

## INTRODUCTION

PP. 13 - 25, Introduction

"The Golden Age of American Gardens, Proud Owners,  
Private Estates, 1890-1940"

Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller

New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1991

### A GARDEN FOREGROUND FOR THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE

"The American landscape has no foreground and the American mind no background," wrote American novelist Edith Wharton to her Boston friend Sally Norton in 1905, as she was completing the garden of "The Mount," her new house in Lenox, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> Like other cultivated Americans of her day, Wharton was eager to import European garden elements to compensate for the artifice she found lacking in her native landscape. For her, the rapture of a limitless view of the Berkshire Hills could be complete only when natural scenery was contrasted with the controlled geometry of a formal garden at the foot of a terrace, such as that at "The Mount." And if the Berkshires recalled, however distantly, the hills of Tuscany, then "The Mount," though modeled after a Lincolnshire house, must incorporate the virtues of a Tuscan villa. In 1904, Wharton had assembled into book form *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, the series of articles, strikingly illustrated by Maxfield Parrish, that she had serialized in *Scribner's* the year before. Tinged though they may have been with cultural snobbery, her observations on the greatest gardens of Italy were informed, perceptive, and deeply felt. Not surprisingly, then, the garden she created at "The Mount" was Italianate, complete with rectangular terraces, a dolphin fountain, and a *giardino segreto*, a walled rectangle made "secret" by a drop in grade below the rest of the garden. In design, "The Mount" typified American estate gardens of the period between 1890 and the beginning of World War II, when eclecticism and historicism dominated landscape as well as architectural design. Because estate gardens were an intrinsically conservative art form, their range of possibilities changed little during these fifty years. Even the appearance of Modernism in art and architecture in the 1920s had little immediate effect on these diverse and luxurious landscapes, which could easily accommodate features from every century of Western garden history, and from the Far East as well. Often a careful mixture could succeed beautifully, as at "The Mount."

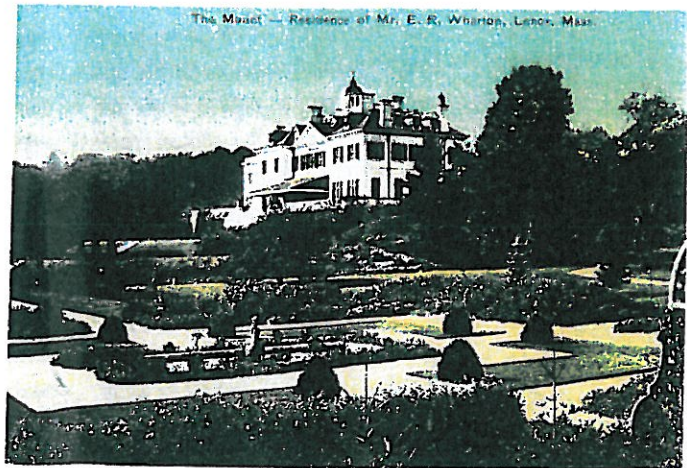
### *American High Society and the Struggle to Get In*

While Edith Wharton's garden typified its era, Wharton herself was an anomaly among American estate owners. An intellectual, independent woman who sprang almost inexplicably from old, conservative New York society, she built "The Mount" with earnings from her best-selling novel, *The House of Mirth*, not with inherited money. High society in New York, and, to a lesser degree, in Boston and Philadelphia, was constantly changing and expanding as new fortunes were made. Garden making, in 1890 as before, was a popular arena for the display of new prosperity; a great estate was intended to resemble a "family seal" with its aura of old

### OPPOSITE:

*Mrs. E. Ward Olney's "Square Acres" once covered most of Convent, New Jersey.*

*Edith Wharton wrote in bed in the mornings; her room at "The Mount" (1905) in Lenox overlooked the Red Garden seen here, which she called "her Oriental carpet, floating in the sun." Lilac and crimson stocks, and annual pinks in every shade of rose, salmon, cherry, and crimson made the garden red.*



*Introdu*



money. The struggle to become one of the elite took place at "the country place" as much as in the ballroom or boardroom, and thus a beautiful garden had the same social utility as good horses, a box at the opera, or magnificent dinner parties. Although the new rich in general had little of Wharton's concern for the American mind, they were smitten with the idea of "background." For their gardens, as for their houses and entertainments, they invented "backgrounds" with the *carte blanche* lent them by the stylistic eclecticism of the day.

"Money is the best manure" is an old garden saying. Despite periodic panics and busts, the American economy everywhere but in the South grew so rapidly after the Civil War that thousands of families became rich enough to afford country estates with extensive gardens. The old rich became richer, too, with the result that even the gardens of some genuine family seats were expanded and elaborated.

#### *Gardens: A Mirror of Society*

The new pattern of country and resort life began as early as the 1870s. In the Northeast, by the mid-1880s, certain preferred city outskirts had changed dramatically. Suburbs like Brookline, Massachusetts, and Morristown, New Jersey, were developing rapidly. Similar expansion occurred in the Midwest some twenty years later; the first mansions appeared in Lake Forest, Illinois, just after the turn of the century. Stone castles and commodious shingled houses, some designed by the greatest American talent of the period, H. H. Richardson, were surrounded by grounds laid out in the Victorian version of the landscape garden style known as *gardenesque*.<sup>2</sup>

By 1890, the beginning of the greatest period of estate building, tastemakers and their clientele had begun to turn away from the Shingle Style and the *gardenesque*. Houses grew larger and were built of more expensive, permanent materials, such as stone or brick. Architects drew liberally and indiscriminately on the Western European Renaissance tradition in order to delight a culture-hungry clientele. Then, by the middle of the decade, a new sense of restraint began to take hold, sponsored by the increasing numbers of architects trained at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. Not only were European styles and periods deployed with greater respect for accuracy, but a more modestly conceived domestic style, the Colonial Revival, grew in popularity. The slow-ripening fruit of the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, the Colonial Revival survived for decades and by the Great Depression had become the sole surviving revival style of any importance. Garden design in the 1890-1940 period did not follow step-by-step every change in architectural fashion. But it's safe to say that between 1890 and 1914 gardens became more firmly structured to complement the new taste for more academic domestic architecture. Terraces, axes, and cross axes were designed to echo the symmetrical shapes and plans of the houses

they adjoined. Later, in the twenties and thirties, garden design, which is just as sensitive to changes in philosophy or behavior as any other field, moved in the direction of simplicity as garden makers looked back nostalgically to romanticized "old American ways." In this way, estate gardens remained faithful to their owners' changing sensibilities.

"Summer places" appeared. In simple eighteenth-century coastal towns, the wooden hotels built in the 1840s and 1850s began to give way to large private summer "cottages." Because the financial, social, artistic, and intellectual centers of American life were largely concentrated in the Northeast at this time, the more intrepid Midwestern or Western millionaire and his family came east, especially in the summer, to see what all the fuss was about. When they became regulars and built "cottages," their pastimes included gardening no less than polo or croquet. Most of these gardens belonged to people who owned more than one house; some had as many as three or four. As garden writer Helena Rutherford Ely said in 1903, "'Home' may be both town and country house, with villa by the sea and mountain camp."<sup>3</sup> The gardens were seasonal, designed for times when the owners were in residence. Bar Harbor, Lenox, and Newport were the resort lodestars; around them twinkled a host of other, smaller places. Regional resorts developed outside the Northeast as well. Many Midwesterners stayed close to home, making splendid lakeshore gardens in places like Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and Grosse Pointe, Michigan. In the winter, every millionaire sought the warmth of Palm Beach or California, or a refurbished antebellum plantation in the Carolinas or Georgia.

