



What's Out There.®

Olmsted on Long Island

Welcome to *What's Out There® Olmsted on Long Island* organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) and Planting Fields Foundation.

This guidebook was created as part of the bicentennial of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., known as the father of landscape architecture. It features a dozen landscapes designed by Olmsted, Sr., and his successor firms between the 1880s and the 1930s, along with an introduction and brief biographies of Olmsted firm members who contributed to designs on Long Island. All the landscapes were featured in *What's Out There Weekend: Olmsted on Long Island*, a series of free expert-led tours produced in partnership with Planting Fields Foundation that took place October 22-23, 2022.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., came to the field of landscape planning in the 1850s from a diverse background of experiences, including journalism. In the late nineteenth century, having completed iconic projects such as New York City's Central Park and the scenic reservation at Yosemite Valley in California, Olmsted, Sr., broadened into the private realm, creating new types of residential communities, as well as large- and small-scale estates and grounds. Characteristics of the work include a sensitivity to natural conditions (both features and systems), with ample consideration given to greater community benefits while meeting clients' needs. Following Olmsted, Sr.'s death in 1903, his nephew and stepson, John Charles Olmsted, and his son, Frederick "Rick" Law Olmsted, Jr., led the successor firm Olmsted Brothers into the next half century.

Designs for residential grounds comprised the largest category of the Olmsted Brothers' commissions, though they also worked on academic campuses, public parks, and other projects. The economic effects of the Great Depression and two World Wars fell particularly hard on the large estates, which were often occupied by only one generation before being sold, neglected, abandoned, or demolished. Thankfully, prudent planning and stewardship protected several remarkable estate landscapes on Long Island, including those featured in this guidebook. Some are preserved as arboreta or state parks, some converted to religious or educational institutions, and a small number remain private compounds, but all have distinctly Olmsted landscapes.

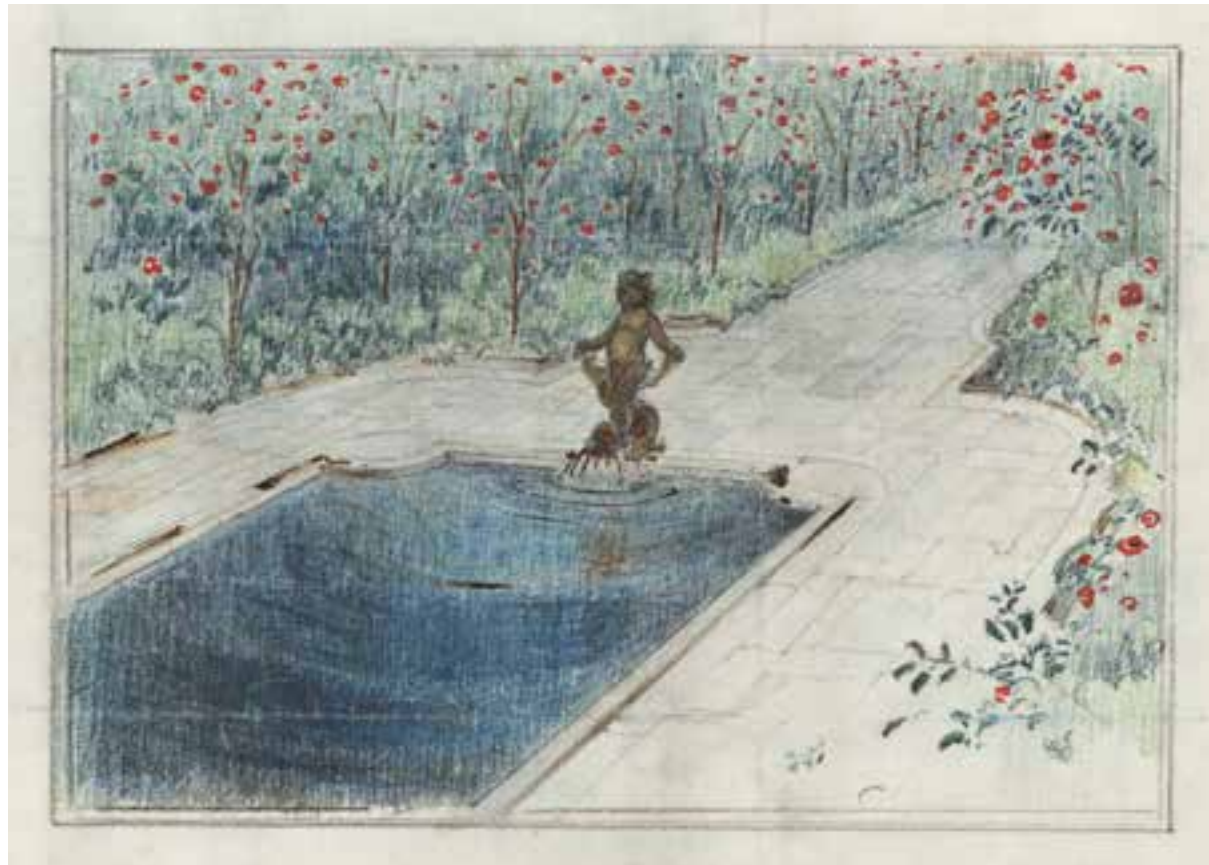
This guidebook complements TCLF's comprehensive *What's Out There Olmsted* digital guide, an online database that includes a history of Olmsted, Sr., and his successor firms, more than 325 sites, along with overarching narratives, maps, historic photographs, and biographical profiles. This print guidebook and the digital guide dovetail with TCLF's web-based *What's Out There*, the nation's most comprehensive searchable online database of cultural landscapes. Profusely illustrated and carefully vetted, it currently features more than 2,500 sites, 12,000 images, and 1,100 designer profiles. It has been optimized for mobile devices and includes *What's Nearby*, a GPS-enabled feature that locates all landscapes within a given distance, customizable by mileage or walking time.

TCLF is proud to collaborate with Planting Fields Foundation and is grateful for the steadfast support of its CEO and President, Gina Wouters, whose leadership was instrumental in this undertaking. A special word of thanks is owed to principal author Arleyn Levee and photographer David Almeida, who each generously gave of their time and talent. We are likewise grateful to the site owners, stewards, volunteers, sponsors, and other supporters who made the guidebook and tours possible, especially the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, without whose generosity none of this would have been possible. On behalf of our partners at Planting Fields and all of us at TCLF, we hope you will enjoy experiencing the unique and extraordinary landscape legacy of Olmsted on Long Island.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
President and CEO, The Cultural Landscape Foundation



The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF)

TCLF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 1998 to connect people to places. TCLF educates and engages the public to make our shared landscape heritage more visible, identify its value, and empower its stewards. Through its website, publishing, lectures and other events, TCLF broadens support and understanding for cultural landscapes. TCLF is also home to the Cornelia Hahn Oberlander International Landscape Architecture Prize®.

tclf.org

Sketch for Features at End Plunge, "Planting Fields," Oyster Bay, NY.



