipal agency, and private park conservancy, responsible for park management and maintenance.[128]

In addition to these broad management and maintenance goals, the ENPMP also made specific recommendations. The plan advised that the police departments, park departments, and community groups work together to be community stewards. Additionally, the plan advocated for the continuation of the Park Ranger program. Similar to Olmsted's Park Keepers, the rangers have been responsible for park security and safety, visitor services, resource management and interpretive programming since 1983. Since a "clean, well maintained park system project[s] a positive image to

[127] ENPMP, 117.
[128] ENPMP, 118.

the public," the plan called for reviewing the penalties for illegal dumping and removing graffiti as soon as possible. Finally, the ENPMP suggested consistent park regulation and standards governing park activities and permitting to avoid overuse.[129]

The management and maintenance program, as set out in the ENPMP, is insufficient to ensure the functional success of the restored Emerald Necklace. These conceptual strategies might very well be successful, but they are dependent upon adequate funding. The city of Boston has already shown that when pressed with difficult financial decisions, it will choose not to invest its money in managing and maintaining its parks. Higgs cogently summarizes this dilemma. The process of park restoration is driven by the goal "to reproduce by whatever means available a predetermined historic [landscape, and] to come as close as possible to restoring what once existed on a specific site."[130] A faithful restoration of an urban park would produce an exact replica of the park landscape at a particular time. But since perfect restoration is not possible, politicians, policymakers, and members of private park conservancies are left to decide what a park landscape should look like.

Like park planning in general, park restoration is, at its core, a design process that results in aesthetically pleasing landscapes based on particular environmental imaginaries. But, nature is a process, not merely a product created by a designer. As a designed ecology, the restoration of the Emerald Necklace re-creates a park landscape by focusing on its *historic appearance*, *aesthetics*, and *visual qualities*. Improving an environmental amenity like the naturalness of the Fens, daylighting the Muddy River, or removing Phragmites, helps to improve the appearances of these parks. One of the major problems with design as a model for restoration, Higgs claims, is that "there are relatively few

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[129] ENPMP, 118-119. For the Boston Park Ranger program see: City of Boston, "Park rangers." Available at http://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/parkrangers/ (accessed on 9 Aug 2012).

[130] Higgs, "What is good ecological restoration?" 343.

examples from the core of integrated design that take the interests of ecosystems seriously instead of just the interests of people."[131] The ENPMP relied on the use of ecological narratives and environmental imaginaries guided by the ghost of Olmsted to justify its proposed treatment methods. Despite these good intentions, "people are remaking nature, often in their own image. Ecological restoration is a preeminent device for managing nature; it encourages by its very constitution the deliberate manipulation of nature."[132]

Resilience and durability lie at the center of the ecological restoration of urban parks. As a designed ecosystem, the parks of the Emerald Necklace have neither been resilient nor durable. The city's lack of maintenance throughout the late-twentieth century revealed a hands-off approach that resulted in a neglected and derelict landscape. Even after spending tens of millions of dollars to follow the Olmsted historic planting palette the restored park landscapes of the Emerald Necklace are not resilient or durable. The city has shown a history of not funding park maintenance. Unlike the 1960s and 1970s when the city refused to fund parks, in this new era of park production the city has relied on private park conservancies and their donors and volunteers. But even after the Muddy River has been daylighted, the river birch along Jamaica Pond has been removed, and the Fens has been redesigned to replicate a riparian habitat, the newly restored landscapes will not be self-sufficient, resilient or durable. They will require human interventions and significant amount of resources (energy, human labor, money) to ensure that no harm comes to these new landscapes.

In order for the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace to promote sustainable urbanism in Boston, the city and the conservancies need to alter their view of what constitutes 'sustainable.' There is, I believe, agreement between the conservative preservation ethos (as advocated for by the ENC) and the progressive preservation ethos (as advocated for by Del Tredici)

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[131] Eric Higgs, *Nature by Design,* 279.
[132] *Ibid*, 218.

that restored landscapes like those in the Emerald Necklace must be resilient and durable. But where the two diverge is in the progressive restoration approach that acknowledges that these urban landscapes can contain spontaneous vegetation—species that provide vital ecosystem functions, while requiring little maintenance.

This progressive approach to the urban environment is even more important when we consider the potential outcomes associated with climate change. While planting native species would be ideal, in some cases doing nothing, and leaving non-native species in place, might be most appropriate. In her research, landscape architect MaryCarol Hunter argues that, "the utility and harm of using non-natives species in urban settings illustrates the complexity of prescribing a balance between cultural and ecological goals, particularly in light of climate change."[133] The success of ecological restoration of urban parks depends upon urban regimes reframing the act of restoration. If, instead of framing restoration as the re-creation of a previously designed landscape, urban regimes framed the process as one of adaptation, the resulting park landscape would be more self-sufficient, resilient and durable—it could be more sustainable.

In designing the nature of the Emerald Necklace, as evidenced by the removal of river birch to provide open views of the pond, or the daylighting the Muddy River to control flooding, restoration is *human-centered*, rather than *ecosystem-centered*. On one hand, if we are going to restore parks so that they are not ecologically functional and do not require little maintenance, we will produce parks that are not resilient and durable.[134] These parks will need significant funding for their constant maintenance in order to remain aesthetically pleasing. On the other hand, we have

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[133] Hunter, *op. cit.*, 176.

[134] C.S. Holling, "Resilience and stability of ecological systems," *Annual Review of Ecological Systems* 4(1973): 1-23; Gary Peterson, "Political ecology and ecological resilience: an integration of human and ecological dynamics," *Ecological Economics* 35(2000): 323-336; W. Neil Adger, "Social and ecological resilience: are they related?" *Progress in Human Geography* 24(2000): 347-364.

been presented with another option, one that allows us to be more inclusive in our conceptions of what constitutes nature. If we view nature as a hybridized socionatural form, then we can incorporate the city's spontaneous vegetation into a progressive park restoration process.

# CHAPTER 8

# CONCLUSION:
# NATURE, HISTORY, AND URBAN PARK RESTORATION

From the beginning of this research for this dissertation, I intentionally focused my study on the ways in which nature was produced and represented in the parks of the Emerald Necklace. More specifically, I have sought to uncover the reasons why these representations of nature have been employed. Through a re-interpretation of the history of urban parks, I have tried to craft a narrative that reframes the myth of Olmsted and moves the discussion beyond the generally accepted history, and historical geography, of urban parks that privileges the social and environmental benefits of parks, or simply focuses on park changes over time. Through a theoretically informed historical narrative, I have sought to highlight the ways in which naturalistic landscape parks have been, and still are, socially produced by privileging certain environmental imaginaries. Through this narrative, I have attempted to add to the empirical knowledge of the social production of urban parks, as well as make key conceptual contributions to the urban history, political ecology, urban political economy, and historical geography literatures. In the sections that follow, I review the theoretical insights drawn from the narratives associated with the social production of urban parks.

*The ecological restoration of the naturalistic landscapes of the Emerald Necklace has been guided by the ghost of Olmsted.* While a goal of restoring the Conservancy Park may have, rhetorically, been urban sustainability, the reality was ecological principles—concern for flows of energy and matter—mattered less than scenic views and aesthetics. As shown in my critique of the ENPMP, the goal for the Conservancy Park is to produce a park that *looks* good and *feels* like an Olmsted park. By copying him, the ENPMP attempted to honor him. But the truest way to honor him would be to study his

designs and his park philosophies to learn from him. There is no need for cities and conservancies to just copy Olmsted; they could work to be as imaginative, original and artistic as he was.