Other congregations of estates began as weekend retreats rather than resorts. Because of their proximity to New York City, the lower Hudson River Valley and the shoreline of Connecticut rapidly became suburban, but in a grand manner inconceivable today. Weekend country places for spring and fall, rather than summer places, predominated. Moreover, the daily commute began as early as the 1870s, though at the time it was usually only a summer phenomenon. Sneden's Landing on the west bank of the Hudson, for example, was situated only one-and-a-half hours from Wall Street by horse-drawn carriage, ferry, and train. At Tuxedo Park, thirty of the 100 cottages were operating year-round by 1905. (Tuxedo Park, the first exclusive residential development in the U.S., had been established as a summer colony in 1886.) By the teens, all these places were becoming a mixture of vacation retreat, weekend country seat, and bedroom suburb.

Outside such cities as Cleveland, Indianapolis, and St. Louis, beautiful estates very much like those on the East Coast were laid out for spring and fall occupancy, on the assumption that winter and summer would be spent away from the punishing extremes of the Midwestern climate. By the teens, exclusive residential subdivisions managed by real estate speculators (who often had the largest house and garden in the develop-



ment) had become an accepted pattern. As urban development accelerated in these more recently established cities of the Midwest, the prolonged exodus that had taken Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore three generations to accomplish took place within as little as one generation. By the teens, even the South had gathered momentum, and an estate boom, though nowhere matching in scale that on Long Island, was underway from Richmond to San Antonio.

#### PUBLIC DUTY AND HORTICULTURAL BEAUTY

But gardening, even estate gardening, during these years was certainly not all social climbing or urban flight. Throughout America during the nineteenth century, not just in the Northeast, there had grown up the conviction, expressed on the largest scale by the creation of Central Park in New York City (1857), that contact with nature was beneficial for everyone, and that making a garden, even a private garden to be enjoyed only by one's friends, was a socially valuable act if not actually a public duty. In those pre-Darwinian days nature's lessons were assumed to be good ones that would, in the words of John T. C. Clark, the author of *The Amateurs' Guide and Flower-Garden Directory* (1856), "inculcate a tone of refinement, afford pleasant and healthy employment, and give us exalted views of her Creator." He exhorted his readers to "make the acquaintance of Flora, whose flowery paths abound with innocent pleasures."

All through the nineteenth century, forces both cultural and horticultural conspired to raise an interest in nature and gardening. The paintings of the Hudson River School captured the sweeping majesty of the American wild—now that the wilderness frontier was safely far away. A new romanticized domesticity, complete with a garden, became the Victorian ideal, pushed by women's magazines like *Godey's Lady's Book*. During the first quarter of the century, when the Shakers began to package seeds, they became the first to conduct widespread seed merchandising. (The first American seed house, Landreth's, had been established in Philadelphia in 1784.) Shaker packets were plain brown paper, but by the time the mail-order catalogue business began to boom after the Civil War, fancy chromolithographs of dreamlike fruits, vegetables, and flowers were part of the package design. Still later, artists as well known as N. C. Wyeth and Maxfield Parrish provided the art.

American nurseries proliferated. A good nursery had a great impact on gardens in the surrounding area, since early nurseries were the botanical gardens of their day and furnished inspiration for design as well as the plants for ornamental gardens. For example, it is no exaggeration to say that Rochester, New York, would never have been known as "The Flower City" were it not for the Mount Hope Botanic and Pomological Gardens, begun in 1840 by George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry. The partners furnished what landscape architect Fletcher Steele, in a de-



*Civic duty: wearing special uniforms, the ladies of the Piscataqua Garden Club in York Harbor, Maine, clear roadside trash in 1933.*

scription of Rochester gardens, called "venerable rare plants that would bejewel arboretums," and they also donated 20 acres for a public park. Horticultural eminence attracts: Frederick Law Olmsted took on the landscaping there, and ravishing Chinese plants were donated in great numbers by Charles Sprague Sargent, the imperious director of the great Arnold Arboretum in Boston, who took Rochester under his horticultural wing. In 1867, Ellwanger, whose nursery had grown from 7 acres to 500, built himself a garden that inspired many others; in the twenties, Steele was asked to revise and add to the design. His stroke of genius was a formalized orchard, viewed from above, of flowering cherries, peaches, crab apples, and hawthornes, which recalled the region's hillsides quilted with fruit trees, many of them Ellwanger's own introductions.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE PRINTED WORD

##### *Periodicals*

Periodicals featuring articles on gardening and landscape design flourished: *The Magazine of Horticulture*, *Gardener's Monthly*, and A. J. Downing's *The Horticulturist* were all mid-nineteenth-century publications. Downing's audience was the general cultured reader, interested in what Downing called "the rural arts" and beautifying the "home grounds." Later *Country Life in America*, *The House Beautiful*, and *House & Garden* appeared, whose subjects were the ideal country life and how to live it. *House & Garden* published an issue entirely devoted to gardens every year.<sup>5</sup> *The Garden Magazine*, *The National Horticultural*

*Introductio*



*Magazine* (precursor of *American Horticulture*), and *Garden and Forest*, published for the Arnold Arboretum, dealt with horticulture, gardening, and landscape design. *The Gardener's Chronicle of America: A Horticultural Digest* was what could be called the professional estate gardener's magazine. All were modeled after English publications; many American library tables featured English *Country Life*, *The Studio*, and *The Garden* as well as the American versions.

### Books

Around the turn of the century and through the 1920s, a spate of big beautiful picture books appeared on country places old and new—though mostly new. The primary focus of all these books was the gardens of the East Coast, and especially the Northeast. *American Gardens*, Guy Lowell (1901), *American Estates and Gardens*, Barr Ferree (1904), *American Country Homes and Their Gardens*, John Cordis Baker (1906), *Beautiful Gardens in America*, Louise Shelton (1915), *American Homes of Today*, Augusta Patterson (1924), and *American Landscape Architecture*, P. H. Elwood, Jr. (1924), are among the best.

Comparisons drawn between the gardens of Europe and America were widespread: Wilhelm Miller's *What England Can Teach Us About Gardening* (1911) appeared both in *Country Life in America* and in *The Garden Magazine*. English books on gardening were consulted as often as American ones, especially the works of William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll. There were many regional books also, by climate or by state: Alice Lounsberry's *Gardens by the Sea* and *Beautiful Homes of Northern New Jersey* (1910) are typical. Many monographs on architectural firms also covered landscape design.

While the ideal of country-house life in a garden landscape had certainly been around since Mount Vernon and Monticello, its nineteenth-century fervors began with the *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America; with a View to the Improvement of Country Residences* (1841), by Andrew Jackson Downing, the first American to write professionally on landscape architecture—and the first American-born landscape architect. He espoused the idea he had gathered from English garden designer, writer, and editor John Claudius Loudon that human behavior is greatly affected by environment. By the end of the century, Downing's book had gone through eight editions. The making of gardens was recognized as a civilized and civilizing activity. It was also considered healthful and a suitable activity for ladies (with the heavy work done by the gardener, who was always a man).

### The Ladies

Ladies, those women who didn't have to work or actually do the household chores, had found their lives increasingly limited during the last half of

the century. For their benefit, Downing had published Jane Loudon's *Gardening for Ladies* in its first American edition in 1843. But it was really after the Civil War that women fell on gardening with a whoop and in increasing numbers. Much of the pent-up frustration and energy, for which these women could find no other acceptable outlets, went into making gardens. In many places, groups of ladies met informally for tea and to look at each other's gardens, as they did on Mrs. Hamilton Fish Webster's porch in Newport in 1911 when the Newport Garden Club was founded.