Planting Fields Arboretum

List of sites

- ① Bayard Cutting Arboretum State Park
- ② Caumsett Historic State Park Preserve
- ③ Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
- ④ La Selva
(Private - Not Shown)
- ⑤ Locust Valley Cemetery
- ⑥ Munsey Park
- ⑦ Oheka Castle
- ⑧ Lattintown Gold Coast Estate
(Private - Not Shown)
- ⑨ Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park
- ⑩ Seminary of the Immaculate Conception
- ⑪ The Memorial Cemetery of St. John's Church
- ⑫ Welwyn Preserve

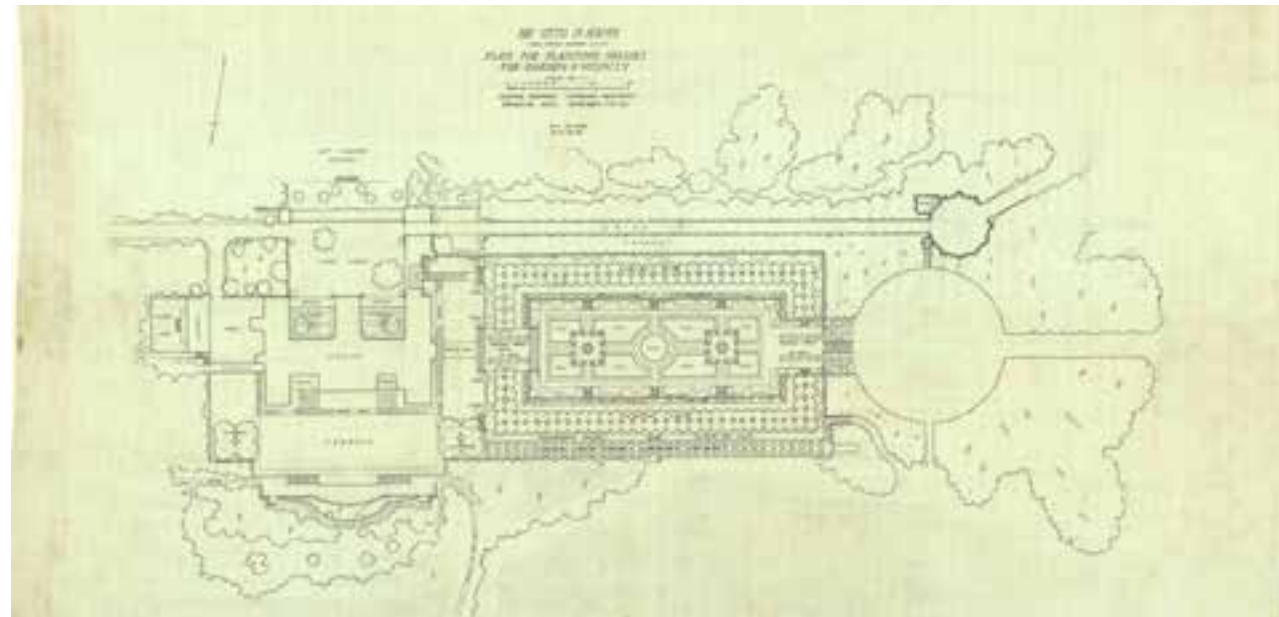
Olmsted on Long Island

Long a source of sustenance from land and sea to feed Manhattan and beyond, Long Island, with its varied scenery of shorelines, woodlands and rolling pastures, its beneficial climate and diverse recreational opportunities, was 'discovered' in the late nineteenth century, beckoning the wealthy elite to establish grand estates, particularly along the north shore. Transportation improvements (development of the Long Island Railroad, completion of the Queensborough Bridge and train tunnels traversing the East River, plus Vanderbilt's private toll road, the paved Long Island Motor Parkway) spurred interest among the "great wealthy ones," as local nurseryman Isaac Hicks termed the newcomers, to acquire vast areas of former farmland and small hamlets for private domains of competing grandeur and scale.

In so doing, the Island's former agrarian economy, its population, and its landscape were forever transformed — with resultant gains and losses. To accomplish this

transformation in the period between the late 1880s and the 1930s, the new property owners required architectural advisors of all calibers, skilled craftsmen and artisans, experienced managers, and armies of laborers to sculpt landform, delineating forest and field in order to sympathetically accommodate grand edifices and their ancillary buildings, surrounded by suitably structured and beautified grounds with scenic advantages.

The Olmsted firm was in the vanguard of landscape planning for these new Country Place-era estates on Long Island. Beginning in the 1880s with plans by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., for two south-shore properties (the Cutting estate in Westbrook and the summer colony of the Montauk Association), the work continued under the successor firm, Olmsted Brothers, and their partners for decades. Their estate client list, which reads like a Who's Who of America's leaders, includes more than 160 entries for Long Island:



Plan for Planting Masses, Cold Spring Harbor, NY.



Lantern slides of "Ormonston," John Edward Aldred house, Glen Cove, NY (left); and "Planting Fields," William Robertson Coe house, Oyster Bay, NY (right) – Courtesy Library of Congress.

some mere queries, others resulting in plans, sometimes numbering in the hundreds for complex properties. Whether for modest plots or vast acreage, the Olmsted designers settled buildings of all sizes into the land in harmony with natural features and viewsheds. They advised on property acquisition; architectural character and proportion; well-constructed graceful routes of access within and outside the boundaries; and planting plans, from simple tree and shrub groupings to multiple diversified garden rooms adorned with elaborate features. They emphasized design for a functional purpose, protective of core landscape values and natural assets, rather than simply decorative display.