Relying on the ghost of Olmsted, the restoration of the Emerald Necklace represented the theming of the city. The theming of a city takes advantage of the uniqueness of the local culture, environment, and history in order to market the place. The master planning process produced a series of "collectively produced fictions."[1] These fictions resulted in landscape fetishism, providing the ghost of Olmsted the power to mask the historical-geographical relations (e.g., contradictions, tensions and conflicts) associated with the nineteenth-century production, the mid-twentieth-century deterioration, and the late-twentieth-/early-twenty-first century reproduction of the Emerald Necklace. Behind the ghost of Olmsted were certain environmental imaginaries. Throughout the restoration process various arms of the state apparatus and park advocates associated with private park conservancies assigned significance to the particular representations of urban nature they felt best symbolized the Olmstedian ideal of naturalistic landscape parks.

Restoration treatments like the removal of the hardy, adaptable river birch along the shores of Jamaica Pond represented what Boyer has called "restaged scenographic allusions" and "simulated environments."[2] The ENPMP called for the removal of the river birch to try to reclaim the tree-covered pathway around the pond that Olmsted envisioned. It mattered little that these trees had already created the kind of walkway the plan wished for the landscape. Instead, it mattered more that Olmsted did not specifically call for the placement of river birch in this park, and therefore the trees needed to be removed. As such, the movement towards the sustainable park is merely part of the post-industrial, urban spectacle, and the park is reduced to a series of green

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[1] Grazian, *Blue Chicago*, 12.
[2] Boyer, *City of Collective Memory*, 47.

images used to market "leisure-time lifestyles" and commodify urban space, in part by enhancing the private property values.[3]

The ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace was not about transforming the park landscape to promote ecological integrity, rather its focus was to promote a form of environmentalism that provided naturalistic spaces for recreation and place commodification. In other words, the ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace was about "green-washing."[4] The kinds of projects found in the ENPMP helped to re-image the city as a green city, which was especially important to create new recreational and commercial landscapes that improved urban livability and appealed to middle- and upper-middle class residents and tourists. These kinds of projects helped the city open up "urban spaces for new waves of investment and bringing back the middle class to the city," and represented a strategy of urban redevelopment that crafted a narrative focused on the symbolic economy of place.[5]

*Through the social production, and reproduction, of naturalistic landscapes, urban regimes utilized public parks as a spatial fix.* As engineered urban ecosystems, Olmsted's naturalistic landscape parks were produced within a specific political-economic setting and set into the historical–geographical crises of capitalism. If urban historians and park scholars focus solely on the social and environmental dimensions of urban parks, then they will be overlooking this significant part of the urban park narrative. By ignoring urban political economy, park historians and scholars have ignored perhaps the most important dimension associated with the social production of urban parks. That is not to say that the economic dimensions are paramount, but when looking at the

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[3] Boyer, *City of Collective Memory*, 51.

[4] Igor Alves, "Green spin everywhere: How greenwashing reveals the limits of the CSR paradigm," *Journal of Global Change and Governance* 2(2009): 1-26; Ernest Yanarella, Richard Levine, and Robert Lancaster, "Green versus sustainability: From semantics to enlightenment," *Sustainability* 2(2009): 296-302.

[5] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city," 550.

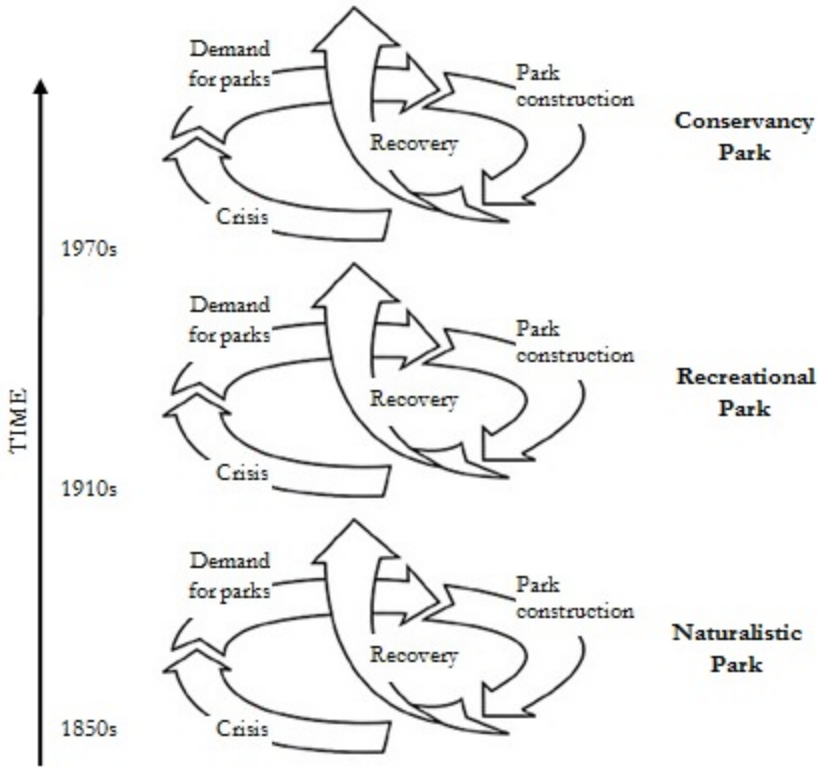


**Figure 8.1.** New park typology and chronology.

connections between the urban economy, the urban policy regimes, and the parks they produced, it's hard not to conclude that urban political economy influenced the type, use, and appearance of park landscapes. In considering the role of political economy and urban regimes in park formation, a new typology of large urban parks emerges: the Naturalistic Park, the Recreational Park, and the Conservancy Park (Figure 8.1).

Responding to crises of production in the late-nineteenth century, elite urban regimes favored the creation of Naturalistic Parks as pleasure grounds. Although the social and environmental benefits were often used to rally general support for naturalistic parks, these benefits were secondary to the economic benefits. These regimes privileged the landscape aesthetics of the Naturalistic Park due to its ability to act as a spatial fix with the potential for economic gain through

boosterism and real estate speculation. While there was a general public good associated with the creation of urban parks due to improvements in air and water quality, there was also a quasi-public good that benefited the members of the leisure class living closest to the parks. Their properties near the park appreciated in value, and therefore, they could extract surplus value from their land by selling it, or they could retain the property to further accumulate wealth. This fueled real estate speculation as antecedent parks like Central Park, Prospect Park, and Franklin Park were built on undeveloped land in the hopes of establishing new residential districts around them. As those new districts developed and filled with families, a new crisis arose.