The ladies soon founded their own national gardening organization, The Garden Club of America, in 1913 in Germantown, Pennsylvania, when twelve garden clubs from neighboring Main Line towns met at "Stenton," the erstwhile estate of the Logan family. By 1938 there were more than 2,000 garden clubs with various national affiliations across the country. Members not only exerted themselves in their own gardens and at flower shows, but also undertook many civic, educational, and horticultural projects. Members of garden clubs usually had old family trees as well as beautiful gardens. They lobbied successfully against billboards and for conservation; they worked hard, their families had money and political clout, and so they were often successful in their efforts. They also were, and are, serious and energetic gardeners: in the early days of some clubs, meetings were held as often as weekly. According to the bylaws of one club, members were asked "to bring to the meetings, twice during the season, interesting specimens of plants, blights, or insects, giving their personal experience with them." They visited each other's gardens, and listened to lecturers such as Charles Platt, Rose Standish Nichols, and Marian Cruger Coffin. They also went on trips together, and the numbers could be staggering. In 1924, The Garden Club of America's annual meeting junket to Virginia consisted of 740 women visiting the tidewater plantations of the James River on a steamer. Elaborate entertainments were planned for every trip: in 1930, three weeks in the Northwest included a Martha Graham performance at a ladies' club in Seattle, and a trip across Lake Washington on a barge disguised as a formal garden with flower beds, gravel paths, and park benches. Special trains with private observation cars and dining cars were put on—the sign on the board in New York's Grand Central Station read "Garden Club Special." Little booklets, green of course and printed up by the railroad, gave the schedule, and listed the ladies and their stateroom numbers. The camaraderie was intense. For many of these women, such trips were rare times—away from their husbands and families, and away from their decorous, self-disciplined daily life.<sup>6</sup>

Public-spirited women interested in horticulture and beautification projects were not new to the American scene: in 1853, the Laurel Hill Association had been established in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, through the efforts of Mary Hopkins Goodrich, a sort of female Paul



Revere, as she is described in Garden Club of America history, who rode around in a black riding habit on a white horse, and assembled all the townspeople to plant trees, clean up the streets, and beautify the village.

BOOKS BY THE LADIES: As amateurs, women of the period were gardeners and writers; as professionals, they were garden designers and makers of planting plans. As amateur gardeners, ladies wrote about their gardens. By the turn of the century they were responsible for most of the books that had to do with gardening per se—and there were many. Anna Gilman Hill points out in her memorable *Forty Years of Gardening* (1938), “it is the women who have worked in and loved their own gardens, who have given us the greater number of the charming and practical garden books which are now on every library table.” Perennial flower gardening in all its variety, with a special interest in color harmony and massed effect in the border, is the focus of most of these works. Every single book written after the turn of the century pays homage to English garden designer and writer Gertrude Jekyll, whose influential books began to appear in 1899.

Most of these ladies gardened and wrote in the Northeast, with the notable exception of Mrs. Francis King from Michigan, author of *The Well-Considered Garden* (1915), among many other books, which has a foreword by Gertrude Jekyll. In 1938, Anna Gilman Hill called her “the best-beloved and best-known American woman gardener.”

One of the first of such practical American gardening books was the wonderfully titled *Gardening by Myself* by Anna B. Warner, which appeared in 1872. Without the vote, without property rights, practically speaking, and with careers limited to teaching or nursing for those few who ventured outside the domestic sphere, how little did any woman do by herself in those days! Warner, who lived on an island in the Hudson in the shadow of West Point, went on to write another nineteen books.<sup>7</sup> The Colonial Revival spurred an interest in regional character, and books of local history were favorites: Sarah Orne Jewett’s book about the Maine coast, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, is one of the best examples. Garden books, such as Celia Thaxter’s *An Island Garden*, occasionally verged on this genre. Daughter of a lighthouse keeper, Thaxter wrote about her cottage garden, which she made and maintained entirely herself on stony, windy Appledore, one of the Isles of Shoals off the coast of Maine. Judging from a series of watercolors by Childe Hassam, which illustrated the first edition of her book, Thaxter’s garden must have been one of the most beautiful of the period, with drifts of color, annuals and perennials all melting into each other. Far from Thaxter’s cottage garden, or from the practical garden books, was Alice G. B. Lockwood’s immense historical work, *Gardens of Colony and State*, organized geographically and published in 1931–34 for The Garden Club of America. With great accuracy, especially given the romantic state of

garden archeology and restoration at the time, she detailed in plan, map, and photograph the extant notable gardens in the United States whose beginnings could be traced to the eighteenth century. Many gardens disappeared about a decade after Lockwood recorded them, done in by postwar suburbanization and the absence of gardeners who had left their posts in wartime and never returned.

While literary style was often of the dear-little-garden sentimental kind, the information in these books by women invariably indicated hands-on experience. Louise Beebe Wilder grew from seed all the rare and difficult plants she described in *My Garden* (1916) and *Adventures in My Garden and Rock Garden* (1923). A useful reference was Mabel Cabot Sedgewick’s *The Garden Month by Month* (1907), with over four hundred pages of illustrated lists of hardy plants by color, height, bloom

•Childe Hassam’s oil painting, *In the Garden* (1892), catches gardener and writer Celia Thaxter dreaming in her island garden on Appledore, off the New Hampshire coast. Thaxter wrote ecstatically about her flowers: “In the Iceland poppy bed the ardent light has wooed a graceful company of drooping buds to blow, and their cups of delicate fire . . . sway lightly on stems as slender as grass.”





time, and cultivation preferences. Mrs. Sedgewick, first wife of Ellery Sedgewick, editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, for twenty-nine years was also an inspired domestic scavenger. Not only did she transplant ordinary pasture cedars, *Juniperus virginiana*, to use as effective vertical accents in her garden, but she also rescued the interior of the 1802 Isaac Ball House in Charleston and had it shipped by schooner to Boston, where the Sedgewick house, "Long Hill," was built around it by architect Philip Richardson in 1918.<sup>8</sup>

The ladies also discussed garden style. Critic Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer's influential *Art Out-of-Doors: Hints on Good Taste in Gardening*, which appeared in 1893, was a book of garden design for the "house beautiful."<sup>9</sup> She looked at the raging battle taking place among contemporary English garden writers about formal and naturalistic garden styles, and wrote that there was a place for each where "it satisfies the broad artistic sense of fitness." Her broad critical overview takes account of such design features as piazzas, formal flower beds, paths and roads, the placement of garages and stables, and the architectural components of gardens. Neltje Blanchan Doubleday, wife of the publisher and author of *The American Flower Garden* (1909), among many other books, divided gardens of the period into three theoretical categories: formal, naturalistic, and wild. In practice, American landscape architects and gardeners alike almost always had something of each, just as in England, where even William Robinson, author of *The Wild Garden*, had an enclosed flower garden with regular rectangular beds—though to be sure it was heaped with wild-looking perennials and not laid out in neat Victorian patterns of annuals.

## THE GARDENS

Country estates throughout the entire fifty-year period (1890–1940), even given regional, climatic, and topographical variation, followed a regular pattern. A long drive was lined with trees, through which parkland, fields, and handsome farm buildings could be glimpsed. The drive ended in a formal court on the entrance front of the house. On the most sheltered side of the house lay a terrace or loggia, which was both a visual foundation for the building and a platform from which to look down at the rest of the garden. From this stage, hedged or walled enclosures ran down to a naturalistic lawn and trees that connected the house-surrounding to the wild landscape and the view. Somewhere in the woods or laid out as a separate garden was a place for ferns and wild flowers, or a rock garden, or a Japanese teahouse and pond, or a water garden—or all of the above.