Of the numerous estates that the Olmsted firm created, few survive that are still held as private family compounds. Most large estates were subdivided or became country clubs or nature preserves and arboreta. Some were donated to religious or educational institutions, which could not adequately sustain the architectural or horticultural refinements. Among the few exceptions, the Coe estate, Planting Fields, stands out. After several transitions, it retains its design integrity and is now being stewarded for the public by a public-private partnership that recognizes its significance. The firm was involved in planning for at least fifteen major subdivisions or resort communities throughout Long Island, beginning in 1898. Amid the windswept

wildness of Montauk's eastern tip, John Charles Olmsted laid out roads and lots for residential groupings in Wompananit and Hither Hills, some of which later became state parkland. Sadly, following subsequent development, little of his planning is still extant. Further west on the scenic Shinnecock Hills, he also planned a similar development, stretching from Peconic Bay to the Atlantic, with easy access from a new railroad station. The roads and lot arrangements here still reflect this early work. Whether on acreage of a former estate (the Cravaths in Locust Valley, the Pratts in Glen Cove, the Whitneys in Westbury, or the Munsey property in Manhasset), or carved from agricultural land (Old Field in Stony Brook or the former Hicks Nursery in Westbury) or from a gravel pit in Northport, Olmsted Brothers shaped graceful residential plots along curving tree-lined streets in communities that today have little recognition that their neighborhood was the result of considered design by the Olmsted firm.

The largest such development undertaken by the firm was for the 2,600 acres of the Fishers Island Club. Beginning in the 1920s, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., working again with developer Frederick Ruth (they had previously designed the Mountain Lake community in Lake Wales, Florida) and colleague Henry Hubbard, transformed this picturesque island in Long Island Sound into an exclusive resort, a

project that generated over 1,100 plans and design recommendations for more than 40 private properties. While protecting this unique landscape of rugged grasslands, wooded hollows, and jagged rock-strewn shorelands, they inserted necessary infrastructure to support homes, a clubhouse, a Seth Raynor golf course, and other amenities.

The final concentrated area for Olmsted Brothers' endeavors on Long Island was not one of their usual emphases—that of cemetery and private plot design. They advised on or planned over 40 such projects. If Long Island's scenic attractions represented leisure retreats from business life and a more domestic pace, they also promised 'pockets' of serenity amid tree-shaded lawns encircled by lush plantings. At the request of their estate clients, the Olmsted firm applied their design and horticultural skills to shaping their clients' final resting places amid the hills and vales in Cold Spring Harbor and Locust Valley. Initiated by a 1912 request from the De Forest family to expand the Memorial Cemetery of St. John's Episcopal Church in Laurel Hollow, followed by a 1917 request by a consortium, many with Olmsted landscapes, to develop a new cemetery in Locust Valley, and finally for the Pratt family in mid-1930s to augment their private burial grounds in Lattingtown, the Olmsted partners laid out shrub-enclosed 'rooms' and crafted discreet markers for family burials. They additionally shaped graceful roads and paths to connect and meld these unique spaces with more conventional lotting.

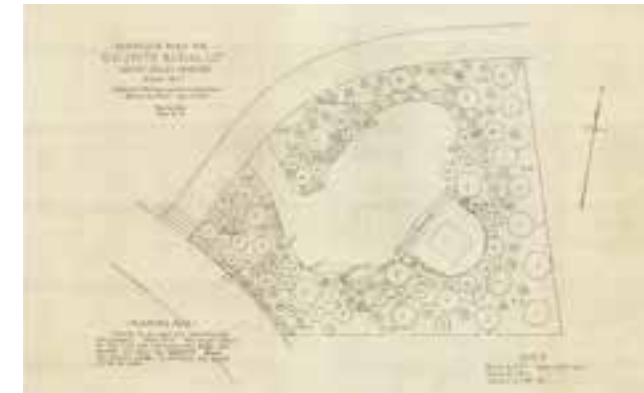
Looking forward, there is one area of Olmsted involvement on Long Island still to be explored by scholars – to better

understand the role played by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in the general planning for the Island's overall development. As a major advisor for the 1929 New York Regional Plan, a pioneering effort coalescing the major innovator thinkers of its day to chart a strategic growth pattern for this expanding metropolitan corridor, Olmsted, Jr., was assigned Nassau and Suffolk Counties. This overall effort evolved into the still-influential non-profit Regional Plan Association to accommodate growth while protecting natural resources in the Tri-State Region. Olmsted, Jr.'s, concerns were several: transportation corridors to connect the urban core with expanding suburban enclaves and with regional recreational assets; laying out potential residential areas balanced with commercial needs; and developing the administrative and legal mechanisms to support long-range planning and to protect resources.

Today, less than one-third of the more than 1,200 Gold Coast mansions built on Long Island's North Shore between the late 1880s and the 1930s survive. Fortunately, the work of all three Olmsteds, as well as many other Olmsted firm partners and collaborators (see page 34), can be experienced today. Thanks in large measure to acts of visionary testamentary planning by their original owners, as well as by local and state agencies who received these properties, and even one passionate developer, the public can still experience what it might have been like on Long Island's North Shore during the Gilded Age. Here are a dozen examples that reveal what's out there of Olmsted on Long Island.



Preliminary Plan for the property of Fishers Island Club, NY.



Davison Cemetery Lot, Locust Valley, NY (top left); Planting plan for R.W. Smith Burial Lot Locust Valley Cemetery, NY (top right); Plan of Ormston, Long Island, NY (bottom).

Bayard Cutting Arboretum State Park



In 1884 William Bayard Cutting, civic leader and entrepreneur, acquired 600-plus acres along the Connetquot River from the Lorillard brothers, previously a horse farm and game preserve. Cutting hired Charles Haight in 1885 to build a picturesque Tudor-style mansion with gate lodge and farm complex, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., in 1886 to provide landscape advice. Olmsted retained much of the site's natural beauty—the contrast of open and closed spaces, dense woods with marshy lowlands, and broad rolling meadows with sizable oak and tupelo groupings—enhancing the natural woodland verges with shrubs to cultivate an English park-like effect. Around domestic spaces, he recommended no formal plantings but rather varied shrub masses, some native, some more exotic, to take advantage of the beneficial growing conditions and river views. These plantings have attained massive sizes over the decades. Olmsted renovated circulation routes and the entrance and boundary walls, adding massed native rhododendrons. A pinetum, with a rich display of conifers, was purportedly planted with saplings sourced by Charles Sprague Sargent from the Arnold Arboretum, and possibly inspired by Cutting's 1880s visit to the Hunnewell estate in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

After Cutting died in 1912, his family continued to seek Olmsted firm advice to transition the grounds into an arboretum. In 1926-27, his son-in-law Henry C. James hired Olmsted Brothers to plan a subdivision on a southeastern portion of the acreage. In 1936, Mrs. Cutting and her daughter gave 200 acres, including the house, to the Long Island State Park Commission. With the family's million-dollar bequest, the state was able to provide visitor amenities, expand nature trails, and acquire more property, including the Dairy. A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program was established in 2012. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

Historic Name:
Bayard Cutting Estate
Westbrook

Landscape Category:
Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:
Arboretum
Public Park –
State Park
Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
James Frederick Dawson
F.L. Olmsted & Co.
F.L. & J. C. Olmsted
Henry V. Hubbard
Olmsted Brothers
Olmsted, Olmsted + Eliot
Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
John Charles Olmsted



