National Association for Olmsted Parks
Spring 2003

Olmsted Research Guide Online Goes Live

The Olmsted Research Guide Online (ORGO) is now available to everyone with access to the Internet at www.redicow.com/olmsted. For the first time, records from the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (Olive) in Brookline, MA, and the Olmsted Associates Collection at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, can be searched together in one database.

The database is not complete, and data entry continues. But much of the material in both collections has been included.

Fairsted Collection
From the collection at Fairsted, the database includes:
- approximately 50,000 plans and drawings, listed individually,
- lithographs from about 280 Olmsted projects, listed as folders, and
- about 2,300 albums of photographs, listed as albums.

Library of Congress
The listings from the Library of Congress so far are:
- all of Series A (correspondence letterbooks from 1884-1899, with approximately 33,000 letters listed individually), and
- all of Series B (correspondence folders from 1858-1950, filed by job number, with about 6,600 folders entered).

Among the items from the Library of Congress yet to be entered are the records of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. 1858-1895.

Finding Information
All of the entries include the job number assigned by the Olmsted office, which is the key to finding the job. The website also includes a way to look up the job number, using some combination of client name, project name, project type, or location.

For example, to look up Audubon Park in New Orleans, go to Search Master List of Projects. Entering Audubon Park under Project Name reveals that Audubon Park is job number 02001 and there are 508 plans. A click on Archival Records Search, and entering 02001 as Project Information, produces a list of 27 records — 12 folders of correspondence and the rest photo albums. So the plans and drawings have not yet been entered into ORGO. Clicking on any of the items will show more details.

ORGO is a partnership project of the National Association for Olmsted Parks and the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site with initial funding from the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training of the National Park Service. For questions or problems with the database, just e-mail fria_orgo@nps.gov.

Happy searching!

NEWS From Fairsted

The Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site is currently engaged in planning and design work for a major construction project to rehabilitate the site's aged facilities, including a barn. The construction is currently scheduled to begin in 2005, and is expected to last one year, with the possibility of a few additional months for unknown contingencies. The staff at Fairsted will provide more information as soon as it is available on the project and project details, including the date and time of the project and project details, including the date and time of the project.

In 2004, the Olmsted site also announced a multi-year project to create a General Management Plan (GMP), which was written in 1983. The GMP update or amendment will enable the park to strategically plan for the future, with particular focus on the site's resource management and visitor goals, and boundary concerns.

For the past spring, the site focused on acknowledging two significant anniversaries — 150th anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s birth and the 200th anniversary of Ralph Waldo Emerson's birth. Several programs explored significant connections and common themes in these two men's work. The first event on April 19 included a panel discussion entitled "The Influence of Nature in the Thought of Emerson and Olmsted" with panelists Dr. Charles Bevans (American University), Professor Dan Nadeau (Clemson University), and Ms. Stephanie Mayer (Boston University) and moderated by Brookline Selectman Joseph T. Geller. See the site's website www.fairsted.org for more information.

New Contact Information for
National Association for Olmsted Parks
Parke Backer 38 Parkside Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14214
866.666.6905 716.853.1300 fax
naep@buffalo.ilmstedparks.org
A Genius and His Legacy: Frederick Law Olmsted in the South

Old Salem, Winston-Salem, NC • September 25-27, 2003

"A Genius and His Legacy: Frederick Law Olmsted in the South" is the theme of the 14th biennial conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes to be held in Old Salem, Winston-Salem, NC, September 25-27.

While Olmsted is a figure of New England and the Northeast, the South has a special claim on Olmsted’s talents through his work, begun in 1888, on the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. Other Olmsted-designed landscapes were in Louisville, Atlanta and Baltimore. The influence of Olmsted and his firm, felt in every city and town in the Southern states, will be examined at the conference by a panel of speakers who are scholars and authorities on Olmsted and the firm, or who are landscape architects for various restorations of Olmsted landscapes in the South. The keynote speaker will be Charles E. Beveridge, series editor of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, American University, Washington, DC. His subject will be “the significance of the South in the career of Frederick Law Olmsted.”

Additional speakers include Arlyn Levee, Lauren Meier, Susan M. Rademacher (President, Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy), Dale Jaeger, Bill Alexander (Landscape and Forest Historian, Biltmore Estate) and Ed Shull.

The Southern Garden History Society, Old Salem, Inc., the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, and Historic Staunton sponsor the conference. This will be the first Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes Conference to address the special challenges of restoring Southern gardens and landscapes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

For information, contact: Kay Berger, Coordinator, Landscape Conference, c/o Old Salem, PO. Box F Salem Station, Winston-Salem NC 27108-0346, or call (336) 721-7378. E-mail for Ms. Berger is bergeryks@wfu.edu.