By the 1910s, a crisis of consumption coincided with a new egalitarian urban regime that favored the development of social services and programs, resulting in the creation of the Recreational Park. No longer content to utilize naturalistic parks for passive activities, urban residents begin to demand to use parks for more active recreational uses. The Recreational Park fulfilled the need for mass consumption and an environmental imaginary that allowed for active recreation replaced the old naturalistic environmental imaginary. Instead of wide-open areas of pastoral green space, these vital elements of the Naturalistic Park were carved into baseball and football fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, and golf courses. By the 1910s and 1920s in Boston, the "centers of attraction" solution by the park commissioners helped bring intrusions into Olmsted's naturalistic designs, which continued into the late-1950s/early-1960s. The creation of ball fields, tennis courts, and football fields in places like the Fens, Olmsted Park, Jamaica Pond, and Franklin Park, the addition of monuments and memorials to the Fens, and the addition, and expansions, of the golf course and the zoo in Franklin Park highlighted the encroachment of mass recreation into Olmsted's tranquil and idyllic landscapes. The mass consumption of a park's recreational facilities placed a burden on the city to maintain the park's recreational infrastructure as

more and more people used the Recreational Park. The cost to maintain these modern parks with their playgrounds, ball fields, zoos, and other park equipment, being significantly more than the cost to maintain naturalistic scenery, ultimately led to new crises by the 1970s.

Beginning in the late-1960s and continuing through the 1970s and 1980s, Recreational Parks across America fell into a state of disrepair as financially-strapped cities were unable to keep up with the wear and tear of parks and meet basic maintenance demands. In Boston, changes in the city's demographics resulted in white flight to the suburbs, causing a decline in the tax base, and resulting in deferred maintenance. These rapid demographic shifts led to racial tensions throughout the city in general. But specifically, neighborhoods bordering on Franklin Park experienced substantial rises in the black population, leading to further disinvestment in Franklin Park due to the perception that it was the "black" park. The resulting park became a neglected space, a derelict space, a space for criminal activity. Responding to this crisis of production in the 1980s, local citizens, fed up with the city's lackadaisical efforts to maintain the Franklin Park and other parks of the Emerald Necklace, began to form private park friends groups and conservancies to press for park restoration. Emphasizing local stewardship and urban sustainability, park restoration at this resulted in the rise of the Conservancy Park, led by local nonprofit park conservancies since the city budget still did not allow for municipality-financed restoration. To restore the Conservancy Park back to its original grandeur, they called upon the ghost of Olmsted.

*As a gentrification strategy, restoring naturalistic landscape parks helped improve the landscape aesthetic thus increasing a city's "quality of life," enhancing proximate property values, and acting as an instrument of social exclusion.* Since the 1970s, American cities have experienced a 'neoliberal turn' whereby they engaged in capitalist strategies to help them "re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to

restore the power of economic elites."[6] Neoliberal urbanism exists in the form of tendencies toward privatization, public-private partnership, interurban competition, and entrepreneurialism, all of which helped to reshape the urban landscape.[7] Since the material manifestation of park restoration represented the entrepreneurialism and the connections between urban socionature and quality of life, park restoration, therefore, represented a form of "actually existing neoliberalism" in the city.[8]

Seeking new forms of revenue in the 1980s, urban regimes in the neoliberal cities of postindustrial America sought to produce landscapes of consumption for the middle- and upper-middle classes. Entrepreneurial in character, the neoliberal city competes for mobile capital, as well as tourists and new residents to the city, and can accomplish this by crafting a narrative that focuses on the city's sense of place.[9] In the entrepreneurial city, creating a sense of place attachment can help to develop a "symbolic economy" of place.[10] Festival marketplaces, trendy shopping districts and cultural institutions (like museums and parks) represented a cultural strategy of economic development for those cities facing economic hardship. The production of space, therefore, reflects the ideologies of the dominant urban regime. These ideologies get imprinted onto the urban landscape and commodified through various aspects associated with the city's 'quality of life.'

Urban regimes, like those in Boston, engaged in these kinds of urban redevelopment by focusing on elements of the city's history, culture or environment. The restoration of the Emerald Necklace represented an effort to improve the city's livability and a push towards sustainable urbanism. Just as New York City's parks department allowed the Central Park Conservancy shaped Central Park into a cultural institution on par with MoMA or the Met, the city of Boston and the

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[6] Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 19.

[7] Brenner and Theodore, "Actually existing neoliberalism;" Chapin, "The entrepreneurial city;" Harvey, "From managerialism to entrepreneurialism" and *Condition of Postmodernity*; Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City*.

[8] Brenner and Theodore, *op. cit.*

[9] Boyer, "Cities for sale;" Florida, *Rise of the Creative Class*.

[10] Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*.

Emerald Necklace Conservancy (as well as other private park groups) began shaping the Emerald Necklace as a unique historical/cultural/environmental element of the city on par with the Freedom Trail. The restoration of the Emerald Necklace improved the aesthetics of the landscape. Gone were the illegal trash dumps and illicit activities. In their place were sanitized and aesthetically pleasing green spaces where urban professionals and tourists could go for a run, grab lunch on a park bench, people watch, or unwind a bit before catching the train home. The ecological restoration of the Emerald Necklace resulted in the enhancement of proximate property values, but was also used to attract tourists, and in this way it served as a spatial fix.

The notion of naturalistic landscape parks enhancing private property is not entirely new, nor is it surprising. Considering that the ENPMP focused its restoration efforts on the looks and the aesthetics of the park landscape, it seems logical that the naturalistic landscape aesthetic of urban public parks helped to enhance proximate property values. The proximate principle was such an important dimension of the nineteenth-century park movement in America, and yet it often goes unnoticed today. Leisure studies researchers have been the only ones to apply this principle to contemporary park research. However, they look at property values largely in a vacuum—there is no connection to larger issues associated with urban political economy.

An examination of the historical production of parks within a city's political economy reveals the reasons why parks look the way they do. Members of Boston's nineteenth-century leisure class recognized that other cities benefitted from the creation of parks through the proximate principle. They looked to the ways in which Olmsted's work in Central Park and Prospect Park impacted the values of nearby properties, and predicted similar results for their city. Their prediction paid off—in the first seven years of park construction in Boston, properties values near the parks increased by nearly $12 million, which generated nearly $1.5 million in tax revenue for the city. The proximate

principle was still operational as my analysis of property values in Brookline neighborhoods abutting the Riverway and Olmsted Park showed that naturalistic landscape parks significantly impacted residential properties adjacent to these green spaces. The sale prices of these properties increased by $105 with each foot one moved closer to a park entrance in the Riverway or Olmsted Park. This showed that people were willing to pay more to live closer to these environmental amenities. But this quasi-public good also acts as an instrument of social exclusion.[11]

The consumption of these green spaces emerged as a form of social exclusion. The full benefits of a renewed park became available for members of the leisure class residing near the parks, while others became marginalized. For some, the high land values and rents worked to prevent the full access to and use of the parks.[12] For others, park rules and regulations, surveillance, an increased police presence, a lack of certain amenities, or poor public transportation limit access.[13] The green spaces associated with urban parks represented "billboards" that highlighted the wealth, social power, and the elite qualities of the urban spaces adjacent to park landscapes.[14] The distinguished homes adjacent to park entrances tended to act as gatekeepers (of sorts) for the rest of the neighborhood. In two Brookline neighborhoods, the homes adjacent and near the park entrances symbolized the monopolization of space associated with social exclusion; they signified spaces of wealth and power.

By focusing on the unique qualities, or the aura, of the Emerald Necklace, the ENPMP attempted to assign historical significance to these spaces. It did not matter that the parks would not be restored back to their original Olmsted design. What mattered most was the creation of

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[11] See: Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion* and Philo, "Social exclusion."