Caumsett Historic State Park Preserve

Historic Name:

Caumsett
Marshall Field Estate

Landscape Category:

Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden
Public Park –
Scenic Reservation
Public Park –
State Park

Landscape Styles:

Picturesque

Designed By:

Marian Coffin
George Gillies
Percival Gallagher
Alfred Hopkins
J.J. Levison
Olmsted Brothers
John Russell Pope

These more than 2,000 acres of abandoned farmland and woodlands were transformed into a country place for Marshall Field III beginning in 1921. Field sought to emulate the pastoral character of English country estates on Long Island's North Shore, with scenic advantages of shoreline views. Naming his estate "Caumsett," Matinecock for "place by sharp rock," Field chose John Russell Pope to develop the layout and design a Georgian manor house and ancillary buildings, with Alfred Hopkins designing the vernacular farm buildings. From the wooded acreage, Pope organized major designed areas: the farm complex at the beginning of the winding approach road, the stable and pastures merging into rolling lawns edged by native woodlands, tennis courts, a forest glade, and the Winter Cottage, with its Marian Coffin landscape. The mansion, with service courts, garden rooms, and sizable forecourt, overlooked a terrace and lawns sloping to a freshwater pond, beyond which lay the beach. Pope turned to Percival Gallagher of Olmsted Brothers to anchor and embellish the surrounds. Beginning in 1925, Gallagher strengthened the axial vistas to and from both sides of the house by planting the forecourt and northern terrace edges with specimen trees. To the west, Gallagher designed a circular box garden with steps leading to a hedge-enclosed flower garden, terminated by a pair of purple beeches. He transformed a natural ravine into a picturesque rockery. Overseeing the landscape was English gardener George Gillies, who remained at the property until 1961 when it was purchased by New York State.

The grounds are now managed as a nature preserve with many buildings housing educational and environmental programs. The Lloyd Harbor Historical Society occupies the original eighteenth century Henry Lloyd Manor House. Caumsett was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.



Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory



In the late nineteenth century, the De Forest family acquired considerable property along the western shore of Cold Spring Harbor. On the larger, sloping wooded northern parcel, Henry Grant De Forest built “Nethermuir,” named after a Scottish village. His son, Henry Wheeler De Forest, increased the acreage and extensively renovated the house. The smaller, southern parcel contained a historic shingled farmhouse named “Airlie,” which became his daughter Julia Mary’s estate until her death in 1910, when it reverted to her brother. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., of Olmsted Brothers, enhanced the landscape beginning in 1906, introducing substantial regrading, rearranging trees to bolster privacy and enhance viewsheds, and creating gardens, lawns, and ancillary structures. With Edward Clark Whiting, between 1907 and 1909 Olmsted, Jr., designed ten- to twelve-foot-tall ashlar enclosing walls for an oblong space carved into the western slope, against which he draped vines or espaliered plants, filling the foreground with flowering shrubs and small trees. Elevated structures overlooked the garden at each end. Olmsted tiered the interior space with lower dry-laid walls with plant pockets. Axial paths bisected herbaceous planting beds.

Olmsted and Whiting additionally shaped passages of scenery throughout both properties, interspersing open rolling lawn with shadowy copses of conifers or deciduous trees, underplanted with flowering shrubs. At Airlie, they developed a piazza and intimate garden. Henry De Forest continued to improve his properties with Olmsted supervision until his death in 1938. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory acquired Airlie and the stables in 1943. By the 1990s their holdings included the barrier beach and grounds of Nethermuir (house no longer extant). Over the next decades, the former formal garden was incorporated, now subdivided into parcels with garden structures converted into residences. A drive now bisects the lawns. Diverse tree groupings, some mature remnants from the Olmsteds’ Nethermuir design still survive. The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

Historic Name:

Nethermuir
Henry and Julia De Forest Estate

Landscape Category:

Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden
Institutional Grounds –
Medical Institution

Landscape Style:

Beaux Arts / Neoclassical
Picturesque

Designed By:

Harold Hill Blossom
Hans J. Koehler
J. Clinton Mackenzie
Charles R. Wait
Edward Clark Whiting
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
John Charles Olmsted



La Selva



In 1915 Elizabeth Sanderson purchased 25 acres of hilly farmland and her husband, financier Henry Sanderson, turned to James Dawson of Olmsted Brothers to design a landscape for the Italian Renaissance villa being designed by Hunt & Hunt (a nod to the previous collaboration between the seniors Hunt and Olmsted at the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina). Given the limited acreage and challenging topography, the house was restricted to a southwest quadrant, with the curving main drive to the northwest. Utility buildings lined the western boundary, while a rectangular vegetable-cutting garden with espaliered fruit trees and a sizable arbor anchored the southern edge.

Architect Joseph Hunt sited the mansion with loggias and a long terrace at the edge of the steep hillside, overlooking meadows, bound by thickly planted mature upper canopy and flowering understory material. Major specimen trees were installed throughout. Off the south loggia, Dawson planned a sequence of linked garden rooms enclosed by tall stuccoed walls enlivened by wisteria with a pine boschetto to screen the vegetable garden. The loggia opened onto a square paved court with a flower garden on the cross axis, while the main axis contained a *tapis vert* surrounded by raised narrow planting beds. This space linked to the terminal colonnaded 'cirque,' centered on a simple pool with single spray. Marble merfolk by Johan Selmer-Larsen (Olmsted Brothers' in-house sculptor) topped the grand entrance columns.

The Sandersons' tenancy only lasted until the early 1920s. Development of this complicated and ornate property was hindered by incomplete and shoddy workmanship, caused by World War I labor and materials shortages. By 1927 the property was sold to Joseph Wheeler, who renamed it 'Delwood' and installed a swimming pool with Olmsted Brothers' guidance. After Mrs. Wheeler's death, the property changed hands a number of times. In 2012 it was sold to private owners who have worked to recapture its historic significance and unique character.