It was also very fashionable to have still other separate gardens organized by color—the Blue Garden, the White Garden—or by species—the Iris Bowl, the Rhododendron Dell. Three other places completed the gardening arrangements on any self-sufficient country estate:

a kitchen garden for fresh vegetables, a cutting garden for flower arrangements, and a greenhouse for propagating annuals for the flower borders, for wintering over tender tubbed shrubs, and to provide cut flowers in winter for the house.

In the new estate gardens of the 1890s, flower beds, which had studded the gardenesque landscapes of the earlier part of the century, were put back into a formal framework. Patterns were outlined in tiny English boxwood; at first, in the gardens made before the turn of the century or just after, the surface of the bed was often slightly raised and filled in with plants, usually annuals, all of the same low height: dwarf marigolds, calceolaria, ageratum, and other small bright flowers. Plants with variegated foliage, such as red-and-yellow caladium and silvery santolina, added still more color. These formal parterres were magnificent and appropriate ornaments for the huge "palaces" they surrounded. By the late teens, contemporary periodicals and garden books began to inveigh against such French gardens. Gertrude Jekyll's books had appeared, and English flower gardens, rather than French parterres or Italian green gardens, took the lead in popularity. The design was formal, with a central axis and cross axes, but the plantings within the geometry of the whole were often informal. The emphasis fell on the flowers rather than on the pattern. Gardens were divided by low walls, balustrades, and steps into simple, often rectangular, sections, and were planted with luxuriant (and labor-intensive) combinations of perennials and annuals that spilled out into the walks. In still later gardens of the thirties, the garden architecture itself was often made of plants—hedges for walls, trees for statues, turf steps for stones. No layout was complete without water—a lily pool, a fountain, or a long formal rill with Japanese iris growing in it. The flower garden was punctuated with urns, sometimes cascading with vines and flowers, sometimes bristling with yucca; topiary trees in *caisses de Versailles* (big square wooden boxes, with elegant finials on the corners, first devised for Louis XIV), and statues, statues, were everywhere. Italianate gardens incorporated big old oil jars, and sculptural and architectural fragments. Special landscape features of the period included sunken gardens, pergolas covered with vines, and wide grass or herringbone brick walks that unrolled between pairs of perennial borders often as deep as twelve feet on each side.

Many such gardens were made in the days of horsepower and shovel, and a ready supply of immigrant labor was vital. The art and science of gardening reached a pitch not equaled since, thanks to a hardworking corps of highly trained English and Scots gardeners, who all seem to have known each other and who formed what can only be called a horticultural mafia. In 1931, English garden writer Marion Cran noted, "There is a new swank! Greater and more crushing at a dinner party than wearing a new rope of pearls is it to say: 'My Kew gardener has just arrived.'"



## WOMEN GARDEN DESIGNERS AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

For a woman in 1890, becoming a professional of any kind was almost as difficult as getting the vote. But at least the very newness of landscape architecture as a profession offered some hope.<sup>10</sup> Although courses were given in a few universities, there were no separate schools, and the American Society of Landscape Architects was only founded in 1899. When places like Harvard, MIT, and the University of Pennsylvania established separate schools of landscape design at the turn of the century, they were not open to women. Nonetheless, estate garden design, as a branch of landscape architecture, was where women won a substantial though largely unrecognized place for themselves by the end of the 1920s. They were helped on their way to a career by three design schools started by inventive and dauntless women. Mrs. Edward G. Low established the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture for Women in Groton, Massachusetts, in 1901; the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture was founded by Jane B. Haines in 1910; and the most influential of all, the Cambridge School of Architectural and Landscape Design for Women, began with one student studying the architectural orders of Vignola on a mahogany bridge table in her living room in 1915. Her instructor was Henry Frost, who taught at the Harvard Graduate School of Architecture. He also had an infant design firm in Brattle Square with another young man, Bremer Pond, a landscape architect who had worked for several years as an assistant to Frederick Law Olmsted. Frost was a rather unwilling teaching recruit. James Sturgis Pray, chairman of the Harvard Graduate School of Landscape Architecture, called Frost into his office to explain that a Radcliffe graduate had applied for permission to study architectural drafting—"and of course," said Pray, "to permit such a thing was quite impossible." Frost continued, "I saw the blow coming as the tale unfolded . . . there was nothing for it but to accept with the best grace possible."<sup>11</sup>

Within very few years, "the best grace possible" included solid training in architecture as well as landscape studies. Frost and Pond, who joined his business partner in his new academic venture, overcame their early hesitations and plunged wholeheartedly into finding space, getting the best instructors—and they *were* the best—and building a library collection for their rapidly expanding school. The Pennsylvania School of Horticulture was very plant-oriented and the Lowthorpe School's curriculum only slightly less so. But at the Cambridge School, the stronger emphasis on architectural design and construction as part of the whole ensemble of landscape design gave graduates a better chance to create gardens entirely on their own—without a male architect to build the steps and balustrades while the women waited to fill the spaces with plants, so to speak. Certainly up through the Great Depression there was plenty of estate work for both men and women. The Depression and the

beginning of World War II took their toll, however; in 1942 the Cambridge School was forced to close by Smith College, which for some years had been the school's home. That same year women were cautiously admitted to the Graduate School of Design at Harvard.

Public projects, which usually have been considered an architect's most important works, were out of reach until the mid-thirties for most women, with two or three exceptions, because, as one periodical article on women and landscape gardening succinctly pointed out in 1908, "In other arts there is nothing to restrain a woman from making a deliberate display of her powers. . . . But in landscape architecture success waits on invitation." Women certainly went as far as they could, given the general view of women's place in landscape architecture, which was well summarized in 1908 by Boston architect Guy Lowell when he said, "A woman will *fuss* with a garden in a way that no man will ever have the patience to do. If necessary, she will sit on a camp-stool and see every individual plant put into the ground. I have no hesitation in saying that where the relatively small garden is concerned, the average woman will do better than the average man."<sup>12</sup>

To get off the campstool at all, then, it was vital to have money and connections. Beatrix Farrand, then still Miss Jones, said in 1908, "I do not know of any of the women who are considered to be successful landscape gardeners who have not some means of their own assured to start with. At present I do not think there is an opportunity for many or few women who depend upon it entirely for their support."<sup>13</sup> Besides having some sort of independent income and family or social connections responsible for their early commissions, most successful women practitioners, such as Farrand, Marian Cruger Coffin, and Ellen Biddle Shipman, had as their mentors male professionals well known in landscape design and horticulture. Farrand (1872–1959) was trained informally by Charles Sprague Sargent and worked at the Arnold Arboretum; Ellen Shipman (1869–1950) was encouraged by architect Charles Platt and worked with him on many commissions; Marian Coffin (1876–1957) grimly studied mathematics independently in order to get into the MIT landscape architecture program in 1901 as a special student. Coffin's mentor, or rather, angel, appeared when she began to look for work: the biggest single landscape commission of her career was "Winterthur," for her friend Louise du Pont Crowninshield's brother, Harry F. du Pont. After such a start, she went on to design fifty of the finest estates on the East Coast. When the Depression came and new estate work dried up, she was able to make the transition from private to public work partly because du Pont continued to be helpful by recommending her for institutional commissions such as the rose garden at the New York Botanical Garden. Because they took up the profession before the schools existed, Farrand, Coffin, and Shipman trained themselves and used their connections instead of having a school "name" to go on (not