[12] Heynen, "The scalar production of injustice within the urban forest;" Wolch, Wilson, and Fehrenbach, "Parks and park funding;" Heynen, Perkins, and Roy, "The political ecology of uneven green space;" Perkins, "Turning feral spaces into trendy places."

[13] Rosenzweig and Blackmar, *The Park and the People*; Katz, "Whose nature? Whose culture?;" Taylor, "Central Park as a model for social control;" Germic, *American Green*; Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*.

[14] Heynen, "The scalar production of injustice in the urban forest," 983.

environmental imaginaries that could be used to, among other things, improve the livability of the city, market these spaces as attractive destinations for the local travelers, and enhance nearby properties. In this, urban space continues to be commodified, but now with a neoliberal twist. With the emergence of present-day neoliberal political systems of governance within American cities, the burden to restore and preserve these landscapes has shifted from away city government to the private sector and non-profit organizations. In Boston, like other cities, park friends groups and conservancies take on the responsibilities of restoring and maintaining parks, and therefore reshape these landscapes according to their goals, values, and ideologies. The preservation and restoration of the Emerald Necklace represented a unique historical parallelism—the environmental amenities of the Emerald Necklace once again acted as a tool with which elite citizens groups could wield power and shape the production of space in the city.

*Historic preservation in general, and park restoration in particular, is a static, backward-looking field that fails to produce innovative, progressive, and dynamic urban landscapes.* The ENPMP claimed that its goal was to preserve the Olmsted vision and legacy for this park system. In this, the plan recognized Olmsted as a master landscape architect and park maker, and therefore, relied on the ghost of Olmsted to guide the preservation and restoration processes. But, by preserving and restoring this twenty-first century park landscape by adhering to nineteenth-century park ideologies has created a static landscape. Largely, the twenty-first century has brought about a state of flux for Boston's built environment. In addition to new high rise condos and office space, the completion of the Big Dig in 2007, in which the elevated highway known as the Southeast Expressway was torn down and the highway re-routed through a series of tunnels under the city, allowed for the construction of the

Rose Kennedy Greenway to re-connect downtown Boston with its waterfront.[15] Projects like the Big Dig and the greenway highlighted a progressive vision for the city's built environment. However, historic preservation in general, with its need to find historical significance, and the restoration of the Emerald Necklace in particular, with its goal to look backward to Olmsted precedent and his historic planting palette, represented a nostalgic view of landscape change.

Olmsted understood that the only certainty to the future of a park was change. He recognized that a park was not, simply, a *thing*, it was a *process*, and either through natural ecological functions, or through the hand of the park designer, the park was going to change. We can look to the discussions over the thinning of trees in Central Park in 1889 to see how Olmsted responded to removing park elements that were well-loved by the public. In 1889, the West Side Improvement Association and the park commissioners hired Olmsted and J.B. Harrison, of the American Forestry Congress, to investigate the "difference of opinion" over the felling of trees in Central Park.[16]

Some New Yorkers became upset over the thinning of trees, and through the earnest and strenuous objection of a nineteenth-century Lorax, they set out to protect 'their' trees. Olmsted and Harrison note how some tree protectors "have hastened to stand before a partly felled tree and have attempted to wrest the axe from the woodsman."[17] More often, however, citizens simply resort to using the media to raise public outrage over the felling of trees. In effect, this sentiment, according to Olmsted and Harrison, then makes the governing body and the park superintendent "extremely resistant to use the axe."[18] In producing Central Park, Olmsted followed the old adage—"plant thick, thin quick"—and thousands of trees were planted solely as nurse trees, and with their function

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[15] For a history of Boston transportation project, known as the Big Dig, see: Dan McNichol, *The Big Dig* (New York: Silver Lining Books, 2003).

[16] FLO and Harrison, *Observations on the Treatment of Public Plantations*, 5.

[17] *Ibid*, 3.

[18] *Ibid*, 4.

complete, they were no longer needed. Left standing, they competed with the other and thinning helped to improve the overall urban forest by preventing the depletion of nutrients and sunlight.

Olmsted and Harrison, with a bit of condescension, provide thirty-one quotations from professional landscape architects and foresters (Price, Repton, Sargent, and the like) that stressed the importance of tree thinning and pruning in order to improve the ecological health of the trees as a whole. They fittingly end their list of quotations with one from Sargent:

> As the trees grow, the weaker are pushed aside, and finally destroyed by the more vigorous, and the plantation is gradually thinned. This is the operation which is always going on in the forest when man does not intervene...But man can intervene, and by judicious and systematic thinning help the strong to destroy the weak more quickly, and with a less expenditure of vital force. Thick planting is but following the rule of nature, and thinning is only helping nature do what she does herself too slowly, and therefore too expensively.[19]

Regardless, of the "To thin, or not to thin?" questions, we must remember that a park is not a wild ecosystem—it is a designed ecology. But we must remember two things. First, designed ecologies still operate according natural laws and ecological principles. Second, change in an engineered park ecosystem is constant, and unless adequate funding is set aside for routine maintenance the environmental imaginary of the park will be lost.

The preservation and restoration of the naturalistic landscape parks designed by Olmsted typically requires the use of environmental imaginaries, narrative and rhetoric that represented the perfect version of the landscape ideal—the Olmstedian pastoral park. By focusing on the Olmsted legacy, and emphasizing the improvement of urban streams, or replacing invasive plant species with natives, the process of preservation and restoration privileges one particular, more ideal representation of the landscape. With its focus on meanings and symbolism, the ENPMP

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[19] FLO and Harrison, *Observations on the Treatment of Public Plantations*, 12.

highlighted selective parts of the past, while erasing others. Through landscape fetishism, the ENPMP 'found' significance in Olmsted and the mythic park narrative, nostalgically cementing that story in time.[20]

Ultimately, the restoration and preservation of the parks serves a greater purpose than that of nostalgia. Historical geographer Richard Francaviglia stated:

> the goal of preservation is didactic—to convey messages about the meaning of the past. Our preserved heritage landscapes are reminders of what we cherish—and have lost—in our transition from an agricultural and industrial country to a service economy. [T]hey enable us to reconstruct, or reinterpret, the past, sometimes as it should have been rather than as it was. In actively preserving and creating heritage landscapes, the underlying assumption, always operative, is that the past is *worth* preserving; when places are preserved to a certain period of time it validates the premise, often unspoken, that certain periods in time are more significant than others.[21]

The goal of preservation is to establish the material representation of the idealized environmental imaginaries to perpetuate the exclusive myths of the city's past, which acted to endow these park landscapes with prestige.[22] The process of preservation privileges the environmental imaginaries of those who had a particular vision for the built environment.

Landscape preservation fits neatly into the agenda of the neoliberal city. According to Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, the preservation of historic landscapes represents the conservation of cultural heritage and the retention of sense of place, both of which provide opportunities for tourism. Rogers argues that those ideals and values embedded in the historic landscape resonate with residents of the modern city, therefore, she acknowledges that the processes of preservation exemplify the tensions between permanence and change, between our attachment to the past and

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[20] See: Katz, "Whose nature, whose culture?" and Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, 102-109.

[21] Richard Francaviglia, "Selling heritage landscapes," in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America,* ed., Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 68.