Historic Name:

La Selva
Henry W. Sanderson Estate
Delwood
Joseph Wheeler Estate
Franciscan Monastery and
Retreat House

Landscape Category:

Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden

Landscape Style:

Italianate
Picturesque

Designed By:

James Frederick Dawson
Joseph H. Hunt
Carl Rust Parker
Olmsted Brothers
Charles R. Wait



Locust Valley Cemetery

Landscape Category:
Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:
Cemetery

Designed By:
James Frederick Dawson
Percival Gallagher
Hans J. Koehler
Olmsted Brothers
Carl Rust Parker

Acquisition of substantial acreage for this cemetery was hastened in 1922, with the need to find a suitable burial site for banker Henry Davison, a leader of the international League of Red Cross Societies during World War I. The Locust Valley Cemetery Association, led by Edward Stettinius, Sr., negotiated six acres of hilly wooded land north of the historic Reform Church. James Dawson and Percival Gallagher from Olmsted Brothers were hired to design a road through the thick undergrowth and lay out potential burial sites. Echoing the landscape aesthetic established by the De Forest site at The Memorial Cemetery of St. John's Church, the Olmsted design for the half-acre Davison lot modulated variable grades with native stone walls and steps to create an outdoor room centered around an open lawn, with alcoves for flat burial tablets, canopied by trees and enclosed by banks of flowering shrubs planted in drifts. At the Dickinson family plot, a path through textured plantings led to steps descending to a catacomb, embellished with a Tiffany window. Other "rooms" in this group were later subdivided into smaller spaces.

The Olmsted firm generated twelve private design commissions for family rooms. Stettinius, Sr., later consulted with Olmsted employee Carl Rust Parker to rearrange the landscape into smaller plots. By 1931 the firm had designed a second addition to the northeast, with varied smaller lots, accessed from a curving loop road or wide paths. To continue the garden room ideal, belts of laurel and rhododendron enclosed individual plots, intended to each hold four tombs with limited open space. Planning for a third addition abutting the west side of the site began in 1936; the firm shaped this gently sloping narrow strip into more traditional single plots arranged in rows separated by plantings. The Olmsted firm significantly impacted overall planning as the cemetery expanded by the 1940s to its present 32 acres. Today, this non-sectarian cemetery is maintained by the Association, in which all plot holders are members.



Munsey Park



At his death in 1925, the estate of author and publisher Frank Munsey was bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, including nearly 700 acres of rolling woodland in Manhasset. Joseph Day, a realtor, was to plan a subdivision of lots to be auctioned. Robert de Forest, president of the museum and of the Russell Sage Foundation, which was sponsoring the then in-progress New York Regional Plan, became concerned when the proposal did not reflect the planning principles that the Regional Plan espoused. In 1927 de Forest called upon the Olmsted Brothers to improve the planning.

Considering the site's natural conditions and community needs, Olmsted partner Edward Whiting created an efficient and aesthetically pleasing neighborhood plan on the northern section of the land. Tree-lined interior streets, named for artists, honored the site's topography and encircled blocks with variously sized lots, designed with minimal access to the main highway to deter cut-through traffic. Five parks, a school, and three business areas were incorporated, the latter restricted to main entry points. Architectural standards emphasized the Colonial Revival style, with 162 houses completed by 1930, and a shopping center underway. Beginning in 1932 an eighteen-hole golf course was attempted at the eastern end, but was abandoned for residential development five years later.

The Olmsted firm also provided the Museum's developers with preliminary street-lot layouts for the property south of the main boulevard in late 1927, when Munsey's own estate, Sherryland, was purchased by Mrs. Graham Vanderbilt. Little remains of this work, as developers restructured the space to meet new demands. In 1938 the Vanderbilt property was sold to William Levitt, the Munsey mansion preserved as the still extant Strathmore-Vanderbilt Country Club. Munsey Park, an incorporated village since 1930, has retained a strong sense of its character, sustained by local government and various civic associations.

Landscape Category:
Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:
Suburb –
Garden City/Garden Suburb

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Olmsted Brothers
Edward Clark Whiting



Oheka Castle

Historic Name:

Otto H. Kahn Estate
Oheka

Landscape Category:

Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden

Landscape Styles:

Beaux Arts / Neoclassical

Designed By:

Harold Hill Blossom
Delano & Aldrich
James Frederick Dawson
Beatrice Farrand
James Fraser
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Seth Raynor

At the beginning of World War I, banker and philanthropist Otto Kahn purchased 443 acres of potato fields and woods abutting railroad tracks. He commissioned Delano & Aldrich to design an immense French chateau, to be second only to the Biltmore estate in North Carolina. Delano turned to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to refine the proportions, details, and planting plans for the landscape. James Dawson and Harold Hill Blossom served as the principals on the job. They shaped and connected the landscape's myriad features, installed large-scale plantings, and advised on woodland improvements, even designing an "intimate pleasure garden" with a meandering brook in a ravine. In 1919 Beatrice Farrand designed a series of garden rooms and an amphitheater south of the grand parterre (nothing remains of this space today). Olmsted Brothers installed evergreen plantings to punctuate the terraces, provide layered enclosure for the water parterre, and to line the long entrance drive. Truckloads of specimen trees and shrubs were transferred from Kahn's Morristown, New Jersey, estate (Cedar Court) to Oheka, under the supervision of James Fraser, who would become Oheka's superintendent and continue to implement the Olmsted design long after their involvement ceased. After 1919, golf architect Seth Raynor designed an eighteen-hole course to wind around the 'castle' and its gardens.

After Kahn's death in 1934, his widow Addie sold the estate to the City of New York, which used it as a retreat for Department of Sanitation workers. Post-war, the Cold Spring Country Club acquired the golf course, while the extensive greenhouse complex was sold and much of the property developed into homesites. The Eastern Military Academy took residence until 1979, significantly altering the mansion and grounds. In 1984 developer Gary Melius acquired the property, restoring the original buildings and grounds, converting them into a luxury hotel destination. The original golf course, upgraded by Robert Trent Jones in 1968, is now re-associated with Oheka, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.



Lattingtown Gold Coast Estate



In 1910 Henry Davison, a recent senior partner at J.P. Morgan & Co., purchased Peacock Point, formerly the country estate of Charles Gates, president of Royal Baking Powder Company. After the original house by Lamb & Rich burned in 1913, Davison hired Walker & Gillette to design a new edifice worthy of this property with its broad vistas over the Long Island Sound. The architects enlivened a substantial dark brick Georgian Revival mansion atop the beach-side slope with bold classical limestone details, which gave the structure long-distance visibility. Architect Stewart Walker engaged his frequent collaborator, Percival Gallagher of Olmsted Brothers, beginning in 1915. Gallagher crafted graceful curvilinear drives and paths, enframed the structure with massed plantings, and designed textured garden rooms with appropriate sculptures and structures.

Gallagher, assisted by Farnham Martin, designed a sunken garden below the eastern terrace. Centered around a pool for aquatic plants, ample turf walks curved around planting beds overflowing with color coordinated drifts of annuals and herbaceous material, intersected by stepping-stone paths. A rustic cedar shelter with a thatched roof overlooked this garden. By contrast, below the western terrace an open lawn surrounded by mixed shrub and perennial borders with flagstone walks and steps descended the slope to the casino and boat house. A spacious tea house was installed along the shore.