The Southern Garden History Society was founded in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in May 1982, as an outgrowth of a continuing series of conferences on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes held in Old Salem. The purpose of the society is to stimulate interest in Southern garden and landscape history, in historical horticulture, and in the preservation and restoration of historic gardens and landscapes in the South. The society’s quarterly news bulletin, Magnolia, brings members reports of activities in garden history in the South. A major emphasis is to seek out and publish, as possible, worthwhile materials relating to Southern garden history.

www.southerngardenhistory.org/conference.htm

8th International Urban Parks Conference:
Great Parks Great Cities

The Central Park Conservancy, the Project for Public Spaces, and other groups are celebrating 150 years of Central Park with a major conference June 21-June 25 in New York City. Participants will be coming from around the world to consider shared problems and solutions, this year focusing on the great success the Central Park Conservancy has had in restoring and revitalizing the Olmsted & Vaux masterpiece. The conference will range much farther, however, including looks at Prospect Park’s Ravine restoration, Governor’s Island in New York Harbor, the World Trade Center site, and a canoe trip down the Bronx River.

This website has extensive material on the conference, including online registration at http://pps.org/gpgc
Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation – Staffing Update

The Olmsted Center is pleased to announce the arrival of two new staff members. Laurie Matthews joins the Olmsted Center as a landscape architect to assist with coordinating the Cultural Landscapes Inventory for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service. Laurie has a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Oregon and has gained a broad range of experience in cultural landscape preservation working for LANDSCAPES, Inc. with Patricia O’Donnell. Dan McCarthy has joined the Olmsted Center as a field project coordinator in the Preservation Maintenance Program. Dan has been with the National Park Service for the past 9 ½ years, beginning his career with the Gardener Intake Program, a career development opportunity sponsored by the Olmsted Center. In addition, he is a graduate of the Center’s Arborist Training Program and is certified through the International Society of Arboriculture. Dan will be working with the Olmsted Center to enhance the preservation maintenance assistance provided to national parks in the northeast.

Regrettably, Lauren Meier, a senior landscape architect with the Olmsted Center, has decided to leave the Center to accept a position with Presley Associates, Inc. in Cambridge, MA. Lauren has worked with the National Park Service for thirteen years in various capacities. Through her work in Washington, with the formation of the Historic Landscape Initiative, and at Fairwood, with the development and growth of the Olmsted Center, Lauren has made significant contributions to the development of the National Park Service cultural landscapes program.

Cultural Landscape Report for Angel Island
The Olmsted Center recently completed a Cultural Landscape Report for Angel Island Immigration Station, the main point of immigration and emigration on the West Coast between 1910 and 1940. Partners on the project included the National Park Service Pacific Great Basin Support Office, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. The three-volume report covers the history of the site, interprets the significance of the Immigration Station and provides guidance for the future rehabilitation of the landscape. This was the first Cultural Landscape Report to be completed for the California Department of Parks and Recreation and will serve as a model for future California State Parks cultural landscape documentation. In light of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr.’s role in preparing the first state park report in California and Olmsted Jr.’s 1929 Report of State Park Survey of California, the Olmsted Center was particularly thrilled with the opportunity to be involved with this project.

Olmsted Center Assists Acadia National Park with Stabilizing Hazardous Trees
During the week of December 2-6, 2002, the Olmsted Center coordinated a multi-park team to assist Acadia National Park with hazard tree stabilization work at three areas of the park: Sieur de Monts Spring, Bear Brook picnic area, and Thompson’s Island picnic area. The crew, consisting of arborists and landscape maintenance staff from three Northeast region parks (Seneca National Battlefield, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site, and Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site) worked closely with a local contractor and the park to remove hazardous trees, prune dead and diseased limbs, and chip and remove debris. Despite the extreme cold and related mechanical breakdowns, the crew accomplished work on nearly 400 trees.

Publication Deadline for the Summer Issue is August 1, 2003.

Field Notes is a publication of The National Association for Olmsted Parks. Letters Welcome! Send to naop@buffalcolmstedparks.org

Publications VP
Lucy Lewiss

Contact Coordinators
Alida Silverman
Esley Hamilton

Production Coordinator
Patrice Kish

Ethan Carr
Frank Kowsky
Ann Petr

News from Around the Country

continued from page 2

Deborah Ann Trumble of NAOP is NASP has begun. The first community forum was held in late September for public input on the best way to restore the park and pathway system. The University of Buffalo’s director of The Urban Design Project described the ambitious effort as "Buffalo...pivoting itself to once again become an Olmsted City."