[22] Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, 128.

the evolution of the city.[23] To explain the justification for preserving historic landscapes, Rogers identifies the importance of this social process: "It is not simply preservation of design for the sake of conservation of a design. Historic landscapes represent different ages of an urban culture and preservation of landscapes gives the community the opportunity to see the various layers of history in a natural setting, rather than behind the glass of a museum exhibit."[24] Interestingly, Rogers is not alone in her use of the museum metaphor.

Landscape preservation and urban park restoration represents what landscape architect Paul Gobster identifies as the "museumification" of nature, since restoration presents the re-engineered Olmstedian landscapes in a manner similar to the ways that art museums display the legendary works of Monet, Gauguin, and Picasso. Gobster explains the process of museumification as one in which,

> places or subjects of the everyday world are transformed in ways that can lead people to think and act toward them as if they had been placed in a museum...[it] can be accidental or intentional and its aim might be to conserve or commodify, but the end result is a shift in the meanings, behaviors, and experiences people have in relation to a place or subject.[25]

The restoration of the Emerald Necklace, as called for the ENPMP, resulted in the museumification of the park because they represented landscapes produced for visual consumption. Like an art museum displays paintings, the restored parks of the Emerald Necklace display a new form of urban nature. The labeling of plants, while often seen as an educational tool, serves to objectify them and give the impression that the park is a botanical garden or arboretum, reinforcing the museum quality of the park.[26] Just as the process of art restoration can repair tears and holes, and remove layers of dirt and mold to reveal the original painting, park restoration repairs "tears" and "holes" in the

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[23] Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 2001), 474.

[24] *Ibid*, 473.

[25] *Ibid*, 100.

[26] Gobster, "Museumification of nature," 106.

fabric of designed landscape by following the ghost of Olmsted, by adhering to the historic planting palette to re-create a naturalistic landscape, by stabilizing and framing pond edges and streambanks, by bringing lost elements like the Muddy River back to the surface, and by removing layers of intervening invasive plant species to reveal something that resembles the original design.

Our cultural belief in naturalness, not ecological principles, drives much of the park restoration; any of the ecological benefits that resulted from the aesthetic decisions were bonuses. The ENPMP conforms to the cultural expectations of how urban parks, and by extension urban nature, should look and feel. The goal of this park restoration process was to produce a series of environmental imaginaries that helped to improve the attractiveness and livability of the city. By relying on the ghost of Olmsted to guide the restoration of this historic park landscape, the environmental imaginaries found in the ENPMP aided in the museumification of nature, which helped to create attractive green spaces, which served to continue to commodify urban space.

But, as the literature and work of landscape architects and ecologists show there is an alternative to the museumification of nature. Instead of engaging in backward-oriented restoration processes, and practicing a progressive, forward-oriented restoration, we could begin to view the engineered park ecosystems as a process rather than a calcifying thing. A progressive restoration process would focus on the ecological functions provided by both the existing and future ecosystem, as well as the costs to maintain the ecosystem to determine the best restoration plan. Only by placing a priority on ecological function, rather than nostalgic representations of past landscape compositions, can urban regimes produce durable, resilient, and sustainable park landscapes. Otherwise, parks become historic things that need constant maintenance, require large capital investments, and depend upon large inputs of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides to maintain their 'historic' charm.

In this dissertation I responded to the calls for a "natural" turn in political economy.[27] I tried to situate the social production and reproduction of Boston's Emerald Necklace within the broader urban political-economic processes that activate environmental imaginaries as a way to provide an "urban sustainability fix."[28] To accomplish this, I examined the history of this park landscape, the design philosophy of Olmsted, the public park's role in local economic development, particularly as a tool to enhance private property values, and the economic-environmental scheme (e.g. the urban sustainability fix) employed by private park conservancies and state agents in the planning process. My goal was not to merely describe these parks and how they have changed over time, but to use geographical history to understand changes in the meanings and material representations of urban public space and infrastructure. This approach allowed me to use the past production of parks to help explain the present effort to restore them.

The socio-natural processes associated with the production of the built environment are dynamic, and therefore require a critical geographical-historical perspective to examine the changing narratives and environmental imaginaries associated with urban public parks. Through the state apparatus and private park conservancies, powerful urban regimes shape the urban landscapes in general, and public parks in particular. These regimes embedded park landscape with potent ideologies and meanings. As shown, Boston's leisure class, the Brahmin, wielded power in the city, and imposed their collective ideology upon the city by exerting control over various political, economic, and cultural institutions. By controlling these social institutions, members of the

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[27] Sally Eden, "Environmental issues: Nature versus the environment?" *Progress in Human Geography* 25(2001): 79-85; Simon Dalby and Roger Keil, "Introduction: Political ecology and Canadian political economy," *Studies in Political Economy* 70(2003): 5-9; Karl Zimmerer and Thomas Bassett, *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies* (New York: Guilford Press, 2003).

[28] While, Jonas, and Gibbs, "The environment and the entrepreneurial city." See also: Rob Krueger and Julian Agyeman, "Sustainability schizophrenia or actually existing sustainabilities? The politics and promise of a sustainability agenda in the U.S.," *Geoforum* 36(2005): 410-417; Andrew E.G. Jonas and Aidan While, "Greening the entrepreneurial city: Looking for spaces of sustainability politics in the competitive city," in *The Sustainable Development Paradox: Urban Political Economy in the United States and Europe*, R. Krueger and D. Gibbs, eds. (New York: Guilford Press, 2007), 123-159.

dominant cultural group influenced the shape of the built environment. To understand the changing attitudes toward the social production of Boston's Emerald Necklace, I uncovered the specific geographical and historical processes at work in Boston by examining the relationship between cultural beliefs and ideologies and the materiality of the landscape to examine how the physical landscape represented calcified values, ideologies, and social relations.