Davison was critical to the development of the international Red Cross during World War I, and the beach at Peacock Point was used as a training ground for the Davisons' sons and their Yale classmates to prepare for enlistment with the burgeoning U.S. Naval Air Reserve. Following Davison's death in 1922, his widow continued to improve aspects of the property with Olmsted Brothers' help. After her death in 1962, the main house was demolished; five generations of the family continue to reside in other homes on the site.

Historic Name:
The H. P. Davison Estate
Peacock Point

Landscape Category:
Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:
Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
Percival Gallagher
Lamb & Rich
F. B. Martin
Olmsted Brothers
Carl Rust Parker
Walker & Gillette
Edward Clark Whiting



Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park

Historic Name:

Planting Fields
The William Robertson Coe Estate

Landscape Type:

Arboretum
Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden
Public Park –
State Park

Landscape Styles:

Beaux Arts / Neoclassical
Picturesque

Designed By:

Grosvenor Atterbury
Harold Hill Blossom
James Frederick Dawson
Percival Gallagher
James Greenleaf
Heritage Landscapes
P. R. Jones
Hans J. Koehler
Guy Lowell
Olmsted Brothers
Carl Rust Parker
A. Robeson Sargent

From its early usage as fishing, hunting, and cultivation grounds for indigenous tribes, to seventeenth to nineteenth century farmsteads, the patterning of this landscape evolved further with the 1904 purchase of 350 acres by attorney James Byrne for a country retreat. By 1908 a residence and ancillary structures designed by Grosvenor Atterbury were constructed, surrounded by a landscape shaped by James Greenleaf. William Robertson Coe, a successful English entrepreneur, purchased the property and additional acreage in 1913. He hired Guy Lowell and Andrew Robeson Sargent to introduce new buildings, greenhouses, and gardens (Italian Blue Pool Garden), establishing a framework for distinctive horticultural character. An ardent gardener, Coe imported plants from England to enrich borders, woodlands, and greenhouses, while augmenting his tree collection with transplanted mature specimens.

In 1918, when the house burned and Sargent unexpectedly died, Coe turned to Walker & Gillette to rebuild a larger English Tudor Revival style residence, and to James Dawson of Olmsted Brothers for the landscape. Dawson worked until the mid-1930s to integrate new and existing features, and structures, adding greenhouses, highlighting specialized plant groupings, and balancing decorative elements with sweeping naturalized spaces. Dawson even advised on breeds of sheep, reflecting the import of a productive landscape. The estate's circulation system was realigned, especially with the 1927 installation of the monumental English Carshalton Gates.

In the 1940s Coe deeded the estate to New York State with the provision that it be maintained as an educational public property. SUNY occupied the grounds (1955-68), after which it reopened as a state arboretum. Supported by Planting Fields Foundation, the 409-acre property was the subject of a 2019 Cultural Landscape Report by Heritage Landscapes, which is guiding project work to restore and rehabilitate the landscape. Planting Fields was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.



Seminary of the Immaculate Conception



Roland Ray Conklin, an entrepreneur and financier previously based in Kansas City, Missouri, but with ancestral ties to Huntington, New York, purchased considerable acreage around 1902, commissioning Wilson Eyre to design a residence with gardens atop a west-facing hill with a steep declivity toward the Sound. Roland decided as a romantic gesture to gift his wife, Mary McFadden Conklin, a former opera singer, with a performance space of her own.

In 1912 the Conklins asked Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to transform their sloping “bowl” into a sizable amphitheater, with semi-circular turf-covered tiers for an audience of nearly 3,000, descending to a stage at the bottom, separated by a moat. Conklin envisioned that when not in performances, it would be an attractive landscape feature. With the complicated engineering and significant financing required to retain the sandy slopes while providing adequate space to traverse each terrace, this was a short-lived and problematic commission for the Olmsted firm. Conklin took the plans and proceeded to construct the amphitheater to his personal liking, with occasional consultations from Olmsted and his architect Charles Wait. The amphitheater was used for various performances, attracting major actors of the day.

Most notably, the Conklins hosted The National Red Cross Pageant in 1917, which was also produced as a silent film, and was recognized on a national level, being featured in magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*. After his wife's death in 1919, heartbroken Conklin sold the property to the Brooklyn Diocese, who by 1924 built the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception, later also becoming a retreat and conference center.

Historic Name:
Rosemary Farm

Landscape Category:
Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:
Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden
Institutional Grounds –
Religious Institution

Landscape Style:
Picturesque

Designed By:
James Frederick Dawson
Wilson Eyre
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Charles R. Wait



The Memorial Cemetery of St. John's Church

Landscape Category:
Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:
Cemetery –
Rural Cemetery

Landscape Styles:
Picturesque

Designed By:
James Frederick Dawson
Hans J. Koehler
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Carl Rust Parker
Edward Clark Whiting

In 1862 land was acquired by John Divine Jones for use as a family burial ground. The wooded property of steep-sided valleys rising to a gentler plateau instead became the cemetery for nearby St. John's Episcopal Church. Traditional linear plots with access roads were arranged on the plateau, and by 1890 a small chapel was added near the entrance.

In 1912 Robert and Henry De Forest purchased ten acres to the west, increasing the cemetery to about 36 acres. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was hired to lay out informal burial grounds, respectful of the natural topography and vegetation, to accommodate the De Forest families. By 1915, three acres around a natural bowl were graded into alcoves, with flat slate markers, all enhanced by a layered planting palette.

This aesthetic held great appeal for numerous De Forest colleagues and neighbors who engaged the Olmsted firm to shape, plant, and furnish individual burial rooms. The firm oversaw 22 projects over three decades. They navigated complicated grading, saving existing trees while adding walls and steps to enclose garden rooms, sometimes transplanting materials from the clients' own estates. These spaces were embellished with horizontal burial tablets, stepping stones, occasional benches, or mausolea for which the firm provided individual identity for each.

Simultaneously, the firm refined the cemetery's drainage system and path network, deploying meandering steps through the woods to link gravesites. Particularly steep areas, or those with significant landscape features, were set aside as reservations. Larger plots (later subdivided) and areas toward the northeast quadrant were laid out for single graves, with the firm's last plan dated 1958.