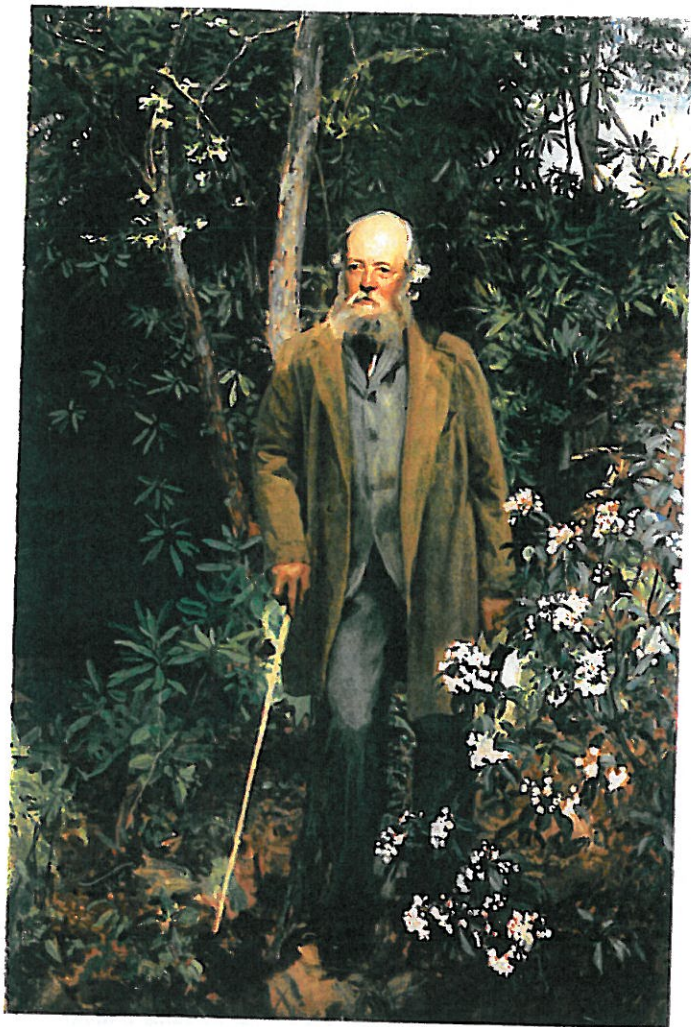


that the name of the Cambridge School meant anything in its earliest years). All three women, and many others like them, gained their experience and worked throughout their careers by themselves or in small firms with other women, not in the big landscape architecture offices run by men. Coffin explained the difficulty: "It is hard to get a start, as there is a prejudice in many offices against employing women . . . . A woman has to solve many problems and learn the ropes entirely by herself, while a man has the advantage of long office training and experience."

**GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Women also found careers in garden photography: Frances Benjamin Johnston, Mattie Edwards Hewitt, Jessie Tarbox Beale, Antoinette Sipprell, and Marvin Breckinridge Patterson are best known. The reason for their comparative ease of entry was the same as for landscape architecture: garden photography per se was a new field. Periodicals and lavish illustrated books created the biggest market. There was also a steady demand among estate garden owners who wanted a permanent record of their (usually new) gardens; landscape architects who needed pictures for professional reasons; and garden clubs, who commissioned hundreds of lantern slides for their afternoon meeting programs. The same photographs were circulated in many forms, so it is possible to find the same image as a black-and-white print in a periodical, in a family album, and as a hand-colored lantern slide. These photographers' styles (including those of men such as John Wallace Gillies and Samuel Gottscho) did not vary greatly in terms of pictorial organization, in the main because the point was to show as much of the garden as possible. Many images were organized around an architectural feature—a bench, a gazebo, a reflecting pool, or a feature, such as a path, steps, or an arch, that suggested movement through the garden. Often the photograph looked soft and romantic. However, within this narrow range, some remarkable art was produced. "The difficulty with Americans," said architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, "is that they are always forcing themselves to make everything come true."<sup>14</sup> The best pictures, particularly Johnston and Hewitt's, give these American gardens a mythic quality they often lacked in real life.

**DESIGN AND HORTICULTURE:  
FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED  
AND CHARLES SPRAGUE SARGENT**

Training and jobs are what Frederick Law Olmsted's (1822–1903) firm provided for many male landscape architects. As early as 1859 the Swiss emigrant Jacob Weidenmann was supervising an Olmsted project in Hartford, Connecticut, and designing estates there.<sup>15</sup> Charles Eliot, largely responsible for Boston's "Emerald Necklace" of parks, and Henry Codman, designer of the Chicago World's Fair, joined the Olmsted firm in the nineties. Warren Manning, Bryant Fleming, Fletcher Steele, Charles



*In March of 1895 American artist John Singer Sargent painted Frederick Law Olmsted among the last dogwood blossoms and the mountain laurel of North Carolina at George Vanderbilt's "Biltmore." Olmsted was an old man (and already suffering the loss of memory that would force his retirement). Sargent records this, but also captures that bright unswerving optimism that had carried Olmsted through his long, prodigious life.*

Gillette, and A. D. Taylor, all makers of notable estates nationwide, were trained by the firm or by those who themselves had trained there. In the days before public environmental action, the Olmsteds' private arboreta, from Bayard Cutting's "Westbrook" on Long Island (1887) to A. F. Sanford's "Boxwood" in Knoxville, Tennessee, made others aware of the need for conservation.<sup>16</sup> Harvard's Graduate School of Landscape Architecture was in some sense an Olmsted institution; its chairman



was James Sturgis Pray who had worked for the Olmsted firm, and the course of studies was devised by F. L. Olmsted, Jr., working with Arthur Shureliff. City planners who went to Harvard, like Herbert Hare of Hare and Hare in Kansas City, Missouri, made the framework for a later generation of estates when they laid out exclusive subdivisions such as River Oaks in Houston, where Ima Hogg's great garden, "Bayou Bend," is located. The Olmsted firm's influence spans nearly a century, from Olmsted's first work in Central Park in 1857 to the retirement of his son, F. L. Olmsted, Jr., in 1950.

As much as job opportunities or training, Olmsted provided inspiration. Most famous of all American landscape architects and the first to be widely recognized in the nation, he is responsible for the very notion of "park" in this country. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, and self-trained, since there was then no other way to become a landscape architect, he traveled abroad in England and in France before finding his profession. He looked not only at newly developing public parks but at the eighteenth-century English estates which served in many cases as park models. Olmsted started with Central Park, his best-known work, in 1857, from which he retired briefly in 1863 during the Civil War to serve as sanitary commissioner. He left the job permanently in 1883 in despair over government corruption, moving to Brookline, Massachusetts. He was also deeply interested in the suburban movement of post-Civil War America, of which the great estates were the most spectacular manifestation.

Olmsted was a superb and articulate observer of landscape and land use, and had a phenomenal grasp of what was local and particular. Perhaps this sensitivity to what lay before his eyes at the outset of a project, combined with his vast organizational ability, is what most distinguishes his own ability. Olmsted himself did not design many estates, proportionate to the body of his work, but those he did were important models in fundamental ways for the subsequent work of Olmsted Bros., and for the profession in general. In Massachusetts alone there are nearly 500 Olmsted gardens.