# APPENDIX A

## PARK RESTORATION PLANS


**Figure A1.** Restoration plan for the Back Bay Fens. Source ENPMP.

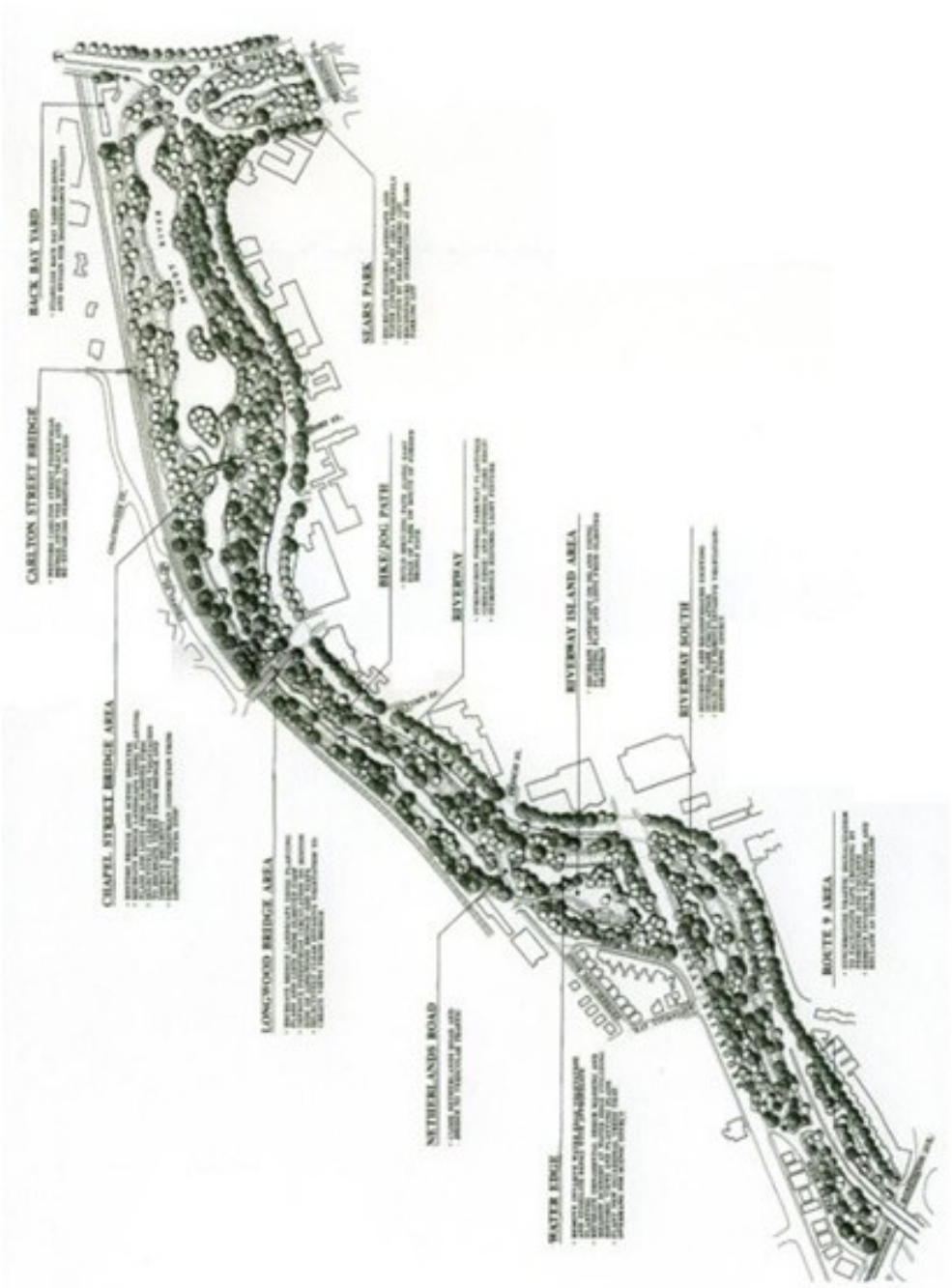


**Figure A2.** Restoration plan for the Riverway. Source ENPMP.

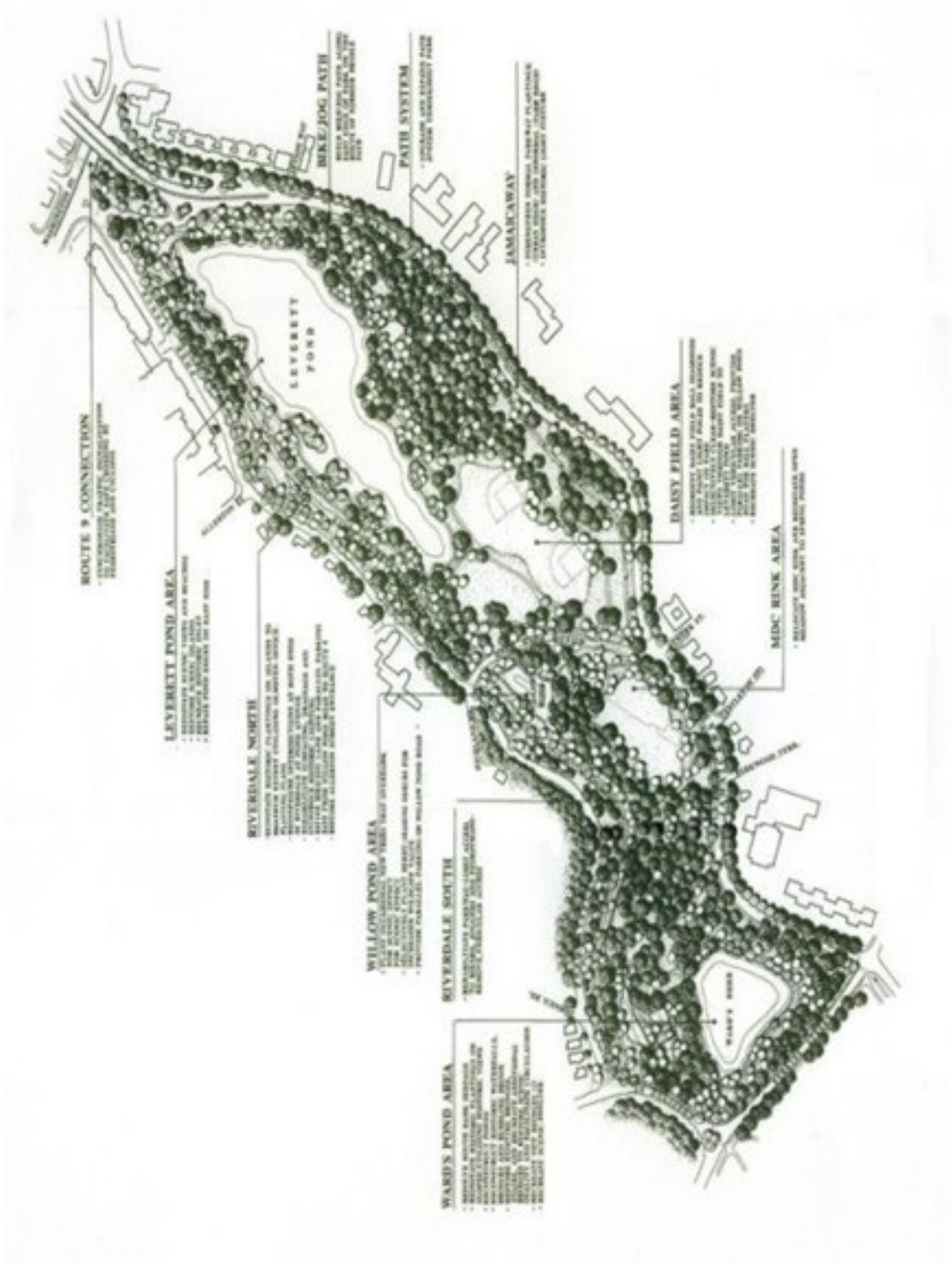


**Figure A3.** Restoration plan for the Olmsted Park. Source ENPMP.

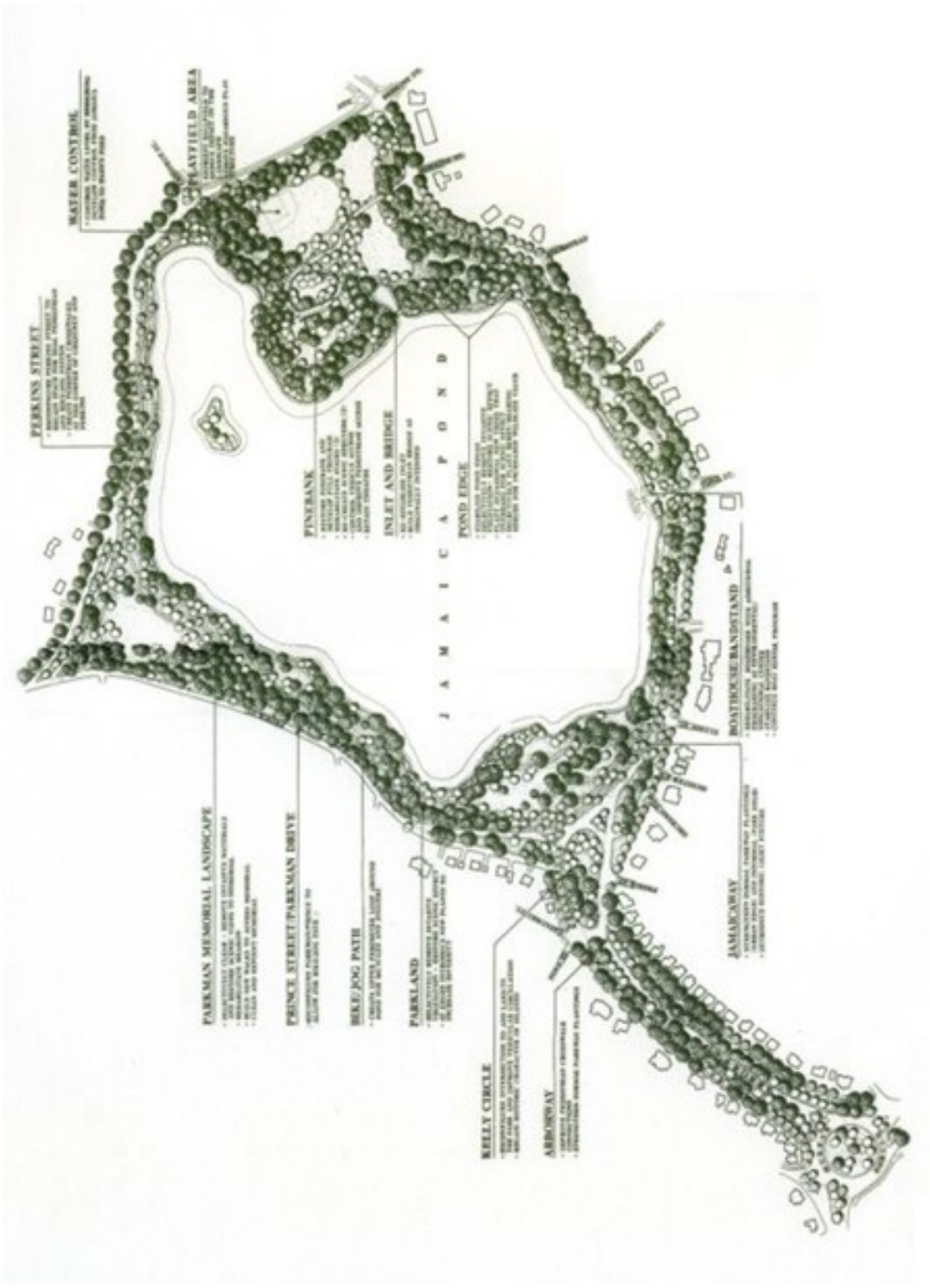


**Figure A4.** Restoration plan for the Jamaica Pond. Source ENPMP.

# APPENDIX B

## LIST OF CONTRINUTORS TO THE ENPMP

The following is reprinted from Appendix A of the ENPMP (pp. 205-208).

The Emerald Necklace Master Plan was developed through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Environmental Management's Olmsted Historic Landscape Preservation Program in collaboration with the following state and municipal official.

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**
Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor
Jane Swift, Lieutenant Governor

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Bob Durand, Secretary
Betsy Shure Gross, Special Assistant for Community Preservation
Jay Wickersham, Director, MEPA Unit

Department of Environmental Management
Peter C. Webber, Commissioner
Susan Frechette, Deputy Commissioner
Patrice Kish, Director, Office of Historic Resources

Metropolitan District Commission
David Balfour, Commissioner
Samantha Overton Bussell, Deputy Commissioner of Policy
Julia O'Brien, Director of Planning

**CITY OF BOSTON**
The Honorable Thomas Menino, Mayor

Boston Parks and Recreation Department
Justine M. Liff, Commissioner
Ray Foley, Associate Park Commissioner
Paul Foster, Associate Park Commissioner
Charles Titus, Associate Park Commissioner
Susan Park, Associate Park Commissioner
Brian McLaughlin, Executive Secretary, Park Commission
Frances G. Beatty, Senior Landscape Architect for Historic Parks

**TOWN OF BROOKLINE**
Board of Selectmen
Joseph T. Geller, Chair
Robert L. Allen
Deborah, B. Goldberg

Gilbert R. Hoy
Donna R. Kalikow

Brookline Officials
A. Thomas DeMaio, Commissioner, Department of Public Works
Erin Chute, Director of Parks and Open Space
Peter Ditto, Director, Engineering and Transportation
Robert Duffy, Director of Planning
Greer Hardwicke, Preservation Planner
Richard Kelliher, Town Administrator

The Emerald Necklace Master Planning process was guided by the advice and input of the following advisory committees. It is because of their commitment and vision that this document exists.

**OLMSTED PROGRAM STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (1985-1989)**
Rolf Diamont, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site
Herbert W. Cables, National Park Service
William Clendeniel, Mount Auburn Cemetery
Dr. Julius G. Fabos, University of Massachusetts
Professor John Martin, University of Massachusetts