Welwyn Preserve

Historic Name:

Dosoris Park
Welwyn
Harold I. Pratt Estate
George D. Pratt Estate

Landscape Category:

Designed Landscape

Landscape Type:

Garden and Estate –
Country Place Era Garden
Public Park –
Scenic Reservation

Landscape Styles:

Picturesque

Designed By:

James L. Greenleaf
Martha Brookes Hutcheson
Olmsted Brothers
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
Carl Rust Parker
Charles Adams Platt
Edward Clark Whiting

Beginning in the 1880s, entrepreneur and philanthropist Charles Pratt acquired nearly 1,100 acres land known as “Dosoris.” As they married, Pratt gifted each of his six children portions of the coastal property to build summer residences. The land was held in common with a shared area known as “the Oval,” where myriad structures were placed around an oblong track. Following Pratt’s death in 1891, a mausoleum, designed by William Tubby, and a cemetery were constructed. By c. 1905 the Pratt progeny had built shoreline homes by various architects, some with landscapes by James Greenleaf. The Olmsted firm was first hired in 1906-09, with consultations until World War I. Their earliest work provided grading and building connections to the Oval, of which only the clock tower is extant. The Olmsteds originally designed garden rooms for two of the Pratt sons’ homes (Poplar Hill, now Glengariff Rehabilitation; and Killenworth I). These gardens were lost when earlier residences were demolished and rebuilt with new surroundings by Charles Pratt for Poplar Hill, and by Trowbridge & Ackerman for Killenworth II (now a retreat for Russian diplomats).

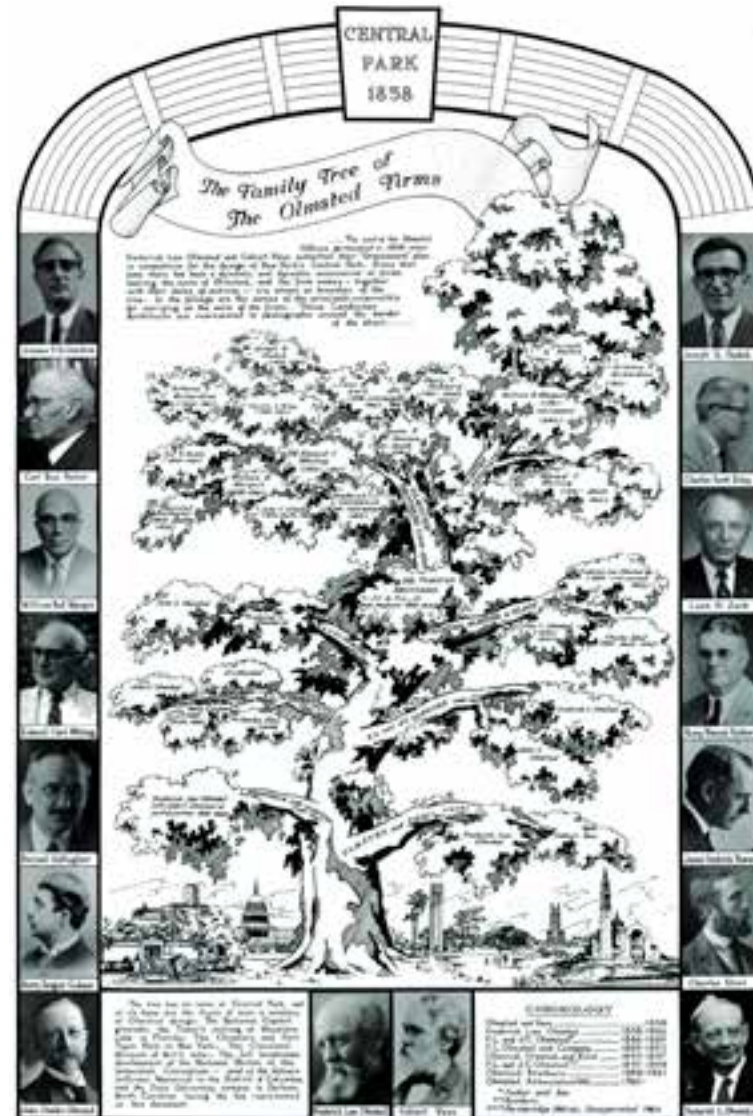
At Welwyn, Harold and Harriet Pratt partially renovated the original mansion where Olmsted Brothers planned drives, service courts, and extensive plantings. Many of the specialized garden rooms were likely designed by Greenleaf or Martha Brookes Hutcheson, with some possible Olmsted involvement. In 1969 Welwyn was bequeathed to Nassau County. In 1992 the mansion and immediate surrounds became home for the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center, while 204 acres of wooded trails and Long Island Sound shoreline were retained as a public preserve. The most important Olmsted Brothers firm undertaking was Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.’s, 1908 analysis of the Pratt holdings, advising on suitable boundaries in dividing the common land. When the firm returned in 1934, Carl Rust Parker planned a subdivision of two- to four-acre family plots around the Oval; he also supervised renewal of the Pratt Family Cemetery. The Olmsted restructuring is visible today, with smaller lots and more subsidiary roads.



Photo by Aniko Nagyne Vig.



The Olmsted Firm on Long Island



Between 1880 and 1958, all three Olmsteds and numerous employees contributed to the planning and design of myriad projects that spanned more than 75 years of design on Long Island. Their biographical profiles follow illuminating the roles and contributions of the firm's extraordinary talent pool.

Olmsted Family Tree, 1858-1958.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903)

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, and unsurpassed in the field of landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., defined and named the profession and designed many of America's most beloved nineteenth century parks and landscapes, including New York's Central Park, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, the Biltmore Estate, and the U.S. Capitol grounds. His commitment to public works stemmed in part from his abolitionist stance: by creating elegant and equitable public spaces for all, he hoped to show the inherent beauty possible in a free society. During his remarkable 40-year career, beginning in the mid-1850s, Olmsted, his partners, and employees created the first park systems, urban greenways, and suburban residential communities in this country. He and his colleague, Charles Eliot, were pivotal figures in the movement to create scenic reservations such as Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Niagara Falls. His collaborations with Charles Eliot, Calvert Vaux, Warren Manning, and his sons, John Charles and Frederick, Jr., allowed his influence to continue long past his retirement.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957)

Among "Rick" Olmsted's first tasks in the Olmsted office was the implementation of plans for Biltmore, the 10,000-acre Vanderbilt estate in Asheville, North Carolina. In 1898 he joined his brother in forming Olmsted Brothers. In 1899 he set up the first professional university curriculum in landscape architecture, and in 1900, together with his brother, was one of the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects. As a leading proponent of city planning, Olmsted, Jr., produced reports and plans for cities including Washington, D.C., Detroit, Boulder, Pittsburgh, New Haven, Rochester, and Newport, and suburbs around Baltimore, New York City, and Los Angeles. He devoted his later career to the conservation of the country's park and wilderness areas. His work shaped national parks from coast to coast, including Maine's Acadia National Park, the Florida Everglades, and the California State Park System. Olmsted, Jr., remained a partner in Olmsted Brothers until his retirement in 1949, and advised until his death in 1957.