Olmsted's stroke of enduring genius in Central Park had been to divide circulation into pedestrian, horse, and wheeled traffic, and to sink the roads crossing the park. The same clarity of parts distinguishes his estates. They are divided into three: farm or forest, ornamental parkland, and the immediate house surroundings. Olmsted was really the first American to define those divisions, and to give such emphatic and attractive form to the character of each part. As for gardens—the immediate house surroundings—Olmsted was almost Californian in his belief that his gardens should allow people "to carry on daily life in the outdoors." He supplied "outdoor apartments" by means of terraces, lawns, hedged enclosures, and walled gardens. A particularly significant example of his work is "Moraine Farm," the John C. Phillips place in Beverly, Massachusetts, which is presently being restored to its original state.<sup>17</sup>

The house itself was designed by the Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns. Olmsted got to work on the landscaping in 1882, just before he moved to Brookline. A combination of country seat, functioning farm, and experimental forestry preserve, it is a forerunner of his later estate work at "Shelburne Farms," Vermont; "Florham Farms," New Jersey; and "Biltmore," North Carolina. Typically, the long landscaped approach alternates open and closed spaces, light, and shade. The wide view of Wenham Lake is only revealed after one passes through the house and onto the terrace. The comfortable terrace shelf, buttressed by boulders and fieldstones, has space at one end for a lawn and a sunken garden, both set apart so as not to compete with the view. A pavilion which seems to grow right out of the wall takes advantage of the elevation to overlook a wild garden below. Despite its boulders and conifers and general picturesque qualities, "Moraine Farm" is a significant early remove from the gardenesque, where lawn, woods, views, rose garden, and flower bed were supposed to run seamlessly from one to another. Olmsted, in trying to shape and order different spaces into wild and cultivated, rough and smooth, light and dark, once even said, "If the gardener shows himself outside the walls—off with his head!"

Between these first suggestions of formality at "Moraine Farm" (1882)

*The great Frederick Law Olmsted's clients did not always agree with him. He had envisioned the garden below the teahouse at "Moraine Farm" in Beverly, Massachusetts, 1892, planted with "ferns and perennials seen amid groups of low trees which like the sumachs and dogwoods and Pinus Mughu appear to advantage when looked down on." But Mrs. John C. Phillips dearly wanted a garden of fashionably bright tropical annuals, which is what she got.*







*Boston's horticultural high and mighty: Horatio Hollis Hunnewell (left) and Charles Sprague Sargent sit among the orchids outside a flower show in 1901.*

and the Chicago World's Fair (1893), the tone and temper of Olmsted's firm altered. Formal treatment of landscape became more extensive. The 1871 plan for Jackson Park in Chicago, the future site of the world's fair, shows a small formal basin and a big natural lake. In 1890, on the same site, a long formal pool was the axis of the world's fair plan while the natural lake had become a divertissement. The picturesque, or naturalistic, look survived at the Chicago Fair in just the same way it would survive in gardens of the period: off the central axis — importantly there — but as a contrast, not as the main theme.

If Olmsted created landscape architecture as a profession, Charles Sprague Sargent (1841–1927) was “the grand old steam-roller of horticulture.”<sup>18</sup> At the Arnold Arboretum, Sargent combined the science of botany with what amounted to a display garden just when people were crying aloud for more decorative plants and cultural information.<sup>19</sup> In his fifty years at the Arboretum, Sargent put in 120,000 trees and shrubs, many of which he himself would never see come to maturity, and introduced 1,932 taxa into cultivation in the United States.<sup>20</sup> Sargent knew all about money, energy, and influence as well as plants. He probably



spent as much of his own money every year on the Arboretum as he earned. He worked seven days a week, hired a staff that could make a dead stick grow, and cajoled Olmsted into creating an Arboretum plan. In 1881, the two strong-armed the Boston City Council into a public funding scheme with a blue-blood-studded petition that, as *The Boston Herald* said, “was the most influential ever received by that body.”

What is most interesting about Sargent is neither his Arboretum and the new plants it provided, nor his own great estate garden, “Holm Lea,” in Brookline. Rather, it is the close-knit complexity, both social and scientific, of his vanished world, a Boston Brahmin world that believed in, and faithfully exercised, the responsibility of privilege. The ties of family, long-term friendships, civic duty, and mutual interests that were passed from generation to generation were as strong in the fields of science and horticulture as they were in finance or the law. What’s more, it was a small world. For better or worse, professionally as well as socially, everyone really *did* “know” everyone else—by reputation, if not by sight, in the upper social and financial strata of the Northeast. Not for nothing was New York society called “the 400” by social arbiter Ward McAllister in the 1880s (it soon outgrew the number but not the idea of exclusivity). There was meaning to the famous description of Boston as a place “Where the Lowells talk to the Cabots, and the Cabots talk only to God.”<sup>21</sup>

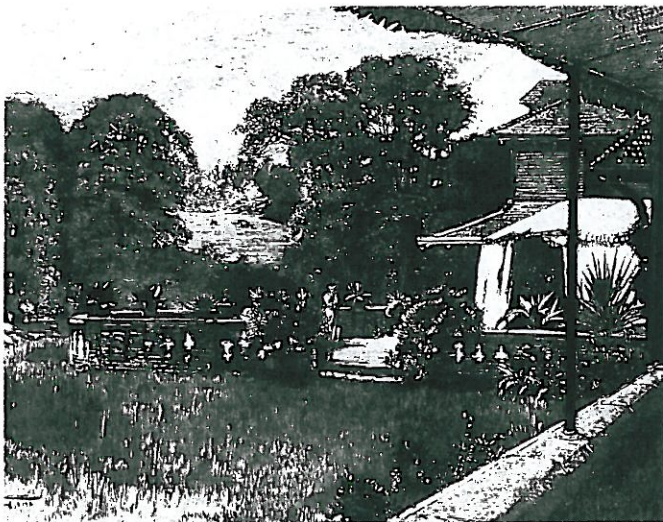
The field of botany was smaller than most—first John Torrey in New York and then Asa Gray at Harvard *were* American botany. Gray was virtually alone at Harvard until 1872, when President Eliot of Harvard appointed four men to help Gray do what he had been doing alone since 1842. Gray created the botany department, the botanical library, and the great herbarium, which was named after him. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, whenever a new plant turned up in America (and many still did at that time), it was stuck in an envelope and sent to Asa Gray at Harvard; generally he wrote back.

Charles Sprague Sargent, who was the son of a successful Brahmin banker and railroad investor, grew up in Brookline. About the time of Sargent’s birth Downing had written, “The whole of this neighborhood of Brookline is a kind of landscape garden, [with] an Arcadian air of rural freedom and enjoyment.” Charles would inherit his father’s place, “Pine Bank.” Adding to it two parcels of adjoining land, he created the much-admired “Holm Lea,” a masterpiece of picturesque landscape. Charles, darkly handsome and with beautiful manners, was a man emotionally restrained enough to drive his friends mad. Later in life he and his good friend, the naturalist John Muir, stood on a beautiful mountain top together. As Muir described it in his journal, he turned to Sargent, who was “standing there as cool as a rock, with a half-amused look on his face at me, but never saying a word. ‘Why don’t you let yourself out at a sight like that?’ I asked. ‘I don’t wear my heart upon my sleeve,’ he retorted. ‘Who cares where you wear your little heart, mon?’ I cried. ‘There you

stand in the face of all Heaven come down to earth, like a critic of the universe, as if to say ‘Come, Nature, bring on the best you have. I’m from Boston!’”<sup>22</sup>