John Furlong, Radcliff Seminars
Charles W. Eliot, Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks
Betsy Shure Gross, Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks
Eric, W. O'Brien, Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association
Patricia Loheed, Boston Society of Landscape Architects
Charles C. McLaughlin, National Association for Olmsted Parks
Valerie A. Talmadge, Massachusetts Historical Society

**EMERALD NECKLACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, BOSTON (1985-1998)**
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
Massachusetts Audubon Society
MASCO, Medical Area Services Corporation
Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council
Boston Foundation
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Metropolitan District Commission
Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management
Franklin Park Coalition
Roxbury Neighborhood Council
Boston Natural Areas Network
Northeastern University
Jamaica Pond Project
Friends of the Boston Common, the Public Garden and Commonwealth Mall
Massachusetts Horticultural Society

Boston GreenSpace Alliance
Boston Trust Office
Town of Brookline
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Restore Olmsted's Waterway
Friends of the Muddy River
Friends of Leverett Pond
The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University
Boston Environment Department
Boston Conservation Commission
Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston Parks and Recreation Department
Boston Fenway Program

**BROOKLINE/OLMSTED PARK/RIVERWAY/CITIZENS ADIVSORY COMMITTEE**

Isabella Callanan, Friends of the Muddy River
David Coleman, Point Neighborhood Association
Robert DeVries, Planning Board
Frances Shedd Fisher, Citizen at Large
Daniel Ford, Park and Recreation Committee
Naomi Gordon, The Brook House
Robert Gronquist, Citizen at Large
Betsy Shure Gross, Conservation Commission
Mary J. Harris, Point Neighborhood Association
Hugh Mattison, Friends of Leverett Pond
Edna F. McCourt, Citizen at Large
James J. Morcott, Citizen at Large
Fredrick S. Perry, Friends of the Muddy River
Barbara Whiting Drew, Conservation Commission
Gerald Tuckman, Park and Recreation Commission
Nancy Yetman, Preservation Commission

During the course of the Emerald Necklace Master Planning process numerous individuals, organizations, institutions, and state agencies provided professional expertise, guidance and direction in the development of this plan. This Master Plan is a product of the public's participation and spirit of cooperation in reaching consensus. The Department of Environmental Management gratefully acknowledges the contributions of these individuals and organizations, as well as those who contributed to the Master Plan update.