John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920)

John Charles Olmsted became the stepson of the senior Olmsted upon the latter's marriage to his brother's widow. Olmsted apprenticed in his stepfather's office, working on the U.S. Capitol Grounds and various expositions. Like his stepfather, he saw expositions as public tastemakers for good design, and comprehensive park system planning as a way of contributing to well-considered residential and civic urban growth to serve expanding populations. In 1898, he and his younger half-brother formed the Olmsted Brothers firm. Olmsted was an advocate both for the emerging profession of landscape architecture and for the value of comprehensive planning to develop healthful and attractive cities. During his tenure, the Olmsted firm took on the planning of park systems for numerous cities, including Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Hartford, Louisville, Portland, and Seattle. It also gained commissions for subdivisions, private residential work, and institutions. In his more than four decade career, John Charles Olmsted saw the firm grow from 600 to 3500 commissions, and consistently melded a Picturesque-style aesthetic with pragmatic planning.

Harold Hill Blossom (1879-1935)

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Blossom was the first student to graduate from Harvard with a Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) in 1907. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., hired Blossom to work for Olmsted Brothers while he was still a student, a post that he continued after graduation. He traveled often on behalf of the firm, including for the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Diego. When Olmsted Brothers resigned from that project, Blossom returned to the northeast, working mainly on residential estates in Newport and on Long Island. In 1919 he left the firm to start his own practice. He died in 1935 of cardiac failure at age 56.

James Frederick Dawson (1874-1941)

Born in Boston, Massachusetts, where his father was superintendent and chief propagator at Arnold Arboretum, Dawson graduated from Harvard University and was chosen by John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in 1904 as the first associate partner in the firm of Olmsted Brothers. Dawson spent his entire career with the firm, becoming a full partner in 1922. He supervised projects in Venezuela, Cuba, Canada, and Bermuda, as well as throughout the United States, designing in a wide range of landscape types—arboreta, parks and parkways, expositions, estates, resorts and country clubs, golf courses, and subdivisions.

Percival Gallagher (1874-1934)

Born in South Boston, Gallagher studied horticulture at Harvard before joining the Olmsted firm, becoming a full partner with Olmsted Brothers in 1927. Noted for his artistic talent, horticultural knowledge, and modest temperament, Gallagher was well suited to collaborative work with colleagues and clients alike. He contributed to the campus design work for Bryn Mawr, Haverford, Swarthmore, Vassar, and Duke University. Gallagher also worked on the design of the park system for Union County, New Jersey, including Rahway River Park, and extensive estate work around Philadelphia and on Long Island. These latter projects show a range of plant palettes and a facility with multiple design styles.

Henry Vincent Hubbard (1875-1947)

Born in Massachusetts, Hubbard became in 1901 the first student awarded a degree in landscape architecture from Harvard University. After graduation, Hubbard joined the Olmsted Brothers firm but left in 1906 to cofound the practice Pray, Hubbard & White with H.P. White and James Sturgis Pray. When that practice closed in 1918 Hubbard rejoined Olmsted Brothers, becoming a partner in 1920. With the Olmsted firm he liaised with federal agencies and acted as planning consultant to the cities of Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; and Providence, Rhode Island. Hubbard coauthored the first textbook for the discipline with Theodora Kimball, whom he married in 1924. He remained with Olmsted Brothers until his death at age 72.

Percival Reginald Jones (1860-1941)

Born in Wales, Jones immigrated to Boston, Massachusetts, in 1884 and joined the Olmsted Brothers firm in 1886 as a draftsman. Jones was to remain with Olmsted Brothers for the rest of his career, eventually expanding his role to manage a wide range of projects as a principal assistant. As John Charles Olmsted's health declined, Jones began to play a larger role in coordinating projects and dealing with clients. In the early 1930s, Jones's failing eyesight and the economic downturn of the Great Depression slowed his active role in the firm. He eventually moved to Nova Scotia, Canada, where he remained until his death at the age of 81.

Hans J. Koehler (1867-1951)

Born in Hoboken, New Jersey, Koehler began working for the Olmsted Brothers in 1905. During his long career with the Olmsted firm, Koehler worked on several notable public parks and private estates. He established himself as the firm's plantsman, with great knowledge about trees. His expertise was an asset to the horticultural enrichment of the Baltimore parks system, Bok Tower Sanctuary in Florida, and for a number of the Long Island and Newport estates, among other projects. Koehler retired in the 1940s and died in West Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1951 at age 85.

Carl Rust Parker (1882-1966)

Born in Andover, Massachusetts, Parker began his career working for Olmsted Brothers after high school, serving as a draftsman, planting designer, and construction supervisor. In 1910 he resigned from the firm and opened his own practice in Portland, Maine. There he worked on a range of residential projects, civic spaces, subdivisions, and resorts. Parker returned to work for the Olmsted firm in 1919. His practice expanded to projects in Maine, Mississippi, New Jersey, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In 1950 Parker became a partner of the firm, retiring in 1961. He was inducted as a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1915.

Edward Clark Whiting (1881-1962)

Born in Brooklyn, Whiting studied at Harvard and joined Olmsted Brothers in 1905, spending his entire professional career with the firm. He worked as a draftsman, assistant engineer, and general designer before becoming a partner in 1920. He worked on many types of projects throughout his career, including park and city planning, subdivisions, institutional grounds, and cemeteries. He also worked on many private estates, including the Davis Estate in Marstons Mills on Cape Cod; and J. E. Aldred's Ormston (today known as St. Josaphat's Monastery) alongside Percival Gallagher in Nassau County, New York. He was named a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1930.



Planting Fields Foundation is a not-for-profit educational foundation chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Established in 1952 by William Robertson Coe, the Foundation works in a public-private partnership with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to steward our 409-acre historic site, Planting Fields. Through year-round daytime visitation, regular exhibitions, capital improvements, and public and educational programs, Planting Fields Foundation strives to preserve and make relevant to all audiences the heritage of Planting Fields.

For more information visit www.plantingfields.org



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This guidebook is the result of scholarly research by principal author Arleyn Levee, with additional editorial and programmatic support from Charles Birnbaum, Dena Tasse-Winter, Celia Carnes, Allan Greller, Nord Wennerstrom, Aileen Beringer, and Blythe Romano. The guidebook was laid out by Justin Clevenger.

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Left: Photo courtesy Oheka Castle Cover: Photo by David Almeida