Kentucky – Harrods Creek

An Eagle project by a member of Boy Scout Troop 113 established the "Olmsted Tribute Tree Trail" on the grounds of St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church designed by the Olmsted firm in 1947. To ensure that the trees and landscape that the Olmsted firm envisioned remain intact and preserved, several residents such as Alan S. Kuhn were involved. A deed, white dogwood tree, part of the original plan, was replaced.

LALH Website: See It Now
The Library of American Landscape History's new website www.lalh.org is up and running.

The Library of American Landscape History has greatly expanded the range of books available about the history of landscape architecture in the country and the cornerstone publication, Pioneers of American Landscape Design, in theirs, edited by LALH executive director Robin Knoepf and the National Park Service’s Charles Emlen. Susan Naus’s prize-winning book about Forest Lawton, A Modern Arcadia, also comes from its source. Related organizations are also encouraged to include a link to www.lalh.org on their own websites.

Please visit www.lalh.org to learn more about LALH’s books, exhibitions, efforts in preservation, and to download the Library's newsletter.
MWC Center For Historic Preservation Awards 2003 Book Prize

Fredericksburg, Va. — The Center for Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College has awarded the 2003 Historic Preservation Book Prize to A Modern Arcadia: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and the Plan for Forest Hills Gardens by Susan L. Klaus, an independent scholar specializing in urban and landscape history. The book is published by the University of Massachusetts Press in association with the Library of American Landscape History.

The Historic Preservation Book Prize is awarded each year to the book that has made the most significant contribution to the historic preservation movement in the United States, as determined by a jury of professionals. The award announcement coincides with National Preservation Week, which was May 5-12, 2003.

The prize, first awarded in 1996, consists of a certificate and cash award to the author or editor, a certificate to the publisher, and an invitation to the author to lecture at the Center for Historic Preservation, located in Fredericksburg.

In awarding the prize, the jury found that A Modern Arcadia presents an excellent documentation of landscape history and recognizes the integration of planning, landscape architecture and architecture. They noted that the book demonstrates that the fundamental ideas for successful suburban design are found in revisiting history. The jury feels that the book will encourage developers, planners and preservationists to look at these practices in a new way. The jury commended Klaus for her portrayal of the collaborative efforts of diverse design professionals, as well as the financial considerations that go into designing and constructing a planned community. In selecting A Modern Arcadia, the jury concluded that the book takes the first step in encouraging future landscape history works to consider and expand on preservation planning practices. The application of preservation tools to the recognition and continued presence of all character-defining features in early 20th-century residential suburban developments is of paramount importance, according to the panel.

Members of the 2003 Book Prize jury are: Kirk A. Cordell, executive director of the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training; Valerie L. Hansgen, ASLA, URS Corporation, Landscape Architecture; Ann Millikin McKee, director, Undergraduate Program in Historic Preservation, Department of History & Historic Preservation at Goucher College; John N. Pearce, senior lecturer/director of the James Monroe Museum, Department of Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College; and Wendy L. Price, associate professor, Department of Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College and Book Prize Jury chair.

The Center for Historic Preservation was established at Mary Washington College in 1979 to support the college's undergraduate curriculum in historic preservation and to sponsor outreach activities at the regional, national and international levels. For more information about the Historic Preservation Book Prize or the Center, call (540) 654-1041.

New Publications

Concrete and Clay: reworking nature in New York City
By Matthew Carucci. 244 pp. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press. 2002. $24.95. The following statement suggests the potential value of this book, which looks at New York's parks, in the context of its infrastructure and the demands of shifting ecological needs.

The contemporary emphasis on "reclaiming" the city and placing the space more attractive to middle-class New Yorkers is as much a reflection of socioeconomic shifts within the city as it is a rediscovery of Olmsted's ideals in urban planning. The fact that Olmsted's aesthetic ideals find a strong resonance with an emerging preservationist ethic makes the case with which extremely progressive social ideals have been translated into new forms of cultural boister to serve the needs of powerful urban entities. Recent changes in park management and funding may have improved the park's appearance, but the "rational public has an awe of control over the site's most important public spaces."

Central Park: An American Masterpiece

The author has been the official photographer for the Central Park Conservancy since 1984 and its historian since 1989. The sumptuous new book is published just in time for Central Park's 150th birthday and the Central Park Conservancy will receive a portion of the proceeds from its sale. Miller emphasizes the history of the Olmsted & Vaux's "Greenwashed" design, contrasting it with two other eras--the 1853 design competition, which were recently researched. The fact that the final nature look of the park required the building of stone outcropping, setting of millions of cubic yards of soil, and planting vast acres of trees and shrubs is still a big surprise to many people, even New Yorkers.