**INDIVIDUALS**

Katherine Abbott
Josephine Albrecht
Lee Albright
Jeffrey P. Allen
Charles C. Ames

Eleanor (Noni) Ames
Ellen H. Anderson
Carla Benka
Shary Page Berg
Valerie Burns
Ilyas Bhatti
John Buldoc
William Coughlin
Trudy Coxe
Christopher J. Crowley
Luster T. Delany
John P. DeVillers
Elisabeth Shure Gross Draper
Lawrence Dwyer
Governor Michael Dukakis
Jovita Fontanez
Mayor Raymond Flynn
Tricia Gadsby
William Geary
Chris Greene
William Griffiths
Andrew Lincoln Gross
Gary Lawrence Gross
James Gutensohn
Patrick Harrington
John Harris
Anne Hoover Henderson
Thomas P. Hennesey
James Hoyte
Peter Jackson
Julie Johnson
Estelle Katz
Jane Holtz Kay
Richard Kendall
Robert Kumor
Richard Leary
Ellen Lipsey
Arlene and Hugh Mattison
Robert McCoy
Cornelia Hanna McMurtrie
David Mendelsohn
Michael W. Merrill
Representative Eleanor Meyerson
Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy
Edward Novakoff
Roger Reed

Martin R. Rosenthal
Zvi A. Sealing
S. Christopher Scott
John Van Scoyoc
Peter Smith
Edward Stashko
Marty Suuberg
Robyn Sweesy
Representative Ronny Sydney
Susan Tierney
Mark Watson
Don Weitzman
Governor William Weld
Victoria Williams
Paul Willis
Sandi Wolchansky
John Woodward
Bob Yaro

**INSTITUTIONS**
Army Corps of Engineers
Boston Community Cable Network
Boston Conservation Commission
Boston Environment Department
Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Boston School Department
Boston Transportation Department
Boston Water and Sewer Commission
Brookline Conservation Commission
Brookline Park and Recreation Commission
Brookline Planning Board
Brookline Preservation Commission
Brookline Tree Planting Committee
Boston University
Boston Architectural Center
Brook House
Emmanuel College
Federal Emergency Management Agency
First Baptist Church of Jamaica Plain
Forsythe College of Dental Hygiene
Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site
Hellenic College
Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
Mary E. Curley School

MASCO/ The Medical Area Services Corporation
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
Massachusetts College of Art
Mission Park
Morville House
Mt. Auburn Cemetery
Museum of Fine Arts
National Park Service
Northeastern University
Radcliff Seminars
Simmons College
State University of New York at Syracuse
The Boston Globe
The Boston Globe Foundation
The Brookline Chronicle-Citizen
University of Massachusetts at Amherst
University of Massachusetts at Boston
WBUR/Boston University Radio
WCVB-TV/Chronicle
Wentworth Institute of Technology
Wheelock College

**STATE AGENCIES**
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Office of Waterways
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Division of Water Pollution Control
Massachusetts Historical Commission

**ORGANIZATIONS**
Boston Fenway Program & Street Safe
Boston GreenSpace Alliance
Boston Society of Landscape Architects
Boston Preservation Alliance
Brookline GreenSpace Alliance
BUG/Boston Urban Gardeners
Ebony and Ivory League
Emerald Necklace Conservancy
Fenway Alliance
Fenway Civic Association
Fenway Community Development Corporation
Fenway Garden Society
Friends of Leverett Pond
Friends of the Muddy River
High Street Hill Neighborhood Association
Historic Massachusetts, Inc.

Jamaica Pond Project
Jamaica Plain Historical Society
Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks
Massachusetts Recreation and Parks Association
Muddy River Action Group
National Association for Olmsted Parks
On the Fens Condominium Association
Open Door Theater
Point Neighborhood Association
ROW/Restore Olmsted's Waterway

The following is reprinted from Appendix F of the ENPMP (pp. 235).

**EMERALD NECKLACE CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (MGL c.30 ss61-62-H) and MEPA regulations (301CMR11.00) the City of Boston and the Town of Brookline filed an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the Emerald Necklace Environmental Improvements Master Plan and Phase I of the Muddy River Flood Control, Water Quality, and Habitat Enhancement and Historic Preservation Project. In his certificate issued on April 29, 1999, Secretary of Environmental Affairs, Bob Durand, called for the establishment of a Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC). As the certificate states, the CAC's role is to advise the Secretary in his evaluation of the proponent's (Boston and Brookline) measures to minimize or mitigate damage to the environment, while meeting the goals of flood control, water quality improvements and landscape restoration. The CAC reviews proposed activities and provides comment on the feasibility of different approaches and their likely environmental impacts, and assist Boston and Brookline in the development and review of project alternatives, which would avoid or minimize damage to the environment. The CAC , appointed in 1999 is made up of the following individuals:

Adam Kahn, Brookline Conservation Commission
Charles A. Birnbaum, National Park Service
Edward Burke, Citizen at Large
Isabella M. Callanan, Friends of the Muddy River
Suzanne Comtois, Fenway Community Development Corporation
Edward Cutler, Ph.D., Citizen at Large
Christine Cooper, Jamaica Pond Project
Mary Crane Penniman, Charles River Watershed Association
Margaret Dyson, Historic Massachusetts, Inc.
Frances Allou Gershwin, Citizen at Large
Irene Gillis, Citizen at Large
Alan Goodman, The Abbey Group
George Haggerty, Fenway Studios
June Hatfield, Boston Preservation Alliance
Richard Heath, Citizen at Large
Gary Hilderbrand, Citizen at Large
Frances Kemp, Citizen at Large

John Leahy, Citizen at Large
Arleyn Levee, National Association for Olmsted Parks
John Martin, Emerald Necklace Conservancy
Hugh Mattison, Friends of Leverett Pond
Lauren Meier, Citizen at Large
Paul Mentag, The Fenway Alliance
Jane Pfister, Citizen at Large
George Proakis, Citizen at Large
Marion Sabal, Fenway Garden Society
Roscoe Sandlin, Fenway Community Development Corporation
Joyce Starner, Symphony United Neighbors
Frederica Veikley, Fenway Civic Association
Eileen Woodford, National Parks and Conservation Association

The following submitted comments during the public comment phase for the 1999 Secretary's Certificate on the ENF and for the 1999 Secretary's Certificate establishing a special review procedure.

Joe Barton
Boston GreenSpace Alliance
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Boston Water and Sewer Commission
Brookline Village Action Groups
Brookline Conservation Commission
Edward J. Burke
Charles River Watershed Association
City of Boston, the Environment Department
Edward B. Cutler
Paul C. Demakis
Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Friends of the Muddy River
Historic Massachusetts
Pauline R. Katz
Harriet F. Koch
MASCO
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Muddy River Action Group
Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
Bernard J. Ransil
Restore Olmsted's Waterways
Riverway Square Condominium Trust
Riverways Program
Rubin and Rudman, LLP
The Emerald Necklace Conservancy

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