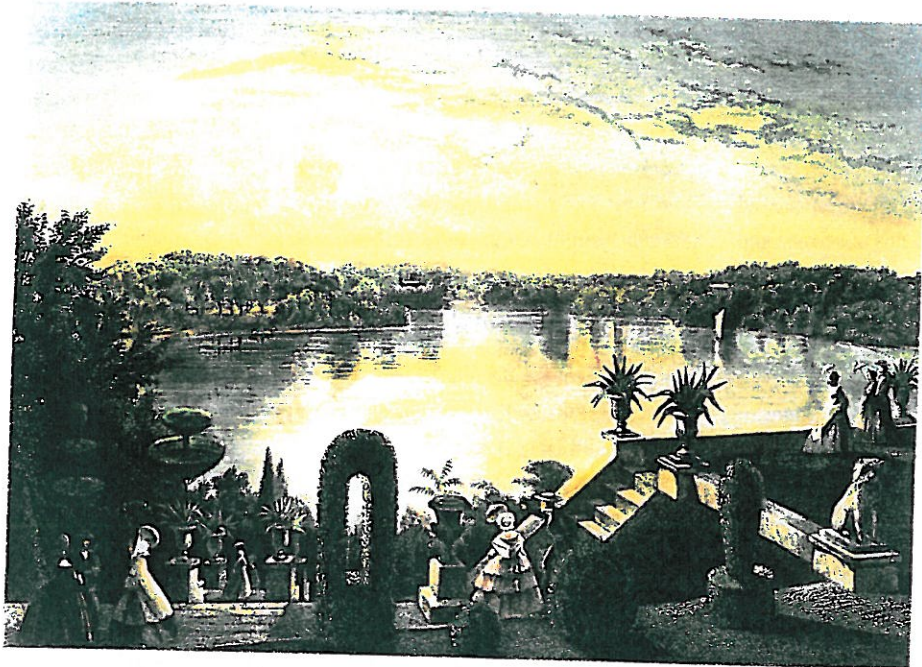
Sargent, a so-so student at Harvard and one of the very few not to take the natural history course given by Asa Gray, found his first real teachers in his second cousin, Henry Winthrop Sargent, and another family connection, Horatio Hollis Hunnewell. Both were rich and gifted amateurs, whose consuming hobby was horticulture; both were plant collectors; both had magnificent gardens which held the country’s two most notable conifer collections. Henry Winthrop Sargent’s “Wodenethe,” on the east bank of the Hudson above Fishkill Landing, New York, was directly across the river from A. J. Downing’s estate. When Sargent bought his 22 acres in 1840, it was heavily wooded. Downing advised Sargent on the “expressive, harmonious, and refined imitation of the agreeable forms of nature,”<sup>23</sup> cutting out the views and giving good “specimens room to grow. Henry Sargent always said that most of the landscaping of “Wodenethe” was done with an axe. After Downing’s early death on a Hudson River steamboat, Sargent wrote a sorrowful preface to the sixth edition of Downing’s *Landscape Gardening*. “Wodenethe” was an extremely influential garden: nearly 100 years later, in 1938, periodicals were still publishing articles like “The Landscape Tradition at Wodenethe: An English Inheritance Becomes an American Influence.”

*A. E. Anderson's engraving for The Century Magazine depicts the house terrace of Charles Sprague Sargent's "Holm Lea" in Brookline, where 150 acres of horticultural rarities were laid out as a landscape garden. Sargent kept to a grand style indoors as well as out, with a succession of hundreds of homegrown hothouse plants to mark the seasons, and a footman behind every chair at dinner.*



*Intro*





*H. H. Hunnewell's "Italian" topiary terraces, at "Wellesley," in Massachusetts, were actually inspired by the "Italian" gardens at Elvaston Castle in England. Hunnewell loved trees: according to Mary Jane Eastman, when a house on the property was burning, he shouted to the firemen, "Save that tree! We can build a new house!"*



*The rose garden of Mrs. Walter Belknap James, Mrs. Hugh D. Auchincloss, Sr.'s sister, at "Rockhurst" in Newport, had tea roses massed by color and backed with ramblers on swags and pillars—an extravagance of flowers typical of early twentieth-century gardens in Newport. The designer was society's favorite rose maven, Mrs. Harriet Foote, who also made the rose garden for the third sister, Miss Annie Burr Jennings of Fairfield, Connecticut, and the hideous rose garden for Mrs. Henry Ford at "Fair Lane" in Michigan.*



From his cousin, Charles Sargent doubtless learned to love trees and the picturesque landscape.

The same age as Henry Winthrop Sargent, Hunnewell was married to Sargent's first cousin Isabella Welles, after whom first the estate, then the town of West Needham, and finally the college were named "Wellesley." Hunnewell, like many other American millionaires, made *two* fortunes: he lost the first in the panic of 1837, and started again with railroads and real estate in 1839. He bought "Wellesley" in 1854. "It will be my aim," he confided to his diary in 1867, "to plant every conifer, native or foreign, that will be found sufficiently hardy to thrive in our cold New England climate."<sup>24</sup> Charles Sargent, a proponent of "natural" gardening, perhaps didn't like the topiary much, but it was surely from Hunnewell that he learned early on that many trees of many species can be grouped together successfully in an outdoor museum of plants.

In 1872, President Eliot appointed Sargent professor of horticulture in charge of the Botanic Garden (then in great disarray), and curator of the fledgling Arnold Arboretum; in 1873 he became director. Sargent, who had no experience and no scientific credits to his name, was then acting as estate superintendent for his father at "Holm Lea," so it seems a singular choice. How did he get the job? One can only speculate, but since Hunnewell was a big benefactor of Harvard, a friendly acquaintance of Gray's (they played whist together and Gray advised him on his trees), and a close friend of Eliot's, Hunnewell doubtless had something to do with it, as he must have noticed Sargent's growing obsession with trees and landscape. Add to this the fact that Sargent, in the fall of 1872, after he was appointed professor of horticulture and before taking full charge of the Arboretum, spent weeks at the Botanic Garden with Asa Gray, learning as much as he could. Noticing that Gray's professional load was keeping him from completing his life's work, *A Flora of North America*,

Sargent silently, without Gray's knowledge, arranged for his father and Hunnewell each to provide \$500 per annum for Gray on the condition that Gray would resign his professorship and devote himself to his researches full time. Gray did so, retaining his title and his house at the Garden, and his position as America's greatest botanist. Sargent got the directorship, in hindsight one of the landmark appointments of the century.

Always moving at top speed, Sargent was a good field botanist, one of the earliest environmentalists—and a superb fundraiser. (Eighteen separate major bequests from personal friends of Sargent's came to the Arboretum during his tenure.) He did not, however, move too fast to overlook any possible friend of the Arboretum, and he gave advice to Arboretum patrons on planting and design. (His biographer points out that there was usually an observable ratio between the patron's generosity and the time Sargent expended.) Gardens all over the Northeast were the proud recipients of Sargent's specimen lilacs, Far Eastern exotics, and splendid bay trees, but he also went as far afield with plants and advice as "Wychwood," the wild garden and nature preserve of Charles and Frances Hutchinson in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Sargent's weekly *Garden and Forest* (1888–97), although never widely circulated, was read by every professional and is a chronicle of the struggle between picturesque and classical styles which took place just as landscape architects were defining their new profession. Like the elder Olmsted, his close contemporary, Sargent leaned toward the picturesque, or natural style. However, *Garden and Forest* was kindly about the formal landscaping at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893<sup>25</sup> and earlier that same year Sargent himself had gingerly blessed the reemergence of formal garden planning in two articles, "Formal gardening, does it conflict with the natural style?" (Conclusion: not necessarily) and "Formal gardening, where it can be used to advantage."<sup>26</sup>



An oak tree in relief ornaments the facade of the underground ballroom at the Joseph Desloges' "Vouziers" outside St. Louis.



## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

1. Lewis, *Wharton*, 143.
2. "Gardenesque," a word coined by English garden designer and writer J. C. Loudon in 1832, came to mean the typical Victorian garden, which attempted to find a middle way between the old formal garden and the landscape garden. See Goode, *The Oxford Companion to Gardens*.
3. Ely, *A Woman's Hardy Garden*, 22.
4. Steele, "Background of Culture and Horticulture in the Genesee Valley," *GCA Annual Meeting Program*, 14.
5. The *H&G* spring number for 1927 contains 18 garden articles.
6. *GCA Annual Meeting Bulletin*, Seattle, 1930, 9.
7. Anna B. Warner also collaborated with her sister, Susan Warner, to write the sensational best-seller, *The Wide, Wide World*.
8. The derelict Isaac Ball house was slated for conversion as a dormitory for railroad workers.
9. Van Rensselaer's other principal work was *Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works*.
10. The term "landscape architect" was first used by English author and traveler Gilbert Meason in 1828 and subsequently by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux to describe their profession in writing to the NYC Board of Commissioners, resigning from the Central Park job in 1863.
11. Anderson, *Women, Design, and The Cambridge School*, 3-4.
12. Hartt, "Women and the Art of Landscape Gardening," 699.
13. *Ibid.*, 703
14. Wilson, "The Paradox of the American Country House."
15. David Schuyler, "Jacob Weidenmann," in Tishler, *American Landscape Architecture*, 44.
16. Olmsted actively campaigned to preserve areas of natural beauty such as Yosemite Valley and Niagara Falls. Olmsted, Jr., carried on the firm's environmental concerns by helping frame the enabling legislation for the National Park Service.
17. For "Moraine Farm" see Charles E. Beveridge, "The Historical Significance of Moraine Farm."
18. Steele, "Background of Culture," *GCA*, 17.
19. Sargent's lasting memorial is *A Manual of Trees of North America* (1905), which described and pictured for the first time every tree that grows wild north of Mexico.
20. Sargent commissioned English plant hunter Ernest Henry Wilson's voyages to China and Japan between 1907-1919. Estate gardens would not have been the same without Wilson's flowering cherries, rhododendrons, azaleas, and *Lilium regale*.
21. According to Cleveland Amory, this popular jingle was originally delivered by a "Western man" at a Harvard alumni dinner in 1905. *Proper Bostonians*, 14.
22. Sutton, *Charles Sprague Sargent*, 105.
23. Spingarn, p. 29, quoting from Downing, *Landscape Gardening*, 2d ed. Sargent continued to amend Downing's book in subsequent editions: his changes and additional illustrations trace the gradual reemergence of formal features in the garden beginning as early as the 1850s.

24. Eastman, "Hunnewell Estate," 9.
25. Sargent, "The Columbian Exposition," 104-105.
26. Sargent, *Garden and Forest* (Mar. 15, 1893), 119-20; *Garden and Forest* (Mar. 22, 1893), 129-30. When Sargent visited the Chicago World's Fair, he brought his protégée, Beatrix Farrand.

## THE NORTHEAST: THE POWERHOUSE

### THE RESORTS

1. Shelton, *Beautiful Gardens*, 70.
2. Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer, *Newport*.
3. In the 1880s, Philadelphia millionaire Fairman Rogers threw a Persian carpet on the lawn as a garden model. His gardener John Gibson needed 3,000 plants to duplicate the effect. See Phelps, *Newport in Flower*, 16.
4. James, *American Scene*, 224.
5. Mrs. J. K. Van Rensselaer and Van deWater, *Social Ladder*, 219.
6. Mrs. J. K. Van Rensselaer, *Newport*, 44.
7. Amory, *Last Resorts*, 175.
8. *Ibid.*, 197.
9. Mrs. J. K. Van Rensselaer, *Social Ladder*, 243.
10. Amory, *Last Resorts*, 23-24.
11. The "joggle board," which provided exercise considered suitable for ladies, was a seesaw with chair backs attached. Mrs. J. K. Van Rensselaer, *Social Ladder*, 223.
12. McAllister, *Society*, 174-77.
13. Bourget, *Outre Mer*, 48.
14. Amory, *Last Resorts*, 202.
15. Mrs. J. N. Brown, "The Elms."
16. Downing and Scully, Jr., *Architectural Heritage of Newport*, 162.
17. Ernest Bowditch (1850-1918), scion of a prominent Salem family, was initially a partner of landscape gardener Robert Morris Copeland in 1871. His later Boston-based practice with Charles H. Miller involved both city planning and residential work. Bowditch often worked with the Boston architectural firm of Peabody and Stearns, as at "The Breakers." He did the original landscaping for Peabody and Stearns's original 1877 house for Pierre Lorillard; when Vanderbilt bought the house in 1886, Bowditch was called in again. After a fire, Richard Morris Hunt designed the present-day "The Breakers" for which Bowditch did the landscape, this time with his brother James. See Bowditch Papers, Essex Institute, Salem; Murphy, "Ernest W. Bowditch," 162-76; and Vanderbilt-Bowditch Correspondence, Preservation Society of Newport County.
18. On the death of Julia Berwind, in 1961, the house was purchased by the Newport Preservation Society before the gardens went downhill.
19. Mrs. J. N. Brown, "The Elms."
20. The Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris was the princi-

pal training ground for American neoclassical architects and landscape architects between 1880 and 1920.

21. Richard Morris Hunt was the Vanderbilt family architect; the Philadelphia Wideners had Horace Trumbauer, who designed houses for them as well as the Widener Library at Harvard, a memorial to Harry Elkins Widener, lost, along with his father, George, aboard the "Titanic." Mrs. Widener later married Alexander Hamilton Rice.

22. Maher, *Twilight*, 73.

23. Two other estates featured in this book are built on the Comstock Lode: Clarence Mackay's "Harbour Hill" on Long Island and James C. Flood's mansion in San Francisco.

24. Amory, *Last Resorts*, 253.

25. Alva Belmont was honored not for her abilities but for her patronage: she built or restored 12 houses in her lifetime, including "Marble House," Newport's showiest cottage.

26. *A Guidebook to Newport Mansions*, 79.

27. Fahnestock also had fourteen-carat gold bathroom fixtures. Amory, *Last Resorts*, 176.

28. Bourget, 50.

29. Robson, "Newport and its Gardens," 3.

30. In 1909, the Jameses tore down an 1887 McKim, Mead and White house to erect "Beacon Hill House." Landscaping was done by Olmsted Bros. Perhaps because the house was located on a rocky crag, none of the gardens was near it, but in the valley behind. The Olmsted Bros. rose garden was later replaced by a new one laid out by Manchester, Mass., rose specialist Mrs. Harriet Foote, which consisted of a 1,000-foot-long rectangle, blasted out of Rhode Island granite, filled with loam and 5,000 rose bushes, including the yellow hybrid tea rose named Harriet James for Mrs. James. John Greatorex, the Jameses' superintendent, planned the Blue Garden, a virtuoso exercise in plantsmanship. The gardens were destroyed on James's death in 1941.

31. James was the largest owner of railroad stock in the country; at his death in 1941, he was Newport's largest taxpayer.

32. Fifty-six dancers and actors, and pageant director Joseph Lindon Ward were brought from New York. See the Arthur Curtiss James scrapbook, Redwood Library, Newport.

33. Constable, "York Harbor."

34. Amory, *Last Resorts*, 287.

35. For Bowen see Bowen, *Baymeath*.

36. For "Hamilton House" see DeVito, "Hamilton House," and Emmet, "Beside a Timeless River."

37. Robin Karson, "The American Sculptor's Summer Haven," 62.

38. Painter Edward Simmons. Dryfhout, "The Gardens of Augustus Saint-Gaudens," 148.

39. Ermenc, "Economic Give-And-Take," 105-21.

40. Morgan, "Charles A. Platt's houses and gardens in Cornish, New Hampshire," 119.

41. Duncan, "Gardens of Cornish," 17.

42. Colby, "Stephen and Maxfield Parrish," 1299.

43. Platt's comfortably classical but not overpowering houses and his clear rectangular designs for gardens pho-